



League in Action

November 4, 2020

President's Message

What a day to have our newsletter scheduled! Obviously, we did not have a clue of the outcome of the election when we closed this. However, with estimates of record early voting, we can safely say that the winner is our voting system. Hopefully, the final reports will show that voting topped more than 60 percent – and how sad it is that we think of that as a high water mark. We have our work cut out for us to get that rate up in future years. There should be no reason why every eligible American should not have easy and fair access to the polls and understand the need and value of their vote.

If you put out one of our yard signs, please take them down ASAP. They need to be down by today. Please take them down and recycle them. Thank you for your assistance – your work was essential to the high turnout in Arlington and Alexandria City.

I know it is hard to acknowledge every effort individual League members are doing to get out the vote – but three cheers to mastermind **Debby Churchman** and her merry band of texters.... In the weeks before the election, they texted people from Arlington and Alexandria City who received their mail ballots but had not yet returned them. Then on November 2, they texted registered voters who did not yet

vote, reminding them of their polling places: Thanks to them, more than 7000 people were reminded to get to the polls!

Double thanks to **Aaron NGo** a new member, who created a series of daily tweets supporting the Redistricting Amendment!

Shout out to **Karen Darner**, who drove people to early voting locations.

Applause to our phenomenal social media team lead by **Rachelle Walker - Robin and Emma Wosje and Alana McBride** who has been keeping our students informed. You have put in hours and hours! Thank you!

Recruiting volunteers to tutor

Laura Jackson is the Volunteer Coordinator for one of Arlington's terrific housing friends and they have a much praised tutoring program for students in their apartments and housing.

The Arlington Housing Corporation is a valuable asset to all of us. They are running a teen program virtually this fall and are **still looking for a few volunteers, two specifically, for Mondays, 4:30-5:30 PM** - one to help a teen who is studying Spanish; the other to help a student with reading comprehension. **Another student needs a female volunteer on Wednesdays, 5-6 PM**, to assist her with whatever homework she has for that night.

Volunteers will join a Zoom call with staff and all students at the set time and then work virtually in Zoom breakout rooms for about 50 minutes. Zoom training can be provided.

Please contact Laura Jackson laura.jackson@ahcinc.org at The Arlington Housing Corp. 703-486-0636 Ext 1107.

EVENTS

November 10

Tune in on November 10 at 6 PM for this **post election forum** on women in civic, nonprofit and corporate leadership:

Women in Leadership: From the Ballot Box to the Boardroom

Moderator: **Jessica Baxter**, Communications and Public Engagement Director, Arlington County Government

Panelists:

Stacey D. Stewart, President and CEO, March of Dimes

Theresa Peterson, Manager of External Affairs and Technology Programs, GE Research

Mary Margaret Whipple, former Virginia state senator

This event is co sponsored by the Arlington County Government Women's Employee Resource Group (WoW), the National Coalition of 100 Black Women-NOVA Chapter, League of Women Voters of Arlington, and the American Association of University Women - Arlington Chapter.

[RSVP here](#)

December 2

LWV-VA Pre-Session Women's Legislative Roundtable Wednesday, Dec. 2

Every year in December, the League of Women Voters of Virginia sponsors the Pre-Session Women's Legislative Roundtable before the next Virginia General Assembly Session.

We invite directors and policy and advocacy experts from many nonprofit organizations to speak about their priority issues and legislation, and to give their predictions on what may or may not happen during the next Session. We generally have 15 to 20 speakers who each speak for 5 to 7 minutes.

This year, the LWV-VA Pre-Session will be held **virtually** on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., with a lunch break scheduled around noon. We are delighted that this year's keynote speaker is Brian Koziol, Director of the Virginia Housing Alliance, who will speak at 11:30 a.m.

In addition to the keynote presentation, the morning program will include:

- LWV-VA President Deb Wake and LWV-VA Advocacy Chair Julie Turner discussing the League's upcoming legislative priorities.
- Commissioner of Elections Chris Piper sharing his observations on the 2020 election.
- Virginia Secretary of Finance Aubrey Lane presenting his insights on the the challenges Governor Northam's administration faces.

