

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE HOUSTON AREA

94TH ANNUAL MEETING

Report to the Membership AND WORKBOOK

2014



AMERICAN REPAST | John Ross Palmer

ABRIDGED EDITION | FULL EDITION INCLUDES ALL CURRENT POLICY
POSITIONS AND MAY BE ACCESSED AT WWW.LWVHOUSTON.ORG

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.



**94th Annual Meeting
League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Thursday - May 22, 2014**

The Montrose Center
401 Branard Street
Houston Texas 77006

5:30 pm
Buffet Dinner

6:00 pm
Keynote Address
Roksan Okan-Vick
Executive Director
Houston Parks Board

Annual Meeting follows immediately.

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Endpaper illustration: “*American Repast*” by John Ross Palmer

The presence of 18 members will constitute a quorum, enabling us to conduct business at this Annual Meeting (Bylaws, Art. VIII, Sec 3).

Please note that this workbook includes information about programs and outreach activities conducted by our affiliated organization, the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund.

League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
94th Annual Meeting
Thursday - May 22, 2014

Order of Business

Call to Order	Carolyn Mata
Organization Appointment of Parliamentarian Appointment of Timekeeper Appointment of Committee to Approve Minutes Adoption of Order of Business Adoption of Rules	Carolyn Mata
Treasurer's Report	Barb Swartz
Local Issues: Study and Advocacy Adoption of Proposed Changes to Existing Positions	Januari Leo
Report of the Budget Committee Adoption of the Budget, 2014-2015	Katie Molina
Awards and Appreciations Report of the Awards Committee	Sharon Cunningham
President's Remarks	Carolyn Mata
Report of the Nominating Committee Election of Officers, 2014-2015	Mary Lee Burrus
Advice to the Board (I wish the Board would...)	Carolyn Mata
Announcements	Carolyn Mata
Adjourn	

**The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Minutes of the 93rd Annual Meeting
May 22, 2013**

***The Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area was called to order at 6:50 pm by President Linda Cohn. A quorum of members having been recorded as present, the business of the Annual Meeting commenced.**

***Procedural Announcements:**

Martha Murphree shall serve as Parliamentarian.

Ann Herbage shall serve as Timekeeper.

Marcia Miqueloto and Penny Milbouer shall serve as a committee to review and approve the minutes of this meeting.

The annual meeting shall proceed in accordance with the rules published in the Annual Meeting Workbook and Report to Members.

Laura Blackburn moved to amend the agenda to insert a discussion of strengths of the LWV after the budget portion of the agenda. Motion carried.

***The Treasurer's Report was presented by Barb Swartz.**

***Vice-President Jan Wilbur** recommended that all current positions be retained. Laura Blackburn moved approval of the recommendation, and the motion carried. Jan recommended four minor editorial changes described on page 16 of the workbook, and all were approved.

***Budget Committee Chair Barbara McCormick presented a motion on behalf of the Budget Committee that annual dues be held at the same level as last year.** The motion carried.

***Budget Committee Chair Barbara McCormick presented the report of the Budget Committee and moved that it be approved by the general membership.** Judy Hollinger moved that the budget be amended by adding \$600 to provide printed membership directories. The amount was increased to \$750 in a friendly gesture from Barbara Swartz. The amended motion was approved.

***Laura Blackburn led a discussion of what the Houston League of Women Voters does well.**

- Minutes continue on following page

***Sharon Cunningham presented the report of the Awards Committee:**

For encouraging civic engagement with veterans and the Spanish speaking community, a special achievement award was presented to Tom Berg.

For outstanding service in chairing the Board Governance Committee, a special achievement award was presented to Mary Lee Burrus.

For outstanding service as chair of the Budget Committee, a special achievement award was presented to Barbara McCormick.

For outstanding service as co-chairs for the Repast, special achievement awards were presented to Ryan Leach and Sarah Schimmer.

The Helen Hunter Award is presented to the one individual who, over the course of membership, by productive work and by excellent deportment, has furthered the mission of the League of Women Voters. The recipient of the 2013 Helen Hunter Award is Jackie Alfred.

***Mary Lee Burrus thanked Linda Cohn for her leadership on behalf of the board.** A \$400 contribution was made to the LWV Education Fund in honor of Linda.

***Lynn Walshak presented the report of the Nominating Committee.** Linda Cohn moved that the report be accepted. The motion passed. As provided by the Bylaws, the terms of office for newly elected leaders commence immediately.

President: Carolyn Mata (2013-2015)

Executive Vice President: Aimee Mobley Turney (2013-2015)

Vice President Civic Engagement: Claudia Ortega Hogue (2013-2015)

Vice President Program and Advocacy: Januari Leo (2013-2014)

Secretary: Mary Ellen Whitworth (2013-2015)

Director: Annie Johnson Benifield (2013-2015)

Director: Ryan Leach (2013-2015)

Director: Molly R. Salazar (2013-2015)

Director: Vannessa Wade (2013-2015)

Director: Sherry R. Walshak (2013-2014)

Nominating Committee: Mary Lee Burrus, Chair (2013-2014)

Nominating Committee: Nancy Parra (2013-2014)

Nominating Committee: Lynn Walshak (2013-2014)

***The President's Report was presented by Linda Cohn.**

***The Annual Meeting was adjourned.**

-minutes recorded by Mary Lee Burrus and approved by Penny Milbouer and Marcia Miqueloto

Proposed Rules for the Annual Meeting

Composition

Admission to the Annual Meeting is open to voting members, associate members and guests. Only voting members may vote.

Quorum (ART VIII, SEC 3, LWV-HA BYLAWS)

Eighteen members must be present in order to conduct business at this meeting.

Debate

Only voting members have the privilege of the floor. No person may speak twice until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Each speaker shall identify herself or himself. Each debate speaker shall be limited to one minute, plus the time required to complete a sentence.

