

LWVUS President Visits Texas

Mary G. Wilson, the League's national president, was in Texas March 19-21. While in Austin, she made calls with Advocacy Vice President Mary Finch and President Karen Nicholson. They saw Rep. Rafael Anchia, Rep. Todd Smith (Chair of the House Elections Committee), and the Chief of Staff for House Speaker Joe Straus on the voter ID bills. The League opposes additional requirements for registered voters that might be a deterrent to voting. *The Senate bill, which passed the Senate handily, is likely to be significantly different when it comes out of the House Elections Committee.* Surveys show that the public sup-

ports some additional identification requirements to prevent voter fraud. However, when specific examples of people who would have a hard time coming up with the additional identification are presented, support wanes. Consider the grandmother who lives with her son and daughter-in-law, doesn't drive, and receives no bills in her name at that address. While opposed to voter fraud, the League notes that the ID requirements would do little, if

anything, to prevent fraud in mail-in ballots, which is where fraud is more likely to occur.

While in Texas, President Wilson met with local League members in the Austin and Dallas areas at receptions that were hosted by these two local Leagues.



(left to right) Karen Nicholson, Mary Wilson, Anita Privett, Mary Finch, Rep. Donna Howard

Iron Jawed Angels

Linda Wassenich, Dallas, PR VP



Members and guests who came to League Lobby Day were treated to a showing on the big screen of *Iron Jawed Angels* at the Thompson Center on the UT-Austin campus the night before Lobby Day,

inspiring film about the suffragists' efforts to win the right to vote for women. To commemorate International Women's Day a video produced by Oxfam America

and to celebrate Women's History Month. Close to 100 people, including League members, college students, and community people, saw this

highlighting global warming and its effect on women was also part of the program.

Sponsorships were critical to LWV-TX being able to show this film. Thanks go to our corporate sponsors: Randall's/Tom Thumb/Safeway, Texas Nurses Association, AT&T, Greater Texas Water Company, and H-E-B. Several League members and others also contributed to make this event an effective fundraiser/membership drive.

President's Message

Karen Nicholson, President, Midland



"Democracy is never a thing done. Democracy is always something that a nation must be *doing*." I'm quoting Archibald MacLeish. The League, indeed, is "*doing*." We are working especially hard during this legislative session. Advocacy VP Mary Finch, the Program

Chairs, and the Capitol Corps are *doing* a magnificent job. Spring elections mean local Leagues are *doing* forums and Voters Guides. We will soon be *doing* Regional Workshops across the state so that you can have more information about everything you're doing in your local Leagues. Members of the League of Women Voters seem never to sleep. We are always *doing* something! I am very proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters and all the things we are *doing* to make democracy work. Keep *doing* all that you do, because we (and democracy) are never done. I thank you for that.

Karen

Merchandise Close Out

Get yours while supplies last! Coffee mugs with logos for the League and for the Year of the Voter in red and blue, book clip lights, and red heart-shaped tree ornaments with LWV on one side are now being sold for \$5 each, plus shipping and handling. These items make great gifts for outgoing board members, speakers, birthdays, and more. Check the website, www.lwvtexas.org, to see pictures and place your order.



Sustainers Plaque

Linda Wassenich, Dallas, PR VP

Three Local League Leaders have been recently recognized on the Local League Leaders Sustainers Plaque. The Lubbock League honored Glenna Burns and Ann Burbridge; Pat Vaughan of Dallas was honored by Linda Wassenich. These three have held numerous positions with their local Leagues over the course of many years. The Sustainers Plaques are displayed at the state office and also brought to each biennial state convention.

You can honor one of your own for a donation of \$200 to LWV-TX or LWV-TEF. With the end of a League year approaching, this designation is a great way to honor an outgoing president, board member, or someone who has just "been there, done that" and is still doing it! An extra benefit this year is that donations to place a name on one of the Sustainers Plaques counts toward the challenge grant described in another article in this VOTER.

Golden Oldies-Leagues 50+

LWV-Houston Area

1920

- The 18th Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and transporting of alcoholic beverages, went into effect. It was later repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933.
- The 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, was ratified.
- William Hobby was Texas Governor.

