

Fairfax VOTER

March 2024

Volume 76, Issue 7

LWVFA March 2024 Book Club

Read a “Challenged or Banned Book”

Why was a particular book on a list of books not considered appropriate for school or public library collections?

Discuss your opinions with fellow League members at your local unit gatherings.

Calendar

March: Women’s History Month

Note: LWVFA Unit Meetings will meet in March & LWVFA Book Discussion-Reading a Banned Book

- 3 Fairfax *Voter* Deadline for the April 2024 issue including Annual Meeting Kit
- 5 Super Tuesday (Presidential Primary)
- 8 International Women’s Day
- 12 LWVFA/FCPL Women’s History Month Program
- 20 LWVFA Board Meeting, 10 a.m.

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Presidents' Message

Dear Fellow Leaguers,

We can't believe it's already March and time for Presidential Primaries! This will be the first chance for many of our newly-registered voters to exercise their right. And we have been registering many new voters, at high school events and at new citizen ceremonies.

Our units had great discussions on banned books and the processes and issues behind the efforts to remove books from library shelves.

We are also deep in the process of preparing for our Annual Meeting next month, where we will ask you to approve our budget for the next fiscal year and a slate of candidates for several Board positions. Finally, we are preparing for some changes to our membership structure being implemented by LWVUS, and we will share information as it becomes available and clear.

Pat and Katherine

REMINDER!

*Special event for Women's History Month
March 12
"WOMEN POWERING DEMOCRACY"
Sign up now to reserve your spot*

The LWVFA will be co-sponsoring a special in-person event, WOMEN POWERING DEMOCRACY at the City of Fairfax Public Library on March 12 from 7PM- 8PM.

This event will explore the early history of the power of women voting in Fairfax County. We will have a chance to view historic documents from the archives of the Clerk of the Court's office documenting the earliest history of Fairfax women voting, including records related to Mary Ellen Henderson (1885-1976), a pioneering local African American civil rights leader and LWV member. Viewing of these valuable records will be accompanied by a discussion by Dr Jennifer Ritterhouse, Professor of History at GMU.

This will be a unique and inspiring event you will not want to miss, but space is limited so be sure to sign up now. You can find the link to register at librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov then type WOMEN POWERING DEMOCRACY into the search field.

See you there!

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

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2023-2024

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

League Day

In the coming months, you will begin seeing changes to our membership structure. Please be sure to renew your membership with us this summer, but also be aware that sometime next year, LWFVUS will be taking over the process.

When you renew this year, we recommend you renew at the basic level and consider giving any additional money you might have given in the past to have a higher-tier membership directly as a donation.

Stay tuned for more details!