Closing Debate

A motion to halt debate is stated as "I move the previous question." This motion, which must be seconded, is not debatable and must be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds vote is necessary to adopt this motion. If adopted, debate is immediately ended, and the motion under debate is voted upon.

Voting Procedures

A majority of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election of officers. Nominations for officers may be made from the floor by any voting member at the appropriate time, provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting, provided the amendments have been submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance.

Annual dues

Annual dues are determined by a three-fifths vote of those present and voting.

Budget

Adoption of the budget requires a majority vote.

Governing Rules

The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws.

Report of the President Carolyn Mata

It has been an honor to be your president this year as the Houston LWV reinvents itself into a multigenerational, diverse organization.

My main goals were to improve the **technology** in the office and upgrade the **website**.

Turning to our **website** – early on, we contracted with a graphic designer to convert the website to a WordPress platform. This popular, upkeep-friendly platform turned out to be a disappointment both in look and function. In response, we have moved forward with plans to revise and upgrade all elements of the website, hiring independent contractor Jenny Tran to be our professional webmaster. For a more detailed review of our website analysis please see the report of the Marketing committee:

Marketing Committee

Sherry Walshak, Chair

Committee: Aimee Turney, Sarah Schimmer, Vannessa Wade, Carolyn Mata (ex officio)

The marketing committee has been focused on the LWV-Houston website, making it more engaging. In this digital economy the website is the face of the organization and it must be easy to use, interesting, and provide value/services. Immediate needs are a better organization of content, adding photos to reflect the diversity of the members as well as rotating content to highlight key events.

Additionally, we decided to have committee members to be assigned to each VP/Program chair to get updates on activities that can be quickly posted to our website. We reviewed the current website, compared to other websites for best practices and identified a need to address a technical issue.

As to **technology**, all office computers and printers now work without freezing. A modern file server was purchased and installed. The next step is to review the myriad files on the M drive, sorting through to move each file to the cloud, to delete, or appropriately categorize. Additional details are provided below, courtesy of consultant Reggie Alston:

The first quarter of 2014 has seen the Houston Area League take a large step forward in updating its computer technology infrastructure. Starting from a network infrastructure that based on an aging Windows 2003 based file server the following improvements to the have been made.

**The addition of Wireless network access that allows league members to access the network using their mobile devices when visiting the League office.*

- Technology continues on following page

**Replaced the obsolete file server with a modern Windows 2012 based server that provides additional storage capacity and expanded network services.*

**Replaced the receptionist workstation with a new Windows 7 based workstation.*

**Upgraded the RAM on the remaining workstations and upgraded operating systems to Windows 7. These machines are beyond their useful life and should be replaced when possible.*

**MS Office and QuickBooks software have also been upgraded to current versions.*

**Installation of open source document management software that will allow for ore control of the document generation and maintenance process.*

**Implemented secure remote access to the league network down to the desktop level allowing League personnel to access network resources including the document management system when not in the office.*

The improvements noted above provide a solid foundation for the support of the Leagues activities going forward.

An ad hoc committee was chartered to address **office space**. Here's the report:

Office Space Assessment

Nancy Parra, Chair

Committee: Lindsay Taylor Munoz, Marcia Miqueloto.

The five-year lease that LWV Houston Area has with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services (Mildred Holman, building owner) is expiring this May. With the departure of the Executive Director in 2012, LWV-HA no longer needed such a large office and the Board believed that a smaller, more centrally located office might be better, depending on the rental charged. Another option that had been proposed was to sub-let the available, unoccupied office in the current location. Although the monthly rent of \$800 was reasonable, an ad hoc committee was formed. When the committee began to explore other available spaces, it became apparent that rentals had increased in the Houston Area. Fortunately, Rebecca Rodriguez wanted to sub-let the available office at the rate of \$145 per month. After speaking with building management, they agreed to extend the lease for one year at a small increase of 10%, or \$80 per month. It was decided that the best solution was to remain in the current location and sub-let the unused space.

- President's Report continues on following page

A **Strategic Thinking Committee**, chaired by Lynn Walshak, was chartered to continue the important work of organization assessment and reform. In order for LWV-Houston to be an effective organization, it must develop statements of governance and structure in the policy handbook and an updated job description for all board members, officers, committee members and staff.

The Committee recommended the creation of four sub-committees for 2013-14, each addressing a specific area: Governance, Office Space, Marketing and Public Relations, and the Development a Procedural Handbook to guide Board members, volunteers and employees. The work of the Office Space and Marketing Sub-committees has concluded. Their reports are included above. The Governance and Procedural Handbook groups are in process.

In addition to the major **special events** described in the following section, we also:

- *travelled to Austin on May 26 to receive a special proclamation from the Texas House of Representatives recognizing recent LWV-Houston presidents and honoring our organization.

- *with the Greater Houston Partnership, co-hosted the State of the County luncheon on February 27. Sarah Schimmer organized a group of distinguished guests for the LWV-Houston table.

- *maintained and strengthened strong community partnerships with sister civic organizations, including One Voice, the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, NALEO, Neighborhood Centers Inc. and the Citizens Environmental Coalition.

- *attended the LWV-Texas state convention and are making plans to attend the LWV-US convention this summer in Dallas.

Reports on Special Projects

Women's Equality Day Commemoration Ryan Leach and Sarah Schimmer, Chairs

Our fourth annual Women's Equality Day Observance was held on September 26 at the Hughes Hangar. The cocktail-style reception featured a salute to President's Medal recipient Christina Gorczynski along with the introduction of the competitively-selected *Rising Stars* class of 2013-2014. This year's *Rising Stars* are: Kris Banks, Bethany Bannister, Scott Braddock, Celeste Byrom (winner of the Carrie Chapman Catt award), Veronica Chapa-Jones, Durrel Douglas,



Jovanna David, Russell Etherton, Tammy Friedeck, Christina Garza, Reynaldo Guerra, Reda Hicks, Ariana Montelongo de Valdivia, Lindsay Munoz, Jerry Peruchini, Meredith Phillips, Lillie Schechter, Courtenay Sigfried, Eric T. Tung, Ne'Cauje Turner, Fransheneka Watson, Lou Weaver, Michael Webb and Roxanne Werner.

