



League in Action

May 5, 2021

President's Message

Welcome to our Annual Meeting Edition. LWV Arlington's Annual Membership meeting is June 5, 2021 from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM. It will be a virtual celebration **featuring Samia Byrd, Arlington's Chief Race and Equity Officer, and Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, The Commonwealth's Attorney, for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church (who is also a member of LWV Arlington!)** We hope to see all members there! You can RSVP at <https://lwvarlingtonannualmeeting.eventbrite.com>.

Pursuit to the bylaws, all members must receive information on issues on which they must vote thirty days prior to the meeting. This year that will include, the slate of officers, budget and an investment of the Holly Williams fund, our DEI statement, and a name change to include Alexandria City! **You will find all of the necessary information here** and please email us with any questions!

See you in June!

Thanks,

Joan

[Link to RSVP](#)

NEW MEMBER DIRECTORY

We are about to put the membership directory in a password protected section of the website – which only members will have access to – (information on how to access coming after the Annual Meeting.) **If you do NOT want** your address, phone or email listed on this site – PLEASE – email Joan at lwvarlingtonva@gmail.com by May 24th.

Thanks!

Name Change – Vote Needed

Over the past three years, the number of members in our League who live in Alexandria has grown tremendously and **we now have 25 Alexandria City members.**

League veterans will remember that there once was a LWV of Alexandria City. Since its demise, people who live in Alexandria City area joined us, while those who live in the Mount Vernon area migrated to LWV of the Fairfax Area. In the past three years, I have made a concerted effort to engage more members in Alexandria City.

Technically, there are enough members in Alexandria City to form their own League, however, when asked, none were interested – they like Arlington, they really like us! Which is just fine with me! **In recognition of their growth and activism, the Board is proposing that we officially change our name to the League of Women Voters of Arlington and Alexandria City.**

There is precedent for this. Just this year the LWV of Prince William changed their name to Prince William and Fauquier Counties to acknowledge their growth into that area.

There are practical reasons for this change. When we print voter information for Alexandria City, we can't use our logo because at first glance, it would appear to voters that this information isn't relevant to them because the heading reads "Arlington." We must use LWV Virginia on top of everything we do for Alexandria which causes delays, additional expense and still doesn't "speak" to Alexandrians. When Anna reaches out to Alexandria candidates for Vote411, they often question why this is coming from Arlington and when planning candidate debates, we run into the same problem. We must note in the very beginning that we also represent Alexandria City and hope they read past our logo!

There are also emotional reasons. **We want Alexandrians to feel that this too is their League** – that they aren't our stepchildren. We want them to feel fully invested in our committees, our programs and that they are never an afterthought.

To me, this reason is the most important. We appreciate and respect our Alexandria members and want them to feel at home.

For these reasons, **the Board has recommended that this name change take place and a vote will be taken at the annual meeting.** This will have to then be approved by the LWV Virginia and It will cost us \$25 to change the name with the State Corporation Commission.

2021-2023

Nominating Committee Report

Nomination Slate – Vote Needed

Vice President – **Lisa Koteen Gerchick**

Secretary – **Connie Potter**

2022 Nominating Committee

Anne Murphy – Chair

Claudia Scott

Lisa Koteen Gerchick chairs the LWV Arlington and the LWV VA Election Integrity Committees. Lisa practiced law at the US Department of Commerce, ultimately as a trade negotiator. In Washington, DC she served three terms on the Advisory Neighborhood Commission a 3-C nonpartisan elected position. Since moving to Virginia in 1993, Lisa has been an inside poll observer. She and her husband, Mark Gerchick, have two children.

Connie Potter retired from the National Archives and Records Administration in 2014 after 30 years. She joined the League in 2016. She has worked on voter registration in the high schools and with the Arlington Housing Corporation, was a member of the

Redistricting Committee, and helps on an ad hoc basis.

Vote Needed – Budget

Last year's budget was impacted by COVID 19 insofar as categories mostly under the Program heading. Funds generally allocated to the Voter Services, High School Voter Registration, Annual Meeting Attendance, and the Williams Environmental Project were all reallocated to Voter Education so that the aggressive distribution of voter information during the pandemic could be paid for. Additionally, all unused travel funds (70% of State Convention + workshop allocation) were also redistributed to Voter Education efforts. By accomplishing these reallocations, we were able to robustly respond to acute voter access needs brought about by COVID 19.

