

# The VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County TX

February 2011

## League Events Calendar:

### February:

- 14, Happy 91<sup>st</sup> birthday for LWVUS  
Filing period for local elections begins
- 15 6:30 p.m. HealthCare Collin County meets at Collin College, Springcreek campus, in Plano, 2800 Spring Creek Pkwy, Section D-E of the Conference Center, use east entrance.  
Topic: "**Introduction to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's)**"  
[www.collinhealthcare.org](http://www.collinhealthcare.org)
- 16 6:30 p.m. LWVP/CC Board Meets, & will approve local candidate questions, Schimelpfenig Library, 5024 Custer Rd., Plano
- 16 7:30 p.m. **LWVP/CC meeting for members.....**
- 17, meet with Collin County Election Administrator Sharon Rowe, McKinney ([janice@schieffer.us](mailto:janice@schieffer.us))

### March:

- 7-8 LWV TX Lobby Days in Austin TX (see pg.3)
- 14, Filing period for May local elections ends
- 16 7 p.m. LWVP/CC Board meeting at CUMC, 3101 Coit Rd. (at Parker Rd.) room C-225, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

### April:

- 13, 7 p.m. LWV P/CC Board meeting (nominations, budget, program proposals reviewed.) at CUMC.
- 14, Last day to register to vote before local election  
**LWVP/CC moderates candidates forums**

### May:

- 2-10, Local Election early voting period
- 14 7 a.m.—7 p.m. Statewide Local Election Day
- 21, LWV TX summer seminar in \_\_\_\_\_ TX
- 21, 10:15 a.m. LWVP/CC Annual Meeting,  
\_\_\_\_ Texas Legislature Adjourns

## **President's Message** by Patty Jantho, [pniantho@gmail.com](mailto:pniantho@gmail.com)

The League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County will hold the annual Local Program Planning meeting with the membership at Schimelpfenig Library, Custer and Spring Creek, at 7:30 p.m on Wednesday, February 16. In addition to the League's concern with all aspects of the voting process, we undertake additional program activities intended to improve the quality of life for residents of this County. On Wednesday, February 16, we will consider the current status of our selected program and positions and determine what future action we should take on each. We are in the second year of our Health Care study and the first, on the education of juvenile offenders in our county. You can read elsewhere in this issue and at [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org) the specifics of each program. Collectively, we will discuss whether to continue with all, study one or more and the form that action should take.

It is you, the membership, that we, the Board, are eager to engage in this discussion. We hope you will come and join in the fellowship and the process of determining our "next steps." Read on.....

### **Local Program Planning on February 16**

**Schimelpfenig Library, 5024 Custer Rd., 7:30 PM  
south of Spring Creek Pkwy,**

**Members and visitors welcome**

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. LWVUS & LWV TX program will be considered next year. At the local League level, our convention is the Annual Meeting, to be held this year on May 21.

We will have our Program Planning meeting this month, on **Wednesday, Feb. 16, 6:30-7:30 at Schimelpfenig Library in the Program Room.** Have you been thinking about some local issue that you would.....(contin. pg. 2)

(Program Planning, continued) ..... like to know more about? Is there a problem somewhere in the city, the schools, or county that has been worrying you? Others may be concerned about the same thing.

Please come and give us your ideas. If you are not able to attend, you may send your ideas about issues for discussion to Vice President for Programs, Mary Alice Garza at [garzama@verizon.net](mailto:garzama@verizon.net) by Feb. 15.

League policy : no idea can be brought up for consideration at our Annual Meeting unless it has been mentioned at Program Planning. At the next Board meeting, League directors will consider the ideas, choose one (or more) to recommend, and flesh out the proposed study with a focus and scope. Then the recommended item and/or all other proposals mentioned at program planning can be considered by members and adopted at the Annual Meeting in May.

Please come on February 16. League is a grassroots organization and we need your input! BE THERE !

### **Studies adopted at Annual Meeting 2010**

Two studies were adopted last year: 1) Indigent Health Care and Mental Health Care in Collin County, and 2) Alternative Education in the Collin County Juvenile Probation Programs. Both of these are still pending. Do we want to continue these? Come to hear the status of each one, and discuss what to do next.

