



## Join the LWVFA “Book Club” in January!

“*A Nation of Nations*” by Tom Gjelten

We are talking about a very timely and important issue—immigration. The book, *A NATION OF NATIONS, A Great American Immigration Story* by Tom Gjelten, is about the effects of immigration at home—in Fairfax County, VA! In his book, published in 2015, Gjelten explores how the community has responded to the tremendous influx of diverse people since 1965 when U.S. immigration laws were changed. Find a group discussion (unit meeting) to attend—a lively conversation is assured. Meeting times and places are listed inside the back cover of this VOTER.

### Calendar

#### January 2018

#### Happy 70<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary, LWVFA!!!

- 1 New Year’s Day
- 1 *Fairfax VOTER* deadline
- 5 LWNCA Board meeting
- 6 Briefing and At-Large meeting**
- 6 League presents testimony to the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly
- 7 LWV Day in Richmond
- 8-11 LWVFA unit meetings**
- 10 General Assembly convenes
- 17 LWVFA Board meeting**
- 17 LWV-VA Women’s Legislative Roundtable, Richmond
- 24 LWV-VA Women’s Legislative Roundtable, Richmond
- 31 LWV-VA Women’s Legislative Roundtable, Richmond

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## Presidents' Message



Happy New Year!

We concluded 2017 with excellent unit discussions of our local and national positions on where we stand...and where we want to go. The bedrock of League positions is "making democracy work." It is our tag line, and it grounds everything that we do at all levels of League.

Central to this mission is our advocacy around elections and voter service. The League believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote and that no person or group should suffer from discrimination. For years, LWVFA has been working with LWVUS and LWV-VA to promote the following three proposals for reform:

### 1. Fair Redistricting in Virginia

One of our highest priorities is to stop gerrymandering. In Virginia, the state legislature redraws the district lines for the U.S. Congress, our state House of Delegates, and the Virginia Senate after each 10-year census. Elected officials—from both parties—draw the district lines to serve their own interests. As a result, legislative and congressional districts often look like puzzle pieces. The LWVFA supports the state League position to have lines drawn by an independent, non-legislative redistricting commission. For more information go to <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/redistricting-forum/>

To further our work in this area, please mark your calendars:

Redistricting Workshop with OneVirginia 2021

Sunday, February 25, from 1 to 5 p.m.

Sherwood Community Center

3740 Old Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22030

To sign up for the Redistricting Forum go to <https://redistrictingvaforum.eventbrite.com> More information to follow.

### 2. No-Excuse Absentee and Early Voting in Virginia

Virginia does not allow for no-excuse absentee voting or early voting. In fact, there are 20 valid reasons for

a voter to vote absentee if he or she cannot make it to the polls on Election Day. Many of us are very familiar with this policy given that we are election officers. Unlike Virginia, 34 states plus D.C. allow for no-excuse early voting. We are working to change our outdated system to make it easier for voters to vote and make their voices heard.

### 3. Guaranteed Right to Vote for Everyone

We are working hard to fight voter suppression. The League is greatly concerned about the Pence-Kobach "Election Integrity" Commission. LWVUS President, Chris Carson, released a strong statement that the Commission is undermining the public's confidence in our elections and has issued Action Alerts about it. At the same time, we are trying to empower our most vulnerable populations through our voter registration tables and Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts in Fairfax and in the state. Unfortunately, our work is cut out for us. According to the ACLU, for example, Virginia is the 5<sup>th</sup> worst state in the nation for felony disenfranchisement, despite recent gains made in that area.

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

### LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2017 - 2018

This newsletter, partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area Education Fund, is published 10 times each year—from September to June by:

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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.

Our LWVFA volunteers are engaged in advocacy, action, and voter service activities to ensure that citizens are able to exercise their right to vote. We want to acknowledge some of our volunteers who make this possible but whom you might not realize because their work is often quiet and in the background: treasurer Ronna Pazdral; Board secretary Betty Ellerbee; membership director Carol Bursik; program director Sherry Zachry; public relations director Adarsh Trehan; and unit coordinator Charleen Deasy, just to name a few.

