

Fairfax VOTER

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Alcohol and Women

Drinking Deaths on the Rise – 85% Higher Among Women

This headline in USA Today Weekend, November 23-25, 2018, grabbed my attention. I clipped the article and filed it in my Behavioral Health folder. Then this September two very good friends died. Both were older women who lived alone and both were alcoholics. I wanted to learn more and so I went to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism website and learned that research shows that alcohol use and misuse among women are increasing. While alcohol misuse by anyone presents serious public health concerns, women who drink have a higher risk of certain alcohol-related problems. I share this information with you. It should make for an interesting discussion.

Judy Helein

Calendar

- 1-31 Women's History Month
- 2 Fairfax Voter Deadline for April 2020 issue
- 2 Watergate at Landmark Community Election, 2011 Yoakum Parkway, Alexandria
- 3 Virginia Democratic Presidential Primary
- 6 LWNCA Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- 7 Approximate General Assembly Sine Die (Ends the Session). 60 Day Session.
- 7 LWVFA Briefing and At-Large Meeting, Packard Center, Annandale, 10 a.m.
- 7-12 League Units meet at various locations
- 8 International Women's Day
- 11 LWV-VA Board Meeting
- 14 LWVFA New Member Orientation, Packard Center, Annandale, 10 a.m. to noon.
- 18 LWVFA Board Meeting, Packard Center, Annandale, 10 a.m.
- 21 Unit Leader Brainstorming Meeting, Packard Center, Annandale, 10 a.m.

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Presidents' Message



Hello fellow Leaguers and Happy March to you all!

February has been a busy month but it looks like March is not going to be any less busy with the Democratic Primary on Tuesday, March 3rd.

It's going to be an interesting election with so many candidates on the ballot. All signs point to a high voter turnout which is such a wonderful thing in a democracy. Last year, in Virginia, nearly 2.4 million voters showed up at polling stations to cast their ballots in state legislative elections. That is a 42% turnout. This is 13 points higher than the turnout in 2015 when a little over 1.5 million Virginians voted in legislative elections and just a tad below the 2.6 million voters who showed up in the 2017 gubernatorial race.

Many political scientists think that we could see as many as two thirds of all registered voters show up in the 2020 Presidential election. This enthusiasm is going to be visible in the primaries too, if all these scientists are right. The surge in turnout means that there could be a large number of voters who have rarely or never voted before. These voters may not even know where their voting place is which could potentially make them susceptible to misinformation that could disenfranchise them. According to "The Hill," the National Association of Secretaries of State has launched a program, #TrustedInfo2020, that is designed to highlight trusted sources of information to thwart the efforts of any nefarious agencies. They have partnered with more than 30 agencies and organizations, including Facebook, Twitter and Google.

Voter enthusiasm is very high and that is great. What is not so great is that more and more people are coming out to vote not because they feel very positively about the candidate they are voting for but because they dislike the other candidate(s) more.

This negative participation creates a more divided environment and leads to increased polarization which in turn leads to a veritable lack of civil discourse.

As you all might be aware, we at the Fairfax League, in our own small way, are trying to douse some of these divisive fires and are very excited to be partnering with Fairfax County Public Libraries in an initiative to have a civil discourse in our communities. The first program was held on February 16th, at Pohick Library and consisted of a screening of the film "American Creed" accompanied by a scholar-facilitated discussion designed to foster respectful dialogue about American ideals and identity across all types of deepening divides.

We hope many of our members were able to avail themselves of this opportunity and attended this screening and discussion. In case you missed it, please look at our website and you will be able to find a complete list of other such events that are being held this year.

Stay warm and remember to vote.

Anu and Nancy

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

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2019 - 2020

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



Annual Meeting

Keynote Speaker: Elsa Walsh

Pulitzer-Nominated writer, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting, speaks frequently about women’s lives. Author of “Divided Lives: The Public and Private Struggles of Three American Women,” most recently staff writer at *The New Yorker* and *The Washington Post*.

Saturday, April 25, 2020

Waterford at Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial, Highway Fairfax VA 22033

9:30 a.m. – Registration & Coffee

LWVFA Members: \$50 each, includes coffee, luncheon, and speaker
Guests & General Public: \$60 each, includes coffee, luncheon, and speaker
Coffee or Tea: \$15, includes coffee or tea and speaker

Registration

To register and pay online, visit <https://2020am.eventbrite.com>

To register by check, fill out the following form, make checks payable to **LWVFA**, and mail to:
2020 Annual Meeting, c/o Viveka Fuenzalida, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston, VA 20194

Members’ Lunch @\$50 ea. Members’ Name(s) _____

Non-Members’ & LWVFA Guests’ Lunch @\$60 ea. Name(s) _____

Coffee and Tea Only: @\$15 ea. Name(s) _____

Phone Number & E-mail _____

Total \$ enclosed _____

Luncheon Menu: *Plated Baby Spinach Salad (with Dried Cranberries, Feta Cheese, Roasted Corn and Frosted Walnuts served with a Champagne Raspberry Vinaigrette), Chicken Wellington (Chicken Puff-Pastry filled with Chicken Breast and Mushroom Duxelles) with Roasted Red Pepper Sauce, Virginia style Green Beans and Honey Glazed Carrots, Bread and Butter, Dessert, Coffee Service.*

Special dietary needs or questions? Please Call Viveka Fuenzalida at 703-404-0498.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, April 16th

For more, visit www.lwv-fairfax.org/2020am or <https://2020am.eventbrite.com>

Spotlight on Voter Services

By Cindy Kalkwarf, Voter Services Chair

The Voter Services volunteer team focuses on registering people to vote, getting out the vote, providing educational and informational public services, and initiating outreach programs to groups of potential voters.

