

League of Women Voters
of Dallas

VOTER



A nonpartisan organization that encourages informed participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**The League of Women Voters of Dallas
Education Fund**

cordially invites you to the

Twelfth Annual

Susan B. Anthony Award Luncheon

Friday, February 15, 2008 at 11:30AM

Dallas Arboretum – Rosine Hall

8525 Garland Road, Dallas 75218

honoring

Virginia Bulkley Whitehill

who exemplifies the characteristics of Susan B. Anthony:
independence, persistence, determination, and dedication to
obtaining equal rights for all citizens of the United States of America

Featuring keynote speaker Colleen Walker

dynamic, new CEO of the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas

Honorary Chair: Catalina Garcia, M.D.

Host Committee: Dorothy B. Box, Eleanor Conrad, Carol C. Donovan, Harryette Ehrhardt, Lois Finkelman, Dr. Elba Garcia, Adlene Harrison, Veletta Forsythe Lill, Barbara Lischer, Julie Lowenberg, Joy Mankoff, Barbara Materka, Harriet Miller, Lucy Polter, Louise Raggio, Eleanor Sutherland, Becky Sykes, Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Molly Van Ort, and Linda Wassenich

Luncheon Chair: Michelle Manners

(214) 750-2197 or michelle_manners@ml.com

From the President's Desk

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On February 15, 2008 we will celebrate the courage, determination, and resolve of one woman, who pioneered change in this country by honoring another woman for what she too has done on a local front to influence women and others as well.

Honoring **Virginia "Ginny" Whitehill**, as the 2008 Susan B. Anthony awardee is an honor and a privilege for me. I met Ginny several years ago as we shared a stage and discussed this very topic. It was an interesting meeting that left me intrigued and impressed with her strength, resolve, tenacity, unrelenting message of inclusion for all, and her "this is the only way it will be" personality. Few women, if any, leave such an impression on me...So then, when I researched and read that in 1872 that Susan B. Anthony demanded that women be given the same civil and political rights and that she led a group of women to the polls in Rochester to test the right of women to vote, it is absolutely intentional and correct that Ginny be honored.

And so on this occasion where we celebrate Susan B. Anthony's boldness and refusal to accept the unjust laws directed at women, history also records that while awaiting trial, she continued to engage in highly publicized lecture tours and in March 1873, tried again to vote in city elections. She campaigned endlessly for a federal woman suffrage amendment through the National Woman Suffrage Association (1869-90) and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (1890-1906). In 1888 she organized the International Council of Women and in 1904 the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Although Anthony did not live to see the consummation of her efforts to win the right to vote for women, the establishment of the 19th amendment is deeply owed to her efforts.

Ginny is our current day Susan B. Anthony! She is a historically courageous woman. So from me to you. Ginny: Thank you for all you have done to advance the cause and influence of women. Thank you for your membership and loyalty to the League of Women Voters – Dallas. Thank you for exemplifying the characteristics of Susan B. Anthony. Thank you for your independence, persistence, determination, and dedication to obtaining equal rights for all citizens of the United States of America. Congratulations!

Now I am really glad that I am a member of the League, because I also get to know you.

Until next time...

Libbie Terrell Leell

Ann Adams says to

March 4 Primary Voters

The LWVUS Presidential Voters Guide now available online
at lwvdallas.org

February 13 and 14 Unit Meeting Times and Locations

Oak Cliff Unit – Mildred Pope

214-374-8067 or mderrpope@yahoo.com

10:00AM Wednesday Primrose Oaks
Community Room, 2999 S. Hampton Road at
Perryton Drive across from Kiest Park.

East Dallas Unit – Suzanne Wills

214-324-1594 or suzwills@swbell.net

Noon Wednesday Lakewood Branch
Library, 6121 Worth, bordered by Abrams &
LaVista.

Dallas Evening Unit – Miriam Foshay

214-503-7932 or mfoshay@speakeasy.net

6:30PM Wednesday Central Market
(2nd floor Community Room B)
5750 E. Lovers Lane at Greenville Avenue.

North Dallas Unit – Gayle Hurst

214-348-7112 **9:30AM Thursday**

Churchill Way Recreation Center,
6906 Churchill Way off Hillcrest.

