

Fairfax VOTER

May 2024

Volume 76, Issue 9

Courts, judges, prosecutor, juries, and defendants are in the news - seemingly every day. Who appoints or selects the judges? How many courts are there in Virginia? Where do you go if you want a divorce? What do magistrates do?

Find the answers to these questions and others in this issue.

Calendar

LWVFA Unit Meetings will meet in May

- 1-31 Asian Pacific-American Heritage Month
- 1 LWVFA Legacy Committee Meeting
- 3 Fairfax *Voter* Deadline for the June 2024 issue
- 3 In-Person Early Voting begins
- 4 LWVFA Briefing and At-Large Meeting, 3 p.m.
- 8-13 LWVFA Unit Meetings at various locations around Fairfax County
- 15 LWVFA Board Meeting, 10 a.m.

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Presidents' Message

Dear Fellow Leaguers,

First, thank you so much to everyone who attended our two online events last month - the fireside chat and our annual meeting. We especially appreciate your questions and other input and hope that we can maintain a vigorous exchange going forward. Change is always difficult, but your energy, ideas and dedication will help us stay strong and relevant as we move forward.

Speaking of moving forward, the June primaries for U.S. Congress and one Senate seat are coming up. Early voting starts May 3, and the deadline to register is May 28. We have registered so many new voters this year, it is amazing, but please remember to encourage them (as well as friends, family and neighbors) to get out and vote, now and especially in November!

Stay tuned for lots of ways to get involved as we move into the fall election season.

Pat and Katherine

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY ELECTION

McLean Community Center Election

Tuesday, May 14, 1-5:30 p.m.
Validate Affidavits from Early Voting

Friday, May 17, 3:30 - 8:00 p.m.
(Multiple shifts)
Election Officers

Saturday, May 18, 10:30 AM - 8:30 p.m.
(Multiple shifts)
Day: Election Officers
Evening: Vote Counters

Please sign up at Sign-Up Genius:

[https://www.signupgenius.com/
go/20F0D48AFA82FA7F94-48829441-mclean](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D48AFA82FA7F94-48829441-mclean)

Questions? Contact Susan Cowart,
sfcowart@aol.com, 703-893-2229 (H) or
703-915-3444 (C)

Much needed funds for League activities are raised
running these elections and it is fun to meet other
League members!

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

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2023-2024

This newsletter, partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area Education Fund, is published 10 times each year - from September to June by:

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office
or call 703-658-9150.

Proposal to Rename the Woodrow Wilson Library

By Jessica Storrs, At-Large Director

At the March 13th Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees meeting, several community members submitted comments asking for the renaming of the Woodrow Wilson Library, which is located in the Mason District near Bailey's Crossroads. The Trustees will create a committee to study this proposal over the next several months.

League members may submit their own comments to the Library Trustees and/or may register to speak on this issue during the public comment period at each monthly board meeting. For more information visit research.fairfaxcounty.gov/library-board-of-trustees.

The Fairfax League submitted the following comments to the Trustees in April in support of the renaming proposal.

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area supports the community proposal to rename the Woodrow Wilson Library, located in the Mason District of Fairfax County.

President Woodrow Wilson's racist views and policies make him an unsuitable namesake for a library located in a community that values diversity. Changing the name would signal that those who did real harm to marginalized groups should not be honored.

During his tenure, Wilson mandated that the federal workforce be segregated by race, thereby eroding the gains some Black people had made following Reconstruction and diminishing future gains in generational wealth for Black families. He was also a defender of the Ku Klux Klan and screened Birth of a Nation at the White House, a film rooted in white supremacy.

While Wilson's tenure included the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, his support for women's suffrage came only after the tide of public opinion had irrevocably shifted, making continued opposition harmful to his party. For years Wilson ignored the issue of women's voting rights, prompting the suffragists to stage the first ever protest in front of the White House in 1917. Dozens of protesters were arrested and imprisoned at the Occoquan Workhouse and Penitentiary in Lorton, where they were abused and force fed.

The Fairfax League asks that Fairfax County Library Trustees consider the following alternative names for the library:

Annie Harper, a Fairfax County voting rights activist who challenged the constitutionality of Virginia's poll tax. The lawsuit went all the way to the Supreme Court. Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections was decided in 1966 declaring the poll tax unconstitutional.

