Cinde Weatherby, President

The news this month is personal - to me and to the 20,000 plus individuals who participated in the student-led March for Our Lives on Saturday March 24th between Austin City Hall and the State Capitol. Everyone reading this should know there is a sea change underway in our region and our nation. The activist spirit has reawakened and it is real!
I've mentioned before that I'm just old enough to remember the activism of the mid- to late-1960s and 1970s. Young people - many from college campuses - took leadership positions to protest America's involvement in the Vietnam War. They also supported the Civil Rights efforts led by minorities in the south. These young people went on to run for office around this country and lead efforts to fight to protect the environment and make other progressive advancements. Those young Baby Boomers worked hard to establish themselves as a force for public good.

From what I observed directly during the recent March, the next major force is now picking up that flag of activism. The high school students here are an extremely impressive lot! Four high school seniors exhibited the most amazing strength of purpose and responsibility I believe I've ever witnessed. They handled every detail themselves, calling upon help from others when needed, but always in charge. And there were students from kindergarten through high school in this crowd, with a succession plan already in the works. A sophomore was the organizer of the pizza poster party where we also offered voter registration. She worked with a new group called Feed Our Democracy.

What is the best news about this? This group realizes that if they want to make progress on the gun issue, they must step up as voters. They share the League's belief that our democracy is broken and not responsive to the electorate on many issues.

They know that to see change they have to be a visible voting force. Dozens of LWV-AA and Travis County Voter Registration Division VDRs registered voters at City Hall, during the march up Congress and at the Capitol. We registered 255 individuals. Also, a new texting communications system was initiated March 24th to offer students a pledge to vote and receive follow-up election-related information. That service is being provided by the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) and Children's Defense Fund (CDF), and graciously includes LWV-AA.

Our voter registration and First Vote! world will be evolving. I predict it will not be as challenging to get students' attention to convince them of the relevance of voting to their daily life. Many of them are already aware - in a very visceral sense. They get it!

**More Good News**

More good news is that many other organizations are joining the support network to assist these students. College students and millennials are also joining in the Generation Z activism. The number of national and local organizations assisting is growing daily, and beginning to coalesce for a greater impact. We are working with TCRP, CDF and others to provide content and a collaboration to foster grassroots statewide student voter registration efforts. You will be hearing much more about that in future months.

LWV-TX is also launching a major program of detailed TEKs-compliant curricula for high schools, along with accompanying videos produced by the Dallas County Community College District, that LWV-Dallas has been fostering over the past couple of years. LWVUS is also providing resources.

At LWV-AA, the great news is that VP-Voters Service Joyce LeBombard's diligent, detailed work on the First Vote! program positions us as a leader to respond to expanded demands for voter registration assistance and voter education with a newly trained volunteer workforce. Demand will require even more to volunteer to assist. **Could that someone be YOU?** An expanding corps calls for more leaders as well. Please contact Joyce directly if you are as excited as we are about giving this new generation of voters what they need to Make Democracy Work better.

Speaking of making that Democracy work - particularly on the gun issue - take advantage of the LWVUS action process to voice your opinions to your elected leaders [here](#).

**Even More Good News**
Thanks to the organizers, sponsors, supporters and attendees of the 2018 26th Annual State of the City Fundraising Dinner & Awards event, almost $30,000 was raised. This set a new level of support available to offset the Primary Voters Guide additional costs. We appreciate each and every one of the donations and contributions of time and money to make the dinner a success. Special thanks go to Elizabeth Cooper and Angela Koegler, Co-Special Events Chairs. Be sure to look elsewhere in this newsletter and online for reports and photos from the event.

In our very first foray into Amplify Austin participation, without time for any elaborate campaign, we gained almost $2,000 in contributions. Thanks again to VP Community Relations Mary Jane Burson and Secretary Gina McCool for handling the application and Treasurer Gwen Santiago's coordination of qualifying documentation.

March for Our Lives Photos
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

First Vote! Coordinator

Voters Service is looking for one or two people to lead this extraordinary effort going into next school year. The program and process is in place but can always be improved upon. If you are interested in finding out more about this role, please contact Joyce at VP-votersService@lwvaustin.org.

2018 State of the City Dinner and Auction

Thanks to all who attended the 26th annual State of the City fundraising dinner. We raised almost $30,000 from ticket sales, sponsorship, and live and silent auction funds.

We really appreciate Janet Maykus, aka Wonder Woman, for stepping in at the last minute as our auctioneer.

