

Denton VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Denton, Texas
Established 1961

P. O. Box 424945, TWU Station
Denton, Texas 76204

May, 2009

Sue Smith, President
Byron Witmer, VOTER Editor

www.lwvdenton.org

LWV DENTON CALENDAR

Board Meeting: The New Board will meet on Sunday, May 31, at 3 p.m. at the home of Peg La Point

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Thanks to all the members who made Annual Meeting such a success. Jean Aboul-Ela and Lois Sorensen were appointed tellers and Dorothy Adkins served as parliamentarian. We adopted the budget, by-laws, local program and nominating committee report as proposed in the Workbook. I gave a month-by-month report of activities for the year with thanks to Peg La Point and Maggie Dodd for planning very interesting and educational general meetings. Since presidential primaries shouldn't, but seem to be, more important than other elections, there were many Voter Service activities from voter registration to Voters Guides for all elections. Ken and Sondra went the extra mile, literally, by delivering Voters' Guides all over the county. The importance of Action Alerts was emphasized. It is one thing to get one "official LWV" email concerning a piece of legislation, but more impressive to receive one from every member.

The highlight of the meeting for me is always the presentation of our Little Old Lady In Tennis Shoe award. This year Jim Alexander received our "shoe" beautifully decorated by Marilyn Smith. He spoke briefly about "No Child Left Behind". As I told him, we could hear him speak for hours and not be ready for him to stop. Mayor Mark Burroughs spoke on "state of the city" and fielded questions at the conclusion of his remarks.

Sondra Ferstl surprised me by announcing that our local board members arranged to have my name added to the Local League Sustainers Plaque in the State Office through a donation of \$200 to LWV-TX Education Fund. They couldn't have thought of anything more meaningful to me and I can't wait to get to convention to see it on display there.

As I said at the meeting, being president of this League is more fun than work. I really have enjoyed every minute of the last six years, the third time around, and look forward to working with Sondra Ferstl as our next president, her fourth time to be so honored.



– Sue Smith

Contributors to LWV-Denton and LWV-Texas Education Fund 2009

Contributors who are members of LWV-Denton are indicated by an asterisk *. Contributors giving to the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund are indicated by LWV-TEF. All other contributions were made to the League of Women Voters of Denton.

Friend (\$25 - \$49)

Anonymous*
Horace Brock
Maggie Dodd*
Jerry Eastup
Janet & Ed Ellis*
George & Jane Hopkins
Maisie Kashka*
Jo Kuhn
Mary Doyle Marcello*
Agnes Rogers*
Joe & Betty Roy
Lois Sorensen*
Fritz & Renate Schwalm
R.E.J. Sears
Gary Truitt
Emma & Roland Vela
Margaret Widmer
Rosemary & Byron Witmer*LWV-TEF

Supporter (\$50 - \$99)

Anonymous
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Dorothy Damico*
Roberta Donsbach*
Janet & Ed Ellis*
Jim & Jo Ann Engelbrecht
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Sue & Wes Smith*
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Euline Brock*
Linda Brock*
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Sondra Ferstl*LWV-TEF
Alonzo Jamison
Jo Luker*
Linnie McAdams*
Sarah McIntire*LWV-TEF
Joe Mulroy
Charles Stafford

Patron (\$250+)

Abbe Doss Patton*
Paul Voertman LWV-TEF

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE CONSENSUS

The League has long supported abolishing the electoral college system in Presidential elections. In 2008, delegates to the national convention voted to adopt a study on the

advisability of using the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) among the states as a method for electing the President. A brief discussion of the NPV was in the April Voter. Ten members attended the April 16 meeting.

- Peg La Point

At-Risk Americans: The Uninsured And Underinsured

By Janis McMillen

Data from multiple sources agree that in 2007, 47 million Americans (15.6 percent of the total U.S. population) lacked any kind of health insurance coverage. When these numbers are adjusted for age (excluding those 65 years and older), the uninsured percentage of the population rises to 17.9 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that 25 million adults under age 65 were underinsured during 2007, despite having insurance all year. In total, 42 percent of all adults (86.7 million) were either uninsured or underinsured during 2007.

