

2020

# ANNUAL REPORT



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF THE  
RICHMOND METROPOLITAN AREA

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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**



Our new website launched on July 1, beginning a year of innovation for the League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metro Area (RMA). Below is a summary of RMA's accomplishments; reports in this Annual

Report provide detailed accounts of the impressive work of RMA officers, committees, and working groups.

The new website, under the guidance of webmaster and Communication Committee Chair Anna Mason, has been a resounding success, with ongoing improvements in design and content. Another technological advance was the utilization of a Google drive to store, organize, and archive our records. Secretary and Communication Committee member Becki Lawson set up a detailed file structure that is much-used and greatly appreciated.

New technology supports our traditional events and activities. This year, for a special event to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of The League of Women Voters, Lynn Johnston not only organized a lovely Centennial Tea for our members, but connected with organizations in the area and collected photos and other mementos of the League's 100 years.

The Voter Service Committee, co-chaired by Penny Adams and Valarie Fillgrove, held a voter registration training public event and sponsored a record number of voter registration events. Finding, however, that many partisan and community groups are now registering voters, the Committee decided to focus on voter education, beginning with a slideshow presentation for high schoolers. Beta testing by creators Anna Mason and Lucille Miller was very successful. As always, VOTE411, under the skillful leadership of Evelyn Glazier, continues as one of our most important efforts, bringing candidate information directly to voters on the internet.

The Voter Service Committee, as well as several other RMA groups, have forged a highly-productive relationship with the *Richmond Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated* (Deltas). Doris Bey, an RMA board member, acts as liaison to the sorority. The synergy created when groups in the community work together has been evident at voter service, voter education, and membership events. In October, RMA, the Deltas, and *CARE* teamed up for a House of Delegates candidate forum on evictions.

Membership and Engagement Chair Jeanne D'Ascoli initiated several programs with the Deltas as well as with other groups. In January, an Educated Voter event on ranked choice voting

featuring co-sponsor *FairVote Virginia* drew a large crowd of engaged attendees. On March 7th, the Membership and Engagement Committee sponsored a breakfast, with break out groups that brought old and new member together for discussion.

For decades Donna Granski has been leading RMA Leaguers in the battle for passage of the ERA by the Virginia Legislature. This year success! The work that went on in the months leading up to passage was remarkable - rallies, speeches, an ice cream truck, and much more. Congratulations to all the Leaguers and others who kept the effort moving forward!

To name just a few of our many successful events and programs this year: an energizing Board Retreat organized by 2nd Vice President Marianne Feeney, a fund-raising campaign spearheaded by Marianne Feeney and 1st Vice President Karen Rosenblum, and a very productive Advocacy Program Planning Meeting led by Karen Rosenblum. Mabel Wells and Virginia Cowles organized a Black History Commemoration event and at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, followed by a luncheon at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

As 2nd Vice President this year Marianne Feeney had responsibility for many of the major

functions of LWV-RMA. She skillfully coordinated efforts, always innovative and ever-mindful of the history and process of the LWV.

Our members are dedicated and knowledgeable about a cross-section of issues and advocacy. Jane Newell is a co-leader on a LWV study to enhance the League's position on election security. Alice Tousignant leads a LWV study to strengthen the affordable housing position. Virginia Cowles' Transportation Committee advocated for better pedestrian access for Henrico County bus riders.

Advocacy for a redistricting amendment was advanced by an RMA working group led by Nancy Conkright. Acting in cooperation with the LWV-VA and *OneVirginia2021*, the group met with, called, and emailed legislators and kept us informed during the fast-moving legislative cycle.

When we were stopped short by the COVID-19 emergency stay at home health orders, RMA, like so many across the country, has been forced to re-evaluate how to continue working; how to continue *Making Democracy Work*. We have been meeting by Zoom, as committees and groups of members --educating ourselves, brainstorming, and planning for the upcoming year.

--- Lynn McMartin, President

## FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### 2020-2021 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:

<b>Open Government</b>	<p><u>Open representative government.</u> Open citizen participation and representation in governmental boards and commissions.</p> <p><u>Fiscal policy and citizen participation.</u> Open and active inclusion of citizen input in the development, adoption, and implementation of the budgets of all metropolitan area local governments.</p>
<b>Regional Government</b>	<p><u>Regional cooperation.</u> Regional cooperation in the provision of government services to meet the needs of the citizens of the metropolitan area.</p> <p><u>Regional transportation.</u> An efficient, multimodal, economical regionally planned, financed, and managed balanced transportation system.</p> <p><u>Regional land use planning.</u> Comprehensive, cooperative, and enforced land use planning in the metropolitan area that preserves permanent open space and develops pleasing roadways.</p>
<b>Local Services</b>	<p><u>Public education.</u> Equality of public education for all, including gifted and handicapped students, which includes</p> <p>cooperation among school divisions</p> <p>provision of up-to-date information</p> <p>community involvement in school policies, programs, and budget processes.</p> <p><u>Child care.</u> Child care programs that meet the social, mental, and physical needs of young children.</p> <p><u>Health care.</u> A health care system that provides access for all residents and controls health care costs.</p> <p><u>Housing.</u> Availability of sound, affordable housing without discrimination.</p>

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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.*

## 2020 Advocacy Program Planning Report

Held on January 25th, at the Tuckahoe Area Library, this meeting celebrated 2019 accomplishments, reviewed LWVUS and LWV-RMA Positions, and planned the 2020-2021 Advocacy Program.

