

Fairfax VOTER

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White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

This month we are reviewing an article by Peggy McIntosh, former associate director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and founder of the National SEED Project. The National SEED Project partners with communities and institutions to drive personal, institutional, and societal change toward social justice.

McIntosh calls on us to explore unconscious bias by asking readers to recognize white privilege by making its effects personal and tangible. Note that white privilege is not the presumption that everything a white person has accomplished is unearned, nor does it suggest that white people have never struggled. Instead, she describes it as “an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious.”

For further reading see *Understand and Dismantle Racial Injustice*, a resource guide from the Fairfax County Public Library at research.fairfaxcounty.gov/dismantle-racial-injustice.

Calendar

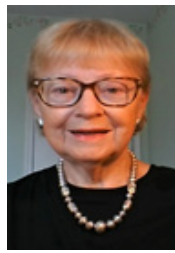
- 1 LWVNCA Board Meeting (Virtual)
10:30 am – 12 pm
- 3 *Fairfax Voter* Deadline
- 4 Food for Others’ Voter Registration and
Education Drive, 9:15 am – 11:15 am
- 5 District 43 Candidate Forum
- 11-14 LWVFA Unit Meetings
- 12 District 39 Candidate Forum
- 16&20 Drive Clean program Sponsored by
LWV California: Interested in an
Electric vehicle? Register at
<https://drivecleancalifornia.org/league-of-women-voters/#signup>. (See the
September *Voter* for more information.)
- 18 District 44 Candidate Forum
- 20 LWVFA Virtual Board Meeting
10 am – 12 pm

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Presidents' Message



Welcome to Election Season!

League volunteers are busy helping people register to vote, providing nonpartisan information so voters can make informed decisions, and writing postcards to “Get out the Vote.” There are many ways that you can help. Find the requests for volunteers in this newsletter and the E-League that frequently arrives via email. More volunteers are needed to support all these efforts. Use Sign Up Genius to contribute your time and effort.

Words cannot express how much we appreciate the passion and the effort that goes into the work that our volunteers do. The weather does not deter them nor does the sometimes rough reception they get from some very partisan folks out there.

We recently came across some interesting data on volunteering and would love to share it with you. VolunteerMatch did a study with United HealthCare in 2017, and it showed the mental and emotional benefits of volunteering:

- 93% reporting an improved mood;
- 79% reporting lower stress levels;
- 88% reporting increased self-esteem by giving back.

Another study reports that people who volunteer generally have a higher level of satisfaction and rate their overall health as better in comparison with those who do not.

So, doing good is good for you and everyone else around you!

“One person, One vote”

Redistricting efforts are continuing. We support the creation of Virginia voting districts that allow each vote to have equal weight. The Virginia Redistricting Committee must recommend voting districts that are roughly equal in population and created using consis-

tent, nondiscriminatory policies. You can follow the work of the Virginia Redistricting Committee on the LWV-VA website by going to:

<https://lww-va.org/category/redistricting-alerts/redistrictingblog/>

The Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee is developing a recommendation for local election districts. Anne Kanter is serving on this committee as a representative of the LWV-FA. She reported that there is some agreement on the Advisory Committee for recommending the expansion of the Fairfax County voting districts from the current nine districts to ten. (The County Charter allows for 11 districts.) These voting districts apply to elections for the Board of Supervisors and the School Board and will not change school boundaries.

Although the Advisory Committee does not have the

**Fairfax County 24-hr.
Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline:
703-360-7273; 711 TTY**

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necessary 2020 Census data, the Board of Supervisors has set a deadline of September 17 for the Committee’s recommendation. This would allow the notices and public hearings to be completed by the first week in December, so redistricting can be completed by January 1, 2022. You can follow this process by going to:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting/2021-redistricting-advisory-committee>

We hope you have been able to attend some of the Candidate Forums in September and will attend the ones coming up this month! It is important to know who your candidates really are and what they stand for.

Wishing you a lovely fall season,

Pat and Anu

League of Women Voters of the U.S. President Dr. Deborah Turner Participates in LWV Fairfax Voter Registration Drive at Food Bank

By Katharina Gollner-Sweet

(This article first appeared in The Alexandria and Mt. Vernon editions of The Patch.)

