

LWV-Texas Launches Promote Texas Voting Campaign

Linda Krefting, Election Law Issue Chair, Lubbock County

To address the Texas-sized problem of low voter turnout—lowest of all states in 2010—LWV-Texas is initiating a Texas-sized, nonpartisan coalition of organizations, businesses, and individuals committed to Promote Texas Voting (PTXV). This Texas-sized problem is bigger than any one organization can tackle, but by working together we can make a difference!

The goals of this coalition are straightforward:

- To improve voter registration dramatically, especially among underrepresented groups;
- To increase voter turnout in Texas significantly; and
- To ensure that no voting-eligible person is effectively denied the opportunity to vote because of
 - a lack of understanding of registration and voting regulations;

- an inability to comply with the regulations (e.g. ID requirements);
- failure of election officials to properly apply regulations (including accommodation requirements);
- insufficient information upon which to base a vote; or fear or intimidation.

We are in the process of organizing the PTXV steering committee and in the near future will begin inviting additional organizations to partner with us. Fundraising and plans for a Promote Texas Voting website are underway.

We'll keep you posted as plans develop. Contributions to support this effort can be made to the LWV-Texas Education Fund and designated for PTXV.

2012 Convention in San Antonio

Chris Davis Garcia, 2012 Convention Chair, Corpus Christi



It's not too early to begin thinking about the LWV-Texas 2012 Convention, scheduled Friday-Sunday, April 13-15, 2012, in San Antonio at The Hilton San Antonio Airport on Northwest Loop 410. Our host, LWV-San Antonio Area and President Phyllis Ingram, and your Board invites you and members from your

LWV to join us for a special Friday evening event, informative workshops, important LWV plenary, great hospitality, networking, and more! Let's have every LWV represented!

You can follow the instructions below to make your room reservation right now for the 2012 Convention:

- Individual reservations can be made by calling hotel reservations at 1-888-728-3031, or via the internet at www.hiltonsanantoniop.com.
- Please make sure to give our **group/convention code LWV** to receive the group rate of \$104, plus tax, per night and all group special concessions.
- A credit card number for one night's advance deposit will be required to secure a room out of this block. Cancellations must be received 72 hours prior to arrival or the one night room and tax will be assessed.

The group rate is only available through **March 13, 2012**, so make hotel reservations now! If you need any assistance in making your reservation, contact our hotel representative, Kimberly Chaney by email or phone: kchaney@hiltonsanantoniop.com or 210-377-4608.

President's Podium

Karen Nicholson, President, Midland



I'm excited that you are seeing our State Office re-model in this issue. Many of you donated to the update at Convention last year, and although, for a variety of reasons, it took longer than we'd anticipated, it is now finished. We "initiated" the office somewhat during Lobby Days when we had an open house. We were happy that not only could the attendees see the improved office, but also they could visit with the state board and network with each other.

Pam Reeves of Tyler donated her services to draw a design plan for reconfiguration and decorating. Since there had been no improvements since we bought the condo in 1985, it was certainly time to address the stained carpet and dingy walls as well as to consider an updated layout. The executive director's office was moved, and we now have a large conference room that was used during the session by an elections coalition of which we are a part. We plan to offer our facility to other groups with whom we work. We have a larger, more efficient work room. Some doors were moved for better flow. It is simply a better looking, better working office, and we invite you to go visit any time you're in Austin.

Besides several historical documents framed and on the walls, be sure to notice the quilt with signatures of political women and LWV presidents, not just from Texas, but US ones, as well. Our awards and plaques are also prominently displayed.

We also want to honor Pam's husband, Blake. He worked with Pam on the construction and built a conference table top for us. During the construction time, however, he was diagnosed with cancer and lost his battle with the disease. Pam and Blake were a great team doing in-kind work for us.

Florence Nightingale opined, "I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results." Pam and Blake brought results. Justine labored in the construction mess of the state office for too long, but continued to bring outstanding results. You bring results every day with your varied work for the LWV. Thank you.

