

2023-2024 LWV Marblehead

YEAR IN REVIEW

1. Leadership: Steering Committee 2023-24

Tom Krueger	Treasurer
Katharine Redmond	Contact Person /Membership Chair
Shari Pressman	Voter Service Chair
Mimi Hollister Gardner	Fair Housing, Sustainable Marblehead
Bonnie Grenier	Observer Corps Facilitator
Margaret Smist	Newsletter Editor
Cathy Marie Michael	Member at Large
Jody Howard	Member at Large
Kathy Leonardson	Member at Large
Lee Mondale	Member at Large
Nancy Powell	Member at Large
Polly Whitmore	Member at Large
Kathy Breslin	Member at Large
Gratia Pelliciotti	Member at Large
Steve Levy	Member at Large

2. Membership Report: Katharine Redmond

Annual Meeting- June 17, 2024

In June of 2023 we had 57 active members.

Currently we have 62 active members.

In the interim we lost 9 and gained 14 members

Dues: Our mandatory "Per Member Payment" (PRP) to the Massachusetts and National Leagues are:

LWVMA: \$23

LWVUS: \$32

Our current dues are \$60, and we continue our policy of charging second-in-household members the full membership fee of \$60.

Beginning in January of 2025, annual dues will be collected directly by the National League and renewal dates for each member will be on the anniversary of their individual date of becoming a member.

Details of how the new system will work are still unknown. Stay tuned!

3. LWV Marblehead Programs/ Meetings/Groups 2023-24

- a. **Steering Committee**- Ten Meetings; met monthly via Zoom/hybrid at Abbot Public Library at Eveleth from September 2023 – June 2024; rotating chair and scribe to plan programs; open to all members
- b. **Current Events** – Ten meetings; met monthly via Zoom, except for summer; open to all members and nonmembers, Katharine Redmond and Kathy Leonardson facilitators
- c. **Book Group** met 4 times via Zoom: Oct 14, 2023, Dec 11, 2023, Feb 26, 2024, May 31, 2024; Kathy Leonardson facilitator. This group is included banned books in its reading, to highlight challenges to intellectual freedom in the lead up to October meeting on the topic. A complete list of all books discussed can be found on the League website.
- d. **Observer Corps** (see report)
- e. **Voter Service** (see report)
- f. **Website Development/Maintenance team**:
- g. **LWV Marblehead Newsletter**
- h. **Regional League meetings**- Members attend North Shore League group meeting, quarterly
- i. **Data Reporting**- One member submitted reports on our League activities and impact on Marblehead and region to LWVMA
- j. **Lynn Gateway City Project**: . Monthly meetings Goal: to find ways to partner with Lynn organizations to promote civic engagement. Ongoing.
- k. **Town Government Improvement Study Group**
- l. **Community – Connection - Climate Group**- Goal: to find ways to engage community around climate in all meanings of the word. Group formulated its initial program with Thatcher Kezer on Greening Marblehead in January 2023 and a later program with Amy McHugh, Director of Public Works, Water and Sewer. In 2023-24, in collaboration with Abbot Public Library, there have been ongoing programs entitled “Intro to Marblehead Town Government”, featuring town leaders/dept. heads. These included: Intro to Town Government with Andrew Petty (Sept 18, 2023), Intro to Town Government with Aleesha Benjamin (Nov 15, 2023), Intro to Town Government with Becky Curran Cutting (Jan 29, 2024), Intro to Town Government with Jon Fobert (Mar 11, 2024). Every meeting filled to capacity.
- m. **Donation Committee**- Goal: develop events/ activities to honor members who have passed away, utilizing donated resources. Two programs were developed: Intro to Intellectual Freedom to honor Joan Ehrich (Oct 2023); Support for Genocide studies program at Essex Northshore Agricultural and Technical School and (May 3, 2024). Also, resources materials were developed for use by students when working on Civics projects and these were provided to the Marblehead Veterans principal and Vets’ principal and Essex Tech. and we will provide judges for the Civics Expo at Vets to honor Judy Jacobi (June 13).
- n. **Finance Group** LWV Town Finance Group organized in Nov. 2023 to explore educational programs for the public related to town finances. We co-sponsored with the COA “Hidden Gems: How to shrink your financial footprint” Wed Mar 20 with a booklet of resources.
- o. **Marblehead Public Schools Ad Hoc group** LWV group hosted a public forum for SchCom Mar 27, 2024.
- p. **Defending Democracy/Article V group NEW** – Goal is to develop innovative strategies to promote civic involvement and voting in November election and beyond.

