



2018 - 2019

LWV-TC

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The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

President's Message



National Voter Registration Day is coming up fast: September 25th. The deadline to register to vote is October 9. I challenge you to ask at least 5 people if they are registered to vote and either register them or point them in the right direction. If the person you ask answers that they are already registered, advise them to double check their registration online.

In the process of helping out with voter registrations this month, a few of our volunteer deputy registrars have helped people look up their registration to find that some of the folks had a suspension that they needed to get corrected. There have been a few instances in the news of people who were mistakenly purged from the voter registration list but didn't find out until they showed up to vote. Make sure that the people you talk to verify their registration, and if they need to, reregister to vote.

Vote411 will become live on October 8th so please share with everyone you know about our Voter's Guides so that they can make an informed decision. Tell people and post it on your social media. Keep up the good work Leaguers!

Sincerely,

We still need volunteers to help register voters on September 25 on National Voter Registration Day. Visit <https://signup.com/group/417035364310494037> to sign up for shifts.

Date: September 25

Shifts Available: 3pm-5pm

Location: East Arlington Branch - 1624 New York Ave, Arlington TX 76010

Date: September 25

Shifts Available: 3pm-5pm and 5pm-7pm

Location: Northeast Branch - 1905 Brown Blvd, Arlington TX 76006

Date: September 25

Shifts Available: 3pm-5pm and 5pm-7pm

Location: Southeast Branch - 900 SE Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington TX 76018

Date: September 25

Shifts Available: 11am-1pm and 1pm-3pm

Location: Keller Public Library - 640 Johnson Rd, Keller, TX 76248

There is also one shift not filled on Wednesday, September 26 from 6-8pm at the Bedford Public Library.



On the ballot in November: Botanic Garden's proposed addition of fees for entrance.

A look at opposing viewpoints.

Panel eyes admission fees that could add \$3.7 million in revenue to botanic gardens

BY SANDRA BAKER

sabaker@star-telegram.com

March 19, 2018 07:47 PM

FORT WORTH

The [Fort Worth Botanic Gardens](#) could raise nearly \$3.7 million in new revenue if the city started charging an admission fee, a task force studying the garden's future was told Monday.

The proposed fee of \$12 for adults, \$9 for seniors and \$8 for children would cover access to the entire grounds. Currently, separate fees are charged for the Japanese Garden and the Conservatory, which has been closed for several months because of structural issues.

The Conservatory is just one on a long list of [\\$15 million in repairs](#) needed just to bring the gardens up to par, a consultant's report concludes. Other costly improvements and renovations are needed beyond that.

The task force also learned Monday that an additional \$172,750 could be raised by offering memberships and from private and corporate giving.

About 334,400 people visited the gardens in 2017, two-thirds of whom don't live in Fort Worth. The city subsidizes a little more than \$3 million of the garden's \$5.2 million budget. That funding would continue and be used toward operations and capital improvements.

The garden was established in 1934 and the Japanese Garden in 1973. The gardens have undergone a reorganization of their financial support groups in the last year and are now a special revenue fund of the city.

The task force is also considering discount days and single-use free passes, or designating a section of the park to be free, to make sure the gardens remain accessible.

The task force will host a public meeting before it makes a recommendation to the City Council, which is expected to happen before the July summer break.

Richard Zavala, the [city's parks](#) director, said the task force is trying to get to the most effective recommendation it can.

"This is a very diverse and very engaged group and they are asking a lot of good questions," Zavala said. "Their recommendation is what is going to make the Fort Worth Botanic Garden reach its full potential and enable us to sustain it for future generations."

Implementing an admission fee would raise the garden's budget to around \$7.5 million in 2019 and \$8.7 million by 2023.

