



THE VOTER

Newsletter of the **League of Women Voters of Tarrant County**
"Not for Women Only"

Making Democracy Work

February 2008

www.lwvtarrantcounty.org

lwvtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net

3212 Collinsworth Street

Fort Worth, TX 76107

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Access to Legal Services in Tarrant County Community Education Forum



Tuesday, February 12, 2008

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC)

Community Room, 2nd Floor

1001 Jones Street

Fort Worth, TX 76102

Discussion Panel Includes:

- **Legal Aid of Northwest Texas –**
Linda Gregory, Managing Attorney, Fort Worth Office
- **Texas Wesleyan University School of Law –**
Legal Clinic – Celestina Contreras, Supervising Attorney
- **SafeHaven of Tarrant County –**
Donna Guion, J.D., Legal Services Director
- **The Women's Center of Tarrant County –**
William Campbell, J.D., (volunteer attorney)

(See Page 4 for more details)

League of Women Voters of Tarrant County

*The mission of the League of
Women Voters is to encourage
informed and active participation in
government and to influence public
policy and advocacy.*

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Dolores Ruhs

President-Elect

Open

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Georgia Kidwell, Chair
Reeta Johnson
Eunice Givens
Nancy Stevens
Christie Campbell

THE VOTER

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Dolores Ruhs
Michelle Jann

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Greetings from President Dolores Ruhs

Dear League Members,

As usual, your League is quite busy with planning the Legal Service Forum for February, the Environmental Forum for March, the hosting of the State Convention in April, and the Annual Meeting of your local League in May. Your League could use help from ALL the membership.

A big thanks to Dolores Geisel and John Huffman for all the work and time they've given to the *Voters Guide* in preparation for the upcoming primaries. What a pleasure it is for the Tarrant County and Arlington Leagues to be working together on the VG! Arlington is planning to distribute 3,000 and Tarrant County 4,000 before the Early Voting period, February 19-29. Dolores Geisel needs ALL of our support to get the Guides distributed.

NOTE: The deadline for registering to vote in the upcoming primaries is FEBRUARY 4!

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Georgia Kidwell, will begin its search for individuals to fill on-Board and off-Board positions. Why not volunteer before the committee asks you? **YOUR League needs YOU!**

We have a birthday to celebrate! February 14 is the League of Women Voters 88th birthday. With a renewed commitment to "Help America Vote," your Tarrant County League will provide an opportunity for citizens to be registered to vote, educated about the candidates and issues, and to feel confident in the political process.

Your League should be proud of the work and time Kelli Obazee and Dawn Ellison are devoting to getting our young people involved in the elections. They've been visiting college campuses encouraging students to get registered. You go, girls!

February 18 is Presidents' Day. Originally known as Washington's Birthday, it later included Lincoln. Today, Washington and Lincoln, as well as others who have served as our President, are honored each year on the third Monday in February.

Your League office now has new carpeting and baseboard. Thanks to John Huffman and Michelle Jann for rearranging the office and making it more efficient.

Thanks for everything each of you do to make a strong League in Tarrant County.

-Dolores Ruhs, President

Membership News

Thanks to the following for their support:

New Member –Daurice Ring

Renewing Friend – Tish Thelen

Renewing Membership – Bonnie Bowman, Pat Cheong, Mary Fulbright, Nancy McVean, Rita Rivers, Bob & Mary Scott, Lindsay Selkirk, Lynne Stanley, Richard & Barbara Trice

Sustaining Membership – Sarah O'Kelley & Linda Pavlik



Martha Munford "Marty" Stone

July 1, 1934 - January 9, 2008

Former League of Women Voters of Tarrant County member, Marty Stone, died on Wednesday, January 9, 2008 at the age of 73. Marty was involved in many civic and volunteer organizations. While a member of the League, Marty served as coordinator and host of the weekly television program "Voter's Digest".

Calling ALL League Members!

WE NEED YOUR HELP to deliver *Voters Guides* to offices, businesses, libraries and friends. Also, we are working to arrange for a Saturday morning when we will hand them out in front of Wal-Mart stores. Our goal is to distribute 4000 *Voters Guides* during the week before early voting begins.