Repast With Political Pioneers Aimee Arrington and Jane Cummins, Chairs

The 13th annual Repast Fundraising Luncheon was held on May 2, 2014, honoring United States Representatives Ted Poe and Al Green. Ernie Manouse (Houston Public Media Channel 8) led



the honorees on a conversational stroll through their careers in public service. Ariana Montelongo de Valdivia (Houston MediaSource) served as emcee. The event was well-attended and yielded Ed Fund revenue in excess of budget expectations. Repast 2014 was enhanced by a special affiliation with Houston artist John Ross Palmer, who designated the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund as his charitable partner for 2014. Mr.

Palmer created a series of original art to honor the suffrage movement and generously donated a portion of sales proceeds to the LWV-Houston Ed Fund. Those with an eye for social media will be pleased to know that a lively Repast Twitter campaign reached 104,997 individuals with 274,391 impressions.

- *Special Projects continues on following page*

“Your America” Public Education Campaign

During the 2013 Election Season, all METRO buses, trains and Park-and-Ride stations were festooned with LWV placards encouraging voter registration, featuring the message: “*Register.*



**REGISTER. VOTE.
THIS IS YOUR AMERICA**

Vote. This is Your America.” These placards were replaced with: “*Vote. This is Your America.*” after the registration deadline. Each placard included a Quick Response code pushing to a special LWV webpage, in

English and in Spanish, offering basic voting information. Take-away LWV handouts were available on buses and trains, in English and in Spanish, explaining the voting process.

Reports of the Vice Presidents and Their Committees

Vice President for Membership Affairs – Martha Murphree

Membership Committee Judy Hollinger, Chair

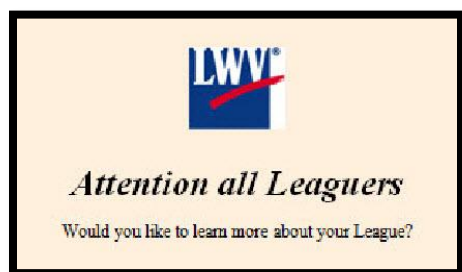
Total active membership as of April 15, 2014: 233
Individual: 172
Household: 44
Associate: 12
Student: 5
New members enrolled (May 2013-May 2014): 51

The 2013-2014 membership Committee proposed the following goals for membership:

**Recruit and retain members*

All new members received an email and personal phone call from the membership chair, welcoming them to the League and assessing their desired level of participation.

League Basics/Member Orientation- This program originated with Leslie Taylor who hosted 4 League Basics meetings at her house from September 2013 through March 2014. These well attended meetings covered basic aspects of the LWV at all 3 of its levels- national, state and local. New members were able to meet committee chairs and Board members and to ask questions and indicate specific programs and activities which interested them. Members with specific interests were referred to committee chairs for placement.



Renewing Members- Updated policies were established for dues renewal notices and follow-up with non-renewing members. This has resulted in a higher percentage of renewals as well as improved the accuracy of information on our member data base. The office staff in place since October 2013 has done an excellent job of implementing these procedures.

Associate Memberships—an option allowing established members to change their membership to a non-voting, reduced cost local membership has resulted in restoring 8 inactive members to active status.

- Membership continues on following page

**Increase member participation in LWV activities*

Members who expressed an interest in becoming active in the LWV received phone calls and emails throughout the year about upcoming events and were encouraged to participate.

On Line unit—The Membership Committee determined that participation in the traditional Unit meeting structure was declining and that newer and younger members were not joining in the Unit discussions. An effort was begun to establish an OnLine Unit and is expected to be fully operable by June, 2014

**Improve communication among members*

A Membership Directory and Handbook was compiled, printed and mailed to all members in August, 2013.

To accommodate our 20 members who do not use email, the monthly newsletter is printed and mailed to them.

**Maintain an updated and correct member database*

The LWV-HA Member Data Base was updated and is currently maintained on a weekly basis by office staff. All changes and additions are incorporated in LWVUS and LWV-TX records. The annual membership report was filed with LWVUS in January to establish our annual PMP obligations.

Thanks to a very active Membership Committee. In addition the eVOTER was sent each month to all members with email addresses. Information was supplied by officers and committee chairs, compiled by Martha Murphree, and edited by Sherry Walshak.



Vice President for Issues Study and Advocacy – Januari Leo

The League of Women Voters-Houston explored a number of timely issues during the 2013-14 programming year, through educational forums, unit discussions, and state recommendations.

**Educational Forums*

In September 2013, Penny Milbouer organized a presentation on modern day slavery, or Human Trafficking. Panel members included Harris County Deputy Sheriff Javier Perez and Senior Assistant County Attorney, Linda Geffin. Victims of trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or

- Issues continues on following page

coercion for the purposes of commercial sex, debt bondage, or forced labor. The panel addressed what participants could do about this problem that is “hidden in plain sight”. The League partnered with the National Association of Social Workers –Houston (NASW), and offered continuing education credits for social workers, LPCs, and LMFTs.



In November 2013, Januari Leo organized a presentation about the Affordable Care Act, which focused on basic information and the Insurance Marketplace. Panel members included Randall Ellis with Legacy Community Health Services, Mario Castillo with Enroll America, and Travis Sheive, speaking from a consumer perspective. The League once again partnered with NASW-Houston, and offered CEUs. A follow up healthcare program was filmed in February 2014 for Houston MediaSource, where

Januari Leo gave a one hour presentation on the ACA.