Did you know that Virginia Department of Elections now posts voter information in three languages in addition to English? See the article below to learn more.

Department Of Elections' Website Increases Language Accessibility for Voters

By Sidney Johnson

The Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) now has information for voters in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean, the three language groups that have enough members in Virginia to require that ballots be published in their languages.

These are the links to the web pages on the Department of Elections website.

Spanish - <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/es/>

Vietnamese - <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/vi/>

Korean - <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/ko/>

ELECT explained in a press release January 27th that this assistance was mandated by the Voting Rights Act of 2016. Since that year, ELECT has worked particularly with counties in Northern Virginia to identify the communities that should receive language assistance. They “include localities with 10,000 voting age citizens who are members of a single language minority group or a single language minority group that make up 5 percent of the total voting-age citizens in a single political subdivision.”

“We want to do all we can to help voters successfully cast their ballots on Election Day,” said Christopher Piper, Department of Elections Commissioner.

We in LWVFA welcome this new move to reach out to voters who may have limited proficiency in English. We are notifying our contacts in these language groups of this new service.

LWVFA Outings

By Diane Blackwell

We have begun organizing outings, which we hope to continue on a monthly basis. In February, we went to the Library of Congress, and in March, we will go to the National Geographic Museum. Stay tuned for future adventures!

March 20 at noon, National Geographic Museum One Docent-Led Tour of Two Exhibitions.

Limited to 25 participants. Cost: approximately \$16.00

Women: a Century of Change and Exploration Starts Here: In tribute to the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, this exhibition celebrates women around the world. The stunning photographs are drawn from National Geographic's image collection.

Becoming Jane: the Evolution of Dr. Jane Goodall. Experience: Explore Dr. Goodall's early years in this multimedia exhibition of Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park where she did her famous behavioral research on chimps.

For details and to RSVP, visit www.lwv-fairfax.org/outings. **Participants meet no later than 11:45am at the Information Desk. For those interested in staying for lunch: Blackfinn's at 1:30pm., indicate within the RSVP.** Questions? Contact Diane Blackwell at Diane.Blackwell@lwv-fairfax.org. Metro Stations located a few blocks away: Farragut North on the Red Line and Farragut West on the Blue, Orange, or Silver Lines.

Help with the Count!

The Crystal City Area Census Office is seeking enumerators for the 2020 Census. Enumerators contact individuals who do not initially respond to the Census. This is a paid, temporary position beginning this spring. Most work would be evenings and weekends. Pay is competitive. The minimum age is 18, so many high-school seniors can apply. There is no maximum age, and many senior citizens find Census work compatible with their schedules. The Bureau makes accommodations for disability, so disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

We have needs throughout the County, but particularly in Baileys Crossroads, Seven Corners, West Falls Church, Annandale, Lincolnia, and Rose Hill. Making sure that everyone is counted by the Census is vital for ensuring political representation and allocating social services, so this is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to serve their community. Apply at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>.

Women and Alcohol

By Judy Helein

Alcohol Use in the United States:

Prevalence of Drinking: According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 86.3 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime; 70 percent reported that they drank in the past year; 55.3 percent reported that they drank in the past month.

Prevalence of Binge Drinking and Heavy Alcohol Use: In 2018, 26.5 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month; 6.6 percent reported that they engaged in heavy alcohol use in the past month. (See definitions of binge drinking and heavy alcohol use.)

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the United States:

According to the 2018 NSDUH, 14.4 million adults ages 18 and older (5.8 percent of this age group) had AUD. This includes 9.2 million men (7.6 percent of men in this age group) and 5.3 million women (4.1 percent of women in this age group). About 7.9 percent of adults who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 8 percent of males and 7.7 percent of females with AUD in this age group.

Alcohol-Related Deaths:

An estimated 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States. The first is tobacco and the second is poor diet and physical inactivity. In 2014, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 9,967 deaths (31 percent of overall driving fatalities).

The rising number of people in the U.S. who have been killed by alcohol in the past decade has been obscured by the opioid epidemic. Alcohol kills more people each year than overdoses through cancer, liver cirrhosis, pancreatitis and suicide among other ways.

From 2007 to 2017 the number of deaths attributable to alcohol increased 35 percent according to analysis by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington. Deaths among women rose 85 percent. (Women once drank far less than men and their more moderate drinking helped prevent heart disease, offsetting some of the harm.) Deaths among men rose 29 percent.

Teen deaths from drinking were down about 16 percent

during the same period. Deaths among people ages 45 to 64 rose by about a quarter. People's risk of dying, of course, increases as they age. What's new is that alcohol is increasingly the cause. "The story is that no one has noticed this," says Max Griswold who helped develop the alcohol estimates for the Institute. "It really hasn't been researched before."

Researchers who looked at Emergency Room (ER) visits from 2006 to 2014 found the largest increases were among the middle-aged, especially women. Binge drinking sends far more people to the emergency room, a team of researchers reported in the journal of *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, in February 2018. From 2008 through 2014 the rate of ER visits involving acute alcohol consumption rose nearly 40 percent. For chronic alcohol use, the rate rose nearly 60 percent. The increases for acute and chronic alcohol use were larger for women.

People who drink throughout their lifetime develop a tolerance for alcohol but as they age, they lose muscle and gain fat and become less tolerant. This leads to increased injuries and illnesses says Rick Grucza, an Associate Professor of psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis and lead author of the *Alcoholism Study*.