Following a review of RMA accomplishments and committee updates, members reviewed LWVUS Positions. As in the last biennium, the LWVUS has urged all Leagues to focus their legislative priorities on the Campaign to Make Democracy Work™. For the 2020-2022 term, they recommend focusing on redistricting, the 2020 census, election administrative reforms, voter protection, and money in politics.

On the question of retaining all present LWVUS positions, a motion was made and approved to retain all current positions. On the question of whether we support the LWVUS' continuation of the Making Democracy Work Campaign, a motion was made and approved to support the Making Democracy Work Campaign. There were no recommendations of additions to the LWVUS program items, but it was suggested that RMA advise LWVUS that the League consider the issue of a fair, livable wage, with unanimous agreement by members at the meeting.

All recommendations were forwarded to the LWV-RMA Board, which concurred and sent them forward to LWVUS.

On the question of whether RMA supported via “concurrence” the LWVUS position on Voter Representation/Electoral Systems, a motion was made to concur with the position, with the rationale that many state leagues had studied and adopted it. Discussion centered on the positions’ lack of clarity and the conviction that membership would have benefitted from more extensive advance preparation. There was agreement that that improvement was needed within our own league in the area of communications, so that in the future it would be clear what was expected prior to any meeting requiring votes. The motion to concur was defeated, but it was recommended to convey to the Board that members were not as much objecting to the concurrence position as to the process.

As the meeting’s second agenda item, members voted unanimously to retain all LWV-RMA positions for the upcoming year. That recommendation was approved by the LWV-RMA Board. No motion was made to restudy, retire, or add a position. Jane Newell advised that the state, unlike LWVUS, does not have a position on “money in politics” and it is not included in her election study. Members voted to explore the possibility of forming a new committee on this.

The final segment of the meeting was devoted to determination of our advocacy action in the upcoming year. The group reviewed LWV-RMA accomplishments, the foci of the Making Democracy Work campaign, and this historic legislative moment in Virginia. Penny Adams reviewed Voter Services activities, noting that

many organizations are involved in registering voters. With Inspire Virginia no longer working with high schools, there is a niche that RMA can fill. Lucile Miller and Anna Mason have been working with Meadowbrook High School students on high school voter education. They have developed a presentation that eventually can be utilized by others in order to reach more young people. They plan on copyrighting the presentation.



Discussion proceeded about establishing an advocacy focus or foci for the upcoming year. Suggested foci included redistricting, the census, community building, gun control/safety, and voter education. The top four were the census, redistricting, voter education, and community building. Attendees recorded their level of interest in each.

The final segment of the meeting focused on advocacy and lobbying. Mary Crutchfield gave an overview of lobbying at the General Assembly, providing helpful hints and information about contacting legislators. Donna Granski discussed the efforts to ratify the ERA, stressing the importance of partnering and bringing together diverse groups.

--- Karen Rosenblum, 1<sup>st</sup> VP - Program

## SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT

**Membership & Engagement.** The 2nd Vice President functions as liaison to this important committee, attending meetings and coordinating with the committee chair on events and new member initiatives. Read Membership & Engagement Chair Jeanne D’Ascoli’s report in

this Annual Report for a more complete picture of a very successful year.

**Communications.** The Communications Committee has come to be a hub of activity in the RMA organization. This year, with Anna Mason as chair, the Committee handled everything from

social media to lapel buttons. The First Vice President attended committee meetings, coordinated with other committees, and provided liaison to the board of directors. See separate report.

**Budget & Finance.** The 2nd Vice President chaired the Budget Committee and produced the final budget. Members of the committee this year included Treasurer Mary Anne Stone, Penny Anderson, Evelyn Glazier, Karen Rosenblum, and Lynn McMartin.

**Planning Calendar.** A planning calendar is essential for RMA's busy year. The 2nd Vice President tracks event dates, committee meeting

dates, deadlines, and other relevant dates such as holidays and holy days.

**Board Retreat.** The retreat in July 2019 began the board year on a positive note. It was an opportunity to gather old and new board members and to develop guidelines for the year. 2nd Vice President Marianne Feeney coordinated the event and Alice Tousignant led the meeting, guiding participants through exercises and discussion.

**Fund Raising.** The 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President were instrumental in initiating fund raising this year.

--- Lynn McMartin for Marianne Feeney,  
2nd Vice President

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

We adopted three new technologies this year that make it easier for the board and committees to share information and to communicate with members.



