



THE VOTER

Newsletter of the
League of Women Voters® of the Williamsburg Area

Celebrating our 55th Year

MAY 2018

P.O. Box 1086, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1086

www.lwvwilliamsburg.org

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League of Women Voters State Council

Would you like to observe and participate in the statewide League Council this summer? It takes place on **June 16, 2018**. Each local League has two voting delegates (the President or designee and one other delegate) but can send an unlimited number of observers.

The Council will be held at the **Roslyn Retreat Center, Henrico, VA**. The deadline for Council registration is May 31. Registration is \$50 for each delegate or observer; reservations need to be made online.

In addition to the discussion of League business, attendees will be able to participate in workshops pertinent to League activities in Virginia. Contact Mary Schilling if you have questions or are interested in attending.

You're Invited! – 2018 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting for Williamsburg-area members will be **Thursday, June 7, 4:30-6:30 pm, in New Town's Legacy Hall**. The event includes a reception, brief business meeting, and remarks by the **Virginia Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Thomasson**. Secretary Thomasson assists the Governor in recruiting and appointing Virginians for boards, managing restoration of rights, and other tasks.

SAVE THE DATES

May 23	New Member Orientation	6:30-8:30 pm	Mary Schilling's Home
June 6	LWV-VA Board Meeting	4 – 5:30 pm	Williamsburg Library, Rm B
June 16	LWV State Council	Saturday	Roslyn Retreat Ctr, Henrico
July 11	LWV-WA Board Meeting	4-5:30 pm	Williamsburg Library, Rm B

President's Column

Again this year, **Great Decisions**, our signature foreign affairs lecture series, was a huge success—with sold-out crowds plus standbys. Doug Wood managed speaker selection and logistics while Doris and Harvey Margulies orchestrated registration, check-in procedures and correspondence. Mary Anne Miller coordinated hospitality. A special thanks to the team and their many volunteers who provided support. Great Decisions has earned high visibility in the community, and already subscribers are looking forward to next year's series.

During **General Assembly** the LWV-VA's **Women's Legislative Roundtable** brought into focus the incredible array of bills proposed in the House of Delegates and the Senate. Each Wednesday a Williamsburg League contingent trekked to Richmond to hear non-profit executives, Delegates, and elected officials discuss bills as they moved through the legislative process. In direct conversations with our local Delegates and Senators we were able to advocate for League positions on a variety of bills. Our League consistently had the largest number of members present, and on one occasion, seated in the House Gallery, we were recognized by the Speaker. Concurrently, a number of League members wrote emails, sent letters, and made phone calls advocating on individual bills. The advocacy efforts were tracked as part of a challenge launched by the LWV-VA.

The **March for Our Lives** galvanized and mobilized persons of all ages and from diverse communities on issues of sensible gun legislation. What was conceived as a march in our nation's capital ultimately became hundreds of marches across the country and even abroad on Saturday, March 24. A large crowd gathered at Colonial Williamsburg's Capitol for speeches, then marched down Duke of Gloucester Street. Many League members joined in the march to demand common-sense

solutions to curb gun violence. Others joined the March for Our Lives in DC where nearly a million people gathered near the US Capitol for speeches, videos, and music performances. Similar to other historic marches, these events provided opportunities for the exercise of free speech focused on a critical issue of our day.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy. is the new LWV slogan! As noted by LWVUS, "Voting is a critical cornerstone of our democracy. We must protect the right to vote with laws and policies that make sure all eligible voters are free to exercise that right." It is imperative that we work to expand voter access, work to register all eligible Americans to vote, and guard against any covert or overt attempts to suppress the right to vote. Further, we need to be vigilant and ready to stand up and speak out when our democratic institutions, norms, and rights are threatened. These are serious times.

Please join us for our **Annual Meeting** on Thursday, June 7, 4:30-6:30 pm, in New Town's Legacy Hall. The event includes a reception, brief business meeting, and remarks by the **Virginia Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Thomasson**. Passionate about openness and inclusion in state government, Secretary Thomasson assists the Governor in recruiting and appointing Virginians for boards, commissions and councils. Her portfolio includes management of clemency petitions, restoration of civil rights, extraditions, authentication of documents and commissioning of Notary Publics. She is the Governor's liaison to Virginia's Indian Tribes as well as the Council on Women and was appointed by former Governor McAuliffe to the Virginia Information Technology Advisory Council.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

*Mary Schilling, President, LWV-WA
Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*



These League members attended the March for Our Lives in Washington D.C.: Mary Ann Moxon, Lucy Painter, Mary Schilling, Kathy Casey, Stuart Dopp, a friend, and Bobbie Falquet.

