



May 2026 "eVoter"

Showing Up Across Our Community

From celebrations to civic action, LWV-CVA is on the move this month!

May is a full and vibrant month—bringing Mother’s Day, UVA graduation, and partnership events for LWV-CVA!

May 1st is May Day and LWV-CVA supports efforts led by Indivisible to raise awareness about threats to democratic processes, including authoritarianism and the influence of money in politics. While no formal meet up is planned, members are encouraged to attend the gathering at 12:00 PM at the Free Speech Wall on the Downtown Mall, with a march to Washington Park. If you attend, consider wearing your LWV T-shirt or button.

On May 2, LWV-CVA will participate in the Batesville Day Parade. Join President Lisa Hilgartner—who will be in suffragist attire—and fellow members as we celebrate and connect with the community. “Votes for Women” sashes will be available. Meet at 10:30 AM in the Batesville field, where we’ll also host a table following the parade. Wearing an LWV T-shirt or white attire is encouraged.

May 16th is a kickoff event in Richmond for the Reproductive Freedom Amendment campaign that is being organized by Virginians for Reproductive Freedom (VRF) and locally by Charlottesville NOW. For those interested, use the link below, or visit the [Charlottesville NOW website](#), to get more information and RSVP!

Contact lww@lww-cva.org if you are interested in carpooling.

Virginians for Reproductive Freedom Registration

May 30th Healthy Streets, Healthy People at Washington Park. (*more information below*)

These are great opportunities to engage the public and inform them of our mission to inform, educate, and advocate for the rights of voters and their families.

BOLO For Annual Meeting Packet

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 13 (see “Save the Date” below for more details). The Annual Meeting packet will be distributed mid-month and, as last year, will be sent electronically. Please check your email—and your spam folder if you don’t see it.

Save the Dates

Upcoming Events

June 6, 2026

LWV-VA Conference

Virtually, 8:30am-12pm

This year, a series of workshops on running a League will be offered. Lisa Hilgartner, President, and Stephanie Lowenhaupt, Vice President, will attend on behalf of our local League.

The workshops are open to any member interested in participating. To learn more or sign up, please contact Lisa Hilgartner at president@lwv-cva.org

June 13, 2026

Annual Meeting and Democra-Tea for All Members

University Universal Church
717 Rugby Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903
2:00-4:00pm

We will hold our Annual Meeting—the one meeting each year where members elect new officers, vote on positions and priorities for the 2026–2027 year, approve the budget, and hear highlights from the past year along with plans for the year ahead. Refreshments will be provided.

We are pleased to welcome Corrine Field, Associate Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the History Department at UVA, as our guest speaker. Her work explores the intersections of age, gender, and race. More information about her talk will be shared in our June e-Voter.

April in Review

PVCC Voter Registration and Education Event
April 8, 2026

Volunteers connected with students at PVCC, providing voter information and encouraging civic participation. Thank you to Lucy Aslett and Pamela Dolgin for engaging with students and supporting this outreach effort.

IX Park Farmers Market

April 11, 2026

Volunteers at our table at the IX Park Farmers Market shared voter resources and connected with community members. Many thanks to Pamela Dolgin, Bobbi Williams, and Anne Geraty for your time and energy.



Monticello Founder's Day Celebration

April 11-12, 2026

We were honored to serve as a community partner for Founder's Day weekend at Monticello. Thank you to Lucy Aslett, Anne Geraty, Lisa Hilgartner, and Stephanie Lowenhaupt for representing the League. Our table welcomed many visitors and sparked a number of meaningful conversations—including one with "Mr. Jefferson."

On Saturday we were treated to a conversation with James Mattis, retired four-star general and prior U.S. Secretary of Defense, and David Rubenstein, philanthropist, author and civic leader. Their discussion explored leadership, character, service, the role of the military in a democratic society, and the values that shape our nation.

"Courage to Participate" Tom Tom Festival Event

April 25, 2026

LWV-CVA hosted our first Civic Circles session as part of the Tom Tom Festival. The crowd was small, but mighty and exactly what we needed to for a "practice run with purpose". We are excited about where this format can go in the future. Special thanks to Kim Harris, Miriam Fleitman, Anne Geraty, Sam Harris, Lucy Aslett, Carol Cutler, and Lisa Hilgartner for making it possible.

Committee News

Voter Services Committee by Kim Harris

How is it already May? April kept us on our toes!

First, a huge thank-you to everyone who served as an election official or observer on April 21. These roles may not be glamorous, but they are critical. After a 16-hour day, I can confirm they also require snacks, stamina, and a solid sense of humor. That said, helping someone vote—especially for the first time—is still one of the best parts.

As you can see from the April In Review section, we were out in the community all month!

Coming Up: We Need You! (Yes, you)

• **May 30, 11–3pm** | Washington Park (lower field)

Healthy Streets, Healthy People

Come help us register voters, talk about upcoming elections—and take a spin on the trivia wheel.

- **June 6, 12–3** | Charlottesville YMCA

Festival of Cultures

Great food, great community, and great conversations about voting and League priorities. What's not to like?

And because we don't believe in slowing down, we're already planning fall events—postcard writing, Civic Circles, Listening Tables, and more.

Want in? Join us! Email Kim Harris (kwharris555@gmail.com) for the Zoom link. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 5 PM—no 16-hour shift required.

Natural Resources Committee by Christine Putnam

The Importance of Dark Skies

During April, both the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County **recognized** International Dark Sky week (April 13-20), raising awareness of the importance of reducing light pollution, which not only prevents our ability to enjoy the spectacular array of stars at night, but also interferes with the natural processes of life on Earth.