We do have some open positions on the board, and we encourage you to seek nomination by contact Nominating Committee Chair, Rona Ackerman, at [ackermanrona2@gmail.com](mailto:ackermanrona2@gmail.com). Please get involved!

We hope you had a wonderful holiday season, and we look forward to working with you on these important reforms and others throughout 2018!

*Wendy & Judy*

## Bryan Hill Appointed New County Executive



At its Nov. 21 meeting the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed Bryan Hill as County Executive, effective Jan. 2, 2018. Hill is currently the James City County, Va., administrator and clerk to its Board of Supervisors. He replaces Edward L. Long, [who retired in September](#). Kirk Kincannon is [currently serving as acting County Executive](#).

“The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is pleased to welcome Bryan Hill to Team Fairfax,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. “Bryan brings impressive leadership, management, communications and budget experience to the table, and we look forward to working alongside him. Fairfax County is on a great track, and we are confident Bryan will continue to build upon a foundation of excellence for both our workforce and County residents.”

## LWVFA Recent Donors and Supporters

The LWVFA Board wishes to thank the following individuals for their generous support, including those who responded to our #Giving Tuesday Fundraiser.

Dorothy Artz  
 Stair Calhoun  
 Jeanette Calland  
 Mary Jane Cleary  
 Susan & Jack Cowart  
 Barbara Ewalt  
 Mary Alice Giarda  
 Wendy Fox-Grage & Don Grage  
 Jane Goldberg  
 Olga Hernandez  
 Sheila Iskra  
 Dorothy Joslin  
 Helen Kelly  
 Celeste Land & Kent Giles  
 Elise Loach  
 Karole McKalip  
 Robert Meredith  
 Lois & Ron Page  
 Ann Parham  
 Ruth Rischer  
 Hilary Spring  
 Anne & Bill Thomas

We also wish to thank those who generously donated cash at the November 18 General Meeting.



## Correction to December Fairfax VOTER

Kathy Kaplan, a source for the article on Fairfax County libraries, should have been identified as a Fairfax Library Advocate and co-chair of the Library Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations.

# Metro Task Force News

By Deb Wake, LWVFA Transportation Observer

The Metro Task Force met with members from other Northern Virginia Leagues on Wednesday, November 29. Items discussed were the National Capital Area (NCA) transportation position, how Metro safety has improved, how Metro is funded, and the economic benefits of Metro for the entire state (see the VA Voter for a detailed article written by Karen Finucan Clarke of Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)).

On Monday, December 4, Task Force members attended a Legislative Briefing from the NVTC and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). Delegates and delegates-elect from all over the region were also in attendance. The speakers and transportation panelists stressed that Metro and Virginia Rail Express (VRE) are economic engines for the Commonwealth of Virginia but that we are approaching a funding fiscal cliff—from increased costs and from expiration of funding sources. Metro has made great strides to get back in good repair. Safetrack condensed 3 years'-worth of repair work into one year. They've reduced fires and red signal overruns, and improved personal safety. On-time service is at a high of 90 percent, offloads are down 50 percent, and costs have been reduced by eliminating 800 positions and reducing absenteeism. In addition they've gotten their finances in order and have had two years of clean audits.

Panelists from the business community stressed forming a blueprint for the region from Baltimore to Richmond. Transportation is integral to setting up urban communities sought by new college graduates and by businesses. Development along the expansion of the Silver Line is being designed to complement and incorporate Metro. Sports fans travel from throughout the region to attend events. Fans depend upon Metro, the workers at the arenas,

hotels and restaurants need Metro—and they need late-night hours restored. Mass transit supports a healthy lifestyle and improves air quality, which impacts healthcare costs - physically and in terms of dollars.



After the NVTC/PRTC legislative briefing, Mark Keam, 35<sup>th</sup> District delegate, met with the Task Force. Delegate Keam currently has more Metro stations in his district than any other representative in VA, DC or MD. Keam risked his political career by crossing the aisle and supporting a pivotal transportation bill, HB2313 in 2013, that he knew was crucial to Northern Virginia.

