

“The Prince William - Fauquier Voter”



Winter 2024 Newsletter

Happy New Year

A message from our President, Pat Reilly

LWV – Prince William Fauquier Area’s not-so-secret advocacy weapon: Carol Noggle



January and February are the months when we, as a chapter, focus on the work the General Assembly. We are fortunate to have a member who keeps that focus sharp and reminds us to pay attention to Legislators who represent us.

If you haven't read an email from Advocacy leader Carol Noggle in the last month, you are missing out on one of the key benefits of being a member of our chapter of the League. From the time the dust settles on the latest election of Virginia legislators, through the House and Senate members' introduction to an intense 60-day session, to the early morning committee meetings, Carol Noggle is watching. She even parsed our 70-member League chapter by district and emailed each of us with contacts for our representatives in both houses. She'll let you know if they need persuasion in voting for the right bills.

During the legislative session, the Virginia State League holds one-hour roundtables every Wednesday morning at 8:30, in-person in Richmond and on Zoom, on different themes, i.e. gun violence, education, budgets, healthcare. Various non-partisan partners, legislators and experts give you the context on bills under consideration and answer questions on the issues involved. Carol Noggle sends out “alerts” on legislation that conforms with League priorities with links to principal legislators on key committees. She reminds us not to speak as the League, but as constituents. She makes it easy through her hard work for us to be informed about what state government is doing.

So, if you haven’t heard from Carol Noggle by email in the last month, email her on cnogg@comcast.net to get on her radar and strap in for a graduate course on being an informed citizen.

If you go with her to League Day on Feb. 7 at the Capitol in Richmond, you will meet most of the League members on hand. They know her from her decades of service to the League of Women Voters. Sign up to come along. We will be carpooling and staying the night for a League reception Feb. 6 and a special informative breakfast to kick off a day of meeting our representatives or their staffs. It is nice to be with a group that is universally respected around the Legislature.

On a sadder note, we need to stop and honor our past President of the LWV, Deborah Turner.

Dr. Turner died suddenly on January 28, 2024.

For more information on her contributions to the League of Women Voters – US click on the link below.

[League Mourns Loss of LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Ann Turner | League of Women Voters](#)



An update from Treasurer, Trish Freed

The League of Women Voters mission statement is one that inspires and motivates our members:

“Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.” We take this mission very seriously and all that we do as a chapter revolves around this mission.

As you know, this is a Presidential election year and there is much work to be done.

Our efforts to register voters in high schools, on college campuses, at community events, and in senior centers are more important than ever. We'll be printing voter education materials for distribution at all these events that will list pertinent voter information and we'll be on hand to help voters identify their new voting districts, which may have changed due to redistricting. We plan to host candidate debates and forums that will introduce candidates and their platforms to voters. Our outreach will also include writing postcards to voters who are registered, but haven't been voting in elections, and to those who may be in danger of becoming disenfranchised, encouraging them to participate in the upcoming election. It's going to be a busy year!

For all these voter outreach and education activities to happen, though, we need your help. **Please support our Education Fund** by making a tax-deductible donation. Our Education Fund provides our local league with the funds that allow us to provide all the voter outreach activities listed above. As always, we appreciate your support.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Education Fund via your credit card click here:

[SLL Donation Form \(jotform.com\)](http://jotform.com)

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.

Membership Report

Our Prince William-Fauquier league currently has 71 members. Here is a breakdown of how wide-spread our membership has become: Of our Prince William membership, we have the most members (27) living in Western Prince William County, 19 members in Eastern Prince William, and 10 members residing in Manassas/Manassas Park. Then we have 13 members in Fauquier County and we actually have two members from Rappahannock County (look it up on a map!). Our geographical distance from east to west is over 50 miles! Our membership includes 8 men, 6 of whom are household members with their wives. We also have 2 male members who joined on their own. Two of our household members are women. Our oldest Leaguer (in years served, not age!) is Barbara Amster who has called herself a Leaguer since January 1, 1975, when she became a member of Park Forest, IL, LWV. She remained a member of that league until her move to Virginia approximately 7 years ago. She reports it was a vibrant, supercharged chapter, which studied important issues like handgun control and school financing and got things done via lobbying. We have two charter members of the Prince William League (Judith Anderson and Jane Touchet), who joined with the formation of our chapter by Sheila School and others in 2003. Our newest member is a man: Scott

Christian, who joined us on Dec 23, 2023! Welcome to the League! We have many active members, but we need more! If you know anyone who might be interested in learning more about the League of Women Voters and the promotion of democracy and voting rights, please give their information to our Membership Outreach: Catherine Ring (ring.cw@gmail.com) or Jane Touchet (janetouchet@gmail.com).

March 2024 Dual Presidential Primary

Every polling place will have the same contests on their ballot. Voters will be offered a Democratic or Republican Party Ballot. Voters may vote EITHER ballot, but not both.

