



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

BULLETIN

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Celebrate 100 Years

Local Events To Mark League's History

Tuesday, March 3, 10:30 a.m.
Warm Hearth Village Center

Saturday, March 14, 3 p.m.
Lyric Theatre

Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m.
German Club

Introducing Black Suffragists
and the 19th Amendment

Anniversary Champagne
Celebration of the League's
Founding and 19th Amendment

Preview Performance of Yellow
Rose, Red Rose: Women and the
Vote, Radford University and
Virginia Tech create theatre about
history

Showing of Iron-Jawed Angels



Smithsonian Institution exhibit



Details on page 3



Registration Deadline Feb. 10 for Primary

If you have a friend - or know a 17-year-old - who isn't registered to vote, encourage them to register by Feb. 10 so they can vote in the Virginia primary March 3.

The 2020 Virginia Democratic Primary on Tuesday, March 3, is one of 14 contests scheduled on Super Tuesday in the Democratic Party presidential primaries for the 2020 presidential election. The Virginia primary is an open primary, with the state awarding 124 delegates, of which 99 are pledged delegates allocated on the basis of the results of the primary.

Virginia is one of 16 states that allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 by General Election Day.

The League of Women Voters, a community-based organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters is a non partisan political organization that does not support or endorse any political party or candidate, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.



Beth Obenshain

League Leadership in 2019

Speaking out at a public hearing on gun control, registering college and medical students to vote, hosting candidate forums and a panel on "The Cost of Voting" - the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County was busy in 2019 while also laying the foundation for essential work in this presidential election year.

Our League responded last month to its mission to speak loudly on issues that affect women, children and families when the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors considered declaring our county a Second Amendment Sanctuary. Three of the first seven speakers at the standing-room-only session were members of the League of Women Voters. President Beth Obenshain, Secretary Linda Plaut and Voting Services Chair Peggy Layne spoke movingly about the need for gun safety legislation. We voiced state and national League positions on universal background checks, red flag laws, prevention of child access to guns, and other safety legislation. The Board of Supervisors rejected the controversial sanctuary designation by a 4-3 vote, instead approving a bland statement supporting the U.S. Constitutional Amendments.

Before November's critical election, which changed the balance of power in the Virginia legislature, League members worked hard to register students at Virginia Tech's Gobblerfest, and the School of Osteopathic Medicine and at New River Community College. After the election, we have met with local Senate and House members to share the League's position on the Equal Rights Amendment, redistricting and other critical issues.

The League hosted two well-attended Candidates Forums for the Christiansburg Town

Council race and contested county races, including Montgomery County School Board and County Board of Supervisors and Treasurer, relying on the organizing expertise of past president Mary Houska.

We also researched, printed and distributed several thousand of our largest ever Voter Guide, profiling all candidates in contested local and state races. The 24-page Guides disappeared quickly from local libraries, especially in Christiansburg, which had a contested Town Council race.

All the information on local and legislative candidates also went online this year as we joined VOTE411 to put campaign profiles at the fingertips of every voter with computer access in our county. Our thanks to Catherine Piche for entering all the information into a complex database so information on candidates in each local race became accessible to all local voters simply by typing in their address.

Did you realize that Virginia was ranked the second most costly state for voting? Thanks to the work of League past president Carolyn Rude, we held a standing-room-only panel discussion on "The Cost of Voting" with three experts from Virginia Tech analyzing why it is so hard for many people to register and vote in our state. We hope the 2020 General Assembly may address and change some of the state's restrictions on voting.

We started the year with a League social with an important speaker - Registrar Connie Viar - who was accompanied by two of the three members of the local Board of Elections. We look forward in 2020 to continuing a partnership with our local elections officials so all eligible voters have a chance to register and vote on November 3.

In Memory of Three League Members

Laurie Shea, 73 years old, died Oct. 17, 2019.

She and her husband and three children moved to Blacksburg in 1981. She received her PhD from Virginia Tech in Marriage and Family Therapy and spent 30 years in private practice.

In addition her work and community activities, Laurie was a trail-blazing female runner, racing the Boston Marathon in 1983 and the NYC Marathon in 2005.

Mary Rivers Powe, 93 years old, Oct. 13, 2019.

From Charleston, SC, she was the first civilian employee on the United States Army War College in Carlisle, PA. In addition to being a homemaker, Mary worked as a bookkeeper for Harrisburg Hospital, Harrisburg, PA, Deckman and Associates, Camp Hill, PA as well as the Agricultural Department and Public Affairs at Virginia Tech, until her retirement.