Around the State

Judy Hollinger, Houston Area



Just take a look at what our Texas local Leagues have been doing this spring! Major activities in the last few months have been LWV-TX Lobby Day, voter registration, particularly at Naturalization Ceremonies, and candidate forums and *Voters Guides* for the May local elections. Almost every

local League sponsored candidate forums and published a *Voters Guide*! Way to go! Here are a few highlights to inspire us all:

LWV-AMARILLO has had a busy spring—candidate forums, a meeting on the water issue and registering newly naturalized citizens to vote. Two Amarillo league members Janette Kelly and Ellen Green received Dis-

tinguished Service Awards from the Amarillo Women's Forum.

LWV-ARLINGTON AREA sponsored a booth at the Dalworthington Gardens Celebration with information on the LWV and voting. They also hosted a hula hoop contest—hope we get some photos from that!

LWV-AUSTIN AREA conducted a successful member Phoneathon fundraiser. They also claimed the distinction of having the LWV-AA *Voters Guide* published in the May 1 Austin American Statesman. Their May meeting was on "Money In Politics."

LWV-BAY AREA has published and distributed 2,000 copies of their new Guide to Elected Officials. They held a candidate forum for city elections and are working with social studies and history teachers at local high

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schools to register eligible voters and to engage teenagers in civil participation.

LWV-COMAL AREA sponsored a screening of “Iron Jawed Angels” and produced a *Voters Guide* for municipal elections.

To educate voters about candidates and issues in the local elections, **LWV-CORPUS CHRISTI** held a Meet and Greet, a candidate forum, and published a *Voters Guide*.

Welcome to **LWV-DALLAS** new administrative assistant Fran Morris. LWV-Dallas sponsored a booth at an area-wide Earth Day celebration. With sister Leagues in Irving, Plano/Collin County and Richardson, as well as several community organizations, Dallas hosted a forum on Redistricting: Why Does it Matter?

LWV-DENTON celebrated its 50th anniversary this year and presented awards to a local journalist for investigative reporting and to LWV member Barbara Burns for superior achievement in Voters Service. Denton’s new local study is Communication between Local Government and its Constituents.

LWV-EL PASO sponsored a “Nuts and Bolts” Primer on Redistricting. They honored Rosemary Castillo and Elliott Shapleigh at their May 5 BRAVO Awards Luncheon. They are also registering voters at the naturalization ceremonies.

LWV-HOUSTON AREA held its 10th *Repast With Political Pioneers* fundraising lunch. A local study on Human Trafficking has been completed, and a new local study on Increasing Voter Turnout in Harris County is proposed. LWVHA honored its very successful voter registration committee and volunteers who have registered 50,000 voters in the last 4 years!

LWV-IRVING cosponsored an area wide meeting on redistricting, hosted a candidate forum, and published a *Voters Guide* for the May elections.

LWV-KERRVILLE AREA - members aren’t just “kicking back” in the Hill Country! They sponsored a series of 3 forums on Texas Water: Whose Water Is It? They are initiating and coordinating a Women’s Talent bank to encourage women to serve on boards and commissions and to run for office. A team of LWV-Kerrville Area members participated in Community Infusion Day. They also sponsored a candidates forum for local elections.

LWV-MIDLAND - Water water water—always a hot topic in Midland and hotter than ever during this drought. Midland sponsored a community meeting on Water As A Commodity.

LWV-MONTGOMERY COUNTY is on the move with a forum on the state budget and education, a candidate forum, and a regional LWV-TX seminar on membership outreach and engaging young professionals.

LWV-PLANO/COLLIN COUNTY had its hands full with Voter Service for elections in four cities and school districts. They sponsored candidate forums for two of these entities and included all four in the *Voters Guide*. The LWVPCC Guide to Elected Officials is being updated and LWVPCC is beginning its second year of local studies on Indigent Health Care and Mental Health Care in Collin County and Alternative Education for the Collin County Juvenile Detention Program.

LWV-RICHARDSON marked its 50th birthday with a proclamation from the City of Richardson. Recent meeting topics included Reproductive Choice and Redistricting.

