



The VOTER

APRIL 2020

League of Women Voters-Corpus Christi

Coronavirus Crisis Absolutely Requires PHYSICAL DISTANCING

By Debbie Noble, Director/Social Media & Website

Although we would prefer to focus our attention on promoting participation in the 2020 Census and preparing for the November General Election, the COVID-19 global pandemic must take precedence for now. **We are not, as a community or as a nation, doing all that we can do to stop the spread of this virus.** This is a health care crisis, not the zombie apocalypse. It requires us to stay at home, not hoard toilet paper.

County Judge Barbara Canales put it succinctly when she announced the Nueces County Stay At Home Order. "You can do the things that you need to do, not the things that you want to do."

The virus does not care about guidelines for group sizes. It does not care that you only hung out with 3 people yesterday and 4 people today. Social Distancing may have entered our lexicon, but it needs to take over our lives. We really should think of it as **Physical Distancing**.

The fact is: We should not be within spitting distance of anyone not living in our household, if at all possible. (We understand that people need to purchase food and fulfill basic needs). This virus is spread by droplets in the air from people coughing, sneezing and simply talking. Talking. It survives on surfaces for days, in some cases.

By staying home (as much as possible), you don't go near

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Homebound puzzle activity

10 Members To Represent LWV-CC at State Convention

For the first time ever in its 100-year history, the League of Women Voters of Texas will hold an on-line one-day-only state convention to conduct required biennial business.

LWV-CC will be represented by the following 10 delegates--Anne Stewart, Sandra Heatherley, Annell Neale, Victoria Munt Rogers, Linda Snider, Elisa Gonzalez, Colleen Johnson, Alice Hawkins, Paula Brighton, and Chris Davis Garcia. All volunteered to participate after responding to an all-member email invitation sent in late March.

Several had been considering attending the April 17-19 convention in Austin before the event was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The delegates will be emailed information from the state office about the business items to be voted on (state budget, election of officers to the LWVTX Board, approval of program issue statements).

Coronavirus Guidelines Forced Many Cancellations

For the record, here's a listing of what League events and activities have been cancelled since early March: March 19 LWV-CC luncheon meeting; March 31 Equal Pay Day Event, cosponsored with the YWCA; April 1 Board Meeting; April 16 Community Forum on Lead Study; voter registration activities throughout the community; and various committee meetings.

Please continue to open emails sent to you by LWV-CC, and feel free to call any officer (see page 2 listing) with your questions.

LWV MISSION STATEMENT

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 League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Anne Stewart, LWV-CC President

Dear Members,

Your devotion to duty, your high ideals, and compassionate sensibilities make you all heroes in our community at large and in the various communities with which you serve. All of you are problem solvers... always working toward the best solution possible, if not what is considered perfect or final. Are you familiar with the statement SUFFER IT TO BE SO NOW?

For example, some of our members are writing to our governor and legislators asking that all registered voters be considered eligible to cast their ballots as "disabled" so their ballots can be mailed in rather than having voters stand in line for long periods of time. Some have various other suggestions to be considered. There are likely others who don't want any changes.

Another example can be seen in the work of our Nominating Committee. (see Page 3). It presently looks as if our League may not be able to have its Annual Meeting in May as planned (election of officers and adoption of proposed 2020-2021 budget are main business items), but the Board will discuss alternative plans and let members know.

The Nominating Committee called for nominations a few months ago and has created a slate of individuals they have great confidence in to serve us well. You will find names of women who have served in various capacities and some who have not accepted a nomination before this spring. All have a vital role to play as we begin our new year together, whenever and however we have elections.

It is a joy to regard all of our members as **THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN THE GOOD PART.**

Best wishes to all and your families for safety, security, good works and happiness.



NAVY OPEN HOUSE--Capt. Christopher C. Jason (second from left), commanding officer of NAS-Corpus Christi, poses with League President Anne Stewart and others in February 2020 at a community meeting. Navy personnel have been monitoring water quality on and around NAS while the League has been examining records of children suffering from lead poisoning in the area, possibly from city water.