Lucy Burns, a leader in the National Women's Party and a key player in the women's voting rights movement. She was among those arrested for picketing in front of the White House and subsequently imprisoned at the Occoquan Workhouse and Penitentiary in Lorton.

HELP WANTED! – JUDY SMITH

Our unit co-coordinator, Karen Beck, is stepping down. We thank Karen for all that she has done this year to assist with the units.

Help is needed right now to track unit meeting locations and forward this information to the Fairfax Voter and the website coordinator. It takes approximately one-to-two hours per month AND you can work from home on your computer!

If you can help with this important task, please contact Judy Smith at Judy.Smith@lwv-fairfax.org or 703-342-3353.

Vote411.org

Help Wanted!

Are you looking for an at-home option to serve democracy this election year? Are you comfortable learning a new database? Our current Vote411.org lead, Jessica Storrs, is seeking an "apprentice" to help manage the Fairfax County section of the US League's national Vote411 database. In 2024 the database will be updated for both the June primary and the November election. Bonus: the local ballot is short this year so it's not a heavy lift.

As the tide of disinformation and misinformation grows, Vote411.org provides a national platform for reliable, accurate and non-partisan voting resources. Its reach continues to expand exponentially each year with more and more voters relying on the data.

Please reach out to Jessica Storrs at jessica.storrs@lwv-fairfax.org if you would like to discuss details or ask questions. Thank you for helping to make democracy work!

Domestic Violence: What Do You Know? Why Should You Care? Domestic Violence and Asian American and Pacific Islanders

By Adarsh Trehan
Chair, Domestic Violence Committee

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This year's theme is "Advancing Leaders Through Innovation." According to the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), this month celebrates and "pays homage to the visionaries and trailblazers who have shaped our...history and continue to influence our collective future." <https://fapac.org/>

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) groups are diverse, ethnically and economically, that have made immeasurable contributions to America in the fields of medicine, technology, commerce, government, and culture. While they are considered a model minority, "the AAPI community, and AAPI immigrants in particular, suffer from high levels of income inequality." <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/aapi-community-contributions-population-growth/>

Who are the AAPIs? They are originally from Afghanistan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island). They are also from Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, etc. <https://www.uncp.edu/campus-life/student-inclusion-diversity/calendar-events/asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-month-2023>

"There are 20.6 million people who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone (not in combination with another race), making up 6.2% of the nation's population, according to the 2020 Census <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/05/aanhpi-population-diverse-geographically>

It is difficult to assess the magnitude of the problem. Statistical data on AAPI victims is incomplete and difficult to obtain since this cohort is undercounted by Census data. AAPI victims are also undercounted by studies of domestic violence since they "are more likely to seek support from community rather than formal authorities."

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/domestic-sexual-violence/awareness-about-domestic-and-sexual-violence/asian-pacific-american-heritage-month>

"In the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), three telephone interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of 18,049 non-institutionalized English and/or Spanish speaking adults: 9,970 were women and 8,079 were men (response rate: 27.5-33.6%). 4.7% of the sample was of Asian or Pacific Islander descent. 19.6% of Asian or Pacific Islander women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Estimated prevalence rates for other groups are: 46.0% for American Indians or Alaska Native women, 43.7% for Black women, 37.1% for Hispanic women, 53.8% for multiracial women, and 34.6% for White women." [Note: Separate rates for rape, physical violence, and stalking were not reported for Asian or Pacific Islander women due to a small number of cases]. <https://api-gbv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10Facts-stats-rpt-updated-expanded-Oct20201.pdf>, page 1.

"Caller Demographics collected by the National Domestic Violence Hotline provide a snapshot of trends of intimate partner violence Asian women are experiencing: Of the Asian victims, 95% reported emotional/verbal abuse, 77%, physical abuse, 34%, economic abuse, 6%, sexual abuse; and 6%, stalking during 2011. Similar trends were reported in 2012: 96% of Asian victims reported emotional/verbal abuse, 69%, physical abuse, 35%, economic abuse, 7%, sexual abuse, and 6%, stalking and 1% of Asian callers reported elder abuse." <https://api-gbv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Facts-stats-rpt-updated-expanded-Oct20201.pdf> page 18.