Sandra Baker: 817-390-7727; @SandraBakerFWST

For more information about the Strategic Plan, Task Force Recommendation as well as agendas of the Task Force meetings with documents and presentation, visit <http://www.fwbg.org/strategic-plan>

Keep Fort Worth Botanic Gardens “Everybody’s Garden”

By Karin Cagle, September 12, 2018

One of Fort Worth’s Botanic Garden’s “Key Strengths,” identified in the 2010 Master Plan, is its role as “Everybody’s Garden.” “Fort Worth Botanic Garden, founded in 1933, is the oldest botanic garden in Texas and encompasses 110 acres in Fort Worth’s renowned cultural district.” Unlike many Gardens in comparable cities, FWBG’s land was purchased with public money, rather than established by foundations on private land with private money. Further, FWBG contains extensive infrastructure built by the CCC during the Depression. Except for the Japanese Garden and the now closed Conservatory, the FWBG has been free to the public. That is about to change -- if residents of FW do not act. All documents cited herein are available at <http://www.fwbg.org/strategic-plan/>

The BG Strategic Planning Force, which is not representative of the city’s residents, recommends that the city turn over the park to an independent (unknown) non-profit and charge admissions fee of \$6 for kids 6-15 and \$12 for adults. Recommendation p. 23 and 12. The charges are recommended to begin in 2019.

Why? For years, the FWBG’s management was controlled by the city and two private organizations. This has caused a lack of supervision and coordination; and it resulted in a purported need of up to \$15,600,000, for deferred maintenance (\$6-7 mil) and capital projects (\$6.6 -8.6 mil). See page 22 of EMD report. This is even though the combined revenues versus expenses of the City, Botanic Society and Garden Club showed the FWBG made a profit from 2007 through 2014. See EMD report p. 10. This surplus was generated without funding, or with insufficient funding, for critical positions that handle development, membership, finance/ business operations, curation, events, visitor services, education/public programs, horticulture, maintenance and operations. Recommendations p. 10. This neglect lead to the lack of revenues and, most importantly, decline in the facilities.

But it is not just the “maintenance” money. The 2010 Master Plan calls for big changes to the BG. For example, an expansion to the southwest requiring the purchase of private land and the installation of a tram. Special interests want to make the FWBG a “world class garden” and an “outstanding cultural institution Fort Worth needs and deserves.” Recommendations p. 22. To do this the Strategic Committee recommends using the fees to finance the public debt from a \$10 mil deferred maintenance bond. The remainder is to come from future capital expenditure bonds.

In my opinion, FW does not need a cultural amusement park. FWBG is the City’s only remaining free cultural amenity. It serves many people in many different ways that are not addressed by the strategic plan. I think that we must take steps to maintain the infrastructure and to increase programs that educate our residents about horticulture and the environment. But the desired big-ticket “improvements” should wait.

The city seems to be going down a similar path that lead to the BG’s deterioration, using questionable assumptions and blind faith, just hoping that it will all work out. For example:

In the Recommendation at page 13, the Committee assumes that in 2019 the admission revenues will be almost \$1,000,000. This number is based on questionable attendance estimate and assumes that the first-year visitation will drop by only 20%. Then in 2020, the admission revenues more than double to almost \$2,400,000. Imagine the Yelp reviews of people who paid \$12 to visit the FWBG in its current configuration. The assumptions are baseless and the FWBG’s reputation could be permanently, thoughtlessly, damaged.

The EMD Consultant’s Report, at page 9, states that from 2007-14 the total surplus of revenues “exceeded \$2 mil.” But “the [EMD] project did not include a comprehensive financial audit of past expenditures nor a study of all potential future expenditures for operations or capital improvements.”

The EMD report relied on comparisons to six other gardens that are very different in origin, facilities, or public services available. There was no analysis concerning how FW residents use the Gardens and what they would like to see happen to their Gardens.

The Committee reviewed three management options: City Management, Single Support Group, and License or Management by Independent Non-Profit. Recommendations, p. 21-23. The analysis is negligible and stilted toward Option 3, which is privatization. It acknowledges that the option removes public influence from BG management, justifying this in part because “managing cultural institutions [is no longer] part of the core responsibility of government entities.” A debatable point, and no justification for abridging residents’ access to and influence over a city owned amenity.