At the pre-session in Richmond on December 6, Metro Task Force members met with League members from Hampton Roads, Fredericksburg and the New River Valley to discuss transportation. They also distributed a Metro Fact Sheet to educate League members across the state about the statewide economic importance of Metro. Task Force members are tracking a couple of Metro bills in the federal government and will be actively advocating for dedicated, bondable funding from the Virginia legislature. They will also be attending the January 22 Transit Day at the General Assembly sponsored by VTA (Virginia Transit Association).

For more information and to get involved, please contact Deb Wake at [metrotoo@lwg-fairfax.org](mailto:metrotoo@lwg-fairfax.org).

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# A NATION OF NATIONS—A Great Immigration Story

By Tom Gjelten

By Sherry Zachry, LWVFA Program Director:

Why are we reading a book? Well, this is not just *any* book; this is a book about “us” (to paraphrase a popular television show)—as in, **we who live in Fairfax County and City** today. According to the author Tom Gjelten, who lives here, too, Fairfax has become a “nation of nations” as has much of America in 2017. Included below are two book reviews and some questions from Gjelten’s “Teacher’s Guide” on the book.

Gjelten’s Epigraph in *A Nation of Nations* comes from Walt Whitman’s Preface to *Leaves of Grass*:

The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth, have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem. In the history of the earth hitherto the largest and most stirring appear tame and orderly to their ampler largeness and stir. Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is not merely a nation but a **teeming nation of nations.** (*Emphasis added*)

Based on interviews, Gjelten follows five immigrant families from Korea, Libya, and Bolivia, recording the economic, social, political, and personal challenges for first- and second-generation family members. He writes: “These new immigrants could not disappear easily into a white Euro-American society, no matter how hard they tried.” He portrays how over the years the forces of acceptance and rejection struggle in Fairfax County, revealing the many allies that are needed to help the immigrants find their place in the community. Gjelten concludes that immigration has neither diluted national identity nor led to cultural separatism but has enriched the nation (and Fairfax), creating a new sense of “we.” One optimistic outcome is that newly re-elected Delegate Mark Keam from Fairfax’s 35<sup>th</sup> District is from one of those families.

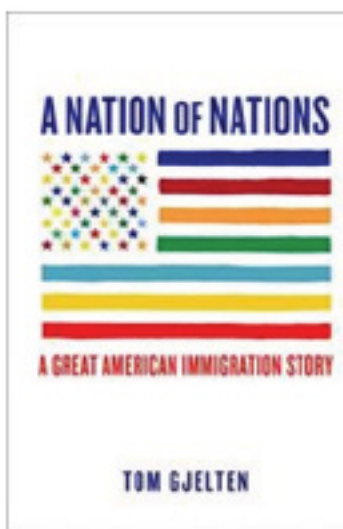
The Teacher’s Guide created for this book provides 30 discussion questions with references to the chapters where readers can find the answers. We’ve selected several that we thought were interesting and hope they will enhance your reading. In addition to questions from the Teacher’s Guide, two book reviews, one from *Kirkus* and one from *The New York Times* are at the end of this article, which concludes with some information about the author.

## The League Connection

In April 2008, the LWVUS Board adopted a position on immigration (as you may have noticed last month when we did LWVUS program planning). The brief version is:

### **Immigration**

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs



of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The history of the position states that the League lobbied the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress [Jan. 3, 2009, to Jan. 3, 2011] in support of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act that would provide a path to citizenship for young immigrants who complete a college degree

or serve in the military, thereby enabling them to be a fully productive part of American society. The legislation passed the House but lacked enough votes to overcome a filibuster in the Senate. As we know, in 2017 the DREAM Act still has not passed Congress and is being debated today.

We think this book speaks eloquently to today’s issues while offering a valuable history of America’s changing immigration policies as it chronicles the realities for five families as they assimilate into an entirely new culture. As we contemplate the many facets of the immigration debate in our country and community, both historically and today, we wonder:

1. Has the discussion in the country changed for the better or worse since 1965? In Fairfax?
2. How can we overcome the negative aspects of today’s hyper-partisan politics in the debate?
3. Can Fairfax’s experiences (past and present), as outlined in this book, provide an example for the country?