It has been mentioned earlier that AAPI domestic violence victims seek support from their communities rather than formal authorities. What are the barriers that prevent victims from seeking help from such authorities? Victim blaming, financial limitations, language barriers, cultural/religious expectations, and immigration status.



The Virginia State Courts

By Mary Jane Cleary and Julie Jones

Although there are two court systems in Virginia, the federal and state, the following is information about the Virginia State Courts. More details can be found on the Virginia Judicial System website (www.va-court.gov) or by searching for courts on the Fairfax County website (www.fairfaxcounty.gov).

The Virginia Court System

“The mission of Virginia’s Judicial System is to assure that disputes are resolved justly, promptly, and economically. The Virginia court system, unified in its structure and administration, strives to have competent, honest judges and court personnel and uniform rules of practice and procedure.”

“The present system consists of four levels of courts: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the circuit courts, and the district courts. In addition, magistrates serve as judicial officers with authority to issue various types of processes. The courts are organized into 31 judicial circuits and 32 similar judicial districts. More than 2,600 people, including judges, clerks, and magistrates, work within the judicial branch of government with the goal of providing the citizens of the Commonwealth prompt, efficient service.”

Virginia Magistrates

In 1974 the General Assembly abolished the Justice of the Peace system and created the magisterial system. In 1975 magistrates became salaried state employees and were no longer paid by the fees they imposed and collected.

The magistrate system for the Commonwealth is divided into eight regions, with three to five judicial districts. Each magistrate is authorized to exercise his or her powers throughout the magisterial region to which he or she is appointed. There are magistrate offices located throughout Virginia, including at least one in each of Virginia’s 32 judicial districts.

Magistrates In Fairfax County and City: Magistrates are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the Fairfax Adult Detention Center and the Mount Vernon Governmental Center. Limited magistrate-service is also available at the Mason Governmental Center. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/courts/magistrate>

Qualifications for Magistrates: To be eligible for appointment as a magistrate in the Commonwealth of Virginia, an individual must be a citizen of the United

States, a resident of the Commonwealth, and hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university. Chief magistrates must be a member in good standing of the Virginia State Bar. Since 2008 the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia appoints all magistrates in consultation with the chief judges of the circuit courts within the magisterial region. (Virginia Magistrates Manual)

Magistrate Duties: A principle function of a magistrate is to provide an independent, unbiased review of complaints of criminal conduct brought by law enforcement or the general public. Magistrate duties include issuing various types of processes such as arrest warrants, summonses, search warrants, emergency protective orders, emergency custody orders, and certain civil warrants. Magistrates also conduct bail hearings in instances in which an individual is arrested to determine under what conditions the arrestee should be released from custody prior to trial.

Office of the Commonwealth Attorney in Fairfax County: The Office of the Commonwealth Attorney oversees the prosecution of crimes committed in violation of the Code of Virginia in Fairfax County.

These include misdemeanor and felony criminal matters as well as delinquency matters. Cases come to their office through State Troopers and public arrests, who bring the initial charges.

The Office needs approval from magistrates to bring charges after which the person is arrested and the case is referred to the General District Court. The Office has a Deputy Chief of Staff who oversees the Diversion Program, which is for helping low-level offenders stay out of the regular criminal justice system instead of going to jail.

About 30,000 cases per year come to this Office from the courts, with charges from traffic arrests to misdemeanor cases. They come from all of Fairfax County which includes the City of Fairfax, the Town of Herndon, and the Town of Vienna, a total of approximately 1.2 million residents, which constitutes Virginia’s largest jurisdiction. (L. Birnbaum, Deputy Chief of Staff/Public Information Officer)

Public Defender’s Office in Fairfax County: Magistrates may determine if a person is eligible for a court-appointed attorney when the person cannot afford to hire his/her own. In Fairfax County in the last fiscal year the Public Defender’s Office had 7,000 cases after 5,000 cases per year for several years. For the years in which they had 5,000 cases about 1,300 clients were White, 2,300 were Black, and 1,100 were Hispanic. About 40 percent of the County’s jail population is Black. The jail population has decreased

about half in the last two years.

