



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

Fairfax Voter

September 2008

(Formerly LWWFA Bulletin)

Volume 61, Issue 1

Program Year Kicks Off With Election Facts

The program study for this month concentrates on fulfilling one of our most crucial roles as a League, that of providing potential voters with the necessary information to ensure that they exercise their right to vote. Leaguers can play a special role in informing themselves and then informing family members, neighbors, and friends by keeping a copy of this study on hand and sharing the facts when asked (and you most likely will be asked.) The key word this month is SHARE—and tell them you are a League member and they should join too.

Calendar

September

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01 | Labor Day |
| 02 | Ramadan begins |
| 02 | School Begins |
| 05 | NCA Board Meeting |
| 05 | October <i>Fairfax Voter</i> Deadline |
| 06 | Unit Officers Kick Off - 10 am/
Briefing 12 pm, Mason Dist
Gov't Ctr |
| 06 | Reston Multicultural Festival |
| 8-11 | Units - Elections |
| 13-14 | Burke Conservancy Days |
| 17 | Bd Mtg/Oct. UC Letter Deadline |
| 13 | Centreville Day |
| 26 | NCA Reception for LWWUS Board |
| 28 | Fairfax Cable Election, 1:00 pm |
| 28 | Kingstowne Library Outreach |
| 30 | Rosh Hashana (begins eve of 29th) |

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60 Years Strong - Needed Now More Than Ever



The Acting President's Message

Dear fellow Leaguers,

It has been a busy, satisfying and sometimes hectic year as Acting President working with you energetic dedicated people. I am thankful to members of the LWFVA board and the many "off-board" chairs who worked so hard. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Sherry who did a lot of behind the scenes tasks and was ever available for advice and help. Hers are not easy shoes to fill. Although I have moved to Baltimore and the easy lifestyle of condo living, I have kept my LWFVA membership and will remain active taking on occasional projects that can be done long distance. I'm enjoying my new life and looking forward to learning more about Baltimore and Maryland governance. But I will always look back on Fairfax County and the LWFVA with warm remembrance and much affection. "Remember the ladies," be inspired by their courage and ever confident in your ability to make a difference.

Mary Grace

Returning President's Message

Hello Again!

The last time I wrote this message, I believe I said "see you in September" – I just did not say "which" September! So, the wedding is done (or will be by the time you are reading this) and it was a lovely affair. It truly took a year to plan and execute, so my "leave" was well utilized. And now back to League affairs!

Words are inadequate to express the depth of my gratitude to Mary Grace, for taking over the presidency and making it possible for me to take my leave of absence. I am certain that if she "knew then what she knows now," her offer may not have come! The LWFVA has been well served under her leadership (again!) with the help of the board and off-board members who "kept on trucking." New and exciting ideas have sprouted during her tenure; we thank you and

will endeavor to nurture them into full growth. And Mary Grace, I have your telephone number and expect to keep in touch with you—Baltimore is not that far away!

Thank You Mary Grace, the LWFVA Board and membership for giving me my time off!

Sherry

HELP WANTED!

Excellent Money Making Opportunity [for LWFVA]

We have up to 24 openings for Voter Registration Clerks at the Reston Community Center Preference Poll election at various locations in Reston On October 18, starting at 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Only Non-Reston residents need apply. For more information, or to submit your application, contact:
Bill Thomas 703-938-7304-billthomas4@verizon.net
Una White 703-922-8721-unawhite@gmail.com

Note: Reston residents will be welcome for post-polling duties on October 18 and are also invited to participate in the Fairfax Cable Access Corp.(FCAC) election on Sunday, September 28 at 1:00 PM. Food will be provided. Contact unawhite@gmail.com.

LWFVA Fairfax Voter 2008

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

UNITS KICK-OFF IS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

The Units Kick Off meeting, which signifies the start of the new League program year, will be held on **Saturday, September 6, 2008**, at the **George Mason District Governmental Center**, 6507 Columbia Pike, in Annandale 22003 (the same place as it has been before). The meeting begins at 10:00 AM and will be followed by the September discussion leaders' briefing – probably around 11:30 AM. Come meet the new Unit Co-Coordinators **Julia Jones and Diane Hardcastle**, hear about the exciting programs your League has in store for the upcoming year, and learn how to make your unit meetings even better!

LWVFA Welcomes New Members . . .