**Google Drive.** Our archives of past annual reports, newsletters, board minutes, and governance documents are now kept in an access-controlled cloud storage area on Google Drive. This "online file cabinet" does not replace the LWV-RMA archive at VCU, but it is easier and quicker to access. Our Drive also contains folders where standing committees can store electronic resources, and teams can collaborate on works-in-progress.



**Mail Chimp.** In March, we debuted a system that allows us to create and send emails that are compliant with the CAN-SPAM law and that are sent to members from one of our official LWV-RMA email addresses. We have piloted the use of Mail Chimp to send the *Mini Leaguer* and an announcement of *The Leaguer* newsletter. We will begin to use Mail Chimp for other types of member emails, as more of our communicators get comfortable using the new system. Members can configure their email preferences in Mail Chimp so that they receive the types of email they choose. Our goal is to create emails that are consistent, clear,

and visually appealing. A big advantage of Mail Chimp is that emails are automatically formatted for the device that displays them, whether large screen or small. Mail Chimp is also used by LWV-Virginia.

Please add [communications@lwv-rva.org](mailto:communications@lwv-rva.org) to your email contact list so that you'll be sure to get our mailings.



**Zoom.** When the coronavirus pandemic resulted in stay-at-home orders and restrictions on the size of groups, we recognized that carrying out our mission meant being able to meet electronically. Our new Zoom videoconferencing account has hosted meetings of the board, Communications Committee, and Membership and Engagement. At the beginning of the annual meeting, we will amend our Bylaws to stipulate that meetings may be held virtually if required for reasons of health and safety. We have researched the security controls that are recommended for videoconferencing, and feel confident that our settings will protect attendees' privacy and security. A computer with camera and microphone is not required to participate in a Zoom conference; one can join a meeting using a smart phone or land line.

--- Becki Lawson, Secretary

## TREASURER'S REPORT

JUNE 3, 2020

<b>Forward Balance from May 2019 Meeting</b>		<b>10,601.71</b>
<b>plus INCOME &amp; ADDITIONS:</b>		
Dues received		4,311.98
Annual Dinner payments recd		630.00
<i>Member IN-KIND donations</i>	732.61	
Donations to General Fund		2,638.65
Misc. Income		10.68
Ed Fund payment		4,774.20
Recent Presby Donations for Ed Fund		55.52
Tea Party		896.82
Collection Wares		530.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>13,847.85</b>
<b>less EXPENSES &amp; DEDUCTIONS:</b>		
Website Expense		264.99
Printing Expense		1,110.99
Insurance		265.00
Intern		2,340.00
VA Convention		460.46
Meeting Expense		768.64
VDACS fees		30.00
P. O. Box Expense		80.00
Telephone Expense		100.00
Tea Party		1,542.82
Ed Fund donations Transfer made		1,271.30
Board Expense		264.43
Refreshments/Food		252.68
Annual Dinner		1,190.52
Per Member Payment (PMP) Expense		4,104.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES &amp; DEDUCTIONS</b>		<b>14,045.83</b>
<b>Closing Balance April 2020</b>		<b>10,403.73</b>
<b>Closing Balance Check book</b>		<b>10403.73</b>
<b><u>EDUCATION FUND 501 (c)(3)</u></b>		
<b>Balance Forward</b>		<b>6,834.24</b>
Special Health Project Fund Balance Forward	3,876.00	
Regular Ed Fund balance forward	2,958.24	
plus donations recd	7775.95	
less transfer to LWV for Vote 411 Voters Guide	600.00	
less transfer to Gen Fund (Voter Service Projects)	618.00	
Intern	2,250.00	
Regular ED Fund balance end	7266.19	
<b>Closing balance LWV-RMA Ed Fund April, 2019</b>	<b>11142.19</b>	<b>11,142.19</b>

--- Mary Anne Stone, Treasurer

## MEMBERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Our favorite part of being co-chairs for the Membership and Engagement Committee is having the chance to get to know our members. The meetings and gatherings we had in the past were great ways to share who we are, our interests and our passions. Some of those opportunities are written about throughout this report. Not to be missed was when our League partnered with *FairVote Virginia*, *Richmond Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.*, *AAUW of Greater Richmond* and *Represent Richmond* to host an educational, very successful, hands-on event on Ranked Choice Voting. And just prior to realizing the impacts of the Coronavirus, we had a memorable breakfast with many of our new(er) members joining in! (What a great group of people!)

Sometimes now that past is difficult to remember. Our League, along with many other organizations, want to ensure the safety and health of our members. Since the beginning of



March, we have been working to find new ways to get to know our members. (Yes, Zoom has been an important partner!) Phone calls, emails, committee meetings, our weekly series on “*Setting the Table*” have been important first steps. We are looking forward to additional opportunities to be with each other in the near term.

As we engage with our members and get to know them, we want to provide a pathway for them to be involved in the issues that are most important to them. This necessarily is a two-way street. Call or email Jeanne or Nancy, give us some feedback, help us to help you to make the Richmond Metropolitan League an important component in the upcoming election. Working to ensure our democracy isn’t a spectator sport!