We also would like to thank our wonderful speaker, Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez, who reminded us about the challenges we face when we try to do the right thing for the right reasons. Visit our website for the full text of her presentation.

We presented awards to League Volunteers of the Year: Mollie Snow, JoAnn McKenzie, Hal Jennings and Dixie Davis; to Democracy in Action winner Kassie Barroquillo of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life; and to Friend of the League Bob Gregory of Texas Disposal Systems, all of whom support LWV-AA efforts to increase
voter registration and civic engagement.

It was a night of laughter, fun, and generosity! We couldn’t have done it without the hard work of our volunteers and the generous support of our sponsors.

**Special Thanks**

**Celebrating Democracy Sponsors**
Robby Ausley / Joan Hilgers
Austin Fire Fighter PAC

**Honoring Democracy Sponsors**
Alamo Drafthouse Cinema
Bob Gregory - Texas Disposal Systems
John Philip Donisi
Julia Marsden
Sorrento’s Coffee
Voters Service
Joyce LeBombard, VP Voters Service

The Westwood High School Parent Teacher Student Association invited us to do a First Vote! program. We did slide presentation for about 50 students at an assembly and then also offered voter registration during lunch periods. We registered 67 students and 31 of them opted-in to receive election reminders. Thank you Maureen Mercado, Sandi Bone, Anne Clark, Mollie Snow, and Karen Eikner.

I held two training classes for 35 volunteers on our First Vote! program. Thanks to all who attended. I hope it gave more people the information they needed to be willing to present at some of our upcoming First Vote! programs.

To learn more about First Vote! program go to lwvaustin.org/first-vote/.

Register & Vote

Please welcome Michael Keller who is the new Register & Vote (R&V) co-Chair replacing JoAnn McKenzie. Thank you, JoAnn, for all that you have done for the R&V committee this past year.

While we did several events this month, the big focus was on March For Our Lives on March 24. Due to the size of the event, this took a lot of effort by a lot of people. Thank you Michael Keller, Mollie Snow, JoAnn McKenzie, Carol King, Cindy Hintikka, Karen Eikner, Emil Hunziker, Matt Flores Jr., and Cinde Weatherby for all that you did to make this event such a success.

Another fun event we did was the International Women’s Day Concert coordinated by Beth Schrader.

We did four (4) events including the ones mentioned above and took over 335 voter registration applications.

Civic Engagement Alliance

Melissa Crijns and JoAnn McKenzie added several companies to our newly formed Civic Engagement Alliance including Alamo Drafthouse, Rackspace, and Accenture. We provided Voters Guides to them during the Primary Election and held two voter registration events at Accenture. We have a couple more lined up to join soon.

Voter Publications

We updated our 'Be A Texas Voter' bookmark and added a QR Code to it that points to the online version on our website. You can try the QR code yourself by scanning it with your cell phone here:

Voters Guide

The Voters Guide for the May 5th and May 22nd elections will not be printed, but all content will be available on LWV-AA website and VOTE411.org.

Thank you Jaci Collins and Gretchen Otto for collecting information on the local elections.

A New Equation for Transportation and Accessibility: New Ideas, Designs and Systems
Equal More Opportunities.
Lea Masiello, VP Programs and Mary Cullinane, Program Director

April 8, 2019, 3-5pm.
The Sustainable Food Center
2921 E. 17th St. Bldg. C.
Austin, TX 78702

This program is part of the update study process for the LWV-AA’s position on mobility-related issues, in collaboration with the City of Austin’s Transportation Department and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority to foster additional outreach and understanding. Speakers will discuss major transportation initiatives, including the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and Project Connect. Speakers include Britin Bostick, Chair, LWV Austin Transportation Position Update Committee, and Transportation Issue Chair, LWV Texas; Annick Beaudet, Assistant Director, Austin Transportation Department, City of Austin; Coleen Gentles, GIS Analyst, Public Works Department, City of Austin; Todd Hemingson, Executive Vice President Planning and Development, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Ann Kitchen, Council member for District 5, Chair, the City of Austin’s Mobility Committee. Additional speakers will join us from the team working on specific aspects of improving transportation, including specialists in safety, sidewalks, safe routes to school, bike routes, and urban trails.

