



Pat Wirth, *Executive Director,*
Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association

COME JOIN US

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Dedication

Occoquan Region Park

Fairfax County, Virginia

What's Inside

President's Message	2
Great Decisions Lectures	2
League Marks Centennial with High Tea and History Lesson	3
League Members Hear Priorities at WLRT Pre-session	4
Testifying Before a General Assembly Subcommittee	4
What's Up with the General Assembly	5
Williamsburg Well-Represented at League Day in Richmond	5
League Membership Tops 250 Members	6
Mark your Calendars	6



At the Centennial Tea, the League of Women Voters Board posed with Susan B. Anthony, women's rights activist who played a pivotal role in the women's suffrage movement.

President's Message

What a grand celebration of the LWVUS Centennial Founding on February 14! Many thanks to those who envisioned, planned and executed our Anniversary Tea steeped in League history and camaraderie.

And to all who participated, thank you for coming.

With the General Assembly in session, League members have been busy advocating with our Delegates and Senators on issues of major concern to our program positions.

Each year we look to our membership for fresh leadership to energize our Board and major committees. Now is the time to volunteer to get involved for the upcoming year. Please get in touch with Vice President Sudie Watkins or with me to let us know how you'd like join us in maximizing the impact we can make in our community and the Commonwealth.

Look forward to seeing all of you at the Annual Meeting on June 4, 4:30-6:30 pm for an important exploration of the often untold story of the interfacing of race and suffrage. Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins was the first African American President of our national League and will share insights on where we've been and where we are. going.

Mary Schilling,
2/20



Great Decisions Lectures Enlighten Attendees

Bobbie Falquet, Great Decisions Co-chair

Great Decisions 2020 is up and running. This tremendously popular foreign policy program is fully subscribed with 293 registrants. The topics are a little different than those in the past. We are being challenged to think and consider new information, new ideas, and new ways of looking at the world. The program continues to broaden our understanding of events and forces that impact others around the world and us today, tomorrow and into the future.

LT. COLONEL LARRY WILKERSON, W&M Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy, tackled the complex issue of Climate Change and the Global Order, focusing on the disruptions and cost to people, governments and countries around the world.

PROFESSOR GENE ROCHE, W&M Executive Professor of Higher Education and faculty fellow at its Center for Innovation in Learning Design, broadened our understanding of Artificial Intelligence and Data. He took a complex subject, making it relevant to how technology is shaping and impacting individuals, society, and cultures here in the US and around the world.

At mid-winter press time, we look forward to four additional lectures:

MARCH 10 Philippines and the US with Mr. Hank Hendrickson. Mr. Hendrickson is the Executive Director of the US-Philippines Society based in Washington DC.

MARCH 17 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking with Mr. David Schilling. Mr. Schilling is the Senior Program Director-Human Rights and Resources at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) based in NYC.

MARCH 24 China's Road into Latin America with Mr. Frank Samolis. Mr. Samolis is a partner and co-chair of the International Trade Practice for Squire, Patton, Boggs in DC. He advises clients on international trade matters, including trade law, trade policy and legislation, and international trade negotiations.

MARCH 31 Red Sea Security with Ambassador David Shinn. Ambassador Shinn, a State Department Foreign Service Officer for 37 years, is currently an adjunct professor at George Washington University in the Elliott School of International Affairs.

Ms. Maria Fernanda Perez Arguello led the Great Decisions Lecture "US Relations with the Northern Triangle." She is the Associate Director of Adrienne Arsht Latin American Center of the Atlantic Council. With her is the Co-Chair of Great Decisions for the League, Don Schilling.



League Marks Centennial with High Tea and History Lesson

Phoebe Kent, Voter Editor



Some of the League members participated as servers at the tea.

Highlighted by Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association Executive Director Pat Wirth's fascinating history lesson, 99 people celebrated the 100th anniversary of the LWVUS's founding on February 14 with a festive Centennial Tea at Legacy Hall.

Eleven tables of League members and friends, including City Council member Barbara Ramsey and JCC Supervisors John McGlennon and Jim Icenhour, were served tea and savory and sweet finger foods by eight tuxedo-attired husbands of board members.

February 14th, 2020 marks 100 years that the League of Women Voters has empowered voters and defended democracy. Over the last century, Leagues across the country—numbering more than 700 state and local Leagues—have worked for equal access to the ballot, election protection, and other democratic reforms, committed to nonpartisanship and to fostering an informed electorate.