We have positions for **action** on several items that were studied over the Plano League history, including Parks and Open Space, Flood Plain Management, Mass Transportation, Economic Growth, Public Education, and Health Care. Any of these might need to be updated, as our current study of Mental Health Care was proposed to update our Health Care position. We will discuss these at our Program Planning meeting also . For details on these positions, see the Annual Meeting Workbook from our May 22, 2010 meeting, available on our website, [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org), under the link "Positions on Issues."

(program information provided by Janet Imhoff, LWVP/CC Nominating Committee Chair, LWVTX V.P., [janimhoff@tx.rr.com](mailto:janimhoff@tx.rr.com) )

*(examples) Why study this?*

*a. public needs to know. b. timely c. local/county government has a role. d. resources available.*

*"I propose a study of 1. Family Violence in Collin County with a focus on response by city and county public safety departments and county attorney.*

*Scope to include collecting data about incidence, funding available for training; prosecution completion or diversion to treatment programs available."*

*2. " I propose an update of position on mass transit"*



### **VOTER SERVICES**

By Janice Schieffer, Co-Chair, [janice@schieffer.us](mailto:janice@schieffer.us)  
**Deputies?**

Since all our "commissions" as **volunteer deputy voter registrars** expired 12/31/2010 and need renewal to continue, we are planning a trip to McKinney's Elections Department to "re-up" and to meet with Sharon Rowe, Elections Administrator for Collin County, to talk to her about the use of vote centers in the November 2010 General Election.

We will need our newly deputized registrars to volunteer at **naturalization ceremonies** at the USCIS building in Irving. Naturalization ceremonies are held almost daily for 50-100 new citizens. We coordinate with the Irving and Dallas Leagues to provide voter registration several times a month. Mail-in registration applications are also available at all ceremonies. We anticipate other voter registration events, especially with Collin College, as we approach elections during the year.

Watch for the announced date and time for our re-deputization trip and meeting with Sharon Rowe, and contact me to join us and carpool. (Feb. \_\_\_\_)

### **Local Elections**

Feb. 14 is the first day for candidates to file for a place on the May 14 ballot for local elections, but candidate signs are already popping up. We are expecting contested races for city councils and ISDs in Allen, Frisco, McKinney and Plano, which we will include in our online **Voters Guides**. Questions for the *Voters Guides* will be approved at the Feb. 16 board meeting, so be sure to send your suggestions to [Janice@schieffer.us](mailto:Janice@schieffer.us). We will also plan **candidate forums** in April as needed for Plano and McKinney races. The filing deadline is Mar. 14, so plans will proceed quickly after that. Be sure to check the Elections page on our website, [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org) for details as they become available. You can also submit suggested *Voters Guide* questions from there.

April 14 is the last day to register to vote in the local elections; early voting begins May 2 and ends May 10. Sample ballots, voting locations and voter registration information may be found before the election on the Collin County website, [www.co.collin.tx.us](http://www.co.collin.tx.us).

## **\*“How Can Radioactive Waste Be Stored Safely, Protect Texans, the State Budget and the Environment?”**

Forum Sponsored by the LWV TX  
Tuesday, February 8, 2011,  
In the TX State Capitol, Austin, Texas

\*See [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org) to view the recorded forum and supporting materials supplied by the speakers

Legislators, aides and members of the public heard about the import and storage of low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) into the Waste Control Specialists (WCS) disposal site in Andrews County, Texas. Read about LLRW, the Compact with Vermont and Maine, assurances, regulations and their enforcement as they relate to the WCS site. Learn the facts presented by the people who know how to avoid accidents and how to calculate costs to the Texas budget, and how to protect the health and safety of people and the environment.

### **LWV-TX Lobby Days, March 7-8, 2011, at the Texas State Capitol,**

By Janice Schieffer, LWVTX Board Member,

LWV Plano/Collin County members are encouraged to advocate on League issues and lobby our legislators on LWV Lobby Days in Austin, Monday and Tuesday, March 7 and 8. It's a great opportunity to visit the Capitol, network with other League members, learn about advocacy and lobbying and talk with your state representatives and senators.

Start the day Monday with a visit to the LWV-TX office in Austin, 10 a.m.-noon, to meet the state board and staff and see progress on the office remodeling. The afternoon program at the Capitol will feature a talk about redistricting by Senator Kel Seliger from Amarillo, a panel discussion on "Open Government and Transparency" by LWV-TX issue chairs, and participate in a group exercise to use a balanced approach to a balanced budget by a lobbyist with AARP Texas.