LWV-Tarrant County

1942

- Oveta Culp Hobby, a former LWV-TX president, became director of WACS (Women's Army Corps).
- "Casablanca" appeared in movie theaters, and Bing Crosby released the song "White Christmas".
- Coke Stevenson was Governor of Texas.

LWV-Corpus Christi

1945

- World War II ended.
- Golfer Byron Nelson won a record 18 events.
- Coke Stevenson was still Texas Governor but was defeated in the 1948 Senate race, losing to Lyndon Baines Johnson.

2009 League Lobby Day at the Capitol

We scheduled three topics for Lobby Day: redistricting, county authority and moratorium on the death penalty. A fourth was added, voter ID, after it was apparent that the Senate was planning to pass Rep. Fraser's SB362 bill.

The Senate had voted the week before to change their 2/5th rule to 3/5th on the voter ID issue only. The Senate Committee of the Whole did meet the following week March 17, through the night, finally voting and passing the bill on Wednesday. It was an exciting time to be advocating in the Capitol.

Local Leagues from all over the state were in attendance. The state office had prepared 80 folders with handouts. These were gone before the meeting started. Fortunately, the office is two blocks away and more copies appeared. We had at least ten non-League attendees. The Capitol Committee room was almost filled to capacity.

The handouts on Lobby day included a sheet on how to lobby in person and Advocacy Papers on redistricting, county authority, and moratorium on the death penalty. Talking Points were distributed on these issues and voter ID.

Senator Wentworth talked to us about his redistricting bill SB315 and the history of redistricting in Texas since the 1960s. It was an interesting and informative talk. He told us that his mother had been a League member for years. At the conclusion of his remarks, Elaine Talarski covered her Talking Points on redistricting so we would all know what to say to our legislators about voting for Senator Wentworth's bill.

Karen Rankin told us why counties need more authority. Representative Rose dropped in and spoke to us for a few minutes. He told us that Karen had been instrumental in getting this subject as a number one item on many county agendas; he spoke very highly of the work she has done on this issue. Neighborhoods are being built in county areas surrounding our large urban cities. This is a very important issue to counties experiencing rapid growth without the authority to meet the challenges of

Mary Finch, Austin, Advocacy VP

growth and development.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports a moratorium on the death penalty because as it is administered in Texas today it is inherently flawed. Marj Loehlin talked about the many errors in death penalty convictions in Texas. Statistics of incorrect convictions are hard to ignore. The League of Women Voters of Texas is supporting several bills calling for a moratorium on the death penalty and a commission to study the issue.

Anita Privett, who after waiting for 24 hours testified against the Senate voter ID bill for the League, discussed the Talking Points for opposing voter ID. In advocating against this bill, we have heard from several legislators in both parties that this bill is about "politics not policy." In addition to opposing the barriers imposed by voter ID, the League is opposing onerous voter ID bills for policy reasons. The legislature has many critical issues to resolve this session and does not need to be sidetracked by this non issue.

We finished up our lively 2009 Lobby Day session at noon. After lunch in the Capitol cafeteria, our members met with their legislators in

the afternoon. This is one of the few times local League members can lobby their state legislators in the name of the League. We kept running across one another in the halls as we moved from office to office. Everyone seemed to be having a great time. If you were not here this year, make plans to come to the next Lobby Day in two years.

In the meantime, you can follow the Leagues activities this session by reading the Legislative Newsletter, sent to all our members with email addresses. If you are not receiving it, please be sure your local membership person has your correct email address. You can also read Testimony and Advocacy Papers (click on "Press & Public" and then on "Advocacy") on the state League website: www.lwvtexas.org We are following many important issues at the Capitol.



Senator Wentworth and Karen Nicholson

Around the State

Barbara Downey, Dallas

Bay Area League members met to kick off the LWV-Texas re-study of Voting Rights and Election Laws. The goal of the study is to consider ways to increase voter participation. While voting experiences were still fresh in their minds, they discussed such ideas as vote by mail, Internet voting, same-day registration, election-day centralized voting, overseas ballot provisions, and other procedural barriers to voting. While they didn't come to any conclusions, they did generate many questions and comments that were forwarded to the state's study committee.

About six years ago, Leaguer Jana Swisher volunteered to take the growing pile of clippings and photographs that the **Comal Area League** was accumulating and scrapbook them. Now LWV-CA has five scrapbooks preserved in the archives at the Sophienburg Museum on Academy Street. Jana has recently resigned her post. The League owes her a tremendous debt of gratitude for her service.