## 4. Did you like the book?

We look forward to your feedback on these four questions.

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**KIRKUS Review**

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/search/?q=A+Nation+of+Nations>

An incisive look at immigration, assimilation, and national identity.

“Award-winning journalist and NPR correspondent Gjelten (*Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba, 2008, etc.*) probes the immigrant experience after the 1965 Immigrant and Nationality Act, passed under Lyndon Johnson’s administration. This dramatic reform did away with quotas that privileged European ancestry; gave preference to spouses, minor children, and parents of immigrants who became citizens; and allocated 165,000 slots for others, half for those with “exceptional skills or education deemed ‘especially advantageous’ to the United States.” Although many lawmakers maintained that the act would not substantially change the country’s identity, some political scientists expressed consternation about assimilation: would immigrants comprise a permanent underclass—or worse, a threat—if they did not adopt what Samuel Huntington called “America’s Anglo-Protestant culture and political values?” As Seymour Martin Lipset put it, “becoming American was...an ideological act.” Now, 50 years after the act’s passage, Gjelten focuses on Fairfax, Virginia, a county that by 2010 had undergone “stunning demographic transformation.” In 1980, 9 percent of residents were foreign-born; by 2000, immigrants populated 40 percent of one unit of the county and 25 percent overall. Official publications were translated into six languages, hardly representing the more than 100 languages spoken in Fairfax. Based on interviews, Gjelten portrays in rich detail five immigrant families from Korea, Libya, and Bolivia, revealing the economic, social, political, and personal challenges for first- and second-generation family members. He examines schools’ responses to changing populations, the Muslims’ struggles as they met with ostracism after 9/11, new immigrants’ relationships with African-Americans, backlash incited by illegal immigration, and recent calls for new curbs. In a book reflecting Gjelten’s many years reporting overseas, he concludes that immigration has neither diluted national identity nor led to cultural separatism but, he optimistically sees, has enriched the nation, creating a new sense of “we.””

A timely, well-informed entry into a national debate.

Pub Date: Sept. 15th, 2015

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Page count: 400pp

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Review Posted Online: July 7th, 2015

Kirkus Reviews Issue: Aug. 1st, 2015

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**New York Times Book Review:**

[https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/books/review/a-nation-of-nations-by-tom-gjelten.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/books/review/a-nation-of-nations-by-tom-gjelten.html?_r=0)

**SUNDAY BOOK REVIEW**

A Nation of Nations, by Tom Gjelten

By Helen Thorpe, SEPT. 11, 2015

“Over the past half-century, immigration to the United States has radically transformed. In his prologue to “A Nation of Nations,” the NPR correspondent Tom Gjelten describes how his 19th-century Norwegian ancestors arrived in America and homesteaded their way across the upper Midwest, striking out into the wilderness. For the first 200 years of the country’s history, most of the foreigners who settled here voluntarily were European and white. In 1965, however, legislators rewrote our restrictive immigration laws, and over the past 50 years, the foreign-born population has become far more diverse, with new immigrants hailing from South America, Asia and Africa.

“Gjelten focuses on a handful of immigrant families living in Fairfax County, Va., a place that saw its foreign-born population grow sevenfold in the three decades after the changes. Gjelten views the new policy as more fair, but it also results in greater challenges: “These new immigrants could not disappear easily into a white Euro-American society, no matter how hard they tried.” A messy upheaval results in Fairfax County, as languages proliferate inside its schools and many newcomers find that getting by sometimes runs counter to assimilating. We watch the new arrivals labor in chicken-processing plants, until they save enough money to buy their own liquor store. They shop at Family Dollar and live doubled up, with two families sharing one apartment, to save on rent. They salvage furniture from the trash, and violent gangs plague their apartment complexes. Outside, men fall asleep in lawn chairs rented by the hour to those whose apartments are too crowded.

