



## **League in Action**

December 16, 2020

## **President's Message**

As we step deeply into the holiday season in this most bizarre of years, I wish you, your family, and friends the most joyous and healthy season possible. I know that history will judge the work we did in this presidential year as remarkable. In spite of this tragic pandemic, we used every avenue possible to inform the public of their electoral choices and allowed nothing to stop us from our mission. Being part of that effort is something for which we can all be eternally proud.

So, rest during this darkest part of the year. This is what the ancients did during this time – pulled in and rested in the dark.

As the light dawns again, so will we. Mark your calendar for a few exciting events coming up (see below) and remember, the next General Assembly Session begins on January 13!

Happy Holidays and thank you,

Joan

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## League Testimony Helps Move Legislative Agenda

Because of testimony presented by the League at the yearly General Assembly Pre-Session hosted by the Arlington County Board, the Board added two additional recommendations to the legislative agenda. One was to allow permanent "ballot curing" for people to fix errors on their ballots and the other was to add more, permanent ballot drop boxes!

Thanks to Board Member, **Seema Jain**, for representing the League at this event co-hosted every year by the League.

[Read our Testimony Here](#)

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## Reclaim the Vote Georgia Phone Banks Are Open!

**Reclaim the Vote is continuing their efforts** to reach registered voters in Georgia in advance of the January 5th runoff election. The voter registration deadline was December 7.

To access phone bank training go to <https://www.votinginformation.org/rovphonebankcentral/>

If you do not need training you can proceed to <http://centerforcommonground.org/main/>

Hover your cursor over CAMPAIGNS - and the click on "The Voter Project" --- and then click Georgia. On the bottom of the page you will find the link to the various

counties they are targeting.



**Anna Weber** mailing her reclaim the vote cards to Georgia Voters in rural areas where citizens of color have been historically disenfranchised

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## **2021 - The Year to Focus on Local Issues**

**We have several opportunities for direct citizen participation** in Arlington County and Alexandria City programs on behalf of the League. **If you are interested** in any, please email us at [LWVArlingtonVA@gmail.com](mailto:LWVArlingtonVA@gmail.com).

**We can use people to monitor County/City Board events** on a regular basis.  
**We also want to get more involved in Housing, Climate and Transportation**

## **Issues -**

### **Immediate Justice Opportunities**

**LWV Arlington is getting involved** in several Justice reform opportunities!

- 1. Arlington County Restorative Justice Program**

<https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/11/RA-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

**We need people** to be our representatives to this program and keep the League active in this program.

- 2. The Arlington County Civic Federation Civil Rights Working Group**

The ACCF Legislation Committee has created a Civil Rights Working Group to take a broad look at civil rights in Arlington County.

The **priorities** include:

- **Review injuries and deaths associated with publicly reported use of force** by Arlington law enforcement 2000-2020.
- **Identify publicly reported allegations of civil rights violations** made against Arlington County government agencies, officials, or their agents from 2000-2020
- **Research what role sovereign immunity and qualified immunity plays** when civil rights violations by the government, government officials, or its agents are asserted
- **Review current law associated with the role of police officers** at public schools in Arlington

- **Identify risks associated with breaches of data privacy** and data security and the need to address data discrimination relating to law enforcement practices in Arlington
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## **Arlington Seeks New Member Applications for Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee is seeking [new member applications](#) for a two-year term beginning February 1, 2021. The committee advises the County Board on County government's exposure to financial, operational, and reputational risks. Membership includes two Board members; three residents, including a representative from the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee; the County Manager, and the Director of the Department of Management and Finance.

We encourage those with experience in one or more of the following areas to apply:

- Performance auditing
- Risk advisory services
- Enterprise risk management
- Government management
- Financial management

**We are accepting applications through January 8, 2021.** To learn more about the committee, visit the [Audit Committee webpage](#) and read the Audit Committee [Charter](#).

For further questions, please contact County Auditor **Chris Horton** at [cnhorton@arlingtonva.us](mailto:cnhorton@arlingtonva.us).