To help the medicine go down and to address concerns raised about access for less affluent members of our community, the committee made “Recommended Accessibility Options.” See Addendum to June 19, 2018, Meeting. The recommendations are directed at families receiving public assistance, which is good. But the majority of residents’ needs and abilities are ignored: many middle-income families cannot afford to pay \$100 for a family membership; many kids at non-Title I schools are not included; and seniors are given only a \$2 discount, without consideration as to their financial situation.

“Don’t call it a park!” Residents protesting the fee have been chastised for referring to FWBG as a park. True, it is not a park, and, likewise, the City cannot justify limiting access to the FWBG because residents can visit parks for free. Parks do not offer the aesthetics, plant variety and educational opportunities available at the FWBG. Nor is the FW Zoo a fair comparison or justification for charging fees at the Gardens. True, the FW Zoo developed into a nationally recognized zoological institution after it was privatized and admission fees instituted. But, zoos are not gardens. The humanitarian standards for zoos had changed greatly since the FW Zoo’s creation. The expenses necessary to reform and maintain the zoo at even the lowest standards would take away from our residents’ quality of life. Plants are not animals. The costs maintain the FWBG as a free amenity is not comparable to the financial needs of a zoo. It is only the unnecessary aggrandizement of our Gardens that make the admission fee “necessary.”

The City has set the council’s vote on this important issue for November 6, 2018, which is unacceptable. That is Election Day. It also set the meeting for 10 a.m., rather than the common and more accessible 7 p.m. time. This is unacceptable and must be changed.

In my opinion the city council member, the taskforce and Mayor Price should consider the following suggestions:

- Privatization and the admission fee must be rejected; the impact of fees or alternatives have not been fairly studied.
- Option 2: Single Group Support should be considered with a proven, qualified non-profit that can be financially accountable and support the needed funding for development, membership, finance/ business operations, curation, events, visitor services, education/public programs, and horticulture. Proposals from non-profits should be received and the organizations vetted before the council votes to turn over management of the Gardens.
- FWBG should have been part of the last bond package and must be included on the next one. Fees from the Japanese Garden (and the Conservatory once it is restored) can be used to finance the debt.
- A truly representative advisory panel should be constituted to study and propose ways to improve FWBG without charging admission fees for the currently fee-free areas.
- Energies and money should be directed to maintenance and repairs. The grand improvement ideas in the 2010 Strategic Plan must wait until the city fulfills its obligations to keep FWBG “Everybody’s Garden.”

Unit Discussion Questions

1. To what extent are the fees based in research? What part of the research did you find interesting, concerning or that you have more questions about?
2. Will the fees be used to increase the budget for maintenance or will it be used for renovation?
3. If the park institutes the fees how will it affect the level of access to the gardens and who will it affect the most/least?
4. Will the fees affect how the City of Fort Worth helps to fund the gardens?
5. Is there a plan to eventually privatize the gardens and what will that mean for the City of Fort Worth?

League Membership gatherings - Summer, 2018

The League had several fun and informative gatherings during the Summer and early September. Here are pictures from a few of the following:

- ◆ Happy Hour, Legal Draft in Arlington
- ◆ July 13, Membership Social at Pamela Wright's home
- ◆ August 18, Membership Workshop & Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training at Downtown Arlington Library
- ◆ September 10, General Meeting of Membership at SE Branch of Arlington Library



We had a great time at my house, eating desserts, answering voting trivia questions, passionately discussing issues, and getting to know each other better. Larger group photo is of "seasoned" members while the small group is of newbies.
Pam Wright



To Pam:

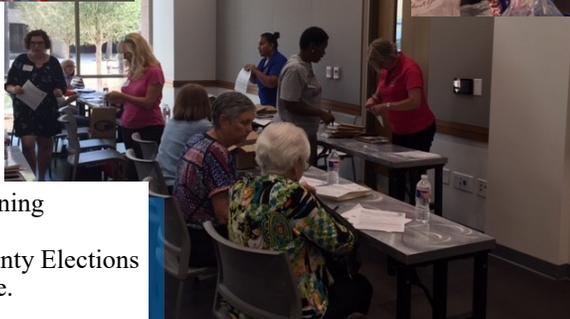
Thank You

*From all of us here at the
League:*



Membership Workshop & Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training

A huge thanks to Leslee and Erin for making this such a success



Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training

A shout out to the staff at the Tarrant County Elections office for making this possible.

