



## **League in Action**

May 6, 2020

### **President's Message**

Hi all. I hope you are all well and surviving our crazy world.

Despite Covid we are holding our **annual meeting**. We will have a Zoom meeting on **May 16 at 10:00 AM**. Our speaker will be Chairman of the Virginia Board of Elections, **Bob Brink**. I am sure he will have much to say about "elections during Covid." Join us! **Be a part of history** as this will be our first electronic annual meeting. How many times can you go to one in your fuzzy slippers?

ALSO, you can renew your membership when you RSVP. **We really need everyone to renew their membership** – this is a tough time to get new members since we aren't "out in the public" – and we have a lot of work to do. So **please click** on the RSVP link to sign up and renew!

See you there.

Joan

P.S. I know everyone wants to spread the word on how to vote in our primary and special election, however, we don't have all of the information yet! As soon as we

know the outcome of the LWV VA and ACLU lawsuit to remove the requirement for witnessing of absentee ballots, we will have updated fliers for you to distribute.

Thanks

[RSVP and renew your membership here](#)

**Please review** the proposed budget and slate of officers before the meeting.

[Read the budget here](#)

[See the slate of officers here](#)

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### **Responding to Ongoing Urgent Community Needs**

[See VOLUNTEER ARLINGTON - Covid - 19 Care for Community for opportunities to donate/volunteer here](#)

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### **LWVVA Partners with VA Covid-19 Justice Coalition on Behalf of At-risk Prisoners**

The League of Women Voters of Virginia in partnership with the Virginia COVID-19 Justice Coalition is **urging Governor Northam** to safely and

immediately release any person in custody throughout Virginia who does not pose an imminent threat to others, and the partners also ask that the status of coronavirus in all state and local facilities be shared with the public on a daily basis.

[Read Joan's letter to Governor Northam here](#)

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### GET CREATIVE THIS ELECTION YEAR

This year promises to be quite the election year! While we are glad that Virginia will have no-excuse absentee voting as of July 1, we will face unprecedented problems assuring that everyone gets to vote. **One big stumbling block could be stamps!** Many college students don't "do" stamps – and many lower income people may not have a roll of stamps in the house. We are hopeful that ballots mailed without stamps will still be delivered but we are not yet sure that will be the case. **One idea to combat this** is to create "stamp care packages" for students and others who may be stamp-shy. Do you have another idea?

What are your ideas to increase voter turnout in the age of Covid??? **We need to hear from you.** It is all hands on deck for 2020.

Thanks! Times of crisis are also times of innovation!

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### PANDEMIC POSTCARDING CONTINUES

We have have blown through 3500 postcards. Thanks to the National Trends and Services Committee of The Links for their help!

More postcards are on order!! I ordered 2000 more - they will be here mid May. We had enough money left over from your generous donations to pay for this printing. However, 2000 stamps are going to cost more than \$600. Since we are writing to people in Georgia and North Carolina, we can't use Arlington League money.

**Help us reach** potential voters! No pandemic is a match for LWV Arlington members.

**Contact us** at [LWVarlingtonva@gmail.com](mailto:LWVarlingtonva@gmail.com) to get your postcards or if you can help defray the cost of next batch of stamps.

Thank you!



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*Voter Safety is a Priority*

**Delay of May Elections Supports Public Health  
Press Release LWV Virginia**

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports Governor Northam's decision to delay May town, city, and county elections to May 19 in Virginia, in order to increase the safety of elections during the COVID-19 crisis.

Deb Wake, President of the League of Women Voters of Virginia, stated: "Postponing these elections to May 19 is the right decision. This will help voters cast their ballots in greater safety. Even two weeks can give election workers more time to prepare for social distancing at the polls. Still, we encourage voters to apply now for absentee ballots and return them promptly."

The League supports voting by mail while the pandemic persists. In order to best protect health while keeping our democracy strong, voters should apply now for absentee ballots on the Department of Elections website, <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation>

The League advocated by [letter](#) earlier this month for voting by mail. We urge policy makers to consider secure drop boxes, website optimization for voting at home, and strong support for transparent and efficient processing of the anticipated surge in absentee voting.

