LWVAA Calendar

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Leave a Legacy to Your League

LWVAA Calendar

Mon., Jan 4, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin. Members.

Sat., Jan 16, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Local Issues Group Meeting League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin.

Mon., Feb 1, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin. Members.

Sun., Feb. 7, 2:00 - 4:00 pm General Meeting Ladders of Opportunity. Place TBA.

Sat., Feb. 20, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Local Issues Group Meeting League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin.

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

From the President

LWVEF Receives $100,000 from Knight Foundation to Extend Reach of VOTE411.

The League of Women Voters US announced that it will expand access to VOTE411 thanks to The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's $100,000 investment to support new delivery tools for VOTE411 information, helping to extend its reach to at least one million more people, including 200,000 from underrepresented groups.
The local Austin League is gearing up for elections with Voters Guides to cover local, state and national offices. Although the National League has received a nice grant to help support Vote411, the Austin League needs your financial support to produce our Voters Guide. Please consider a tax deductible donation to the LWV Austin Education Fund to help with the costs of producing the local Voters Guide.

**State of the County Dinner**
Speaker, **County Judge Sarah Eckhardt**
**Wednesday, March 9, 2016, Doubletree Hotel, 6505 N IH 35, Austin**
This year we will be focusing on Travis county issues. The first female elected to preside over the Commissioners Court, **Judge Eckhardt** began her judicial tenure January 2015. In this time she has provided leadership over the worst flooding event in the County's history, agonized over a defeated election for a new civic county courthouse, and presided over the setting of the lowest county tax rate in five years. Join us in learning from Judge Eckhardt on what is in store for county government in 2016, and learning who the Making Democracy Works Award recipients will be.

**LWV Texas State Convention**
**Friday-Sunday, March 11-13, 2016**
The League of Women Voters of Texas will hold its biennial convention Friday-Sunday, March 11-13, 2016, at The Houston Westin, Memorial City. League members and local League delegates from across the state are invited to attend and enjoy a 48-hour gathering that is packed from start to finish with these opportunities:

- Renewing old friendships and meeting new friends;
- Attending the opening Convocation on Friday at 12:30 p.m. and being inspired by a special Readers' Theatre presentation, "We Hold These Truths..." by LWV-Collin County;
- Participating in Friday afternoon workshops to grow, learn, and share accomplishments and concerns;
- Accomplishing League business through Plenary sessions that include election of the 2016-2018 LWV-TX Board;
- Reaffirming League goals and the mission, with emphasis on making democracy work and participation in government;
- Continuing conversation between membership and leadership coaches and their Leagues;
- Bidding on one or more of the fabulous silent auction items provided by League members and friends across the state;
- Hearing keynote speakers at both the Saturday luncheon and Saturday evening banquet;
- Enjoying a Friday evening Port of Houston cruise and reception hosted by LWV-Houston Area; and
- Making a commitment to stay involved in your local League and grow the League’s leadership and membership base.

**Registration**
Registration for the 2016 Convention will be $140 per person (if confirmed prior to March 8, 2016) or $150 at the door. The luncheon and banquet meals will be priced separately, as will the Port of Houston cruise hosted by LWV-Houston Area. Can't Attend the Whole Convention? A special invitation is available for the 2016 Convention to any League member, student, or League supporter who cannot attend the entire convention but would like to participate in the Friday Convocation and Friday afternoon workshops. LWV-Texas is offering a special rate of $50 per person registration for League members and high school/college students and $65 per person registration for non-League members.
Planning:
State of the County Dinner

Planning for the State of the County Annual Dinner is underway. The Committee is seeking donations for the silent auction. Please forward information on favorite restaurants for the committee to pursue. We are also looking for sponsorships. Contact Eliza May, committee chair via email: elizamay@sbcglobal.net

