

Charlottesville Area League of Women Voters Newsletter June 2018

E-mail: lwv@lwv-cva.org Visit Our Website: lwv-cva.org

Mailing Address: PO Box 2786 Charlottesville, VA 22902

2018 LWV CVA Annual Meeting

The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area held its 2018 Annual Meeting at The Greencroft Club on Thursday, May 10. Dr. Pam Moran, superintendent, Albemarle County Public Schools, gave an inspiring address through stories of students' achievements within a modern teaching system that allows innovative ideas to be put into action now not somewhere in the future. The League honored Dr. Moran's 16 years of outstanding service by a \$400 donation in her name to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library which promotes early childhood literacy.





From left to right: Kerin Yates, Megan Tracy, Rosalie Simari, Maggie Hoover, Peggy Gilges, Anne Claar, Linda Goodling, Dena Imlay, Gerry Kruger, Beth Alley, Kit Murphy McNally, Natalie Testa. [Photos by Kate Bird]

Following Dr. Moran's presentation, the business meeting of the League was held and actions taken by the membership are presented on page 2 of this newsletter. Rounding out the luncheon program were thankyou's to our outgoing president Kerin Yates, along with recognition of our outstanding, hard-working Board of Directors, who were presented with nose-gays by member Frances Schutz. (Absent due to illness was Michele Kellermann--Frances saw Michele included by making a nose-gay home delivery after we adjourned.) Frances, thank you from all.

Page | 1 – June 2018



2018 LWV CVA Annual Business Meeting Actions

Voted upon and accepted by the members present:

- Operating budget for fiscal year, July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019
- Updates and additions to Local Natural Resources program
- Add Firearms Safety as a Local program
- Local Program for 2018-2019
- Updates and revisions to LWV CVA By-Laws
- Slate of New Officers, Directors, and Committee Members:

Officers: (2 years) 2018 – 2020 President: Pat Cochran Secretary: Maggie Hoover Elected Directors: (2 years) 2018-2020 Newsletter Editor/Webmaster: Michele Kellermann Membership: Beth Alley Nominating Committee: (1 year) 2018-2019 Chair: Bobbie Williams Member: Kerin Yates Mary Stamps White Committee (3 years) 2018-2021 Member: Elaine Longerbeam

Welcome Pat!

Pat Cochran, our newly elected President, is relatively new to the League of Women Voters but certainly not new to community service. Pat says that a full life including motherhood has afforded her with many volunteer opportunities along the way. She held the elected position of "Library Trustee" in Milton, Massachusetts, and "chaired" the board of trustees of the Village School also in Milton.

Her career as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist spanning more than 40 years included many venues of participation in teaching and research in the field of anesthesia and afforded her a birds-eye view of the ever evolving roles of women in medicine.

Since retiring in 2015, she and her husband Gordon Matthew have worked via JABA to introduce and implement the international program "Music & Memory" at Mountainside Senior Living Memory Care Unit.

Pat also enjoys the wonders of being a grandparent to six "perfect" grandchildren.



Page | 2 – June 2018

President's Message --

Because time became scarce at our annual meeting at Greencroft words of thanks to you our members that I had planned to speak had to be put aside. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board Members for their steadfast work on behalf of our League during the 2017-18 League Year, **Jeanne Fradianni** for her help in the office, and all my fellow league members for their support and participation. If you missed reading the Board's individual annual reports in the May newsletter, please do. Their content summarizes and confirms my outlook that the year was quite a success.

Just consider some of what we did! **Dena Imlay** orchestrated seven candidate forums covering four counties and the city of Charlottesville with the help of **Marge Cox, Deborah Hoard, Mimi Bender, Susan Roberts, Meg Gore, Elaine Longerbeam, Michele Kellermann, Bobbie Williams, Megan Tracy** and our UVA intern, **Amelia Faraco-Hadlock**, as moderators, time keepers, social media staff, and question gatherers.

