

# Fairfax VOTER

November 2021

Volume 74, Issue 3

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area General Meeting will be held November 21, 2021, via Zoom, starting at 2PM.

Unit meetings will resume in December.

The guest speaker will be Scott Konopasek, Fairfax County Director of Elections and General Registrar. He will address *How Recent Voting Reforms in Virginia Have Affected Voter Involvement and Participation*.

Please be sure to join us for an exciting discussion!

## Calendar

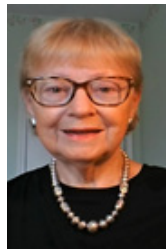
- 1 Food for Others' Voter Registration and Education Drive 9:15am – 11:15am
- 2 Election: Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Virginia House of Delegates, and School Bond Referendum
- 3 Fairfax *VOTER* Deadline
- 5 LWNCA Board Meetings -- Virtual 10:30am – 12:00pm
- 10 LWVFA Legacy Committee (Virtual) 1pm – 3pm
- 17 LWVFA Virtual Board Meetings: Ed and General Fund Meetings 10am – 12pm
- 21 LWVFA General Meeting 2pm

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## Presidents' Message



Welcome to Fall,

November signals the end of the 2021 voting season. We are grateful for the time and energy that so many of our members contributed to ensuring that people in our community were able to register to vote, had access to voting information, and could hear the candidates answer questions in our candidate forums. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see specific information about these accomplishments. Congratulations to our Voter Registration and Voter Services teams. They have put in their blood, sweat, and tears these last few months. The results are there for all to see.

Our community has been well served by their outstanding efforts.

Although voting season is over for this calendar year, our work is not done! Redistricting at the Virginia and Fairfax County levels continues. As an informed citizen, you can provide input. You can contact the Virginia Redistricting Commission at <https://www.virginiaredistricting.org/> A public hearing on the Fairfax County proposed redistricting plan will be held on November 9. More information on the public hearing will be sent as soon as it is available via the eLeague that frequently arrives in your electronic mailbox.

***We will have our annual general meeting on November 21 at 2 p.m.*** It will be held on Zoom and we hope that a lot of you will be able to join us. Details are still being worked out at the time of going to press. Updates will be sent via the eLeague.

Our unit meetings provide an avenue for discussing and learning from one another, so we can continue to be knowledgeable and civic minded. Volunteer opportunities are ongoing.

Watch for updates in the eLeague.

Leaguers are ever mindful of our two-part mission that has guided the work of the League for over 100 years: **Empowering voters. Defending democracy.** As Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government, that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights.” (In a letter to Richard Price, January 8, 1789, from the Library of Congress.) Leaguers are working to put Mr. Jefferson’s words into action.

It is our privilege to live in the United States, but we must also continue the work to “make a more perfect union.”

Count your blessings and enjoy Thanksgiving.

## *Anu and Pat*

Fairfax County 24-hr.  
Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline:  
703-360-7273; 711 TTY

### LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2021 - 2022

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Subscriptions to the *Fairfax VOTER* are available to non-Fairfax League members for \$15 per annum. Send your check to the above address and request a subscription.

Please e-mail address corrections to the office  
or call 703-658-9150.

## County-wide Voter Registration Event Held on National Voter Registration Day, September 28

By Arina van Breda

The LWV of the Fairfax Area held a County-wide event for NVRD this year, with 68 League members (with a few AAUW members joining us), holding Voter Registration and Information sessions simultaneously at all 21 of our Fairfax County Public Library branches. For the record, that is over 10% of our total membership participating in this event.

We spoke to over 760 voters and library clients, registered 21 new voters, assisted over a dozen people with absentee ballot information and forms, gave out over 420 pieces of literature, including information about What's on the Ballot and flyers with information about where and when to vote early in person. We also reminded voters that witness signatures were again required this year, and encouraged interested visitors to join the LWV.

Our success was due in large part to our event coordinator, Amy Leeson, working closely with the FCPL system. All the Fairfax County public library staff were very welcoming and helpful in ensuring the success of this logistically challenging but very rewarding event. Our volunteers, the library staff members, and the public all seemed very happy that we made this effort.