LWV-Denton President Sue Smith reports that the Denton Record-Chronicle's 25 Years Ago column on February 3 featured a League meeting in 1984 on public transportation. Guest speaker Adlene Harrison (Leaguer and former Dallas mayor) said, "No matter what system may be decided, the public must be involved." These words are still very appropriate for the League today.

Recently the **Denton League** hosted city staff for a review of maintenance codes proposed for approved by the City Council. They gave an excellent overview of the reasons for many of the proposed revisions and how the codes would impact the average citizen.

The **League of Women Voters of Gainesville** held their Texas quilt raffle at their Christmas Social at the Main Street Pub and Eatery. Each square of the lap-size quilt is a map of Texas complete with blue bonnets and, of course, the city of Gainesville. Leaguer Jamie Wilson created and donated the quilt for the successful fundraiser for which each LWV member sold 20 raffle tickets.

LWV-Corpus Christi will again partner with Leadership Corpus Christi Alumni to host an evening forum for all candidates for the Corpus Christi City Council. The forum will be televised live on Cable Channel 20 (government channel) and then will be aired on additional dates. LWV-CC will produce a 12-page Voter Guide before the start of Early Voting and will have about 5,000 copies printed for distribution throughout the community.

LWV-Galveston hosted a fund-raiser and award dinner in March at Gaido's Restaurant. Their "Bravo Award," which recognizes persons who contribute unselfishly for

the betterment of their community, was presented to Jim and Lynda Guidry to honor their devotion and commitment to provide the most extensive coverage of community activities and events in the Gulf Coast area. The evening's events included a successful auction featuring two baskets contributed by the two major political parties. "The League gained over \$500 that night; we thank everyone who contributed!"

80 people attend the **LWV-Midland's** Making Democracy Work luncheon, honoring Mayor Wes Perry at the Petroleum Club. The Mayor gave a State of the City address, told what he thought was necessary to "make democracy work," and answered audience questions. President Pat Stanley reported that they received a front page picture and reporting in the Midland Reporter Telegram as well as TV coverage.

Program Planning El Paso Style: **LWV-El Paso** considers their March general meeting the most important one of the year because "it's about us." The Issues and Actions Committees update the current EPLWV "Program" and discuss ways to become more active in influencing local policy. Then, issues are chosen for 2009-2010.

One of the **Richardson League's** special projects, under the capable leadership of Martha Dorris, has been Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollment events in the local school district as well as regular monthly help sessions at a local church. Please consider writing your elected representatives in support of expanding CHIP, especially as new bills are introduced in the Legislature. A good source of information is the Texas Finish Line Campaign at www.texaskidswin.org.

Women in Tyler, a group founded in 1999 to celebrate Women's History Month by honoring women who have contributed to the quality of life in their community, chose Dee Brock, president of the **Tyler/Smith County League of Women Voters** and a member of the state board, as one of their honorees feted at a luncheon on March 19. The luncheon's theme was "Women Who are Driven", and those honored were deemed women who are driven to succeed, to survive, and to help their communities.

Along with Brock, other honorees included a breast cancer awareness advocate, a Vietnam refugee and hospice worker, a Habitat for Humanity volunteer, an AARP driving instructor, a magazine founder, and a college president. Congratulations to all of these "driven" women and especially to our own Dee Brock.

League Loses Leader

by **Carolie Mullan, Lubbock, LWVUS board member**

When Betty Anderson died on December 28, 2008, the League of Women Voters lost one of our most dedicated, active, and productive members. However, the loss will be felt by far more than the League. Betty was an energetic and passionate advocate for the rights and well being of everyone for almost 50 years. She worked on a wide variety of issues, but she was especially interested in those relating to children and other underserved members of our society.

We all see things that we would like to change, but when Betty identified a need for change, she did something about it. She created organizations, she served on boards, she wrote letters to the editor, and she visited with elected officials frequently. The grace with which she debated issues allowed her to share her perspectives with officials who, regardless of their views on the subject, welcomed her well-researched and well-presented input. During a League Lobby Day visit in 2005, former Speaker Pete Laney laughed that he'd been following Betty's direction on children's issues for years.

