



May 2016

League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area

May full of 'special' elections

May will be a busy month for elections. Early voting is already underway and runs through May 3 for the Bexar County joint general, special and bond election set for May 7.

This is not a countywide election, but a variety of municipal, school board and bond elections that will vary depending on where you live.

A special election is being held in Texas House District 120 to fill out the term of Rep. Ruth Jones McClen-don, who retired in January. (Later in the month there's a runoff among a different set of candidates running for the same seat, and the winner will replace the winner of the special election come January. Confused? Join the club.)

Alamo Community Colleges and the Northeast Independent School District have some trustees up for election. East Central and Judson independent school districts have bond elections.

Castle Hills, China Grove, Fair Oaks Ranch, Hollywood Park, Hill Country Village, Grey Forest, Kirby, Somerset,

Shavano Park and Universal City all have council elections. Some also have propositions, perhaps the most controversial of which is Castle Hills' vote on the continuation of VIA service within the city.

The San Antonio Municipal Utilities District No. 1, serving the San Antonio Ranch subdivision, and the Emergency Services District No. 7, in the Helotes area, are also holding elections.

A sample ballot including all voting choices available everywhere in Bexar county is on the

Bexar County Elections Department website, http://www.home.bexar.org/elections/pdf/G_May7_Sample_1.pdf

The Democratic and Republican runoff primary elections are May 24. Early voting is May 16-20.

On the Democratic side, there are five runoffs. In the statewide race for Railroad Commissioner, Grady Yarbrough faces Cody Garrett. In the aforementioned race for State Representative, District 120, Barbara

Gervin-Hawkins and Mario Salas face off. Gabe Quintanilla and Angelica Jimenez compete in the race for District Judge, 408th Judicial District. The winner of the race between Andy Lopez and Javier Salazar will face Sheriff Susan Pamerleau in November. The winner of the runoff between Rudy Garza and Michelle Barrientes Vela will be the Democratic candidate for Constable, Precinct 2.

For Republicans, there is one local runoff, that for Constable, Precinct 3 between Nathan Buchanan and incumbent Mark Stewart Vojvodich. In statewide races, Wayne Christian and Gary Gates are in a runoff for Railroad Commissioner; Ray Wheless and Mary Lou Keel face off for Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 2; and Scott Walker and Brent Webster face each other in the race for Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 5.

The Bexar County Elections Department has the sample Democratic ballot at http://www.home.bexar.org/elections/pdf/D_Prim_Runoff_May24.pdf and the sample Republican ballot at http://www.home.bexar.org/elections/pdf/R_Prim_Runoff_May24.pdf

Municipal, school board, bond elections await voters

Vote411 off to positive start

In the San Antonio league's first use of Vote411, almost 3,000 people went to the online source of voter information about the primary elections between Feb. 1 and March 1.

Exactly 2,963 individuals used the site in 4,296 sessions for an average duration of

5:51 minutes. That shows that not only did people discover the site, but they went back to it.

This bodes well for future use of web-based voter guides and spreading information about candidates to more people this way.

Stone never dreamed of being a judge, or a lawyer, or even going to college

As a child growing up poor in small-town Maine, with a mother who didn't even get through high school, Catherine Stone never dreamed of being a judge. Or a lawyer. Or even going to college.

It was enough to just get through life day by day, being the "adult" to her four sisters with the help of a supportive extended family.

Young Catherine did end up going to college, planning a career in the Foreign Service. But, as often happens, plans change. After

graduating she married and moved to Texas with her new husband, who was pursuing a degree in psychology. When it became her time to continue her education, she chose the more practical path of law school over an academic career.

In 1994, 12 years after she graduated from St. Mary's Law School, she was appointed to the Fourth Court of Appeals, where she joined two other women and four men. In 2005, the court made news as the nation's first all-female appeals

court. In 2008, she became the chief justice of the court.

Today, Stone said, she thinks rags-to-riches stories like hers are still possible, "but in part it depends on people like you and me and other rags-to-riches or even riches-to-riches but with a greater calling. But "there are so many kids in school who are without hope," she said.

"There are a whole lot of families with a whole lot of kids that are living in miserable circumstances. There are a lot of homes in San Antonio with no books in them. No books, no internet, all these things we take for granted. Schools are pretty nice refuges but there really is only so much that a teacher can do. So all of the rest of us have an opportunity to make rags to riches possible."

