



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

# Fairfax VOTER

March 2013

Volume 65, Issue 7

## Clean, Affordable Water: Can We Count on it?

Water, unlike the saying, is not everywhere, but fortunately folks in the Fairfax area have plenty of clean, good tasting water to drink—at least for now. This month you are being given a clear and thoughtful description of how the water you may take for granted is being brought to you, what it costs, who oversees it, the various stresses the system has overcome, several interesting controversies that have arisen, and the challenges for the future. Many thanks to Anne and Bill Thomas and to Gloria Haheer who rose to the occasion and created an ad hoc water committee in order to bring this to you.

### Calendar

#### March 2013

- 1 LWVNCA Board meeting
- 2 Briefing and At-Large meeting
- 4 *VOTER* deadline
- 6 **League meeting with Fairfax  
County Office of Management  
and Budget**
- 8-9 LWV-VA Board Meeting -  
Williamsburg
- 10-16 Sunshine Week (open government)
- 11 Daylight Savings Time begins
- 11-14 Unit Meetings**
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 Board meeting**
- 20 General Assembly reconvenes session
- 25 Passover begins at sundown
- 25-29 FCPS holiday
- 31 Easter

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## Presidents' Message



The League was invited to set up a voter registration table at a Martin Luther King celebration, and those of us who worked the event were pleased at how many people stopped to tell us, "Thanks for all that you do."

That's a message we want to pass along to all our members who have helped us over the past year. To all of you who stepped up to fill Board and off-Board positions, registered voters, volunteered to work the LWWUS Convention last June, we say thank you for all that you do. We couldn't have accomplished anything without your help.

We also want to thank those of you who answered the call of the nominating committee and have agreed to fill vacant Board and off-Board positions for the coming year. Your help will be invaluable during this year when Virginia will elect a new Governor and all the General Assembly delegates. We look forward to working with you and to getting to know you better. And we thank you for all the contributions we know you will make as members of our team.

Elections and voting are the League's core activities, and Fairfax County residents appreciate the nonpartisan information we provide to voters. Our *Facts for Voters*, *Voter's Guide*, *What's on the Ballot* and candidate Meets and Greets give members of our community the chance to learn the candidates' views various issues. In working on these projects, we also learn about the candidates, get better acquainted with one another and provide a service that our friends and neighbors value.

Right now though, we're looking forward to spring with its brighter sunshine, longer days and brightly-colored blossoms in a greener landscape. Enjoy the change in seasons, and thank you for all that you do.

*Julie and Helen*

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
**(703) 360-7273**

## Bi-Partisan Election Process Improvement Commission Meets Weekly

*By Olga Hernandez*

The Bi-Partisan Election Process Improvement Commission (BPEPIC), established by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) is meeting every Thursday through mid-March to look at how to improve the management of elections and deal with the problems experienced in November 2012. Olga Hernandez, former LWVFA and LWV-VA president, is representing the LWVFA on the committee.

The commission meets at the Government Center in room 232 on Thursdays, except on Feb. 13. All meetings are open to the public. The group is accepting public comments at its website <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/electioncommission/>. All comments by League members that were sent to Therese Martin were forwarded to the commission for review.

The commission will deal with a subject each week until March 7 to reach consensus as to what can be done and make recommendations to the BOS. Members hope to present a full report to the BOS in early spring, before the budget is finalized.

### LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2012 - 2013

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



~ You are cordially invited to attend ~



**LWVFA Annual Meeting**  
on  
**Saturday, April 27, 2013**  
at  
**Hilton Springfield**  
6550 Loisdale Rd, Springfield, VA

**Meeting Agenda**

9:30 a.m.	Registration & Coffee
10:00 a.m.	Business Meeting
11:00 a.m.	Speaker: To Be Announced
12:00 noon.	Luncheon (Cost \$37 per person)
2:00 p.m.	Conclusion of Business Meeting

**Directions:** From I-95/395 going south, exit onto Franconia Road going east. Keep right and turn right onto Loisdale Road. From I-95/395 going north, exit onto Franconia Road going east. Keep left and turn left onto Loisdale Road. The Hilton is one-half mile ahead on the left. From Van Dorn Street, turn left onto Loisdale and the Hilton is on the right.

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**Deadline for Reservations: April 13**

Please choose – Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetable Pasta \_\_\_\_\_

Program is free; Luncheon, \$37 per person.

Make checks payable to LWVFA and mail with reservation form to:

2013 Annual Meeting, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston, VA 20194

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch @\$37 ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number & E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch @\$37ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

For special dietary needs or questions, call Viveka at 703-404-0498

## Domestic Violence Fatalities Review Team Reports

The Fatality Review Team created by the Domestic Violence Policy Procedures Coordinating Commission (DVPPCC) gave its report to DVPPCC January 17, 2013, based on information from 2009. Under Virginia Code, domestic violence fatality review teams are permitted and one was created by Fairfax County in 2007. This team reviewed domestic violence fatalities to identify gaps in the system. The January report included the following information: More than one-half of all Fairfax County homicides (there have been 14) were domestic violence. These eight cases

included four that were the killing of one partner and then the suicide of the killer.