On August 27, League of Women Voters of the U.S. President Dr. Deborah Turner joined the LWV of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA) chapter’s Voter Registration Drive at the Rising Hope United Methodist Church’s food bank in Mt. Vernon. The event is one of several outreach events that LWVFA developed with the support of a grant from Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, through its local affiliate Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB), which distributes over 45 million meals annually across D.C., Maryland and Virginia. “Food is a basic human need,” said Dr. Turner. “Only once people are able to provide food for themselves and their families are they able to focus on exercising their right to vote. I’m delighted that LWV of Fairfax is able to partner with the CAFB and engage in conversations with local food bank visitors about voter registration. A healthy and well-informed electorate ensures a healthy democracy,” she added.

The LWVFA is working with the CAFB at area food banks in order to provide accurate, non-partisan voting and voter

registration information. “Individuals experiencing food scarcity in Fairfax County often are not afforded the same opportunities to register to vote or get reliable voting information,” said Arina Van Breda, LWVFA Voter Registration Chair. “We hope that our voter registration drives will provide those opportunities and encourage more residents

to make their voices heard on issues that matter to them.”

In addition to partnering with more than 450 organizations to distribute food, the CAFB also works with its network to provide critical services such as health care and skills development. Julia Lemp, CAFB Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator, represented the



Photo: Katharina Gollner-Sweet

CAFB at the Voter Registration Drive.

The LWV is a non-partisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The Fairfax chapter regularly conducts voter registration events at Fairfax County schools, libraries, farmers markets, food banks and county fairs. For information on volunteering for such events, go to: <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/volunteers-2>



Photo: Katharina Gollner-Sweet

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Donna Blake
September 2021

The LWVFA year runs from 01 July – 30 June so members should send a renewal form with payment in late June, if possible. The membership form is on our website at <http://www.lwv-fairfax.org/join> and on the back page of the *Fairfax VOTER*. Payment may be made through PayPal or by personal check. The website has an option to set up for automatic renewal but remember that renewals received between 01 July and 31 December will run only to 30 June of the following year. Student memberships are free but the LWVFA asks that students send a renewal form to indicate their desire to remain active in the LWVFA for the coming year.

The LWVFA membership stands at 503 as of August 31, 2021. Prior to last fall’s election, there was a surge of new members but we lost a number of members who did not renew for the year, possibly due to the impact of the pandemic. Fortunately, we are again seeing a number of new members. The following individuals have joined or been reinstated between 01 July – 31 August 2021:

- Stephanie Abbott
- Monica Ansel
- Angel Brown (student)
- Ann Connell
- Elizabeth Diliberti
- Betty Gordon
- Greg Harvey
- Shyamali Hauth
- Renee Jaeger
- Angela Lewis
- Alison Rivard
- Elizabeth Sakati
- Jo Ann Schubert
- Nancy Sheerin
- Dana Stewart
- Sarah White



White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh, former associate director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and founder of the National SEED Project. © 1989

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Through work to bring materials from Women's Studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials which amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages which men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, co-debts, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive.

I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us."

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American co-workers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which

- I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
 4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
 5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
 6. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
 7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
 8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
 9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
 10. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
 11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
 12. I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
 13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
 14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
 15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
 16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world’s majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
 17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
 18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race.
 19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my race.
 20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race.
 21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
 22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
 23. I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
 24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
 25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
 26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color and have them more less match my skin.
- I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me, white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one’s life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.
- In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive.
- I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was

an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made inconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color.

For this reason, the word “privilege” now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work systematically to overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one’s race or sex.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systemically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

The question is: “Having described white privilege, what will I do to end it?”

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what will we do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn’t affect them because they are not people of color, they do not see “whiteness” as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won’t be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. But a “white” skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can

palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems, we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculcated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

*This is an authorized excerpt of McIntosh's original white privilege article, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies," Working Paper 189 (1988), Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, MA, 02481.



