



121 Cathedral Street, Suite 2B, Annapolis MD 21401 Tel. 410-269-0232 ~ lwvmd.org ~
info@lwvmd.org Follow us @LWVMD on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

Editor: Linda Rittelmann

Co-Presidents: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson

STATE BOARD LETTER

October - November 2020

LWVMD Calendar

October

10/26 Early Voting Starts (Same Day, In-person Voter Registration Available)
7:00 AM – 8:00 PM

November

11/2 *Last day of Early Voting - 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM - [Election Hero Day!](#)*
11/3 *General Election Day - 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM – (Same Day, In-person Voter Registration Available)*
11/11 *Veteran's Day - LWVMD Office is Open for the Holiday*
11/18 *LWVMD Membership Workshop - email nchambers@lwvmd.org for info*
11/21 **LWVMD Board Meeting - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**
11/26 *Thanksgiving Day - LWVMD Office Closed for the Holiday*
11/27 *Native American Heritage Day - LWVMD Office Closed*

Planning your local league calendar? Click [here](#) to see the whole calendar.

Presidents' Message

As Election Day draws near, my overpowering feeling is gratitude to members and staff at all levels of the League in spite of Covid-19.

Although the office has been closed and she had to go to Wisconsin because of a death in her family, our State Director, **Ashley Oleson**, has managed:

- to hire two part-time staff;
- engage LWV volunteers to answer concerned voters' calls about the election;
- participate in the Election Protection Command Center, 866-OUR-Vote to recruit (over 100!) poll monitors and answer questions from voters;
- serve on a work group coordinating with the State Board of Elections alongside our newest elections expert, **Janet Millenson**;

- work with the **Everyone Votes Coalition** on messaging and support services for voters as processes changed;
- update our website with the correct election information.
- AND, expand the reach of our election information and Voters' Guides by managing and creating advertising campaigns for Facebook, digital and print campaigns in coordination with the Baltimore Sun Media team, and via various organizational partnerships, including the Baltimore Ravens and Common Cause Maryland.

Have you noticed the link on the League's Voter Services page for ["Screen Reader Accessible Voters Guides"](#)? We've wanted to make our Voters' Guides accessible to the blind for some time. Thanks to a very generous donor, in coordination with **Barbara Crain** and **Ralph Watkins**, Ashley was able to recruit and hire an accessibility expert to put our guides in a usable format. It was a much more complicated and time-consuming job than we anticipated, but it has been very rewarding, and we look forward to learning more about how to make our website and other materials more accessible.

As usual, our [2020 General Election Voters' Guide](#) page has links to PDFs of all the county guides. We thank all the local volunteers who worked on [Vote411](#) and produced their county guides, as well as the state volunteers who assisted with guides for counties without Local Leagues. Led by **Barbara Crain**, these volunteers also made sure every county guide was transformed into a format easily adjusted for accessibility by our expert in remediation for screen readers.

Then there were numerous calls from reporters and citizens asking questions and opinions, or for someone to participate in virtual programs. Often, we depended on our experts, **Ralph Watkins**, **Ashley** or **Janet Millenson** to respond. On local issues, our local League leaders were sought out for the best guidance.



Kudos to local Leaders for all the virtual forums they organized. **Richard Willson** and the Online Services Committee were instrumental in facilitating these online meetings.

Soon we'll be shifting to encouraging patience until votes are finalized. And then it is on to advocating for civility and our legislative priorities. Our democracy is worth waiting and fighting for, and so we shall.

Respectfully submitted, Lois Hybl, Co-President

October State Board Meeting Highlights

Elsewhere in this issue of the SBL you'll get to meet **Carolyn Wetzel** and **Willow Goode**, our two new staff members. New staff are allowing our State Director to focus on our election education work and strategic planning. Hiring staff from limited time part-time to year-round part-time to expand our capacity is just part of the "investing to work smart" approach that has seen

us trying new approaches like increasing Zoom meeting capacity and sending direct mail appeals to outside vendors.

Later this fall, your board will engage in a virtual phone-a-thon seeking financial support from League partners and supporters throughout the community. We will be virtually in one call center so we can celebrate our successes and tabulate our running pledge totals but working our personal phones from an easy chair or home office. The Phone-a-Thon is part of an overall shift in strategy to expand and grow the revenue needed for Making Democracy Work™.

Legislative priorities for the upcoming 2021 session of the General Assembly.

The Board approved as the two Primary Priorities: 1) Redistricting Reform, and 2) Vote by Mail (which is currently under active Study for specific recommendations). Secondary Priorities – meaning secondary in terms of LWVMD time and energy, and not importance – ranging from Government Transparency, to Police Accountability Reform and Clean Energy.

A brochure detailing all our Legislative Priorities will be forthcoming.

The Board also approved joining the [Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability](#). We know that work in the coalition is the best way to support work where we cannot be the lead organization, while at the same time allowing LWVMD to influence the tone and content of advocacy on key issues. **Nancy Soreng** has graciously agreed to be our representative to this important effort.

