Summer, 2015

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LWVAA Calendar

Tues., July 5, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, or 6:30 pm, Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training, Travis County Voter Registrar’s office, 5501 Airport Blvd, Austin.

Sat., July 11, 10:00 - 11:30 am. Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training, First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Austin, 4700 Grove, Austin.

Sat., July 18 10:00 am - Noon Local Issues Discussion meeting at League office. 1011 West 31st Street, Austin.

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

Sat. Aug. 15, 10:00 am - Noon Local Issues Discussion meeting at League office. 1011 West 31st Street, Austin.

Tues., Sept. 2, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st St. Members.

Sat. Sept. 19, 10:00 am - Noon Local Issues Discussion meeting at League office. 1011 West 31st Street, Austin.

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.

The VOTER is partially funded by the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund.

If you received this email from a friend, click here to get on our list. You do not have to be a member. We will NOT give your email address to anyone else.

Board Contact List

Carol Olewin
President
Mary Cullinane
1st VP Program
Cinde Weatherby
2nd VP Community Relations
Jaci Collins
3rd VP Organization
Jacklyn Williams
4th VP Voter Services
Diane Davis
Secretary
Gwen Santiago
Treasurer
Judy Parken
Membership
Lea Masiello
Publicity/Publications
Kate Canby
Tues., Sept 22 National Voter Registration Day.

September, Date to be determined. Annual Kick Off, General Membership Meeting. More information coming.

Oct. 16-18 Texas Tribune Festival

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

From the President

General Membership Meeting, on May 19, elected new officers and directors for the 2015/2016 operating year. Officers serve staggered 2 year terms and directors serve 1 year terms. See sidebar of this edition of the Voter for the list of new officers and directors. In addition, members approved an operating budget and adopted the local program of study, Ladders to Success.

LWV Texas Leadership Training - Ten members of the Austin league attended a Texas LWV sponsored training session in San Antonio on June 27. They were Grace Chimane, Jaci Collins, June Conway, Mary Cullinane, Diane Davis, JoAnne Grimshaw, Lea Masiello, Frances McIntyre, Carol Olewin, Donna Pauler, Cindi Weatherby, and Jacklyn Williams. Training covered general operations of the League and gave Leagues an opportunity to share strategies and stories of success.

Materials for Upcoming LWV Studies Constitutional Amendment Study Committee Recommended Reading
The Constitutional Amendment study will explore what constitutes an appropriate and well-crafted constitutional amendment. For local Leagues that want to begin to prepare for the study, here is a paper published by The Century Foundation in 1999: Great and Extraordinary Occasions: Developing Guidelines for Constitutional Change. This paper, developed by a long list of eminent lawyers and scholars, presents eight guidelines for constitutional amendments. It analyzes historical amendments and contemporaneous proposals (those discussed during the 104th and 105th Congresses, 1995 - 1999) against these guidelines.

History of Campaign Finance Chart Available - Money in Politics Review. The History of Campaign Finance Chart, which outlines key statutes, actions and court cases in the 20th and 21st centuries, is now posted on the League Management website. The chart provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of campaign finance law through Congress and the Supreme Court. The chart can be found on the Money in Politics Review page. For inquiries on the MIP Review, you can contact Barbara Zia at MIPCommitteeChair@lwv.org.

Payday & Title Loans Study - Aug 1, 2015 State office will distribute Facts & Issues and Leaders Guide for the Payday and Title Loans Study. Public information and consensus meetings will be held in September and October.

LWV-TX State Convention; April 21-24, 2016, Houston, TX

Nominations for LWV State Board of Directors
Nominations are now open for the 2016-18 LWV-Texas Board of Directors. Click here for the Nomination form. It is also available on the LWV-TX website.

The Nominating Committee urges you and your board to consider nominating an outstanding League leader in your group. It may be you, as the outgoing president or...
one of your board, present or past, who has done an excellent job. Self-nominations and nominations by entire boards are welcome and encouraged. Feel free to publish the nomination form in your local VOTER if you think your general membership might be interested.

Service on the LWV-TX board gives the members the opportunity to set policies and make decisions that affect the political and League culture in all of Texas while meeting and interacting with outstanding members from all over the state. Board meetings are held four times a year in Austin. Each board member holds a portfolio with most of the work done from home, with input from a committee of the board. Email has simplified the process immensely. The experience is interesting, rewarding, and fun!