An analysis of US death certificate data by researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) found that nearly 1 million people died from alcohol-related causes between 1999 and 2017. The number of death certificates mentioning alcohol more than doubled from 35,914 in 1999 to 72,558 in 2017, the year in which alcohol played a role in 2.6% of all deaths in the United States. The increase in alcohol-related deaths is consistent with reports of increases in alcohol consumption and alcohol-involved emergency department visits and hospitalizations during the same period. The new findings released on January 8, 2020, are reported online in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

"Alcohol is not a benign substance and there are many ways it can contribute to mortality," said NIAAA Director Dr. George F. Koob. "The current findings suggest that alcohol-related deaths involving injuries, overdoses, and chronic diseases are increasing across a wide swath of the population. The report is a wake-up call to the growing threat alcohol poses to public health."

In the new study, Aaron White, PhD., senior scientific

advisor to the NIAAA director, and colleagues analyzed data from all US death certificates filed from 1999 to 2017. A death was identified as alcohol-related if an alcohol-induced cause was listed as the underlying cause or as a contributing cause of death. The researchers found that in 2017, nearly half of alcohol-related deaths resulted from liver disease (31%; 22,245) or overdoses on alcohol alone or with other drugs (18%; 12,954). People aged 45-74 had the highest rates of deaths related to alcohol, but the biggest increases over time were among people age 25-34. High rates among middle-aged adults are consistent with recent reports of increases in “deaths of despair,” generally defined as deaths related to overdoses, alcohol-associated liver cirrhosis and suicides, primarily among non-Hispanic whites. However, the authors report that by the end of the study period, alcohol-related deaths were increasing among people in almost all age, racial, and ethnic groups.

As with increases in alcohol consumption and related medical emergencies, rates of death involving alcohol increased more for women (85%) than men (35%) over the study period, further narrowing once large differences in alcohol use and harms between males and females. The findings come at a time of growing evidence that even one drink per day of alcohol can contribute to an increase in the risk of breast cancer for women. Women also appear to be at a greater risk than men for alcohol-related cardiovascular diseases, liver disease, alcohol-use disorder, and other consequences.

“Alcohol is a growing women’s health issue,” said Dr. Koob. “The rapid increase in deaths involving alcohol among women is troubling and parallels the increases in alcohol consumption among women over the past few decades.” The authors note that previous studies have shown the role of alcohol in deaths is vastly underreported. Since the present study examined death certificates only, the actual number of alcohol-related deaths in 2017 may far exceed the 72,558 determined by the authors.

“Taken together,” said Dr. Koob, “the findings of this study and others suggest that alcohol-related harms are increasing at multiple levels—from ER visits and hospitalizations to deaths. We know that the contribution of alcohol often fails to make it onto death certificates. Better surveillance of alcohol involvement in mortality is essential in order to better understand and address the impact of alcohol in public health.”

In its *Pain in the Nation* report in 2018 the Well Being Trust called losses from drugs, alcohol and suicide “despair deaths.” The three are closely related. Suicide is the third leading cause of death from alcohol, after cancers and

digestive diseases. One in five individuals who die from opioid overdoses have alcohol in their system at the time of their death.

Alcohol and the Human Body:

Liver Damage

In 2015, of the 78,529 liver disease deaths among individuals ages 12 and older, 47 percent involved alcohol. Among males, 49,695 liver disease deaths occurred and 49.5 percent involved alcohol. Among females, 28,834 liver deaths occurred and 43.5 percent involved alcohol. Among all cirrhosis deaths in 2013, 47.9 percent were alcohol-related. The proportion of alcohol-related cirrhosis was highest (76.5 percent) among deaths of persons ages 25-34, followed by deaths of persons ages 35-44, at 70 percent.

In 2019, alcohol-related liver disease was the primary cause of almost 1 in 3 liver transplants in the United States. Women who regularly misuse alcohol are more likely than men who drink the same amount to develop alcoholic hepatitis, a potentially fatal alcohol-related liver condition. This pattern of drinking can also lead to cirrhosis (permanent liver scarring.)

Heart Disease

Long-term alcohol misuse is a leading cause of heart disease. Women are more susceptible to alcohol-related heart disease than men, even though they may consume less alcohol over their lifetime than men.

Cancer

Drinking alcohol increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, esophagus, pharynx, larynx, liver and breast. About 15 percent of US breast cancer cases are caused by alcohol. Studies demonstrate that women who consume about 1 drink per day have a 5 to 9 percent higher chance of developing breast cancer than women who do not drink at all. That risk increases for every additional drink they have per day.

Brain Damage

Research suggests that alcohol misuse produces brain damage more quickly in women than men. In addition, a growing body of evidence shows that alcohol can disrupt normal brain development during the adolescent years, and there may be differences in the impact of alcohol on the brains of teen girls and boys who drink. For example, in one study, teen girls who reported binge drinking, but not teen boys who reported binge drinking, showed less brain activity and worse performance on a memory test than peers who drank lightly or abstained. Similarly, teenage girls who drank heavily showed a greater reduction in the size of important brain areas involved in memory

and decision-making than teenage boys who engaged in heavy drinking. Women also may be more susceptible than men to alcohol-related blackouts, and gaps in memory for events that occurred during intoxication. These gaps happen when a person drinks enough alcohol to temporarily block the transfer of memories from short-term to long-term storage—known as memory consolidation—in a brain area called the hippocampus.