Stone credits her own public school teachers with "lifting me up, because school was my haven," she said. She tells the story of how, when she was appointed to the appeals court in San Antonio more than 20 years after she graduated from high school, two of her junior high school teachers in "little old Biddeford, Maine" found her and sent her notes saying they always knew she could succeed.

"Now that's a teacher!" she said.

Serving on the nation's first all-woman appellate court, which

happened in 2005, was somewhat different from serving on a more diverse bench. At first, "it was a really big deal," she said. "It was fun, and then eventually it was OK, let's move on." It happened again in her last two years on the bench, 2012-2014.

Generally, Stone said, women work differently. "We tend to start with some informal 'let's know each other, let's check in with each other,' so we know that everybody's ready to move on to business at the end. It is more collaborative in many ways.

"Many a time I've seen men sit at a table and they'll immediately start with 'here's my suggestion.' I don't think they intend it to be authoritarian but we might perceive it that way. There was less of that. Again, that's a generalization."

As much as she enjoyed the all-female bench, Stone said diversity is better in the long run and that even when men felt a bit awkward as an unaccustomed minority, everyone got along and worked well together.

After more than 20 years on the appellate court, she decided it was time to do something else although, she said, she loved her job "from day 1 to the last day." So she retired in December 2014 and after considering several opportunities decided to go back to practicing appellate law, but in a very different capacity than what she did as a beginning lawyer.

As the head of the appellate division of Langley & Banack, a large law firm, she has the opportunity to mentor young lawyers as well as practice law, "and I'm working longer hours, and harder, than I've worked in a long time," she said with a laugh.

When she isn't working, she belongs to "probably way too many organizations," including SA 100,

the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Catholic Charities. With all of that, she still finds time to relax and have fun with her husband.

And recently her oldest son and his family moved in temporarily while they house-hunt, having moved to San Antonio recently. They don't see as much of the other two sons because one is in India and the other lives in New York.

Changing her lifestyle isn't in sight for Stone. "It's hard to be mindful when you think of the long term, how much do I want to slow down, and I don't want to slow down. I don't want to waste my life chasing dollars, but I also don't want to think of 62 as old and inactive."

So for the foreseeable future, she will continue practicing law,

mentoring young lawyers, being involved in the community, and doing things like keynoting meetings like ours on May 21.



Justice Catherine Stone, guest speaker at the League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area's annual meeting May 21.

"There are a whole lot of families with a whole lot of kids that are living in miserable circumstances."

–Justice Catherine Stone

Spring luncheon menu

Salad of chopped romaine, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion and buttermilk chive dressing

Rosemary chicken infused with red wine demi-glace

Mushroom rice pilaf

Lemon chiffon cheesecake

Accompaniments of fresh vegetables, rolls (with the Omni's lavender honey butter), iced tea and coffee

The luncheon and annual meeting will be held May 21 in the top-floor ballroom of the Omni Hotel at the Colonnade, which has a panoramic view of San Antonio. Details in Upcoming Events.

Comal Area League sponsors regional planning workshop

We're all aware of how fast San Antonio is growing. But of equal or greater concern is how fast the whole San Antonio-Hill-Country-Austin area is growing, with regional concerns that need to be addressed if the Hill Country is to be preserved.

The League of Women Voters of the Comal Area has invited us and the Austin, Hays County and Hill Country leagues to a workshop on regional planning Saturday, Aug. 6, in Bulverde.

The speaker will be Britin Bostick, a graduate student at the University of Texas School of Architecture and a member of the Austin league, who will present the findings of a study by the School of Architecture, "Toward a Regional Plan for the Texas Hill Country," requested by the Hill Country Alliance last year.

She will focus on the last part of the report, "Where do we go from here?" discussing strategies and long- and short-term goals.

There also will be roundtable discussions to look at appropriate state and local league positions and begin outlining some action steps. Possible actions might be to hold community forums or to ask the state league to lobby for legislation to give counties more authority over land use.

Roxanna Deane, president of the Comal Area league, suggested that all league members interested in preserving the culture and environment of the Hill Country for future generations should consider coming to the workshop. She said the group would like a mix from urban and rural areas.