The event's speaker, Pat Wirth, women's rights activist and successful businesswoman, now directs the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association. Her remarks highlighted a series of brave women, famous and unknown, who courageously fought for the right to vote.

Turning Point Memorial's mission is to build a national memorial to commemorate the five million suffragists who fought for more than seven decades to win the vote for American women. The only national memorial to women's suffrage in the country, the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial will be built in Occoquan Regional Park, part of the historic prison grounds where the infamous Occoquan Workhouse was located.

From June, 1917 until early 1919, over two hundred women who picketed outside Woodrow Wilson's White House, were arrested and imprisoned in Occoquan Workhouse or the District of Columbia jail. In Occoquan they were met with violence and thrown into cold, rat-infested cells. When the women refused to eat, they were brutally force fed. Their harsh treatment was reported widely in the papers, raising the public's awareness of what the women were willing to endure to win the vote. This became the turning point that ultimately led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



Some of the League members and guests enjoy tea.



Jan Woodward was recognized as our League's newest 50-year life member at the tea.



League Members Hear Priorities at WLRT Pre-session

Phoebe Kent, Voter Editor

Each December the Virginia League brings together an array of organizations and nonprofits to share their priorities for the upcoming General Assembly (GA) at the Women's Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) Pre-session. On December 4, nearly 20 Williamsburg members traveled to Richmond to hear firsthand what issues were considered most important for the post-election GA session in January when for the first time in decades, Democrats control Senate and House.

Secretary of Finance Aubrey Lane described the Commonwealth's fiscal situation and shared some of Governor Northam's budget priorities with fiscal implications, including more education funding, an increase in gas tax, transportation funding, and renewable energy.

The Virginia League's 2020 legislative priorities include: passage of the constitutional amendment on redistricting and strong enabling legislation; no-excuse absentee voting and same-day registration and voting; gun-violence-prevention legislation including universal background checks and extreme-risk-prevention (red flag) laws; and Virginia joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Each spokesperson for the 20+ organizations listed their top priorities: paid sick days for employees, repeal of ultrasound for women seeking abortions, gun safety measures (Governor Northam's budget included eight separate bills), changes to eviction laws and payday lending rates, ERA support, addressing the gender pay gap, ending solitary confinement, more education, behavioral health and transportation funding. Many of their priorities reflect League positions, and we came away with great respect for those dedicated individuals who will be lobbying the legislature this session.

Testifying Before a General Assembly Subcommittee

Les Solomon, LWV-WA member

Weekly during General Assembly, I join fellow Leaguers and other interested parties in Richmond. We listen, observe, and advocate for LWV positions. A few weeks ago, I added another role when I had the opportunity to testify in support of a bill. Delegate Don Scott, Portsmouth, introduced HB820 to ensure that persons not free on bail would be informed of their right to counsel during their arraignment and bond hearing.

That Wednesday was an action-packed day. I waited more than an hour to be able to enter the Capitol building because it was filled to capacity. Fortunately, the large public school teachers' rally outside raised my spirits. Inside, I watched Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn, the first woman to hold the post, preside in the House. Later I cheered as the final Senate and House votes were taken to pass the ERA legislation.

Del. Mike Mullin's subcommittee on Criminal Justice began deliberations in the early evening on issues involving immigration and penal reform. I joined six other witnesses and spoke in support of HB820 about our court watch program in Williamsburg. My 45 seconds before the subcommittee came nine hours after my day at the Capitol started. The bill passed out of the subcommittee and was sent to the Appropriations Committee that considers all legislation with fiscal implications.

Unfortunately, an Appropriations Committee killed HB820 (9-0) a few days later. But I hope to return next year to testify in support of a similar bill that guarantees counsel to persons not free on bail. Perhaps with your help, we can make a difference.

What's Up in the 2020 General Assembly

Linda Rice, *Action and Advocacy Chair*

Several members of the League of Women Voters-Williamsburg Area (LWV-WA) have attended the Women's Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) which are sponsored by LWV-VA each Wednesday morning during the session of the General Assembly. At the WLRT attendees are given a report on the status of various bills by legislators and non-profit groups before visiting legislators.

The halls of the Pocahontas Building are more crowded than in past years. This is likely explained by the increase in bills filed this year since the Democrats gained control over both houses. We have also noticed a strong presence of the state police in the hallways. This was brought about by concerns for the safety of legislators as a result of the passage of several gun violence protection bills which are not supported by guns rights activists.