Why Do Women Face Higher Risks?

Studies show women start to have alcohol-related problems sooner and at lower drinking levels than men and for multiple reasons. On average, women weigh less than men. Also, alcohol resides predominantly in body water, and pound for pound, women have less water in their bodies than men. This means that after a woman and a man of the same weight drink the same amount of alcohol, the woman's blood alcohol concentration (BAC, the amount of alcohol in the blood) will tend to be higher, putting her at greater risk for harm. Other biological differences may contribute as well.

Alcohol and Pregnancy

Any drinking during pregnancy can be harmful. Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause physical, cognitive and behavioral problems in children, any of which can be components of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Drinking during pregnancy can also increase the risk for pre-term labor.

Some women should avoid alcohol entirely, including:

- Anyone who is pregnant or trying to conceive
- Anyone younger than age 21
- Anyone who takes medications that can interact negatively with alcohol, such as sedative drugs, sleeping pills, pain relievers, and anti-anxiety medications.

What are Symptoms of Alcohol-Use Disorder?

A few mild symptoms which you might not see as trouble signs can signal the start of a drinking problem. It helps to know the signs so that a change can be made early. If heavy drinking continues over time, the number and severity of symptoms can grow and add up to alcohol use disorder. Doctors diagnose alcohol use disorder when a patient's drinking causes distress or harm. See if you recognize any of these symptoms in yourself or perhaps a family member or friend. Even if symptoms exist, steps can be taken to reduce risks.

In the past year, have you:

- Had times when you drank more or longer, than you intended?
- More than once wanted to cut down or stop drinking or tried to but couldn't?

- More than once got into situations while or after drinking that increased your chances of harm (such as driving, swimming, using machinery, walking in a dangerous area or having unsafe sex)?
- Had to drink much more than you once did to get the effect you want? Or found that your usual number of drinks had much less effect than before?
- Continued to drink even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem? Or after having a memory blackout?
- Spent a lot of time drinking? Or being sick or getting over other after effects?
- Continued to drink even though it was causing trouble with your family or friends?
- Found that drinking or being sick from drinking interfered with taking care of your home or family or caused job troubles? Or school problem?
- Given up or cut back on activities that were important or interesting to you, or gave you pleasure in order to drink?
- More than once got arrested, been held in a police station or had other legal problems because of drinking?
- Found that when the effects of alcohol were wearing off you had withdrawal symptoms such as trouble sleeping, shakiness, restlessness, nausea, sweating, a racing heart or a seizure? Or sensed things that were not there?

These questions are part of an interactive assessment tool, *Rethinking Drinking*, that can help folks determine if their pattern of drinking puts them at risk for Alcohol Use Disorder. This tool can be found at <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov>. Please share the link with family and friends.

If you see the signs, disregard the discomfort that comes from bringing up this uncomfortable topic. You might just save a life!

How Can You Reduce Your Risks?

Options for reducing alcohol-related risks include:

- 1) Stay within the limits provided in 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend no more than 1 drink per day for women and two drinks a day for men.
- 2) Take steps to be safe. Alcohol is a factor in many vehicle crashes, falls, burns, drownings, suicides, homicides, sexual assaults and transfers of sexually-transmitted infections. If you choose to drink, then take whatever steps necessary to avoid putting yourself or others at risk

for harm. Take precautions. Have a designated driver or take a cab. Use protection for sex. Don't use machinery, walk in a dangerous area, swim or drive a boat during or after drinking. Don't drink if pregnant or could become pregnant. Be safe.

3) Quit drinking altogether.

It is important to be aware of health risks as you make informed decisions about alcohol use.

WOMEN AND ALCOHOL – RESOURCES

1. Alcohol In America, USA Today Weekend, November 23-25, 2018.
2. NIAAA Facts and Statistics, Updated December 2019, www.niaaa.nih.gov
3. Pain In the Nation, Well Being Trust, 2018
4. 4Alcohol-Related Deaths Increasing in the United States, News Release, Wednesday, January 8, 2020, www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/alcohol-related-deaths-increasing-united-states
5. Rethinking Drinking at <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov>



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS POSITIONS ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health is the nationally-accepted term that includes both mental illness and substance-use disorder.

The League position on Behavioral Health at the national level is found under *Health Care in the League Impact on Issues* document. The summary statement states that the League promotes a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all US residents, including behavioral health and controls on health care costs.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia position on Behavioral Health is found under Social Policy in the LWV-VA document, *Positioned for Action*. The Position in brief

states: “Support for comprehensive behavioral health care that includes both mental illness and substance use disorder.

- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services.
- Coordination of comprehensive and integrated care among Health and Human Services (specifically Behavioral Health) and other state departments such as Medical Assistance Services (Medicaid), Public Safety (re-entry planning, identification of behavioral health needs in jails/prisons, patient’s rights, substance abuse, drug/mental health courts), Housing (Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing) and Education (health education from early childhood through adult). These agencies must provide this care along with a focus on community-based

services such as Community Service Boards (CSBs).

- Realignment of the funding equation so that a higher proportion of funds goes to CSBs rather than state institutions. This will result in more cost-effective care that is more responsive to client's needs.
- Adequate funds and other incentives to ensure sufficient trained staff at all levels of service.
- Continued efforts to decrease the stigmatization of behavioral health problems and care.”

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area has no specific position on Behavioral Health.

WOMEN AND ALCOHOL – QUESTIONS

1. Did any of the information in this article surprise you? If so, what?
2. Do you think that the amount of drinking is under reported? If so, why?
3. Do you agree that the consumption of alcohol by women has increased? If so, why?
4. Are there any actions that the League can take with regards to the public health issue of women and alcohol?