In January 2014, Katie Molina and the Natural Resources committee organized a presentation on water conservation. Panel members included Jim Lester from the Houston Advanced Research Center, Bob Stokes with the Galveston Bay Foundation, Whitney Milberger-Laird with Masuen Water Resource Consultants and Margaret Menger from the City of Houston. The program investigated water conservation issues at hand for the local Houston area, since Proposition 6 was approved by voters in early November 2013. Discussion revolved around dealing with drought, drainage and infrastructure challenges, managing our collective water resources, safeguarding water quality, and improving and innovating technologies to help save water.

In April 2014, Peggy Hill organized a presentation on literacy development. Panel members included State Representative Alma Allen, Margaret Doughty and Sheri Elder with Adult Literacy Organizations, Carol Bedard with HISD, and Carol Shattock with Collaborative for Children. Partnering agencies included the Harris County Department of Education, Collaborative for Children, Houston A+, LWV-Bay Area, Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, Greater Houston Area Reading Council, and the Houston Center for Literacy. The program focused on the importance and development of literacy in the Houston Area from pre-school through adults.

**Unit Meetings*

Unit meetings reflected the program topics on the corresponding months. Other topics of discussion included pre-school education in October 2014, and marijuana legalization and decriminalization in February 2014.

- Issues continue on following page

**Consensus Report*

Two consensus reports were submitted: Human Trafficking and Agriculture.

**2014-16 Recommended Studies*

Study of charter schools in HISD – one-year study

Study of hurricane preparedness for the Houston/Harris County region – two-year study

Report of the Natural Resources Committee

Katie Molina, Chair

Committee: Carolyn Mata, Sue Schwaller, Nancy Parra, Laura Blackburn, Jan Wilbur and Mary Ellen Whitworth, Januari Leo (ex officio)

The Natural Resources Report convened in August 2013 .The group began meetings to discuss possible program topics, prescheduled for January 2014. Two topics rose to the top of the list immediately – the City’s proposed One Bin recycling plan and water issues. From August to October, the committee began probing into both topics by way of research, shared articles, expert opinion and field trips. After each meeting, the chair provided written recaps and summaries for the members in order to sustain continuity, gain feedback, provide reading links and contact information for follow up, and to propose subsequent topics and meeting schedules. The group was very active from August 2013 through April 2014.

We visited the City’s Green Building Resource Center and viewed exhibits illustrating ways to conserve water and energy and recycle. We also toured the roof to see the new solar panels installed there. We then utilized their free meeting space to hold our first discussions on One Bin, and it quickly came to light that this proposal was a hotly contested idea, strongly opposed by the Sierra Club and Texas Campaign for the Environment. This prompted us to reach out to Laura Spanjian, the Mayor’s Director of Sustainability, to learn more about the City’s intentions. At that time, the Mayor’s office declared the proposal unready for rollout, with much fact gathering still to be done, therefore, the committee resolved to table this for the future and move forward on water issues next.

The committee then visited the City of Houston Waterworks Museum and Education Center and water treatment facility to learn more about our water supply. After touring this impressive exhibit and reading the materials provided, we felt we learned a lot about where our water comes from and how the recent drought was affecting our supply. Subsequently, we decided to investigate further into the more specific topic of water conservation.

We met again and invited Whitney Milburger-Laird of Masuen Water Consultants to brief us on the State Water Plan and Proposition 6, which was to be on the November ballot. We reviewed her materials on the subject, along with many editorials and informative articles along the way relating to this issue. We also reviewed the findings of the Mayor’s Water Conservation Task

-Natural Resources continues on following page

Force that met the previous summer. As a result, the decision was made to feature water conservation in our January program, mainly due to the pressing and severe drought, but also due to the timeliness of Proposition 6 being on the ballot in the short term.

From here, our chair invited local experts to present at our program. We led off with Scott Jones of Galveston Bay Foundation who spoke about where Houston water goes after we use it, describing environmental flows, water reuse problems, and sustaining our fisheries with that water. Then Jim Lester of Houston Area Research Center gave a great review of the issues, the State Water Plan and its strengths and weaknesses, along with many ideas of ways we can conserve water locally to ensure an adequate supply for a burgeoning population. Whitney Milburger-Laird from Masuen then briefed the group on the issues of outdoor irrigation, the biggest water user and where we might be able to conserve the most in the short term. She also described a newly completed pilot program in Katy. In closing, Margaret Menger gave us a summary of what the City's current plans were relating to water conservation.

The program was very well attended, indicating a high interest in the subject. Our chair wrote a brief and discussion questions which were subsequently shared with Unit Leaders at their monthly discussion groups. Based on this interest level among our membership and on the general disappointment with the City's strategies on this issue, we felt we had a mandate to take back to the City to encourage them to give more priority to water conservation issues in general, and to push forward with more constructive ideas.

Carolyn Mata, NR committee member and LWV board president, and our NR chair met with City Councilmember Stephen Costello to pursue the matter. As a civil engineer by trade, very involved in flooding issues already, and a champion of the City's Rebuild Houston effort to repair aging infrastructure, he was very receptive to our findings. This meeting served as a catalyst for their further research into the issue of conservation, and they are now meeting with some of our contacts in the community to learn more about new projects to use water more efficiently and to determine if the City might be able to win some Proposition 6 funding for some new projects. We have established an open line of communication with his office on this topic, and we will receive updates to their investigations as they go along.

The Natural Resources Committee also met several times with great effort to support the LWVUS Agricultural Consensus effort. Unable to manage the full scope of the project originally requested, we still sought to make a significant contribution to the process by reducing the material for review to a workable level for our membership to consider, and also reducing the topics to those we could address intelligently from our urban perspective. In the end, we were able to gather a useful report to include in their findings.

Our chair has also recently recruited 4 new members to add to our Natural Resources Committee, some becoming new LWV-Houston members in the process, based on their interest in natural resources. We welcome all to participate during the coming year.

