



August 2011

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS--CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

League of Women Voters  
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## Important Calendar Dates

### Monday, August 15, 2011 at 5:00 pm LWV-CC Board Meeting

**Location:** LWV-CC office at Doddridge Plaza, Room 305 (corner of Doddridge and Alameda Streets).

### Thursday, August 18, 2011, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm LWV-CC Monthly Membership Meeting

**Location:** Held at the First Baptist Church Recreation Building, 3115 Ocean Drive; Price \$10.00 for members and guests who order one of the menu choices below.



**Our program will feature Mrs. Glenda Kane**, chair of the Texas Department of State Health Services Commission, speaking on “Women’s Health Issues in Texas.” **Menu choices** are: Egg Salad Sandwich on Pumpernickel Bread or Taco Salad; both choices include chips, beverage, and dessert. Please call the LWV-CC answering service at 880-6501 to RSVP or e-mail [SHeatherle@cs.com](mailto:SHeatherle@cs.com) to confirm attendance and select which menu choice you prefer. **Deadline to order lunch: Monday, August 15.**

### Thursday, September 15, 2011, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm LWV-CC Monthly Membership Meeting

**Location:** Held at First Baptist Church Recreation Building, 3115 Ocean Drive; Price \$10.00 for members and guests who order lunch from available menu choices.

**Our speaker in September will be Marlene Villarreal**, operations/marketing director of Blue Nation, a local grassroots organization of volunteers dedicated to raising awareness about human trafficking in our area. Her remarks will be titled “Human Trafficking in the Coastal Bend.” Our menu choices will be announced in the September issue of *THE VOTER*.

The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, a non-partisan, political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

# President's Message

By Judy Telge



## In My Spare Time . . .

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

The Mission of the League of Women Voters is the bedrock of all our activity as League members whether at the local, state or national level. Our collective goal is to empower people to shape better communities worldwide; our purpose is to increase informed voter participation.

At the LWV-CC 2011 Board Retreat earlier this month, we talked about the political divisiveness and the political chaos occurring throughout our country. We recognized that new ways of governance may result with the pressures of diverse opinions and perspectives and the effects on policy development, budget decisions and ways of doing business.

Now more than ever, our democratic society needs the guidance provided by the core values of the League of Women Voters. These include:

- engaging communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy;
- maintaining respect for individuals and valuing diversity; and
- promoting the power of collective decision making for the common – and greater – good.

League members pledge to act with trust, integrity, and professionalism. Members believe in a process that acts after study and agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest, in an unbiased manner.

This is the framework that supports League members as we stand up for what's right, to model inspiration at the local level, and promote civility within the political context. That's a pretty tall order these days. But the League has flourished since 1942 and membership has grown over the years as its importance is felt in communities and states across the country.

As members of the League of Women Voters–Corpus Christi, we have much to be proud of with all that we do and stand for. But we have a lot of work to do and we need more participation from individual members as well as the community.

I challenge each of you to invite new people to join, encourage old members to re-join, and most importantly to live up to the mission of your league and get involved. Our strength is in numbers, diversity, and an open nonpartisan process.

Judy Telge, President  
LWV-CC, 2011-2012

## LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Thanks to these LWV membership renewals:

Gloria Scott

Carolyn Cutbirth

Peggy Banales

Jacqueline O'Keefe

If you haven't yet renewed your League membership for 2011-2012, please respond! Your support is sincerely appreciated!

## Operation K.E.Y.S. Walk Saturday, September 10, 2011 8:00 a.m.- noon

Teams of volunteers will depart from  
Carroll, King, Miller, Moody, and Ray.



Community Walk Aimed at Encouraging Students to  
Return to School and Complete Their Education!

To volunteer, please visit [www.ccisd.us](http://www.ccisd.us) or call Marci Fischer at 844-0432 ext. 182.

You can encourage at-risk students and others who have dropped out of school to return and earn their high school diploma! Sign up for the K.E.Y.S. Walk and be part of the “adults who care” teams.

# Should Water Be a Commodity?

## A Study by the League of Women Voters Texas Education Fund

By Sandra Heatherley

On August 1, LWV-Texas e-mailed the *Facts and Issues* surrounding the question: "Should Water be a Commodity?" This e-mail went to all League Members who have an e-mail address. So if you missed it, check back to August 1 in your inbox. If you don't have an e-mail address then you will shortly receive the printed version of the *Facts and Issues* via the US mail.

For those of you who attended the Regional Water Forum hosted by LWV-Corpus Christi on April 30, many of the facts and issues referred to in the publication are familiar to you. However, all of our members are encouraged (maybe even obligated) to read the *Facts and Issues* from cover to cover! It's only 10 pages and contains the latest status of water law and management in the state of Texas.

Within the coming weeks our president, Judy Telge, will receive a number of questions about how to regulate Texas water which she will distribute to the membership through our newsletter.