2018 Annual Meeting Offers Food, Fun, and Facts

Phoebe Kent, *The Voter Co-Editor*

Come join us from 4:30-6:30 pm at Legacy Hall in New Town for a lively, interesting Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 7. In addition to the opportunity to converse with fellow members, the meeting features Kelly Thomasson, Governor Northam’s Secretary of Administration, who will share her insights with us. Her responsibilities are many: management of clemency petitions, restoration of civil rights, extraditions, authentication of documents and commissioning of Notary Publics.

Kelly is a graduate of **Lead Virginia**, a statewide leadership program that gives a select group of professionals the opportunity to learn about regional differences and statewide needs, creating a nonpartisan network of informed, active leaders with a shared vision for the Commonwealth’s future. She currently serves on the Lead Virginia Board of Directors. She was named to Top 40 Under 40 by *Style Weekly* in 2017.

We will also conduct our formal business – hearing a report from President Mary Schilling,

voting for new officers, and approving a budget for 2018-2019. Hors d’oeuvres and drinks will be available. We hope to see you there.

General Assembly and Great Decisions Photos



Les Solomon, Christine Payne, Rubyjean Gould, Bobbie Falquet, Sudie and Rich Watkins, shown here at a WLRT event, are among the League members who made their voices heard during the GA session this year.



Above: Doug Wood, speaker Larry Wilkerson, and Mary Schilling.

Nominating Committee's Proposed 2018-2020 Slate

*LWV-WA will elect those candidates noted in **bold** below to two-year terms. The remaining officers' and directors' terms continue for another year.*

Officers:

President: Mary Schilling (2018-2020)
Vice President: Les Solomon (2018-2020)
Secretary: Lucy Painter (2018-2020)
Treasurer: Lonnie Mattes (2017-2019)
Parliamentarian (Appointed): Mary Swain

Elected Directors (6 allowed):

Outreach/Public Relations: Mary Ann Moxon (2018-2020)
Great Decisions: Don Schilling (2018-2020)
Advocacy and Activism: Linda Rice (2018-2020)
Membership Co-Chair: Susan Carron (2018-2020)
Voter Service Co-Chair: Rubyjean Gould (2017-2019)
The Voter Co-Editor: Madeline Vann (2017-2019)

Directors Appointed by President (6 allowed):

Voter Service Co-Chair: Maryann Simpson (2018-2019)
Great Decisions Co-Chair: Bobbie Falquet (2018-2019)
Hospitality: Jan Keady (2018-2019)
Member at Large: Phoebe Kent, *The Voter* Co-Editor(2018-2019)
Member at Large: Mary Bull, Webmaster (2018-2019)
Member at Large: Kathy Casey (2018-2019)
Ex-Officio: Anne Smith

Nominating Committee:

Chair: Carol Deakins (2017-2019)
Member: Judy Knudson (2017-2019)
Member: Ann Tetreault (2017-2019)
Two members appointed by the board

2018 Nominating Committee:

Chair: Carol Deakins
Member: Judy Knudson
Member: Ann Tetreault
Board-appointed Member: Phoebe Kent
Board-appointed Member: Les Solomon

Budget to be voted on at Annual Meeting:

**LWVWA Proposed Budget for July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019
2018-2019 Budget Committee Report**

Receipts

Dues	6,500
Great Decisions	13,000
Contributions	1,550
Transfer from Reserves	5,700

Total Receipts **26,750**

Expenses

Voter Services

Candidates Forum & Voter Information	500
Great Decisions expenses	8,500
Facts for Voters/Special events	1,000
Web services	400

Total Voter Services **10,400**

LWV Position Support

PMP-National and State	6,800
LWV Conventions and meetings:	
State Mtngs and Round Table	700
State Convention	5,000
LWVUS Convention	0
LWV Interest Groups	1,000

Total LWV Position Support **13,500**

Services to Members

Membership Meetings	800
Annual Meeting	800
Holiday party	300
LMVWA "Voter" newsletter	350

General overhead expenses 600

Total Expenses **26,750**

Submitted by Budget Committee: Sue Delos, Chair; Barry Hood; Don Schilling

Ex Officio: Mary Schilling, Lonnie Mattes

(The budget is available only to members and should not be shared outside the organization.)

