



*LWV-RMA assisted with VCU student elections*



*VCU student election workers with the LWV banner*

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

  

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE RICHMOND METROPOLITAN AREA

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## MINUTES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

*League of Women Voters-Richmond Metropolitan Area  
Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May 24, 2018  
Westwood Club, 6200 West Club Road, Richmond, VA  
5:30-7:30 pm*

### Call to Order and Welcome

**Attendance:** 29 LWV-RMA members, 2 LWV-VA members, and 1 guest.

President Mary Crutchfield called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. A quorum was established. Mary thanked Lorraine Waddill for agreeing to act as parliamentarian. She also thanked Secretary Lynn Crowder for recording the minutes and three members who have agreed to be readers for the minutes: Penny Anderson, Gail Schweickert, and Suzy Szasz Palmer.

Mary asked for any additions to the agenda; there were none.

**Minutes** from the May 2017 Annual Meeting were approved as submitted (see Annual Report).

**The Treasurer's May 24, 2018 Report** was distributed at the meeting (attached). Mary Anne Stone reviewed it and thanked Penny Anderson for her invaluable advice. Mary Anne expressed our appreciation for the continuing donations that come in as interest on a gift from the Presbyterian Church that go into the Education Fund. This is also how we are able to use the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church for our Board meetings. Our LWV-RMA accounting of the General Fund reconciles with the bank statement and the Education Fund reconciles with LWV national records.

### **Proposed Budget for 2018-19** – Evelyn Glazier (see Annual Report)

Evelyn thanked the Budget Committee (Mary Anne Stone, Penny Anderson, Gloria Green, Suzy Szasz Palmer, and Evelyn Glazier). Evelyn summarized the main parts of the budget. The budget was approved as proposed.

### **Proposed Program for 2018-19** – Karen Rosenblum (see Annual Report)

Karen reviewed the salient features of the proposed program; the program was approved as proposed. Karen explained that the 2018 Advocacy Program (see Annual Report) had already been approved by the Board. This process must occur every year. Virginia Cowles urged the Board to use these positions in our advocacy and also urged each member to select a committee to work on and become active.

### **Report on Membership** – Karen Rosenblum

As of May, 2018, we have 101 LWV-RMA members; 14 of these are new in the last year.

Donna Granski asked that we express appreciation to Karen and Jeanne D'Ascoli for breathing new life into our League with their initiatives during the past year. We expressed our thanks to them both with a round of applause.

### **Special Member Recognitions: Catherine Walker and Meghan Dorsett** – Mary Crutchfield (see Annual Report)

Both Catherine and Meghan passed away this past year; both were special friends of the League and will be missed.

**Report of the Nominating Committee** (see Annual Report and attached memo) – Lynn Johnston  
Nominations from the floor were also requested; there were none. The 2018 - 2019 Slate was approved.

2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Marianne Feeney  
Treasurer: Mary Anne Stone

Directors (2018-2020) Mary Julia Street  
Valarie Fillgrove  
Jeanne D’Ascoli  
Suzy Szasz Palmer  
Susan Rebillot

Directors (2018-2019) Penny Adams  
Alice Tousignant

**Recognition of all Officers and Directors of the LWV-RMA Board** – Mary Crutchfield

**President’s Remarks**

Mary expressed thanks to those leaving the Board this year and recognized them individually: Nancy Vest, Lorraine Waddill, Mabel Wells, and Evelyn Glazier. Nancy has been a strong leader on ERA and has managed our Facebook page skillfully. Lorraine has served the League for many years and her work on International Affairs has broadened our horizons. Her Hot Topics program on human trafficking was an eye opener for us. Mabel has been our calm voice of reason and will continue in her off-board role as Black History chair. Evelyn has given us years of service and has been a champion for VOTE411, which she will continue to manage off-board. Mary thanked Evelyn for being her mentor and right-hand woman during her presidency. Mary also thanked all League members who volunteered throughout the year.

Mary pointed out the back sheet of the Annual Report, where members may offer “**Direction to the Board**” on any matters of interest or concern. These suggestions can also be made on index cards that can be found at the check-in table and given to Mary tonight or made via email.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Crowder, Secretary

*Readers Penny Anderson, Gail Schweickert, and Suzy Szasz Palmer affirm that they have read and approved these minutes.*

## League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, Inc.

## BUDGET - July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

## GENERAL FUND BUDGET

## INCOME

CORPORATE & INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS & GRANTS		\$3,000.00
LOCAL ANNUAL MEETING		\$1,050.00
	35 attendees @ \$30/person	\$1,050.00
MEMBERSHIP DUES		\$4,765.00
	72 Individual memberships @ \$55	\$3,960.00
	9 Household memberships @ \$85	\$765.00
	2 Student memberships @ \$20	\$40.00
TRANSFERS FROM EDUCATION FUND		\$2,868.00
	for LWVUS PMP	\$1,368.00
	for Voter Education Projects	\$1,500.00
SPECIAL EVENTS (1)		\$1,500.00
WARES SALES & MISCELLANEOUS		\$116.00
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME</b>		<b>\$13,299.00</b>

