

League of Women Voters
of Dallas

VOTER



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

Our President Reports on Local, State, and National Meetings

This past spring was busy, with Leagues at all three levels--local, state, and national--holding their annual or biennial meetings. The Dallas League's annual meeting was in March and the LWV-TX and LWVUS conventions were held in April and June respectively.

League of Women Voters of Dallas Annual Meeting

LWV-Dallas' meeting at the downtown library was well-attended, with over 50 members present. They heard reports on the past year's activities and achievements, voted to retain \$60.00 annual dues, and approved a budget for 2010-2011. New board members **Kathleen Anderson, Kristen Castellanos, Michelle Manners, Monita McGhee,** and **Elizabeth Walley,** and nominating committee members **Susan Grundy, Diane McQuarie,** and **Carol Donovan** were elected.

The **Economic Development Tools study was continued** for a second year and no new local studies were recommended for 2010-2011. Fair Park, the Trinity River project, and solid waste were recommended as topics for upcoming general meetings, and transportation and housing as topics for unit meetings. **All program support positions were retained.**

Two bylaw changes were approved--the first removed language stating that "those who make a lump-sum life membership payment to LWVUS shall be paid life members." LWVUS no longer allows this and local bylaws must conform with theirs. The second change was to add a sentence under "Membership" that states that "those who choose on the dues renewal form to 'support the League financially but participate minimally' shall not be counted when determining quorums for general meetings."

Barbara Downey was presented with the Bulkley Award and **Angela Hunt** with the Macdonald Award. **Gayle Hurst, Cherlyn Remington,** and **Eleanor Sutherland** received President's Meritorious Service Awards. **Carol Brin** was recognized for 50 years of League membership.

Business was concluded in an hour and a half and that made everyone happy!

League of Women Voters of Texas Convention

The April LWV-TX convention in San Marcos was also efficient and productive. Lasting just 2-1/2 days, it was packed with plenary sessions, workshops, an environmental awards luncheon, and a dinner celebrating long-time League leader Maxine Barkan and LWV's 90th anniversary. There was **a silent auction and a live auction, both chaired by Dallas' Susybelle Gosslee.** There were approximately 100 delegates at the convention; the Dallas League was well-represented with six delegates--**Lynda Ender, Miriam Foshay, Julie Lowenberg, Mary Vogelson, Elaine Wiant,** and **Sandy Greyson.**

During the plenary sessions, ably chaired by LWV-TX president Karen Nicholson, delegates heard reports on **development and marketing (by Dallas Leaguer and LWV-TX Public Relations V.P. Linda Wassenich), services to local Leagues (by Dallas Leaguer and LWV-TX Organization V.P. Barbara Weinstein),** citizen education, advocacy, budget, fiscal management, and nominations. Issue chairs gave reports covering their areas of expertise.

There was one bylaw change adopted which clarified that the state board, as well as local Leagues, can propose a concurrence at convention. The national board had adopted this same amendment at their convention in 2008.

(Continued on Page 5)

New Board of Directors Meets in Retreat for Orientation and Planning

2010-2011

Board of Directors

Officers

President

Sandy Greyson

President-Elect

Michelle Manners

Vice Presidents

VP Organization

Katherine Homan

VP Program

Mildred Pope

VP Advocacy

Kathleen Anderson

VP Voter Outreach

Kristen Castellanos

Secretary

Suzanne Wills

Treasurer

Miriam Foshay

Directors

Ann Adams

Judy Coats

Barbara Downey

Carolyn Dunnigan

Rose Harder

Monita McGhee

Elizabeth Walley

On Saturday, July 24, 2010, the Board of Directors of the the Dallas League met in an education classroom at St. Thomas the Episcopal Church for discussion and planning of the coming League year. The profiles of our newest Board members are listed below.

Michelle Manners, President Elect

Michelle has been an active member of the League of Women Voters Dallas since 2000, serving on the Board of Directors as Treasurer and Membership Chair, as a member of the Municipal Bond Study Committee, and as Chair of the Susan B. Anthony Award Luncheon.

An Associate Vice President – Investment Officer with Wells Fargo Advisors, Michelle is a Certified Financial Planner™ with a MBA from the University of Dallas. In her spare time, she serves on the board of The Friends of the Dallas Public Library, has been an active member of The Wilkinson Center Auxiliary, and in the Swiss Avenue Historic District, where she has lived for seventeen years.