By Leslie Vandivere, Membership Director

Did you remember to pay your dues for the 2008-2009 dues year? If you aren't sure, check the address label on your *Voter*—your membership expiration date is the top line. If you pay your dues directly to LWVFA **and your membership has expired, the October *Fairfax Voter* will be the last one you receive.** Fill in the form on the back of the *Voter* and send your dues check to the office. If you have any questions about dues, please contact the Membership Director, Leslie Vandivere, at 703 222-4173 or LVandivere@cox.net.

Welcome the following new members who joined at the local level: **Jackson Harper, Clifton (FXS), Kay Taylor, Fairfax Station (FXS), Elizabeth Lawson, (McLean), Joyce Taylor, (Herndon), Bonnie Holland, (Lorton), Janet Oleszek, (Fairfax), and Nancy Barkume, (Alexandria),.**

We're glad to have the following new national members: **Renee Gholz, Falls Church and Janet Neuhaus, Fairfax.**

Over half of current LWV members indicated they joined because someone they knew **ASKED** them to join! Do your part in building membership for LWVFA by **ASKING** friends to join.

Suffragist's Great Grandson Joins LWVFA

By Sherry Zachry, Editor

Talk about wonderful synergy – Raymund V. Nolan attended the dedication of Turning Point Plaza in Occoquan Regional Park, along with approximately 170 other people on Sunday, July 27, 2008, and ended up completing his great-grandmother's legacy by joining the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA). Why is this special? Read on.



Raymund V. Nolan

Mary Nolan from Jacksonville, Florida, Raymund's great-grandmother, was the oldest suffragist to be held at the Workhouse; she was 75 years old and suffered the same mistreatment as the younger women. Mr. Nolan says that his great-grandmother, similar to many of the suffragists, was arrested ten times and jailed five times, both in D.C. and in the Workhouse at Lorton.

Raymund Nolan says that on his great-grandmother's gravesite in Jacksonville is a marker with the words she told a D.C. judge in 1917 when she was asked if she was guilty or not guilty: "I am guilty if it is guilty to want freedom." A fitting epitaph for all of the women who fought so long and hard for women's rights in America and the battle is not over yet!

"Turning Point Plaza" received its name because the news of the Suffragists treatment at the Occoquan Workhouse raised the country's awareness and turned the fight for women's right to vote around. The Plaza will be a physical reminder, with three wayside displays that tell the suffragist's story and park benches for lingering in the beauty of the area, of the need to be vigilant about equal rights for women in America today and into the future. Plans are underway to add a monument

See **Suffragist Great Grandson**, Page 6, Col. 2

LWVFA Thanks Our Special Supporters

By Bernice Colvard, Finance Director

A big THANK YOU is due to those who participated in unit fundraisers or made individual contributions in FY 2007-08. Your support is critical for League operations (rent, phone, copying, e-technology, etc.) and very much appreciated. Several units excelled. Two units were not heard from, and we hope they will join us in unit efforts in this new fiscal year. We have never set goals but ask each of you to make a "best effort."

2007-08 Unit Project Proceeds

A/B	\$25	MVD	\$805
CHD	208	MVE	520
DU	75	RD	708
FXD	296	RE	265
FXS	306	SPF	637
MCL	85	Total	\$3,930

Individual Donations of \$50 or More:

Louise Anderson-Jurgens	Therese Martin
Edith Appel	Marion Meader
Bernice Colvard	Mary Nightlinger
Deborah Freund	Winnie Shapiro
Anne Kanter	Leslie Vandivere
Ferebee Lewis	Sherry Zachry

Community support for *Facts For Voters* is shown on the back of *Facts*, as usual. They include Dominion, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, Cox Communications, CH2M Hill and the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors. Their generous support of \$3,750 was essential to underwrite production of League's signature public service publication but did not entirely cover costs.

We thank each of you for your loyalty and generosity and ask that you plan now for League support in FY 2008-09.

Please Consider a Generous Gift This Year!