~Eliza May SOC Planning Committee Chair elizamay@sbcglobal.net

Program Survey:
Response Requested

This is a gentle reminder to answer the program planning survey "What Issues are Important to You?" that was sent to this past week. The deadline for submitting your answers is January 5, 2016. Please email your responses to Mary Cullinane at mculli@sbcglobal.net

"Program" is the process of study and advocacy of issues. The League depends on members to suggest areas of interest for studies. In order to keep the LWV-TX positions current, every two years the League seeks member input in order to decide which positions should be amended, updated, or restudied; this is also an opportunity to suggest new studies. The state board will consider all recommendations and will write a proposed program for adoption at Convention 2016. Your preferences and opinions, which will be analyzed and passed on to the state League, are vital to their deliberations and decision making. Results will be published in the February Voter.

Program positions can be found

Remember - please complete the survey by January 5, 2016.

Many thanks to all of you who have already answered!

~Mary Cullinane, 2nd VP of Programs mculli@sbcglobal.net

Money in Politics
National Study

Two groups met in December to determine consensus on the Money in Politics study. Joanne Richards, who led the study, has prepared the consensus report for submission to the LWVUS. The report will be submitted to the national
organization after approval by the Board in January. The consensus report will be shared with the membership in the next issue of the *Voter*.

~Mary Cullinane 2nd VP of Programs
mculli@sbcglobal.net

Maxine's Musings

Search and Rescue

Historically, the League has long been involved in women's struggle for equal rights and voting rights that usually require changes in the political arena and in public attitude. But there is an area I have not written about—a book with a different slant on the role of women and the different kinds of obstacles they face.

A book I read, *Here If You Need Me*, by Kate Braestrup is the true story of a woman who became a chaplain to a Maine law enforcement agency. She was left to raise four young children after the sudden death of her husband, a Maine State Trooper, in a car accident. Her husband wanted to become a Unitarian Universalist (UU) minister when leaving law enforcement. Based on his experience with "crime scenes and search scenes, he could help families and officers cope with the spiritual and emotional dimensions of the work he was all too familiar with." He thought he could combine parish ministry working with law enforcement as a chaplain.

Kate decided to carry out her husband's dream, so she enrolled in the Bangor Theological School and subsequently was ordained as a UU minister. The school did not have a law enforcement program for chaplains, so Kate's program was designed for independent studies "exploring intersections between law enforcement and theology, police work and pastoral care." She rode on patrol with police from many different agencies to help fulfill her degree requirements. Police chaplains are not usually found in law enforcement, but nevertheless, both the police and the Maine Warden Service adopted the chaplain position. Kate was the second person to serve the wardens in the area of search and rescue and still serves. (I think I saw her recently on a TV program, "North Woods Law"). She knew nothing of the role of game wardens and thought, "What does a game warden do, Bless the moose?" She adopted a clerical collar to show she was a chaplain. Her uniform, Kelvar vest, and boots, that were issued to her were men's small sizes! Just in case, she was also issued a firearm. Her role, she explained is "taking on the task of being with the victim's family that leaves the wardens free for other tasks".

As a chaplain, she is "on call for emergencies statewide" such as accidents, those missing in woods, drownings, fire, and other catastrophes. It is especially hard when the victims are children. She asks friends and family to be with her children when called to duty. The children appear to accept their mother's unusual occupation. When asked what one of her sons thought of her job, Kate says, "He thinks it's cool".

Kate's job is to provide comfort for the victim's relatives during the often long waits to find either the missing person or the body if they have died and sometimes has to notify relatives. This is particularly hard when the victim is a young child lost in the woods. Maine wardens do not give up their search no matter how harsh the weather and risk their lives in the process. They, too, are often in need of Kate's comforting services when they are overcome with emotion after finding a victim, especially a child who has not survived. She has been praised by a warden for being a help to families and wardens. Kate has a comrade relationship with the male wardens. One addresses her as "Your Holiness." Another, "Your Mothership"!