## EXPENSES

## PROGRAM EXPENSES

	VOTER SERVICE		\$1,600.00
	Committee	\$100.00	
	Voter Education Projects	\$1,500.00	
	PROGRAM PLANNING/ADVOCACY MTG		\$150.00
	LOCAL/STATE/NATIONAL ISSUES PROGRAMS(2)		\$600.00
	CONVENTIONS/COUNCIL		\$1,600.00
	National Convention	\$1,000.00	
	State Council	\$600.00	
	SPECIAL EVENTS (1)		\$1,800.00
	LOCAL ANNUAL MEETING		\$1,150.00
	Annual Report	\$100.00	
	Meeting expenses ( <i>from fees</i> )	\$1,050.00	
	MISCELLANEOUS (3)		\$70.00
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$6,970.00</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES

	<i>The Leaguer</i> newsletter production		\$50.00
	Website		\$300.00
	Fundraising		\$100.00
	Membership		\$4,454.00
	Membership Materials and Events	\$350.00	
	<b>Operating Expenses continued below</b>		

	Membership Fees - LWVUS		
	81 full-PMP members @ \$32 (4)	\$2,592.00	
	9 half-PMP members @ \$16 (5)	\$144.00	
	Membership Fees - LWV-VA		
	81 full-PMP members @ \$16 (4)	\$1,296.00	
	9 half-PMP members @ \$8 (5)	\$72.00	
	Board related expenses (6)		\$700.00
	President's expenses		\$50.00
	Secretary's expenses		\$50.00
	Treasurer's expenses		\$50.00
	Office expenses		\$575.00
	Liability Insurance	\$265.00	
	Postage	\$50.00	
	PO Box rental fee	\$70.00	
	Printing/Copying expense	\$50.00	
	Telephone expenses	\$85.00	
	SCC non-profit registration fee	\$25.00	
	VADACS non-profit registration fee	\$30.00	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$6,329.00</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES (from above)</b>			<b>\$6,970.00</b>
<b>TOAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$13,299.00</b>
<b>EDUCATION FUND BUDGET</b>			
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>			
BALANCES AVAILABLE			\$6,834.00
	Health Care Project balance	\$3,876.00	
	Other Ed Fund balance	\$2,958.00	
EDUCATION FUND INCOME			\$2,056.00
	Presbyterian Foundation (Anonymous donor)	\$56.00	
	Donations - Individual & Corporate	\$2,000.00	
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE EDUCATION FUNDS</b>			<b>\$8,890.00</b>
<b>EDUCATION FUND EXPENSES</b>			
	Health Care Projects		\$3,876.00
	Voter Education Projects		\$1,500.00
	Other Education Projects		\$2,146.00
	Transfer to General Fund for LWVUS PMP		\$1,368.00
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION FUND BUDGET EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$8,890.00</b>
Footnotes:			
(1) Special Events include Black History and Back to League			
(2) includes Housing Forum, Educated Voter series and \$350 LWVUS 2020 Centennial event			
(3) Miscellaneous expense includes honoraria and donations given			
(4) Includes PMP for individuals and first household members			
(5) Includes PMP for second household members; no PMP for students			
(6) Includes board retreat \$600			

**PROPOSED 2019-2020 LWV-RMA ADVOCACY PROGRAM\*****Purpose:**

The League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area (LWV-RMA) promotes political responsibility through informed and active citizen participation in government and acts on selected governmental issues.

**Non-Partisan Policy:**

The LWV-RMA shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

**National and State Program:**

The LWV-RMA supports the principles and advocacy positions of the League of Women Voters of Virginia and the League of Women Voters of the U.S.

**Local Program:**

The LWV-RMA supports:

**Open Government**

Open representative government. Open citizen participation and representation in governmental boards and commissions.

Fiscal policy and citizen participation. Open and active inclusion of citizen input in the development, adoption, and implementation of the budgets of all metropolitan area local governments.

**Regional Government**

Regional cooperation. Regional cooperation in the provision of government services to meet the needs of the citizens of the metropolitan area.

Regional transportation. An efficient, multimodal, economical regionally planned, financed, and managed balanced transportation system.

Regional land use planning. Comprehensive, cooperative, and enforced land use planning in the metropolitan area that preserves permanent open space and develops pleasing roadways.

**Local Services**

Public education. Equality of public education for all, including gifted and handicapped students, which includes cooperation among school divisions  
provision of up-to-date information  
community involvement in school policies, programs, and budget processes.