Seventy-five percent of the victims were female; 75 percent of the offenders were male. Victims varied in age from 19 to 66 years old and the average age of offenders was 45, with a range of 17-64 in age. Guns played an important role with 63 percent using a gun to kill. Another 25 percent were strangled.

Stalking was present prior to the murders in 38 percent of the cases. In two cases, children were either present or directly witnessed the homicides. A quarter of the victims had also

experienced domestic violence in previous relationships. Only three of the victims had sought law enforcement interest. One of the victims sought a protective order. None sought domestic advocacy services. Half of the offenders had threatened to kill the victim prior to the homicides, and one-fourth had been previously arrested or convicted of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team made recommendations in three areas.

- Professional training to include nontraditional points of entry. These could include school resource officers, teachers, and counselors, Child Protective Services, social workers, and faith-backed organizations;
- Community outreach and education to educate community about domestic violence and stalking, especially to underserved populations such as immigrants, men, and youth;
- Increase in and improvement of coordination of services, and development and implementation of assessment tools for high-risk cases with the goal of lethality saving.

## League Members Register Voters at MLK Event in Reston



Fairfax LWV members Helen Kelly, Kelly McFarland and Therese Martin staffed a voter registration table on January 20 at Reston's Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday community lunch and talk by Julian Bond. While all attendees were already registered, many (including U.S. Representative Connolly, Virginia Delegate Plum, and Hunter Mill Supervisor Hudgins) thanked the League for the work that it does and our presence at the event.

*Note to those League members who see copies of the 2012 Facts for Voters on the table: Each one carried a note on the cover saying that the 2013 edition would be available by January 30 at all county libraries and government centers and on [www.lwv-fairfax.com](http://www.lwv-fairfax.com)! Extras were left at the community center.*

## News and Notes From NCA . . .

### LWVNCA Invites Input on Convention Speaker

By Olga Hernandez, LWVNCA Secretary

The LWVNCA Board is seeking member input about Leaguers' interest in some of the following topics. The LWVNCA convention, to be held May 4 in D.C., is open to all members of participating Leagues and is a forum for regional issues. We would like to invite a speaker on a topic that local Leaguers are interested in. The convention will be more interesting and educational when we provide members with a program of interest. Please send input to LWVNCA President, Elinor Hart at [hart1651@juno.com](mailto:hart1651@juno.com), as soon as possible. Choose what you want to learn more about from the following topics. Remember you are part of the LWVNCA.

- Gun safety
- Decriminalization of drug possession
- Voter suppression
- Impact of Citizens United Decision on the 2012 election
- Re-entry of formerly incarcerated persons
- Immigration

## December Unit Meetings Followup . . .

### Fairfax County OMB Representative to Speak on 2014 Budget

Remember the Fairfax County budget discussions at your December unit meeting? Did you find it hard to rank priorities for spending? Did you come away with definite ideas about areas in which you do *not* want any program (budget) cuts?

On Wednesday, March 6, at 10:30 a.m. at the Packard Center, a representative from the Office of Management and Budget will speak to League Board members about the proposed Fairfax County budget for FY 2014 and answer any questions that we have. All members are encouraged to attend.

This meeting is your chance to speak up! Call or email Rona at the LWVFA office if you can be there—we'll need enough chairs, and, maybe, a bigger room.



# Clean, Affordable Water: Can We Count on It?

by Anne Thomas, Bill Thomas, and Gloria Maher

For most of the world's population, finding clean water is a major daily challenge. 780 million people--approximately one in nine people--lack access to an improved water source.<sup>1</sup> And women in the developing world are estimated to spend 200 million hours every day simply carrying water to their homes.

But here in the U.S., we take for granted the fresh, clean water that flows from our tap. We benefit from major investments made in the past 100 years to develop water treatment facilities and distribution systems. Today tap water is one of our cheapest consumer items. But what about tomorrow? Can we count on our water supply?

## Water Suppliers in Fairfax County

Water service in the Fairfax Area is provided by a number of suppliers. By far the largest of them is the Fairfax County Water Authority, which has adopted Fairfax Water as its business name. However, independent water systems are maintained by the Towns of Vienna and Herndon, and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. Often these facilities provide service beyond the legal boundaries of their parent municipality. The Falls Church Water Utility, for instance, services a large part of the Tysons Corner area as well as the City of Falls Church.

## Fairfax Water

Fairfax Water is Virginia's largest water utility, serving one out of every five Virginians who obtain their water from public utilities. Nearly 1.7 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Herndon, Ft. Belvoir, Loudoun, and Prince William depend on Fairfax Water for their water supply.

Fairfax Water is chartered by the Virginia State Corporation Commission as a public, nonprofit water utility. It operates

two water treatment plants. In the northwestern part of the County is the Corbalis Treatment Plant, which draws on the Potomac River, while the Griffith Treatment Plant located on the Occoquan River Reservoir serves

the southeastern area. Water is distributed through more than 3,400 miles of water mains.

