



The Voter

League of Women Voters - Comal Area, PO Box 311324, New Braunfels, TX 78131
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Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Neither the League nor its Educational Fund supports or opposes any political party or candidate.

LEGISLATIVE FORUM TO FOCUS ON LEAGUE ISSUES

Date: Wed, Jan 28, 2009
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Place: GVTC Auditorium, 36101 FM 3159 (near US 281 & SH 46) in Comal County

(More information on pg. 2)

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Circle Arts Theater

My Fair Lady on January 30th at 8:00 P.M. Tickets for the performance may be purchased from members of the League Board or Sandi Boyd (830-606-0636).

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Get out your new 2009 calendar and save the date of Jan 28.

We have elected our new and returning Texas State Representatives and State Senators, now how do we influence the legislation that is going to be considered January through May in Austin?

LWV-Comal Area will be hosting a Legislative Forum and is inviting all League members (and the public) who live nearby.

League leaders from LWV-Texas will give an overview of how to be involved in making a difference during the upcoming Texas legislative session. This will be informative for new members as well as not-so-new.

- LWV-TX new Advocacy VP, Mary Finch, will give an **overview of issues** that will be coming up during the session and will explain all about the LWV-TX Legislative Newsletter, advocating, action alerts, and our Statewide Meeting/Lobby Day.
- Karen Rankin, LWV-TX Program Chair for State/Local Relations will talk about the **county authority issue**. (Those of us concerned about growth issues in our counties will find this particularly important.)
- Laurie Vanhoose, LWV-TX Program Chair for Voting Rights, will talk about "**Voter ID**" and **some of the election issues our new state study is looking into**.
- And, hopefully, we'll have time to discuss Sen. Wentworth's **redistricting** bill, which will be a big priority for the League during the session.

Bring a friend and join us!

Directions:

From New Braunfels, take State Highway 46 west toward Boerne.

At FM 3159 turn right.

You will see the GVTC Auditorium on your right.

CIRCLE ARTS THEATER FUNDRAISER

The Comal Area League of Women Voters is pleased to announce its annual fundraiser, the sale of tickets to the Circle Arts Theater performance of My Fair Lady on January 30th at 8:00 P.M. Tickets for the performance may be purchased from members of the League Board or Sandi Boyd (830-606-0636). The price of tickets is \$16.00 each, with the proceeds to benefit the League Voter Information program. Only the 30th performance benefits the League, so please make your plans to join us at what will certainly be a wonderful event

Comal County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (RHCP)

By Jensie Madden

After more than a year of monthly meetings, the Citizen's Advisory Committee on the RHCP has submitted a plan to the Comal County Commissioner's Court for approval. The purpose of the plan is to preserve open space, conserve endangered species in Comal County, and help landowners comply with the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Under the ESA, any landowner whose activities would cause loss of habitat for endangered species, such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo, would need to apply for a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and would need to show how the landowner would mitigate the "take" of endangered species if the permit were granted.

The RHCP being proposed by Comal County would give the county the authority over the permitting process in Comal County. The plan benefits the county because it would result in preserving large natural areas that are habitat for endangered species, and the plan benefits landowners by providing a less cumbersome and less expensive process for complying with the ESA.

In essence, the county would work with landowners who wish to set aside land that would not be developed. Such a "land bank" would be financed with mitigation payments for other land which is allowed to be developed.

Details regarding the proposed plan, and how the public can be involved in making comments are at www.co.comal.tx.us/comalrhcp/default.htm.

LWV-CA made comments to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at a hearing on December 4, 2008. We thanked the Comal County Commissioner's Court for their foresight in developing a plan for conserving habitat. We asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete an Environmental Impact Study on the proposed plan using the criteria developed by LWV-CA in our position statement on land use planning in the county. We specifically asked them to evaluate the impact of the proposed Outer Loop on Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat and on the Edwards Aquifer.

Another public hearing will be scheduled when the Environmental Impact Study is completed, probably in the spring or early summer of 2009. LWV-CA will continue to monitor the progress of the RHCP.