LWV-SAN ANTONIO AREA has already begun committee work for the 2012 LWV-TX State Convention.

LWV-SAN MARCOS AREA sent members to LWV-TX Lobby Days, held a candidate forum and prepared a *Voters Guide* for the local elections.

LWV-TARRANT COUNTY held its Fools Rule fundraiser, which included a show featuring LWV-TC members and local politicians. The LWV-TC *Voters Guide* for the May elections boasted a 96% candidate response rate! This League is so tech savvy that it offers candidates the option of making “meet the candidate” videos to be posted on the League website!

LWV-TYLER/SMITH COUNTY registered voters at the Naturalization Ceremony, hosted a showing of the documentary “Gerrymandering” and sponsored a candidate forum and Meet and Greet for the May elections.

LWV-WICHITA FALLS members kept busy with candidate forums and **Voters Guides**. They hosted a meeting on the local Interfaith Ministry organization.

The **LWV-WIMBERLEY VALLEY MAL** is going strong cosponsoring a workshop on Civility in Government, participating in LWV-TX Lobby Days and holding a candidate forum.

LWVUS COUNCIL June 17-20, 2011

“We must never forget that we are that League, we are those patriots!” – Elisabeth MacNamara, recounting the history of the League at LWVUS Council meeting.



Pat Cheong, LWV-Tarrant County; Karen Nicholson, LWV-Midland; and Leslie Taylor, LWV-Houston Area

Karen Nicholson, LWV-Texas president, and I arrived at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA, for the 2011 LWVUS Council meeting Friday June 17, 2011, to find a leafy community college-like campus. The center was about 30 minutes from Dulles airport near Washington, D.C. This retreat-like setting was the backdrop for 108 delegates from 42 states and the District of Columbia plus 13 delegates from the LWVUS board to engage in a long weekend of important discussions and planning. I enjoyed meeting Leslie Taylor from LWV-Houston Area, who accepted one of three Smackdown Your Vote! 2010 Democracy Awards, as well as seeing Margaret (Peggy) Hill, LWVUS board member, Laura Blackburn, LWVUS Nominating Committee (both from the Houston area), and Elaine Wiant, LWVUS board member from Dallas.



Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President, presents Smackdown award to Leslie Taylor, LWV-Houston Area

Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President, welcomed delegates and explained that Council originated when LWV used to hold an annual convention and convened the State presidents before and after Convention as an “Executive Council”. Convention now takes place every two years, and the event now simply known as “Council” brings

Pat Cheong, Director, Tarrant County

together state presidents and other state league delegates in alternate years. You can read more about Council, including MacNamara’s opening remarks here:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Council_and_Convention&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=58&ContentID=16862

MacNamara launched Friday evening’s plenary session with a discussion of the controversial television ads issued by LWV targeting two senators (a Democrat and Republican) whose legislative actions had threatened the Clean Air Act, on which LWV has held a position for 40 years. MacNamara explained how the ads had been developed by a coalition, which decided that a strong partner - one that could not be dismissed as “just another environmental group” - should “get in the way”. After consultation with the state Leagues in Massachusetts and Missouri, the ads were launched. Controversy ensued! The microphones were opened up to delegates who shared their concerns (and a few kudos) about calling out legislators in television ads.

Later that weekend, Judy Duffy, LWVUS Advocacy Chair and liaison to our Texas League, presented her Advocacy report, which provided more context around the decision to move forward with the ads. You can read Duffy’s report here:

<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=17560>

Asked to come with a state-wide project in mind, Karen and I spent time fleshing out our plan for Texas’ Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project, recently funded by LWVUS, through helpful work sessions on 2012 Elections, fundraising, visibility and leadership. It was great to come away from the session with an embellished plan for ongoing work to give to the LWV-TX members working on PAVP.