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LWV-CC Board, 2019-2020

President

Anne Stewart, 361-850-0663; emlean@gmail.com

Secretary

Rebecca Huerta, 361-826-3105 (wk);
361-442-8745 (cell)

Treasurer

Annell Neale, 512-771-3026; annell@ebns.us

Vice President, Member Services

Sandra Heatherley, 361-876-4321;
sheatherle@cs.com

(Chair, 100th Anniversary Planning Committee)

Co-Vice Presidents, Program

Peggy Banales, 361-726-9404
Maria Jimenez, 361-888-7560

Vice President, Voter Services

Paula Breighton, 970-820-0661; paulabr@mac.com

Director, Website/Social Media

Debbie Noble, 410-271-1167;
debleenoble@gmail.com

Director, Media/Communications

Melody Cooper, 361-994-4952

At-Large Director--Lois Huff, 361-774-1500;

lch764@gmail.com (also Chair, 2020 Women's
Equality Day Committee)

Appointed Director/Archivist

Sylvia Whitworth, 361-853-9990

Immediate Past President (Non-voting)

Chris Davis Garcia, 361-244-4193;
garciachr1714@gmail.com

OFF-BOARD CHAIRS

Voter Registration Committee

Raul Ramirez, 361-774-0937;
raul.ramirez.05.rr@gmail.com

Ruth Falck, 548-2615

Diversity Committee

Alice Hawkins, Chair;

Study Committee, "Potential for Lead

Contamination in Our Communities' Drinking
Water" Sally Farris, s.farris@att.net

100th Celebration Committee (Historical Display):

Sue Williams, 361-779-8593;
aswilliams17@gmail.com

VOTE411 Voters Guide: Kathryn Oler, 806-773-1535;

Kathryn.oler@gmail.com

Nominating Committee

Peggy Duran, Chair, 361-696-9366

Non-Board Members: Brenda Hamby, Sylvia
Campos. **Board Members:** Lois Huff, Maria
Jimenez

The VOTER Editor

Chris Davis Garcia, garciachr1714@gmail.com

Coronavirus Crisis

(Continued from Page 1)

people and you don't touch anything, which helps to stop the spread. Comparisons of statistics of this virus to the annual flu or to car accidents are missing an important point. All those other fatal diseases, accidents, and dangers (as terrible as they are) are spread out over time.

Left unchecked, this virus will attack our health care systems within an extremely compressed period of time.

Our systems are not set up to deal with this many cases ALLAT ONCE. This means that the demands on our health care professionals and equipment and materials will outstrip the supply. It will be difficult to provide the best care to anyone needing medical attention and more people will suffer.

We do not yet have a vaccine to prevent it or drugs to mitigate it. Asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic people can and are still carrying and spreading the virus without knowing it.

As citizens, we can help right now by keeping ourselves healthy and doing our part to stop the spread. Stocking up on eggs and paper products may be more psychologically satisfying, but it is not helpful to the community.

We are being called to help our country get back to robust physical and economic health by doing one simple thing: **Stay At Home.**

Follow the city and county corona website for important local and national information and resources at:

<https://www.cctexas.com/coronavirus>

If you are on Facebook, make sure you follow City of Corpus Christi-Government. The City is live streaming all City Council meetings and Health Department updates.

Report from the Nominating Committee

(Submitted by Peggy Duran, Chair)

League By-Laws, Article IV-Officers, Section 1. Election of Officers reads as follows: The officers of the LWV-CC shall be a president, three vice presidents, a secretary and a treasurer. There shall be three elected directors. Officers and three directors shall be elected by the general membership at the annual meeting of the general membership and take office June 1st. The president and all other officers and the three elected directors shall be elected for terms of two years as follows:

a. The president, one vice president, the treasurer and two directors shall be elected in odd-numbered years.

b. Two vice presidents, the secretary and one director shall be elected in even-numbered years.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Peggy Duran and composed of Lois Huff, Sylvia Campos, Maria Jimenez, and Brenda Hamby submits the following slate for election:

Two -Year Terms (2020-2022)

Vice President, Member Services: Dr. Mary Jane Garza

Vice President, Program: Julie Travis Rogers

Secretary: Elizabeth Riggle

Director/Media/Communications: Victoria Munt Rogers

At-Large Director: Patti Anderson (completing the unexpired two-year term of Lois Huff)

One-Year Term (2020-2021)

Chair, Nominating Committee: Peggy Duran (If someone else would like this position, it is open to nominations from the floor and I would be happy with that.)

