

The Leaguer

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NEWSLETTER

October 2019

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The words '*Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy*' are not just a slogan - it's what our members do every day. In this issue you will see many examples of empowering voters. Registration training ripples out across the community, as more people are trained, and, in turn, can register others to vote. We've also held numerous registration events ourselves, including at the VCU student fair and the Maggie Walker High School Fall Fair, among many others. Our partnership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. of Richmond has been a beneficial one in working on registration and other election events.

The LWV Vote411 electronic voting database is essential for empowering voters in this digital age. Many League members across the country and here locally work for months to ensure that voters can access accurate information on candidates' positions as expressed in answers to questions sent to all candidates in a particular race.

2019-2020 LWV-RMA Board

OFFICERS

President

Lynn McMartin

1st Vice President – Program

Karen Rosenblum

2nd Vice President – Administration

Marianne Feeney

Secretary

Becki Lawson

Treasurer

Mary Anne Stone

Past President

Mary Crutchfield

DIRECTORS

Penny Adams

Doris Bey

Jeanne D'Ascoli

Valarie Fillgrove

Donna Granski

Barbara Greenleaf

Suzy Szasz Palmer

Gail Schweickert

Mary Julia Street

Alice Tousignant

Natalie Testa

Our members have tirelessly distributed bookmarks imprinted with voting information and the Vote411 QR code at registration events, libraries, and throughout the community to their schools, places of worship, and neighbors. And, in addition to League work, many Leaguers volunteer as Poll Workers on election day.

The suffragists knew their work was not complete when women gained the constitutional right to vote. Groups formed that subsequently became the League of Women Voters, and the LWV has been in forefront of fighting for citizens' rights ever since. Defending Democracy requires 'eternal vigilance,' to paraphrase a famous adage. We in the LWV-Richmond Metro Area partner with VARatifyERA in working for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and we advocate for firearms safety, public transportation, and many other issues. We not only advocate for fair housing and election security, but we are sponsoring studies to enhance the LWV positions on these important issues.

I urge members to jump in when you see an event or project you are interested in, even if you have only a few hours. We need you to empower voters and to defend democracy.

Lynn McMartin

CALENDAR

Date	Event	Time	Location
October 2019			
14	“Voices in the Garden” – dedication of Virginia Women’s Monument	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Capitol Square Richmond, VA
15	LWV-RMA Board Meeting All members invited! Presentation by fundraising professional Celeste Land	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Libby Mill Library 2100 Libbie Lake East Street Henrico, VA (NOTE change of venue)
24	LWV-RMA Voter Service Committee Meeting	11:15 am – 12:30 pm	St. Mark’s Church Lounge 520 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond VA
24	LWV-RMA Hot Topic Anti-corruption campaign for the US, Led by Ken Trostad from Represent.Us	6:00 – 8:00 pm	Jeanne D’Ascoli’s home 513 Ridgeley Lane, Henrico VA
November 2019			
5	Election Day – Virginia Elections	6:00 am - 7:00 pm	Check Vote411 to find your voting location!
7	LWV-RMA Meet and Greet	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	<i>To Be Announced</i>
19	LWV-RMA Board Meeting	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Ginter Park Presbyterian Church 3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, VA
December 2019			
3	LWV-RMA Holiday Party		SAVE THE DATE!
4	LWV-VA Women's Legislative Roundtable Pre-Session (meeting and luncheon)	9:00 am	<i>To Be Announced</i>
17	LWV-RMA Board Meeting	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Ginter Park Presbyterian Church 3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, VA
January 2020			
8	Opening Day of the General Assembly		Richmond, Virginia State Capitol

Did you know...

... that Board Meetings are open to all League members as observers?

Check the Mini-Leaguer or our website Calendar for time and place.

RECENT EVENTS

LWV-VA Fall Workshops



LWV-RMA members at Fall Workshops

Twelve members of the LWV-Richmond Metro Area joined members from local leagues around the state at the *LWV-Virginia Leadership Training Workshops* in Fredericksburg on September 14th. The day's stellar agenda encompassed a wide range of topics from Getting Out the Vote to the 2020 Census. View the workshop documents and materials now available online at <https://lwv-va.org/2019-lwv-va-workshops/>.

LWV-RMA Board Retreat

In July, the Board held their first ever retreat to review our year, reflecting first on the numerous things we accomplished as a League over the past year. And there were so many! Our League is active and vital! Yet there is always room for improvement and we wanted to take the time to explore where and how we need to grow.