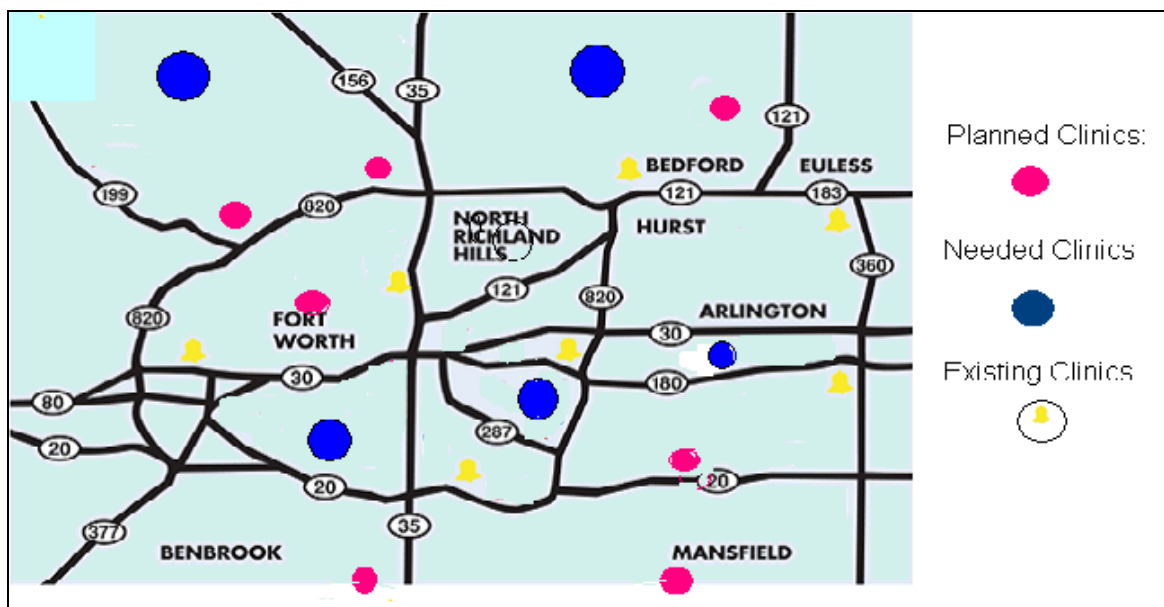
The Arlington League is doing the county *Voters Guide* jointly with us, and they expect to deliver 3000 to Arlington alone. We can surely find homes for 4000 in the rest of the county! Call Dolores Geisel (817-446-4536) or Dawn Ellison (817-810-9721) for more information and to volunteer.

Our Health Committee Is Going Great Guns!

We are visiting the HEB clinic, which Georgia Kidwell helped establish, on January 30 at 3 p.m.

At our February 15 meeting, Michael Steinert, who is in charge of the Fort Worth Independent School District's School-based clinics, will talk to us about expansion opportunities in the FWISD. We will have ideas for him!

Here are some ideas for expansion clinics. Do you have others? Let us know!





LEGAL SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME PEOPLE IN TARRANT COUNTY

(based on information provided by organizations providing legal services)

At the League's Annual Meeting in May 2007, members decided to update our Program position on support for adequate free legal services for the indigent in Tarrant County, with a focus on existing organizations, funding and types of legal services provided. The League's position had initially been taken in 1971, and amended in 1988 to read: The League of Women Voters of Tarrant County supports a federally/locally funded legal services program to provide legal representation to the indigent at all stages of the legal process. (In 1988, support for a public defender system was dropped because the courts are no longer using the public defender system.)

This year, a survey was used to gather current information from Legal Aid of North West Texas (LANWT), formerly West Texas Legal Aid; Texas Wesleyan University School of Law; The Women's Center; and SafeHaven of Tarrant County. Their services are as follows:

Legal Aid of North West Texas (Legal Aid) provides free civil legal services to members of the low-income community in 114 counties. Legal Aid represents people with legal problems who cannot afford to pay an attorney and for whom one would not be provided or paid for by any 2nd or 3rd party. Legal Aid clients generally live at or below 125% of poverty as established by the federal government. People with incomes up to 200% or assets up to \$50,000 may be eligible under certain circumstances. Details are available at Legal Aid's website www.lanwt.org. This assistance does not extend to criminal problems, traffic tickets, and anything that generates a fee such as personal injury or class actions.

Legal Aid provides a spectrum of services ranging from advice or help with documents to full legal representation in court. Legal problems addressed include access to benefits, consumer finance, predatory lending, education, employment, family law, juvenile, disability/other rights, wills and estates, homelessness, domestic violence, and housing. It is important to note that most, if not all, family law cases accepted by Legal Aid involve some form of family violence or abuse.

Clients apply through the Legal Aid Line, a telephone application hotline available Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to noon. They also apply at 20 different legal clinics in 17 locations in and around Fort Worth. Clients meet with staff and volunteer attorneys, who verify their eligibility, analyze their situations, give legal advice and information to the applicants, and then make recommendations as to whether the applicant should be accepted.

