

# The VOTER

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

October 2011

## League Events Calendar: October 2011

6, Thurs. 7 p.m. LWVP/CC Discussion and consensus for LWVUS study, re questions, issues in the history of federal involvement in public education, and common core education standards, at 2821 Aspen Court, Plano, TX

11, Last day to register to vote in the Nov. 8 Election. LWVTX Voters Guides available distributed by volunteers.

13, Thurs., 7 p.m. Discussion and consensus, re education equity and funding, at 7247 Moss Ridge Rd, Parker TX. (call to carpool with member near you.)

19, Wed., 7 p.m., LWV P/CC Board meets, 2520 Kelsey Dr., Plano

24, 8 a.m., First day of Early Voting statewide re ten proposed Texas Constitutional amendments and local election changes. Poll locations at [www.co.collin.tx.us/elections](http://www.co.collin.tx.us/elections)

### November 2011:

4, Friday, Last day of Early Voting

5, Saturday, 7-9 p.m., Cordial Tasting Fundraiser to benefit LWVP/CC at 6903 Maple Creek Lane, Dallas. (see invitation, page 2)

8, Tuesday, 7 a.m.—7 p.m. ELECTION DAY. Poll locations at [www.co.collin.tx.us/elections](http://www.co.collin.tx.us/elections)

10, Thurs., 7 p.m., LWVP/CC discussion and consensus on LWVTX study of water as a natural resource and as a commodity, at 3804 Roman Court, Plano, TX. (carpool with member near you.)

12—Dec. 12, Filing period for candidates in the March partisan Primary Election

15, 7 p.m. Pamela Larson speaks-Davis Library

16, Wed., 7 p.m., LWVP/CC Program Planning and Board meeting, 2903 Moss Creek Ct, McKinney

## From the President.....

**Patty Jantho**

This has been an uncommonly busy fall with many worthwhile activities. On Saturday, September 24, North Texas LWVs and the Sierra Club sponsored a regional water forum in Irving TX that asked the question, "Will There Be Enough Water In Texas? (Sept. 24 was "A Global Day of Climate Action! ) This topic was especially prescient since we may be in a multi-year drought that could equal or exceed the Drought of Record between 1950 and 1956. Our meeting on the LWV TX water consensus--***Should Water Be a Commodity?***—takes place on Thursday, November 10 at Janice Schieffer's home, 3804 Roman Court, Plano. Water study report, background information, is available on our website, [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org)

Learn the difference between ground water and surface water, how each is managed and what the future holds for both.

Please read the LWV US two-part discussion materials on *The Federal Role in Education*. Consensus meetings—led by Janet Imhoff, and held on consecutive Thursdays: Oct. 6, at 7 pm at the home of Mary Alice Garza, 2821 Aspen Court, Plano; Oct. 13, at 7 pm at the home of Marilyn Hinton, 7247 Moss Ridge Road, Parker TX. Consensus study materials were e-mailed to members by the end of September.

An opportunity fell into our hands from the executive director of LWV US, Nancy Tate. Pamela Larson, Executive V.P. of the National Academy of Social Insurance, will be spending a month in Texas to meet with groups to discuss her topic of specialization, "*The Future of Social Security and Medicare.*" (Who is not concerned about this? ) We have a firm date of **Tuesday, November 15 at 7 p.m. at Plano's Davis Library.**

On Sat., Nov. 5 we are going to have **Fun** and do a bit of **Fundraising**. From 7 to 9 pm, we will have a **Cordial Tasting** at the home of member, Holly Nichols, (See page 2.)

We think "wine" tasting has been done and done again, but to taste a select sampling from the multiple varieties of cordials is both new and different. And, we are going to open up the invitation list to a variety of non-members as well. Who knows whom you might meet!! You won't want to miss it. Reservations are on a "first come" basis, and it's a dandy way to treat friends!

For additional information on the gamut of LWV P/CC activities, make regular visits to our updated website: [www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org) and our Facebook, as well. [www.facebook.com/LWV/Collin](http://www.facebook.com/LWV/Collin)

**(highlight, click and copy to enclose with your check.)**

**YOU**

are invited to a

**CORDIAL TASTING**

For Fun and Fellowship and to Benefit the Educational Outreach of The League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County

**Saturday, November 5, from 7 to 9 pm  
At 6903 Maple Creek Lane  
Dallas 75255**

(Between I-190 George Bush and Frankford, east of Hillcrest to Highland Creek Estates; turn east onto Genstar and follow left all the way to 6903 Maple Creek Lane, home of Holly Nichols)