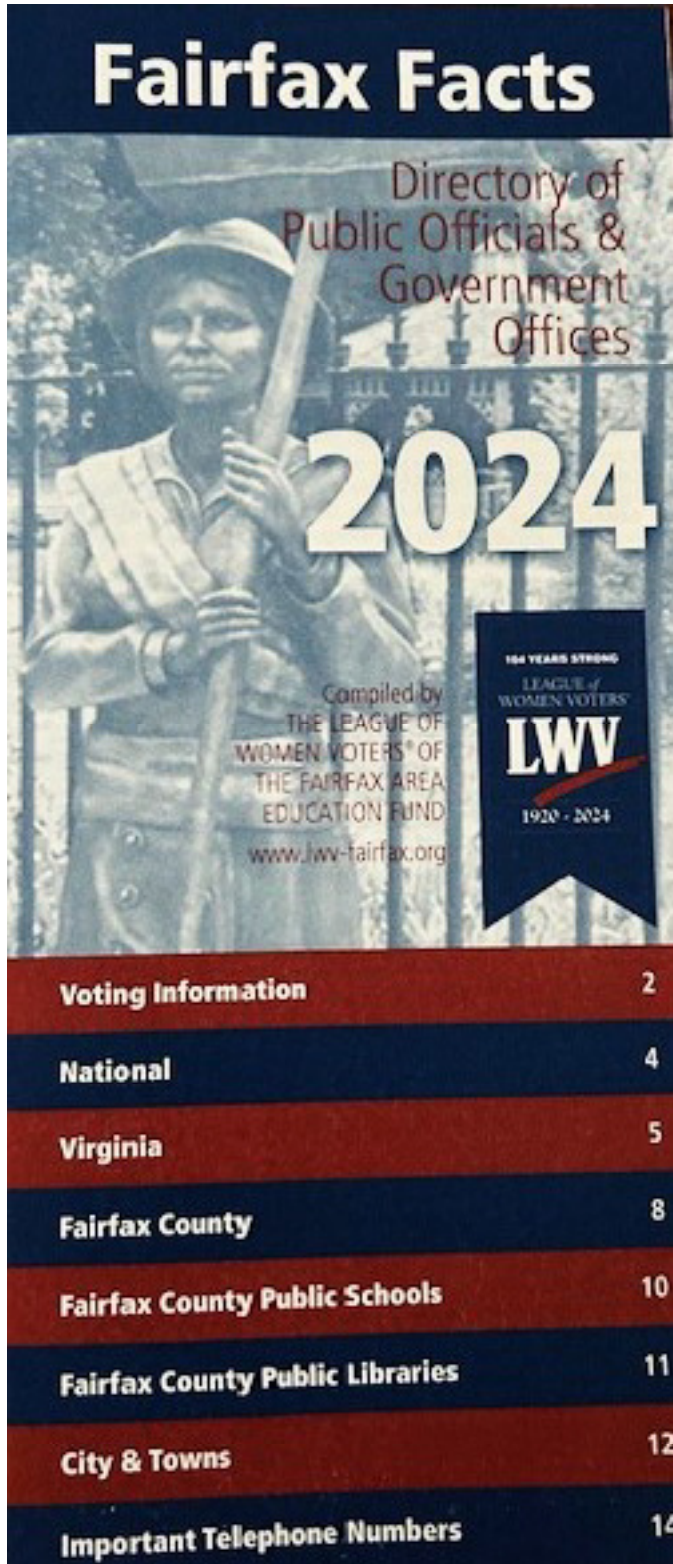
On February 7, ten Fairfax Members joined colleagues from across Virginia for League Day in Richmond. We had a great time meeting with friends and canvassing the halls of the State Legislature.

During our formal program, we heard from other groups advocating on many of the issues we care deeply about: National Popular Vote, women's reproductive rights and open government. We visited the offices of all the State Senators and Representatives from Fairfax to provide copies of the 2024 "Fairfax Facts" and background information on bills we support or oppose at the State level.

We already can't wait until next year!



LWFVA members attended League Day in Richmond



Leadership Opportunities

By Peggy Knight, Nominating Committee Chair

Any organization is only as good as its members and leadership. LWVFA is a very active and successful organization due to the active involvement of its members in so many ways, whether behind the scenes registering people to vote or up front as a member of leadership.

In order to continue the important work of registering voters and providing valuable civic information to the residents of the Fairfax area, LWVFA needs leaders to ensure that this work continues. That means we need you!

Consider volunteering for a leadership position. It is a great way to meet inspiring people and to forge new friendships.

Two-year positions beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2026:

- Program Director(s)
- Development Director(s)

Information about specific positions and their responsibilities can be found on the League website at: <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/members-info>

If you are interested in serving in one of these exciting volunteer opportunities or have questions, please contact a Nominating Committee member:

Peggy Knight, peggyknight49@gmail.com, 703-772-4939

Mary Valder, mary.valder@lwv-fairfax.org

Arina van Breda, arina@lwv-fairfax.org

Alice Reilly, alice.reilly@lwv-fairfax.org

Charleen Deasy, Charleen.deasy@verizon.net, 703-620-3593

LWVFA members attended League Day in Richmond and distributed “Fairfax Facts” to the Fairfax delegation. Copies are being distributed to all Fairfax Public Libraries or you can pick one up from the League office. It is also available online under the Publication tab on our website.



The LWVFA Local News Position

By Julie Jones

During the January 2024 unit discussions, LWVFA members concurred with the League of Women Voters of Washington State position on local news. Our approval will be conveyed to the LWV-VA Board, who will present their finding at the next LWVUS convention.

