

The VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County TX
Donna Bening, VOTER Editor

August 2011

League of Women Voters Events Calendar

September: 13, Tues., 6-9, Orientation to LWV & Speaker on Election Law changes, at Davis Library, Plano, 7501 Independence Pkwy.

13,14, 15, Tues., Wed., Thurs., 11-1, voter registration at Collin College campuses

21, Wed., 7 p.m. – LWVP/CC Board meets, home of Pat Lawson, 972-964-8951, 2520 Kelsey Dr., Plano

October:

6, Thurs., 7-9 p.m. and

13, Thurs., 7-9 (two meetings to arrive at consensus on the LWVUS study topic “The Federal Role in Education”

19, Wed., 7-9, LWVP/CC Board meets, home of Pat Lawson, 972-964-8951, 2520 Kelsey Dr., Plano

24, Monday, First day of early voting for the statewide election on proposed Texas Constitutional amendments and proposed changes in local terms of office

November: 4, 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Last day of early voting for Nov. 8 election

5, Saturday, 7-9 p.m. Cordial Tasting Party at a Member’s Home –Save this date. Details to follow.

8, Tues., 7-7, statewide & local ELECTION DAY

10, Thurs., 7 p.m. LWVP/CC consensus meeting on LWVTX study of “Water as a Commodity”

16, Wed., 7-9 p.m. LWV/PCC Board meeting at home of Pat Lawson, 2520 Kelsey Dr., Plano

*Please mark these dates on your calendar
Locations to be announced. Your participation is
important to our future.*



You’re Invited:

**LWV Members, and Interested Voters
September 13,
6:-6:45 p.m. Orientation to LWV Plano/Collin
7:00 – Sharon Rowe, Collin County Election
Administrator speaks on election law changes,
November ballot, redistricting, & more.
At Plano’s Davis Library, 7501 Independence.**

President’s Message: by *Patty Jantho*
pjantho@gmail.com

Our Sept 13, speaker, is Collin County Election Administrator Sharon Rowe, at our Fall Membership Meeting at 7 pm at Davis Library, 7501-B Independence Parkway, Plano. We will discuss how the countywide vote centers, photo voter ID and local election changes will affect us all. These are core issues for LWV and we want you to be part of the discussion.

From 6 to 6:45 pm, we will have an “Orientation to the League” as a refresher for members and as an introduction for others. We will outline significant workings of the League such as Voters Service and Program, including what’s ahead for us this year.

LWV Program Planned for 2011-2012 by Mary Alice Garza, Vice President for Program garzama@verizon.net

In League, Program Planning has a special meaning. It is the process of generating study ideas at the grass roots level, and results in one or more studies to be adopted at a League convention. The local LWV adopted the following studies for 2011-12. Each study group is open to any member who wants to participate. Please contact me, Mary Alice Garza, if you are interested.

Local Study Continues: Indigent Health Care and Mental Health Care in Collin County

The University of North Texas (UNT) under contract with the Collin County Commissioners studied the Collin County behavioral health services system as part of the NorthStar system, the state government assistance program for north Texas. UNT completed and submitted three reports to the Commissioners. These are available on the County website at [www.co.collin.tx.us](http://www.co.collin.tx.us/public_information/feature_s/unt_study_2011.jsp) http://www.co.collin.tx.us/public_information/feature_s/unt_study_2011.jsp

Mental health needs of the county were identified and a recommendation made to hire a behavioral health services director.

Phase One reported fact-based expenditures and services utilization, and commented on the existing system of behavioral health care for the County's residents under the NorthSTAR program.

Phase Two reported on the trends in services utilization and estimated future behavioral health care needs.

Phase Three presents a vision, strategies for each of the six final recommendations, and a compilation of the priorities for services and systems, issues developed by stakeholders in the County's behavioral healthcare system.

Local Study continues: Alternative Education for the Collin County Juvenile Probation Programs

With Marilyn Hinton as Chair, LWV will continue the study of the education system of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), a non-residential campus, the Collin County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC), a short and long term residential facility, and the Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Both campuses are under the supervision of the Collin County Juvenile Justice System, and are run by the McKinney ISD.

When students are expelled from their school, the county is responsible for their continuing education. Meetings with the director and principal provided insight to the changes anticipated in the program. New computers are to be installed in the facility to help the students keep current with most of their classes so that returning to their campuses will not put them at a great disadvantage.

New Study: Vote Centers in Collin County

LWV will study implications of Vote Centers, the pilot program that allows a voter to cast a ballot at any voting location rather than an assigned precinct location. During the 2010 elections, there were problems at some centers that led to waiting in line for over two hours. Not all elections are eligible for the Vote Center concept. LWV offered comments in support of the concept of Vote Centers at a public hearing held by the Commissioners Court in Collin County (using the LWV TX position on Voting Processes.)