Members, Nominating Committee: Mary Sherwood, Christy Stockman/
(Note: Two additional Nominating Committee members will be appointed from the League Board in summer of 2020.)

Nominations from the Floor: League Bylaws (Article VIII-Nominations and Elections) state that immediately following the presentation of the Nominating Committee report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member, provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured. Elections shall be by ballot. However, if there is only one nominee or co-nominees for each office, the election may be by acclamation. A majority vote shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

The following officers are completing the second year of their two-year term and will continue serving through May 2021.:

President: Anne Stewart

Vice President Voter Services: Paula Brighton

Treasurer: Annell Neale

Director/Website & Social Media: Debbie Noble

REPORTS FROM YOUR BOARD MEMBERS:

Because the LWV-CC Board was unable to meet for its April 2 meeting, President Anne Stewart asked Board members to submit their reports for inclusion in this VOTER. The reports are featured here and on Page 5.

PROGRAM

From Peggy Banales and Maria Jimenez Co-Vice Presidents, Program

Meetings and programs have been cancelled for March and April. The LWV Annual May Meeting is being discussed; place, time, and date to be announced as arrangements are confirmed. Ms. Tina Butler, TABPHE-CC (Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education) may give an overview on the Juneteenth Celebration.

Nueces County Judge Barbara Canales is scheduled for our July meeting. August will host a variety of activities celebrating the passage of the 19th Amendment.

The "Lead Education Forum" will be rescheduled for September. Also, Mr. Alan Wilson, Head of the Military Task Force, has been contacted as a possible speaker.

Please stay safe and healthy. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

HISTORICAL EXHIBIT COMMITTEE

From Sue Williams, Chair

The members of the committee were to have removed the Historical Display on March 30 from the Nueces County Courthouse. Sandra Heatherley checked with Judge Canales' office, however, and they recommended that we leave it until the end of April. Since the library is closed, we could not have transferred the Display anyway. So, you could say our 2020 Historical Display is in quarantine at the Courthouse! I will see where we stand with this health crisis by the end of April and determine the League's next course of action.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

From Melody Cooper, Director/Media Communications

In view of the current situation with Covid 19, there is nothing significant to report as per publicity for future events. Thank you, and everyone stay safe!

SECRETARY

From Rebecca Huerta, Secretary

Minutes taken at recent Board meetings will be distributed as soon as they are completed.



VOTER REGISTRATION

From Raul Ramirez, Chair, Voter Registration

Nothing significant to report from Voter Registration Committee. We have no scheduled events, but we will look forward to re-engage activities after May 4th - situation dependent upon the current health crisis. We'll take the right precautionary measures for the welfare of our DVRs once we start again.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE

From Debbie Noble, Director/Social Media and Website

I have been and will be keeping our facebook page updated with Corona information from the city, census information, Women's history month information, and election (especially in times of physical distancing) information.

I also have been researching TED talks that might be applicable to our mission to post on our page so that we can continue to educate ourselves :)

If any of you are still not on Facebook, I will suggest, once again, that you consider joining. When used correctly, it can provide timely, important, and up-to-date information, both locally and internationally.

I keep telling myself that I will use this required down time to work on transitioning our website to the new platform. Wish me luck :)

I hope that you are all staying home and limiting all contact with people outside your household as much as possible. That is the most important thing that we, as individuals, can do for our country at this point. Also, I highly recommend the city website corona page to find all the update local and national information

<https://www.cctexas.com/coronavirus>

TREASURER

From Annell Neale, Treasurer

Submitted February and March financial reports to the Board; will begin working with the Budget Committee on a proposed budget for 2020-2021 that will be approved by the LWV-CC membership at the 75th Annual Meeting, to be announced.

