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LWVAA Calendar

Mon., Oct. 5, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st St. Members.

Mon., Oct. 5, Last day to Register to Vote for November elections.

Sat., Oct 10, 2:00 - 4:00 pm Voters Service: Meet about Young Voters Project at League office 1011 West 31st.

Sun., Oct. 11, 2:30 - 4:30 pm, General Membership Meeting. Payday and Auto Title Loan Study - Panel Discussion. Trinity United Methodist Church, 4001 Speedway, Austin.

Fri.-Sun., Oct. 16-19, Texas Tribune Festival. University of Texas campus.

Sat., Oct. 17, 10:00 - Noon Local Issues Discussion meeting at League Office. 1011 West 31st Street, Austin. Canceled because of Texas Tribune Festival.

Mon., Oct. 19, 10:00 am - 12 pm. Consensus Meeting Payday and Auto Title Loan Study, Café Express, 3418 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin.

Thurs., Oct. 22, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Consensus Meeting Payday and Auto Title Loan Study, Judy Parken’s house 7917 West Rim Dr. Austin.

Sat., Oct. 24, TBA. Suffragette movie, Alamo Draffthouse, 1120 South Lamar Blvd., Austin.


Mon., Nov. 2, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W 31st. Members.

Tues., Nov. 3. General Election

Sun., Nov. 15, General Membership Meeting, Money in Politics Study Panel. Time/Place TBA.

Sat., Nov. 21, 10:00 - 12 pm. Local Issues Discussion meeting at League Office. 1011 West 31st Street, Austin.

Mon., Nov. 30, Time/Place TBA. Consensus Meeting, Money in Politics Study.

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

From the President

Executive Director, LWV US, Nancy Tate resigned after 15 years of service to the League. Nancy lead the League through an evolution that saw tremendous expansion of the ways people interact with one another as well as with their government officials, particularly through the explosion of online communications channels.

The 2015 Fall Kickoff got off to a rousing start with about 70 people attending the event at Trinity United Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon, Sept 20, 2015. President Carol Olewin welcomed all attendees and gave a brief overview of the LWV and the Austin history. Chairs and directors of special committees described their current activities and invited participation:

Jacklyn Williams (VP Voters Services) issued a challenge to all to come up with ideas to get people out to vote

June Conway (Director Voter Registration) highlighted registration activities coming up at Highland Campus, Austin Community College.

Lea Masiello (Publicity, Chair of State Study on Payday and Auto Title Loan Study) explained the Unit Meeting schedule and the process of coming to consensus and also invited participation at the upcoming Social Media workshops

Cinde Weatherby (VP Community Relations) described the Capitol Corps advocacy group and gave a preview of our collaboration with Alamo Draffhouse around the movie Suffragette movie.

Frances McIntyre (Voters' Guide Editor, Advocacy Chair and Candidates Forum Chair) asked for help on the Voters Guide coming out for the primary election in March, and also volunteers for the LWV "PAC", which she describes as a "pack of people" ready to email elected officials supporting LWVAA positions or attend city council meetings.

Jaci Collins (VP Organization) asked for volunteers to donate 3 hours a month to "woman" the LWVAA office

Judy Parken (Membership Director) requested that all members fill out the Member Interest Survey so we have a list of interests and skills.
Eliza May (Special Events Chair) announced an organizational meeting in October to get ready for the State of the City banquet next spring. Carol Olewin (for Mary Cullinane, VP Program) introduced the LWVUS study on Money and Politics.

Gina Hinojosa, President of the Board of Trustees, Austin Independent School District (AISD) was the featured speaker of the afternoon. According to President Hinojosa, AISD is comprised of 84,000 students (59% Hispanic, 8% African American, 27% white, and 7% other) on 130 campuses. Approximately 60% of the students are economically disadvantaged, and 30% are English language learners. AISD has a relatively new School Board, a new Superintendent, and a new Strategic Plan. In spite of these challenges, President Hinojosa is proud that every high school in AISD met the state accountability standards, the graduation rate increased to 86.3%, the budget is balanced, and employees received a 3% pay rate. She is supporting a new marketing strategy that will get AISD’s positive achievements to the people of Austin.