News from the State Board

Anne Bradstreet Smith, VP, Williamsburg,
LWV-VA Program Director

I am delighted to announce that both the Behavioral Health (initiated and led by our own Williamsburg Area League) and Public Funds for Public Schools study updates are complete. They have been recommended by the State Board to be considered for concurrence at the upcoming Council.

And please do mark your calendars for Council on June 16. President Sue Lewis will be issuing a “Call to Council,” but in the meantime here’s some information for your planning purposes. Each local League has two voting delegates (the President or designee and one other delegate) but can send unlimited observers, and we hope many of you will chose to attend. This year Council is very accessible ... it’s at the Roslyn Retreat Center, 8727 River Rd., Henrico, VA 23229. The rooms are \$79.13; the deadline for reservations and for Council registration is May 31. Registration is \$50 for each delegate or observer; reservations need to be made online.

The Council agenda includes presentations on each of the two study updates, followed by a caucus on the draft position changes. The speaker is Rachel Bitecofer, a published author and the Assistant Director of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University. The afternoon includes breakout groups. One I think will be particularly interesting for the Williamsburg League is a session on working with activist groups.

I hope to see many of you at Council!

“The vote is a power, a weapon of offense and defense, a prayer. Use it intelligently, conscientiously, prayerfully. Progress is calling to you to make no pause. Act!”

- Carrie Chapman Catt

LWV-VA Behavioral Health (BH) Study Update

Linda Rice, Behavioral Health Study Chair

BACKGROUND

At its 2017 convention, the LWV-Virginia voted to update its existing mental health position, originally adopted in 1987 and 1989, which would also integrate the current language of the LWVUS Behavioral Health Position adopted at its 2016 Convention. “Behavioral health” is today’s nationally recognized terminology that includes both mental illness and substance-use disorder.

STATUS

LWV-VA recommends the Study Committee’s proposed position for adoption at LWV-VA Council in June 2018. Local Leagues are also asked to review and comment on the position.

The BH Committee members include: Rubyjean Gould, Karen Kallay, Judy Helein, and Jodi Longwell who worked in the behavioral health field and/or are serving on Community Service Boards. Other members of the committee - Bobbie Falquet, Madeline Larkin, Mary Ann Moxon, Linda Rice, Nicole Trifone, and Madeline Vann – also spent many hours becoming familiar with the issues.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED POSITION

Support for comprehensive behavioral health care that includes both mental illness and substance-use disorder:

- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services.
- Coordination of comprehensive and integrated care among Health and Human Services (specifically Behavioral Health) and other state departments such as Medical Assistance Services (Medicaid), Public Safety (re-entry planning, identification of behavioral

health needs in jails/prisons, patients' rights, substance abuse, and drug/mental health courts), Housing (Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing), and Education (health education from early childhood through adult). These agencies must provide this care along with a focus on community-based services such as Community Service Boards (CSBs).

- Realignment of the Commonwealth's funding equation so that a higher proportion of funds is directed to CSBs rather than state institutions. This will result in more cost-effective care that is more responsive to clients' needs.
- Adequate funds and other incentives to ensure sufficient trained staff at all levels of service.
- Continued efforts to decrease the stigmatization of behavioral health problems/care.

Public Schools Taskforce Recommends Changes to Education Position

Sudie Watkins, Education Chair

On April 11 the League sponsored a public forum, *Public Funds for Public Schools*. The School Choice Task Force, authorized by last year's State League Convention and led by Richmond Leaguer Carol Noggle, after considerable research has concluded that our League education position needs to be supplemented with specifics on Virginia school-choice options. Preventing the diversion of public funds from public schools to private schools is the primary goal.

At the forum, Carol Noggle's PowerPoint presentation highlighted that Virginia's public schools face fierce competition and challenges from the private and corporate sectors. Public

funds are going to private schools. The task force analyzed the parameters, funding, and administration of Virginia's Tuition Tax Credit programs, private Virtual Schools, and proposals for voucher programs that all have a negative impact on public school funding.