Reasons applicants are not accepted include being over income/assets; being undocumented; being referred to another agency; having a legal problem Legal Aid is prohibited from addressing or that is outside the priorities set annually by Legal Aid's board; living outside the service area; already having representation; the case having no merit or representing a conflict with an existing client; lack of Legal Aid resources to help them; and insufficient information to determine if the case has merit.

Legal Aid is funded from a number of different grants and private sources, with almost half (48.69%) coming from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Legal Aid is the 7th largest LSC-funded program in the U.S. Other primary funding sources include foundations, individual donors, and United Ways (8.36%); competitive government grants such as US Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Department of Justice, Texas Attorney General, the IRS, and US Department of Health & Human Services (12.61%); and the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (30.33%).

The source of funding frequently determines what services Legal Aid is able to provide. For instance, Legal Services Corporation requires clients to be legal residents, living at or below 125% of poverty, but it allows Legal Aid to accept people at 200% of poverty under certain circumstances. The IRS restricts 90% of clients funded by their program to 250% of poverty. US Department of Justice funding has no income restrictions, while HUD homeless assistance funding only requires clients to be homeless.

Legal Aid employs 145 FTE staff attorneys and also operates the largest volunteer attorney program in Texas. The Tarrant County Bar Association is a partner in an effort to convince each of the almost 4,000 licensed attorneys in Tarrant County to volunteer to represent Legal Aid clients. Last year, more than 2,200 hours of attorney time were donated to Legal Aid clients by Tarrant County area attorneys.

In 2007, Legal Aid of North West Texas closed 4,371 Tarrant County applications, of which 3,588 received some form of assistance. Of those applying, 28.41% had all of their identified legal needs met; 53.67% had some of their identified legal needs met; and 17.91% were rejected. For all counties, in 2007 Legal Aid closed 27,010 applications, of which 21,783 received some form of assistance. Of all applicants, 40.14% had all of their identified legal needs met; 40.51% had some of their identified legal needs met; and 19.35% were rejected for various reasons listed above.

Needs and gaps identified by Legal Aid include not enough funding or volunteers to serve everyone who asks for help. The organization does not have a waiting list. It provides applicants as much advice and information possible, but when it comes to full legal representation, the client intake system operates like a hospital emergency room: those in the most danger receive help first. Others are informed as quickly as possible of the decision not to represent them.

Legal Aid's highest priority is to meet the identified legal needs of as many eligible applicants as possible. To meet that goal, it would have to triple the number of attorneys currently on staff and to develop innovative partnerships to house those attorneys and support staff. At present, a handful of Legal Aid attorneys office off-site at local nonprofits such as domestic violence shelters. The organization hopes to expand its Legal Aid Line from 3 hours per day to 9 hours per day, which would enable it to provide low-cost legal advice services to an additional 5,000-7,500 individuals per year.

Legal Aid has been a pioneer in the use of technology. It now has the state's only fully functional video conference network that connects all 14 offices. It also has five remote sites where applicants can come to speak face-to-face via videoconference with one of its attorneys. Legal Aid hopes to expand that to include dozens of sites throughout its 114-county service area.

Texas Wesleyan University School of Law has a Law Clinic (1500 Commerce Street, Fort Worth) through which law students can rotate for credit. Current sources of income include the university and a United Way grant. This funding provides for year-round services to low-income Tarrant County residents; services focus on specific areas of law, including family law (custody, divorce, child support, termination of parental rights, adoptions, modifications and protective orders), Social Security issues (including Social Security Disability Insurance – SSDA– and Supplemental Security Income – SSI – for adults and children), and other services including wills, Powers of Attorney and Medical Directives. Eligibility for these services is limited to households in which all household income is at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$20,000 for a family of 4), who live in Tarrant County and have their case in Tarrant County, have no criminal history involving drugs or violent crime, and need legal assistance within the focus areas outlined above (no criminal law or personal injury).

In 2006, the TWU Law Clinic served 350 clients and turned away 167 people. Applicants for the United Way-funded service apply through Lena Pope Home, which assesses the family's social service needs and screens for the legal need before referring to the clinic. When accepted, clients go on a waiting list. The most common reasons a client was not accepted include eligibility (income over the eligibility guideline, issues not within the parameters, applicant not a Tarrant County resident, the case not in Tarrant County, criminal history), legal issues too complex for representation through the Law Clinic, the individual failed to respond to contact efforts, the issues were not yet ripe for litigation, conflict of interest (opposing party had already applied to the Law Clinic for services), the applicant was not able to pay the necessary litigation fees (notifications in publications to notify relevant parties, special medical examination or testing, attorney *ad litem* fees, etc.), the applicant did not know where the opposing parties were located, or the applicant requested assistance too late (e.g., after an appeal deadline).

