



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Summer 2020

LWVVT Decries Police Killing of George Floyd

The League of Women Voters of Vermont grieves the murders of George Floyd and countless other Black lives that have been tragically taken at the hands of rogue law enforcement officers who are rarely held fully accountable for their actions.

We have seen people from all over the country exercising their First Amendment rights as peaceful demonstrators take to the streets demanding change. We have seen people of every race, religion, and ethnic background stand and kneel in solidarity with the Black community with the same message—Black Lives Matter.

We have also seen civil unrest in some places and, sadly, acts of police violence against protestors. We must not let those images derail the fight against systemic racial injustice and inequality. The systems of oppression that have perpetuated the myth of white supremacy in our country must be dismantled if we are ever to become the nation we pledge to be—*indivisible, with liberty and justice for all*.

As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities. The League shall do so by speaking out against racism in all forms and being committed to listening to and amplifying Black voices, and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country.

The League acknowledges, painfully, that America is a nation founded on racism. Therefore, all who live in this country must contribute to and participate in organizations actively working to achieve full liberation and inclusive freedom. We must all advocate for anti-racist policies at every level of government. We must ensure that recent actions to address the problems in Vermont do not become just paper exercises.

Finally, the road to change lies at the ballot box – we must all vote in August and November. Now, more than ever, it is clear that our work to inform voters and hold government accountable on the local, state, and national level is where the real potential for change lies. Vermont will hold its state primary on August 11 – voters need to know where candidates stand on issues and how their votes directly impact their communities in the immediate and the long term. In November, we will elect state officers and legislators, our Representative to Congress, and the President.

The League of Women Voters of Vermont is committed to continuing the fight to dismantle systemic racism within our electoral system and ensuring the right to vote is protected for all citizens.

Message from the Board

Summer 2020

The 2020 Election is here!! The League is gearing up to GET OUT THE VOTE, but this effort will be anything but business as usual. The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed how we can work to get out voter information and rally people to go vote. No large gatherings are permitted at least until the official State of Emergency is lifted. Summer festivals and public events have been cancelled by the Governor. Clerk's offices are generally closed to the public, and many voters are concerned about actually going to the polls. Fortunately, the automatic voter registration by DMV should significantly increase voter registration.

The League reached out to the Secretary of State's Office in April, when we learned that the Secretary of State was considering mailing ballots, to offer our help with voter education for mail-in voting. We signed on with 13 other civic and business groups to the May 1st letter to Gov. Scott and Sec. of State Condos urging them to mail ballots.

An Ad Hoc committee has formed to work on the mail-in voting education and coordinate with our other voting initiatives: Youth Voting; Prisoner Voting; and New Citizen Voting. Flyers, Front Porch Forum postings, and public access TV programming are in the works. The committee is also looking into other ways to send the message that mail-in voting is safe, simple, and secure. If you have ideas to Get-Out-the-Vote, let us know. **Contact me (sonjapeter@mcocast.net) if you want to work with the committee.**

Once again, we had many fine applicants for the Winona Smith scholarship, see the profiles of the recipients.

Also, *One Event, Many Perspectives on Women's Suffrage*, the symposium sponsored by the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum, League of Women Voters, Vermont Suffrage Centennial Alliance, and Vermont Commission on Women can still be viewed on-line. The presenters speak to the experiences of Black, Native American, and rural Vermont women. The May Symposium at the Museum had to be turned into a virtual event. Each of the talks is a separate video. To view them go to <https://www.ethanallenhomestead.org/suffragesymposium.html>

Happy Summer!

Sonja Schuyler, State Board



Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York welcomes LWV founder Carrie Chapman Catt on her triumphal return from Tennessee, August 27, 1920. (AP Photo) See story on p. 6.

NB: Neither Sue Racanelli, our state league president, nor any member of LWV, will ever email you asking you to send money by gift card codes or by any such untraceable method. There's a scam running where bad actors pretend to be people you know asking for a "favor."

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Membership in the League includes a subscription.
If you would like to join the League, go to our website,
www.lwvofvt.org, e-mail, or write:

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2020 LWVUS Convention Goes Virtual

The League expected more than 1,200 members from all 50 states, plus D.C. and the Virgin Islands, to gather in Washington, D.C., for its 2020 national convention. However, due to the District's coronavirus lockdown policy, the convention will be held in digital format. Members may register as observers at <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/convention-2020-registration>.

Based on Program Planning responses, the LWVUS Board recommends retaining all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.