Betty's broad interests fit well with LWV's multi-issue portfolio. Betty was president of the LWV-TX from 1975 to 1979 and president of LWV-Lubbock twice – 1967-1969 and 1987-1988. I was fortunate to be on her board in 1987 and in addition to all of her other virtues, Betty ran great meetings – they started and ended on time, everything on the agenda was addressed, and no committee work was allowed during board meetings!

LWV-TX awarded Betty the state League's President's Award in 2003 to recognize her tremendous League accomplishments at all League levels. She also received the LWVUS Voters Education Fund Leaders Award.

In addition to the League, Betty was active in numerous other organizations and sat on many boards. She was state president of the American Association of University Women, and also served on the AAUW national board. She was named an AAUW Woman of Distinction and the Lubbock chapter was renamed in her honor. Betty was a

founding board member of the Center of Public Policy Priorities in Austin, and served on that board for many years. She chaired the Texas Committee on the Humanities and the Texas Commission on Women, and she served on The Texas Commission on Children and Youth and the Texas Commission of Human Services. She also served on numerous local boards and received several prestigious local awards.



Betty Price Anderson (1933-2008)

In addition to all of these accomplishments, and many more, Betty's enthusiasm inspired others to leadership roles to work on the issues she espoused. Her life was dedicated to making life more equitable for others, but her work is not yet complete and there is still much to be done.

Betty had many interests besides activism - politics, education, government, and the arts, for instance. One story illustrates the way she adapted her musical interest to West Texas. When she and her husband, John, moved to Lubbock in 1961, she accepted engagements to perform on the harp, which she played beautifully, and the Andersons bought a pickup to accommodate Betty's harp. Pickups were common in West Texas, even in 1961, but John and Betty's vehicle was the only one with a harp in the back.

Betty was very active in her church, hosted wonderful events in her home, and even baked her own bread! She was always one of the first to reach out to her friends when they needed it most – making hospital visits, sending notes and cards, or providing delicious homemade food. Her friendship was a treasure that will be missed.

There is no better way to honor our friend and our colleague than to carry on her work to effect change in the areas where the need is greatest.

Update: Voting Procedures Study

Janet Imhoff, McKinney, Program VP

With regret, the Board of Directors accepted the resignation of Jayne Kraweitz, chair of the study of "Voting Procedures to Increase Voter Participation" at our January meeting. Under her guidance, the committee completed their research, and Reed Bilz of Tarrant County has volunteered to edit the papers, which will then be compiled into a Facts and Issues publication. This publication will be sent to all members in late summer.

Leagues around the state may want to hold meetings next year to discuss the study's findings, but at this time,

the Board does not anticipate a need for consensus discussions. We expect at this time our current Election Laws and Voting Rights position is adequate, but our study will be a valuable tool and resource in summarizing many new voting procedures used in other states.

Many thanks to Jayne and the study committee of Reed Bilz (Tarrant County), Renee Cross (Houston), Charlotte Foulkes (Arlington), Laurie Vanhooose (Austin), and Pat White (El Paso).

Statewide Conference at Lobby Day a Big Success

Janet Imhoff, McKinney, Program VP

League Members from across the state met on Monday, March 9 at the State Capitol in Austin for a combination of Lobby Day and a Statewide Conference. This was the first time to call a statewide conference to take care of the business of making changes to two of our program positions so we might lobby more effectively this session.

The conference met to consider changes to our Child Abuse and Neglect and Judicial Selection positions. Eighty members attended and fifteen local Leagues were represented, which is the majority required by our Bylaws for a quorum to conduct business. Both changes were sent to all members attached to the registration form. Both changes were approved by the voting delegates.

The proposed change to our Child Abuse and Neglect position deleted the words, "in their families and homes" from the opening statement of the position, and now reads:

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports the development and implementation of adequate legislation, policies, services, and programs to protect children from abuse and neglect.

This change now allows us to lobby for bills that address abuse or neglect in places other than the family or home.

Our Judicial Selection position was previously the fourth bullet of our Judicial position, and the proposed change recommended adding district judges to our position supporting non-partisan selection and retention of judges. The selection part of our Judicial position is now set apart from the other bullets and reads:

The League supports the selection of judges in the following manner:

- Nomination by a diverse, representative, nonpartisan commission, with appointment for a specific term, or appointment by the governor for a specific term; judges are subject to retention or rejection in an unlimited number of periodic nonpartisan elections. Selection, if by election, should be nonpartisan.
- This should apply to the Texas Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Courts of Appeals, and State District Judges.