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**Report of the Agriculture Committee
(Members of the NR Committee)
Laura Blackburn, Chair**

My thanks to the NR Committee for volunteering to help with the agriculture consensus. We all worked very hard, met many times, and accomplished the following:

- Reading many of the 22 background papers prepared by LWVUS (60 total pages, small print)
- Choosing questions for units to consider
- Preparing our own background paper entitled “LWV-HA Guide to the Agriculture Consensus,” which was placed on the website along with links to the full papers on the LWVUS website. Thanks to Aimee for doing that.
- Preparing a Recorder’s Form for units
- Sending all of the information to Mary Lee Burrus for distribution to units
- Preparing for and attending the briefing for Discussion Leaders
- Attending all 5 units as Discussion Leaders as “Resource”
- Preparing a summary of responses of units
- Reviewing the summary and determining the response for LWV-HA.

Every unit had access to the materials we had prepared and, to varying degrees, were ready to take consensus. According to the three members who attended our five units, the discussions were very good and unit members were engaged and enjoyed the process of consensus.



This was much more work than usual for either a state or national consensus, much less a local one. I will be attending the LWVUS convention, and either by a motion or direction to the board, I will encourage the board to have future background papers limited to 10-15 pages, i.e., summarizing any material committee members have written.

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City/County Action Team

Jan Wilbur, Chair

The City/County Action Team formed in January 2014. The League has a number of positions relating to City and County Government. The committee will look at those positions, research the political scene to see what is possible and what is most important for the health of the future of the City and/or the County, and devise a course of action on a specific issue and act on that plan.

The committee chose five possible action items for further research. Those five are:

1. Pensions, including, the gender and ethnic makeup of those getting City pensions who would be most impacted by changes in the pension system. The League held a public meeting on the financial aspects of pensions in early 2012 so that members are informed about that issue as it relates to the health and well-being of the City of Houston budget.
2. Term limits. The League has a long-standing position for the elimination of term limits, although, it can also support two four-year terms as a step in the right direction.
3. Water conservation. The January 2014 public meeting brought members up to date on water conservation.
4. Hurricane preparedness. The League has a position on building codes in coastal areas but none specifically on hurricane preparedness, although, a hurricane impacting the ship channel industries would certainly cause environmental damage and we do have positions relating to protection of vulnerable populations from toxic chemicals. This is an item in the public discourse at this time and it is appropriate for the League to do some research and gather information on the issue.
5. Comprehensive planning and coordination in the ETJ, especially, as it pertains to Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs). Over 900 MUDs operate in the Houston area as independent entities with their own elected boards of directors responsible only to the residents in their territory.

Committee member Lisa Robertson, researched the **pension issue** and found that we cannot find out the gender and ethnic makeup of those getting City pensions. Furthermore, any further major changes depend on the Texas Legislature giving control of the pensions back to the City. We will continue to monitor the situation but put the issue on the back burner for the time being.

Term limits are currently being researched.

The Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Katie Molina, is taking action with regard to **water conservation**.

Committee member Xavier Herrera secured a speaker, Ammy Gierzak with the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to tell us what Harris County does currently for **hurricane preparedness**. Committee member Laura Blackburn contacted Jim Blackburn (no relation), to speak at the late March meeting concerning progress of the Gulf Coast Protection and Recovery District, the Ike Dike and the SSPEED Center. Laura Blackburn reported on that meeting in the April e-VOTER. The committee would like to see the proposed two-year study on Hurricane Preparedness adopted to reach consensus on the best plan for Houston and Harris County.

Vice President for Civic Engagement – Claudia Ortega-Hogue

Debates and Forums Aimee Turney, Chair

LWV-Houston co-sponsored several mayoral debates including Channel 8, GHWCC, and one at Leonel Castillo Community Center.



It was an exciting election season for the League. Not only did we host a series of candidate conversations with our partners at Houston Media Source, we also hosted the only Houston Mayoral Debate with our other media partners at Channel 8. To say it was a huge success would be an understatement. This year's mayoral race was particularly contentious and the ratings were high as the community tuned in to see who they wanted to vote for. It was a big push to educate the community and the work the League did reached out to and engaged more Houstonians than ever.

– submitted by Ryan Leach

Monthly TV Program – Houston MediaSource Aimee Turney, Chair

In the fall, there were several editions of *Conversations with the Candidates*. The spring shows featured interviews with guests corresponding to our fall programs.



Note: there is a video library of all recordings on Vimeo.

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Handy Dandy Guide to the Elections

Updated editions of this trifold brochure were prepared and made available for distribution throughout the community.

Outreach to the Hispanic Community

Tom Berg, Chair

Under the leadership of Tom Berg supported by Claudia Ortega-Hogue and Beni Gutierrez, LWV sustained our expanded outreach into the Hispanic community through community events,



television programs, Twitter and other social media outreach. We worked with our partners at Univision, NALEO, Mi Familia Vota, and Neighborhood Centers, Inc., in numerous bilingual voter registration efforts and GOTV programs including Naturalization Ceremonies, High School voter drives and Ripley House events.

Tom and Claudia used their bilingual skills to represent the League and discuss voter registration and voter participation on several shows telecast on Univision during the election season. Both were active during Houston's Citizenship Month which Claudia co-chaired and for which Tom served on the steering committee. Tom provided live and objective commentary in Spanish during Telemundo's Election night coverage. Tom also actively recruited young Hispanic talent for board membership.



Voters Guide Committee Report

Jacqueline Alfred, Chair

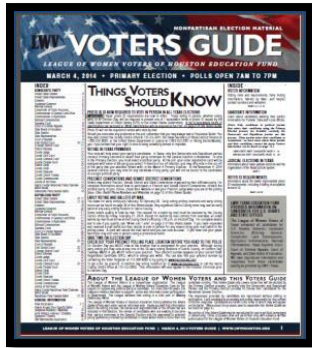
A team of over 20 people worked to produce *Voters Guides* for the November 2013 General Election and the March 2014 Primary Election.

