**Evan Smith Keynotes September 7 Kickoff**

All interested in the League of Women Voters are welcome to attend the LWVAA Fall Kickoff on **Sunday, September 7 from 2:30-4:30 pm at Trinity United Methodist Church** on 4001 Speedway, 78751. This is a great time to hear what the League is planning this year, and to get involved in areas of interest.

In addition we will have a great keynoter, **Evan Smith**, who will speak about the state of the political scene in Texas. He will cover such topics as the primary election results, the current state of the political parties in Texas, whether political platforms influence voters’ decisions, and other matters that may influence voter turnout like photo ID, gender issues, and money in elections.

**Texas Tribune**

Evan Smith spent over a decade at *Texas Monthly* as editor, during which the magazine was nominated for 16 National Magazine Awards, the magazine industry’s equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. In 2009, he co-founded the *Texas Tribune* – a nonprofit, non-partisan public media organization that has won numerous awards for outstanding journalism and is the
go-to publication for many followers of Texas politics. He now serves as the Tribune's CEO and editor-in-chief, and hosts "Overheard with Evan Smith," a weekly interview program that airs on PBS stations across the country.

~ Judy Parken, Chair; japarken@aol.com; Joanne Richards, phjfr@swbell.net; Stewart Snider, s2snider@gmail.com

LWVAA Calendar

Sat., July 26, 10:00 am, Voters Service Committee, League Office, 1011 W. 31st. St. Open to members.

Mon., July 28, 5:30 - 8:00 pm, Imagine ONE Austin, LCRA Dalchau Service Center A, 3503 Montopolis Dr., 78744. "Land Use and Transportation." Public.

Mon., Aug. 4, 5:30 - 8:00 pm, Imagine ONE Austin, LCRA Dalchau Service Center A, 3503 Montopolis Dr., 78744. "Housing, Neighborhoods, and Public Safety." Public.


Mon., Aug. 11, 5:30 - 8:00 pm, Imagine ONE Austin, LCRA Dalchau Service Center A, 3503 Montopolis Dr., 78744. "Health and Human Services." Public.


Thurs., Sept. 4, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council District 1, Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Road Austin, TX 78754. Public.


Thurs., Sept. 11, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council Districts 4 & 7, Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Dr. Austin, TX 78757. Public.

Mon., Sept. 15, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council Districts 6 & 10, Hope Presbyterian Church, 11512 Olson Drive, Austin, TX 78750. Public.

Tues., Sept. 16, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council Districts 5 & 8, Austin Community College, 1820 W. Stassney Lane Austin, TX 78745. Public.

Thurs., Sept. 18, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council District 9, Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. Austin, TX 78704. Public.

Tues., Sept. 30 - Forum: City Council Districts 2 & 3, Montopolis Recreation Center, 1200 Montopolis Dr. Austin, TX 78741. Public.

Wed., Oct. 1, 5 - 9 pm, Forum: Mayor, Austin Convention Center, 500 East Cesar Chavez St. Austin, TX 78701. Public.

Mon., Oct. 6, Last Day to Register to Vote for November Election.

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


Mon., Nov. 3, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st. St. Members.

Mon., Nov. 10, Forum: City Council District 3, Austin Convention Center, 500 East Cesar Chavez St. Austin, TX 78701. Public.


Mon., Nov. 24 - Fri., Nov. 27, Early Voting for November Election.

Mon., Nov. 30, Forum: City Council District 4, Austin Community College, 1820 W. Stassney Lane Austin, TX 78745. Public.

Tues., Dec. 2, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: Mayor, Austin Convention Center, 500 East Cesar Chavez St. Austin, TX 78701. Public.


Mon., Dec. 15, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st. St. Members.


Mon., Dec. 29, Forum: City Council District 7, Austin Community College, 1820 W. Stassney Lane Austin, TX 78745. Public.

Tues., Jan. 3, 6 - 9 pm, Forum: City Council District 12, Austin Community College, 1820 W. Stassney Lane Austin, TX 78745. Public.