The LWVUS Board recommends a League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work®: Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics and Redistricting

The LWVUS Board also proposes continuing work on urgent issues: Climate Change, the Equal Rights Amendment, Health Care, Gun Safety, and Immigration.

The agenda can be seen at <https://www.lwv.org/ConventionSchedule>

Caucuses and pre-convention webinars will be held between June 22-24. The LWVVT is sponsoring two caucuses, which we encourage you to attend:

Monday, June 22, 7pm-8pm

Voter Representation/Electoral Systems.

LWVUS has positions on public policy issues decided by our elected representatives, however, *we do not have a position on how we*

elect the representatives who make the public policy decisions we care about

Our caucus will cover the proposed concurrence position, the reasons for this important recommendation and answer delegate questions.

Wed., June 24, 8pm-9pm

America's Choices in the Health Care Debate - Defining the Priorities, Understanding the Costs, and What We Can Do

The urgency of Health Care Reform is upon us. Health care consistently ranks as the most urgent issue for voters, even more so now that the COVID19 pandemic has shown us just how dangerous it is to tie healthcare insurance to employment. This caucus will engage attendees focused around these questions:

Why does our health care system need to change?
How has COVID19 increased the urgency for change?

What are the major proposals for change? What is the League's position on Health Care, and which of the current proposals can best achieve the League's position?

What can YOU DO to help get the health care you and your family deserve. How might the power of the League be mobilized to help?

To see the list of all caucuses and to register, go to: [https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-virtual-caucuses-and-info-sessions'](https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-virtual-caucuses-and-info-sessions)

CBS Evening News anchor and managing editor, Norah O'Donnell, will deliver the keynote address.



Early and absentee voting for the Vermont August primary begins June 29th, and the League of Women Voters of Vermont will have VOTE411.org live that day for nonpartisan election information. Candidates are already responding to our questionnaire so we can share information about them.

What can you do as a League member to be an informed voter and to encourage others to be informed voters? Visit VOTE411.org on or after June 29th and see who is on your ballot. Should anything seem amiss, contact Johnna Ferguson at 802-448-0709 or league@lwvofvt.org.

Want to do more? Share VOTE411.org on your social media. It works in all states as a one-stop shop for everything from registering to vote to providing nonpartisan candidate information. Primaries are a great time for us to encourage friends, in any political party, to vote for their candidate of choice.

Want to do even more? If candidates for state legislature in your district haven't answered our questions, you can join our team encouraging them to respond.

VOTE411.org is how we offer nonpartisan election information to the public.

VOTE411.org, the League's one-stop-shop for election information was named Best Government & Civil Innovation Website in the 24th Annual Webby People's Voice Awards.

Hailed as the "Internet's highest honor" by The New York Times, The Webby Awards, presented by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, is the leading international awards organization honoring excellence on the Internet.

LWVVT Spring Lecture and Lunch Rescheduled (Again)

The LWVVT 2020 Spring Lecture and lunch has been postponed to Saturday, September 19.



Garrett Graff, journalist, author, and historian will speak on *Election 2020: American Democracy under Challenge?* at

noon in the Ethan Allen Room, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier.

Tickets are \$10, free to League members. Send check to LWVVT, P.O. Box 1391, Montpelier, VT 05602. Please respond by May 22.



LWV Joins 2020 National Voter Registration Day

The League of Women Voters is, once again, partnering with National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) which will take place on September 22.

NVRD is a nonpartisan civic holiday celebrated on the fourth Tuesday of September to help eligible voters get registered, or update their registration, learn about early voting options, request mail-in ballots, and more. In 2019 NVRD registered over 470,000 voters on one day across the country. LWVVT efforts were centered on registering voters in high schools and prisons.

This year, the covid-19 pandemic and social distancing is making voter registration more challenging. We have to rethink traditional ways of signing up voters, especially since the months leading to the presidential election will see a spike in registrations. Although we are a partner with NVRD, we are awaiting direction in how to proceed. If you have any ideas, please reach out to us.

LWVVT Announces 2020 Winona Smith Scholarship Awards

The League of Women Voters of Vermont is pleased to announce its 2020 Winona Smith Scholarship Award winners. Recipients are:

Hannah Larose. She is the daughter of Heather and the late Anthony Larose. Hannah will graduate from South Burlington High School later this month. Her teachers characterize Hannah as possessing a "level of resilience and determination that most her age have yet to tap into". She is a natural leader and has worked within her school community to further peer leadership. She takes learning seriously and has high academic achievements which demonstrate this. Hannah was a three-sport athlete. She hopes to become an orthodontist. She has been accepted at four universities - UVM, New England, Massachusetts at Amherst and UConn.