Mary was an avid reader, book club member, and world traveler. She enjoyed entertaining and cooking. She was an active member of Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Blacksburg, for more than 46 years.

Theodore Ake, 92 years old, died Dec. 4, 2019.

After serving in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II, Ted received a degree in electrical engineering from Case Institute of Technology in 1950.

He worked with Cleveland Electric then joined the Miller Lighting Company, in Connecticut before moving to Hubbell Corporation and Blacksburg, in 1985.

He was a member of the Illuminating Engineering Society (the longest serving associate of that organization). A member of the Presbyterian Church, he served as elder and deacon of the churches in Palatine, IL and Blacksburg. Along with his dog, Sam, read to children at Blacksburg schools.

Ted loved the game of bridge.

Celebration Will Be All Year

For the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, 2020 is going to be a year both of celebration of our 100th anniversary and of civic action as we engage and register voters for the presidential and congressional elections.

League members are hard at work creating special moments for our community to commemorate the 100th anniversaries of the founding of the League of Women Voters and ratification of the 19th Amendment. Mark your calendars now for these activities this year. Here are details of the events highlighted on the front page of this bulletin.

Tuesday, March 3, 10:30 a.m., Warm Hearth Village Center, Carolyn Rude will introduce some of the heroic African-American women who battled within the suffragist movement for respect and the power of the ballot box. The long-ignored secret of the fight to obtain the vote for women was that white suffragists made a strategic decision that the amendment would fail in Southern states - and thereby fail national ratification - if black women were included in women's suffrage. Most of us have never heard of the courageous black women who fought for their right to vote while also confronting the racism of this nation's Jim Crow era. The program is offered by the League, the Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd chapter of the NAACP, and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech.

Saturday, March 14, 3 p.m., there will be a 100th Anniversary Champagne Celebration at the Lyric Theatre. Brief

comments and celebration of the League's founding in February 1920 and the 19th Amendment's ratification on August 18, 1920 will kick-off the event which will also feature the Golden-Globe winning "Iron Jawed Angels" with Hilary Swank. This movie is about the imprisonment and force-feeding of women suffragists in a Virginia prison. The courage these women showed marked a turning point in public support for women's vote. This celebration is co-hosted by the Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd branch of the NAACP.

Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m., at the German Club, see a preview of "Yellow Rose, Red Rose," a performance piece about women's suffrage written by two Virginia Tech and Radford University professors and their classes. The struggle over the 19th Amendment will be told through vignettes from plays, letters, songs and speeches from the era. This performance is co-hosted by the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech and the Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd branch of the NAACP.

The League will continue the celebration through the year.

Thursday, April 23, at the Annual League Dinner at Warm Hearth Village Center, Rachel Bitecofer, will speak. Dr. Bitecofer, assistant director of Christopher Newport University's Wason Center for Public Policy, has received national coverage for her

innovative election forecasting model that analyzes the nation's increasingly divisive politics. The event begins at 5:30 p.m. with a social gathering, dinner at 6:30 p.m. and speaker at 7:15 p.m. We will invite local officials to be our guests as we celebrate our 100th year.

Saturday, May 2, the official presentation of "Yellow Rose, Red Rose: Women and the Vote," will be performed in the Alexander Black House. The performance time will be in the afternoon with a limited number of participants because of the historic house's size. Stay tuned for information on the exact time and how to make a reservation.

This year will also be our best chance to attend the **League's National Convention, June 25-28** as it is being held not far from us in Washington, D.C. More details on how to register will be available on the League's national website.

Here at home, we're planning to have League members participate in **Blacksburg's Fourth of July** parade with signs commemorating our 100th anniversary.

Then later this summer, the League and LLI are planning a trip to the Barter Theatre to see "Winter Wheat," a play about the dramatic and suspenseful 1920 fight in Tennessee over ratification of the 19th Amendment. Details are still being finalized.

Much serious work will also be on our schedules in 2020 as we work to register more voters for our presidential and congressional election on Nov. 5.

Thank you

The League has important work to do this year. Your membership fees and donations make it possible for us to be an active civic presence in Montgomery County.

Thank you for helping the League be a strong voice for women, children and families for 100 years.