A reminder of their Position in Brief: The League of Women Voters of Washington believes it is the responsibility of the government to provide support for conditions under which credible local journalism can survive and thrive. The League of Women Voters of Washington defines local news as accurate, in-depth coverage of government entities, including but not limited to, city councils, county councils, county boards of commissioners, health departments, schools, and school boards.

The units reported lively and thoughtful discussions on the topic. As part of the Greensprings' report: "We talked about funding for local news. One member shared the demise of advertising as a contributing factor. Another member mentioned that we have always had government support for local news such as PBS. And we agreed that there is a need for support and that support can take many different forms. There was also concern that government not control the content of the news."

The Oakton/Vienna group had a "long discussion about support and solutions, although the Washington study didn't try to present any. Tax breaks for local publishers is one possible way to provide support. Still, we are leery of relying on government support; so many people, including many of us, have become distrustful of government programs. They can exercise control and are not reliably permanent. Nonprofit programs are also often discontinued for a variety of reasons."

Several questions and points were raised in the discussions:

1. We are aware of legal requirements in some locations to publish certain actions or proposals by local governments, agencies and others such as utilities. Do they still exist? Where are they printed?
2. What is a "credible" local news source?
3. Media literacy is paramount. We would like to see it included in many school subjects, including not only civics but also history, social studies and other classes at all levels.

Banned and Challenged Books

by Julie Jones, Co-Director of Program

In recent months, the "culture wars" have been about books and their accessibility to children of all ages. Communities are becoming divided on whether children should have access to books that some deem to be inappropriate for them. This has caused contention in school and library board meetings across the country as they deal with book challenges and book banning.

The American Library Association's (ALA) definitions of the difference between a challenge and a banning:

"A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials. Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather, they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others. Due to the commitment of librarians, teachers, parents, students and other concerned citizens, most challenges are unsuccessful and most materials are retained in the school curriculum or library collection.

ALA states that books "usually are challenged with the best intentions—to protect others, frequently children, from difficult ideas and information. ... Censorship can be subtle, almost imperceptible, as well as blatant and overt, but, nonetheless, harmful."

The *Library Bill of Rights* (ALA's basic policy concerning access to information) states that "Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources." Censorship by librarians of constitutionally protected speech, whether for protection or for any other reason, violates the First Amendment."

The ALA article continues: "As Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., in *Texas v. Johnson*, said most eloquently: *If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.*"

"If we are to continue to protect our First Amendment, we would do well to keep in mind these words of Noam Chomsky: *If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don't believe in it at all.*"

“Or these words of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas (“The One Un-American Act” Nieman Reports, vol. 7, no. 1, Jan. 1953, p. 20): *Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.*”

Why are books challenged?

Source: “Common Reasons for Banning Books,” Fort Lewis College, John F. Reed Library. Banned Books, Censorship & Free Speech. November 15, 2013. Web. March 19, 2014. libguides.butler.edu

Each book that is banned or censored is done so for the content within the pages. There are a few common reasons that books have been banned or censored in schools, libraries, and book stores. These include:

Racial Issues: About and/or encouraging racism towards one or more group of people.

Encouragement of “Damaging” Lifestyles: Content of book encourages lifestyle choices that are not of the norm or could be considered dangerous or damaging. This could include drug use, co-habitation without marriage, or homosexuality.

Blasphemous Dialog: The author of the book uses words such as “God” or “Jesus” as profanity. This could also include any use of profanity or swear words within the text that any reader might find offensive.

Sexual Situations or Dialog: Many books with content that include sexual situations or dialog are banned or censored.

Violence or Negativity: Books with content that include violence are often banned or censored. Some books have also been deemed too negative or depressing and have been banned or censored as well.

Presence of Witchcraft: Books that include magic or witchcraft themes. A common example of these types of books are J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter Series*.

Religious Affiliations (unpopular religions): Books have been banned or censored due to an unpopular religious views or opinions in the content of the book. This is most commonly related to satanic or witchcraft themes found in the book. Although, many books have also been banned or censored for any religious views in general that might not coincide with the public view.