Fairfax Water produces, on average, 160 million gallons of water per day. Over 233,000 mostly residential accounts in Fairfax County comprise about 55 percent of total water sales. The remaining 45 percent of total water sales represent water wholesaled to Loudoun and Prince William Counties, the City of Alexandria, Ft. Belvoir, the Town of Vienna, and Dulles Airport.

Fairfax Water produces only water. Waste water and sewage collection and treatment are the responsibility of the County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). For the convenience of the customer, the utility bills issued by Fairfax Water and the independent municipal water systems include a sewer charge, which is set by the County based on water consumption. Proceeds from the sewer charge are turned over to the County, and not retained by the water companies.

Fairfax Water is governed by a 10-member Board of Directors, composed of Fairfax County citizens, appointed by the elected Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County. A General Manager, supported by a senior staff of engineering and business professionals, manages the day-to-day operations of Fairfax Water.

## Other Fairfax Area Water Utilities

The Falls Church Water Utility supplies some 35,000 customers in Falls Church and Fairfax County. It obtains its water supply from the Washington Aqueduct System, which also supplies the District of Columbia and Arlington County with water. Falls Church also supplies the Town of Vienna with the majority of its water. The Town of Herndon



obtains its water from Fairfax Water.

The City of Fairfax obtains its water from facilities located on Goose Creek, near Leesburg in Loudoun County. These facilities were completed in 1961, replacing local well-water sources. Dams on Goose Creek and Beaverdam Creek impound water, which is treated on site and shipped by a 22-mile long underground pipe along the W&OD trail to its intersection with Hunter Mill Road, from which it follows the Road through Oakton and into Fairfax City. The system has a proven capacity of 18 million gallons per day. In addition to the City of Fairfax, the system supplies customers in Eastern Loudoun County through Loudoun Water.

### Water Rates

Table 1 shows water rates for Fairfax County and surrounding cities and counties. The amount shown is the quarterly water bill paid by a residential customer who uses 24,000 gallons of water over that period of time. Unless otherwise noted, the bill includes any fixed charge as well as the charge based on usage.

Why is Fairfax Water able to supply water to its customers at a rate far lower than other suppliers? Most likely, the simplest explanation is economies of scale. The sheer number of customers for Fairfax Water means their overhead and management costs are spread over a bigger business base. Also, much of the water system managed by Fairfax Water may be younger and newer than that of established communities such as Vienna and Falls Church. The latter

may experience more breaks and require more maintenance simply because their facilities are older.

### Water Policy and Oversight

One important role for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) is to protect our water supply through appropriate land use management. In 1982, the Board of Supervisors approved a downzoning of more than 41,000 acres in the Occoquan Watershed in Fairfax County and placed additional protections on about 64,500 adjacent acres. In 2002, a task force composed of citizens, County staff, and regional agency

representatives looked at the watershed's viability 20 years after that action. The LWVFA, represented by member Leslie Vandivere, was a part of that group. The group's report, "Fulfilling the Promise - The Occoquan Watershed in the New Millennium," presented things that needed to be done in order to maintain the high water quality in the Occoquan Reservoir and Watershed.

The BOS until recently adopted a laissez faire policy with respect to the business operations of the independent municipal systems. This changed in December 2011,

when the BOS adopted a new policy that mandated that independent suppliers could not charge their Fairfax County customers at a rate higher than the prevailing rate set by Fairfax Water.<sup>2</sup> This policy was challenged in court by the City of Falls Church, which argued that the Board of

**Table 1 - Basic Water Service Charge in Various Jurisdictions**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Basic Water Service Charge (\$)</u>
Prince William County (2)	192.51
City of Manassas Park	184.50
City of Rockville, Maryland	145.02
District of Columbia	142.38
Town of Leesburg (outside)	139.20
Montgomery and Prince George's Counties MD (3)	131.96
Town of Vienna	122.00
City of Fairfax (4)	110.75
City of Alexandria (2)	110.44
Town of Leesburg (inside)	100.80
City of Bowie, Maryland	96.84
Arlington County	95.52
Prince William County Service Authority	93.15
City of Falls Church (4)	86.55
City of Manassas	81.75
Loudoun Water (effective April 1, 2013)	79.26
Town of Herndon	77.10
Fairfax Water (effective April 1, 2013)	64.16
Fairfax Water (current)	60.19

#### Notes:

(1) Basic Water Service Charge includes the account service charge plus water used at the current commodity rate.

(2) Virginia-American Water Company

(3) Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

(4) Excludes utility tax.

Source: FCWA Website: [www.fcwa.org/rates/FINAL%20Rate%20Comparison%202013.pdf](http://www.fcwa.org/rates/FINAL%20Rate%20Comparison%202013.pdf)

Supervisors did not have the authority to set their rates.

In November of 2012, the parties to the dispute resolved the issue by agreeing to the sale of the Falls Church Water Utility to Fairfax Water. Under the terms of the agreement,

- Fairfax Water will purchase the assets of the Falls Church Water Utility for \$40 million. The City will retain debt and pension obligations of the water system amounting to about \$30 million.
- Fairfax Water will become the water supplier to all the current Falls Church customers. Within two years of the completion of the transfer, customers' water rates will be reduced to match those prevailing elsewhere in the Fairfax Water service area.
- The City of Falls Church and Fairfax County will adjust their boundaries so that George Mason High School, Henderson Middle School, and school athletic facilities will lie within the City's corporate limits. This transfers some 42 acres of land to the City.