The Making Democracy Work Dinner Monday evening at the UT Alumni Center will give you a chance to network with other League members and learn about the importance of the League's advocacy partners, with special attention to the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) and remarks by its Executive Director F. Scott McCown. LWVTX will present CPPP with the first "Making Democracy Work in Texas" Award.

On Tuesday morning, we'll meet at the Capitol for coffee and advice on how to lobby legislators. League members will meet with their legislators during the rest of the morning, with a chance to regroup with other League members and share experiences. **Each League must arrange interview appointments with its own legislators prior to the Lobby Day.**

LWV-P/CC members will arrange a carpool to Austin. A block of rooms has been reserved at League rates for Monday night at the Drury Inn & Suites Austin North. Hotel reservations must be made by Feb. 19. The Lobby Days registration fee of \$10 covers the information packet and meetings at the Capitol. The Monday night dinner costs \$50 for League members; the deadline for dinner reservations is Feb. 22. For complete information about the Lobby Day events and a registration form, see the state website [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org) or the e-mail that was sent to all League members on Feb. 1.

### **League of Women Voters Membership**

Eloise Richardson, [tweetRichardson@verizon.net](mailto:tweetRichardson@verizon.net)

We want you as a member! We need your support, your energy, and your ideas.

The process of joining is easy: just complete the application for membership form, and a member profile from our [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org) website to identify your areas of interest in the League. You may also contact me, Eloise Richardson at 972.208.8459 to request a new member packet be mailed. Consider a Gift Membership for someone you love when celebrating a special occasion.

#### **Welcome our new members:**

-Coty Rodriquez Anderson joined the League October 2010. Coty has expressed an interest in assisting in League Events and registering voters.

-Shannon Rodriquez Anderson also joined the League October 2010. She is interested in helping with League events, registering voters and assisting at candidate forums.

-Dorothy Cranshaw first joined the League (Tarrant County) in 2007. Dorie comes with an impressive background in finance and wants to be active in League Organization & Special Voter Service Projects.

-Elizabeth Erkel's affiliation with the LWV started ~1976. Dr. Erkel arrived in Plano from South Carolina. She wants to help with Health Policy for the uninsured and under served.

-Ruben Garza is the husband of board member Mary Alice Garza.

-Marilyn Hinton is a Plano ISD School Board Trustee and has indicated her desire to assist with communications, League events and advocate for Indigent and Mental Health Care in Collin County.

-Carol Hummer joined the League in 2010 and is interested in Voter Service activities.

-Donna Wood Martin and Scott Martin became League members in 2010 as supporters.

-Holly Nichols is the daughter of our president and is another supporter.

--Thank you and let's put those members to work !!

**LWV P/CC Observer: Collin County Commissioners**

**Items of interest: January 24, 2011**

1. (AI-33051) Mental Health Needs and Care in Collin County, UNT Phase II presentation: Dr. Crusier of UNT Health Science Center presented an overview of the "Analysis and Recommendations for the Management and Financing of Behavioral Health Services in Collin County, Texas." There were four major findings:

- § Rates paid to each provider for the same service type did not differ significantly among the NorthSTAR providers. Patterns in services utilization, however, differed by county.
- § Under a "recovery" model, subscribed to by the current NorthSTAR system, many services are under-resourced within Collin County.
- § Within the current NorthSTAR system Collin County has limited bargaining power. The recent establishment of a stakeholders' advisory committee has considerable merit.
- § Collin County residents consumed an annual average of \$5,037,286 worth of NorthSTAR covered outpatient and community inpatient services (2007-2009), and \$653,357 worth of Value Options (non-Medicaid) funded medications.

Dr. Crusier said that Dallas County residents get more expenditures in the system because they are diagnosed with more serious disorders. Collin County residents with serious disorders are referred to other providers. Complete report is available on county website: [www.co.collin.tx.us](http://www.co.collin.tx.us), on home page, click right column, #2 New UNT Study.

Phase III of the study will have a strategic plan.