Wed., Jan. 4, 5 - 9 pm, Forum: Mayor, Austin Convention Center, 500 East Cesar Chavez St. Austin, TX 78701. Public.

Mon., Jan. 9, Last Day to Register to Vote for March 1 Election.

Mon., Jan. 9, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st. St. Members.


Mon., Jan. 27, Last Day to Register to Vote for March 1 Election.

Mon., Jan. 27, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st. St. Members.

The LWVAA is in urgent need of a webmaster.

The LWVAA Webmaster’s key responsibilities are to monitor the website, insure that it functions well, and see that accurate, timely information is provided in an easy-to-use format. This requires an overall understanding of how a website works and how to change all parts of the site including hosting related issues, FTP (File Transfer Protocol), the content development software (WordPress) and various plugins and widgets.

Additional Duties of the Webmaster include: Responding to queries about the site and its functions, Troubleshooting and resolving issues, Encouraging those with content to provide it, Adding content (although others should help with this), Maintaining backups, Creating graphics for sliders, Reviewing statistics and monitoring analytics, Updating the software and look of the site as necessary, and Recommending improvements.

If interested, or you know someone with this skill set, contact Carol Olewin, 512-380-0088, c.olewin@gmail.com. The previous webmaster, Anita Privett, will oversee training and provide support.
President's Message: League's Community Involvement

Our League has been busy this summer with preparations for many community education and voters service events. This will be an active year and there are plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. So be sure to come to the Sun., Sept. 7 Kickoff meeting and sign up to volunteer on some of these important projects.

May: Newly elected Board members met with the old Board at the Annual Transition Meeting on May 31, and discussed organization and plans for the upcoming year. 2014/2015 will be busy year for the Austin League, as always. See new Board List in the Annual Meeting report.

June - August: The Austin League partnered with Leadership Austin, KLRU, the Annette Strauss Institute, LJ Center for Politics and Governance, and Community Impact to host a free, Imagine One Austin informative series where the public, candidates for Austin city council and mayor, and candidate staffers receive baseline information about Austin and the region’s most pressing issues. This series helps candidates and voters alike to develop a vision for Austin and enhances community dialogue over the next few months. The six partnering sponsors are working toward the same result -- an engaged electorate and a productive start to our single-member-district council. Frances McIntyre and Jacklyn Williams headed the League’s contribution to this series.

June - Oct.: With the first election after the formation of single member districts for Austin City Council in November, the League’s Voters Services Committee is busy with Candidate Forums for Austin City Council. Five trustees for Austin Independent School District will be decided too. The League’s Education Committee will assist the Voters Services Committee in that/those AISD school board forum(s).

June - Oct.: The Voters Guide committee under Frances McIntyre’s leadership is already busy with Voters Guide preparations for the largest Guide we have ever published. It will include Austin City Council races, Austin Independent School District and Austin Community College trustee races, state and federal Representatives, Travis County Commissioners, and other local offices. We will try to publish the Voters Guide in Spanish.

July: Austin Independent School District has launched a search for a new, permanent Superintendent. The AISD Board recognizes that selecting a superintendent is one of its most important functions. Therefore, the AISD Board has invited the League of Women Voters of Austin to provide input into the identifying the qualities most desired for a new AISD Superintendent. Laura Sheridan, Education Chair, and her committee provided input to the AISD Board.

Aug. - May: This year’s local Program of Study will be Poverty and Safety Net Services in Austin, Stacey Mather is chairing the study.

Come to the Kickoff on Sun., Sept. 7 to learn more about each of these opportunities. We need your input and participation.

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

Honors and Memorials

The following donations have been gratefully received by the League.

In memory of Chuck Pace, husband of Jaci Collins, by Jo Reichler and Anne Roussos.

In honor of Judy Parken’s dedication and service to the League by Barbara Werth.

In honor of outgoing and incoming LWVAA officers, board, and committee chairs by Jo Reichler.

To make a donation in honor of or in memory of a League member, click here for the form. Then mail with your donation to the LWVAA Office, 1011 W. 31st St., Austin, TX 78705.