Child care. Child care programs that meet the social, mental, and physical needs of young children.

Health care. A health care system that provides access for all residents and controls health care costs.

Housing. Availability of sound, affordable housing without discrimination.

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\* The LWV-RMA's local advocacy program positions were reviewed in 2016. Former positions have been archived. Updated positions are shown here for all areas except two. The entire Local Government Structure position was removed and archived because the specific recommendations for Richmond's government were enacted. The entire Juvenile Justice position was removed and archived because it was outdated. Future advocacy on juvenile justice issues can be undertaken using the LWV Virginia's Juvenile Justice position.



## 2019 ADVOCACY PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT

*Karen Rosenblum*  
*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

Held on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the Varina Area Public Library, this lively meeting celebrated our 2018 accomplishments, reviewed LWV-RMA and LWV-VA positions, and launched planning for the 2019-2020 Advocacy Program.

Following a preview of the new LWV-RMA website, members reviewed the process for establishing or revising LWV-RMA and LWV-VA positions and the commitment of time and member interest that is required.

As the meeting's first agenda item, members voted unanimously to retain all LWV-RMA positions for the upcoming year. That recommendation was approved by the LWV-RMA Board.

As the meeting's second agenda item, members considered whether LWV-VA should add, restudy, or retire positions. Following an extended examination of the current LWV-VA Election Laws Position, members voted unanimously "that the LWV-VA should review/update the Election Laws position to include election processes, laws, and regulations, e.g., post- election audits, to ensure free and fair election results, transparency, security, and accountability."

That recommendation was forwarded to the LWV-RMA Board, which concurred and sent the recommendation forward to LWV-VA. As there are three other local Leagues engaged in various aspects of this topic, LWV-VA suggested a proposal for a consolidated study that would include each of the items specified by the individual Leagues. The LWV-RMA Board concurred.

Discussion then turned to the work that has been done by the LWV-RMA Housing Committee, with members voting unanimously to recommend establishment of a study leading to a new state position on affordable housing. The LWV-RMA Board approved and forwarded the proposal to LWV-VA.

Members voted to retain all other LWV-VA positions; the LWV-RMA Board approved.

Led by Alice Tousignant, the final segment of the meeting was devoted to a workshop in which members brainstormed topics and plans for the activities of the 2019-2020 Advocacy Program. This planning process yielded a set of items which were assigned to specific committees and individuals. Priorities, a timeline for activities, and resources will be established by committees and the Board over the next months.





## REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2019-2020

At the Annual Meeting on May 14, the Nominating Committee of LWV-RMA will propose the following slate to serve for 2019-2020:

President	Lynn McMartin
1st Vice President	Karen Rosenblum
Secretary	Becki Lawson
5 directors for 2-year term	Penny Adams Doris Bey Donna Granski Barbara Greenleaf Alice Tousignant
1 director for 1-year term	Gail Schweickert
Nominating Committee – 3 off-board members	Evelyn Glazier, Chair Anna Mason Lorraine Waddill

Submitted by 2019 Nominating Committee:

Gail Schweickert and Evelyn Glazier, co-chairs;  
Lynn Johnston; Jeanne D’Ascoli; Marianne Feeney

## BYLAWS CORRECTION

The legal name of our local League, as registered with the Virginia State Corporation Commission, is “League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, Inc.” However, our Bylaws state the name as “League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, *Virginia*, Incorporated.” The proposed correction is to delete the word *Virginia* from our name in the Bylaws to conform to the State Corporation Commission registry.

## TRIBUTE



Long- time League member Ann Tyler died March 19, 2019. Ann was a former board member, membership chair and Unit meeting hostess, as well as a strong supporter of the ERA. All who knew Ann will remember "the sunshine and abundant goodness she brought to each of our lives."

*Richmond Times-Dispatch, Obituary, March 24, 2019.*

**2018-2019 CALENDAR****July 2018**

July 17 LWV-RMA New/Old Member Board Meeting

**August 2018**

August 15 Naturalization Ceremony (handing out voter registration applications to new citizens)

August 18 LWV-RMA Voter Registration Training

August 21 LWV-RMA Board Meeting

August 27 Hot Topics - "Expanding Voter Participation"

**September 2018**

September 8 LWV-VA Fall Workshops

September 16 LWV-RMA in partnership with Delta Sigma Theta - Candidate Forum

September 20 "Defending Democracy" (Back to League night)

September 25 National Voter Registration Day - Voter Registration at VCU

**October 2018**

October 16 LWV-RMA Board Meeting

October 17 Naturalization Ceremony (handing out voter registration applications to new citizens)

**November 2018**

November 5 and 6 LWV-RMA Call 12 Volunteers on Election Information

November 6 Election Day

November 13 Hot Topics - "Immigration"

