“**The Prince William - Fauquier Voter”**



April 2023 Newsletter

**From the Desk of the President ….**

**Janet Gorn, LWV-PWFA President**

**Commission on the Status of Women**

The 67th Session of the United Nations

The 67th Session of the United Nations (CSW-67) – the UN’s (193 members) largest annual gathering on gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights – successfully closed its two-week session, with the acknowledgment of the critical role of technology and innovation in achieving gender equality. The first fully in-person session following three years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference also provided virtual access. The CSW-67 registered more than 7,000 participants, including 4 heads of state and government and 116 ministers, 205 side events on the UN Premises, and about 700 NGO parallel events.

I was a member of the LWV-US Delegation to the United Nations ACSW-67. On March 15th, 2023, the LWVUS delegation hosted a webinar “Technology: Friend or Foe of Free, Fair and Accessible Elections?  This webinar was organized by the UN Observer team of the League of Women Voters  of the United States and was presented on the margins of the United Nations CWS-67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.  The presentation was outstanding, and we received much positive feedback in response to a post-conference survey. Here is a link to the recording of the presentation:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SSnYfP7Xjk

The agreed conclusions adopted by Member States at the final Plenary Session, provided a blueprint for all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and youth, to promote the full and equal participation and leadership of women and girls in the design, transformation and integration of digital technologies and innovation processes that fulfill the human rights and needs of women and girls. The CSW-67 called for the significantly increased public and private sector investment to bridge the gender digital divide, more inclusive innovation eco-systems, and the promotion of safe and gender-responsive technology and innovation. It also called for inclusive and equitable quality education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, information and communications technology and digital literacy to ensure that all women and girls can thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The CSW-67 Initiatives to consider to promote innovation and technological change, and

education in the digital age for achieving gender equality are:

* Develop the digital tool and services to address the needs of all women and girls;
* Mainstream gender in digital policies to remove barriers to equal access;
* Foster a policy of zero tolerance for gender-based violence that occurs through or is

amplified by the use of technology;

* Promote policies and programs to achieve gender parity in emerging scientific and

technological fields; and

* Develop gender-responsive innovation that challenges gender stereotypes and negative

social norms.

* Full and equal participation and leadership of women and girls in the

design, transformation and integration of digital technologies and innovation processes that fulfill the human rights and needs of women and girls.

**Notes from the Treasurer, Trish Freed:**

The Treasurer and Budget Committee are pleased to announce that the LWV - PWFA Board has approved the proposed budget for FY 23-24.  The [link to the budget](https://d.docs.live.net/41f5bcf6bd15560c/Documents/LWV%20PWA/Proposed%20Budget%202023-24.pdf) is included in this newsletter for your review.  Members will have the opportunity to vote to approve or amend the budget at the biennial meeting on May 21st.

I’d also like to encourage members to support our Education Fund by making a tax-deductible donation.  Our Education Fund provides our local league with revenues that support our voter outreach activities, whether they be tabling events at community fairs, candidate debates, or preparation of our Top Ten handouts. As always, we appreciate your support.

**To make a tax-deductible donation to the Education Fund via your credit card click here:**[**Donation to LWV Education Fund VA-116**](https://form.jotform.com/201055595959163?league=VA116) **Or, you can send a check payable to the LWV Education Fund and note our League ID VA 116 in the Memo line. Mail to: LWV-Prince William Fauquier Area, 6151 Hemlock Court, Manassas, VA 20112.**

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**Congratulations to Janet Gorn and the publication of her Letter to the Editor:**

Colleagues,

This afternoon with the assistance of Pat Reilly I submitted a *Letter to the Editor* of the *Washington Post*regarding “Restoring Felon Rights in Virginia,” in response to the paper’s “VA Tightened Policy on Restoring Right to Vote” March 22 News Article. I understand that the *Washington Post*, in addition to the LWV-PWFA letter, received a number of other local league letters (e.g., LWV-Fairfax) and from Deb Wake, LWV-VA President.  A copy of the LWV-PWFA letter as printed is attached.

A similar letter was submitted to the *Prince William Times* and the *Fauquier Times* which was printed in hard copy on the “Opinion” Page *Letters to the Editor,* as the only letter on the page.  The Prince William Times also issued a virtual copy of the letter.

**Letter to the Editor**

**Washington Post**

**Published March 30, 2023**

**[Editorial Page A-22]**

**“Transparency in Voting Rights”**

It was very troubling to learn in the March 24 Metro Article “VA Tightened Policy on

Restoring Right to Vote” of the absence of transparency in the change by Governor

Glenn Youngkin (R) in restoring civil rights to Virginians who have served time for a

felony conviction. It is more troubling to learn that the revised process lacks specific

criteria and has resulted in greatly reduced numbers of people having their rights

restored. This disenfranchises those who have paid for their crime.