The theme for this session is more progressivism in the form of enhancing access to voting (No excuse absentee voting for a period of 21 days before the election, Election Day as a state holiday, and removing the photo ID requirement). Other efforts appearing headed for passage are: raising the minimum wage (not done in over a decade), crackdown on the high interest rates charged by payday lenders (288 percent on a one year loan), and decriminalization of possession of up to an ounce of marijuana.

The passage of the Equal rights Amendment brought much attention to Virginia because it became the 38th state to ratify. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the courts will agree that the deadline for ratification has not passed.

Finally, the most consequential bill is the constitutional amendment (CA) for redistricting reform (SJ18 and HJ 71). The CA was passed with bipartisan support in 2019 and it must pass in the same form in 2020. Its purpose is to remove partisan gerrymandering by the General Assembly. The passage of the CA is not guaranteed in

What's Up

continued in top two columns on page 6

Williamsburg Well-Represented at League Day in Richmond

Phoebe Kent, *Voter Editor*

The February 12 Women's Legislative Roundtable kicked off LWV-VA's League Day at General Assembly (GA). Fifteen of us came from Williamsburg for the morning's events on the day after GA's Crossover Day. With the session half over, no new legislation can be introduced, and bills passed by one body now move to consideration in the other.

We heard from several delegates, including Sam Rasoul (D, 11th) who asked for League's continued support for passage of the Constitutional Amendment creating a redistricting commission to limit gerrymandering, Danika Roehm (D, 13th), and Vivian Watts (D, 39th) as well as several Virginia League staff. Williamsburg member Christine Payne updated attendees on gun safety legislation that has passed and where League advocacy is still needed.

The Williamsburg "Gang of 15" attended the

OneVirginia2021 press conference for an update on redistricting reform. In a late-night session Feb. 11, the Senate passed the amendment and enabling legislation that protects minorities, requires transparency, and spells out the criteria for selecting commission members. Delegates passed the enabling legislation, but not the amendment. The House is also considering a bill that includes amendment language and criteria,

but would become a statute not an amendment. The Constitutional Amendment would enshrine the Voting Rights Act in the Constitution, end racial and partisan gerrymandering, and prevent mid-decade redistricting. Executive Director Brian Cannon introduced and thanked three supportive senators: George Barker (D-39th), Emmitt Hanger (R-24th) and Jennifer McClellan (D-9th) and the League.

We stopped to thank Delegate Batten (R-96) for her support before heading to the Capitol. Leaguers in the galleries were introduced by Vivian Watts in the House and Janet Howell (D-32nd) in the Senate; both mentioned the League's 100th anniversary of its founding in 1920 shortly after the 19th Amendment was passed.



Some of the members of the "Gang of 15" who attended League Day in Richmond.

What's Up

continued from bottom left column on page 5

the House. Some fear that the CA in spite of enabling legislation by Senators Locke and Lucas does not go far enough to ensure racial and ethnic balance of the non-partisan commission. Supporters say that the CA will ensure voting rights protection in our state constitution and stop the possibility of mid-decade redistricting. Keep your fingers crossed that Virginia will take this important step toward reform.

Update: On February 26 four members of LWV-WA (Christine Payne, Linda Rice, Jo and Les Solomon) and Deb Wake, LWV-VA president visited the legislative aides

of House Speaker Filler-Corn and House Majority Leader Herring to reiterate face to face the importance of bringing SJ18 to the House floor for a vote. It is the only version of the CA still alive. Redistricting reform was one of the promises made by the Democratic candidates in the 2019 election. Without a recorded House vote, the citizenry of Virginia will again lose confidence in their elected officials to put us above political power. One of the delegates urged us to organize our members to come to Richmond before the deadline for action on March 7. LWV-WA plans to do that on Monday, March, 2.