REPORTS FROM YOUR BOARD MEMBERS:

VOTER SERVICES

From Paula Brighton, Vice President/Voter Services

“Voting in the time of covid 19” (apologies to Gabriel Garcia Marquez :-)

Primary runoff elections scheduled for May 26, 2020, have been postponed to July 14 (early voting July 6-10).

National and state leagues continue to work on ensuring that all eligible voters will be able to cast their ballots in future elections while also addressing the safety of poll workers.

Regarding Voter Guides for the November election: Proposed budget for 2020/21: \$1840/publications; \$600/voter registration events.

There was discussion at the last board meeting about moving toward an electronic platform, especially for the state guides (\$375/1000). Chris Garcia reached out to the Caller Times for estimated costs for Fall 2020 local guides (estimated size, 36 pages): \$1,000/8,000; \$1,080/10,000/

We should be prepared for the possibility that if Covid 19 subsides in the summer, it may resurge in the fall which could result in much of the population that usually picks up voter guides at public locations not venturing out.

If three or four League members would like to meet virtually to discuss how best to meet the LWV mission of voter awareness in times of social distancing, please drop me a line: paulabr@mac.com

Cheers all!

THE VOTER

From Chris Davis Garcia, Editor

I am working on the April 2020 issue of The VOTER and have asked for assistance from the Board (via email to Anne) The proposed deadline is April 7-8, with electronic send to all members a couple of days later.

As always, I will have 20 copies printed by Parkdale Printing if the company is open. I am prepared to also produce the May VOTER, with the Board's assistance.

I continue to receive by email all LWV-Texas and National news alerts and often access both websites to make sure our League is informed and responding.

I continue to respond to phone calls and emailed queries from the public as well as League members who need information and I continue to share League history and “how to” about various projects and activities, when requested. Also I am prepared to begin work on producing the Annual Meeting workbook.



MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

From Sandra Heatherley, Vice President/Member Services

The League currently has 108 voting members:

87 individual members

2 are lifetime members

8 are student members

11 are additional household members

Year of Women Winning the Vote Celebration

Our March 7th celebration of 100 years of Women Winning the Vote was a total success. The subcommittee working on the visual display depicting the 70-year struggle to convince Congress and the nation that woman should be considered fully enfranchised citizens was a huge success and will be rotating through the local public libraries all year long.

More than 250 women, men, and children participated in our march from the courthouse to Artesian Park to demonstrate the power of the women's vote to our community and its elected officials.

The date of March 7th had been selected two years earlier based on there being no other community-wide event scheduled that day. How fortuitous! The League missed having to cancel the event due to the coronavirus by 2 days and to our knowledge everyone who participated returned home happy and healthy. Our Buc Days Parade participation has been postponed until the Fall.. Stay tuned!

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY COMMITTEE

From Lois Huff, Chair

The August 2020 celebration committee has voted to recommend to the Board to postpone the August 2020 event.

Pandemic Voting

By Debbie Noble, Director/Social Media & Website

We are currently living with a city, county, and state Stay at Home order until at least April 30. The governor postponed our primary runoff election until July 14, and we have a Presidential election in November. The CDC recommends wearing face masks when leaving the house, which we can only do for essential trips, like food or healthcare.

The CDC also recommends that we don't go within 6 feet of anyone not currently living in our household with us. We are supposed to constantly wash our hands and wipe down all our surfaces, even as hand sanitizer and bleach sprays are difficult to find in stores.

How do we exercise the greatest civic duty of our Democracy if we can't leave our house or go near people or touch anything? **How do we vote during a pandemic?**

We believe we put ourselves or others at risk by physically going to a Vote Center and voting in person.

Four states currently conduct all their elections via mail (Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington.) They mail a ballot to every registered voter, and voters can mail it back or drop it off or vote in person during an extended election period. They have slowly and carefully put systems in place to guarantee safety, security, accuracy, and efficiency.

Two-thirds of the states allow anyone to apply for an absentee ballot to vote by mail. About a third, including Texas, require a valid excuse in order to receive a ballot by mail.