Even though Virginia, in comparison to some states, has been conservative in authorizing tax credit and voucher programs, there is a strong interest from some legislators, private schools, and profit-making companies to expand them, thereby raising major concerns about the quality of private schools and private resources that receive the public funds. Those schools, including for-profit online learning programs, may have inadequate oversight, accountability, accreditation, transparency, student retention rates, achievement scores, curriculum, and protection of rights. Already some public funds go to private schools that include religious training, thereby compromising the principle of separation of church and state.

Virginia public school funding needs continued protection. The Task Force believes that the LWV-VA Education Position requires supplemental details and language in order to offer effective advocacy. In brief, the recommendations are:

1. Support the Virginia Code's current extensive regulations for establishment and administration of the eight existing **public** Charter Schools.

2. Oppose the Tuition Tax Credit Program: Virginia has a tax credit scholarship program, Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit (EISTC) Program, that allows taxpayers to donate to Scholarship Foundations that provide scholarships for students in certain approved private schools. Thus, public funds are going to private schools. The Task Force recommends opposing any expansion from the current parameters, and supports new limits that would decrease public schools' loss of revenue.

3. Oppose Vouchers *aka* "Parental Choice Education Savings Accounts" (ESAs)

4. Virtual Schools: Require robust Department of Education oversight, accreditation, and accountability of any public programs; oppose profit-making providers.

Strengthening the League education position will allow members to speak out on any attempts to divert public school funds to alternatives. Delegates to State Council on June 16 will address these proposed changes.

Education Committee Explores Various Issues

Sudie Watkins, Education Chair

Educational involvement and coordination with other groups has been the focus of several events this year. On February 13, the Education Committee joined with three other groups – W&M School of Education, WJCC PTA Council, and The Village – to present the film, *Backpack Full of Cash*. This film explores the real cost of privatizing America’s public schools. In many places, public education is at a tipping point. Leaders in Washington are calling for a massive increase in funds to expand privately-run charter schools and vouchers. The film viewing was an opportunity to connect with others working to support and strengthen public schools that serve all students equitably. Following the screening of the film, the approximately 80 attendees shared their comments, questions, and ideas.

The LWV Education Committee met on April 23 at the Williamsburg Library and heard attorney Laura Turnberry speak. She has focused on education law since opening her practice in 2008 and provided information on the current state of Special Education in Virginia. She added her personal insights as the mother of children who have utilized the Special Education laws to get the best education possible.



Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax introduced LWV-WA board member Jo Solomon while presiding in the Senate during General Assembly. Jo and Justin had worked in the Eastern District Federal Court in Alexandria, Fairfax as law clerk to the federal judge and Jo as courtroom clerk. His personal story, commitment to justice, and infectious laugh made Fairfax one of her favorite colleagues. The Lt. Governor’s public recognition of Jo made her day!

LWV-VA Makes an Impact at General Assembly

Phoebe Kent, The Voter Co-Editor

For seven weeks during the legislative session, Williamsburg Leaguers trekked to Richmond on Wednesdays to attend the Women’s Legislative Roundtable, sponsored by the state League. Ten local Leagues sent members; 8 state board members and 9 AAUW friends were also among the 182 attendees. Williamsburg League sent as many as 14 attendees, including two present for all seven sessions. At each WLRT, delegates, senators, agency and nonprofit leaders spoke about their priorities and upcoming legislation; thereafter attendees visited legislators’ offices to share League positions.

Christine Paine kept us informed weekly with her Action Alerts that highlighted WLRT speakers and upcoming legislation requiring citizen action and advocacy sharing with the state League. Her thoughtful reflections on her General Assembly experience follow this article.

Highlights of General Assembly session:

- Speaker Kirk Cox (R, Colonial Heights) succeeded retiring Speaker William Howell.
- House of Delegates now includes 51 Republicans, 49 Democrats (change from 66 Reps, 34 Dems) with 12 new women (total now 28).
- Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax presides in the Senate.
- 1558 bills introduced in the House, 966 in Senate.
- Redistricting bills were defeated early.
- The ERA was defeated despite vigorous protests from the gallery.
- The felon threshold was raised to \$500 from \$250, not enough, the League feels, but a start.
- The Constitutional Convention bill was defeated.
- Transparency increased exponentially: now all committee and subcommittee rooms electronically record every vote; live streaming of committee meetings.
- Two of five Constitutional Amendments passed in 2017 survived this session; both involve some form of property tax exemption - for veterans' surviving spouses and the other regarding recurrent flooding.
- School suspension times reduced for two age levels.

