



2013 - 2014

LWV-TC

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September 2013



The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

National Voter's Registration Day

**COME MINGLE WITH MEMBERS
AND SEE WHAT THE LWV-TC
IS DOING—
RAFFLES; DOOR PRIZES; FUN!
BRING A FRIEND, REGISTER TO VOTE**

SEPTEMBER 24, 2013

5:30—8:PM

**Rahr Brewery
701 Galveston Ave
Ft Worth, TX 76164**

Located South off Main & Leuda

COSTS: \$10

Covers beverages

Food available for Purchase

RESERVE BY FRIDAY Sept 20TH

Message from the Co-President!

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– Terri Freer

On August 26, 1920, the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution became law, giving women the right to vote. We celebrated this anniversary with our 3rd annual Women's Equality Day luncheon on August 23 at The City Club in Fort Worth. Our wonderful panel included Eva Bonilla, Mary Beth Garcia, Deborah Peoples, and Judge Deborah Nekhom. We are very grateful to the panel, to our emcee for the day, Shivaun Palmer, and to Sarah Zink for once again singing the National Anthem for us. Thanks to all who attended, and we look forward to doing it again next year!

Our Board and members continue to be busy, working on voter registration and educating the public on important issues. We hope you will all plan to join us on September 24, which is National Voter Registration Day, at Rahr's Brewery, 701 Galveston Avenue in Fort Worth. We will be there from 5:30 to 8:00 and you will be able to register yourself or any guests you bring, as well as educate anyone on the benefits of joining us as a member of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County.

If you have not yet visited one of our monthly unit meetings, please check out the locations and times on our web site a www.lwvtarrantcounty.org. You will make new friends and learn about issues that we support. We hope to see you all very soon!

Becoming a Voter Registrar

– Claire Forshey, Voter Service Vice-President

I wanted to provide everyone with information about becoming a deputy registrar. Doing voter registration events is a great way to get our name out in the community. Also, we need to make sure we are able to inform the public about the changes in Voter ID laws.

To become a deputy registrar, you just need to go to the Tarrant County Elections office, located at 2700 Premier Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76111, and ask to complete the training session. Regular business hours are 8am-4:30pm, M-F. If you need to go after hours, you can call them to schedule a training session. These are done at 6pm on Thursdays by appointment only. For more information, go to <http://tcweb.tarrantcounty.com/evote/cwp/view.asp?a=771&q=468198>.

When you are at the elections office, it's a good idea to pick up plenty of voter registration forms. We have two upcoming events:

September 17- 11am-1pm- Constitution Day event at TCC Trinity Campus with AARP
September 27- 4-8pm- BNSF Family Day at the BNSF campus in North Fort Worth

If anyone has any questions about the deputy registrar program or doing voter registration events, please let me know.

– Mary Beth Garcia, Committee Chair

This year, the League of Women Voters of Texas is studying the issue of human trafficking so that we can understand state and local policies as well as the public's role in abating human trafficking.

Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, or procurement of a person for labor or services for the purpose of involuntary servitude, slavery, or forced commercial sex acts. Thousands of people each year fall victim to this type of crime – both within the United States and abroad. Many victims are brought into the United States and are forced into domestic service, sweatshops, prostitution, sex work/pornography industry, marriage/servile marriage, criminal activity, begging, labor, factory, construction, restaurant work, agriculture, ranch work and nail salons. It is often very hard to identify victims of trafficking as they have little contact with the outside world or their every action is closely monitored by their traffickers.

Since human trafficking is difficult to track, the Department of State can only estimate that between 18,000 and 20,000 victims are trafficked into the United States annually, excluding domestic trafficking (which does not involve crossing an international border). Since 2001, more than 20 percent of the total identified victims nationwide have been located in Texas.

Our goals in the study will be to understand the nature and definition of human trafficking, consider its extent in Texas, explore how to reduce its occurrence, including considering state and local laws and their enforcement, and assess the components of social services for victims to rescue and restore their lives.

We will introduce and discuss this topic at our September unit meetings and then further discuss and come to consensus at our November unit meetings. In preparation for your unit meeting in September, please read the Facts & Issues sent to all members last month. A copy is available for download on the [LWV-TX](#) website. You can also visit our website for additional informational materials. Some questions or topics to consider and discuss at your unit meeting are:

1. Under Texas law, minors who are arrested for soliciting sex or who are sexually exploited are victims, not law breakers. The state is allowed to hold them and provide services without bringing charges for prostitution, but they may be charged with juvenile delinquency. In May 2013, the governor signed into law SB 92 which allows, but does not mandate, deferral and dismissal for minor victims by special courts. Failure to successfully complete the program results in a CINS (conduct in need of supervision) offense. Texas still does not provide a systemic response for placing minors into necessary rehabilitation services without criminalization. Should this be changed? Should these services be a form of probation or should Texas law allow for both decriminalization and diversion of juveniles out of the criminal justice system and into programs with services?
2. Texas has an anti-john law regarding solicitation of sex by adults but it has not been vigorously enforced. A charge under this statute is a second degree felony (punishment is imprisonment for no more than 20 years and no less than 2 years and may also include a fine of no more than \$10,000). Johns are not required to register as sex offenders. Should this be changed? Should all johns be required to register as sex offenders? Should the anti john laws be more vigorously enforced?
3. The Fort Worth police department has a "John TV" website to make the public aware of sex related offenses. In 2011, the Texas Legislature passed a first offender prostitution prevention program for johns "to promote public safety, to reduce the demand for the commercial sex trade and trafficking by educating the offender." However, surveys have shown these approaches ultimately have little effect on the desire to purchase. Can you think of some other ways that buyers of sexual services may be deterred from doing so?
4. Human trafficking is modern slavery, but many people are not aware that it exists even in their own communities. Texas, in particular, is a transportation hub for sex trafficking. What issues need to be addressed in education and public awareness of the "problem hidden in plain sight?"

All of the documents, plus additional references and resources, will be posted on the Issue Studies page of the LWV-TX website, <http://www.lwvtexas.org/issues.php>.

First Tele-Unit Meeting

– Tamara Allen, President-Elect

The first tele-meeting will be held on September 16th, 2013, 7-8pm
To connect to the meeting call 1-646-307-1300 and enter the Pass Code 9208836
The facilitator will begin the meeting with an introduction explaining the process of the tele-meeting.

The discussion topic for each meeting, to be held the third Monday of each month, will be listed in the Voter and will include a monthly review of the work and announcements of LWV Tarrant County. This month the discussion topic is *Human Trafficking*.

The dial in number is long-distance. If you are interested in participating and don't have a free long-distance plan, contact the facilitator so that we may try to connect you via another member's line. If you have a free-long distance plan and a Smartphone and would like to be of service to other members without a plan, contact the facilitator.

The meeting facilitator is Tamara Allen, 817/713-7223, twothirdsdutch@yahoo.com Please contact Tamara if you have any questions.

Lunch Unit Tour of JPS

– Christie Campbell, Downtown Lunch Unit Chair

Back in May the Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit used its members-choice meeting to tour the John Peter Smith Trauma Center. The meeting began with lunch at the hospital during which JPS President and CEO Robert Earley gave background information on the hospital, Tarrant County's only publicly funded hospital, and its work. The hospital served 1.1 million patients in 2012, 80% of whom had no insurance. Many patients have not seen a doctor in years, and generally they are in a crisis. Diversity is a given, with 55 languages and 38 interpreters on staff. 1500-1600 per month are mental behavioral patients, a very large number because other local hospitals don't get or don't take these patients.

It costs JPS over \$2.2 million per day to serve its patients; 1/3 of their funds come from local taxpayers, 1/3 from federal pass-through funds, and 1/3 from patient/insurance payments. The emergency room averages 400 patients per day. The average hospital stay is 4.7 days; the national average is 5-6. The mortality rate is 3.7%, lower than the national average. JPS also trains over 200 residents per year, 71% of whom stay on after their residency.

After lunch we toured the Level 1 Trauma Center. This level is the highest and means they have staff on site 24/7, with a total of 647 beds. The nearest Level 1 to the west is in Lubbock, south Waco, north Oklahoma, and east Dallas. This means JPS covers an immense area. Our tour began at the outside admitting bay where there is washing-down equipment (there is a similar arrangement for the heliport). We saw the operating rooms, intensive care units and patient rooms. Dr. Ghandi, the Trauma director, answered questions and also pointed out special equipment, such as mobile CT machines which can be brought to the patient's room, saving time and money instead of transporting the patient to a central location. The Trauma Center serves more than 2500 patients per year.

A very worthwhile and informative visit. Perhaps other units might like to schedule a similar visit.

An update on a proposed reorganization of the Fort Worth water delivery service was given by Fernando Costa, Fort Worth Assistant City Manager on June 6th at a Fort Worth League of Neighborhood meeting. The meeting was held at University Christian Church and was open to the public.

Background: March 5, 2013, Fort Worth City Council adopted a resolution appointing a water utility task force to advise City Council members on possible public/private partnerships to deliver water and wastewater service. On April 3, 2013, EMA, Inc., a consulting firm, facilitated the first workshop in which city staff presented the current scope of water activities. EMA provided case studies of some cities that have or are in the process of having some privatization. A Request for Information (RFI) was developed to get the task force up to date with information on which to make a recommendation. The RFI will include a water department overview with a breakdown of operating costs. The RFI will also ask the private sector to come up with steps to reduce costs while maintaining current levels of service which will result in lower rates for utility customers. On May 8th, EMA led a second meeting with discussion of the five various models to be considered in the RFI process.