This change allows us to support bills which include district judges in proposed changes to the selection method.

League Meets with SOS

Janet Imhoff, McKinney, Program VP

Several Board members met with our new Secretary of State, Hope Andrade, and her staff in January. In attendance were Ann McGeehan, Director of the Elections Division, and John Saphri, General Counsel. We discussed several election and voting related topics, including:

November 2008 Election –There was just under 60% voter turn-out, and 67% of voters voted in early voting period. Galveston and Chambers Counties' elections officials were very proactive in getting organized, assessing unusable polling places, ordering temporary buildings, etc. after the hurricane.

Statewide Voter Registration Database – It was fully functional and worked well. It is used by 225 counties. The large counties maintain their own systems, but are continually in communication with the SOS office with changes.

Electronic Voting Machine Certification – There has been no new certification of equipment at the federal level due to stagnation at the EAC. The SOS office has heard that the paper receipt machines used in other states do not work well. Texas currently has no money to help counties replace or upgrade their voting machines.

Countywide Polling Place Pilot Project –There is a pilot project which allows counties to conduct election day voting at countywide voting locations, instead of providing polling places in each regular precinct. Only Lubbock County participated in this project in the Nov. 2006 general election, and Lubbock and Erath Counties tried it in November 2008. Several more said "they were reluctant to make any big changes in such a critical election year."

The Secretary sees it as a way to make voting more convenient, and so increase voter turnout, and to save money for the counties by having to provide fewer precincts. She will ask the legislature to reauthorize the pilot project for possible use in the November 2009 constitutional amendment election. "With data from a wider spectrum of counties, the SOS could make more informed recommendations for future permanent legislation."

Poll Worker Education – The SOS provides on-line training, training face-to-face by satellite or webinars, by video, and through printed handbooks. The on-line training worked very well, and can be tailored to specific voting equipment. It allows large counties to train workers who have difficulty reaching a central

.....continued on next page

Take a Vacation from the League

Linda Wassenich, Dallas, PR VP

As we labor on through another legislative session, League members can look forward to great vacation opportunities after the session ends. A drawing will be held on June 10 for one of three fantastic prizes: two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines, a weekend night and breakfast at the Omni Hotel in Houston, or a two-night stay at a lake house on Possum Kingdom lake in North Texas. Only 300 chances are being offered. With a donation of \$25, you get one chance; three chances are \$50. Send your check to the State Office, and be sure to mark it TVFL. Checks should be made out to LWV-TEF. These donations also count toward the challenge grant, which is described in another article.



Possum Kingdom Lake

Challenge Grant Challenges the League

Linda Wassenich, Dallas, PR VP

For several years, the Texas League has had to go into its reserves to cover shortfalls at the end of the year. Two anonymous donors have issued a challenge totaling \$15,000 to match donations from League members and other individuals before October 15. Any contribution to LWV-TX or LWV-TEF will be matched dollar for dollar.

There are several easy ways for you to contribute.

• Change for Change

Just put your loose change in a jar and periodically send a check to the League office for the amount collected.



• \$10 on the 10th

Pledge through an automatic bank withdrawal or credit card charge by making arrangements through the state office. (You can also set a different amount on a different date, if you wish.)

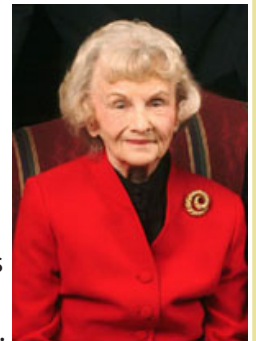
• Take a Vacation from the League

Make a donation to TEF only. See the article at the top of this page for details.

• Respond to one of the letters from the League asking for donations.

In addition, this spring we are honoring Louise Raggio, Chair of the Advisory Council for LWV-TEF and past president of the Austin Area League, on her 90th birthday in June. Send your donation and a tribute letter to the state office by April 30, and we will put the letters together to present to Louise along with an announcement of the amount raised. Louise is an icon in women's rights. She led the efforts for passage of the Marital Property Rights Act and the Texas Family Code, which is a model for the nation. All of us who live in Texas are indebted to Louise for what she has done for women and children.