Political Bias: Most commonly occurs when books support or examine extreme political parties/philosophies such as: fascism, communism, anarchism, etc.

Age Inappropriate: These books have been banned or censored due to their content and the age level at which they are aimed. In some cases children’s books are viewed to have “inappropriate” themes for the age level at which they are written.

Many books have been banned or censored in one more of these categories due to a misjudgment or misunderstanding about the book’s contents and message. Although a book may have been banned or labeled a certain way, it is important that the reader makes his/her own judgements on the book. Many books that have been banned or censored later were dropped from banned books lists and were no longer considered controversial.

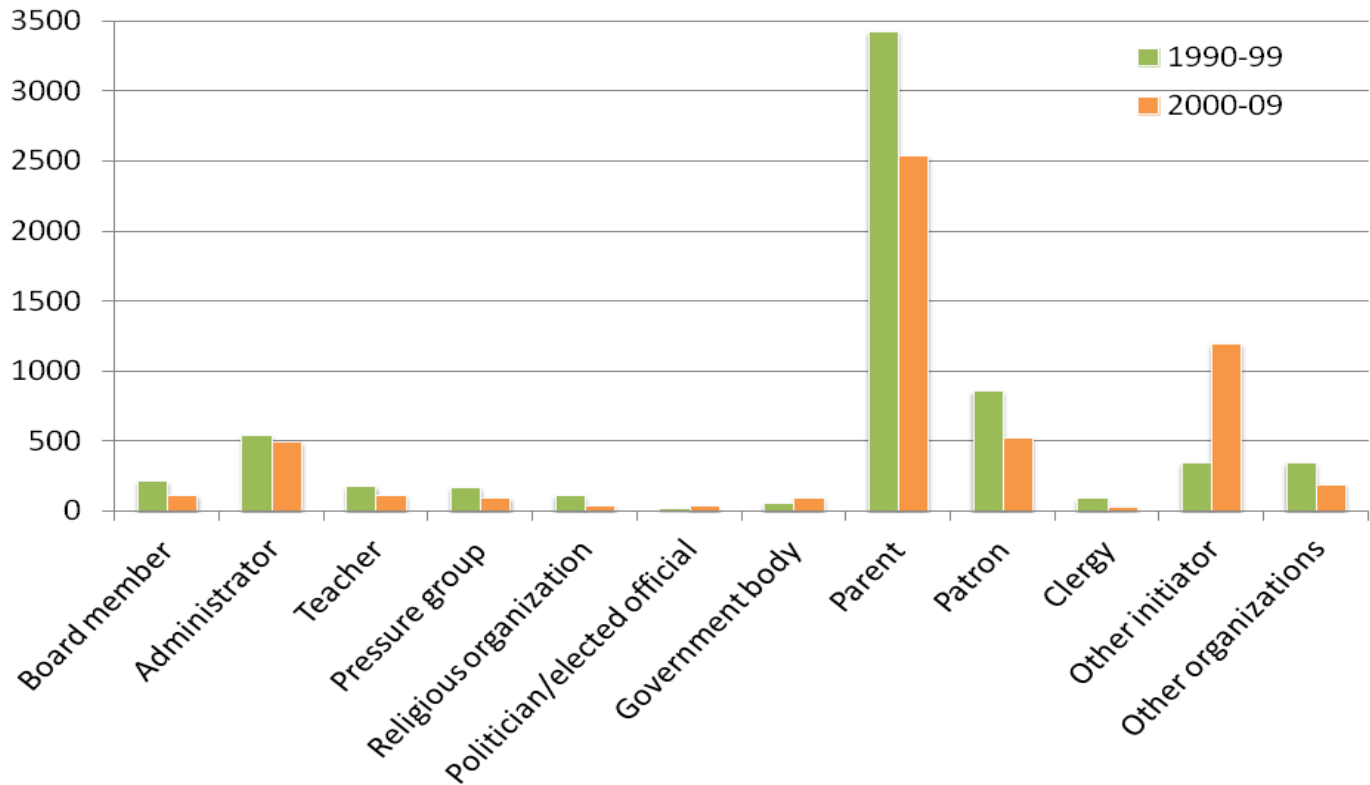
Who Challenges Books?

