



Charlottesville Area
League of Women Voters
 Newsletter
 April 2015

Office Phone:
 (434) 970-1707
 E-mail: lww@lww.avenue.org Visit Our Website:
lww.avenue.org

LWV CVA April Community Dialogue

"Update: Access to Affordable Health Care in Virginia"

Guest Speaker: Jill Hanken, Esq.,
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Tuesday, April 21, 2015
 Meet and Greet: **11:45 am**

Program begins at 12:15 to 1:30 pm
Old County Office Bldg., Room 235
401 McIntire Rd. , Charlottesville

For Lunch Reservations at the meeting, box lunch \$8.
Contact the office, 970-1707, or email:
lww@lww.avenue.org by Monday, April 20



"The 2015 General Assembly Session has ended without closing the health care coverage gap in Virginia. While the adopted budget includes some good provisions for safety net providers and a limited group of low-income adults with serious mental health conditions, the failure to close the gap for up to 400,000 Virginians overshadows those measures." (Healthcare for All Virginians: <http://havcoalition.org/>)

Our guest speaker, Jill Hanken, is a staff member of the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VLPC), a non-profit organization that serves Virginia's legal aid system by providing advocacy, training, and litigation support on civil justice issues that affect low-income Virginians (<http://www.vplc.org/health-law/>).

Ms. Hanken will update us on:

- Open Enrollment #2 – number of Virginians who purchased health insurance on the federal marketplace; outreach, education and enrollment activities statewide;
- King v. Burwell case in Supreme Court – potential impact;
- Status of Medicaid Expansion in Virginia (and elsewhere); and
- Governor’s Health Access Plan – new coverage for people with serious mental illness, dental care for pregnant women, etc.

Following her presentation, Ms. Hanken will respond to questions from the audience. Join us on Tuesday, April 21, program at noon, to hear about this important issue that our League has a stake in.

This page is sponsored by Joan Jay of Loring Woodriff Real Estate Associates
Phone: 906-1806 or email: joanjayrealtor@gmail.com

2015 Finance Drive Update by Frances Schutz, LWV CVA Finance Director

After the initial flood of envelopes, the weather may have delayed your responses. Please don't forget to write your check[s] now, and put them in the mail! Special thanks to those who gave to the Operating Fund, which is not tax deductible. Several members also gave in memory of Jane Foster and of Jessie Hook. We appreciate deeply this way their friends have of remembering the activities of these women in the League. If you haven't already made your donation (and remember we send our request only once a year), please consider responding with a check made out to LWV CVA, indicating "Operating Fund" or "Education Fund," and slipping it into the handy envelope we sent out with our request. You know that we put every penny we receive to good use in fulfilling the mission of the League of Women Voters.

Mail your check to: League of Women Voters, 1932 Arlington Blvd. #111, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Totals As of March 16:

Operating Fund	\$2,483
Education Fund	<u>\$2,640</u>
Total Donations	\$5,123

Members we thank for Ed Fund donations:

Jean Hammond
Pat Hurst
Martha Levering
Lydia Peale
Susan Roberts
Rosalie Simari

Friends we thank for Ed Fund gifts:

Hon. Jay Swett
Grace Zisk

Members who donated to the Operating Fund:

Muriel Grimm
Sonia Haimés
Lois & Dudley Rochester
Frances Schutz
Sally Thomas
Kerin Yates

Friends who gave to the Operating Fund:

Iveagh Gott
Nancy Galloway

In Memoriam: Leah Gropen

Sadly, we note the peaceful passing of Lifetime League of Women Voters Member, Leah Gropen, age 90, in Charlottesville, where she had lived since 1988.

Leah was beloved for her numerous civic, conservation, and artistic efforts, and was an active member of our LWV CVA, where she will be remembered fondly. Gerry Yemen writes: "Leah had me to her home many times to talk about the LWV and the role of women in politics and business. She gave me several books on the women's movement that I have kept and cherish. Leah was a mighty woman."