The workshop will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Aug. 6 at the Bulverde Spring Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing, Bulverde. Participants are asked to bring a bag lunch. Coffee, soft drinks, water and cookies will be provided.



Growth in the Texas Hill Country is of concern to the whole San Antonio-Hill Country-Austin area.

Support ed fund through The Big Give S.A.

Mark your calendars for May 3, 2016! That's when our community comes together to support local nonprofits in one giant day of giving called The Big Give S.A. You can support the League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area's Education Fund. Last year, our first year to participate, we raised over \$700. Every penny funds your local league's efforts to educate voters by giving them the tools they need to analyze candidates and issues, and make their decision at the polls.

What is The Big Give S.A.?

The Big Give S.A. is a 24-hour period of giving that brings donors

and non-profits together by creating a shared region-wide experience and connecting people to the causes that matter to them the most. Last year, \$4.3 million was raised for 882 charitable causes in the South Central Texas area. This year's goal is to raise \$6 million.

Anyone can make a donation to a participating nonprofit that

has a profile on The Big Give S.A. website. Just Google "The Big Give S.A." While participating agencies are located in Bexar and surrounding counties, support can come from anyone, anywhere. In fact, last year 39,000 donations came from 12 countries, 49 states, and 1,500 cities. So not only can you give, but you can encourage your friends and family from anywhere to make a contribution on May 3



to the LWVSAA Area Ed Fund. Find it by putting League of Women Voters in the search box on the website.

How can you make a donation? On May 3 starting at midnight and for the next 24 hours, use your credit/debit card to donate to any nonprofit that has registered to participate. You can search for a non-

profit by name, charitable cause area or group, or you can give to multiple organizations in one transaction on the homepage. Participating non-profits will have a donation page that you can find where you can choose the amount you want to donate. While there is no maximum, the minimum gift is \$10.

Is your gift tax-deductible?

Donations on The Big Give S.A. are eligible for a tax deduction. You will immediately receive an email from the San Antonio Area Foundation confirming your gift. By selecting a specific charity to receive your donation, your gift is restricted for that charity and will not be given to any other charity.

In addition to receiving the immediate thank-you note and tax receipt, you can return to the home page at any point after the event and retrieve your receipt by entering your email address.

The Big Give S.A. is part of the national day of giving called Give Local America, during which more than 100 communities across the country are coming together on May 3. So please, circle your calendar, spread the word, and give on May 3.

Upcoming Events

Election Day, May 7, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., elections for many municipalities and school boards, special election for Texas House District 120. Early voting through May 3. <http://www.home.bexar.org/elections/>

Volunteer Deputy Registrars needed, Voices for Children event,

May 7, 7:30-9 a.m., Northeast Lakeview College, 1201 Kitty Hawk Rd., Universal City

Annual Meeting, 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.

Election Day, May 24, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Democratic and Republican primary runoffs. Early voting May 16-20.

LWV National Convention, June 16-19, Washington D.C. Early Bird registration through May 31, \$395 plus \$80 fee for Lobby Day activities.

Proposed 2016-17 Annual Budget

	Actual 2014-15	Approved 2015-16	Anticipated 2015-16	Proposed 2016-17
LWVSAA GENERAL FUND				
BEGINNING BALANCE (total SACU)	5,250	5,256	5,278	5,256
BEGINNING CASH (BofA)	2,868	5,000	8,010	9,300
INCOME				
Interest	6	13	22	13
Dues	3,384	5,300	5,136	5,500
Contributions (cash)	90	100	185	200
Meetings & Programs	1,060	1,000	1,150	1,150
Fundraisers:				
Special Event	6,295	7,000	5,375	7,000
Other	640	0	0	500
Misc	1,160	0	818	0
Total	12,635	13,400	12,686	14,350
EXPENDITURES				
Operating				
Rent	720	720	720	720
Telephone	204	204	204	204
Postage	0	200	16	100
General Printing	0	100	0	100
Supplies & equip	0	100	0	200
Internet	230	250	280	250
Other	0	100	15	100
Voter Mail	0	50	0	50
Meetings & programs	0	1,300	1,459	1,500
Educational Printing	0	100	0	250
Membership	89	250	96	300
Fundraiser Costs	3,594	4,000	3,043	4,000
Position & Issue Support	0	100	0	25
Voter Service	92	0	0	0
Delegate expenses	0	500	400	500
Per Member				
National	2,496	3,000	2,528	3,000
State	1,770	2,000	1,740	2,000
Misc	1,254	200	7,380	200
Total	10,503	13,114	11,396	13,599
ENDING BALANCE (total)	5,000	5,286	9,300	10,051
LWVSAA EDUCATION FUND				
BEGINNING BALANCE	2,610	9,835	8,635	9,090
CONTRIBUTIONS				
Member	6,779	3,000	1,824	3,000
Non-member	25	300	7,383	1,000
Total	6,804	3,300	9,207	4,000
EXPENDITURES				
Voter Service				
Voter Guides	4,476	4,500	3,311	6,500
Other Publications	0	0	40	0
Candidate Forums	0	0	0	0
Total	4,476	4,500	3,351	6,500
ENDING BALANCE	4,938	8,635	9,835	6,590

