

League of Women Voters  
of Dallas

# VOTER



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

## Your Help Needed!

**Rose Harder and Katherine Homan, Luncheon Co-Chairs**

Our Ed Fund's single annual fund-raising event is just around the corner! **All proceeds go toward providing voter education services** such as nonpartisan opportunities for the public to hear speakers at **issue and candidate forums** and increased distribution of the League's widely-used, nonpartisan **Voters Guide**.

In store for Susan's Birthday Bash this year is **our great honoree, Julie Lowenberg, and Dallas County Commissioner Maurine Dickey, Rev. Dr. Sheron C. Patterson and Ann Stuart, Ph.D. saluting our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** and celebrating 90 years since the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granting women the right to vote.

**Your donations** of gift baskets, restaurant gift cards, movie, orchestra, opera, theater and lecture series tickets, jewelry, art and handmade items, vacation stays, celebrity luncheons-- you-know-what--**are essential for our success!** Please call **Becky Brakke** (214-363-0921) or **Jane Pak** (972-233-2715) **no later than Sunday, February 7 to arrange delivery of your donation or indicate your availability to volunteer at the Auction tables.**

Deadline for program items is **January 22**, while you have until **February 1** to purchase tickets. **Plan your participation now!**

## Public Information Forum on the International Inland Port of Dallas (IIPOD)

You do not want to miss our invited panelists: Dallas County Commissioner **John Wiley Price**, City Councilman **Tennell Atkins** and representatives from the **Allen Group** and **EPA** addressing us on the status of development at the IIPOD. Mark your calendars now to be at **Reverchon Park Recreation Center**, 3505 Maple Avenue, Dallas 75219 from **11:30-1:00PM on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**IIPOD** is a public-private partnership for a **regional intermodal distribution center** located in Southern Dallas County, at the confluence of I-35, 45 20 and future Loop 9. This project, covering 234,000 acres and encompassing 12 municipalities, is **a catalyst for Southern Sector investment, job growth and development of sustainable communities.** There are multiple development projects underway in the impact area, with the largest being led by the Allen Group. Other developers active in the area include ProLogis, Hillwood, Duke and First Industrial.

As envisioned, IIPOD will use technology to speed the processing of cargo freight from deep-water ports to nationwide locations. The total project is estimated to take 30 plus years to complete.

If you want to reserve a **box lunch, please** contact the Office (214-688-4125 or [lvvdallas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lvvdallas@sbcglobal.net)) **before Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>.** Payments of \$10 will be accepted at the door.

## Units Meet on January 13 and 14

As you are well aware, Texas Texas needs to determine how it is going to pay for transportation improvements and maintenance in the future. This month the Units will follow up on our **Rails & Roads Transportation Forum** by learning about **Regional Mobility Authorities (RMAs)** from **Frederick Lopez**, who has an extensive background in transportation. During the most recent 81<sup>st</sup> Texas legislative session, he was the Legislative Director for State Representative Allen Vaught focusing on transportation policy. Currently, he is pursuing a Master's of Arts in Urban Affairs and is evaluating the impact of Transit Oriented Development for TxDOT as a graduate research assistant to Dr. Jianling Li at UT-Arlington.

(Continued on Page 3)

**2009-2010**

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*From the  
President's Desk*



The League of Women Voters of Dallas is delighted that **Julie Lowenberg**, former LWVD President and outstanding advocate for better lives for women, children, and families, will be our Susan B. Anthony honoree this February. We are looking forward to this luncheon to honor Julie and also to celebrate 90 years of women's voting rights and the 90th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. Please mark your calendars for February 12 and join us.

National League will be determining advocacy priorities for 2010 at the LWVUS board meeting in late January. If you would like to submit suggestions, send an email to [jduffy@lwwv@aol.com](mailto:jduffy@lwwv@aol.com) by January 15. Indicate whether your suggestion is submitted as an individual or as the result of a committee or League meeting. All suggested advocacy priority topics will be compiled into a report to the board for consideration.

LWVD continues to be busy providing voter outreach. There are efforts to serve community college students with registrations at El Centro and upcoming drives at Eastfield. The board supports expanding this service to the other community college campuses.

LWVD will also be working with LWV-Irving on new citizen voter registrations at the Immigration and Naturalization Service offices in Las Colinas. Please let us know if you are interested in helping with either of these voter projects.