Pauletta Copenheaver	Don & June Mullins	Beverly Fleming	Deborah Travis	Elva Miller
Mary Lough	Janice Litschert	Mary Ann Johnson	Wayne Worner	Susan Hansen
Debbie Nuss	Margaret Hoover	Linda Plaut	Shelley Gelbert	Marquita Hill
Leanne Mitchell	Jana Ruble	Isabel Berney	Jane Sprague	Ann Groves
Lillian Moore	Mary Houska	David Scheim	Virginia Cox	Harriett Cooper
Marilyn Klemperer	Susan Anderson	Joseph Merola &	Lisa Garcia	Judy Kirwan
Catherine Snyder	Gunin Kiran	Catherine duBreuil	Karen Hult	Ted Ake
John Muffo	Mary Ollendick	Connie & Mark Froggatt	Karen Novak	Alison Wilson
Ellen Glover	Laurie Shea	Millie Wiggert	Phyllis Albritton	Mary Jane Zody
Linda & Tunstall Powers	Beth Obenshain	Leslie Hager-Smith	Sharon Day	Susan Leslie
Michael Reilly	Judy Snoke	Tamara Hodsdon	Margaret Ray	Ann Hess
Jim Shuler	Molly McClintock & Irene Peters	Liz Craine	Jeanie Baker	June Schmidt
John Bush	Carolyn Rude	Nancy & Charlie Warren	Josie Shotts	Carol Linker
	Dorothy Domermuth			

League's Position Presented To Montgomery County Supervisors

(These comments were made at a public hearing before the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors on December 16, 2019)

Good Evening. My name is Elizabeth Obenshain and I am president of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County. The League is a nonpartisan organization that for 100 years has supported laws that enhance and protect the lives of women, children and families in this nation. I speak also as a gun owner and landowner who permits hunting on our family farms.

First, these resolutions are unnecessary and accomplish nothing. We **know** you as our supervisors support and respect the Constitution. The League believes that within the parameters of the Constitution there is a need and room for common sense gun laws to protect Virginians. Guns are not just a legal issue, but a public health issue as almost 1,000 Virginians die from gun violence every year.

These resolutions are apparently a reaction to legislation being proposed by our governor and supported by many members of the General Assembly. Gov. Northam's legislative proposals for gun safety have all been legislated in other states and are proven pieces of legislation that have saved lives. His proposed legislation will work within constitutional bounds of gun control rulings by the Supreme Court to reduce the death rate from guns. There is no need for hysteria that the Governor and the 2020 General Assembly are going to undermine the Second Amendment.

A recent poll of Virginians of all political stripes found that 84 percent favor universal background checks and 76 percent favor Red Flag laws. The League supports universal background checks, Red Flag laws for those "judged to pose a grave risk to public safety," prevention of child access to guns and reporting lost/stolen guns.

The League asks you NOT to approve these resolutions.



General Assembly - Speak your mind!

The General Assembly convened Jan. 8 with the chance to enact historic legislation such as the ERA, redistricting, gun control and other legislation. League members can help pass these bills by writing or calling our legislators when the League lobbyists send out an **Action Alert**.

Let's join League members from across the state for **Lobby Day** on **Wednesday, Feb. 12**, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. to visit our legislators and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters!

A League 100th Anniversary Luncheon will feature A'Lelia Bundles.

She is the great-great-granddaughter of Madame C.J. Walker, who became the first female self-made millionaire despite being born the daughter of enslaved parents.

Go online to the Virginia League of Women Voters to RSVP for the event. Our League can make a modest contribution to offset some of your travel expenses.

League 2020 priorities

Redistricting Reform: The constitutional amendment to create nonpartisan redistricting must be passed by the General Assembly a second time this year before it can be placed on the ballot for voter approval this fall before Congressional and General Assembly redistricting in 2021. We need to keep pressure on our local legislators as Democrats, including Sen. John Edwards, have started to backslide as they are now in the majority and can gerrymander state and federal election districts to their own advantage. State League President Deb Wake said: "The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports the amendment and accompanying enabling legislation. All eyes are on Virginia to do the right thing and bring the amendment to the ballot box this November."

Equal Rights Amendment: League and other supporters hope the ERA will be passed by Jan. 13 - before you get this newsletter! Regardless, it will be challenged in court due to Congress' deadline for passage and recessions by 5 states. Previous recessions have been ignored.

Gun Violence Prevention: We support legislation to address gun violence including universal background checks, strong extreme-risk protection orders, child-access prevention laws, stronger protection orders, and state and local authority to regulate firearms in public spaces.