To be eligible to vote early by mail in Texas, you must:

- * be 65 years or older;
- * be disabled;
- * be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or

* be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.

The question that we should not have to vote on is whether any or all of us can check the 'disability' box if we believe we put ourselves or others at risk by physically going to a vote center and voting in person.

Can this part of the election code be broadly interpreted to solve our social-distancing-while-voting problems?

The Director of Elections from the Texas Secretary of State's office sent out an advisory to all election officials on April 2.

The purpose of the advisory was to assist in preparing for elections during this public health crisis. It covered registration procedures (still as unwieldy as ever), early voting, curbside voting, cleaning and sanitizing, and voting by mail.

Currently, the Election Code allows voting by mail if one is sick or disabled, which is defined as "a sickness or physical condition that prevents the voter from appearing at the polling place...without a likelihood ... of injuring the voter's health."

According to the advisory, "Voters who meet this definition and wish to vote a ballot by mail must submit an application for ballot by mail. As the situation changes, we will be updating our guidance. We hope this information has been helpful."

It is always a concern in any election to preserve public trust in the process.

Our own Nueces County Clerk, Kara Sands, seemed hopeful that this meant good news for legally voting by mail during the pandemic, but she was also hoping to get some more, clearer, guidance from the Secretary of State's office soon.

Grace Chimene, president of the League of Women Voters of Texas, thinks that no such clarification is coming and added that the league has joined a lawsuit.

"We are suing to try to get the Secretary of State's office to expand vote by mail," she said. "At this time, the SOS did not expand the vote by mail."

And expanding vote by mail would mean that counties have a lot of work to do to get ready. Normally only about 7% of people vote by mail in Nueces County.

Scaling up will take time, money, equipment, staffing, training, and planning

Scaling up will take time and equipment and training. More people will be needed to process the applications and mail out the ballots. Many more printed ballots will be needed.

A robust public information campaign should be used to make sure that people fill out applications and ballots correctly and in a timely manner (we should be trying to get applications and ballots in very early so that there will be time to work out any problems...).

Counties will have to make sure that both applications and ballots are postage-paid so that people are not trying to go out and purchase stamps.

Many more trained people will be needed to process the actual ballots, which includes checking all the signatures and being able to call voters and work out any discrepancies, so that votes are not thrown out without voters having time to contest. (This is a major concern of voter rights groups - last year, the Texas Civil Rights Project sued the state on behalf of two voters whose ballots were thrown out.)

Counties will need time to purchase enough special scanners to read and count the increased number of ballots. We will definitely need an extensive plan for this staffing, training, equipment, and public education process.

One of the stimulus packages just passed by Congress included \$400 million towards increasing vote by mail. Texas could be eligible for some of that

funding, but it requires a state match and our Legislature doesn't meet again until 2021, so that seems unlikely.

Although some in-person vote centers, drop boxes, and person to person interaction to resolve issues will still be necessary,

Ms. Sands did express her hope that increasing the vote by mail option would put less pressure on the county to find and staff so many vote center locations.

The county always has issues finding enough locations in enough precincts willing to act as vote centers, as well as the people to staff them adequately.

Security and timeliness of results are issues

Security (making sure that people are responsible for their own ballot and not subject to pressure from caretakers, family, or outside forces) and timeliness of results are other issues.

Although there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in any of the states currently offering extensive voting by mail, it is always a concern in any election to preserve public trust in the process. Most states' voters sign the ballot and the back of the envelope, and then their signatures are compared to the one on record with the county or state.

Most states took years to work up to this volume of mail voting. If we were to start now, we only have 7 months. Especially in this short timeframe, any election officer considering taking on this project should talk to his/her counterparts in some of the states with successful systems to compare best practices.

Historically, primary runoff elections have very low turnout. Our July 14th election might be a great practice run for using our extended vote by mail option. But we will need a clear ruling from the Secretary of State very soon. The longer we wait, the harder it will be.

In the meantime, everyone who fits the current criteria should apply for an application to vote by mail as soon as possible.