And Frances Schutz says, "As Gerry noted, Leah had a generous heart. I have in my garden several plants that she gave me before she left her Hazel Street house. She was also eager to show me how she mulched and built up the soil around the edges of her yard with layers of wet newsprint--a technique I have used many times in my poor-soil yard. Many will remember her triptych that she created for the Synagogue, depicting I think, 2000 years of Jewish history. Whatever the number of years, it is an amazing work."

President's Message

Membership in the LWV often leads me in directions that I have never considered. I knew the LWV was in favor of transparency in government, but I never stopped to look how opaque our government actually is. If someone asked you if you could track the votes of your delegate or senator in their committees and subcommittees of the General Assembly, I bet would say "of course!" The fact of the matter is that you cannot. In the General Assembly that just closed, approximately 423 House bills were dispatched by unrecorded voice votes. Some of the bills killed by an unrecorded voice vote in subcommittee were:

1. To allow voters 65 and over to vote by absentee ballot;
2. Prohibit discrimination in public employment on the basis of sexual orientation;
3. Allow future governors to seek a second consecutive four-year term; and
4. Revise Redistricting .

I am not saying these bills were all good and I know the system has been in place no matter which party was in control. I just want our members to know that the yeas and nays on bills are not available. There is no obligation to record them.

Because of this opaqueness a new broad-based coalition of advocacy groups which includes the LWV has dedicated themselves to changing this. Members are checking dockets at midnight for last minute and early morning changes. Volunteers from the coalition are attending committee meetings (often at 7am) and are attempting to record the votes. The coalition realizes that time is short for our delegates and senators to handle all that they must in a session, but we must urge them by some means to keep their constituents informed. That is how we MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK.

More reading on this subject:

PilotOnline.com by Patrick Wilson The Virginian-Pilot
2/16/2015

Fredericksburg.com: Editorials 3/12/2015

Fredericksburg.com: Editorials 3/10/2015

Sincerely,

Kerin Yates

President LWV CVA

Restoration of Voting Rights -

Update: Edith Good a long time LWV member like many of our members has an area of emphasis to which she devotes a great deal of time. For Edith this is helping non-violent felons regain their voting rights. Restoration of voting rights has been an ongoing LWV cause. Because of Edith's dedicated work on this issue through *Virginia Organizing*, she was invited by Charlottesville Organizer Harold Foley to witness the restoration of Davon Miller's civil rights at a celebration in Richmond On December 18, 2014, attended by the Governor Terry McAuliffe, Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney, Mayor of Richmond Dwight C. Jones, and others. **Mr. Miller immediately registered to vote. Edith writes: To date, 5,113 people have had their rights restored. Of that number, 3,577 are registered to vote.** Virginia has the 4th highest rate of disfranchisement in the U.S. But Virginia has made progress. In 1985, it took a particular felon 21 years before his rights was restored. He tried three times to complete the voluminous restoration application before succeeding in 2006. **All drug-related sentences are now nonviolent and the time between release and application has been reduced from five years to three. The application has been reduced from 13 pages to one.**

Try accessing the video of Edith attending the restoration of Davon Miller's civil rights at:

<http://www.newsplex.com/home/headlines/VA-Making-It-Easier-for-Felons-to-Regain-Voting-Rights-286261271.html>

Looking at the 2015 State Legislature in Action

by Sue Lewis, LWV CVA Vice-President and First Vice-President LWV of Virginia

I've had the opportunity to be at the General Assembly and Capital several times during this year's short session of the Virginia legislature. I attended several meetings of the **Women's Legislative RoundTable** on Wednesday mornings, where several legislators dropped in and spoke about the legislation that they were working on.