--- [Jeanne D’Ascoli and Nancy Conkright](#), Co-Chairs

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION—REDISTRICTING

On March 6, 2020, Virginia’s General Assembly passed momentous Redistricting reform, authorizing a Constitutional Amendment for voter approval on the November 2020 ballot that creates a bipartisan commission to re-draw legislative districts after completion of the census. For LWV-RMA and some members who had worked on this issue for years, or even decades, the passage of this reform was the answer to a long quest: to end gerrymandering in Virginia and give voters a true voice in selecting democratically elected officials.



Early in January, just as the General Assembly was getting started, LWV-RMA identified Redistricting reform as a top priority. A group of members began working on its passage—by educating themselves on the legislation and staying on top of the debate to know when to take action. LWV-RMA was fortunate to have two members with exceptional knowledge: Anne Sterling, a member of the Advocacy Board of *OneVirginia2021*, the state-wide organization leading the charge on redistricting, and Mary Crutchfield, currently LWV-VA’s representative to the Legislature, who was on the ground daily at the General Assembly. Their insights into events along with those of Brian Cannon, the Executive Director of *OneVirginia2021*, helped inform our actions.

We also joined a LWV-VA Task Group dedicated to Redistricting reform, and its collective analysis was invaluable in identifying when to take action, and with whom. As a result, our members attended various meetings, including



Legislative Roundtables; persuaded friends and family to join in; visited legislators, wrote emails, made phone calls, and then did it all over again, contacting not just their own representatives but legislators from across the state who were key to the outcome. Our members participated in a massive effort to make reform happen, and as we watched the close vote at the end, knew that every little bit had helped win the “ayes” needed for passage. And within the context of the U.S. League of Women Voters, we had just helped secure a key piece in its nationwide campaign for

People Powered Fair Map™. The power of collective action with others who care deeply!

And now, on to the next phase: working to educate voters on the Constitutional Amendment before they vote by mail or at the ballot box in the November election. All members are invited to join in as we work to cross the all-important finish line. Watch for upcoming League news on how to help!

--- Nancy Conkright

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

- Established a monthly date for meetings — Second Monday of each month at 10am.
- Created a calendar for a monthly theme for each meeting (September theme: “Everyone get ready to communicate about VOTE411 with the world”).
- Social media is getting ramped up, increased coordination, and focused using analytics. Check us out on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and our website.
- Using Google Drive to store all League related materials.
- New League phone number: **(804) 464-3424.**
- Focusing on our media outreach.

- *The Leaguer* “rocks”.
- Using Mail Chimp to send out emails.
- Will use Eventbrite to allow for RSVPs to larger events.
- Communication Guide created.
- Zoom guide and account created.

Physical Based Things have progressed but paused:

- Alternative language Voter Information cards being printed and distributed.
- New business cards.
- LWV RMA bookmark redesign and printing.

--- Anna Mason

## VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

We held our annual Voter Registration Training event on July 27, 2019, this year in partnership with the Richmond Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated (Deltas), at Henrico’s Glen Allen Library. More than 50 participants attended the two-hour event, from the League, the Sorority, AAUW, various civic groups and members of the public. We were lucky to once again have Garry Ellis from the Virginia Department of Elections provide the training and the very valuable Q&A that followed. We had moved this year’s training forward on the schedule from past years, since certification expires every year on June 30th. This



proved to be successful, and we will keep to the earlier date in the future.

We had various voter registration events, including participation in the Naturalization ceremonies held at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture on July 4th and at Patrick Henry’s Scotchtown on Constitution Day, September 17th. We also held events during SOVO at VCU, South University in Short Pump, the Bird House Farmer’s Market, VARatifyERA, and the Maggie Walker HS Fair. We also co-sponsored and served as timekeepers at a forum for the Campaign to

Reduce Evictions at the VA Museum of History and Culture.

On National Voter Registration Day, we held two voter registration events, both in partnership with the Deltas, at Virginia Union University and Chesterfield Towne Center. Lots of fun. One thing we realized from the day is that it would be useful to have a special handout addressing felon's rights, which we have put into motion.

We also participated again this year in Call 12, womaning the phones and Channel 12 ahead of the November election.

Valarie Fillgrove filed for the 2020 Youth Voter Registration Grant, and we were awarded \$500. This money will be put toward our plans of working with our HS contacts.

Looking for a way to broaden our profile in the community, and recognizing that since INSPIRE

folded, there is no one paying specific attention to registering high school students, we have developed on an educational program to be presented to civics and history classes that will address various issues such as registration, how to choose a candidate, what to expect on election day, etc. We are partnering with Maggie Walker and Meadowbrook High Schools, and producing a program that we can also offer to the community, modifying as needed for a particular audience.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 Pandemic has put a hold on a variety of events—some tied into the League Centennial—that we had ambitiously charted for 2020, a very important election year. Instead, we are putting our attention to how best we can serve our core goals and the needs of the community during the shutdown.