[**Register for the Pre-session here**](#)

December 10

Celebrate Our Past and Forge our Future:

The League of Women Voters of Virginia – 100th Anniversary

Dec.10, 2020 – 7 PM

Virtual Event

Join other League members for a celebration of “100 Years of Perseverance” – the 100th birthday of the League of Women Voters of Virginia.

Speakers include **Mari Julienne** of the Library of Virginia who will discuss Virginia Suffrage efforts and LWV member and former LWV US Executive Director, **Nancy Tate**, who will focus on League history. She will also have several ideas on how we can all preserve our history.

Local League presidents will highlight their past accomplishments and share their hope for our future.

THEN we PARTY! Bring a cupcake, brownie or whatever (perhaps an adult beverage) to the screen – with a candle and we will have a group celebration of US.

[RSVP here to get the Zoom link](#)

Committees

November 15 – 2 PM Book Club – contact **Joan** at Joan@joanporte.com

the book is *Humankind* by Rutger Bergman

November 16 – 7 PM – **Redistricting** – contact **Ann Sharp** Sharpab2828@gmail.com

November 18 – 7 PM – **Election Integrity** – contact **Lisa Koteen Gerchick** –
lkoteengerchick@gmail.com

November 23 – 7 PM – **Affordable Housing** – contact **Joan** at Joan@joanporte.com



Centennial Corner – November 4, 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 19th 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).

Renaming of Lee Highway & Suffrage Spotlight: Ella Baker

If you missed our October Centennial Corner feature on the history of Lee Highway, including the recent renaming efforts, [click here](#). As noted, the [Lee Highway Alliance](#), a working group comprised of Lee Highway residents and business owners, will eventually submit a new name recommendation to the Arlington County Board. Based on submissions from the public, the group released its **Top 20 Name Options for Lee Highway**. Check out the options and vote on them [here](#).

This week's Suffrage Spotlight is on one of the Lee Highway re-naming options: **Ella Baker**.



Ella Baker, Source: Civil Rights Movement Archive.

Ella Baker was an African-American civil rights activist, leader, and grassroots organizer who fought tirelessly for over five decades for racial and social justice. Baker was an important advisor to the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Born in Norfolk, Virginia, Baker and her family moved to North Carolina when she was a child. In addition to important work, such as traveling throughout the Jim Crow South to organize against discrimination and to recruit people to the Civil Rights Movement, Baker played a critical role in voting rights, namely:

- In the late 1950s, Baker, through the SCLC, ran a voter registration campaign called the **Crusade for Citizenship**, the purpose of which was to double the black vote in the South and register two million black voters by the 1960 presidential election. At the time, the majority of states in the South required a literacy test to vote, which served as a means to curb the black vote. In addition, voter registration books were often “closed” when black voters appeared.

Crusade For Citizenship

TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED NEGRO VOTERS IN THE SOUTH

TO REALIZE the potential voting strength of the Negro population in the South, and to give real meaning to the 1957 Civil Rights Bill, a sustained and vital mass movement must be developed. For no legislation is any good until and unless people make use of it.

1. The basic aims of the Crusade are twofold:
 - a) To educate and stimulate Negroes to exercise the vote where they have it.
 - b) To help them to obtain the right to vote where, in practice, it does not exist.
2. The Crusade is Non-Partisan. It will not engage in party politics.
3. The Crusade is designed to serve as a Clearing House, to aid, service and strengthen local voting efforts.
4. Registration Clinics, workshops for leaders, public meetings and all mass communication media will be utilized in the Crusade's program.
5. Non-violent resistance will be emphasized to help prepare Negroes spiritually and tactically to meet the opposition they will face.
6. Major emphasis will be placed on registration for the 1960 elections.
7. But voting in all elections, city, state and national will be constantly stressed.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference flyer. Source: Civil Rights Movement Archive

- Leading up to the 1964 election, Baker worked with the **Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party**, comprised of black, working class people and their white and Latino supporters, which pushed for the Democratic Party to take a firm

stance against racist all-white primaries and efforts to disenfranchise black voters (spoiler alert: it didn't work). It served as a parallel political party to Mississippi's white-dominated Democratic Party. At the time, the southern Democrats ("Dixiecrats"), including in Mississippi, dominated state governments and served as a roadblock to black citizens seeking to exercise their right to vote through the creation of laws, intimidation tactics, the use of force, and violence. In the Summer of 1964, under the advisement of Baker, SNCC created and led **Freedom Summer**, which was a massive voter registration effort targeting disenfranchised black southern voters through the creation of "Freedom Schools" and community centers throughout Mississippi.