Educational community meetings (our "Sunday Seminars") were held on firearm safety headed by **Maggie Hoover**; on ERA headed by **Kate Bird**; on environmental pollution headed by the Natural Resources Committee under **Sally Thomas, Peggy Gilges, Martha Levering, Muriel Grim** and **Linda Goodling**; on school choice headed by **Gerry Kruger** and **Michele Kellermann**; and on civics/city governance with *Charlottesville Tomorrow* and the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center.

Anne Claar kept our finances in fine order. Maggie Hoover promptly reminded us of what we said at monthly Board meetings. Marge Cox saw that the Finance Drive proceeded well. Facts for Voters in Fluvanna County was updated and distributed by Frances Schutz. Jean Minehart authored an article on gun control for the newsletter. Voter registration was provided at the naturalization ceremonies at the US District Court for the Western District of Virginia under the guidance of Audrey Dannenburg with committee members Maggie Hoover, Sue Lewis, Beth Alley, and Karen Christiansen. Gerry Kruger and **Lois Sandy** represented the League on July 4th at Monticello. **Natalie Testa** juggled programs and sites for IR. Beth Alley greeted new members and helped them find their place of interest in League. Megan Tracy kept us on Facebook and Twitter and streaming live when possible. Rosalie Simari steered us through our program planning for 2018-19; reviewed our bylaws in preparation for updating at the annual meeting; and has been assisting with sorting years of League papers as we prepare to move the office. Gerry Kruger wrote up the IR reports for the monthly newsletter so that we all could share in what IR members were learning. Anne Linden and Beth Kariel followed child care legislation. Lois Sandy, Bobbie Williams, and Dena Imlay found us a new president and committee members. Kit Murphy McNally made sure we had places to meet and initiated a new LWV-CVA Committee on Justice Reform. The Mary Stamps White Committee comprised of Sally Thomas, Sue Lewis, and Dena Imlay met and considered funding for various new initiatives upon requests from the Board. Ruth Wadlington and Carol Hogg made available space at Westminster Canterbury for our Board meetings. Michele Kellermann saw that the newsletter came out on time and launched our new website.

Continued on next page

President's Message - Continued from previous page

Voters were registered. Our banner was hung. It was a good year. As members, named here or as supporters via the directory, **all of you** have participated. **Thank you**. Please give yourself a rousing round of applause because you made the year successful. **YOU ARE the League of Women Voters.**

In League, **Keríw Yates** President, LWV CVA



Wear Orange the weekend of June 1 through June 3.

The LWV CVA Firearm Safety Committee encourages all League members to WEAR ORANGE the weekend of June 1 through June 3. "Wear Orange" is a yearly event sponsored by *Everytown* and their partner organizations across the country. By wearing orange we are honoring those who have lost their lives and loved ones to gun violence. People around the country are coming together with a simple message: there's more we can do to end these senseless tragedies.

Members of the Firearm Safety Committee will be meeting at the Downtown Mall during the day on Thursday, June 21st to hand out materials provided by Moms Demand Action, BeSMART for Kids. BeSMART is a campaign to reduce child gun deaths. All members and friends are welcome to join the group. A social hour will follow. For more information, email maggie.hoover@gmail.com.

Help stop GERRYMANDERING. VOLUNTEER with ONEVirginia2021

A PRESENCE AT THE POLLS IS NEEDED.

More supporters are needed to dedicate a few hours on **Primary Day, Tuesday, June 12,** talking to voters about gerrymandering and collecting signatures on their action form. **SIGN UP HERE to volunteer**.

Volunteers are especially needed that are willing to drive to targeted districts. The goal: 1000 supporters per House of Delegates district to insure legislators know their constituents care about redistricting reform and are demanding action. **Contact:** <u>Director@OneVirginia2021.org</u>

OneVirginia's "Presence at the Polls" initiative is one of the most effective ways to grow the redistricting reform movement across the commonwealth.

For more information go to <u>onevirginia2021.org</u> or call Kerin Yates, 964 -1840.

Do you have a business or service that you would like to advertise in the 2018-2019 LWV CVA Membership Handbook?

The Handbook is published in the summer and rates are very reasonable. A full page ad including pictures costs \$150, half page is \$75 and $\frac{1}{4}$ page is \$40. We can run a preset ad or a business card.