The new AISD strategic plan will "reinvent the urban school experience" by focusing on 1) readiness (for college and life), 2) resources (maximize what we have), and 3) relationships (community engagement). Other ongoing achievements at AISD include the three high schools where a student can graduate with an associate degree, the Community Schools, after-school programming, mentoring, dual language services, social/emotional learning, the "No Place for Hate" campuses, and the new regulation that prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. New projects coming up for AISD include the Young Voter Project which partners with LWVAA, the appointment of a trustee for District 7, the decision on whether to start a Liberal Arts Science Academy in south Austin, and a potential name change for the Robert E. Lee Elementary school.

The only negative Hinojosa discussed was the school finance situation, where 30% ($275 million) of AISD local tax dollars go to the state in order to spread money to poorer school districts. The state's education financial regulations are currently on appeal in the State Supreme Court. President Hinojosa is hopeful for a positive outcome that will be more equitable to AISD.

Also in attendance and introduced were local elected officials: Elliott Naishrat, State Representative, Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor/Voter Registrar, Ann Teich, AISD Trustee, and former AISD Presidents Nan Clayton and Kathy Rider.

Carol Olewin closed the meeting with an invitation to all to stay after and meet the committee chairs and members. People did, and many signed up for the committees - a successful conclusion for all.

The Austin League is in need of an historian, librarian, or archivist to help manage our historical files. Contact Carol Olewin if you have time to spend on preserving our records for generations to come.

~Carol Olwin, President
c.olewin@gmail.com

Programs

The explosive growth of Super PACs is a major outgrowth of the Supreme Court’s decision in Citizens United, and it is undermining the integrity and effectiveness of our nation’s anti-corruption campaign finance laws. The national League is committed to reforming the nation’s campaign finance system. LWV-US is working to protect the public’s right to know and to maximize citizen participation in the democratic process and is battling in Congress and state legislatures to combat corruption and undue influence and to increase competition for public office. (LWV-
Joanne Richards has agreed to chair the national Money in Politics study. Joanne brings a wealth of experience to the effort as she has been advocating for campaign finance reform for many years. She is out of the country right now, but will need some help with the study once she returns. If you are interested in this study and would like to be involved in the planning, Joanne's email is phifr@swbell.net. In the meantime, there are campaign finance reform articles on the website that members are encouraged to read in advance to prepare for the study.

The Payday Loan and Auto Title Study is well underway. See Lea Masiello's column below to learn the times and dates of upcoming meetings. And finally, the general membership meeting in February will be an informational meeting about income and social inequality.

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

Payday and Auto Title Loan Study

We have set a few dates for general membership meetings for Payday and Auto Title Loan Study. You will be receiving more email communications from us with reminders about the dates and locations for the meetings. See the calendar below for the full schedule of meetings, with times and locations:

**Sunday, October 11.** General Meeting: Panel Discussion, Trinity United Methodist Church, 4001 Speedway, Austin, (map) 2:30-4:30pm.

Panelists include:
Kathleen Hunker, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Bee Morehead, Texas Impact; Ann Baddour, Texas Appleseed; Howard Porter, Texas Community Capital; Dana Edgerton, Office of Consumer Credit; Matt Pogor, St. Vincent de Paul; Jennifer Allmon, Catholic Bishops.

**Monday, October 19.** Consensus meeting. Café Express, 3418 North Lamar, Austin. (map) 10:00am-12 pm.

**Thursday, October 22.** Consensus meeting. Judy Parken's house 7917 West Rim Dr. Austin. (map) 7:00-9:00pm.

**December 31.** Deadline to submit consensus report to State League.

~Lea Masiello Chair of Payday Loan and Auto Title Loan Study
leamasiello@gmail.com

Texas Tribune Festival

The fifth annual Texas Tribune Festival will be returning to the campus of the University of Texas at Austin on October 16-18, 2015. As in past years, the three-day event will feature political debate and dialogue, with some of the biggest names in the world of politics and public policy on the program. For more information and a list of scheduled speakers and sessions go here.