“School book challenges reached historic highs in America in 2021 and 2022, according to the American Library Association. And just a handful of people are driving those records. A *Washington Post* analysis of thousands of challenges nationwide found that 60 percent of all challenges in the 2021-2022 school year came from 11 adults, each of whom objected to dozens - sometimes close to 100 - of books in their districts. (*Washington Post* Oct 9, 2023) In one instance, the *Washington Post* reported on a mother in Spotsylvania who had initiated 73 challenges She typed up passages “from more than 1,300 pages - of the 24,000-plus pages she read - that she says depict sexual acts. Then she filed challenges against 71 of the books with Spotsylvania County Public Schools.” (“A brigade of Objectors,” by Hannah Natanson, *Washington Post*, Oct.9, 2023)

The small group of individuals often use lists supplied by outside advocacy groups not related to the challenger’s community. *The Washington Post* (Dec.23, 2023) had a long detailed article, “Half of Book Challenged Books Return to Schools. LGBTQ books are Banned the Most.” The article highlighted data from over 100 school districts in 29 states. “LGBTQ titles also made up a sizable percentage of books that were restricted but not banned: nearly one-third, or 28 percent. Books with authors or subjects of color made up 31 percent of restricted books. And LGBTQ books were 20 percent more likely to be unavailable before drawing a challenge. (*The Post* previously found that 43 percent of 2021-2022 school challenges targeted LGBTQ books, while 36 percent targeted books deal-

ing with race.)

Challenges by Initiator



www.libguides.butler.ed

Fairfax County Public Schools Challenge Result

“FCPS Reinstates Two Books, Reaffirming Commitment to Supporting Diversity in Literature” was the headline posted by the Office of Communication and Community Relations (FCPS News NOVEMBER 23, 2021)

“Two books that were subject to a formal challenge have been deemed appropriate for high school readers following a two-month review process and will be reinstated to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) libraries. These are the two books:

Lawn Boy, review committee recommendation

Gender Queer: A Memoir, review committee recommendation

The decision reaffirms FCPS’ ongoing commitment to provide diverse reading materials that reflect our student population, allowing every child an opportunity to see themselves reflected in literary characters. Both reviews concluded that the books were valuable in their potential to reach marginalized youth who may struggle to find relatable literary characters that reflect their personal journeys.”

The full regulation and step-by-step procedures can be found on the Fairfax County Public School website: Challenged Library and Instructional Materials Regulation 3009.12 effective 06/09/23. The form below is completed by the challenger.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY OR
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

In order for your challenge to be processed, you must respond fully and completely to all of the following questions:

Request Initiated by _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City and State _____ Zip Code _____

Name of Child _____ School _____
(If request is from a parent or guardian)

Title _____ Type of Material _____

Author _____ Copyright _____

1. Did you read or view all of the material? Yes ___ No ___
If not, your challenge will be dismissed; consequently, you may want to delay completing this form until you have read the material. If you have read or viewed it, please summarize it.

2. Have you conferred with the principal and school staff member(s) regarding this material?
Yes ___ No ___ Date of Conference _____

3. Explain the purpose of this material as you understand it. Does the general purpose for the use of the material, as described by school staff member(s) seem a suitable one to you?
Yes ___ No ___
If not, please explain. (Feel free to attach additional information related to the material).

4. Please cite page numbers or location and specific information in the material to support your objections.

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

The Winter Quarterly Meeting of the Council to End Violence

By Adarsh Trehan
Chair, Domestic Violence Committee

The Winter Quarterly Meeting of the Council to End Violence was held virtually on January 25, 2024.

The Lethality Assessment Protocol

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation on the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) by Kee-sha Cole, Assistant Division Director, Department of Family Services (DFS). The LAP is “an evidence-based...protocol that helps first responders assess the level of imminent danger to victims/survivors of intimate partner violence.”