League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County TX Board of Directors 2011-12:



President: Patty Jantho; Vice President, Program: Mary Alice Garza; Vice President, Voter Service: Janice Schiefer; Treasurer: Sharon Goldgar; Secretary: Elizabeth Erkel; Directors: Membership—Eloise Richardson; Fundraising—Dorothy Cranshaw; Publicity—Jackie Fleschman; VOTER editor—Donna Bening; Webmaster—Carol Worthington; Bylaws—Erma Spencer; Observer Corps—Patricia Lawson; At-Large—Susan Miles; Alternative Education for the Collin County Juvenile Detention Program Study—Marilyn Hinton; Facebook Mgr—Stephanie Werner; Nominating Committee—Schieffer, Imhoff, & Meg Titus.

LWV Texas Studies and Consensus: by Janet Imhoff, LWVTX Program Vice President
janimhoff@tx.rr.com

Consensus Meetings This Fall

Since we are a grassroots organization, we want all our adopted positions to have buy-in from our members. At all three levels, national, state, and local, we adopt studies after they're recommended and voted on by the members, and then our members discuss the findings of the study and give their opinion on future actions. This process is called **taking consensus** and may take two years. We have reached the consensus phase of both a national and a state study.

What Is Consensus? Here is a definition of the League's consensus process:

Consensus is agreement of a substantial number of members reached through group discussion. It is not a vote, but a sense of what the group supports. (There is no "census" in consensus). Consensus discussions produce *group opinion*, whereas a vote is a tabulation of *individual opinions*. Consensus is not a simple majority, nor is it necessarily unanimity. It is a decision with which participants are comfortable overall. While voting might polarize people unless the vote is unanimous, consensus can be a unifying process.

We will meet together and discuss and take our group consensus on the water issue on Nov. 10.

The Federal Role in Education. This national League study was suggested by members and adopted at convention in June 2010. The study committee of League members has published several articles on the subject and has written "consensus questions" that all Leagues will discuss in local membership meetings. The local results will be sent to the study committee, who will read and assess the responses to write a national consensus statement, or position, for adoption at LWVUS convention 2012 in June.

Our meetings on this subject have been scheduled for two **Thursday evenings, October 6 and 13**. We will be sending you readings on the subjects to be discussed. The first meeting will deal with the *history of federal involvement in education*
http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/StudyTaskforces/Migrate2011/PublicEducation/historyrevised_July.pdf
and *common core standards*,
<http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/StudyTaskforces/Migrate2011/PublicEducation/CommonCoreAug.pdf>

and the second meeting will cover *equity and funding*. Come to both meetings, as the consensus questions will be divided over the two meetings. Please watch for the email containing the papers to read, the consensus questions, and the directions to the meeting place. They will be sent about two weeks before the October meetings.

The LWVUS Study of "Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions to the Private Sector" to be discussed in January, and to meet for consensus March 15.

Texas Water As a Commodity. The LWVTX study was adopted at convention in April 2010. The *Facts and Issues* publication, "*Should Water Be a Commodity?*" was emailed to every member on August 1.

<http://www.lwvtexas.org/Facts%20and%20Issues/Facts%20and%20Issues%20-%20Should%20Water%20be%20a%20Commodity.pdf>

Please save and read this publication for our discussion meeting on November 10. The water consensus questions to be discussed will be sent to you closer to the meeting date.

Our League held a meeting on water last March 24, 2011 and a summary of the speakers' presentations follows:

Water in Collin County, by Janet Imhoff

Speakers: Rachel Ickert, with Freese and Nichols, Inc. Consultants to North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD)

Mary Vogelson, LWV-Texas Water Chair, and Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), Region C Water Planning Group member

This report is specific to Texas Water Planning Region C, of which Collin County is part.

Region C is a 16 county area, has one fourth of the state's population and in the year 2000 accounted for 1/12 of the water used in Texas. In Region C, 90% of the existing water supply is from surface water sources. The region has 41 wholesale water providers and 357 water user groups, as defined by the TWDB. Nine of the larger regional wholesale water providers provide 85% of the water in Region C. One half of the water used in Region C is returned to the streams as treated effluent, and reuse of water will be a significant source in the future.

The water user groups include cities, utilities,

manufacturing, steam electric generation, livestock, mining, and irrigation. Region C currently gets inter-basin water transfers from Lakes Texoma, Chapman, Fork, and Tawakoni.

