February 2013

**LWVA Calendar**

**Sat., Feb. 2, 12:30 - 4:30 pm, League Workshop for Applicants for Redistricting Commission**, Carver Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, TX 78702. Come anytime.

**Mon., Feb. 4, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting**, Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Avenue, near N. Lamar and W. 29th Streets. Open to all members.

**Tues., Feb. 5, 6:00 pm, State of the City Dinner and Auction**, Chez Zee American Bistro, 5406 Balcones Drive. Dinner, Speaker, Fundraiser.

**Mon., Feb. 11, 10:00 am, Central Unit Meeting**, Howson Library, 2500 Exposition Blvd. "Water Availability, Needs, and Future Supply for the Austin Area.”

**Tues., Feb. 12, 7:00 pm, North Unit Meeting**, at home of Judy Parken, 7917 West Rim Dr. "Water Availability, Needs, and Future Supply for the Austin Area.”

**Wed., Feb. 13, 7:00 pm, South Unit Meeting**, South Austin Senior Center, 3911 Manchaca Rd. "Water Availability, Needs, and Future Supply for the Austin Area.”

**Sat., Feb. 16, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm, AISD District 2 Community Conversation about Public Education**, South Austin Recreation Center, 1100 Cumberland Rd., Austin, TX 78704.

**Sat., Feb. 16, 1 - 4:00 pm, League Workshop for Applicants for Redistricting Commission**, South Austin Recreation Center, 1100 Cumberland Rd., Austin, TX 78704. Come anytime.

**Mon. & Tues., Feb. 25 & 26, LWVTX State Lobby Days**, Texas Capitol. Click here for pdf of schedule.

**Mon., Mar. 4, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting**, Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Avenue, near N. Lamar and W. 29th Streets. Open to all members.

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

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**State of the City**

**Tuesday, February 5, Chez Zee, 6 - 9 pm**

Keynote speaker for the League's annual State of the City Dinner and Auction is **Bruce Elfant**, new Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voting Registrar. He will discuss his plans for improving voter registration and voter access to the polls.
The event will take place on **Tuesday, February 5, 2013, 6 - 9pm** at Chez Zee restaurant, located at **5406 Balcones Drive 78731**. Complimentary valet parking is available for our members and their guests. Tickets are $50 for members and $55 for non-members. [Click here](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=49l8dbda... to make a reservation if you have not already done so. Pay by check at the door if you don't use your credit card online via PayPal. **All proceeds will benefit the LWVAA Education Fund.**

At the social hour and silent auction, bid on items including Acupuncture, Architectural Prints, Autographed Books, Comedy Club Tickets, Dance Classes, Film Series Tickets, Fine Wine, Gardening Gift Certificate, Landscape Photographs, Museum Passes, Opera Tickets, Political Button Collection, Restaurants (Multiple), Riverboat Cruises, Texas Flag Flown over Capitol, Theater Tickets, and Wildflower Center Membership.

Enjoy the live auction after dinner with Mary Gordon Spence hilariously presiding. Bid on your favorite items among a High-Tea hosted again by Frances McIntyre, a Champagne Brunch hosted by Judy Parken, a Ben Sargent political cartoon, and a $300 Russell Korman Fine Jewelry gift certificate.

~ **Adriana Cox**, Co-chair; adrianacox@austin.rrcom

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**February Unit Meetings:**

"**Water Availability, Needs, and Future Supply for Austin Area**"

Professional hydrologist **Raymond Slade, Jr.**, after 33 years of experience with the United States Geological Survey, will speak at all three February unit meetings. Mr. Slade, now an independent consulting geologist and adjunct ACC professor, has authored 120 reports and served as project chief on some 30 USGS investigative projects on topics including the Edwards Aquifer, floods, droughts, rural and urban hydrology, non-point source pollution, and water quality of surface and ground water in Texas.

