

Sample of  
MAL

mailing 

TO: LL Presidents; MAL Unit Chair; DPM

LWV-Texas

May 1989

FROM: Diane Sheridan, LWV-T President

LLP Mailing; DPM

H.2.

State Convention

SUMMARY OF 22nd LWV-TEXAS CONVENTION

April 14-16, 1989  
J. W. Marriott Hotel  
Houston

"Celebrate Our Victories" was the theme of Convention '89, and celebrate we did. Two hundred and two delegates and observers attended the three-day event, the highest turnout in recent years. One was a member at large of the state League from Gonzales, and the others came from 31 of our 32 local Leagues, our one provisional League, and the state board. LWV-Houston Area did a magnificent job of hosting the event.

Pre-convention activities included a well-attended and informative briefing on parliamentary procedure by our parliamentarian, Dr. Ruth Cameron Amend. Those tapped to train local League boards received training Friday morning. And delegates consulted with the budget, bylaws, and long range planning committee chairs, as well as the program vice-president.

On Friday at noon, the luncheon speaker, Dr. Amy Freeman Lee of San Antonio, praised us for being "in league with life" and reminded us of the importance of caring for every living creature on this planet. Guests included seven corporate contributors as well as the 1988-89 local League presidents, who were treated to lunch in honor of their service to the League.

The first plenary meeting opened with welcomes from Jeanette Vanderwater, president of the Houston League, and the honorable Kathy Whitmire, Mayor of Houston and long-time League member. The mayor presented the Houston League with a proclamation declaring April 14, 1989 "League of Women Voters Day" in Houston.

After the usual introductions and organization of convention, business began with presentations of the proposals for program, budget, and bylaws as well as the report of the nominating committee. All presentations were based on the material in the Convention Workbook, Parts I and II.

A complete revision of the bylaws was adopted as presented, after debate centering on the elimination of delegate adoption of the sharing formula. Most of the revisions modernized and clarified the bylaws. Substantive changes in addition to the fact that delegates will no longer adopt the sharing formula, which remains in place as board policy, included revision of the method of handling emergency additions or corrections to the program at Council. In keeping with national bylaws and the usual program adoption process, the state board will now determine whether or not to recommend an emergency program change to council delegates, and delegates will decide whether or not to consider it before debate may open on the substance of the issue. Under the new bylaws, the president of each local League, or an alternate, becomes one of two delegates per League to Council, which is in keeping with current practice. State units will now be called member-at-large units because the new name more clearly indicates their makeup. All deadlines in the bylaws will now be



expressed in numbers of days rather than by weeks or months. The new bylaws, which went into effect upon passage, can be found in Convention Workbook, Part II until the 1989-90 League Directory is published this summer.

During the first plenary meeting, reports were given by Diane Sheridan, President, and Barbara Weinstein, Development Director. Sheridan evaluated the state League's efforts to take risks, focus its work, and try new approaches to League activities—all of which led to many successes over the last two years. Weinstein presided over the presentation of the second annual Pot of Gold award for excellence in fund development, which went to LWV-Houston Area.

Upon adjournment, delegates gathered for a delightful reception hosted by LWV-Houston Area. Incoming presidents then joined state board members for informal, get-acquainted Dutch-treat dinners in area restaurants and the nearby Galleria. After dinner, caucuses called by local Leagues addressed child care, child abuse, and relations with the national League.

Saturday's activities began early when delegates attended one of six concurrent workshops: incoming presidents, local League use of LWV-Texas Education Fund, local Leagues with their own education fund organizations, fundraising, VOTER production, and Voters Guide production and funding.

The second plenary meeting opened with delegates' granting consideration to the not-recommended item of Child Abuse and Neglect. Debate on this and the recommended study of Child Care occurred Saturday morning. After a recess, delegates switched subjects and discussed and debated the proposed 1989-90 budgets. A \$10 per-member payment, with a \$300 minimum level of support per local League, was adopted for 1989-90. This plenary meeting ended with a report from Evelyn Bonavita, Legislative Director, giving the status of our two legislative priorities (Services for the Seriously Mentally Ill and Community-Based Alternatives to Prisons), as well as other items we are tracking. Bonavita also shared with delegates the rather serious problem LWV-Texas faces in providing legislative support in Austin for the program directors around the state, now that we have no full-time volunteer legislative director there.

