

BAY AREA

VOTER

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area
APRIL 2008

President's Message

Barbara Murray

This election year is proving to be very fascinating! I am still hearing stories about the **March primary election**... the excitement of new citizens voting for the very first time, the interest and enthusiasm of young voters, the sometimes chaotic/confusing but ultimately rewarding experience of participating in the Texas caucus system. I am sure that many of you also have stories to share.

What better place to share your stories than at the League's **Annual Meeting**! This year's annual meeting will be held on Saturday, May 31st, at Verva Densmore's lovely home in Whispering Lakes Ranch in League City. The official invitation and workbook containing the proposed budget, program, by-laws and slate of officers will be mailed to you at the end of April.

Speaking of the **slate of officers**.... Every current board member is willing to serve again next year, but we would also be delighted to open and expand our group to other interested League members. Are you interested in becoming more involved with the League and developing new friends or renewing old ones? Then this is the group for you. We meet four times a year and utilize emails between meetings as our preferred way to communicate. Please feel free to contact Nancy Wallace (nancyhwallace@aol.com / 281-532-3633), nominating committee chair, or Barbara Murray (bhmurray@mail.com /281-474-3154), president, for more information.

Even though the March primary election has been a big focus this spring, we must not ignore the **other elections** that will be taking place. The primary runoff election (April 8) and the local municipal elections (May 10) are also very important. The Bay Area League plans to hold a **candidates forum** for one of the city elections – still to be determined. We also plan to hold at least one more **voter registration drive** to register first time voters at Clear Brook High School. Someone will be contacting you for these volunteer opportunities. (Feel free to contact me also if you are interested in participating.)

On a final note – I want to thank Tamara Kaupp for answering the **League telephone** for the last several years. Taking over for Tamara will be Aggie Bourgeois. Thank you, Aggie, for stepping in and filling this vital role allowing the community to be able to contact the League.

Our LWV-Bay Area telephone number is: 281-648-0929

WHAT DOES “NONPARTISAN” MEAN?

(The following article, written by LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson , appeared in the March LWVUS *Leaders Update* sent via email to local board members. More information about the League nonpartisan policy can be found on the LWVUS website <http://www.lwv.org>)

In a year when there’s lots of excitement about the elections, we want to take a minute to remind ourselves, as League members, about the importance of nonpartisan conduct while doing League activities. One area of concern is anything related to internal party disputes about how to allocate delegates at party Conventions. It’s an area where League members are concerned because we don’t want voters to be “disenfranchised,” but this is an example where the League’s nonpartisan orientation calls on us NOT to comment because it relates to internal party activities/decisions.

Non partisanship toward candidates and political parties is critical to the effectiveness of the League’s unique voter service/citizen information work. It also provides a strong foundation for the work done in support of issues. Action on legislation and ballot proposals is more effective when the public and the legislators believe that the League’s conclusions are based on merit rather than politics.

Applying the nonpartisan policy at the local League level is important. As you look at your own policy, your League should be clear in determining what, if any, limitations should be put on Board members (the whole Board or only those in “sensitive” positions, such as president and Voter Service chair) who participate in the following activities:

- Making financial contributions to candidates and/or political parties;
- Participating in behind-the-scenes efforts for candidates, such as telephoning, stuffing envelopes, writing position papers, etc;
- Publicly supporting a candidate for partisan political office;
- Circulating or signing nominating petitions or referendum petitions;
- Attending coffees or other gatherings to meet candidates;
- Holding coffees for candidates seeking political office and/or nonpartisan office;
- Attending fundraising functions for candidates or political parties;
- Holding an appointive political office;
- Holding office in another organization that supports or opposes political parties or candidates.

Editor’s note: These limitations are applicable only to Board members, not to all League members – so long as the member makes it clear that she/he does not speak for the League. Only the president can speak for the League.

Check out [VOTE411.org](http://www.vote411.org) for current, updated election information!

You can find information on:

- * voter registration requirements
- * voter eligibility
- * polling procedures
- * poll locations for the November elections
- * candidate information

<http://www.vote411.org>

CALENDAR

APRIL 2008

- 4-6 LWV-TX Convention '08', Fort Worth
- 10 Last day to register to vote in May election
- 28 Early voting begins

MAY 2008

- 6 Early voting ends
- 10 UNIFORM ELECTION DAY (includes local city council elections)
- 31 **LWV-BA Annual Meeting**

SAVE THIS DATE!

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area
Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 31, 2008
9:30 am – Social
10:15-11:15 – Annual Meeting

3910 Sunset Terrace Drive, League City