Calendar

Monday, November 6, 4:00 p.m.
**LWV-AA Board Meeting**
League Conference Room
1609 Shoal Creek Road Ste. 202, Austin, TX 78701
Members welcome.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, December 2, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
**LWV-AA Annual Holiday Brunch**
George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center
1165 Angelina Street, Austin, TX 78702
RSVP to brenda@koegler.me or call 512-792-9477

Wednesday, March 7, 2018
**State of the City Dinner**
DoubleTree by Hilton
Details Forthcoming

Cinde Weatherby, President

**Gerrymandering Game Night - December 6, 2017**

Gerrymandering -- It’s on the front page, under consideration at the U.S. Supreme Court, and is motivating voting rights activists across the country. Want to know more about the whole subject of redistricting and the extreme districts that eliminate open political competition - without getting bleary eyed and dozing off?

Mark your calendars for the evening of December 6, 2017 to join us for a [Glasshouse Policy Team](#) game night. The
game offers a fun and accessible way for you to get a glimpse into the redistricting process. This night there will be full and open competition -- between teams who will be given a chance to draw their own political districts that meet assigned objectives. A panel of judges will then assess the districts based on how well they meet the stated objectives.

Glasshouse Policy is actively seeking input on the game and its mechanics prior to public roll-out. This event will be the first in a series of "test" game nights at which participants are encouraged to provide feedback to improve the game.

League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is actively organizing to promote independent redistricting commissions in cities across Texas and calling upon the Texas Legislature to establish fairer methods to use in the 2021 Congressional and Legislative redistricting. It is collaborating with Glasshouse Policy and the Austin Monitor to offer the game and a status on redistricting reform efforts. LWV-AA is excited to host the game's debut/beta test. Come to learn - participate - and give feedback to make this game the best it can be before it begins touring to other Leagues and venues around Texas. More information will be coming soon on the location and other details.

Returning the Favor to Huston-Tillotson Student Leader

For an active LWV-AA member, what could be any better than listening to university students talk about why voting is important to them?

I was invited by the HTU Student Government Association President and a VP of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Taleah Moore to talk with the group about the November 7, 2017 election. Other students also attended the sorority meeting. Leaders and audience members began the session saying why voting matters to them.

The "Why is Voting Important?" document was inserted into our LWV-AA Voters Guide available at the session for all attendees. The student moderator didn’t just query the audience, as both speakers - me and local attorney and Travis County Democratic Party Chair Vincent Harding - were also on the hot seat. I was honored to participate with a group so committed to civic engagement and voting!
Continuing the Conversation December 7th at BookPeople!

When we kicked off our League year on the HTU campus, President Colette Pierce Burnette recommended reading Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award Winner "Stamped from The Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America," in response to a question. Our new member and video contributor Charlotte Moore has graciously made that book her book club's December selection and invited one and all to participate. Start reading it today! Then come to the DiverseCity Book Club at BookPeople, 6:30-8 pm, Thursday, December 7, 2017. As the invitation reads, bring a dish, a friend, and a mind open to raw and candid discussion. For more details and to indicate attendance check out the Facebook Event. [Hint: If you don't complete all 500+ pages by Dec. 7th, there is a link to detailed book review and description in the event listing.]

If you have missed Charlotte Moore's video documenting our September Kick-off Event, you will want to take a look. LWV-AA thanks her for the tremendous contribution of time, talent and passion -- and her membership!

September Kick-off Event

The Last Word!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see information about volunteer opportunities. Take it seriously - whether you have a spare hour or two, or want to propose a new project and take the lead on it. We have a long, long history, but YOU are what makes the League of Women Voters what it is today. We know you are passionate about the well-being of our city, our state, our country!

We are working on how to better help you connect your passion and interest with our efforts. We are getting better organized and are always interested in your opinions. If
you want to know more about what you personally can do to increase voting and literally make our democracy work better, call me, send an email or text. Or, reach out to anyone else at LWV-AA. In coming months this newsletter and our website will continue to feature priority opportunities. Explore ways to be involved!

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**The Office Corps** is a group of local League members, just like you! Each member of the Office Corps comes to our League office once a month for 3 hours, to handle mail, phone, membership payments and donations. A few times a year, the Office Corps helps with special projects like answering phones during early voting and Election Day to let citizens know where to vote and distribution coordination of the Voters Guide. We provide full training on all office activities and you will be issued a key to our office. Schedule changes are easily accommodated.