Audrey Grant. She is the daughter of Stephanie Fraser and Robin Grant. She will graduate from Hazen Union High School. She is a consummate volunteer for many school and greater community activities such as coordinating youth volunteers at the Hardwick Food Pantry, blood drives, technical director of Vermont Vaudeville among many others. She is a member of the National Honor Society, having taken many AP courses and other challenging classes. Audrey participated in the school choruses and played clarinet in the school band. She has been accepted at five colleges including UVM and Marymount Manhattan. Audrey plans to study in Political Science and then work in government or non-governmental organizations.

Senan Pol. Senan is the son of Jennifer Sikes and Daniel Pol. He will graduate from Rutland High School later this month. He has a substantial list of volunteer activities which include YES, a community service program, Experiment in International Living in Morocco, National Honor Society, Amnesty International Club, New Neighbors Club and Encore Theater and others. One of the application reviewers asked if Senan is

really more than just one person. He has been accepted at eight higher education schools which direct students to study contemporary cultures and societies and Anthropology. He has been characterized as a "passionate, intelligent, empathetic, motivated, courageous, generous and talented young person".

Eva Jessup. Eva is the daughter of Kimberley and Benjamin Jessup. She will graduate from U-32 middle and high school. Eva volunteers for numerous entities such as being the co-director of the Middlesex Food Shelf where she helped establish a cash amount for families in need above the food needs. She is a dual athlete, on student council, senior editor of U-32's student newspaper and a member of the Principal's Proficiency Group. Eva works at a local Montpelier boutique to save money for college. She is to attend UVM in the fall and has several thoughts for a major including Pre-med, human development with a minor in neuroscience. She plans to work this summer although she knows that the pandemic may put restrictions on her ability.

In 1998, the League established scholarship awards in honor of long-time league leader Winona Smith. They are in the amount of \$1,000 each and are presented each year to worthy Vermont high school graduates pursuing studies in higher education. Selection of recipients is based on student civic participation, community service, school activities, financial need, and teacher recommendations. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate civic ideals by writing two essays, one on a voting rights issue and one on a national or international event. Awards are usually presented at each school's awards ceremony but this was not possible due to the viral outbreak.

The League received over 40 submissions for the scholarships. While it was difficult to pick among so many worthy candidates, the League congratulates these 2020 recipients and thanks all students for their outstanding applications.

Skip The Lines. Mail in Your Ballot.

The coronavirus pandemic has made voters nervous about going to the polls, especially as Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has warned that the virus will almost certainly “strike again” this fall.

Voting by Mail or Absentee Ballot is a safe and secure alternative. Secretary of State Jim Condos has said that all voters who do not wish to vote in person due to the Covid-19 concerns can vote by mail.

For the August 11 primary, absentee or mail-in ballots will be available June 29. You can request a ballot by telephone, fax, email, mail, in person from your Town Clerk or online at <https://mvp.vermont.gov/> or by calling your Town Clerk. Requests can be made until closing time of the town clerk's office the last day before the election.

For the November 3 General Election, the Vermont Legislature approved a bill that will

allow mail-in voting in case the pandemic makes it too dangerous for people to go to the polls.

Absentee or mail-in ballots will be available no later than September 21. The League strongly recommends that military or overseas voters request an early or absentee ballot at least 45 days prior to the election.

Election security is an important concern but there is **no evidence** that voting by mail results in significant fraud. As with in-person voting, the threat is minimal. A 2017 study from the Brennan Center for Justice found the rate of voter fraud was between 0.00004% and 0.0009%. Five states - Hawaii, Utah, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado — will run all-mail elections this year.

We strongly urge you to skip the lines, complete your absentee ballot with care, and mail in your ballot. For additional information, contact the Secretary of State's office, Elections Division, 802-828-2363.

Commemorating Women's Right to Vote

August 26, 2020 marks one hundred years of passage of the 19th Amendment, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, which prohibits the denial of the right to vote on the basis of sex, thereby guaranteeing women the right to vote. On this centennial anniversary, we pay special tribute to the thousands of women whose tenacity and resilience secured enfranchisement at great personal cost.

The fight for the vote began in the 1850s; a long, bitter struggle that spanned three generations of suffragists, and those who began the movement did not live to cast a ballot.