[Chris Horton](#), 703-228-7481

[View this release in our newsroom](#)

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## The new LWV-VA Advocacy Challenge has begun

The new Advocacy Challenge is out, and **LWV of Arlington could win!** The challenge starts now. This friendly competition measures advocacy, proportionate to the size of your Local League. **Winners will be notified at Convention in 2021.**

For current top priorities and talking points; [click here](#).

### Summary

- *Help people access voting: make permanent the temporary legislation that allowed:*
  - > *Convenient drop off of absentee ballots*
  - > *Removing witness requirement for absentee ballots*
  - > *Letting absentee voters correct procedural errors*
- *State level preclearance of practices restricted under the federal Voting Rights Act*
- *100% Right to Vote Constitutional Amendment -- protecting the right to vote so it is not taken away upon incarceration*
- *Campaign Finance Reform*
- *National Popular Vote*
- *More Broadband Coverage*

**Contact your legislators! Log your action!**

Find details of LWV-VA legislative priorities and information on how to participate [here](#)

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## More Representatives Needed from Arlington for Lobby Corps

This is a great opportunity to influence legislation on a Federal Level. **If interested or if you have questions** please contact **Don Gurney** at [donnwren@comcast.net](mailto:donnwren@comcast.net)

What is the LWVUS Volunteer Lobby Corps team?

**The League of Women Voters of the United States volunteer Lobby Corps team is a group of approximately 20 League members who live in or near the nation's Capital who lobby the entire United States Senate and House of Representatives.**

**They --**

**Attend briefings** by League professional advocacy/lobbying staff monthly at LWVUS national headquarters in Washington, DC

**Familiarize themselves with LWVUS priority issues** for presentation to legislators

**Make appointments on Capitol Hill** one or two days per month to present our priorities and positions to Congressmembers

**Record and Report** on meetings to LWVUS

**Report to LWV Presidents** across the nation to update on lobbying visits to their representatives

What are the topics discussed in these appointments?

Lobby Corps team members are briefed each time on one particular bill which is receiving attention on Capitol Hill, the subject of which is a member-chosen priority for that year based on member-studied positions.

Some topics have been the Affordable Care Act, public funding of campaigns, climate change, energy, the Help America Vote Act, civil liberties, SCHIP, DC Voting Rights, the New STARTreaty, Title X, the Keystone XL Pipeline, air toxin emissions, Super PACs, gun control, immigration reform, DISCLOSE, the VRAA, EPA regs., etc.

Training?

Indeed, LWVUS volunteer Lobby Corps team members are thoroughly trained about how to gather last-minute information, how to make appointments, how to write the reports and follow-ups, and a mentor takes trainees along on appointments so that the trainee can witness first- hand what he or she will experience.

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**The eight legislators who will serve on the Virginia Redistricting Commission have been selected!**

BUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CITIZEN MEMBERS IS OPEN - CONSIDER APPLYING

**The legislator commissioners are:**

From the House: **Del. Les Adams** (R-Chatham), **Del. Delores McQuinn** (D-Richmond), **Del. Margaret Ransone** (R-Westmoreland) & **Del. Marcus Simon** (D-



Fairfax).

From the Senate: **Sen. George Barker** (D-Fairfax), **Sen. Mamie Locke** (D-Hampton),  
**Sen. Ryan McDougle** (R-Hanover) & **Sen. Steve Newman** (R-Lynchburg).

We look forward to the participation of these legislators in ensuring the fairest redistricting the Commonwealth has ever seen-- but we're way more excited about the eight seats reserved for citizens!

[The application for citizen commissioners is officially open](#) until **December 28th**, and **we hope you'll apply and encourage others to do the same!**

<http://redistricting.dls.virginia.gov/2021/RedistrictingApplication.pdf?emci=6af96c89-e238-eb11-9fb4-00155d43b2cd&emdi=90518f08-5439-eb11-9fb4-00155d43b2cd&ceid=2289032>

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## EVENTS

### December 16 **Today!** or December 17

Join the League of Women Voters of Virginia and developers from Tufts University MGGG (Metric Geometry and Gerrymandering Group) Redistricting lab as we explore **what happens next in the 2021 redistricting process. Learn about their [Districtr](#) tool** that can help Communities of Interest.

Learn how YOU and your neighbors can help provide valuable information about your "community of interest" to the Redistricting Commission by mapping your community using their tool Districtr.