The 2011 Region C Water Plan includes the following water supply sources for the year 2060: 33% from current water supply sources, 16% from new reservoirs, 23% from conservation and reuse, 25% from connections to existing reservoirs, and 3% from groundwater.

The current water supply for the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) comes from Lakes Lavon, Chapman, and reuse. Future sources listed for NTMWD in the 2011 Region C Water Plan include the Lower Bois D'Arc Creek and Marvin Nichols Reservoirs (both proposed), additional Lake Texoma, Toledo Bend Reservoir, and Oklahoma water sources.

The plans for Region C state that new supplies are needed and conservation is essential. Reuse should be encouraged. Environmental flow needs and environmental issues are important. Inter-basin transfers are essential, but current law governing them is burdensome and needs revision. New reservoirs will be needed, and in many cases that would be the least expensive new source. Public support is needed for implementation of the regional water plans and the state water plan.

At the Red River, Texas – Oklahoma boundary, Lake Texoma is a potential water source for both Collin County and the area, but their current problem is that the zebra mussel has been found there-- a tiny organism that can get into pumps and pipes and clog the water flow and ruin the pumping infrastructure. The zebra mussel (originally from Europe) was first found in North America in the Great Lakes in 1988. Zebra mussels were found in Lake Texoma in July, 2009, and the pumps between Lake Texoma and Lake Lavon were immediately stopped. Later a few were found in Sister Grove Creek, a tributary to Lake Lavon, but none have been seen in Lake Lavon at this time. However, the lakes built by the Army Corps of Engineers are designated for multiple uses, including recreation, and boats are the principal carriers of the mussels. Texoma water represents one fourth of the water supply of NTMWD, and is an important source during droughts. They are working with state and federal agencies, and encouraging boaters to keep the mussel from spreading into the Trinity River Basin and ultimately to the Gulf.

VOTER SERVICES

How Election Changes Affect You

Janice Schieffer, Voters Service Chair,
janice@schieffer.us

LWV of Plano/Collin County invites the public to attend our forum Sept. 13, 2011, at the Davis Library, 7501-B Independence Parkway, Plano, TX, from 7-8:45 p.m. Sharon Rowe, Collin County Election Administrator, will describe the impact of the new voting laws--enacted at the recent Texas Legislative Session-- on Collin County voters.

Will Collin County have countywide vote centers in the November 2011 election? How will reported problems with the vote centers be resolved? Other issues include redistricting, the new photo voter ID law and how election date changes to accommodate overseas voters will affect local elections. All this information is vital for active participation by Collin County residents in the upcoming elections.

Elections 2011

On **Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2011**, Texas voters will decide whether to add 10 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution. These amendments were approved in joint resolutions by at least two-thirds of the members of each house of the Texas Legislature and must be approved by a majority of the voters to become effective. Texas voters have approved 467 amendments to the Texas Constitution since its adoption in 1876.

The 10 amendments for 2011 include homestead exemptions for survivors of disabled veterans, water development bonds, student loans, inter-local agreements between cities and counties, the Permanent School Fund, the "resign to run" provision for some elected officials, and other topics. Background and arguments for and against will be presented in the *LWV-Texas 2011 Constitutional Amendment Voters Guide*, which will be available in both printed and electronic form prior to **early voting Oct. 24 – Nov. 4**.

In addition, Collin County ballots may include charter amendments or other proposals for some cities and ISDs to accommodate election changes for 2012. Be sure to attend the public forum Sept. 13, at Davis Library for more information.

Voter Registration opportunities: LWV-P/CC member volunteers continue to register new citizens at naturalization ceremonies at the **Las Colinas Citizenship & Naturalization Center**

once or twice a month. We will also register voters at **ROCK the Vote** events at **Collin College campuses Sept. 13-15, 11-1 p.m.**

Volunteers are needed to help plan and to participate in our Voters Service activities for the March 2012 primaries and May 2012 local elections. We need to formulate questions and formats for *Voters Guides*, to plan and conduct candidate forums and to contact candidates. Please contact Janice Schieffer, 214-415-3476, janice@schieffer.us to volunteer.

Be sure to check out the **Elections 2011** page on our League website, www.lwvcollin.org to keep up-to-date during this busy election year – elections, forums, voters guides, voter registration! See updated lists of elected officials in all cities and ISD's in Collin County: **Guide to Elected Officials**.

VOTE411.org: The LWVUS has updated this national resource for election information with state-by-state resources for millions of voters. The site now reflects the most current election dates and laws nationwide.