The agreement is subject to the approval of the three parties (Fairfax Water, Fairfax County, and the City of Falls Church). It was approved immediately by the Board of Fairfax Water, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and the Falls Church City Council. However, it must also be approved by the residents of Falls Church, and a referendum has been scheduled for the November 2013 election. If the voters approve it, the transfer will take effect around January 2014.

## Water Quality Standards and Treatment

We like to know that our water supply is clean and wholesome. All water suppliers must continually monitor and test the water they supply. And cleanliness begins with making sure the sources of water are not polluted. The Virginia Department of Health has the responsibility of making sure that the various facilities producing water meet federal, state, and local water quality standards.

## Sources of Drinking Water

The sources of all drinking water, both tap water and bottled water, include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material. It can also pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals

or from human activity.

Fairfax Water draws raw water from two primary sources: the Potomac River and the Occoquan Reservoir, which is fed by the Occoquan River. The James J. Corbalis Jr. Treatment Plant, at the northern tip of Fairfax County, draws water from the Potomac River. The Occoquan Reservoir, on the southern border of Fairfax County, supplies the Frederick P. Griffith Jr. Treatment Plant.

Under the provisions of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, states are required to develop comprehensive source-water assessment programs that meet the following requirements:

- Identify the watersheds that supply public tap water;
- Provide an inventory of contaminants present in the watershed; and
- Assess susceptibility to contamination in the watershed.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife;
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or can result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses;
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems; and
- Radioactive contaminants that can be naturally occurring or can be the result of oil and gas production or mining activities.

The assessment consists of maps of the evaluated watershed area, an inventory of known land-use activities, and documentation of any known source-water contamination within the last five years.

Based on the criteria developed by the state, the Potomac River and the Occoquan Reservoir were determined





to be of high susceptibility to contamination. This determination is consistent with the state's finding for other surface waters, such as rivers, lakes, and streams, throughout Virginia.

## Water Supply Challenges

Our water system must be robust and able to withstand the worst that nature can throw at it. In 1972, Fairfax Water suffered its worst disaster with the arrival of Hurricane Agnes. After nearly 16 inches of rain in 36 hours, the Occoquan

water treatment facilities were flooded. Storage tanks were depleted and system pressure was lost. The supply line between the reservoir and the treatment plant was severely damaged.



Almost 35 hours after a total water-production shutdown, limited water service was restored to Fairfax County. Full service was restored about eight days later. This was accomplished by a coordinated effort between various federal and local resources. Full repairs to damaged structures took another four years to complete.

Fairfax Water has faced major environmental disasters as well. One example began on March 28, 1993, when a ruptured oil pipeline began dumping oil into Sugarland Run, a tributary of the Potomac River above Fairfax Water's raw water intake. The spill forced an emergency shutdown of the Corbalis treatment plant. Fairfax Water quickly lost production capability at a plant that normally provided 50 percent of the potable water to a population of more than a million people. Fortunately Fairfax Water's ability to draw and distribute water from two different sources prevented a total crisis.

Within hours, water restrictions were announced and emergency personnel were deployed to monitor water quality and provide additional support in the production and distribution of the water. Interconnection agreements with other water companies were exercised and production was maximized at the Occoquan facilities.

Water pumps and valves were re-configured to reverse

water flow through the distribution system. Instead of water flowing out of the Corbalis treatment plant, water produced at the Occoquan treatment facilities was routed through the Corbalis distribution system. This action enabled Fairfax Water to continue service to areas only served by the latter facility. For 17 days, emergency operations prevailed until the threat to the water system passed.

Barely nine months later, another disaster struck with unusually frigid temperatures from January 15 through January 23, 1994. In eight days, employees serviced 17,500 customer calls, thawed 7,000 frozen water meters, repaired 54 main breaks, and worked 11,500 hours of overtime to provide continuous water service to the customer base.

Today, the modern Griffith plant has replaced the old Occoquan facilities. The plant incorporates design features that help cope with natural disasters. It also incorporates security features appropriate to our post-911 world.

## Water Wars

In 1994, Fairfax Water applied to the State of Maryland for a building permit to construct an off-shore intake on the Potomac River. A key principle of water treatment is to start with the best source-water possible. Over the years, Fairfax Water studied the water in the Potomac River and found that water closer to the center of the river contains less sediment most of the time. In an agreement dating back to 1785, Maryland has jurisdiction over the Potomac River to the low-water mark on the Virginia shoreline. So, Fairfax Water needed to obtain a building permit from Maryland to build a new intake. After Maryland denied Fairfax Water's permit, the Commonwealth of Virginia became involved in the case, citing the need to protect the right of Virginia to access such a vital resource. The case ultimately was heard before the United States Supreme Court (Original 129, *Virginia v. Maryland*) in the spring of 2003. In December 2003 the Court handed down a ruling in favor of Virginia, and Fairfax Water ultimately built the off-shore intake.