The MGGG team will explore the nuances and tradeoffs in determining community. **Two identical sessions will be offered: December 16 at 4 PM and December 17 at 7 PM. Only register for one please.** Register [HERE](#).

[Find more information here](#)

**January 17**

### **Membership Meeting and Day of Action!**

Our first membership meeting of 2021 will be a joint event with our “Day of Action.” Normally, we hold this first meeting of the year at the Arlington Library, but we will easily adapt to a virtual event. Mark your calendar for January 17.

**From 2 PM – 3:15 PM we will hold our membership meeting** in which we will review our goals for 2021 – which include an adult civics program and a discussion on increasing our local advocacy in Arlington and Alexandria City! **Then we segue into our Day of Action** – writing emails, postcards, letters to elected officials about legislation before state and local officials.



**Invite a friend** to both!

[RSVP here](#)

**February 2 or February 22**

### **Dialogues on Race and Equity**

Limited to 20 attendees

The LWV Arlington will participate in the Arlington County “Dialogues on Race and Equity” Initiative. We will be conducting two small interactive virtual dialogues among League members to learn and discuss race and equity in Arlington. These are private, hands-on work. **Kristen Shattuck**, League Member, will facilitate the Challenging Racism curriculum. Everyone has different experiences, backgrounds, insights, opinions, and beliefs about race and equity.



There are two meetings – please only sign up for one.

**Space is very limited – only 20 people for each event - so if you RSVP but learn you cannot attend, please cancel so we can open it to someone else.**

**Feb 2- 7 - 9 PM**

**Feb 22 - 1 - 3 PM**

[RSVP here](#)

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## Committees

**Book Club** – Dec 20 – 2 PM – *Destiny of the Republic* by **Candace Millard**

The Affordable Housing Committee will not meet in December.



**REVIEW OF SECOND PART OF LWV VA ELECTION LAWS POSITION**

**DAY 1 TODAY!!!**

The Arlington League's discussion of Part 2 of the Election Laws Position Update will take place on two dates, as follows:

**Wednesday, December 16, 7:00 PM** (in lieu of regular committee meeting) - **Part F, Voter Suppression**

**Thursday, January 14, 3:00 PM - Part E, Ranked Choice Voting**

For more information and Zoom link contact **Lisa Koteen Gerchick**

[lkoteengerchick@gmail.com](mailto:lkoteengerchick@gmail.com)

[Read Election Laws Study Part 2 here](#)

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### **Centennial Corner, Mid-December 2020**

As we wind down the Centennial Corner feature, we thought it would be fun for our many, *many* new members to hear from some of the inspiring LWV-Arlington leaders throughout the decades.

Below are lightly edited excerpts from a 2005 presentation celebrating the national League's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. **Beth Cogswell** and **Kristin Goss** (both of whom served on our board for many years) interviewed 15 former Arlington League presidents and asked them to reflect on our organization's public contributions and personal meaning. There was much to celebrate – all because of our passionate, public-spirited, and indomitable grassroots membership.

#### ***What LWV-Arlington Has Contributed***

From the early days, Arlington Leaguers were at the forefront of recognizing and solving community problems. We were there to pick up the pieces when the

League of Nations failed, and then again when the United Nations was created.

**Elizabeth Weihe** joined around that time, and she remembers that her first task was to chair a committee on international affairs. Let's take a moment to thank goodness for committee chairs!

We were there again fifty years later when Arlington came under brutal attack, and the United States launched an all-encompassing "war on terrorism." The prosecution of that war has raised serious questions about our nation's commitment to multilateralism, to civil liberties, and to open government, all traditional League positions. **Bonnie Franklin** remembered proudly that we, in Arlington, joined with other organizations to examine the Patriot Act and speak out for civil liberties. Sonja Elmer recalls that we were founded by leaders of the peace movement and suggests that we hold onto our roles as kinder, gentler leaders.

We were there for public schools. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Arlington League was concerned about ensuring that all children – Black and White – received a quality education, on an equal basis. We helped facilitate Arlington's leadership in the shamefully delayed process of integration following the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Since then, we've advocated for a strong curriculum, career education, and technological support for every Arlington student. Today, as **Mary Kay Parker** notes, the League needs to continue to speak out to make sure that, in fact, no child is left behind.