--- Penny Adams

## VOTE411

The Richmond Metro Area League used VOTE411 to create an online voters' guide for the November 2019 elections. It was the eighth year of our participation in the web-based system. Our local area had a total of 155 candidates in 80 races for Virginia Senate and Virginia House of Delegates; county offices in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and Goochland (covered for the first time in 2019); and special elections in Richmond.

The response rate for candidates was 58% overall (90 of 155 candidates) and ranged from 29% in the House of Delegates races to 80% for Richmond's special elections.

The results were published live on [www.VOTE411.com](http://www.VOTE411.com) on October 1, 2019. Between October 1 and the election on November 5, the website had 14,116 users in our metro area, up from 10,246 users in 2018. There were more than 70,000 Virginia users of the website in 2019.

We printed 5,000 bookmarks and provided a PDF poster to libraries and other users to advertise VOTE411.

Also during FY 2019-2020, information was available on VOTE411 for the Democratic Presidential primaries (March 2020 for Virginia) and the US Senate and House of Representatives primaries (June 23, 2020 for Virginia). (Limited information for the June 2019 primaries leading to the November 2019 races also was included in VOTE411. This occurred too late to be included in the 2018 annual report.)

On May 4, 2020 we held a Zoom meeting to introduce or reintroduce League members to VOTE411.

Assisting for November 2019 were Mary Julia Street, Lucile Miller, Nancy Conkright, and Doris Bey on data and administration. These Leaguers plus Donna Granski, Alice Tousignant and Virginia Cowles helped with the all-important follow up phone calls to the candidates. Additional Voter Service committee members worked on candidates' questions, bookmark distribution, and publicity. Thank you to all who worked to provide election information to voters through VOTE411.

--- Evelyn Glazier

## BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATION

The LWV-RMA commemorates Black History Month on the fourth Saturday in February. On February 24, 2018 we toured the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia. Our plan for 2019 was to return to the National Museum of Black History and Culture in Washington, D. C. to which we had traveled for 2017. But we had no observance in 2019 because after arrangements were underway all of the U. S. Government offices were shuttered, including the Smithsonian Museums. It was then too late to plan another location. Hence, we had no commemoration in 2019.

For the year 2020 we decided to attend a local program. The Museum of History and Culture was offering a celebrated exhibition, "Determined," a history of black people in the US, a large spread of art and photography. Our Committee chose this program for our commemoration for 2020. The plan also included lunch at the neighboring Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Arranging this task took careful planning, although the VMFA is only a short walk from the VMHC. Finally, after several changes, we received permission for four tables at the VMFA (20 persons), since the restaurant is

open to the public. Twenty-five Leaguers had signed up, A decision was made to have some Leaguers sit in the informal area of VMFA, the Cafe. As it developed, only 18 Leaguers came for lunch (20 for the exhibition), so we were all able to sit in the formal dining area at VMFA.



Oddly this local plan caused more juggling than our travels out of town, but we benefited from the wonderful, educational exhibition at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture and a really fun time at lunch at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

We will probably travel again for the Black History Commemoration in 2021.

--- Mabel Gilbert Wells, Virginia Cowles,  
and Mary Anne Stone

## ELECTION MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

The 2016 election brought into focus the impact on elections of technology. This new committee was formed in 2018 to determine what action the LWV could or should be taking in the areas where technology can be used to negatively impact free and fair elections. LWV-VA initiated a statewide study in 2019 to cover many of the topics of concern including election security. Members of the RMA Election Modernization team have joined the statewide study teams in researching and proposing updates to the LWV-VA Election Law positions. Election concerns raised by this committee and included in the study include:

- Registration systems were hacked by external parties in what appears to be a

focused effort. While the federal government has declared state voting infrastructure to be "critical infrastructure," it has been left to individual states to make the changes to increase the protection of their registration systems. Virginia systems have been secure relative to other states; but ongoing vigilance is needed.

- Voting equipment still used in some states has been found to be hackable (fortunately not in Virginia).
- Election Audits: Post-election audits have long been of interest to the LWV. Virginia has limited law supporting the regular application of audits to assure that election results are accurately recorded.

- Ranked Choice Voting will be included in the study's second phase. (RCV may be piloted in Virginia with the passage of several bills in the 2020 General Assembly.)
- Voter Suppression will be included in the second phase of the study.

A concern of the committee not included in the study:

- Social media has proven to be a means to influence the voting citizens. Fraudulent

"users" based outside the United States have spread falsehoods while posing as U.S. based organizations.

The committee initially included an ongoing effort to identify members to attend and report back on State Board of Election and local Electoral Board meetings. This activity has recently been clarified and officially assigned to the Election Modernization Committee.