Criminal cases consist of misdemeanors and felonies. The courts can sentence criminal defendants accordingly, except that no one can be sentenced to death as the death penalty has been abolished in Virginia. Seventy-five percent of all criminal cases in the County are represented by Court-appointed attorneys. If there is a client conflict in a case represented by the Public Defender, another attorney will be assigned. (D. Butorec, Chief Public Defender, Fairfax County)

Virginia District Courts

There is a General District Court in each city and county in Virginia. The judge is sworn to enforce, without favor, the laws of the Commonwealth and community. By law, the court must apply rules of procedure and evidence uniformly to each case it hears.

The Fairfax County General District Court hears traffic violation cases, minor criminal cases known as misdemeanors, and civil cases such as landlord and tenant disputes, contract disputes, and personal injury actions. The General District Court does not conduct jury trials. All cases in this court are heard by a judge, without a jury. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/general-district/general-district>

District Court Judge Selection: The judges of Virginia's District Courts are elected by a vote of each house of the General Assembly for a term of six years. Vacancies in District Court judgeships occurring when the General Assembly is not in session are filled by the Circuit Court judges of the corresponding circuit.

Types of General District Court Cases

Civil Cases: The General District Court decides civil cases in which the amount in question does not exceed \$25,000, except for personal injury and wrongful death cases in which the amount in question does not exceed \$50,000. In addition, unlawful detainer (eviction) suits that include a request for rent for commercial or agricultural property can be heard by the General District Court even if the amount of rent requested is more than \$25,000. A suit is begun by filing a civil warrant or complaint with the Clerk of the Court and paying a filing fee.

Criminal Cases: The Code of Virginia defines criminal offenses and sets penalties. For many offenses, the penalty prescribed is a fine. All fines collected for violation of State law are paid into the Virginia State Treasury and credited to the Literary Fund. Fines collected for violations of city, town, or county ordinances are paid into the treasury of the city, town, or county whose ordinance has been violated. The amount of

court costs is set by the General Assembly, and the court cannot suspend or waive costs. The General District Court decides cases in which a person is charged with a misdemeanor. A misdemeanor is any charge that carries a penalty of no more than one year in jail or a fine of up to \$2,500 or both.

The General District Court holds preliminary hearings in felony cases. A felony is any charge that may be punishable by more than one year in jail. Preliminary hearings in felony cases are held to determine whether there is probable cause to believe the defendant committed the offense in order to justify certification of the charge to a grand jury in circuit court. The grand jury then determines whether there is probable cause for the defendant to be tried in the Circuit Court.

Each defendant in a criminal case is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Upon consideration of the evidence, the judge decides the question of guilt or innocence and, on a finding of guilt, determines which penalty, if any, is proper and lawful.

Traffic Cases: The General District Court hears cases in which a person is charged with a traffic offense. Most traffic offenses are traffic infractions, which are generally punishable by a fine. If you are convicted of certain traffic violations, the Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will assess points against your driver's license. This is an administrative action by the DMV and is in addition to any sentence imposed by the judge.

Small Claims Cases: Small Claims Court is a separate division of the District Court. It has jurisdiction over civil actions when the amount claimed does not exceed \$5,000 and recovery of personal property valued up to \$5,000. There are no attorneys in Small Claims Court.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court: This Court handles cases involving: children accused of delinquent acts, such as having traffic violations or status offenses (ex., truancy), are in need of services or supervision, who have been subjected to abuse, neglect, or abandonment and whose custody, visitation, support, or parentage is before the Court in foster care. It also handles former foster youth in the Fostering Futures Program for whom relief of custody or termination of parental rights is sought or the youth is seeking emancipation or work permits and whose eligibility for federal or state benefits requires certain findings by the Court.