- **Mon., Feb. 11**, 10:00 a.m., Central Unit Meeting, Howson Library, 2500 Exposition Blvd., Joan Hilgers, Chair.
- **Tues., Feb. 12**, 7:00 p.m., North Unit Meeting, 7917 West Rim Dr., home of Judy Parken. Judy Parken, Chair.
- **Wed., Feb. 13**, 7:00 p.m., South Unit Meeting, South Austin Senior Activity Center, 3911 Manchaca Rd., Anne Roussos and Phyllis Portnoy, Co-Chairs.

All League meetings are free and open to the public.

~ **Karen Haschke**, Water Chair; karenhaschke@sbcglobal.net

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**Third Community Conversation in Education**

The League's first two community conversations about public education generated informative reports now being studied by AISD and a range of community groups. In this, our third conversation on education, we will focus issues that are of particular concern to AISD District Two. We want to learn what parents and community leaders of this district say about our shared responsibility in providing leadership that helps make education work for all students in this district. As before, all comments from this conversation will go into a report that will be available for anyone to read.
Residents from District Two wishing to be participants should RSVP to us below. We will be needing the volunteer services of League members to facilitate, scribe, and assist with hosting. Please notify us if you can help on February 16.

~ Nancy Oelklaus, Program VP, nancyoelklaus@gmail.com
~ Stewart Snider, Co-President, s2snider@gmail.com

**Application Help: Redistricting Commission**

To provide information and support to those considering applying to serve on this commission, the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area is sponsoring free, open, nonpartisan workshops on how to apply for the Austin Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission. Citizens selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting Commission will make history as the first citizen-initiated, independent entity to establish the boundaries of the 10 new Austin City Council districts. Citizens Redistricting Commissioners will reflect the diversity of Austin.

- **Saturday, Feb. 2, 2013, 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.** Come anytime. Carver Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, TX 78702.
- **Saturday, Feb. 16, 2013, 1:00 - 4:00 pm.** Come anytime. South Austin Recreation Center, 1100 Cumberland Rd., Austin, TX 78704.

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**For duties and qualifications of serving on the Commission, click here.**

**For a copy of the application, click here.** Scroll down to the link for either the English or Spanish "Application for Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission" or "Solicitud para la Comisión Ciudadana Independiente de Redistritación."

**Deadline for receipt of applications** is Friday, February 22.

- Eliza May at elizamay@sbcglobal.net
- Frances McIntyre at mcintyre.frances@gmail.com or 512-451-1551
- Jacklyn Williams at jacklynwilliams@aol.com

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**Co-President’s Letter: Stewart Snider**

We have about 25 members who have volunteered to take part in our advocacy at the Capitol this session. This Capitol Corps has already interviewed most of the 15 House and Senate legislators in Travis and the surrounding counties to give us a better idea of how to advocate during the session. I’m coordinating Capitol Corps volunteers this year, and my top priority is to get as many people involved as possible. We have a great mix of experienced and new volunteers that will make this a great learning environment for folks who have the interest. We’ll be holding 1-2 meetings every month during the session, and will have a call-in number for those who can’t be there in person. Please email me a note if you want to be added to the Capitol Corps email list. You are welcome to join this list whether you want to just watch or to invest yourself in one of our issues.
Our **Biennial Legislative Reception**, held at the Capitol on January 16, was a huge success. 78 people attended, evenly split between League members and the public. The first picture has State Rep. Elliott Naishhtat with State Sen. Donna Campbell. The third has State Rep. Eddie Rodriguez with Bruce Elfant. The fifth has State Rep. Donna Howard. Thanks to Jaci Collins for the photos.

New member **Ami Hooper**, a professional web designer, has offered to spruce up our website to make it look more modern and to convey more information. She suggested a marquis panel with a captioned slide show of us in action. She will be previewing the new design at our next board meeting. It's great to have Ami remind us that our website's primary audience is voters, not Leaguers. I think this change will make us more effective as an educational organization.

