December 2016

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LWVAA Calendar

Monday, December 5, 4:00 pm. Board Meeting, League Conference Room, 1011 W. 31st., Austin Members.

Thursday, December 1 to Friday, December 9 Early Voting. Run Off election for District 10 City Council and Place 4 and 9 Austin Community College Board of Trustees.

Saturday, December 10 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, Holiday Brunch and New Member Recognition. Summerwood Clubhouse, 8216 Summer Place Drive, Austin.

Tuesday, December 13 Election Day. Run Off election for District 10, Austin City Council and Place 4 and 9 Austin Community College Board of Trustees.

Monday, January 2, 4:00 pm. Board Meeting, League Conference Room, 1011 W. 32st., Austin Members.

Back issues of the LWVAA Voter can be found at this link.

From the President

The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates. It may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest after significant study and consensus is reached.

The VOTER is partially funded by the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund.

If you received this email from a friend, click here to get on our list. You do not have to be a member. We will NOT give your email address to anyone else.

Board Contact List

Cinde Weatherby
President
Lea Masiello
1st VP Program vacancy
2nd VP Community Relations
Jaci Collins
3rd VP Organization
Jacklyn Williams
4th VP Voters Service
Diane Davis

The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates. It may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest after significant study and consensus is reached.
LWV Austin Urgently Relevant

Experiencing the Election Season this year reminds League of Women Voters members and our supporters why they choose to participate. Our relevance is as strong today as it was in 1919 when the Texas women (and men!), fresh from the hard-fought battle to win voting rights for women, organized the League.

Want proof? Just Google “league.” In my last search, only League of Legends (an evidently very popular computer game) and the Wikipedia definition of the word came in ahead of the League of Women Voters. The next two entries were a mixture of old and new: the League of American Bicyclists (founded in 1880) and The League (an exclusive computer dating app for Millennials founded in 2014).

As long as there is a United States of America, LWV will remain relevant. Seems bicycles are also timeless, as there is a resurgence of their use for transportation in Austin and around the world.

Record-Setting November Election

Our Austin LWV has much to celebrate. Under the leadership of Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector Bruce Elfant and his Voter Registration Office, we helped register to vote more than 92 percent of Travis County citizens.

Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir’s Elections Office improves the voting process each year, making it insanely easy to vote. We can claim some part of getting more than 65 percent of those registered voters to the polls. We can definitely boast of a great number of those voters showing up at the polls informed about the candidates.

Our Voters Guide remains the most respected nonpartisan source of candidate information that includes all of those who run for office. We also informed voters with our well-attended candidate forums for Austin City Council and Austin Community College and Austin Independent School District leaders, that were also available for viewing online.

Looking specifically at the Austin Guide stats, nearly 80,000 voters checked out the Guide at www.LWVAustin.org, and others directly viewed it on the Austin American-Statesman and Ahora Si! websites. In addition, each Statesman subscriber received it with their Sunday printed edition and others at local libraries and locations throughout the area. We thank all of those organizations and individuals who promoted the Guide through their websites and social media channels. We had substantial Voters Guide views that originated from other websites, including the County’s VoteTravis and iVoteEarly, KUT radio and Austin Community College.

Massive LWV Growth Spurt

We are most overwhelmingly celebrating the addition of more than 80 new League members this year! We have been extraordinarily busy registering voters, informing them at forums and through the Guide, and promoting voter engagement of our younger voters and the general public. A big thank you to the new and veteran members who volunteered many hours of their time and donated funds to make it all possible.

"Like" Our League on Facebook

It's so easy to follow our League on Facebook.

1. Go to facebook.com and login to your existing account or create a new one.

2. Enter "League of Women Voters of the Austin Area" in the search box at the top of the page.

3. Facebook will show you possible matches to your search terms as you type. Simply click on the box with our logo and title.

4. Once you get to our page, there will be a button that says "Like" and has an image of a "thumbs up."

5. Click on that button. Now you are subscribed to our page and will see our news stories on your Facebook homepage. You can choose to receive notifications of all our posts, by turning on notifications.
On December 10th, we will do some in-person celebrating at our Annual New Member Holiday Brunch. The event is for all LWV members and will begin at 10:30 am in the Summerwood Clubhouse, 8230 Summer Place.