\$20 per person, \$35 per couple

Reservations due by

Wednesday, November 1, 2011

Send check payable to "LWVP/CC"

to Sharon Goldgar, 2900 Dartmouth Dr., Plano 75075

Guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ single reservations @ \$20

\_\_\_\_\_ double reservations at \$35

Total payment enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENSUS MEETINGS COMING** by  
**Janet Imhoff, LWVTX Program Vice Pres.**  
**972-547-4270, [janimhoff@tx.rr.com](mailto:janimhoff@tx.rr.com)**

As a multi-issue organization, where do we get all the positions we lobby on at the state and national levels? From YOU, the members. We are grassroots, not top-down. After a study is conducted and facts are gathered, we read about them, discuss them, and come to CONSENSUS on what we think about it all. From all the consensus reports submitted, the study committee writes a position statement that is approved by the board at the appropriate level. Biennially, we consider new issues to study or continue at the national and state levels. We welcome your future study ideas for the Nov. 16 Program Planning meeting.

This fall we will have member **consensus meetings on both a national study, "The Federal Role in Education," and a state study, "Water As a Commodity."** The education consensus will take place in two meetings on October 6 and 13, and the state water consensus will take place on November 10. (Guests welcome but not voting!)

**Education:** The October 6 & 13 education consensus meetings will be in the homes of two members, Mary Alice Garza and Marilyn Hinton. The consensus questions will be given to you at each meeting.

To read the background papers and consensus questions, see LWVUS website: [http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public\\_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=16957](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=16957)

**The Oct. 6 meeting** reviews efforts to develop Common Core Standards for education by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. We will discuss arguments for and against adopting common educational standards for grades K-12, how they compare with state standards, whether they improve achievement, and how students and standards would be assessed.

**The October 13:** We will discuss equity and funding of education by the federal government for special populations.

The **November 10** meeting on water in Texas relates to the *Facts and Issues* publication that was sent to all members by email on August 1. . If you have joined since Aug. 1, go to [www.lwvtxexas.org](http://www.lwvtxexas.org) to see the publication, “**Should Water Be a Commodity?**” to prepare for the meeting at the home of Janice Schieffer, 3804 Roman Court, Plano. Participation in consensus is one of the democratic ways our membership in League is important.

**LWV-Texas Study:  
Should Texas Water Be a Commodity?  
CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

1. Texas has a mandate to preserve and conserve the water of the state. Both groundwater and oil and gas are considered the property of the landowner. Should water continue to be regulated differently from oil and gas? Choose one.

- a) \_\_\_ Like oil and gas, groundwater in place is private property. There is no reason to regulate the two differently.
- b) \_\_\_ While there are some similarities between water and oil and gas, water serves a much different function, and it should be managed for the benefit of the people and the protection of the resource.

Comment:

2. The “Rule of Capture” has been modified by the creation of groundwater conservation districts (GCD’s). How do you feel about the following issues? Yes or no.

- a) \_\_\_ If a water district prevents the owners of underground water from selling as much water as they want, thereby depriving them of income, the landowners should be compensated for loss of potential income.
- b) \_\_\_ Locally controlled groundwater conservation districts should have the power to regulate groundwater use in a way that protects landowner water rights from neighboring water withdrawal and to conserve the aquifer.
- c) \_\_\_ The state should enact laws strengthening the rights and responsibilities of GCD’s in order to

improve their ability to defend against lawsuits questioning those rights.

- d) \_\_\_ Groundwater should be owned and permitted by the state, as is surface water.

Comment:

3. Transfers of water from areas of surplus to areas of scarcity have been discussed. Which of the following options would best serve Texans? Choose one or more.

- a) \_\_\_ A state agency with strong enforcement powers should regulate all water transfers to make sure that water resources are not depleted.
- b) \_\_\_ The state should allow water transfers through an exchange agency that lets price float with the market. Buyers would determine the successful bidder, not the state.
- c) \_\_\_ There is no need for the state to regulate water transfers. Because of the expense and distances involved, localities will solve this problem without interference from the state.
- d) \_\_\_ The state should only intervene when transfers are in dispute.

Comment:

4. What steps should be taken to ensure that future growth makes the best use of limited water resources? Choose one or more.

- a) \_\_\_ Developers should not be allowed to build unless they are able to find enough water for the project.
- b) \_\_\_ Requiring permits would limit growth. Market forces plus the price of water should determine what gets built.
- c) \_\_\_ There should be mandatory public interest review of water transfers that considers potential third-party impacts and protects the environment.
- d) \_\_\_ Water moved to urban areas should not endanger the future economies of rural Texas.

