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Co-Presidents: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson

STATE BOARD LETTER

June-July 2020

LWVMD Calendar

July

7/15 - 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Membership Portfolio Training Session – Register [here](#)

August

8/01 – 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM State Board Retreat

See [page 6](#) for Program Planning dates later in the year.

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

LWVMD Operations & Continuity of Service

Reminder: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis, LWVMD's office in Annapolis is closed to the public. Our State Director, Ashley Oleson, is working remotely and will still be available to answer emails and conduct League business. You can also reach her by phone at our office number 410-269-0232 with any questions during this time.

Presidents' Message

Thanks to League leaders and staff at all levels for continuing our work through the Covid-19 pandemic just as our foremothers fought through the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. We have shifted from in-person events to online meetings, communications, forums, and presentations.

For our LWVMD Council, we especially thank our Zoom hosts and co-hosts Richard Willson, Ashley Oleson, Linda Rittelmann and Elaine Apter who handled credentials. Elaine also competently handled credentials for the LWVUS Convention.

At Council, we adopted a budget that builds on our organizational capacity for action, passed an emergency program item for a state study of vote-by-mail so that we can adopt an official

position before the next General Assembly session, and affirmed support for the plan to legally switch the names of our 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 and adopt changes to the bylaws for a LWVMD Advocacy Fund at our 2021 convention.

Directions to the board were to (1) lobby for full funding of the United States Postal Service as critical to democratic elections; (2) take a more active state role in coordinating and publicizing all voting options for the General Election; (3) use the SQUINT application to combat misinformation about the election and urge the State Board of Elections to use it also; (4) extend the free student membership option; (5) actively pursue all kinds of diversity including age and economic status partly by taking care in the choice of images we use to represent our work together; (6) launch a LWVMD YouTube channel to promote our work; and (7) continue online access to statewide meetings even when in-person meetings resume.

Our keynote speaker, [Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins](#), the first and only person of color to be president of the LWVUS, at least until the election at the LWVUS Convention last week of Dr. Deborah Turner, challenged us to finish the fight to make America and the League as good as its promise. We can celebrate our history and amplify the good while at the same time acknowledging our inexcusable mistakes in the way we have treated women of color. We are validating the contributions of these women and need to do more research in our local and state records for such history. She challenged us to look at our procedures and publicity to make our activities more accessible and inviting to all demographics.

Our workshops provided information on tools we can use to get out the vote and combat misinformation. [Maggie Bush](#), Programs and Outreach Director for LWVUS, presented research showing that door knocking, live phone calls, and direct mailing were the most effective in getting out the vote. She recommended doing outreach just prior to deadlines for voter registration or for voting so that voters are receptive. The discussion brought out some local efforts such as mailing Voters' Guides, providing virtual lesson plans for high school seniors about registration and voting, registering voters at protest marches, and putting voter information in food distribution boxes. Local Leagues would like financial assistance for printing and mailing Voters' Guides.

[Brett Schaffer](#), Digital Disinformation Fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy, explained the kinds of disinformation that are used and how to recognize them. He recommended that Leagues have good website security, train our members and friends on how to recognize misinformation, but especially concentrate on "pre-bunking" by flooding social media with factual information regarding elections. He agreed that using an app like SQUINT to send suspected misinformation to a central location for analysis would be an effective project.

Those of us who virtually attended the [LWVUS convention](#) can also be proud of how national officers and staff handled the business and caucuses for 2,500 delegates and observers with very few glitches. LWVUS is focused on Making Democracy Work issues, but also is trying not to neglect other priority issues.

We passed an ambitious budget but kept PMP at \$32 per member. Among bylaw amendments, the zero PMP for students was made permanent. (But this has generated discussion about whether free membership should be granted to other young people, etc.)

The following program items and resolutions passed:

- The abolition of the electoral college by Constitutional amendment as an action focus;

- The concurrence with LWV New Mexico on the Transfer of Federal Public Land;
- The Voter Representation/Electoral Systems Concurrence as presented in the Workbook to support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters. (Some of the wording was controversial with Maryland Leaguers, but the idea of having a nation position that state and local Leagues could act on won out.);
- Retaining all current LWVUS positions in the areas of representative government, international relations, natural resources and social policy;
- The proposed LWVUS program for 2020-2022 Campaign for Making Democracy Work®: ensuring a free, fair and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Rights, Improving Elections and advocacy for the National Popular Vote Compact, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics and Redistricting and to continue to work on urgent issues: Climate Change, the Equal Rights Amendment, Health Care, Gun Safety, and Immigration;
- Reaffirming our commitment to Immigration reform, for efficient, expeditious immigrant entry into the United States. The League stands in solidarity with immigrants and our immigrant rights community partners. Congress must take immediate action to pass common sense, fair immigration policies that end the crisis at our borders, end the separation of families, ensure their health and safety, and provide a clear path to citizenship, including DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) young people;
- We Resolve First, That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes;
- We Resolve Second, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC) deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done, so that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," and finally;
- The LWVUS calls for an immediate, wide-scale, mobilization by the United States, to restore, protect and fund an ecologically sustainable environment and climate, based on an interrelated approach that is environmentally sound, science based, just and equitable, dedicated to adequately addressing the scale and speed of the global climate change emergency.