Secretary of the Commonwealth Kay Coles James (R), on a March 22, responded to

Senator Lionel Spruill, Sr. (D-Chesapeake), chairman of the Virginia Senate Privileges

and Elections Committee, who asked on behalf of a constituent whether Mr. Youngkin

changed state policy for restoring rights to felons who had served their time: Former

inmates “are informed upon release the recommendation of applying and given a paper

application.”

The governor did not provide even minimal transparency. It should not take a letter

from an elected representative to bring to light a major change in an important

government policy that affects thousands of Virginians.

The League of Women Voters supports the automatic restoration of civil rights of felons,

regardless of the nature of their crime, on their release from incarceration or on

completion of probation or parole. The process should be easy to understand,

accessible, transparent, and fair with information about the criteria made available to all.

The process should be identical for all felons, regardless of the nature of their crime.

The governor has said that he believes in second chances. Perhaps he could give us all

the first chance to know how the surreptitiously changed process works.

Janet M. Gorn, President

League of Women Voters of the Prince William-Fauquier Area

On March 7, 2023, the League of Women Voters – Prince William Fauquier Area received a Proclamation from the Town of Dumfries!



**PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PRINCE WILLIAM-FAUQUIER AREA**

**WHEREAS,** American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways, and have played and continue to play critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of the life of the Nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working inside and outside of the home; and

**WHEREAS**, American women have played a unique role throughout the history of the Nation by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force of the Nation, were particularly important in the establishment of early charitable, philanthropic, and cultural institutions in our Nation, and served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement; and

**WHEREAS**, American women have served our country courageously in the military, and have been leaders, mot only in securing their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights m movement, and other movements, especially the peace movement, which created a more fair and just society for all; and

 **WHEREAS**, the theme for the 2023 National Women’s History Month is “Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories,” and the League of Women Voters of Prince William-Fauquier Area has been instrumental in empowering women to participate in the democratic process, and in advocating for policies that promote social and economic justice, and fair elections; and

**WHEREAS**, despite these contributions, the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued, in the literature, teaching, and study of American history.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF DUMFRIES, VIRGINIA**, do hereby proclaim March 2023 National Women’s History Month in the Town of Dumfries, and recognize the League of Women Voters of Prince William-Fauquier Area for its contributions to advancing the cause of women in our community.

**FURTHERMORE**, we commend the organization for its tireless efforts to promote civic engagement and to protect and expand the voting rights of all citizens. Let us celebrate the theme “Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories” and recognize the contributions of the League of Women Voters of the Prince William-Fauquier Area in promoting democracy and civic participation.

We call upon the resident of the Town of Dumfries and surrounding communities to join me in celebrating the achievements and contributions of American women, and particularly the women of our community, to our Nation’s history and to our future.

Derrick R. Wood, Mayor

Town of Dumfries

March 7, 2023

You and your guests are invited to attend the

League of Women Voters of the

Prince William-Fauquier Area

Biennium Meeting

Sunday May 21, 2023

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Manassas Park Community Center

99 Adams Street

Manassas Park, Virginia

**Eileen Filler-Corn** will present,” Madame Speaker:  Behind the Scenes in Richmond”.  A “potluck” dessert is planned, and members are invited to share one of their favorite desserts! During the business part of the meeting members will vote on the proposed budget for FY24, elect new officers and directors, and the President’s Annual Report will be distributed.

Eileen Filler-Corn served as the 56th Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates. She was the first woman in the 400-year history of Virginia’s legislature to serve as Speaker. Today, she continues to serve her community and commonwealth in the House of Delegates fighting on behalf of her constituents and all Virginians. Representing the 41st House District, which includes portions of Fairfax County, Eileen’s passion for service shines through her tireless work to make the Commonwealth of Virginia a better place to live, work, and raise a family. Her commitment to improving the lives of her neighbors is what drove her to run for the House of Delegates. In her more than a decade of service in the House of Delegates, Eileen has been a listener and problem solver, delivering results that move her community forward and advocating for everyone equally regardless of background, circumstance, or ideology. She has introduced, championed, and passed legislation that has made Virginia a safer, stronger, and more equal Commonwealth. During her time as Speaker of the House, the House of Delegates passed a record amount of groundbreaking, progressive legislation to implement necessary gun violence prevention measures, dramatically expand voting rights, support small businesses, improve the lives of working families in the Commonwealth, combat climate change, make our criminal justice system fairer, root out discrimination, and make Virginia the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The House’s bold actions to move the Commonwealth forward have led to Virginia earning record-breaking back-to-back titles as CNBC’s Top State for Business and jumping to #23 in the nation for workers – up from dead last. Speaker Filler-Corn also oversaw the House of Delegates during the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis, passing critical legislation to keep Virginians safe and put the Commonwealth’s economy on the path to a strong recovery. Thanks to her leadership, Virginia developed a top vaccination program and significantly curbed the spread of the virus, all while the Commonwealth’s unemployment rate remained well below the national average. In the House of Delegates, Filler-Corn serves on the House Education Committee; the House Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources Committee; and the House Rules Committee. She also serves on the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board, the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability, the Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation, the Public Private Partnership Advisory Commission, the Online Virginia Network Authority, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, the Legislative Support Commission, the MEI Project Approval Commission, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