We have an opening for the 4th THURSDAY of each month starting in January, 2018. Please send your contact information to Debbi Voss at daracobs@aol.com or call 713-826-1580.

**Voters Service** needs your help with the March 2018 Primary Voters Guide. The Voters Guide will contain Congressional (Senate & House), Texas Legislative (Senate & House), gubernatorial, State and County commissioners, judges, State Board of Education, and local races. The 2018 Primary Voters Guide has more candidates than the November 2018 Voters Guide. The first part of developing the Voters Guide is to find candidate contact information. This part starts at the filing deadline, December 11, 2017.

Between December 11 and January 9, we need your help contacting the primary candidates in Travis, Williamson, Caldwell and Bastrop counties. We need to obtain the candidate's name, email address, and phone number to use for Voters Guide correspondence.

You would be making phone calls, sending emails, contacting the county and state parties, and also sending Facebook messages. You can use the Internet to find phone numbers and candidate filing applications to glean the candidate contact information and then confirm that information with the candidate.

It should take a few hours each week, on your own schedule. It can likely be completed in one week. If you have a particular interest in a number of these races and candidates, you can have your pick of candidates to contact. You will receive templates, scripts, and suggestions for all these contact methods.

If you're interested, please contact Jaci Collins, today, at jacic@sbcglobal.net.

**2018 State of the City Dinner and Auction**
Save the Date! The 2018 State of the City Dinner and Auction is March 7, 2018, at the DoubleTree by Hilton. The event will feature both live and silent auctions and Sheriff Sally Hernandez will be the featured speaker. Registration information will be provided soon.

Making Democracy Work Awards will be presented at the dinner. Please nominate outstanding members of The League of Women Voters Austin Area and local organizations, businesses or individuals who have supported or enhanced the work or mission of the League.

Members and non-members may submit award nominations. Individuals, companies or organizations may nominate themselves. Submit forms electronically or by mail. Mailed nomination forms must be postmarked by December 1, 2017.

Please indicate the award category of your nomination. Check all that apply. The event or activity must have occurred between November 1, 2016 and October 31, 2017.

- **Friend(s) of the League**: An individual or organization that provided a significant amount of time or money to the League of Women Voters Austin Area, positively influencing its ability to achieve its mission; not a League leader (may be a dues paying member).
- **Volunteer(s) of the Year**: A member or specific group of the League of Women Voters Austin Area, with an emphasis on member(s) of two years or less, that have dedicated a significant amount of time and effort supporting the League and its goals. LWV-AA officers and board members are not eligible as individual honorees. Honoree must be an active volunteer and dues paying member.
- **Democracy in Action**: An individual or organization that made a significant impact in advancing or promoting one or more of the LWV-AA's areas of focus or policy positions (registering and educating voters, advocating for voting rights, or one of the many LWV-AA positions (p. 18-29); not a League leader (may be a dues paying member).

Contribute to the live and silent auction:

**Donations for Auction Needed**: If you would like to make a donation for the auction, please click here for the donation form.

**Sponsorship Opportunities**: If you would like to Sponsor the State of the City Dinner, please click here for more information.

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**Programs**
Lea Masiello, VP Programs

We held three wonderful programs in the last month, all of which were informative and interesting. We held two unit meetings with Justice of the Peace Susan Steeg (precinct 3) and Mr. Michael Gallardo, LMSW, Director, Juvenile Case Management Program District 3, and one general program meeting about the innovative approach to education at Austin Community College, Highland Campus.

**A Case Management Approach to Changing the Value of Education**

Judge Steeg and Mr. Gallardo recognize the power of a tightly organized case management and prevention approach to reducing truancy, changing the culture around the value of education, and getting more students to finish high school. They explained...
how the truancy reduction programs in Travis County are already funded by a percentage of traffic violation fees, and how, in some cases, this money is not even being used at all! Connections among school involvement in the process, family support, counseling, and truancy reduction programs run by Judge Steeg’s office are crucial to making a difference in changing the culture around the value of education.