I had been invited to be LWV-Texas’ second delegate to Council because I chair the state Website Committee. I was delighted with the focus on social media. Speakers Celinda Lake, President of Lake Research Partners, and Tammy Gordon, AARP’s Senior Advisor and Director of Social Communications and Strategy, as well as LW-

LWVUS COUNCIL (continued from page 6)



Pat Cheong, LWV-Tarrant County; Peggy Hill, LWV-Houston Area; Laura Blackburn, LWV-Houston Area; and Elaine Wiant, LWV-Dallas

VUS' own Kelly Ceballos and Susan Wilson, emphasized the importance of new technology in reaching under-represented populations. In addition to hearing excellent presentations and seeing a demonstration of LWVUS' soon-to-be-launched new website, I had the opportunity to network after hours with younger state leaders, especially from California and New Mexico, who answered technical questions and helped some of us open Twitter accounts or check Google website analytics.

Water Study



The Facts and Issues was emailed August 1. The Water Study Committee's paper, "Should Texas Water Be a Commodity?" is available on the LWV-TX web site. Members can read it there with hyper-links to maps, charts, and various publications, or print off a plain black and white copy.

The consensus questions were approved at the June board meeting. When the committee began the study, we assumed we would end up with a powerful new League position. We found, however, that the League already has a good position on conservation. With that as our basis, we began to look at practical and ethical ways of managing and delivering the water we have. We quickly discovered that every community has a different set of problems and possible solutions. The value of the study has been the focus on local areas; however, the laws governing water are made in Austin. In a certain sense, one size does have to fit all.

An unexpected benefit of the study and activity on the part of LL's is the relationships developed. When the Panhandle found itself in the midst of a drought worse than any since record keeping began in the 1890's, the newly elected city commission, mayor and city man-

Learning about leadership styles, budget issues, the value of storytelling and the political environment, as well as putting a face to the names of so many League leaders from around the country whose names I've seen on the "LWV-leaders" listserv, made for an information-packed weekend. One evening, the larger Leagues also had a chance to visit about issues related to renting or owning facilities, hiring staff, funding sources, and so on.

Karen and I both came away from the weekend feeling very proud of LWV-Texas and our local Leagues, as well as the leadership exhibited by the members from our great state serving the LWVUS. It was gratifying to see our Per Member Payment (PMP) funds and resources that we send to LWVUS so hard at work to strengthen the organization across the country in its efforts to "Make Democracy Work"

Mina Johnson, Water Study Chair, Amarillo

ager started looking for allies in the struggle to get water usage down. They turned to The Amarillo League of Women Voters, asking for advice and suggestions.

When the mayor and commissioners wanted an audience for their press conference appealing to citizens to

curtail water use, they called the LWV for help. We managed to almost fill the commission's meeting room with less than twenty-four hours' notice. One of the young attendees with very short hair had shaved the letters WC into his scalp. We teased him and said the initials stood for Water Conservation.

The problems with water faced by our state are not going away. ...Neither is the League of Women Voters.

FYI: Another forum is planned for **Sat, Sept 24, 2011, in San Antonio, at the SAWS (San Antonio Water System) headquarters.**



Beverly Gattis and Tonya Kleuskens of LWV-Amarillo with city manager Jarrett Atkinson

Program Opportunities for 2011-2012

Janet Imhoff, Program VP, Plano/Collin County



If non-partisan Voters Service is the heart of the League, then Program is the soul. By Program I mean our studies of the issues that are important to us, our consensus process of discussion give- and-take, and our advocacy of the positions we reach through our grassroots.

This year is our big program year as we reach the consensus-taking stage of the studies which we adopted at state and national League conventions in 2010. Our state study, **Water Resources As a Commodity** is complete, and the Facts and Issues have been published, in print and online, in August. The online publication has been emailed to all members who have email addresses. A print copy will be mailed to all others. The due date for consensus is December 31. If you are a Member-at-Large (MAL, a state member not attached to a local League) then you can access the consensus questions on our website and send them directly to the state office. All MAL consensus forms will be considered as a unit. If you are a member of a local League, then find out when your League will be having consensus meetings and take part. The issues surrounding water in Texas are fascinating and timely.