Work continues in the LWV-AA position update committees. We are reviewing and updating current LWV-AA positions in these areas: affordable housing; quality of the environment; criminal justice; mobility/transportation; education; and healthcare. Healthcare has drafted some position revisions and new statements that help emphasize people receiving timely care for a full range of services for both adults and children, and for clinics to work towards retaining professional staff. Affordable Housing has been moving ahead also in their explorations of area housing that is affordable, and Cynthia McCollum is organizing a meeting for the education committee.

If you like meeting in small groups with your fellow League members, we would love to have you join a committee. You can email me at leamasiello@gmail.com and I will let the committee chair know of your interest.

Membership Report and Interest Survey
Brenda Koegler, Membership Director

Welcome New Members! Hope you have had the chance to attend one of our new member monthly coffees. We hold new member coffees to serve as a mini-orientation to help you get involved as soon as possible. If you have not had a chance to attend one or would like another opportunity to learn more about the League, please let me know. And a special thank you to this month’s Renewing and Sustaining members! We are grateful to Sustaining Members for their additional financial support for our local League.

Welcome, New Members: Sandra Bone, Emily Cash, Molly Comeaux, Gretchen Crook, Karen Darby, Janet and Allison Eakman, Whitney Evans, Rachel Forster, Jean Frank, Frances and Daniel Hamermesh, Nancy and Christine Hurd, Jody Klopp, Shelley Livaudais, Laura McDonough, Linda Miller, Rebecca Mullan, Nora Mullarkey-Miller, Lana Norwood and James Robinson, Gaye Sodoma, Paula Traffas and Ron Seamon

Thank You, Sustaining Members: Sandra Bone, Sarah Carriker, Elizabeth Cooper, Jean Frank, Carol Fredericks, Frances and Daniel Hamermesh, Nancy and Christine Hurd, Jody Klopp, Laura McDonough, Kathryn Mettelka, Rebecca Mullan, Nora Mullarkey-Miller, Lana Norwood and James Robinson, Anita Privett, Gaye Sodoma, Jeanie Stanley,
Thank You, Renewing Members: Mary Cullinane, Angela Koegler, Christopher Paton, Velva Price, Jan Soifer, Kent Stewart

As a member of the Austin League, each of you is also a member of the national and state leagues. See the links below for an abundance of educational information.

www.lwvaustin.org  www.lwvtexas.org  www.lwv.org

Member Interest Survey: We are very interested in seeing what in particular interests you and why you joined the League. Click on Select Your Action Involvement to complete the survey. Please fill it out and hit submit. We will then connect you to the appropriate League leaders.

Need more information? Visit our webpage for more information on new memberships and membership renewals.

In Memorium - Phyllis Portnoy 1927-2018

Lifetime Member Phyllis Portnoy passed away peacefully on March 12, 2018. She was born November 29, 1927 in Newark, NJ, graduated from Weequahic High School in 1944, married Philip Portnoy in 1948 and raised four sons in Union, NJ. Phyllis had a career as a registered nurse and then went back to school when her sons had finished high school and was awarded a Masters in Social Work with a focus on drug and alcohol counseling.

Phyllis and Phil moved to Austin, Texas in 1991 and Phil passed away in 1994. Phyllis was a lifetime (50+ years) member of the League of Women Voters. Her friends in LWV-AA described a vivacious woman who served on the Board as co-chair with Yvonne Khouri as Vice Presidents for Organization for approximately 10 years. During that time she hosted numerous meetings in her home in Onion Creek. She was the designated punch-maker for many League events. Challenged by Judy Parken as to whether Phyllis spiked the punch at Fall Kickoffs, she confessed; and though told to stop adding to the recipe, she commented that it would not taste as good.

Phyllis was a subscriber to the Austin Symphony and was often accompanied by League member and friend Jaci Collins. She will be buried beside her husband Phil in Beth Israel Cemetery, Woodbridge, NJ. She will be missed.

Thank you for supporting the League!

Memorial/Honorary:
Judy Clack donated in memorial to Phyllis and Steven Portnoy


Voters Guide: Laura Wisdom.

Amplify Donations: Many League members and citizens of our community made generous donations to LWV-AA in March through Amplify Austin. Some chose to remain anonymous in this fundraiser but we would like to thank: Nancy Busbey, Michelle Goerdel, Julie Gomez, Dana Collins, Amy Averett, Dylan Rinda, Timothy Webb, Joan Stys, Christopher Skelley, Mary Overton, Sara Mitchell, Erin Stenzel, Karen Haschke, Alana Carpenter-Moore, Dixie Davis, Judy Parken, Kassie Barroquillo, Mollie Snow,