**ACC Highland Campus: Community Engagement, Information, Commitment**

Austin Community College is an important game-changer in the Austin area due to its well organized approach to getting education out to communities and their commitment to becoming part of that community. Our program began with a tour of the current renovations at what used to be the Highland Mall, and before that, was a community gathering place for the African American community called St. John’s Encampment. We saw the ACCELERATOR and supplemental learning spaces, the Bioscience Incubator. LWV member Gigi Bryant, who is also co-chair of the ACC Board of Trustees, encouraged us to help change the conversation about ACC to emphasize the excellent education it provides, rather than seeing it as “just” a community college. Trustee Bryant also asked us to “stand for women,” to help young girls see where education can lead, and to see how whole families can have their lives changed through education.

**Upcoming Programs**

LWV-AA is reviewing and evaluating our positions on the subjects of education, transportation, healthcare, criminal justice, affordable housing, and environmental quality. Please check out the current positions which are available in the Annual Meeting Workbook for 2016 beginning on page 17. Look for announcements about future meetings, which will be set as the committees reviewing these positions decide on topics and speakers.

*Is there a program you would like to see next year?* Propose an idea by emailing me, Lea Masiello, at vp-programs@lwvaustin.org.

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**Victims Service**

Joyce LeBombard, VP Voters Service

Butterflies were swirling in my stomach as Joan Reames and I pulled into the parking lot of Manor New Technology High School one October afternoon. You ask, "Why"? It was the first time the First Vote! presentation and student activity exercises would be seen by actual high school students. We think we must have done well, because we were asked to come back to do the program again in the spring. We registered 19 students and 1 teacher, and got some great feedback from them about what worked and didn't work for the program.

Manor New Technology High School contacted us to help them comply with state regulations. High schools have to offer voter registration to their students twice a year. I described the First Vote! program to Manor High’s Lisa Carroll, professional school counselor, and Robin Villarreal, instructional coach. They were excited to pilot our program with us. We have scheduled Round Rock Success High School for November. And Akins High School wants to schedule for spring. We will begin scheduling other schools soon.

**Victims Service** offered a series of three training sessions:
Travis County Volunteer Deputy Registrar (VDR) certification. This is the same training done by Travis County the first Tuesday of every month at their offices. This is for anyone who wants to become a VDR or who needs to renew their VDR certification.

Premium VDR training. This training provides more in-depth information about questions that come up on-site at registration; clarifies rules/regs/forms applicable to registration; provides tips & tricks for successful VDR events, etc.

First Vote! training. First Vote! is a free, nonpartisan program to help schools build voter education and registration into their curriculum for high school juniors and seniors.

We had 34 people participate in one or more training sessions. We plan to offer more training sessions again soon.

The Register & Vote Committee had a very successful month once again. We participated in 8 events registering 131 citizens! We can always use more help, so be on the lookout for our SignUpGenius event announcements/calls for VDRs.

The Kyle Chamber of Commerce contacted Carol Eckelkamp, LWV-AA Candidate Forum Chair, to help hold a candidate forum for their Mayoral and City Council races. The races will be decided on November 7th, 2017. Three mayoral candidates, and five city council candidates participated in the forum. Unlike our typical Candidate Forums, the Kyle Chamber of Commerce developed the questions for this one. We were able to put out a call for membership on behalf of the Hays County LWV, and met with Ida Miller, LWV Hays County President, to discuss working with them to gain a bigger presence in Kyle. The goal is for them to take on the Kyle Candidate Forum in the future.

I invite you to find out more about the many exciting volunteer opportunities we have in Voters Service. If you want to know more, please contact me, Joyce LeBombard, at VP-votersService@lwvaustin.org or 512-585-4090 (call/text).

Vote FOR AISD Proposition A

Frances McIntyre, Director of Advocacy

The LWV-AA encourages you to vote FOR the Austin Independent School District Bond Proposition.

Early voting is Monday, October 23rd to Friday November 3rd. Election Day is Tuesday November 7, 2017. You may vote at any polling place in the County. Look for the "Vote Here" signs.

The League has long supported Austin AISD in its efforts to provide a strong education through goals at all grade levels.