Some Notes for Facilitators on Presenting My White Privilege Papers

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1. My work is not about blame, shame, guilt, or whether one is a "nice person." It's about observing, realizing, thinking systemically and personally. It is about seeing privilege, the "up-side" of oppression and discrimination. It is about unearned advantage, which can also be described as exemption from discrimination.
2. Please do not generalize from my papers. They are about my experience, not about the experiences of all white people in all times and places and circumstances. The paragraph in each paper before the list begins says this, and also allays fears of white people that a paper on white privilege will call them racist.
3. Keep "the lists" in their autobiographical contexts. It is a matter of scholarly integrity and accuracy not to claim more than I did. I compared my own circumstances with some of those of African American women I worked with. Being clear about this will actually increase your effectiveness as a facilitator. You can say, "This is from just one white woman coming to see she's white in her time and place and workspace. . . She's writing about herself, not you."
4. The work goes best when you draw on participants' own personal experiences, not their opinions. Opinions invite argumentation. Telling about experience invites listening. Opinions tend to bring on conflict, whereas shared experiences tend to elicit curiosity and empathy. When participants move from experiential testimony to opinion, bring them back, knowing that most schooling discourages testimony.
5. When exploring privilege, it is useful to use "Serial Testimony," a disciplined mode in which each participant gets to respond in turn, uninterrupted, for, say, one minute, timed. I call this "the autocratic administration of time in the service of democratic distribution of time."
6. But without rigorous use of a watch or timer, Serial Testimony can be as undemocratic as any other form of discussion.
7. Understand that every participant has an in-

- tricate "politics of location" (Adrienne Rich) within the systems of social power. For example, all people in a workshop or class will have a lifetime of experiences of both advantage and disadvantage, empowerment and disempowerment, overwhelming or subtle, within many different systems of power.
8. Recognize that all people are both located in systems and also uniquely individual.
 9. Co-presentations and panels of people speaking about their experiences one after another can be very effective. I do not usually arrange for "dialogues," since I feel they are often a veiled form of debating and fighting, rather than listening and learning. I discourage "crosstalk" after panels unless it further clarifies and respects what the panelists have said. This is what Peter Elbow called playing the "The Believing Game."
 10. My lists of the unearned privileges I have relative to my colleagues are not "check lists" or "questionnaires." They are not "confessional readings."
 11. Please draw attention to the specificity of "my sample." I compared my circumstances only with what I knew of the circumstances of my African-American female colleagues in the same building and line of work. This sample is very specific with regard to race, sex, region, location, workplace, vocation and nation.
 12. Behind and within my examples are institutions that bear on my experience such as schools, the police, the IRS, the media, the law, medicine, business.
 13. Do not get trapped in definitions of privilege and power. They lack nuances and flexibility.
 14. Invite people to make their own autobiographical lists of privilege, for example, about: Sexual Orientation; Employment; Families' relation to Class; Physical ability; education; money; Region; Handedness; housing and Religion; Language; neighborhoods Gender; Nation of Origin; Families' languages of origin; Gender identity; Ethnicity
 15. Beware of gym-exercises which position people in only one aspect of their identities, asking them to step forward or backward from a baseline at a given prompt.
 16. Urge participants to avoid self righteousness and preaching to family and friends about privilege, especially if it is something they have just discovered themselves. Explain the word "systemic." Help participants or students to think about what it is to see society systemically, and structurally, rather than only in terms of individuals making individual choices.
 17. Think about why U.S. people, especially White people, have trouble seeing systemically. Explain the myth of meritocracy: that the unit of society is the individual and that whatever one ends up with must be whatever that individual wanted, worked for, earned, and deserved. Why do you think this myth survives so successfully, suppressing knowledge of systemic oppression and especially of its "up-side," systemic privilege?
 18. Help participants to strengthen three intellectual muscles: a) the ability to see in terms of systems as well as , in terms of individuals; b) the ability to see how systemic discrimination , the downside, is matched by systemic privilege, the upside; c) the ability to see many different kinds of privilege systems.
 19. You can argue that work on privilege in schools and universities makes people smarter, not necessarily better. Academic institutions do not claim that making us better is their primary goal, but accurate thinking is a goal they claim to foster.
 20. **When I present, or co-present with a person of color, on Privilege Systems, whether or not I am the first to speak, I usually:**
 - tell how I came to see men's privilege and their obliviousness to it, which made me see laterally to my own race privilege and my obliviousness to it;
 - read some examples from my white privilege list, and sometimes read some of my heterosexual privilege list, class privilege list, Christian privilege list, and lists of privilege relative to Asian Americans, Indigenous people, Latino/as, etc.;
 - analyze some of the different misreadings of my paper by white people and people of color;
 - raise the question of how I can use unearned advantage to weaken systems of unearned advantage, and why I would want to.

