



Fairfax VOTER

April 2015

Volume 67, Issue 8

Annual Meeting Will Engage, Satisfy and Enlighten

A is for April and for Annual Meeting, a great time to demonstrate your commitment to the League process. Some of the many opportunities:

- catch up with League friends, especially the ones not in your unit
- get an overview of proposed program plans
- approve the proposed budget for next year or suggest changes in priority
- discuss opportunities for volunteer service locally and nationally
- learn about the challenges facing Virginians on redistricting reform
- enjoy a delicious lunch somewhere other than in your own kitchen

How can you resist? Registration form inside (See page 5.)

Calendar

April

- 1-3 FCPS holiday
- 3 LWNCA Board meeting
- 6 *VOTER* deadline
- 6 FCPS holiday
- 8 General Assembly reconvene session
- 15 **Board meeting**
- 15 Tax Day
- 17 FCPS holiday
- 22 Earth Day
- 25 **Annual Meeting at Clyde's of Tysons**

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Presidents' Message



This is what I wrote last year for the April VOTER. "Hello Spring! As I write this it is below freezing and we have 6 inches of snow on the ground. Spring must be here by the time you read this." It seems that a year has passed but some things never change. Spring surely will be coming soon.

At our Annual Meeting at Clyde's in Tysons on April 25, we are pleased to have Brian Cannon as our speaker. In January 2015, he became the Executive Director of OneVirginia2021. We will hear about strategies and plans to change Virginia's Redistricting process.

The League of Women Voters was 95 years old on February 14. Our organization has come a long way since the founders fought so hard for women's vote. Come to the Annual

Meeting to celebrate their accomplishments.

The Nominating Committee (Gail Richmond, Chair; Charleen Deasy, Wendy Fox-Grage, Mia Merin, Pat Nelson-Douvelis) worked diligently to fill the slate of officers and directors. Thanks to them we have only a few vacancies.. We are trying to make the positions more focused and capable of being shared. Maybe there is something that you would like to do to help. Volunteer!

We have many committees to thank and acknowledge for their accomplishments. The General and Education Fund Budgets were produced by a great group. The Voter Service Committee has been working to set up Meet and Greet events for the fall. Sidney Johnson, especially, has spent long hours on the organization of many Voter Service activities. Super volunteers conducted a successful condo election at Watergate at Landmark. The committee on firearm safety did a great job in putting on a community event in March. (We hope that you had a chance to attend.)

Julie and Helen

Annual Meeting to Focus on Redistricting

"We've got plenty of time to consider all the ideas," said Del. Mark L. Cole, R-Spotsylvania who chairs the Privileges and Elections Committee. Cole was referring to the fact that the next redistricting is not scheduled until 2021, a year after the 2020 census." (Stafford County Sun, February 20, 2015). Not everyone thinks we have plenty of time.



Plan now to attend the League's Annual Meeting and learn more about how important it is to begin to press for redistricting reform now. The process is involved and includes approval of the General Assembly in two different years. To explain more about the process, we have for our keynote speaker, Brian Cannon, Executive Director of One-

Virginia2021 since January 2015. He brings over a decade of experience in non-profit leadership, community building, fundraising, and bipartisan advocacy for state policy issues. Previously, he worked as a consultant with startups

and high-growth companies. While in law school, Brian studied election law and was on one of the winning teams in the 2011 state-wide redistricting competition.

Deadline for reservations is April 17. (Please use form on page 5.)

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2014 - 2015

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

Firearm Safety in Virginia: Units Weigh In on Local Situation

By Karole McKalip, Program Cochair

Introduction

The February unit discussions followed two earlier examinations of firearm safety. This third article focused on Virginia. Opening discussions centered on the statistics of firearms violence. Units voiced surprise at the number of children killed by firearms in one year, the comparison of deaths in traffic accidents vs. by firearms, and the percentage of victims of domestic violence who were stalked before they were killed. They noted that while total gun ownership may be down in recent years, the number of guns is still the same, given that the people who own guns have more of them. Members at the Briefing commented that there seems to be a dearth of mechanisms in states to implement federal laws

How Effective Are Virginia's Current Gun Restrictions?