Gaps and needs identified by TWU Legal Clinic include the applicant's inability to pay for other litigation fees and services (though the clinic does not charge for attorneys' services), or the applicant's civil law need, such as a divorce, does not have the grant focus of child abuse or domestic violence. For more information, visit

<http://law.txwes.edu/CurrentStudents/ExperientialPrograms/LawClinic/tabid/224/Default.aspx>

SafeHaven of Tarrant County provides legal assistance to Tarrant County residents who are victims of domestic violence whose income is no more than 150% of the federal poverty level. The service is funded by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Participation in SafeHaven's Counseling services is encouraged. Services are provided in confidential locations in Fort Worth and Arlington, not only at the shelters, but also at counseling offices. Services include divorce, protective orders, restraining orders, child custody and visitation, child and spousal support, termination of parental rights, name change, court accompaniment, immigration law, counseling referral, legal options group (weekly question/answer information session with SafeHaven attorney).

In 2006, SafeHaven of Tarrant County provided Legal Services to 324 clients. Approximately 50 were referred to the TWU Law Clinic; others were referred to a local attorney who charges a reduced fee or accepts *pro bono* cases. Rejected applicants were either not eligible or the caseload precluded serving new clients.

Gaps and needs identified by SafeHaven include *ad litem* attorney, psychological evaluation, social study fees, court transcripts, mediation, and bridge the gap between grants. For more information, visit www.safehaventc.org

The Women's Center of Tarrant County receives ongoing funding from United Way to provide its Legal Clinics. The service, which is free to any adult, includes having an attorney answer questions, offer legal information and options in group settings about divorce, child custody, child support and other family law matters. It does not include legal representation. The Women's Center's Legal Clinics are offered twice monthly in Fort Worth at The Women's Center facility, 1723 Hemphill Street, and monthly in Arlington (3rd Thursday at 4 pm at the Arlington Human Service Center, 401 W. Sanford, Suite 1200).

The Women's Center's Legal Clinics served 109 individuals in 2007. Although no one was turned away, the focus of the Legal Clinics is family law issues.

Gaps and needs identified by The Women's Center include legal assistance for criminal law matters, an increasing need for Spanish-speaking attorneys or translators, and individuals needing assistance with completing legal forms (filling them out or checking them over). For more information, visit www.womenscenter.info

Other organizations providing legal services in Tarrant County include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Justice for our Neighbors (immigration clinic), Catholic Charities, and Tarrant County Family Court services.

--Pat Cheong, Chair, Legal Aid Services

2007 US Dept of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines

Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	125% of FPL	200% of FPL	250% of FPL	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$10,210	12,763	20,420	25,525	\$12,770	\$11,750
2	13,690	17,113	27,380	34,225	17,120	15,750
3	17,170	21,463	34,340	42,925	21,470	19,750
4	20,650	25,063	40,100	50,125	25,820	23,750
5	24,130	30,163	48,260	60,325	30,170	27,750
6	27,610	34,513	55,220	69,025	34,520	31,750
7	31,090	38,863	62,180	77,725	38,870	35,750
8	34,570	43,213	69,140	86,425	43,220	39,750
For each additional person, add	3,480				4,350	4,000

Discussion Questions for February Unit Meetings on Legal Services in our Community

1. What kind of telephone legal aid hotlines exist in our community?
2. a. How does one get a referral to low-income services to the family issues law clinic at Texas Wesleyan University Law School? Describe the services offered by the clinic.
b. Discuss the low-income legal services offered by Safe Haven of Tarrant County and the Women's Center of Tarrant County.
c. Where would one find low-income legal aid in the community for immigration issues both documented and undocumented?
d. Where would a low-income person find assistance for an employment law issue?
e. Where would a low-income person find assistance for an eviction or landlord-tenant question?
f. Where would a homeless person find legal assistance?
g. Where would one find legal assistance for an employment discrimination issue based on age, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, or religion.
3. What are frequent reasons for being turned away from services at LANWT, Texas Wesleyan Law Clinic, Safe Haven, and The Women's Center?
4. What would have to occur to allow LANWT, Texas Wesleyan Law Clinic, Safe Haven, and the Women's Center to broaden their access and services to the public?
5. Complete the following sentence for each of LANWT, Texas Wesleyan Law Clinic, Safe Haven, and the Women's Center to broaden access to legal services: "More _____ to provide _____ so that the public may be better served with legal services."
6. What other sources exist for legal advice for issues not discussed, especially at LANWT?
7. What recommendations do you have for enhancing access to legal services for low-income people in our community?

LWV-Texas CONVENTION COMING SOON!