4. 2023024 Collaborations and Partnerships

- a. We partnered with Marblehead local access TV, **MHTV** for Candidate Night and many other programs to amplify public ability to watch the programs.
- b. We collaborated with the newspaper **Marblehead Current** for their Town Meeting Guide; we are also collaborating with them for their Election Guide.
- c. Voter service events in MHS library are coordinated with **Marblehead Public Schools**; we collaborate with MHS to offer voter registration.
- d. We partnered with **Abbot Public Library** for a number of programs including Intro to Marblehead Town Government, and the fall program on intellectual freedom and the library.
- e. We partnered with **Council on Aging** for a program
- f. Our Observer Corps provides copies of all the Observer reports to **Marblehead Current, Marblehead Weekly News**
- g. League is a member of **Coalition on Building Inclusive Marblehead**.
- h. We worked with the **LWVMA** in developing a response to misinformation about our local League; we worked with co-president Elizabeth Foster Nolan to develop SchCom Forum which she moderated; she also moderated Candidates' Night.

5. 2023-2024 LWV Marblehead Activities by Month

- Sept 11, 2023 "**Democracy in Chains**" author, 7 p.m. LWV-MHD in partnership with the UU church meeting
- Sept 15 LWV **Current Events group**
- Sept 18 "**Intro to Marblehead Town Government: Andrew Petty, Director of Health Department**"
- Sept 19 **Registered Students to Vote at MHS**
- Oct 3 **Steering Committee**
- Oct 3 LWV Marblehead approved **Statement/Resolution on First Amendment and Book Bans** "An Assault on the First Amendment is an Assault on the Heart of Democracy; Book Bans are Part of That Assault"
- Oct 4 Panel on Intellectual Freedom, "**Intro to Intellectual Freedom**" Joint program with Abbot Public Library and LWV Donation Committee, to honor Joan Ehrich
- Oct 20 LWV **Current Events group**
- Nov 7 **Steering Committee**
- Nov 15 at 6:30 p.m. "**Intro to Marblehead Town Government: Aleesha Benjamin Town Finance Director**"
- Nov 17 LWV **Current Events group**
- Nov 23 LWV Marblehead **Letter to the Editor** in Marblehead Current on Book Bans "American ideas, ideals and rights...at risk"
- Dec 5 **Steering Committee**
- Dec11 LWV **Marblehead Book group**.
- Dec 15 LWV Third **Friday Current Events group**
- Jan 2, 2024 **Steering Committee**
- Jan 6 League **Membership Meeting** - Carole McCauley, Mass Audubon, North Shore region director;
- Jan 9 **Steering Committee Meeting**
- Jan. 16 **Testimony in opposition to H3502/S2310**—Bonnie Grenier, Statehouse hearing
- Jan 19 LWV Third Friday **Current Events group**
- Jan 29 "**Intro to Marblehead Town Government with Town Planner, Becky Curran Cutting,**
- Feb 6 **Steering Committee**
- Feb 16 LWV Third Friday **Current Events group**
- Feb 26 LWV **Book group**

- Mar 5 **Steering Committee**
- Mar 9 **Program for Women’s History Month at Lynn Museum** (Gateway City Project)
- Mar 11 **Introduction to Marblehead Town Government with Tree Warden Jon Fobert”**
- Mar 15 . LWV Third Friday **Current Events group** (Zoom).
- Mar 20 1 p.m. program at COA **“Hidden Gems: Town resources to reduce your financial footprint”**
- Mar 27, LWV Marblehead- **School Committee Forum**
- Apr 2 **Steering Committee**
- Apr 19 LWV Third Friday **Current Events group**
- May 3, 2024; 10-1 p.m., 5-8 p.m. **Genocide Studies Student Exhibition, Alumni Gym, Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School to honor JoAnne Mayer**
- **LWV Marblehead takes position to support Town Meeting Article 36**
- May 6, 7 **Town Meeting**, Tues May 7 Town Meeting League volunteered as back up tellers
- May 7 **Steering Committee**
- May17 LWV Third Friday **Current Events group**
- May 21 LWV **Candidates Night**
- May 31 **Book Group and Author talk with Patricia Sullivan**
- June 4 **Steering Committee**
- June 11 Local Elections: put out **Vote Today signs**
- June 13 **Civics Showcase Fair- Veterans Middle School** (League Judges)
- June 17, 5:30 p.m. **Annual Meeting the State Rep. Jenny Armini**
- June 21, 11 a.m. LWV Third Friday **Current Events group**