In this down economy, we must look to those closest to our organization, our members and people who care about *Making Democracy Work*, to keep the League on a stable financial footing. The League protects voters rights, studies critical public policy issues, helps voters cast informed votes in each election, and more. Every donation counts. Please be generous.



Louise Raggio

Continued...Secretary of State

location for training by election officials. The on-line training was launched in September, 2008.

Get-Out-the-Vote – the SOS office held four “telethons,” 2 in Austin and 1 each in Dallas and San Antonio, where officials were available in television studios and took calls from an 800 number. Two of the events were sponsored by Univision Network for Spanish speaking callers. They felt the telethons held in the fall were very successful.

The Secretary said their concern is making the voting process easier and helping the voter. They feel Texas is ahead of other states with our early voting option, our voter registration database, and our HAVA compliance. They invited us to come back after this legislative session to discuss any new legislation regarding elections and voting.

Legislative Newsletter

Have you been receiving the
Legislative Newsletter?

If not, please let Brandon know
(bspennath@lwwvtexas.org)

Archives are available on the website in the
members section.

2009 Regional Workshops

May 2 - Plano

May 16 - Wichita Falls

June 6 - Kerrville

\$10/person (or) \$50/League

See www.lwwvtexas.org for more information &
registration form

Thank you to our Donors

TX

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Bartha, Gregory
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Batchelor, Colleen
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Cheong, Pat
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Morrison, Susan
Mullan, Carolie
Nicholson, Karen
Nisbett, Reggie
Owen, Natalie
Pak, Jane
Pavlik, Linda
Pino, Carol
Randalls
Ray, Kaylene
Roomberg, Susan And Mark
Smith, Frances
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Stanley, Pat
Swartz, Barbara
Talarski, Elaine
Tarpley, Martha
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Texas Counseling
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Texas Nurses Association
Vanderwater, Robert
Wassenich, Linda
Weinstein, Barbara
Wilkerson, Karen
Wilson, Nancy
Witmer, Rosemary

Honors & Memorials

•Heather Becker donated to EF in honor of Louise Raggio
•Jensie Madden donated to EF in honor of Louise Raggio & Julia Marsden and in memory of Betty Anderson
•Salley Lang donated to EF in honor of Louise Raggio
•Patricia Lacombe donated to TX in honor of Louise Raggio
•Carol Fredericks donated to TX in honor of Louise Raggio
•Patricia Davidson donated to EF in honor of Louise Raggio
•Julie Bleicher donated to TX in honor of Louise Raggio
•Abbie Meyering donated to TX in honor of Louise Raggio

•Grier Raggio donated to TX in honor of Louise Raggio
•Sondra Ferstl donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith and in memory of Betty Anderson
•Barbara Coe donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith
•Peggy LaPoint donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith
•Linnie McAdams donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith
•Mary Dodd donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith
•Rosemary Witmer donated to EF in honor of Sue Smith
•Julia Marsden donated to TX in memory of Rene Salazar & Betty Anderson

•Linda Krefting donated to EF in memory of Rene Salazar
•Darlene Hicks donated to EF in memory of Rene Salazar, Betty Anderson & Halsey Marsden
•Joyce Robinson donated to TX in memory of Rene Salazar & Betty Anderson
•Elaine Talarski donated to EF in memory of Rene Salazar
•Karen Nicholson donated to EF in memory of Rene Salazar
•Linda Wassenich donated to EF in memory of Rene Salazar, Ned Fritz, Halsey Marsden & Betty Anderson and in honor of Pat Vaughan
•Barbara Swartz donated to TX in

memory of Rene Salazar
•Julie Lowenberg donated to EF in memory of Betty Anderson & Halsey Marsden
•Robert & Shirley Cooper donated to EF in memory of Betty Anderson
•Jane Pak donated to EF in honor of Mavis Knight
•LWV-Marshall/Harrison Co. donated to EF in memory of Greg Beil
•Georgia Kidwell donated to EF in memory of Betty Anderson
•Susan Majors donated to TX in memory of Halsey Marsden
•Martha Kissinger donated to EF in memory of Betty Anderson