

Charlottesville Area

League of Women Voters Newsletter November 2017

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Meet and Greet Your Legislators!

Sunday, November 19
2 – 3:30 pm
CitySpace
on the Downtown Mall



With elections on November 7, we will know which legislators will fill these seats in the Virginia General Assembly. We have invited the House Delegates (all those running for election as well as incumbents) and State Senators of all of the districts that are touched by the *League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area* (City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Nelson, and Louisa) to a "Meet and Greet" reception on Sunday, November 19, from 2 to 3:30 pm, in CitySpace on the Downtown Mall. This is an opportunity to talk to your representatives as they prepare in the succeeding weeks for the 2018 General Assembly, starting in January. Join us for an informal get-together—it's free and open to the public. CitySpace is located on the Downtown Mall, in Charlottesville, adjacent to the Market Street parking garage. Light refreshments will be served.

Election Day – Tuesday, November 7, 2017. You can check your voter registration status and polling place at the Department of Elections website, www.elections.virginia.gov (or call 804 864-8901 or 800 552-9745, 8 am to 5 pm weekdays.) Or click on <a href="https://citego.c

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Voter Service Report by Dena Imlay, LWV CVA Voter Service Director

During the Fall 2017 election cycle, LWV CVA held seven candidate forums. This could not have happened without the participation of the League members who have served in a number of important roles. With much appreciation, we thank:

Moderators:

Elaine Longerbeam, Bobbie Williams, Marge Cox, Michele Kellermann, and **Mimi Bender**. Special thanks to **Bob Gibson**, who moderated the House of Delegates forum for the 58th and 65th districts, in partnership with the Fluvanna County Chamber of Commerce

Time keeper and audience assistants:

Frances Schutz, Meg Gore, Susan Roberts, and Peyton Williams

Social media:

Megan Tracy, Maggie Hoover, and Amelia Faraco-Hadlock

We also appreciate the participation of our candidates in the forums and VOTE411.org. This year we invited 64 candidates to give their photo, bio, and answers to three questions addressing issues for their office. These appear in the VOTE411.org "Voter Guide." Office Assistant, Jeanne Fradianni, was indispensable to that process that took three months to complete. See the box below for instructions on how to access these responses by the candidates.

Finally, to all those League members who showed support of our forums with their attendance and participation in the question-and-answer periods, we thank you. Have I neglected to thank anyone? If so, please let me know: Dena Imlay, 296-6651.



How to Access **VOTE411.org** Voter Guide:

Use **VOTE411.org** for information about your registration, polling place, and voter's guide. Type in your address on the main page of VOTE411.org. This will take you to your voter "settings." You can access your "Personalized information on candidates and issues" by clicking on the green box under "On Your Ballot" and then choosing the city or county where you Once that appears on the screen (i.e., Charlottesville or Albemarle), click on "Go to My Races" that are specific to your address, including Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and your House of Delegates, as well as local races such as Board of Supervisors and School Board. Then you will choose which candidates' responses you wish to review. You will see their photo, party affiliation, profession, address, and responses to questions posed by the League. Need help with this? Call Dena Imlay, 296-6651.

LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Report

The following letter was sent by President Kerin Yates to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors:

October 10, 2017

To the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and David Hannah, Albemarle County Natural Resources Manager:

The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area has a long-standing policy to advocate for protection of water resources and water quality. Stream buffers are very important to maintaining clean and healthy water, thus we are writing to encourage you to strengthen the County's stream buffer protections. We request that you clarify stream buffer provisions which may be misunderstood or misapplied, eliminate damaging loopholes, and consider what measures are needed to strengthen enforcement of our existing stream buffer protection requirements.

Because we are aware that the Board is concurrently updating its climate action plan, we request that you take climate change effects into account as you consider stream buffer protections. Climate change is making heavy precipitation events more common. Hurricane Harvey brought rainfall totals of more than 50 inches to the Houston area this September, demonstrating the need for communities to prepare for the possibility of unprecedented rainfalls. Stream buffers should be maintained and enforced not only to protect water quality, but also to reduce flooding and erosion in the event of extremely heavy rainfalls.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to offer comment on Albemarle's stream buffer regulations.

Sincerely,

Kerin Yates, President The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area 1932 Arlington Boulevard Suite 111 Charlottesville, VA 22903-1560

Special Guest at Natural Resources Committee Meeting on Nov 15!