Coming Fall 2024

- Tues Sep 17, 2024 **National Voter Registration Day**, LWV Marblehead Registers students at Marblehead High School
- Sat Sept 28, 2024 2- 4 pm. Lady J performance on **Francis Perkins Part I.**, LWV co- sponsor with Friends of APL, LWV donation of \$200 approved.
- Wed Oct 23, 2024 6:30- 8 p.m. Lady J performance on **Francis Perkins Part II.**, LWV co- sponsor with Friends of APL, LWV donation of \$200 approved

Marblehead League Group Reports

6. Voter Service/ Voter Engagement 2023-24

- **Voter Registration**

On September 19, 2023, League members I worked with National Voter Registration Day to register and pre-register 22 Marblehead High School students to vote.

Students were notified ahead of time via morning announcements. Many were registered already through automatic voter registration when they got their learners' permit and driver's license at the RMV. Beginning January 1,2023, individuals who apply for a driver's license are automatically registered to vote and the option to "opt out" was removed from the driver's license application. Applicants who wish to opt out must contact their city/town directly.

We came away energized by the enthusiasm of those who registered!

We will be registering students again at MHS on September 17, working again with National Voter Registration Day. We may be able to include Essex Tech in our effort to register and preregister all eligible voters.

Voter Service also worked with one of the Civics teachers to encourage those 7 students who were eligible to vote in the March 5 primary and 13 in the June 11 election. During the 2024-2025 school year, one of our main goals will be to encourage registered students to vote.

It's rewarding to register new voters, but just as important for them to actually cast ballots.

- **Candidates' Night**

Voter Service's other event is Candidates' Night, which was held on May 21, 2024. Elizabeth Foster-Nolan was our moderator for two contested races: Select Board and Recreation and Parks Commission. A third race, for Housing Authority, will have two candidates on the ballot, though one has dropped out and is supporting the other.

Elizabeth Foster-Nolan is co-president of LWV of Massachusetts and did a great job moderating the forum.

All candidates except one either attended or wrote two- minute opening statements read by the moderator. We had only 9 candidates present at the MHS Library which gave us the opportunity to ask more questions. Our questions this year were especially well-crafted by a dedicated Candidates' Night committee, voter submissions by e-mail and audience questions and very effective editing by our sorters.

We received coverage in both news outlets and compliments from those attending.

- **Voter Reminders**

The Light Dept puts up our Vote Today and Town Meeting tonight signs. One member has been putting out Vote Today yard signs in Marblehead for 15 years.

7. League of Women Voters of Marblehead Observer Corps 2023-24 Bonnie Grenier, Coordinator

The League of Women Voters of Marblehead Observer Corps was revived in late 2019. Now in existence for about four years, we have eleven dedicated League observers.

All observer reports are sent to the Marblehead Current and Marblehead Weekly News. The Current posts reports online and the Weekly News puts them in their print paper. In addition, they are posted to the LWVM website and Face Book pages. Many town officials and citizens have come to rely on these reports to stay abreast of the goings-on in many of the town boards and committees.

Observers and their respective committees are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Tom Krueger | Board of Health |
| Maggie Smist | Municipal Light Board |
| Shari Pressman | Task Force Against Discrimination |
| Brigitte Lagoutte | Abbot Library Board of Trustees |
| Nancy Powell | Disabilities Commission |
| Katharine Redmond | Finance Committee |
| Kathy Breslin | Harbors & Waters Board |
| Steven Levy | Water & Sewer Commission |
| Bonnie Grenier | Fair Housing Committee |
| Bonnie Grenier | HPP Implementation Committee |
| Cathy Michael & Mimi Hollister | Marblehead Housing Authority |

Here's a sample of what's been happening in some of the committees we're observing:

- **Marblehead Disabilities Commission** launched a major initiative last year with the completion of an audit of municipal buildings, outdoor facilities, and public communications and used the findings to create a Transition Plan to address compliance issues in town. This year, the town hired a Sustainability Coordinator who is working with the Commission to complete an application for a \$250,000 ADA Improvement Grant. If successful, the funds will be used to make much needed accessibility improvements at Devereaux Beach and Chandler Hovey Park including upgrades to bathroom facilities, pavilions, parking lots and pathways.
- **Water and Sewer Commission**- All water employees with Water Distribution Licenses completed the state renewal process. Replacing the Monitoring system for pump stations communication was evaluated. Data was uploaded into the new GIS system.
- **Municipal Light Commission** is working on ways to diversify the energy portfolio in town so as to reach the ten-year carbon-free goals that have been set forth by the state of Massachusetts. They are also working to balance electric demand especially during extreme cold or heat emergencies.
- **The Finance Committee** will be meeting on Monday June 17 to discuss long term planning for FY'26. The Select Board, Town Manager, Treasurer and Finance Committee have committed to long term planning starting this summer. In prior years this has not happened.
- **The Fair Housing Committee and Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee** haven't been meeting on a regular basis since the School Committee refused to turn over the Coffin School to the town. The two committees may merge at some point in the future. They did spend a fair amount of time working with Becky Curran Cutting on trying to get the MBTA Communities Act passed at town meeting.
- **Abbot Library Board of Trustees** –After having been closed for almost 2 years, the Marblehead Abbot Public Library will reopen on June 20 with a ribbon cutting ceremony starting at 4 pm. and open to the public. Three years ago, the Town approved a \$ 8.5 million override for the renovations, and the APLF (Abbot Public Library Fund) raised 1.5 million through private donations to help accomplish the project. The new library innovations will include new gender-neutral bathrooms, and 3 small meeting rooms electronically equipped with presentation screens, makerspaces, a podcasting studio, self-checkout kiosks, and improved internet connectivity. The Driftwood Garden Club has been working on planting and redoing the Secret Garden. The library will be available to be rented for social events (weddings, birthdays, etc.), utilizing the newly available indoor and outdoor spaces. During the Marblehead Festival of Art (July 5 to 7), the library will offer its Summer Reading program, and will help organize the Marblehead Literary Festival, including 20 speakers and workshops encompassing a variety of literary and creative themes.
- **Board of Health** -The major issues this year have been: Transfer station renovations- the modified plan was finalized with the ~\$1.4 M funds still remaining. This was put out to bid but none of bids fell in the estimated ranges and no general contractor bid for the job. Outreach is currently taking place to secure bids and a general contractor. The plan includes a new traffic pattern in the TS, possible stickerless system, etc. 2. Mental Health Task Force- was very active during the year and had numerous programs 3. Substance Abuse awareness/ education - much discussion about resources and possible programs - Marblehead Counseling Center, Learning to Cope, recovered addict speakers - still in process. HD purchase and placement of boxes with fentanyl test strips and narcan. Other issues - budget, website, reports from tobacco control, from public health nurses, MHS mental health survey.
- **The Harbors and Waters Board**-The new safety boat will arrive sometime this fall. Mooring and ring fees will likely rise in the coming year or so due to increased costs. The State Street Landing bathrooms have been reassigned to Rec and Parks with plans to keep it open year-round, per Phil Blaisdell's Article which passed at Town Meeting 2024. The Town has plans to soon start work on the seawalls from Hammond Park near the Light Dept down to the Commercial Street docks and boatyards at Cliff St and the Marblehead Yacht Club. It will be a lengthy process.
- **The Task Force Against Discrimination** was formed by the then Board of Selectmen in 1989 to address the issues of prejudice and bigotry. TFAD holds monthly meetings with Police Chief Dennis King as a de facto member. Meetings

usually begin with his report of any incidents or proactive work to stop possible incidents. The Marblehead Police Force works closely with the ADL, the FBI, neighboring police departments, schools and houses of worship.

The Task Force has sponsored or co-sponsored an Indigenous Peoples Day, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Pride Flag Raising, Juneteenth Celebration, the first Marblehead Asian Pacific American Heritage celebration, How Four Friends Stood Up to Sit Down, a February Book Read within the elementary schools commemorating Black History Month. The Task Force also contributes to the creation and maintenance of the crosswalk in front of the Information Center, which was vandalized. The TFAD has two high school representatives who are liaisons with the schools. They've reported on their relationships with the School Committee, METCO, Juneteenth participation, the Cultural Feast, ADL sponsored activities and a conference in Boston with other high school students.

The TFAD has two representatives from the Marblehead Racial Justice team who report on the activities of their organization. The TFAD had a memorable meeting with METCO director Daja Johnson and METCO parents. The meeting led to a respectfully honest discussion of incidents and how they affected some of the METCO students. TFAD members were motivated to discuss how the organization can be more proactive about preventing hateful incidents before they happen.

