

Denton VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Denton, Texas
Established 1961

P.O. Box 424945 TWU Station
Denton, Texas 76204

January 2008

Sue Smith, President
Sondra Ferstl, VOTER Editor

www.lwvdenton.org

CALENDAR

Sunday, January 13, 3 p.m. Board Meeting
at the home of Peg LaPoint, 1900 Highland
Park Circle. Members are welcome to
attend Board Meetings.

**Thursday, January 24, 7 p.m. General
Meeting on Electronic Voting.** Room 176,
EESAT Building, University of North Texas.
Film: "Hacking Democracy."

**Sunday, February 10, 3 p.m. Board
Meeting.**

IS ELECTRIC VOTING SECURE?

By Peg LaPoint, Program VP

The subject of our January 24 meeting will be an issue central to the League of Women Voters because it is essential to the democratic process. A growing body of evidence indicates that our votes can be subject to inadvertent or intentional alteration because the programming of voting machines is held in secrecy and there is usually no paper evidence of the vote. We are learning that the problem is not limited to isolated incidents, as hundreds of documented problems are being revealed.

There is an understandable resistance to the very idea of ballot tampering and it is difficult to get people to even consider the abundant evidence. I am confident the members of the League are open-minded and curious enough to educate themselves on this issue because it has such broad implications on several levels.

At our next meeting, we will watch the award-winning film *Hacking Democracy*, which takes a nonpartisan, clear-eyed look at the secrecy, cronyism, and incompetence of elections in present-day America. It follows the revelatory journey of Seattle grandmother Bev Harris and a band of extraordinary citizen-activists as they set out to answer the question: How does America count its voters? They reveal a broken system riddled with secrecy, incompetent election officials, and voting machines that can be programmed to alter elections. They also take on the voting machine industry, exposing alarming security holes in America's trusted systems.

The film is based on Bev Harris's book, *Black Box Voting, Ballot Tampering in the 21st Century*. I have put together a synopsis of the book which I will hand out to those attending the meeting. I strongly urge you to attend.

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM



This may be the beginning of the calendar year, but it is right in the middle of our League year. I hope you had a very nice holiday and are anxious to get back to study, action, and voters service.

Please read the article about our General Meeting, Thursday, January 24, make plans to attend, and invite anyone interested in the voting process. Our name and this subject do go hand in hand.

You won't believe it is time to be thinking about Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 19, but in preparation for that, the nominating committee will be meeting soon. If you receive a call, just say yes. Board members have all the fun.

Know someone who might join the League now? Members joining from January through August may do so for \$25 per person. Details available from Treasurer Ann MacMillan.

Sue Smith

DECEMBER PROGRAM MEETING

Thanks to the 16 members who attended the holiday party and helped plan our program for the next year, and who provided delicious refreshments. We had lively discussions about national, state and local options for informational meetings and possible study. There were no recommendations for position changes or new studies at the national level. In January, we will report the results of our consensus meetings on Immigration Policy to the national office.

When discussing state-level issues, several interesting subjects arose, and it was the consensus of the group to propose new

studies in four areas: The State's Role in Funding Public Higher Education; The Role of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in Protecting Health and Environment; The Adoption of Textbooks in Texas; and The Foster Care System in Texas. The group agreed that all current LWV-Texas positions are worthy of retention.

The Texas League has proposed a wording change in the position on Domestic Violence. The current position calls for the reduction of domestic violence. The state board proposes changing references in the position from "reduction" to "elimination," which was unanimously endorsed by those present. (The final decision on the change, of course, will be made by the delegates to State Convention. See information on p. 3.)

During a lively discussion on local issues we received several excellent suggestions. (Ken Ferstl's proposal for a program on "Dissolving the League" received the desired response but went unsupported.) Suggestions receiving support of the party-goers included an exploration of magnet schools as a way to reduce the amount of re-segregation of schools; an overview of the City boards and commissions; property code enforcement; the influence of City codes on environmental issues; and a panel discussion on air quality in the Metroplex. It was proposed that we arrange a tour of Denton's Hazardous Household Waste facility (perhaps combined with a discussion of a city-owned recycling facility). There were no suggestions for a new local study.

We welcome your suggestions for discussion at the local level. Please send them to a member of the Board. The schedule for next fall and spring will be established at the Board Meeting in late summer.

Peg LaPoint, Program VP

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LWVTX CONVENTION '06

Fort Worth, Texas

Cowtown...Culture...Community

April 4-6, 2008

Think about joining other members of the Denton League to attend the State Convention this year. Indicate your interest to Sue Smith, LWV-Denton President.

Convention delegates will be staying in the completely renovated Hilton Fort Worth. Located within walking distance of Sundance Square, Bass Hall, Sid Richardson Museum and downtown shopping. Go to www.hilton.com and take a look.

There will be a Pre-Convention Tour of the Fort Worth Stockyards, Friday morning, hosted by LWV-Tarrant County. It will leave the Hilton at 10 a.m. and return by 12:30 p.m. in time for the afternoon workshops.

Two fabulous back-to-back workshops will be offered on Friday afternoon: Advocacy and the Relationship Between (sic) the Three Levels of League, conducted by Carolie Mullan, LWVUS Board member and former LWV-Texas President; and a Membership workshop conducted by Cheryl Graeve, LWVUS Senior Director for Membership.

There will be a Host League dinner Friday evening, preceded by a tour of the Sid Richardson Museum.

Saturday morning we begin our plenary session and will hear the Secretary of State Director of Elections, Ann McGeehan, share

information on elections in Texas, with time for Q & A.

Saturday noon the 11th Environmental Awareness Awards Luncheon will take place.

Keven Ann Willey from the Dallas *Morning News* will be the keynote speaker at the Saturday evening banquet. Special donated items will be auctioned off by Ft. Worth's own auctioneer, Dan Tribble.

During our festivities, special awards will be made to local Leagues, there will be a gathering for local League presidents, and there will be a chance to meet LWV-Texas Program Chairs. Then, of course, there will be the fabulous Silent Auction available for your bid(s) from Friday morning until Saturday evening.

ENVIRONMENTAL TIP FOR THIS MONTH

Rayon production mixes exorbitant amounts of highly refined virgin wood pulp with polluting chemicals to make a relatively small amount of cloth. Instead of adding rayon to your wardrobe, look for organic cotton, hemp, or washable silk.

VOTERS GUIDES FOR THE MARCH 4, 2008 PRIMARY ELECTION

Judy Hollinger, Voter Services Chair for the state League, has announced that the LWV-Texas Education Fund will publish a Voters Guide for the March 4 primary election. This guide will cover the statewide offices on the ballot—U.S. Senator, Railroad Commissioner, Supreme Court, and Court of Criminal Appeals, and the regional Courts of Appeals. The guide will be available in time for early voting which begins February 19.

All U.S. Representatives, all Texas Representatives, some State Senators, and many county officials: sheriff, district attorney, county attorney, tax assessor/collector, county commissioners, JPs, constables, and various judges will also be up for local election. The local board has decided not to publish a Voters Guide for candidates for local election in the March primaries.

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