The LWVUS study of the **Federal Role in Education** is also complete and consensus is due November 30. Five issue papers have been posted on the lwv.org website and are fascinating reading. If you don't have computer access you might consider downloading them at your local library. Print copies will not be published. Consensus on a second adopted study, **Privatization**, will be due in the spring.

Besides consensus, the other important aspect of League program is "**Program Planning**." This is where you will have input into suggestions for new studies for the next biennium to be adopted at Convention 2012. You can also suggest amendments to our current program positions (See Program Perspectives, 2010-2012 on the LWV-TX website.) To be considered for board recommendation to the convention, all program planning reports from local Leagues are due January 13, 2012. Again all MAL input can be sent directly to the state office, and the report forms can be accessed on our website, lwvtexas.org. Program Planning for LWVUS will be due in March.

As you can see, this is a big program year, but it is one that should prove really interesting and make you glad you are in the LWV. If you have any questions, please email me at janimhoff@tx.rr.com.

Voters Service

Janice Schieffer, Voters Service Director, Plano/Collin County



Candidate Forums and the Texas Open Meetings Act

The Texas Open Meetings Act, adopted in 1967, requires meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public, including informal meetings. If a quorum of a governmental body, generally a majority of its members, is present at a meeting, it may be subject to requirements of the Texas Open Meeting Act. The act requires public notice of the time, place and subject matter of such a meeting, as well minutes or tape recordings of the session. The act also permits members of the public to record open meetings with a tape recorder, video camera or other means of aural or visual reproduction.

So, if a quorum of elected officials of a governmental body – such as a city council, school board, county commissioners court – attends a candidate forum, is that forum subject to the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act? This is not a hypothetical question, as several local Leagues have found out recently. The quorum doesn't consist only of incumbents who are candidates participating in the forum, but also of any other members of the governmental body who just attend. If the candidate forum is subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act, then the requirement to allow members of the public to record it is in conflict with the League's policy of not allowing the public to record candidates forums.

LWV-Texas is considering how the Texas Open Meetings Act should be reflected in its policies for candidates forums. Once policies are approved, they will be

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Voters Service *(continued from page 4)*

posted on the website and members will be informed. In general, it appears that the responsibility for deciding whether a forum is an open meeting under the act belongs to the elected officials and their governmental body, not the League or other sponsor of a candidates-forum. If so, the governmental body must provide notice and record of the meeting. In that case, the League whether it is a sponsor of the forum or just moderating it, may not prohibit members of the public from recording it.

The Texas Attorney General's Office has provided a handbook about the Texas Open Meetings Act, which is available on the Internet at www.oag.state.tx.us/open/publications_og.shtml.

Texas Constitutional Amendments Voters Guide

Both printed and electronic Voters Guides in English and Spanish will be available for the November 8, 2011 Constitutional Amendments Election. The electronic guides will be available in PDF and InDesign files.

Call For Nominations

Joyce Robinson, Nominating Committee Chair, Sherman/Grayson County

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE LWV-TX BOARD OF DIRECTORS TERM — JUNE 2012 - MAY 2014

Do you know someone who would like to serve on the LWV-TX Board?

Would you like to serve on the LWV-TX Board?

Some guidelines for consideration:

- League experience
- Geographic representation
- Diversity

Nomination Submission Forms are available online at www.lwvtexas.org. **Deadline is September 1, 2011.**

E-mail submission forms with potential nominees (yourself or someone else) to LWV-TX Nominating Committee Chair, Joyce Robinson at jbrobinson@cableone.net or mail to 333 Chisholm Trail, Sherman, TX 75092.



*Current LWV-TX State Board & Staff: Reed Bilz, Justine Quinn, Linda Wassenich, Dee Brock, Linda Krefting, Janice Schieffer, Mina Fields Johnson, Pat Cheong, Janet Imhoff (back row)
Edie Jones, Karen Nicholson, Barb Swartz, Susybelle Gosslee, Anita Privett, Chris Davis Garcia (front row)*

Have you asked someone to join the LWV lately?