“We have left behind the frontier fables we tell ourselves (which were never quite true to begin with) and arrived in a grittier landscape. Drugs course through these neighborhoods, and it is hard to know whom to trust. Gjelten describes a community-minded female police officer who befriends

a Korean woman nicknamed Sonny, then slowly discovers that her companion has some unsavory contacts. “Sonny would be, like, ‘Let’s go to the spa,’” the officer recalls, “and my guys would say: ‘Do not go. Do not go to the spa.’”

“For every questionable character, however, there is a redeeming figure. –Victor Alarcón, an immigrant from Bolivia, teaches himself how to replace the engine in a Ford Escort by consulting books in the local library; he eventually saves enough money to buy a small house, “thus achieving a key element of the immigrant dream,” Gjeltten writes. A great battle is waged in Fairfax County between the forces of acceptance and rejection. Assimilation, it seems, is not something immigrants do alone; they require allies. Robert Frye, an African-American community leader, speaks up for parents who don’t know English and cannot show up to meetings because they are working multiple jobs.

“Frye and others try to stitch together this increasingly fragmented community. Initially, it seems that the variations will result only in walled fiefs. Yet a shared political culture does evolve, and second-generation immigrants forge relationships across cultural boundaries. For instance, three friends, whose parents are from South Korea, Bolivia and Pakistan, bond as teenagers and work together afterward, in the Korean family’s dry-cleaning business.

“When 9/11 occurs, however, the question of trust becomes all-encompassing, particularly in regard to Muslim immigrants, who experience years of setbacks. Finally, however, the election of Barack Obama unites Fairfax County’s disparate newcomers. All of the major factions line up to support Obama; each group, it seems, can identify with a man who is half black and half white and wants to belong.

“A Nation of Nations” is slow-paced, but it builds through the accumulation of detail to a book of impressive heft. Gjeltten excels as he documents the reality of each family. It is harder to say what this all means, but perhaps that is because we have not yet arrived at the answer. One has the sense, at the end of the book, that this experiment is still very much a work in progress.

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**Selected Questions** from the “Teacher’s Guide,” <http://nationofnationsguide.com>

1. Immigrants are often said to take jobs that native-born American workers don’t want. Do you see examples of that in the stories the author tells? (Chapters 1–4, 12, 13)
2. Describe some of the hardships and discouraging situations experienced by the immigrants profiled in this

book. What obstacles do they have to overcome in order to adapt to life in America? (Chapters 2–6, 12–14)

3. Anti-immigrant sentiment has a long history in American political culture. Who were the first immigrant groups to encounter hostility in the United States? What was said about them? What efforts were undertaken by immigration opponents to limit the influx of foreigners? (Chapter 8)

4. In what ways is the current debate over immigration an echo of the debate in the early years of the twentieth century? What cultural concerns were raised about some of the nationalities represented in that big immigration wave? (Chapter 8)

5. It was in America, a predominantly Judeo-Christian nation, that Libyan immigrant Esam Omeish became committed to Islam. The experience actually strengthened his American identity and contributed to his patriotism. In what ways is America uniquely a place where immigrants like Omeish can explore their own religious traditions? (Chapters 14, 21)

6. What challenges did the immigrant influx in Fairfax County present to local authorities in terms of governance, law enforcement, and schooling? (Chapters 15, 18)

7. One issue raised by the influx of non-European immigrants in the post-1965 period was that the newcomers would not embrace America’s Anglo-Protestant culture and political values and thus not make good Americans. Was this implicitly a racist argument or not? (Chapter 17)

8. How did the experience of Muslim Americans in Fairfax County change after 9/11? (Chapter 18).

9. As a social worker and counselor, Álvaro Alarcón was able to identify some of the typical factors that explained problems encountered by immigrant youth. What were they? (Chapter 19)

10. The Keam/Seong family, the Alarcón family, the Omeish family, and Marta Quintanilla all had their own ideas of what America stood for. What do you think America represented to each of them? (Chapters 7, 12, 14, 16, 19–21)

#### **About the Author:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Gjeltten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Gjeltten)

<https://www.npr.org/people/2100536/tom-gjeltten>

“Tom Gjeltten covers issues of religion, faith, and belief for NPR News, a beat that encompasses such areas as the changing religious landscape in America, the formation of personal identity, the role of religion in politics, and social and cultural conflict arising from religious differences. His reporting draws on his many years covering national and international news from posts in Washington and around the world.

