



League of Women Voters® of Virginia



Voter Express

March, 2018

Making Democracy Work

Volume 64, No. 7

From LWV-VA President, Sue Lewis

March – Women’s History Month, International Women’s Day (8th), Daylight Savings time starts (11th), St. Patrick’s Day (17th), Spring Equinox (20th) and the adjournment of the General Assembly!

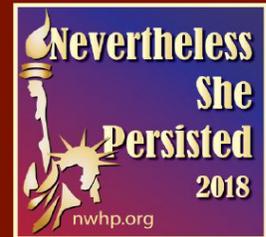
After February, that short but sweet month, March looks too full. But, in comparison, our work looks easier. Some of you have events planned to celebrate WHM and IWD, and I know that our lobbyists are welcoming the last week of the legislative session (ends on March 10). There are still the Appropriations Committee conferences to reconcile the two house’s bills, which may lead to meaningful expansion of Medicaid in VA. Most election-law-related bills are going to a joint committee for further work before next year’s session. Next month’s newsletter will tell us just how we fared in the GA this session.

League Day was a success, even with another change of venue (the Tobacco Company will be back sometime this spring). We had introductions in both houses, and even a recognition of the League’s birthday on Feb. 14. WLRT has proven to be working out fine with its change of venue, although we continue to look for a space closer to the Pocahontas Building for the next three years.

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The National Women’s History Project is excited to announce the theme for 2018:

NEVERTHELESS, SHE PERSISTED:
Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women



When you read this, I’m hoping that your LWVUS Program Planning responses have been sent in on-line (March 1 was the deadline). And I hope that your local league will send at least one delegate to the LWVUS Convention in Chicago from June 28 to July 1. Delegate count will be released this week by Linda Garvelink, Membership Director.

And don’t forget to put June 16 on your calendar for LWV-VA Council in Richmond

Women’s History Month

Lois Page, LWVFA

For centuries women have been excluded from history books, perhaps in part because men were writing them. Interestingly enough, ancient Greek history seems to abound with interesting women but for centuries after silence prevailed. For K-12 curriculum throughout the country, women’s history was an unknown topic. Until very recently, history books in Virginia devoted one paragraph to the suffrage movement. Even now, fewer than 8% of all U.S memorials recognize women.

As might be expected, California led the way in changing things, according to the website of the National Women’s History Project [<http://bit.ly/1oJRIgp>],” when the Education Task Force of the Sonoma (CA) Commission on the Status of Women “initiated a “Women’s History Week” celebration for 1978.”

“The week March 8th, International Women’s Day was chosen as the focal point of the observance. The local Women’s History Week activities met with enthusiastic response, and dozens of schools planned special programs for Women’s History Week. Over one-hundred community, women participated by doing special presentations in classrooms throughout the country and an annual “Real Woman” Essay Contest drew hundreds of entries. The finale for the week was a celebratory parade and program held in the center of downtown Santa Rosa, California.” [<http://bit.ly/1oJRIgp>]

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Soon the word was out about the success of the California event, with a special impetus coming from the Women's History Institute of Sarah Lawrence College. Of course, it was the 70's!

The website continues, *"The first steps toward success came in February 1980 when President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th, 1980 as National Women's History Week. In the same year, Representative Barbara Mikulski, who at the time was in the House of Representatives, and Senator Orrin Hatch co-sponsored a Congressional Resolution for National Women's History Week 1981. This co-sponsorship demonstrated the wide-ranging political support for recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the achievements of American women."*

"Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards, and the U.S. Congress."

Each year, the dates of National Women's History Week, (the week of March 8th) changed and every year a new lobbying effort was needed."

"By 1986, 14 states had already declared March as Women's History Month. This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale to lobby Congress to declare the entire month of March 1987 as National Women's History Month. In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women."

Among the incredible achievements of American women, of course, was the passage of the 19th amendment.

The names of Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, Alice Paul, and our own Carrie Chapman Catt need a huge chapter in every history book. *"They engineered the greatest expansion of democracy on a single day the world had ever seen . . ."* - Eleanor Clift, author of ***Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment***. Acclaim goes to the five million suffragists who fought for 72 years to win the right for all women to vote.

Several current efforts in Virginia seek to underline women's place in history. Groundbreaking on the grounds of the state Capitol in Richmond to build the Virginia Women's Monument, a series of statues of accomplished Virginia Women called "Voices from the Garden." And on the site of the imprisonment of suffragists in southern Fairfax County site work is underway on the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, a garden style memorial that tells the history of the suffrage movement.