Good Friend And Member Of The League, Passes Away

By Mary Grace Lintz

Senator Joseph V. Gartlan, who served in the Virginia Senate from 1972 until his retirement in 1999, passed away on July 18, 2008. He was a forceful advocate for abused and neglected children, people with mental health problems and the environment. He chaired three Senate committees: Privileges and Elections; Rehabilitation and Social Services and Courts of Justice. A member of the Fairfax Area League of Women Voters, Senator Gartlan was known for his effective oratory and legislative skill. Those of us who were privileged to know and work with "Senator Joe" remember a courtly, literate man of great intelligence, remarkable memory and rapier wit. In his retirement speech, he quoted Edmund Burke, who said "a representative owes his constituency not his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays instead of serving his people, if he sacrifices that judgment to their opinion." These words typify, Joe Gartlan, a rare politician and superb man.

LWVUS Convention Adopts Program

By Leslie Vandivere

Four LWVFA delegates attended the 48th Biennial LWVUS Convention in Portland, Oregon, June 14 – June 17: Janey George, Therese Martin, Leslie Vandivere and Sherry Zachry; there were 611 – 682 voting delegates present on the four days. Highlights of Convention were:

Program for 2008-2010: retain all current positions and adopt the following:

- Health care program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed;
- A multi-level education and advocacy campaign to promote solutions to global climate change;
- The advisability of using the National Popular Vote (NPV) compact among the states as a method for electing the President; and
- Amend Principles by adding: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government:

See **LWVUS Convention Adopts**, Page 12, Col. 1

Everything You Need to Know - and Share - About Elections

By Lois Page, Program Chair, and
Janey George, Voters Service Outreach Chair -
League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area

Every year about this time, those of us who ought to know a lot about elections start to wonder if we really know all that we should. Do we know enough to give accurate information to new young voters? To brand new citizens? To our neighbors? Thus our kick off for the 2008-2009 LWVFA program year covers a lot of key information about voting, with a timeliness that allows people to register to vote and apply for absentee ballots as needed. In general, a tremendous amount of information on elections (registration, absentee voting,

upcoming elections, polling places, candidate information) can be found at the Fairfax County elections website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb. City of Fairfax residents may find additional information at GeneralRegistrar@fairfaxva.gov.

One thing we all need to know is that in Virginia we vote every single year. Yes, 2008 is a national election year, but good government starts locally. It is on the local stage that potential candidates receive the training and experience that turns them into responsible politicians for the future. The following chart includes the schedule for elections in Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax for the next few years:

Year	Federal	State-wide	General Assembly	Local/County & City of Fairfax	Town (all May elections)
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •President •Vice-President •House of Reps. •Senate 			City of Fairfax-(May) Mayor 6 Council Members, 5 School Board,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clifton-Mayor, 5 Council •Herndon-Mayor, 6 Council •Vienna-Mayor, 3 Council
2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Governor •Lt. Gov •Att'y Gen. 	•House of Delegates	City of Fairfax Commissioner of Revenue Treasurer	•Vienna-3 Council
2010	•House of Reps.			City of Fairfax-(May) Mayor 6 Council 5 School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clifton-Mayor, 5 Council •Herndon-Mayor, 6 Council •Vienna-Mayor, 3 Council
2011			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •State Senate •House of Delegates 	County •Board of Supervisors •Commonwealth's Attorney •Sheriff •Soil & Water Commission; School Board	•Vienna-3 Council

VOTER REGISTRATION

The first thing Virginians need to know about voting is that they must register to vote. Interestingly, this is not true of one state, North Dakota, and seven states allow voters to register on the day of the election. Ensuring that voters register is a key factor in voter turnout. This may not sound very profound, but the low voter turnout so often mentioned after an election is a percentage of *eligible* voters (63.8% in 2004). The percentage of registered voters who voted that same year was 88.5 percent, a fairly respectable showing. That means, of course, that 27.9 percent of eligible voters were not registered, who most likely would have voted if they were registered. (*National Voter*, June 2008, p.5) Next month's program will take a look at some of the reasons why people may not be registered.

Frequently Asked Questions About REGISTERING TO VOTE in Virginia

1) Am I eligible to vote?

Answer: you are eligible to register to vote if you are

- A citizen of the United States
- At least 18 years of age by the next general election
- A resident of Virginia
- Have had your voting rights restored by the Governor if you have ever been convicted of a felony. (Unique to Virginia)

2) When is the next election?

Answer: **November 4, 2008**

3) When can I register to vote?

Answer: You can register to vote anytime. However, applications submitted during the 29 days before a general and primary election will not be processed until after that election. Registration will then be permanent under most circumstances.