Our thanks to all our observers who have been so diligent in attending and reporting on committee meetings. The committees being observed, in turn, generally appreciate that their work is getting the attention of the community and not going unnoticed.

League members are always welcome to join the Observer Corps. There's the option of partnering with another observer or taking on responsibility for observing a board not already covered. Anyone interested can reach out to Bonnie Grenier at bonniegrenier1@gmail.com.

8. Report: Fair Housing Report 2024

The Fair Housing Committee did not meet regularly this year. The Town Administrator, Thatcher Kezer is now the Chair. Our work is closely tied to the town's Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee now – perhaps the two will merge. The main focus was on the new State law called the MBTA Communities Act for which a Town Warrant needed to be created for the Town Meeting in June. Town Planner, Becky Cutting, worked diligently with the Planning Board to create a by-right zoning map to be presented at Town Meeting with the support of the HPP Committee and Fair Housing. It did not pass but a special Town Meeting will be called later this year to make a second attempt. The ramifications if we do not agree as a town to this Act are considerable – loss of state grant funding for many aspects of needed work, such as climate mitigation funding as well as multi-unit housing development funding. The MBTA Communities Act is step towards creating more affordable housing because multi-unit developments, for rent and for purchase, are inevitably less expensive than single family homes. More to come...

9. Report: Sustainable Marblehead 2024

Sustainable Marblehead had several informational forums for helping homeowners consider and install insulation; air source heat pumps and tankless water heaters; green boating measures. Included were the State rebate incentives for greening homes.

They recently held a second annual Green Homes Tour for people to experience what some have actually done in their homes and to talk with home owners about how all that went.

A Green Fair is in the works in September that will be held at the high school with the ability to test drive electric vehicles among many other informational and hands on events.

The Light Board will now be almost entirely progressive and knowledgeable members, thanks to SM's advocacy work. So it feels like there is real progress toward the challenging town goal of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2040. The town Green Committee has several SM members and a sympathetic and interested Select Board and Town Administrator now.

10. Report: Gateway City Project

The Gateway City project is a State League program that invites Leagues that are near designated Gateway Cities to support issues around voting and citizenship in those cities. Lynn is the city the state selected; we are the local League selected to be involved. We are exploring ways to connect with voters perhaps by pairing with another organization like Neighbor to Neighbor at Farmers Markets this summer. Contact Lee Mondale, leeamondale@gmail.com, if you are interested.

11. Report: Community- Connection- Climate (CCC) Group

This group began in January 2023 with the emerging goal of finding ways to engage community in dialogue around climate in all meanings of the word. A new partnership with library for ongoing programs was developed featuring town leaders and department heads for public meetings every couple of months to facilitate information exchange with the public on timely topics. Additional committee activities outside of the partnership with Abbot Public Library will also continue.

CCC meetings/activities this year (2023-24) "Intro to Marblehead Town Government" featured four speakers Andrew Petty, Becky Curran Cutting, Aleesha Benjamin, Jon Fobert in partnership with Abbot Library. Last year's speakers (2022-23) included Thatcher Kezer and Amy McHugh. These hybrid meetings have all been full to capacity. Contact Lee Mondale, leeamondale@gmail.com, if you are interested.

12. Report: Donation Committee

The purpose of the committee is to find ways to honor our members who have passed away, utilizing monies donated to our League in their memory. In 2023 we began by asking Massachusetts League leaders for suggestions. From that wide-ranging list, we settled on two different areas for investigation, special speakers and special programs, in honor of one or more of the following: Joan Ehrich (d. Feb 16, 2022), Joanne Mayer (d. Sept 12, 2022), Carol Kessler (d. Feb 18, 2022), and Judy Jacobi (d. July 25, 2020) all of whom died during the pandemic. Here is where we are as of June 2024:

- To honor Carol Kessler, a donation was made in support of the Gateway City Project
- To honor Joan Ehrich:
 - Panel Discussion on Intellectual Freedom Oct 4, 2023- a joint program with the Abbot Public Library during Book Ban Week on intellectual freedom with speakers to honor Joan Ehrich.
 - Our League adopted Statement/Resolution on First Amendment and Book Bans in Oct 2023 and wrote Letter to editor on the topic "American ideas, ideals and rights...at risk" and was printed in the November 23 edition of Marblehead Current
 - We purchased and framed the ALA Library Bill of Rights. In honor of Joan Ehrich to be hung in the renovated library
- To honor JoAnne Mayer:
 - Genocide Studies Exposition May 3, 2024, Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School-- We donated \$500 to support students in need for their projects and assisted in the evening session of the Exposition in memory of JoAnne Mayer providing sign in, refreshments, etc.