Mockingbird Unit – Pat Vaughan

214-350-2623 or dallasvaughan@aol.com or

Eleanor Sutherland 214-368-8215 or
ews4167@att.net **9:30AM Thursday**

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church,

Unit Meetings Will Feature Voter Service Projects *Brends Marks, Voter Service VP*

February unit meetings will include
discussion and planning for the individual
unit's spring 2008 voter outreach project.

LWVD will, of course, be producing
candidate forums and the 2008 General
Election Voters Guide, but the voter
outreach projects to be discussed at
February meetings are the choices of the
individual units.

Bring your ideas and creativity and help us
get ready for what I know we all believe will
be a very dynamic election season.

Becky and Jane say Let's top last year's popular Unit baskets!

Check with your Unit leader
for this year's basket theme
and bring or send your contribution
to the meeting.

Michelle Manners says:

Don't Wait!

until February 1 to order your tickets for the
Susan B. Anthony Award Luncheon

Seating in Rosine Hall is limited! First come, first served!

Top Drug War Stories of 2007 **Suzanne Wills, Drug Policy Observer**

The longest war rages on. Here are some battles and skirmishes that took place during 2007.

International

At least 2,500 people were killed in **Mexico** in battles between drug trafficking organizations and the government or rival drug trafficking organizations. The Bush administration is planning to send \$1.4 billion to Mexico (the Merida Initiative) for transport helicopters, surveillance aircraft, night vision scanners, secure communications equipment, forensics, polygraph and human rights training and programs promoting judicial reform.

Since Evo Morales, President of **Bolivia**, shifted to a policy of "coca, yes; cocaine, no," conflict in the coca fields has dropped dramatically. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Colombia and Peru.

The poppy crop in **Afghanistan** hit another new record. Afghanistan now accounts for 92% of the global opium supply. Several think tanks have called for buying the crop and diverting it to medicinal uses.

National

More than **1.8 million arrests were made for nonviolent drug law violations**. By comparison, about **600,000 arrests** were made for *all violent crimes combined*.

Four presidential candidates, three Democrats and one Republican, called for major drug policy reform.

The Congressional Joint Economic Committee held hearings on "*Mass Incarceration in the United States: At What Cost?*"

For decades there has been a 100:1 disparity in the quantity of crack versus powder cocaine it takes to trigger mandatory minimum sentences. The **U.S. Sentencing Commission reduced crack sentences slightly**. The Supreme Court ruled that judges can make downward departures in crack sentences.

The DEA continued to **raid medical marijuana dispensaries in California**. More than 100 people face federal prosecution. The DEA sent letters to the dispensaries' landlords threatening to seize their property.

New Mexico became the 12th state to adopt a medical marijuana law. **Wisconsin and Michigan** expect to see serious medical marijuana efforts next year.

Texas

A bill by **Bob Deuell (R-Greenville)** to allow all county public health departments to operate **sterile syringe programs** passed the full Senate but was not given a hearing by the House public health committee.

Ruth Jones McClendon (D-San Antonio) attached an amendment to a budget bill (SB 10) allowing for a pilot syringe exchange program in Bexar County. Implementation has been blocked by District Attorney Susan Reed.

A bill to make medical use of cannabis an affirmative defense by **Elliott Naishtat (D-Austin)** was not given a hearing by the House public health committee.

Abuses in the **Texas Youth Commission** were exposed. About 12% of admissions to the TYC are for drug law violations.

The **Department of Public Safety** implemented new rules which place "no priority" on arresting "end users." DPS now targets "Drug Trafficking Organizations" with five or more identified participants. In the first year the number of drug seizures doubled while overall drug arrests declined 40%.

A bill by **Jerry Madden (R-Plano)** designed to reduce the number of inmates in county jails and to reduce the amount of time police spend on nonviolent law violations allows police to issue a court summons (similar to a ticket) to persons found in possession of up to 4 ounces of marijuana. Only Travis County has begun issuing court summonses.

January Combined Unit Meeting on the Inland Port



Meg Kimberland and **Suzy Wills** welcomed members and guests at Reverchon Park Recreation Center.