League Testimony on Tax Equity and Superintendent Qualities

Testimony on Tax Equity

On June 6 (or rather at 3:00 am on June 7), Frances McIntyre testified for the League at the Austin City Council meeting.

"Good evening Council. I am Frances McIntyre speaking for the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area. We are in favor of Agenda items 64, 65, and 66 and wish to applaud the makers of these items.

The Austin League of Women Voters believes in an equitable system of taxation which assures an adequate revenue, is easily administered, and is consistent with economic, social and environmental goals. We also
Proposed LWVAA 2014-2015 Program

The chairs of the four program committees, along with former and new board members, met on May 31 to plan the program calendar for 2014-2015. There are four active program committees - Advocacy (Frances McIntyre, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com), Voters Service (Stacey Mather, staceym80@gmail.com), Education (Laura Sheridan, lasheridan@sbcglobal.net), Health Care (Mary Cullinane, mculli@sbcglobal.net).

Cinde Weatherby (cindeweatherby@gmail.com) is interested in studying Transportation issues in the Austin area. All members are welcome and are encouraged to join any of these committees by contacting their chairs.

The Proposed Program Calendar - 2014 - 2015:

- **September 7** - Kick Off - Speaker will be Evan Smith (Confirmed)
- **October** - General Meeting for Poverty Study - Housing and Transportation
- **November** - General Program chaired by Education Committee
- **December** - Holiday Party and New Member Orientation
- **January** - Membership Meeting - Program Planning
- **February** - General Meeting for Poverty Study
  - State of the City Dinner and Fundraiser
- **March** - General Meeting - State Legislative Update
  - Unit Meetings - Consensus on Poverty Study
- **May** - Annual Meeting

~ Mary Cullinane, VP Program, mculli@sbcglobal.net

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**IMAGINEONEAUSTIN**

Continues on Mondays through August 11....

Imagine One Austin, the educational programs for City Council candidates and the public, is continuing. They have been meeting every Monday evening 5:30-8:00 pm from June 30 - August 11. These very informative sessions have speakers about city demographics, Imagine Austin plan, city utilities, budget and planning, the economy, conservation, environment, recreation, land use and transportation, housing, neighborhoods, public safety, health and human services. The meetings are free and open to the public and are held at the LCRA Service Center, Bldg. A, 3505 Montopolis Drive, 78744. Arrive by 5:30 pm for light refreshments. The program begins promptly at 6:00.

The six partnering sponsors (Leadership Austin, KLRU, Annette Strauss Institute, Community Impact Newspaper, LBJ School of Public Affairs and the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area) hope these programs facilitate a more engaged electorate and a productive start to our single-member-district council. For detailed agendas and copies of past presentations, go to this link.

Serving on the organizing committee from LWVAA were Frances McIntyre and Jacklyn Williams. Assisting with registration were Judy Clack, Stacey Mather, and Cinde Weatherby.

~ Frances McIntyre, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

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advocate for appraisals of taxable property at full market value. The taxing programs should be understandable to the taxpayer and encourage compliance.

It really comes down to an issue of fairness. Everyone should pay his or her fair share of the taxes that finance our government. The rub between residential property appraisals and commercial appraisals is, I believe, the result of unequal and unfair treatment from the Appraisal District. The commercial properties that are rarely taxed on their full value use the same streets, sidewalks, police and fire protection and other city services that the residential taxpayers do, yet the bulk of the taxes for those services comes from the residential taxpayers.

It is important for the City to encourage coalition building with other municipalities who are experiencing the same frustrations. I know they are out there because I just got back from the League of Women Voters national convention in Dallas, and equal taxation was a topic of discussion among many Texas Leagues.

We are encouraged to see that you want to develop a policy and hope that will be forthcoming soon.

Again, the League is very concerned about tax equity and believes these agenda items are a good start for the city.

Thanks.