Early Voting Begins: Friday, January 19

Deadline to Register to Vote: Monday, February 12

Deadline to Request a Mail Ballot: Friday, February 23

Early Voting Ends: Saturday, March 2

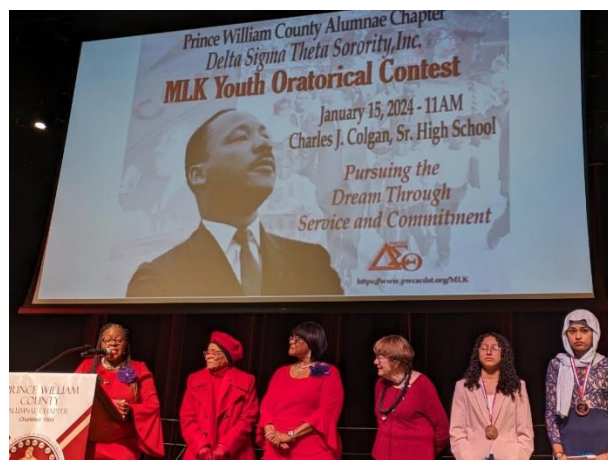
Election Day: **Tuesday, March 5**



January and February with the General Assembly

The Women's Legislative Round Tables are open – with the first session on Voting and Elections, and second one on Gun Violence. If you have never attended a WRLT, you should try, from the convenience of your own home. You can sign up for any of them by clicking <https://LWVWLRT2024.eventbrite.com>

If you have missed a session and would like to hear the speakers, use this link to sign in. [\(1175\) League of Women Voters of Virginia - YouTube](#)



Competition was hosted by the Prince William County

The 39th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Oratorical



Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The program was held on Monday, January 15th at Charles J. Colgan Senior High School.

Our League is a proud sponsor of the oratorical competition and celebrates the six finalists every year with a special book. The 2024 book was I Have a Dream (The Essential Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr) with a new foreword by Amanda Gorman. This year, our President, Pat Reilly, presented each of the six finalists and two honorable mentions, with Dr. King's book.

Laura Mushaw shared her experience attending the 39th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Competition and the above photo.

I attended the 39th Annual MLK, Jr. Oratorical Contest, sponsored by the PWC Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, inc.

It was a very energizing, positive, community experience focused on opportunity for our youth. There was a large MLK Youth Choir, made up of K-12 students. These students had practiced together on weekends, in small groups. They were proof of what community working together can achieve.

There were 3 speakers from Middle School level and 3 from High School level competing for top prize. These students were regional winners from an initial pool of 50 MS students and 30 HS students.

The speech prompt was "...if America is to remain a great nation, we must...". Which is a line in the MLK , Jr. Dream speech.

I was glad I was not a judge, because the final choices had to be very difficult. I was struck by the fact that while student 's speech made mention of gun violence and personal experience with hate, they ended with comments referencing what each of us can do working together to improve things... starting with being kind to each other.

Ruthann Litchford represented our local League when the donation was given to the Warrenton Police Department.



Representatives from Four of the Six BLMVfA Sponsors Present Our 3rd Annual Donation to Special Olympics Virginia in Honor of the Warrenton Police Department

This year's amount was \$2,283, for a three-year total of \$5,740!

left to right- Mary Haak, *Coming to the Table*; Jon Trevathan, *Piedmont Race Amity Project*;

Ruthann Litchford, *League of Women Voters*; Ellen Head, Sr. Director of Development, *Special Olympics Virginia*; Lieutenant Justin Pierce, *Warrenton Police Department*; Sargent Eric Davidson, *WPD*; Scott Christian, *Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy*

Barbara Amster sent a report on the Fauquier School Board meeting she attended on December 11th, 2023.

At last night's School Board meeting, I spoke for the LWV, thanking the Board, the 3 coordinators, and all the teachers who helped us implement our first "Now You're 18" program in the three Fauquier County high schools. I mentioned their flexibility and enthusiasm in deciding to help us present the program with such a short turnaround time and praised the efforts of all involved, especially the students. It was a very upbeat moment, which I told them I knew we would continue into the coming years with the help of the new board members who will begin serving in January. A bit of a puff piece, but I hope it helps lay the groundwork for a regular annual presentation.

Scott Elliott, the publisher of the *Fauquier and Prince Williams Times* was sitting behind me and tapped me on the shoulder when I returned to my seat. He wants to do a story on the Now You're 18 program and plans to send a reporter to interview me. This morning there was an email asking me what the dates of our next presentations will be so he can cover it. I told him it will be next fall, but I think he wants to do a feel-good article now. Stay tuned for further details.

P.S. The only other speakers during Citizen's Time asked the Board not to yield to pressure and ban helpful books and self-acceptance curricula.

An update:

Since then, I have attended 2 more School Board meetings, at which FUSE (Fauquier United to Support Education) wore red shirts to impress on the incoming two (Moms for Liberty) school board members that their agenda is not supported by the community. There were 38 people in red at the last meeting! So far, things are peaceful but had not been in the fall of 2023. FUSE would be worthy of LWV support, since all it does is support the professionals who direct curriculum and textbook choices and

oppose the book burners. It is based on furthering public education and opposing those who are trying to privatize it.