Other cases which this Court handles involve:

- Family or household members who have been subject to or accused of abuse

- Adults accused of child abuse or neglect, or of offenses against a family or household member
- Spouses seeking support after separation
- Enforcement of support orders
- Court-ordered rehabilitation services
- Court consent for certain medical and mental health treatments
- Court-ordered blood testing of minors

In Virginia, a child is any person under the age of 18. A child is adjudicated “delinquent” when a Court finds that the child has committed a certain action that would be a crime if committed by an adult. A “status offender” is a child who has committed a certain action that, if committed by an adult, would not be considered a criminal offense, such as a curfew violation. A “child in need of supervision” is one whom habitually and unjustifiably is absent from school or runs away from home. A “child in need of services” needs treatment, rehabilitation, or services to keep the child or his/her family safe, and the intervention of the Court is required. “Child abuse and neglect” cases involve the improper care or injurious treatment of children.

These Courts differ from other courts in their duty to protect the confidentiality and privacy of children and their families who have legal matters before the Court. In addition to protecting the public and holding delinquent children accountable, the Court considers services needed to provide for rehabilitation.

As a District Court, this Court does not conduct jury trials.

Domestic Relations Courts: This Court covers cases such as adults who are not married who have custody, visitation, and/or child support and/or additional issues such as domestic violence. In the latter situation an adult may petition for a protective order. In some protective order cases, people can petition the Court on behalf of a juvenile but that is a rare situation.

A lawyer in Domestic Relations Courts can represent a parent or train to become guardian ad litem, who is an attorney who represents a child. Sometimes those children may have been abused or neglected. As with the General District Courts, all parties subject to a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court order or judgment may appeal the decision to the Circuit Court. (L. Taylor, President of the Fairfax Bar Association, and private practice lawyer in domestic relations cases, among others.)

Virginia Circuit Courts

The only trial court of general jurisdiction in Virginia is the Circuit Court. The Virginia Circuit Court sys-

tem includes 31 judicial circuits with 120 separate circuits in the various counties and cities of the Commonwealth. The Supreme Court of Virginia establishes the rules of practice and procedure for the Circuit Courts, and the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court serves as the administrator of the Circuit Court system.

The Fairfax Circuit Court serves the residents of Fairfax County and Fairfax City. The 19th Judicial Circuit is the trial court of general jurisdiction and is the largest trial court in Virginia, composed of fifteen full-time trial judges. It has authority to try a full range of cases, both civil and criminal, jury and non-jury, and to hear appeals of misdemeanor and traffic cases from the General District Court and Juvenile Courts.

Circuit Court Judge Selection: These judges are elected for an eight-year term by a majority vote of both houses of the General Assembly. If the General Assembly is not in session when a vacancy occurs, the Governor may temporarily appoint a judge (interim appointment) to serve until the General Assembly meets again and can elect a judge for a full term. The Circuit Court handles any case for which jurisdiction is not specified in the Code of Virginia. It has jurisdiction over the following:

Civil Actions: Shared jurisdiction with General District Courts for monetary claim of more than \$4,500 but not exceeding \$25,000 and claims not exceeding \$50,000 in personal injury and wrongful death cases

- Exclusive original jurisdiction of most monetary claims exceeding \$25,000
- Attachments
- Validity of a county or municipal ordinance or corporate bylaw
- Divorce proceedings
- Wills, trusts and estate matters
- Property disputes
- Adoption proceedings

Criminal Cases: All felonies, which are offenses that may be punished by imprisonment of more than one year and misdemeanor offenses that were appealed from district court or originated from a grand jury indictment

- Transfer or certification of felony offenses committed by juveniles

Appeal Cases: Appeals from the general district court or juvenile and domestic relations district court (heard de novo - for the first time)

- Appeals from administrative agencies

Grand Juries: At the beginning of each term of the Circuit Court a Grand Jury is convened. These juries consider bills of indictment to determine whether there is sufficient probable cause to believe that a person accused of having committed a serious crime did commit such crime and should stand trial. The grand jury does not hear both sides of the case and does not determine the guilt or innocence of the accused.

A special grand jury may be convened to investigate any condition that tends to promote criminal activity in the community or indicates malfeasance by governmental agencies or officials. This grand jury has subpoena powers and may summon persons, documents, or records needed in its investigation.

Clerk of Circuit Clerk: The Clerk of the Circuit Court is a constitutional officer elected to an eight-year term by voters. The Clerk handles administrative matters for the Court and also has authority to probate wills, grant administration of estates, and appoint guardians. The Clerk is the custodian of the Court's records, and the Clerk's Office is where marriage licenses are issued and deeds are recorded.