"April planning brings November safety," said Joan Porte, First V.P, League of Women Voters of Virginia. "While ballot processing this year may take longer, due to distancing measures, we appreciate the Commonwealth's attention to health, security, and transparency. Our democracy is resilient, Virginians treasure their right to vote, and we support safe access to the polls."

This announcement follows an April 8 decision to move the June primary elections from June 9 to June 23, 2020.

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**After Advocates from the Fair Elections Center and LWV-VA Noted  
a Discrepancy with Federal Law, Virginia Moves Primary Voter  
Registration Deadline to May 26**

[Read LWV VA voter registration update here](#)

**JUST IN - In a win for voting rights, a Lynchburg judge ruled that  
absentee voters are relieved of the witness signature requirement  
for Virginia's June 23 primaries.**

[Read LWV VA press release here](#)

**LWV Virginia asks Commission of Elections Piper to secure the vote in  
November.**

[LWV VA Letter to Commissioner Piper](#)

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## Legislative Priorities

**LWV Virginia is asking for the input to plan their legislative priorities** for the 2021 General Assembly. Advocacy should not just happen during the few weeks that they are in session. We need to work year-round to make sure that we are not only reacting to but initiating legislation.

**Please send Joan your suggestions by May 15.** Remember, that legislation must be in line with existing LWV policy (on a state, local or national level.) You can find these on websites for each under "issues" and "policies."

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## Ranked Choice Voting Comes to Arlington

With some caveats. The General Assembly voted to allow Ranked Choice Voting in Arlington providing that the County pays for it. High estimates place costs at \$1,000,000 although that seems very high! However, in the age of Covid, the County may not have the desire or ability to make that kind of outlay.

The Department of Elections will have to formulate guidelines before this can proceed. While it is doubtful that this will happen in November, the law is on the books and we are going to make sure it is not forgotten.

[Read Joan's letter to county board members here](#)

Read The Sun-Gazette's "Arlington League of Women Voters backs instant-runoff balloting" here

### Vote for the League of Women Voter Vote 411.org

Vote for VOTE411 now for the [24th Annual Webby Awards People's Voice](#), and be sure to share with your friends and family!

<https://vote.webbyawards.com/PublicVoting#/2020/websites/general-websites/government-civil-innovation>

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## June 6

### League of Women Voters of Virginia Virtual Council Meeting

We have a great Council meeting this year. Our keynote speaker is **Allison Robbins**, registrar of Wise County. We also have breakout sessions on **Ranked Choice Voting, the National Popular Vote Compact, and the ACLU proposed Constitutional Amendment on voting rights**. We will also hear about updates to our two policy studies.

Registration is free.

[RSVP here](#)

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## MEETINGS

May 6 7 PM **Sips and Civility Planning** – contact **Carol Brooke**  
[changetheclimate555@gmail.com](mailto:changetheclimate555@gmail.com)

May 11 - 7:00 PM - **Housing** - contact **Carol Brooke** -  
[changetheclimate555@gmail.com](mailto:changetheclimate555@gmail.com)

May 17 - 1:30 PM **Book Club** - contact **Joan Porte** for Zoom link -  
[Joan@joanporte.com](mailto:Joan@joanporte.com)

May 18 - 7:00 PM - **Redistricting** - contact **Jackie Rivas** or **Ann Sharp** for  
Zoom link [Jackiejr@verizon.net](mailto:Jackiejr@verizon.net), [Sharpab2828@gmail.com](mailto:Sharpab2828@gmail.com)

May 20 - 7:00 PM **Election Integrity** Committee - contact **Lisa Koteen**  
**Gerchick** for Zoom link - [lkoteengerchick@gmail.com](mailto:lkoteengerchick@gmail.com)

## LWV VIRGINIA SKILLS SURVEY

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of League work. Now more than ever we need volunteers to support our efforts throughout the state. The LWV-VA Board is asking members to complete the LWV-VA SkillShare Survey. By completing the survey you will be sharing your skills and interests with LWV-VA leadership and will further your engagement in LWV-VA activities and advocacy work. Help LWV-VA empower Virginia's voters by sharing your skills, complete the LWV-VA SkillShare Survey today! Contact Andrienne at [membership@lwv-va.org](mailto:membership@lwv-va.org) with questions.