Saturday's luncheon address focused on the activities of the LWVUS Lobby Corps as described by veteran lobby corps member, Fran Kieffer, of Fairfax County, Virginia. Kieffer described how these League volunteers from the Washington area lobby on behalf of local Leagues on LWVUS advocacy priorities. In keeping with her role, Kieffer urged convention delegates to work in support of HB 15, national voter registration legislation.

After lunch, delegates and observers worked in small groups with a discussion leader to attempt to reach member agreement by a modified concurrence process on the mission, goals, and objectives of a draft long range plan. After examining the proposed plan and suggesting modifications, workshop participants brainstormed to produce creative suggestions for the board to consider in implementing the plan. Based on the input from this very productive workshop session, Louise Cummins, chair of the Long Range Plan Committee, will present the state board with the final draft plan for their consideration and approval at the June, 1989 board meeting.

The second plenary meeting reconvened late Saturday afternoon with completion of debate on the remainder of the proposed program: Women under Texas Law, Government, Administration of Justice, Social Policy/Human Resources, Natural Resources, and the



**Program Summary.** Delegates debated against the proposal to drop the State-Local Positions item, and amended the summary of the Public School Finance position to produce wording that more clearly reflected the detailed position. "Action to achieve a high quality education for all Texas public school children through an equitable school finance system" was substituted for the wording proposed on page 38, Section IV. A. of the Convention Workbook, Part I.

The highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the series of skits, depicting dreadfully familiar membership recruitment events, that punctuated the presentation of membership growth awards. LWV-Midland (48%), LWV-Edinburg/McAllen (40%), and LWV-Orange (30%) received \$100, \$75, and \$50 respectively for having the greatest percentage increases in locally recruited members between January 1, 1988 and January 1, 1989. In addition, LWV-Dallas received the award for the best membership growth plan.

On Saturday night we partied, celebrating the 70th birthday of the League of Women Voters of Texas. Surrounded by festive decorations, delegates enjoyed an elegant banquet, sang happy birthday to the League, and toasted our victories. Under the direction of Louise Cummins, the state board serenaded (???) delegates with songs such as "We're Forever Doing Studies," to the tune of "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles," and "Mamas, Do Hope Your Babies Grow Up to Be Leaguers" to the old Texas favorite of similar title.

Former state League presidents Ruth Joer (1966-70), Veta Winick (1970-75), Betty Anderson (1975-79), Diana Clark (1979-83), and Lois Carpenter (1983-87) shared their memories of the victories that occurred during their terms. And Cookie Smith (1956-60) and Eleanor Richards (1952-56) sent greetings. Each former president was presented with a framed reproduction of the page of the original minutes of the Texas Equal Suffrage Association convention recording passage of the motion by which it became the Texas League of Women Voters on October 10, 1919. Also reproduced was the page of the minutes recording the first convention of the Texas League of Women Voters, in which the treasurer's report revealed that income projections had not been met and the League held a note for \$1200! On the back of the framed "picture" was a copy of the original typed resolution calling for the suffrage association to dissolve into the League.

As the former presidents lined up on the stage with a piece of paper, a metal cookie tin, and matches in hand, unsuspecting delegates slowly realized that a most significant victory would be celebrated by the burning of the note taken to purchase the state League office. Having raised nearly \$190,000 in four and a half years (the last of it just days before Convention) due primarily to the generosity of League members, the state League indeed had a victory worth celebrating. The note became ashes as delegates and guests cheered. In gratitude for their help, each local League that had made a donation from their League funds was given a certificate of appreciation.

Saturday evening ended with the whole crowd joining in singing "This League is Your League" proving that League conventions are not always all work and no play. Of course, indefatigable as always, some League members trooped off to caucuses after the gala ended.

The third plenary meeting began Sunday morning with the vote on program. The amended proposed program was passed, including the study of Child Care in Texas. (This convention summary plus the Convention Workbook provide a complete version of the



1989-91 program until the updated Program Perspectives is completed this fall.) After losing by a hair, the not-recommended study of Child Abuse and Neglect was reconsidered in an amended form and adopted as a study to be carried out by an innovative method. Delegates approved a process in which the main proponent, LWV-Houston Area, will conduct the study, taking a statewide perspective, with the guidance of the state board. If they reach consensus locally, their position will then be circulated to local Leagues across the state for concurrence. This method gives local Leagues the task during the next two years of conducting one in-depth state study and consensus, Child Care, and the choice of determining how much attention to give to the Child Abuse and Neglect Study prior to concurrence.