Photos by Arina van Breda

**The League of Women Voters Fairfax Area General Meeting will be held November 21, 2021, via Zoom, starting at 2PM.**

**The guest speaker will be Scott Konopasek, Fairfax County Director of Elections and General Registrar. He will address *How Recent Voting Reforms in Virginia Have Affected Voter Involvement and Participation*.**

**Konopasek has 25 years' experience in elections management including as Assistant Registrar of Contra Costa County, California, Director of Elections in Salt Lake County, Utah, and Registrar of San Bernardino County, California. He holds a Master's degree in political science from the University of Utah and a Bachelor of Arts in international relations from Brigham Young University, Utah.**

**Bring all your questions about Fairfax voting machines and voter security!!!**

## **Program Update: Feedback from September Report on Virginia's New Cannabis Laws**

by Jessica Storrs, Program Director

Fairfax League member Andrienne Konstas' cannabis report received much praise for its comprehensive review of the new law and the history of cannabis in our State. Unit members expressed both approval of and concern about the new regulation, with some hoping it would reduce the illicit consumption of illegal drugs and prescription medications, as well as reduce the effect of imbalanced legal enforcement on communities of color. Other positive outcomes mentioned include prohibiting employment discrimination for medicinal use of cannabis, and the eventual expungement of prior misdemeanors, though some felt leaders should make an effort to speed up the timeline.

Negative outcomes of the new law could include marijuana becoming a gateway drug to other illegal substances. Members also expressed concerns about impairment while driving. Some also felt that the law would be confusing, thereby making compliance difficult. One unit urged the League to lobby for contin-

ued monitoring of health outcomes and fair enforcement of the law. Another unit noted the potential for the law to be reversed if the political balance in Virginia changes.

We thank Andrienne for doing a deep dive into this topic and providing us with such a thorough review of a complex issue. It gave us a great subject for a robust discussion.

*We are a volunteer organization and rely on our members for our discussion content! If you have a program idea on which you'd like to take the lead, please contact me at [jessica.storrs@lww-fairfax.org](mailto:jessica.storrs@lww-fairfax.org).*

### **Upcoming 2021-22 Program Schedule**

*December:* LWVUS & LWVFA Program Planning

*January:* Book club Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men by Caroline Criado Perez

*February:* Native American Voting Rights by Vicki Mitchell

*March:* To be determined

*April:* Annual Meeting

*May:* Reparations by Sidney Johnson

*June:* Do Your Own Thing

## Environmental Update: World Leaders Meet at COP26

By Elizabeth Lonoff

The United Nations (UN) is reconvening the 191 countries that are parties to the Paris Agreement in Glasgow, Scotland this month to combat climate change, in what is known as a Conference of the Parties (COP). A September UN Report shows that their targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions fall far short of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Although recent plans from 70 countries outlined such goals, the UN report projected that overall the current plans, even if fully met, would produce 16% more emissions in 2030 than in 2010. In August, the UN's International Panel on Climate Change warned that limiting industrialization's global average temperature increases to 1.5° C, the temperature limit the Paris accord is trying to prevent, would require a 45% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030; 2° C would require a cut of 25%.

A series of five short films about feedback loops that explains how warming can become self-perpetuating is available at <https://feedbackloopsclimate.com>. For an analysis of how countries plan to reach their climate targets, see <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-01/the-benchmarks-countries-must-hit-to-reach-net-zero-emissions?srnd=premium>. In 2019, energy research firm Wood Mackenzie projected that converting the entire U.S. power grid to 100% renewable energy in the next decade is technologically and logistically attainable and would cost an estimated \$4.5 trillion.

The International Energy Agency's May report, "Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector", warns that the amount of solar and wind power added every year needs to quadruple; the rate of energy efficiency improvements has to triple the rate of the last two decades; and electric vehicle sales must go from ~5% of global car sales today to more than 60% by 2030. Additionally, in many cases, there is nothing backing the Paris pledges. However, overhauling the energy sector could create a net 25 million jobs, and global GDP could be 4% higher by 2030 than if the

world economy continued on its current path.