April 4-8, 2008 at the Fort Worth Downtown Hilton at Main and 8th Streets

HOW DO I ATTEND? Our League may have up to 15 delegates. If you wish to be a delegate, with voting privileges, call Dolores Ruhs at 817-249-1829. You may also come as an observer to learn all about League and meet interesting people from all over our great state.

Picture yourself driving up to the Hilton on Friday morning, April 4. You drop off your bags at the front desk and go find a parking place. (Unless you wish to pay the hotel's \$14 per day valet parking fee.) Parking meters cost \$ until 5 PM. After that they are FREE in downtown Fort Worth! If you arrive before 10 AM you can join the Special Event Tour of the Stockyards and be back by 12:30. You get settled in your room and visit our Registration Table outside the Crystal Ballroom to get your packet that includes your agenda and all kinds of information. You drop into the Auction/Office room to see what goodies are for sale and for free.

At 1 PM you go to the first workshop, "Advocacy and the Relationship Between the Three Levels of League" (local, state and national) led by Carolie Mullan, a LWV-US Board Member. Then coffee break and a second workshop on "Membership" led by Cheryl Graeve, LWV-US Senior Director for Membership.

At 5 PM there is a Special Event visit to the Sid Richardson Museum of Western Art (a 5 block walk) or at 7 PM you can walk just 2 blocks to the Intermodal Transportation Center at 9th and Jones Streets for a social hour, catered dinner, live music, door prizes and conversation with other delegates. You will be back at the hotel before 9 PM.

Saturday morning the Plenary begins at 8:30 AM. The Environmental Awards Luncheon is at NOON. Plenary continues during the afternoon. The Saturday Night Banquet in the Crystal Ballroom offers speaker Kevin Ann Wiley, VP and Editor of the *Dallas Morning News* Editorial Page, and a live auction to benefit the State League.

Sunday morning Plenary resumes at 8:30 AM and ends by NOON. A Special Event Tour of Museums will carpool from the Hotel at NOON, have lunch at the Kimbell, see exhibits and return to the hotel by 3:30PM.

HOW DO I REGISTER? Go to www.lwvtexas.org to register on line. Printed forms will also be in our next VOTER. Registration fee is \$115.

HOW DO I GET A HOTEL ROOM? You must make your own reservation by calling the Hilton 817-870-2100. Tell them you are attending the LWV-Texas Convention to get our special rate of \$125 (single/double), \$135 (triple) or \$145 (quad). Reservations must be made before March 14 to guarantee availability and the above rate.

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR SPECIAL EVENTS? Fill out the form on next page and mail with a check to Dolores Geisel. Any profit made on the 3 special events will benefit our local League.



Your HELP Is Needed!

Make your plans now to attend the State Convention in Fort Worth Friday – Sunday, April 4 – 6 at the completely renovated Hilton Fort Worth. Volunteers are needed for 4-hour shifts: Friday 9-5, Saturday 8-5, and Sunday 8:30-12:00. Volunteers are needed to help with registration, in the Convention Office, the auction area, guides to provide information, room setter-uppers, microphone handlers, and ushers/doorkeepers. If you want to be a delegate, you can also be a volunteer and help with some jobs. If you are interested in helping, please call Georgia Kidwell by phone at (817)282-0712 or e-mail her at grgkdw@yahoo.com.



The League of Women Voters of Tarrant County
Presents



FUN IN FORT WORTH

When you come to the League of Women Voters of Texas Convention **APRIL 4-6, 2008** the local League has planned two exciting trips to see the sights in Fort Worth and experience some of Fort Worth's very special **Cowtown Culture!**

PRE CONVENTION TRIP

THE HISTORIC FORT WORTH STOCKYARDS

Friday morning-April 4, 2008 carpools leave the Hilton at 10:00 AM
Cost \$20.00

- Go to the Stockyards to see the 11 AM Longhorn Stampede (well it is really more of an amble than a stampede).
- Take a walking tour of the Stockyards and hear the history of the cattle and early west frontier life.
- Enjoy lunch from at a cowboy restaurant.
- Return to hotel by 12:30 in plenty of time for the 1 PM first session.