Following adoption of the program for 1989-91, delegates adopted the 1989-90 LWV-Texas budget and approved an \$11 per-member payment for 1990-91 after debates on its need and adequacy and consideration of an amendment that would have increased it to \$12, which failed.

Action motions were passed regarding legislation on the Edwards Aquifer, voter registration, and decriminalization of homosexuality.

Delegates approved a motion directing Texas delegates to LWVUS Council to convey concerns to the national board relating to changing advocacy priorities after adoption by convention delegates, financial matters, program publications, and direct-mail fundraising and membership solicitation. Delegates also supported the state board's proposal that the national League publish a national Voters Guide for presidential and vice-presidential candidates, that could be incorporated into our state guide.

Delegates made a variety of suggestions to the state board during "I Wish the League Would..." relating to the need to diversify membership, member-at-large unit dues structure, dates for Council/Convention, recitation of the pledge of allegiance at Council/Convention, identification of topics of action motions, desire to see LWV-Dallas' membership plan, need for early background material on Child Care, and publication of get-out-the-vote materials for purchase by local Leagues.

The Courtesy Resolutions Committee commended LWV-Houston Area and all who made Convention '89 a success, and LWV-San Antonio Area orchestrated a novel invitation to host Convention '91 complete with Shamu!

The proposed slate for a new board and nominating committee for 1989-91 was elected and introduced, as were three members whom the board will appoint as directors in June. The new board takes office June 1. The slate elected is listed in the Convention Workbook.

Convention '89 ended with the second annual Silent Auction, complete with another visit from Karnak the Magnificent (and occasionally Maleficent?), netting more than \$2500 for the LWV-Texas budget.

After three days of staying on schedule, the convention was adjourned sine die shortly after noon, April 16, ending forty-eight hours of education, inspiration, business, and pleasure!



Distributed on letterhead at press conference  
and to Capitol press corps May 1, 1989

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 1, 1989

CONTACT: Catherine Perrine  
[REDACTED]

COMMUNITY DRINKING WATER SURVEY

Today the League of Women Voters Education Fund released results of a nationwide survey of water utility officials and state drinking water administrators in a publication titled Crosscurrents: The Water We Drink. Questions addressed both the current status of drinking water supplies and needs for future improvements.

Emphasis was given to implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments adopted by Congress in 1986, which call for:

- additional filtration and disinfection to remove microbiological contaminants that cause waterborne diseases;
- EPA standards for 83 contaminants not previously regulated, including organic chemicals, radon, and lead;
- monitoring for these chemicals by public water systems;
- wellhead protection programs and aquifer protection plans for groundwater sources that are chief sources of drinking water.

Survey respondents favored strengthened rules to fight water-borne diseases as the most effective health protection measure. Some expressed concern that expensive programs to treat chemical contaminants may divert resources from basic system operations.

In Texas, 15 water utility managers were interviewed, as well as Charles Maddox, Director of the Division of Water Hygiene at the Texas Department of Health. Mr. Maddox ranks standards for organic chemicals and additional monitoring as the most effective of the new requirements in protecting public health in Texas, where disinfection is already required of all public drinking water utilities.

During the three-year period covered by the survey only two Texas water systems had to abandon water wells--both because of chemical contamination from improperly managed landfills. No surface water intake had to be discontinued.

Texas water utility officials rank proper siting and permitting of landfills, hazardous waste facilities, wastewater treatment plants, injection wells, and septic tanks, along with monitoring of raw water quality, as highly effective means of protecting drinking water supplies. The principal impediments to protection of water supplies are believed to be lack of public interest and conflicting governmental authorities.

During National Drinking Water Week, May 1-7, water utilities and other sponsors, including the League of Women Voters, are urging citizens to learn more about their drinking water sources and treatment plants. "Congress took the first step to improved water quality by passing the Safe Drinking Water Act and the 1986 Amendments," says League president Nancy Neuman. "Adequate funding and community-based commitment is crucial to successful implementation and enforcement of current laws."