Request for info: I know other League members participated in voter registration efforts during September and we would like a tally on how many new voters were wrangled in Travis County. So all you Deputy LWV members count the notches on your belt and email to june-cnwy@yahoo.com

Last day to Register: October 5th for the November 4th election.

Volunteers needed to become Volunteer Deputy Registrars. VDRs help register eligible citizens to vote by distributing, reviewing, and accepting completed voter registration applications. This training must be repeated every two years. Starting January 1, 2015, all current VDRs and those wishing to become VDRs must get trained. Your term will be January 1, 2015 - December 31, 2016.

Citizens interested in becoming a VDR or renewing their eligibility may attend a one-hour training session held the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Training is held at the Travis County Voter Registrar's office located at 5501 Airport Blvd, Austin, TX 78751. Upcoming dates are Tuesday October 6 and November 16, 2015.

Bruce Elfant, our Travis County Voter Registrar, is offering extra Volunteer Deputy Registrar (VDR) training the second Saturday of each month from 10:00AM - 11:30 am (usually ends at 11:15). The next sessions will be October 10 and November 21 at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4700 Grover, Austin. Space is limited. Sign up at this link.
Discussion Group:
Local Issues at the City Level

The Local Issues Committee generally meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10:00 am-12:00 pm in the League office on 31st Street. The October 17 meeting has been canceled because of the Texas Tribune Festival so the next meeting will be in November.

We always have a lot to talk about and there is no real agenda, so we can spend time on one subject for a long time or jump from one to another. I usually bring information on the activities of the City Council, Commissioners Court and AISD that are relevant. Everyone is learning a lot during our extended conversations.

Anyone who is interested is most welcome to come and join us at next meeting Saturday, November 21 at 10:00 in the League office, 1011 West 31st St. (map) Join us when you can.

~Frances McIntyre, Advocacy Chair and Voters Guide Editor, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com 512-451-1551

Collaborating with Partners to Broaden Our Reach

While the Austin League of Women Voters is experiencing a nice growth spurt in membership, we continue to also reach out to public and non-profit organizations to broaden our efforts. We are always delighted to have the opportunity to work with the office of Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar Bruce Elfant and his staff to supplement their activities on several fronts.

You will be hearing more in the future about specific plans to increase the number of registered voters in Travis County. The objective is to add 75,000 new registered voters, taking the County from the 83 percent level to a goal of 90 percent. LWV Austin is pleased to be partnering with Elfant’s office to call attention to the effort.

One of the methods being used to reach out especially to new young voters is through the County’s new smartphone program that allows anyone to begin voter registration by texting “register” to 48683. We are extending the County’s reach with our online and social media outreach and ask all members to do the same. If you are not already following LWV Austin on Facebook, please be sure to “like” our Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/lwvaustinarea] and “follow” us on Twitter. Our Twitter handle is @lwwATX. If you share our Facebook posts or retweet our Twitter posts, you multiply the League’s reach greatly.

LWV Austin will also partner with Elfant’s office and the Austin Independent School District in some major initiatives to reach high school students in the schools. Vice President for Voters Service Jacklyn Cooper Williams and Voter Registration Services Director June Conway are actively involved in these projects and will be sharing details.

LWV Austin is engaging in an exciting partnership with the Alamo Drafthouse in October. We will be involved in the showing of a new movie,
Suffragette, about the suffrage movement in the United Kingdom. The Alamo will host a community event following one of the showings of the film, tentatively set for the afternoon of Saturday, October 24, 2015 at the South Lamar location, 1120 South Lamar Blvd. In exchange for our assistance in planning the event, LWV of Education Fund will receive a percentage of the proceeds for that showing. More details will be shared as they are determined. To view the film’s trailer, starring multiple-Academy Award winning Meryl Streep among others, go to this link. LWV Austin and others will also be staffing voter registration tables during the film’s showing and will be recruiting volunteers.

As we proceed into the new League year, we will also continue to partner with Leadership Austin on voting-related efforts and are anxious to identify others with whom we can partner. We are developing a master database of organizations sponsoring initiatives for voter registration, voter education and engagement, and research on voting. Leading this effort is Sara Groff, our Community Relations Team’s Catalyst for Collaboration. We are still seeking a LWV member to fill our volunteer slot of Executive Producer, to undertake developing at least two videos on voter engagement. Additionally, we are recruiting a Chief Researcher to organize our research related to voting. Please contact Cinde Weatherby, cindewetherby@gmail.com if interested in leading or working on any of these projects.

