

# Voter



February 2016

League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area



***Carrie Chapman Catt, center, leads a group of suffragists in a New York City parade staged in the fall of 1917 to gain support for woman suffrage. The required constitutional amendment was finally ratified on August 26, 1920.***

***Catt was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which was dissolved when women got the vote. The League of Women Voters was formed in its place.***

## How can League members highlight our 100th anniversary?

By *GLEND A WOLIN*

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters – Feb. 14, 1920 – we might ask ourselves what we can do to highlight the original purpose of the League when it began, six months before the ratification of 19th Amendment.

As the LWW-US website de-

scribes it: “From the spirit of the suffrage movement and the shock of the First World War came a great idea – that a nonpartisan civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded on that idea.”

Even just paying our dues helps fulfill that goal, and every bit of

participation beyond that furthers it more. But there are two actions, one fairly common among our ranks and one not so common but perhaps just as important, we should consider: becoming volunteer deputy voter registrars and working at polling sites.

Becoming a volunteer deputy

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registrar, or VDR, is easy, and it enables you to register people to vote either on your own or at events. Organizations frequently call on the League to offer voter registration because of our nonpartisan position and reputation, but often we must say no because we don't have enough VDRs.

To become a VDR in Bexar County, you must take a one-hour free class at the Bexar County Elections office at 1103 S. Frio. Classes are usually offered at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. On occasion, classes are offered off-site to groups that request one. The schedule and information are at [www.Bexar.org/elections](http://www.Bexar.org/elections)

Working at the polls involves very long days, but it doesn't happen often – and you get paid. Whether you choose to be an election judge or a clerk, it's just one day (or up to two weeks if you want to work the early vote), when there is an election. The next one is the municipal elections on May 6.

Polling sites have a presiding judge, an alternate judge and usually one or two clerks. They might all do the same jobs but with varying levels of responsibility. Judges must attend a certification class and pass a test; clerks don't have to, but it helps for clerks to understand the process and makes them more useful.

## League calls for independent redistricting commission

For more than 20 years, the League of Women Voters of Texas has been supporting efforts to reform the way the state draws boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts.

Now that the 85th legislature is in session, the League has issued its latest, updated redistricting position, which calls for an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.



**Members of the DC League celebrate the 10th anniversary of woman suffrage at a luncheon on March 26, 1930.**

The class covers everything from setting up and dismantling the voting machines to using the laptop to understanding voting laws to how to deal with election observers. Information can be found at [www.Bexar.org/elections](http://www.Bexar.org/elections). Click on Participate in the Process, then click on Apply as an Election Official.

Election days begin at 6 a.m. to prepare for opening the polls at 7 and end at 8 or 9 p.m. after shutting down the polls, obtaining the results and dismantling the machines.

The reward for doing all that work is \$12, \$11 or \$10 an hour plus a lot of satisfaction.

In fact, satisfaction is what drives those of us who do these jobs. Knowing we have helped people become registered to vote, or have helped them exercise their right to vote – or even better, helped them get their voter registration cards and then helped those same people become active participants in their democracy, far outweighs any other kind of pay.

It's not an easy road. In the 2015 session and again for this one, Reps. Donna Howard (D-Austin) and Rafael Anchia (D-Dallas), and Sen. Royce West (D-Dallas,) introduced bills proposing a redistricting commission to set boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts, but in 2015 it got nowhere. According to the LWV-TX website, reform measures have been introduced in each regular

session since 1985 but have not been reported out of committee. Forty-three bills on redistricting were introduced in 1993. Although none of the bills passed, the number introduced and the interest generated gave hope for progress in the future.

But here we are almost a quarter-century later and no progress

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has been made.

In fact, the three-judge federal panel overseeing the latest redistricting litigation still hasn't made a final ruling on the case, which was brought six years ago. It has been two years since the trial on the merits of the case concluded. The fear now is that if the court does not decide soon, it will be too late for the 2018 election and redrawing of the census-driven boundaries in 2021.

None of this stops the League, which continues to take a principled stand. Following is the updated redistricting position, Approved Jan. 30:

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports action to achieve an effective method for drawing boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts.

The League supports the forma-

tion of an autonomous, Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission following the decennial census with the initial responsibility of formulating a redistricting plan designating boundaries for the U.S. congressional districts and the state House and Senate districts.

Criteria and standards for drawing district boundaries include the following:

- ◆ Districts must be geographical and contiguous

- ◆ Consideration must be given to ensuring that the districts be compact, that district lines coincide with boundaries of local political subdivisions, and that districts not be drawn to dilute the voting strength of minority populations or drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or incumbent

- ◆ Districts must not be apportioned on the basis of numbers of electors, but on total population (a qualified elector is any person eligible to vote in a state election in Texas; federal apportionment law is based on total population.)

### **The Position in Brief:**

Support for an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission as the preferred redistricting body.

Support for a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny.

The redistricting process must include:

- ◆ Specific timelines for the steps leading to adoption of the redistricting plan

- ◆ Public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption.

## **Texas League members to meet with state legislators**

During the 140 days the 85th Texas Legislature is in session, the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) will be meeting with legislators, providing testimony and writing letters to support or oppose legislation relating to the League's positions.