November 14 Naturalization Ceremony (handing out voter registration applications to new citizens)

November 20 LWV-RMA Board Meeting

**December 2018**

December 4 LWV-RMA Holiday Party (home of Alice Tousignant)

December 5 LWV-VA Women's Legislative Roundtable Pre-Session

December 18 LWV-RMA Board Meeting

**January 2019**

January 16 Naturalization Ceremony (handing out voter registration applications to new citizens)

January 19 LWV-RMA Advocacy Program Planning Meeting

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January 23	Women's Legislative Roundtable
January 30	Women's Legislative Roundtable
January 30	Hot Topics - "Immigration"
<b><u>February 2019</u></b>	
February 6	Women's Legislative Roundtable
February 6	LWV-VA League Lobby Day
February 12	LWV-RMA Meet and Greet
February 13	Women's Legislative Roundtable
February 19	LWV-RMA Board Meeting
February 20	Women's Legislative Roundtable
February 24	Black History Month Commemoration - Generation Dream 2019 Presented by Richmond Peace Education Center, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King
February 28	Hot Topics - "Climate Change"
<b><u>March 2019</u></b>	
March 10	League - What Do We Stand For (orientation for new members and a refresher for more seasoned members)
March 13,14,15	Assist with VCU Student Elections
March 19	LWV-RMA Board Meeting
March 28	Hot Topics - "Housing"
<b><u>April 2019</u></b>	
April 9	LWV-RMA Meet and Greet
April 16	LWV-RMA Board Meeting
April 25	LWV-RMA Hot Topics - "Restorative Justice"
<b><u>May 2019</u></b>	
May 14	LWV-RMA Annual Meeting
May 17-19	LWV-VA Convention
May 21	LWV-RMA Board Meeting
<b><u>June 2019</u></b>	
June 11	LWV-RMA Meet and Greet
June 18	LWV-RMA Board Meeting
<b><u>July 8</u></b>	LWV-RMA Board Retreat

## REPORTS FOR 2018-2019

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I feel so fortunate that I have been able to serve as the President of the LWV-RMA, facilitate board meetings, and participate in committees with strong, dedicated and talented Leaguers. When I first came on the LWV-RMA Board five years ago there were only two committees: Voter Service and Transportation. Now in addition to those two committees we have Membership and Engagement, Communications, Affordable Housing, and Election Modernization. Each of these committees has been very active and has contributed to inspiring and engaging our members and helping our League to grow.

Jeanne D'Ascoli has been a great Chair of Membership and Engagement, organizing the Hot Topics and Meet & Greets. Jeanne also invites new members to have coffee and conversation and asks about their interests and how they want to participate in the LWV-RMA.

The Communications Committee has accomplished much good work this year under Lynn McMartin's leadership. The most ambitious and exciting project was developing a new website which will be launched on July 1. We are grateful to Anna Mason and Suzy Palmer for their guidance and management of the new website. We are also excited and grateful for Becki Lawson who has volunteered to be our new editor for "The Leaguer" newsletter. Thanks to Mary Julia Street for maintaining the LWV-RMA Roster.

Congratulations to two of our new committee chairs, Alice Tousignant and Jane Newell, for making study proposals that have been accepted by the LWV-VA Board and will be brought to the LWV-VA Convention in May! Alice Tousignant has been doing a wonderful job as Chair of the Housing Committee, educating us on the affordable housing crisis in Virginia. She has proposed a study on Affordable Housing which will be voted on at the Convention. Jane Newell has led the Election Modernization Committee in studying election processes and security issues. The committee has proposed a study to update LWV-VA's Election Laws Position to include election processes, laws and regulations to ensure free and fair election results, transparency, security and accountability. This proposal will be combined with other League proposals and will be voted on at the LWV-VA Convention.

Donna Granski, Women's Issues Chair, deserves our gratitude for her fearless and tireless advocacy for the ERA in Virginia. She will continue to inspire us and lead us again next year!

Virginia Cowles is our VIP long term Leaguer who has kept the Transportation Committee and LWV-RMA members informed on transportation issues and meetings. The committee is making plans for another GRTC bus excursion and Virginia will let us know when the plan is finalized.

Valarie Fillgrove and Penny Adams have been Co-Chairs for Voter Service this year. Thanks to Penny Adams for arranging with VCU student government leaders for Leaguers to help with their student elections. We look forward to doing more activities with VCU students in the future. Thanks to Barbara Greenleaf for her work organizing the volunteers for naturalization services. Thanks also to Evelyn Glazier for all her work on the online voter guide VOTE411. I encourage LWV-RMA members to volunteer to help her with VOTE411 tasks for the upcoming election.