**The stakes are high.** For example, with the highest GHG levels in the atmosphere in human history in 2020, the World Bank's Groundswell 2.0 report found that immediate action is required to combat climate change, rising sea levels, water scarcity, and declining crop productivity to avoid the internal migration of 216 million people globally by 2050. Otherwise, climate migration "hotspots" will emerge as soon as 2030, hitting the poorest parts of the world hardest. Due to the anthropogenic warming already built into the atmosphere, the best we can do is to reduce that migration by 80% to 44 million people. This scenario-based modeling doesn't consider mass external migration, which could cause wars.

As it is, the sustainability nonprofit Ceres' new study of the vulnerability of U.S. commercial loans at leading banks found climate change risks from floods, fires, extreme heat, and hurricanes to pose a greater risk to bank balance sheets than the subprime mortgage crisis leading up to the Great Recession. Similarly, according to a study by Carbon Tracker and the Climate Accounting Project, top carbon emitters are not disclosing the full risks associated with climate change in their 2020 financial reports, reducing the chances of meeting global emissions targets. U.S. banking regulators are working on climate risk management guidance, possibly covering both concerns.

**Challenges abound.** For instance, decarbonizing the U.S. electricity grid with 40% solar power as targeted by the Biden administration faces shortages of materials used in solar panels and capacity limitations to accommodate new solar arrays in some local distribution grids, especially in poorer areas. The U.S. likely will shatter its record for wind and solar installations for a second straight year, but this isn't enough to achieve a net-zero carbon emissions economy by 2050. And it could be difficult for either the U.S. or China, the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters, to take a leadership role with the poor view of their handling of climate change as captured in a Pew Research Center study surveying a representative sample of nearly 20,000 people in 17 countries in North America, Europe, and Asia.

**As do opportunities.** In September, British Airways flew

its first carbon-neutral passenger flight from London to Glasgow using a combination of sustainable aviation fuel, off-sets, and emissions-reducing measures like switching to half-power during taxiing. That follows United Airlines' announcing last December its commitment to going carbon neutral by using carbon removal by 2050 and its plans to invest in a new direct-air-capture facility being built in Texas. In addition to the Drawdown Project's compendium of existing climate solutions, BBC Future's *Bright Sparks: Sustainability* series profiles engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs behind many new and innovative ways of tackling environmental problems.

In his 2020 book, *Climate Courage: How Tackling Climate Change Can Build Community, Transform the Economy and Bridge the Political Divide in America*, author Andreas Karelis asserts that **individual contributions matter, but community impact is bigger**. He advises focusing on known solutions, like how most new power projects are solar and wind energy due to economics. The nonprofit he founded and leads, RE-volv, helps nonprofits to go solar and make its adoption contagious. At <https://climatecourage.us/take-action/>, he lists ideas by walk of life. The book's foreword was written by atmospheric scientist Katherine Hayhoe, who says the most important thing you can do is to talk about the public's climate change consensus, connecting through common values and presenting climate as a human and humane issue. She has a 10-min. weekly podcast on NPR and a related youtube channel. The latest Fairfax County data from Yale (<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/>) shows that 78% of residents think global warming is happening vs. 72% nationally; only half recognize it will harm them personally.

## LWVFA MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Donna Blake, Membership Chair

As we approach the winter holidays and the end of the calendar year, take the time to check that your dues have been paid for the current LWV year, July 01, 2021 – June 30, 2022. The easiest way to pay your dues is by visiting <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/join> and filling out a membership form online or downloading it and sending hard copy to the League office in Annandale. Another option is to use PayPal which has the advantage of setting up an annual renewal. If you are unsure if you have renewed for this year, contact your Unit Chair or Membership Director ([membership@lwv-fairfax.org](mailto:membership@lwv-fairfax.org)). While you are checking for your annual dues, verify that your contact information is up to date so you can be contacted as necessary.

As of September 30, 2021, the LWVFA has 510 active members including 23 individuals who have joined or been reinstated since July 01, 2021. These 23 include 19 primary members, 1 student member, 2 reinstated members, and 1 household member. Please make them welcome and aware of the many exciting volunteer opportunities available so that they can become active in the League right away.