Bonding is the cornerstone of school district financing for capital expenses -- new schools, for example -- as opposed to the day-to-day costs of items such as salaries. Under state law, a district must seek voter approval to issue bonds. With approval, it
can sell the bonds on a timetable of its choosing and pay them off with tax money. That spreads the cost for infrastructure over time, rather than taxpayers facing a massive upfront rate hike every time a district needs a new campus.

This bond is more than $1 billion ($1,050,984,000). AISD has called for a comprehensive 25-year facilities master plan that aims to modernize the district and all its campuses. With many aged school buildings and the long overdue maintenance of most, this bond money alone will not cover the 25-year plan. But the League believes this will be a very good start to the district’s 21st Century plans. There will be no tax rate increase and all the money raised through bonds remains in AISD.

We trust that AISD will focus on the problems associated with diversity in our schools. The League supports equality of opportunity in education. AISD should have as its goal to meet, if not exceed, the state and federal accountability standards for achievement, attendance, dropout rates and completion rates in each school in the district, and to reduce the disparity in performance among schools.

**The Voters Guide is available at:**

- Printed copies are available at the Austin Library branches.
- LWV-AA website

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**Membership Report and Interest Survey**

Brenda Koegler, Membership Director

Please join us for our **Annual Holiday Brunch** celebrating our new members!

George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center  
1165 Angelina Street, Austin, TX 78702  
December 2, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Please RSVP at brenda@koegler.me

**Welcome New Members:**  
Terry Carvajal and Kim Enick, Lora Ann Gerson, Suzanne Haley, Madeline Maxwell, Vanessa Santamaria-Dainton

**Thank You, Sustaining Members:**  
Maxine Barkan, Shelly Baumgartner, Shay Blankenship, Terry Carvajal and Kim Enick, Grace and Beau Chimene, June Conway, Lucy and Gary Gibbs, Frances Gibich, Vikki and Bob Goodwin, Madeline Maxwell, Nancy Neavel, Belia Nichols, Pat Oakes, Kay Taebel, Cynthia and Brian Schaufenbuel

**Thank You, Renewing Members:**  
Barbara and Dick Chiarello, Diane Davis, Judi Nudelman, Roye Reeves, Betsy
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](http://www.lwvaustin.org)  [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org)  [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

**Member Interest Survey**: If you have time to volunteer for the League (either regularly or occasionally), please complete this [Member Interest Survey](http://www.lwvaustin.org). This information will help us identify your skills and interests, and connect you to the appropriate League leaders.

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

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**Thank you for supporting the League!**

**In Memory/Honorary**
Laura Wallin in honor of Victoria and Vanessa
John Trainor in memory of Zora Evans
Sarah Currie in honor of Rev. Kyra Kerr Fitzgerald
Ruth Davis in honor of DACA Dreamers

**Donations**: Frances McIntyre, Laura and Greg Hitt, Debra Danburg and Randall Chapman, Dee Jackson, Ellen Strong, Mollie Snow.

**YouthCam PSA Program**: Velva Price, Dorothy Browne, Perry Loreenze, Herring and Pasnzer LLP, Lloyd and Elizabeth Doggett, Alfred Stanley and Kathleen Guido Fund, John Phillip Donisi.

**Voters Guide**: Susan Morrison, Leon and Peggy Holland.

**Randall’s Good Neighbor Program** gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their Remarkable Cards. Complete this [document](http://www.lwvaustin.org) and return to any Randall's store. Our account number is 465.

**Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters Austin Area** in your will is the easiest way to offer support of the League's work for years to come. [Learn how](http://www.lwvaustin.org) to leave your legacy and become a member of our League's Legacy Society.

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**Common Ground for Texans Hosts "Weather and Climate in Texas and Beyond"**

Our friends at Common Ground for Texans asks that we invite you to their next general meeting on Saturday, November 4. They are hosting a panel discussion on climate change. The session will include what scientists are expecting both in Texas and in the wider world, as hurricanes like Harvey, Irma, and Maria illustrate the increasing intensity of storms. It will address: the best ways to mitigate and adapt to climate change and obstacles to the adoption of such solutions. Panelists will include:

Kerry Cook, Professor, Jackson School of Geosciences, UT Austin
Details
Weather and Climate in Texas and Beyond
When: Saturday, November 4, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM
Where: Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive, Austin, Texas 78756

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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.