4) So what does that make the deadline for the November election??

Answer: The deadline to register to vote for the next election **or to submit a change of address form** is 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 6. (For additional information call the Fairfax General Registrar's Office at 703 222-0776 or City of Fairfax General Registrar's Office at 703 385-7890.) Mail-in applications must be postmarked on or before October 6.

5) How do I register?

Answer: There are four ways:

- a. In person from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday at the Fairfax County General Registrar's Office 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 323 Fairfax Virginia 22035-0081
Phone: 703 222-0076

Or, in City of Fairfax,

General Registrar's Office / Sisson House,
10455 Armstrong St. Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703-385-7890

- b. In person at other registration sites such as community festivals where a trained assistant registrar, such as some League of Women Voters members, can take your application. Be sure to get a receipt if you ask the assistant registrar to mail it in. Call 703 324 4700 for a list of other sites.
- c. By mail, to the Fairfax County address above or, if a City of Fairfax resident, to General Registrar's Office / Sisson House, 10455 Armstrong St. Fairfax, Virginia 22030. The form will contain a pre-addressed envelope. If you register by mail you should include a copy of your current and valid photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows your name and address. You should receive a Voter Information Card within 30 days. If you do not, call your respective Office of Elections number above to follow up.
- d. Military personnel and their families, plus other overseas voters, may register to vote by using a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) which can be downloaded from www.fvap.gov. You can sign it and mail, fax, or scan and send an e-mail attachment to your local registrar, so long as it reaches the office by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 6, 2008. Please note that the original post card application with the original signature, must be mailed to the registrar's office and received no later than the close of polls on election day to be processed. Sounds complicated? Maybe the following website can clarify this: www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Absentee_Voting/Military_Overseas_Citizens/Index.html
- 6) **Where do I get a registration application?**
Answer: You can pick a Virginia Voter Registration Application at the following sites:
 - Department of Motor Vehicles (5)
 - Military recruitment offices
 - Public assistance agency offices
 - Public libraries
 - Public schools
 - District Government Centers, Board of Supervisors offices
 - Citizens Assistance in the County Government Center lobby
 - Judicial Center information desk

- Web site of the State Board of Elections:
http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Forms_Publications/Index.html
- Voter drives, such as local elections groups, civic associations, churches, League of Women Voters outreach events at community gatherings

7) Are there other restrictions when you register by mail?

Answer: Yes. If you register by mail, you must vote in person the first time you vote. You are exempt from this if you are in the military service or a dependent, an overseas citizen, a full-time student, or disabled. However, if exempt from this restriction, you must still provide a photocopy of a valid identification with your mailed absentee ballot.

8) Do I have to state my political party preference?

Answer: No

9) I'm already registered but moving. Will I be able to vote in the next election?

Answer: Registered voters must notify their general registrar in writing of any change of address to insure their voting privilege. The back of your Voter Information Card (which we hope you have carefully saved) provides a form. Full legal name, home address, date moved to the address, birth date, the last four digits of your social security number, complete address of previous registration and a signature must be provided. If you are moving to another city or county, you must complete a new voter registration application to update your address. This must be done by October 6 for the November election.

10) I am a college student living away from home.

Where should I register?

Answer: You can register either at your home or school, depending on state law. It is important to update your registration each time you move. If you are registered at your home address while you are at school, remember to request an absentee ballot at least 30 days before the election. (See absentee ballots)

11) Where can I get assistance for someone who doesn't speak English?

Answer: Check with registrar. The Voting Rights Act requires local election officials to provide bilingual voter registration applications, ballots, and language assistance once the minority reaches a certain percentage of the population.

12) Is the information on the Voter Registration Form confidential?

Answer: The information is a matter of public record. However, recent legislation prevents

states from using this information for any purpose other than voter registration. States that require a Social Security number are required to protect the confidentiality. This is why our recently mailed Virginia Voter cards no longer have a Social Security number, but a new registration number.

13) What information does the registration form require?

Answer: See insert: Virginia Voter Registration Application

ABSENTEE VOTING

How Do I Vote If I Am Out of Town?

The issues surrounding absentee voting are many and include the question as to why you must have a reason to vote absentee and the problems that people have voting absentee from overseas. Next month's study will look at some of these.

Frequently Asked Questions About ABSENTEE VOTING

1) I will be out of town on Election Day. Can I vote absentee?