During the three days preceding the plenary sessions, there were many excellent caucuses on issues ranging from Getting Out the Vote to Climate Change to Encouraging Diversity, Health Care, etc. Click [here](#) for recordings from several of the caucuses.

The convention concluded with a [stirring speech](#) by our newly elected second Black president, **Dr. Deborah Turner**, and a very diverse board. As a Midwesterner, she implored us to look beyond what is portrayed in the media about different parts of the country. This is the time to fly or fall as we leverage our name and numbers to eliminate voter suppression and reinvigorate

the electorate. [Vote411](#) should be a household word. We can't separate democracy and social and racial justice and must come together across generations and learn from each other. Echoing Iowa's theme for our 100th anniversary --"Hard won, not done!" -- she said, "We, as an organization, acknowledge our own difficult history with racism while we embrace our future, where DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) will become part of our DNA."

And as [CEO Virginia Kase said](#) to delegates, "You are the heart and soul of this organization." I say go for it!

Virtually yours, *Lois Hybl*, Co-President

June State Board Meeting Highlights

Financially we are sound. The ruling that PMP's will be waived for students has been extended for the coming year. This is a time to get younger members involved in our great organization especially in an election year. It is also a great way to increase your membership.

We listened to what you had to say at the State Council meeting and are acting. We are investigating SQUINT and Club Express, all things that will make our organization run more smoothly. We are also working on improving our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) methods.

Several of your State Board Members attended the LWVUS Convention and came away with a wealth of knowledge. Richard Willson is holding monthly ZOOM meetings with all Local League Presidents. This is our way to improve communication and hopefully aid our Local Leagues.

The Board would like to thank those Local Leagues that invited us to their Annual Meetings. They proved to be informative and enjoyable.

Theresa Freligh, Secretary

The November 2020 General Election to be Conducted with Enhanced Voting Options

The format of Maryland's November election has been uncertain for several months. The State Board of Elections was unable to come to an agreement on the subject, and the Board's report to Governor Hogan on June 2 ultimately outlined two potential scenarios. The governor's response was eagerly anticipated and was finally issued on July 8, when he announced that Maryland's Presidential General Election will be held with enhanced voting options. As detailed in his press release, the governor has instructed the State Board of Elections to send absentee ballot applications to all eligible voters as soon as possible. There is to be early voting, and all polling places are to be open on Election Day. The plan is to promote early voting, absentee voting by mail, and voting at off-peak times as safe and efficient options.

Governor Hogan indicated that state employees will be encouraged to assist with election staffing needs. Polling places and voting centers will follow CDC guidelines emphasizing the importance of sanitation, social distancing, and face coverings.

Barbara Crain, VP Voter Service

Thank You, Nancy Soreng

This year as we celebrate the fortitude and enduring commitment of the suffragists who went on to create the League of Women Voters, there is perhaps no one who embodies the spirit of these formidable women more than Nancy Soreng. Nancy has been a relentless advocate for all types of causes that will make our state stronger and more equitable. She has led the charge with LWVMD on voting rights and campaign finance advocacy, while still finding time to work with coalitions to champion environmental and transit concerns in the state. Beyond LWVMD, she sits currently on the LWNCA board as Secretary, and somehow also finds time to support her local LWV in Montgomery County.



While perhaps best known for her advocacy efforts, Nancy is also committed to actively engaging new members and volunteers in League work as a part of our efforts to empower and educate citizens. She is a patient and incredibly wise mentor, always willing to take time to lend an ear and answer questions to anyone seeking her counsel. We owe a great debt of thanks to her for the support she's provided which enabled LWVMD to engage more students and young professionals in the League through her eponymous [Young Professional Advancement Fund](#).

Since its establishment in 2018, this fund has helped LWVMD engage five young women as interns to support our work of defending democracy and empowering voters. These paid internships provided these women with experience to help propel their professional and academic careers forward, and that has built lasting relationships with the League.

We wished to acknowledge just a few of these shining attributes and contributions to the League, as June marked the end of Nancy's tenure on the LWVMD Board. We are incredibly grateful for the time she has committed to helping us work to achieve our mission at this pivotal time in history. Nancy is an unstoppable force and an eternal optimist and her voice will be missed on the LWVMD board, but we know that she will not be far away so long as there is still much to be done to Make Our Democracy Work. Thank you for your service, Nancy. We are a better organization for your leadership.