I want to thank Marianne Feeney, 2nd Vice President, and members of the Budget Committee, for their good work putting together the LWV-RMA budget for the next year. I urge all LWV-RMA members to support this budget. Also, it will be important for all members to help in various ways to increase funding for our League so that we can continue with our current projects and be able to fund future projects. Thanks to Mary Anne Stone, our Treasurer, for keeping LWV-RMA finances in order and providing regular reports at board meetings. I am so grateful to Lynn Crowder, our Secretary, for her dependable attendance and thorough recording of the minutes of our board meetings and for editing the Annual Report. Karen Rosenblum continues to be an awesome 1st Vice President and is to be commended for leading the Advocacy Program Planning, working to include inclusivity policy in all our communications, and for planning a series on Civil Discourse.

In conclusion, I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as LWV-RMA President and to collaborate with these awesome Leaguers on growing our League and working to make democracy work for all.

*Mary Crutchfield, LWV-RMA President*

## 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

See 2019 Advocacy Program Planning Report.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Administrative tasks go on behind the scenes to support the League's voter service and advocacy work. The Second Vice President oversees these tasks. Thank you to the many members who help with all these tasks!

### **Membership**

The Membership and Engagement Committee, created in 2016-17, continued its work under Jeanne D'Ascoli, Chair. The Second Vice President serves as a member. See separate report.

### **Communications**

The Communications Committee was created in 2017-2018, and the Second Vice President serves as a member. See separate report.

### **Budget and Finance**

The Second VP chaired the Budget Committee with Mary Ann Stone, Penny Anderson, Evelyn Glazier and Linda Mateyka. Evelyn Glazier, Penny Anderson and Mary Ann Stone were instrumental in completing the registration with VDACS so that now we will be able to solicit donations. Fundraising will be a focus for the upcoming year.

### **Annual Board Retreat**

The First and Second Vice-Presidents planned and conducted a Board session to begin a conversation on what, if anything, needs to be done to attract and retain members. As a result of this discussion, the Second Vice President recommended that an annual retreat be held for the Board, where greater time would be available to dig deeper into what we hope to accomplish as a League. The Board supported this recommendation and the Second Vice President will be organizing this event. A committee will be formed to plan this event.

### **Other**

The Second Vice President also served as a member of the Nominating Committee.

Marianne Feeney

Second Vice President (Administration)

## MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

A newer member of the League agreed to have a cup of coffee with me and as I listened to her story, I once again felt so fortunate to have a chance to meet some of our members one on one. My long-range goal is to meet as many of our members as possible since I'm interested in them and in their perspectives about the League. One young student wants to register voters, another wants to be engaged at the General Assembly, another just wants to support the League but doesn't have time right now to be more involved. As I hear their stories, it's renewing to know of a group of people who really care about democracy and want to make a difference.

As Chair of the Membership and Engagement Committee, I have the chance to respond to some of what I learn from our members. How fortunate I am to be organizing such meaningful and productive fun activities! Every couple of weeks an email is sent to all our members. The subject line reads, 'LWV-RVA Mini Leaguer Newsletter.' Check this calendar of events for activities that may be of interest to you.

Have you had the chance to join us at a Meet and Greet Happy Hour at Travinia's in Willow Lawn? Come alone or with a friend. They are a great way to meet Leaguers, have good conversations and socialize.

Each month we've been hosting a Hot Topics session that has led to thought provoking and productive conversations. Two meetings focused on identifying specifics on our thinking about immigration and the policies we consider important regarding this issue. (For more see the article in this report [or](#) see the LWV-RMA website: <https://www.lwv-rma.org>).

In February William Nelson and Ann Pierce, leaders from the Richmond Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby gave an excellent presentation on the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. It's a bipartisan climate solution (H.R. 763). Our members had the chance to hear from leaders of this group and ask questions. We encourage our members to learn more about this bill that has the potential to bring climate change under control while unleashing American technology innovation and ingenuity. (For more go to [www.energyinnovationact.org](http://www.energyinnovationact.org))

As of this writing we will have had two additional Hot Topics: a discussion on taking a serious look at affordable rental housing and the eviction crisis in the region, and a talk on the Virginia Center for Restorative Justice by Judy Clarke, a long-time member of the League and founder of the Virginia Center for Restorative Justice.

Recognizing how complicated the League can seem to newer members, we posed the question, "The League of Women Voters - What Does the League Stand For?" During a session in March held at the Capital Ale House, we provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about the League and to ask questions. We hope to hold these meetings a couple of times annually and plan to advertise them in an effort to interest additional people.

Report submitted by Jeanne D'Ascoli, Chair, LWV-RMA Membership and Engagement Committee





## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

In July 2018 the Communications Committee set priorities for the upcoming year: the website, Facebook, media outreach, and developing membership through better use of communication tools.

