

VIA offers free rides to polls

Voters will be able to get free bus rides to the polls on Election Day now that VIA Metropolitan Transit has approved a plan to provide them. It begins on Primary Day, March 1, and will apply on all municipal, state and federal election days.

The “Ride VIA to Vote” initiative will provide free public transportation throughout the VIA service area for customers presenting a valid voter registration card to the bus or van operator when boarding on Election Day. This includes regular bus service and VIAtrans paratransit service. Registered VIAtrans customers must schedule their trip in accordance with VIAtrans policies and procedures.

“The League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area congratulates the leadership at VIA for taking this important step to ensure voters from throughout our community can ride VIA free of charge on Election Day,” said Kathy Hill, vice president of community engagement. “No citizen should be barred from having their voice heard at the polls simply because they don’t have reliable or affordable transportation. VIA has effectively removed a very



Kathy Hill, vice president of community engagement, and Jeffrey C. Arndt, President/CEO of VIA Metropolitan Transit at the press conference announcing free rides to the polls.

“No citizen should be barred from having their voice heard at the polls simply because they don’t have reliable or affordable transportation.”

Kathy Hill

real voting barrier for many in our community.”

District 8 Councilman Ron Nirenberg also expressed his approval. “I am enthusiastic about this initiative because it expands access to polling locations, so that even more of us can take part in the most important right that we

have, our right to vote.

“Every segment of our society — from individuals and families to businesses and communities — benefits from public transportation,” he said. “The same can be said of civic engagement because we all benefit from an engaged electorate, from informed citizens who help shape our city’s future.”

For additional information regarding routes and schedules on Election Day, call [\(210\) 362-2020](tel:(210)362-2020).

Plan now for state convention

It's not too late to sign up for the 2016 LWV state convention. It's March 11-13 in Houston, and you can decide at the last minute to go. Registration will cost you \$150 instead of \$140 after March 8. Rooms may still be available at the Westin Houston, Memorial City, the convention site, but discounted rates won't be available. Several San Antonio members are going, so you'll be among friends.

Friday, a theater production, "We Hold These Truths," tracing the suffrage movement will be presented, and several interesting and useful workshops are planned. The day concludes with a Port of Houston dinner cruise.

Saturday, highlights include the luncheon keynote speaker, Jennifer M. Ross-Nazzal, NASA historian and author of "Winning the West for Women: The Life of Suffragist Emma Smith DeVoe." The evening keynote speaker will be Lisa Falkenberg, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Houston Chronicle.

Sunday, the convention wraps up with the last session and adjournment, after which everyone says goodbye to new and old friends with promises to meet again next year if not before.

For more information, visit <http://www.lwvtexas.org/Convention.html>

Nominating committee

The League's nominating committee has been meeting. If you are interested in playing an active role in this great organization, consider nominating yourself for a position as a director or committee member. We are always looking for new ideas, energy and enthusiasm, and you can choose the level of participation you would like. Call Evelyn Bonavita (210-828-1368) or e-mail ebonavita@satx.rr.com.



Martha Langford, (from left) Evelyn Bonavita and Kathy Hill discuss the film "Pay 2 Play."

Film about money and politics enlightening, humorous

About 20 league members gathered Feb. 27 to watch a screening of "Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes," a documentary about the corrupting influence of money in our political process featuring Robert Reich, Lawrence Lessig, Marianne Williamson, Noam Chomsky, Van Jones and many other real-life movers and shakers.

The film's production notes summarize the film this way: "Driven to make the world better for his newborn daughter, (director) John Ennis looks for ways out of our system of pay-to-play politics. Along the way, he journeys through high drama on the Ohio campaign trail, uncovers the secret history of the game Monopoly, and explores the underworld of L.A. street art on a humorous odyssey that reveals how much of a difference one person can make. PAY 2 PLAY: Democracy's High Stakes is a fun guidebook to returning the United States government to its People."

With a Tomatometer rating of 80 percent, the film has gotten high marks from reviewers and audiences alike. Here is a sample from the press:

"Ennis is an optimist at heart, and his belief that one person can make a difference is infectious... The difference with this movie is that it actually means to inspire hope." — [Washington Post](#)

Members of the audience had these comments:

"It was an informative and yet disturbing movie. It's one that should be shown in classrooms all over the country," said Martha Lankford.

"Kudos to Kathy Hill and her team for pulling together a great event, showing the ground breaking film Pay 2 Play. It exposes the pervasive role of money in politics," said Diann Andy.

It's not too late to see the film. You can buy, rent or stream it from various online services and in stores that sell DVDs.

The website <http://www.pay2play.tv/> has more information about the subject matter in the film and activities related to it.

2015-16 Leadership Team

President:

Vacant

Secretary:

Diann Andy
210-262-1499
diannandywv@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Elaine Talarski
210-521-5496
bookdoll99@gmail.com

VP Organization:

Martha Lankford
210-340-5366
mblankford1@gmail.com

VP Community Engagement

Kathryn Hill
210-313-7484
kathy@khillpr.com

VP Program

Evelyn Bonavita
210-828-1368
ebonavita@satx.rr.com

Finance Chair:

Nancy Price
210-223-8986; W-266-6843
nanknox@sbcglobal.net

Membership:

Leslye Altemeier
210-612-4505
loa639@gmail.com

Voter Service:

Phyllis Ingram
210-764-1557
pingram1@satx.rr.com

Directors at Large

Olga Benevides
210-545-3798
granble@aol.com

Marian Edson
210-493-9569
marloedson@satx.rr.com

Sybil Morgan
210-349-7012
sybilmorgan349@gmail.com

Theresa Poenisch
210-732-3789
taxp@grandecom.net

Sue Robertson Dodd
830-481-3030
jsuerobertsondodd@gmail.com

Tina Torres
210-643-5222
tinactorres@aol.com

Webmaster:

Rae Martinez
210-683-8212
martinezam13@gmail.com

A priceless graduation gift

Voter registration is one of the important functions of our organization, and we do it very well. But going into high schools to register students is different because of the understandable reluctance of school administrators to let people they don't know into their halls and classes.