Nominations for 2016-17 board of directors

Nominations Committee

Chair: Ruth Stewart
 Members: Mary Anne Kramer, Rowena Rodgers, Leslie Altemeier, Sue Robertson-Dodd

Nominations

President: Vacant
 Treasurer, Theresa Poenisch
 VP Organization, Martha Lankford
 VP Program, Madhu Sridhar

Elected Directors

Membership, Sybil Morgan
 Editor, "The Voter," Glenda Wolin
 At Large, Olga Benavides
 At Large, Evelyn Bonavita

Carry-over Board Members (1 year remaining)

Secretary, Diann Andy
 VP, Community Engagement, Kathy Hill
 Voter Service, Phyllis Ingram
 Finance, Nancy Price
 At Large, Sue Robertson-Dodd
 At Large, Tina Torres

Off Board Appointed

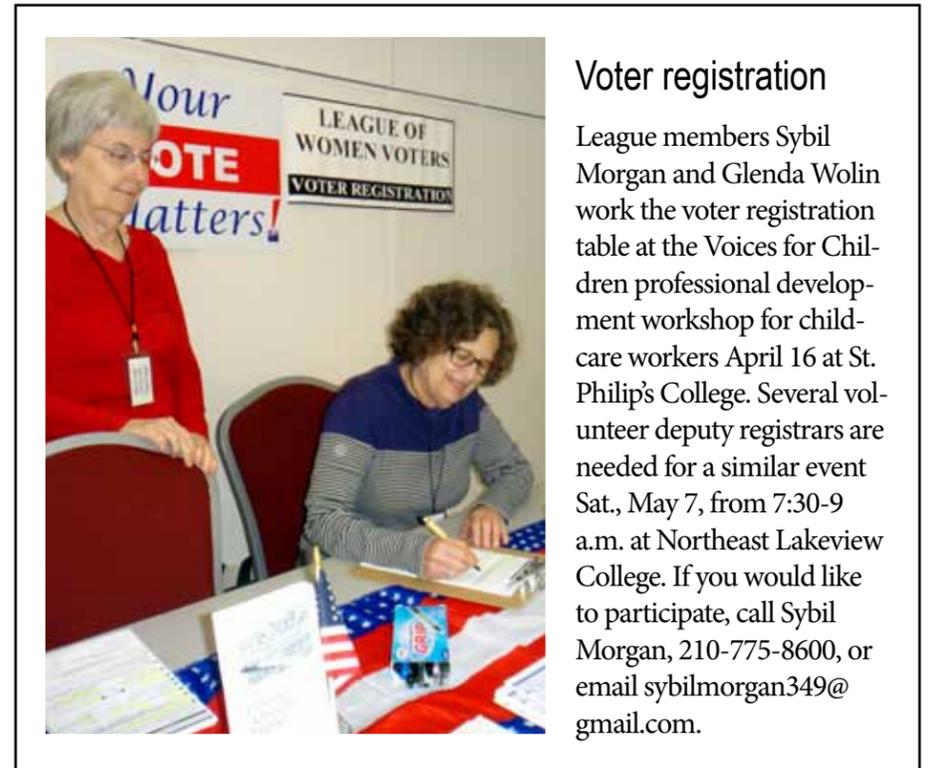
Action, Bill Altemeier
 Publications Designer, Steve Ingram
 Publicity, Chris Reilly
 Telephone, Ruth Stewart

Nominating Committee 2016-17

Chair: Ruth Stewart
 Members: Leslye Altemeier, Elaine Talariski

Dues notice

Many of you will soon be getting your annual \$70 league dues notice. Please send them in as soon as possible. We count on those dues for a large part of our general fund, as you can see from our proposed budget. And every reminder that gets mailed out takes a bit of money from our funds. Thank you!