If you are interested, please contact Jeanne Fradianni at the League office by email: <u>lwv@lwv-cva.org</u>

2018 LWV-VA Council and LWV US Convention Coming Up in June

For complete information about LWV-VA 2018 Council, including registration (deadline May 31), go to http://lwv-va.org/lwv-va-2018-council/

For complete information about the 53rd LWV US National Convention in Chicago from June 28 to July 1, go to <u>http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2018</u>

Registration for Convention without increased registration fee is June 1. Our League has budgeted funds for two persons to attend. One reservation remains open. Our league will pay air fare, half a hotel room, and registration. Call Kerin Yates for further information, 964 1840.

Qualifying to Register New Voters

The Virginia Department of Elections requires that anyone who wishes to register new voters must complete training to qualify for this task. The training is available on line at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration-drives/training-video.html.

The video takes about 15 minutes, and then you complete an online form on which you promise that you have understood the guidelines and will abide by them. **Certification lasts for only one year** from July 1 to June 30. If you qualified in the past, you need to renew your certification (take the training again after July 1, 2018).

From the Senior Statesmen "Immigration: Two Different Views"

Wednesday, June 13, 1:30 to 3 pm: Some of the most talked-about and most significant policy issues facing the country today involve immigration. We regularly read about the "dreamers" who were brought to this country as children. There are many other immigration issues as well and we have two experts from DC think tanks with very different views coming in to discuss them: Matt O'Brien with the Federation for American Immigration Reform and Cathleen Farrell with the National Immigration Forum. How -- and if -- these issues are resolved will have far-reaching implications.

Senior Center, 1180 Pepsi Place, Charlottesville, 22901. Parking is at a premium due to construction. Carpool if possible.

Page | 5 – June 2018

In Memoríam: Helen B. "Sandy" Snook

Sandy Snook, our League's president from 1968 to 1970, again in 1991 to 1992, and a third time as co-president, 1998 to 2000, passed away on May 22, 2018. She was 90. During her first term as president, the League's *Observer Corps* followed the discourse of merging Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. Though the merger of these two governmental entities was rejected, the idea of merger did, however, bring about the formation of the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, whose decisions our League through our Natural Resource Committee still monitors.

Sandy's memories of the League are wittily written by her in our 70th Anniversary Booklet by member Gerry Yemen (pp 57-58). At the end of her piece on her presidency in 1968-70, Sandy wrote:

"Time marched on, but the Charlottesville/Albemarle League was a constant. We still observe our governments in action, speak up on things unwise, unfair, or inefficient, and compliment the many good things our officials do. We still advocate and work toward informed and active participation of citizens in government, strong support for children and education and for the values and actions that make our world safe and workable for future generations. We still study and make sense of tough issues. Without a doubt, this League is one of the most incredible groups of people anywhere! Witty, wise, and intellectually stimulating, you all are just plain fun to be with and it has been a real kick to be the keeper of the gavel this year."

What a wonderful devoted Leaguer was Sandy Snook! Her funeral will be at St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church, 1700 University Avenue, at 4:00 pm on May 31, 2018, with a reception to follow in the Parish Hall. The family invites anyone whom Sandy touched to join us as we remember her full life.

LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 20, 1:30 – 3 pm

University Village (small committee room) at 500 Crestwood Dr., Charlottesville

The monthly meeting of the LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee will take place on Wednesday, June 20, 1:30 – 3 pm. There will be a short presentation by the Charlottesville Climate Collaborative about the programs they will be initiating soon, and will be discussing current events related to natural resources. For further information about the NRC, please contact Peggy Gilges, peggygilges@mac.com.

Welcome New LWV CVAMember

Christine Bethune 841 Rainier Rd. Charlottesville 22903 Phone: 713-927-4249 Email: <u>bethunec@vcu.edu</u>



The League of Women Voters of Virginia Supports Public Funds for our Public Schools

The following statement by the School Choice Task Force under the leadership of Carol Noggle, LWV-VA Task Force chair, will be presented at LWV-VA Council for amendment to our state position on Education:

"Public schools should prevail as the highest priority for school choice in Virginia based on their role and responsibility in sustaining democracy."