If you want website references for any of Debbie's information in this article, please contact her.

Five To Comprise Budget Committee

As per the League Bylaws, a Budget Committee is required to review the 2019-2020 budget, consider actual and anticipated income and expenditures, and submit a proposed budget for 2020-2021. Members recently appointed to serve include Mary Kay Fant, Lois Huff, Chris Davis Garcia, Peggy Duran, and Pat Anderson, a new member of the League. Garcia will serve as chair.

The committee will receive financial information from Treasurer Annell Neale later this month and will submit the proposed budget to the Board for consideration at the 75th Annual Meeting.

Hawkins Leads Diversity Committee

By Alice Hawkins, Chair

The Corpus Christi Chapter of the LWV is striving to fulfill its commitment to increase diversity in its organization.

In 2013 the League codified its diversity initiative in its policy guide. The league recognizes that diversity and pluralism are most important to strengthening our community. In keeping with our policy, the League welcomes people of all genders, races, religions, national origins, the disabled, and political affiliations.

Additionally, the LWV-CC supports diverse perspectives and inclusiveness. With diversity and pluralism as our focus, we strive to reflect these ideals in membership, board affiliations, staffing and programs.

The Diversity Committee is looking forward to crafting a set of goals for strengthening and increasing the diversity of LWV-CC as we move forward in 2020.



Alice Hawkins

The Diversity Committee is composed of Hawkins, Raul Ramirez, Ron George, and Sue Williams. It was established last Fall by League President Anne Stewart.

CENSUS 2020

Don't forget to complete the Census 2020 form for your household. It was mailed in mid-March (with individualized ID code for each address) and takes less than 10 minutes to complete and return electronically to CENSUS 2020. Because of the pandemic, the deadline has been extended. LWV--at both the state and national levels--are partners and urge every League member to participate.

REMINDER:

Your Membership Renewal Matters!

Please plan to renew your membership in May.

(See renewal notice and form on Page 8)

May Is Month To Renew Your Annual Membership

LWV-Corpus Christi was established in 1945-46 and is approaching its 75th anniversary. Your continued support of LWV-CC, through your annual membership dues, ensures that the League continues addressing its mission.

Did you know that your local League membership makes you also a member of the League of Women Voters-Texas (LWVTX) and the the League of Women Voters-US (LWVUS)? Both “agitate, advocate, and educate” when it comes to state and national policies, including voter suppression.

The League’s membership year is June 1 through May 31. Membership categories are \$100 Sustaining; \$90 Household (two persons residing in the same household); \$60 Individual; \$5 Student; and \$30 Friend of the League (non-voting). Please utilize the membership application & renewal form found below and also on the League’s website. The Board would especially appreciate your noting how you are interested in serving the League.

Plan to renew your membership during the month of May.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - CORPUS CHRISTI AREA

PO Box 8276 • Corpus Christi, TX 78468-8276

LWV-CC membership runs June 1 to May 31 and supports local, state and national LWV actions to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. We welcome your membership. Please complete this form and return it to the League at the address noted above.

Date: _____

Select Member type and remit payment or visit: <http://www.lwv-cc-org/JoinRenewOnline.html>

- Individual \$60 Household (2 people, same address) \$90 Individual Sustaining \$100
 Student \$5 Friend of the League \$30 (without voting privileges)

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

I prefer to attend: Luncheon Meetings _____ Dinner Meetings _____

I'm interested in volunteering my help with one or more of the following activities:

- Register Voters Prepare/Distribute Voters Guides Organize Candidate/Issue Forums
 Advocate for Issues Investigate Issues/Conduct Studies Network/Facilitate Community Dialogues
 Budget/Fundraising Media/Communications Membership Services
 Governance/Bylaws Observer Corps (monitor local government meetings)
 Special/Community Projects Attend Austin "Lobby Days" During Legislative Session
 Train/Serve as Nueces County Volunteer Deputy Registrar Advertise in Monthly VOTER Newsletter *

* Note: Business card ads in the monthly VOTER newsletter are priced at \$100 for 10 issues.