

League of Women Voters  
of Dallas

# VOTER



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

## March 12 and 13

### Oak Cliff Unit – Mildred Pope

214-374-8067 or [mderrpope@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:dallasvaughan@aol.com) or

**Eleanor Sutherland** 214-368-8215 or [ews4167@att.net](mailto:ews4167@att.net) **9:30AM Thursday**

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, Inwood at Mockingbird

## March Unit Meetings Focus on LWV-Texas Convention Planning

The League of Women Voters of Texas **Convention on April 4-6** will be practically right next door in **Fort Worth!** **Workshops** will be offered **on membership** recruitment and retention and on how **advocacy** works within the National, State and Local Leagues so that the League speaks with one voice.

In Plenary Sessions members will determine the issue(s) for study at the state level. In preparation, we will address the **pros and cons of various study proposals at our unit meetings**. Even if you can't attend the State Convention, your participation will help us instruct our delegates.

**In order to be a delegate and vote, attendee registration forms must contain our League President's signature.** March 21<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for Early Bird registration fees; start now by submitting your Registration form to the League Office for signature.

For more details, see the blue insert in this issue. **Registration forms are available on-line at [lwvtexas.org](http://lwvtexas.org) or inside your upcoming Texas VOTER.**



Enjoying the Susan B. Anthony luncheon are Elaine Wildman, Joyce Forney, Eleanor Sutherland, Ann Moy, Lynda Ender, and Beverly Tobian.

## *From the Vice President of Voter Outreach, Brenda Marks*

### **Board of Directors**

2007-2008

*Officers*

**President**

Libbie Terrell Lee

**Vice Presidents  
of**

**Organization**

Katherine Homan

**Program**

Mildred Pope

**Advocacy**

Lynda Ender

**Voter Outreach**

Brenda Marks

**Secretary**

Suzanne Wills

**Treasurer**

Jane MacAdams

**Directors**

Ann Adams

Barbara Downey

Miriam Foshay

Michelle Manners

Alix Mason

Cherlyn Remington

Karlton Remington

Nancy Todes

Adrienne Williams

Yes, Texas does matter! Do you find yourself wanting to participate in the Presidential Primary process but don't understand what to do? Don't worry, you're not alone!

The Republican Party appears to have settled on a nominee – Senator John McCain – as of press time. But for the first time ever, it appears that the Democratic Party nomination fight will come down to Texas. We will be seeing and hearing quite a bit about Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama between now and primary election day, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

For information about how to participate in your Republican Party Precinct Caucus and convention delegate selection process, go to [www.texasgop.org](http://www.texasgop.org) and click on the link "2008 Convention." The Republicans will hold their national convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in early September.

Texas Delegates to the Democratic Party's national convention, to be held in Denver, Colorado in late August, will be chosen according to a process too complex to outline in this short piece. For complete information on how to participate in your Democratic Party Precinct Caucus, go to [www.txdemocrats.org](http://www.txdemocrats.org), under the drop-down category titled "The Party", click on the link "Rules of the TDP". Article IV, Party Conventions, outlines all the rules and steps to attending your local Precinct Convention at Section B, "Precinct Conventions." It also lists the number of delegates that will be awarded for each State Senatorial District.

Be sure to arrive at your precinct polling place no later than 7:15 pm on March 4<sup>th</sup>, to participate in your party's caucus. Once there, sign in under the candidate of your choice, and let the games begin!

**VOTER OUTREACH ALL-STARS**

**Brenda Marks, Liz Wally, SunHee Hong, Sandy Thornton, Ora Jean Watson, and Toni Rose**





Carol Donovan introduced the speaker at the 12th Susan B. Anthony Luncheon, a function she played a large role in founding and nurturing in its first nine years.



Colleen Walker, Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas, delighted the audience with inspirational stories that high-lighted the common goals of our organizations and the contributions that Ginny Whitehill has made to these and other women's groups.



Katherine Homan and Awardee Ginny Whitehill are pleased to see everyone enjoy the results of this carefully planned event.

## Snapshots of a Sold-Out Susan B. Anthony Luncheon

A special program to honor Ginny's many accomplishments was supported by her family and friends

Photos courtesy of Judi Stewart and Lifetime Videos



Above: Eve France, Pat Vaughan, Ann Jones, and Amber Zimmermann.



Front row: Lois Finkelman, Adlene Harrison, Sandy Tinkham. Back row: Anne Leary, Candace O'Keefe Mathis, Dr. Elba Garcia, Veletha Forsythe Lill, Kirsten Brandt James, Rita Cox, Ruth Morgan, PhD.

## War on Disease Prevention Suzanne Wills, Drug Policy Observer

According to Centers for Disease Control about **30% of all HIV infections and almost all hepatitis C infections in 2004 were the result of injecting drugs with used needles**. These viruses are transmitted further via unprotected sex. Pregnant women transmit the diseases to their infants at birth or by breastfeeding.

The CDC, the American Medical Association and numerous other scientific bodies contend that **sterile syringe programs are highly effective** at preventing the spread of HIV-AIDS and other infectious diseases. The programs also provide HIV-AIDS testing and counseling, substance abuse treatment and screening for tuberculosis, hepatitis and other infections. **Texas is the only state that does not utilize such programs.**

During the 2007 legislative session **Senator Bob Deuell** (R-Greenville), a family physician, carried a **bill to allow** all county public health departments to operate **sterile syringe programs**. It **passed the Senate**. **Representative Dianne Delisi** (R-Temple), Chairman of the Committee on Public Health, **refused to give the bill a hearing** before her committee thereby preventing it from being voted on by the House.