“In 1986, Gjelten became one of NPR’s pioneer foreign correspondents, posted first in Latin America and then in Central Europe. In the years that followed, he covered the wars in Central America, social and political strife in South America, the first Gulf War, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and the transitions to democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

“Since joining NPR in 1982 as labor and education reporter, Gjelten has won numerous awards for his work, including two Overseas Press Club Awards, a George Polk Award,

and a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award. Gjelten and his colleagues at NPR received a Peabody Award in 2004 for “The War in Iraq”. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a regular panelist on the PBS program “Washington Week,” and a member of the editorial board at World Affairs Journal. A graduate of the University of Minnesota, he began his professional career as a public school teacher and freelance writer.

“Gjelten resides in Arlington, Virginia, with his wife, Martha Raddatz, the Chief Global Affairs Correspondent for ABC News.”

## Environmental Update . . .

### What’s in Your Tap Water?

By Elizabeth Lonoff

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to protecting human health and the environment, has released a national Tap Water Database compiling data from drinking water tests conducted during 2010-2015 by 48,712 water utilities. Consumers can use this tool to check for reports of potentially harmful chemicals in their drinking water and find out what scientists consider safe levels for those contaminants. Results for the Fairfax County Water Authority are available at <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/system.php?pws=VA6059501#.WfvSDoWcGmQ>. You also can search by zip code.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets minimum drinking water standards for nearly 100 chemical and microbial contaminants, which mainly are implemented by state governments through testing requirements and operator licensing. EWG found that most drinking water supplies meet federal regulations. However, many of the 267 contaminants detected of approximately 500 tested are below Safe Drinking Water Act limits but above levels that are suspected to pose serious health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. Such industrial and agricultural contaminants have been linked to cancer, brain and nervous system damage, or developmental defects.

Consider Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), still unregulated after decades of use as an ingredient in firefighting foam, Teflon, and other consumer products. EPA has linked these perfluorinated compounds to low birth weights, cancer, and liver tissue

damage, or chromium-6, made famous by the film “Erin Brockovich.” This unregulated carcinogen is widespread at low concentrations. California set 0.02 parts per billion as a public health goal in 2011; officials there believe it can be harmful for drinking, bathing, or any contact. That rate’s exceeded in Fairfax County.

According to *USA Today*, EPA hasn’t created a rule for a new contaminant since 2000, despite reviewing candidates for health-based standards every five years. More than half of EWG’s contaminants detected have no regulatory limit, allowing them to legally be present at any concentration and with no requirement that utilities test for them or tell their customers about them. You can learn more about the regulatory process at <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations>.

Orb Media recently found microplastics in tap water collected from more than a dozen cities around the world. The University of Minnesota School of Public Health tested 159 samples and found that the U.S. had the highest contamination rate, 94 percent. For the European countries included, the rate of contamination was 72 percent. Microplastics absorb toxic chemicals that could be released into the body and can harbor pathogens. EPA is looking into aquatic plastic pollution, including microplastics, since some 8 million metric tons enter the world’s oceans each year and that amount is expected to more than double within a decade.

A similar News21 investigation of 680,000 water quality and monitoring violations from 2007-2016, *troubledwater.news21.com*, reported in August that as many as 63 million people were exposed to potentially unsafe water more than once during the past decade. The findings show the impact of decades of industrial dumping, farm runoff, and water plant and distribution pipe deterioration. Systems cited for water quality violations typically took more than two years to resolve them.



News21 also determined that drinking water quality often reflects the wealth and racial makeup of communities. Small, poor communities and neglected urban areas sometimes receive little government help. EPA estimates local water systems need to invest \$384 billion in the coming decades to keep water safe as pipes and 20<sup>th</sup>- century treatment plants reach the end of their useful lives.