~ Cinde Weatherby, 2nd VP Community Relations, cindewetherby@gmail.com

Capitol Corps Still Active Between Legislative Sessions

The Legislature may have ended and most of our representatives have headed back home, but we are already gearing up to promote LWV positions in the 85th Session. The interim period is the most advantageous time to talk with Representatives, Senators and their staffs in their home district offices where their attention can be more focused.

Each LWV-TX Issue Chair continues to follow their respective issues and take advantage of opportunities for testimony before appropriate bodies. As an example, LWV members have already testified in Austin and around the state before the Health Human Services Commission.

The LWV-TX advocacy team continues to share relevant information with Issue Chairs and aligned Capitol Corps members. There are several Issue Chair vacancies. Now is a great time to volunteer to fill one of the vacancies and get involved. Some high priority vacancies include: Campaign Finance Reform, Judicial Selection, Criminal Justice, and Redistricting. A full listing of the LWV-TX positions can be found on the LWV-TX website. The new LWV-TX website is set to debut October 1, 2015. Check out the Advocacy section for the Issues information and all of the testimony and other advocacy carried out in the 2015 Texas Legislative Session.

If you are interested in being an Issue Chair, or providing support on an issue, please contact Grace Chimene at ghimenelwv@gmail.com or Laura Blackburn at laura2blackburn@gmail.com. Please email cindewetherby@gmail.com if you wish to become a member of the Capitol Corps and begin to receive information about the issues that interest you. Be sure to note those issues in your email.

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 lwatx 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 LWVAA page and get updates on any of our posts.

Honors and Memorials

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.
Testimony to Austin Ethics Review Commission

Consideration of Resolution regarding lobbyists rules
September 16, 2016
(The following testimony was presented to the Ethics Review Commission.)

Good evening. Thank you for having this opportunity for the public to weigh in on the proposed resolution on updating the ordinance that governs lobbyists.

I am Frances McIntyre representing the Austin League of Women Voters. As you may know, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization with both men and women members, that promotes the informed and active participation of citizens in government through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates or parties.

I am here tonight to express our support for the Resolution you have before you. The reason the League is supporting this resolution is because we believe the citizens of Austin deserve to know who is being paid by companies or individuals who want to influence our Mayor and Council in their favor on governmental issues. Anyone can watch city meetings on TV and see who is trying to persuade the Council one way or another. Lobbyists work on a different level to persuade Council/Mayor outside of public meetings and their activities are not always evident to the public.

This resolution sets out clear rules about who should register as lobbyists. Most of the rules come directly from the State of Texas lobbyists rules, which makes me think they could not be that onerous or complicated.

For instance:

- State Law violation of the rules is a Class A misdemeanor plus an administrative fine. Austin’s would be a Class C misdemeanor.
- The State requires reporting of compensation, e-filing, preparation aides and preparer and reporting of subject matter in detail as does this resolution.
- The current Austin Lobbyists Law has a loophole that allows lobbying of upper-middle management city employees. The State law does not have the loophole. The proposed law, attempting to influence any city staff, except clerical or administrative personnel on a discretionary municipal matter, would be defined as lobbying.
- Employees of larger firms would not necessarily need to register. The resolution requires only the lobbying entity to register, pay fees and report standard information.
- Uncompensated citizens are not required to register as lobbyists at any level of government (including the State). In this proposition, the threshold is clearly
stated at $2000 per quarter spent on lobbying to require registration. The State level is $1000.

The current ordinance is not transparent, fair or enforceable. The proposed resolution is a big step toward a more transparent policy that the Austin citizens deserve. And if the lobbyists who work on State issues can abide by their requirements, it should not be unreasonable for our city lobbyists to comply.

The Austin League approves and encourages this Ethics Commission to endorse this resolution now, so it can proceed in the process and become law as soon as possible.