Virginia's Constitution REQUIRES a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained. *(VA Constitution Article VIII, Section 1.)* The League has concerns about the expansion of the Tuition Tax Credit Program: Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EISTCP) and the establishment of "Vouchers" (Educational Savings Accounts) for the reasons below.

A. Regarding the EISTC Program:

- 1. Tuition Tax Credits reduce revenue for public schools.
- 2. At least \$25 million can go to private schools each year.
- 3. \$25 million should not be diverted from Virginia's public schools. (\$7,395,530 in 2016)
- 4. Public schools are already underfunded.
- 5. Private school curriculum may include religious bias and religious training.
- 6. Private school policy may include gender discrimination. Title IX compliance is not required.
- 7. Transferring a student to a private school does not reduce a local school's operating expenses.
- 8. VDOE has to employ personnel to administer the program; thus, funds diverted from classrooms
- 9. Better education at these private schools has not been shown.
- 10. Donors benefit by taking both Federal and State charitable tax deductions
- 11. But the donation may not fully cover the student's tuition.
- 12. Wealthy donors benefit more than the students do.
- 13. Parents are not always advised of the loss of protection of federal rights for disabled students
- 14. Desirable diversity in the public school may be decreased.
- 15. Tax shelters undermine our public education.
- 16. Legislative changes can be proposed including these:
 - ...Reduce the allowable tax credit of 65%
 - ...Reduce the annual \$25 million cap of donations

B. Regarding Vouchers (aka Educational Savings Accounts or ESA)

- 1. The Virginia Constitution prohibits public funding of private schools. (Article VIII, Section 10)
- 2. Payment would go directly from the local school district to a family.
- 3. ESAs have high startup and administration costs such as reported in the 2017 proposal HB1605.
- 4. ESAs are not targeted to families in need of financial assistance.
- 5. Vouchers may not cover full tuition or expenses
- 6. Low-income families may have limited participation.
- 7. No specific income level is required for eligibility.
- 8. High income families can already afford private school tuition
- 8. Payment is based on the local school district SOQ, not the need of the family or the cost.
- 9. Few limits are placed on how payments can be used including transportation, home-schooling, and college tuition
- 10. No quality controls such as an approval process or accreditation are required.
- 11. Teacher qualification standards may be minimal.
- 12. Limited educational improvement with ESAs is reported by other states.
- 13. Nondiscrimination policies may not be in place in a private school.

International Relations /Federal Government Committee News

By Gerry Kruger

On April 25 the International Relations/Federal Government Committee enjoyed the hospitality of **Kit McNally**. Lydia Peale and Valerie Chasin refined our knowledge on some important issues.

First Lydia's report on Afghanistan since the 9/11 attacks revealed the important role that Pakistan has played in the 17-year-old war that still seems endless. This is the longest war in U.S. history. We originally had 100,000 troops there. Obama reduced this number, but Trump has increased the number of troops by 15,000. During this time the United States has battled al Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban. We are holding our own, but this not enough to protect our national security or our counterterrorism objectives.

When the Iraq War began in 2003, it interrupted the progress we were making in Afghanistan. Now the U.S. continues to deal with insurgents in Afghanistan who can simply escape to Pakistan when they are losing. Pakistan refuses to do anything to them, and with India and Pakistan's arsenal of nuclear weapons, the United States must use caution in dealing with them. The ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), a shadow group, is the premier intelligence agency of Pakistan. They have been accused of supporting the Taliban in the War in Afghanistan.

So far nothing that the United States has tried has worked to end the war. We even tried spraying their plants to keep the Taliban from producing opium to fund the war. A conclusion may come only if Americans go home and the other side wins.

Valerie Chasin's report on "Verified Voting for U.S Elections" gave us a clearer picture of what this means for our elections. The Verified Voting Foundation is a non-profit lobbying organization that supports accuracy and transparency in voting. After the Bush vs. Gore election, electronic systems became popular, but now it has been determined that paper ballots are the best answer to verification, and malware can't attack them.