~ Frances McIntyre, Advocacy Chair, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

Testimony on Superintendent Qualities

The LWVAA was asked to provide testimony regarding qualities we’d want in the new AISD Superintendent. Frances McIntyre delivered the collective input of the LWVAA Education Committee to the Ray and Associated search firm on July 16.
Seven Fall City Council and Mayoral Candidate Forums

You may have seen this map of the ten new districts into which Austin has been divided for City Council representation. We will be electing ten city council members as well as a mayor in November.

Do you know in which district you live? Click here and simply enter your home address. Or look on your Voter Registration Certificate.

The City of Austin Ethics Review Commission is collaborating with the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area to host a series of public candidate forums that will be also be televised and recorded for video on-demand. The forums will feature all candidates from each of the ten new districts as well as those for mayor. Frances McIntyre, Jacklyn Williams, and Stacey Mather have been working with the City of Austin Ethics Review Commission on all the arrangements for these seven forums. Each forum is open to the public.

Thurs., Sept. 4 - City Council District 1, 6 - 9 pm - Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Road Austin, TX 78754

Thurs., Sept. 11 - City Council Districts 4 & 7, 6 - 9 pm - Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Dr. Austin, TX 78757

Mon., Sept. 15 - City Council Districts 6 & 10, 6 - 9 pm - Hope Presbyterian Church, 11512 Olson Drive, Austin, TX 78750

Tues., Sept. 16 - City Council Districts 5 & 8, 6 - 9 pm - Austin Community College, 1820 W. Stassney Lane Austin, TX 78745

Thurs., Sept. 18 - City Council District 9, 6 - 9 pm - Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. Austin, TX 78704

Tues., Sept. 30 - City Council Districts 2 & 3, 6 - 9 pm - Montopolis Recreation Center, 1200 Montopolis Dr. Austin, TX 78741

Wed., Oct. 1 - Mayoral, 5 - 9 pm - Austin Convention Center, 500 East Cesar Chavez St. Austin, TX 78701

Click here for the latest information on these candidate forums as well as a map to each location.

The Austin American-Statesman did an article about each of the ten geographic districts. Click here to find those articles as well as population and demographic information about each district.

~ Judy Clack, Voter Editor, jbc1ck@yahoo.com

New Local Study:

Poverty and Safety Net Services

Eighteen percent of Travis County residents live in poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Approved at the May Annual Meeting was a new local study on Poverty and Safety Net Services. The LWVAA will learn about the issues impacting people living in poverty, safety-net services, and ways to reduce poverty in the Austin area.

"-- Is an articulate and respected advocate for public education (traditional public schools).
-- Demonstrates an ability to support successful programs within traditional public schools (as opposed to charter schools) to meet the needs of our diverse student population.
-- Demonstrates a capacity to present information to the Austin school board that will allow the board to make meaningful policy-level decisions.
-- Demonstrates a talent to speak with, and on behalf of, Austin's diverse communities.
-- Shows an ability to lead the community in building trust and confidence in all of Austin's traditional public schools.
-- Has a proven track record building successful public school programs.
-- Has a plan to reverse the trend of losing students to private, charter and home schools.
-- Has a policy of transparency in all AISD processes."

~ Frances McIntyre for the LWVAA Education Committee mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

League Notes

Voters Guide: Under chair Frances McIntyre, work has already begun on the November Voters Guide which will certainly be the largest one we have ever put out (as will be the ballot). It will be published in the Austin American-Statesman on Sunday, October 19, the day before early voting. We are exploring a way to have a Spanish translation of the VG.

More Thanks: In addition to those recognized earlier, two more League members became LWVTX Convention Sponsors: Carol Whitcraft Fredericks and Judy Parken.

ThinkVoting App: The Voter Services committee viewed a new, comprehensive voter application designed for use on cell phones. The committee voted, and the LWVAA
The study will include, but not be limited to: current state of poverty in the Austin area; safety-net status and infrastructure; food insecurity; housing and transportation; homelessness; income and employment; and local and state government policies that affect poverty levels and/or safety-net services.

The first study group meeting will be held in August, date TBD. Please email me if you are interested in participating and have not previously submitted your information. An email invitation will be sent out in late-July with the meeting information. Thanks, and I hope to see you there!