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was first proposed and rejected in 1878, then reintroduced every year for the next 41 years. On June 4, 1919, Congress approved the woman's suffrage amendment and sent it to the states for ratification. Thirty six states were required to approve ratification. Vermont had the opportunity to be the decisive 36th state, but passed. On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified by Tennessee and officially certified by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby on August 26. No suffragists were invited to witness this historic event and no photos or videos were taken.

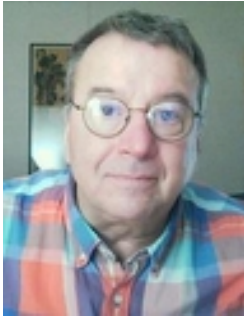
Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul were pivotal forces in the passage of the 19th Amendment. Catt, opting for pragmatism and politics, implemented her Winning Plan on a state level and in the halls of Congress. Paul's strategy of relentless confrontation employed dramatic, nonviolent militant tactics - rallies, daily picketing at the White House, hunger strikes, protests, and parades - to bring national attention to suffrage. These two powerful adversarial leaders devoted their lives to women's suffrage, lobbying tirelessly to win the vote for 10 million women. And, in the November 1920 General Election, roughly three million women voted for the first time.

For women of color, though, the 1920 victory did not guarantee voting rights. Despite passionate participation, their voting rights were completely secured with the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

On August 26, 2020, let us reflect on the importance and significance of this anniversary and remember how valuable our right to vote remains. In the words of Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of the League of Women Voters, “Women have suffered agony of soul which you never can comprehend, that you and your daughters might inherit political freedom. Prize it!”

Meet the Board of Directors of the LWVVT

Last month we introduced four of the eight-member board. We now present the remaining four members.



DAVID HORTON, dryder47@gmail.com

David lived in different parts of the world as he grew into a teen and then went to college in the US. He has lived primarily on the east coast and spent most of his adult years in New England; about 17 years here in the North East Kingdom. He moved to this area to volunteer at Karne Choling, a Buddhist retreat center in Barnet and, after a year of service, decided to stay in Vermont for the progressive ideas and politics as well as the natural beauty of this wonderful state.

David works in the NEK; driving seniors with physical and cognitive disabilities to medical appointments and social activities. He has spent 20 years as a social worker, working primarily with people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. He was both an employee and volunteer at the Community Restorative Justice Center in St. Johnsbury. David is proud to be a member of the LWVVT and looks forward to helping.



MADELINE MOTTA, madelinemmotta@aol.com

Madeline is a Vermont Superior Court Assistant Judge and corporate and government ethics compliance consultant, lawyer and academic. Dr. Motta completed her doctorate in law from McGill University Faculty of Law with a focus on fiduciary law, ethics and bio-medical regulatory law. She holds a JD degree from the Univ. of Mass. with extensive experience in anti-trust, and MS in Social Work from McGill University.

Madeline was the first League appointee her to the newly formed Vermont State Ethics Commission and subsequently was elected Chair of the Commission. Madeline established the LWV Inmate Voter Registration Initiative, for which she obtained a grant to register inmates to vote in two large Vermont correctional facilities. Under her direction League volunteers will continue to register inmates to vote in the 2020 election and offer educational seminars on the importance of the right to vote.

In June 2019, Madeline was awarded the LWVVT June Carmichael Award for Outstanding Service to the League.



JESSE SCARLOTO, jessemanysteps@gmail.com

Jesse lives in Montpelier and works primarily as a farmer. She has worked on the Vermont State House as part of an all-volunteer team of liaisons on behalf of a network of LGBTQ rights organizations and has been involved in climate justice work, both locally and regionally.

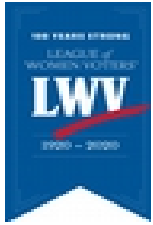
Jesse is especially interested in taking part in the League's work at the State House, continuing voter registration in prisons and to other underserved populations, and encouraging and supporting political engagement for people all across Vermont. She is honored to be on the board, and looks forward to serving in that role.



SONIA SCHUYLER, sonjapeter@comcast.net

Sonja joined the Champlain Valley League in 1970 when a unit formed in Richmond, VT. She joined the State Board as Natural Resource Chair in 1979. In addition, she has been newsletter editor, local and state President, and state Treasurer. She lobbied at the state and national level for clean air and clean water laws. She was the League representative to the Vermont Clean Air Coalition, which worked hard on passage of national legislation to control acid rain and the long range transport of air pollution and served on National LWV committees to re-write the clean water and natural resource positions.

Through her League experience, she became comfortable with public speaking, learned how to write a press release, and how to produce a TV show, and, most importantly, learned how to move a meeting to consensus.



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