--- Jane Newell

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

The LWV-RMA is leading a two-year state affordable housing study, which was approved at the 2019 LWV-VA Convention. The Affordable Housing Study will culminate in a position on the issue presented at the LWV-VA's Convention in 2021. The study is being led by Alice Tousignant from the Richmond League, who is also chair of the LWV-RMA Affordable Housing Committee. The study began in earnest in September 2019 with the establishment of the LWV-VA Affordable Housing Study Committee (AHSC) which consists of representatives from most local leagues across Virginia.

The focus of the study is on affordable housing for renters at 50% of Area Median Income and below, which includes people who are homeless.

After months of meetings, research and analysis, the AHSC has completed its report and will be presenting a summary of it at the LWV-VA Council meeting on June 6th at 11am. There will also be a special presentation of the report summary for the LWV-RMA on Tuesday, June 23rd from noon to 1pm.

Local leagues, including the LWV-RMA, will be reviewing the report and responding to study questions and consensus questions in order to arrive at consensus. The report and related documentation can be found on the LWV-VA website at <https://lwv-va.org/publications/our-studies/lwv-va-affordable-housing-study-2019/>.

For more information, contact [Alice Tousignant](#).

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE



Following its trip in May 2019 to Short Pump on the recently extended GRTC #19 bus from Willow Lawn, the LWV-RMA Transportation

Committee decided to make advocacy for pedestrian safety infrastructure its priority for fiscal 2020. This decision was based on observing a lack of crosswalks, pedestrian count-down signals, and continuous sidewalks along West Broad Street as well as facing the danger of

walking across West Broad Street in the Short Pump area when trying to catch the eastbound #19 back to the city.

Accordingly, the Transportation Committee has advocated for pedestrian safety infrastructure in several ways. Immediately, letters on the subject were sent to the Henrico County manager and to the Three Chopt District supervisor. In October Virginia Cowles, Chair of the Transportation Committee, spoke before the Commonwealth Transportation Board at its fall transportation meeting. She described the need for pedestrian safety infrastructure along West Broad Street, a need already recognized by the VTrans needs assessment. In February Karen Rosenblum,

LWV-RMA First Vice President for the advocacy program, made a presentation to the Henrico Board of Supervisors advocating for pedestrian safety infrastructure, and in March Virginia made a similar plea for funding before the Chesterfield Board of Supervisors. At various transportation meetings throughout the year Virginia tried to raise awareness of the need for better pedestrian infrastructure for transit users.

The Transportation Committee continues to be represented at the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) meetings. Plans for more park & ride locations in the Richmond area, for the Ashland to Petersburg bicycle/pedestrian trail, and for complete streets in Ashland were among the topics presented.

In August Virginia attended the first steering committee meeting for the Greater RVA Transit Vision Plan: Phase 2. The purpose of Phase 2 of the Transit Vision Plan is to identify which bus routes in the Richmond area could actually be extended with more frequent service within the next five years. The Steering Committee has met

twice more (the April meeting via Zoom), and has limited 20 possible bus routes to five. There will be one more steering committee meeting before a final decision is made about the routes.

The Transportation Committee is pleased that in the past year regular fixed route bus service has been extended to Short Pump in Henrico and to John Tyler Community College in Chesterfield. We were also happy to see two transportation bills passed by the General Assembly that will help fund regional transportation needs, though we expect this funding to be put on hold for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another prospective transportation improvement, which might also be delayed, is building a second railroad bridge parallel to the Long Bridge from Arlington to Washington, D.C.

Of course, it is disappointing to see so many positive transportation developments now in jeopardy, but we will persevere.

--- Virginia Cowles, Chair

## WOMEN'S ISSUES REPORT

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

Virginia passed resolutions in both the Senate and the House during this year’s General Assembly to become the 38th state needed to enshrine those words in our Constitution.

Once again, the Richmond League was part of a coalition of organizations — AAUW, Women Matter, the Deltas, and NOW, just to name a few — under the umbrella of VARatifyERA, to orchestrate a campaign for the third year to see the passage of the ERA come to fruition in Virginia.

For 11 weeks during late summer and fall, an *I Scream for Equality* van, covered in slogans to educate voters as to the need to elect legislators

who would support ratification, toured the state giving out factual, non-partisan flyers and ice cream. Specific areas of the state were earmarked because these had been places where legislators had refused to entertain passage of the ERA even though a great majority of their constituents as well as most Virginians supported it. On Election Day, we stood in precincts in these areas with this information — reiterating who supported the ERA.

In addition, hundreds of thousands of postcards were sent to voters in these areas, again educating voters. We even had postcards coming from EVERY STATE IN OUR COUNTRY.

I loved working with the young Sprinters and Marathoners alike in this endeavor and am grateful we were successful. Unfortunately, now we face the fact that the National Archivist has been directed to ignore our successful campaign.



However, shortly after our success, the House of Representatives passed a resolution eliminating the deadline. The deadline, which was not part of the original amendment, has often been the battle cry of those who oppose passage because

almost every other reason they give has been debunked. What an incredible day it was!