Court of Appeals

Either party in a case may appeal a decision made in the Fairfax General District Court to the Fairfax Circuit Court. The procedures differ depending upon what kind of case is to be appealed.

The Court of Appeals provides appellate review of final decisions of the Circuit Courts in domestic relations matters, appeals from decisions of an administrative agency, traffic infractions, and criminal cases. It also hears appeals of final decisions of the Virginia Workers Compensation Commission. While appeals of criminal, traffic, denial of a concealed handgun permit, and certain preliminary rulings in felony cases are presented by a petition for appeal, all other appeals to the Court of Appeals are a matter of right. Other civil decisions of the Circuit Court are appealed directly to the Virginia Supreme Court by petition for appeal.

The Court of Appeals also has original jurisdiction to issue writs of mandamus (ordering the holder of an office to perform his/her duty), prohibition (ordering a public official to stop an action), and habeas corpus (ordering one holding custody to produce the detained person before the Court for the purpose of determining whether such custody is proper) in any case over which the Court would have appellate jurisdiction, and writs of actual innocence (based upon non-biological evidence).

The decisions of this Court are final in traffic infrac-

tion and misdemeanor cases where no incarceration is imposed, in domestic relations matters, and in cases originating before administrative agencies or the Virginia Workers Compensation Commission. However, upon a petition for review, the Supreme Court may review those decisions if it finds that the decision of the Court of Appeals involves a substantial constitutional question as a determinative issue or matters of significant precedential value. In cases where the decision of the Court of Appeals is not final, any party aggrieved by a decision of this Court may appeal.

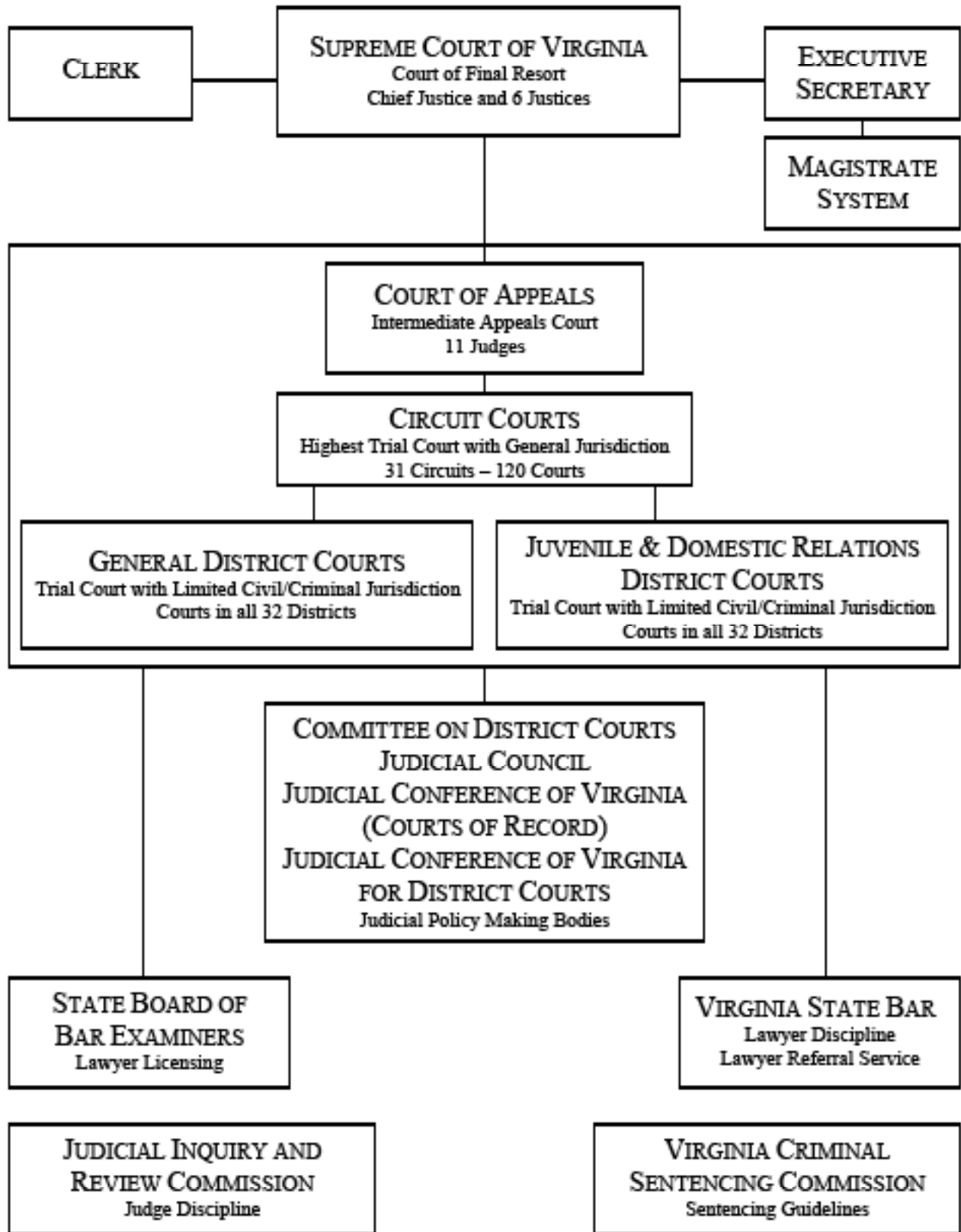
Court of Appeals Judge Selection: The seventeen judges of the Court of Appeals are elected by a majority vote of both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly. These justices serve for eight years.

