



2019-2020

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Carol Cordell
Vickey Ward

Office Hours:
T W Th 9:30-1:30 p.m.

Mailing Address
P. O. Box 100175
Fort Worth, TX 76185

Telephone
817-348-VOTE (8683)

E-mail Address
lwvtarrant@gmail.com

Web site
www.lwvtarrantcounty.org

Facebook
www.facebook.com/LWVofTarrantCo
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Thank you to our 2019 community sponsors:

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The League Mission is to empower voters and defend democracy. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate. We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Centennial Celebrations Begin

The *League of Women Voters of Texas* will celebrate its 100th Anniversary in San Antonio with a luncheon this **Saturday, October 19**, at the historic **St. Francis Hotel** from 11:30-1:30 p.m. Several members of the local League will attend, and reservations close October 15. Go to <https://my.lwv.org/texas/event/lwvtx-celebrates-100-years-strong> to make your reservation.

On **March 20, 2020**, the Tarrant County League will celebrate the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, when women gained the right to vote in every state. The Fundraising Committee is hard at work planning an evening gala at Ridglea Country Club, and we will honor six Tarrant County women who have been elected to local or state office. For more information, see page 4, and mark your calendars for this big event.

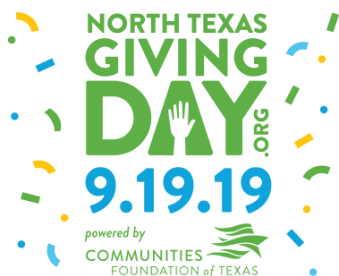
It's Election Season Too

Twelve proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution will be on the ballot on **Tuesday, November 5**. The League of Women Voters of Texas has published an analysis of each amendment, including its pros and cons, in its Voters Guide. Print copies are available at local libraries, and an online explanation of the Texas constitution and amendments is available through <https://my.lwv.org/texas/election-information>. Voters can also go directly to <https://www.vote411.org> for information on each amendment. October unit meetings will discuss each amendment on the ballot.

Some municipalities and ISDs also have local races on the November ballot. Information on local races is available through VOTE411.org as well.

The League will moderate a **candidate forum** for **North Richland Hills City Council Place 4**, for which there are three candidates. The forum, to be held on **October 23rd at the Birdville High School Cafeteria** beginning at 6:30 p.m., is sponsored by Birdville High School PTSA and Student Council.

Early voting runs from October 21 through November 1 at early voting sites. On election day, for the first time, Tarrant County citizens can vote in their home precincts or at Vote Centers across the county, using the county's new voting machines. Voting hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. To find a Vote Center, go to <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections/Upcoming-Election-Information/Election-Day-Schedule-Locations-and-Map.html?linklocation=Button%20List&linkname=Election%20Day%20Voting%20Locations>.



Thank You!

Forty members, friends, and anonymous supporters donated to the League on North Texas Giving Day. We made our goal and are grateful to all who supported our work through this annual giving event that included more than 2000 worthy organizations in north Texas. We deeply appreciate your support for the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County in your Giving Day donations.

A Busy Autumn for Voter Services

Vice Presidents Erin Merkel and Nancy Kirkland have had a busy two months of registering voters and providing information about the upcoming election.

- They hosted Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training at the Community Enrichment Center in North Richland Hills on Saturday, September 14. Seventeen new Volunteer Deputy Registrars completed the requirements to begin registering voters, and the Elections Office brought the new voting machines for attendees to try out..
- For National Voter Registration Day on September 24, the League provided 24 volunteers at nine libraries in Arlington, Fort Worth, and Keller. Emma Allen and Nancy Stevens also helped register voters that day at TCC South Campus. Nancy Stevens also represented the League at a voter registration event at Dunbar High School, where she helped the school VDRs to register approximately 50 new voters. Thank you to all who helped to register new voters and provide voter information to those already registered.
- On September 27, Pam Wright and Nancy Kirkland represented the League at the Get Out the Vote booth at BNSF Family Day. This annual event includes voter registration and voter outreach to those already registered.
- Sharon Whittington and Erin Merkel had a table for Voter Registration at National Night Out in Pantego.
- Voter Services created a new bookmark and signage to advertise the VOTE 411 website, with key dates and ID requirements for voters on the reverse.
- Voter Services has gathered candidate responses for the Voters Guide for the handful of city council and school board elections on the ballot this November. Information on these races and the latest amendments to the Texas constitution is now available at <https://www.vote411.org/>.
- The League will moderate a candidate forum for Richland Hills City Council Place 4 candidates at Birdville High School on March 23 at 6 p.m.