POST CONVENTION TRIP

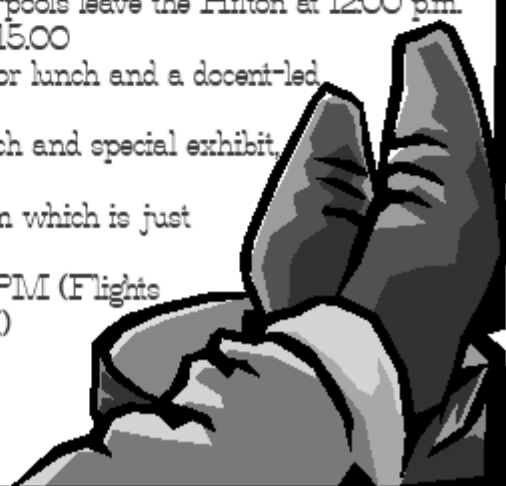
FORT WORTH'S ART MUSEUMS

Sunday afternoon-April 6, 2008 carpools leave the Hilton at 12:00 p.m.
Cost \$15.00

- Go to the Kimbell Art Museum for lunch and a docent-led tour of their permanent collection.
- Participants pay for their own lunch and special exhibit, if they wish to see it.
- Option-visit Modern Art Museum which is just across the street if time permits.
- Return to hotel or airport at 3:15 PM (Flights home must depart after 5:30 PM)



League of Women Voters
of Tarrant County



Sid Richardson Museum of Western Art and Dinner
Friday evening-April 4, 2008 at 5:00 PM

Cost \$40.00

Go by bus or foot to the Sid Richardson Museum of Western Art for a docent-led tour and monologue performance based on letters from Charles Russell's wife. Then on to the nearby Intermodal Transportation Center. In their lovely Community Room enjoy a catered dinner, wine, western music and power point background silent presentation of suffragette activity. Great door prizes and intimate conversation with old and new friends. Home about 9:30 PM.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR ALL 3 SPECIAL EVENTS

Registration Deadline March 21, 2008

(check the ones you want)

- 1. Friday Morning-10AM to 1230PM Cost \$20.00 ☐
Trip to Historic Fort Worth Stockyards
- 2. Friday Evening-5PM to 9:30PM Cost \$40.00 ☐
Museum and Dinner "Fort Worth-Where the West Begins"
- 3. Sunday Afternoon-1200PM to 315PM Cost \$15.00 ☐
Fort Worth's Art Museums and Lunch

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____ Phone _____

League you belong to _____

Chk #: _____

Send this form and a check payable to **LWWTC** to:
Treasurer Dolores Geisel, **LWWTC** Office,
3212 Collinsworth, Fort Worth, TX 76107



League of Women Voters
of Tarrant County

WHAT DOES YOUR PMP PAY FOR?

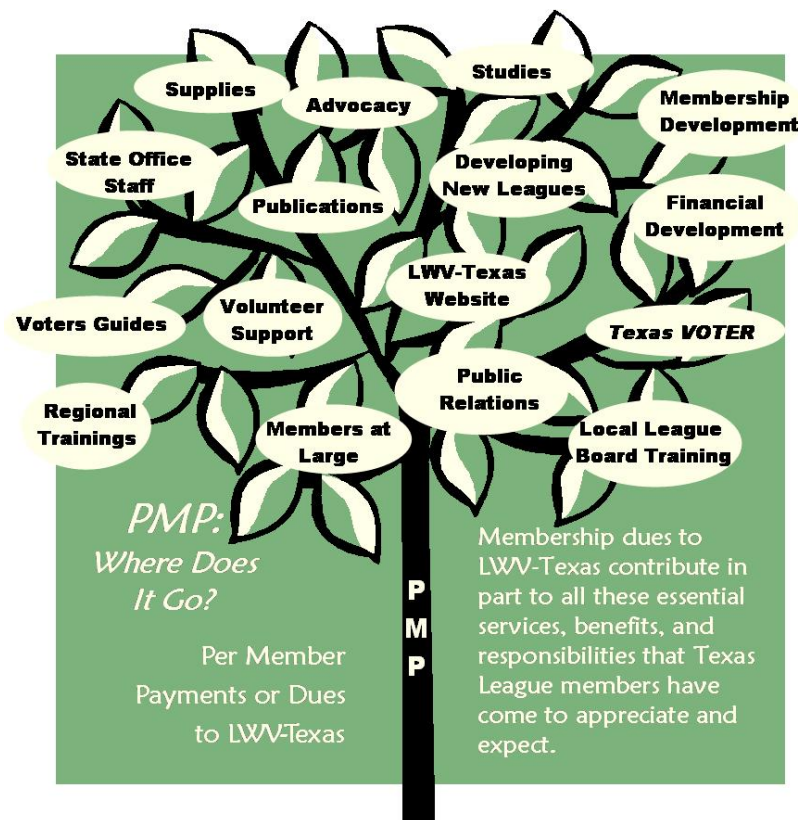
Every year the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County pays a PMP (per member payment) to the League of Women Voters of Texas. This PMP provides the foundation from which the state League operates. It is the core source of financial support for services to members and the community and for studies and action on issues, and it helps maintain the League's standards for nonpartisanship and lack of bias.