National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact Study

Delegates at LWWUS Convention 2008 voted to study the advisability of using the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact among the states as a method for electing the U.S. President. **Comal Area League will have a consensus meeting sometime in February. This will give members time to read some or preferably all of this info. in preparation for the meeting.** We have scheduled a League Consensus Meeting on the national position of Electing the President by Popular Vote. It will be in the Library Room at the Education Center, NBISD, at 430 W. Mill St., NB at 7:00 pm on Monday, February 23.

National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact Study Committee Members

General Information

National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact

The text of the *Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by Nationwide Popular Vote*.

National Popular Vote Compact Consensus Questions

NPV Compact Consensus Questions for discussion meetings. The electronic Response Form will contain these same NPV Compact Consensus Questions will be available in January.

National Popular Vote Compact Suggested Resource List

Background Papers

LWWUS National Popular Vote Compact Paper Supporting the NPV Compact (Pro)

The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact provides a way to choose the President of the United States by popular vote without amending the Constitution. These are the arguments in favor of the NPV Compact.

LWWUS National Popular Vote Compact Paper Opposing the NPV Compact (Con)

The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact provides a way to choose the President of the United States by popular vote without amending the Constitution. These are the arguments against of the NPV Compact.

LWWUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Background Paper

Climate Change Task Force

The Climate Change Task Force was established in response to the LWVUS Board designating climate change as a priority for advocacy. While the LWVUS supports efforts to mitigate climate change, many of the issues within this broad category need discussion and explanation. The task force was charged with researching and writing substantive supporting materials (background papers) for the LWVUS position on climate change.

In the future, the task force will continue to provide research and respond to specific issues, including questions arising with federal climate change legislation. Occasionally, other papers and articles will be written as the issues present themselves. Leagues may also convene local authorities to discuss the myriad issues of global climate change. The issues are many and building the bank of knowledge is an on-going activity.

LIGHTING THE WAY TO A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

By Eleanor Revelle (LWVIL and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force Member)

It's on every Top Ten list of things-to-do to save energy and help fight global climate change: Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs).

The benefits are compelling. CFLs use roughly one-quarter of the electricity of an incandescent bulb to produce the same amount of light. This means savings for consumers through reduced electric bills. And by reducing the demand for electricity, it means less global warming pollution from coal-fired power plants.

About one-third of global warming pollution in the United States is caused by coal plants generating electricity. And lighting accounts for 20 percent of the electricity used. For consumers whose electricity is produced from coal, replacing a single incandescent bulb with a CFL will keep over half a ton of

carbon dioxide (CO₂) out of the atmosphere over the life of the bulb.

Those consumers whose electricity is supplied primarily by nuclear power can make an impact as well. Nuclear power plants typically sell their considerable excess base-load capacity to electrical distributors in nearby regions which otherwise depend on coal-fired power. Reducing demand for electricity in such cases, therefore, makes more emissions-free nuclear power available to replace carbon-intensive coal-fired power elsewhere.

Is Mercury a Problem?

CFLs do contain a very small amount of mercury—about 5 milligrams, enough to cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. The mercury is safe while the bulb is intact or in use, and even if the CFL should break, it poses little

risk.

Far more serious are the 50 tons of mercury emitted annually from coal-burning power plants in the United States. To generate the average 10,660 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity used by the typical household each year, a power plant will emit about 245 mg of mercury (roughly 0.023 mg of mercury/kWh of electricity produced). By using CFLs instead of incandescent bulbs, homeowners will reduce their electrical demand and cut mercury emissions as well.

Assessing the Impact

Let's compare a 23-watt CFL with an incandescent bulb that produces the same amount of light, namely a 100-watt bulb. Since ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs last five to ten times longer than incandescent bulbs, this example compares one 23-watt CFL with five 100-watt incandescents, equivalent to the minimum expected lifetime of the one 23-watt CFL.

