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2019-2020 LWV-RMA Board

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- Natalie Testa

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



There are important elections in November that will be held under the restrictions and confusion caused by a worldwide pandemic. These are times that try one's soul, to contemporize Thomas Paine's famous words. In his 1776 pamphlet entitled *The American Crisis*, Paine went on to exhort citizens to do the hard work, not to shrink from the service of their country.

Richmond Area Leaguers are doing the hard work! It is difficult to say what is more remarkable, our multi-faceted approach to voter service under Covid restrictions, or the fact that in this election season we have also continued work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, position studies, and sponsoring an intern, to name just a few.

It is equally difficult to say what is more impressive, the willingness to pitch in and ideas of new members, or the diligence of members who continue their decades-long fight to make democracy work. There are only a few weeks until the elections - let's get voter registration information to voters, educate voters about how to vote and how to learn where candidates stand, and let's encourage voters to cast their vote!

--- Lynn McMartin



CALENDAR

Date	Event	Time	Location
September			
8	LWV-VA DEI Issue Group	2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Zoom
12	LWV VA Fall Workshops	9:00 am-2:00 pm	Zoom
14	LWV-RMA Communications Committee	10:00 am – Noon	Zoom
14	Membership and Engagement Committee	6:00 pm-7:00 pm	Zoom
15	LWV-RMA Board Meeting	3:00 pm-5:00 pm	Zoom
17	LWV-RMA Voter Services Committee	11 am	Zoom
22	National Voter Registration Day	8:00 am-5:00 pm	
24	LWV-RMA DEI Committee	11:00 am-12:00 pm	Zoom
25	Election Modernization - Observation Teams	12:00 pm-1:00 pm	Zoom
October			
13	Last day to register to vote or update registration		
20	LWV-RMA Board Meeting	3:00 pm-5:00 pm	Zoom
23	Last day to request absentee ballot		
November			
3	ELECTION DAY	6:00 am – 7:00 pm	
17	LWV-RMA Board Meeting	3:00 pm-5:00 pm	Zoom

Please check the [calendar on our website](#) or the Mini-Leaguer for events scheduled after this issue was published.



Without our traditional face-to-face Annual Meeting this year, many members may have overlooked writing a check for the current year’s dues, which were due by July 1, 2020.

If you haven’t done it yet, **please** take a moment to **renew online** using PayPal (<https://www.lwv-rva.org/join-lwv-rva-form/>), or print the form on page 12 and mail it with your check. Contact Treasurer [Ashley Tankesley](#) if you aren’t sure whether you’ve renewed your membership.

Did you know that joining LWV-RMA also gives you membership in the national and state Leagues? *Over 85% of your dues goes to support those two organizations, and only \$7 remains with our local League.* We are proud of what we have accomplished on a slim budget. Any extra that you can contribute in these challenging times will help us do more!

Watch for the **Mini-Leaguer** in your mailbox on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. Thanks to VP Carol Stephens, this email brings you the latest information about coming events. To make sure the “Mini” gets to your mailbox, add communications@lwv-rva.org to your Contacts.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Voter Services

Our focus is on how to proceed with registering people to vote, which is at our core, when we no longer feel comfortable sitting at a registration table and when there are very few events that call on us to do so.

We have designed two-sided **sandwich boards** that display basic Vote 411 and registration information, including a QR code that will connect someone directly to the Registrar's office via their own phone. They also feature a display box that can self-distribute Vote 411 Bookmarks and other printed material. These sandwich boards can be left at a safe site or monitored by a Voter Services member at an outdoor venue without need of personal interaction.



We have also developed **Voter Fact Sheets**, which distill up-to-date information on voting rules in the Metro area. Three versions target the general audience, as well as student and first-time voters, and public housing residents, and have been produced in English and in Spanish. The Fact Sheets can be distributed electronically, or in printed version, and are meant to be sent as widely as possible. Efforts to coordinate the distribution have been another task for Voter Services. The fact sheets are the inspired result of a true team effort by Nancy Conkright, Donna Granski, Morgan Johns, Dale Johnson-Raney, Rebecca Neale, Alice Tousignant, and Mary Weiser.

Voter Services is also working to sponsor **two billboards** in target areas of the city which will promote Vote 411.org. As we get past the registration period, we will be focusing our energy on ways to get out the vote for the November election.