What is in your “elevator” speech when you tell someone about the LWV?

What can you do to help your local League increase and retain membership?

What do you love about the LWV that you should tell potential members?

Here is the response we often get when we ask new members why they joined the LWV:

Nobody ever asked me before. JUST ASK!

Summer Seminars: Engaging Leaguers to Engage Young Voters



Over 100 Leaguers from 18 Leagues across and around the state gathered at three regional summer seminars in June and July to explore the need for and the process of engaging young voters. They were joined by attendees from local colleges, city government, and others interested in civic life to work on ways to

learn more about the characteristics and attitudes of young people 18-25 years old.

Not surprisingly, these young people constitute the most underrepresented population segment at the polls. Even in the 2008 presidential election when the numbers of young voters really spiked upward, young voters were underrepresented.

This group is an important target for Leagues in their efforts to increase the numbers of informed voters. Studies show that voting is a habit, and voters who become politically engaged at a young age are likely to become lifelong voters.

The Texas Election Code takes particular note of the need to register 18-year-old students in Texas high schools. *The Code says that principals in public and private high schools are automatically deputy registrars.* Further, it requires principals to pass out registration applications twice a year to students who are 18 or will become 18 during the school year. Clearly, these regulations are not enforced as evidenced in part by the fact that the majority of the people at the seminars did not know these regulations exist.

Attendees at each of the summer seminars heard several speakers, participated in discussion sessions with their fellow Leaguers, and picked up a booklet entitled

Dee Brock, Organization VP, Tyler/Smith County

“Engaging Young Voters.” This handout delivers additional information about the multi-faceted topic and is now available at www.lwvtexas.org.

In addition, each of the three seminars featured talks about the successful LWV 2010 High School Registration Project. This pilot effort by the national office involved five states, including Texas. LWV-Austin Area and LWV-Houston Area both participated.

One of the highlights at the Austin seminar was the presentation by Maggie Duncan, LWV Election Specialist, who led the 2010 High School Registration Project for LWVUS. Maggie explained the project’s research findings and confirmed that the Houston Area League achieved the best results in the nation.



Maggie Duncan, LWVUS, delivering her presentation

Ms. Duncan developed an excellent manual, “Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow: Developing Winning High School Voter Registration Programs,” which lives up to its title. The manual is available on www.lwv.org and through a link on www.lwvtexas.org.

The other two seminars also featured excellent, first-hand accounts of this project from those in the know from LWV-Houston Area. Linda Cohn, newly installed president, spoke in Irving, and Christina Gorczynski, Executive Director, spoke in The Woodlands.

The Houston Area’s volunteers in the High School Registration Project contacted almost half of all the high school students reported from the five states involved in the 2010 study. Also, they registered just under half of all those students who followed through and actually registered to vote. One strong point of the Houston Area project was the number of young people who volunteered to work in the schools with the students. Though high school students did not join the League, the high visibility of the project helped attract 60 new members for Houston Area League last year.

Special thanks go to the host Leagues and their members for the “Engaging Young Voters” seminars: LWV-Montgomery County, chaired by Mara Saltz; LWV-Irving, chaired by Mona Wyatt; and LWV-Austin Area, chaired by Frances McIntyre.



Dee Brock, LWV-Tyler/Smith County; Christina Gorczynski, LWV-Houston Area; and Maggie Duncan, LWVUS



Dee Brock, LWV-Tyler/Smith County, speaking in Austin



LWV-El Paso members in Austin



LWV-Austin Area members in discussion

Water Study Committee Members Active in Water Planning

Mina Johnson, Water Study Chair, Amarillo



LWV-Amarillo member named to Regional Planning Group

Tonya Kleuskens, chair of the Amarillo League's Environment Committee, has been chosen to fill the environment seat on the Panhandle Water Planning Group, the body responsible for determining how to reach the Desired Future Conditions for Region A of the Ogallala Aquifer.

