



League of Women Voters®
of Virginia



Voter Express

May, 2018

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

Volume 64, No. 9

2018 Council LWV of Virginia June 16th, 2018

at Roslyn Retreat and Conference Center
8727 River Road Richmond, Virginia 23229



TAKING ACTION TO MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

2018 Council is coming! Be sure to make your reservations for this exciting event. There will be a lot of work to do, not the least of which is to address the board approved recommendations from the School Choice and Behavioral Health Task forces. Read all the information about the 2018 Council at <http://lwv-va.org/lwv-va-2018-council/>. You can register for 2018 Council at <http://lwv-va.org/register-for-2018-council-here/>

Be sure to read the documents that will be voted on by the Delegates at Council:

[LWV-VA Education Position 2018 Proposal](#)

[LWV-VA Behavioral Health Position 2018 Proposal](#)

From the President:

May – My favorite month - it is finally a real spring in Virginia, it has my favorite holiday (Mother’s Day) and my birthday (!) and college graduations and many League Annual Meetings.

This year, it also has a special session of the General Assembly to finalize a state budget, held over from March, when the House and Senate could not agree on expanded Medicaid funding. The GA reconvened on April 18 to act on Governor Northam’s recommendations, and upheld almost all of his vetoes. The Senate will meet again on May 14 to continue budget reconciliation efforts, and the Governor has until 30 days after the end of the special session to veto or sign their efforts.

This month’s Voter Express has information about Council on June 16, and some excellent information about communications from Carol Lindstrom, our Communications Director.

At Council, one of the breakouts will be for those planning to attend the LWVUS Convention in Chicago from June 28 through July 1. I hope that every league will be sending at least one delegate, because this is a very important Convention with many new ideas about how the League operates. If you haven’t heard about the Transformation Journey that we’re embarking on, heading toward our 100th Anniversary in 2020, you should check it out at <http://lwv-va.org/> You can view the Convention webinar and get an overview of what will be going on. The last day to get the reduced registration price is June 1, so I hope that your league will be taking advantage of it.

Registration is now open for our Council at Roslyn Retreat Center – go to our website at <lwv-va.org> for information. Although voting privileges are limited to two from each league, other members are encouraged to attend since there will be a lot of new information to take home.

Happy Spring!

Sue Lewis

Important Information From LWVUS: Constitutional Convention Webinar

A dangerous and misguided effort to alter the US Constitution through a Constitutional convention is being proposed and considered in state legislatures throughout the country. Many leading conservative and progressive groups, scholars, economists, lawmakers, and policy experts rightly oppose a constitutional convention, because of the unintended consequences of unraveling our nation's fundamental freedoms. [Sign up to join a webinar on this topic on Wednesday, May 2 at 3:00 PM ET.](#) We'll discuss this issue and the efforts supported by the League to stop this threat to our democracy from moving forward. For questions about this webinar please contact Jessica Jones Capparell (jjones@lww.org).

And For Every Other Day: VISIBILITY! (a few notes from your Communications Team)

Governor Northam announced the 3rd Annual Virginia High School Registration Week as being April 22nd through the 28th. We hope that all of you participated in helping to drive the youth vote. We want to hear from you about your activities related to High School Registration so that we can highlight this important work in the upcoming June Virginia Voter. We ask that each local league write a short paragraph describing their activities and number of registrations. Please keep text to 20 words or less and include one photo of an activity if you wish. Please send those to communications@lww-va.org

This event should serve as a catalyst as we move into election season and need to be preparing now for some great outreach through voter registration and Get Out the Vote activities. It also means it is time to start planning for voter education activities in your area. Physically performing these is something the League has done for almost 100 years. We plan and hold forums, registration events, Meet & Greets, and put out signs. Where we are not fully utilizing our ability to be visible is through internet resources. (Please note that some Leagues already do a great job of this, but we have much room for growth when we look at all of our Leagues.)