After you have had an opportunity to read the *Facts and Issues* and the questions regarding whether water should be defined as a commodity in Texas, our league will have

Sandra Heatherley is serving as a member of the state study committee on this topic and is representing our league well! Thanks, Sandra.

--Judy Telge, President

a "consensus session" during which we will all discuss the questions and possible answers to determine if we have a consensus among members that favors a particular answer.

The results of our consensus session will be communicated to the state league along with those from the other 29 leagues across the state to determine if our state membership has reach an agreement on any of the options presented.

If there is a consensus, the league is then empowered to take a position on water regulation and present that position to legislators and elected officials at every level of state and local government.

For those who for some reason have not received their copy of the *Facts and Issues*, there will be extra copies available at our August 18 meeting. Please plan to participate in our consensus session as an informed citizen actively participating in government!

**Be watching for information on the date and location of our Consensus Meeting on "Should Water Be a Commodity?"**

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**READ TO SUCCEED**

# Update on Las Brisas Energy Center

By Peggy Duran, Member

As our members may recall, the League of Women Voters-Corpus Christi opposes the building of Las Brisas Energy Center based on our positions on energy, water, and public health.

LWV-Texas states in its program position paper We Support under Energy: *“Promote incentives for renewable and clean energy sources and energy conservation. Monitor the building of coal fired plants and nuclear power plants.”*

Energy from Las Brisas will come from petroleum coke which is as dirty as coal and will cause as much pollution as all seven of the refineries along the Ship Channel.

Our position on water is: *“Support funding for safe and adequate water supplies, using sound ecological/economic strategies that emphasize conservation. Support enhanced protection for environmental flows; Texas rivers, bays and estuaries.”*

Las Brisas will use three million gallons of fresh water daily, about 10% of current Corpus Christi usage. We are in a semi-arid region, and water is already scarce and expensive. The heated water dumped into the harbor will also certainly harm marine life.

Dr. Wes Stafford, a respected local allergist, gave a powerpoint presentation at two LWV meetings outlining the public health hazards of Las Brisas.

Of special concern is particulate matter (“soot” produced by burning) that increases asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and heart attacks. Hazards include lead, which is highly toxic in small doses and is linked to learning disabilities; sulfur dioxide/nitric oxide, which produces acid rain that irritates eyes and lungs and damages crops and metals; and mercury, which is linked to learning disabilities and permanent brain damage in children. This damage can begin in the womb if a pregnant woman eats mercury-contaminated fish.

The Administrative Law Judges of the Texas Committee on Environmental Quality (TCEQ, the state permitting agency) spent two weeks in Corpus Christi hearing both

sides of the issues and concluded that “Las Brisas Energy Center (LBEC) has failed to meet its burden of proof... LBEC’s air modeling was simply inadequate and provides insufficient assurance that the permits, if issued, would comply with all applicable air quality standards and be protective of human health and the environment...”

The Office of Public Interest Counsel, also a part of the TCEQ, concurred.

Because two Commissioners from the TCEQ overrode their own Judges and the Public Interest Counsel and granted the air permit, a lawsuit is currently pending brought by the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Clean Economy Coalition, and the Texas Clean Cities.

The water permit is now before the TCEQ. Because of the way the air permit was handled, all League members are encouraged to contact the Environmental Protection Agency to request that federal standards be maintained and that Texas follow them. Call Gina McCarthy at 202-564-7404 and also talk with your friends and neighbors. This is League grassroots action time!

## League Announces Grant Opportunity

The Board voted recently to pursue a pass-through grant opportunity available through LWV-Texas. The Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project offers \$3,000 to local leagues for activities to increase voter registration opportunities and prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations such as minorities, the poor and the elderly. Also eligible is finding ways to improve election administration, particularly in implementation of new photo voter ID requirements.

Ideas expressed for the grant application were to target certain zip code areas with low voter turnout in previous elections, particularly those with a higher percentage of low-income populations, minorities, elderly and people with disabilities. School districts in those zip codes will be targeted for increased efforts to engage students in registering to vote.

Several local organizations were identified to participate in the nonpartisan voter registration collaboration.

League members who volunteered to participate in the grant application are Pat Parr, Chris Davis Garcia, Twila Mouttet and Judy Telge. Members are invited to submit comments to [jtelge@stx.rr.com](mailto:jtelge@stx.rr.com). The application is due September 1.