~Hal Jennings, Webmaster,
hal@jenningsweb.us

"Like" Our League on Facebook

It's so easy to follow our League on Facebook. Thanks to Brigid Hall for these instructions:

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.

Follow Our League on Twitter

It's so easy to follow our League on Twitter. Thanks to Brigid Hall for these instructions:

1. Go to twitter.com and login to your existing account or create a new one.
2. Search for lwvatx in the search box at the top of the page.
3. On the left hand side of the page, under "People" click on our logo.
4. Click on the "follow" button and then you will be subscribed to the
Kate joins many women who have served in more dangerous roles heretofore thought to be the province of men only, women such as those that served not only in all branches of the military, but also in law enforcement, some of whom have died with their boots on.

Source of quotes: Permission Hachette Book Group USA, Inc.
~Maxine Barkan, mbarkan@austinrr.com

Holiday Brunch and New Member Recognition

Many thanks to Diane Wheeler for hosting League members at her North Hills Clubhouse for our Annual New Member's Brunch on December 5th. Board members gave a brief overview of their activities and told how NEW members could get involved.

We surprised Lea Masiello by honoring her with a gift card to Starbucks for her many achievements as a NEW member. She is a board member doing publicity for our events, chaired the Austin's League participation in the State League Study of Payday and Auto Title Loans, and helped with a social media program to help us get up to date.

Harriet Harrow, also a new member told us what the League means to her and why she joined. Some asked for a copy of her remarks, so they are below As a long-time member it is always heart warming to hear our newest members let us know why they joined.

Why I joined the League from Harriet Harrow:

"I'd known of the League of Women Voters forever though I didn't join until recently, prompted by the helpful public testimony given by League members to Austin's Citizens Redistricting Commission, especially Frances McIntyre.

As befits an organization that's 95 years old, the League takes a long view. My long view sees how much society has changed. I grew up when everyone respected authority and society's great institutions.

Then came assassinations, Vietnam, Watergate-and a great awakening. I felt betrayed by my Church...then by our financial institutions...and our politicians. We ask ourselves, "How did politics get so godawful?" I can tell you how. Politics started going to hell in September 1988. That was when the Republican and Democrat parties muscled the Presidential debates away from the League of Women Voters, who had sponsored them after 1960. And done a superb job!

Politicians created a Commission on Debates to dictate who would ask the questions, select live audience members and choose media to participate. The League refused their terms, saying it "had no intention of...hoodwinking the American public."

The political parties knew the League was incorruptible. Our religions may falter, Wall Street may commit fraud, corporations may be blinded by profits. But in 95 years, the League has moved mountains to foster good government, and never suffered a scandal. That's why I'm a member. You should be too."

LWVAA page and get updates on any of our posts.

Honors and Memorials

Gloria DeVere made a donation of $100 to the Education Fund this past month. The League wishes to thank her for her generosity.

Donations are continuing to be accepted in honor of or in memory of a League member. Click here to download the form. Then mail with your donation to the LWVAA Office, 1011 W. 31st St., Austin, TX 78705.

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.

Click on this link for a document to complete and return to any Randall's store to join the Good Neighbor Program and help our League.

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
Many thanks to all who helped with the punch, coffee and refreshments.

~ Judy Parken, Membership Chair, japarken@aol.com

Membership Report and Interest Survey

Member Interest Survey:
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. This will help us identify your skills and interests. A few new members have filled this out already, but most 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:
New members John Goldsmith and Susan Theiss 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 www.lwvtexas.org 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 in Austin and supports our local League’s activities.

Thank You, Sustaining Members:
Special thanks to this month’s sustaining members: Brenda Koegler and Sandra and Larry Fox.
We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League.

Thank You, Renewing Members: Many thanks to the following members who also renewed this month: Jane German, Maria Johnson, Amy K. Taylor, plus Dr. Karen Swenson and Ken Cauthern.
We depend on your support and appreciate your renewals.

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.

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Contact me anytime with your League questions.

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