For several years RVA members have discussed the need to update RVA's **website** presence. This year the Communications Committee took on this project and brought it to a successful conclusion. A working group initially looked into website options, reviewing local league websites using the LWV-US platform, websites managed by local leagues, and non-league sites. The working group recommended a self-managed website using WordPress, and a prototype was developed. Versions of the website were evaluated by the Communications Committee and the Board of Directors. In January a test site was introduced to the general membership at the Program Planning Meeting. On July 1 the new website will launch, and the old website will be phased out. The new website gives LWV-RVA flexibility in how material is presented and stored. LWV-RVA's URL can also be used for accounts with SignUpGenius, Google, etc.

In August a Communications Committee brainstorming session revealed the importance of electronic communication. **Facebook** in particular, members felt, should be used to best advantage by linking with other groups and including links to Facebook in the Mini Leaguer Newsletter, the website, and anytime contacts are made.

Members of the Communications Committee pursued **media outreach**, finding that traditional newspaper advertising is too expensive. Work on media outreach is ongoing - newer, less traditional media outlets will be contacted.

**Developing membership** provided the impetus behind many of the committee's activities. In addition to **publicity** about events, new marketing items will give LWV-RVA greater visibility. Navy blue **t-shirts** with bright logos and Vote411 information can be worn to events. **Pens** with rollout flags advertise LWV-RVA and provide important voter information. Larger, red-white-and-blue **lapel buttons** identify members. T-shirts were sold to members for close to cost. Pens and buttons can be distributed to LWV-RVA members and sold at state and national events.

At the beginning of the 2018-2019 we did not have an editor for ***The Leaguer*** newsletter. Several people took a turn as editor. Input from the temporary editors was that it was a very time-consuming job, leading to discussion about whether, given the time requirement, a newsletter was still needed. The Committee and the Board, however, felt that it was important to continue all means of communication, including the newsletter, as members use and respond to different formats.

Other work handled by the Communications Committee included maintenance of the **membership roster** and **archiving LWV-RVA records**. Two new projects in development will be very important in upcoming election cycles: **informational videos** for voters, etc. and **handouts in Spanish** for new citizens and Spanish-speaking voters.

Members of the Communications Committee: Jeanne D'Ascoli, Mary Crutchfield, Marianne Feeney, Evelyn Glazier, Linda Mateyka, Lynn McMartin (Chair), Suzy Szasz Palmer, Susan Rebillot, Karen Rosenblum, Mary Julia Street.

Report submitted by Lynn McMartin, Chair, LWV-RMA Communications Committee

## VOTER SERVICES

The Voter Services Committee maintained its usual activities during the year:

We held Voter Registration Training on August 18, 2018 at Henrico's Tuckahoe Library. A two-hour event which was open to the public, we hosted members of AAUW and Delta Sigma Tau Fraternity as well as Leaguers and individual members of the community. Gail Henderson was our guest Registrar, and did a wonderful job. It was agreed that we will attempt to hold future sessions earlier in July, as certification expires June 30<sup>th</sup>.

We also held various Voter Registration events—notably we were in attendance for the Wednesday Naturalization Ceremonies at the Courthouse Downtown through November 2018. We have, unfortunately, been disallowed at this venue since the changeover of a new judge, as it has been determined that the Registrar's office will now be handling this voter registration opportunity. We also participated in events at various housing complex meetings, at the Downtown YWCA, at VCU, and at an event sponsored by a local radio station.

The Richmond League also partnered with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as timekeepers and audience question gatherers for a Meet the Candidates Forum at VUU in September. And we once again “womaned” the phones for Call 12 on the night before and morning of election day.

Recently, committee members assisted VCU Student Government in their election process, encouraging students on campus to take a moment to vote, and also passing out election information. We have forged a new relationship with the SGA, and look forward to more opportunities to interface with the student body.



To that end, we have also just begun to investigate forum opportunities at VCU that would address information about candidates, issues that apply more specifically to student concerns, and to simply make sure students are informed on the voting process. The committee is also considering the possibility of developing adult forums, to help introduce local candidates. Both ideas are new works in progress. Voter Services welcomes new members to the committee. Also, one does not have to be a committee member to participate in any of our activities. Contact Penny Adams ([NBFginc@aol.com](mailto:NBFginc@aol.com)) if you have interest.

Report submitted by Penny Adams and Valarie Fillgrove, Co-chairs, LWV-RMA Voter Services Committee

Our 2018 VOTE411 Voters' Guide went live on the [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) website on Friday, September 21, 2018 with information for all races on the November ballot: US Senate, US House of Representatives (Districts 4 and 7) and special elections in Chesterfield, Henrico, and Richmond. The two Virginia Constitutional Amendments also were covered.

LWV Virginia handled the Senate race and the amendments. LWV-RMA handled our Richmond area congressional races and special elections. Ten of the 13 candidates in the Richmond area races responded to our questionnaires.