As we get closer to the election, we are working with local libraries and several civic groups to make **presentations** about voter registration and getting out the vote. We are also planning a **car-caravan** parade to promote registration and voting, to be held early October.

We will continue to look for innovative and safe ways to do what we do—promote well-informed voting.

--- Penny Adams



For the ninth year, the Richmond Metro League is participating in VOTE411, an electronic voter guide for the November election. Our local League is responsible for surveying candidates for Congressional Districts 4 and 7 and Richmond City's races for Mayor, City Council, and School Board. The Virginia

League is handling the US Senate race and the two Virginia Constitutional Amendments, and the US League is handling the presidential race.

Our goal is to have the information live on the website www.VOTE411.org by September 19, when early voting begins. In addition to the voter guide information on candidates and ballot issues, VOTE411 has general information on registering and voting in all states.

Check out the website and for more information contact Evelyn Glazier at emglazier1@gmail.com or Mary Julia Street at easywriter.maryjulia@gmail.com.

--- Evelyn Glazier

Redistricting

Redistricting is on the Ballot!

There is a history of gerrymandering in Virginia by both parties. Every ten years when the General Assembly revised election districts, whichever party was in the majority drew the districts to garner more seats for that party.

On November 3rd, Virginia voters will decide whether to approve a state Constitutional Amendment that creates a Commission to draw election districts. The Commission comprises citizens and legislators and will be led by a citizen. The Commission will hold public hearings, and its communications will be treated as public documents.

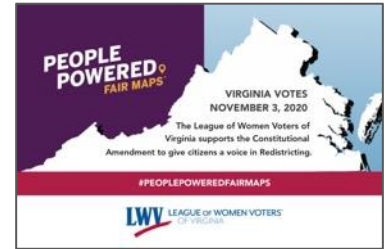
The vote on this Amendment is the culmination of several years' work by groups and individuals seeking to establish a Redistricting Commission. In 2020, the General Assembly passed the Amendment in the second of two consecutive sessions, as required by the Virginia Constitution. In November, it will be on the ballot for final approval by voters.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports the Amendment, and some of us in the Richmond Metro League are participating in a postcard and yard sign campaign that includes thousands of postcards mailed by local leagues throughout the state.

Many, however, oppose passage of the Redistricting Amendment. A recent lawsuit objects to the role of the state Supreme Court in drawing districts if the Commission fails to do so.

Here's a link to what will be on the ballot November 3rd and to the text of the proposed constitutional amendment. <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/proposed-constitutional-amendment-2020/>

--- Lynn McMartin



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In December 2019, LWV-US formally published its DEI Policy, stating that “*Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy*”. State Leagues are now forming issue groups to determine how to realize the goals of this policy. LWV-RMA’s Doris Bey has convened the Virginia issue group, which is meeting monthly to consider ways to embed DEI into the state League’s program and to provide guidance to local leagues.



In these unusual times of global pandemic, racial injustice, economic disparity, and housing challenges, focusing on DEI principles gives us a chance to grow and become actively engaged. Change is happening all around us. James Baldwin says, “have a plan.” We’re excited about developing that plan!

Our local Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, formed in July, is exploring ways to educate members on what these terms mean and how we can use a DEI lens to examine our League’s activities and governance. The committee is gathering suggestions for speakers who could kick off a virtual discussion of DEI.

To start your own journey of reflection on diversity, equity and inclusion, take advantage of the excellent resources on the LWV-US website at <http://bit.ly/LWV-3m4fSkr>.

--- Doris Bey

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Zoom virtual events

Setting the Table

As we all know, by mid-March COVID-19 had made in-person League meetings impossible. Nonetheless, under the auspices of Membership and Engagement chair Jeanne D'Ascoli, in the first week in May, RMA rolled out a plan. The "**Setting the Table**" series aimed to help our members think about the work that would need to be done in the upcoming months, even when we didn't know the conditions under which we would be operating. In May, Zoom sessions on the Census, VOTE411, voter registration during a pandemic, RMA's new and newly-virtual high school civics education program, and the history and future of the fight for the ERA, our members looked both to the past and forward. The enthusiastic response to the series showed our members' ability to rise to a dramatically changed world and plan for an uncertain future. *Nicely done Leaguers!*

Affordable Housing Study



The LWV-VA Affordable Housing Study was initiated by the LWV-Richmond Metropolitan Area, led by Alice Tousignant, in response to revelations that the City of Richmond as well as other Virginia cities, both large and mid-size, have among the highest eviction rates in the nation. A state-wide study of affordable housing was approved at the LWV-VA Convention in June 2019, with consensus questions going to local Leagues over the summer months. As we all know, safe, affordable housing

is a health issue, an economic issue, and an environmental issue, as well as a moral and equity issue.