Stephanie Abbott (student)  
 Monica Ansel  
 Angel Brown  
 Ann Connell  
 Elizabeth Diliberti  
 Betty Gordon  
 Greg Harvey (household)  
 Shyamali Hauth (reinstated)  
 Renee Jaeger  
 Angela Lewis  
 Kim Lewis  
 Jacqueline Nichol

Bonita Pennino  
 Alison Rivard  
 Elizabeth Sakati  
 Jackie Sasinowski  
 Jo Ann Schubert  
 Nancy Sheerin  
 Dana Stewart  
 Alisha Temples  
 Sarah White  
 Estella Worley (reinstated)  
 Hermine Zossougbo

*Welcome!!*

## *In Memorium*

By Lisa Colvard

**Bernice Steinke Colvard**, 87, longtime historian for the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, died October 5, 2021, at Fairfax Hospital. Bernice was born in Wisconsin in 1933 and moved as a child to the Richmond area. She graduated from what is now Virginia Commonwealth University and later received a master's degree in counseling at American University. She married Patrick Colvard in 1956, and they lived in Germany before settling in Northern Virginia. She was business manager for her husband's dental practice for 40 years before retiring in 1998.

In 1972, Bernice joined the Fairfax League of Women Voters and served on their board of directors in various capacities for many years, as Bulletin Editor, Unit Coordinator, Treasurer, Finance Director and PR Director. She particularly enjoyed the position of League's historian. Her publications included *Tracing Our Roots: From Seneca Falls, New York, to Fairfax, Virginia*, published in 1997 to commemorate the Fairfax League's 50th anniversary, and *Virginia Women & the Vote, 1909-2009: the Equal Suffrage League & the League of Women Voters in Virginia*. Bernice also served as a Girl Scout troop leader, assisted the Wakefield Forest PTA Players and the Annandale-Springfield Girls Softball League, and served as VP on the board of the Northern Virginia Dental Society Auxiliary. She enjoyed traveling, gardening, and lunches with her many friends, as well as reading, research, and writing.

She was predeceased by her husband in 2014 and her sister in 2019. Survivors include her two daughters, Anita Colvard and Lisa Colvard.

A private memorial will be held. For those wishing to do so, memorial contributions may be made to the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (<https://www.lwv-fairfax.org>).

Bernice, you are in our hearts!



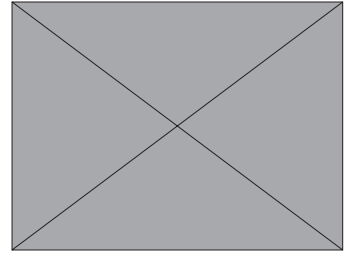
Photo courtesy of Lisa Colvard



Photo by Cindy Kwalkarf



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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®  
 November, 2021**

Anu Sahai, Co-President  
 Pat Fege, Co-President  
 Katherine Ingmanson, Editor

The League of Women Voters® is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person at least 16 years old, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters® never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters® name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Please Support Our Work! The LWVFA Education Fund is supported by donations from our members and the public.  
<https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/donate>



**LWVFA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM**

Dues year is July 1 – June 30

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit (if renewing): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Second Household Member (if one): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Condo/Apt No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code +4: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Status:** \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

**Membership Level (please check one):**

*Basic Membership:*

Individual (\$75);  Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$100);  
 Limited Income (suggested donation: \$10);  Student (Free!)

*Membership Plus:*

Suffragist (\$100);  Advocate Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$150);  
 Champion (\$300);  Founders' Circle (\$500)

*Membership Plus levels include basic membership PLUS a donation to the LWVFA General Fund. This money will support members of limited income, help invest in LWVFA web site technology, and support other priority projects. General Fund donations are not tax deductible.*

**Volunteer Interests:**

Please visit [surveymonky.com/r/LWVFAFairfaxVols](https://surveymonky.com/r/LWVFAFairfaxVols) to let us know your interests.

Please mail this completed form along with payment to:  
 LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403