In the lead up to the election when the questionnaire information was available (October 1 to November 6, 2018) VOTE411 had 10,246 users in the Richmond area and 79,972 users statewide. (From January 1 to November 6, 2018 there were 100,667 users statewide.)

This is the eighth year LWV-RMA has created a voters' guide using VOTE411. This year's committee included Mary Julia Street, Terri Guylas, Lynn McMartin, and Evelyn Glazier. We met jointly with the Voter Service committee, whose members helped to formulate the questions used and to distribute bookmarks and posters to advertise VOTE411.

A very big “Thank you!” to all who contributed to making the 2018 VOTE411 Voter Guide a reality.

Report submitted by Evelyn Glazier, Chair, LWV-RMA Vote411 Committee

## ADVOCACY PROGRAM REPORTS

### ELECTION MODERNIZATION

Organized in June 2018, the Election Modernization Committee was formed to study and act on issues involving election security and integrity in keeping with the LWV motto "Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy." The committee was formed after a "Hot Topics" gathering on election security in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election with the realization that things had changed in elections and not all states and localities had kept up with the technology and influences practiced today.

Early planning involved identifying topics and focusing our interests. The top topics identified included: Registration System Security, Social Media Influence, Election Audits, and Voting Equipment. We mapped topics into the governmental level, and corresponding LWV organizational level, that could influence and manage changes.

As we are a small committee, we reached out to learn from others with members attending meetings of the State Board of Elections, some local boards of elections, the 2018 joint House/Senate Privileges and Elections Committee, and the newly formed Virginia Elections Benchmark Index Workgroup. We also identified organizations internal and external to the LWV that might help us focus our energy on the changes of most value. Groups such as the LWV Election Security Google Group and organizations such as Secure our Vote have been sources of information.



From the Secure our Vote reports we learned that the Commonwealth of Virginia is viewed as having adequate voting equipment security today, but that is not true of all other states. We also learned that Virginia is identified as having weak Election Audit laws and processes.

The committee focused on election audits and developed a list of questions concerning the processes and plans for election audits in Virginia. At present we are attempting to schedule a discussion with the Virginia Department of Elections to develop the answers to those questions.

As the result of the LWV Richmond Metro Area Advocacy Program Planning meeting in January 2019, the committee has been asked by the local League to: hold forum on the election process and election security; educate on Rank Choice Voting; and establish a Joint League Committee for Post-election Audits. We have proposed that a YouTube video be produced entitled "What happens to your vote?" to educate ourselves and the public on the process from the ballot to the election results.

After the LWV RMA advocacy planning, the LWV of Virginia recognized that multiple Leagues held concerns around election laws related to security, audits, rank choice voting, etc. The Leagues will form a study group jointly. At this time, it appears that Richmond

Metro Area, Arlington/Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax leagues will be involved.

Report submitted by Jane Newell, Chair, LWV-RMA Election Modernization Committee

## HOUSING

During the 2019 Fiscal Year, the Housing Committee of the LWV-RMA continued to focus its efforts on the eviction crises in the Richmond Region, especially in the City of Richmond. The Committee chair serves on the statewide Campaign to Reduce Evictions (CARE) Steering Committee. CARE was formed in response to the release of nationwide eviction data gathered by Professor Matthew Desmond and his team and made available to the public at Eviction Lab ([www.evictionlab.org](http://www.evictionlab.org)).

The Eviction Lab data revealed that Virginia has five of the top ten highest eviction rates among large U.S. cities, and three of the top ten highest rates in mid-sized cities. (The City of Richmond has the second highest eviction rate in the nation for cities its size.) The purpose of CARE is to determine the reasons for the eviction crisis in the State and to develop solutions to lower the rate. Dr. Katherine Howell from the Wilder School of Government created a local eviction research lab and began working on dissecting the local data to help CARE move the conversation forward toward solutions. After the CARE Launch meeting in May, in addition to the data team led by Dr. Howell, three separate workgroups were formed to work on recommendations: Legal Reform, Affordable Housing and Prevention Services. The Prevention Services Workgroup was led by the chair of the LWV-RMA Housing Committee. The Workgroups each held several meetings and the members of the LWV-RMA Housing Committee were encouraged to attend any of these workgroup meetings and the CARE follow-up meeting which was held in September to hear the



workgroups' recommendations. These included proposed changes to the Virginia Landlord/Tenant Act, an increase in State funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and a two-year Pilot Prevention Program. Housing Committee members were urged to personally advocate for these issues during the 2019 General Assembly.