## The Challenges of Growth and of Aging Infrastructure

Ten years ago, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that water systems would require investments of from \$11.6 billion to \$20.1 billion a year (in 2001 dollars) over 2001-2010 just to maintain their existing facilities, without even considering growth in demand.<sup>3</sup> More recently, the American Water Works Association has estimated that \$1





**Water losses can be expensive before they are discovered and repaired.**

trillion will be required over the next 25 years (an average of \$40 billion a year) to maintain existing facilities and to accommodate growth in demand for drinking water.<sup>4</sup>

The AWWA report indicates that large northeastern systems such as Fairfax Water will need to invest \$80 to \$90 per household per year to maintain their distribution systems. For the roughly 235,000 households currently served directly by Fairfax Water, that implies spending between \$18.8 and \$21.5 million a year on pipe replacement. From 2001 to 2010, Fairfax Water spent \$39 million—an average of \$4 million per year. Fairfax Water's system is relatively young compared with the national averages, and this helps keep spending low. Nevertheless, in 2010 the Fairfax Water Board decided to increase program expenditures by 50 percent to \$9 million a year and will increase them further to \$11 million in 2013.<sup>5</sup>

For smaller communities, maintaining their water system may be even more of a challenge. The City of Fairfax estimates that necessary investments in its water system will push the costs for a typical residential customer from \$443 presently to \$608 in 2014 and \$748 by 2018 (all costs in 2012 dollars). The alternative of selling the treatment plant on Goose Creek and buying treated water from Fairfax Water is estimated to save \$56 in 2014 and \$118 by 2018. Notwithstanding the projected savings, the City Council, with citizen input, has decided for now to maintain its independent system.

Water is a precious resource. In order to keep our clean, wholesome, and convenient resource, we must both protect our environment and make necessary investments in treatment and distribution systems.

**[Acknowledgements:** Much of the material on the history of Fairfax Water and water quality was adapted with permission from the Fairfax Water website. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Jeanne Bailey, Fairfax Water Public Affairs Officer, who reviewed a draft of the report. As always, responsibility for the report's findings rests with the authors. Pictures from website as well.]

### **(Endnotes)**

- 1 Estimated with data from WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation. (2012). [Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-Water](#), 2012 Update.
- 2 Fredrick Kunkle, "Fairfax County Board Votes to Set Water Rates for All Residents," *Washington Post*, Dec. 6, 2011 (available at [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-06/local/35286906\\_1\\_water-rates-county-water-water-service-agreements](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-06/local/35286906_1_water-rates-county-water-water-service-agreements))
- 3 Congressional Budget Office, *Future Investment in Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment*, Washington, D.C.: CBO, November 2002.
- 4 American Water Works Association, *Buried No More*, Denver: AWWA, February 2012
- 5 "Water Infrastructure," available at [http://www.fairfaxwater.org/current/water\\_infrastructure.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/current/water_infrastructure.htm)



**Example of many corroded water pipes throughout Fairfax's system.**

## **Think Green . . .**

If all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars per year! (EPA, 2008)

## Water Study Discussion Questions

- Who supplies water to Fairfax County residents?
- Who has oversight for Fairfax water?
- Who sets standards for water treatment and quality?
- Who enforces water standards?
- What are the threats to the quality of our water sources?
- What are the challenges to our water supplies?
- Discuss the redundancy of Fairfax County's water supply.
- What are the plans for the future maintenance and protection of our water supply?

## LWV-VA Spring Tour of Montpelier and Local Winery

The LWV-VA is sponsoring an excursion to historic Montpelier and a local winery on Saturday, April 13, 2013. This is the first fundraising trip for LWV-VA, and we hope you will make the event successful. The trip will foster camaraderie among League members who will enjoy a walking tour of Montpelier, James Madison's estate, and gardens. The staff of Montpelier will also offer a special program on women's roles at Montpelier through their program called Constitutional Conversations or an optional walking tour of the enslaved community. The cost of the trip is \$110 per person from Richmond and \$95 per person from Charlottesville. A box lunch and drink are included in the cost of the ticket. The winery will provide an opportunity for a wine tasting. Tickets are non-refundable after March 13, 2013. General questions about the trip can be directed to Linda Rice, LWV-VA Program Director, [lrice@widomaker.com](mailto:lrice@widomaker.com) or [program@lwv-va.org](http://program@lwv-va.org).

## WRT/Lobby Day in Richmond Well Attended by Fairfax Area Leaguers

By Helen Kelly, Co-President

On Wednesday, February 6, Leaguers from across the state joined other civic groups for League Lobby Day at the Women's Round Table in the General Assembly building in Richmond. Fairfax had nine members in attendance. We heard speakers advocate for effective and sensible legislation in the areas of transportation and Medicaid expansion, among other issues.

Fairfax Delegate and former State Secretary of Transportation Vivian Watts gave an impassioned talk about transportation. She echoed League positions on the subject when she said that Virginia must stop raiding its General Fund to pay for transportation needs. Instead, the gas tax and user fees are the correct way to provide a reliable revenue stream for upgrading and maintaining our transportation infrastructure.