Learning and Lobbying at the General Assembly

Christine Payne, LWV-VA member and author of weekly General Assembly Action Alerts

I am happy to have become a member of the Williamsburg Area LWV this past year and am grateful to be involved in this nonpartisan political organization. We all come to the group with our own perspectives, cultivated in large part, from our life experiences. Originally from

Connecticut, I grew up in a large Italian family, nurtured by many strong, passionate women. I was influenced early in life by the Carmelite order of nuns who administered a nursing home where I volunteered and was later employed throughout high school and college. Attending Fairfield University for my undergraduate degree in Nursing exposed me to the Jesuit philosophies of critical thinking and the pursuit of justice, and prepared me well for my career in critical-care nursing. As a result, the lens through which I view the world is focused primarily on how an issue impacts health, safety, and well-being.

Raising my twin daughters and their brother, all born within a span of two years, kept me busy for the better part of two decades. I remember the gut-wrenching day of the Virginia Tech shooting that compelled me to hold my little ones tighter and added a new layer of worry and concern about the world in which they were living. I did not, however, become active in the cause of gun violence prevention (GVP) until the Sandy Hook shooting intruded upon the quiet neighboring town of my childhood and directly involved my family and friends. Over the past five years, the GVP issue has motivated me to become a more active participant in civic discourse and activism. Ours is a fragile democracy and one that requires civic engagement to survive.

As I reflect upon this past session of the General Assembly, I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the Women's Legislative Roundtable discussions. Each week during the 2018 session, League members throughout the state gathered in Richmond to meet with our representatives and activists to discuss a variety of issues. I was struck by the depth of knowledge and level of dedication of League members and their eagerness to engage in discussions of public policy. I was proud to be among the women and men comprising the Williamsburg-area contingent, who maintained an impressive level of attendance and engagement throughout the course of six weeks.

Through our roundtable discussions and the lobbying efforts that followed, I learned a great deal from the talent and commitment of our members, each possessing a unique set of skills and perspectives. Whether we met with legislators and aides who supported our policy positions, or those who did not align with the League, I believe our presence was impactful and contributed to effective civic discourse.

I was equally motivated by the level of involvement and willingness to participate among our legislative representatives. The WLRT forum provided an opportunity for new delegates to share their visions as well as the challenges they confronted within the General Assembly. The obstacles they faced did not diminish their optimism. Whether they were given a less-than-exciting committee assignment, faced with persistent hazing or the competing demands of the job and their families, this group of freshmen delegates conducted themselves with professionalism and grace. Additionally, I recognize and admire the tenacity and wealth of experience of our longest serving female representative in the House, Delegate Vivian Watts (D-Fairfax). First elected in 1981 and later in 1996, Delegate Watt's breadth of experience is an asset to the legislative body as a whole. Her consistent attendance at our WLRT's enhanced our understanding of the challenges unique to female legislators and of a wide range of policy initiatives including workplace conduct, budget and taxes, transportation and education. Our understanding of legislative issues was also enhanced by conversations with activists such as OneVirginia2021's Brian Cannon and Claire Gastanaga of the Virginia ACLU. Through this in-depth information sharing, we League members were empowered to lobby our representatives.

Influencing public policy through education and advocacy is our ongoing League responsibility. I am happy to have had this opportunity to actively participate and look forward to ways in which we, as League

members, can continue to make an impact on every level of government.



Jo Solomon, Sen. Monty Mason, and Christine Payne during one of the League trips to the General Assembly.

Members Recorded Their General Assembly Actions

Les Solomon, Membership Chair

The Williamsburg-area League is the second largest League in the state (Fairfax is larger) and one of the most active. When the State League decided to promote advocacy efforts during the General Assembly session, we were one of four Leagues to participate. Not only did we keep the roads busy between Williamsburg and Richmond each week, we also documented our contact activity with our delegates and senators.

Although several members did not report their at-home lobbying work, this much we do know: Members made more than 260 contacts with our representatives during the session: 42% were in person in Richmond, 33% were by phone, and 22% were by email. A special thank you to new members Christine Payne for

her diligent work in preparing weekly Action Alerts for the membership, and Denise Goode for compiling the records of contacts.