~ Stacey Mather, Poverty Study Chair and VP Voters Service, staceyM80@gmail.com

League's Education Committee Studies AISD Changes

In recent years, the LWVAA Education Committee has led efforts to facilitate community education and involvement in the matters of importance to our traditional public schools through a series of Community Conversations. The LWVAA Education Committee met in May and June to discuss opportunities to continue this important work. Without a doubt, 2014 is a year of change in Austin ISD. The district will be selecting a new superintendent and voters will elect five members to the School Board in November. Here’s a summary of the committee’s findings on this year of change for Austin AISD.

**Superintendent Search:** In March 2014, Superintendent Meria Carstarphen announced she was leaving AISD. Within a month, the district bid her farewell and hired Paul Cruz to serve in the interim. By May, AISD had hired a search firm, Ray and Associates, to assist the board in the search for a permanent superintendent. Two themes appear to characterize the tone of the search: transparency in process and the need for stakeholder input.

And on that note, the district wasted no time. To be transparent, the AISD created a Web page dedicated to the search: [http://www.austinisd.org/superintendent-search](http://www.austinisd.org/superintendent-search). The page describes the district’s selection process and includes links to a survey designed to capture community feedback for building a profile for the next district superintendent. The survey can be taken in any one of three languages: English, Spanish and Vietnamese. **All AISD residents are encouraged to provide input online at that link.**

In addition, the search firm is facilitated input opportunities through a series of open public forums on July 15, 16, and 17. The LWVAA was offered an exclusive, fifteen-minute, meeting with the search firm and and Frances McIntyre delivered our collective input on July 16. Once the superintendent profile has been established sometime in late July or early August, the position officially will be open for applicants. AISD has tentatively scheduled Sept. 20 as the projected close date for applications for the superintendent position, and is currently looking at January 2015 as the next superintendent’s official start date.

**School Board Election:** Five seats on the AISD school board are up for election in November. Although the deadline to declare candidacy is not until August, five of the incumbents’ intentions (as of July 6) are as follows:

- Vince Torres, Board President, District 4, Not seeking re-election
- Cheryl Bradley, District 1, Not seeking re-election
- Lori Moya, District 6, Not seeking re-election
- Robert Schneider, District 7, Will seek re-election

Board approved, to donate $1,000 from the LWVAA Education Fund to the ThinkVoting team during their $50,000 Kick-Starter campaign. Unfortunately, they did not reach their goal in the allotted time, so our donation was not taken. It’s back to the drawing board for ThinkVoting and they are working hard to make this application a reality for the November election. Check out this app here.

Following are suggestions made during the "I Wish the League Would" segment that closed the Annual Meeting: hire an organizational development consultant to help increase membership, especially of young people; help inform Hispanics about where to go to register and attend candidate forums; figure out how to increase membership; get more of our members to serve as elections workers; provide a PA system at all meetings and require speakers to come to the front of the room to speak; request that members learn parliamentary procedures and that the League publish Robert's Rules of Order for members to follow during meetings; get members to volunteer for a committee; and support efforts of the Texans for Fair Courts Network in judicial selection efforts.

Other wishes included: go into schools to energize kids to bug their parents to vote; register high school and ACC students to vote during the school year and summer; educate young people on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; have more people at the Annual Meeting, educate members on Robert’s Rules, continue to grow and have more younger members, work with university and ACC chapters in the area, encourage immigrant participants, and do voter registration in high schools and colleges; poll members to see if the current unit
If you'd like to join this study group, contact me.

~ Laura Sheridan, Chair of Education Study Committee, lasheridan@sbcglobal.net

Productive Annual Meeting

Leaguers met on May 20 for our Annual Meeting that provided for camaraderie, culinary treats, and consensus on program and administrative matters. More than 40 Leaguers were on hand for the covered-dish supper at Trinity Methodist Church - far more than the quorum needed to adopt the budget and program, and elect officers and board members. There were no bylaw changes.