Ami also asked her mom, **Gloria Hooper**, to design a membership database of the Austin members that all Austin members can access online. This will be in a password-protected hidden area and thus not accessible to the public - only to members. We'll update it every month so you'll have up-to-date information at your fingertips. Now Gloria has joined the League too. We're thrilled to have this skillful pair as members.

Finally, LWV members from across the state are invited to **LWVTX’s Lobby Days** on February 25-26 where we will meet with legislators and hear several presentations that pertain to our legislative priorities. I think you'll be impressed with the speaker lineup:

- **Education**: former Lt. Governors Bill Hobby and Bill Ratliff, and former House Education Vice Chair Scott Hochberg
- **Health Care**: Anne Dunkelberg, Center for Public Policy Priorities
- **Water**: Andrew Sansom, Former Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner

This event includes an optional formal dinner where LWV-TX is honoring Planned Parenthood. [Here's a link](#) to the event’s detailed schedule and reservation form. I hope to see you there.

~ **Stewart Snider**, Co-President, s2snider@gmail.com

**Co-President’s Letter: Carol Olewin**

The **League office has moved** into its new 312 square foot location within the same building at 1011 W. 31st St. We now have a corner office with two windows, a new floor and fresh paint. We owe a big thanks to Susan Phillips, the building owner, for the fresh new office. Another big thanks to the members who helped us make the move: Judy Clack, Frances McIntyre, Belia Nichols, Carol Olewin, Margit Orange, Stewart Snider, Nancy Stout, and Dolores Wilhite.

February 5 will be the **State of the City Dinner** with Bruce Elfant as our guest speaker. Bruce is the newly elected Tax Assessor/Collector for Travis County. Prior to this office, Bruce served as Precinct 5 Constable. Do you know why the county’s Tax Assessor/Collector is also the county Voter Registrar? Come find out at our dinner at Chez Zee.
Please welcome **Sheila Milner** as the new Assistant Treasurer. Sheila will be learning all of your names and how to keep the records straight for our 501(c)1 and 501(c)3 organizations.

The Austin League participated in a **Survey of Public Election Officials** after the November Presidential and General Elections. Travis County is one of the more progressive counties in the state. Travis County successfully participated in the centralized voter centers on election day called Super Centers and is working to develop on-line voter registration. Travis County has many good ideas they will be presenting to the Texas legislature this session. We'll keep our eyes open and see if the county's new ideas turn into laws.

~ **Carol Olewin**, Co-President and Treasurer; c.olewin@gmail.com

## Healthcare Committee Study Group

Seven LWVAA members and one guest met January 19 for the first Healthcare committee meeting of 2013: Judy Clack, Nan Clayton, Mary Cullinane, Frances McIntyre, Nancy Neavel, Betty Williamson, Marilyn Wills - Chair, and guest Tamara Plaut. (Hugh Moore offered to add additional information via mail.) Discussion led to a need for a better understanding of current national, state and local League positions regarding healthcare in general but more specifically in the areas of **healthcare access**, **women's health**, **mental health**, **Medicaid expansion**, and the **new medical school**.

It was determined that the group would begin to research gaps and concerns regarding existing League positions. It is anticipated that the committee will not be prepared to tackle all subjects of interest by the May LWVAA Annual meeting, but may identify specific issues to recommend for a Local Study for approval for next year. The group was also hopeful that current League positions in reference to family planning, women's healthcare access, and Medicaid will be concerns that will be addressed by the **Capitol Corps** during the legislative session.

There are other members who have expressed an interest in working with the committee and we welcome anyone who wishes to participate. Send an email to me at the address below if you are interested. The next meeting will be on a **Saturday at 11:00am at the LWV Austin Office 1011 West 31stSt.** near N. Lamar. I’ll email all interested of our meeting date.