DEFINITIONS

Alcohol-Use Disorder (AUD): AUD is a chronic relapsing brain disease characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences. AUD can range from mild to severe and recovery is possible regardless of severity. The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association described two distinct disorders—alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence—with specific criteria for each. The fifth edition, DSM-5, integrates the two DSM-IV disorders, alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence, into a single disorder called alcohol-use disorder, or AUD, with mild, moderate, and severe subclassifications.

Binge Drinking: The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels to 0.08 g/dL. This typically occurs after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which conducts the annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health, defines binge drinking as 5 or more alcoholic drinks for males and 4 or more alcoholic drinks for females on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past month.

Heavy Alcohol Use: SAMHSA defines heavy alcohol use as binge drinking on 5 or more days in the past month. *Patterns of Drinking Associated with AUD:* Binge drinking and heavy alcohol use can increase an individual's risk of AUD. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that if alcohol is consumed, it should be in moderation, defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age. Some individuals should avoid alcohol completely.

Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatality: A fatality in a crash involving a driver or motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or greater.

Disability-Adjusted Life-Years (DALYs): A measure of years of life lost or lived in less than full health.

Underage Drinking: Alcohol use by anyone under the age of 21. In the United States, the legal drinking age is 21.



In Memoriam - Elaine Dylla Bronez

By Melissa Bronez

Elaine Dylla Bronez died on Monday, January 6, 2020, at Montgomery Hospice Casey House in Maryland. She was 96.

Elaine Rosalie Dylla was born on June 17, 1923, in Newark, New Jersey, to Henry and Hedwig Dylla, first generation German immigrants. Elaine brought energy, humor, creativity and compassion to the people and many causes in her life. Though her childhood weaved through the Great Depression, she described her youth as exciting and carefree, living over her parents' bakery and falling asleep to the sound of the bakers below working through the night; whimsically playing jacks and coin games with her friends against the alley walls on their way to school; sneaking in to nearby Olympic Park; and playing clarinet in the high school marching band. She eschewed her parents' assumption that she would become a secretary and shocked them by enrolling in Bucknell College, which she chose because she erroneously thought a vaccination would not be required. She became known there for her Tarzan yell and for petitioning to establish the Sorority for All Those Not in a Sorority.

After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in psychology, she joined the Red Cross and was deployed to the South Pacific island of Tinian where she planned recreational activities for the troops during the final years of World War II, capturing everyday life through cartoon sketches. While taking a day trip on the island, she stumbled -- literally and figuratively -- on to the Enola Gay, parked unceremoniously in the undergrowth, and grabbed a "Do Not Remove" tag from the cockpit, only later discovering the plane's significance as having recently dropped the first atomic bombs. After the war, she obtained a Master's degree in student personnel administration from Columbia University and worked professionally as a YWCA program director, conference organizer, and at a women's prison.

Elaine married Ray William Bronez of Chicago on December 26, 1949. They lived in Ohio, France, and Germany before settling in Alexandria. While raising her children, she was always in motion and a force for good in the community. She was a long time, active member of the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church (MVUC) serving on the Board of Trustees, chairing the social action committee and creating the "Good Companions" program. She received a MVUC Lifetime Service Award in 1996 and an Unsung Hero Award in 2008, and was noted for her comedy routine "How to avoid being asked for money by the church canvasser." Elaine was an early and energetic advocate to end segregation and participated in one of -- and perhaps the first -- "sit in" at a Washington, D. C. drugstore lunch counter. Two leaflets from this event are part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History collection. A 1976 photo caption from a profile in the Alexandria Gazette dubbed her a "professional volunteer" and she was quoted, "You get spoiled because you get to do what you feel is really important." Notable among these many "important things" was her appointment to the Fairfax County Commission on Aging, an interest spurred by her dedicated caregiving to both her own mother and mother-in-law.

She was also active with the Fairfax County League of Women Voters, which anointed her an honorary life member, and was a leader of the Northern Virginia fair housing movement, penning several seminal reports on homelessness and housing access; partnering with local businesses, realtors and elected leaders; and leading door-to-door advocacy for the elimination of racial discrimination in the sale of housing. She was a founding member of the Fairfax County Route One Task Force for Human Resources and a board member at the United Community Ministries and the Fairfax County Community Action Agency. Later in life she re-entered the work force as a sales representative for a condom company and - duster in hand - visited local drug stores to ensure the displays were visible and clean. She and a friend also started a business selling African sculptures. She resumed her professional career as the Community Education Coordinator at Alexandria's Groveton High School and then as the inaugural director of Arlington County's Operation Match program.

Elaine is survived by four children: Jeff, Nancy, Melissa and Mark (and their spouses); eight grandchildren: and four great-grandchildren. Her husband preceded her in death.

A memorial service will be held 3 p.m. Sunday, May 17, 2020, at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Condolences may be sent care of Melissa Bronez at P.O. Box 4, Garrett Park, MD 20896. Donations in her memory may be made to the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area via www.lwv-fairfax.org/donate, or mailed to the office at 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003.

Spotlight on MAGGI LUCA

Maggi was interviewed by Wendy Fox-Grage and Julie Jones

I was born in 1941 in Long Island, NY, where I lived until I went to college. I feel fortunate to have grown up in New York. I remember going to the theater for \$2.00. I was the youngest of five, and they called me Babe. I went to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and graduated in education because, in those days, you could either be a nurse or a teacher. My mother was a nurse, so I knew that wasn't for me. I had a brother who went to Georgetown, and I fell in love with the area. I got a job teaching English at Annapolis High School after college. Throughout the years, I taught high school and middle school English, and then I taught special education.