What is the next step in our community's Fifty-Year Supply Plan? During Tom Frederick's tenure as director of the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, the Natural Resources Committee was very involved in the development of the Fifty-Year Water Supply Plan. We advocated for an expansion of the Ragged Mountain Reservoir and a new water line running between the South Fork and Ragged Mountain reservoirs.

At our next meeting, **Bill Mawyer**, Tom Frederick's successor, will talk with us about what the next steps are for the Fifty-Year Plan, and other issues. Mr. Mawyer is also the Director of the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority (think: McIntire Recycling Center and the site that used to be called the Ivy Landfill). **Please join us at University Village at 1:30 pm, on Wednesday, November 15**, for a very informative conversation. Contact Linda Goodling with any questions at <u>434 953-4535</u>.

International Relations / Federal Government Committee News

By Gerry Kruger

On a warm September 27 that felt more like July, **Gerry Kruger** welcomed a large number of committee members and guests to hear **Beth Alley's** and **Maggie Hoover's** reports. **Beth updated us on a practice that immigrants in the United States use to gain asylum in Canada.** She told of an underground railroad in Buffalo, New York where asylum seekers from a large number of countries get legal advice about the application process, food, and shelter. It's a safe house about four miles from the Canadian border. The safe house, *Viva La Casa*, was founded in 1984. Immigrants can apply to the U.S. or Canada for asylum, but not both. The U.S. uses a lottery to grant visas and only a small percentage of applicants actually get them, whereas Canada accepts about 62% of applicants. Many immigrants also sneak illegally into Canada.

Beth told stories about several refugees and the problems they face. In order to have asylum, they must be able to prove that they are in danger, which cannot be assuaged by simply moving to another locale within their native country. Another possibility is being able to prove they have an "anchor," such as a child or spouse in the country. Some are allowed to stay, work, and go to school even though they cannot prove persecution or that they have an anchor. The number of applicants are tripling every month, and there is a back-up through 2020.

Maggie Hoover read *Death of Expertise*, a book by Tom Nichols, a Harvard professor, who claims that Americans are rejecting the advice of experts and actively resisting learning rather than letting go of their beliefs. He says both liberals and conservatives refuse to accept facts that conflict with their values. Most young people today see a college education as a must. Therefore, many colleges attract mediocre students by offering "dumbed-down" courses taught by incompetent teachers, passing out high grades. As a result we have young people who feel they are too smart to listen to advice, even from those who are experts in their fields. Professors are no longer regarded as experts.

The internet has also contributed to this phenomenon. Many people no longer read whole articles, but simply glance at the top line, read a few sentences and move on. This creates a false sense of learning about a topic when actually their knowledge is shallow. They surf until they reach the conclusion they're after, one that coincides with their beliefs. Few converse with a person on the other side or listen to another point of view. This kind of give and take is necessary for critical thinking. Nichols says we're becoming "mired in our own biases." Moreover, 90 % of internet facts are not accurate.

Nichols says that experts shouldn't give opinions, just stick to facts. Cable news is full of so-called experts that give one-sided arguments and mislead young people to the point that they know little and show little interest in the world around them. The author thinks that Americans today are more interested in their feelings than facts, and there's no hope for democracy if they claim to be on equal footing with the experts.

October 11 found the International Relations/Federal Government Committee in Lydia Peale's mountaintop sun-filled home. Bobbie Williams gave a timely report on Iran and the nuclear deal that President Trump threatens to decertify. After explaining Iran's complex and turbulent history, she spoke of President Hassan Rouhani's strategy to improve Iran's economy by signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In July 2015, a fifteen-year nuclear deal struck between Iran and six world powers - the US, UK, Russia, France, China, and Germany - was signed by Barrack Obama and harshly scrutinized by Trump during his campaign. Royhani was motivated to sign the deal because he wanted sanctions against Iran to be lifted and \$1,000,000,000 in their frozen assets to be returned. There is also a "snap-back" clause that voids the deal if Iran breaks any terms of the agreement. For example, it would be void if there were human rights violations.

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To comply with the conditions of the deal, Iran reduced the number of centrifuges which they had installed from over 19,000 centrifuges to about 5,000. They agreed to keep uranium enrichment to a low level and only to use it for medical, agricultural, and industrial reasons. They also conceded any activities which could contribute to the development of a nuclear bomb.

Iran has to commit to robust monitoring and inspection. An international group does all the inspections, and every three months it must be recertified. At present Trump appears to be the lone dissenter in the group. Others feel that the agreement will contribute to regional and international peace and security.