We printed and distributed 20,000 English language and 13,000 Spanish language *Voters Guides* for the November 2013 General Election. For the March 2014 Primary Election, the numbers were 19,000 English and 9,500 Spanish language for printed *Voters Guides*. We are grateful to our many community partners and the local media for helping us promote and distribute the printed edition of the Guide.

-Voters Guide continues on following page

For both elections, in addition to the *Voters Guides* in printed form, we offered online links to the English and Spanish versions of the Guide on our website. Links to our online Guide were provided to numerous other organizations, media, and individuals to be posted on their websites, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

The Voter411 interactive software, provided through an account with LWV-US, was again used to compile the content for the *Voters Guide*. The software program enables us to contact the candidates and receive their responses to our questions, electronically. The Vote411 system and other electronic means of communication and information sharing is making the work of the VG committee much more efficient and streamlined and expedites the process of developing the database of candidates, contacting those candidates, collecting responses, and developing the layout. Information about statewide candidates and statewide ballot issues is compiled by LWV/TX and we purchase the right to reproduce the material in our Guide.



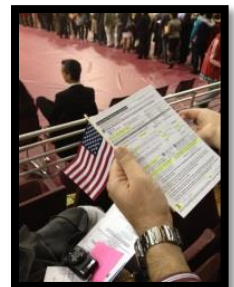
In 2013-14 the *Voters Guide* covered candidates and ballot issues at the National, State, County and City level and included comprehensive information about voting and the election process.

We are currently beginning work on the *Voters Guide* for the 2014 General Election in November and exploring the possibility of increasing our outreach into the Asian community with *Voters Guides* produced in Vietnamese and/or Mandarin Chinese.

Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies

Tom Berg, Beni Gutierrez, Judy Hollinger, Mary Titus, Chairs

One of the most rewarding outreach efforts for the LWV-Houston Ed Fund and the biggest voter registration program among any local league in the U.S., this voter registration effort at the Naturalization Ceremonies each month brings together 20-30 league and community volunteers. Representatives from the Harris County Tax Assessor/Voter Registrar's office are present to take receipt of the completed voter registrations. We always need more qualified volunteers. Please contact the LWV office to learn how you can be a part of this effort.



-Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies continues on following page

**Voter Registration at Houston Area Naturalization Ceremonies
2013**

DATE	Number of Petitioners	Number of New Citizens Serviced on the Spot	Rate of Response
1/23/13	2272	1835	81%
2/25/13	2227	1725	77%
3/27/13	2291	1942	85%
4/24/13	2051	1257	61%
5/15/13	1528	1148	75%
6/26/13	2146	1634	76%
7/ 31/13	2191	1539	70%
8/28/13	1713	1226	72%
9/25/13	1685	1181	70%
10/23/13	2005	1673	83%
11/ 20/13	1829	1504	82%
12/18/13	1518	1205	79%
TOTAL:	23,456	17,869	76%

2014

DATE	Number of Petitioners	Number of New Citizens Serviced on the Spot	Rate of Response
1/15/14	1,087	910	84%
2/20/14	1,614	990	61%
3/26/14	1,577	1,161	74%
4/23/14	1,256	925	74%
TOTAL:	5,534	3,986	72%

Local Issues: Study and Advocacy for 2014-2015
Report of the Programming Committee
Januari Leo, Vice-President

2014-16 Recommended Studies

Study of charter schools in HISD – one-year study

Study of hurricane preparedness for the Houston/Harris County region – two-year study

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015
Report of the Budget Committee
Barbara McCormick, Chair
Martha Murphree, Co-chair

Committee: Barb Swartz, Beni Gutierrez, Katie Molina, Carolyn Mata (ex officio)

Please note that the membership is presently charged with approving a budget for the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area only. A budget for the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund will be approved by the LWV-Education Fund Board of Trustees at their first meeting of the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Items pertaining to the LWV-Education Fund are included for information only.

Budget data charts begin on page 24 and conclude on page 27.

		LWV HA		LWV HEF		Pro- posed 2014- 2015		
	INCOME	YTD 3/28	Budget	YTD 3/28	Budget	LWV HA	LWV HEF	TOTAL
101	Dues	10,718	15,000			15,000		15,000
102	Focus on Issues Meetings							0
103	Holiday Reception		1,000					0
104	Program Planning							0
105	Annual Meeting		1,200			1,500		1,500
106	Raffle		1,000					0
107	Repast			165	52,000		55,000	55,000
108	Fall Fundraiser/ Special Event			6,834	25,000		7,000	7,000
109	Leaders for Democracy	0	3,000		3,000	0	0	0
110	Member Donations, unrestricted	1,049	3,500	18,937	4,000	1,000	4,000	5,000
111	Nonmember Donation, unrestricted			683	100		700	700
112	Corporate Donations, unrestricted			499	2,000		500	500
113	Memorials		1,500				2,000	2,000
114	LWVUS Grants							0
115	Foundation Grants				25,000			0
116	New Funding Avenues				2,500		5,000	5,000
117	In-Kind Contribution of Goods	651	5,000	112	5,000	1,000	1,000	2,000
118	Directory of Elected officials				600		600	600
119	Voters Guide			7,504	10,000		7,505	7,505
120	Member List Rental/Sale		1,000			1,000		1,000
121	Misc.			255				0
122	Sublet Rent			290			1,800	1,800
123	TOTAL	12,418	32,200	35,279	129,200	19,500	85,105	104,605