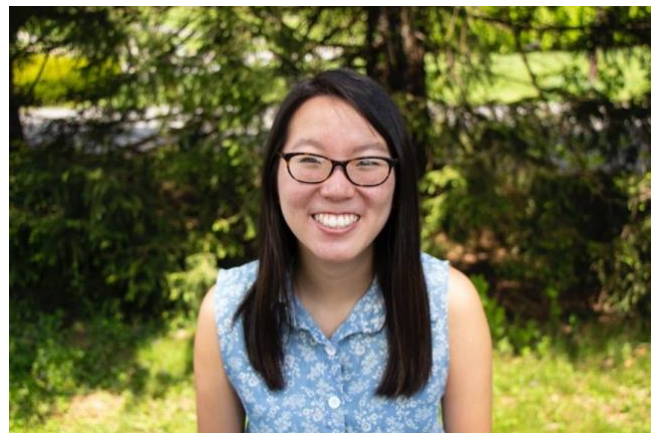


Finally, do save the date for our **Winter Workshop - Saturday, January 30, 2021 from 9-noon** in a virtual format. There will be a briefing on the Initiative Study that local Leagues will be doing this coming Spring, a panel discussion on policing reforms and issues, a keynote address and possibly an opportunity to win a \$50 GrubHub gift card to make up for the fact that we cannot do a luncheon to go with our speaker!

Richard Wilson with Roy Appletree

Meet Our New Staff Members!

Willow Goode, Administrative Coordinator - I am a recent graduate of The University of Baltimore where I earned a degree in government and public policy. While in college I was an Andrew Goodman Foundation Fellow working on campus as a Vote Everywhere Ambassador. I was instrumental in encouraging and registering students to vote. I moderated discussions about voting and hosted election day festivities. Through this experience I learned the importance of making sure that students have access to credible nonpartisan resources to best inform their decisions. One of the resources I used was the LWVMD Voters' Guide. LWVMD's commitment to empowering voters and its dedication to protecting democracy is



what attracted me to be part of its work. I am committed to continuing to work to provide voters with trustworthy information so that all are prepared to participate in the democratic process.



Carolyn Wetzel, Communications Assistant - While I recently moved to Baltimore, I hail from Lafayette, Indiana, originally. I recently graduated from Hope College in Michigan where I earned my degree in Peace and Conflict Studies with a minor in Spanish. My academic interests include human rights advocacy, global activist movements, and foreign policy. These academic interests have overlapped with my personal interest in travel; I have had the opportunity to travel to and study in Mexico, Chile, Nepal, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine. I am so excited to have the opportunity to work with the League and promote political participation in Maryland.

Working with the LWVMD not only provides an opportunity to invest in my new community, but it also allows me to play a more active role in the democratic process. The tireless advocacy of the League to make sure that all citizens have the information and access they need is something I experienced myself when local League members visited my high school government class and taught us about voter registration. Ultimately, my personal experience with the educational efforts of the League as well as a desire to help others become more politically active is what motivated me to work with the LWVMD, and I am grateful for everything I have learned so far.

**OUR DEMOCRACY IS WORTH
WAITING FOR.**

Post-Election Messaging Advice from LWVUS

Election messaging doesn't end on Election Day! It's good to plan a public message to send out on social media, to the press, via email to your supporters, or on your website for the day (or days) after Election Day. **Use these prompts** to help formulate your post-election message that will keep your supporters engaged.

We are determined to do all we can to make sure every vote is counted and that will require patience on everyone's part. Please continue to share the message that **Democracy is Worth Waiting For** to set the expectation that election results will come later than usual this year.

LWVMD Embarks on Ambitious Fund-Raising Campaign

In order to maintain and enhance LWVMD's ability to fulfil our mission to empower voters and defend democracy, we have developed a plan to ensure an increased and reliable funding stream for LWVMD for the near and long term.

LWVMD is uniquely positioned to take on many of the challenges that face our country today: concern about fair elections, lack of trust in government and our political system, unequal economic opportunity and institutional discrimination based on race, gender and sexual identification. Indeed, many legislators and other organizations have looked to LWVMD to be leaders in these areas. While LWVMD has relied primarily on volunteers, the reality is that this model is not sustainable for the level of engagement necessary to make an impact. An organization that is equipped to meet the challenges of the future needs to have a diverse workforce that can bring a variety of skills and perspectives to the League table.

The LWVMD Board appointed a Fundraising Committee whose members are: Richard Willson, Lois Hybl, Joyce Duckett, Carolyn Hetterick, Beth Hufnagel, Amber Treat, Ashley Oleson and Nancy Soreng, Chair. We are planning a variety of initiatives that will be rolled out over the coming work year and beyond.

The first of those is a LWVMD Board led Phone-a-Thon. Through this activity we will broaden the reach of our fundraising beyond our members and expand the visibility of LWVMD to a larger community. During a 3-hour time frame in early December, the Board will meet via Zoom and secure gifts to sustain the ongoing work of the League.

Future State Board letters will highlight other fundraising actions.

Nancy Soreng

A Tribute to Former LWVMD President, Gloria Cole

Gloria Cole passed away on September 17th at age 96. She was President of LWV Montgomery County from 1966 to 1969 and of LWVMD from 1969 to 1973. In 1984, she returned to the State Board as Debate Chair, and served again on the State Board in the 1990s. In an interview by Marlene Cohn for the LWVMD Golden Gala in 2009, Gloria said she remembered the long and arduous commute to Annapolis before there was a beltway or a Route 50. In 1969, the League was very active in the explanation and support of the new State Constitution proposed by the Constitutional Convention. Although the new Constitution never passed, many of the Convention's recommendations were passed as amendments, including the establishment of a unified, uniform District Court.

In that same interview, Gloria remembered the senatorial debate of 1985 between Barbara Mikulski and Linda Chavez. She said she would never forget her surprise when a man on an elephant showed up at the Loyola debate site to support the Republican candidate.

As for why she has remained a member for so long, Gloria credits three things: the good friends that she made, the issues that are never fully resolved, and the confidence that, even with limited experience, a Leaguer can do anything if she tries. The LWVMD office in Annapolis has a plaque that says, "This desk was donated by Gloria Cole". While we couldn't move that desk to the new office, we will always keep that plaque as a reminder of a great Leaguer.

Nancy Soreng