As we begin a new year of Unit meetings, it is good to remind ourselves that LWV is a non-partisan organization. Our conversations need to be about the issues and not take on a partisan tone.

Many people feel like issues are partisan because political parties have become the champions for their point of view on that issue. Please remember that this is not how the LWV operates. League members do expensive study on a topic and only when there is a consensus reached do we publish a stance on an issue. This enables us to then advocate/lobby for our position on that issue.

For example, the League has this position on public education funding:

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports a school finance system that provides taxpayer equity and an equitable distribution of funds to ensure that all Texas school children receive a high-quality education.

If we feel like this is not happening then we can advocate/lobby for our position. Without this position we cannot speak about it as an organization. Some politicians have taken a stance on an issue but that does not make that issue partisan and those politicians do not affect our stance as a League.

If you want to review our National, State and Local stance on issues and please do so by clicking the links below:

National League Stance on Issues: https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/impact_on_issues_2016-2018_positions_in_brief.pdf

Texas League Stance on Issues: <https://my.lwv.org/texas/positions>

Tarrant County Stance on Issues: http://www.lwvtarrantcounty.org/files/lwvtc_local_program_2018_-_2019.pdf

Leslee Barnes



Unit Topics for this year

- November 2018** - Homeless in Tarrant County
- December 2018**- No Unit meetings – enjoy the holidays
- January 2019** - Immigration
- February 2019** - Gun Control/Public Safety
- March 2019** - ERA / Women’s Services
- April 2019** - Environment – (Hazardous materials in and traveling through Tarrant County)
- May 2019**- No Unit meetings – Plan to attend the Annual Meeting

Thank you to all of the people who donated to our North Texas Giving Day fundraiser. We received donations from 35 people amounting to over \$4,440. This is a great start to our goal of \$15,000. We only have \$10,560 left to raise to make it through our fiscal year.

HOWEVER!

With our present contributions, we can keep operations going until January 1, 2019. So please keep the League in mind when making your end of year donations. All donations made to LWV TEF are tax deductible.

Hospital District Bond Election Educational Forums

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court will be hosting five educational forums to inform the general public on Tarrant County's zero tax rate increase Hospital District Bond Election. These educational forums are scheduled throughout the county for the convenience of interested residents.

All forums will begin at 6 p.m.

Monday September 24	Arlington Subcourthouse 700 E. Abram St. Arlington, TX 76010
Wednesday September 26	Lake Worth Activity Center 7005 Charboneau Rd. Lake Worth, TX 76135
Thursday September 27	Northeast Courthouse 645 Grapevine Highway Hurst, TX 76054
Monday October 1	Bethlehem Baptist Church 1188 W. Broad Street Mansfield, TX 76063
Wednesday October 3	Southwest Subcourthouse 6551 Granbury Rd. Fort Worth, TX 76133

This publication is for informational purposes only.

Voter Registration Drive Opportunities

Voter Registration Drive Opportunities for those of you who are Volunteer Deputy Registrars:

We're using SignUp.com to organize our upcoming voter registration drives.
Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Click this link to see our SignUp on SignUp.com: <http://signup.com/go/VWVQDBr>
- 2) Review the options listed and choose the spot(s) you like.
- 3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on SignUp.com.

Note: SignUp.com does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.