RMA members attending the virtual July consensus meeting on Zoom approved five of the study questions and gave partial approval to the sixth. There was no consensus among attending members on the question of whether state laws should mitigate the impact of evictions by expunging eviction records. Members expressed some support for such legislation but offered comments on the phrasing and details of the study question.

For more information about discussion at the consensus meeting, please [read the full report here](#).

Election Laws Study

Over three virtual meetings in July and August 2020, RMA members heard reports from the LWV-VA Election Position Study Committee on updating the LWV-VA 2011 Election Laws position. This Study, initiated through the leadership of RMA members Jane Newell and Becki Lawson, encompasses two phases. The first phase addressed questions concerning these topics:

- Whether the Virginia Department of Elections is doing enough to make the election system secure.
- In light of new legislation passed by the General Assembly, whether the LWV-VA should state positions on no-excuse absentee voting or the photo ID.
- Whether general registrars should be trained and funded to conduct risk-limiting audits before an election is certified.

After reviewing information on each of these questions, RMA members voiced support for the report as written. They commended the Study Committee for the depth, detail, and thoroughness of their treatment of these important topics. The second phase of the position study has been launched, with completion expected in 2021.

--- Karen Rosenblum

Equal Rights Amendment

Forty-eight years after Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the amendment. It was a momentous occasion in the General Assembly, full of cheers and tears of joy. However, because Congress had set a time limit for full ratification, the Department of Justice instructed the National Archivist not to publish the amendment to the Constitution. Soon after Virginia's ratification, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to eliminate the deadline for ratification. This legislation has not been taken up by the U.S. Senate.



Three exciting pieces of news from DC:

- The Attorneys General of Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia, the last three states to ratify the ERA, filed a lawsuit to declare the deadline not binding, and to instruct the National Archivist to certify the amendment.
- *Equal Means Equal* (EME), one of our League's ERA partner organizations, filed suit to require the Archivist to certify ratification and to dismiss anti-ERA suits from states that had defeated or rescinded ratification.
- Amicus briefs to the EME suit have been filed by 69 organizations, the United States Conference of Mayors, and 93 large corporations.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you all for being there these past three years as we all helped make it happen!

--- Donna Granski

Membership & Engagement

Inspire: to excite, encourage, or breathe life into

In this challenging election cycle, we are seeing that the League's mission is inspiring new members to get involved, at the same time that those new members are inspiring League veterans with their energy and commitment.

Since the last Leaguer was published on May 1, and as of September 1, **thirty-four new members** have joined LWV-RMA. Look for the names of our newest members in each issue of the Mini-Leaguer, and please welcome them all! It's our goal to help everyone find a fulfilling role within the League's many activities.

The Membership and Engagement Committee is focused on making it easier for new members to find information that answers their questions and inspires them. The committee invites members to attend its meetings, as a way to get to know other Leaguers, share ideas, and decide where to put their efforts. Watch the Mini-Leaguer for information about our next meeting.

Happily, being in the League has a fun side, too! Our first two virtual Happy Hours were great successes. Sure, everyone needs to bring their own refreshments, but it is a wonderful opportunity to connect with others and get inspired.

--- Jeanne D'Ascoli

Transportation

Inspired to Advocate

We advocated for extending transit service to Short Pump, then transit was extended to Short Pump. We advocated for extending transit service to John Tyler Community College, then transit service was extended to JTCC. We advocated for sidewalks along West Broad Street for transit users, and funding for more sidewalks for West Broad Street has been recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee of the Richmond Region Transportation Planning Organization!

We don't make *post hoc, propter hoc* arguments, but we are very proud and happy to have participated in efforts to improve bus transportation in the Richmond Metro Area. Thanks to Karen Rosenblum, Gail Schweickert, Alice Tousignant, Lorraine Waddill, and Valarie Fillgrove for their transportation advocacy before supervisors in Henrico and Chesterfield. It's exciting when you succeed. Please join our efforts. Sidewalks are needed at bus stops.