Remembering Jean Baggerly

The funeral for longtime member Jean Baggerly was held on Saturday, October 12. Jean was born in 1928 in Beijing, China, where her father was a missionary. She eventually moved to Fort Worth, where she raised her two children and taught kindergarten at Como Elementary School. She then taught in the Department of Defense school in Mannheim, Germany, for 11 years, and scarcely slowed down after retirement. A lifelong traveler, she visited at least 80 countries over the decades. Jean passed away peacefully on October 1 after a brief period in hospice.

September Unit Meetings Report

The **Southwest Unit** met at La Madelaine on South Hulen with seven members present. There was lively discussion of HB 4181 with several different viewpoints being explored. At the end of the discussion, the unit decided to ask the LWVTC Board to contact the State Board voicing our concerns with this bill and asking for further investigation at the state level.

The **Arlington unit** reported that eight members attended the unit meeting at the Fielder Museum. They were not impressed by the legislator's argument, because separation of powers makes no sense here. One member wanted to find out more about legislators' reasons for supporting the bill: Did they know about the impact on public access to information, or were they not paying attention? Over the next two years, there needs to be study of the impact of this change: will there be more denials of journalists' requests, less material sent to archives, etc.? Linda Pavlik, of the state LWV oversight committee, should be asked about this.

The **Trinity Terrace** unit reported that seven members and one guest discussed the implications of HB 4181. They were skeptical of Rep. Geren's reason for the bill, adjusting general housekeeping rules, and concerned that the real reason is to keep secret all deliberations on redistricting. A federal judge can waive the effects of the bill. Concerning redistricting, is the League going to work on legislation to reverse HB 4181 before actual districts are redrawn? Could a bill be passed at the beginning of the next legislative session (2021) before there are redistricting communications to be hidden?

At its October 14 meeting, the **LWVTC board** voted to send a letter to the state League, inquiring whether other Leagues have also expressed concern and inviting LWV Texas to look into the matter prior to the 2021 legislative session. This bill has been signed into law, so reversing the problematic provisions will take time. We may need to follow up on this matter at the LWV Texas convention in April 2020.

October Unit Meetings Will Discuss Constitutional Amendments

The unit meeting is at the heart of League activity, and unit leaders and the Board have planned for a year of lively discussions about the big issues of the day. LWV Tarrant County has four unit meetings, each meeting in the third week of the month:

- The **Arlington unit** meets on the 3rd Monday evenings of the month at the Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram in Arlington. The October meeting will thus be on October 21.
- The **Mid-Cities unit** meets on the 3rd Tuesday evening of the month at the Barnes and Noble in the Shops of NE Mall, on Melbourne Road next to Best Buy. This month, however, the unit meeting will be held on the 4th Tuesday, October 22.
- The **Fort Worth Downtown Lunch unit** meets at noon on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at Trinity Terrace, 1600 Texas Street. October 17 is the meeting date this month.
- The **Fort Worth Evening unit** meets the 3rd Thursday evening of the month at La Madeleine restaurant, corner of Hulen Street and I-20/820, at 6 p.m. The meeting this month is October 17.

The topic for October is the 12 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution that are on the November ballot. LWV Texas has prepared a helpful explanation of the rationale behind each amendment, plus its pros and cons, as part of VOTE 411. To review the amendments, please go online to <https://www.vote411.org>. For background on the Texas Constitution and the frequent amendment process it involves, go to <https://my.lwv.org/texas/election-information>.

Environment Committee Meets October 21

Committee chair Linda Hanratty will host the next meeting of the Environment Committee on Monday, October 21 at 5:00 p.m. at her home, 4236 Oak Park Ct., Fort Worth 76109. For more information, contact her at llswenard47@gmail.com or by phone at 817-800-5922.