The Women's History Project website concludes, *"Understanding the true history of our country will help us to comprehend the need for full equality under the law for all our people. This goal can be achieved by ratifying the 27th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states that "Equality of Rights under the Law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."* (Molly Murphy MacGregor, Executive Director)

Presidential Message 1980 President Jimmy Carter's Message to the nation designating March 2-8, 1980 as National Women's History Week. Read Here

[\[http://bit.ly/2sMDSAV\]](http://bit.ly/2sMDSAV)

U.N. Observer Corp Update

PLEASE JOIN THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVERS GOOGLE GROUP

Jill Follows, UN Observer and member of LWV Fairfax Area
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Excitement is building for the United Nations' 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62). This hugely influential series of meetings and discussions will be held at United Nations headquarters from March 12-23, 2018. The LWVUS will send 20 delegates to observe activities of member states at the UN and side events conducted by NGO's including the League's side event titled "Women Political and Business Leaders: Achieving Economic Solvency With Rural Women". (see the full report here: <http://bit.ly/2EQHRhe>)

A Waiting Game, VA Metro

Deb Wake, LWVFA

As this issue of the Voter Express (2/24) goes to press, both General Assembly chambers have passed amended bills that provide some funding for Metro and gas tax floor bills. It is not a matter of selecting one bill above the other but providing the right mix in a bipartisan conference bill, as was HB 2313 nearly five years ago. To provide necessary funding for Metro, which provides \$600 million each year for Virginia's budget resources, we support measures that:

- Will provide the approximately \$150 million annual Northern Virginia payment to Metro.
- Include the current state matching for federal funds.
- Do not go below a 3% operating budget cap as the threshold for withholding of funds.
- Raise new revenue for transit rather than re-allocating current funds that are needed to support other transit needs in Northern

Virginia and elsewhere in the state. (“Robbing Peter to pay Paul”)

- Provide a floor for the gas tax in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads at the 2013 level not the lower current level.
- Address the “financial cliff” which will affect capital funding for statewide transit services.

Virginia LWV members should continue asking their legislators to support the goals of providing a dedicated, bondable, reliable and sustainable funding for Metro, and establish a gas tax floor needed by Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, while addressing the remainder of Virginia’s transit. Maryland’s session will continue a month after Virginia’s ends, and our LWNCA and coalition partners would certainly welcome a positive Virginia response to the Metro funding crisis in building their case for Maryland’s response.

LWVNCA Metro-Funding Action Team is Working Hard

And We Will Need Your Support

In the fall of 2016, the LWNCA Board adopted securing a dedicated funding source for Metro as a number one Action Priority. Edith Holmes Snyder from Falls Church and Nancy Soreng from Montgomery County were named co-chairs of that endeavor. They spent the first year working with a committee that had representation from DC, VA and MD gathering background information. This included a briefing by Katie Mattice, Executive Director of the Northern VA Transportation Commission, Barbara Donnellan, Consultant Council of Governments and David Snyder, Falls Church City Council Member and former Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board Chair and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). Next, the

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members of the Metro-Funding Action Team attended the organizational meeting of the Fund It/Fix It Coalition convened by the Coalition for Smarter Growth. Following that meeting, LWNCA decided to join 23 other non-profit organizations as official coalition members as a Tier 1 member. (Please read full article here: <http://bit.ly/2GGdeM9>)

Restoration of Civil Rights for Persons with Felony Convictions

Molly McClenon, LWV Lynchburg

The last Governor made the process much easier and restored many persons' civil rights enabling them to register to vote and actually to vote. The current Governor is continuing with the same process. The Lynchburg League has updated their brochure and is eager to share it. There is a section of local resources which would need to be made specific to each locality.

Now there is only one process; it is the same for persons with violent felony convictions and those with non-violent convictions. All persons must be free from incarceration and have successfully completed their supervised release time, namely parole/probation. The parole officer notifies the Department of Corrections when someone has completed their parole; the DOC notifies the Secretary of the Commonwealth and that person's name goes on a list. There is still a need for our work. People need to know that they can fill out a very simple application and their case will be considered sooner. The best way fill out an application is on line using:

<http://restore.virginia.gov/>

A copy of LWV Lynchburg's brochure is available at:

<http://bit.ly/2FsqBAD>

Happy Birthday LWV

SURPRISE!!

Delegate Dawn Adams, District 68, Richmond, rose for a Point of Personal Privileges on February 14 to recognize February 14 as a special day in history -- the 98th birthday of the League of Women Voters on February 14, 1920.

See the video where Del. Adams gave her speech. She speaks at approx. minute 22 in the video. She clearly notes the non-partisanship of League.

<http://bit.ly/2F4V61q>

Member Raises \$876.00 for LWV-VA

Thank you to Amy Hjerstedt, League of Women Voters of Falls Church. She used Network For Good to do a Facebook fund-raiser for LWV-VA’s sponsorship of the Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) postcard campaign: “Sometimes it takes a four letter word: VOTE” during the 2017 fall election season. Amy personally solicited donations from her Facebook friends in November and December 2017, raising \$876.00 for LWV-VA. The funds were received from Network for Good in February 2018. Thank you, Amy, both for your hands-on work to get members and non-members involved in getting out the vote and for the funds you raised.

“This could be a convenient way for people to elevate the League's work and help raise easy funds for our state-wide voter education and mobilization efforts. Most of the money I raised came from my non-League friends who likely would not have donated to our organization had it not been for the "ask" on Facebook. I met them where they are at, which is online. Please do tap the untapped potential in your social networks.”
Amy Hjerstedt