Kathleen Anderson, VP Advocacy

When **Kathleen** joined the League in 2004, she lists her interests as health services, housing, local government, voter rights and election, and women's issues. In a previous position she helped the Oak Cliff Unit find a regular meeting place at Primrose Oaks and often joined us there for meetings. Currently she is a Community Liason and Patient Advocate for a Home Health Service in Duncanville.

Kristen Castellanos, VP Voter Outreach

Kristen has been a member of the League of Women Voters since 1998. From 2001-2005 she served on the Board of Directors as a Director and as Secretary. After earning her MSW from University of Texas at Arlington in 2000 she worked in the District Office of State Representative Harryette Ehrhardt. Currently she is enjoying her job as full time mother to Nathan and Lola Anne. In her spare time she volunteers for the Wilkinson Center and her son's school Montessori Children's House and School.

Monita McGhee, Director

A member attending the League's Evening Unit, **Monita** has worked for only two organizations since graduating from Texas A&M Commerce: the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and the Community Council of Greater Dallas.

Her current involvements include development of caregiver support systems in institutions of faith, planning for a coordinated transportation system in the North Texas area for seniors and people with disabilities and promoting healthy lifestyles of seniors through participation in evidence based disease prevention programs.

Monita has two children, Narada and Brandon and one grandson, Narada Jr., and is a member of the Inspiring Body of Christ Church. Her interests include planning family functions, caring for grandson, walking, reading and listening to music.

Elizabeth Walley, Director

Blessed with a good family, education, and health, **Elizabeth Walley** gives back through volunteerism in political areas. She is interested in the registration and education of young people, particularly those who come from non-voting families and likely to remain uninvolved in the voting process, thus continuing a cycle of under-representation. Most recently Elizabeth spearheaded a League voter registration drive at Eastfield Community College.

A retired Certified Public Accountant, Elizabeth loves feral cats and turtles, opera and classical music, and playing the piano.

The Mayor Brings a Proclamation for the League's 90th Anniversary and Speaks About The Greening of Dallas



Mayor Leppert and Program VP Mildred Pope

First came the presentation of the Proclamation recognizing the 90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Then Mayor Tom Leppert launched into a description of the greening of Dallas.

He said that 10 or 15 years ago we weren't even interested; now we're out in front of the pack. He mentioned many of the city's accomplishments from the green buildings to energy recycling and water conservation. Community gardens and bike trails need more work. The Inland Port is up and running with a second one in the planning stages. Problems include Southwest Center Mall and local sidewalks.

America Speaks Event Wrap-Up Katherine Homan, Organization VP

On Saturday, June 26th, 3,500 Americans convened a National Town Meeting here in Dallas, and in Albuquerque, NM; Augusta, ME; Casper, WY; Chicago, IL; Columbia, SC; Des Moines, IA; Detroit, MI; Grand Forks, ND; Jackson, MS; Overland Park, KS; Pasadena, CA; Louisville, KY; Missoula, MT; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; Portsmouth, NH; Richmond, VA; and Silicon Valley, CA. and sent a message to Congressional leaders and the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform about the importance of action to strengthen the nation's economy in the short-run and their willingness to make tough choices to address growing deficits over the long-term.

Using keypad polling devices and networked computers, participants identified and prioritized the core values they thought should guide our country's fiscal future. Fifty-one percent of participants supported the stimulus legislation, while thirty-eight percent said they were not supportive of it. The concerns about the state of the economy spanned unemployment and the need for more jobs, the amount of personal debt and federal deficit, the slow pace of economic recovery, too much government spending and involvement, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, lack of support for small businesses and distrust of elected officials to fix what is broken fiscally.

Reforms that were preferred by participants from the options provided included:

- * Raising the limit on taxable earnings so it covers 90% of total earnings.
- * Reducing spending on health care and non-defense discretionary spending by at least 5%.
- * Raising tax rates on corporate income and those earning more than \$1 million.
- * Raising the age for receiving full Social Security benefits to 69.
- * Reducing defense spending by 10% – 15%.
- * Creating a carbon and securities-transaction tax.

Specific messages participants asked to have sent to Congress and the President's Commission were:

- * Please find the political will to use this input as if it were coming from a powerful lobbying group—because we are.
- * Abandon the failed politics of partisanship. You can't demonize each other and expect us to trust you.