PMP helps cover the indirect costs of all that the state League does, including

- training offered in regions and to local Leagues
- costs associated with the web site, where all of our publications are available to Leaguers and most to the public
- advocacy costs, including the Capitol Corps and the program chairs through the staff
- office overhead such as staff, telephone, supplies, copying testimony, and so on

The PMP to the state League covers less than 25% of the state League's budget. LWV-TX also seeks grants for our studies and Voters Services, such as the *Voters Guide* and the web site. In the past decade it has been increasingly hard to get grants for studies, partly because we have studied some controversial subjects and some funders want to know how the study will turn out before they give a grant. While funders can easily understand the direct costs such as printing and mailing, the League's expenses for staff, telephones, office supplies, state training and publications for local Leagues are less likely to be funded. As one potential grantor said, "We just don't want our grant to pay for paper clips."

LWV-TX also raises money through the auction and generous donations from individuals for membership services and action. And the vast amount of the League's activity is not reflected in any balance sheet because it is done by volunteers. The League estimates that over 200,000 hours of volunteer time worth \$3.75 million was donated last year in Texas.



LWV-TC Gas Pipeline Recommendations

As gas drilling in the Barnett Shale raises concerns about impacts on water, air, land and lives, the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County urges local Cities to adopt a stringent Gas Pipeline Ordinance immediately. The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Texas Railroad Commission have authority over gas drilling. Gas pipeline companies have the power of eminent domain to build pipelines. The Cities, however, have authority over existing and future land use, including the manner in which gas pipeline easements cross property within their jurisdiction.

The pipeline collection system for natural gas (NG) can be visualized as a network of pipes in varying sizes, some as large as three feet in diameter. This network carries the gas from the well to initial dewatering tanks, then to pump stations where the line pressure is increased, transporting greater volumes of compressed NG onward to other processing stages (odorizing the NG), and ultimately into a network of distribution lines to end-users. Each drill site requires a pipeline feeding into the collection system. As gas wells increase in number, the gas pipelines multiply – intermeshing with or crossing underground electric lines, water pipes and other conduits, several of which cannot share the same trench.

Natural gas is a highly explosive/flammable substance. Development must be limited around gas transmission pipelines because of the potential for gas pipe failures and/or ruptures, and the resultant explosions and fires. Gas pipeline ruptures are not uncommon. Obviously, the more pipelines there are, the greater the chance for a rupture or failure.

At present, local Cities appear to be granting pipeline easements without knowing where the pipelines will begin or end. In Fort Worth, the proposed route of a two-foot-diameter gas pipeline is along an existing rail corridor where The T plans to operate mass transit and construct transit stations. Fortunately, citizens identified the issue, and a City Council member convened a meeting between The T and the pipeline owner to mitigate potential problems. But initially The T had no way of knowing that the proposed easement through Trinity Park could impact their proposed transit stations in Southwest Fort Worth. When assessing gas pipelines, one must be able to see the big picture, not a single easement.

Gas pipeline ordinances are needed to mitigate the safety and land-use risks associated with such pipelines and to encourage gas companies and pipeline operators to work together to minimize the number of new gas pipelines. Ordinances should, at a minimum, include the requirements listed on the attached page.

Application Requirements

Every gas drilling application shall include:

- Name and address of the pipeline owner or operator and principal contact person.
- Name and telephone number of a 24-hour emergency contact.
- Plans showing the dimensions and locations of the pipelines and related items or facilities within the subject right-of-way or easement, as well as all proposed lift stations, pumps or other service structures.
- The origin point and destination of the pipeline and a text description of the general location of the planned pipeline.
- A description of substance to be transported through the pipeline.
- A copy of the substance Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).
- The maximum allowable operating pressure and normal operating pressure.
- Application review by City Engineer, City Attorney, City Manager, and, if required, the City Council prior to permit/easement approval.

Construction and Repair Requirements

- All pipelines shall be constructed out of new pipe.
- Pipeline trenches shall be double ditch backfilled and constructed at a minimum depth of thirty-six (36) inches except in public rights-of-way, where the minimum cover to the top of the pipe shall be at least forty-eight (48) inches.
- The pipeline owner or operator shall give notice forty-eight (48) hours prior to commencement of pipeline construction to all residents and business establishments that are located within five hundred (500) feet of the proposed centerline of the pipe.
- The owner or operator of the proposed pipeline shall post a bond to guarantee that the pipeline will be built in accordance with this ordinance and other applicable law and to guarantee that all surface land will be returned to its previous condition.

Pipeline Operation Requirements

- Every pipeline owner or operator shall provide an annual safety report to the city.
- All pipeline owners or operators shall have procedures to minimize hazards resulting from an emergency.

Public Education Requirements

All owners or operators must have a public education program that includes the location of each pipeline, material transported in the pipeline, how and where to report an emergency, special requirements for excavation near a pipeline, and how to take cover in an emergency.