March 20, 2020 — Save the Date to Help Us Celebrate 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment finally gave women the right to vote throughout the United States. While some states, particularly in the West, had already allowed women to vote in some or all elections, and racially discriminatory laws still denied suffrage to some women for several decades more, 1920 was the year when a constitutional amendment declared that women had full voting rights.

The Nineteenth Amendment needed bipartisan support to pass, and on March 20, 2020, we will honor that spirit of bipartisanship with a gala celebration of women who currently serve in elected office or have done so in the past. We have invited the county chairs of the Republican and the Democratic parties to help us honor six women in elected office (three from each party) at a Friday evening dinner at Ridglea Country Club.

If you would like to help in some way to make this event a fundraising and public relations success, contact Vickey Ward at vickeyward54@swbell.net or sign up for this committee at your unit meeting.

Hot Topic Luncheon Held October 9

Tarrant County's Deputy Elections Administrator, Troy Havard, spoke to 27 League members and guests at the Hot Topic Luncheon at Joe T. Garcia's Mexican Restaurant on October 9. He explained new voting procedures for the November 5 election, including the new Vote Centers that allow voters to vote at various sites around the county or in their home precincts on Election Day. He brought examples of the new voting equipment we will start using this November, and explained that the new system has several layers of security that make it extremely difficult to hack electronically, plus a paper ballot record that could be recounted if discrepancies should arise. Thanks to Carol Cordell for arranging this most informative program and to Troy Havard for allowing us to test out and see the new voting machines in action.

League Testimony at the Fort Worth Redistricting Hearing

Co-President Nancy Stevens was among the 70 people who testified before the redistricting panel at the October 9 hearing for Fort Worth, though the crowd was pretty thin by the time she spoke in the fourth hour of the hearing. Speaking on behalf of LWVTC, she urged the committee to adopt the state League's proposals for an independent redistricting commission to replace the current phenomenon of politicians being able to select their voters to create extremely safe districts. She reminded the panel that Tarrant County's current districts are not a good example to follow in 2021 redistricting efforts. The county has more than 2 million residents, and Fort Worth accounts for 43% of the county's population, but only three of the county's six congressional districts have representatives from Tarrant County (up from two in 2018, when the congressman from Ennis retired). One district extends from Weatherford to San Marcos as well as taking in part of Tarrant County; another runs two rural counties to the west while also taking in much of the west side of Fort Worth; and yet another is shaped like a barbell that follows a thin line across the Mid-Cities to tie together large populations in Fort Worth and Dallas. In addition, Texas still has yet to fix the three congressional districts that are considered unconstitutional and racially gerrymandered after the 2011 redistricting.

California relies on a redistricting commission made of individuals who are not elected officials or their families or party activists, who understand the need for compact districts that represent geographic communities instead of splitting them apart to create safe seats for one political party or the other. For information on the LWV Texas position on redistricting, visit <https://my.lwv.org/texas/redistrictingcensus> and review the fine information provided by issue chair Stephanie Swanson.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

We are the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County (LWVTC), one of the hundreds of local Leagues across the nation whose members — men and women — are committed to Making Democracy Work.

Our nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Your membership automatically enrolls you in LWV-Texas and LWVUS at no additional cost and provides publications from all three.

Mail your membership application, dues, and contributions to:

LWVTC, P. O. Box 100175, Fort Worth, TX 76185 or enroll online at <http://lwtarrantcounty.org/join.html>.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Basic Membership:

- \$75/yr **Regular** full voting member
- \$115/yr **Family** (two members in one household)
- \$5/yr **Student**

Or consider one of the following:

Supporting Membership:

- \$100/yr **Sustaining** Membership: Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- \$150/yr **Advocate** Membership: Carrie Chapman Catt
- \$200/yr **Patron** Membership: Mary McLeod Bethune
- \$300/yr **Benefactor** Membership: Eleanor Roosevelt

THE VOTER NEWSLETTER BY U.S. MAIL

- \$10/yr (*online VOTER is no additional cost*)

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City/Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Mobile) _____

Would you like to attend one of our Unit meetings? If so, please indicate which Unit would best suit your needs.

- Arlington Area Downtown Fort Worth Area Northeast Tarrant County
- South/Southwest Tarrant County