States with strict gun laws, as noted in Mt. Vernon Evening, appear to have lower percentage of deaths relative to population. Several units felt that Virginia's gun restrictions are weak and, therefore, not very effective. Too many loopholes exist. The state has no way to take guns away after convictions. Many questioned how authorities could physically remove guns, catalog them, and store them. Fairfax Station members observed that lack of funding for federal regulations prevents local/state enforcement of confiscation guns. Violence occurs in homes where unsecured legal guns are easily accessible. And while Virginia law does restrict domestic violence offenders from buying or transporting guns, several units noted that searches are not made in the homes of the offenders to ensure they do not already have guns.

What Are Some Key Areas to Improve Virginia Laws?

Units provided many suggestions on ways to improve Virginia's current laws.

- Hold parents/adults responsible for child access to guns; allow county regulations for gun safety in areas of day-care providers/stalking/domestic violence;
- Gun access provisions should be strengthened, as should policies encouraging use of gun locks and making it easier to get them. Children need to be educated on the safe use of firearms. (Mt. Vernon Evening)

- Misdemeanor stalking and dating offenders should be included. Even with is a restraining order, the gun show loophole makes it relatively easy for an offender to buy a gun. Virginia should close that loophole. Since guns have monetary value, do owners have to be compensated for the removal of guns? (Reston Evening)
- Removing guns from convicted abusers should be state law, not just federal law. State law should support the removal of existing weapons when protective orders have been issued; this removal mechanism should be expanded to include dating partners and stalkers We need laws that require guns be locked up. (Centreville/Chantilly, Reston Day, McLean)
- Require secure storage and prohibit gun ownership if convicted even once of domestic violence. (Mt. Vernon Day)
- Need for stalking laws and greater protection from domestic abusers; also need ways to protect the police in pursuing domestic violence calls (Springfield)
- Virginia law should mirror the federal law so funding would be available to confiscate guns. Some felt local authorities should enforce federal law... "using funding as an excuse." New thumb print technology could help ease passage of a comprehensive CAP law. (Fairfax Station)
- Fairfax/Vienna listed the laws they would like, but did not expect them to be enacted in Virginia: Register ALL guns and re-register (perhaps yearly for younger people, less often for those over a certain age). Require background checks for all sales, including private sales. Limit the number of firearms that can be purchased. Ban purchase of automatic weapons. Limit concealed weapons. Collect data and make it available. Require owners to keep firearms in a locked safe. Require proof of instruction in safety. Limit ammunition purchases. Require "smart" guns (rather than prohibit them).

Recommendations for Domestic Violence and Child Access Prevention Laws

The Firearm Safety Committee proposals were seen as a beginning by most units. Members felt the recommendations were not strong enough but understood the need to be

pragmatic. Some considered them to be politically viable; others did not think they would pass in Richmond.

Reston Evening generally agreed with the domestic violence recommendations and thought the requirement of locks to prevent child access might encourage firearm manufacturers to have other safety features available. This unit discussed the definition of a minor and observed that some areas of the state treat hunting as a rite of passage for adolescents. Members questioned how the criminal liability would be implemented if the minor has access to an unloaded firearm and does not cause harm. They were concerned about a high potential of violating privacy rights. The McLean unit also discussed the section on “child access” laws at some length and thought it would help if Virginia laws allowed charges to be brought against a gun owner who has allowed a minor (under 18) to have access to or be given a gun, even in the absence of harm or injury to the child, and to allow the prosecutor to charge either a misdemeanor or a felony. They agreed, however, that since much of Virginia is rural, hunting/sport shooting will probably continue to be part of the adult and teenage culture.

Recommended League Actions to Promote Firearm Safety Policies and Methods of Enforcement

Fairfax/Vienna said we could sponsor meetings and talk about gun safety and about changing behaviors; educate people about the facts and statistics; promote firearms programs by police and fire departments and possibly even try working with NRA on safety programs. Reston Evening suggested that lobbying in person is always a good way to promote policies. Education is very important: the forum scheduled in March titled “Firearms: Reducing the Risks” would educate the general public of the issues at hand with the hopes that good policies would follow. Fairfax Station felt that the focus should be on federal laws and in stressing the use of common sense to enforce laws. A priority should be a concentration on victims rather than perpetrators.

