

# Denton VOTER



The League of Women Voters of Denton, Texas  
Established 1961

January, 2010

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

Sondra Ferstl, President  
Byron Witmer, VOTER Editor

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

## JOIN THE BIRTHDAY PARTY!

The League is 90 years old and we are going to celebrate with a wonderful dinner and concert!

Back in 1992, Donna Trammell wrote a fabulous musical review just for the Denton League. Her songs poked fun at a wide range of political figures and social issues, and was a huge success. Ms. Trammell has generously offered her company of singers to perform songs from the show, with updated material that is sure to please and entertain everyone. Along with an excellent dinner, this will be an evening you will not want to miss, and needs to be shared with everyone.

We are using the event in place of our annual finance drive, so we are depending on a large turnout. We are inviting the public and hope every member of the League will encourage family and friends to attend. This should also be a fun and entertaining way for us to make contact with the community.

We are giving people and organizations an opportunity to sponsor a song, with recognition in the program. Please promote this idea to anyone who might be interested or consider it for yourself.

We are mailing invitations to community members and have printed an invitation in this Voter. We will have extra invitations for you at the January general meeting. Please make your reservations right away and make an effort to recruit several other folks to attend. Note that all seating is by reservation and our deadline for reservations is February 15.

- Peg La Point

**Join Donna Trammell and Company**  
in a musical tribute celebrating the  
**90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the League of Women Voters**  
Thursday, March 4, 2010, 6:30 p.m.  
Fremaux's Metropolitan Catering, 932 W. University Drive, Denton

_____	<b>Reservation(s) @ \$40 each for dinner and entertainment</b>	\$ _____
_____	<b>Sponsorship of one Donna Trammell song @ \$90</b>	\$ _____
	<b>How should you be listed in the program?</b> _____	
_____	<b>Other contribution to support the work of the League</b> (Not tax deductible)	\$ _____
	<b>Total</b>	\$ _____

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED BY FEBRUARY 15, 2010**

**Make Checks payable to: League of Women Voters**

**Send with this form to: PO Box 424945 TWU, Denton, TX, 76204**

**You will receive written confirmation of your reservation. For more information: Peg La Point at 891-4984**

LWV is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences policy through education and advocacy.

## PRESIDENT'S PODIUM



Take a look at the 2010 Calendar of Events for the Denton League printed in this issue! We have plans for two special activities: the celebration of the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the League of

Women Voters (the national organization) and a course that is an actual Candidates Forum (a reality show?) offered through the Emeritus College at University of North Texas.

The Birthday Party is being planned by Peg La Point, chair, Kay Branum, and Sue Smith. These board members have met frequently to work out the details of this celebration. Donna Trammell and the Trammell Group will provide the entertainment for the event as their salute to the League. All of us need to “sell” reservations to friends and relatives who support the League. Encourage them to show their support by attending the dinner and also contributing to the organization. Perhaps you would also like to sponsor one of the musical numbers.

The course for the Emeritus College is an idea that I had that was endorsed by the Board of Directors. I have recruited Linnie McAdams to be the moderator for the event. I will get out my trusty stopwatch to serve as timer. I need another League member to help collect and look over the questions for the candidates. Any volunteers? (Call me at 940-383-3775.)

In January we also gear up for the League year in 2010-2011 (is it possible?). The Nominating Committee will be swinging into action. If you receive a call to be on the Board or next year's Nominating Committee, I hope you will say “yes.” It is vital that we continue to develop leadership for our organization's future.

We will also explore interesting topics pertaining to public policy with meetings on Toll Roads in North Texas and the Death Penalty in Texas. There will also be opportunities for voters service for the March primary and the May 8 local elections. Stay posted for more details!

– Sondra Ferstl

## JANUARY PROGRAM PLANNING

Every year we help direct the activities of the state and national boards of the organization. Our January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be our opportunity to discuss program planning for the Texas and National Leagues. We depend on the input of all our members for this process. We will discuss possible studies that have been proposed by other Leagues and will pass along any suggestions from our members to both state and national offices.

I urge everyone to join in this important discussion. This is your opportunity to influence the activities of your League.

– Peg La Point

## HOLIDAY PARTY AND PROGRAM MEETING

Thanks to Rosemary and Byron Witmer for hosting the holiday party in their beautiful home. Several members attended to celebrate the season and share their interests. While enjoying excellent refreshments, we discussed possible subjects for study or programs in the upcoming year.