	1 23-watt CFL	5 100-watt incandescents
Cost of bulbs (Home Depot prices)	\$4.00	\$3.15
Lifespan of bulbs	5,000 hours	5 x 1,000 hours
Electricity used over bulbs' lifetime	115 kWh	500 kWh
Cost of electricity (at 10¢/kWh)	\$11.50	\$50.00
CO ₂ produced	230 lb	1,000 lb
Mercury (electrical generation)	2.6 mg	11.5 mg
Mercury (in the bulb) *	5.0 mg	0

* With proper disposal, the mercury in the CFL will not enter the environment.

Making the Switch

For those who haven't made the switch to CFLs yet or who were unhappy with fluorescent lights in the past, it's time to check out the nearest lighting display.

- CFLs now come in a variety of shapes and sizes—mini-spirals small enough to use in table lamps, sconces and ceiling fixtures; globes for bathroom vanity fixtures; chandelier bulbs; recessed downlights; and more.
- CFLs can replace incandescent bulbs in almost any fixture. Some are specifically designed for use with dimmers or in three-way fixtures.
- The amount of light that any bulb will put out is measured in lumens. A 100-watt incandescent bulb will put out about 1,600 lumens. Replacing that bulb with a 23-watt CFL will also produce 1,600 lumens, but it will require much less power.
- CFLs are available in a range of color temperatures. For a warm (yellowish) light, look for a CFL labeled *soft white*, with a color temperature of 2,700K (degrees Kelvin). CFLs labeled *bright white* and *daylight* will have a cooler (bluish) light and higher Kelvin numbers (e.g., 3,500K or 5,500K).

- Look for ENERGY STAR-qualified bulbs. These have been tested to meet stringent performance criteria; they will use 75 percent less energy than an incandescent bulb and last up to ten times longer.

Disposing of CFLs

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin, and proper disposal of CFLs is a must. The U.S. EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and major retailers to expand recycling and disposal options. Ikea, Home Depot and some hardware stores already accept used CFLs, and many states and municipalities sponsor regular household hazardous waste collection programs that include CFLs.

State and local recycling options can be found online at www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling/ and at www.earth911.org.

If a CFL should break, scoop up the glass fragments and fine particles with stiff paper or cardboard and put them in a plastic bag. Do not use a vacuum or broom. Wipe the area with a damp paper towel and place that in the bag, too. Seal the bag, place it in a second plastic bag, and dispose of it properly. If weather permits, open windows to allow the room to ventilate.

Online Resources for Additional Information

ENERGY STAR comprehensive CFL web page: www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls

Environmental Defense detailed guide to finding energy-saving light bulbs that work for you: www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagid=632

Earth 911 Web site with extensive information about recycling: <http://earth911.org/recycling/>

State-by-state listing of disposal and recycling options: www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling/

U.S. EPA information on cleaning up mercury spills: www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm

Produced by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force

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Two Local Office Holders Interviewed

Every Texas Legislative session, the Texas League asks local Leagues to interview their representatives and senators concerning issues that the League is particularly interested in. For instance, two of the questions this term involve redistricting and land-use for urbanizing counties.

LWV-CA members Sharon Levett and Bonnie Leitch interviewed Senator Jeff Wentworth in his San Antonio office January 9, 2009. The interview was cordial and informative. Details of the interview have been sent to the advocacy chair of the state League.

On January 16, LWV-CA members Jensie Madden, Doris Daner and Bonnie Leitch went to Representative Doug Miller's insurance office in New Braunfels to interview him. Again, the interview was warm and frank. The consensus from both meetings was that Comal County is well represented in the Texas Legislature this term.

Policy restricts members from publicly distributing details of the interview. Summaries of both interviews will be used by the State League to promote League issues and stands during the 81st Legislative Session.

League Thanks Jana Swisher

About six years ago, Jana Swisher volunteered to take the growing pile of clippings and photographs that our League was accumulating and scrapbook them. Six years later, LWV-CA has five scrapbooks preserved in the Sophienburg archives on Academy Street.

Jana has recently resigned her post. The League owes her a tremendous debt of gratitude for her service. We hope all of you find a way to thank Jana for her work and dedication.