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Susyabelle Gosslee (seated center) facilitates Board Retreat

## 10 Constitutional Amendments on Nov. 8 General Election Ballot

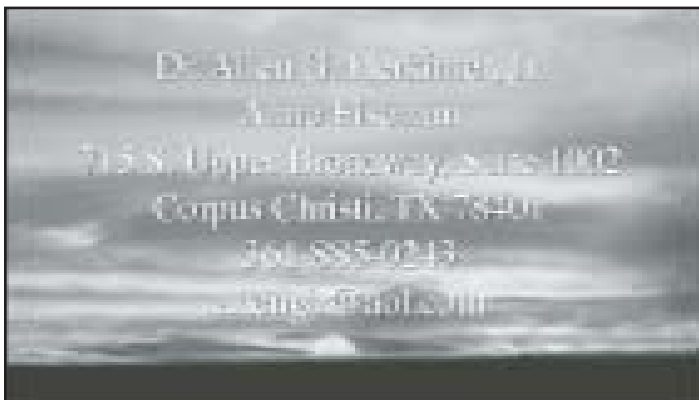
The ballot order for 10 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution was determined earlier this summer through a random drawing by Secretary of State Hope Andrade. The election will be Tuesday, November 8, 2011.

“As in all elections, these are important decisions for voters to make,” said Andrade. “Our constitution was enacted in 1876 and has been amended more than 400 times, and each amendment is just as important as the last.”

Here is the official ballot language for the first three amendments of the Constitutional Amendment Election. The seven other amendments will be featured in the September VOTER. LWV-Texas will prepare a Voters Guide in early October with pros and cons for each amendment. Copies of the Voters Guide will be available for purchase by local Leagues or on the LWV website.

**Proposition 1** -- “The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran.”

(Continued on Page 7)



## 2011 Board Retreat Held

The LWV-CC Board of Directors held its 2011 Board Retreat on Saturday, August 6, at the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority training room on Bear Lane.

The training facilitator from LWV-TX was Susybelle Gosslee, a member of the 2010-12 LWV-TX Board of Directors/Trustees and the Services to Local Leagues Committee, and chair of issues committees on capital punishment and hazardous waste.

The half-day retreat covered topic areas of mission, vision, beliefs and principles of the League of Women Voters, the work of the League, and the road from study to action. The goal setting process for the current board began at the training session and will be expanded at an upcoming meeting.

Board members in attendance were Judy Telge, Sandra Heatherly, Twila Mouttet, Bobbie Wood-Hughes, Peggy Banales, Maria Jimenez, Pam Maupin, and Frank Pimentel. The retreat was open to all LWV-CC members.

President Judy Telge reported that the Board members were impressed with Ms. Gosslee’s skills at facilitation, her knowledge and dedication, and her inspirational delivery of important information about League matters. Content of the training will be shared with members in various ways through the newsletter, on the website and during monthly meetings.

## Recap of July Meeting

Although attendance was low, interest was high at the July LWV-CC monthly meeting with a program on AARP’s position on Social Security and Medicare cuts, presented by Rosie Barrera, Associate State Director, Community Outreach, AARP.

Barrera explained that the AARP position, like the League of Women Voters, is based on principles, not partisan politics. Neither Social Security nor Medicare contributed to the budget deficit and therefore should not be cut or harmed.

She explained the budget plans being considered by Congress and advised that AARP did not support any of them because of the potential harm to individuals 55 years of age and over. The bi-partisan “Gang of 6” plan had not been released at the time of the meeting.



# What's Happening With the Redistricting Plans?

**Information compiled from** Anita Privett (Austin Area) [advocacy@lwtexas.org](mailto:advocacy@lwtexas.org); Frank Pimental, LWV-Corpus Christi Board Member' and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

During the 2011 Session ending in July, the 82nd session of the Texas Legislature passed redistricting bills for the State Board of Education, Texas House, Texas Senate and U.S. Congressional Districts.

The Legislature adopted maps for the State Board of Education, House and Senate in May but didn't get congressional redistricting done until late June in a special session. But all the plans require preclearance by the U.S. Justice Department or a federal court before they can be implemented.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott opted to bypass the Obama Justice Department and on July 19 asked a federal district court in Washington, D.C., to approve the plans.

But more than a dozen lawsuits have been filed challenging them. A three-judge federal panel in San Antonio has scheduled a Sept. 6 trial for several of the cases.

## 27th Congressional District

One of the redrawn maps is of the 27th Congressional District, which follows the coastline of the Texas Gulf from Port Aransas to Brownsville, including the counties of Nueces, Kleberg, Kenedy, Willacy and Cameron and portions of San Patricio and Aransas counties.

Prior to the 2010 election, the 27th Congressional District was represented by Democrat Solomon Ortiz. As a result of the 2010 election, it is now represented by Republican Blake Farenthold.

The 27th District is unique and important for several factors. Within the 27th Congressional District is the Corpus

Christi SMSA that include Nueces, San Patricio and Aransas counties. The area represents the Port of Corpus Christi, and San Patricio County and Port Aransas are on the Gulf of Mexico and are important to future economic development and growth of the region.