This year's budget overall has mostly the same categories that are usually in the budget with just a few changes. Lines removed from this year's budget include (1) LWVARL Education Fund (the 501c(4) has been dropped and will no longer be reported); (2) Conversion of LWVARL from 501c(4) to 501c(3) (that was accomplished in November 2020); (3) Williams Centennial, Williams COVID 19 Mitigation, Williams Environmental Project, and Williams Fund Project (OneVA2021) (this cluster of items are no longer relevant for FY22). One new category has been added: Broadcast Media. We anticipate that FY22 will show a bit of a return to normal.

[See the proposed 2022 budget here](#)

DEI Position – Vote Needed

At the 2020 Convention of the LWV of the US, a bylaw change was adopted to include a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement. All state and local leagues were required to incorporate this statement into their bylaws which we have done. This addition reads, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY. THE LEAGUE IS FULLY COMMITTED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE—IN PRINCIPLE AND IN PRACTICE—WITH LWVUS' DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY.

State and local leagues had the option to develop their own position to be placed on their website which would further expound on their DEI goals.

Thanks to the work of a committee of two NEW members, **Janet Ladd** and **Sandra Brody**, we have such a position to consider. What they are proposing for the LWV Arlington DEI position is the following:

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on any of the innate characteristics or life experiences that make people unique including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, culture, religion, belief system, socioeconomic status, educational level or background and political perspective or affiliation.

The Board is indebted to the work of these two new members and supports the adopted of this position.

I will note that **Janet** is also our representative to the LWV Virginia DEI Committee.

Development and Investments

COVID 19 did sprinkle a few benefits in with its horror, not that they should be

considered mitigating in any way. One, however, was the **LWV Arlington did not spend as much money as projected.** The fees to attend the LWV Virginia and LWV US's conventions were more than halved. We didn't have food expenses for events because they were virtual, we didn't print as much voter education information because we had to rely more on email, and we didn't send people to Richmond because everything was closed, etc.

While we didn't spend our whole budget - we did pay much more for voter information/education on account of Covid; but we still came in way below our projected costs.

These budgetary benefits meant that **we didn't have to withdraw the expected amount of money from our legacy account called the Holly Williams Fund.** For those of you new to the League, Holly Williams was a very generous member who bequeathed \$60,000 to us in 2011. Since then, we have been withdrawing money yearly to help meet our budgetary needs and to defray the costs members incur to participate in League events, which is what Holly would have wanted.

The Board recognizes that expending more money than we raise is not sustainable over the long term. **To remedy this problem and to maintain our current level of activities, the Board recommends two measures: to invest a modest portion of the Holly Williams fund in the stock market to earn a respectable rate of return to add to the fund; and to start more aggressive fund raising to reduce the need for withdrawals in the future.**

The Holly Williams Fund has been kept in a money market fund which does not earn much interest (about 0.01% a year), however, the Board believes we now need another approach. **The Board recommends that the members approve taking \$5000 that we did have to use in 2020 from the money market fund and**

invest in the much higher yielding stock market so that it begins to work for us.

This is a way to make a finite asset available to future League generations.

By reinvesting the income, we make, we will extend the time that the Holly Williams Fund and her memory and legacy will live on and that future League members will be able to partake in her largess. It is not fair for us to say to future League members, we had a legacy fund, but we didn't think to share it with you.

IN ADDITION, we need to start seriously fundraising. Dues does not cover our expenses and many of those expenses are fixed....website, insurance, etc. We pay per member payment or PMP to LWV US, LWV Virginia and LWV of the National Capital Area which consumes a good portion of our dues. We don't begrudge those payments. Every time the LWV US files a voter protection lawsuit in Georgia or Arizona or fights for HR and SJ 1, the Voter Protection legislation, we see our money at work. When the LWV Virginia sues to remove the witness requirement on absentee ballots during a pandemic and advocates for more drop boxes, or the removal of Jim Crow laws that restrict voting, we have further proof of their value. When we work on DC Statehood with LWV NCA, that is driven home even more.

However, the fact remains that we need to raise more money. Our "wares", t-shirts, jackets, and pins help but we need to do more. **We need an ongoing development committee** that will look for ways we can make money. I was hoping to start a restaurant night program whereby we find restaurants who will donate a portion of their take for one night to the League--- then came COVID. Whether it is through a tiered donation program, encouraging a legacy program as other Leagues do, direct mail or some other mechanism we need to make development a part of our thinking.

I know there are some people who think that fundraising is "unseemly."

Unfortunately, life is all about following the money. It is our life blood.

I will discuss this development plan more at the annual meeting.