We also heard advocates for Medicaid expansion in Virginia. The Federal Government would pay 100 percent of the cost for the first three years, and 90 percent thereafter. According to one speaker, expanding Medicaid in Virginia will bring 30,000 new healthcare sector jobs to the state. The League supports Medicaid expansion in Virginia.

Senator Ralph Northam, a pediatric neurologist, said

that legislators should not tell physicians how to practice medicine. He promoted two bills. The first would restore parental rights under certain conditions to protect the interests of offspring between the ages of 14 and 21 who are not likely to be adopted if permanently removed from their parents. The second would make it illegal to smoke in a car where a child is riding. He said that for a child, one hour in a smoke-filled car is equivalent to that child's smoking 10 cigarettes.

At lunchtime, we were thrilled to hear that House Speaker William Howell had declared the Senate surprise redistricting plan "non germane" to the House bill to which it was attached. The original House bill sought to reduce the number of split precincts in the first redistricting maps the General Assembly issued after 2010 census. With this ruling, Speaker Howell killed this Senate redistricting plan that the League opposed.

After hearing speakers at the Women's Round Table, Julie Jones, Therese Martin, Sherry Zachry and I distributed ***Facts for Voters*** to members of the Fairfax delegation at the General Assembly. We were joined in Richmond by a good number of fellow LWVFA members who also visited their Senators and Delegates to promote League positions.

Long Lines Waiting to Vote . . .

# Kelly Testifies For Changes in State Voting Regulations

[*Ed. Note: The following testimony was presented to the Fairfax delegation to the Virginia General Assembly on January 5, 2013.*]

Good morning. I am Helen Kelly, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I speak on behalf of our members and supporters in Fairfax County and Fairfax City. Thank you for the privilege of speaking to you this morning.

Last November, Virginians waited hours at the polls, and those who couldn't wait forfeited their right to vote. That's why we ask you to support these policies:

- **Allow no-excuse absentee voting.**
- **Allow online voter registration** for those who have a signature on file with the state.
- **Increase funding for local election offices.**
- **Keep the current list of acceptable voter IDs.**

Allowing no-excuse absentee voting will increase participation and reduce lines on election day. Allowing online voter

registration will modernize Virginia's registration system, making it easier for prospective voters to register and to make address changes. It will help election officials to eliminate errors and it will save money because electronic transactions are cheaper to process – each paper form costs 83 cents, but each online form costs only three cents. Keeping current voter IDs will enable Virginia to use the same lists for all voters, not reopen the voter suppression debates of the last session, and it will save printing and administrative costs which any changes would require at the state and local levels. With its budget surplus, Virginia should increase allocations for election offices, which for years have had less state funding to support a heavier workload.

If we modernize procedures, use technology to save money, provide adequate funding for election offices, and avoid unnecessary ID changes, all of us will benefit. Our vote is our voice. Let's make sure Virginia's voices are heard.

We invite you to join us at the Women's Legislative Roundtable Wednesday mornings between January 16<sup>th</sup> and February 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. in 7<sup>th</sup> Floor West Conference room. Leaguers come from all over the state to attend these meetings. We look forward to seeing you there too.

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## Letter From Our National President . . .

Dear Leaguers,

As the League powered the vote for the 2012 Election, we reminded voters that 'your vote is your voice.' Now that the votes have been cast, it is time to govern and government of, by, and for the people requires active and engaged citizen voices all the time, not just during an election. To realize the power of the vote, we must raise our voices to demand accountability.

The League was founded 93 years ago not just to register and inform newly enfranchised women voters, but also to integrate women into the political process. To accomplish either mission League members relied on facts with the belief that knowledge is power. Over the years, the League has become a trusted source for information on both the

electoral and political process and on the issues that confront the community.

We are seeing a new majority emerge in America and that majority is just now finding its voice. The League has fought hard to keep politicians from silencing this new majority by erecting barriers to the vote and that fight is far from over. Voting rights and even citizenship are hot button issues right now. The tools in the League's citizen tool bag transcend voter service. Could the voters we registered last year benefit from those tools? From observer corps to legislative news letters to educational forums, the League has always helped voters translate the power of their vote to the power of their voice. Our work in communities around the country offers an opportunity to promote our tools through our partnerships, events and online channels.

In League,  
Elisabeth MacNamara, President, LWVUS



## National League Joins with Nine Others in Urging Continuing Operations of Office of Congressional Ethics

The Hon. John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. Capitol H-232  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
House Minority Leader  
235 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Our organizations are writing again to express our gratitude for creating and maintaining over the last four years the unique Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) and to encourage both of your offices to ensure that OCE continues its operations in the 113th Congress without interruption by reactivating the agency and appointing new board members in a timely fashion.

The organizations include: Campaign Legal Center, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Common Cause, Democracy 21, Judicial Watch, League of Women Voters, National Legal and Policy Center, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation and U.S. PIRG.