These Internet activities should include the use of your websites, email, and social media platforms. We have a new Google Calendar on the Member's Resources Section to help with your planning. Take a look and see if it might be useful for you [http://lww-](http://lww-va.org/members-corner/editorial-calendar-more/)

[va.org/members-corner/editorial-calendar-more/](http://lww-va.org/members-corner/editorial-calendar-more/). It establishes a spread of time before a major event where you can focus energies to get information out to the public. Set up one for your own League that highlights those events where you feel it is useful to strive for greater visibility and to empower citizens.

Now is the time to start trying out some of the great tools that can help you get your message out. One good place to start is a review of the PowerPoint presentation made by LWVUS that denotes the importance of having a league presence that is visible 365 days per year! A special section on the League Management Site ([Calendaring: A 360 View for 365 Days](#)) helps to identify key dates and why they are important. This tool will really help you to identify your audience for outreach as well.

Using Images:

Images make your website, email, and social media attractive while simultaneously helping to increase your rankings with search engines (increasing visibility). If you are a member of the Communications Team Facebook group, which is open to all members, you will see us posting some general images that you can download and use. If you are not a member of that group, have an interest in graphics, then please consider joining and share your work with the group. We need images to encourage folks to register to vote, learn about candidates and issues, and vote, (along with anything else you can think of).

Some folks have programs on their computer that will provide them with a way to generate graphics. I personally use [Gimp](#) which is a free open-source program. But, there are quite a few resources on the internet where you can do your design in the 'cloud' then save your finished product on your computer. One such program is <https://www.canva.com/>. Canva is basically a free program for designing most anything you could want to use from Facebook posts to cards, to infographics and business cards. Here are a couple of examples of Canva products I have used:





Although free to use, Canva does sell some of the backgrounds offered. There are plenty of free ones to choose from though and you can upload your own backgrounds! This last part, using your own backgrounds, means that you can custom fit it to your unique community. Just find a good photographer in your local league and ask him/her for some photos. Be sure to give the person an idea or what you want or what message you want to send so that they can find a suitable image.

Photographs that show action are powerful. Those that show people posing for pictures are just not as powerful. Work on gathering a collection of action photos for your League that you can use in different ways. Your photos can be used to highlight text by using them as backgrounds or including them as only a piece of a larger image is another useful tool. When using photos, try to remember to resize them to a standard size such as 640x480 and in .png format if possible. The .png format provides a better quality image as your photo is automatically resized for display on different types/sizes of screens.

If you're really brave, you can venture onto the LWVUS website (forum specifically) and do some searching to find images that may be useful. I found it quicker to create my own! A Google image search using terms such as elections, get out the vote, voter registration, and such may yield a lot of images, but you have to be very careful not to violate any copyright laws. Instead, look at them to get our own ideas and then make your own.

If there are any folks out there who feel comfortable helping others learn how to work with graphics, or if you would like some help in getting started with your own graphic designs, email communications@lwg-va.org. Let's work together to get the jobs done! To get even more ideas be sure you join the [LWV-VA Communications Team](#) Facebook Group.

Now about that text stuff:

Sometimes, an image says everything, but not usually. It can be difficult to come up with an image that allows you to include a link to something specific like the page where you can register to vote online. Just a few words can turn a nice graphic into a powerful tool!

The LWVUS has been sending out suggested social media text for several years. Again, if you don't get it in the email and immediately save it, it can be very difficult to find on the website. We will be working on some of our own that we can share in on the [LWV-VA Communications Team](#) Facebook Group. The LWVUS ones are a nice starting point and good for national elections, but we need to custom fit to our Virginia leagues. Each league is different and has a different audience to reach. You people in your local leagues are the experts! You know what needs to be said and how to say it so that your particular citizens will get the most out of it.