Some of them we'd heard from in previous sessions, and others were new this year. But the most fun has been attending committee and sub-committee meetings, mostly the "Privileges and Elections" bodies in both houses. Since the LWV-VA has concentrated on laws affecting voters this session, our lobbyist, Carol Noggle, was a very visible presence at those meetings, and Leaguers who were there on the days that those committees met would join her in the audience. Based on my observations, generally of the Senate Privileges and Elections committee, most votes were on a strictly partisan basis, but the deliberations were always respectful, and transparent in how decisions were made. In the House of Delegates, the partisanship was more pronounced, and we observed several instances of legislation that we were interested in being left off of agendas, eliminating an opportunity to testify for it.

Looking forward to next year, I would recommend that Leaguers take the opportunity to attend sessions in 2016, particularly the committee meetings, where the action really is!

Welcome New Members!

Karen and Terry Ogden
250 Pantops Mtn. Rd., #7502
Charlottesville 22911
972-2852
Karen_ogden@umanitoba.ca

Adele Wood
448 Hidden Ridge Rd.
Charlottesville 22902
977-3616
Adelf108@mac.com

Sonia Haimes
3160 Waverly Dr.
Charlottesville 22901
977-3006

Karen Phelps
107 Linda Court
Charlottesville 22901
719-338-3977
dKarenPhelps@gmail.com

**Save the Date! Thursday, May 14,
LWV CVA Annual Meeting: The
Greencroft Club, at Noon. Reservation
information in the May newsletter.**

**Save the Dates! May 30 and May 31
The Annual LWV VA Convention will be held in
Charlottesville at the Holiday Inn on Emmett
Street. More information in the May newsletter.**

International Relations /Federal Government Committee News **by Gerry Kruger**

Molly O'Brien opened her beautiful home to us on February 26 with **Deborah Brooks** and **Becky Thomas** reporting on topics that are of grave concern to all of us. First, **Deborah gave an extensive and well-researched explanation of ISIS or the Islamic State and their connection to Islam and the Quran.** Her report was primarily based on an article in *The Atlantic* by Graeme Wood. The word "jihad" means a struggle. It can be interpreted as a militant struggle, but it can also be understood as a struggle within oneself. In the 1990's Jihadism first emerged. From 1998-2003 there was an inflow of Jihadists to the Islamic State, made up of Iraq, Syria and parts of Libya. Their religion is Sunni Islam. They are Salafis, who are Sunnis that belong to a very strict orthodox form of Islam. They are also Wahhabis, The Wahhabi sect was established in the 18th century and is the dominant sect in Saudi Arabia. They are ultra conservative and have spent millions of dollars to expand all over the world.

ISIS wants to establish a new Caliphate with ideology and laws that date back to the 6th century and emulate the life of Mohammed who died in 632 AD. Slavery is considered acceptable because Mohammed had slaves. They believe killing non-believers is necessary in order to purify the Muslim faith. Deborah brought a copy of the Quran which Muslims believe was verbally revealed by God to Muhammad. There are several passages which direct Muslims to kill those who are unbelievers. It also mentions making some exceptions for Christians and Jews.

The threat of ISIS to the United States is smaller but still cause for concern. Some who want to enter the Islamic State to become terrorists are encouraged to stay at home and commit terrorist acts. Al Qaeda and ISIS are terrorist organizations that use different approaches. Al Qaeda stays underground and has satellite groups; ISIS takes over territory and expands. They hope to stretch across all of North Africa.

*(At our **March 11 meeting:** Deborah updated us on the situation since the burning of the Jordanian pilot by ISIS. King Abdullah of Jordan, who is at the height of his power, has begun bombing ISIS as well as bringing together Saudi Arabia and other forces in the area to participate. He says the Islamic State practices a perverted form of Islam. He wants Muslims to destroy it by themselves rather than involve the US and Western Europe.)*

Becky Thomas presented the Israeli-Palestinian situation from three different articles that espoused three different points of view. The first was by neo-realist political scientist Michael Roskin. He insists that the two-state solution, once thought to be a compromise that would resolve the conflict between Arabs and Jews, is dead for three reasons: (1) the return of the Palestinian diaspora, estimated at between five and nine million people since the two-state solution was approved by the UN in 1948; (2) the settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and (3) Palestinian insistence on at least part of Jerusalem as their capital. Roskin concludes that the U.S. should pull back and "leave the antagonists to their eternal warfare that destroys both sides, physically and morally. Eventually, gazing into the abyss may scare them into a settlement."