Please remember LWVD's holiday non-event fundraiser if you haven't yet had a chance to make a contribution. To those of you who have already donated, a huge thank you!

To all, a joyous holiday season and the hope that 2010 will be a happy and healthy year for you and yours.

## Register New Citizens to Become New Voters

*Cherlyn Remington, Voter Outreach VP*

**Naturalization ceremonies** are no longer being held at the Dallas Convention Center but in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' newly opened district offices at **6500 Campus Circle Drive East, Irving, TX. 75063.**

We will be partnering with our sister League in Irving to help new citizens there become new voters at **9:30AM on Friday, January 8 and January 15.**

If you are interested and available, please contact the Office (214-688-4215 or [lvydallas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lvydallas@sbcglobal.net)) for details. You do not need to be a deputized Voter Registrar to be of assistance.

## Units Meeting on January 13 and 14

(Continued from Page 1)

Laws enacted by the 2001 and 2003 Legislatures authorized the establishment of RMAs with significant powers over road creation. Essentially, these are **county or multi-county toll-road authorities entrusted with financing, designing, building, operating and maintaining toll roads** and other transportation projects. RMAs are not directly accountable, however, to the people of Texas. No voter approval is required for their creation, for the selection of their board members or staff or for the selection and funding of their toll projects. [www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/ctrma05/intro.html](http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/ctrma05/intro.html)

Come with a guest and further your education on this important and timely topic!

## Nominations Are Now Open

*Arline Pitt, Chair, Nominating Committee*

Yes, we are early this year with the search for League leadership positions. Adjusting to the changes in our fiscal year, adopted at the annual meeting last May, the next annual meeting will be March 27. This means a shorter amount of time to prepare a slate of officers to present to the voting membership. The Nominating Committee consists of elected members, **Claire Buie Chaney, Arline Pitt,** and **Linda Sharp,** as well as board-appointed members, **Mildred Pope** and **Suzy Wills.**

In addition to the **President Elect** who has at least a year to learn the ropes, the following positions with two-year terms will expire this year:

**Treasurer**

**Advocacy VP**

**Program VP**

**Voter Outreach VP**

**4 Directors**

We are looking for people to offer their time and talents to keep the League a vital and active organization. **New faces and new ideas are welcome and needed for keeping our group relevant and in tune with an ever-changing society.**

Don't be shy. Toot your own horn and nominate yourself. Or if you know of another LWV-D member who would be a good candidate, let us know. **Send in your nominations to Arline Pitt** at [pittnik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pittnik@sbcglobal.net) or the LWV-D office at [lvydallas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lvydallas@sbcglobal.net) or 214-688-4125.

## Unit Meeting Places and Times

**Wednesday Unit** meets at 10AM in Piney Woods Room at Center for Community Cooperation, 2900Live Oak.

**Evening Unit** meets at 6:30PM at SMU's Canterbury House, 3308 Daniel Avenue near Hillcrest. Note time and place change.

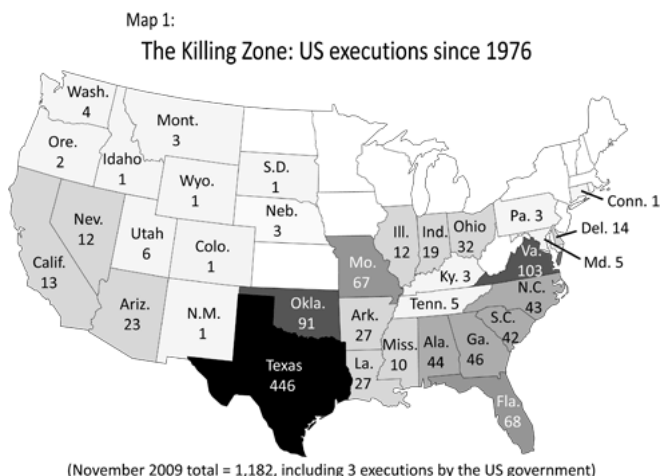
**Thursday Unit** meets at 9:30AM at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, Inwood & Mockingbird. Note place change in 2010.