While I was teaching, my boyfriend, who I met in college, was drafted. We got married in April 1964. I finished teaching that year, and we moved to Williamsburg. We moved quite a bit. After the army, my husband, Ray, was in the printing industry. (Note: Maggi is the proud mother of three sons and grandmother of four grandsons, and she has been married to Ray for 55 years.)

I joined the League when I had my first son in 1965. I don't think I was political, but I was always aware. I will never forget my first League experience. The women were all so interesting and fascinating. It was such a wonderful experience.

Every place we moved, I joined the League. You just knew you were going to meet women with whom you had something in common. I have been in Leagues in Williamsburg, Newport News, Prince Georges, San Mateo (California), and Fairfax (40 years!) We still have many members now who were in the Fairfax League when I joined. It's really something. I live in the same house, too.

Later in my life, I got involved in politics and with the Democratic party. Because of a fellow League member, I helped my district supervisor, Audrey Moore, with her campaign. I then got involved with Mary Sue Terry becoming Attorney General. Then with Del. Vivian Watts' campaign (note: Vivian has also been an active League member for more than 50 years!). Vivian had to run for three years in a row in 1979, 1980, and 1981 because of redistricting. That was really quite something!

I worked on many campaigns in the early years, but always as a volunteer. I worked for Alan Mayer's election as delegate for Vivian Watts' seat, and then I started going

to Richmond as a legislative aide. I got to know Del. Leslie Byrne better. She had been president of the Fairfax League. I ran her campaign for Congress for the new 11th congressional district. She was the first woman elected to Congress from Virginia. I became her Chief-of-Staff. That was truly an amazing experience. We broke the glass ceiling. Two years later, she lost to Tom Davis. Broke my heart. I recovered by becoming legislative aide for Sen. Janet Howell.

In the meantime around 1985, Mark Warner moved to the area, and I tried to convince him to run for the delegate of Springfield. It's so funny. I then got involved with Mark and his campaign. When Mark was elected governor, I became Secretary of the Electoral Board in Fairfax County. I was there until there was a Republican governor. Because of my friend in the League, I had worked in the early 1980s at the Electoral Board. My husband was a good sport.

When I had to give up my Secretary of the Electoral Board position, there were very few places in the County where I was allowed to work because I had been a political appointee. One of those places was the Fairfax Park Authority. I was very fortunate, and it was a wonderful opportunity.

For all those millions of years, I did not have a League leadership role because I was busy and raising my sons. When I retired, they asked me to be the voter services person for the League of Virginia. When I worked for the Electoral Board, we always gave out Facts for Voters. I think it's the greatest publication! When I retired, I took on updating that publication because there was talk of not publishing it every year. I couldn't imagine not having Facts for Voters. It was such a gift from out of the blue to get funding to publish it in multiple languages. It is very well received!

Everyone you meet in the League brings something to the table. Not only can they talk about local government and policy, but also the arts and other opportunities. I'm happy the League has always been there. I used to be concerned about the quality of education. There is nothing that is more important. My concern now is gun control. What honestly keeps me up at night is what's happening with our government. I'm concerned that we're not going to recover from this -- what our kids are learning about what's ok behavior. I wrestle with it all the time. I wish I didn't and that I could go back to worrying about education.

Without the glass ceiling, I probably would have majored in political science. I look back, and I'm embarrassed that I accepted a back seat because it's just the way it was for women. It's terrible. However, I am encouraged by the swell of women stepping up and running and winning elections. We still don't have equality, but are making strides.

Environmental Update: Beyond Your Recycling Bin

By Elizabeth Lonoff

As indicated in last month's VOTER, Fairfax County advises checking with your trash hauler about what gets recycled curbside. That's how to determine if it accepts items like dairy and prescription containers and peanut butter jars, which are not covered in the universal yes/no list for curbside recycling within Fairfax County: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/sites/publicworks/files/assets/documents/pdf/publications/always-never-flyer.pdf>. Some companies recycle more items, and the County's collector could accept more if clean. Material must be loose, clean, and dry, and unacceptable items must be recycled elsewhere or put into the trash.

For alternatives to traveling to the County's I-66 Transfer Station or I-95 Landfill, including to recycle electronics (see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/electronics>), contact veterinarian offices and animal shelters about dropping off used textiles; check with your homeowners association and school environmental clubs for community projects, like carpooling recyclables to distant collection sites; try the searchable recycling center database Recycle Nation; and see if these retail chains meet your needs:

- Best Buy offers electronics and appliances recycling as detailed at <https://forums.bestbuy.com/t5/Customer-Service-Knowledge-Base/Recycling-at-Best-Buy/ta-p/957386>.
- Home Depot recycles compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and portable rechargeable batteries.
- Every IKEA store has a recycling station inside the main entrance for cardboard, light bulbs, domestic batteries, paper packing, and plastic drink containers. Additionally, IKEA will haul your old sofa, mattress, or refrigerators to a recycling center for a small fee when you aren't buying a replacement there.
- Lowe's accepts CFLs, rechargeable batteries, plastic shopping bags, and cell phones for recycling.
- Accepted materials vary over time and by location.
- Office Depot collects old cellphones and used rechargeable batteries weighing less than 2 pounds for recycling.
- Search Staples.com for "Recycling Service," listing rechargeable batteries and electronics as accepted for free.