		LWV HA		LWV HEF		2014- 2015		
	EXPENSE	YTD 2/28	Budget	YTD 2/28	Budget	LWV HA	LWV HEF	TOTAL
201	Rent	960	1,450	6,240	8,150	1,575	8,925	10,500
202	Maintenance		45		45	45	45	90
203	Telephone	209	410	1,362	2,315	450	2,400	2,850
204	Office Supplies	72	150	242	180	75	200	275
205	Software Updates	95	75		315	0	0	0
206	Postage	64	50	514	1,200	100	600	700
207	Insurance, liability & worker's comp	50	180	282	850	180	850	1,030
207 a	Insurance, D&O		750		750	375	375	750
208	Equipment		300	1,996	850	100	100	200
209	Equipment Maintenance		30	1,270	255	100	400	500
210	In-Kind Contribution of Goods	651	5,000	112	5,000	1,000	1,000	2,000
211	Focus on Issues Meetings			245	290		300	300
212	Holiday Event		750					0
213	Program Planning				100			0
214	Annual Meeting	119	1,000			1,000		1,000
215	Lobbying Activities		100			100		100
216	Membership		100			100		100
217	Funding expense	107	100			125	100	225
218	Directory	417	0			450	0	450
219	VOTER	22	0	97		45	125	170
220	Annual Meeting Workbook		150			125		125
221	Strategic Planning	17	375	334	2,125	100	400	500
222	Convention/ Council		0		500	0	1,000	1,000
223	Voter Registration			57	500	0	800	800
224	Special Project				400	0	0	0
225	Voters Guide, printed			17,953	24,000	0	8,855	8,855

		LWV HA			LWV HEF			2014- 2015		
	EXPENSE	YTD 2/28	Budget		YTD 2/28	Budget		LWV HA	LWV HEF	TOTAL
226	Voters Key					550			550	550
227	Facts & Issues									0
228	Voter ID Project					300				0
	Mobile Voter Education Project									0
230	Program Study									0
231	Debates & Forums					2,000			2,000	2,000
232	Fall Fundraiser/ Special Event				2,051	6,500			2,500	2,500
233	Repast				1,200	25,000			25,000	25,000
234	Annual Report		15					100		100
235	Public Relations									0
236	Dues to Coalitions				1,975	1,300			2,000	2,000
237	Member List Rental/Sale								1,000	1,000
238	LWVUS Grant Expenses									0
239	Office Administrator	946	7,200		6,490	8,840		2,340	13,260	15,600
240	Website	80	150					225	1,275	1,500
241	Equipment	352	3,600							0
242	Payroll Taxes	174	1,310		338	660		175	995	1,170
243	Auto Expense		40					15	25	40
244	Staff Development		40			210		100		100
245	Professional Services	450	3,000		1,385	6,000		500	1,500	2,000
246	LWVUS PMP	3,681	4,500		1,841	3,500		3,700	3,700	7,400
247	LWV-TX PMP	2,618	3,400		1,310	2,400		2,600	2,600	5,200
248	Contingency		1,100			425		2,000	2,000	4,000
249	Bank & Pay Pal Charges	180	500		60	665		180	180	360
250	Credit Card Lease				387	520			45	45
	TOTAL	11,265	35,870		47,740	106,695		17,980	85,105	103,085

						Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
	LWV- HA Year-to- date	Budget		LWV- Ed Fund Year- to-date	Budget	LWV- HA 2014- 2015	LWV- Ed Fund 2014- 2015	TOTAL
Difference	1,153	-3,670		-12,461	22,505	1,520	0	1,520

Report of the Awards Committee

Sharon Cunningham, Chair

Committee: Tom Berg, Ann Herbage, Sherry Walshak, Carolyn Mata (ex-officio)

The Awards Committee has the pleasure of recognizing League members for distinguished service. In keeping with tradition, 2014 recipients will be revealed at the Annual Meeting. 2013 award recipients are as follows:

2012-2013 Outstanding Service

Thomas Berg
Mary Lee Burrus
Ryan Leach
Sarah Schimmer
Barbara McCormick
Lynn Walshak

Helen Hunter Award– Jacqueline Alfred

2013-2014

To be announced at the 2014 Annual Meeting

Guidelines for the Awards Program

1. Present Outstanding Service Awards for notable accomplishment to individuals who, over the course of the League Year, have shepherded a significant program or project to great success. Use meaningful criteria, or yardsticks, to evaluate activities and performance, such as:

- Is it mission-critical?
Is it driven by the organization's goals, e.g. financial development, membership growth/diversity, strong leadership, organizational excellence, community outreach, etc..
- Is it relevant?
- Did it attain results?

The number of Outstanding Service Awards presented each year should not be limited, but the Awards Committee should take care to maintain high standards and avoid citing too many recipients, so that these recognitions remain a distinctive and meaningful honor.

- Awards continues on following page

2. Continue the practice of presenting a Helen Hunter Award when there's a suitable candidate. No more than one per year. A key requirement is "over the course of membership".

This award was established as a way to honor Helen Hunter, LWV-Houston president from 1982-1985, and to recognize and encourage valued leadership. This tradition dates to 1995

although a HH recognition has not been designated in each year. *The Helen Hunter Award is presented to an individual who, over the course of League membership, has epitomized the exemplary spirit of Helen Hunter in furthering the mission of the League of Woman Voters in a cordial, steady and effective way; who has brought great credit to the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area; and who has thereby brought great benefit to the community we serve.*



Recipients to Date:

1995	Claudia Kemondo	2003	Alice May Berthelsen	2009	Millie Whittington
1996	Melba Drake	2004	Jan Wilbur	2010	Linda Cohn
1997	Margaret Kolodzie	2005	Barb Swartz	2011	Sharon Cunningham
1998	Mary Gillette	2006	Gwen Essinger	2012	Nancy Parra
2002	Bette John	2008	Judy Hollinger	2013	Jacqueline Alfred

Report of the Nominating Committee

Mary Lee Burrus, Chair

Committee: Tom Berg, Nancy Parra, Aimee Turney, and Lynn Walshak

The following list of candidates includes five that are currently members of the Board, three in different positions. Three are new board members who have been honored as Rising Stars, and one former board member is returning for another term.