Violation Penalty Requirements

The city shall impose fines for violations and shall also be entitled to injunctive relief to prevent violation or compel compliance with this ordinance.

-Linda Hanratty, Chair, Environmental Committee

NEW EAST FORT WORTH UNIT WILL MEET FEB. 18

The get-organized meeting of the new East Fort Worth Unit was held January 21. This was Martin Luther King Day, a federal holiday, so attendance was low. But the good news is that Mary Stallings has agreed to chair the new unit and even provided lunch for us. The unit will meet again on Feb. 18, which is President's Day, but hopefully people will be able to attend.

All League members are welcome to attend any unit meeting, and we hope the new East Fort Worth Unit will have a good crowd in February!

Martha Kissinger
Unit Coordinator

Want to do more? Let us know!

The Nominating Committee is beginning its work on the slate of officers and directors for 2008-09. Positions up for election are President, President-elect, Organization Vice-President, Program Vice-President, Community Relations Vice-President, Treasurer, and three directors. We need your help and ideas. If you would like to serve, please let us know. The League needs you!

Georgia Kidwell, Chair
817-282-0712 grgkdw@yahoo.com
Reeta Johnson
Nancy Stevens
Christie Campbell
Eunice Givens

Help Us Bring New Talent into the League of Women Voters

We're the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, one of the hundreds of local organizations across the nation whose members are committed to Making Democracy Work. Our non-partisan organization encourages informed and active participation by citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League of Women Voters does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Our goal is to empower citizens to shape better communities around the world.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

\$59	Full voting Member	\$ _____
\$49	Full voting Member , Age 30 and under	_____
	Full voting Member , Age 65 and older	_____
	Full time student (please list school)	_____
\$29.50	Additional Full voting Member in same household	_____
\$1,000	Benefactor Membership	_____
\$500	Patron Membership	_____
\$250	Sustaining Advocate Membership	_____
\$100	Sustaining Membership	_____
\$20	Friend of the League – Mailing list only	_____
_____	Contribution	_____

TOTAL

\$

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (E-mail) _____ (Fax) _____

Membership dues and contributions are not eligible for a tax deduction under I.R.S. 501(c) (3) rules. You may make a tax-deductible contribution by writing a separate check payable to the LWV/Texas Education Fund. This will be used for educational projects benefiting the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County. Mail your membership application, dues and contributions to LWV-TC, 3212 Collinsworth Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107.

LWV/US PMP	\$26.30
LWV/TX PMP	\$22.00
PMP = Per Member Payment	

League of Women Voters of Tarrant County Calendar

All Members and Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend any League event

Feb. Board Meeting:

Feb. 5 (Tues) 6:00 pm **LWV-TC Board meeting**, League office, 3212 Collinsworth St., Fort Worth

Feb. Unit Meetings:

Legal Services Update

Feb. 15 (Fri) 12:00 Noon **Friday Lunch Unit**, Luby's Cafeteria, 2800 8th Avenue, Fort Worth.
Dutch treat. Call Mary Strom at 817-457-5565 for information.

Feb. 18 (Mon) 12:00 Noon **East Fort Worth Unit**, office of Laird & Cummings, P.C., 2400 Scott Street, Fort Worth.
Call Martha Kissinger 817-457-2622 for information.

Feb. 19 (Tues) 7:00 pm **Mid-Cities Unit**, Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 8525 Airport Freeway, North Richland Hills.
Call Georgia Kidwell at 817-282-0712 for information.

Feb. 21 (Thurs) 12:00 Noon **Southwest Lunch Unit**, Trinity Terrance, 1600 Texas Street, Fort Worth. **RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED**. Call John Johnson at 817-810-9399 for reservations. Deadline for
reservations is Tues., Jan.15. Call Jean Baggerly at 817-926-6189 for information.

Feb. 21 (Thurs) 5:30 pm **Fort Worth Evening Unit**, La Madeleine Restaurant, 6140 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth.
Dutch treat. Call Linda Hanratty at 817-924-6629 for information.

Dates to Remember:

Feb. 4 (Mon) Last day to register to vote in Primary Election

Feb. 12 (Tues) 7:00 pm **Community Education Forum on Access to Legal Services in Tarrant County,
Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC), Fort Worth**

Feb. 19 – 29 Early voting for Primary Elections

Mar. 4 (Tues) Primaries Election Day

April 4 – 6 2008 LWV State Convention, Fort Worth

May 12 (Mon) LWV-TC Annual Meeting, The Gardens Restaurant in the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens,
3220 Rock Springs Rd, Fort Worth

League Office Hours: MWF 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.