

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

**Barbara Murray**

This is the last VOTER of our League year 2017-2018. I will be recapping the year at the Annual Meeting and in our summer *VOTER*, but as a quick preview it’s been a wonderful year! With many voters service opportunities, interesting discussion meetings, and the addition of several new members, we have a lot to celebrate.

**Annual Meeting – June 2**

By this time, you should have received an email with the Annual Meeting invitation and workbook attached. You will also be receiving an actual paper invitation via US postal mail in mid-May. I hope you will be able to attend the Annual Meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. In addition to a very interesting speaker on plastics in our oceans, I have some exciting voters service initiatives to share with you. I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting!

**CCISD Candidates Forum**

We hosted a candidates forum for the May 5<sup>th</sup> CCISD board of trustees election on Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. The Clear Creek Community Council of PTAs and CASE (parent support group for gifted and talented students) were cosponsors. The forum was very successful with about 50 citizens in attendance. I want to thank the

dedicated League volunteers who helped “Make Democracy Work” – Aggie Bourgeois, Suzanne Gossett, Nicole Kenley-Miller, Julie Bulloch, and Sherrie Matula.



Nicole Kenley-Miller, Julie Bulloch, and Sherrie Matula screen questions to hand to moderator.

## LWV-BA Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 2

9:30- noon

at home of Susan Braymer

RSVP by May 30

Details in attached invitation.

## Cinco de Mayo Voter Registration

Judith Oppenheim is organizing a Cinco de Mayo voter registration event in Galveston on May 6. The Galveston Fiesta Committee approached us to help register voters during their outdoor celebration of Cinco de Mayo in front of the Galveston County Courthouse. A big thank you goes out to voter registration volunteers Ethel Patton, Julie Bulloch, and Judith for "Making Democracy Work!"

## LWV-Texas State Convention

Diane Sheridan and I had the great pleasure of attending the LWV-Texas state convention in Kerrville April 27-29. Please refer to Diane's excellent account of the convention. I'll just say that it is always impressive to see what the local Leagues of Texas as well as the Texas League are accomplishing. Change is in the air and it is inspiring to be a part of what the national president described as a transformation roadmap. I'll be giving a short report on a proposed restructuring of the League at the state level and how that may affect us. Exciting times ahead for "Making Democracy Work!"



LWV-BA members at LWV-TX Convention: Peg Hill, who just completed a term on the state board; LWV-BA President Barbara Murray and VOTER Editor/Program Chair Diane Sheridan



One of two baskets of Texas wines donated by LWV-BA for Silent Auction benefitting LWV-Texas Education Fund.

## ELECTION AND LEAGUE CALENDAR

### May 2018

- 11 Last day for application for ballot to vote by mail to be *received* for May 22 Primary Run-Off
- 14 First day of early voting for May 22 Primary Run-Off
- 18 Last day of early voting for May 22 Primary Run-Off
- 22 Primary Run-Off Election
- 22 Last day to receive ballots by mail (7:00 p.m.) unless overseas or military voter deadlines apply

### June 2018

- 2 LWV-BA Annual Meeting, Brunch, and Speaker. 9:30 – noon at home of Susan Braymer. Details to follow.

## REPORT FROM LWV-TEXAS CONVENTION 2018

Three Bay Area LWV members attended LWV-Texas Convention in hilly Kerrville on April 27-29. President Barbara Murray and Diane Sheridan were privileged to serve as delegates representing the LWV-BA. As a vice-president of the state League, Peg Hill was a state board delegate. Seventeen of 24 local Leagues and 5 of 8 Leagues at Large sent representatives. Representing the new Beaumont League at Large was Nicole Barnett-Dunbar. Barbara and Diane serve as coaches for this new group, and Nicole often attends LWV-BA meetings.

Grace Chimene of Austin was elected LWV-Texas President. A budget for 2018-2020 was adopted with little debate. Bylaws changes established the new League at Large structure to make it easier to start a new League. Current program positions were readopted. While no new full-scale studies were adopted, the next biennium will bring reviews and updates of two state League positions. A review of part of the Criminal Justice and Capital Punishment Reform position will focus on the current bail bond system while a review of the Land Use position will look at eminent domain. Both should make for lively discussion meetings. Structural changes to the League were adopted contingent on IRS approval. What this means for LWV-BA will be discussed with members later.

Reports from President Elaine Wiant and various state board members included the following highlights:

- LWV-TX membership is up 18% since 2016. While we have fewer members than we did decades ago, we reach more people.
- We have 17 times more Voter 411 users than we did 4 years ago.
- State League Facebook followers increased from 450 to 6400 from 2014 to 2018 and grew more as people posted messages during the Convention.
- Video explanations of Constitutional Amendments last November, prepared by state League interns, were viewed by 55,000 people.
- A “fund a need” drive during Convention raised more than \$9000 to spend on a service that will text people with, for example, voting reminders.

LWVUS President Chris Carson said LWVUS membership increased 12% from January 2017 to January 2018. The national organization has taken part in 16-17 lawsuits with state and local Leagues relating to gerrymandering and voter ID. An assessment of the organization as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches led to adoption of a *Transformation Roadmap*. A few things that stood out in her presentation included the need to make it easier to form a League, which Texas has addressed with the League at Large system. Carson said those involved in developing the roadmap also want to make it easier to join the League so that, for example, someone you meet at a march can join immediately instead of going home and waiting for someone to send her or him an application, which then needs to be mailed in with a check. Lightening the administrative workload of local Leagues is also receiving attention. Part of that is developing a common database that will make it easier, in one small example, to transfer your League membership if you move midyear. A comprehensive database will also make it easier to gather the data necessary to approach donors with more than anecdotes about our work. Diversity, equity and inclusion must also be addressed. While many things about the League may change, three things will not: 1) we will remain a grassroots membership organization, 2) nonpartisan, and 3) focused on our mission of program and voters service.

(Report from State Convention con't.)

The new state President, Grace Chimene, quoted Margaret Atwood: "Now I'm awake to the world. I was asleep before. That's how we let it happen." "The League," said Chimene, "is always awake to the world." Chimene challenged us each to keep a "democracy list" to remind ourselves of the things we each can do to empower voters and defend democracy, such as simply talking to people about voting.

One of the enjoyable things about a state League Convention is seeing people who have moved from the Bay Area and become members elsewhere. These included Deb Edwards, Melinda Wasson, and Linda and Larry Calvert.

To recognize the work of Peg Hill, who completes her service on the state board this month, Barbara went to the microphone to thank Peg for all she *energetically* does. Next year, Peg will chair the LWV-Texas Nominating Committee, once again using her talents in support of the League. One of the things Peg does best is to ask people to join the League – something we all can and should do!



VISIT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BAY AREA WEBSITE

[www.lwv-bayarea.org](http://www.lwv-bayarea.org)

Want to contact your election officials?

You'll find them in our *Bay Area Guide to Elected Officials* at

<http://www.lwv-bayarea.org/CitizensGuide.pdf>



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## WHERE TO FIND THE LEAGUE

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) - [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org) - [www.lwv-bayarea.org](http://www.lwv-bayarea.org)

LWV-Texas may be found at:

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