Putting a face on persons who were uninsured or underinsured during 2007 and 2008¹

Age: One of three people under age 65 were uninsured for some or all of 2007 and 2008; of the total uninsured population, 60.1 million were adults (between 19 and 64 years of age)

Duration: Among the underinsured/uninsured, 74.5 percent were uninsured for nine or more months and one-quarter were uninsured the entire 24 months

Employment status: 80 percent of individuals who were uninsured were in working families and only 16 percent were not in the labor force (due to disabilities, chronic illness, or serving as family caregivers)

Income: Nearly 60 percent were in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL: \$21,200/year for a family of four); 52 percent with incomes between 100 to 200 percent of FPL went without health insurance in 2007/2008

Racial and Ethnic origin: 55 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, 40.3 percent of African Americans and 34 percent of other racial or ethnic minorities had no health insurance in 2007/2008, compared to 25.8 percent of whites. While racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be uninsured, whites accounted for 49.8 percent of the uninsured

Age breakdown: The likelihood of being uninsured declines with age; 49.5 percent of those 19 – 24 years old, 36.3 percent of those 25 – 44 years old, 32.5 percent of those 45 – 54 years old and 21.2 percent of those 55 – 64 years old were uninsured over this two-year time period. The 55- to 64-year-old age group consumes more health care on average than younger adults.

For all ethnic and racial groups, lower-income families and individuals were more likely to be uninsured than lower-income whites. This disparity continues even as incomes rise in all groups.

There is a marked increase in the number of adults having difficulty paying medical bills – the most visible consequence of the weakening in insurance coverage. In 2007, 41 percent of adults (72 million people) reported problems paying medical bills, faced bill collectors or were in debt for medical care, up from 34 percent or 58 million in 2005. The majority had insurance at the time these bills were incurred² – well in advance of the economic downturn.

¹ All statistics above and below are from <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/americans-at-risk-findings.html>

²The statistics in this paragraph are from <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Testimonies/2009/Feb/Testimony-Insurance-Design-Matters-Underinsured-Trends-Health-and-Financial-Risks.aspx>

Janis McMillen (LWVUS Board member and LWVKS) is chair of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.

FIVE FROM DENTON LEAGUE ATTEND WORKSHOP

Peg La Point, Linnie McAdams, Barbara Burns, Kay Branum, and Sondra Ferstl attended the Regional Workshop presented by the LWV-Texas on May 2 at the W. O. Haggard Public Library in Plano. Forty-one local League members from North Texas and points east gathered for a day that began with playing League Jeopardy and ended in taking shelter from a scary thunderstorm!

Participants tried to ask the right question Jeopardy-style for a certain number of points testing information about the League of Women Voters. It was a clever idea made somewhat difficult by the lack of a mouse to guide the cursor to the proper box. At times the computer program revealed the answer before the item was selected! Still, we took the session in good fun.

After that warm-up, members of the State Board shared tips on effective meetings, mentoring, and the importance of nonpartisanship in the League. After the break participants chose two topics for round table discussion from the following list: communication, fundraising, collaborations, program/advocacy/consensus. There was also an opportunity to ask the State Board about a variety of topics in the "You Have Questions/We Have Answers" segment.

We were into the final portion of the three-hour meeting, bragging about local League experiences, when the thunderstorms that had been building up their fury all afternoon let loose. Sirens sounded! Participants scattered for cover! And as soon as the all clear was given, we headed for our cars and headed for home! What a dramatic finish to the day!

Sondra Ferstl



Barbara Burns & Sondra Ferstl



Peg La Point & Barbara Burns

Workshop Photos by Sondra Ferstl & Peg La Point