Answer: Any registered voter who expects to be away or otherwise physically unable to go the polls on Election Day may request an absentee ballot.

2) My commute is too long to get back in time to vote. How can I vote?

Answer: You can vote absentee if you will be working and commuting for 11 or more hours between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., if you are a primary caregiver of a confined family member, an Election Officer (poll watcher), or on vacation. (Other acceptable reasons are listed on the ballot application below.)

3) Is working in Washington D.C. or even Alexandria considered being out of town?

Answer: Yes. Anyone out of Fairfax County on Election Day may vote absentee, if you meet the above time frame. This includes Washington, D.C., Arlington, or Alexandria, among others

4) What if I just want to avoid the hassle on Election Day.

Answer: You have to swear that the reason you selected is true. The penalty is a felony conviction under VA law (conviction would bar you from voting for life.) The maximum penalty is \$2500 fine and/or 10 years in jail.

5) Where do I apply to vote absentee?

Answer: Four places:

A. By mail. Form may be requested from the General Registrar's Office (address and

www.lwv-fairfax.org

phone number above) beginning 10 months before the general election. Requests for a ballot must be received by the General Registrar at least SEVEN DAYS before the election—**October 28, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.** They are also available at registration sites and government centers. The League Office often has a number on hand as well as being provided at Voters Service Outreach events.

- B. In person at the Registrar's Office
- C. Online: Web site of the State Board of Elections: http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Forms_Publications/Index.html
- D. Military personnel and their families serving overseas and other overseas voters are permitted to apply for an absentee ballot by email attachment, using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). People meeting this criteria may request to receive the ballot via e-mail. The original card with an original signature has to be mailed so that it is received by the close of polls on Election Day. Every voting family member must send in a separate card and fill out forms sent specifically to them. The ballot itself must be sent through postal mail or delivered personally to the Office of Elections.

6) How do I cast my vote on an absentee basis?

Answer: Two ways:

- a. By mail or in person, voted ballots must be received in the office by **7:00 p.m. of Election Day** to be counted.
- b. You may vote in person in the Registrar's Office or in satellite locations before a general election. **IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTES MAY BE CAST THROUGH THE SATURDAY BEFORE EACH ELECTION DAY** (this year, NOV. 1, 2008). **YOU MAY BEGIN VOTING IN PERSON THIS ELECTION ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008.**

7) Where are the in-person satellite voting locations?

Answer: Besides the registrar's office at the Government Center, there are 7 locations; you need to call 703 222-0776 or visit the county website mentioned above to discover hours of operation:

- Franconia Governmental Center
- Mason Governmental Center
- McLean Governmental Center
- Mt Vernon Governmental Center
- North County Governmental Center
- Sully District Governmental Center
- West Springfield Governmental Center

8) What information does the absentee ballot application ask for?

Answer: See next page for copy of first page of absentee ballot application that lists the criteria for voting absentee. The second page of the application, not included here, gives you, in Part B, the opportunity to tell them where to send the ballot, especially important if you have moved. (Part F on this page gives you the opportunity to submit change of address information.) Part C gives you the opportunity to tell them if you need assistance marking the ballot due to disability, blindness, or inability to read which will alert officials to the need to send instruction to the assistant. Part D asks you to sign a statement that all the information is true with the penalties mentioned in #4 under Absentee Voting. Part E is where the Assistant signs for the person mentioned in Part C.

9) Is there any problem with voting absentee?

Answer: According to election officials, the absentee ballot must include all information requested on the B envelope, including the date, or it will have to be rejected. This happens in an unfortunate number of cases.

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

Going to the Polls

Assuming you have navigated the registration process successfully and you will be in town on Election Day, you may still confront some complications at the polls. A close look at some of these, such as long lines or confusing ballots, will be part of next month's study.

Frequently Asked Questions About VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

1) How will I know where to vote?

Answer: The Registrar's Office determines eligibility and confirms acceptance of a registration application by mailing to the registrant a voter information card which includes your election districts and the name and address of the voting location. You should check with the General Registrar if you are not notified within a reasonable time of your voting status. You can also find your polling place online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb or GeneralRegistrar@fairfaxva.gov

2) When will the polls be open?

Answer: From 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

3) Is there any way I can help relieve the anticipated long lines at the polls?

See What You Should Know, Page EF-7, Col. 1