**Representative Ruth Jones McClendon** (D-San Antonio) then attached an **amendment** to a budget bill (SB 10) allowing for a **pilot syringe exchange program in Bexar County**. It **became law**.

**District Attorney Susan Reed** immediately announced her intention to thwart the effort. She **warned that she could prosecute workers** in the program for **distributing drug paraphernalia**. Bexar County is **awaiting an opinion from Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott**.

Meanwhile members of the Bexar Area Harm Reduction Coalition began distributing sterile syringes. **Bill Day, 73, Mary Casey, 67, and Melissa Lujan, 39, described as Christian activists** by the Houston Chronicle, were **arrested and charged** with distributing drug paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and fines up to \$4,000.

"These are enormously decent, charitable people, and what's happening with them smacks of persecution," Neel Lane, an attorney with Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, told the San Antonio Express-News. The law firm is defending the group at no cost.

Seven federal reports have found that increasing access to sterile syringes saves lives without increasing drug use. The **LWVTX drug policy position supports syringe exchange programs**. Susan Reed has never explained her opposition.

Sources: *Houston Chronicle*, "Needled To Death", January 28, 2008.  
AP wire service, "Texas Needle-Swap Activists Face Charges", January 23, 2008.



**Standing: Suzy Wills, Katherine Homan, Karlton Remington, and Doty Box. Seated: Ann Adams, Nancy Todes, President Libbie Lee, and Luncheon Chair Michelle Manners.**

## **Voting Matters**

**Doug Taylor, League Member and Contributing Columnist**

As we are all aware, the primaries will be held on March 4<sup>th</sup> here in Texas. Early voting begins on February 19<sup>th</sup>. **For the first time in decades, the Democratic Party primary is closely contested at the Presidential level.** Since the Republican Party race is not as close and they have a different delegate selection process with fewer unpledged delegates, I will focus on the Democratic Party's national convention delegate selection process as it is implemented in Texas.

With the Presidential race being very close this year, **Texas will have considerable influence on the selection of the Democratic Presidential nominee.** As a result, many more voters are expected both in the Democratic primaries and the precinct caucuses this year.

**Texas has a total of 228 delegates** who are broken down as follows:

- 126 pledged delegates from the state senatorial districts based on primary results
- 102 pledged delegates broken down as follows:
  - 67 from the caucus/convention process (42 at large and 25 delegates consisting of party leaders, local elected officials, and legislators) proportionally allocated by the presidential preference of delegates attending the state convention
- 35 unpledged delegates broken down as follows:
  - 32 super delegates composed of Members of Congress, Members of the DNC, past House Speakers and former DNC Chairs
  - 3 unpledged delegates elected through a post primary convention process

**The struggle in the Democratic Party is over the super delegates who compose about 20% of the national convention delegates.** Both leading campaigns are lobbying these delegates for their votes. The Democrats created super delegates in order to prevent a brokered convention, which was very common prior to the 1950s. Unfortunately, in a close race it's the super delegates who can make the selection of the party's nominee in effect brokering the convention. Since most of these super delegates are party insiders, advantage may go to the candidate who is a party insider. On the other hand, many are elected officials who would not want to go against the wishes of their constituents. This should make for a very exciting and interesting race for all of us, and it **will drive up voter turnout considerably.**

For more information on super delegates:

The Wikipedia article: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superdelegate>

The Lone Star Project: <http://www.lonestarproject.net/>

The Superdelegate Transparency Project: [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Superdelegate\\_Transparency\\_Project](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Superdelegate_Transparency_Project)

2008 Democratic Convention Watch: <http://demconwatch.blogspot.com/>



**Standing:** Miriam Foshay, Susybelle Gosslee, and Theresa Daniel. **Seated:** Barbara Materka, Linda Wassenich, Kristen Castellanos, as well as Linda Hanratty and Edie Jones from the Tarrant County League.



Working hard behind the scenes helped Jane Pak and Becky Brakke (top left) produce an enticing Silent Auction for the second year in a row. Adrienne Rosenberg (top right) was one their helpful table volunteers. Many creative donations and generous bidding assured its success. Ginny contributed thoughtful personal items that her admirers will continue to enjoy for years to come. Our major fundraiser for the year, this event will make possible many exciting and educational activities in the upcoming election year.

### **A Voter Outreach Volunteer Opportunity** Doug Taylor, *Voting Matters* Columnist

Dallas County Elections Department Administrator Bruce Sherbet and I were recently interviewed by Adell Campbell on her radio show sponsored by the **North Texas Reading and Radio Resource for the Blind** (R&RR). We discussed the importance of getting out to vote, how to find out where to vote, and the various ways to vote - such as by mail or using the electronic voting terminal set up for the visually impaired.

Before voting, however, the visually impaired need, as we all do, to become informed about the candidates and their positions on the issues. **Leaguers** can help in this regard by **volunteering to be a reader of our Voters Guide** so that R&RR can record and distribute it to the blind. The R&RR building is located in Downtown Dallas, across from the KERA Studios. To volunteer, go to their web page at <http://www.readingresource.org/> or call 214-871-7668.

### **International Women's Day 2008**

**Sunday, March 9 Noon – 3:00 PM**  
**The Women's Museum at Fair Park**

#### **What You should Know About Women**

Cultural displays, information booths, music, entertainment, refreshments, and conversations

**For information 214-319-6696 or [www.wordsofwomen.org](http://www.wordsofwomen.org)**