OCE is a semi-independent investigative agency that supplements the work of the House Ethics Committee. The agency was first established in 2009 by then-Speaker Pelosi and maintained intact by Speaker Boehner in the last congressional session. OCE provides a critical yet non-intrusive link between the public and the important work of the House Ethics Committee. OCE cannot make recommendations or judge any case, but in the course of its investigative reports, the agency does offer useful evidence and insights and helps the public better understand the nature of specific cases – both those that warrant dismissal and those that warrant further consideration. (See data on OCE and Ethics Committee enforcement actions at: <http://www.citizen.org/documents/making-the-congressional-ethics-process...>)

Most of the preliminary investigations are dismissed for lack of merit or insufficient evidence. In the 112th Congress, only about a dozen cases have been recommended to the House Ethics Committee for further investigation.

The terms of four members of OCE's board will expire at

the end of this year, leaving just the two chairmen – Porter Goss and David Skaggs – as sitting board members. OCE cannot function without an active board of directors.

It is the responsibility of solely your two offices to agree upon and appoint board members for the expired terms in the 113th Congress. The expiring terms are term-limited, so those four members cannot be reappointed, but the two current alternate members of the board may be appointed to regular terms. And any of the expiring board members may be appointed to the two alternate positions.

Whatever your choices for appointment to the board, there is a wide selection of qualified persons, especially among former members or staff of Congress familiar with how the institution operates, who are interested in serving on the board.

We urge you to proceed in a timely fashion to consider and appoint qualified and responsible members to OCE's board of directors so that the agency's useful work is not interrupted as we enter the 113th Congress.

Respectfully Submitted,

Campaign Legal Center  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics  
in Washington (CREW)  
Common Cause  
Democracy 21  
Judicial watch  
**League of Women Voters**  
National League and Policy Center  
Public Citizen Starlight Foundation  
U.S. PRIG

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## Phyllis Payne To Receive Citation of Merit From FCFCA

Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations announced that it will award their Citation of Merit Award to Phyllis Abramczyk Payne of Fairfax, Co-Founder of SLEEP in Fairfax at its annual meeting in March. Phyllis is a member of LWVFA in the Springfield unit. Congratulations to Phyllis on this honor.



# League Testifies in Support of Daily 20-Minute Recess Period

Helen Kelly, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, spoke at the Fairfax County School Board's budget hearing January 29 at Luther Jackson Middle School in Falls Church. Superintendent Jack D. Dale's FY 2014 Proposed Budget totals \$2.5 billion, a net increase of 2.6 percent, or \$62.7 million, from the FY 2013 Approved Budget. The FY 2014 budget includes funding for 292.5 additional positions in schools to cover the cost of membership growth—a projected increase of 2,857 students to a total enrollment of 184,393—and changes in student demographics. Her testimony is as follows:

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area believes that all elementary students should participate in a daily recess period lasting at least 20 minutes. A recent policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics cites the crucial role of recess in school. "Recess serves as a necessary break from the rigors of concentrated, academic challenges in the classroom," the Academy states. "But equally important is the fact that safe and well-supervised recess offers cognitive, social, emotional, and physical benefits that may not be fully appreciated when a decision is made to diminish it."

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) also recommends that the minimum daily recess period should be at least 20 minutes. Your own School Health Advisory Committee supports this recommendation. However, the FY 2014 Proposed Budget only provides enough time in the elementary school week for 10 minutes of recess per day.

Another scheduling issue that jeopardizes the health of Fairfax County students is early high school and middle school start times. Many high schools start at 7:20

a.m. The League believes that delaying the beginning of classes at all high schools and middle schools will provide the best opportunity for student learning and will promote adolescent health and safety. We support the goal of achieving "high school start times after 8:00 a.m. so that students are able to obtain a healthy and sufficient amount of sleep, as defined by sleep research and medical experts."

We thank your staff for decreasing the amount of extraneous information in this year's budget materials, while providing more data of importance to citizens' understanding of the budget, such as the sections on various funds and reserves. However, we noted that the budget presentation document is based on changes to the approved 2013 levels without providing a table showing those levels. Further, the tables in the larger budget presentation show the 2013 estimate, not the 2013 approved levels. The League also believes that more discussion is needed on how FCPS calculates the additional resources needed to cover the cost of increasing enrollment.

The League supports the proposed market scale adjustment of one percent and wishes that it could be greater.

We appreciate the efforts you have made to maintain a high quality educational system. We also understand that teachers have numerous academic goals to meet in a limited amount of time. We encourage you to expand your efforts to make the FCPS budget materials understandable and transparent. And we urge you to add at least 50 minutes per week to the elementary schedule to accommodate a minimum of 20 minutes of recess per day.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you tonight and for your continuing efforts to improve the services that Fairfax County provides to its students.

*Sign Up Early  
for the Annual  
Meeting  
April 27, 2013*

## Think Green . . .

Approximately 1.5 million tons of construction products are made each year from paper, including insulation, gypsum wallboard, roofing paper, flooring, padding and sound-absorbing materials. (American Forest and Paper Association, 2002)

## Connolly Holds Congressional Forum on Voting Reform

By Ron Page, Editor

“What can we do to allow every single voter to be able to exercise that right?” asked Gerry Connolly, 11th District Representative, as he kicked off a hearing held in Woodbridge last month. He talked about the latest wave of efforts to suppress voter rights and his own belief that we should work to broaden people’s rights to vote. As a result, he has introducing FAST Voting Act (H.R. 97) in the U.S. House of Representatives, which would encourage states to aggressively pursue reforms. Mark Warner is sponsoring a companion bill in the U.S. Senate

The first panel, citizens from Prince William County, testified on their experience last November as they showed up to vote.