We were there for the planning and construction of Metro. We love the image of **Mary Kay** in a pink hardhat inspecting the newly dug, deep underground caverns for the subway line. The Metro and I-66 were on the League's agenda 30 years ago, and we suspect they will be on the League's agenda 30 years from now. Reflecting on the issues that dominated her presidency in the early 1970s, **Mary Kay** said, "They are the same issues as today. Lord, they never go away!"

We were there for integration of public spaces and meetings. Listen to this story by **Elizabeth Weihe**. "I was president when *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided. The League had never had a segregated meeting of any kind. The General Assembly decreed that all public meetings in the state had to be segregated. The League was just not going to accept this. We tried everything we could think of, but finally decided to challenge the decision at a candidates meeting. The League was very influential and conducted all of the candidates meetings then. There literally was a line at the school waiting to get into the auditorium. **Ellen Bozman** was Voter Service Chair. A Quaker, **Faith Bissell**, agreed to sit in the designated "Black section." Most people were afraid to break the law. We called Howard University, and two professors came out and sat in the "White section." **Ellen Bozman**, going through thoroughly staged motions, came down to this White woman and asked her if she would be kind enough to move to the White section. Faith refused. The police arrested her. **Ed Campbell** took her case and lost it because it couldn't be proven that **Faith** was 100% White. The case was dropped but the law was successfully challenged."

We were there for the civil rights marches of the 1960s, ahead of the community and even the national League in our support for the extension of rights to people of color and people of poverty. **Joan Allen** recalled our controversial support for the Poor People's March in 1968, following Dr. King's assassination.

We've always been there for the "good government" issues. In the 1950s we served on commissions that developed the master land use plan of Arlington – the same master plan that is updated annually and that guides today's decisions for development in Arlington. Thanks to this plan, jurisdictions around the region look to "little old, 26-square-mile Arlington" as the regional leader in smart growth.



We were there for the environment, speaking out for monitoring e-coli in Four Mile Run; for measuring run-off in increasingly paved-over Arlington; and for supporting stronger, equitable, more efficient public transit. We are there now supporting affordable housing initiatives, an adequate and healthy water supply, pedestrian safety, and money for parks and libraries and schools. And of course, we are the organization that gave birth to the “get out the vote” campaigns.

### *What LWV-Arlington Means to Us*

Former presidents shared how the League gave them an avenue of influence within their community and the satisfaction of helping to improve it. The League was especially critical during earlier decades, when professional and political routes to power remained largely closed to women.

As **Mary Kay Parker**, president in the early 1970s, said, “The League was a way to get your voice heard.”

**Anne Clare**, president in the mid 1990s, said that the League has provided her with a free continuing education on the workings of local, state, and national government and on a wide variety of issues that she might otherwise have known nothing about.

**Joan Amico**, president in the early 1970s, said, “The County Board paid attention to how the League felt because they knew we had done it from the bottom up and it was something that reflected what was going on in the community.”

Being so conscientiously informed took a toll, of course. As **Elizabeth Weihe**, president in the early 1950s, recalls, “My last year as president, I think I went to 200 some odd meetings. When you got on the board, it became your life. Someone asked my young son, “What does your mother do?” And he said, “*She goes to meetings!*” ”

Besides teaching women how to run – and sit through – meetings, the League has provided women with a wide array of what **Ginny DeSimone** (president in the early 1980s) called “political and life skills”.

**Jane Bartlett**, president in the late 1970s and early 1980s, noted that her League experience provided courses in everything from budgeting, to parliamentary procedure, to public speaking, to public affairs.

And, as **Mary Kay Parker** wryly added, being a League president also makes one develop what she called “the skin of an elephant”! You learn not to let things bother you, just to get things done. THAT is an important skill.

In fact, several of the Presidents said that the skills they learned in their League service, and the contacts they made, provided an invaluable springboard to public office.

After serving as League president in the 1950s, **Elizabeth Weihe** went on to serve on county commissions concerned with everything from planning to tourism to beautification. **Alice Sufit**, president in the early 1960s – and co-president again nearly 40 years later – served on the planning commission and on the landmark Commission on the Status of Women.