Nominations are due October 1. The Nominating Committee will interview nominees as we seek to balance the board with particular skill sets. Our particular known needs at this time are in Voters Service and Development. The slate of nominees will be presented at the state convention in March 2016. Service on the new board will begin June 1. Board appointments are for two years.

Thank you so much for your consideration and for your service to the League. With your help and participation, our grass-roots organization will continue to be a positive force in the political culture of Texas. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email me or any of the members of the committee.

Look for the 2015-2016 Kick-off meeting coming on a Sunday afternoon in September.

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

Texas Tribune Festival
LWV Discount

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. Once again, the Texas Tribune has graciously offered a significant discount for League members to attend their always exciting annual event. Here is how they describe it:

The annual Texas Tribune Festival is an innovative and engaging three-day event for people who are passionate about the issues that affect all Texans. Each year, the Festival brings together some of the biggest names in politics to explore the state's and nation's most pressing issues.

This year's event will feature more than 50 sessions in distinct programming tracks including public and higher education, immigration, health care, transportation, energy, the environment, criminal justice, and government transparency - all on The University of Texas at Austin campus.

For more information and a list of scheduled speakers and sessions, go to the event web page. To receive the League of Women Voters special pricing of only $150 for all three days, go to this exclusive registration page. This is a substantial discount. It is well worth the price for those of us who like to stay informed about the political issues of our times.

Discussion Group:

LWV ATX Classifieds

Cinde Weatherby, LWV Austin VP - Community Relations, is seeking applications for three positions to become an Action Team supporting our external relationships with the general community and the media and informing and supporting efforts of other Board members and volunteers. Please respond directly to Cinde at cindeweatherby@gmail.com or call 512-243-8491, if you want to join this high energy Team.

Catalyst for Collaboration - Will involve identifying other organizations with similar goals, acquiring and cataloging information about the organizations and voting-related activities. Executive Producer - Responsible for coordinating arrangements for and execution of at least two YouTube videos. Previous experience desired, but commitment and desire can be substituted. Chief Researcher - Responsible for acquiring and cataloging accepted / academic research related to voting. For example, why do people not vote? What does motivate them to vote?

None of the positions will have to begin work in a vacuum. Nascent information gathering is already underway, ready to be handed on to a leader who can devote maximum effort to successful outcomes. Positions open until filled. Act now if you know you are the right person for the job!
Local Issues at the City Level

The Local Issues Committee continues to meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10:00 - 12:00 in the League office on 31st Street. Coming on July 18, we will have Sheryl Cole as our guest. At our meeting in June we had former Councilwoman Laura Morrison, and it was very interesting to get her perspective on many of the issues before City Council. We previously had Mike Martinez. These former Council members are much more relaxed, smile a lot and seem to enjoy our discussions.

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. We will meet next on Saturday, July 18 at 10:00 in the League office, 1011 West 31st St. Our regular schedule is the 3rd Saturday in the month. Join us when you can.

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

A Different Take on Voter Services

On May 28th, at the request of the Sun City Community in Georgetown, the Austin Area LWV provided vote counters for the annual election of their Board of Directors. Since the ballots have to be signed, state law requires that they be counted by an outside entity. Because the LWV is known and respected as being totally non-partisan, we were asked to provide this service. Because our members step up whenever and wherever they are called upon, eleven volunteers gave their time for this event. Thank you to Carol Olewin, Jaci Collins, Jo Reichler, Hal Jennings Carol Eckelkamp, Cinde Weatherby, Julie Moore, Diane Davis, Margit Orange and June Conway. We also want to thank Joyce Robinson, a League member and resident of Sun City, who was the catalyst for this opportunity.

BONUS: In return for our effort, the Sun City Community made a contribution of $1500 to the Austin Area LWV. And provided lunch!

VOTER REGISTRATION WISH LIST

The time is NOW for planning and launching VR efforts. Here is my list of "Wannados" that will require a lot of time, expertise, contacts and grunt work to make them come true. All of that can be found among our members, so choose your passion and sign up ASAP. We will be having some committee-forming, brainstorming meetings in July and August.

1. High School Senior and ACC Campus Voter Education/Registration Day. Target: February, 2016. This effort needs at least FOUR months of pre-planning so preparation needs to begin NOW.

2. A "Register and Vote" student Video competition. This could be in collaboration with area high schools, ACC, UT. Who else? Target: winners at end of school year, 2016. Need to lay the groundwork NOW.