The 27th Congressional District is surrounded by the 14th Congressional District [represented by Ron Paul (R)] and the 15th Congressional District [represented by Chuy Hinojosa (D)]—two influential politicians. Note that some of the voters in living in San Patricio and Port Aransas may lack clear representation by having more than one Congressional District representative in sections of their county.

## Decennial Redistricting

Decennial redistricting can take several courses, but the timing and legal requirements dictate that the basic process take the following course:

If the Texas senate or house districts are not enacted during the Regular Session of the Legislature, the Texas Constitution requires that the Legislative Redistricting Board (LRB) meet and adopt its own plan. Any legislative or LRB plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for preclearance under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

If the congressional or State Board of Education districts are not enacted during the regular session, the governor may call a special session to consider the matter. If the governor does not call a special session, then a state or federal district court likely will draw the plan.

## Suits Can Be Brought Anytime

A suit against an adopted redistricting plan may be brought at any time under the federal or state constitution or federal law. Note that plans drawn by a federal court do not need to obtain Section 5 preclearance, while plans drawn by a state court do require preclearance.

The filing deadline for the 2012 primary elections allows approximately seven months from the end of the regular legislative session for the governor to act on any redistricting legislation passed, for the LRB to meet if necessary, for any special session called to consider redistricting if necessary, for obtaining preclearance under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, for court action, and for counties to make necessary changes in county election precincts.

If the legislature fails to redistrict house or senate districts during the first regular session following release of the decennial census, Section 28, Article III, of the Texas Constitution requires the board to meet within 90 days of the end of that regular session and, within 60 days of convening, to adopt its own house or senate plan.

**Support your League by advertising your business in The VOTER! Business card size ad is only \$100 for placement in 10 issues. Call Treasurer Bobbie Wood-Hughes at (361) 993-0052 for details.**

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# LWV-Texas Needs Suggestions for New Studies, Issue Changes

A message from Janet Imhoff, LWV-TX Program Vice President

We need your suggestions for new studies or recommendations for changes or amendments to our current issue positions (called Program Planning) by a due date of January 13, 2012. The reason is that our Bylaws require that suggestions from the grassroots must be submitted three months before our state convention, April 13-15, 2012.

Leagues are invited to poll their members for suggestions in your local newsletter or take a few minutes at one of your other meetings to get ideas. Another idea is to do it at a board meeting, if you can't find time for a Program Planning meeting. The *Program Planning Leaders Guide and Report Form* will be sent to each local League president in September. Questions? Call or email Janet Imhoff at 972-547-4270 or janimhoff@tx.rr.com.



## League of Women Voters-CC

### If you are a Facebook user:

1. Search for "Corpus Christi League of Women Voters."
2. Read the latest information regarding our mission, meetings, events
3. Click the "like" option in order to establish our credibility as an active Facebook site.
4. You can indicate whether or not you are planning to attend meetings or functions by clicking on the events calendar to the left of the page.
5. Have fun! Explore! Be interactive!

***Help us connect with young people!***

## Constitutional Amendments

(Continued from Page 5)

**Proposition 2** -- "The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board in an amount not to exceed \$6 billion at any time outstanding."

**Proposition 3** - "The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of general obligation bonds of the State of Texas to finance educational loans to students." increasing ad valorem tax rates."

***(The September VOTER will include the wording of amendments 4-10.)***

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS-CORPUS CHRISTI

### Renewal/New Membership Application

LWV-Corpus Christi was formed in the mid 1940s and has been an active organization for more than 66 years. Join now and help in the effort to promote political responsibility through informed, active participation in government.

Type of Membership:     NEW             RENEWAL

Individual \$60     Student \$30     Household \$90

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I would enjoy helping with one or more of the following activities:

Voter Registration \_\_\_\_\_ Candidates' Forums \_\_\_\_\_

Voters Guide Preparation \_\_\_\_\_ Observer Corps \_\_\_\_\_

Special Events/Fund Raising \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Recruitment \_\_\_\_\_

The Membership year is from June 1 - May 31.

Your dues to LWV-CC is shared with LWV-Texas and LWV-US as part of a strong network of men and women working to

**"Make Democracy Work"**

Return this application with your check or money order, payable to:

LWV-CC (Attention: Treasurer), PO Box 8276 \* Corpus Christi, TX 78468




**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
**CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**  
 PO Box 8276  
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## National Study Titled “Role of the Federal Government in Public Education”

Local Leagues can now download the consensus questions, leader’s guides, and supplemental information from the LWVUS website on the 2011 Education Study. The Education Study scope is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (preK through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs but are national, not federal. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope.

Although the study focuses on the federal government, the original intent of the study included the Common Core Standards. These were written and funded by the National Governors’ Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Historically we have always had national standards written by the teaching organizations; however, the discussion of the LWVUS study will focus upon how these new standards called Common Core State Standards will be used by the federal government. All Leagues are encouraged to hold a consensus meeting before the end of the year.



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