After the passage many members of the House had a party for us. Needless to say, it was amazing. Carolyn Maloney, who led the push to eliminate the deadline, asked me where I purchased my sash. I quickly took it off and placed it on her - telling her I was there representing all the Richmond Leaguers to offer our thanks for all she and her colleagues had accomplished. A similar resolution sits on a pile of ignored proposed legislation in the Senate.

Now it's on to the courts! Stand by to see how this all unfolds this fall.

---Donna Granski, Richmond ERA chair

## INTERNSHIP REPORT

In 2019, LWV-RMA funded its first student internship. In her six-month appointment, Morgan Johns focused on building a social media presence for RMA congruent with the interests of the college and non-college youth population. She also established a good working relationship with VCU Student Government and helped LWV-RMA members with voter registration drives. Morgan continues to be an active member of RMA.

While 2020 funding was set aside for a three-month student internship, the candidate has not been able to accept.

## MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

**MAY 14, 2019**

Westwood Club, 6200 West Club Road, Richmond, VA

### Call to Order and Welcome

**Attendance:** 23 members were in attendance. A quorum was established.

President Mary Crutchfield called the meeting to order at 5:25 p.m. Suzy Szasz Palmer volunteered to serve as Parliamentarian. Becki Lawson agreed to record the minutes, and three members agreed to serve as readers of the minutes: Alison Beall, Gail Schweickert, and Suzy Szasz Palmer.

Mary asked for additions to the Agenda. Virginia Cowles requested time to speak for the Transportation Committee.

**Minutes** from the May 2018 Annual Meeting were approved as submitted (see Annual Report).

**The Treasurer's Report of May 14, 2019** was distributed at the meeting. Evelyn Glazier summarized the report on behalf of Treasurer Mary Anne Stone. She noted the distinction between the Operating Fund and the Education Fund, and thanked those who had made contributions to the latter.

**Proposed Budget for 2019-20** – Marianne Feeney (see Annual Report)

Marianne announced that the LWV-RMA is now a state-registered entity eligible to solicit tax-deductible donations. A new Fundraising Committee has been established to coordinate activities to bring in income from grants and contributions. Marianne summarized the main points of the budget. The budget was approved as proposed.

A **Change to the Bylaws** was proposed to correct the name of the organization to its legal name, League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, Inc.”, removing the word “Virginia”. The motion to amend the Bylaws was approved.

**Proposed Advocacy Program for 2019-20** – Marianne Feeney on behalf of Karen Rosenblum (see Annual Report)

The Board has approved the advocacy program that was proposed at the Advocacy Program Planning meeting on January 19. Three new items were proposed for study: election security (Jane Newell, coordinator), housing (Alice Tousignant), and sexual harassment (Alison Beall). These topics were approved at the state level and will be discussed at Annual Convention later this month.

The First Vice-President’s Report was approved as distributed.

**Membership and Engagement:** Jeanne D’Ascoli welcomed all members in attendance and especially thanked those who took part in the Hot Topics and Educated Voter programs that were hosted by the Committee this year. She challenged everyone to reach out to former members and to other friends, with the goal of having each member bring one new person into the League.

**Report of the Nominating Committee** – Gail Schweickert

Gail presented the slate of nominees for 2019-2020 and asked for any nominations from the floor. There were none. The slate was approved.

<i>Role</i>	<i>Nominee</i>
President	Lynn McMartin
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Karen Rosenblum
Secretary	Becki Lawson
Directors (2019 – 2021)	Penny Adams Doris Bey Donna Granski Barbara Greenleaf Alice Tousignant
Director (2019-2020)	Gail Schweickert
Nominating Committee	Evelyn Glazier, Chair Anna Mason Lorraine Waddill

**Report on New Website:** Anna Mason and Suzy Szasz Palmer demonstrated the new LWV-RMA website, which is scheduled for official launch on July 1. It retains the wealth of information from our old website but has an updated look and new features, for example, a simpler way to join or donate to the League. We recognized Anna and Suzy’s work with a round of applause.

**President’s Remarks:** Mary Crutchfield recognized all of the current term’s Board members and Directors and thanked them for their service. She expressed gratitude to Lynn Crowder for her years as Board Secretary. She thanked Linda Mateyka for organizing the venue and dinner for tonight’s Annual Meeting. As retiring President, Mary thanked the many long-term members who provided help and support during her tenure.

Mary introduced incoming President Lynn McMartin, who has served admirably as chair of the Communications Committee. She also pointed out the back sheet of the Annual Report, where members may offer suggestions to the Board on any matter of interest or concern.

**Incoming President’s Remarks:** Lynn McMartin thanked the group for their support. She hopes to focus on inclusiveness and diversity in the coming year, and to convey the importance of the League and its commitment to democracy as the next election season approaches. She also encouraged members’ input on programs such as Hot Topics.