The co-presenter and I take equal time to testify about how we came to see privilege systems in and around us. After this, we use Serial Testimony. We form either small circles of people, or pairs, to respond, in turn, uninterrupted, for one minute each, to the following prompts:

Round one: What are one or more ways in which you've had unearned disadvantage in your life?

Round two: What are one or more ways in which you've had unearned advantage in your life?

Round three: What is it like for you to sit here and talk about and hear about these experiences of unearned advantage and disadvantage?

Round three is like a debrief in itself. Any further debrief should be only on new learnings from the exercise. Random discussion of the exercise usually leads away from experience to generalizations and repetitions of the same opinions people came into the session with.

Some people "get" the idea of systemic privilege and ask "But what can I do?" My answer is, you can use unearned advantage to weaken systems of unearned advantage. I see white privilege as a bank account that I did not ask for, but that I can choose to spend. People with privilege have far more power than we have been taught to realize, within the myth of meritocracy. Participants can brainstorm about how to use unearned assets to share power; these may include time, money, energy, literacy, mobility, leisure, connections, spaces, housing, travel opportunities. Using these assets may lead to key changes in other behaviors as well, such as paying attention, making associations, intervening, speaking up, asserting and deferring, being alert, taking initiative, doing ally and advocacy work, lobbying, campaigning, protesting, organizing, and recognizing and acting against both the external and internalized forms of oppression and privilege.

Discussion questions

1. This article listed a number of conditions to consider as we interact with others in our community. What conditions prompted the most discussion? Did you find any of the examples particularly insightful or thought-provoking? Please describe.
2. Has anyone experienced instances of white privilege that you are willing to share?
3. Privilege can come in many forms. Has anyone experienced a lack of privilege based on factors such as gender, religion, socio-economic status, etc? Please describe.
4. McIntosh says that "I see white privilege as a bank account that I did not ask for, but that I can choose to spend." How can we share the power of white privilege to the advantage of others?
5. Do you have any additional feedback or suggestions for further discussion?

Interested in finding data on your area?

The National Equity Atlas provides interactive data on a variety of equity issues, both economic and social: <https://nationalequity-atlas.org/research#reindex>

- Ed.

Environmental Update: Help Protect the Potomac from Litter

By Elizabeth Lonoff

A study by the Weizmann Institute of Science published in the December 2020 issue of the scientific journal *Nature* reported that the material output of human activities was surpassing all global living biomass, another reason to consider officially renaming this as the Anthropocene epoch. Every week, we make as much material as the weight of our global population. If that trend continues, the anthropogenic mass will double in about 20 years.

The study examined concrete, bricks, asphalt, metal and polymers, wood and paper, and glass. The construction industry only is second in total weight to plastics. The study excludes the weight of waste, such as in landfills or polluting ocean surfaces. In 2018, the average American generated five pounds/day of municipal solid waste. Half of this waste was landfilled, 32% percent was recycled or composted, 12% was combusted with energy recovery, and 6% was food managed commercially for animal feed, bio-based materials, etc. Any litter landing on pavement in Fairfax County is on its way to the Potomac.

In an EnviroPod interview, Jennifer Cole, Executive Director of the Clean Fairfax Council, said there is no “away” with trash and more garbage is being put to the curb during the pandemic, only partly due to PPE waste. She wants consumers to get back to considering their purchases, such as limiting the amount of packaging. Jen advises everyone to decline plastic utensils offered with takeout food, and to vote their values both at the ballot box and by attending public meetings where decisions are made, especially related to governmental and corporate accountability. With its mission to encourage environmental stewardship and urban sustainability in Fairfax County, Clean Fairfax is working to counter the growing volume of litter, such as by putting the burden of recycling back onto manufacturers. Legislating the use of recycled plastic is particularly needed when the price of oil is low enough that using raw materials is cheaper than recycling. You can listen to her discussion of litter caused by the pandemic, plastic and other trash and

its effect on the environment, and the importance of starting at the root of the problem - the manufacturing and over-use of plastics - at <https://soundcloud.com/fairfaxcounty/clean-fairfax-executive-director-jen-cole-enviropod-podcast-episode-21>.