Voter registration

League members Sybil Morgan and Glenda Wolin work the voter registration table at the Voices for Children professional development workshop for child-care workers April 16 at St. Philip's College. Several volunteer deputy registrars are needed for a similar event Sat., May 7, from 7:30-9 a.m. at Northeast Lakeview College. If you would like to participate, call Sybil Morgan, 210-775-8600, or email sybilmorgan349@gmail.com.

League sets goal to increase Texas voter turnout by 5 percent

The League of Women Voters has always been all about voting – registering people to vote, protecting voting rights, empowering voters, getting out the vote.

As announced at the state convention in March, the program for 2016-18 is doubling down on that. Rather than a new state study, the state league has decided on a Get-Out-the-Vote Action, with the objective of increasing voter turnout in Texas by 5 percent over the 2012 figure by 2020.

The board notes that while 84 percent of the estimated voting-eligible population in Texas was registered to vote in 2014, only 34 percent of registered voters cast ballots in the November 2014 midterm/gubernatorial election. A small minority of citizens elected our current state government. Low voter turnout decreases government account-

ability and increases political dissatisfaction within our communities. Thus, this Program Action is recommended in lieu of a new state Issue Study.

The goals are to encourage informed and active participation in government by facilitating voter engagement; and to facilitate increased implementation of Section 13.046(a) of the Texas Election Code and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The first makes all high school principals deputy registrars and requires them to distribute voter registration forms at least twice each year to students who are 18. The second, known as the Motor-Voter Act, requires state motor vehicle agencies to register all eligible voters who want to when they apply for a drivers license or state ID, or change their address. Texas has faced enforcement problems with both laws.

2015-16 Leadership Team

President:

Vacant

Secretary:

Diann Andy
210-262-1499
diannandy1wv@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

Voter Editor

Glenda Wolin

State board adopts position on payday, auto title loans

After two years of public forums and meetings throughout the state by local leagues, and an intensive study by the League of Women Voters of Texas Educational Fund, the LWV-TX board of directors adopted a position on payday and auto title loans. More than 300 members from 19 leagues worked to reach a consensus.

The study brief, "Facts & Issues: Payday and Auto Title Loans in Texas," looked at such questions as: To what degree should payday and

auto title lending be regulated in Texas? And how can the small-dollar loan market be regulated so that lenders function both as a consumer

service and a successful business? It presents balanced, factual information from the points of view of the borrowers, lenders and opposition and a range of policy options, according to a release by Elizabeth Erkel, the study chair,

"The position gives us a new tool to prevent a long-term cycle of debt among Texas consumers in need of immediate cash," said Elizabeth Wiant, state league president.

The state position

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports policies, legislation and programs that enable a small dollar loan market that maintains access to affordable credit while safeguarding consumers. Payday and auto title loan businesses

should be regulated so that they function both as a consumer service and a successful business.

The league believes a loan is affordable if the borrower can repay the loan and cover basic expenses without borrowing again or obtaining money from another source. Local governments should be able to regulate payday and auto title lending within their jurisdictions in order to achieve a viable small dollar loan market that provides consumer access to affordable credit

"The position gives us a new tool to prevent a long-term cycle of debt among Texas consumers."

—State President Elizabeth Wiant

and safeguards against predatory lending. Criminal charges and penalties for payday and auto title loans in default should continue to be explicitly prohibited by Texas law.

The league supports:

- * Consumer credit regulations that increase restrictions on short-term loans and require lenders to offer affordable loans.

- * Financial education measures that increase the ability of consumers to successfully use small dollar loan financial products, and

- * State and private funding of measures to prevent long-term debt by borrowers in need of immediate cash.

Study committee members included Erkel; Stephanie Mace, LWV-Collin County, co-chair; Linda Eichblatt, LWV-Amarillo; Miriam Foshay, LWV-Dallas; Leslie Copeland Taylor, LWV-Houston Area; and Sharon Whittington, LWV-Tarrant County.