

The VOTER

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

April 2011

League Events Calendar:

April:

4, Monday, 7:00 p.m. Plano City Council Budget Work Session, 1520 Ave. K. Watch City Council Meetings live on Plano Television Network, Channel 16 on Time Warner Cable and Channel 30 & 31 on Verizon FIOS .

7, Thurs., 7-9 p.m., Plano Homeowners Council Candidates Forum, (City Council & ISD Trustees), 1910 E. Spring Creek Pkway.

9, Saturday, 10:30—12:45 – LWV Forum for Plano City Council and Plano ISD Trustee candidates, at Schimelpfenig Library, 5024 Custer Rd.

16, ?, Sat., Forum for McKinney candidates at

19, 21, 28, Tuesday and Thursdays p.m., C&S publications reserved all three dates to have three forums in Wylie, Murphy and Farmersville. We await more information. Contact janice@schieffer.us to volunteer.

20, Wed., 7 p.m. LWVP/CC Board meeting at Christ United Methodist Church, (CUMC) room M225, Members welcome. pnjantho@gmail.com

27, Wednesday, 1:30-3:15 p.m. – AARP Forum with Plano City Council candidates, with LWV moderator and timekeeper, at Plano Senior Center, 401 W. 16th St.

May:

2-10, Early Voting Period at various locations www.co.collin.tx.us/elections

14, Saturday, 7—7 p.m. Municipal Election Day throughout Texas at vote centers. See www.co.collin.tx.us/elections

18, 7 p.m., Wed., LWVP/CC Board meeting at CUMC, M225. Members welcome. pnjantho@gmail.com

**May 21, 10:30—1, Saturday,
LWVP/CC Annual Meeting for all
members.**

Look for details by e-mail before April 21.

President's Message: by *Patty Jantho*
pnjantho@gmail.com

It is time for the Board of Directors of Plano/Collin County to give the annual accounting to the membership of how our collective energies have been applied during the past program year--June 2010 through May 2011. This will occur at our **Annual Meeting of members on Saturday, May 21, at the Clubhouse of the Colonnade at Willow Bend, 1100 Meredith Lane (south/across from St. Andrews Methodist Church and just east of the Tollway-- Mapsco 655Z.)**

****At this meeting you will hear about our activities over the past year, elect officers and vote on our program activities, bylaws, and budget for the coming year. We will end the morning with lunch provided by the Board of Directors. This is a relaxed opportunity to talk, listen, learn and have some companionship with fellow members in the process. So, *put Saturday, May 21 from 10:30 to 1 p.m. on your calendar now.***

By April 21, you will receive the Annual Meeting Workbook via email with reports from the officers covering the year's activities, enabling you to review our proposals in advance of the meeting. Hard copies of the Workbook will be available at the May 21 Annual Meeting as well. It will discuss how we have supported the Indigent Health Care and Mental Health Care in Collin County; what we have learned and how we can aid Alternative Education for the Collin County Juvenile Probation Programs; and outline our concerns about water as a non-renewable resource both locally and statewide as introduced at our public meeting held March 24.

(president's message, continued:)

A fiscal note: Many of you know that our Plano libraries, our primary meeting locations, will begin to levy hourly room use charges. At this May's Annual Meeting, Open Your Checkbook -- contributions will be used to defray those costs for upcoming program year. More details follow at the meeting.

In this issue please read about upcoming Candidate Forums set for Saturday, April 9 and more. If you have never been to one of our forums, this is an excellent opportunity. The stakes are especially high this year for all voters because of the fiscal situation confronting us locally, in Texas, as well as nationally. Come, listen to the candidates and ask the questions that are of concern to you. This is truly "democracy in action" and you will want to be part of it.

You say you're just "one person?" Well, I'm reminded of what a famous Texan, Liz Carpenter, has said, "I learned in my four decades in Washington that one person *can* make a difference." Isn't that what LWV P/CC is all about?



