



The **ROADwomen** Register

**OCTOBER
2014**

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NEXT MEETING

October 21, 2014

Sherry Merfish
Houston Organizer
IGNITE

Shelby Hansen
Communications
Co-Chair &
Founding Member
Houston Chapter,
New Leaders
Council

5:30 p.m.
St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
1805 West Alabama

HOME GROWN WOMEN LEADERSHIP: WINNING TODAY AND TOMORROW

The pundits may all still say that Texas is beet-red, but we know better. Texas is not a red state; Texas is a non-voting state. That needs to change. ROADwomen are taking the lead in making that change by educating and preparing young women in the political process. The October ROADwomen meeting will feature two women (both ROADwomen, by the way) who are taking up the challenge and who, you might note from the photos, hang out with some other pretty impressive women leaders.



Sherry Merfish, one of the very first ROADwomen, is the Houston organizer for IGNITE, which delivers programs in high schools and colleges that provide political and civic education, exposure to women in political leadership, and hands-on training opportunities. IGNITE has become a peer network of women who support and nurture each other's aspirations for civic and political leadership.

Shelby Hansen is a founding member and Communications Co-chair of the Houston chapter of the New Leaders Council. The New Leaders Council works to recruit, train and promote the progressive political entrepreneurs of tomorrow... the trendsetters, elected officials and politically-engaged leaders in business and industry who will shape the future landscape. By helping establish a Houston chapter, Shelby is one of thirteen members who are bringing the New Leaders Council to Texas for the first time.



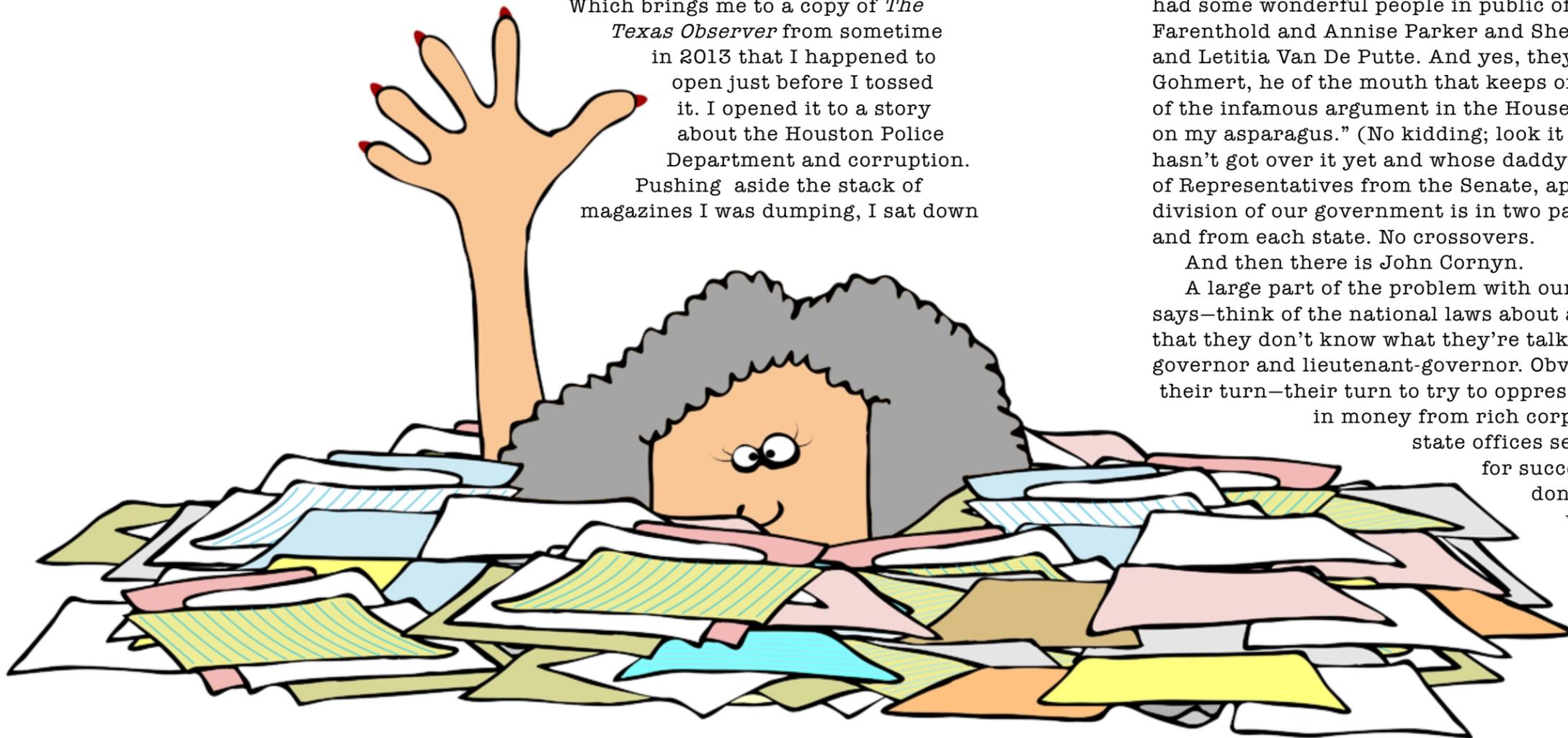
Don't miss the inspiring program at the October ROADwomen meeting.