EPA announced in July that it will reestablish an assistance program for the nation's small-community drinking water utilities to help them comply with federal environmental rules, which it had eliminated at its discretion in 2012. More than 91 percent of the U.S.'s 50,366 drinking-water supplies serve fewer than 10,000 people. This new policy should result in the return of two on-site technicians in each state.

While most Americans get their water from local utilities, 15 million homes are on private wells. They are vulnerable to the same contamination issues but not required to install treatment systems. The limited data available shows wells in many parts of the U.S. draw groundwater containing dangerous levels of toxins from natural and man-made sources.

### What Can You Do to Protect Our Water Sources?

- **Attend the public hearing on the environment.** Raise your concerns to the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Board at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, January 10 in conference rooms 9 and 10 at the Government Center.
- **Learn how to establish a rain garden by attending a free rain garden workshop.** A rain garden is a landscaped area designed to allow rain water to soak into the ground. Rain gardens also can slow the flow of runoff from roads and buildings to prevent pollutants from reaching local streams



and the Potomac River, a drinking-water supply for the region. (See <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/newsletter/rain-garden-myths.htm>.) Learn how to properly locate, design, construct, and maintain a small rain garden from 9:30 - noon on Saturday, February 10 at the Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Register at [awinquist@arlingtonva.us](mailto:awinquist@arlingtonva.us).

- **Participate in Earth Sangha's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.** The history and future plans of this nonprofit, which implemented Fairfax County's Riparian Buffer Restoration Project and is promoting sustainable agriculture in the Dominican Republic, are outlined in its November and December newsletters at <http://www.earthsangha.org/acorn>. You can volunteer to meditatively tend the Wild Plant Nursery, remove invasive plants at the Marie Butler Leven Preserve,

## The Voice of America Features LWV of Fairfax

The Voice of America Pakistan featured LWVFA in an interview with our Co-Presidents and Executive Director. This news segment about U.S. women voting was shown in Pakistan. The League fights for your right to vote. Your vote is your voice.



Beth Tudan, LWV of Fairfax Executive Director, and Adarsh Trehan, Public Relations Chair, discuss our work and history with Nilofar Mugha, VOA Pakistan Reporter.

*The short memories of American voters is what keeps politicians in office. - Will Rogers*

## 2018 FCPS High School Voter Registration Challenge

Voting is a fundamental civic duty and right of all eligible U.S. citizens and one of the primary ways we make our voices heard. For youths who come of voting age it is an important rite of passage. This Challenge aims to help ensure that the torch of civic engagement is passed on to the next generation of voters. We are each responsible for the health of our democracy.

The LWVFA has teamed up with Inspire VA and the Fairfax County Council of Parent Teachers Association (FCCPTA) to create this challenge. League members are urged to contact their local high school and encourage their participation.



### ***What Is the Challenge?***

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) will challenge one another to register the highest percentage of eligible voters.

### ***Who Can Participate?***

All high schools in FCPS and all FCPS students who meet the voter registration requirements.

### ***What Is the Deadline for Registrations?***

Schools should aim to complete the challenge by May 21, 2018. (May 21 is the Voter Registration deadline for the June 2018 Primary).

### ***How Do Schools Register for the Challenge?***

The Challenge Committee is working with the FCPS social studies chair, who is asking every high school to assign a point of contact. All FCPS Schools have their own unique URL, so registrations can be tracked. To actively work with us to participate in the Challenge, fill out the survey here.

### ***How Do I Get More Information?***

Contact Beth Tudan, [director@lww-fairfax.org](mailto:director@lww-fairfax.org), Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, or Morgan O'Toole, Regional Director of Inspire VA, [morgan.otoole@inspire-usa.org](mailto:morgan.otoole@inspire-usa.org).

### ***What Are the Prerequisites for Registering to Vote in Virginia?***

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be a resident of Virginia.
- Be at least 18 years old by the next general election. 17-year-olds who will turn 18 on or before the next general election (November 6, 2018) can register now. (The math is easy this year -- anyone born or on before November 6, 2000).
- Have had your voting rights restored if ever convicted of a felony.
- Had your capacity restored if you have ever been declared mentally incapacitated in a Circuit Court.