## WHEN

Friday, June 2 and  
Saturday, June 3, 1989

## WHERE

The Hyatt Regency San Antonio  
On The Riverwalk  
at Paseo Del Alamo  
123 Losoya Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Media, government, legal and academic professionals; students; and anyone who cares about the free flow of public information.

## REGISTRATION FEES

A \$95 registration fee covers the complete conference. This includes Friday evening's James Madison Award Dinner as well as Saturday's events and meals. An \$80 registration fee covers Saturday only and will include the continental breakfast as well as the luncheon. To attend the James Madison Award Dinner only, the fee is \$50.

## SPONSORS

The Freedom of Information  
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## UNDERWRITER

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*"Knowledge will forever govern  
ignorance; and a people who mean  
to be their own governors, must  
arm themselves with the power  
which knowledge gives,"*

*—James Madison*

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION FOUNDATION OF TEXAS' ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION..... A PEOPLE'S RIGHT



*This conference is for reporters, teachers, attorneys, students and citizens. Access to public information is a right. What we need to know as participants in our local, state and national governmental process will be covered.*



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Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending both days at \$95 each \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending Sat. only at \$80 each \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending Fri. only at \$50 each \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Less 20% discount if check received by May 19, 1989 Total \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount of enclosed check Total \_\_\_\_\_

Registration must be received by May 19, 1989 in order to receive the 20% discount. Please make checks payable to FOIFT and return to the above address. Direct phone reservations may be made by calling the FOIFT office at 214/977-6658. All fees must be received in the office by May 26, 1989 in order to have a reservation held. All paid reservations will be held at the door. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel by calling 1-800-228-9000 or 1-512-222-1234. Rooms available on a first call, first serve basis. A special rate of \$65 per night will be extended to anyone wishing to remain in San Antonio for the weekend. Reservations need to be made by May 19th in order to assure a room at the Hyatt. The Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the Riverwalk offers the use of its fitness center and rooftop swimming pool to all guests.





THE FREEDOM  
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## AGENDA

### FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1989 EARLY BIRD SESSIONS

2:30 *FOI IN TEXAS .....1989 LEGISLA-  
TIVE UPDATE*

3:30 *FOI IN THE COMPUTER AGE*

5:30 *RECEPTION*

7:00 *JAMES MADISON AWARD DINNER*

7:30 *WELCOME.....GEORGE IRISH,  
PUBLISHER, SAN ANTONIO LIGHT*

### SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1989

8:30 *CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST*

9:00 *WELCOME .....RALPH LANGER,  
VICE PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE  
EDITOR, THE DALLAS MORNING  
NEWS AND PRESIDENT OF  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
FOUNDATION OF TEXAS.*

9:30 *ROUNDTABLE SOCRATIC DIALOGUE  
WITH GOVERNMENT, LEGAL, AND  
MEDIA PARTICIPATION*

11:30 *BREAK*

12:00 *LUNCHEON SPEAKER....UNITED  
STATES DISTRICT JUDGE  
WILLIAM WAYNE JUSTICE*

2:00 *FORUM....A TIME TO  
ASK....QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
FOUNDATION OF TEXAS  
ATTORNEYS.*

3:45 *ADJOURNMENT*

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May 8, 1989

To all readers of this mailing:

LATE-BREAKING NEWS!!!

News sounds a bit more cheerful than I feel! Due to the impending death of both of the decent typewriters in the state League office, we find ourselves investigating the purchase of computer equipment a bit sooner than anticipated. Several League members have expressed a desire to be consulted about computer purchase, with the thought that computer businesses they or their friends own might be willing to give us a good bid.

If you or someone you recommend is interested in receiving a proposal from the state League specifying what we are seeking in the way of computer equipment, please contact me soon.

Alternately, if you are an employee of IBM or another company with a program to give equipment to organizations in which their employees volunteer, let us know about that also.

The office is not computerized at all, so we are looking for an IBM-compatible PC for each of the two staff members, color monitors, hard disks, one laser printer, one other letter-quality printer, and software for word processing, data base, spread sheet, and desktop publishing.

Leave a message on the answering machine if I am not there, with your phone number, so that I can return your call. I will be traveling a lot this month, so do talk to the answering machine if I'm not at home.

The board will be seeking enough information about costs between now and the June 2-4, 1989 board meeting to make a decision at that point about how to proceed.

Diane Sheridan, President  
[REDACTED]