Every spring and fall, millions of birds migrate across North America. In Central Virginia, peak spring migration occurs between March 15 and May 15. Seventy percent of North American birds migrate, and 80% of migrating birds fly at night.

Glass and artificial light at night are two extremely impactful human-caused dangers along the way. Migrating birds use the stars to navigate and are especially at risk due to the disorienting effects of light coming from the windows of buildings, security lighting and streetlights. Light pollution and window collisions result in the death of millions of birds every year.

This problem is easily addressed. Add window treatments to **prevent bird collisions**, and move bird baths and feeders away from windows. Reduce light pollution at night by following the **five principles of responsible outdoor lighting** as recommended by Dark Sky International and the Illuminating Engineering Society.

For billions of years, all biological processes have evolved with the Earth's predictable rhythm of night and day. The response to this predictable rhythm is encoded in the DNA of all life. There is growing evidence that the **disruption of the day/night cycle can have serious consequences** for our mental and bodily health. Nighttime exposure to artificial light, specifically the blue light emitted from LEDs, suppresses melatonin production, which is needed to keep us healthy. Melatonin has antioxidant properties, induces sleep, boosts the immune system, lowers cholesterol, and helps our body function properly. So remember to turn off the lights-- for birds, for your own health, and for the health of all other living things on planet Earth.

International Relations and Foreign Government by Gerry Kruger

The International Relations Federal Government Committee met on April 16, 2026 at a different venue for the first time. Our Lady of Peace Nursing Home welcomed Anita Pilling, who led our discussion, and LWV-CVA members Kathy Sudduth, Carol Cutler, Dena Imlay, Bobbie Williams, Rosalie Simari, and Gerry Kruger. Others joining us were Sarah Esvert from Louisa County and Ina Holland who once lived in Germany and now lives in Charlottesville.

The topic of today's discussion was Cuba. To fully understand the diverse group of people in Cuba today and their attitudes toward their government, we need to understand its history going all the way back to the first East Asians to arrive in the Western Hemisphere.

In the 1830's the first East Asians came in Spanish galleons from the Philippines as indentured servants. They had conjugal relationships with Afro-indigenous women and played an active role in Cuba's struggles for independence and in the business community.

Rum, which was integral to the slave trade, played a key role in the alliance formed between dictator Fulgencio Batista and Meyer Lansky, born in Brooklyn, the son of Jewish immigrants. Lansky was responsible for Havana becoming a major gambling and narcotics hub that flourished from the 1920's until the 1959 Revolution.

An influential Cuban poet and journalist, Jose Marti, became a national hero when he died fighting for Cuba in the 19th century war of independence in which Cuban elites revolted against Spanish colonists. The famous American humorist and novelist Mark Twain also opposed the U.S. occupation of Cuba and the Philippines following the Spanish American War in 1898.

The Platt Amendment of 1901 allowed the U.S. to intervene in Cuban affairs and maintain naval bases like Guantanamo Bay. It was in effect until 1934.

Today Cuba remains a Castro regime. President Diaz-Canel is Raul Castro's handpicked successor, the first President in decades that is not a member of the Castro family, but he is careful to present himself as a loyalist. He blames Cuba's struggles on U.S sanctions in place since 1962.

As of now there is no organized political opposition to the Castro regime. It would be difficult for many Cubans to overthrow the communist government. Despite poor conditions, the government has embraced the importance of education, medical training, and abstinence concerning alcohol and drug use. Also, the Cubans' close ties to Venezuela and Maduro, who provided Cuba with much needed oil, makes the possibility of winning their hearts and minds improbable.

GAESA, which is a conglomerate owned and operated by Cuba's armed forces, controls Cuba's economy and makes it impossible for private businesses to compete against it. GAESA gets a percentage of all businesses and must approve them.

Our group wasn't sure about Putin's involvement in Cuba and his relationship with President Trump. Does Putin want to avoid provoking Trump into giving aid to Ukraine?

President Trump's unpredictability combined with the disapproval of the former allies of the United States, makes it difficult for us to see a positive outcome for

The next meeting of the IR/FG committee will be held on **June 11 at 1:00 at Our Lady of Peace**. The topic is Africa.



Celebration of Women: A Quilters Perspective by Priscilla B. Godfrey of Philomont, VA

This quilt was made to honor the 80 year struggle to gain the right to vote. Many suffragettes experienced torture and great pain while incarcerated for their posters in front of the White House. Colors chosen represent the colors of the sashes they wore and the lettering represents the black letters on white of their protest posters during their wordless silent protests in front of the White House in Washington, D.C. We must never forget what they did for women throughout the United States.

Update Your LWV-CVA Handbook **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Kimberly Swanson
434-284-7796
Nkawie99@gmail.com
124 Commonwealth Circle
Charlottesville, VA 22901

LWV CVA Calendar of Events May 2026

Visit our [website calendar](#) for more information

May 1 12pm, May Day Solidarity Celebration, Free Speech Wall

May 2 10:30am, Batesville Day, 6534 Plank Rd, Afton VA

May 12 5pm, Voter Services Meeting, via Zoom
Contact kwharris555@gmail.com to join

May 16 12pm, Virginians for Reproductive Freedom Campaign Launch, Richmond, VA

May 21 3pm, Board of Directors Meeting, Hybrid via Zoom or Northside Library

May 25 4pm, Natural Resources Meeting, Piedmont Environmental Council Office

May 30, Healthy Streets, Healthy People, Washington Park

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area

President: Lisa Hilgartner

eVoter Editor: Jessica Harris

Visit our website: lwv-cva.org



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We are committed to applying the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our operations and activities. We support governmental policies that apply these principles in addressing the social, environmental and economic problems in our communities.

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area | PO Box 2786 | Charlottesville, VA 22902 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!