Alice Tousignant led us through an exercise where we identified our strengths and weaknesses. Based on this, we determined four goals to concentrate on this year. These are:

1. Become a more effective organization (utilize a strategy "screen", which we will use when planning events/activities);
2. Increase partnerships (working with other organizations with "like" objectives; starting with organizations interested in election security and fair housing, the two studies we will be undertaking this year and next);
3. Increase and engage a diverse membership; (cultivating relationships with area colleges and universities; determining how to best "engage" our current memberships); and
4. Plan and implement centennial events (the next year brings many centennial celebrations - the ratification of the 19th amendment, the founding of the LWV-US, and the founding of our own League).

All Board members were present and all agreed that it was a great success. We plan on building this retreat into our yearly calendar.



Alice leads the Board Retreat

Marianne Feeney, 2nd VP - Administration

Powering Up for Action

We held our annual “Back to League Night” meeting on September 26. Members had the opportunity to hear more about what we are planning for the upcoming year and how to encourage members to volunteer for activities of interest.

Anna Mason demonstrated the new website, which launched in July. Members were very excited about the look and ease of this site, and offered constructive comments for consideration.

We had a spirited discussion on how best to achieve our goal of *increasing and engaging a diverse membership*. The Membership Committee will follow up on some of the suggestions. If YOU have ideas on this topic, please contact Jeanne D’Ascoli at jhdascoli@gmail.com.

Committee chairs presented their goals for the year and identified many opportunities for members to get involved, from “one-and-done” activities to a deeper commitment. Read the reports in this newsletter and discover an activity that your fits your interests! See the Board and Committee contact details on page 8.

We ended the evening with a celebration cake “99 Going On 100”, marking the countdown to our Centennial. Many thanks to Jeanne D’Ascoli and Linda Mateyka for their hard work on refreshments and goodie bags for all attendees!



Our "Powering Up for Action" Cake

COMMITTEES

Communications

The Communications Committee's goals are to keep our members informed and to increase LWV visibility in the community. We strive to devise new ways to communicate and to reinvigorate existing tools. New and experienced members work together to enhance computer and social media skills, writing, editing, photography, and design. We plan to continue increasing our Facebook presence. The Communications Committee is responsible for The Leaguer newsletter, The Mini Leaguer newsletter, the LWV-RMA website, Facebook, Twitter, surveys and media outreach.

In 2019 we went live with our new website, which is getting comments from members like "looks beautiful" and "I love the calendar!" Other local Leagues have been reaching out to see if we would help them to emulate the look and up-to-date content of our website.



Help spread the word! Bookmark the website, “Like” us on Facebook and Twitter, and don't forget to check back frequently. If you have an upcoming event or want to share a particular League success, email Anna Mason at amason.darby@gmail.com.

Anna Mason, Chair

Membership & Engagement

The Membership and Engagement Committee, along with all of the LWV-RMA Leaguers, want to warmly welcome all of our new members. As Chair of the Committee, I’m hoping I’ll have the chance to meet each of you - either one-on-one or at an upcoming meeting.

A great way to engage with other members is to come to one of our *Meet and Greets* that are held periodically during Happy Hours at a local restaurant. Watch for the next one! It will be listed on our website as well as in the Mini-

Leaguer. The “Mini” is sent every couple of weeks to all members by email.



At the end of October, we will host a Hot Topic. Our presenter is from

Represent Us, a nonpartisan organization that is diligently working to end corruption in our government. They have excellent ideas on what we can do. We expect a lively discussion - and Hot Topics are an informal and fun way to get to know other Leaguers. The meeting will be held

in the home of Jeanne D’Ascoli - and fortunately, she has lots of chairs!!

Watch the Mini-Leaguer for the announcement of another upcoming meeting - this one on Rank Choice Voting. We look forward to learn how it works - and we’ll be doing this in an interactive way. We’ll also have the chance to evaluate the benefits and concerns regarding this Hot Topic.

Hoping to see you soon!

Jeanne D’Ascoli, Chair

What’s on our Website?

<http://www.lwv-rva.org>



- Current Calendar of Events
- Short articles on important topics, for example:
 - Update on Firearms Safety
 - Restoration of Voting Rights
 - Articles by our Student Intern, Morgan Johns
- LWV Positions
- Voter Resources
- And much more

Voter Services

The LWV-RMA Voter Services Committee continued to keep its close-to-twenty members busy this past year, led by Co-Chairs Valarie Fillgrove and Penny Adams. This year, we changed our annual Voter Registration Training event from August to mid-July, in order to shorten the down-time in certification, which



expires annually on June 30th. Together with the *Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. of Richmond*, we hosted approximately fifty as Garry Ellis led the training. Many of those who attended were non-League members, and several of those have subsequently joined the League.