General Assembly Update: Special Session and Reconvene Session

Phoebe Kent, The Voter Co-Editor

Since the 2018 General Assembly ended without a budget passed, the two houses were called back for a Special Session on April 11. The House passed a budget again that includes Medicaid expansion for 400,000 Virginians, but included a stricter work requirement for able-bodied adults and an effort to bring down the cost of Affordable Care Act insurance policies as enticements for Senate passage. While most Democrats and 19 Republicans supported the change, Rep. Sam Rasoul (D-Roanoke) voted against this budget because of the more stringent work requirements. The budget now goes to the Senate. Unless at least two Senate Republicans change their minds, it will be up to about a dozen senior legislators to negotiate a budget. And unless a two-year budget is passed by June 30, state government will shut down.

The legislative bodies held a one-day Reconvene Session on April 18, limited to considering Governor Northam's amendments to bills passed by House and Senate. In all, the Governor amended 60 bills and vetoed 10. His vetoes were all upheld, including one related to sanctuary cities (Virginia has no sanctuary cities) and another that would have limited the governor's authority.

Of particular interest to our area, the House and Senate approved the Governor's amendment removing groceries and retaining the \$2 transient occupancy tax in Senate Bill 942, which increases by 1% the sales tax for just the Historic Triangle. In order for the tax increase to go into effect, the Williamsburg City Council must repeal its Tourism Development

Fund that increased taxes to transient occupancy, food and beverage, and admissions. At this juncture, City Council is weighing its options; action is expected soon.

Voter Services Visible and Active in Community

Maryann Simpson, Voter Services Co-Chair

Our 2018 Voter Services' efforts are off to a great start with continued initiatives in the community. We took advantage of the enthusiasm generated by the national and local March for Our Lives. Spearheaded by Voter Services Co-Chair Rubyjean Gould, we attended the local march in Williamsburg and encouraged new voter registrations, as well as providing excellent information about upcoming elections through our *Facts for Voters* trifolds. Rubyjean was assisted by members Priscilla Peterson, Sharon Kiefer, and Leslie Herman.

We piggybacked on these marches by going into our local high schools to register eligible students to vote. There was real enthusiasm and interest by students in voting and making their voices heard! Many thanks to members Kathy Suslik, Kathy Casey and Susan Mulnix for helping.

We have also visited our local senior communities to assist residents in updating voter information and applying for absentee ballots if needed. These are lifelong voters, and we are honored to help them continue their commitment to full participation. Again, thanks to League members Mary Ann Brendel, Mary Chris Miller, Kathy Casey, Lucy Painter and Priscilla Peterson for their help.

A naturalization ceremony for new citizens is scheduled for June 14 at Colonial Williamsburg; there we will register our new citizens for their first election. This ceremony is open to the public, and we encourage you to come witness this wonderful and moving event.

OneVirginia2021 Local Action Group Formed in Williamsburg

Phoebe Kent, The Voter Co-Editor

OneVirginia2021 Associate Director Aaron Ware was surprised and delighted to find nearly twenty area residents at a meeting at the Williamsburg Library on Tuesday, April 3, to discuss setting up a **Local Action Group** (LAG) in the Williamsburg area.

OneVirginia2021 is the bipartisan redistricting reform coalition of which the state League and others, including LWV-WA, are members. Its goal is to educate Virginians on the redistricting process, the harm gerrymandering does to our democratic process, and how we can make reasonable, tangible reforms to improve representation. The crucial next step is to petition for reform in advance of the 2020 census and the redistricting that will take place in 2021. OneVirginia2021 officially launched its Constitutional Amendment Campaign with its March Forth to the State Capitol on March 4, 2018, a day that included training sessions for advocates.

With the clock ticking, Aaron explained to interested Williamsburg-area residents that OneVirginia2021 seeks local groups – LAGs – to assist in gathering 1,000 signatures from each House of Delegates’ district to petition legislators to pass an amendment in its 2019 and 2020 sessions that voters must then approve in November 2020. The proposed amendment would include anti-gerrymandering language, promote transparency, and support redistricting that preserves “communities of interest.” Aaron also discussed specific ways in which Local Area Group members could assist: by volunteering to collect signatures at the polls for the May 1 Williamsburg municipal elections. As of April 2018, OneVirginia2021 has collected over 72,000 signatures around Virginia.