Mr. Costa explained the Management Plan for Fort Worth stated that the goals include: Improve city financial health (right now there is a \$50 million gap between income and expenditures expected); Improve customer service (possible #311 for access to all city services); and Promote development that uses resources wisely (mixed use development).

He added that water service will not be subsidized by taxes but be a self-sustaining service. Raw water costs are major costs and Tarrant Water District sets the rate. Water Dept. services will include City, Extra territorial jurisdiction, and Areas of convenience and Necessity. Only 5% of the budget is what could be addressed for efficiency savings. Currently FW Water utilizes about 10% of operating and maintenance budget for out-sourcing in areas of design and construction.

Mr. Costa stated firmly that selling the water utility as other cities have done IS NOT an option under consideration.

Models under consideration are:

1. Contract Operations & Maintenance (Enterprise) agreement under which the city engages a contractor to manage the entire utility for 2 to 5 years, which is not considered a long term agreement.
2. Strategic Outsourcing (Specific Services) - City engages a contractor to manage a specific utility service for 2 to 5 years.
3. New Revenue Stream or Business in which a partnership is formed with a private entity to design, build, finance, and/or operate a new facility or offer a new service that generates a new revenue stream. The private developer receives a long term contract to operate & maintain the new assets, which are owned by the City.

Members of the Water Utility Task Force are: Bob Pence, Chair; Lairy Johnson, Marty Leonard, Raul Pena, Bob Riley, Vernell Sturns, Sarah Walls, Libby Watson, Jeff Wentworth.

For more information, see the League of Neighborhood website at: <http://fwlna.org/water-services-privatization.html>

The City of Fort Worth website is another good source of updated information:

<http://fortworthtexas.gov/water/info/default.aspx?id=109382>

To see the names of the eleven organizations who replied to the city's RFI (Request For Info):

http://fortworthtexas.gov/uploadedFiles/Finance/Purchasing/Bids/Bid_Openings/Summary%20of%20Bids%20Read%20July%2018,%202013.pdf

Schedule of Water Utility Task Force Meetings which are all open to the public:

- Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013 at 3 pm. (Meeting #6) in pre-council chambers at City Hall
- Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2013 at 6:30 pm., Public Input Meeting- City Council Chambers
- Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2013 at 3 pm. (Meeting #7) in pre-council chambers

The Public Input Meeting on September 24 was scheduled to allow residents an opportunity to share their views with the Task Force before the Task Force reports to the City Council. By late October, a decision on whether to go ahead and pursue outside contracts or keep doing what we're doing now will be made. The Task Force will be dissolved by the end of the year. Phase 2 will include going for a private partner or not.

Additional information provided by Steve Epstein.

– Mike Baldwin, Environmental Issues Chair

As a new board member of LWV Tarrant County and as a public librarian, I'm interested in facilitating greater cooperation between LWV and public libraries, which I think will be beneficial to both. To that end, I have initiated a series of public information programs at Benbrook Public Library (where I am the director), co-sponsored by the library and the LWV. The series title is "The Informed Citizen." We have already had three programs in the series this year: The Evolving Constitution, presented by Dr. Don Jackson, professor of government at TCU; Political Parties, Political Philosophies, presented by Dr. Sam Arnold, professor of government at TCU; and most recently, Environmental Economics Issues, presented by Dr. Frank Ewell, professor of Agricultural Economics at Tarleton State University.

As chair of LWVTC Environmental Issues, I was gratified to see several League members attend and participate in Dr. Ewell's program, which discussed many environmental topics, including climate change, which is one of the League's national issues for 2013. Dr. Ewell's presentation emphasized how so many current social issues are inter-connected and are difficult to understand or address as individual problems. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity, energy sources, environmental degradation, genetic modification, population pressure, and humanity's relation to nature all influence each other in numerous ways. For example, climate change, which has been brought on primarily by the use of coal and petroleum as energy sources, will cause sea levels to rise significantly, which will increase population pressure and environmental degradation, which is also caused by the mining of fossil fuels. While sea levels rise, fresh water is being depleted at a rapid rate so that disputes over its use for agriculture versus other needs will increase tremendously. Biodiversity is being threatened by climate change, too, as species are unable to adjust to rapidly changing climates and ecologies. Genetic modification produces more food, but often of lower quality while contributing to loss of biodiversity. Meanwhile, children who grow up seeing nature only through television or the Internet may not value it or understand nature's importance to human survival. These are but a few of the ideas touched on by Dr. Ewell.

The next program in "The Informed Citizen" series will be on Constitution Day, **September 17, at 6:00 pm** at Benbrook Library. Dr. Don Jackson will discuss the Bill of Rights and why we must be continually vigilant against threats to these basic rights.

I'll try to keep the membership informed of library programs relevant to LWV policy initiatives and I hope you will send me your ideas on how the League and libraries can benefit from closer cooperation with each other.