~ **Marilyn Wills**, Healthcare Chair; mgdesertwills@gmail.com

## Join a Study Group

**Local Study Groups:**

Local study groups have formed for LWVAA's key program areas: **water**, **healthcare**, **education**, and **affordable housing**. Email the committee chairs below to join any of these groups and learn more about one or more of these important issues:

- **Karen Haschke** ([karenhaschke@sbcglobal.net](mailto:karenhaschke@sbcglobal.net)) is heading the water group.
- **Marilyn Wills** ([mgdesertwills@gmail.com](mailto:mgdesertwills@gmail.com)) is heading the healthcare group.
- **Nancy Oelklaus** ([nancyoelklaus@gmail.com](mailto:nancyoelklaus@gmail.com)) is heading the education group.
- **Anne Shelby Clark** ([AnneShelbyClark@yahoo.com](mailto:AnneShelbyClark@yahoo.com)) is heading affordable housing.

**State Study on Human Trafficking:**

We're still looking for someone interested in human trafficking to head the LWVTX consensus process in the fall of 2013. All study materials will be provided by LWVTX. You would be responsible for calling study meetings to discuss these materials. If you're interested, email search box at the top of the page.

--On the left hand side of the page, under "People" click on our logo.

--Click on the "follow" button and then you will be subscribed to the LWVAA page and get updates on any of our posts.

I hope to see a bunch of new followers to our Twitter and Facebook pages in the near future! If you have any questions, get in touch with me.

~ **Brigid Hall**, Social Media Intern, brigid.hall@lwvaustin.org

### Randall's Donations

**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**.

### Compass Bank Donates to LWVAA

Have you opened an account at BBVA **Compass Bank** in the last 12 months? If so, they will make a **$50 contribution** to the Austin League of Women Voters. Just email your name (no account numbers) to our treasurer, Carol Olewin, c.olewin@gmail.com.

Compass Bank also pays the League a small percentage for Internet and phone transactions. For
Travis County Commissioners Court:
Gun Shows and Birth Control

January 8, Karen Rankin
(1) Commissioners discussed with representatives of the Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) department a plan to expand recycling at all county facilities. TNR will designate $20,000 in their existing budget, and the court agreed to spend an additional $46,000 on the program. It is expected that some of the cost can be recovered by revenue from recycling, and that additionally money will be saved by lowering outlays, such as buying less paper. No dollar amounts on the saving and revenue were given.

(2) A request to cease leasing Travis County Exposition Center for gun shows was considered. Since November 2010, 17 shows have been held there, with an additional nine more scheduled in coming months. Revenue to the county from these shows is $128,000 per year. All types of weapons and ammunition are sold, and the county requires insurance from the organizations holding the events. Several members of the public spoke in favor of continuing the shows, with a couple of people stating opposition. Commissioner Eckhardt asked several questions of those testifying, such as:
--Does the county require background checks on all purchases? (No, that is not a county function, but federally licensed dealers are required to do them. Private sellers are not.)
--Does the county keep a record of the number, type, etc. of weapon sold/purchased? (No.)
--Does the county monitor the parking lot at these shows? (Yes, there are two officers inside the building and one outside.)
--What would happen if the county canceled previously booked shows? (The decision would probably be litigated.)
The court will confer with the county legal department, and then revisit the issue next week.
~ Karen Rankin, karenrankin@austin.rr.com

January 22, Joann Robison
(1) Citizen communication: several residents of the Granada Hills neighborhood off of Hwy 290 W came to lobby to have a sidewalk funded in a previous bond election built along El Ray St. They feel a minority of neighbors who did not want the sidewalk stopped it. But traffic increase over the last 30 years has made this a safety issue for the entire neighborhood. The court asked a few questions but made no indication of their intent for action.