Barbara Simmons, a computer scientist and member of the League of Women Voters, has been warning everyone for years about the fallacies of electronic voting. For years no one listened to her. Even the League of Women Voters gave her no credibility. The moderator at a League of Women Voters convention yanked the microphone from her hand while she was addressing the group. Since the 2016 efforts by Russia to interfere with our elections, (21 states had attempts at meddling.) Simmons is no longer ignored or ridiculed. The League of Women Voters no longer insists on paperless voting. One can go to <u>www.verifiedvoting.org</u> and find out the kinds of voting machines and practices used in each state.

[Notes from the May 9th meeting below were submitted by Carol Cutler due to Gerry Kruger's absence at this meeting. Thanks, Carol.]

On May 9, 2018 our group met at the home of Marge Cox. After enjoying the delicious refreshments she prepared, three reports were given. First, **Carol Cutler**'s report, which was a Russian meddling update, was based on "The Meddler: How Russia Menaces Western Democracies" and "The Discord Amplifier" in the *Economist*, (March 2, 2018). Other news reports were noted in a two-page handout. Over the last six months we have learned more about how Putin and Russian oligarchs use tools of propaganda. These include financing extremist politicians in Europe, influencing social media, and manipulating divisions

Continued on next page

International Relations/Federal Government Committee News Continued from previous page

and opinions among citizens in the US and Europe (Britain, Germany, France, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Sweden, Italy, Austria).

Carol reported that March 2018 *Face the Nation* and *NPR* interviews with Mark Warner and Susan Rice respectively indicated their concern with inadequate preparation for future election security. She updated us on news reports concerning the Justice Department's investigation by Robert Mueller and the two congressional committee investigations in the House and Senate. A discussion followed on issues such as the problem of voter suppression, importance of paper ballots over electronic machines, and League involvement in voter registration as well as possible media literacy programs in high schools and public events.

Next, **Bobbie Williams** spoke about a March 12 article from the *New Yorker* "The Spreading Vine." She discussed the changing land use of the Ningxia Province in China from agriculture to an expanding wine industry. Bobbie stated that many East Asian people are not used to wine and don't tolerate it well, but China is now the 7th largest producer of wine in the world. This has caused the relocation of thousands of families of the Huy and Han ethnic groups to be displaced to the cities by government order. Group discussion followed the fairness of this relocation for the people of China vs. the national need to find places suitable for growing particular crops.

The last speaker, **Anne Claar**, brought an April 15 *Daily Progress* editorial by Jill Richardson to our attention. It pertained to a questionable pro-gun argument. The argument goes that gun laws are not necessary because criminals do not follow laws anyway and would get around such things as background checks. This argument for not having gun laws doesn't hold up because most people, including those who would commit crimes of passion, are deterred from using guns if some laws are in place. The editorial by Richardson stated, "We ban murder, rape, tax evasion, intellectual property theft, burglary... (yet) criminals still do those things." This doesn't mean we shouldn't have laws against them.

Molly O'Brien, our inveterate hostess, once again welcomed us to her home on May 23. Our first reporter was **Dena Imlay**, who revealed the gigantic problems caused by a shortage of judges for immigration courts. The failure of nations to provide a safe haven to refugees from the Nazi regime during World War II brought about a practice called *non-refoulement*. It forbids returning asylum seekers to a country where they would be in danger of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Thus each refugee's case must be heard before a judge in immigration court.

The backup of cases to be heard in the United States is increasing exponentially because of there are simply not enough judges to keep up with the huge numbers of refugees. In fact, children are being separated from their families and sent to live in foster care. Meanwhile adult refugees are put in detention while they wait for their cases to be heard. In some places the wait has been as much has five years. Immigration courts come under the jurisdiction of the executive branch, not the judicial one. Attorney General Sessions has deemed that the best way to improve the situation is to speed up the process. Judges are being evaluated on how many cases they get through the system, not on the quality of their judgments. Dena ended her presentation with a segment from John Oliver's show. The English comedian and political commentator's parody focused on the problems of the immigration courts as well as the lack of common sense being used to tackle them.