This year's meeting was dedicated to Judy Parken, who has served the past 12 years on the board, mostly as Membership chair; but also as Program VP, and additionally as chair and host of the Evening Unit for the past five years. As part of her Membership duties, Judy serves as chair of the fall Kickoff meeting and the Annual Meeting, and has hosted new-member orientations. She serves on the Nominating Committee that works each year to fill board and off-board positions. Judy was honored with flowers, as was Jacklyn Williams, who is leaving the board as Voter Service VP to serve on the LWVTX board. Also recognized were two of the eight Leaguers who have been members for 50 or more years and who were present-Maxine Barkan and Phyllis Portnoy.

Concerning our program, members adopted the program and a proposed revision of the Health position that included input and revisions from the April Unit Meetings. The position combines updated provisions of both the old Health (2003) and the Mental Health Services (2008) positions revised into an updated Health position with three categories: Health Care, Behavioral Health Care, and Wellness and Health Promotion. Changes were made in recognition of the implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act, Texas' decision not to expand Medicaid or establish an insurance exchange, and the Texas Legislature's appropriation of money to match federal funds, known as 1115 Waivers. The Health Care Committee and Chair Mary Cullinane received generous praise at the meeting for their dedication and hard work to produce the updated position.

Also approved at the meeting was a new, board-recommended local study on Poverty and Safety-Net Services. Committee Chair Stacey Mather said the study will involve research into safety-net services and will identify potential ways to reduce poverty in the Austin area. The study will include, but not be limited to: current state of poverty in the Austin area; safety-net status and infrastructure; food insecurity; housing and transportation; homelessness; income and employment; and local and state government policies that affect poverty levels and/or safety-net services. Discussion included numerous suggestions to expand the scope of the study. The committee was given leeway to take all suggestions under advisement and include issues as they see fit. See Stacey's invitation to join this study committee.
Officers elected include: Carol Olewin, President; Mary Cullinane, 1st VP, Program; Stewart Snider, 2nd VP, Community Relations; Judy Clack, 3rd VP, Organization; Stacey Mather, 4th VP, Voters Service; Peggy Stewart, Secretary; and Gwen Santiago, Treasurer.

Directors elected to one-year terms were: Jaci Collins, Membership Records; Judy Parken, Membership; Judy Clack, Voter Editor; Mescal Evler, Publicity; Frances McIntyre, Advocacy; and Cinde Weatherby, Development.

Off-board chairs, who were appointed by the board (not elected) for one year were: Dianne Wheeler, Budget; Maxine Barkan, Bylaws; Frances McIntyre, Voters Guide Editor; Eliza May, Special Events; and Anne Roussos, Workbook Editor. Unfilled is the Webmaster position. Margit Orange will serve as chair of the Nominating Committee. Karen Haschke volunteered to fill one of the two non-board positions; the other position was not filled.

~ Anne Roussos, Editor, Annual Meeting Workbook, roussos@swbell.net

Voters Service Committee:
Come to July 26 Meeting

Elections are less than four months away and the voter service activities have already started! The Voters Guide Committee, led by Frances McIntyre, has been busy generating questions for the League’s Voters Guide and Austin City Council and AISD School Board Candidate Forums.

Frances McIntyre and Jacklyn Williams have been teaming with the City of Austin’s Ethics Review Commission in scheduling seven candidates forums for city council and Mayor. League volunteers will be needed at each forum. The Education Committee is teaming with the Voters Service Committee to organize AISD School Board Forums.

This is only the beginning and we need YOU to help make our efforts a success! The Voter Services Committee will be meeting on Saturday, July 26, at 10am at the LWVAA office (1011 W. 31st St. near N. Lamar) to prepare for our fall activities. Please be sure to join us if you are interested in any/all of the following: Voter registration, Voter education, Voter engagement/Get out the vote efforts, Candidate forums, or Civic education in the schools.

To become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar and be able to register voters, you must attend a 1 ½ hour training session. Trainings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Travis County Tax Office, Elections

and infants. As the situation was explained to me, Sendero was at the center of a perfect storm, one over which it had little control.