Muriel Stubbs' News Update: What's the Matter with Texas (or Move Over, Kansas, While the Right Wing Screws Over Another One)

Should it be of interest to anyone except a few of my relatives, some friends who never give up, and the guy who drives the recycle truck in my neighborhood, I am presently involved in a prolonged skirmish with stuff that threatens to drown me: books, snail mail, wailing political pleas/threats, magazines of impeccable or dubious origin (impeccable: *The New Yorker* and *The Texas Observer*; dubious: *Consumer Reports* and *The AARP Bulletin*), and the detritus of a life spent reading and writing. Other people seem to be able just to toss stuff into the trash or the recycle bin, but when I recently found a set of papers from a class I taught in Port Arthur in the 1960's, I put it under a box of school stuff in the garage because I couldn't bear to throw it away before I had at least examined it. It's probably still there. I couldn't remember why I kept a whole class set of papers fifty years old. I'm waiting for an answer to come to me.

Which brings me to a copy of *The Texas Observer* from sometime in 2013 that I happened to open just before I tossed it. I opened it to a story about the Houston Police Department and corruption. Pushing aside the stack of magazines I was dumping, I sat down



and read about Houston's finest, which sounded a lot like the local SS. They kicked and beat up people, mostly young Black men. When they finally caught people they'd been chasing at appalling speeds up and down freeways and through residential neighborhoods, the Johnny-come-latelys to the chase begged the ones who had already pulled the miscreant(s) out of the car and were beating the crap out of them to keep them on the ground until the late ones could get in a few blows and kicks because they were all so mad. I understood their anger; I taught school for 38 years. But I didn't and don't understand how they got out of any kind of punishment for their behavior—and, apparently, still do. Don't they get any instruction in how to manage anger—and if they don't, why don't they? In the kind of state we live in, full of bigots and race-baiters and people who think that the Second Amendment to the Constitution gives them the specific right to take their guns anywhere—church, PTA meetings, funerals, weddings—the enforcers of the law are sometimes as bad as the lawbreakers. And ordinary citizens are largely ignorant of laws that would enforce civility. They have apparently skipped over references in the Constitution to militias because they don't know what those were and what they were for, and our largely gutless and clueless politicians don't have nerve—or sense—enough to pass laws that might prevent easy access to deadly weapons. Some of these people apparently consider themselves Christians, maybe of the ilk that thinks they know what Jesus might maybe sometime do.

So No. 1 in What's the Matter...is policing. And No. 2 is politicians. Texas has and has had some wonderful people in public office. Barbara Jordan and Ann Richards and Sissy Farenthold and Annise Parker and Sheila Jackson Lee come to mind. Also Wendy Davis and Letitia Van De Putte. And yes, they are all women. You want some men? Okay: Louie Gohmert, he of the mouth that keeps on running when his brain has parked at the curb. He of the infamous argument in the House when he accused Eric Holder of "casting aspersions on my asparagus." (No kidding; look it up.) And there is Ted Cruz, who went to Harvard and hasn't got over it yet and whose daddy is a Cuban nut. Cruz likes to try to run the House of Representatives from the Senate, apparently ignorant of the fact that the law-making division of our government is in two parts, each of which is composed of people elected by and from each state. No crossovers.

And then there is John Cornyn.

A large part of the problem with our politicians is that if they don't like what the law says—think of the national laws about abortion—they simply invent new ones, never mind that they don't know what they're talking about. Think about our two male candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor. Obviously, their best argument for being elected is that it's their turn—their turn to try to oppress women and ruin public education, their turn to rake

in money from rich corporations and Tea Party nut cases. Repugs have had state offices sewed up for so long that they've come up with a plan for succession that has nothing to do with qualification. They don't consider service to the electorate. They consider which corporations will bring them the most money. If they need to build exceedingly long fences along the border, okay. First, spend a little money spreading little stories about what the fences are keeping out. Nowadays, it's ISIS (ISIL?) and Central American children, who want to invade our schools and soak up

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Muriel Stubbs' News Update:

What's the Matter with Texas (or Move Over, Kansas, While the Right Wing Screws Over Another One)
continued



all of the education so there won't be any left for deserving white kids.