Since 1995, more than 118,000 Virginians have taken part in the Ocean Conservancy's annual coastal event. They've kept about five million pounds of litter and plastic pollution out of the ocean. Compare 2014's top ten litter items at <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/Data,ICCinVA.html> with your usage.

The Clean Virginia Waterways International Coastal Cleanup runs through December. Thousands of volunteers gather along the shorelines of Virginia's waterways and beaches to remove litter and debris and recycle found items. They also complete data cards or use the Clean Swell app (available year-round on your smart phone) to collect valuable information about the amounts and types of litter and debris they find. See <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/cleanupevents2021.html> to sign up for cleanups in Fairfax County. The website also has prevention advice, teaching materials, and a 20-year data summary. To lead a cleanup and pick up supplies, please call Clean Virginia Waterways at 434-395-2602 or send an email to cleanva@longwood.edu.

Make a difference for the Potomac River by attending the first session of the Alexandria Library's Barrett Branch walking and litter pickup club at 10-11 am on October 23th. Trash trekkers will clean up areas around the Old Town library on a regular basis. Supplies will be provided. Register at <https://alexlibrary-va.org/event/5541104> to receive directions and email updates related to the event.

If you volunteer for either of these events, consider simultaneously counting the number of collected plastic products by brand name. By reporting what you find, you will help transform the conversation around plastic in the environment. See <https://www.storyofstuff.org/plastic/brand-audits/> for more information.

Other Local Volunteer Opportunities

- Plant NOVA Trees is a five-year campaign to preserve and significantly increase native trees

and shrubs in Northern Virginia. As temperatures rise and rainstorms become more intense but less frequent, trees that cool the environment and capture stormwater become increasingly important. And only plants that evolved within a local area provide meaningful support for songbirds and butterflies. Find events, educational materials and sources of plants, services, and discounts at plantnovatrees.org. For example, EcoAction Arlington will collect acorns and other tree seeds 1-3 pm on October 2 in Lubber Run Park, 200 N. Columbus Street. Seeds are sent to Virginia Department of Forestry nurseries to grow into seedlings for use in native forest restoration projects. Register at <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E351125&id=27>. They also need help planning public events.

- Barrett Library will hold a Fixit Clinic 11 am–3 pm on October 16. This community repair event will teach skills for living while slowing items’ flow to landfills and countering throwaway culture. Being curious, collaborative, patient, and having good communication skills, “fixit coaches” will attempt to fix items brought in and work with visitors to explain the process or encourage owners to attempt repairs themselves. To share your repair or organizing skills, please contact Megan Zimmerman at mzimmerman@alexlibraryva.org.
- The DC-based, global nonprofit Climate Reality Project is offering free, virtual training to conduct educational events and encourage activity to address climate change in your community. Learn from prominent scientists, activists, and innovators in an interactive session October 16 - 24, including four required two-hour broadcast sessions. You’ll then be part of a network of 36,000+ leaders in more than 170 countries.



Domestic Violence: What Should You Know? Why Should You Care?

By Adarsh Trehan

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. “Domestic violence or IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.” (The National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)) The abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, and/or financial, or a com-

Step Up 4 Kids Caring 4 Kids Videos

The Fairfax County Council to End Domestic Violence has made available a series of eight short (3-4 minute) videos -- four in English and four in Spanish -- to help adults reach out to children who have experienced domestic violence, abuse and neglect, mental health concerns and trauma. The videos have four objectives: “to explain the hardship or adversity; to help adults learn warning signs of the hardship; to teach how the difficulty can impact a child over time; and how the adult(s) can help a child about whom they may be concerned.” The Council is looking for help in disseminating the videos to professionals and members of the public who interact with and support children.