Continued on next page

The second article by David Remnick of the *New Yorker* presents Reuven Rivlin, the president of Israel. Like Netanyahu he is a member of Likud, which favors one state.

Rivlin is “the highest-ranking advocate among Jewish Israelis for the civil rights of the Palestinians in both Israel and the occupied territories.” For this he is vilified by members of his own party. Remnick writes, “to most Israelis and many Palestinians, a one-state solution is no solution at all...but a blue print for sectarian strife...”. The 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza are not included in the one-state solution.

The third article by Roger Cohen of *the New York Times* states, “The two-state idea...can be resurrected ...because there is no plausible alternative..., for no democracy can indefinitely control the lives of millions of disenfranchised people.” With no other solutions in sight, the Labor and Hatnuah Parties formed an alliance that became the Zionist Union Party, headed respectively by Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni. If these two liberals should win the election on March 17, Herzog would be prime minister for the first two years; Livni would hold the post for the second two. The election is thought to be the key to the Israel’s future. Cohen writes, “A battle has been engaged for Israel’s soul.”

March 11 offered perfect weather to stroll down **Jean Minehart’s** wooded path to hear **Marge Cox’s report on an article about Muslims’ assimilation into American society**. Marge reminded us of many groups who have overcome obstacles to be accepted as Americans and some who never have or wanted to. For example, Hasidic Jews have their own schools, their own courts and believe speaking English is undesirable. The Amish is another example of people whose beliefs and culture is very different from the mainstream and have no desire to change. Evangelical Christians often homeschool their children to keep them from the influences that they believe will compromise their values.

Muslims in America appear to assimilate more easily into American culture than those in Europe. There are several reasons for this. One is because Muslims in America must be able to afford to get here. They can walk into European countries, but not the United States. Many come here to attend college and are better educated than those who immigrate to Europe.

Then there are other variables that make it easier for Muslims to assimilate here. For example, nationality tends to have more influence on assimilation than religion. If two people immigrate from the same country, they will have much more in common than if they are both Muslims. Occupations also bring people of different religions together. Smaller numbers of Muslims that enter America make it harder for them to live apart from the mainstream. Finally, surveys show that Muslims generally feel better about living in America than they do in Europe.

The International/Federal Government Committee, as always, welcomes new members interested in learning more about governmental and global issues. See the back of this newsletter for meeting dates and places. **Note:** The attendees on March 11 made the decision to have only one meeting a month in June, July, and August. The meetings will take place on the 4th Wednesday of each month.



League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area
 1932 Arlington Blvd. #111
 Charlottesville, VA 22903-1560

LWV CVA
President
 Kerin Yates

Newsletter Editor
 Michele Kellermann

**Meetings and Events for March/April 2015:
 Mark Your Calendars Now!**

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Wed., Mar. 25, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Rosalie Simari, 107 Rowledge Place, 295-7325	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067
Wed., April 8, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Dena Imlay, 2014 Meadowbrook Rd., 296-6651	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067
Tues., April 14, 4 to 6 pm	LWV CVA Board Meeting	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (Boar's Head Inn Complex)	For further information, contact Kerin Yates, 964-1840
Tues., April 21 - 12:15	LWV CVA Community Dialogue: "Update: Access to Affordable Health Care in Virginia"	Old County Office Bldg., McIntire Rd. and Preston Av., Room 235	For further information, contact Kerin Yates, 964-1840
Wed., April 22, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Deborah Brooks, 3080 Branham Pl., 295-7696	For further information, contact Natalie Testa, 589-4067