I look forward to talking with the newest members and hearing how their fresh ideas and determination can help us best achieve our mission of encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influencing public policy through education and advocacy. These tasks have never been more urgent and meaningful.

One More 2016 Election
Don't forget there is one more 2016 election. The Runoff Election Tuesday, December 13th includes Austin City Council District 10 and two Austin Community College trustee positions. For all election details: www.LWVAustin.org.

~Cinde Weatherby, President
President@LWVAustin.org

Holiday Brunch and New Member Recognition

Saturday December 10
10:30 am-12:30 pm
Summerwood Clubhouse
8216 Summer Place Drive, Austin 78759
Please carpool if possible due to limited street parking.

All League members are invited to a Holiday Brunch to recognize our bumper crop of new members (around 80) from December 2015 to now. Come meet other League members and see what interests our newest ones bring to us. An RSVP would be appreciated by sending a note to membership@lwvaustin.org. We’ll have breakfast tacos, coffee, punch and various sweets. If veteran members would like to bring food or something to share, please do.

Call Judy Parken (512-657-4474) or Brenda Koegler (817-781-5184) with any questions you might have

~Judy Parken, Co-Membership Chair,
Membership@LWVAustin.org 512-502-0278.
~Brenda Koegler, Co-Membership Chair,
Membership@LWVAustin.org 817-781-5184

Run Off Election

Follow Our League on Twitter

Honors, Memorials and Donations

Beth Beutel, Tracy DiLeo, Glenda Goehrs, Neal and Karen Grice, Barbara Jones, and Carol Kinley made donations since last month to the Education Fund for the Voters Guide.

Joyce Jackson made a donation in honor of Hillary Clinton.

Katherine Nelson made a donation in honor of Sherry Priest.

Shop at Randalls and Support the League

Randall’s Good Neighbor Program gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their Remarkable Cards. Our account number is 465.
Early Voting: Thursday, December 1 - Friday, December 9
Election Day: Tuesday, December 13

On the ballot (depending on where you live)

**Austin City Council District 10 candidates:** Alison Alter, Sheri Gallo
**Austin Community College Board of Trustees Place 4 candidates:** Sean Hassan, Michael J. Lewis
**Austin Community College Board of Trustees Place 9 candidates:** Guadalupe 'Lupe' Sosa, Julie Ann Nitsch

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**Upcoming Programs**

In January, we will have presentations and round-table discussions about "Opening the Conversation" about voting rights, disability laws, and education. This meeting will be at Disability Rights Texas, at 2222 Braker Lane. The meeting is tentatively set for Wednesday, January 25 from 1 to 3 pm, with refreshments and time for networking following the discussion. I am working with Molly Broadway at Texas Disability Rights to line up a group of speakers to help further collaboration, education, and action.

We are set for a luncheon meeting, co-sponsored with Women Vote, February 10th in the cafeteria at Huston-Tillotson University, with President Colette Pierce Burnette and others, including students, giving presentations about education and civic responsibility. Dr. Pierce Burnett is co-chairing Mayor Adler's new Anti-Racism Task Force, and we expect to learn more about this group's work.

The *Austin American-Statesman* published this information about the Task Force earlier this year:

The Task Force will consist of a "49-member group to take a comprehensive look at institutional racism and make recommendations by March. The task force will be divided into five working groups: Criminal & Civil Justice; Education; Health; Finance, Banking & Industry; and Real Estate & Housing." Mayor Adler explained more about the purpose of this Task Force to *The Statesman*:

"Violent incidents involving our police officers and communities of color are - and should be - disturbing," Adler said in a prepared statement Wednesday, "but it became obvious when we committed to addressing them that this was a bigger problem than just how law enforcement interacts with African Americans. To deal with racism in Austin, we need to acknowledge that institutional racism exists in Austin, have an honest community conversation about what we can do to root it out, and then commit ourselves to actually do what it takes to make sure all Austinites have an opportunity to thrive."