Kleuskens spent 24 years farming and ranching with her husband, Dale, near Hereford in Deaf Smith County before "retiring" to Randall County in 2009. She has been active in environmental and conservation activities for many years. Besides her involvement in the Amarillo League, she is a member of the Sierra Club, served as chairman of the board of directors of STAND (Serious Texans Against Nuclear Dumping), and was an independent consultant for Governor Mark White's Texas Nuclear Waste Programs Office in 1985. She also served on the board of the Live Oak Fund for Change foundation, which funded environmental peace and social justice issues, served as the coordinator and spokesperson for the Water Heritage Group (organized to protect existing Panhandle-area natural springs) in 2002, and was a member of the Pantex Plant Citizens Advisory Board from 1993-1996. She currently serves on the board of the High Plains Institute of Applied Ecology (HPI).

Besides filling many roles in her farming and ranching operation with her husband, Kleuskens has also worked as a HUD housing representative for Panhandle Community Services and as secretary to a Certified Public Accountant. Other volunteer service has included the American Red Cross, Stephen Ministries and the Deaf Smith County Historical Society. She comes to the

Regional Planning Group with the experience and understanding of irrigated agriculture, illuminated by the spirit of a naturalist.



Haschke Has Long Environmental Involvement

Karen Haschke, LWV-Austin Area, was elected to the public seat on the Region K Planning Group in July, 2010, after serving three years as an alternate. She has a long history of involvement in water issues, serving as chair of the water committee for the Austin League and editing various publications including "The Effect of Urbanization on Austin's Water Resources" and "Advanced Wastewater Treatment."

Haschke started her League career in Seattle where she was a unit chair in 1976 and joined the King County Land Use study committee in 1977. Her interest in land use continued in Texas when she became issues chair for land use during the 81st Legislative session. Her service to the Austin League includes two stints as president, once for four years. Last year Haschke was invited to serve on the City of Austin's Water/Wastewater Director's Environmental Working Group. She has been a valuable member of the LWV's statewide water study committee, grappling with the issues around managing water as a commodity.

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In her professional life Karen, a medical technologist, is a senior project manager at Esoterix Clinical Trials Services, a division of LabCorp, providing laboratory services to research sites performing clinical trials studies. Her other interests include the German-Texan Heritage Society, Gillespie County Historical Society, and The National Trust for Historic Preservation.

What's Up With Young Voters?



The economy remains the top national issue of concern and source of anxiety among 18 to 29 year old Millennials. It far outpaces any other issues, such as health care, energy, and the environment. These young people are concerned about the national economy, but they are even more concerned

about their own economic problems.

- They are economically insecure – most are in debt – especially if they are in or have been in college. Average debt of college graduates is \$20,000, according to Project Vote. They mostly live paycheck to paycheck, and they are concerned as they see college costs, health insurance, housing, and other costs soaring.
- When four-year college students were asked how easy or difficult it would be for members of their graduation class to find permanent jobs after graduation, only 17% said it would be “easy” with 82% indicating it would be “difficult,” according to a March 2011 study by the Institute of Politics, Harvard.
- Almost half of those in the same survey noted above believe their personal financial situation is bad or very bad.

A few voting statistics for young voters (from Project Vote)

- While less than half of the Millennials registered to vote in 2008, 91% of those who registered actually voted.
- Twenty-one million citizens under the age of 30 did not vote in 2008. Had these citizens voted at the same rate as those 30 and over, seven million more votes would have been cast that year.
- Texas was fourth from the bottom in terms of 18-29 voter turnouts in 2008 with 39% of this group voting.
- 20% of voters 18-29 do not have government approved photo IDs. (The Advancement Project)

A look at the young Hispanic vote (National Association of Elected Latino Officials)

- Three in ten of eligible Hispanic voters in Texas are between 18 and 29 years of age. This figure is equal

Dee Brock, Organization VP, Tyler/Smith County

to the share of all eligible Latino voters nationwide in that age range.