These services vary by location and over time.

The County offers residents free, secure shredding of up to four medium-sized packing boxes of sensitive documents in each supervisory district once a year. In 2020, this starts with the Lee District on March 21st. For more information, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/document-shredding>.

Does this complexity and knowing that not everything can be recycled make you curious about the zero waste lifestyle? Several websites and books suggest ways to reduce waste in stages, as much as you're ready to adopt. This movement complements cradle-to-cradle manufacturing.

Earth911.com offers tips to help you adopt environmentally-sound practices that fit your life while making impactful changes. For example, zero waste groceries reduce food packaging and waste. In Northern Virginia, Litterless.com's zero waste grocery guide only lists MOM's Organic Market, which carries home compost bins and reusable cutlery in addition to a wide range of bulk foods, and which was named in EPA's Green Power Partnership Top 30 List last year. Zerowastehome.com's bulk finder adds Whole Foods Markets and more. Wegmans' Zero Waste program is focused on sustainable packaging and has expanded from a single-store pilot in 2016 to a total of 30 stores, with more to follow.

For further inspiration, the DC Environmental Film Festival returns March 12th – 22nd. It's the world's largest green film festival and the longest running one in the U.S. Last year, Washington City Paper readers rated it DC's Best Film Festival. Highlights include the D.C. premiere of "Uniontown," winner of the Eric Moe Award for Best Short on Sustainability: "This film weaves together the unheard individual narratives of grassroots organizers in Uniontown, Alabama, as they fight to take the town back from the hands of industrial polluters and complacent politicians in the midst of a high-stakes local election." You can stream archived Sustainable Living movies from "The Anacostia River" to "WASTED! The Story of Food Waste" at <https://dceff.org/watchnow/#filter=.sustainable-living>.



Domestic Violence: Sexual Abuse

What Do You Know? Why Should You Care?

By Adarsh Trehan

Domestic violence can manifest as sexual abuse. It is ALWAYS used by the abuser to control the victim. It is important to realize that domestic violence is NEVER the victim's fault! Often, the violence results in physical injuries, but sometimes it doesn't.

What is Sexual Abuse?

“Sexual abuse is using sex in an exploitative fashion or forcing sex on another person. Having consented to sexual activity in the past does not indicate current consent. Sexual abuse may involve both verbal and physical behavior. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Using force, coercion, guilt, or manipulation or not considering the victim's desire to have sex. This may include making the victim have sex with others, have unwanted sexual experiences, or be involuntarily involved in prostitution.
- Exploiting a victim who is unable to make an informed decision about involvement in sexual activity because of being asleep, intoxicated, drugged, disabled, too young, too old, or dependent upon or afraid of the perpetrator.
- Laughing or making fun of another's sexuality or body, making offensive statements, insulting, or name-calling in relation to the victim's sexual preferences/behavior.
- Making contact with the victim in any nonconsensual way, including unwanted penetration (oral, anal or vaginal) or touching (stroking, kissing, licking, sucking or using objects) on any part of the victim's body.
- Exhibiting excessive jealousy resulting in false accusations of infidelity and controlling behaviors to limit the victim's contact with the outside world.
- Having affairs with other people and using that information to taunt the victim.
- Withholding sex from the victim as a control mechanism.”

(<https://www.acesdv.org/domestic-violence-graphics/types-of-abuse/>)

How common is it?

“Between 14% and 25% of women are sexually assaulted by intimate partners during their relationship. Women who are sexually abused by intimate partners report more risk



factors for intimate partner homicides than non-sexually abused women.”

(https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/sexual_assault_dv.pdf)

Can sexual abuse occur within marriage? Aren't husbands and wives expected to have sex with each other? Is there something called marital rape?

These are good questions. It is important to remember that sex within marriage should still be consensual. “Until recently, unwanted or forced sex within marriage was not considered “rape.” Married victims of sexual abuse still face considerable stigma when coming forward with their sexually abusive relationships.”

(www.powerofmarriage.com/infoabusive-relationships)

It is still sexual abuse if the husband is using force on his wife. Here are some statistics on marital rape:

- “Between 10 and 14 percent of married women will be raped at some point during their marriages.
- By 1993, all 50 states had either completely or partially repealed their spousal rape exemptions. However, even now, some states still have some form of spousal rape exemptions, and it is often legally considered a different, lesser crime than non-spousal rape.”

(https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/sexual_assault_dv.pdf) Saturday, March 7, 2020

What Direction Should LWVFA Take with Unit Structure?

By Julie Jones

The topic of LWVFA's unit structure has come up several times in the past several years. Unit leaders will gather to discuss various scenarios and your comments and ideas are welcome. The following article highlights several of our concerns.

Connecting with the Leadership by Stephanie Cirkovich in the The VOTER of the LWV - Seattle King County, Washington, January, 2019, p.3.

".....We estimate that only about 20 percent of our membership actively participates in a unit, the League members who regularly attend unit meetings tend to be our most active members and are the backbone of our organization. Our LWV chapter defines unit as a neighborhood-based discussion group where members study issues of concern and interest to our members, reach consensus on certain topics, and help the Board develop "positions" on important subjects. . . .

"As one of the largest local chapters in the United States with more than 700 members, geographically-based units are a logical way for our League to divide and conquer our work. It's also important to note that not all of our units operate as purely "discussion groups." Every unit is different. Many of them are more action-oriented and focus on voter registration, get out the vote efforts, and other activities that are core to our mission. League chapters across the country are reporting a similar trend, where members are shifting from study and discussion to more advocacy and action-oriented work.