Fairfax County Council



# Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

## Topic: LWVFA “Book Club”

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the “At Large Meeting” and Briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of December 1, 2017, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

### Saturday, Jan. 6

#### **10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing**

League Conference Room  
Packard Center (inside Annandale Community Park)  
4026 Hummer Road  
Annandale, 22003  
Contact: Sherry, 703-730-8118

### Monday, Jan. 8

#### **1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)**

Hunters Crossing Classroom  
Spring Village Drive  
Springfield, 22150  
Contact: Edith, 703-644-3970 or  
Gloria, 703-852-5113

### Wednesday, Jan. 10

#### **9:30 a.m. McLean Day (McL)**

StarNut Café  
1445 Laughlin Ave.  
McLean, 22101  
Contact: Anjali, 703-509-5518 or  
Sheena, 703-481-0933

### **9:45 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD)**

Mt. Vernon Government Center  
2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria  
Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561 or  
Diana, 703-704-5325

### **10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)**

8739 Cuttermill Place  
Springfield 22153  
Contact: Kathleen, 703-644-1555  
or Sherry, 703-730-8118

### **7:15 p.m. Fairfax City Evening (FCE)**

The Green Acres Center  
4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax  
Contact: Elizabeth and Amy,  
[Fairfaxcityunit@lww-fairfax.org](mailto:Fairfaxcityunit@lww-fairfax.org)

### **7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)**

Hunter Mill District Comm. Room  
North County Government Center  
1801 Cameron Glen Dr., Reston  
Contact: Rona, 703-476-5758 or  
Rachel, 831-240-6611

### Thursday, Jan. 11

#### **9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)**

11037 Saffold Way  
Reston, 20190  
Contact: Charleen, 703-620-3593\_

#### **9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)**

LWVFA Conference Room,  
Packard Center  
4026-B Hummer Rd., Annandale  
Contact: Marge, 703-451-0589

#### **10 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)**

Sully Government Center  
4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly  
Contact: Leslie, 571-213-6384

#### **1 p.m. Fairfax/Vienna (FX-V)**

Oakton Regional Library, Room 1  
10304 Lynnhaven Pl., Oakton  
Contact: Bob, 563-299-5316

#### **7:45 p.m. Mount Vernon Evening (MVE)**

Paul Spring Retirement Comm.  
Mt. Vernon Room  
7116 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria  
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

## February Event: Workshop on Redistricting (No Unit Meetings)



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)  
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403  
 703-658-9150. Web address: [www.lwv-fairfax.org](http://www.lwv-fairfax.org)

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 January, 2018

Wendy Fox-Grage, Co-President  
 Judy Helein, Co-President  
 Ron Page, Editor  
 Liz Brooke, Content 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.

### LWVFA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Dues: Individual \$65 \_\_\_\_\_ Household \$90 (2 persons, 1 Voter) \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$32.50 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dues year is July 1 – June 30 (A subsidy fund is available; check here \_\_\_\_\_ and include whatever amount you can afford.)  
 Membership Status: New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing \_\_\_\_\_ Reinstatement \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check or PayPal Payment to “LWVFA Ed Fund.”)

(Please print clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit (if renewing) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (M) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to “LWVFA” and mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale VA 22003-2403  
 OR Join Online at: [www.LWV-Fairfax.org/join.html](http://www.LWV-Fairfax.org/join.html).

- I am interested in becoming involved in (please indicate by circling the appropriate bullet(s)):
- Providing organizational support (graphics design, website development/maintenance, fundraising/ grant writing).
  - Voter Services (e.g., voter registration drives, candidate forums, developing Voters’ Guides).
  - Researching/writing about issues in which LWVFA has an interest (e.g., environment, firearms safety, mental health, schools, domestic violence, criminal justice; or, chairing an LWVFA study committee on voter turnout or human trafficking).
  - Representing the League in governmental fora (e.g., serving as LWVFA representative on Fairfax County citizens’ committees and agencies, such as affordable housing, Fairfax County Public Schools).
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_