PWC High School Voter Registration Progress Report

The LWV has not had the luxury of presenting to the High School Seniors in conjunction with the "So Now You Are 18" presentation by the PW Bar Association this year, due to a requirement from the Virginia Department of Education that all HS students have a presentation from the PW Health department regarding drug use, how to administer Narcan, and Mental Health. It was logical for the High Schools to partner these two presentations.

The Government teachers at Osborn HS in Manassas asked us to set up a table in the back of the presentation. Thanks to Carol Proven, we were able to provide a registration table for two days. We had limited student contact time and collected 25 Voter registrations. Freedom High School Government teachers thought Voter Registration was important to provide for their students. They scheduled their auditorium for two days and brought their classes for a 40-minute presentation.

HOORAY... at last "captured" audiences. We collected 120 Voter Registrations over the two days. We were able to discuss both primaries, early voting, and use of factual media. The students said that they had selected three main issues of concern in their government classes: Gun Control, Abortion Rights, and the Environment. These students were born in 2005 and 2006. They are part of the "Lock-Down" Generation. They have practiced active shooter drills, experienced security lock downs in Elementary, Middle, and High School. And some have experienced the impact of gun violence in their neighborhoods and families. They told me "They want change"... I pointed out to them that 18–19-year-olds, IF they all voted could definitely change the direction of the elections. We also discussed the history of voting rights and the importance of voting for people who support their right to vote. These Seniors were passionate, knowledgeable, and ready to improve the world. VERY ENCOURAGING.
Report by Laura Mushaw

Land Use update, by Charlie Grymes

The Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) has primary responsibility for land use - where new houses and commercial development will be allowed, what sort of density/development will be permitted, and where new transportation ("mobility") infrastructure should be built. The BOCS dramatically changed Prince William County land use policies when it adopted key chapters of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan in December, 2022, updating the 2008 versions.

After a very long debate in 2022, the BOCS authorized data centers in new locations outside of the already-defined Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District. The supervisors also dropped the "smart growth" approach adopted in 1998, when increasing property taxes led to a commitment to focus public facilities in a Development Area and minimize public investment in a Rural Area.

The new Land Use chapter authorized more houses in the former Rural Area. The growth boundary had always been controversial, creating separate Rural/Development areas was approved in a split 1998 vote, with the three supervisors in western districts all opposed but a majority of eastern district supervisors voting in favor. Developers soon started purchasing parcels in the Rural Area where only one house was permitted on a 10-acre lot, then trying to get the line redrawn so the land value increased substantially if denser development was authorized.

In 2022 the BOCS also adopted a new Mobility Chapter that proposed \$6 billion in road expansion projects, plus a trails and transit plan. A new Housing Chapter specified how many affordable housing units were needed by 2040. However, the Electrical Utility Services Plan chapter did not identify any new high-voltage transmission corridors to deliver electricity to places where new data centers were authorized.

Because land use, transportation, and housing decisions have such a major impact on local residents, and because the jargon and planning processes are so confusing, our chapter of the LWV initiated a land use study group in 2023. We are starting to get dangerously educated about the DAPS, SUP's, DCSM, and various aspects of local planning.

Why? In political campaigns early money is like yeast, and in land use planning early involvement in the decision process is essential to making a difference. If you are interested in joining the study group, contact Carol Proven at carol.proven01@gmail.com

Book Discussion:

Seven League members gathered on January 24th at Olde Town Sports Pub for an enjoyable lunch and a lovely discussion of Untold Power: The Fascinating Rise and Complex Legacy of First Lady Edith Wilson, by Rebecca Boggs Roberts. Those who attended were Lucia Anderson, Trish Freed, Laura Feld-Mushaw, Barbara Greiling, Laurie Parafinczuk, Carol Proven and Pat Reilly.

The book told the amazing story of how Edith Wilson, with the aid of her husband's secretary, his physician, and the White House head usher, was able to keep the seriousness of the president's illness from the vice president, the Congress and the

public. We were all struck by how differently the White House operated a century ago and by how so few people were aware of the situation and were able to cover it up so effectively for more than a year. We agreed that Roberts offered a fascinating portrait of a woman who defied the traditional role of a First Lady.

Contributed by Barbara Greiling

Mark your calendars for the next book discussion scheduled for July 24th, from 11:30 – 1:30, at the Effingham Manor and Winery. The title is [Beautiful Country: A Memoir of an Undocumented Childhood](#), by Qian Julie Wang.

2023-2025 Board of Directors

Officers:

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Membership Outreach Director	Catherine Ring
Action/Program Director	Carol Noggle
Meeting Co-Directors	Cynthia Chambliss & Sheila Arrington

Non-elected:

Ex-Officio Officer	Janet Gorn
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League Meetings are open to all members!

Board of Directors Meeting, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 pm
(No Board Meeting in December)

General Meetings and Events notices are sent to the members. Watch for upcoming emails!

LWV-PWFA Website: www.princewilliamwww.princewilliamlw.orglw.org
LWV-PWFA Email: lwvpwfa@gmail.com

Please send any comments or concerns to Connie Gilman, Newsletter Editor,
conniewg51@gmail.com.