2. (AI-33110) Election Day Vote Centers, Nov. 2, 2010 Election Administrator Sharon Rowe reported that 72 vote centers were used on Election Day, instead of the 129 precinct polling places. Many of the same locations were used for early voting centers; the ones that weren't used had notices posted. She said that overall it was a good election, but they had some challenges, including:

- § Because of budget considerations, they were not able to purchase as many laptops as they wanted; the laptops were used to check the countywide registration lists. However, if bottlenecks occurred, she wanted them to be at check-in rather than at voting machines. If a voter checks in and then leaves before voting, it is difficult to make adjustments to allow him to vote elsewhere.
- § Some of the locations did not allow them to use all the space requested; consequently, they had fewer machines at some locations.
- § They had technicians available to help with problems, but did not have a technician at each location all day.
- § The judges were in charge of processes at their respective locations; the same processes weren't used countywide.

§ Some locations, such as schools, were already at capacity in their parking before voters arrived. She said that the county wants to use vote centers again, but with improvements. She wants to reduce the "unpopular" locations, add more laptops for the popular ones, select sites with better location and parking. She mentioned several bills that may come up in the state legislative session. One bill would eliminate having to give a reason to use a mail ballot. Another would require Election Day to be a teacher in-service day. Because of office vacancies and runoffs, Collin County had nine elections in 2010, instead of the usual five. Currently a vacancy in a 3-year term has to be filled within 120 days; a proposed bill would change that to fill the vacancy at the next uniform election date.

Shawn Stevens, Collin County Democratic Party Chair, gave a public comment, saying that it was a "whitewash" to say that the election was overall a good one. He said the vote center program was under-funded, under-equipped and over-sold. Some locations had a 3-hour wait; many voters left. The sites were not selected by a committee in 2010. They were not true vote centers, just a reduced number of precinct locations. He said the program needs to be completely revamped, and not done on the cheap.

- 3. (AI-32863) Revised project plan for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Reinvestment No. 2 with the City of Plano: Several City of Plano and Plano ISD officials spoke in favor of the revised plan, which includes some funds for Mendenhall Elem. School as well as downtown Plano. The commissioners were concerned that county dollars might be used for the school, rather than for infrastructure. They approved the plan (5-0) after receiving assurances that the county share, approximately \$1.4 M, would be used for infrastructure. Judge Self also made a presentation outlining some of the issues in treating Collin County cities equally and fairly with regard to TIFs.
- 4. (AI-33159) Board/Committee Appointments: Com. Webb appointed Pat Lawson to Child Protective Services board. The commissioners voted 4-0 (Judge Self abstaining) to appoint Judge Self to the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority Board (NTBHAB).
- 5. Legislative priorities: The commissioners voted 5-0 to support HJR 56, which addresses unfunded mandates from state to county and would say that counties don't have to implement something if the state doesn't fund it. The commissioners oppose allowing ballot by mail without a reason.

(Jan.24 observer: Janice Schieffer.)

## CALLS TO ACTION:

### ADVOCACY: LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011

The Board adopted the following LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011 at its January meeting:

Clean Air Defense;  
Health Care Defense;  
Money in Elections (campaign finance reform); and  
Voter Registration and Election Administration.

The Legislative Watch List\* follows:

CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of  
Discrimination Against Women);  
Climate Change;  
Ethics;  
Immigration; and  
Safe Drilling and Mining ("Fracking").

*\*The Watch List means that if an opportunity arises on these issues and does not interfere with action on an advocacy priority, the LWVUS may take action if it appears we can make an impact.*

The LWVUS Board discussed many issues and the messages from members suggesting Legislative Priorities. The decisions were made based on what issues are likely to come before the 112th Congress, the opportunities to make an impact, program decisions made at the 2010 Convention, member interest and resources available to manage these priorities effectively. The Board reviews these priorities throughout the year, making changes if warranted.

### ACTION ALERT: Protect America's Health Care

[Take action now!](#) An attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act failed in the Senate by a 51-47 vote. Proponents of repeal have indicated that they will continue to raise the issue in the Senate. Please tell your Senators not to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to stand firm in support of this law which extends coverage to millions of uninsured Americans.