Unfortunately, the League continues to make news and work for civic change. If any League member likes to scrapbook, please let a member of the board know. The League needs you!

UPDATES FOR YOUR NEW LEAGUE DIRECTORY

(If you haven't received one yet, please call or email Deanna Frisk, 223-5200, deanna@cscusa.biz)

Jolene Steuckrath's telephone number should be: 227-5748

Erika Curtis' address should be: 8009 Forbsdale Drive, not Torbsdale Dr.

Also, please WELCOME TWO NEW MEMBERS:

April and Richard Hughes
752 Pinnacle Pkwy
New Braunfels 78132
830-626-7272 (h)

AprilHughes@az.com
RHughes@tsocorp.com

Letter to the Editor, Published in the November 23rd's Herald Zeitung.

Letter to the Editor:

This historic election, the League of Women Voters/Comal Area, achieved a goal set three years ago to distribute *Voters Guides* to voters throughout the county. Fundraising efforts in the past three years have been directed towards this goal.

Partnering with the Herald-Zeitung, 10,000 copies of the 20-page *Voters Guide* were delivered in the October 19th, Sunday edition. The following Wednesday, 22,326 additional copies were mailed with the Herald's Up Stream edition to Comal County households. Over 4,000 copies of the *Guide* were then distributed by League volunteers throughout the county to polling locations, Republican and Democratic party headquarters, libraries, schools, chambers of commerce, activity centers, senior centers, convenience stores and other public places in New Braunfels, Bulverde Smithson Valley and the Canyon Lake area. Most of the remaining 2,000 were distributed to 20 of the 22 voting precincts on Election Day.

Volunteers were greeted enthusiastically as they delivered *Voters Guides*. People look to the LWV Voters Guide for concise, non-partisan information and depend on the Guide to help them make informed decisions when they go to the polls to cast their vote.

We are truly grateful to the Herald-Zeitung for helping us make this goal a reality.

The Officers, Directors and Members
League of Women Voters/Comal Area

A Remembrance of Kitty By Bonnie Leitch

Our good friend and valuable League member, Kitty Glaza, died recently. I'm sure, because all of you have been recipients of Kitty's calls and chats, you have fond memories of her. I'd like to share a few of my own that will, I think, mirror yours.

My first memory of Kitty involved receiving a call from her in 1995, right after I'd become a member of the Comal League. She was so friendly and insistent that that call is still a vivid memory. I remember seeing her at the first local League meeting I attended. My initial reaction was that she was surely too ill to be attending *any* meeting.

Of all the ensuing meetings and conversations we had, I believe those two incidents encapsulate most of our memories of Kitty. She was the "Voice of our League," the member the executive board could always call on to notify the membership about upcoming meetings and events. And she loved it. Although fighting chronic illness, Kitty was, perhaps, as faithful a member as we'll ever have.

Always passionate about political affairs, Kitty constantly promoted the League and its work. We will miss her and her spirit.

Help Us Bring New Talent Into the League!

We're the League of Women Voters of Comal and Guadalupe counties. We are one of hundreds of local LWV organizations across the nation whose members are committed to **Making Democracy Work**. Our non-partisan organization encourages informed and active participation by citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. **The League of Women Voters does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate.** Our goal is to empower citizens to shape better communities around the world.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

___ \$50/year -- **Full voting member**, receiving monthly newsletter, special information on issues, leadership training, and more.

___ \$75/year -- Two or more **full voting members** in same household

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

(E-mail) _____

Membership dues and contributions are not eligible for a tax deduction under I.R.S. 501 (c) (3) rules. You may make a tax-deductible contribution by writing a separate check payable to: LWV/Texas Educational Fund. These contributions will be used for local educational projects supported by the League of Women Voters of Comal Area.

Mail your application and dues to:

LWV-Comal Area

P.O. Box 311324

New Braunfels, TX 78131-1324

Dues & Contributions can be paid on the website at:

www.lwvtexas.org/comalarea.htm