With the Legislature and Governor choosing not to expand Medicaid, a lot of the income Sendero expected to receive evaporated. Another problem is that where there were originally three Medicaid HMOs planned for the area, now there are actually four that Sendero has to compete with in the marketplace. That means there are fewer clients for each insurer. In addition to the market issues, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) recently decreased Sendero’s Medicaid reimbursement rates making it difficult to cover the medical claims of its covered high-risk population.

This year Sendero offered a new product on the insurance exchange marketplace (set up by the Affordable Care Act) to find more customers. They have been very successful signing up new clients and their numbers are growing. Sendero is talking to Texas HHSC about the cut to its Medicaid reimbursement rates and, is in the process of re-negotiating some contracted reimbursement rates with providers who take some of their patients, specifically Seton and St. David’s. Despite all these problems, Sendero has still spent less than was originally allocated for its start-up. This is good.

Tom Coopwood, member of the LWV Health Care Committee and a member of the Central Health Board, said that it was the executives’ decision to resign and that the whole process has been very transparent. He does not think that there was any malfeasance or mismanagement. Tom thinks it was a matter of fatigue on the part of the executives and a realization that new skills were needed to keep Sendero a viable asset for the community.

~ Mary Cullinane, Health Chair, mculli@abcglobal.net and the Austin American-Statesman
Training Room, 5501 Airport Boulevard. Visit www.traviscountytax.org to learn more. No pre-registration is needed. Weekly trainings are held every Saturday morning at 10:00 am at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4700 Grover. Pre-register for a specific Saturday with League member Mary Patrick, maptrick@gmail.com. Put "Volunteer Deputy Registrar“ in the subject line. Voters must be registered by October 6th in order to vote in the November 4th election.

I look forward to working with you in our efforts to serve Austin area voters! Hope to see you at our planning meeting on Sat. July 26 at 10:00 am in the League office. ~ Stacey Mather, VP Voters Service, staceym80@gmail.com

Membership

New Members: Three have joined our ranks as new League members: Katherine Canby, Ann McGeehan, and Genie Nyer. A warm welcome to each of you. 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, $53 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only $7 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: Robbie Ausley, Katherine Canby, Jaci Collins, June Conway, Margaret Drake, Carol Fredericks, Judy and Hal Jennings, Joann Lovelace, Chalda Maloff, and Russell Zears, Ann McGeehan, Julie and Jodi Moore, Pamela Reed, and Marilyn Wills. 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: Carol Eckelcamp, Sabine Foster, Brigid Hall, Lisa Harris and Bruce Elfant, Karen Huber, Delphia Jester, Clark Jobe, Arati Singh, Stewart Snider, Betty Williamson, and Carol Wood. 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.

"Like" Our League on Facebook

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

Shop at Randalls and Support the League

Randalls 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.

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LWVUS Convention: Three Impressions

Carol Olewin: Four Austin League members attended the LWV National Convention in Dallas on June 7 -10. Cinde Weatherby, Frances McIntyre and Carol Olewin (with Susan Morrison representing LWVTX) enjoyed the week of camaraderie with League people from all over the US. The major topics of discussion were a living wage, the impact of money on elected officials, campaigns, protecting the environment and climate, and protecting a citizen’s right to vote. However, the hottest topic was the contested campaign for President of the National LWV. After all the secret ballots were counted, Elisabeth MacNamara was re-elected by a margin of two to one.

I enjoyed meeting people from all over the US and hearing their stories. Guest speakers were interesting and watching the LWVUS president lead over 900 members through a convention was awe-inspiring. I especially enjoyed the Management breakout sessions and seeing how many Leagues were taking advantage of short videos to get messages out to the public. Check out the videos from a Student Video Contest sponsored by the LWV Massachusetts.

It was a great opportunity to see how the national LWV operates and learn how the local activities fit into the national perspective. A $1 increase in the PMP National dues was approved to go into effect in 2016. This increase will help pay for a new membership database which is still in the design phase, but should be rolled out in 2014.