To access these videos, please go to:
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/domestic-sexual-violence/step-up-4-kids/videos>

Please free to share this information with your neighbors, friends, principals, teachers and other school staff, athletic coaches, religious institutions, volunteer organizations, etc.

ination of these types of abuse. Sometimes, there are physical injuries resulting from abuse, but many times there are not.

How serious is domestic violence as a worldwide public health problem?

“Population-level surveys based on reports from

survivors provide the most accurate estimates of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. A 2018 analysis of prevalence data from 2000 to 2018 across 161 countries and areas, conducted by WHO on behalf of the UN Interagency working group on violence against women, found that nearly 1 in 3, or 30%, of women worldwide have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner or both. (Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018. Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. WHO: Geneva, 2021)

“Globally as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. In addition to intimate partner violence, globally 6% of women report having been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner, although data for non-partner sexual violence are more limited. Intimate partner and sexual violence are mostly perpetrated by men against women.” (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>)

Unfortunately, domestic violence is rarely discussed, because people consider it a private matter that occurs behind closed doors. Also, a relative, friend or neighbor could be a victim but not talk about it, because of feelings of shame or guilt or because he/she/they feels that there is a stigma attached to it!

“On average, 24 people a minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States - more than 12 million women and men in the course a year. [In addition] more than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 7 men aged 18 years or older have been victims of severe physical or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.” (Source, (NDVH))

Domestic violence can even cause death by homicide or suicide! “For surviving victims, these forms of violence can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts. The 2013 analysis found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience depression and problem drinking.

Health effects also can include headaches, pain syndromes (back pain, abdominal pain, chronic pelvic pain) gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health.” (WHO)

You can gain a better understanding of this very disturbing public health problem by reading the book, *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us*, by Rachel Louise Snyder.

What can you do?

If a relative, friend, neighbor, or even a stranger, confides in you about such behavior, encourage them to call the Fairfax County Domestic and Sexual Services Hotline Violence at (703) 360-7273 TTY 711. If you suspect a person is suffering from such abuse, you can also call the Hotline and report it. The County provides community victim advocates, system-based advocates, and other service providers who offer a safe environment where victims can feel comfortable exploring their options and accessing the services and resources they may need. All services are free and, when possible, confidential.

2021-2022 Upcoming Program Schedule

November: Action/ Advocacy Forum

December: LWVUS & LWVFA Program Planning

January: Book club *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* by Caroline Criado Perez

February: Native American Voting Rights by Vicki Mitchell

March: To be determined

April: Annual Meeting

May: Reparations by Sidney Johnson

June: Do Your Own Thing

LWVFA Members to Celebrate

By Julia Jones

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area includes some fascinating people who have been League members for over 50 years. What stories they have to tell!

LWVFA plans to interview these longtime League members and make sure their stories and experiences are recorded. Among the questions we want to ask: *Why did you join the League? What issues really speak to you? In what League activities did you participate? What are the main reasons that you have been a member for 50 plus years? Will you share with us information about your family and career?*

Patricia McGrady, a 50+ year member, was interviewed at a Greenspring Unit meeting before the pandemic. She joined the League for the social connections that membership provided with women who had similar interests. Since Pat lived in 27 different locations over her lifetime she would search for an area League to join as a good way to meet new people.

Pat had 13 different careers Her first job was as a Proctor and Gamble market researcher, which involved lots of travel. She loved it! Another job was as a Zephyrette, a hostess on the California Zephyr train. Another position was as a college dean. In her jobs, she said that she never ran into “Glass Ceilings” and didn’t feel discriminated against as a woman.

She was and is quite an adventuress. In her day, many friends were focused on getting married before they finished college. That was not a priority for Pat. She was an itinerant, following her mother who set a great example of being adventurous.

The League got her active in civil rights. In Quincy, Illinois, she picketed a real estate company for redlining. Through her church, she helped organize the 1964 Walk of Dignity supporting black community members.

She had life-changing experiences because of the League. Pat joined the Arlington, Virginia League in 1974 and served as Treasurer and Social Chair. The

League published an article about affordable housing which really impacted her. She has been an affordable housing advocate ever since. In the 80s, she was the President of the Arlington Housing Corporation.