--- Members of the Transportation Committee:

Sarah Weisiger, Alice Tousignant, Mary Crutchfield, and Virginia Cowles, Chair.

Website and Social Media

Checked out [our website](#) recently? If not, look for

- ✓ the latest updates on voting in Virginia;
- ✓ restoration-of-rights information;
- ✓ FAQs useful to both new and long-term members;
- ✓ a (justifiable!) bragging section on RMA accomplishments;
- ✓ information about events big and small;
- ✓ links to other Leagues in Virginia, and
- ✓ an archive of recent home-page postings.

Our website is updated weekly thanks to Anna Mason and the Communications Committee.

Social Media

Mary Crutchfield and Morgan Johns are doing an outstanding job keeping our social media content timely and engaging. Here are some examples of our top-rated posts:

[Facebook](#): "Postal Service seen hauling mailboxes away."

[Twitter](#): Beginning of the VA General Assembly Special Session, with a link to the livestream.

[Instagram](#): A series of photos with Q & A on how to vote early in person before Nov. 3.

Visit our social media sites to keep up with the very latest League news!

Voter Services

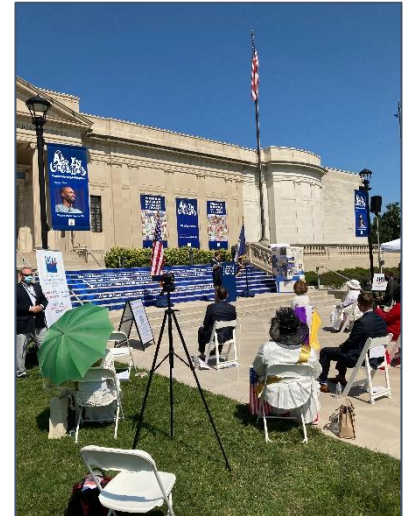
Virtual Voter Registration Training

The Voter Services Committee has had an interesting year to date, coping with the Covid-19 shutdown in the midst of an important election year. We moved our annual **Voter Registration Training** from an in-person event in July to a virtual training led by Taylor Melton from the Department of Elections on August 15th. Nonetheless, we still hosted about 50 people for the certified training.

Votes for Women: 100 Years!

August 26, 2020 marked the centennial of the certification of the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. The LWV-RMA Centennial Committee, co-chaired by Lynn Johnston and Mary Crutchfield, partnered with the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC) to commemorate this historic event. The public gathering, held outdoors on the front steps of VMHC, allowed everyone to attend in a safe environment, with chairs appropriately distanced on the broad entry walk. Speakers included VMHC President, and CEO, Jamie Bosket; Governor Ralph Northam; Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney; and Dr. Sandra Treadway, Librarian of Virginia.

LWV-RMA members also participated, with Pat Fishback acting as Mistress of Ceremonies. Mary Crutchfield spoke about the history of the founding of the League of Women Voters in Virginia. Lynn Johnston and Morgan Johns shared the podium, presenting past and future challenges to our LWV mission of voter education, advocacy, access and citizen participation. Doris Bey, LWV-RMA board member and LWV-VA DEI Chair, spoke about the history and activism of women of color and shared the Maggie Lena Walker story. Doris contributed further by bringing members of the Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, who volunteered as hostesses. Doris also invited a wonderful vocalist, the Rev. Carla Jackson. Nancy Lowden, in authentic Suffragist costume, told the story of the final steps required to ratify the 19th Amendment



Socially Distanced Seating

All attendees received a FAQ Sheet for Voters, a VOTE411 bookmark, and a [detailed list of sites and map](#) for a driving tour of Richmond’s women’s suffrage history locations and museum exhibits.

--- *Commemoration committee: Pat Fishback, Anne Sterling, Doris Bey, Mary Crutchfield, Lynn Johnston, LWV-RMA; and Nancy Lowden, former Director of Historical Programs at Maymont*

You can read more about the event on our [Facebook page](#). For more details on the planning of this event, please [read the full report here](#).



RMA Leaguers with Nancy Lowden



Gov. Ralph Northam



Speakers, Leaguers, and Deltas with Mayor Stoney

Electoral Board Observation Teams

The Election Modernization Committee now has Electoral Board Observation Teams in Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield and Hanover. Observers note that these local boards have common issues in 2020:

- poll location changes due to inability to use retirement communities;
- concerns about the volume of mail-in voting;
- need for new election officers;
- establishing satellite voting centers for early voting;
- timeline challenges with delayed candidate submissions; and
- last minute legislation such as requirements for drop-boxes.