Load times of your web pages and emails are important. So is the load time of any documents you may want to share via the Internet. A .pdf file is best because it is not generally an editable format. Sure, with the right tools, just about anything can be edited, but having your document in a .pdf file makes that less likely to occur. The important thing about your .pdf documents and load time is the size of the file. "Bloat" is the term applied to .pdf files that are larger than they need to be. If you are using programs such as Word or OpenOffice to create your files, then changing them to .pdf files by using the icon on that file page, the odds are good you do not have a big problem with bloat. Programs such as Acrobat Reader DC and In Design create huge bloat issues UNLESS you know how to use the programs well enough to effectively optimize the size (de-bloat) of the document. Whichever you use, there is a free online program that will give you a hand. It is recommended by LEW, Smallpdf (<https://smallpdf.com/>) but has one drawback to consider. The free version only allows you to optimize up to 2 files per hour. In most cases this is fine. In other cases, you may need to do a bit of planning in order to get all of your documents optimized. To remove this restriction, you can get the Pro version for \$6/month or \$48/year. Smallpdf also allows you to do conversions to and from .pdf for PPT, JPG, EXCEL, and WORD. You can also merge, split, rotate and .pdf files,

Both websites and emails call for short powerful statements that have links to additional information. Use .pdf files to provide the additional data while your website/email gives enough information to entice the reader to read more. I have asked a lot of people if they read those long emails that are always floating around

and the most common responses is “no”. They scan it. The longer the material is, the less effective scanning is to capture the reader's attention. If your website allows for a blog section, that is a great way to get out more detailed information while keeping the text on your website, email, and social media applications.

These are just a few tips that will make your jobs easier and help to increase your visibility. Again, we encourage anyone who is a League member and is interested in communications to join the [LWV-VA Communications Team](#).

One last, but very important note when it comes to visibility. Visibility is not just about your League, it is about being visible in communities where no League currently exists. It is about helping to drive the interest that results in the development of new Leagues, making our Virginia League voices even stronger.

Note to Local League Leadership

Please remember to send in a new list of officer and board contact information to communications@lww-va.org as soon after your annual meeting as possible. We want to get an updated Directory to you as soon as possible. Your complete updated list is requested so that we can capture all changes.

We need the following information for Officers, Board Members, and Off-Board Members.

Title (i.e. President, Legislative Coordinator)

- Name of individual(s)
- Mailing address of individual(s)
- Primary Phone number of individual(s)
- Secondary Phone number of individual(s) if any
- E-mail address for individual(s)

Remember that these State Directories are not for public distribution. They are provided to each local League board for internal use only.

Stay Informed on Major Issues

We have 11 special Facebook Private Groups that are for members only discussion and information sharing on important topics. More can and are likely to be added in the future. While others on Facebook can see that these groups exist, nobody but members can see what is posted to those groups. There is also one Secret Facebook Group that nobody can even tell it is there. For this Secret Gun Safety group, you will need to contact communications@lww-va.org for information on joining it. For the others, use the links below to go to a page where you can submit a request join. Here are

our 11 private Facebook Groups (to learn more about specific groups go to <http://lww-va.org/members-corner/facebook-working-groups/>:

- [LWV-VA Social](#)
- [LWV-VA Advocacy](#)
- [LWV-VA Behavioral Health](#)
- [LWV-VA Fracking, Uranium, and other Extractive Industries](#)
- [LWV-VA Communications Team](#)
- [LWV-VA Transportation](#)
- [LWV-VA Redistricting Group](#)
- [LWV-VA Climate Change](#)
- [LWV-VA Health Care](#)
- [LWV-VA Women's Rights & the VA Code](#)
- [LWV-VA Women's Rights & the VA Code](#)
- [LWV-VA Voting & Elections](#)

Other Important Facebook Groups You May Find Useful (Not Sponsored by LWV-VA)

- [Sips & Civility](#) – for planning League social events.
- [League Leaders Today](#) – for sharing information and discussing League.
- [LWV New Media](#) – for keeping up with changes in online media sources, exchanging ideas, and getting help.
- [Vote411 Team](#) – for getting information and help with Vote 411
- [League of Women Voters of WordPress](#) – for those Leagues looking at moving to WordPress or other sources rather than LEW for their websites.

Important Dates (& some not so important ones:)

May 3rd: World Press Freedom Day

May 4th: Star Wars Day

May 5th: LWVNCA Annual Convention

May 8th: National Teacher's Day

May 13th: Mother's Day

May 19th: Armed Forces Day

May 21st: Last Day to Register for Primary Elections

May 26th: Sally Ride Day

May 26th: International Jazz Day

May 28th: Amnesty International Day