We will take a vote on whether we should take the \$5000 we did not withdraw from the Holly Williams Fund in FY 21 into the Vanguard FSTE Social Index Fund (VFTAX) , a socially responsible and strong performing fund. **Its average annual return since inception two years ago is 24% but a more realistic long-term return is the 50 year historic return of the S&P 500 of 6.8%. The fund has an expense ratio is 0.14%, which is quite**

low. <https://humbledollar.com/2020/11/for-goodness-sake/>) and average annual return of 24%. We know the return could be lower in the future.

(<https://www.fool.com/investing/how-to-invest/stocks/average-stock-market-return/>)

We need to assure our own fiscal responsibility and assure that future members of the LWV Arlington have the same financial cushion as we thanks to Holly's generosity. It is a matter of fairness.

If you have any questions on this, please email me at LWVarlingtonva@gmail.com.



CELEBRATING 101 YEARS OF EMPOWERING VOTERS AND DEFENDING DEMOCRACY



And in NON Meeting News – please RSVP to our first Civics Class. The LWV Arlington Civics Committee is sponsoring our first of what we hope are many civics programs. This will focus on the Virginia executive branch and General Assembly...we will kick off with a fun, nonjudgmental trivia game! **Invite your friends and neighbors** – put it on your list serves.... Civics knowledge is the live blood of Democracy.

June 3 – 7 PM

[RSVP here](#)



YOU CAN VOTE NOW FOR THE JUNE PRIMARIES!

All registered voters can begin voting **Friday, April 23** in the June primaries. You can vote in person or request and return an absentee ballot. Find out more:

elections.virginia.gov/voterInformation

Voters with questions about **June 8, 2021**, primary election may call the Virginia Department of Elections at

(800) 552-9745

Go to VOTE411.org to see if you will have a choice of party ballots or just a Democratic Party ballot.



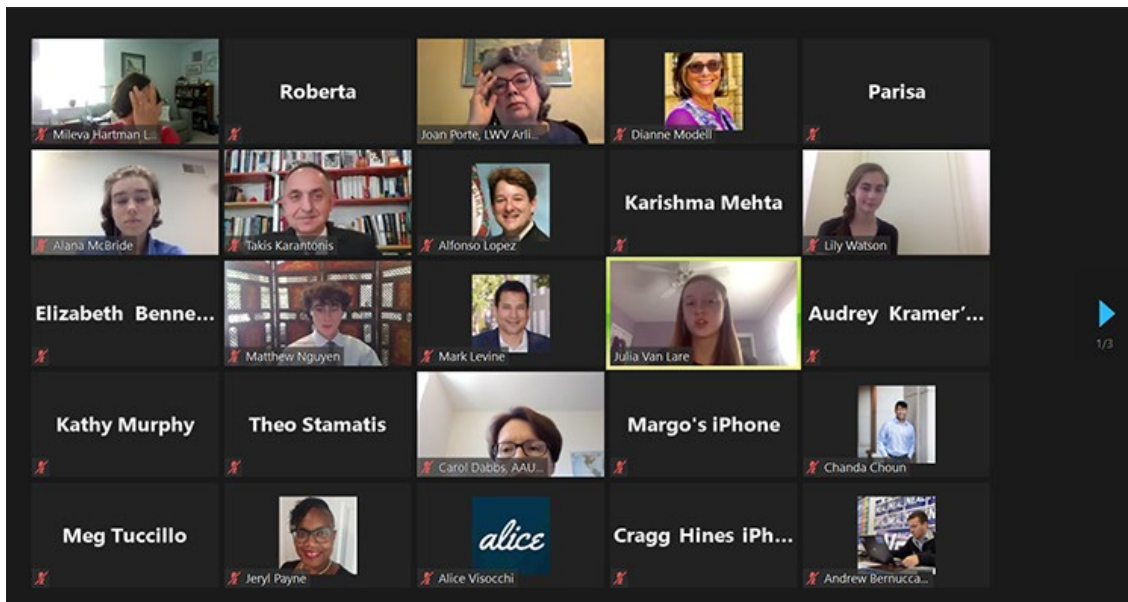
June Primary Election - Arlington and Alexandria

Register to vote by May 17, 2021 to vote in the June 8th Primary Election. **Request a mail ballot** by May 28, 2021. **Early voting began** April 23, 2021.

[See Vote - Arlington information here](#)

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May 2 Candidate Forum



LWV-Arl Candidate Forum - Virginia House of Delegates/Arlington County Board

LWV-VA May Virginia Voter

[Read the Virginia Voter here](#)

**THERE IS STILL TIME TO RSVP TO THE LWV
VIRGINIA 40TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION**

MAY 22 -23, 2021

[RSVP HERE](#)

News from national - April Recap

[Read the April Recap here](#)

Look for next newsletter May 19





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