### League Fights to Protect Public Financing System

The League fought against the efforts last month to eliminate the public financing system for presidential elections. Although the House voted in favor of repeal, prospects in the Senate are a bit better. The League spoke out by letter to the House and by joining a coalition's letter, by blogging our views, and by urging League members and citizens to oppose eliminating public financing for presidential elections.

**Redistricting:** As state leaders undertake the complex and often intensely partisan task of redrawing congressional and state legislative district boundaries after the 2010 census, ensure districts are drawn in the open and that the public has opportunities to weigh in. Open and participatory redistricting will lead to a more representative and accountable democracy and empower communities to advocate for the resources and opportunities they deserve.

### Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP):

Learn more about election laws in Texas and proposals for requiring photo ID at the time of voting. LWVTX spoke in opposition to SB 14. Similar bills have been introduced in the TX House. To review the current make up of voter photo ID laws in the states go to: <http://www.brennancenter.org/page/-/Democracy/Voter%20ID%202010%20States.pdf>

### LWV TX ADVOCACY IN TEXAS LEGISLATURE:

The latest Legislative Newsletter arrived in LWV members' e-mail Feb. 7, reporting on multiple issues being followed by LWV volunteers at the Capitol in Austin.

**Education:** League members should contact their legislators in a show of support for adequate and equitable funding for public schools.

Lt. Gov. Dewhurst has named members of the Senate's Committee on Finance, which will play an important role in the fate of funding for public and higher education. A hearing was set for Feb. 7. Chair Steve Ogden has reportedly said he would "look at everything—including cuts, using the Rainy Day Fund, and finding non-tax revenue," which would include eliminating tax breaks. Senator Florence Shapiro (Dist. 8) is a member of the committee.

### STAY IN TOUCH:"Like" the LWVUS League on

Facebook [www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters](http://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters)

The League of Women Voters of Texas e-mailed their latest newsletter on Feb. 9, to addresses they have received from local Leagues. Contact the [lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org](mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org) and Eloise Richardson, local membership chair, [tweetRichardson@verizon.net](mailto:tweetRichardson@verizon.net) if you did not receive the LWVTX newsletter on Feb. 9.

League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County's website is [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org) and contains useful information, the current local League program to review to prepare for the Feb. 16 program planning meeting and other links to stay informed. We're also on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LWVCollin](http://www.facebook.com/LWVCollin) Photos from Dec. social.



**Join the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County**

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)

Would you like to become involved in supporting your League by participating in one or more of these advocacy or study or organization supports

\_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising

\_\_\_\_\_ Health Care

\_\_\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Natural Resources, Environment

\_\_\_\_\_ Observer Corps: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Open Space/Land Use

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Education (local, state, federal role)

\_\_\_\_\_ Publicity

\_\_\_\_\_ Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_ Water Resources as Commodity (TX study)

\_\_\_\_\_ Voter Services

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**e-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: LWV of Plano/Collin County**

**P.O. Box 866592**

**Plano, TX 75086-6592**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVER CORPS:**

Inform the Coordinator which government body you are able to monitor. Observers attend meeting, communicate with the Coordinator, Pat Lawson, [pat2520@verizon.net](mailto:pat2520@verizon.net) 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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues. 7-9 p.m.

[www.cityoffallen.org](http://www.cityoffallen.org)

Allen ISD meets 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, 7 p.m.

[www.allenisd.org](http://www.allenisd.org)

FRISCO TX

City Council meets 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues, 6:30 p.m.

[www.ci.frisco.tx.us](http://www.ci.frisco.tx.us)

Frisco ISD meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mon. 7:30 p.m.

[www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org)

MCKINNEY TX

City Council meets 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues., 6:30 p.m.

[www.mckinneytexas.org](http://www.mckinneytexas.org)

McKinney ISD meets 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues., 7:15

[www.mckinneyisd.net](http://www.mckinneyisd.net)

PLANO TX

Plano City Council meets 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mon., 7pm

[www.plano.gov](http://www.plano.gov)

Plano ISD meets 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon. 7 p.m.

[www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu)

COLLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays, 9:30 a.m., courthouse in McKinney [www.co.collin.tx.us](http://www.co.collin.tx.us)

NORTH TEXAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

Meets monthly, 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs., 4 p.m. in Wylie, 505 Brown, [www.ntmwd.com/sitemap.html](http://www.ntmwd.com/sitemap.html)