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/domestic-sexual-violence/volunteer-voices/program-spotlight-community-engagement-services>

The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) uses the LAP, as do 31 other states throughout the United States. All FCPD officers completed the LAP training by the end of November 2023.

When the Fairfax County Police Department receives a domestic violence call, “No less than two (2) officers should respond to (the call and be) dispatched from the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC). Upon arrival, officers shall identify themselves to involved parties, FCPD General Order 602 – Domestic Incidents, Protective Orders, and Substantial Risk Orders Page 5 of 21 explain the basis for their response, and respectfully request entry into the residence as warranted. Officers may not reveal the name of the complainant if they are not an involved party that is physically present at the residence.”

The LAP screening process is used by any officer “who (1) makes an arrest or obtains a warrant for any intimate (cohabiting or otherwise) partner for domestic violence, or (2) makes an arrest or obtains a warrant where the parties either currently or have previously dated and/or been in an intimate partner relationship and violence or allegations of stalking has occurred. A LAP assessment may always be used regardless of an arrest or lack of warrants where an officer believes a victim would benefit from additional resources. Victims are screened in as “high danger” and thus, trigger LAP protocol referral, when they (1) answer “yes” to any of questions #1-3 on the LAP form, (2) answer “yes” to a minimum of four of questions #4-11, or (3)

respond “yes” to the question “Is there anything else that worries you about your safety?” Officers may also self-initiate referrals where they reasonably believe a victim is in a potentially lethal situation based upon their training and experience.”

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/sites/police/files/assets/generalorders/go-602.pdf>

The first three questions on the LAP form are:

1. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
2. Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?
3. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?

You can access the LAP Form to read all the 11 questions at:

<https://nij.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh171/files/media/document/domestic-violence-screening.pdf>

The FCPD maintains partnerships with the Division of Sexual and Domestic Violence Services (DSVS), OFS, and Artemis House (a shelter house), to help such victims immediately to provide whatever services the victims need.

Shelley Previa, a department detective, stated that 357 LAP calls were received by the FCPD in 2023. Also, last year the list of domestic violence victims was expanded from just intimate partners to current and former dating partners, current or former sexual partners, or stalking victims.

Other

Eduardo Levia, OFS, talked about the need for efforts to focus on more equity in sexual and domestic violence service provision for underserved victims and in the CEDV leadership structure. The structure has changed from having just a chair to having a vice chair, and a community leader. All three positions are filled by women.

Stacy Ziebell, Program Manager, Countywide Coordination, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, said that the challenging and emerging issues are evolving technology used for tracking and stalking victims, finance and affordable housing, homelessness, and helping more victims with limited English language proficiency.

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: Banning Books

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 February 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.

Monday, March 11,

1:30 pm

Greenspring (GSP) - In Person

Meeting Room:
Hunters Crossing Craft Room
7430 Spring Village Drive
Springfield

Contact: Judy, 703-342-3353,
jjsmith64@earthlink.net

Wednesday, March 13,

10 am

Fairfax Station (FXS) - In Person

8739 Cuttermill Place
Springfield

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

Wednesday, March 13,

10 am

McLean Day (McL) -

In Person

Dolley Madison Library
Conference Room 1
1244 Oak Ridge Avenue
McLean

Contact: Anne,
703-448-6626, akanter@cox.net

Wednesday, March 13, 10 am

Mount Vernon Day (MVD) - In Person

Please confirm date, time and location with the point of contact
Sherwood Library, Room 3, 2501
Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria
Contact: Diana, 703-704-5325,
jfdw1111@gmail.com

Thursday, March 14,

10 am

Springfield (SPF) - In Person and Virtual

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

Thursday, March 14, 10 am

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, March 14, 1 pm

Oakton/Vienna (OV) - In person and Virtual

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

Thursday, March 14, Time TBD

Reston Day (RD) - In Person

Please confirm date, time and location with the point of contact
Contact: Charleen, 703-620-3593,
Charleen.deasy@verizon.net

Thursday, March 14,

7:30 pm

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, March 14,

7:30 pm

Reston Evening (RE) - In Person

North County Government Center
12000 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston

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

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.

April Meetings: Annual Meeting



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
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 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 March 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.

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.

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