“Saving lives” is a more positive approach. Connect mental health practices with gun violence. Reston Day suggestions included: concentrate on the subject of domestic violence and on children’s access to guns as a subject of public safety; support our legislators to focus on laws that can be passed and pass laws that can effectively prevent domestic abusers and stalkers from accessing firearms. Also, pass laws making adults culpable for children’s access to firearms.

Conclusion

Fairfax League members strongly endorse the LWVUS position that the proliferation of firearms is a major health and safety and its support of the regulation of firearms for consumer safety. Units supported as well the recommendations by the Firearms Committee for stronger Virginia laws. While recognizing that these recommendations are important, these should be but the beginning of stronger safeguards.

Members had questions such as: How can we effect change? How do we keep a common sense interpretation of issues? Should we be careful in our language in discussing firearms regulations, i.e., from control to safety; from rights to privileges? Some wanted more information. Reston Evening suggested a chart outlining what the federal laws covered would be helpful. Members at the Briefing thought the CDC should publish statistics/info on effectiveness of various states with a variety of laws. Fairfax/Vienna suggested we identify and explore the motivations of some who are anti-firearms regulation, i.e., munitions manufacturers, moneyed interests, political candidates.

Units commended the firearms safety committee and were very appreciative of the research that was needed to produce the articles on firearm safety. Members also recognized the difficulties of enacting legislation not only in Virginia but at the federal level. The proposed legislation is an excellent start.

Workers Needed for Skyline Plaza Condo Elections

By Anne Thomas, Elections Coordinator

LWVFA has once agreed to run the condo elections for Skyline Plaza. We receive a \$2,500 contribution from Skyline for our services and, thus, it is an important source of income for the League. The election will be held on Wednesday, June 10, 2015. I am looking for volunteers to serve: 8 a.m.-noon and 3 p.m.-7 p.m. to certify voters and

supervise the vote and people to count the votes, which take place from 7-9 pm. I will also need one or two people to help on June 9, at the LWVFA office, to organize proxy ballots and mark that a vote has been cast on the roster. Please email me (anneathomas@gmail.com) if you would like to help and what hours you are available. You do not need to stay for the full four hours of each time slot.

Domestic Violence Hotline
(703) 360-7273

~ You are cordially invited to attend ~



**LWVFA Annual Meeting
on
Saturday, April 25, 2015
at
Clydes of Tysons Corner
8332 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA**

Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 a.m. Registration & Coffee
- 10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Speaker: Brian Cannon, Executive Director of OneVirginia2021
- 12:00 noon Luncheon (Cost \$36 per person)
- 2:00 p.m. Conclusion of Business Meeting

Find Clyde’s of Tysons Corner From I-495

Take Exit 47 (Tysons Corner), Route 7 West (Leesburg Pike). Go west (.9 miles). Tysons Corner Center Shopping Mall will be on the right. Go under the Route 123 overpass. Make a right at the light onto Westpark Drive. Make your next right at the light onto Greensboro Drive. Go to the next traffic light and make a right onto Pinnacle Drive. Go to the end of the road and make a right. Clyde’s will be located 150 yards down on your right.

Deadline for Reservations: April 17, 2015

Please choose – Pan-Seared Salmon _____ Chicken Marsala _____ Seasonal Vegetable Pasta _____

Program is free; Luncheon, \$36 per person.

Make checks payable to LWVFA and mail with reservation form to:
2013 Annual Meeting, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston, VA 20194

Name _____ Lunch @\$36 ea. _____

Phone Number & E-mail _____

Guest Name(s) _____ Lunch @\$36ea. _____

Total \$ enclosed _____

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

The State of Domestic Violence in Fairfax County

[Ed. Note: The Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy & Coordinating Council presented its annual report to the Board of Supervisors for 2014. Below is the Executive summary to give Leaguers an idea what this council has been doing. The full report can be found online (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/domesticviolence/documents/dvppcc-annual-report-2014.pdf>) for those interested. If you have questions, please feel free to call Barbara Nunes, DV Chair and Member of DVP-PCC. at 703-451-7238.]