The Housing Committee met in February and agreed to endorse the LWV-RMA's request to the State League for a Proposed Statewide Affordable Housing Study. The LWV RMA would take the lead on this study, which would focus its efforts on affordable housing for people at very low income (VLI) or 50% of Area Median Income and below and would mainly focus on rental housing. Specific housing issues that the study could examine and make advocacy recommendations about could include such issues as increasing the supply and preserving existing VLI housing, removing barriers to siting affordable housing through law changes such as inclusionary zoning, reviewing landlord/tenant law changes that mainly protect landlords resulting in extremely high eviction rates, and fair Housing law changes, such as source of income, that would enable tenants with vouchers to rent in any neighborhood.

If the LWV-VA Convention adopts this Proposed Affordable Housing Study, the LWV-RMA Housing Committee would focus its efforts in the 2020 Fiscal Year on undertaking the study. The Housing Committee also would like to host a Housing Forum in Richmond that would focus on evictions in the Richmond Region: Facts and Solutions.

Report submitted by Alice Tousignant, Chair, LWV-RMA Housing Committee



## TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Committee's greatest achievement since the 2018 Annual Report was the bus ride to Rockett's Landing on the first day of operation of the GRTC Pulse. Now the Transportation Committee is planning a bus ride from Willow Lawn to Short Pump on GRTC bus No. 19, which extended service to the Henrico mall in September.

The trip to Short Pump for lunch was recommended by the LWV-RMA membership at the January 2019 Advocacy/Program Planning meeting and approved by the LWV-RMA Board of Directors. The other recommendation by the membership for the Transportation Committee, also approved by the Board, was to encourage LWV-RMA members who live in Chesterfield to contact their supervisors and to advocate for extending public transit into the county. This recommendation was acted upon during the time that the County of Chesterfield was planning its budget.

Two members of the Transportation Committee, Virginia Cowles and Mary Crutchfield, continue to represent the LWV-RMA at the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) meetings. During the past year, the focus of CTAC has been on formulating a complete streets policy, which would provide safe transportation for all users—those walking, biking, in wheelchairs, as well as those in cars, buses, or trucks. The Richmond Region Transportation Planning Organization

(RRTPO) has now authorized a complete streets pilot plan in Ashland. Also during the past year, with the transition from the past to present Secretary of the RRTPO (who meets with CTAC) has come a review of the organization and function of CTAC, which will now include representatives from the disbanded EDAC (Elderly and Disability Advisory Committee).



The Chair of the Transportation Committee has continued to attend various transportation related meetings with such organizations as RVA Rapid Transit, GRTC, the Jefferson Davis Highway Association, Concerned Citizens of Ettrick, and BizWorks. Details can be provided upon request. Two standouts among the events attended were the Community Asset Mapping at Biz Works and a showing of the documentary *Free to Ride* at Mount Gilead Full Gospel International Church, both events in Chesterfield County.

The Chair wishes to thank the members of the Transportation Committee—Mary Crutchfield, Alice Tousignant, and Sarah Weisiger, as well as the Vice President for Program, Karen Rosenblum, for their support and assistance during the past year.

Report submitted by Virginia Cowles, Chair, LWV-RMA Transportation Committee

## WOMEN'S ISSUES

Forty-one years ago when I stood silently in the snow on the walkway between the General Assembly Building to the Capitol to vigil for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, I was told it would be 40 to 60 years before Virginia would ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. I could not believe my ears. Well, we are still at it, but as Kati Hornung, fearless leader of VAratifyERA, the group we allied ourselves with, said at our last tactical group meeting, "We took it to the 1-yard line." The Senate passed their resolution for the 6th time since 2011, and there seemed to be a light at the end of the tunnel in the House. Unfortunately, once again it was blocked from coming out of the P&E Committee to the floor. Several maneuvers to get a "true" vote on the floor ultimately failed.

I feel heartened, however, by a number of positives (Okay, you are probably saying to yourself, "Seriously!"): More Women, especially young women across this state have been "woke up"; more people across the state want passage of the ERA than a tax break; counties and municipalities throughout the state passed resolutions in favor of the ERA; strategic planning has already begun for next year's campaign.

From last June until the middle of March, most of our work has been to support activities of the

VAratifyERA. From hosting (and cooking for) events in many venues to organizing a Xmas postcard writing party with AAUW and the Deltas (asking legislators to pass the ERA) to attending many, many tactical meetings to taking part in several weekly conference calls, the Richmond League has been a constant. We are determined to continue to work with like-minded groups next year.

Coming up in the near future will be a state study of violence against women. What a timely study this will be!

Report submitted by Donna Granski, Chair, Women's Issues Committee



*Advocating for ERA Ratification in VA*





## League Principles

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that government bodies protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding

open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation; promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest; share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare; promote a sound economy; and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution to international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organizations and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.



## **Request for Member Suggestions**

The LWV-RMA Board of Directors welcomes your comments and suggestions for League activities in 2019-2020. You can write your suggestions here and pass them to the LWV-RMA President.