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BLACK LIVES MATTER VIGILS continue to be held in Warrenton every Saturday morning and Members from LWV-PWFA continue to attend the vigils, providing support to the issue. Barbara Amster submitted the following update on the vigils.The Black Lives Matter Vigil is just that --a vigil--not a protest or demonstration. We are not part of any national BLM organization, but a group of people who assemble to bear witness for the need for concern over the all too often nationwide killings. It is not a criticism of Warrenton policing, and the Warrenton Police understand that and don't resent us.  Officers come over frequently to chat.   Along with the League, sponsors are the Afro-American Historical Society, the Interfaith Council, Piedmont Amity Project, Come to the Table, and the NAACP, all of which are non-partisan.The opposition to BLM is small, loud, profane, and occasionally violent. They are exactly the same people who harangue the school board every month about removing books on tolerance and racial justice, insisting that any mention of racism is, itself, racist and divisive. They also demand that any mention of GLBTQ issues be gone as well from the classroom and from the school libraries. They seem to represent the Marjorie Taylor Greene wing of the Republican party, with a dash of Q Anon thrown in. One very odd issue: They are convinced we are being 1. paid by George Soros and 2. funded by the government. Their signs call for our defunding but nobody I know has received their check yet. I can hardly wait for Soros to send them.They have at least one representative every month at the Town Council and the Board of Supervisors meetings as well, insisting that BLM be removed from town property.  Many official explanations from these boards and from the police about free political speech haven't moved them and they continue to be at the vigil every week, screaming insults and waving signs like "Free the Jan 6 political prisoners."  They have a few supporters who drive by and make gestures and/or noise, but mostly passers-by wave at us and smile.  BLM participants do not acknowledge the presence of "counter protestors"  in any way, no matter what the provocation.  Personally, I like to give them my grandmotherly smile as I hold my favorite "Learn the History" poster. It makes them even crazier.The original 'protestor", Gabe, is just finishing a one-year restraining order after having assaulted one of our participants in the parking lot.  He likes to pretend to be shooting us and is very loud and abusive.  Most of the others just yell, but one woman led them on an unruly march to Red Truck Bakery, angry that Red Truck had provided some hot coffee to us on a cold day.  The police escorted them out and Red Truck hired a security guard!  The owner closed both the Warrenton and Marshall stores for 3 days because his workers were intimidated by the roughness, but there was no further problem.   I don't usually fear physical violence, especially since these people have been required to stay on the other side of the street, and there is a police officer present.  BLM members have tried to thank the police for their presence, but they won't accept our paying the salary of that officer, and refuse even a donut, let alone a meal.  In thanks, we have raised $1800 and $1600 the last two years and donated it in the Warrenton Police Dept.'s name to the charity they sponsor:  Special Olympics.Next Saturday will be our 145th consecutive weekly vigil. [Please note this update was sent on March 12, 2023]. In nice weather, the League has a Voter Registration table, with signs and hoopla to attract walkers. People come for the Farmer's Market and the Friends of the Library Book Cellar, which are right there near us, and we have registered a few. Mostly we just pass out information before elections. We always have registration forms there, however, even in awful weather, just in case. For next week, I've been asked to explain, once again, what the League does and what issues, specifically, we are working on. I've done it a few times before, to an audience varying between 30 and 100 or so, and it has attracted a few terrific new members. It certainly has spurred an interest in Fauquier County. Vigil participants have mobbed Red Truck Bakery, along with many Warrenton residents, to show their support and to help pay for the security guard. Carol Proven, Ruthann and I stopped in after the Vigil for coffee and a pastry, as did several others.  This was not my first sacrifice for peace and justice:   I want a medal because I selflessly ate a whole rum cake to support the Cause. Greater love hath no man than this.  |
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**On April 16 the Land Use Study Committee presented the first in a series of webinars dealing with land use in Prince William County.** Our goal is to educate our members and friends, to empower us to ask questions before, not after, change happens, and educate the public as well in how our land use policies have developed and changed. Contact Charlie Grymes for more information or to join us. All are welcome!

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Since you have read the April Newsletter to this point, you are eligible to win a door prize at the annual meeting! Simply send your name to Connie and she will add your name to the basket. Conniewg51@gmail.com

**League Meetings are open to all members!**

Board of Directors Meeting, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 pm

General Meetings and Events, 3rd Sunday of the month, 2:00-4:00 pm

**LWV-PWFA Website**: [www.princewilliamlw.org](http://www.princewilliamlw.org)

**LWV-PWFA Email**: lwvpwfa@gmail.com

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**LWV-PWFA Board of Directors**

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Contact Newsletter Chair Connie Gilman conniewg51@gmail.com if you have questions, comments, or ideas!