(Continued from Page 5)

The execution of those with mental illness or “the insane” is clearly prohibited by international law. Virtually every country in the world prohibits the execution of people with mental illness. The execution of someone who does not understand the reason for, or the reality of, his or her punishment, violates the U.S. Constitution (*Ford v. Wainwright*, 1986). The *Ford* decision left the determination of sanity up to each state.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court prohibited the death penalty in persons with mental retardation in *Atkins v. Virginia* (2002), the Texas Legislature has not enacted statutory provisions governing the standards and procedures to be followed in these cases. Some believe that Texas is still executing people who may be mentally retarded. Eleven people have been removed from death row since 2002 due to mental retardation.

Administration of the death penalty can be very costly. A report from the Death Penalty Information Center states: “The death penalty in the U.S. is an enormously expensive and wasteful program with no clear benefits for achieving a safer society. All of the studies on the cost of capital punishment conclude it is much more expensive than a system with life sentences as the maximum penalty.” For some people, the fact that the death penalty is more expensive is counter intuitive, but legal expenses related to court costs of both the trial and appeals process makes life in prison less expensive. As many states face painful budget cutbacks, it is an appropriate time to consider whether maintaining the costly death penalty system is being smart on crime.



Source: US Bureau of Justice Statistics, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/)  
Death Penalty Information Center, [www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/)

A letter to the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice signed by 30 law enforcement officials states, “By pursuing life without parole sentences instead of death, resources now spent on the death penalty prosecutions and appeals could be used to investigate unsolved homicides, modernize crime labs, and expand effective violence prevention programs.”

In 2006 LWVUS Convention delegates concurred with an LWV-IL position to adopt a national position: “The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.”

In 2001-02, LWV-TX studied capital punishment, reaching a limited consensus calling for a ban on the execution of the mentally retarded, mentally ill, and juveniles under age 18 when the crime was committed, as well as for a life imprisonment option without parole and for a moratorium on all executions in Texas while an official study of the capital punishment system in Texas is conducted.

Has the time come for the LWV-Texas to bring its position in line with the LWVUS position supporting abolition of the death penalty? If a bill to abolish the death penalty were to be introduced in the Texas legislature, we could not support it under our current position. Local leagues are encouraged to organize a unit or general meeting on the death penalty so that every member is informed.



Source: Death Penalty Information Center, <http://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions>; US Bureau of Justice Statistics, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/)

## **Capital Punishment**

### **Susybelle Gosslee, Capital Punishment Issue Chair for LWVTX**

Since the suspension of the death penalty in Japan in September, 2009, the United States is the only developed nation that continues to execute its citizens. The unmasking of the political agenda behind state-sanctioned executions during the past 25 years and the growing number of exonerations of prisoners on death row could lead to the abolishment of the death penalty in the US.

Executions have taken place in the U.S. since the restoration of capital punishment in 1976 following a 1968 moratorium won by lawyers from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) recognized that the death penalty as practiced in the U.S. was in violation of the 8th and 14th Amendments, and therefore, unconstitutional. Overwhelming evidence of racial, gender, and social class discrimination ended the administration of the death penalty.

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall presented a concurring opinion in that case and delivered the announcement of the abolition of the death penalty in the US:

*In striking down capital punishment, this Court does not malign our system of government. On the contrary, it pays homage to it. Only in a free society could right triumph in difficult times, and could civilization record its magnificent advancement. In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute. We achieve "a major milestone in the long road up from barbarism" and join the approximately 70 other jurisdictions in the world which celebrate their regard for civilization and humanity by shunning capital punishment.*

Specific death penalty statutes were held to be unconstitutional; thus opening the possibility for states to rewrite their statutes. State legislators focused on "guided discretion" allowing aggravating and mitigating factors in determining sentencing, and these were approved by the Supreme Court in 1976 in the "Gregg Decision." The Supreme Court also allowed the death penalty to be constitutional under the 8th Amendment, so it was reinstated.

The first step to understanding current U.S. politics of the death penalty is to identify the states that have practiced state sanctioned executions most often since the end of the moratorium. Map 1 illustrates by state all of the executions that have been carried out under civil authority in the US since 1976. The most striking feature is the regional disparity in the use of the death penalty. Although 35 states have retained capital punishment, only a few jurisdictions in the Deep South and the Midwest have regularly administered it. California, Nevada and Arizona are the exceptions. (See Map 1 and Chart 1 on Page 4)

Even within the South, there is a striking difference in the use of the death penalty. While the Southern region has most of the U.S. executions, Texas surpasses all other states by a large margin. Beginning in 1976, the U.S. started to increase executions, while during the 1980s and 90s, the death penalty was on the decline around the world. Most of New England and the Midwest have not had any executions.