For many League members the information was not in depth enough, did not cover the many ranges of issues that could be brought up and was not available well in advance to be digested before attending the session (which makes sense given our own study processes), diverse perspectives were generally represented at whole gatherings, maybe not at specific tables of 8-10 (under-represented were conservative voices and Latinos), most described cordial and civil discussions at their tables (some shared surprise that at their tables with such differing perspectives could have civil exchanges and wondered "If we can do this, why can't Congress? Get on with it already Washington, DC!"), some were surprised how quickly 6 hours went and wanted more time to discuss the issues, and most gave positive feedback about the technology.

By being one of the few groups pursuing information from different perspectives with integrity and civility, the League remains highly trusted among the public and policy makers - a rare thing indeed today and what I personally love about the League!

Economic Development Tools Study

Barbara Downey, Co-Chair

The use of Tax Increment Financing is currently the major way the City of Dallas raises money for and promotes redevelopment of declining or blighted areas of the city. Sufficient urban renewal funds no longer come from the federal government. Of course, another option would be raising taxes, but few of us favor that approach.

Sometimes neighborhood groups instigate TIFs to redevelop areas near their neighborhoods, hoping to bring in good retail. Often developers will seek TIF funds in support of infrastructure and amenities.

Check out <http://www.dallas-ecodev.org/> where the Economic Development Office of the City of Dallas has an excellent web site. The Redevelopment Section deals primarily with TIFs and Planned Development Districts (PIDs) Dallas also has several Municipal Management Districts (MMDs) which are awarded and controlled by the state.

Once an idea for redevelopment has been envisioned, **the advice of specialists is usually sought to formalize the TIF proposal so that it follows State Legislative Guidelines as well as City of Dallas Financial Guidelines.** At our Educational Meeting in April we heard from Mark Stein, a local Economic Development Consultant and Planner, and Dr Rod Hissong, Associate Professor and Associate Dean at the School of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Texas – Arlington for a more academic point of view. Information from that meeting will be available on our website.

Finally, **a TIF proposal must be approved by the City Council.** In our single-member district style of government, the Council basically supports the Councilperson in whose district TIF is sought. Because there is little or no public input, this is an area where study and observation by an organization like the League is important.

Committee members have studied the state and local guidelines and are now evaluating the 18 Dallas TIFs and their boards whose annual reports are filed with the State Controller and available on the Economic Development website.

TIF legislation has evolved since the idea was first explored and proposed in 1978 by Steve Wolens, an Oak Cliff legislator at the time. The first TIFs were initiated in the early 90's; the next group in a period from 2005-2007; and a third wave, more recently, including several in Oak Cliff. **In addition to State-Thomas, we will look in more depth at Vickery Meadows and Skillman Corridor because some of us have had personal experience with these boards and neighborhood groups. In the later group we have found excellent urban planning efforts and citizen involvement in the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group.**

We are also interested in social justice issues, such as displacement of people when developers move in. **We will look at the first TIF (State-Thomas), now successfully completed, to see how displacement of residents was handled.** Many TIFs have affordable or moderate income house requirements; the question is how are they are being carried out.

The Committee hopes to hold a general meeting this fall to further educate the public about this important redevelopment process. When the Committee completes its Facts and Issues report, the membership will be asked to consider Consensus questions and hopefully we will have a position of these issues in time for our Annual meeting in the spring.

With the current interest in development in Southern Dallas, we need a position from which to advocate, because more proposals will be coming up for approval by the City Council.

Our President Reports on Meetings (State League continued from Page 1)

(The budget was adopted with **no increase in PMP**. The state board's recommendation to hold the line on any increases to state PMP was greatly appreciated by local Leagues trying to stretch their own dollars!

A new two-year state study of water resources was approved. The study's title is: Texas Water Resources as a Commodity." The focus of the study is: "an update of our water position to consider the competition for water in Texas, including governmental policy, public interest rights, and water resource protection concerns."

There were **five amendments to existing program positions** proposed and all five passed. The affected positions were in the areas of criminal justice and capital punishment reform, health care for those of lesser means, judicial, spousal rape, and election laws and voting rights.

The Houston Area League proposed a concurrence on mandatory Home Owners Associations (HOAs) that generated some strong feeling at the convention. Among other positions, the concurrence proposed that HOAs be prohibited from foreclosing on a home for nonpayment of HOA dues, and that any legal fees incurred by the HOA in pursuit of its monies be reimbursed by the delinquent homeowner after, not before, the past due amounts. While delegates had sympathy for homeowners affected by HOA actions, they felt they didn't have enough information at that time to vote the concurrence up or down. **The final motion was to defer a decision while a small committee gathered more information.**

Several resolutions were adopted including one on dedicated funds proposed by Lynda Ender and one on immigration proposed by Julie Lowenberg.