Supreme Court

Although the Supreme Court of Virginia possesses both original and appellate jurisdiction, its primary function is to review decisions of lower courts, including the Court of Appeals, from which appeals have been allowed. Virginia does not allow an appeal to the Supreme Court as a matter of right except in cases involving the State Corporation Commission and certain disciplinary actions regarding attorneys. The Court's original jurisdiction is limited to cases of habeas corpus (ordering one holding custody to produce the detained person before the Court for the purpose of determining whether such custody is proper), mandamus (ordering the holder of an office to perform his/her duty), prohibition (ordering an action stopped in a lower court), and actual innocence (based on the results of scientific testing of human biological evidence). The Supreme Court also has original jurisdiction in matters filed by the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission relating to the censure, retirement, and removal of judges.

Supreme Court Judge Selection: The Supreme Court is composed of seven justices elected by a majority vote of each house of the General Assembly for a twelve-year term. Interim appointments are made by the Governor subject to election by the General Assembly at the next regular session. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court serves as the administrative head of the Virginia Judicial System and is charged with overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the entire system.

THE VIRGINIA JUDICIAL SYSTEM



Discussion Starters

- What are your opinions about appointed judges vs elected judges? Can you think of problems or advantages of each?
- The powers and responsibilities of magistrates are many. Should they be required to be lawyers? If not, why not? What occupations other than lawyers would possibly be appropriate?
- Was anything about the Virginia court system new or surprising?
- Should or should there not be a reason to have an election for the clerk of the courts, who is a constitutional officer?
- How is the determination made as to who is eligible to be represented by the Public Defender?

agreement that a parent has the right to object to their own child being required to read a book they consider “inappropriate” within reason (e.g. not a student in an AP class). But no one has the right to prevent other students from accessing such a book. We also agreed that anything “forbidden” becomes more desirable to young people, so the efforts are ultimately unsuccessful anyway.”



Fabulous Feats!

LWVFA accomplished a great deal in the 2023-2024 League year – and we still have another month to go. Look at the successes supported by our Education Fund and volunteer efforts:

- *Fairfax Facts* - 15,000 copies produced and distributed to the public free of charge.
- *What's on YOUR Ballot?* - 5,000 copies produced and distributed to the public free of charge.
- Voter Registration - 4,252 citizens, including high school students, registered to vote from September through March. This doesn't include the numbers of voters who registered through the summer months!
- Candidate Forums – Four forums were held, and they were viewed on YouTube 2,632 times. In addition, approximately 300 people watched the forums live either on Fairfax Public Access or Zoom. Our forums were co-sponsored by 12 non-partisan organizations.
- Postcards – 1,000 postcards were written and sent to people who have not recently voted.