Consider the ideas you've heard from Greg Abbott and Dan Patrick. Do I hear you saying you haven't heard any ideas from them? So maybe No. 2 ½ on the What's Wrong... list is Tea Party ideas for what the Loon Star State should be doing between now and 2016, when the Godfathers of Democracy or the Koch brothers, whoever is around to make new, tighter laws

regarding voting and to buy up whichever Congressmen and Senators are still for sale, will have to, unaccustomed as they will be by then, DO SOMETHING. Perhaps we could manage to pass a law that makes their salaries contingent on what they accomplish—and perhaps the sun will rise in the west tomorrow.

Well, it's plain, is it not, even with this short list—as opposed to the real, long one—that what's wrong with Texas is Republicans. We didn't used to have them in such numbers and with such destructive ideas—if, indeed, they have ideas at all. They didn't used to seem as hateful and vindictive as they do now, but perhaps climate change is worse than we knew. Things have already withered. Alas.

The question, then, seems always to be What To Do. As you can see if you take a little ride out into the country or along the coast, the problem with trying to lay out what's wrong with Texas is that our beloved state—the meadows and streams and byways and bogs of it—in spite of all, still produces hazy blue fields of bluebonnets and Indian Paint Brush in the Spring, and the best damn football players in the country in the Fall, and blue crab meat and shrimp and gumbo and cheese enchiladas and tacos and Mariachi bands, and the best friends in the whole world all the time.

And margaritas.

And Democrats, God bless us every one.

And Republicans.

So here's what to do, and we must do it as soon as possible:

Vote the Republicans out, folks.

Vote 'em ALL out.

And happy days will be here again.

Maybe.

Lena Dunham: 5 Reasons Why I Vote (and you should, too)

(EDITOR'S NOTE #1: YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THIS ARTICLE BY ACTRESS-AUTHOR LENA DUNHAM IN A RECENT ROADWOMEN EMAIL BLAST, BUT WITH THE ELECTION JUST AROUND THE CORNER [IN FACT, EARLY VOTING BEGINS MONDAY, OCTOBER 20], IT BEARS REPEATING.)

Here are the reasons I vote:

1. When you vote, you feel so, so good. And proud. Yes, proud. You feel a sense of accomplishment because you said this is how the world should be and I'm not just going to sit around watching reruns of *Shark Tank* and eating Hint of Lime Tostitos and complaining to my friend Joyce. You did the right thing, and you feel joy. You will have the best day just because you voted. I wore fishnets and a little black dress to vote, then walked around with a spring in my slinky step. It lasted for days. I can summon it when I'm blue. It's more effective than exercise or ecstasy or cheesecake (note: I have never done ecstasy, ok?! I am a law-abiding citizen).

Seriously, if you're not registered to vote, or if you're not sure (it can be confusing, bureaucracy) stop reading this and get it done. Nothing I'm going to say in the rest of this thoughtful and heartfelt e-mail I am writing in my underpants is more important than you registering right now. Do it.

(EDITOR'S NOTE #2: IF YOU'RE NOT REGISTERED YOU HAVE MISSED THE DEADLINE IN TEXAS. BUT YOU ARE REGISTERED, AREN'T YOU?)

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**Want to see your ROADwomen Register in FULL Color each month?
Get your Register on-line. It's really pretty...
and saves ROADwomen money, too!**

www.ROADwomen.com



**October 21st Meeting — RSVP NOW!
Growing Women Leaders**

**Sherry Merfish (IGNITE) and Shelby Hansen (New Leaders Council)
Tuesday, October 21, 2014; refreshments at 5:30 p.m.; meeting at 6:00 p.m.
Where: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 West Alabama
Refreshments: Of course!**

2. I find it incredibly, deeply satisfying that every single vote is exactly equal. When practically everything in the world feels deeply unfair, it's a pleasure to know my vote is valued just exactly the same as your vote or Ryan Gosling's vote or yes, even Beyonce's vote. If Blue Ivy was old enough to vote, her vote would be worth just the same. And anyway, the government probably has special dispensation for Blue Ivy. She's probably running for president next election on a platform of FABULOUSNESS FOR ALL.

Do not, DO NOT decide that your vote doesn't matter. I don't care where you live, or what your reasons, your vote matters. You can't complain about the status quo or about the crazy medieval attacks on women's health unless you VOTE. And apathy is so 2008.

3. The crazy and depressing truth is that there are people running for office right now who could actually affect your life. PARTICULARLY your sex life. PARTICULARLY if you're a woman. Yup.