Gerry Kruger is Charlottesville's representative on the "LWV VA Task Force on School Choice," chaired by Carol Noggle. Gerry summarized the four choices that are alternatives to the traditional public schools. One of the four, vouchers or Education Savings Accounts, has not been approved in Virginia, but has been proposed and actually passed both houses of the General Assembly before it was vetoed by Gov. McAuliff. This school choice diverts public funds (taxpayer dollars) directly to private schools.

Charter schools are public schools that are approved by local school boards and address a need that may not be met in traditional public schools. The task force feels that charter schools are not a concern at this point. There are only eight of them in Virginia, and they are generally well run.

Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credits (EISTC's) are 65% tax credits that donors can get when they donate to a foundation that gives money to private schools for scholarships. Wealthy donors realize huge tax credits from these donations, as well as tax deductions for charitable donations. This means a great deal of revenue that could go to public schools is lost. There is a cap in Virginia of \$25,000,000 for total donations. As yet this cap has not been reached.

Finally, virtual (online) learning is available in Virginia through both private and public programs. Virginia's public program—Virtual Virginia (VVA) offers courses built by teams of content area and online learning experts and has a 90% pass rate. It offers extensive contacts between the student and teacher, both online and in person. These services are invaluable to students who are homebound, expelled from school, or wish to take a course that is not offered in their schools.

Private online learning is funded by public funds that leave the public school and is not strictly monitored. There are also concerns about student-teacher ratio, reporting of completion and passing rates, and private companies being more concerned about money than educating young people.

Jean Minehart and Ginny DeSimone were our speakers on October 25 at Maggie Hoover's lakeside home. Jean gave us background on Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, who some think will someday be the Prime Minister. He is a member of the Labor Party, extremely popular, and a moderate. He is also a devout Sunni Muslim. One of eight children born to Pakistani immigrants, he is 47 years old and a former member of Parliament. Since his election in 2016, he has already had to deal with a number of serious problems. First, Brexit has been disastrous for London's economy and job situation. It has gotten so bad that many professionals are leaving. A second major hurdle is terrorism, not only by Muslims but also toward Muslims.

Next, a terrible fire in an apartment building, housing many of London's poor, has been destructive in several ways. Some 80 lives were lost, partly because of the cheap construction and regulations not being met. The area in which the fire took place is one of the most affluent in London, but the gap between the rich and poor is huge. The richest and poorest citizens live in the same borough. And the poor feel they are being pushed out by the wealthy and that no one cares about the problems they face.

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Finally, he must deal with negative feelings that many harbor against Muslims. He insists that he is not a spokesperson for Muslims, but for all people. If he were to become Prime Minister, he would be the first Muslim to be elected to this office. Hugely popular with the people, he seems ready and willing to tackle the problems head on.

Ginny DeSimone's report on globalization contrasted the past two decades with the previous seven. The world has seen such changes in technology that people feel out of control because they can't adapt fast enough to keep up with it. Articles written by Nobel Prize winner Michael Spence and Tom Friedman of the *New York Times* were her sources. Ginny summed up the two time periods as follows:

Until the last two decades globalization was advantageous, bringing about high living standards, beneficial immigration, advances in technology, and profitable trade. The previous decades were full of advances. However, in the last twenty years, trade has brought about a loss of jobs; the United Kingdom has suffered economically with Brexit; there has been a major US retreat from Asia; and President Trump is discussing the renegotiation of NAFTA. Technology caused 85% of job losses from 2000 to 2010; openness between countries has declined; Europe is trapped in low employment and economic loss; the Internet has made us less secure due to hacking; middle income jobs are decreasing; and in the United States and Britain, the gaps between rich and poor are widening.

Tom Friedman says, "Democracy works only if voters can make intelligent choices." Although the authors predict a gloomy future, several of our members offered hope. **Lois Sandy** said, "Just as we adapted to change in the past, we will adapt in the future."

PLEASE NOTE: The International Relations/Federal Government Committee has considered splitting into two groups. The majority of our reports have dealt with international issues, but we would like to have more talks related to the federal government (e.g., health care, education, taxes). We welcome all members who wish to present reports on topics such as these to join us and share a book or article you have read. See the back of this newsletter for the date and venue of our November meeting.



Speakers Jake Washburne (left) and Michael Gilbert (right) present a program on "Who Gets to Vote?" to League members at the Sunday Seminar on October 22. Fascinating insights by both these gentlemen on the issues of voter fraud in elections, and gerrymandering. Many thanks to member Teri Kent for tweeting their presentations. Go to our League website, www.avenue.org, and click on the "Twitter" icon at the bottom of the homepage for the tweets about this event!