Continued on next page

International Relations/Federal Government Committee News Continued from previous page

Next **Maggie Hoover**, having done extensive research on gun legislation, brought us up-to-date on the little progress that has been made to pass common sense gun laws in spite of the spate of mass shootings. First she reminded us of the situation in America when the Second Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1791: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Before the Revolutionary War, men were required to have a working musket to fight the French and Indians. Then George Washington preferred having a standing army, but also being able to call up the militia if necessary.

It wasn't until 1934 that the first federal gun legislation was passed, putting a heavy tax on weapons used by gangsters and requiring that certain weapons be registered. In 1994 after Reagan was shot, background checks on individuals buying guns were required. Since then, however, gun legislation has become weaker. For example: open carry laws, expiration of the assault weapons ban, immunity from lawsuits for gun manufacturers and sellers, and the Supreme Court finding that the Second Amendment unrelated to militia service.

Until 1964 the National Rifle Association had no objection to common sense gun laws. Now the NRA has gone from being primarily a gun safety and training organization to a lobby for gun manufacturers and sellers. As a result mass shootings have grown from 253 in 2013 to 347 in 2017 and already we've had 101 this year. Still no federal legislation has been passed. Now bills are being slipped into the budget, so no one knows how anyone voted and can't be held responsible.

We invite you to join the lively and informative programs that take place in committee members' homes. See the Calendar at the end of this newsletter for our summer IR/FG meetings.

A Note of Thanks to Retiring LWV CVA Board Members

Molly O'Brien and **Linda Goodling** have served many years on our League Board of Directors, giving countless hours to our mission. Molly served as an appointed board member covering the International Relations and Federal Government Committee. Linda served as an appointed board member covering the Natural Resources Committee. Although they retired from the Board this League Year, we know they are not retiring from the League as active members. The League of Women Voters is a part of them and we cannot thank them enough for all they have done.

WE ARE MOVING !

The League office at Suite 111, 1932 Arlington Blvd. will close on June 30. **Our new mailing address: PO Box 2786, Charlottesville, VA 22902** Our physical address: 703 Concord Ave., Charlottesville, VA Contact us at <u>lwv@lwv-cva.org</u> or call Kerin Yates: 964-1840. (The current phone number 434 970 1707 will be disconnected on May 31, 2018.)



League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area PO Box 2786 Charlottesville, VA 22902

LWV CVA President Kerin Yates

Newsletter Editor Michele Kellermann

Meetings and Events for June 2018: Mark Your Calendars Now!

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Fri., June 1 through Sun., June 3	"Wear Orange" to honor those who have lost lives and loved ones to gun violence		For further information, contact maggie.hoover@gmail.com
Tues., June 5, 9 am to 4 pm	LWV CVA Retreat	Westminster Canterbury, Pantops, Charlottesville	For further information, contact Pat Cochran, 326-7873
Tues., June 12	Primary Day	Your voting place!	For further information, go to <u>https://www.elections.virginia.gov</u>
Sat., June 16, 9 am to 5 pm	2018 Council LWV of Virginia	Roslyn Retreat and Conference Center, Richmond	For further information, go to <u>lwv-</u> <u>va.org</u>
Wed., June 20, 1:30 pm – 3 pm	LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Meeting	University Village (small committee room) at 500 Crestwood Dr., Charlottesville	For further information, contact Sally Thomas, 434-295-1819
Thurs., June 21	LWV CVA Firearms Safety Committee: Campaign to reduce child gun deaths	Downtown Mall	For further information, contact maggie.hoover@gmail.com
Wed., June 27, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Bobbie Williams, 108B Oakhurst Circle, Charlottesville	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067
Sat. June 28 – Sun., July 1	53 rd National LWV Convention	Hilton, Chicago	For further information, go to <u>https://www.lwv.org/</u>
Wed., July 25, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Maggie Hoover, 2 Hilltop Circle, Palmyra, 703- 625-9219	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067