Barbara Burns gave an overview of the status of bond expenditures by DISD. Barbara's report and handout from the Denton ISD answered several questions about the spending of the most recent school bond money. We had planned a meeting in the spring on the subject. As a result of Barbara's report, the group agreed that we might change the topic for the general meeting that was to be devoted to school bond issues. (Barbara's review is on a following page)

Sondra Ferstl reviewed issues raised at the Denton City Council retreat last fall, including Denton's aging infrastructure, management of natural resources, plans for the downtown area, infill development, gas wells, and water resource management. The members present seemed most interested in the issues of “infill” development, the development of downtown, and the impact of gas wells.

Janet Peavler suggested a program on health care for the indigent in Denton County. There was some interest in conducting a study on this subject. If any members are interested, please contact Maggie Dodd.

The Board has planned a program in February on the issue of toll roads and there were comments on various areas of that subject that might be addressed.

Thanks to all for your input. If members have further suggestions for program, please contact me at any time (940-891-4984).

– Peg La Point

## CALENDAR OF LEAGUE MEETINGS

January - June 2010

### Thursday, January 21 – State and National Program Planning.

7 pm, Room 176, EESAT Building, University of North Texas.\*

### Monday, February 1 – Board Meeting.

2:30 pm, home of Peg La Point, 1900 Highland Park Circle.

### Thursday, February 18 – Toll Roads in North Texas.

7 pm, EESAT Building.

### Tuesday, March 2 – Primary Elections in Texas

### Thursday, March 4 – LWV 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party with entertainment by Donna Trammell and group.

6:30 pm, Fremaux's Metropolitan Catering, 932 W. University Drive. *By paid reservation only.*

### Monday, March 8 – Board Meeting. 2:30 pm.

### Wednesday, March 10 – Denton ISD Heritage Tour.

10 am – 1 pm. By previous reservation.

### Thursday, March 25 – General Meeting. TBA. 7 pm.

### Monday, March 29 – Board Meeting. 2:30 pm.

### Thursday, April 8 – The Death Penalty in Texas.

7 pm, EESAT.

### Saturday, April 17 – Annual Meeting. Details to follow.

### April 23 – 25 – LWV-Texas State Convention. San Marcos.

### Tuesday, April 27, Course at UNT Emeritus College: Candidates Forum for May 8 Elections.

The LWV-Denton will present a forum featuring candidates for City Council and Denton ISD Board of Trustees. This event is a "course" for enrollees in the UNT Emeritus College. For more information, contact Sondra Ferstl at [smferstl@charter.net](mailto:smferstl@charter.net).

### Saturday, May 8. Elections for City Council and Denton ISD Board of Trustees.

### June 11-15 – LWVUS National Convention. Atlanta, GA.

\*The EESAT Building is located at Hickory and Avenue C on the University of North Texas campus. Parking is behind the building off Hickory Street. You need a hang tag from UNT to park there. A League member will be in the parking lot prior to the meeting to distribute the tags. The meetings are usually in Room 176.

## Bond Update for the

### Denton Independent School District

In 2007 the voters approved a \$280 million bond package for the Denton Independent School District. Of that amount, the District has issued \$120 million in bonds.

A bond is an IOU. If a school district issues bonds, that district is borrowing cash and promising to pay it back at a certain rate of interest. Texas law caps the amount of borrowing at 50 cents per 100 dollars valuation, and the money is not there until the bonds have been sold.

Prior to the passage of the bond package, the Denton Board of Trustees appointed a committee of over thirty people from the community, involving people from different backgrounds and areas of the district. That citizen advisory committee met regularly and then made recommendations to the school board. The committee considered needs based on such issues as growth, state standards, and necessary improvements. In turn, the Board assured the bond committee that it would issue the bonds only if the economy were favorable and also pledged to maintain the 45 cent tax rate.

Following the precedence of previous bond passages, the DISD Board of Trustees appointed an oversight committee, consisting of members of the citizen advisory committee. The group meets quarterly for updates on construction and on upcoming projects.

The Denton school district has one of the highest bond ratings in the state of Texas, which helps with better rates on bonds, but the Denton School District has not issued the remaining \$160 million. Because of the current economy and the promise to taxpayers not to go beyond the 45 cents (of the maximum 50 cents), the District could float only about \$16 million in bonds, which would not even be enough for a new school.

The District has also decided not to issue the rest of the bonds because of a decline in growth. Even though current growth is about three percent, the growth rate, for example, does not justify the building of the seventh middle school that was proposed in the bond package.

– Barbara Burns

## 2010 HERITAGE TOUR OF DENTON SCHOOLS

On Wednesday, March 10, 2010, the Denton Independent School District is hosting its 2010 Heritage Tour. The event will start at 10:00 A.M. from a central location. Guests will ride buses to see some of the schools, including the Advanced Technology Center and recently renovated Ryan High School, Denton High School, and Calhoun Middle School. The district will provide lunch as well and return people to their vehicles about 1:00 P.M.