After new board members were elected, outgoing board members were saluted for their service and welcomed back to their home Leagues. **LWV-Dallas presented Barb Weinstein with a gift of appreciation (red cihie pepers in Nombe) as she concluded her service on the state board.**

LWVD won several awards at the convention including one for our Look to the League table-toppers that contain voter registration cards and information. Thank you, Katherine Homan, for a great idea!

All in all, an excellent convention.

League of Women Voters of the United States Convention

And then there was the national convention in Atlanta in mid-June. This convention was five days long. Between 550 and 600 delegates were in attendance at the plenary sessions on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; many fewer were present on Tuesday, the last day of the convention and the day on which the budget and PMP votes were taken. **Mildred Pope and Sandy Greyson represented the Dallas League.**

Two new studies were approved--the Federal Role in Public Education and Privatization. The board recommended education study will "focus on the role of the federal government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government." The scope will depend on available resources, including committee and LWVUS staff time.

The Seattle, Washington League proposed the **not-recommended Privatization Study**, which will look at "the policy agenda to transfer government functions, services, and assets to the private sector."

(Continued on Page 6)

Our President Reports on Meetings

(National Convention continued from Page 5)

Motions to study the establishment of a cabinet level Department of Peace and to study Regulating Financial Institutions were defeated. Motions to adopt concurrences on Equality in Marriage and the National Popular Vote Compact were and the National Popular Vote Compact was approved, as was an LWVUS recommended concurrence to amend and update the Arms Control position.

Six resolutions were approved: (1) to support lifting the travel restrictions for Americans going to Cuba; (2) to support safe drilling and mining for energy resources; (3) to call upon the U.S. Senate to change its rules to limit the use of the filibuster; (4) to add the principle of transparency to the SARA (Security, Accuracy, Recountability, and Accessibility) Resolution of 2004 and 2006; (5) to call upon the LWVUS board to advocate strongly for bills that legislate for improved Medicare for all; and (6) to highlight the need for those responsible for the Gulf oil spill to be held accountable and also accountable for the clean-up.

Delegates defeated a bylaw change proposed by the Rhode Island League that would have allowed state and local Leagues to lobby their own U.S. delegations on matters of local importance without first obtaining national board approval. **Those voting against the change felt that all levels of the League need to “speak with one voice.”**

Bylaw changes were approved to remove the word “honorary” from life members, require the convention to adopt a biennial budget rather than an annual one, and allow the national board to determine the annual council meeting format (such as webinars, etc.).

Among the last items on Tuesday's agenda were the votes on the PMP and the budget. **The national board recommendation was to increase the PMP by 40 cents for FY2010-2011 and then another 40 cents for FY2011-2012.** Their rationale, and that of the budget committee, was that it's better to raise the PMP more often with smaller increases rather than less often with larger increases. Apparently no one entertains the notion of not raising it at all. After three days of listening to delegates talk about how hard it is to gain new members and how difficult it is to raise funds and how much they have to raise dues, the majority of the delegates voted to increase the PMP for 2010-2011 not by 40 cents but by 50 cents. The reasoning for the additional increase was that there would be two studies instead of one and funding for the second study hadn't been included in the proposed budget. **However, the 2011-2012 increase then became 30 cents, so the overall increase of 80 cents remained the same.**

There was a huge emphasis at the convention on recruiting new members. But, because of high PMP payments, many Leagues across the country actually lose money every time they get a new member. **National is finally beginning to realize that they have an unsustainable financial model. LWVUS president Mary Wilson, whose term just ended, announced the appointment of a committee to look at how national raises funds.** There was no date given for completion of this committee's work.

LWVUS plans to phase out Nationally Recruited Members after this year and focus instead on acquiring donors. Although this change will greatly impact some Leagues, it won't be significant for the Dallas League.

The budget was approved--one line item that met with hearty approval was funding for improvements to national's website.

The new LWVUS president is Elisabeth MacNamara from Atlanta, Georgia.

League Bulletin Board

Contributions

Nettie Brown; Sarah Dunning, Patron Member; **Lenora Graham; John and Sandy Hebley** for the Scholarship Fund; **Kathleen Irvin; Joanne Kimberlin**; Pam Lange of PEN* Texas in memory of Richard Halsey; **Julie and Michael Lowenberg** in honor of Awardees **Barbara Downey and Angela Hunt** and in memory of Helen Harwig; **Annette Stewart** for the Scholarship Fund; **Sandy Thornton**, Patron Member; **Molly Van Ort** for the Scholarship Fund; **Toni Terry** in memory of Richard Halsey and for the Scholarship Fund; **Pat Vaughan**, Patron Member, in honor of **Julie Lowenberg**; **Linda and Mark Wassenich** in memory of Helen Harwig.