LWVMD Board & State Director

[Click here if you would like to make a contribution to the Nancy Soreng Young Professional Advancement Fund today in her honor.](#)

Thanks Also to the Voter Service Team

As we reflect on the primary election season, we would be remiss not to recognize the leadership of Barbara Crain, our Voter Service Chair, and Ashley Oleson, our State Director. Barbara oversaw all the details of importing accurate information into Vote411 and worked days on end answering all our questions. And here we need to recognize Ralph Watkins for the in-person training sessions and additional voter service support. With all of the changes to the

elections, Barbara had to continually track and revise deadlines and voting information for the Guides as changes were made because of Covid-19.

Ashley kept us in touch with our [Everyone Votes Maryland](#) Coalition members to pressure the Governor and Board of Elections to launch a mostly vote-by mail primary with some in-person polling locations. Ashley's excellent communication skills paid off as she helped communicate election information to members and the general public through action alerts and social media—and just answering the phone in the office. We also can't forget the Zoom Town Hall which Ashley conducted in collaboration with our partners, which provided a platform for voters to share their election experiences. We also know that Ralph Watkins and Nancy Soreng worked behind the scenes to keep up with Board of Elections meetings and just general advice on how to proceed.

Program Report

I know everyone is busy with the upcoming election and census work, however we have some important consensus studies coming up that we need you to schedule into your calendars. The following are the three main program events that need to be inserted into your local League calendars.

- The first one is the **Vote By Mail Study**. Since we would like to see if we have consensus on this topic by the start of the 2021 state legislative session, we are asking local Leagues to schedule consensus meetings between October – December. The briefing will be at the Fall workshop on September 26. **Consensus reports from local Leagues will be due to the State by December 14, 2020.** Just a reminder, this was made a state study and so we are looking for members from local Leagues around the state to join us. Most of the work is done and meetings are virtual. If you are interested in joining the study please contact Linda Kohn, study chair lindakohn5@gmail.com.
- The second important deadline for local Leagues will be Program Planning reports. This year Program Planning will be for the state level. **Program Planning reports will be due to State by Feb. 26, 2021.** This will give us a chance to review the initial reports and get back to local Leagues about priorities. It is not too late to be thinking about possible state studies your members might be interested in.
- The third deadline is for the Initiative Study consensus meetings. The briefing for this study will be at the Winter Workshop. **The reports from local Leagues for this study will be due on April 16, 2021.** This will give us time to present a consensus report at the State Convention 2021.

Here's to a great year.

Elaine Apter, Program Chair

Virtual Workshops

This year, LWVMD plans to offer a series of online sessions to share information about different board portfolios and functions:

- **Wednesday, July 15, at 5:00 p.m.** - We'll start talking about the Membership portfolio. Membership has almost as many meanings within the League as Program and can seem equally confusing. Our first session will define basic terms and give an overview of the relationship between the local League membership chair, roster manager, treasurer and president.

Please use the following [link](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pd-ivpj4jH9Tc4Z7fZ6ryzL81RkwptgNa) to register for the July 15 Membership session: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pd-ivpj4jH9Tc4Z7fZ6ryzL81RkwptgNa>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

- To keep the dialogue going, these **Membership sessions will be held every other month on the 3rd Wednesday from 5:00-6:30 p.m.** In between the bi-monthly meetings, there'll be the opportunity to schedule individual or small group training on database issues, e.g. how to update renewal dates, or other topics as requested.

Email online@lwvmd.org to suggest other workshop topics, ask questions or request assistance. Thank you!

Niecy Chambers, VP-Membership

Local League Happenings

Like all local Leagues, The Mid-Shore League of Women Voters (LWVMS) wanted to have a special event during 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth



Amendment and the establishment of the League of Women Voters. **The Sash Project** came about during a leadership team meeting in January when team members passed around a sash I had purchased online. Everyone liked it. Our co-convener, Glenna Heckathorn suggested that her friend and fellow Yogi, Anne McAnulty, might be willing to make some sashes for the LWVMS. Glenna had served on the Board of Coastal Hospice and knew that Anne's quilting group had donated several quilts to Coastal Hospice for Veterans on Veterans Day. Anne's reaction was immediate. She simply asked, "How many do you need?"

Over the winter months, Anne made 20 beautiful sashes, which were carefully lettered by my husband George with the help of our daughter, Juliana, and her 3D printer. Each sash shows the traditional colors of the (American) National Woman's Party: purple, white and gold. As stated by the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage: "Purple is the color of loyalty, constancy to purpose, unswerving steadfastness to a cause. White, the emblem of purity, symbolizes the quality of our purpose; and gold, the color of light and life, is as the torch that guides our purpose, pure and unswerving."