Or in Texas:
<http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1102401434182-69/LWV-TX--Voter+Registration+&+Voting.pdf>

League In the Know:

Facebook: by Stephanie Werner
In the past few months, the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County Facebook page has been growing and is up to 73 friends. Thank you for promoting our page to your friends! Information about the "How Election Changes Affect You" event has been posted and we hope all of our Facebook friends will RSVP in hopes of further advertising this event to their friends.
www.facebook.com/LWVCollin

The LWVP/CC Website: by Carol Worthington, www.lwvcollin.org "The League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County Website provides a detailed calendar of all League forums, meetings, and activities. The site also contains information on League studies, positions on issues, guides to elected officials, the history of the League, how to join and support the League, and contact information. A link to **The VOTER** newsletter is also provided.

HELPFUL LINKS: Plano Television Network, a division of the City of Plano Public Information Department, broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on Verizon Fios channel 30, (Plano ISD=#33, Frisco=#34,) or Time Warner channel 16 and www.planotv.org.

Plano's "Let's Take Care of the Trash"
http://mlinkreview.com/City_of_Plano/trash_final3/bas.html

Limit your junk mail

<https://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/telemarketers.shtml#junkmail> (link to TX Attorney General's Office advice)

LWVTX: www.lwvtexas.org Redistricting and Reapportionment

Watch for local updates about new districts and boundary changes for 2012. (Click to see a link to see LWV meeting in May 2011, <http://vimeo.com/24665700>)

(See also the Congressional Quarterly Researcher report, from LWVUS Pres. McNamara about related issues):

<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=16777&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm>

Suffrage Campaign Remembered



L to R., Patty Jantho, Dorie Cranshaw, Janice Schieffer at LWV Irving, August 22, performance of the Early Life of Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of the LWV.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVER CORPS:

We encourage members to be volunteer Observers of local government meetings. Choose the body you wish to observe, contact coordinator Pat Lawson, pat2520@verizon.net Write/e-mail brief report about the meeting attended, and communicate with Pat about whether there is need or opportunity to take action on LWV advocacy positions. The observer does not make statements on behalf of the LWV. The President is the designated spokesperson for the LWV.

ALLEN TX

City Council meets 4th Tues. 7-9 p.m.
www.cityofallen.org

Allen ISD meets 4th Monday, 7 p.m.
www.allenisd.org

FRISCO TX

City Council meets 1st & 3rd Tues, 6:30 p.m.
www.ci.frisco.tx.us

Frisco ISD meets 2nd Mon. 7:30 p.m.
www.friscoisd.org

MCKINNEY TX

City Council meets 1st & 3rd Tues., 6:30 p.m.
www.mckinneytexas.org

McKinney ISD meets 3rd & 4th Tues., 7:15
www.mckinneyisd.net

PLANO TX

Plano City Council meets 2nd & 4th Mon., 7pm
www.plano.gov
Plano ISD meets 1st & 3rd Mon. 7 p.m.
www.pisd.edu

WYLIE TX

Wylie City Council meets 2nd & 4th Tues, 6 p.m.
<http://www.ci.wylie.tx.us>
Wylie ISD meets 3rd Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Ballard St. S.

COLLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
Meets 2nd & 4th Mondays+, 1:30 p.m., Hatchell Admin. Bldg, 2300 Bloomdale Rd. west of courthouse in McKinney www.co.collin.tx.us

NORTH TEXAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
Meets monthly, 4th Thurs., 4 p.m. in Wylie, 505 Brown, www.ntmwd.com/sitemap.html

LWV Membership

By Eloise Richardson,
tweetrichardson@verizon.net

This is my personal invitation to you to attend the Fall Membership Meeting Sept. 13, 2011, to be held at Davis Library, 7501 Independence Pkwy, Plano. Learn about the programs and issues and changes facing Collin County in healthcare, elections, and water resources.

LWV Orientation begins at 6 p.m. This is an opportunity to meet our board members. At 7 p.m., guest speaker Sharon Rowe, Collin County Election Administrator will provide voting and election. We plan to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

The membership process is easy: complete an application found at the www.lwvcollin.org website and at the meeting, indicate your area of interest in the League, and pay \$55/year for individual membership fee or \$80 for two at the same address.

Join the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County –and Renew

Send a check payable to “LWV Plano/Collin County” for your annual dues (which are not tax deductible*)

- _____ individual \$55
- _____ household \$80 (two or more members)

Participate in one or more of these advocacy or study or organization supports

- _____ Fundraising, _____ Publicity
- _____ Health Care _____ Membership
- _____ Natural Resources, Environment
- _____ Observer Corps: _____
- _____ Public Education (local, state, federal role)
- _____ Voter Services _____ Transportation
- _____ Water Resources as Commodity (TX study)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

e-mail _____

Phone _____

Mail to: LWV of Plano/Collin County
P.O. Box 866592
Plano, TX 75086-6592