The Arlington League was very supportive of the integration of Stratford Elementary School. Pat remembers that the Arlington League President, who lived across from the school, invited Black parents to come to her house so they could watch their kids walk into the school for the first time.

At one time, Pat became the Treasurer of LWVFA. Pat continues her interest in Affordable Housing along with helping with voter registration at Naturalization Ceremonies. (She wishes voter registration was automatic.) Today she is part of the Black and White History Committee at Greenspring where she resides.

If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Julia Jones at dave.julie.jones@verizon.net

The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Our Mission, Vision, and Value

Mission

Empowering voters. Defending democracy.

Vision

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Value

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: White Privilege

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the “At Large Meeting” and briefing when one is listed. As of September 1, 2021, the following information was correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. For October Unit meetings that will be virtual, the unit leaders will send the login information to every unit member.

Thursday, September 30

7 p.m. At-Large Unit Meeting/ Briefing

Virtual meeting (Via Zoom)
Contact: Jessica, 301-704-7854 or
Jessica.storrs@lwv-fairfax.org

10 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD)

Virtual or in-person to be
determined
Contact: Diana, 703-704-5325 or
jfdw1111@gmail.com

11:30 a.m. Centreville- Chantilly (CCD)

Lunch at Food Court, Wegman's
14361 Newbrook Dr., Chantilly,
20151
Contact: Susan, 703-391-0666,
sadill@cox.net

Monday, October 11

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)
Hunters Crossing Classroom
7430 Spring Village Drive, Spring-
field, 22150

Contact: Pat, pmcgrady308@
gmail.com or
Judy, jjsmith64@earthlink.net,
703-342-3353

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

Virtual meeting
Contact: Bev, 703-451-4438,
rbdahlin@verizon.net or
Sue, 703-266-0272,
sueoneill1@hotmail.com

1 p.m. Oakton/Vienna (OV)

Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven
Place, Oakton, 22124
Contact: Mary, 703-932-3665;
mmvalder@aol.com

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)

Virtual meeting
Contact: Wendy, 703-319-4114,
wendy.foxgrage@gmail.com

Wednesday, October 13

9:30 a.m. McLean Day (McL)

Virtual or in-person to be deter-
mined
Contact: Peggy, 703-772-4939,
peggyknight49@gmail.com

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

Virtual meeting
Contact: Barbara (703) 437-0795
or bseandlte@earthlink.net

10 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

Virtual meeting
Contact: Jane, 703-256-7834,
patchwork1@verizon.net

7:45 p.m. Mount Vernon Eve- ning (MVE)

Virtual meeting
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820,
jane@hilderwilliams.net
or Susan, 703-587-4790,
scash5002@email.vccs.edu

November Meetings:

LWVFA Action/Advocacy Forum



The League of Women Voters® of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 October, 2021**

Anu Sahai, Co-President
 Pat Fege, Co-President
 Katherine Ingmanson, Editor

The League of Women Voters® is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person at least 16 years old, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters® never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters® name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Please Support Our Work! The LWVFA Education Fund is supported by donations from our members and the public.
<https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/donate>



LWVFA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

Dues year is July 1 – June 30

Name: _____ Unit (if renewing): _____
 Name of Second Household Member (if one): _____
 Street Address: _____ Condo/Apt No: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code +4: _____
 E-mail: _____ Phone: (C) _____ (H) _____

Membership Status: _____ New _____ Renewal

Membership Level (please check one):

Basic Membership:

Individual (\$75); Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$100);
 Limited Income (suggested donation: \$10); Student (Free!)

Membership Plus:

Suffragist (\$100); Advocate Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$150);
 Champion (\$300); Founders' Circle (\$500)

Membership Plus levels include basic membership PLUS a donation to the LWVFA General Fund. This money will support members of limited income, help invest in LWVFA web site technology, and support other priority projects. General Fund donations are not tax deductible.

Volunteer Interests:

Please visit surveymonky.com/r/LWVFAFairfaxVols to let us know your interests.

Please mail this completed form along with payment to:
 LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403