In the past year and a half, though, a nonpartisan group named EVRI, Educators Voter Registration Initiative, has served 19 high schools in 7 Bexar County public school districts. Started in August 2014 as a Texas nonprofit organization, EVRI is primarily composed of educators, including administrators, teachers and librarians, but anyone can participate. Several League members already volunteer with EVRI.

Sybil Morgan, a current LWVSAA board member, is volunteer coordinator for EVRI. If you would like to spend a few hours assisting eligible seniors in their economics and government classes to register before they graduate, please contact Sybil at sybilmorgan349@gmail.com or call [210-775-8600](tel:210-775-8600). What better graduation present can we give these students?



Phyllis Ingram (at lectern) moderates a candidate forum at Jefferson United Methodist Church. At the tables are (from left) House District 116 candidates Ruby Resendez, Diana Arevalo, and Martin Golando, and Senate District 26 candidate Jose Menéndez. Not shown is Senate candidate Trey Martinez Fischer, who arrived later.

Senate, House candidates face off at league moderated forum

State Senate candidates in District 26 and state House of Representatives candidates in District 116 discussed issues during a forum Feb. 8 at Jefferson United Methodist Church.

Senate candidates José Menéndez and Trey Martinez Fischer, and House candidates Martin Golando, Diana Arevalo and Ruby Resendez, spoke before about 100 people at the forum, which was moderated by Voter Services Director Phyllis Ingram.

Ingram said she was struck by the quality of questions proposed by the audience. All questions were on topics of importance to all citizens in the districts, she said.

The event was sponsored by the Jefferson, Monticello and Woodlawn Lake neighborhood associations.

The San Antonio league has a long history of moderating candidate forums. This is a service the league offers organizations that want an orderly way to provide voters information directly from candidates.

Upcoming Events

2016 LWV-TX Convention, March 11-13, The Westin Houston, Memorial City, Houston. To reserve a room, call 1-800-937-8461 and reference LWV-TX Convention.

Use Your Voice Tour, March 23, Tobin Center, 7:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting, May 23 (note: listed incorrectly in February Voter as May 21), 11:30 a.m., Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade. Guest speaker Judge Catherine Stone, recently retired chief justice of the 4th Court of Appeals.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Voters Guides produced; one printed, one digital

As promised, the League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area has produced not just a printed Voters Guide but, for the first time, also an online guide using Vote411. The Vote411 version was made possible through the work of Phyllis Ingram and the money of the Texas league, which paid the licensing cost.

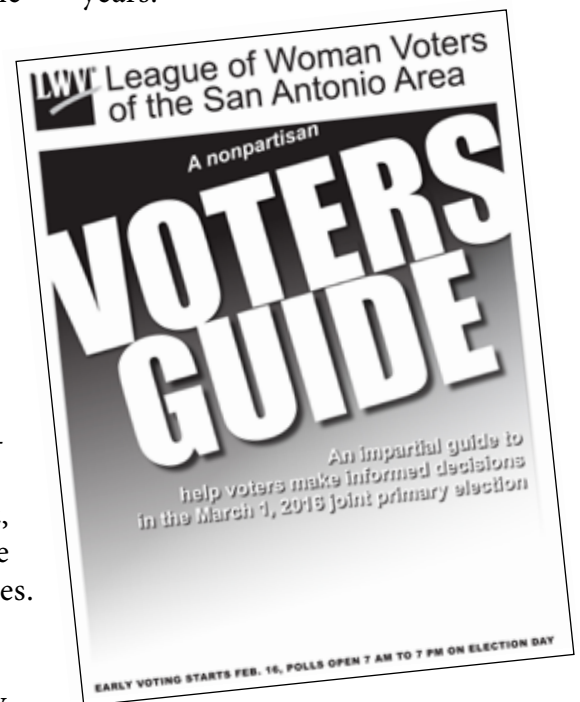
The league printed 10,000 copies of the guide at a cost of \$2,377.39. Five thousand were distributed to San Antonio libraries through the library's distribution center, which makes it possible to easily distribute the guide to all libraries in the San Antonio system.

The other 5,000 copies were distributed to colleges and universities, retirement centers, churches, civic organizations and the Democratic and Republican parties. Special thanks to Bill Altemeier, Mike Davis, Marian Edson, Kathy Hill, Arlis Olson, Annalisa Peace, Teri Swartz, Joan Wells, and Phyllis and Steve Ingram for distributing the guides.

The Voters Guide is the most visible product the league produces, Ingram said. It is not only

a service to candidates but also a valuable aid to voters in making voting decisions.

She noted that Vote411 likely will be the primary means of distributing candidate information within a few years because of the cost savings and because most people will be computer literate enough to use an electronic guide. She says this is a decision the board of directors will need to make in the next few years.



Meet our newest member

Madhu Sridhar may be new to our group, but she's not new to the league. Before moving to San Antonio about six months ago, she served as president of the local Andover, Mass., league for four years, vice president for program and action at the state level for two years and president of the Massachusetts

League for four years.

She was also CEO and president of Akshaya Patra Foundation USA, which provides midday meals to 1.3 million underprivileged children daily in schools across India.

She moved to India for two years before coming to San Antonio to enjoy the good weather and be closer to family.