**Ellen Bozman**, another president from the early 1960s, went on to serve as chair of the County Board, among many other public positions. **Jane Bartlett** ran for county board and served as a legislative aide in Richmond. **Karen Darner**, president in the mid-1980s, went on to serve Arlington in the House of Delegates.

For 85 years at the national level and 60 years locally, the League has played a central role in the lives of the community – and in the lives of her members. We would like to

conclude by quoting another former League president:

I hope, for the future of the league of Women Voters – not that it will become a body of expert persons who do remarkable things brilliantly – but that it will continue to be in fact what one of our wisest members once called it, “an every woman’s organization.”

That quote, incidentally, was from **Maud Wood Park**. It was part of her presidential address to the national League in 1923.

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### **Online Exhibits**

The COVID-19 crisis has shuttered or caused the postponement of many suffrage-related programs. However, some exhibits exist in some form online. Here are a few, with more to be added in forthcoming Centennial Corners.

**The National Archives. “Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote”**

**National Women’s History Museum. “Crusade for the Vote.”**

**Alice Paul Institute. “For Democracy: Celebrating 100 Years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.”**

**Carol Simon Levin, *Remembering the Ladies*.** The author has made available a free electronic version of this book, which profiles 69 women who fought for women’s political inclusion and participation.

## **It's Arlington's Centennial, Too**

The County has launched a [webpage](#) to showcase news of the County's "naming centennial" and associated events. Be sure to sign up for email updates.

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### **LWV VA president Deb Wake Toasting us at our 100th year celebration**



LWV VA was 100 on November 10 but we held the celebration a month later.

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**Some highlights of what the League on a national level achieved this year**



### **Women Power the Vote: Early Top Line Highlights**

2020 has been an incredible and unprecedented year on so many levels and while we're still collecting data and evaluating our efforts, we want to thank you, the heart and soul of the League for your amazing contributions and provide you with some top line highlights from the Women Power the Vote campaign.

- Over 6 million users reviewed over 37 million pages on VOTE411 (that's a 27% increase over 2016).
- Through our largest digital advertising campaign to date, we reached more than 3.5 million voters in our VOTE411 general election marketing campaign with more than 15 million social media impressions.
- More than 170,000 people used the voter registration tool on VOTE411 (that's 4x more than 2016).
- More than 300,000 people used the 'check your registration map' we created this year to connect to their state's resource where they could confirm their registration status.

- Candidates in more 22,000 races in all 50 states were included in the VOTE411 voter guide.
- We launched VOTE411 in Spanish and more than 110,000 users accessed more than 350,000 pages of content in Spanish.
- 1.7 million postcards were sent to women under 45 in 15 target states. These mailings focused on getting out the vote this fall with a special emphasis on helping people learn about and navigate the ever-evolving election process, specifically their early and mail-in voting opportunities. And encouraging them to act now. In 3 of the states, the postcards were in English and Spanish.
- We communicated with nearly 1 million people through our GOTV email series.
- We hosted our first text-a-thon and contacted approximately 300,000 registered voters.
- We developed over 80 active corporate and nonprofit partnerships to support all aspects of Women Power the Vote.
- Thousands of individuals participated in the unprecedented training series we created to support Leagues as they navigated the ever-changing landscape and political environment.
- We brought more than 60 election cases, about 90% were resolved prior to the election, focusing on expanding voter access and participation, which was achieved through pushing for notice and cure in states that did not have a process in place, removing burdensome witness signature requirements for absentee ballots, encouraging SOS to send all active voters an absentee ballot in advance, and increasing ballot box access as well as early voting periods.
- We facilitated high profile appearances on ABC News, CNN, Dr. Oz, New York Times, Washington Post, TIME Magazine, ELLE Magazine, Martha Stewart Living, USA Today, Reuters, Politico, NBC News, Yahoo Finance, and many more.

We look forward to sharing a more complete and robust report in the future, but we

couldn't wait to share these amazing highlights.

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## Circle of Life

Our condolences to our treasurer, Pam Berg, who lost her mother in early December.

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**Look for next newsletter January 6**

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