In addition, our volunteers promoted voter registration and voter education at local senior residences and 33 community events, election information was entered into Vote 411 to assist voters, interesting topics were discussed at unit meetings, the General Meeting included an engaging presentation on Women in Politics, and members attended the virtual Women's Legislative Round Table sessions and the in-person League Day in Richmond.

As this League year is coming to an end, we are already looking forward to another eventful year starting in July. We need your volunteer efforts and financial support to ensure another successful year.

LWVFA Members are READERS

By Julie Jones

During March, LWVFA members were encouraged to read a banned or challenged book. Each unit decided whether to read the same book or have each member make their own choice.

What a variety of books were discussed - ranging from old classics, such as *Ulysses* by James Joyce, to modern novels, such as *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison).

The Springfield unit reported: “We read six different books . . . We all felt our books were appropriate for at least some age groups and most presented positive messages.”

The Greensprings unit read *The Bluest Eye*. “There was great interest in the book and all felt that Toni Morrison's writing was beautiful and deserved to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. . . . We all felt that it is important to have books such as this. Every person gets something different from reading the book. Though it may be inappropriate for elementary children, it still has a place on the library shelves for older students.”

Oakton/Vienna unit responded: “There was general

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: The Virginia Judicial System

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the “At Large Meeting” and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of April 1, 2024, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, May 4 at 3 p.m.

At-Large/Briefing - Virtual

All members are welcome. This will serve as a briefing for Unit Discussion leaders.

Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401,
judithhelein@aol.com
or Julie, 703-476-8347,
Julie.jones@lwv.fairfax.org

Monday, May 13, 1:30 p.m.

(GSP) - In Person

Meeting Room:
Hunters Crossing Craft Room
7430 Spring Village Drive
Springfield
Contact: Judy, 703-342-3353,
jjsmith64@earthlink.net

Wednesday, May 8, 10:00 a.m.

Fairfax Station (FXS)

- In Person

5415 Ashleigh Road Fairfax
Contact: Diana, 707-866-0796
dianawhite@gmail.com
or Sue, 703-266-0272,
sueoneill1@hotmail.com

Wednesday, May 8, 10:00 a.m.

Mount Vernon Day (MVD)

- In Person

Sherwood Library, Room 3, 2501
Sherwood Hall Lane,
Alexandria
Contact: Diana,
703-704-5325,
jfdw1111@gmail.com

Wednesday, May 8, 10:30 a.m.

McLean (McL) - In Person

Dolley Madison Library,
Conference Room 1
1244 Oak Ridge Avenue
McLean
Contact: Anne, 703-448-6626,
kanteratw@gmail.com

Thursday, May 9, 9:30 a.m.

Reston Day (RD) - In Person

Virginia Kitchen
450 Elden Street
Herndon
Contact: Charleen, 703-620-3593,
Charleen.deasy@verizon.net

Thursday, May 9, 10:00 a.m.

Springfield (SPF)

- In Person and Virtual

Packard Center
4022 Hummer Road
Annandale
Contact: Jane, 703-256-7834
patchwork1@verizon.net

Thursday, May 9, 11:30 a.m.

Centreville-Chantilly (CC)

- In Person

Lunch at the Burger Bar in
Wegmans
14361 Newbrook Drive
Chantilly
Contact: Susan, 703-391-0666,
sadill@cox.net

Thursday, May 9, 1:00 p.m.

Oakton/Vienna (OV)

- In person and Virtual

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

Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

Mount Vernon Evening

(MVE) - In person

Please reach out to the points
of contact for information on
the meeting location.
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820
jane@hilderwilliams.net
or Susan, 703-587-4790
scash5002@email.vccs.edu
or Jane, 703-380-3651
jmbyers@att.net

Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

Reston Evening (RE)

- In Person

Gregorio's Restaurant
1428 N. Point Village Ctr,
Reston
Contact: Wendy, 703-319-4114,

In the event of conflicting information on meeting dates and times, consider the League of Women Voters - Fairfax website, <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/> to be the authoritative source.

June Meetings: Do-Your-Own-Thing



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 May 2024**

Pat Fege, Co-President
 Katherine Ingmanson, Co-President
 Laura Hamilton, 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 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.

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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:

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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.

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