Fill out the survey



### Centennial Corner – Early May 2020

**Centennial Corner** is a regular feature of the **League in Action** e-newsletter to celebrate *three centennial anniversaries in 2020*: the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the creation of the League of Women Voters, and the naming of our county as Arlington County. Centennial Corner will:

- Highlight important **moments and leaders** in these three histories;
- List **upcoming events** relevant to the anniversaries; and
- Flag suggestions for additional **reading and other resources**.

The Arlington League's **Centennial Committee** is proud to produce this feature

and would welcome your feedback and suggestions for future content. Please send ideas to **Seema Jain** ([seema.kakad@gmail.com](mailto:seema.kakad@gmail.com)).

### **Celebrating Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn**

This column celebrates the successful movement for female suffrage, but we wouldn't understand anything about the struggle if historians weren't remembering it for us. So this week's Centennial Corner pays homage to one of the most important scholars of the suffrage movement, Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn.

Dr. Terborg-Penn (1941-2018) had local ties. She earned a master's degree at The George Washington University and a Ph.D. at Howard University. She then served as a professor of history at Morgan State University, in Baltimore, for more than three decades. She co-founded the Association of Black Women Historians.

In her obituary, the *New York Times* noted that her signature work, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920*, "challenged the existing narrative that was dominated, and framed, by white activists."

In a recent journal article, Dr. Terborg-Penn described some of the key findings from her decades of study:

*Most Americans are surprised to learn that Black men and women were part of the nineteenth-century woman suffrage movement, which began officially at a small women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. During the over seventy years that followed, hundreds of African American women mobilized to gain the right to vote, especially during the years 1900 to 1920. Some organized in*

*women's clubs formed in churches and in neighborhoods to aid Black communities. However, most joined national African American organizations like the National Baptist Woman's Convention and the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), often through state federations. Still others were members of Black secret societies like sororities of Black college women or Black women's auxiliaries of Masonic orders. Each developed appropriate strategies for gaining the ballot or, in states where women could vote, for electing candidates of their choice. In associations, Black women focused on voter-education classes and other vehicles for helping inform their communities and preparing women to vote effectively. Some Black clubwomen lived in the few states where woman suffrage had been legislated before 1920. Their goals included working to support an all-inclusive woman suffrage amendment that would give all women the right to vote in any type of election.*

We celebrate Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn for enriching our knowledge of history and the women who made it.

Sources: Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "The Nineteenth Amendment and Its Outcome for African-American Women," *Journal of Women's History* 32(1), 2020, 23-31 (quotation above is on p. 23); Katharine Q. Seelye, "Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, 77, Dies; Historian Recognized Black Suffragists," *New York Times*, January 4, 2019; Jacques Kelly, "Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Columbia Resident and Scholar of Black Suffragists, Dies," *Baltimore Sun*, January 11, 2019.

## **Films**

Mark your calendars! PBS's series "The American Experience" is set to feature a suffrage documentary, "The Vote." It premieres on July 6 and July 7, at 9 pm. See

the trailer [here](#).

And for programming already in progress, tune into "[Mrs. America](#)," the story of the ERA battles of the 1970s and 1980s. The 9-episode miniseries is running from April 15-May 27 on Hulu (subscription only). Forthcoming episodes will be released on Wednesdays.

### **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.

Meanwhile, check out this “[story map](#)” from 1920, courtesy of the Arlington Historical Society.

## Resources

Twitter users are getting ready to share thoughts and information on the suffrage centennial. Here are some accounts to follow. (We will add more as we learn of them.)

@WomenVote 100

@DailySuffragist

@WomensVote100

@SuffCentennials

@2020centennial

@Suff\_Postcards

@CentOfSuffrage

@AlicePaulInstit

@100thSuffrageDC

@INSuffrage100

@Suffragist

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**Candidate Forum for School and County Boards April 26**



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**Look for next newsletter May 20, 2020**

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