A Letter from LWV CVA Member Jean Minehart

As I sit at my computer glancing through the window overlooking our woods, I am reminded how the fall season has always been one of my favorite times of year. Through the years, fall has meant the start of a school year with new school supplies and shoes, cooler weather (although not so much this year), beautiful foliage, and new experiences. Unfortunately, this fall is also witness to a lot of problems, especially in the locality we all love. The ugliness that descended on Charlottesville in August has continued to reverberate in many ways. I am sure that all of us are asking ourselves what we can do to improve the quality of life here and elsewhere in our country.

One major concern of mine is the increasing number of shootings in our nation with ever rising levels of carnage and death, and I am pleased that the League is working for changes in the area of firearms safety. Our League has formed a firearms safety committee headed by Maggie Hoover and Natalie Testa. This committee is operating under the aegis of the state firearms safety committee headed by Ruth Hoffman, a Leaguer from northern Virginia who is a fount of information on this topic. The committee is striving to educate itself and to share its knowledge with other League members and the general public. It plans to advocate for laws on issues such as universal background checks, child access laws, gun silencers, concealed carry reciprocity, and domestic abuse. There has already been one screening of a movie on gun violence at a League Sunday seminar. All League members are invited to be part of this firearms safety group. I know that all of us are looking forward to the League's various activities in the coming year and hoping we can make a significant difference. Please read the Firearms Safety Committee News below and consider joining our effort.

Jean Minehart

LWV CVA Firearms Safety Committee News

Maggie Hoover, Firearms Safety Committee Co-Chair

The Firearm Safety Committee met October 25 at the home of Maggie Hoover. On the agenda was the showing of the documentary, "Under the Gun," which examines the events and people who have kept the gun debate fierce and the progress slow (even as gun deaths and mass shootings continue to increase) as well as a review of the "10 Pro-Gun Myths, Shot Down" by Dave Gibson, Mother Jones (updated from his 2013 publication). One of the ten myths:

Myth #2: Guns don't kill people—people kill people.

Fact-check: People with access to more guns tend to kill more people—with guns. States with higher gun ownership rates have higher gun murder rates—as much as 114 percent higher than states with lower gun ownership rates.

- A recent study looking at 30 years of homicide data found that for every one percent increase in a state's gun ownership rate, there is a nearly one percent increase in its firearm homicide rate.
- Gun death rates are generally lower in states with restrictions such as safe-storage requirements or assault-weapons bans.

If you are interested in joining the Firearm Safety Committee please contact Natalie Testa (natesta@embarqmail.com) or Maggie Hoover (maggie.hoover@gmail.com). We welcome new members!

President's Message

I would like to call your attention to a commentary written by Geoffrey Skelly of UVa's *Center for Politics* titled "Underneath it all: Elections for the Virginia House of Delegates." Some of the information he brings forward: One: All 100 Virginia House of Delegates seats are on the November 7 ballot. Two: Incumbents tend to win re-election and they tend to raise and spend more money than their challengers. (Causes are debatable) Three: Virginia has no creditable campaign finance limitations. Candidates just have to report what is given. Four: For an open seat in the House of Delegates the candidate who spends more wins more often, about 71% of the time. For a seat with an incumbent who outspends the challenger, the challenger wins only about 7 % of the time. For a seat with an incumbent whose challenger outspends the incumbent, the challenger wins only about 17% of the time.

This is a really interesting article and reminds us to continue our commitment as members of the LWV to campaign for finance reform. You can read the article in its entirety at http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public content/political commentary/commentary/by/geoffrey/sk/elley/underneath/ it all elections for the virginia house of delegates

Kerin Yates

President, LWV CVA

Redistricting News...And it is Good! By Kerin Yates, President, LWV CVA

Virginia's Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal by *OneVirginia2021* challenging a judge's decision upholding eleven State House and Senate districts. The LWV of Virginia filed an amicus brief with *OneVirginia2021* 's challenge. For more: Go to: wirginia. The LWV has worked for fair redistricting since the 80's. This is one small step forward, but it encourages one to continue an effort that at times seems to have no solution.

LWV CVA "Spots" on WVPT [PBS TV]

Our League, as part of our election education effort, has underwritten several spots on WVPT. We were asked to consider this by the state League. 15 second spots will air before the PBS News Hour October 30 through November 6 and before and after the 20th District Candidate Debate Forum which will be aired on November 2 at 9pm and November 5 at 12:30 pm. Not only will this provide voters with election information, but it will also advertise the League.