Facing long lines waiting in the cold to vote and a lack of enough voting machines, one precinct processed its last voter at 10:45 p.m. This was in sharp contrast to the 2008 experience, when everybody voted and the polls closed at 7:00.

The most vivid testimony presented was by a woman who had recently moved here from California. Because she wanted to be sure to be eligible to vote, she and her husband had reviewed Virginia laws and regulations and had obtained their Voter Registration Cards. The only thing that was missing was their Virginia driver’s licenses. After an hour’s wait she finally got to the front of the line. He went to one poll worker and she to the other one. He checked in and voted and she was still trying to convince the poll worker that her registration card was all that was needed. Finally her California license was accepted as proof of who she was.

Many of those in attendance were surprised to learn that Virginia’s Election Board mandates one voting machine for

every 750 voters in a precinct; VA statute prohibits buying any new machines and voting audits are not carried out in the state.

There appeared to be a consensus that a few of the changes needed include:

- More voting machines are needed
- Poll workers need better training
- No-excuse early voting should be allowed
- Paper ballots should be made available
- Polls should open longer hours



A second panel composed of representatives of nonprofit organizations talked of reform needed at the national level. They all stressed the need to modernize voter registration and to allow certain felons to vote once they have served their debt to society.

Key points from this panel include:

- Use of the Internet for voter registration and updating personal information
- Too many unanswered questions for Internet voting to happen at this time
- National standards are needed for voter registration and voting procedures
- More early voting needed to help ease congestion

## Christmas Card Kudos For the League

Some comments received by Bernice Colvard,

- “Your League of Women Voters did a great job of keeping the electoral process mostly free of glitches and subversion. With all of the money floating around ... the election was a genuine surprise to me and an affirmation of democracy!”
- “The League of Women Voters gave a great presentation to the American Association of University Women before the election - clear and precise.”

## This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

### Topic: Clean, Affordable Water: Can We Count on it?

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, 2013, 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, March 2

##### **10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing**

Packard Center  
4026 Hummer Rd.  
Annandale 22003  
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401

#### Monday, March 11

##### **1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)**

Hunters Crossing Classroom  
Spring Village Dr.  
Springfield 22150  
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

#### Tuesday, March 12

##### **10:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly CC)**

Sully District Gov. Center  
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.  
Chantilly, 20151  
Contact: Olga, 703-815-1897

#### Wednesday, March 13

##### **9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)**

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government Center  
2511 Parkers Lane  
Alexandria 22306  
Contact: Louise, 703-960-0073

##### **9:30 a.m. McLean (MCL)**

Star Nut Gourmet  
1445 Laughlin Ave.  
McLean 22101  
Contact: Peggy, 703-532-4417 or  
Sharone, 703-734-1048

##### **10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)**

7902 Bracksford Ct.  
Fairfax Station 22039  
Contact: Lois, 703-690-0908

##### **6:15 p.m. Dinner Unit (DU)**

Yen Cheng Restaurant  
Main Street Center  
9992 Main Street 22030  
Contact: Tin, 703-207-4669

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

Reston Art Gallery at Heron House  
Lake Anne Village Center,  
Reston 20190  
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

#### Thursday, March 14

##### **9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)**

1606 Greenbrier Ct.  
Reston 20190  
Contact: Nancy, 703-437-4419

##### **9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)**

Packard Center  
4026 Hummer Rd.  
Annandale 22002  
Contact: Nancy, 703-256-6570 or  
Peg, 703-256-9420

##### **1 p.m. Fairfax City/Vienna (FX-V)**

Patrick Henry Library  
101 Maple Ave. E  
Vienna 22180  
Contact: Bobby, 703-938-1486 or  
Liz, 703-281-3380

##### **7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)**

Paul Spring Retirement Community  
Mt. Vernon Room  
7116 Fort Hunt Road  
Alexandria 22307  
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

## April Meetings:

### Annual Meeting, April 27 - No Unit Meetings



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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**March, 2013**

**Julie Jones, Co-President**

**Helen Kelly, Co-President**

**Ron Page, Editor**

**Liz Brooke, Coordinator**

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 citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

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

**LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**(Dues year is July 1 through June 30. Current dues year ends June 30, 2013.)**

**Membership Category:** Individual \$65 \_\_\_\_; Household (2 persons–1 *VOTER*) \$90 \_\_\_\_; Donation \$ \_\_\_\_  
Student \$32.50 \_\_\_\_; (Coll. Attending \_\_\_\_)

**Membership is:** New \_\_\_\_; Renewal \_\_\_\_; Reinstate \_\_\_\_; Subsidy Requested \_\_\_\_

**We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.**

**Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.**

**Please Print Clearly!**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Unit** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip + 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone (H)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(M)** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for checking off your interests:**

<input type="checkbox"/> County Govt	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence

Mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403