From the Webmaster

Some of you may have noticed a new addition to our website a few weeks ago. We now have a Facebook feed on the right-hand side of every page. This makes it easy to see what has been posted there and directly access it, if you are interested. Please check it out.

We also updated the photo "slider" at the top of the home page to show a picture taken at the recent Annual Meeting with a great big Thank You to Judy Clack.

We encourage you to "like" or "share" our Facebook posts to help expand the reach of these announcements to expand to all of your friends. See procedure below.

~ Hal Jennings, Webmaster, hal@jenningsweb.us

Changes to Texas Voter Laws

The 84th Legislature made several minor changes that impact Texas voting.

• Vote by mail (VBM) will now be available for all elections, including run-off elections, and those run by any entity. VBM applications will also be
3. Begin researching areas of Austin where VR is low and finding locations for VR. Target: beginning with National Voter Registration Day in September.

4. Advance coordination of the LWV efforts with the Travis County Tax Office and others - Senior Citizens, Disabled, UT, ACC Huston-Tillotson, St. Edwards and Concordia. Are there any other areas to be considered? Target: beginning with National Voter Registration Day in September.

What's on your wish list for Voter Registration and Voter Services? Send ideas to June Conway.

~June Conway Voter Registration Chair
june.cnwy@yahoo.com

LWV-TX Board Honors Capitol Corps Stellar Service

While in Austin for a quarterly meeting in June, the LWV-TX Board recognized and honored LWVAA members contributing their time as part of the Capitol Corps (CC). Corps members present received certificates and thanks from LWV-TX President Elaine Wiant and VP-Advocacy Laura Blackburn.

The numbers alone are impressive: CC members testified on 69 bills and registered official support or opposition to 135 bills. Leading in the statistics was Barbara Frandsen, who testified on 16 bills and registered positions on 37 bills (14 on one day). Second only to Barbara, was her husband Chris Frandsen. They formed the heart and soul of the Corps throughout the 84th Legislative Session from the beginning until the very end.

Special appreciation goes to each active member: Barbara, Chris, Jane McFarland, Carol Olewin, Brenda Koegler, Sara Groff, Betsey Singleton (San Marcos LWV), Julie Moore, Dianne Wheeler, Bill Hamilton, Anne Clark, and Delores Block. Those who were able to attend the supper are in the accompanying photo.

LWV-TX Legislative Director (and LWVAA member) Grace Chimene was unable to attend the recognition event because she was taking advocacy with her feet - walking nearly 300 miles from North Carolina to Washington with a group of activists calling attention to the closing of rural hospitals. Grace testified on 19 bills during the session, primarily on gun bills and those affecting women's and children's health issues.

A wrap-up on the specific bills that were followed during by LWV-TX Issue Chairs is included in the final 84th Session Legislative Newsletter forwarded to each League member July 3, 2015. It will also be posted on the LWV-TX website.

~ Cinde Weatherby, 2nd VP Community Relations, /Capitol Corp Coordinator
cindeweatherby@gmail.com

For bill numbers and additional details, go to the July 3rd edition of LWV-TX Legislative Newsletter.
Cinde Weatherby,
LWV-TX Voting Rights/Elections
Issue Chair
cindeweatherby@gmail.com
The Legislature approves $700,000 to make Open Records Request easier

Jelain Chubb, the Texas state archivist announced that the Texas State Library and Archives Commission is launching a new project - thanks to new funds from the state budget - that will hold archivable digital files from state government, which the public will eventually be able to search.

In the coming years, those emails, reports, databases, spreadsheets, Word documents, images and videos won't be sitting in individual state agencies, waiting for public record requests. Instead, the Texas Digital Archive will be the central place for all the digital files that state archivists deem of permanent, historical value. And once all those files are collected and categorized, they'll be searchable to the public.

The Texas State library and Archives Commission received $700,000 in funds in the next biennium championed by state Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, which will fund three positions devoted to the project and pay for storage costs. That, along with $6 million for the existing TexShare and TexQuest information programs and other funding increases, represents a 31 percent boost in state funds to TSLAC.

Texas archivists currently hold millions of paper files and only digitize those of particular interest to the public. This project will not scan and digitize all of those papers, which would take a significant amount of additional work and resources. Instead, the digital archive will consist mostly of "born-digital" files from state government, meaning files that were created electronically, rather than paper files.

With this project, Texas joins a national trend of states building digital repositories for government files while at the same time providing opportunity for a more open government.