Relocation of the Richmond Registrar's Office to 2134 West Laburnum Avenue, Richmond 23227, is complete. Voting will start at this new location on September 18. The [committee's notes are available online](#).

--- Jane Newell

From our Intern



One year since my first bright-eyed and bushy-tailed summer as an intern, the world has obviously paused with aggressive volatility. Inspiration to change society has become as contagious as that which keeps us locked away, a frustrating balance between desperate motivation and necessary confinement. This balance (or lack thereof) is quite familiar to my young peers - a desperation to reform the values that govern this country, without much patience for the necessary confines of bureaucracy.

My generation has grown up with notification after notification about the worst that our world has to offer, and frankly, it was only preparing us for this year. There is a natural desensitization and disenfranchisement that overcomes a demographic so saturated in distrust. As I presented in my speech for the 19th Amendment centennial commemoration, the ultimate result is that they don't believe that anyone on the ballot would have their best interest at heart. Our job as Leaguers is now to convince the silenced that their voices matter, and convince the vocal that their ballot is imperative accompaniment.

In order to accomplish this goal for a second summer, I have revitalized the look of our Instagram, designed marketing materials like the voter registration sandwich board (complete with QR code), represented the young voice at events and meetings, and connected with groups around the country for an upcoming virtual young adult panel. I am continuously inspired by the reputation that our organization's foremothers fostered, by my fellow tireless Leaguers, and by the fact that there is so much more to be done yet.

--- Morgan Johns

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

LWV-Ohio leader Treva Cromwell inspires a new generation

New member Hope Norman writes: "In 2002 when I moved to Charlottesville, my entrepreneurship professor and mentor reached out to me to ask that I help him find someone to take his 90-year-old mother shopping. She and her husband lived in a retirement community and could no longer drive. I told my professor that, of course, I'd take her shopping - no need to find another driver.

"Treva Cromwell was enchanting. She was gracious, sharp, humble, and exuded contentedness. I learned that she had been the president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio before she moved to Virginia. Further, once she moved to our state, she led an extensive and successful campaign to preserve watersheds in Virginia. I determined that I wanted to be like her! I wanted to make meaningful contributions, and I wanted to enter old age with her grace. I decided that if ever I had a daughter, I would name her Treva. *Treva Cromwell* died in 2004, and *Treva Norman* was born in 2006."

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hamilton/obituary.aspx?n=treva-wegrich-cromwell&pid=2474219>

In Memoriam: Mattie Roane



Long-time loyal member of the Richmond Metro League, Mattie Roane, died on August 18. Her obituary gives us a sense of this strong woman: “Mattie Frances Roane was born in Historic Jackson Ward in Richmond, Va. She was the first Miss Walker at Maggie Walker High School here in Richmond. She earned her Bachelor's degree in 2.5 years at Virginia Union University. When the University of Virginia would not allow her to attend their graduate school because of her race, the state of Virginia paid for her to attend Columbia University in New York, where she earned a Master's degree in psychology. In her 30 years with Richmond Public Schools, she taught at Nathaniel Bacon Elementary, Bowler Elementary and A.V. Norrell Elementary Schools, and served as a Curriculum Specialist. She was active in the community as a

member of First African Baptist Church, as a Girl Scout leader and as a very involved member of the League of Women Voters. She also owned her own dressmaking shop.” The family notes that memorials may be made to the League of Women Voters.

https://richmond.com/obituaries/roane-mattie/article_7c024597-2adf-5ecc-a806-e5174f7acc81.html

CONTACTS

How can YOU get involved? Our Richmond area league is active all over the democracy space. Send an email to communications@lwv-rva.org and we'll connect you with the Board officer or Committee chair whose portfolio matches your interests.

Topic	Contact
President	Lynn McMartin
1 st VP, Program	Karen Rosenblum
2 nd VP, Administration	Carol Stephens
Secretary	Becki Lawson
Treasurer	Ashley Tankesley
Past President	Mary Crutchfield
Black History Month	Mabel Wells
Communications	Anna Mason
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Doris Bey

Topic	Contact
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

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.

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.