Comment:

5. Should groundwater be regulated differently from surface water or should the same rules apply? Choose one.

- a) \_\_\_ Groundwater and surface water are so interrelated that the same rules should apply.
- b) \_\_\_ Because groundwater is less quantifiable, it should be governed by a different set of regulations and different agencies:

Comment:

6. Given the limited supply and the various needs for water, how would you prioritize the following? Rank 1-3, with 1 being the highest.

- a) \_\_\_ The needs of people, including domestic uses and utilities.
- b) \_\_\_ The needs of the economy including industry, agriculture, and mining.
- c) \_\_\_ The needs of the environment, including in-stream flows for wildlife and preservation of our natural surroundings.

Comment:

7. Texas has always suffered from periodic droughts, and this pattern will likely continue. In addition, the population of Texas is projected to nearly double between 2000 and 2060. What solution do you think is best to handle future water shortages?

Comment:

**Voters Service Report**, Janice Schieffer, Chair ([janice@schieffer.us](mailto:janice@schieffer.us))

**Thanks** to our members who are deputy voter registrars who volunteered in summer at the Irving Citizenship and Naturalization Center, then at 3 Collin College campuses in September and at the International Festival Oct. 1 in Plano. Another voter registration campaign will be scheduled in February. Additional registration opportunities will be available locally and at the Citizenship and Naturalization Center in Las Colinas on demand.

**Send an e-mail** with your name and contact information to [janice@schieffer.us](mailto:janice@schieffer.us) if you are interested in serving on the Voters Service Committee, with a meeting soon in October to review a timetable of voters service activities:

--to compose questions for candidates for a later LWV Voters Guide to be completed,

--to review candidate replies to the questions and post them on our website prior to the March partisan Primary Election.

--to monitor candidate filings and write letters of invitation to candidates to speak and be questioned at our February candidates' forums

--to distribute LWV TX Voters Guides and the Guides to Elected Officials to public sites such as libraries, city halls, school districts

--to review Voters Service policies

--to register voters

The September 13 orientation to LWV and election update meeting at Davis Library was well attended. There were lots of questions for Collin County Election Administrator, Sharon Rowe.

**VOTE Nov. 8 or during the early voting period October 24—Nov. 4** to avoid long lines at the precincts or vote centers—that have been approved by the Collin County Commissioners Court.

Thank you for helping the League's mission to inform, to participate and to advocate.

**What's on the Election Ballot?**

**City of Plano: Nov. 8**

See the City of Plano website [www.planotx.gov](http://www.planotx.gov)

**PROPOSITION NO. 1**

SHALL SECTION 3.01. NUMBER, SELECTION AND TERM OF ARTICLE 3 OF THE PLANO CITY CHARTER BE AMENDED TO CHANGE CITY COUNCIL TERMS FROM THREE YEARS TO FOUR YEARS; HOLD ELECTIONS IN ODD-NUMBERED YEARS BEGINNING IN 2013 FOR PLACES 2, 4, 6, & 8 AND IN 2015 FOR PLACES 1, 3, 5, & 7; CHANGE THE TERM LIMITS FROM THREE TERMS TO TWO TERMS; AND TERM LIMITS SHALL BE APPLIED RETROACTIVELY FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS CURRENTLY SERVING? \_\_\_ for \_\_\_ against

**PROPOSITION NO. 2**

SHALL SECTION 4.04. MUNICIPAL COURT OF ARTICLE 4 OF THE PLANO CITY CHARTER BE AMENDED TO ALLOW THE COURT TO OPERATE AS AUTHORIZED BY THE CITY; ALLOW THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPOINT ALL JUDGES FOR SPECIFIC TERMS INCLUDING APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF MUNICIPAL JUDGE WHEN A VACANCY OCCURS; AND, PROVIDE A PROCESS AND REASONS FOR THE REMOVAL OF ANY JUDGE? \_\_\_ for \_\_\_ against

**PROPOSITION NO. 3**

SHALL CHANGES BE MADE TO THE PLANO CITY CHARTER THROUGHOUT TO CORRECT NON-SUBSTANTIVE ERRORS TO REVISE OBSOLETE DATES AND CLARIFY LANGUAGE BY AMENDING CITY CHARTER SECTIONS 1.02, 2.02, 5.01, 6.03, AND 11.11; AND SHALL LANGUAGE BE REVISED OR REMOVED TO CONFORM TO FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAW INCLUDING REMOVING REDUNDANT PROVISIONS THEREBY CHANGING CITY CHARTER SECTIONS 3.02, 3.06, 4.07, 6.07, 7.02, 9.06, 9.14, 10.02, 10.04, 10.11, 11.01, 11.04 AND DELETING IN THEIR ENTIRETY CITY CHARTER SECTIONS 6.11, 8.01, 8.03, AND 10-A.02?