NEW OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS: 2014-2015 or 2014-2016

LESLIE COPELAND TAYLOR, Treasurer. Term 2014-2016. Attorney licensed in Texas. Former LWV- Houston Board member and vice president. During her tenure, she served as Chair of the Bylaws and Policy Committees and was instrumental in updating and expanding LWV-HA Policies; she also served on the Budget Committee and chaired the Public Defender study. After leaving the Board, she continued to be involved in the League, producing the Membership Directory and hosting welcoming gatherings for new members.

SHERRY R. WALSHAK, Vice President Membership. Term 2014-2016. Experience: Eighteen years with Hewlett-Packard as Senior Marketing Manager for WW Strategic Solutions; previously with American General Corp. as Management Consultant for Improvement/Innovation and Black, Gillock, and Langberg, V.P. Advertising & Communications. Expertise includes business development, marketing communications & research, program management, budgeting, strategic planning, events planning/execution. Community: volleyball coach at Harriet Foster YMCA; volunteer for Travis Elementary School. Two daughters, ages 15 and 11.

KATIE S. MOLINA, Vice President Program and Advocacy. Term 2014-2016. Experience: 30+ years in non-profit community as board member, staff and volunteer of various local organizations, working largely in fundraising/special events and writing. Service areas included environment, early childhood, drug abuse, domestic violence, veterans, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, ATP tennis. Employed as General Manager of Citizens' Environmental Coalition 2008 - 2012. Also many years of marketing, promotions, cost containment, proposal development and writing in the private sector. A 6th generation Houstonian, DAR member, married for 34 years with two sons in Texas colleges.

TOM BERG, Director. Term 2014-2015. Experience: Criminal defense lawyer for 36 years, 27 of those as an Assistant Federal Public Defender. Retired Colonel, Judge Advocate General's Corps, US Army Reserve for 26 years w/ combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Serves on LWV-HA Nominating and Awards committees and is LWV-HA coordinator for Hispanic outreach.

- Nominating Committee continues on following page

DANITA GALLEGOS, Director. Term 2014-2016. Experience: Universal Health Services. Intervenes with patients who have identified psychiatric or chemical dependency needs. Founder of mentoring program “Ikaika Sokol.” Volunteer Coordinator for Joaquin Martinez for State Senator and volunteer on the Ben Mendez for City Council District 1 campaign.

REYNALDO GUERRA, Director. Term 2014-2016. Experience: Application Engineer, TAS Energy. Helped found the Texas League of Young Voters and the Greater Houston Civic Coalition, works on immigrants’ rights as a member of Houston United and Alianza Mexicana, started a non-profit dedicated to STEM and Arts Education, and was selected as a 2013 LWV-HA Rising Star.

BENI ALANIZ GUTIERREZ, Director. Term 2014-2015. Experience: Thirty years in public education, education consultant since 1994. Community Involvement: Member of Hispanic Networking Women of Texas, Hispanic Association for Media Professionals, and Children at Risk and Children Advocacy. Past board member of La Rosa, a nonprofit organization for Victims of Domestic Violence in Houston.

JANUARI LEO, Director. Term 2014-2016. Experience: Public Affairs Field Specialist at Legacy Community Health Services, a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center serving the greater Houston area. Expertise: Healthcare policy issues at local, state and federal level; Organizes various communities to take action. Community: Branch Chair for the National Assoc. Of Social Workers-Houston branch; serves on board for National Coalition of LGBT Health. LWV-HA Rising Star. • Active on 2013 Repast Committee.

LINDSAY TAYLOR MUNOZ, Director. Term 2014-2016. Experience: Currently Political Affairs Analyst for Houston Association of Realtors. Previously worked for a state representative at the Texas Capitol in Austin during the 79th, 80th and 81st Legislative Sessions. Community involvement: Member of Leadership Houston Class XXXII (2013-2014), an Advisory Board Member of Girls Inc. of Greater Houston, League of Women Voters Houston Rising Stars, Class of 2013- 2014, Secretary Treasurer of Pemberton Circle Community Association and Leading Ladies for Theatre Under The Stars. Additionally, a Texas Exes Life Member and alumni of Kappa Kappa Gamma, Beta Xi Chapter.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2014-2015:

Nancy Parra, chair

Linda Cohn

Ann Herbage

**League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Board of Directors: 2014-2015**

Position	Name	Term of Office
President	Carolyn Mata	2013-2015
Secretary	Mary Ellen Whitworth	2013-2015
Treasurer	Leslie Taylor	2014-2016
VP: Membership	Sherry Walshak	2014-2016
VP: Civic Engagement	Claudia Hogue	2013-2015
VP: Issues -Study and Action	Katie Molina	2014-2016
VP: Executive VP	Aimee Turney	2013-2015
Director	Tom Berg	2014-2015 (unexpired term)
Director	Danita Gallegos	2014-2016
Director	Januari Leo	2014-2016
Director	Lindsay Munoz	2014-2016
Director	Ryan Leach	2013-2015
Director	Annie Benifield	2013-2015
Director	Raynaldo Guerra	2014-2016
Director	Beni Gutierrez	2014-2015 (unexpired term)
Nominating Committee Chair	Nancy Parra	2014-2015
Nominating Committee Member	Ann Herbage	2014-2015
Nominating Committee Member	Linda Cohn	2014-2015
Nominating Committee Member	TBD (board member)	2014-2015
Nominating Committee Member	TBD (board member)	2014-2015

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE HOUSTON AREA

We're making democracy work.



2014

AMERICAN REPAST | John Ross Palmer

An original work by John Ross Palmer, created to celebrate the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund as Mr. Palmer's Charity of the Year for 2014. "American Repast" shows the League and American colors of red, white and blue in a contemporary and symbolically appropriate fashion. Although these colors can become polarized by politics, they do co-exist, blend together and work together to form a piece of beauty.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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