When LAG met again on April 24, OneVirginia2021 provided training on how to interact with voters and distributed materials to hand out on May 1. In the meantime, Patti Gray secured Special Event Permits for LAG volunteers to be present for education and petitioning adjacent to the Farmer’s Market on the Henry Street side on April 21, 28 and May 5 and 12. The LAG is creating a list of other area events where volunteers can solicit additional signatures.

Among the initial meeting attendees, I noted LWV-WA members Jim Goode, Mary Ann Moxon, Sue Mulnix, Les Solomon, and Mary Swain. We welcome other Leaguers to assist in gathering signatures. Contact Williamsburg@onevirginia2021.org to volunteer.

New and Improved League Website Debuts

Mary Bull, Williamsburg Webmaster

A good website can spread helpful information to voters, promote League activities, and recruit new members. The past couple of months have seen positive changes to our website which should help us accomplish these three and more. For years, our website represented us well through a product from the California League; however, last year they announced format changes and a large price increase. Fortunately, our Virginia League was prepared to establish a new local setup which will give us greater flexibility and significant savings. Carol Lindstrom (Communications) and Wayne Knight (webmaster) from the State League manage the new website system and were very helpful in the transition.

Our website has a different look, but is at the same address, lwwilliamsburg.org, and has most of the same content as the previous site. At lwwilliamsburg.org/blog, you can see regular posts on topics of interest to League

members and voters. If you have ideas for the website, email me at web@lwvwilliamsburg.org.

A major improvement facilitated by the new website will be the ability to fill out forms, pay dues, and donate to the Williamsburg League on the website. Dr. Kelly Shaw, a local member and professional in software development for over 30 years, the last 20 of which have been in web application development, is facilitating the addition of electronic forms and payment systems to lwvwilliamsburg.org. We are lucky to have her expertise available to us and are on track to have these features added to the website in time for the July 2018 membership drive. A simpler, modern payment system will make it easier to recruit and process information for new members. Our goal is an engaging, coherent, and modern website that will inform local voters on relevant issues and invite them to join in the work of the Williamsburg League.

New Members Invited to Meet with Board

Anne Bradstreet Smith, Vice-President

The Board is delighted to acknowledge the many new members who have joined the Williamsburg Area League of Women Voters in the past few months. We will hold a “get-acquainted gathering” to welcome them for dessert and conversation on Wednesday, May 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the home of Mary Schilling, League President.

Board members and committee chairs will be present to discuss the myriad ways in which new members can get involved in local League activities: by observing governmental officials or bodies in action (General Assembly, City Council, Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, etc.); by participating in a special interest committee, such as education that meets regularly to hear educational experts and advocates for our local schools; by helping to

register young people to vote at our local high schools; or by learning how the League studies an issue in depth, such as fracking, in order to reach consensus on a position, prior to speaking on behalf of the League. The possibilities for *Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.* are many, and we welcome your energy and enthusiasm.

Invitations to new members will be sent by mail.



Doug Wood, China speaker Paul Herr, and Mary Schilling at the Great Decisions lecture series.

Great Decisions Lecture Series Concluded in March

Phoebe Kent, The Voter Co-Editor

Our League owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the outstanding Great Decisions team of Doug Wood and Doris and Harvey Margulies, who have completed their terms. Doug consistently provided Leaguers and community attendees with outstanding and knowledgeable speakers over the last four years. Doris’s attention to detail and careful administrative oversight have brought near-capacity crowds annually to the Williamsburg Regional Library for the Tuesday foreign affairs

lectures during February and March. Every week she and husband Harvey warmly welcomed attendees, distributed Great Decisions books, and sold one-day tickets.

While informing us about timely foreign policy issues, the Great Decisions series is a significant fundraiser for the LWV-WA – and a League gift to the community. According to Doris's careful records, her energetic recruitment netted 285 subscribers in 2018. She and Harvey sold 13 stand-by tickets in February and 47 in March.

Subscribers receive a program book containing essays on all eight topics, and the Foreign Affairs Council also provides a DVD on each study topic. In some communities, the DVDs are routinely shown and discussed. We in Williamsburg have benefited from Doug's wide contacts to engage local and national speakers for each topic. We did show one DVD when a scheduled speaker was unable to arrive on time, and Don Schilling led a discussion. Those interested in one or more of the Great Decision topics can check out the DVDs at WRL to view at home.

