



The Voter

League of Women Voters Loudoun County

Upcoming Events



**Dr. Julie Leidig, Provost
Northern Virginia Community College**

Saturday, June 21, 11:30 AM

LWV LC Annual Meeting & Luncheon Bungalow Lakehouse, Sterling, VA

Members and guests of LWVLC are invited to this year's annual meeting and luncheon on June 21 at the Bungalow Lakehouse restaurant in Sterling. Loudoun League President, Priscilla Godfrey says, "We are honored to have Dr. Julie Leidig, Provost of the Loudoun campus of NOVA, Northern Virginia Community College as our keynote speaker." NOVA serves more than 12,000 students annually in credit programs and 5,000 in non-credit programs in a variety of academic and continuing education classes.

Northern Virginia Community College is the largest institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia and one of America's largest community colleges. If you wish to attend, please send your \$35 check, made payable to LWVLC, P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, VA 20176. Please indicate your preference for salmon or flank steak.

May 17, 10:00 AM

Special Private Tour for LWV Members of President Monroe's Historic Oak Hill

LWVLC members, please join us for a very special private tour of historic Oak Hill, the country manor built by President James Monroe in the early 1800s, now one of the only privately owned early presidential residences in America, right here in Loudoun County. Members will be personally guided through the magnificent house and gardens by Gail DeLashmutt, the current owner with her husband Tom. Space is limited, so please reserve your place by May 5 by emailing Kathleen Hughes at khughes868@aol.com.



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Loudoun LWV Member Jean Brown Wins Making Democracy Work Award

The League of Women Voters – Virginia held its “Celebration of

Making Democracy Work in Virginia” luncheon on Saturday, March 22 at the beautiful Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond.

The keynote speaker was Robert Gibson, Executive Director of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia, which works to strengthen and enhance the quality of government at all levels throughout Virginia on a nonpartisan basis. Mr. Gibson spoke inspiringly about the need for an independent nonpartisan commission to establish state election districts—rather than the political party in power of the General Assembly when the Census is taken each decade.

Redistricting remains an ongoing issue in Virginia, and LWV-VA has been an active member of the Redistricting Coalition started in 2010. Mr. Gibson feels that the “gerrymandering” that has resulted means our legislative process is more divided and gridlocked than ever. He urged League members to get involved in what will be a long campaign to pass a Bipartisan Anti-Gerrymandering bill in Virginia. For more information, on this effort: <http://lwv-va.org/redistricting.html>.

Another highlight of this annual luncheon was the naming of winners of the Virginia League’s Making Democracy Work awards. Among them this year is the Loudoun League’s long-time member, Jean Brown. Jean was honored for her many years of active involvement in state and local politics—from running for election to the House of Delegates and Senate and serving on the Virginia Agricultural Council to her leadership in registering high school seniors to vote. Jean said, “I was overwhelmed when Marla McIntyre called to say that the Loudoun League had suggested me for the “Making Democracy Work” award. There were dozens of other people involved in registering voters, all of whom deserve to share in the award, but I was glad to accept it on behalf of all those volunteers!”

Over the last decade, our League has registered more than 8,000 high school seniors in the county; and it is Jean’s presentation of why voting in local, state, and national elections is vital that has been the backbone of this program. She has also been a driving force behind several “Meet Your Legislator” programs where high school students are invited to meet and question their state legislators (see next page). Jean has held several leadership positions with the LWVLC and also served on the LWV-VA Board of Directors. Congratulations to Jean! ■



State Senator Jennifer Wexton (left) and Delegate Randy Minchew (right) spoke to Loudoun high school students about the General Assembly at Potomac Falls HS March 8 at LWVLC Meet Your Legislator night

Virginia General Assembly 2014 Report by Carol Noggle, LWV Prince William County

This year's Virginia General Assembly session officially ended on March 8, considered 2,888 pieces of legislation, and passed 1,647. These bills now await the Governor's action – either to sign, veto, or amend. This summary is excerpted from the weekly reports compiled by Carol Noggle, Legislative Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of Virginia, and sent by email to all Virginia League members. You can read Carol's full report at <http://lww-va.org/>.