~ Frances McIntyre, Advocacy Chair and Voter Guide Editor, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com 512-451-1551

Maxine's Musings: What I Wish

I don't know about you but I am disheartened by the tone of the Presidential campaign by the candidates regardless of party for the upcoming election. So far, I have hardly heard a constructive program or vision of what the candidates propose for the future of the country. What I have heard almost amounts to character assassination, denigration of some groups in our population, inaccurate and misleading information, false accusations, like saying, "aha, gotcha!" Of course some of this is the politics as usual, but this time it seems to me to have hit a new low, descending to the lowest common denominator.

However, thinking back, name-calling and character attacks were much in evidence and little attention was paid to the issues in the past. One of the most memorable campaigns I remember was the 1952 presidential campaign. In the background were the Korean War that seemed never to end and Sen. Joseph McCarthy who conducted a Gestapo-type campaign of his own that destroyed the reputation of anyone who had a liberal view by labeling them Communists. Even Foreign Officer Julia Child's husband was called to account! Television had just come into its own and for the first time, the campaign activities of the parties and candidates were open to public view in their own homes. Like most of my family, I was a political junkie, and was eager to watch the proceedings from my own living room. I persuaded my husband to buy a TV and bring it home. Sitting on the sofa, I planted my feet on the floor, ignoring my two young toddlers while I spent days watching first the Republican Convention, followed by the Democratic Convention. I was fascinated by the cameras that were focused on smoke-filled caucus rooms of the Republican Convention. This was where the under-the-counter deals were made previously unseen and unknown by the public. The Republican Convention was scheduled first. The main contenders were Gen. Eisenhower and Senator Taft of Ohio. The acrimony between the supporters of each was an eye-opener and ultimately, Gen. Eisenhower won the nomination, but I remember the Republicans decided never to open their caucus rooms again!

That year, the Democratic Convention was not as exciting. They learned from the Republicans not to open up every part of the proceedings to public scrutiny, not that there wasn't grist for the mill. Even though Sen. Estes Kefauver won most of the primaries, he was a controversial figure and had his own detractors. State conventions' delegates were elected at the state conventions where the influence of the governors determined the selection of the delegates to the national convention. Since Kefauver was disliked, Adlai Stevenson was the Democratic nominee. History tends to repeat itself. Religion or religious beliefs helped defeat Al Smith's campaign in 1928 and was an issue in President John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign.
Both were Catholics and many thought electing a Catholic would mean the Pope would dictate the President's policies. Now, the shoe is on the other foot. In the current campaign, religious beliefs have infiltrated into current issues from a different direction where some believe that a Supreme Being is superior to the law of the land. It will be interesting to see how this plays out, but I have always had a belief that the American public responds to extremism by coming together rationally, sort of like consensus.

~Maxine Barkan, mbarkan@austinrr.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](mailto:). 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](mailto:).

**New Members:**
Several new members joined our ranks in the past month. They are Bruce and Alicia Bogart, Barbara Grajski, Cindy and Brian Schaufenbuel, Florence Synthema-Macaulay, and Charlotte Slack. [Corrections from last month: Paul Silver (not Phil) and Kim Sue Lia Perkes.](mailto:) 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 in Austin and supports our local League’s activities.

**Thank You, Sustaining Members:**
Special thanks to this month’s sustaining members: Maxine Barkan, Bruce and Alicia Bogart, Nan Clayton, Vikki Goodwin, Kara Hall, Sheila Milner, Belia Nichols, Patricia Oakes, Margit and Arnold Orange, O.R. Schmidt, Dorothy Richter, and Sonja Sussenbach. 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: Davida Bilgrad, Carol Buckman, Linda Friedman, Patricia La Combe, Dawn Lewis, Ellen Loeb, Aileen McMurrer, Roye Reeves, Anne Roussos, Betsy Singleton, and Jan de Vault. [We depend on your support and appreciate your renewals](mailto:).

**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](mailto:) (or [click here for new memberships](mailto:)) to pay your annual dues online by credit card via PayPal while providing all the above information.
Here is the schedule of dues amounts:

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Household</th>
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<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
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Contact me anytime with your League questions.

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