"Along with this shift to more action-oriented efforts has come a corresponding shift in the traditional unit structure. Attendance at unit meetings has dwindled in the past several years, and some longstanding units have disbanded. Because the League isn't conducting any studies, . . . there aren't any "consensus questions" for units to discuss and relay back to the study organizers. In their place, the Board has been publishing somewhat lighter "discussion questions" on a topic du jour, but this has vexed some units to such a degree that they refuse to meet because they think the questions don't merit discussion.

"So this puts us in a quandary. Without any studies going on, there are no "consensus questions" to ask our members. But we are finding that our members aren't interested in undertaking any studies, either. Furthering this Catch-22 is

that the League's solid reputation and credibility are built on these studies; our nonpartisan, 360-degree look at an issue is what sets us apart from other organizations that only dabble in democracy. While our discussion questions may lack the gravitas that a series of questions posed to develop a position on homelessness or early childhood education, for example, they are our attempt at making unit meetings worthwhile for those units that are primarily discussion-based and would rather focus on topical content than advocacy-related work.

"Put differently, the Board is doing all it can to make being a member of the League a worthwhile, meaningful experience. The rest is up to you and what you want to make of it. Do you participate in a unit but feel the discussion is lacking? Maybe suggest a topic of discussion to the Board or see if other members want to delve into an issue you think is important. Don't participate in a unit but you'd like to do more to get voters registered?

"Email or call one of the unit leaders listed in The Voter and see what their unit is about—you don't have to live in that neighborhood to attend meetings, and many of our units are very active outside their own communities. Don't see a unit in your area, or all the unit meetings are at really inconvenient times? Start a new unit and meet up with other like-minded people to have the kind of experience that will really mean something to you."

LWVFA Donors and Supporters

The LWVFA Board extends an overwhelming thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their amazing support!

January 5 - February 3, 2020

Ellen Hayes

Brad & Cathy Lytle

Anna Marie Mulvihill

Susan O'Neill

Joann Phillips

Nancy & David Roodberg

Jan Towers

Pledgeling Foundation

In Memory of Elaine Bronez

Anne Andrews

Judith Falloon

Lori Holliday

Heather Lemay

Beverly Mock

Lawrence Samelson

Mary Stauss

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: Women and Alcohol

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, 2020, 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 7, 2020

10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

League Conference Room
Packard Center (inside Annandale Community Park) 4026 Hummer Road, Annandale, 22003
Contact: Julie, 703-476-8347

Monday, March 9

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Drive,
Springfield, 22150
Contact: Edith, 703-644-3970 or
Gloria, 703-852-5113

Wednesday, March 11

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

StarNut Café, 1445 Laughin Ave.
McLean, 22101
Contact: Susan, 703-893-2229 or
Peggy, peggyknight49@gmail.com

9:45 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, 22306
Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561 or
Diana, 703-704-5325

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

8739 Cuttermill Place
Springfield, 22153
Contact: Sherry, 703-730-8118 or
Kathleen, 703-644-1555

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

Hunter Mill District Community Room, North County Government Center
1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston, 20190
Contact Gail, gailvb12@yahoo.com

Thursday, March 12

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

1949 Weybridge Lane
Reston, 20190

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

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

Packard Center
4026-B Hummer Road
Annandale, 22003
Contact: Marge, 703-451-0589

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

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

1 p.m. Oakton/Vienna (OV)

Oakton Library
10304 Lynnhaven Place
Oakton, VA 22124
Contact: Mary, 703-319-2185

7:45 p.m. Mount Vernon Evening (MVE)

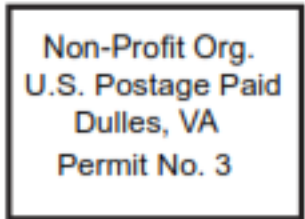
Paul Spring Retirement Community
Mt. Vernon Room,
7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria, 22307
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820 or
Susan, 703-587-4790

April Meetings:

LWVFA Annual Meeting



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



**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 January, 2020**

Anu Sahai, Co-President
 Nancy Roodberg, Co-President
 Katherine Ingmanson, Editor

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

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

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



LWVFA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

Dues year is July 1 – June 30

Membership Dues: Individual \$65 _____ Household \$90 (2 persons; 1 Voter) _____ Student (No fee) _____
 (A subsidy fund is available; check here _____ and include whatever amount you can afford.)

Membership Status: New _____ Renewal _____ Reinstatement _____ Donation _____
 (Dues are not tax deductible.)

Tax deductible donations must be written as a separate check or PayPal Payment to “LWVFA Ed Fund.”
 (Please print clearly)

Name _____ Unit (if renewing) _____

Address _____

City _____ /State/ _____ Zip +4 _____

Phone (C) _____ (H) _____ E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to LWVFA. Mail to LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
 OR Join online at <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/join>

I am interested in becoming involved in (please indicate by circling the appropriate bullet(s)):

- Providing organization support (graphic design, website development/maintenance, fundraising/grant writing)
- Voter Services (e.g., voter registration drives, candidate forums, developing Voters’ Guides)
- Researching/writing about issues in which LWVFA has an interest (e.g., environment, firearms safety, mental health, schools, domestic violence, etc., or chairing an LWVFA study committee on voter turnout or human trafficking)
- Representing the League in governmental fora (e.g., serving as LWVFA representative on Fairfax County citizens’ committees and agencies, such as affordable housing, or Fairfax County Public Schools.)

Other _____