- Nearly half (48%) of all Texans under 18 are Latino

Millennials are the tech-savvy generation (Institute of Politics, Harvard, study, March 2011)

- This is the first generation for which all the communication technologies are just common place parts of their culture.
- They are connected: 88% are online; 70% use internet daily; 2/3 check email daily.
- Facebook adoption continues to rise and outpaces all other communication technologies except email. 80% overall and 90% among four-year college students use Facebook.
- Although Twitter is clearly a less popular tool for young adults than Facebook, Twitter accounts among this group also rose over the past year from 15% to 24%.
- Millennials think social media tools have greater political impact than in-person advocacy.
- America's 18 to 29 year olds look first to major national newspapers as the most preferred sources for political news and information, with 49% of 18 to 29 year olds and 60% of four-year college students reporting that they are interested in receiving information from this source.

Millennials' opinions about U.S. government (Institute of Politics, Harvard, March 2011)

- 55% believe government officials are motivated by selfish considerations
- Less than a third think political involvement has any tangible results
- Half think politics is too partisan
- Nearly twice as many Millennials view community service as more “honorable” than running for office.
- Half rank the President and the Supreme Court as good.
- 46% rank the United Nations as good
- 23% rank the U.S. Congress as good
- 83% think their generation can bring about positive change

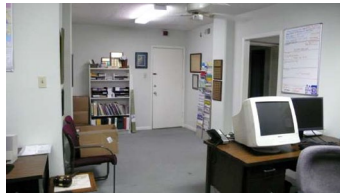
Find more information about Millennials in “Engaging Young Voters” on www.lwvtexas.org.

New and Improved State Office

Before



Front office



Front waiting area



Executive Director office & conference room



Storage and working area

During



Blake Reeves working hard on the renovation

After



Conference room



Front office

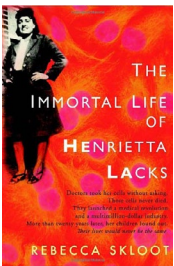


Front waiting area with signature quilt



Executive Director office

What Should I Read Next?

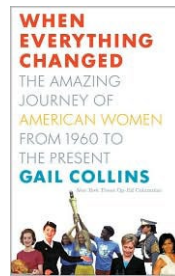


The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks is a biography of a woman who unknowingly supplied an immortal human cell line used in cancer research, and her family. Her cells, called “HeLa,” are still being used today because they grow so well in culture, which is rare. They have yielded an estimated 50 million metric tons of descendents. Scientific and medical researchers add about 300 HeLa-related studies a month to the library of 60,000 studies.

The book is an intriguing combination of biography and science. Skloot does an amazing job of combining a compassionate story of a family and the technical story of the science involved in cancer research.

Recommended by Karen Nicholson, President, LWV-TX



When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present, by Gail Collins.

Beginning in 1960, when women could not get credit cards without permission from their husbands, and taking the reader right up to 2008, when Hillary Clinton ran for President of the U.S., *When Everything Changed* is a fascinating recount of how women have changed and how they have changed the world. This book is a well-researched and insightful history told by a masterful writer and story teller. It will give you some laughs; it may cause you to shed a tear or two; and it will make you proud of those who have paved the way for women to succeed in our time.

Recommended by Janet Imhoff, Program VP, LWV-TX

What do you recommend? Send your suggested titles with a brief description of the book’s content and why you liked it to deebrook@faqspress.com. Brock will compile suggestions for future *TexasVoter*.

Help the League Save Trees and Money!

In a cost saving effort, LWV-TX will send the *Texas Voter* via email to everyone for whom we have an email address. If you would prefer to receive a copy via the US mail, contact our state office at lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org or (512)472-1100 and staff will be happy to send you a hard copy.

If you are a board member, ask at the next board meeting if your League has sent email addresses for all members to the state office. The more people who receive the *Texas Voter* via email, the more money we will have for other projects. In addition, LWV-TX sometimes sends job specific information only to appropriate people; it's very helpful to have local League members email addresses.

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January 16, 2011 - July 31, 2011

- Dorothy Anderson donated to EF in honor of Her Granddaughters
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