Priorities for LWV-Texas this year are election laws and voting rights, women's health, and public education. These priorities and all the issues the League has positions on can be found on the LWV-Texas web site, [www.LWVTexas.org](http://www.LWVTexas.org), by

clicking on Advocacy. Information about the content and status of a bill is on the Texas State Legislative web site, [www.capitol.state.tx.us/](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/)

Members of the LWV-Texas will receive an update of status and action of legislation at least every two weeks. League members are urged as citizens to respond to action alerts to call or write their state representative or senator to either support or oppose a legislative bill.

*Elaine Talariski, Issue Chair for Drug Laws and Policies*

## **Upcoming Events**

**League's 97th Birthday** is Feb. 14. Take a moment to celebrate all the progress that has been made.

**Planning for Growth in Comal County**, a two-day conference and workshop sponsored by the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance and LWV-Comal Area, is Feb. 2-3 McKenna Event Center, New Braunfels. Details: [www.aquiferalliance.net/comal/](http://www.aquiferalliance.net/comal/)

**Save the Date:** The 2018 State Convention will be held April 27-29, 2018, at Inn of the Hills, Kerrville.

**Pass It On** *If you enjoyed this issue of The Voter, please pass it on to someone you know who you think would also enjoy it.*

# League welcomes three new members

## **Anna Lowry**

I am a retired chemistry professor married to a retired United Methodist Church clergyman and thoroughly enjoy my two sons and five grandchildren every chance I get.

Throughout my life, I've felt called to follow in my ancestors' footsteps in service to others and to do my part in making the world a better place. This calling led me to teaching, being active in my church, and doing community volunteer work.

Having appreciated the work of the League of Women Voters, I decided one of the first community volunteer activities I would engage in when my first son was born in 1971 and I quit teaching was to join the LWV in McAllen. There I was asked to help start the LWV in Edinburg, where I'd taught for a year, which I did. As we moved from church to church, as Methodist pastors do, I sometimes maintained my League membership, but was never really active other than to faithfully read the Voters Guide at election time.

At various times before retirement, other than my extensive church activities, I was active in the American Chemical Society and helped start the Associated Chemistry Teachers of Texas, and was a relatively inactive member of many other organizations.

I've always voted, occasionally contributed financially to campaigns, and sometimes been a delegate to the Democratic Senatorial Convention. When my husband and I retired, we became much more active in political

campaigns and grassroots organizing.

## **Jan Peranteau**

I grew up around farm life in O'Donnell, 45 miles south of Lubbock. My parents, Homer and Bess Hardberger, had two children, Phil and me. As he entered college, I began elementary school. We grew up with the passing of seasons punctuated by the crops we grew. Since much of our land was not irrigated, the skies foretold hope or disaster.

I attended Stephens College and then Baylor University, getting a degree in education with a minor in music education. I also took numerous journalism courses. I married the editor of the Baylor Lariat in 1968 and moved to Houston to take a job as a second-grade teacher, while my husband worked for the Houston Post. We moved to Cincinnati, where I taught and earned a Master of Education degree in Learning and Behavior Disabilities. My marriage ended and I moved back to Texas in 1977.

I got a job at the Texas School for The Blind in Austin teaching deaf-blind students. I immediately enrolled in The University of Texas and got certification in Vision and took a series of sign language courses. In 1985, with a new husband and a 3-year-old, we moved to San Antonio. My husband went to St. Mary's Law School and I started teaching at Cotton Elementary. When my principal found out I had vision training, I was moved to an early childhood unit for the visually impaired. I taught with SAISD 25 years and completed 42 years in teaching.

I retired from teaching six years ago. I now teach a children's choir, work in my church food bank, write for my neighborhood newsletter and spend time gardening and reading. Travel gets thrown into the mix. I joined the League because it is a good way to be involved and know what is

going on. I believe women must be informed.

## **Mary Sanders**

I have lived in the San Antonio area for 14 years with my husband and two nearly-grown sons. I currently work as the development director for Magdalena House, a long-term transitional shelter for women and their children who have escaped violent situations and are rebuilding their lives through education. I have worked as a passionate children's volunteer at the Cibolo Nature Center, been a full-time mother, associate director of career services at Sewanee University in Tennessee, history teacher in the Georgia and Tennessee public schools, and management consultant for Deloitte & Touche (now Deloitte) in Chicago. I have a bachelor's degree in history from Williams College and a master's degree in education from Vanderbilt University.

My mother taught me about the League of Women Voters Voting Guides when I was a young voter, and I seek them out every election. I was especially impressed by (and thankful for) the Vote411 web page this past election. In trying to be an educated voter, it is a challenge to find nonpartisan information about the candidates, especially those at the bottom of the ballot.

I am interested in becoming involved with the League because we need an involved and informed electorate to ensure our government serves us. I saw incorrect voter ID info at my polling station this fall, I know people who didn't vote, and I know many more who voted for candidates without knowing anything about them. I want to help change this.

I am passionate about children, education, the environment, health care, and helping the vulnerable in our society. I enjoy being outdoors – in the garden, on a hiking trail, or walking our dogs with my husband.

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## Women's March

*Several members of the San Antonio League went to Women's Marches on Jan. 21, both locally and in Austin. Above, San Antonio League members Teri Swartz, Anna Lowry and Sue Robertson-Dodd joined the approximately 1,500 people in the March Against Hate in downtown San Antonio. Below, among the estimated 30,000-50,000 marchers in Austin were Nancy Price and friends. League members also at the Austin march but not shown were Ann Marie Rehner and Victorria Simpson-Gervin.*