The committee’s focus continues to be on voter registration, and we have held or taken part in many registration events during the past year. Recently, we have begun to get re-involved in high school registration and the Governor’s Challenge, picking up some of what had been covered by *Inspire*. We are proud of *Vote411.org*, which is a part of our committee, and have begun to discuss other ways that we can further serve the Richmond area with more energy put toward voter education/information, as there are now so many other organizations that also do registration. With an eye especially on the 2020 election, we will be looking at developing programs that can get us out in the community – to schools and civic groups – to discuss various aspects of our voting rights and privileges.

Penny Adams, Co-Chair

VOTE 411

Our 2019 Voters' Guide is live online at www.VOTE411.org. Enter your address and all the races that will be on your November ballot are shown. Answers to the League's questions are shown for all candidates who replied to our email questionnaire.

We have bookmarks available to advertise the Voters' Guide. If you can help distribute bookmarks at public meetings, stores, and other public places, contact Evelyn Glazier at 804-358-0011 or emglazier1@gmail.com.

Many thanks to all the League members who helped with data entry, phone calls to candidates, formulating questions, and all the details that make the VOTE411 Voter Guide possible.

Evelyn Glazier

Transportation

The *Virginia Breeze* could be coming to Richmond. At the September meeting of the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), a description of this subsidized intercity bus service was presented. The Virginia Breeze now provides bus service from Blacksburg to Washington, D.C., stopping at several cities (mostly college towns) along the I-81 corridor. Virginia Breeze service from Martinsville to Richmond has been proposed. The Virginia Breeze provides long-distance bus service along routes where private bus companies like Greyhound could not operate profitably, and it does not compete with Amtrak routes. Stay tuned.

The LWV-RMA continues to be represented at CTAC meetings by Virginia Cowles and/or Mary Crutchfield. During the past few months meetings have focused on Park and Ride locations as well as complete streets. At a workshop sponsored by Plan RVA and Smart

Growth America, Virginia designed a complete street for all transportation needs. Check it out at <https://streetmix.net/vipcowles/1/virginia-street-remix>.

Also, Virginia is serving on the Steering Committee for the Greater RVA Transit Vision Plan, Phase II, which will make recommendations for transit plans that can be implemented in the near future. This committee met in August, will meet again in November, and will recommend expanded transit routes by the end of the year.



Lunch at Maggiano's after riding the GRTC bus

The Transportation Committee has a new focus after reviewing the observations made during its bus trip to Short Pump in May: improved safety infrastructure—sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian traffic lights—for pedestrians and transit users. Committee members are Virginia Cowles, Mary Crutchfield, Alice Tousignant, and Sarah Weisiger. Please let us know if there are transportation issues in your neighborhood that need to be addressed.

Virginia Cowles, Chair

WOMEN'S ISSUES: ERA

Working in tandem with *VARatifyERA* for the third year, our sole purpose is to see the Virginia General Assembly finally ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, which would make this state the last of 38 states needed to enshrine equality for women in the United States Constitution. Even though a poll last year found 81% of the state in favor of ERA passage, and resolutions in support of ratification were passed by multiple

municipalities and counties, the ERA resolution never made it to the House floor for a vote.

This year our focus is to identify pro-ERA equality candidates. It is a nonpartisan effort.

This year's campaign is I SCREAM FOR EQUALITY. Starting with a press conference on the steps of the Capitol in the morning and then a screening of ON THE BASIS OF SEX at the Byrd Theater on August 26th,



Donna with the I Scream for Equality van

we have begun to take our campaign in all directions around the state. For 11 weeks our stunning van will continue driving around the state. Those warriors riding the van will be giving out ice cream as well as factual information about the ERA. It's a blast!

➔ Help us out! Sign up to ride the van; write our Get-Out-The-Vote postcards to encourage each and every person who cares about equality to register to vote and then vote for a pro-ERA candidate; set up a table to give out information; or help phone bank.

Visit the VAratifyERA website or see me for materials and further information.

Donna Granski

MEMBER PROFILES

LWV-RMA's New Student Intern

Morgan Johns is a 20-year-old Trainee with the Richmond Ballet. She grew up in Fredericksburg, VA, and spent two years in Tampa, FL before moving to Richmond. Upon doing so, she discovered a passion for environmental policy, and her exploration of the political process led her to the League of Women Voters in January.

I first met Morgan last winter when she came to the *LWV-VA Women's Legislative Roundtables* on Wednesday mornings during the General Assembly Session. She was a member of the Williamsburg League and would go with their group after the WLRT to visit legislators in the morning and then go to her ballet classes.