You might be thinking, how is that even possible? THIS IS 2014! Well, here's how: Colorado's Cory Gardner, who's running for Senate. He's all about letting your boss tell you what kind of birth control your insurance should cover. (Even if your boss thinks the answer is none, shut up and go back to putting the lids on jars, you silly girl.) And if Gardner and just five more of his friends win their races, people who agree will be running the Senate and the House. By my amateur calculations, that's the whole Congress, which means they're going to get right down to business on the whole blocking-coverage-of-birth-control thing, When you can't get access to affordable birth control, suddenly your sex life is ruled by fear. And that's not fair. So if you are a woman, or you love a woman, or you've ever met a woman: vote.

4. I vote because the number of backwards, out-of-touch, downright freaking unbelievably anti-women's health politicians out there right now makes my blood boil. Like Thom Tillis in North Carolina, who snuck a bunch of abortion restrictions into a bill that was supposed to be about motorcycle safety. YES, MOTORCYCLE SAFETY. And called opposition from people who spoke out against his weird obsession with making decisions about women's bodies "a bunch of whining coming from losers." LOSERS! Or Dan Sullivan in Alaska, running for the Senate, who just outright refuses to reveal whether he supports the Violence Against Women Act.

And then there's Joni Ernst running in Iowa who has tried to block women from getting cancer screenings and HIV tests and whatever else they need at Planned Parenthood health centers; she wants to repeal the ACA including the birth control benefit that helps millions of women take charge of their fertility and their lives — oh, and while she's at it just straight up abolishing the minimum wage. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROCESS THAT. But rather than go deep into a rage spiral, I vote. It's healthier, more effective and infinitely more pleasant.

BTW, even if you don't live in those states, you can help. Planned Parenthood Action Fund will tell you what to do.

5. Voting is kind of a gateway drug to "getting involved." And you have to get involved. We need you. "We" meaning women, children, mothers, fathers, sisters, dogs. Everyone. There's SO MUCH MORE you can do to make this whole election thing work for you. If the thought of trying to figure out exactly how to do more for yourself and your community confounds you, I feel you, bro. Planned Parenthood Action Fund made a thing called the Actionator that makes it simple as signing up for Tinder. You have no excuse. And neither do I.

I didn't always vote. And that's embarrassing, more embarrassing than being naked on TV or being told you look like a "baby giraffe" when you walk in heels at awards shows. I didn't vote for a lot of reasons: because I thought our mothers had already handled feminism. Because I live in New York City where, I was told, it was all Democrats anyway. But mostly because I didn't feel my voice mattered. But then I realized: if we don't vote for ourselves, who will? And by voting for ourselves, we vote for each other. I know that's a tongue twister but it's real.

So get registered, get involved. Make your own reasons.

(EDITOR'S NOTE #3: THAT'S THE PLANNED PARENTHOOD ACTION FUND: [HTTP://WWW.PLANNEDPARENTHOODACTION.ORG/](http://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/))

River Oaks Area Democratic Women

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Diane Mosier, June Reeder, Coyia Richter

The ROADwomen Register:

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The Register welcomes your contributions. Please submit any material by the 25th of the month to mstubbs13@comcast.net.

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ROADwomen Membership Form

Yes! I want to be a member of ROADwomen at the level checked below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____

(The State of Texas requires occupation information)

This is a Gift Membership for:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____ Occupation: _____

- Student \$25/yr
 - Under 30 Years of Age \$35/yr
 - Regular ROADwoman/man \$50/yr
 - Regular ROADcouple \$75/yr
 - Sustaining ROADwoman/man \$100/yr
 - Sustaining ROADcouple \$150/yr
 - ROADwoman/man for LIFE \$1,000
 - ROADcouple for LIFE \$1,500
- Membership with subscription to The ROADwomen Register
 Membership with subscription to The ROADwomen Register + Name in the ROADwomen Registry
 Membership with subscription to The ROADwomen Register + Name in the ROADwomen Registry
 Membership with subscription to The ROADwomen Register + Name in the ROADwomen Registry + Priority Seating at ROADshows + No more Dues!
 Membership with subscription to The ROADwomen Register + Name in The ROADwomen Registry + Priority Seating at ROADshows + No more Dues!

Election Day

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

Early Voting

October 20-24, 2014

(8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

October 25, 2014

(7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.)

October 26, 2014

(1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)

October 27-31, 2014

(7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.)

There are 41 Early Voting
Locations in Harris County.
You can vote at any of them.

Don't forget your ID!!!



River Oaks Area Democratic Women
P.O. Box 22678
Houston, TX 77227

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