**Adjournment:** Mary Crutchfield adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becki Lawson, Secretary Pro Tempore*

Read and approved by Gail Schweikert, Suzy Szasz Palmer, and Alison Beall, 21 May 2019

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

At the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee of LWV-RMA will propose the following slate to serve for 2020-2021:

2nd Vice President	Carol Stephens
Treasurer	Ashley Tankesley
5 directors for 2-year term	Jeanne D’Ascoli Marianne Feeney Valarie Fillgrove Jane Newell Natalie Testa
Nominating Committee – 3 off-board members	Nancy Conkright Anna Mason Evelyn Glazier, Chair

*Submitted by 2020 Nominating Committee:  
Board Members: Jeanne D’Ascoli, Donna Granski  
Off-Board Anna Mason, Lorraine Waddill, Evelyn Glazier (Chair)*



Please make a note of our League’s new telephone number:  
**(804) 464-3424**

The Communications Committee met via Zoom





## 2020-2021 BUDGET

League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, Inc.		
PROPOSED BUDGET - July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021		
GENERAL FUND BUDGET		
INCOME	2020-2021	
	Proposed	Proposed Section Total
CORPORATE & INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS & GRANTS		\$7,000
LOCAL ANNUAL MEETING		\$1,050
35 attendees @ \$30/person	\$1,050	
MEMBERSHIP DUES		\$4,770
69 Individual memberships @ \$55	\$3,795	
11 Household memberships @ \$85	\$935	
2 Student memberships @ \$20	\$40	
TRANSFERS FROM EDUCATION FUND		\$6,496
for LWVUS PMP	\$1,368	
for Voter Education Projects	\$4,000	
for other Education projects	\$1,128	
SPECIAL EVENTS (1)		\$1,500
WARES SALES & MISCELLANEOUS		\$250
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME</b>		<b>\$21,066</b>

PROGRAM EXPENSES		
VOTER SERVICE		\$6,500
Committee	\$100	
Voter Education Projects (1)	\$4,000	
Intern	\$2,400	
PROGRAM PLANNING/ADVOCACY MTG		\$350
LOCAL/STATE/NATIONAL ISSUES PROGRAMS(2)		\$600
CONVENTIONS/COUNCIL		\$1,600
National Council	\$0	
State Convention	\$1,600	
SPECIAL EVENTS (3)		\$1,500
LOCAL ANNUAL MEETING		\$1,150
Annual Report	\$100	
Meeting expenses (from fees)	\$1,050	
MISCELLANEOUS (4)		\$465
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$12,165</b>

OPERATING EXPENSES		
<i>The Leaguer</i> newsletter production		\$50
Website		\$72
Fundraising		\$100
Membership		\$4,604
Membership Materials and Events	\$500	
Membership Fees - LWVUS		
80 full-PMP members @ \$32 (5)	\$2,560	
11 half-PMP members @ \$16 (6)	\$176	

OPERATING EXPENSES		Proposed	Proposed Section Total
	Membership Fees - LWV-VA		
	80 full-PMP members @ \$16 (5)	\$1,280	
	11 half-PMP members @ \$8 (6)	\$88	
	Board related expenses (7)		\$420
	President's expenses		\$50
	Secretary's expenses		\$50
	Treasurer's expenses		\$50
	Administrative expenses (8)		\$3,320
	Liability Insurance	\$265	
	SCC non-profit registration fee	\$25	
	VADACS non-profit registration fee	\$30	
	Directors & Officers Insurance	\$1,000	
	Accountant - set up financial records	\$1,000	
	Attorney - advise on local Ed Fund	\$1,000	
	Office Expenses		\$185
	Postage	\$50	
	PO Box rental fee	\$85	
	Printing/Copying expense	\$50	
	Telephone expenses	\$0	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$8,901</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES (from above)</b>			<b>\$12,165</b>
<b>TOAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$21,066</b>

EDUCATION FUND BUDGET			
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>			
BALANCES AVAILABLE			\$9,792
	Health Care Project balance	\$3,876	
	Other Ed Fund balance	\$5,866	
EDUCATION FUND INCOME			\$3,056
	Presbyterian Foundation (Anonymous donor)	\$56	
	Donations - Individual & Corporate	\$3,000	
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE EDUCATION FUNDS</b>			<b>\$12,848</b>
<b>EDUCATION FUND EXPENSES</b>			
	Health Care Projects		\$3,876
	Transfer to General Fund for Voter Education Projects		\$4,000
	Transfer to General Fund for LWVUS PMP		\$1,368
	Transfer to General Fund for Other Education Projects		\$1,128
<b>RESERVES</b>	Future Education Expenses		\$2,476
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION FUND BUDGET EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$12,848</b>

## Footnotes:

- (1) Includes Vote 411, billboards, media, etc.
- (2) includes Housing Forum, Educated Voter series
- (3) Special Events include Black History and Back to League
- (4) Miscellaneous expense includes honoraria, donations, wares expenses
- (5) Includes PMP for individuals and first household members
- (6) Includes PMP for second household members; no PMP for students
- (7) Includes board retreat
- (8) Includes one-time expense of accounting and legal advice plus annual insurance costs

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.