(2) Sarah Eckhardt presented a strongly worded resolution asking the court to take a stand asking federal and state authorities to restore funding for women’s health programs including Planned Parenthood clinics to assure continued access to birth control, cancer screening, routine checkups etc. Commissioner Eckhardt offered a toned down resolution with informal input from legal staff. Respectful testimony from Prochoice Texas stating that only 3% of Planned Parenthood’s services were related to abortions and that lack of available services for poor women will drive them to chose emergency services and Medicaid at greater cost to the county. Further testimony from the Willis Fund concerned the benefit of availability of safe abortion services. This spokeswoman stated that studies show about 3/4 of women helped through their funding have already had children and feel that they would be stressed to support more children.

During this discussion, Commissioner Gerald Daugherty spoke, saying that while he might be personally opposed to abortion he felt the decision for others was "none of my business". He further expressed support for keeping programs in place for healthcare and birth control for

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 LWVAAF’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 LWVAAF.

After you’ve added the League, please email the Austin League office at lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org so we can list you as a member of our Love-Your-League Legacy Society.
women, including Planned Parenthood. He acknowledged that many in his party would have concerns with his statement but felt called to say it out loud and voted in favor of the substitute resolution along with Judge Biscoe and Commissioner Eckhardt. (Commissioners Davis and Gomez were absent)

~ Joann Robison, gatorgunk@gmail.com

### Membership

Welcome, Nine New Members!
We cordially welcome nine new members to the Austin League: Joann and Jim Benton, Carol Eckelcamp, Mindy Gomillion, Gloria Hooper, Ruth Koenig, Frank Merriman, Joyce Robinson, Jade Chang Sheppard, and Franz Weller. We are delighted you have joined us. As a member of the Austin League, you are also a member of the national (LWVUS) and state (LWVTX) Leagues. See these links for an abundance of educational information.

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

### Regular and Sustaining Memberships

Of your $60 in regular dues, $52 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only $8 is left to support our Austin League. Paying at the sustaining level greatly benefits the Austin League because the extra money stays in Austin and supports our local League’s activities. The entire amount is paid to LWVAA and not to the Education Fund.

### Thank You, Sustaining Members

Special thanks to this month’s sustaining members: Anne Shelby Clark, Sandra and Larry Fox, Lucy and Gary Gibbs, Mindy Gomillion, Bob Gregory, Cheryl Hazeltine, Ruth Koenig, Jane Elizabeth Madison and Judd Rogers, Chalda Maloof and Russell Zears, Carol Olewin, Donna Pauier, Jo Reichler, Jade Chang Sheppard, Franz Weller, Jacklyn Williams, and Anne Elizabeth Wynn. We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League’s activities.

### Thank You, Renewing Members

Many thanks to the following members who also renewed this month: Mary Arnold, Mary Ann Baker, Helen Bland, Adriana Cox, Alison Dieter, Mary and Bill Finch, Anita Garcia, Veronica Johnson, Patricia La Combe, Mary Patrick, Marilee Phillips, Susan Shelton, Betsy Singleton, and Bryson McCall Smith. We depend on your support and appreciate your timely renewals.

### New Membership, Renewal Dues Payment, Address Changes

Please send 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 Austin League of Women Voters. Choose an amount below. Or you may instead click here to pay your annual dues online by credit card via PayPal while providing all the above information.

You may renew or join, using PayPal by clicking on the amount that applies to you.

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Contact me anytime with your League questions.

~ Judy Parken, Membership Chair, japarken@aol.com, 512-502-0278.

Persons aged 70% or older can again enjoy tax savings by making charitable gifts directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to the LWV Education Fund. Contact Lauren Frank of LWVUS at 202-263-1355 or lfrank@lwv.org for additional information.

Gift to League at All Three Levels!
By making a gift of cash or securities of $5,000 or more to the League of Women Voters Education Fund Pooled Income Fund, you can receive an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of the gift's value and continue earning a quarterly return on the interest earned for life. You can name your local League, along with the LWVEF, to benefit from the residual funds when you’re gone. Contact the LWVUS Development office at 202-263-1355 or plannedgiving@lwv.org.