Thank you for granting us the honor and privilege to attend the National Convention and being part of the bigger picture of the League of Women Voters!
~ Carol Olewin, President, c.olewin@gmail.com

Frances McIntyre: I didn’t think I could get more committed and enthusiastic about the League of Women Voters, but after attending the LWVUS convention with women from almost every state in the country and seeing their dedication and determination to improve the way we are governed, I am. This organization is one-of-a-kind in this country with great influence on local, state and national governing bodies. And volunteers do all of this! The discussions, debates and conversations, one on one, were so very interesting and informative. It gave me a perspective that I had not realized, to see hundreds of Leaguers so knowledgeable and enthusiastic against, in some cases, formidable odds.

Wade Goodman (a Texan and NPR broadcaster) spoke at the convention telling attendees about the voter suppression and women’s health care issues that Texas has been dealing with. I’ll have to say, a lot of the Leaguers from around the country were astounded by the actions of the Texas legislature and Governor. One woman sitting with us was aghast and kept covering her mouth, saying, “oh, my god, that happened?” She was from the New York area. We did hear some similar information from other states, especially Louisiana.

I came away from that convention knowing that the League has a solid foundation and that we can continue influencing public policy. We were particularly encouraged to take advantage of social media, to embrace and expand our outreach to the increasing diversity of citizens, and to retain our vigilant advocacy for good government and informing voters. All of us can take pride in being members and donors of the League of Women Voters.
~ Frances McIntyre, Advocacy Chair, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

Cinde Weatherby: Reminiscing about my attendance at the 51st National Convention: a small percentage for Internet and phone transactions. For information, contact Paul Sicotte at Compass Bank, 512-421-5741.

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 LWVAEF’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 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 LWVAEF.

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.
Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States in Dallas this past June, my only disappointment was that the Austin Area League was unable to fill all of its possible delegate seats. Of course, we weren't the only one, as I believe the roughly 650 delegates present represented about half of the eligible delegates nationally.

Those who could not go really missed out!

The convention was rich with information and opportunities to learn from League peers from across the nation. I was thoroughly energized by the speakers, debates among members on issues, and the indomitable spirit exhibited.

I described the experience to a fellow Leaguer as a massive smorgasbord or buffet. There was so much offered to take back to our local Leagues. My continuing homework is to organize and pass on materials and ideas on voter services, membership recruitment, development projects, and collaboration. I also found there is a capable cadre of staffers in Washington, D.C. who are working on our behalf and ready to provide us with support.

The most dramatically appealing aspect of the convention was the sharing of successful projects accomplished by other Leagues. The one project that caught my eye the most was the LWV-Massachusetts high school video contest. (I concur with Carol Olewin on this.) The theme was to produce a video telling the next Governor of the state what was on their minds. Winning videos were quite well done, with the top three covering the respective topics of big money in politics, livable wages, and a youth court program expansion. Those top three videos can be seen here.

I’d like to see LWVAA develop a similar contest aimed at high schools and at universities. With Board support and an energetic task force, I feel sure we could have an equally successful program. Other particular projects shared in sessions I attended covered student voter registration programs, registration of new citizens at swearing-in ceremonies, and fundraising / development programs.

I also learned quite a bit about the history of the League. I was astonished that in the early 1930s LWVUS members numbered just under 80,000 and rose to a peak of more than 155,000 in the mid-1960s. Since then we have had a fairly steady decline to today’s membership of just over 50,000. Given those numbers you can see that LWVAA isn’t the only one needing to expand and diversify our membership, although there are some individual Leagues with enviable increases and diversity successes.

Coming back from the convention - where we witnessed smart, energetic women and men working on really big and important issues - I’m re-energized to take that challenge head-on!

I’d also like to challenge us all to field enough members in 2016 to go to the next national convention in Washington, DC and fill all possible delegate slots available to us and some forfeited from other Leagues around the state. To check out some of the presentations and materials from the conference you can visit this link. Steve Murdoch’s presentation slides are worth your study.

~ Cinde Weatherby, Development Director, cindeweatherby@gmail.com