LWVP/CC Board, May 2010-11.

* * *

May Elections 2011!

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

Local elections are in full gear for the cities and school districts in Collin County, with **May 14 as the Uniform Election Day.**

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, candidate forums, voters guides, voter registration!

CANDIDATE FORUMS:

We have invited 40 candidates in contested races for City Council and ISD trustees in Allen, Frisco, McKinney and Plano to respond to questions for our Voters Guide, which will be posted online by April 16. www.lwvcollin.org

The public is invited to meet **candidates for Plano City Council and ISD in a forum Sat., April 9, 10:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.**, at Schimelpfenig Library, 5024 Custer Rd., Plano. The eight candidates for City Council Places 3, 5 and 7 are invited for Session 1, which begins at 10:30 a.m. The five candidates for Plano ISD Places 4 and 5 are invited for Session 2, which begins at 12:00 noon. Between the two sessions, from 11:30 a.m. to noon, we will have a Meet & Greet for all candidates in the two sessions.

Please plan to attend this forum and invite your friends, neighbors and other organizations!

We have been invited to moderate a **forum for Farmersville, Murphy, and Wylie candidates**, sponsored by C&S Media Publications, to be held April 19, 21 or 28. Contact janice@schieffer.us to volunteer.

LWV-P/CC has also been invited to moderate a **forum for Plano City Council candidates**, sponsored by the Plano AARP, **Wed., April 27, 1:00 p.m.**, at the Plano Senior Center. The candidates will appear at 1:30 p.m.

VOTER REGISTRATION: LWV-P/CC members registered voters at **ROCK the Vote** events at **Collin College campuses** March 29-31. Thanks to Dorie Cranshaw, Mary Alice Garza, Pat Lawson, Erma Spencer, Donna Bening and Janice Schieffer. Campuses were competing to register more potential voters.

In addition, we continue to register new citizens at naturalization ceremonies at the **Las Colinas Citizenship & Naturalization Center** once or twice a month. Contact janice@schieffer.us to volunteer.

What's Happening at the TX Legislature?

Members can read and download back issues of the LWV TX Legislative Newsletter by going to: http://www.lwvtexas.org/legislative_newsletter.php

In addition to the newsletter, the Advocacy Team has testified on several issues before various state committees in both the Senate and the House. The text of the testimony is available online:

<http://www.lwvtexas.org/actionalerts.php>

Action Alerts have been sent to all LWV-TX members

LWVTX ACTION REQUEST: "Texas Senate and House Budget Bills Cleared Committee with Deep Cuts in Education -- Advocacy for Funding Needed"

Budget bills still have big budget cuts for public education:

SB 1 restores \$5.3 billion of the \$9.3 billion in planned cuts, as originally filed. However, the bill still means deep state cuts for school districts, costing them an average of \$400 per pupil. The proposal contains a cut of more than \$1 billion in state discretionary funds for initiatives like prekindergarten expansion grants, which have allowed districts to provide high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten programs. The LWVTX strongly supports funding for kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs.

HB1 includes more severe cuts and job losses. This plan cuts \$23 billion from the state budget, including \$7.8 billion in school formula aid and more than another \$1 billion in school grants. The Legislative Budget Board says that under HB 1 the state would have 272,000 fewer jobs in 2012, and 335,000 fewer in 2013. It is scheduled for an April 1 vote on the floor.

Phone calls, letters, and e-mails stressing the importance of adequate funding for public schools are needed.

Contact committee chairs and your local senators and representatives. Advocate for using the Rainy Day Fund, in combination with other approaches to balance the budget that would explore new revenue potential, eliminate tax breaks, and carefully evaluate cuts that would jeopardize already lean services."

CONTACT INFORMATION

Senate Finance Chair: Sen. Steve Ogden, 512/463-0105.