LWV-US Advocacy

DOJ Announces Lawsuit Against TX Voter Photo ID Law

August 22, 2013 the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that it was suing the state of Texas over their voter photo ID law implemented shortly after the Supreme Court's *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* decision earlier this summer. The LWVUS issued the following statement expressing its support for this action.

Statement by Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States:

Washington, D.C. - "The League of Women Voters is pleased with today's announcement by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that they are filing suit against the Texas voter photo ID law. Following the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* earlier this summer, we've seen an all-out attack on voting rights across the country. The League will continue to pursue all avenues to fight for voters' rights, but we also need strong action by Congress to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act protections that have helped us prevent racial and language discrimination in our elections for decades."

Contact: Kelly Ceballos, kceballos@lww.org, 202-263-1331

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Bring Your Talent into the League of Women Voters

We're the League of Women Voters® of Tarrant County (LWVTC), one of the hundreds of local Leagues across the nation whose members—men and women—are committed to Making Democracy Work. Our nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Your membership automatically enrolls you in LWV-Texas and LWVUS at no additional cost...and provides publications from all three.

Mail your membership application, dues, and contributions to LWVTC, P. O. Box 100175, Fort Worth, TX 76185 or enroll online at www.lwvtarrantcounty.org/join.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Basic Membership:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70/yr | Regular full voting member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$105/yr | Family (two members in one household) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40/yr | Student |

Or

Supporting Membership:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100/yr | Sustaining Membership – Elizabeth Cady Stanton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$150/yr | Advocate Membership – Carrie Chapman Catt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200/yr | Patron Membership – Mary McLeod Bethune |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300/yr | Benefactor Membership – Eleanor Roosevelt |

THE VOTER NEWSLETTER BY U.S. MAIL

- \$10/yr *(online VOTER is no additional cost)*

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Mobile) _____ (Fax) _____

Would you like to attend one of our Unit meetings? If so, please indicate which Unit would best suit your needs.

- Arlington Area Downtown Fort Worth Area Northeast Tarrant County
 South/Southwest Tarrant County

\$ _____ For a tax deductible donation, write a separate check payable to:
 LWV Texas Education Fund.

Welcome **new members** Kathy Hasty and Sara Meadors. Thanks to **renewing members** Jean Baggerly, Anna Holzer, Nancy Marchant, and Mark & Paula Wilhelm.

Save the Date — FALL 2013 HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

Topic

Effects Of New Legislation On “Women’s Health Issues”

Speaker:

Kelly Hart

Sr. Director of Government Relations Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas

October 9, 2013 11:30—1:00

At Joe T Garcia’s



SEPTEMBER — OCTOBER 2013 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER All Units: Human Trafficking

- 9 Board Meeting
- 16 7PM Tele-Unit Meeting, Call Tamara Allen, 817-713-7223 for info.
- 17 11AM-1PM- Constitution Day event at TCC Trinity Campus with AARP
- 17 6PM Informed Citizen Series, Benbrook Library, 1065 Mercedes St, Benbrook
- 17 7PM NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting; Barnes & Noble in the Shops at NE Mall; Melbourne Rd. next to Best Buy; Call Georgia Kidwell 817-282-0712 to RSVP.
- 19 NOON Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit; at Trinity Terrace, 1600 Texas Street (reservations required, call John Johnson 817-810-9399); Call Christie Campbell 817-732-0556 or Marjorie Montgomery 817-885-8372 for further info.
- 19 6PM South/Southwest Dinner Unit; at Olive Garden at I-20 and Hulen in the shopping center; Call Michael Baldwin 817-249-2193 for info.
- 19 7PM Arlington Unit; at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1330 S. Fielder Rd, Arlington; Movie, sack lunch and discussion after. Call Tonya Presley 972-978-9481 for info.
- 23 11AM Arlington Monday Matinee, Arlington Police West Service Center, 2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington
- 24 National Voter Registration Day
5:30PM Membership Social at Rahr & Sons Brewery
- 27 4-8PM- BNSF Family Day at the BNSF campus in North Fort Worth

OCTOBER All Units: Constitutional Amendments

- 7 Last day to register to vote for November 5 Election
- 9 Hot Topic Luncheon
- 14 Board Meeting
- 14 7PM Tele-Unit Meeting,
- 15 7PM NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting
- 17 NOON Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit
- 17 6PM South/Southwest Dinner Unit
- 17 7PM Arlington Unit
- 21 First day of early voting for November 5 Election
- 28 Arlington Monday Matinee

~ WE'RE ON THE WEB! ~

WWW.LWVTARRANTCOUNTY.ORG

ALL MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ANY LEAGUE EVENT.

LEAGUE OFFICE HOURS: M, W, & F 8:30 A.M.—12:30 P.M.