*PEN is a worldwide organization of professional writers founded in 1921 to develop a literary community not bounded by politics or government and to defend freedom of expression wherever it is threatened.

It's a Small World

Mary Vogelson, attending her husband's niece's wedding in Philadelphia, discovered that the groom's family is related to **Jean Cozzens's family**. They had come to Dallas to settle her affairs, but assumed that most of her friends were deceased and made no contacts.

They commented that the League had meant so much to Jean. Mary assured them that she certainly had meant a lot to us, but we had no contact information.

Mary promised to convey the message that there is still time and the family would like to hear from us. If you would like to acknowledge Jean's work or just what a great friend and Leaguer she was, **please send messages to her grandson, Dan Cozzens, dancozzens@yahoo.com**

We asked Dan for a regular mailing address. He responded, "I'm forwarding all the correspondence I've received from members of the League to all of Jean's descendants, but I'm also going to include my father's email address in this email, as he is her son and I figure you should have it. I'm a little bit more on top of email than he is though, so please keep me included and I can make sure everybody receives the notices. He is: William Cozzens. Email: william_cozzens@yahoo.com"

Our mailing address is: **Cozzens/Childs Family, 447 E. Mt. Pleasant Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19119.**

Welcome New Members

Barbara Andre

Andrea M. Chaney

Analiza de la Espriella,
Student Member

Shari Martin

Robert Mennel

**To contact fellow members,
check out our
Membership Directory.
<http://members.lwvdallas.org>**

Please join the Good Neighbor Program

by completing a

Reward Application Form at

the Courtesy Booth of any

Tom Thumb/Safeway

using our Account Number

2917

Our most recent rebate

\$108.32.

Recent Communique

Harryette Ehrhardt's husband, Jack, is in Baylor Hospital. He collapsed this week and remains unconscious. Harryette discourages visits to the hospital at this time, but she asks for our prayers.

You can communicate your support for the Ehrhardt family by sending cards and letters to 5731 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75214.

From **Carol Crabtree Donovan**, 7/19/10

Join the League of Women Voters of Dallas

where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

It's 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
___Scholarship information available upon request. Call 214-688-4125
___\$25/year Student \$___Contribution to LWVD Scholarship Fund

Name(s) _____

Address _____

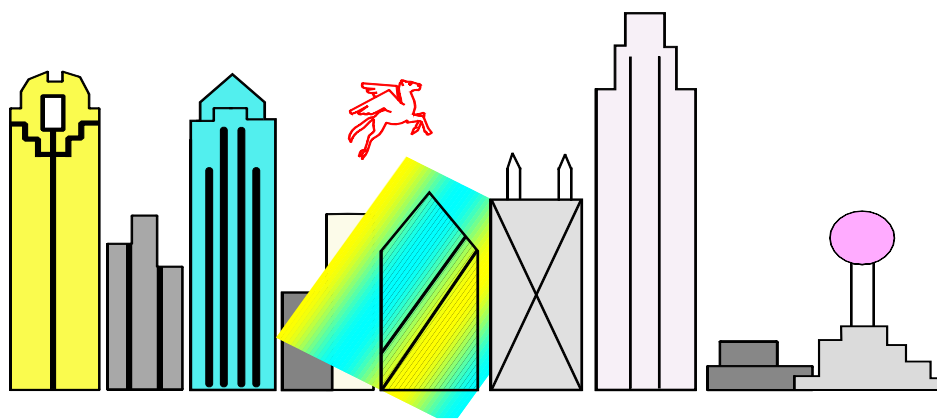
Phones: Home _____ Work _____

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

League of Women Voters of Dallas
2720 N. Stemmons Freeway., Suite 812
Dallas, TX 75207-2241

Office: 214-688-4125
Fax: 214-688-4126
E-mail: lwvdallas@sbcglobal.net



The Dallas **VOTER** is the official publication of the League of Women Voters of Dallas, published ten times yearly.

Volume 17, Number 1

You may contact

Editor Barbara Downey

214-948-6641 bdowney3@sbcglobal.net

Office Administrator Lilia Hollis

214-688-4125 lwvdallas@sbcglobal.net



Copied on Recycled Paper