"Turning Point" Suffragist Memorial Event

Lois Page, LWV-VA President (2015-2017), has been active over ten years in an organization called **Turning Point** whose purpose is to commemorate the events leading up to the passage of the 19th Amendment.

On Sunday afternoon, November 12, 2017, there will be a Centennial Commemoration of the November 14, 1917, arrest of 323 women who were arrested for picketing the White House for the right to vote. They were beaten, chained, and force-fed at the Occoquan Workhouse which is now an arts center and where the commemoration will be held. There will be a tour of the prison, documentary video shorts, and a musical performance. Visit

http://www.workhousearts.org/event/nightofterror for further information. Contact Kerin Yates should you be interested in going: kerinyateslwvcva@gmail.com Carpooling may be arranged.

I want to thank everyone who has turned in their interest survey form. I really appreciate your taking the time to fill it out so that we can better utilize everyone's talents and areas of interest and ultimately serve the needs of our League. Thus far we have received 30 completed forms, but since our membership is over 150 members we obviously still have many more of you who we need to hear from. The following list includes all members who have returned their surveys. Thank you.

Angela Burruss-Terrell	Peggy Gilges	Elaine Longerbean	Kathy Sudduth
Anne Claar	Edith Good	Kit McNally	Natalie Testa
Pat Cochran	Kobby Hoffman	Molly O'Brien	Bobbie Williams
Joyce Colony	Maggie Hoover	Lydia Peale	Peyton Williams
Marge Cox	Laurie Hynes	Susan Roberts	Kerin Yates
Carol Cutler	Dena Imlay	Lois Sandy	
Audrey Dannenberg	Gerry Kruger	Rosalie Simari	
Elizabeth Frank	Anne Linden	Natalie Somer	

Note: If you think you returned your form but do not see your name, please let me know.

Just as a reminder we are going to offer a raffle at our December 12 Program Planning meeting. As many of you know, we were fortunate to have Vivian Thomson, former professor of environmental science at UVa and author of "Climate of Capitulation: An Insider's Account of State Power in a Coal Nation," as our *Sunday Seminar* speaker in September. Part of our raffle prizes will be a hardback signed copy of her book. To accompany that gift, we have a beautiful orchid necklace designed and donated by Johanna Wright of Huppie Designs: https://www.huppiedesigns.com/

Misplaced your LWV CVA "Member Interests Survey" email?
With our busy communications via email, it's easy to do. If you cannot locate the survey in your Inbox, contact Beth Alley, beth.alley@gmail.com or call 434-996-8075 and request that she send (or mail) the survey to you again.



2017-2018 LWV CVA Membership Handbook: The handbook was mailed the week of October 16. If you are a member and have not received one, or if you see corrections/additions that need to be made, please let us know. Email: www.avenue.org or call the office at 434 970 1707 and leave a message. Our thanks to Michele Kellermann for producing this year's Handbook and to Jeanne Fradianni for obtaining ads which underwrite this annual project. Please support those companies and organizations:

Alzheimer's Association, New Dominion Bookshop, Van Yahres Tree Company, and ALC.

Welcome New Member:

Rolf O. Hubbe 1264 Branchlands Drive Apt 3A Charlottesville, VA 22901 (434) 964-0443



LWV CVA
President
Kerin Yates

Newsletter Editor
Michele Kellermann

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Meetings and Events for November 2017: Mark Your Calendars Now!

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Tues., Nov. 7, 6:00 am to 7:00 pm	ELECTION DAY: VOTE!	Your polling place.	Go to VOTE411.org or State Board of Elections: www.elections.virginia.gov
Wed., Nov. 8, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Molly O'Brien, 250 West Main Street, #602, 245- 9806	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067
Wed., Nov. 8, 1:30 – 3:30 pm	LWV CVA Board Meeting	Westminster Canterbury, Pantops, Charlottesville	For further information, contact KerinYates, 964-1840
Sun., Nov. 12, 1:30 – 5 pm	"Turning Point" Suffragist Memorial Event	Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA	For further information, contact KerinYates, 964-1840
Wed., Nov. 15, 1:30 pm	LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Meeting: Guest Speaker - Bill Mawyer	University Village (small committee room) at 500 Crestwood Dr., Charlottesville	For further information, contact Sally Thomas, 434-295-1819
Sun., Nov. 19, 2 – 3:30 pm	LWV CVA Reception: Meet and Greet Your Legislators	CitySpace, 100 5 th St., NE, Downtown Mall, Charlottesville	For further information, contact KerinYates, 964-1840