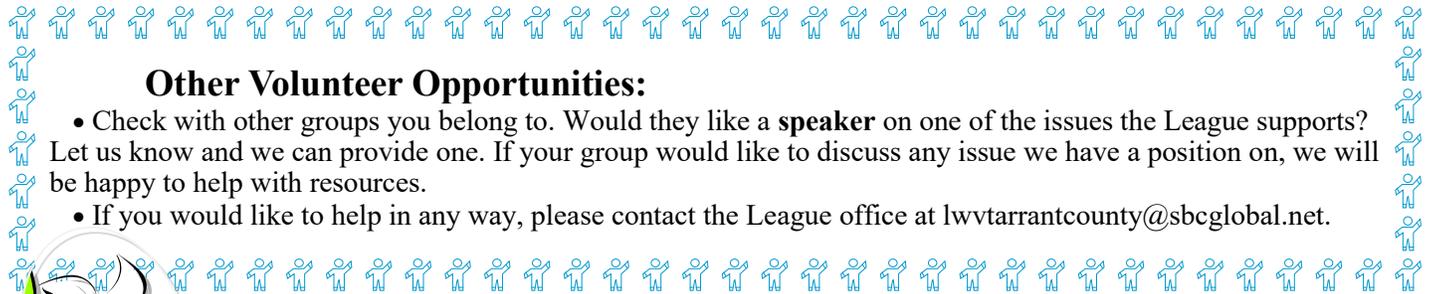
[See League of Women Voters Page on SignUp.com](#)

#3 Coppell Public Library (4 opportunities) 177 N Hertz Rd, Coppell, TX 75019

Sept 30, 2:00-4:00PM

Oct 6, 2:00-4:00PM

Pick a shift and sign up at: <http://signup.com/go/UKVoAVt>



Other Volunteer Opportunities:

- Check with other groups you belong to. Would they like a **speaker** on one of the issues the League supports? Let us know and we can provide one. If your group would like to discuss any issue we have a position on, we will be happy to help with resources.
- If you would like to help in any way, please contact the League office at lwvtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net.



In Memorium

Please consider making a donation to LWVTC in honor of someone special..



Have you moved or changed your phone number? Please contact the League office at 817-348-8683 or email us at lwvtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net so we can update our Local and National Roster. Thanks!

Do you know that we have the following social media accounts for the League?

Our Facebook Page is <https://www.facebook.com/LWVofTarrantCo/>

Our Twitter page is @LWVTarrant or you can access us by clicking on <https://twitter.com/LWVTarrant>

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

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2018 CALENDAR

September 2018 ~

September 25 ~ National Voter Registration Day



October 2018 ~ Units Topic - Botanic Gardens

October 9 ~ **Last Day to Register to Vote.** Application **MUST** be received today

October 15 ~ Arlington Area Unit; **7 PM**, Fielder Museum, 1616 W Abram, Arlington.

October 16 ~ NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting; **7 PM**, Barnes & Noble in the Shops at NE Mall; Melbourne Rd. next to Best Buy; Reservations suggested. Call Georgia Kidwell, 817-282-0721, for information

October 18 ~ Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit; **NOON**, Trinity Terrace, 1600 Texas Street; Blue Spire Room, Reservations suggested but not required. Lunch is optional, cost is \$16.payable by cash or check made out to Marjorie Montgomery only. Call Marjorie Montgomery, 817-885-8372 for reservation.

October 18 ~ South/Southwest Dinner Unit; **6 PM**, Olive Garden at I-20 and Hulen in the shopping center; Reservations suggested. Call Mike Baldwin, 817-249-2193, for information

October 22 ~ Monday Matinee; **11 AM**, Arlington Police West Service Center, 2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington. Bring a sack lunch and a friend.

October 22 ~ November 2 ~ **Early Voting!**

October 26 ~ **Last Day to apply to Vote by Mail.** (Received, not Postmarked)

November 2018 ~ Units Topic - Homeless in Tarrant County

November 2 ~ **Early Voting ends**

November 6 ~ **Election Day**

November 15 ~ Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit; **NOON**

November 15 ~ South/Southwest Dinner Unit; **6 PM**

November 19 ~ Arlington Area Unit; **7 PM**

November 20 ~ NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting; **7 PM**

November 20 ~ Thanksgiving

November 26 ~ Monday Matinee; **11 AM**



Welcome New LWV-TC members:

Judith Davis, Carol Peters and Heather Reck

Thanks to renewing LWV-TC members:

Dawn Ellison, Marion Henderson, Lorraine Levine, Judy Wood & Jim Atkinson and Beth & Woody Wright

All Members and Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend any League event.

League Office Hours: M, W, F / 8:30am—12:30pm

~ we are on the web! ~

www.lwvtarrantcounty.org