

**BAY AREA**

# VOTER

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League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

March 2011

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## President's Message

Barbara Murray

**Voters Service** is one of the cornerstones of the mission of the League of Woman Voters. We have been and will be focusing a lot of our efforts this spring providing several valuable services to voters.

Thanks to Elizabeth Glenn and her committee of League volunteers, we have published and distributed 2000 copies of the **Bay Area Guide to Elected Officials** to area libraries, city halls, and colleges. We publish these popular pamphlets using money from our account in the LWV-Texas Education Fund. Thank you for making contributions to this tax-deductible account. We have also applied for a grant to the Shell Foundation to help in underwriting the cost of next year's publication.

One of the most important services we provide to citizens in the Bay Area is hosting **Candidates Forums**. In this age of suspicion and mistrust, the League, with our reputation for fairness and nonpartisanship, is called upon to put on candidates forums for local city elections... we have been doing this for decades. We are currently in the planning stages to host a candidates forum on April 28<sup>th</sup> for the **Friendswood City Council election**. There may be others. We

will be looking for volunteers to help – please say yes if you are called!

I am very excited about a new pilot project our League has started. Thanks to input from member Ethel Patton, Sara Young, Voters Service Chair, is coordinating a **high school voter registration project**. Sara is working with the social studies department head and government teachers at Clear Lake High School to provide voter registration and voting information to high school seniors. We plan to expand the project to other area high schools next year once we have refined this activity.

I hope to see you at our **March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting** where we will be discussing **what is happening in the Texas Legislature**. Quoting from the League's Legislative Newsletter: "Things are really heating up in Austin with Voter ID, Sonograms and the Budget." Everyone probably has one or more areas of interest and concern. As a former educator, mother of an educator, and grandmother to future students, my focus is on the drastic cuts being

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made in education. Our March meeting will be the perfect opportunity to discuss the issues of importance to you – their status, the League's priorities, and how you can get involved.

As a final note, I want to wish a belated happy birthday to the League on February 14<sup>th</sup> – our 91<sup>st</sup>! Even though the issues have changed and evolved over the years, our goal of **Making Democracy Work** remains just as important now as it was in 1920.

LWV-BA Discussion Meeting

### **“Texas Legislative Activity”**

**Saturday, March 26**  
**9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

at the home of Diane Sheridan  
Directions below

Members and guests will review the most current *LWV-Texas Legislative Newsletter*, with its description of bills the state League is following, their status, and the League's position. Tips for effective advocacy will also be shared.

Diane's home is at 1107 Live Oak Lane in KirbyWoods subdivision in Taylor Lake Village-- off Kirby Road between NASA Parkway and Red Bluff Road. From Kirby, turn east onto KirbyWoods Drive at the subdivision entry sign. When it ends, turn left onto Live Oak--1107 will be on your left ¾ of the way down the block, with a fire hydrant *and* street light next to the driveway. Questions? Call Diane at 281-326-5253.

## **Sign Up to Receive LWV-Texas Legislative Newsletter**

<http://www.lwvtexas.org/legislative-newsletter.php>



## **League Calendar**

### **March 2011**

*Women's History Month*

- 13-19 Sunshine Week
- 14 Last day to file for place on ballot for local government election
- 15 First day to apply for ballot by mail
- 26 LWV-BA Discussion Meeting on Texas Legislature (*see article*)

### **April 2011**

- 2 LWV-BA Board meeting, home of Elizabeth Glenn
- 14 Last day to register to vote for local government election
- 22 Earth Day

### **May 2011**

- 2 First day of early voting
- 6 Last day to apply for ballot by mail
- 10 Last day of early voting
- 14 Election Day

## *The League of Women Voters through the Decades! The 1990s*



*LWVUS celebrated its 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on February 14. The League history series prepared for last year's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday will continue for a few more issues of the Bay Area VOTER.*

### **Organization:**

At the 1996 convention, bylaws changes were made to simplify the process of forming new Leagues by eliminating the provisional League category, and set the procedure for proposing adoption or amendment of an LWVUS position by concurrence on the floor of convention. The LWVUS Future Planning process was also launched at that convention.

At the 1998 convention, the bylaws were amended to provide for communication vehicles other than “snail” mail!

A nationwide brainstorming effort, the Crossroads Project, on the future of the League was set in motion at the 1992 convention, and the resulting recommendations were presented to convention 1994. A 75th Anniversary Membership Campaign was launched in 1994 and included a new member video, “75 Years of a Great Idea”.

### **Issues:**



Members adopted a position on gun control in 1990 and Congress passed reauthorization of the Clean Air Act, capping a ten-year legislative campaign. The League also launched “Take Back the System,” a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections, and sponsored a Presidential Primary Debate in 1992. In 1993, the League adopted a position on health care and won passage of the National Voter Registration Act, better known as Motor Voter.

In the last years of the decade, the issue for emphasis, Making Democracy Work, included increasing voter turnout, campaign finance reform, civic education, diversity of representation, civic participation and voting representation for the residents of the District of Columbia. During that same period LWVEF activities included Running and Winning, a program that encouraged young women to consider careers as political leaders, as well as community dialogues on water resources, energy and health care.

Following the end of the Cold War, the League began several international programs: hosting emerging women leaders from Poland and Hungary; Strengthening Women’s Rights in the NIS; Voices for Women – Forces for Change: Women’s Leadership Workshops for Russia and Belarus; Voices for Women – Forces for Change: Building Peace in the Bosnian Community; a Bosnian Citizen Get-Out-The Vote Campaign; and Woman Power in Politics: Building Grassroots Democracy in Africa.

In 1998 the Democracy Network (DNet) was tested and then launched nationwide in January 2000. This Internet web site was a major effort to provide information regarding elections to citizens across the nation.

***On a personal note:*** Reading this retrospective brought back memories for me because I served on the national board from 1992-98 and on the LWVUS Budget Committee before that. Three things in particular popped into my mind when I thought about those years. First, the thrill of being in the Rose Garden for the signing of the Motor Voter bill, the culmination of years of work by League members across the country and some very effective lobbying in DC. Second, the challenge of being tasked in 1994 to develop the League's first "Cyber Plan" by President Becky Cain when I had no clue what e-mail or the Internet looked like. Third, the sheer fun of standing on a street corner in Fort Worth with Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, urging passersby to "Head for the Polls" in one of the national League's most unusual voter registration drives. Reminiscing reminds me once again of the great variety of ways that the League at all three levels helps to make democracy work.

Diane Sheridan, VOTER Editor

## State and National League Newsletters

*When you pay dues to LWV-Bay Area, they are shared with LWV-Texas and LWVUS. Thus your dues payment is helping to support hundreds of voters service, citizen education, study, advocacy, and organizational development activities of the state and national Leagues. Both publish newsletters to keep members informed of their work.*

The **Texas VOTER** is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Texas. To cut costs, LWV-Texas will send the VOTER via e-mail for all members for whom they have e-mail addresses. If you don't use e-mail or simply prefer a hard copy, the state office will send you a paper copy in the mail upon request to [lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org](mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org) or 512-472-1100. If you have provided your e-mail to LWV-Bay Area, you should be receiving your *Texas VOTER* by e-mail. If you have questions, contact Diane Sheridan 281-326-5253 or [DBSheridan@aol.com](mailto:DBSheridan@aol.com).

**LEAGUE-VOICE** is the electronic newsletter of the LWVUS. Subscribe by registering at the website below. If you have already given your e-mail address to LWVUS, you will already be receiving this newsletter. <https://member.lwv.org/Login.asp>

**The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.**

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