



**League of Women Voters
of Falls Church**

*A Voice for Citizens and
A Force for Change in the United States*

The League of Women Voters of Falls Church is a nonpartisan organization that serves the citizens of Falls Church City through encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, go to www.lwvfallschurch.org.

Dear League Members,

With the election now behind us, LWVFC can be proud of helping Falls Church achieve an 87% voter turnout, among the highest in the region and the Commonwealth. The League is indebted to Genie Flahie, Voter Service Chair, and the many LWVFC volunteers who took part in a range of activities from registering newly naturalized citizens to vote and conducting voter education sessions, to widely distributing information about new voter ID regulations and the League's Fall 2012 Voters' Guide. Thank you to all who participated in these core League activities.

Many thanks, too, to Linda Garvelink, Vice President-Programs, for substantive sessions in support of this year's election and in cooperation with the Arlington League. In October, Linda arranged with Bonnie Franklin, Program Chair for LWV-Arlington, the showing of the film "Patriocracy," which addresses the present dysfunction in our political system and discusses what might be done to enable us to move forward to solve our most challenging problems. Linda and Bonnie also planned a panel discussion of the November 6 ballot initiative on eminent domain that had to be cancelled due to Superstorm Sandy. Unfortunately, the October 30 panel was too close to the election to be rescheduled. Between increased early absentee voting and the need for time to recover from a circumstance like Sandy,

In This Issue

[Memorial Gathering for League Member Ed Strait](#)

[LWVFC Members Serve as "Voters" in FCCPS 7th Grade Civics Class Presidential Election](#)

[News & Notes from LWNCA](#)

[Virginia General Assembly Outlook](#)

[Your Editing Skills Are Needed!](#)

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LWVFC's Board has adopted Linda's recommendation that in future we schedule voter education events no later than October 15.

The League hosted a very successful 14th annual holiday mixer and fundraiser on Sunday, December 2, at the party room of the Oakwood Apartments. This event, so ably organized by Fundraising Chair Bernadette Baroukh and Immediate Past President Ellen Salsbury, generates the resources we need for such activities as publishing voters' guides, placing VOTE! banners over major City streets to remind citizens of election dates, providing scholarships to George Mason High School students, and producing community forums on vital issues, including candidate forums for City Council. Thanks to all who joined us for this evening of warm camaraderie, delicious food and drink, and the chance to do some seasonal shopping at our silent auction. We especially appreciate the donations of items and services for the auction from individual members and local businesses.

LWVFC's next big event is our **January 12, 2013 Annual Planning meeting**, which will be held at The Broadway, 450 West Broad Street, beginning at 9:00 am. All members are welcome and encouraged to take part in planning our programs for the next 12 months. We will send an agenda for that meeting after January 1st.

Until then, best wishes for a peaceful holiday season.

Sincerely,
Edith Snyder
President

Memorial Gathering for League Member Ed Strait

Jeff Strait, son of Ed Strait, longtime member of and friend to the League of Women Voters of Falls Church, has announced a memorial gathering for his father. The gathering will be held on **Friday, December 28, at 4:00 pm** at the Senior Center in the Falls Church community Center, 223 Little Falls Street. The family will also host a light reception.

LWVFC Members Serve as "Voters" in FCCPS 7th Grade Civics Class Presidential Election

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At the LWVFC's September 2012 kick-off meeting, members and guests were treated to a delightful and impressive presentation by Falls Church City Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Liza High and three Mary Ellen Henderson students, now-8th graders, who had participated in the 2011 7th Grade Civics Presidential Election. A few weeks ago, LWVFC received an invitation for our members to participate as "voters" (and to evaluate the presentations) in this year's 7th Grade Civics Presidential Election. Ellen Salsbury and Linda Garvelink accepted the challenge, along with other Falls Church citizens including City Council and business representatives as well as parents and members of the Falls Church Education Foundation.

Ellen was a voter in Rory Dippold's class, and Linda was a voter in Maryel Barry and Marisa Strickland's combined class. The students' "political parties" had monikers such as "Echo," "Public," "Flex," "Smartie," "Diligent," and more. The project used the following process:

- ε Students were placed into groups of six to eight to form a political party. Students created their own political party name, mascot, and slogan and nominated a presidential candidate.
- ε Students used a list of school ideas (e.g. school spirit, service) and decided on three platform concepts. They could also come up with their own idea.
- ε Students had to use a decision-making model to explain the problem, alternative solutions, the best solution, and their action plan. They did some preliminary research to see if their ideas were truly a problem or would improve the school.
- ε Students met with the principal or assistant principal and others to gain approval for their ideas, with some groups revising or changing their platform concepts after speaking the administration.
- ε The student parties did some research and developed their platform ideas. Some parties conducted interviews with teachers, researched

specific facts about their ideas, and conducted surveys to develop their arguments.