\_\_\_ for \_\_\_ against

**State of Texas: Nov. 8**

TEN PROPOSED TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. See ballot wording and pro's and con's at the [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org).

**City of Allen ISD:**

ELECTION DAY OCTOBER 8: EARLY VOTING BEGAN 9/21/11, ENDS 10/4/11 at the Allen ISD Admin. Bldg.

The State of Texas reduced all school district tax rates by approximately one third in 2006.... (for property tax relief). The proposed tax increase is to offset \$21 million in cuts to local funding by the Texas Legislature in 2011. The Texas Legislature reduced funding of over \$4 billion to Texas public schools in June. Cuts to Allen ISD are approximately \$9 million for 2011-2012. An additional \$12 million will be cut from state funding to Allen ISD in 2012-2013.

The Allen ISD Board of Trustees has called a tax ratification election or TRE for Oct. 8, 2011. A TRE election is required when a school district raises the tax rate above its rollback rate. Voters will vote "for" or "against" approving the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.67 per \$100 of value in the district for the current year, a rate that is \$.13 higher per \$100 property valuation than the district's rollback rate.

**REDISTRICTING IN PLANO: We Grew in 2010 Census** ..... After a public hearing, Plano City Council adopted new district boundaries within the city borders Sept. 26. The map will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice for review. The adjustment to district boundaries was necessary due to population growth between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses. Under the [Plano City Charter](#), all Council districts are to have equity in population with the largest Council district being no more than 25 percent larger in population than the smallest. The new map reduces the population differential to just below 4 percent.

**REDISTRICTING IN COLLIN COUNTY: The Commissioners Court** adjusted precinct boundaries and submitted their redistricting plan to the federal government by Sept. 15.

**Nov. 15, 7 p.m. speaker, at Davis Library,  
7501 Independence Pkwy**

## **NEWS FROM LWVUS**

### **Texas in Election Spotlight**

#### **“Elections: Federal Judge Upholds Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act**

A federal judge upheld Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires states with a history of voter suppression to seek approval before implementing changes to their voting laws. The last state legislative sessions demonstrate the need for such continued oversight – multiple legislatures implemented voter photo ID and proof of citizenship requirements as a prerequisite to voting as well as cutting or shortening early voting periods and Election Day registration.

#### **Redistricting: Justice Department Aligns with League on Texas Redistricting**

The Department of Justice objects to Texas's redistricting plan, the Department indicated that it believes the TX plan fails to comply with requirements set forth by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. According to the Associated Press, The Justice Department says Texas' new voting maps for Congress and for the Texas House do not meet federal anti-discrimination requirements.... Hispanics have accounted for two-thirds of the state's growth since 2000. ... the new maps packed Hispanics and blacks into the same districts.

The case, which involves the election districts drawn by the Texas Legislature, will probably be decided by a federal court in Washington. District boundaries are redrawn every 10 years to reflect changes in census data ...The League in Texas and other key states continue to stand up for the rights of minority voters in the redistricting process.”

[www.LWVUS.org](http://www.LWVUS.org)    [www.LWVTexas.org](http://www.LWVTexas.org)

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

#### **Pamela J. Larson**

**Executive Vice President**

**National Academy of Social Insurance**

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Pamela J. Larson has directed the National Academy of Social Insurance since it began operation in 1987. First as Executive Director, then as Executive Vice President, Ms. Larson continues to work closely with the Academy's 800 members and Board and staff to develop its research and education programs on Social Security and Medicare, long-term care, and leadership development as well as developing its services to social insurance professionals. She has managed the Academy's planning and fundraising and has organized its annual conferences, awards events, and internship programs over time. She also staffs the Board of Directors and the Board's Committees. In February 2008 she directed the feasibility study for the Ford Foundation's Affinity Group on Development, Finance, Committee on Social Protection, compiling the report entitled *Charting a Future for Social Protection*.

Before coming to the Academy, she was Director of Membership Services for the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Prior to coming to Washington D.C. in 1983, she served as Director of Long-Term Care Services, Southwestern Pennsylvania Area Agency on Aging, and as a Health Services Specialist for the United Mine Workers of America Health and Retirement Funds.

On mini-sabbaticals in 1998 and 1999, Ms. Larson taught Medicare policy at Florida State University and wrote articles on work and retirement research for the features newspaper, *Aging Today*.

On her fall sabbatical in TX in 2011, she is exploring the meaning of sharing and pooling of risks and finances in a variety of cultures. A member of the National Academy of Social Insurance since 1993, Ms. Larson received her Masters of regional planning from Cornell University.