No other state comes close to Texas with its 446 executions since 1976. Texas accounts for more than 45% of the executions in the South and 37.5% of all executions in the nation. There have been 24 Texas executions out of a total of 50 at press time, with more scheduled in late 2009 and in 2010. Texas has performed almost one-half of the executions that have taken place in the South since 1976. The rapid rise in Texas executions started in 1995 and continues to date, indicating a political agenda that is tough on crime.

The recent allegation of a Texas execution of an innocent man in 2004 could be the turning point for the death penalty. No one wants to kill a person for a crime he did not commit. No one knows for sure how many innocent people have been executed, but since 1973, the number of people who have been exonerated is 138 in 26 states. A total of 43 death row inmates have been exonerated in just the states of Florida (23), Texas (10), and Oklahoma (10).

(Continued on the preceding page.)

United States  
**Census  
2010**



**IT'S IN OUR HANDS**

## **2010 Census Count Is Only Two Months Away**

*Katherine Homan, Organization VP*

In addition to our retaining full congressional representation, there is **a lot at stake in the 2010 Census** since that data will directly affect the fair and accurate allocation of state and federal funding in our community over the course of the decade. The facts gathered in the Census will shape decisions about public health, senior services, transportation, education, neighborhood improvements and more.

Be sure to **promptly complete and return the short and simple questionnaire form** that will arrive in **mid March**. This will substantially save the time and expense of having a census worker come to your home for you to be counted.

As a 2010 Census partner, our League is encouraging everyone at all our gatherings to promote the Census response and spread the following information:

- **The 2010 Census questionnaire only asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, and whether the respondent owns or rents his/her home.** It does not ask about the legal status of the respondent.
- Answers are completely confidential, protected by law, and **used only for statistical purposes.**
- Census workers are subject to \$250,000 fine and/or a 5 year prison term for disclosing information to any other government agency – **including law enforcement, IRS, Welfare, FBI, Immigration, etc.**
- **No court of law, not even the President of the United States, can access the individual responses.**

Our **Partnership Specialist** at the Dallas Regional Census Center is **Tracy Lea**. If you have questions or would like materials to distribute at other organizations, she can be reached at **214-797-8235** (cell) or [tracy.lea@census.gov](mailto:tracy.lea@census.gov).

## **TIF Study Committee Report**

*Barbara Downey, Co-Chair*

Meeting again, with appreciation, at the home of **Beverly Tobian**, all active Committee members were present. An issue that particularly interests **Jane Davis, Genie Fritz, and Judy Jacks** is the membership of TIF Boards. They are looking at the duplication on various boards, the lack of appointed chairmen, and the representation of various interests—business, other taxing districts, and citizens.

**Linda Camin** and **Brenda Marks** have been gathering information about City and State standards for TIFs to help us evaluate the city's compliance. **Susybelle Gosslee** and **Linda Sharp** have been reading annual reports from existing TIFs and will create a summary in spread-sheet format. Susybelle has also contacted the Houston League's point person on TIFs, **Jan Wilbur**, who provided additional information.

**Mary Vogelson** reported on the League's original opposition to the first Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (1988) based on League positions on the best use of tax dollars and urban planning. We discussed the need to develop criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of TIFs. Mary agreed to head up the evaluation from the public policy perspective, looking at the civic impact.

Charged with a presentation to the membership in April, we suggested a panel with representation from the City Council and Staff, School of Urban and Public Affairs at UT Arlington, a developer, and a current TIF Board member. It will be a combined Unit Meeting open to the public.