Every month in Fairfax County, domestic violence hotlines receive over 240 calls, victims request 64 family abuse protective orders, 13 families escape to an emergency domestic violence shelter, and almost 160 domestic violence arrests are made. As domestic violence is the leading cause of homicide in our county, the importance of the timeliness, quality, and consistency of these interventions cannot be understated; nor can the need for additional prevention efforts to break the cycle of domestic violence and prevent future generations from harm.

Sustaining a Coordinated Response: The Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy, and Coordinating Council (DVPPCC) leads the development of a coordinated response--both prevention and intervention to--domestic violence and stalking in Fairfax County. Over the past year, the DVPPCC and their partners have achieved the following objectives in furtherance of their four primary goals:

1. Engage the community in a collective response to the prevention of and intervention in domestic violence: Employed faith and community leaders in the movement to end domestic violence in our community through special events, Tier One training, and increased outreach efforts.

2. Develop and improve services that both support victim safety and promote offender accountability:

- Created new and innovative programs, such as the Domestic Violence Supportive Housing program and the Pet Haven program, to address the specialized needs of victims of domestic violence and stalking.

- Fostered collaboration of offender service providers to increase offender accountability as well as opportunities for offenders to eliminate all forms of violent behavior and to break the cycle of violence in the community.

3. Coordinate system and community interventions and ensure consistency and quality of those interventions through professional training and evaluation:

- Expanded the capacity of domestic violence service providers and law enforcement pro-

professionals to respond to domestic violence and stalking, including implementation of lethality assessments tools to better predict and prevent homicides.

- Educated allied professionals, particularly youth serving professionals in the schools and juvenile court, on the dynamics of domestic violence and the impact of violence on children.

4. Advise the Board of Supervisors on policy, funding and legislative needs.

- Released Annual Reports from the DVPPCC and the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team to highlight the reality of domestic violence in our community.

- Created the Dunn-Chadwick Fellowship, which funds a domestic violence family law fellow to fill a gap in services by providing free legal services to moderate-income victims of domestic violence.

The Year Ahead

In the next year, the DVPPCC will continue their response efforts by:

- Implementing the nationally recognized Lethality Assessment Program, where law enforcement officers will screen for lethal indicators at the scene of all intimate partner domestic violence arrests and, if warranted, immediately connect the victim of the crime with the county's 24-Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline for resources and options.

- Establishing a Child Witness to Domestic Violence Response Team, which will effectuate the DVPPCC and DV Network-approved Child Witness to Domestic Violence Response Plan. The plan includes prevention, intervention, professional education, and community engagement goals that will respond to the traumatic effects that children experience when exposed to domestic violence.

- Increasing public awareness of the barriers faced by underserved or marginalized victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking particularly those faced by victims of teen dating violence and victims of color-and promote access to culturally and linguistically relevant services in our community.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



Invites you to

Our 2015 Annual Convention

Saturday, May 2 ~ 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Clyde's of Gallery Place Restaurant, Piedmont Room 707 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Keynote Speaker: Chris Whatley

Executive Director of the United Nations Association of the USA

"The United Nations Today"

Agenda: Registration at 9:30 will be followed by a buffet breakfast and the keynote presentation. Our business meeting will include election of officers, approval of our 2015-16 budget, program for 2015-17 and a silent auction fundraiser.

Menu: Breakfast buffet with fruit, eggs, quiche, French toast bacon and sausage and assorted pastries.

Transportation: Clyde's is half a block from the Gallery Place Metro station. Garage and metered street parking is available. More information on transportation is on the registration form. The Gallery Place Metro Station serves the Red, Green, and Yellow Lines. Take the 7th Street exit from Metro Station to either the "Arena" exit and walk right on 7th Street one-half block to Clyde's, or take the "Chinatown" exit and walk left on 7th Street one-half block to Clyde's AT 707.

Cost is \$40 per person. Provide a registration form for each person attending the convention. Make checks payable to: League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area, or to LWVNCA. Mail the form below and a check to: Barbara Ewalt, 11037 Saffold Way. Reston, VA 20190.

Deadline for receipt of forms and checks is Monday, April 27, 2015.

-----LWVNCA Convention Registration Form----- (Please print) -----

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Local or State League: _____ Delegate: (Circle one) Yes No

Number of attendees: _____ Amount of Enclosed Check: _____



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
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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, 2015.)

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