Although many of Baker's voting rights efforts were unsuccessful at the time (that is, they did not achieve their immediate goals), they served the important goal of bringing attention to the civil rights violations in the South and ultimately putting pressure on President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress to pass the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** and the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**.

Fun Fact: Vice President Joe Biden recently quoted Ella Baker when he accepted the nomination to be the Democratic Party's nominee for President on August 20, 2020: **"Give people light and they will find a way."**

Sources:

- Barbara Ransby, "Ella Baker's Legacy Runs Deep. Know Her Name" (Opinion), The New York Times (Jan. 20, 2020), <https://nyti.ms/2RxobH1>.
- SCLC Flier, Civil Rights Movement Archive, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/sclc_crusade_58.pdf
- Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Digital Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), <https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/alliances-relationships/mfdp/>.
- Freedom Summer, Digital SNCC, <https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/alliances-relationships/mfdp/>.

Articles and Media

[“Voting in Arlington: Then & Now,”](#) Center for Local History, Arlington Public Library (Oct. 29, 2020). Also, check out the related virtual exhibit by the Arlington Historical Society, **[“A Short History of Voting in Arlington”](#)** (which includes a flier distributed by the LWV-Arlington to African America neighborhoods in Arlington to let them know about the poll tax in advance of going to the polls).

[“A Year of Stories and Milestones in the Fight for Women’s Suffrage,”](#) Center for Local History, Arlington Public Library (Sept. 17, 2020).

Events

Nov. 12, 7:15 pm: Historic Similarities Between COVID-19 and Arlington National Cemetery’s Section 27 (Arlington Historical Society).

Some of the very first people to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery included over 1,500 men who served in the U.S. Colored Troops and more than 3,800 former slaves who were interred in Section 27, the property’s original cemetery. Join author and historian Ric Murphy who will discuss the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery’s Section 27 and its similarities with COVID-19’s impact on American communities today. **Details and registration [here](#).**

Nov. 14, 10 AM: Fairfax County’s Sixteenth Annual History Conference “Votes for Women!” “The Rest of OUR Story” - The Passage of the 19th Amendment - Details [here](#)

Past Events Now Available to Stream

The Write Stuff: Records on Women's Battle for the Ballot (1 hr. 12

min.). The research and writing process is crucial to any successful manuscript – even more so for works of nonfiction that rely upon first person source material to tell a story. On Oct. 10, in a virtual event hosted by the U.S. National Archives, three authors, Winifred Conkling, author of *Votes for Women: American Suffragists and the Battle for the Ballot*; Marjorie Spruill, author of *Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women's Rights and Family Values that Polarized American Politics*; and Elaine Weiss, author of *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, discussed their work on researching women's rights and suffrage and the movement that followed.

Runyon v. McCrary (56 min.). On Sept. 10, 2020, Arlington Historical Society hosted a virtual presentation by Richard Samp who told the story of how an Arlington family's need for child care ultimately became a Supreme Court case to desegregate private schools.

Civil War Colored Troops (1 hr. 22 min.). On Aug. 3, 2020, the Arlington Historical Society hosted an online panel discussion by three local historians and reenactors, Edward W. Gantt, Ben Hawley, and Michael Schaffner who discussed African American regiments organized in what was then Alexandria County (now Arlington County) during the Civil War.

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 19th 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.



Chris DeRosa and **Janet Ladd** at Langston community Center stirring up support for Amendment One

Read the November Virginia Voter here

Congratulations!

To **Matt de Ferranti** who married **Brooke Tansil** on October 25!!!!

Look for next newsletter November 18



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