Voting Rights: The head of the State Board of Elections expects no-excuse voting for 45 days before an election to pass this year. As elections are mostly funded locally, we may need to support our local registrar's request for additional funds to create satellite voting sites, more staff and adequate parking. Additional funding for voting equipment, elections modernization and security, and elections administration at both the state and local levels are also goals.

Affordable Housing: We need more funding and action to increase the availability of affordable housing.

Natural Resources: The League supports strong environmental goals, including air quality and a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing.



Great Decisions Sessions

Begin Feb. 12

Great Decisions is a community discussion program on world affairs. The Foreign Policy Association develops background information and policy options for eight critical issues facing the United States and provides text and videos for discussion groups across the country. Participants prepare for class by reading a 10-page overview for each topic in a Briefing Book. Each meeting begins with a 30-minute video with information on the issues. A local resource person who is expert on the week's topic provides additional information and guides discussion.

The League of Women Voters has hosted Great Decisions since 2008. When the course grew to about 200 participants, the League partnered with the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech beginning in 2015.

In the spring of 2020, the class will meet Wednesdays, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., at the German Club Manor on Southgate Drive. The 8-week course begins February 12.

To enroll, please join the Lifelong Learning Institute at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/. Joining LLI for one semester costs \$45. The course fee is \$35. You may apply for a scholarship by contacting the LLI registrar, heidil@vt.edu.

Topics and Resource Persons

Feb. 12
Artificial Intelligence and Data

Sylvester Johnson, Director,
Virginia Tech Center for Humanities

The EU, Brazil, and other Western countries have adopted regulations that grant users greater control over their data and require that firms using AI be transparent about how they use it. Will the U.S. follow suit?

Feb. 19
Climate Change and the Global Order

Anamaria Bukvic, Assistant
Professor of Geography

Virginia Tech

While much of the world has banded together to come up with a plan to address climate change, the U.S. remains a holdout. What impact will the effects of climate change have on global geopolitics?

Feb. 26
India and Pakistan
Priya Dixit, Associate Professor of
Political Science, Virginia Tech

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked the special status granted to the Kashmir region, inflaming the rivalry between India and Pakistan. How will the Kashmir situation affect the region, both economically and politically?

March 4
**U.S. Relations with the
Northern Triangle**

Ilja Luciak, Professor of Political
Science, Virginia Tech

The Trump administration holds the Northern Triangle of Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala) responsible for the flow of migrants from Latin America to the U.S. With funds from the U.S. cut, how can the Northern Triangle countries curtail migration?

March 11
Red Sea Security

Bill Ochsenwald, Professor
Emeritus of History, Virginia Tech

The Red Sea sees millions of barrels of oil a day transported across its waters, and major nations have built large ports and bases in the region. How important is Red Sea security for global security? Can the region be a place of global cooperation?

March 18
**China's Road into Latin
America**

Paige Tan, Professor of Political
Science, Radford University

As the Trump administration withdraws from the world stage, China is looking to fill the void. How does Latin America fit into China's "One Belt, One Road" plan? Should the U.S. be concerned about China's growing "sphere of influence"?

March 25
**Modern Slavery and
Human Trafficking**

Iuliia Hoban, Visiting Assistant
Professor of Political Science,
Radford University

What is the international community doing to combat slavery and trafficking? What are the experiences like for those being trafficked?

April 1
The Philippines

Tay Keong Tan, Director of
International Studies,
Radford University

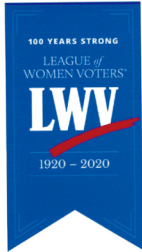
Since the election of Rodrigo Duterte, The Philippines has pivoted toward China and away from the U.S. Duterte has also launched a largescale war on drugs that many criticize for its brutality. What does the future hold for U.S. relations with the Philippines?

READING

Great Decisions Briefing Book, available for purchase at Volume II Bookstore or in the Blacksburg Public Library for in-library use.

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March 3

Talk on Black Suffragists

March 14

Champagne Celebrations and film

March 21

Original Play - Yellow Rose, Red Rose

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY

Become a member of the League of Women Voters. The annual membership fee is \$50. This payment includes local, state, and national membership dues. Members receive The National Voter, The Virginia Voter, and The Montgomery County Bulletin.
Email: Membership@lwvmcva.org.