When Karen Rosenblum, 1st Vice-President, proposed sponsoring a student internship for our League for the summer months, Morgan was happy to accept this project and I agreed to be co-supervisor with Karen. The goals of the LWV-RMA student internship are

- to increase visibility of LWV-RMA and activities through social media
- to reach out to students through partnership opportunities, e.g. VCU Student Government Association events
- to help with LWV-RMA Voter Registration and Information drives
- to assist with other tasks requested by Board members.

Over the summer Morgan's work on social media has increased the number of views of our Facebook page, and her posts on Instagram have introduced younger people to the LWV. She also organized the Voter Registration table for us at the VCU student fair and she has made some connections with student



Morgan Johns at a Voter Registration Event

leaders who are helping with distribution of VOTE411 bookmarks. Recently Morgan wrote a letter to the editor of the Richmond Times Dispatch on the importance of voting. In the near future she will be working on introducing LWV-RMA members on Facebook using the LWV-US “She Is Me” Campaign model.

While Karen is away for a few months, Marianne Feeney is taking her place as co- supervisor with me. Marianne and I look forward to continuing this internship with Morgan and we welcome any suggestions from LWV-RMA members.

Mary Crutchfield, Past President

CONTACTS



How can YOU get involved? Our Richmond area league is active all over the democracy space. Reach out to one of our Board officers or Committee chairs to find out what opportunities match up with your interests.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Contact</i>
President	Lynn McMartin
1 st Vice President, Program	Karen Rosenblum
2 nd Vice President, Administration	Marianne Feeney
Secretary	Becki Lawson
Treasurer	Mary Anne Stone
Past President	Mary Crutchfield
Black History Commemoration	Mabel Wells
Communications	Anna Mason
Election Modernization	Jane Newell
Housing	Alice Tousignant
Membership and Engagement	Jeanne D’Ascoli
Transportation	Virginia Cowles
Vote411	Evelyn Glazier
Voter Services	Valarie Fillgrove Penny Adams
Women’s Issues	Donna Granski


JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Please join or rejoin the League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area.

Our fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30. Membership in the LWV-RMA also confers membership in the League of Women Voters of Virginia and in the League of Women Voters of the United States. Membership is open to all U.S. citizens of voting age.

To join or renew online and pay with PayPal, visit the League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area’s website at <http://www.lwv-rva.org>,

or print and complete the form below and send with your check by postal mail.

		
<u>Membership Type</u>	<u>Annual Dues</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> One member	\$55	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two members in one household	\$85	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student member	\$20	
Name: _____		
Mailing Address: _____		
City: _____ Zip: _____		
Home Telephone: _____ Cell Telephone: _____		
E-mail address: _____		
Name of household member, if applicable: _____		
I want to support the LWV with a contribution of \$ _____		
Interests:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Voter Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Equal Rights Amendment
<input type="checkbox"/> Poll Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Election Modernization	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Legislation
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation		

Please make your check payable to **LWV-RMA** and mail to:



LWV-RMA
P.O. Box 25492
Richmond, VA 23260-5492

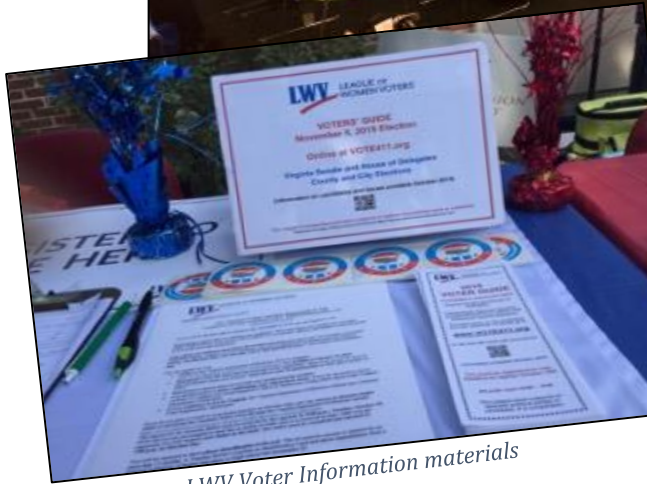
Membership dues and contributions to the League of Women Voters are not deductible as a business or personal expense for tax purposes. Contributions to the League of Women Voters Education Fund are tax deductible.

PHOTOS

Voter Registration Training in July



Morgan and Mary with students at VCU



LWV Voter Information materials



LWV-RMA and the Deltas at VUU Voter Registration



Virginia, Lynn J, Senator McClellan, Doris, Mary, and Morgan at "On the Basis of Sex" at Byrd Theater



League members at Women's Equality Day at the Capitol

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

We work to encourage informed and active participation in government and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Views expressed by non-League links are not necessarily those of the League. These links are provided as a service to readers.

The content of this newsletter is subject to LWV-RMA Bylaws, guidelines, and policies.