In order to receive an invitation, please email Barbara Burns at [bburns333@hotmail.com](mailto:bburns333@hotmail.com) or call her at 382-1650 with the following information: your name; complete address including zip code; and your email address. Barbara will submit the information to Sharon Cox, communications liaison for the school district, and Ms. Cox will send more details in a formal invitation.

Each spring Denton public schools host a tour and luncheon so that people have an opportunity to see some of the growth and renovation in one of the fastest growing districts in the state and to provide information about some of Denton's innovative programs. Those who attend learn a lot about the district in a short but informative few hours, get a chance to meet some of the leaders in the district, and have some fun along the way.

If you are interested, please contact Barbara Burns by Thursday, January 21. She will have a sign-up sheet at the meeting.

– Barbara Burns

## SBOE PUBLIC HEARING

The State Board of education will hold a public hearing in Austin on January 13 on the social studies curriculum. The League of Women Voters of Texas urges you to be informed and communicate with your member of the SBOE on this issue

## LWV TO OFFER CANDIDATES FORUM AS COURSE FOR UNT EMERITUS COLLEGE

LWV-Denton is proposing an unusual “course” for the Spring 2010 offerings of the University of North Texas (UNT) Emeritus College. We will organize a Candidates Forum for those who are running for election May 8 to the Denton City Council and the Denton Independent School District Board of Trustees. This event will be held on Tuesday, April 27, 11 am – 12:30 pm on the UNT campus; the audience will be those who enroll through UNT's Emeritus College (contact Marilyn Wagner in the Center for Achievement and Lifelong Learning at UNT at 940-565-3487 or [Marilyn.wagner@unt.edu](mailto:Marilyn.wagner@unt.edu) for more information.)

Sondra Ferstl, LWV-Denton President, will coordinate the event. We will contact the candidates about the opportunity to speak to an audience of informed citizens (and we know seniors are more likely to vote than other age groups, particularly in local elections in Denton). The League will furnish the moderator, the timekeeper, and the question collector. League rules for candidate forums and debates will apply. Attendees will be asked to bring written questions for the candidates.

The Emeritus College began in fall 2009 as a project at University of North Texas with a handful of courses offered for a membership fee that allowed the enrollee to attend as many courses as desired. The courses are held during the day and early evening and are usually a lecture or a seminar offered for 60 -90 minutes for one or two sessions. Faculty are often emeritus faculty of UNT. Ken and Sondra Ferstl attended a course last November on the “Evolution of the American Presidency” taught by retired history faculty member, Dr. Donald Pickens. There are no tests or grades assigned to these non-credit courses. The only requirement (besides the general membership fee) is a love of learning. This spring Texas Woman's University (TWU) will also offer Emeritus College courses on their campus. TWU will host an open house on Thursday, January 13, from 3-4 pm in the Administration Conference Tower, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Course instructors will be introduced and registration assistance will be provided.

Contact Colleen Ferguson in the Office of Lifelong Learning Continuing Education Division, 940-898-3404 or [lifelonginfo@twu.edu](mailto:lifelonginfo@twu.edu) for additional information on TWU offerings.

We hope that this activity will help citizens to cast an informed vote in two important local elections and that such an event will raise the profile of the League of Women Voters in our community.

– Sondra Ferstl

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
LWV-DENTON 2009-2010**

President – Sondra Ferstl [smferstl@charter.net](mailto:smferstl@charter.net)  
 Program VP – Peg La Point [tnplapoint@msn.com](mailto:tnplapoint@msn.com)  
 Organiz'n VP – Barbara Coe [barbarajcoe@charter.net](mailto:barbarajcoe@charter.net)  
 Community Relations VP  
 Treasurer – Sue Smith [lwvdenton@earthlink.net](mailto:lwvdenton@earthlink.net)  
 Secretary – Kay Branum [kaybranum@aol.com](mailto:kaybranum@aol.com)  
 Directors – Rosemary Witmer [byronw4@verizon.net](mailto:byronw4@verizon.net)  
 Linnie McAdams [l.m.mcadams@att.net](mailto:l.m.mcadams@att.net)  
 Barbara Burns [bburns333@hotmail.net](mailto:bburns333@hotmail.net)

**HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE**

Membership in the League of Women Voters of Denton is \$50 for an individual.

Household memberships are \$50 for the first person and \$25 for each additional person residing at the same mailing address.

Memberships for full-time students are \$20. Dues cover the period September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2010.

To join us, please send a check payable to LWV-Denton to the Treasurer, Sue Smith, at P.O. Box 424945 TWU Station, Denton, TX 76204.

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