Betty Bernhardt has a question for our speaker, **Shirley Augurson**.

In keeping with last year's Program Planning Committee's recommendation to invite speakers on topics of interest, Program VP **Mildred Pope** made a timely choice with Region 6 EPA's Associate Director of Environmental Justice, Shirley Augurson.

Ms. Augurson spoke about the benefits and burdens associated with land development and explained that the EPA is charged with reviewing environmental impact statements (EIS) and enforcing relevant environmental laws. Citizen inquiries are also investigated. To her knowledge, however, no EIS has yet been submitted; a draft impact statement may be in process.

A lively discussion transpired, prompting a volley of questions about the development of this 21 square mile site. Developments already in place include the Dallas Logistics Hub by the Allen Group and the Union Pacific Intermodal Terminal. Board members **Cherlyn and Karlton Remington** promptly visited the area with video camera in hand and posted their tour on YouTube. Check it out at: www.YouTube.com/UDecide008.

You can also find a wealth of information on the City of Dallas Economic Development Committee's site: WWW.DALLAS-EDD.ORG. Be sure to look at the Agile Port chapter of the Forward Dallas report as well as Urban Land Institute Study. There's a lot to learn about the plans for an International Inland Port of Dallas (IIPOD). This might be an interesting League study.



Kathleen Matsamura
and
Mary Vogelson



Miriam Foshay and **Linda Sharp** smiled for the photographer, **Katherine Homan**.



Frances Rasco, Lea Frailey, and Gayle Hurst participated, too.

Voting Matters

Doug Taylor, League Member and Contributing Columnist

Ever wonder how accurate the count at the polls is? A lot of research has gone into accurately predicting elections and validating the count. One of the techniques used is called **exit polling**. The exit polls are carefully constructed to get a truly random representative sample of the voters exiting the polling place. Exit polls are anonymous and even the pollsters are selected so that they are randomly representative of the race and gender typical in the area.

The **accuracy of exit polls** is such that they are used by international election observers to detect fraud in elections around the world. Here in the U.S., some media and political commentators have downplayed the accuracy of the exit polls accusing them of being "wrong" during national elections in 2000 and 2004. The reality may be that the polls are correct; it's the vote counters who were wrong, or at least their machines.

Recent analysis by Steve Freeman in his book **Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen? Exit Polls, Election Fraud, and the Official Count** brings up questions about how well we audit our elections. Among the concerns is that after the election, the polling agencies changed their processes to "correct" the poll results to match the official election results. In other words, if there is election fraud, the pollsters will help cover it up instead of encouraging verification through recounts and audits.

Where are we today? Unfortunately, we are using the same equipment today as in 2004. In the **New Hampshire primaries** a huge discrepancy was found between the exit poll results, pre-election polls, and the actual vote count. In particular there was a discrepancy between the ballots counted on Diebold precinct ballot counters and those counted by hand. These are the same ballot counters that the Leon County Florida elections department found to be very easy to tamper with.

Many of the details are explained in the Brad Blog (<http://www.bradblogger.com/>). One candidate, **Dennis Kucinich, has asked for a hand recount**. Should the recount confirm allegations that the Diebold ballot counters are inaccurate or perhaps tampered with, it will bring into question the validity of using any electronic ballot counter for the fall elections if proper audit tools are not in place.

The fact that the media is not sufficiently skeptical to ask why the exit polls differ so much from the official count is a matter of concern to all of us. Blaming the pollsters rather than demanding accurate, verified ballot counts is very irresponsible and detrimental to the conduct of free and fair elections. **The media has a responsibility** not only to get the story right, but to do the work required to get the truth.

OWL, the Voice of Midlife and Older Women, will present a forum on **Age Discrimination at the Workplace**, with Terri Swain as featured speaker.
Thursday, February 21, 11:30-1:30 PM. Center for Community Cooperation, Gulf Coast Room, 2900 Live Oak.
For reservations & optional box lunch (\$7.50), call **The Senior Source, 214-823-5700** (no-shows will be billed).

43rd Annual
SMU Women's Symposium
February 28, 2008
Register online www.smu.edu/womsym
by February 22
For information call 214-768-4792