Write to Senators at: P.O. Box 12068, Austin, TX 78711-2068; or e-mail by filling in the name as follows: first.last@senate.state.tx.us.

(Florence.Shapiro@senate.state.tx.us.) Dist. 8. House Appropriations Chair is Rep. Jim Pitts, 512/463-0516.

House Ways and Means Chair is Rep. Harvey

Hilderbran, 512/463-0536.

Write to House members at: P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768-2910; or e-mail by filling in the name as follows: first.last@house.state.tx.us.

Van Taylor [District66.Taylor@house.state.tx.us]

Or Jerry.Madden@house.state.tx.us. (Dist. 67)

Or Ken.Paxton@house.state.tx.us (Dist 70)

Or Jodie.Laubenberg@house.state.tx.us (Dist 89)

LWV Lobby Days 2011 provided a wonderful opportunity to visit the Capitol, to network with fellow League members, to learn about issues and advocacy, and to meet with elected officials and staff. Find links to redistricting and Lobby Days resources plus pictures at <http://lwvtexas.org>.

Monday, March 7, Senator Seliger of Amarillo, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting, began the afternoon session with a briefing on redistricting, a priority issue for LWV-Texas. A panel of LWV-Texas issue chairs, including Elaine Talarski, Linda Pavlik, Bonnie Leich, Linda Hanratty and Stewart Snider, provided updates on issues being followed by LWV observers. See the periodic *LWVTX Legislative Newsletter* for specifics. **We aim for transparency**, (accessible, searchable, timely, accurate information for accountability) **and a balanced approach to dealing with the state deficits**. TX AARP's Amanda Fredriksen led an exercise raising awareness of sources of revenue and possible spending cuts to balance the state budget— and to understand the challenges facing our representatives. Tuesday March 8, Liz Zornes, Rep. Rafael Anchia's Chief of Staff, gave advice about using visit time.

LWV Plano/Collin County members visited legislators and their staff in Austin: Peg Slattery, Janet Imhoff, Janice Schieffer, Patty Jantho, and Jackie Fleschman. (photo by Donna Bening)



LOCAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVER CORPUS:

Observers attend meetings of the local government body, write notes about the meeting attended, communicate with the Coordinator, Pat Lawson 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 2nd & 4th Tues. 7-9 p.m.

www.cityoffallen.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.

www.wylietexas.gov

Wylie ISD meets 3rd Monday, 7:30 p.m.

www.wylieisd.org, 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

Observer's Report: Collin County Commissioners Court meeting, Feb. 28.

By Donna Bening (donnabening@verizon.net)

Commissioner Shaheen, Pct. 1, introduced a representative of the Collin County Medical Society after explaining that Texas mandates counties to provide health care to indigents in their county. He estimates that the current Trust Fund of the Collin County Health Care Foundation will last to 2014, and the Commissioners invited representatives of the Collin

County Medical Society to present another model for providing indigent health care by "community non-profits who want to give back." A doctor in Village Health Partners, in north Plano, spoke as a rep of The Collin County Medical Society Foundation, a 501.c.(3) corporation and willing doctors who offer to provide medical care to the county indigent and uninsured. There are 8 such contracts in TX, 50 nationwide. In 2010 they tried a pilot project with the Federally Qualified Health Center and the Adult Medical Clinic. They have 2 cooperating labs, hospitals, pharmacy to provide generic prescriptions, and staffing that includes an executive director, case coordinator, enrollment coordinator, and a medical director. The screened patients found to be eligible are accepted first; care will be provided during daytime business hours, not evenings. They agree to see eligible patients found to be at 100% of federal poverty level at locations of the willing providers. The points of entry in receiving patients—a hospital, a medical office, by referral..... By having doctors continue to see the same accepted eligible patients, continuity of care will improve. Service could begin as early as April 15 if accepted by Commissioners. The County Administrator was asked to draw up contracts to review at the next meeting. (This plan has been approved in March.)

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)

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**

Thank you.