Maxine's Musings.

I have worn many hats in the League of Women Voters, but a first was that of Advocacy Vice-president of the League of Woman Voters of Texas. Advocacy had been an elected director’s chair until the 1993 state convention. The State Board was thinking advocacy should be as important as that of the Vice-president for Programs. As a state board member, I was chairing the newly-adopted study of the Political Campaign Process in Texas. In order to be more effective to advocate for this position, as well as others, the Convention recognized the importance of an officer to advocate for League issues at the Legislature and voted to make this position a vice-president to which I was elected.

The position included writing the Legislative Newsletter which had been done on a typewriter and then mimeographed. I had just bought my first computer with a Lotus word processor that had a somewhat crude capability to produce the newsletters enabling me to format (a new term for me) in columns. Issue chairs, then called Program chairs (which I like better), were to send me their information on the status of bills during the legislative session to edit and include in the newsletter, as is done now. I often tore my hair out when I had trouble by-passing a template (another new

Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training

Volunteers needed to become Voter 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 Tues., July 7 and August 4.

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 July 11 and Aug. 8. at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4700 Grover, Austin. Space is limited. Sign up at this link.

~ June Conway,
Voter Registration Chair.
june_cnwy@yahoo.com

Honors and Memorials
term) which I could not alter, causing me time and grief since I was often computer-speak-clueless! The LWV-TX office staff was invaluable to me running off the final version every two weeks of the session.

This was the era of another new device, the fax machine. I thought it was the greatest invention since the transatlantic wireless! It was a big communication timesaver when events were happening rapidly in the legislature and decisions had to be made ASAP!

During my tenure at the LWV TX I worked on five grants which among them provided funding for a panel of four current retired members of the judiciary to be on a panel, discussing how to take partisan politics out of judicial elections. We partnered with Texas Young Lawyers Association. Arrangements were made by San Antonio League member Elaine Talarski for a recording to be produced at the PBS station in San Antonio, KLRN. The recordings were sent to local Leagues for rebroadcasting on other PBS channels. Another grant provided funds to publish the state VOTER’S GUIDE in libraries statewide where there were no Leagues.

Not too long ago, Travis County was the only large county in Texas without a hospital district. As president of the League in Austin, I served on the first communitywide steering committee working to establish such a district. The late Lowell Lebermann was the Vice-chair who conducted the meetings. We held many meetings with a great deal of the discussion concerning taxation since this would require voter approval. Promises were made that taxes would be low and would not increase beyond an established amount. Representatives from surrounding counties asked why they should contribute to any tax funding as they were already served by Austin hospitals gratis, paid for by Austin taxpayers! Eventually the district was established in 2004, and is now known as Central Health. Our own Leaguer, the late Rose Lancaster, served on the board of managers of the district for a number of years. Even though I was not at the finish, I was honored to be in on the ground floor.

Capital Metro, established by referendum in 1985, established mass transit in Austin and surrounding communities funded at the tax rate of 1%. The League supported a publicly owned community-wide transit system since 1972 and 1981. I chaired a new study in 1996 to update our positions. We published a Facts & Issues, See How They Run: How to Get From Here to There. A subsequent updated study was conducted in 1998. In the early nineties, Capital Metro was in a precarious position. The administration was under fire for bad practices and questionable behavior. Top administrators were let go and new personnel were hired. I was on a community-wide committee to research, evaluate, and make recommendations for the future to the Capital Metro Board. In the process, I was able to work with the Communications department to have signs on the sides of buses with the word V*O*T*E in colored letters! Below it said, Make Democracy Work: Cast Your Vote.

~ Maxine Barken  mbarkan@austin.rr.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:
One more individual has joined our ranks as new League member: **Ann Hudspeth** and **Angelica Thomas**. A warm welcome to you, Anne and Angelica. 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: **Robbie Ausley, Mary Blackstock, Jaci Collins, Toye Goodson Collins, Danelle Farmer, Carol Whitcraft Fredericks, Margaret Gomez, Hal and Judy Jennings, Bill and Suzy Reid, Gail Sulak, Angelica Thomas**. 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: **Clark Jobe, Genie Nyer, Mary Patrick, Carol Peters, Jan Williams** (last month) and **Betty Williamson**. 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](http://www.lwvaustin.org) or [click here for new memberships](http://www.lwvaustin.org) 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.
we can list you as a member of our League's Legacy Society.