League Membership Tops 250

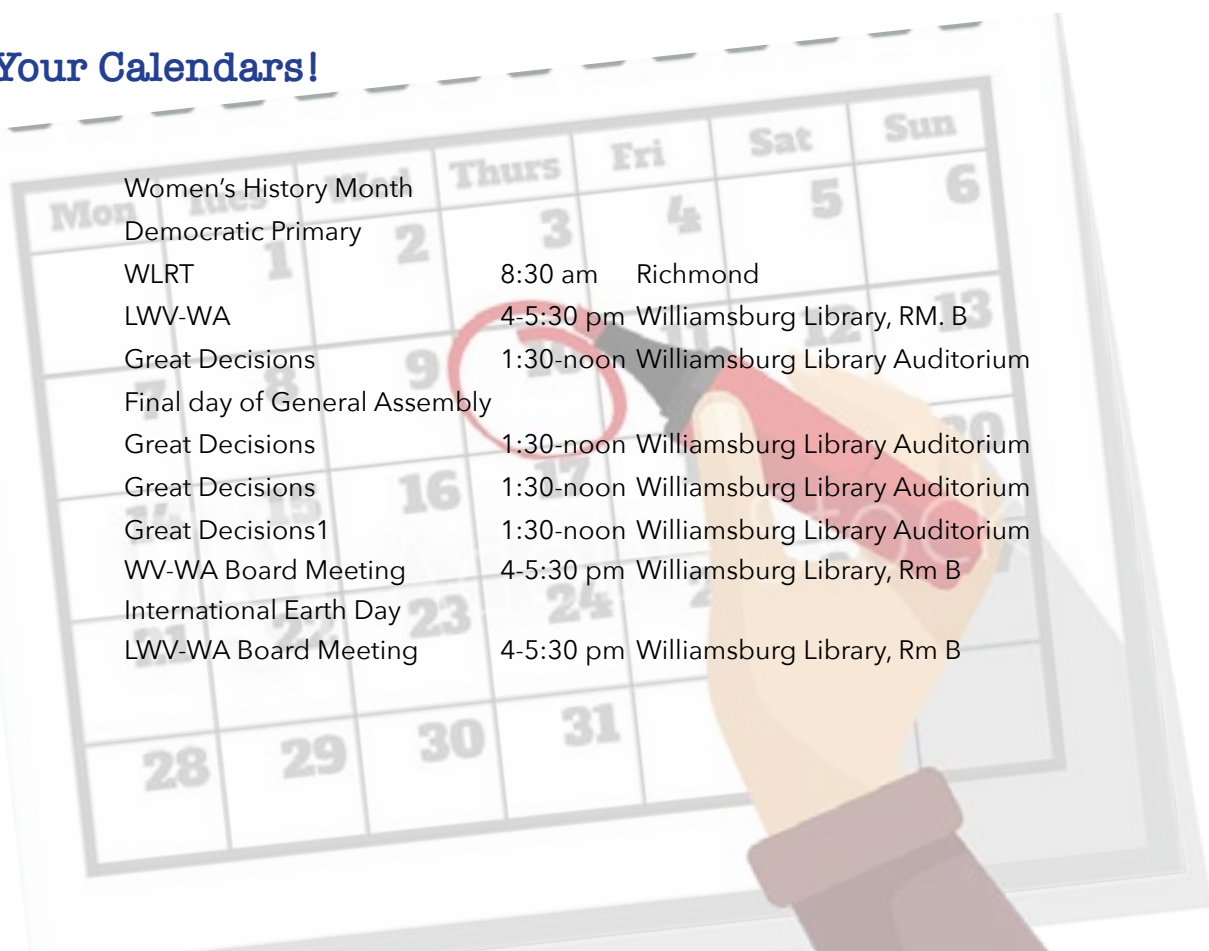
Nancy Moye, *Membership Co-chair*

Thanks to the enthusiasm of our Williamsburg members, the LWV-WA has experienced 25% year-over-year growth during 2019, and 2020 is off to a great start with renewals and new members. The energy of our members as they support our local League events continues to inspire - you are our voice to the Greater Williamsburg community.

In January, we submitted 252 member names to the LWWUS and look forward to increasing our membership throughout the year. You continue to be our best ambassadors in the community as you discuss the League and its nonpartisan mission with your friends and neighbors. Please be on the lookout for events and activities in the weekly eVoter and bring a friend who may share your interests. Again, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to an exciting year with the LWV-WA.

You may renew your membership online at www.lwwilliamsburg.org. Click on "Join the League" or you may pay by mail by sending a check to League of Women Voters-Williamsburg Area, P.O. Box 1086, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1086.

Mark Your Calendars!



	Mon	Tue	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
March 1-31	Women's History Month					
Mar 3			2	3	4	5
Mar 4		1				6
				8:30 am		
				Richmond		
				4-5:30 pm		
Mar 5				Williamsburg Library, RM. B		
Mar 7			9			
				1:30-noon		
Mar 12				Williamsburg Library Auditorium		
Mar 19			16			
				1:30-noon		
Mar 25				Williamsburg Library Auditorium		
Apr 1L				1:30-noon		
Apr 22			23			
				Williamsburg Library, Rm B		
May 6			24			
				4-5:30 pm		
				Williamsburg Library, Rm B		
	28	29	30	31		