Many important bills covering civil rights, non-discrimination, voting, gun violence in schools, mental health, and women's reproductive issues failed or are pending — including ratification of the federal Equal Rights Amendment for women. Sen. Henry Marsh argued the value of this amendment for equal rights and Del. Minchew supported its substance but the majority of the subcommittee voted nay. The opposition argument was that the deadline for ratification has expired and requires action by the U.S. Congress.



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For the tenth year in a row, a constitutional amendment for automatic restoration of felons' rights failed, as did a bill establishing absentee voting without excuse. Even adding an excuse to allow voters who work at least 15 miles from their polling place but within their jurisdiction or without excuse absentee voting that only applied to voters over 65 did not pass.

The bill to establish Military Overseas Voting via email passed, but does not include implementation unless there is re-enactment during the 2016 General Assembly Session. Voter registration by political party: failed.

Redistricting by Bipartisan Commission: Failed. The perennial failure to support a Bipartisan Virginia Redistricting Commission, either by statute or amendment to the Constitution amendment continued during this session. SB158 would have merely provided for a statewide referendum on the question of whether a bipartisan advisory commission should be created to propose redistricting plans for the House of Delegates, state Senate, and congressional districts. No such referendum will be on the November 2014 ballot.

Firearms possession on school grounds: Failed: HB786 (Wilt) would have allowed school employees to possess a firearm on school grounds without penalty. This bill had passed the House, but the Senate Education and Health Committee voted to defeat the bill 8 to 7. There is a Federal law that requires school zones to be gun-free, so this bill would have protected school employees from dismissal even if they violated the Federal law.

Pending (as of this writing, April 2): Also unfinished business. Health care coverage for low-income Virginians remains unsettled with the House majority opposed to Medicaid Expansion using Federal dollars versus support in the Senate for a plan that would accept Federal dollars in the "Marketplace Virginia" plan which would be offered by private insurance companies.

The budget negotiations during the March 24th session will include this issue. The highlights of the session are conveniently reported on the Division of Legislative Services web site.

<http://dls.virginia.gov/pubs/hilights/2014/Highlights2014.pdf>

To contact your legislative representative: <http://www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?nid=134> ■

You Tube You Vote

The LWV of Loudoun County is working with a team from Dominion High School to produce a YouTube video on how to register to vote. LWV Loudoun has formed a partnership with the school. Once the video is completed, a link will be posted on the LWV of Loudoun County web site.



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Board of Directors

- Priscilla Godfrey, President
- Kathleen Hughes, 1st Vice President
- Denise Moore Pierce, 2nd Vice President
- Marla McIntyre, Secretary
- Hatsy Cutshall, Treasurer
- Ellen Heald, Director
- B.J. Beyer, Director
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Join the Board

The Nominating Committee has announced the following positions open on the LWV of Loudoun County Board of Directors:

- 2nd Vice President
- Treasurer
- 4 Directors (one and two-year terms)
- Nominating Committee

The Board meets monthly and takes the lead with many of LWVLC projects, including high school voter registration, HOA elections, candidate fora, fundraising, and membership recruitment. It's hard work, it's fun, and it's important. Please contact Ellen Heald (ellen.heald@gmail.com), chair of the Nominating Committee, to express your interest.

Become a Member

Do you know someone who believes in voter education and is passionate about preserving voter rights? If so, forward this newsletter and bring her or him to the next meeting on May 21 so she or he can meet the Board and learn about the many things League does. Dues are \$60 per year or \$90 for family. For more information on joining, contact Priscilla Godfrey at godfreyblueridge@gmail.com or download a membership application at www.loudoun.va.lwv.org.

Our mailing address is:
 PO Box 822
 Leesburg, VA 20176

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a supporter of the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County. We appreciate your support!

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Many thanks to our February speaker, Jamie Rose, who spoke about her efforts to bring about social change through her non-profit Momenta Creative with its international photography workshops. <http://jamie@momentacreative.com> | 202.688.1448