No speaker is more popular than Larry Wilkerson, former chief of staff to Colin Powell and adjunct professor at the College of William & Mary. As Doug Wood recounts, each year he offered Larry his pick of topics, and Wilkerson's remarks are always up-to-date and relevant, if often cautionary. On March 13 the WRL lobby overflowed with people hoping to get a stand-by ticket to hear him talk about Russia (16 people were able to purchase tickets that day; many more were turned away.).

Additional Great Decision thank you's: Mary Anne Miller ably assumed responsibility for providing refreshments (those Costco cookies are gobbled up!) each Tuesday. Last year she assisted Nancy Campbell, then Hospitality Chair, who died in January. Nancy set a high standard for gracious hospitality, performing her duties even when slowed down considerably by her reliance on her oxygen machine. We miss her and appreciate Mary Anne's good work.

Mary Swain's cheery presence at the door every week greeted attendees. Don Schilling assisted Doug Wood with speakers and took photographs. Last but hardly least, the staff of the WRL is an invaluable League partner, providing the auditorium space, starting the coffee each Tuesday, carrying in the heavy urns, helping speakers with their technology needs, and assisting in myriad ways. In April the League board expressed its appreciation with a monetary gift to the library.

A Tribute: Nancy Campbell

Phoebe Kent, The Voter Co-Editor

The LWV-WA League lost a valued member in January when Nancy Campbell succumbed to the lung issues that she had faced for several years. Recruited first by former president Linda Rice, Nancy served as Hospitality Chair on the League board until late last year. She was a warm presence at the coffee-and-cookie table during Great Decisions, enjoying her personal contact with Leaguers and community members attending the foreign affairs lecture series each February and March. Nancy also oversaw the provision of refreshments for our September programs and Annual Meetings in June, making countless trips to Costco and working with volunteers at the events.

Kathy Suslik said Nancy became a friend the day Kathy moved into Longhill Gate near her, and they saw or talked to each other virtually every day. According to Kathy, Nancy loved the arts – theater, books, museums – and they enjoyed traveling together. Both women loved their dogs; Nancy took the loss of her dog this past year very hard. Fiercely independent, Nancy remained in many ways a private person.

A former teacher, Nancy was active in a book group that includes League members Flora Adams, Nancy Hummel, and Meda Humphreys. Meda expressed amazement at how determined Nancy was to fulfill her hospitality

responsibilities despite the significant limitations of her condition. She said Nancy was just a “wonderful gal” and their book group misses her terribly. Flora Adams concurred, noting her admiration for Nancy’s character and her uncomplaining nature. All of us who were touched by her presence miss Nancy Campbell.

League Membership Numbers Climb

Les Solomon, Membership Chair

April is an interesting time to report on membership. Our official 2017-2018 membership, according to the National count as of January 31 was 173. But our count today includes 173 plus all new memberships since February 1. In the last months, 19 new

members have joined. So our new membership figure, at least temporarily, is 192!

All that changes in July, when our annual membership drive begins. With this new drive will come some new tools available to members, as well as our managers, to more efficiently renew members and keep our members (and friends) informed. Our membership dues continue to be among the lowest in the entire state by our design—we want to ensure that membership is affordable to all. In fact, for student memberships, the board dropped the annual fee from \$15 to \$10. Most of your local dues is sent to the state and national Leagues as our per-member assessment. Therefore, we are especially grateful to members who make an additional gift with their dues. Those dollars help us provide local programs for you.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

For full calendar of events see:

<http://www.lwvwilliamsburg.org/calendar.html>



May 1	City of Williamsburg Election	6 am-7 pm	City polling places
May 2	LWV-VA Board Meeting	4 – 5:30 pm	Williamsburg Library, Rm B
May 23	New Member Orientation	6:30-8:30 pm	Mary Schilling’s Home
June 6	LWV-VA Board Meeting	4 – 5:30 pm	Williamsburg Library, Rm B
June 7	LWV-VA Annual Meeting	4:30-6:30 pm	Legacy Hall, New Town
	Speaker: Virginia Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Thomasson		
June 12	Primary Elections	6 am-7 pm	City polling places
June 16	LWV State Council	Saturday	Roslyn Retreat Ctr, Henrico
June 28-30	LWVUS Convention		Chicago, Illinois
June 30	End of Fiscal Year		
July 1	Fiscal Year Begins: Pay Dues!		
July 11	LWV-WA Board Meeting	4-5:30 pm	Williamsburg Library, Rm B