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**Leave a Legacy to Your League**

Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund in your will is among the easiest ways to offer support of the LWVAAEF's work for years to come.

We suggest the following language to include the Austin League Education Fund as a beneficiary of a will or trust: "I give, devise, and bequeath to the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund, a charitable organization formed in the State of Texas, with offices at 1011 W. 31st St, Austin, Texas 78705, {the sum of $____ }{{____ percentage of my residuary estate}." If you already have a will, you can have your attorney add a codicil to include the LWVAAEF.

After you've added the League, please email the Austin League office, lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org, so we can list you as a member of our League's Legacy Society.
Following the election, President Pierce Burnette wrote this inspiring and encouraging message on the University's webpage (www.htu.edu) about the election results:

The greatest opportunities for us to advance our communities are within our own spheres of influence within our own individual lives. We all want the same things. Though we venture along different paths on our respective journeys, the goals we've set for ourselves, the outcomes we want for our families and dreams we have for our children will not materialize from hopelessness.

Fear mongering works on the non-educated and weak people. It has flushed out where and who we really are as a nation. So, now we know. We also know that EDUCATION IS A WEAPON against our pain sources.

For many of us, the outcome of this election is a pain point for our country. What we must refuse to do is be angry. Instead, we must turn our energies into becoming game changers.

We must be engaged in what is happening around us in our daily lives and begin to hold one another accountable. We will hold Mr. Trump and all elected officials accountable to their word. We need to hold Mr. Trump accountable as the President for all people and make sure he works toward healing wounds and binding divides for all. Hopefully, the news of his triumph over Hillary Clinton has pushed many of us to recognize that, more than ever, we all need to be engaged as active participants.

It's going to be hard work, but we really do not have a choice and there really are no excuses. We didn't get here overnight. When you aren't involved and engaged, things happen to you, not for you. There is no time to rest - now is when the real work begins.

We are not weak people. Go labor in His vineyard. It's our civic duty.

Other programs that are getting started include a meeting on Civil Rights, Voting, Education, and Justice, and unit meetings with local and state legislators. As soon as more information is available, you will receive dates, times, places, and topics. Please keep your eye out for announcements about these and other programs.

Let's go forward into 2017 with the determination to collaborate with other Austin groups, to learn as much as we can about what is needed in Austin to achieve higher voter participation rates, and how we can be part of the effort to increase social and economic justice in our neighborhoods.

~Lea Masiello,
1st VP Programs
VP-Programs@LWVAustin.org

Votes for Candidates, Not the Electors
What a crazy election year! Do you feel like your vote counted, or was it lost in the morass of the Electoral College? Well, maybe it was.

The Electoral College is a process, not a place. The Founding Fathers established it in the Constitution as a compromise between election of the president by a vote in Congress and election of the president by a popular vote of qualified citizens.

The Electoral College allows a state as many "electors" as they have representatives in Congress (senators and representatives). Choosing each state's electors is a two-part process. First, the political parties in each state choose slates of potential electors sometime before the general election. Second, on Election Day, the voters in each state select their state's electors by casting their ballots for president. You help choose your state's electors when you vote for president because when you vote for your candidate, you are actually voting for your candidate's electors.

There are a total of 538 electors in the United States, 38 in Texas. It takes 270 electoral votes to win. That is how many people really vote on the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Most states, including Texas, have a "winner-takes-all" system that awards all electors to the winning presidential candidate. Whoever has the most popular votes on the day of the election will determine how Texas' 38 votes are cast.

Since the 1970s, the League of Women Voters has supported direct election by popular vote of the president and vice president as essential to representative government. The League testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election of the president, including provisions for a national runoff election in the event no candidates (president or vice president) received 40 percent of the vote. The measure, which passed the House and nearly passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each Congress since without success. In 1997, the League of Women Voters again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the president and vice president in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution.

The League also rejects the voting by electors based on proportional representation. The proportional representation would be even worse than the "winner-takes-all" method such as the one in Texas. An example of proportional representation might be a split popular vote where if 30 percent support a particular political party, roughly 30 percent of the seats would go to that party. Proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the president to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the president by the House of Representatives - as addressed in the informational commentary "This presidential election could be decided by Congress" by University of Texas professor Steve Bickerstaff - further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle. We also do not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the president.