# League Bulletin Board

## Contributions

**Ann Adams; Joan Berger; Betty Bernhardt** in honor of **Barbara Downey** and **Katherine Homan; Phyllis Bernstein; Liz Branch; Amy Louise Carter; Winthrop Clark; Mary Crosson; Jennifer Cutrer**, Patron Member; **Sally Eatmon; Agnes Ellsworth; Sandy Greyson; Katherine Homan; Guy Huntley; Julie and Mike Lowenberg; Jacquelyn McElhaney** in honor of Victoria M. Benedict; Sarah Moore in honor of Mary John Barnett; **Lucie Peyton-Carlton** in honor of Neyl Spitler; **Ellen Solender; Eleanor Sutherland; Susan Tribble** in honor of **Barbara Materka; Jo Tuck; Lupe Valdez; Suzi Wills; Betty Lou Winslow.**

## Calendar

### January

- 7 - Board Meeting at 11
- 13/14 - **Unit Meetings**
- 14 - Feb.VOTER Deadline
- 21 - **General Meeting**

### February

- 4 - Board Meeting at 11
- 11 - Mar.VOTER Deadline
- 12 - SBA Award Luncheon
- 16-26 - Early Voting for March Primaries

## Welcome, New Members

**Vicki Garza**

2601 Hibernia St, Ste 200

Dallas 75204

[vicki@garzacreative.com](mailto:vicki@garzacreative.com)

**Sally Lowry**

P.O. Box 794237

Dallas 75379

[ghbdr@aol.com](mailto:ghbdr@aol.com)

**Linda Stearns**

Reinstated Member

5543 Monticello Ave

Dallas 75206

214-768-4179

[lindastearns711@yahoo.com](mailto:lindastearns711@yahoo.com)

## December VOTER Correction

Omit www and use

**Members.LWVDallas.org**

to access the online

Membership Directory.

**Please join our Tom Thumb/Safeway  
Good Neighbor Program  
2917**



**LAST CALL  
FOR  
DONATIONS**

**Gayle Hurst, Dottie Box** and SBA Co-chairman **Rose Harder** are modeling scarfs by **Sue Lichten**, a Chico's bracelet from **Gayle Hurst**, and a gift certificate from Fish City? Cristina's Mexican Restaurant? the Dallas Symphony? Landmark Theatres? Could be any of those or something else altogether. The auction tables will be full of surprises. **What will you contribute?**

## Help Make Democracy Work

# Join the **League of Women Voters of Dallas** *Not for Women Only!*

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DALLAS DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters of Dallas (LWVD), in both its values and practices, affirms its belief in, and commitment to, diversity and pluralism.

LWVD welcomes any person to participate in any activity of LWVD, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or political persuasion.

LWVD recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

LWVD subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that inclusiveness enhances its capability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVD affirms its commitment to reflecting diversity in its membership, board, staff and programs.

### Membership Levels

\_\_\_\$60/year Individual \_\_\_\$30 additional member at same address  
\_\_\_\$150/year Patron \_\_\_\$500/year Benefactor

\_\_\_Reduced Membership rates available upon request. Call 214-688-4125  
\_\_\_\$25/year Student \$\_\_\_\_ Contribution to LWVD Scholarship Fund

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

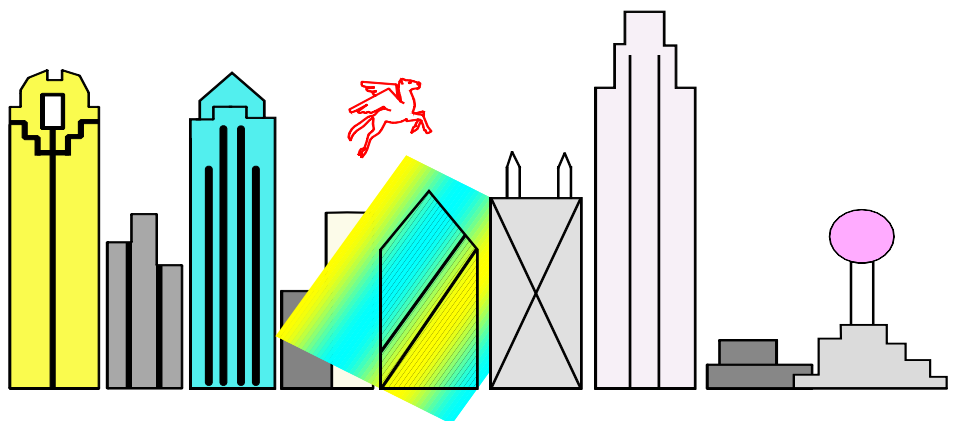
Phones: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail** a check payable to **LWVDallas** with this information  
to the **League of Women Voters of Dallas**  
at the address noted below

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