- To honor Judy Jacobi:
 - Support Student-led Civics Project Expo in Marblehead June 13- A new state law requires students in grade 8 and in high school to participate in a civics project. Last year, we attended the MPS 8th grade civics demonstration. Matt Fox, principal of Veterans School, invited us to be part of the planning for this year's project (2024). We produced a Student Guide to Advocacy document and made this available to the Vets School and Essex Tech. We also participated in the June13, 2024 Civics Project Fair as judges.

13. Report: Town Government Improvement Study Group

The Town Government Improvement Study Group (formerly Charter Study Group) was formed in February 2023 to study town charters in Massachusetts and possible ways to improve Marblehead town government, either through the adoption of a charter or other means. Over the course of the next 12 months, we:

- Reviewed applicable MA law on ways to change Town government: home rule petitions, special legislation, bylaw changes.
- Viewed two webinars put on by the Mass. Municipal Association about home rule and charter adoption rules, processes and pitfalls (Home Rule and Why You Should Care About It and Trends in Municipal Charter Change, both available at www.mma.org)
- Read several articles and information available online relating to home rule, charters, etc.
- Met with Julie Jacobson, former Town Manager of Auburn and former President of the MMA, Paul Cohen, former chair of the Harvard Charter Commission and current Chelmsford Town Manager, and Michael Ward, who leads the Charters and Organizational Structure Practice of the Municipal Services division of the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston.
- Reviewed several MA town charters, including Amesbury, amended and approved in 2021; Harvard, newly adopted in 2018; Middleton, adopted in 1974, currently under review; Concord, effective in 1956, last amended in 2018. Other nearby communities that have charters include Swampscott, Lynn, Peabody, Beverly and Salem. Sandisfield has a draft charter on its website as of September 2023.
- Met separately with each of Thatcher Kezer, Erin Noonan, and Bret Murray, all of whom were supportive of charter adoption.

As a result of the group's study, it made a comprehensive report to the Steering Committee detailing the results of the research. The group asked that the SC approve a League proposal to the Select Board that, following the Special Act Charter process, it appoints a charter committee to study town government and draft a charter for the Town. The Steering Committee approved this next step in November 2023.

Due to scheduling difficulties, the group was unable to appear before the Select Board, but it did present the League's recommendation in writing to each SB member. The SB ultimately solicited applications for and appointed a charter committee in May 2024. Sue has since met with Amy Drinker, the committee chair, at her request to discuss insights gleaned from the group's study.

14. Ad Hoc Group on Marblehead Schools: School Committee Forum

LWV Marblehead monitored multiple serious issues that had been arising in the Marblehead Public Schools since the superintendent left last year. One of the pillars of the League has been support for education (see positions at State and National levels), so upheaval and disarray in our local school district including high staff turnover at the leadership level was concerning. A variety of League actions were considered and discussed. Ultimately, the League offered to host a

School Committee forum. The School Committee agreed and the forum it was held on March 27, with questions submitted by the public. LWVMA Co- President Elizabeth Foster- Nolan (from Weymouth), served as moderator and was part of the planning process. Early on, members of this group consulted with LWVMA Executive Director Pattye Comfort to resolve issues around nonpartisanship and outside groups.

15. Defending Democracy (DD) Committee NEW!

The goal of this Committee is to develop innovative strategies to promote civic involvement and voting in upcoming elections, in the belief that our democracy requires vigilance and active engagement. The DD group is currently working on "Vote" yard signs to be made available at cost of \$6 or \$7..

16. LWV Marblehead Positions, Policies, etc.

- October 2023 approved Nonpartisan Policy
- Marblehead Local League Positions Document (1970-2022), unchanged from last year
- October 2023 LWV Marblehead approved **Statement/Resolution on First Amendment and Book Bans** "An Assault on the First Amendment is an Assault on the Heart of Democracy; Book Bans are Part of That Assault"
- May 2024 **LWV Marblehead Voted to support Article 36** "to see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw and map to adopt a 3A multifamily overlay district"