The League believes strongly that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely "reformed." The Constitutional amendment effort to achieve this goal will take more than a
village to start the ball rolling. The League offers a substitution called the National Popular Vote proposal, while the constitutional amendment is underway. Don't stand by and allow Congress, who have all profited from the Electoral College system, to continue maintaining the status quo. Travis County and surrounding counties have had unprecedented numbers of newly registered and voting citizens. We should implore those voters to begin demanding a system that better represents the voting public. Voters should voice their interests in this change to our existing U.S. and Texas senators and representatives. They should also consider choosing only state senators and representatives in the 2018 elections who pledge support of the system improvement. Let's start the conversation!

Wouldn't it be great to see your vote go directly to the candidate you vote for and not to an elector?

~Frances McIntire
Advocacy and Voters Guide Chair
mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

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**Membership Report and Interest Survey**

**Member Interest Survey:**
We had one member coffee for our newest members this past month. Our annual **Holiday Brunch** celebrating our new members of 2016 will be **December 10**, so please add that to your calendars.

If you are either a new member or a member who may have a bit of time to volunteer for the League (either regularly or occasionally), please complete this [Member Interest Survey](mailto:mcintyre.frances@gmail.com). This will help us identify your skills and interests. A few new members have filled this out already, but many of our members have not. We especially need to hear from all members who have a little time to help us. Thank you for doing this now.

**New Members:**
Amrita Adhikary, Bridgid Bender, Beth Beutel and Christian Long, Amanda Boudreaux, Diane Budy, Michelle Butcher, Merinda Cutler, Dixie Davis, Tracy DiLeo, Susan Elizondo, Deanna Goodson, Michelle Goerdel, Joyce Jackson, Carol and Dave King, Kristin Knifton, Susan Manza, Kelley McClain, Cathy McHorse, Chrissy Nanton, Elsa Reyes, Darcie Robert

Stephanie Sheppard, Nicole Swies, and Lydia Valdes joined our ranks this past month. As a member of the Austin League, each of you is also a member of the national (LWVUS) and state (LWVTX) Leagues. See these links for an abundance of educational information.

[www.lwvaustin.org](http://www.lwvaustin.org)  [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org)  [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Regular and Sustaining Memberships: Of your $60 in regular dues, $54 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only $6 is left to support our Austin League. Paying at the sustaining level greatly benefits the Austin League because the extra money stays
Thank You, Sustaining Members:
Special thanks to these sustaining members who renewed/joined this past month: Bridgid Bender, Angela Bishop-Connolly, Amanda Boudreault, Michelle Butcher, Tracy DiLeo, Michelle Goerdel, Carol and Dave King, Kristin Knifton, Lea Masiello and Clare Cahalan, Cathy McHorse, Elizabeth and Ryan Nielsen, Charlotte Slack, Nicole Skies and Doris Wichita who renewed this past month. We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League.

Thank You, Renewing Members:
Many thanks to Betsy Singleton who renewed this past month. We depend on your support and appreciate your renewal.

New Membership, Renewal Dues Payment, Address Changes: Please mail your name, address, phone number, email address, household member (if applicable), along with your dues payment and/or any changes to the LWVAA office, 1011 W. 31st, Austin, TX 78705. Checks may be made out to the LWV of the Austin Area. Choose an amount below. Or you may instead click here for renewals (or click here for new memberships) to pay your annual dues online by credit card via PayPal while providing all the above information.

Here is the schedule of dues:

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<th>Individual</th>
<th>Household</th>
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<td>Sustaining Dues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Dues</td>
<td>$ 60.00</td>
<td>$ 90.00</td>
<td>$ 20.00</td>
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Contact one of us anytime with your League questions.

~Judy Parken, Co-Membership Chair, Membership@LWVAustin.org 512-502-0278.
~Brenda Koegler, Co-Membership Chair, Membership@LWVAustin.org 817-781-5184