Finding a good use for the 20 sashes was a challenge. The corona virus changed everything. There wouldn't be any parades or large gatherings where we could proudly march with our sashes. Sunnyside, a popular woman's fair-trade shop, agreed to display sashes on their mannequins when it was allowed to reopen. It wasn't until late spring, however, when we could approach other shopkeepers in downtown Cambridge about displaying the sashes. Their

reaction to the vibrant colors and local craftsmanship was positive. Danielle Van Riel, owner of salon Mirror Mirror, was among the first. “You’ve made my day,” she said and went straight to the windows to place two sashes on her mannequins. In less than two weeks, more than 10 shops agreed to display the sashes with a short, framed explanation of the project. From the Dorchester Center for the Arts (DCA) on High Street, down Poplar and Race Streets, shoppers see the sashes in shop windows and are reminded of women’s struggle for the right to vote and the work of our local League. Even the Simmons Center Market’s mascot, a rabbit named Lilly, wears a suffrage sash in time for the Fourth of July and the “Women in the World” exhibit at the DCA which runs July 3-25 (dorchesterarts.org).



Many thanks to Anne McNulty and the hard-working shopkeepers in downtown Cambridge without whom the LWVMS could not have safely and publicly celebrated the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment and the establishment of the League of Women Voters.

Peg Anzalone

LWVUS Partnering with MITRE on SQUINT Election Integrity Project

LWVUS, local and state Leagues have been to participate in a project that helps volunteers report inaccurate or misleading information about elections. On Friday, July 10th, representatives from MITRE will be answering questions about the program at an LWV National Capital Area Zoom meeting. LWVMD will be working with local Leagues and members to figure out the best way to partner in this endeavor.

This is from a flyer prepared by the MITRE Corporation:

MITRE SQUINT provides a fast, reliable way for election officials to report, correct, and analyze distortion and misinformation that could keep people from exercising their right to vote.

Voters need facts: how to register; what is on the ballot; and when and where to vote. Social media has proven an unreliable source. Platforms circulate and amplify disinformation and distortion so quickly and effectively that fiction appears as fact.

But by calling it out and correcting it, we preserve the integrity of election infrastructure, operations, and processes. This happens most effectively at the local and state levels, where election officials work closer to the voting populations and the factors that influence them. CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

BEHIND THE VOTE

Preserving election integrity

MITRE's National Election Security Lab equips election officials and technology vendors with a way to sustain public trust and confidence in their election systems. We're committing our resources to help the election community, volunteering our technical assistance to state and local governments throughout the 2020 elections.



PEOPLE

Free and fair elections depend on a complex foundation of processes, people, information, and technology managed by state and local governments.

153,000,000 registered voters



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

116,900 polling places



917,694 poll workers



Source: U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Election systems have come under attack from adversaries who want to undercut our trust in the democratic process. MITRE supports election officials with expertise and objective advice needed to combat continuing threats to our election systems.

PROCESSES

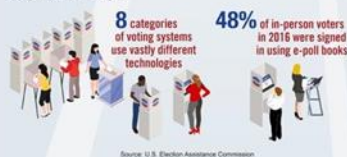
Voter registration is the foundation for voting. Securing voter registration databases must be a priority to preserve the integrity of our elections.



MITRE's free report *Recommended Security Controls for Voter Registration Systems* gives states actionable recommendations to lock down voter registration databases.

TECHNOLOGY

Each state operates its own elections—maintaining and authenticating voter rolls, voting technology, tabulation, and reporting. Election technology relies on a complex ecosystem of hardware, software, processes, and people that must work together. The overall system must be secure, not just each individual component. And that's a significant challenge.



Source: U.S. Election Assistance Commission

43 states use machines that are no longer manufactured

Source: Brennan Center for Justice

www.mitre.org/elections

MITRE SOLVING PROBLEMS FOR A SAFER WORLD

Using MITRE's SQUINT on a mobile device or desktop, users can report disinformation and misinformation quickly, easily, and comprehensively.

SQUINT equips officials with the data to coordinate takedowns with social media platforms, share reports across the election ecosystem, and take corrective action with voters. Behind the scenes, SQUINT analyzes and identifies patterns that are misleading voters, helping you understand, then defend against, misinformation trends.

To learn more, you can go to:

- [The Election Integrity Project](#)
- [MITRE: Election Integrity](#)
- [\(Video\)](#)

MITRE SQUINT (Social See Something, Say Something) provides a fast, reliable way for election officials to report, correct, and analyze distortion and misinformation that could keep people from exercising their right to vote.

Nancy Soreng