- ε Either individually or in groups, the students completed projects to explain one platform idea or why people should vote for their presidential candidate through one of the following media: video, pamphlet, poster, website, newspaper article, or PowerPoint presentation. The presidential candidates had to write a speech.
- ε On Election Day (December 17 and 18), the parties presented their projects and worked to persuade the voters of the merits of their platform issues and their candidates. Students learned specific presentation skills and persuasive techniques as part of this process.
- ε Both students and adults (guests) voted; the results will be announced during the next class. Students complete a reflection as a group and individually on what they learned and the thinking process they went through to complete their projects.

The goal is for students to improve the school, regardless of whether they win the election.

Party platforms included:

- ε "Flexible" Flex time, i.e., rather than being given specific Flex assignments, the students would be able to use the time to work with teachers or other students on specific classes and assignments.
- ε Benches for the playground.
- ε Hot cocoa or juice at the start of the school day to "wake up" students.
- ε An organized volunteer group to work one day a week at an animal shelter.
- ε Increased transition time between classes (students currently have only three minutes to get from one class to the next.
- ε Domino's pizza on the cafeteria menu to replace the

generally disliked cafeteria pizza (one group proposed every Friday, another proposed twice per month).

- ε Add intramural and/or after school sports such as archery.

Both Ellen and Linda found this experience gratifying. We had an opportunity to tell the students briefly about the League of Women Voters of Falls Church. And, our visit enhanced the LWVFC's relationship with the school. We highly recommend this event to other League members for the 2013 "election."

News & Notes from LWNCA

LWNCA recently reinstated short reports to local Leagues about upcoming issues following its board meetings. This is the first of these reports.

This fall the regional League launched a new website. Local Leagues are invited to submit events so they can be posted to the calendar section of the site, www.LWVNCA.org.

Currently, the LWNCA is asking all member Leagues to provide feedback regarding the programs and issues they want to see LWNCA address. Various issues have been proposed, which you will hear about during your League's program planning meeting. Remember that LWNCA deals with regional cross-jurisdiction issues, such as mandatory minimum sentences (see position on this issue). You can find the list of these issues at www.lwvnca.org/Positions.html.

Every other year, LWNCA awards a local League The Madeline Naumann award for an outstanding project. More information can be found on the LWNCA website at <http://www.lwvnca.org/NaumannAward.html>. Local Leagues are encouraged to submit their project by March 7. Information will be sent to the presidents early in the year by Committee Chair Barbara Ewalt.

Virginia General Assembly Outlook: So Much to Do and So Little Time to Do It

The upcoming new year will be an odd-numbered one, which means the Virginia General Assembly will hold a short session of only 45 days, beginning Jan. 9. There will be a lot to cover during that time, and on December 5 at the Capitol Building, the League of Women Voters of Virginia sponsored a pre-session Women's Legislative Roundtable to hear from a variety of organizations and advocates about what to expect. The effect of the federal budget on Virginia's economy and general health and welfare was a major concern, with special presentations on the Affordable Care Act. A wide range of related and other issues included immigration and tax reform proposals; predatory lending; juvenile justice; gun control; clean energy and efficiency; women's rights; prisoners' and felons' rights; and election improvements.

LWVFC members Linda Garvelink and Madalyn Cafruny attended. This annual event showcased the LWV-VA leadership role in providing opportunities to coordinate and leverage joint resources with like-minded advocates, and to rally local Leagues. If you would like to become active in the Women's Roundtable by attending General Assembly sessions and reporting on them to LWV-VA, contact Molly McClenon, LWV-VA events planner: mcclenon@cstone.net; 434-384-7430. The state League will cover the cost of your hotel room in Richmond.

Your Editing Skills Are Needed!

Do you have editing skills you can loan the LWV-VA on a short-term, work-from-home project? LWV-VA is performing what it calls a "simple edit" of positions, and is looking for help with completion by mid-February, especially for two sections: Civil Rights of Felons and Mental Health. If you're interested, contact Linda Rice, LWV-VA program director, jrice@widowmaker.com; 757-566-1825.

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