

**Delegates' Diary**  
**For**  
**LWV 52<sup>nd</sup> National Convention**  
**June 16-19, 2016**  
**Making Democracy Work for ALL**  
**LWVFC Delegates: Martha Cooper & Linda Garvelink**

**Plenary Session News:**

**Friday, June 17: Opening Plenary Session**

First the National Anthem, always moving when lead by a beautiful voice and followed by the voice of more than 684 LWV members from 48 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands.

Although Mayor Muriel Bowser was scheduled to welcome the delegates to DC, she had a last minute conflict and was not able to attend.

**Speakers:**

The Convention plenary sessions always feature interesting and engaging speakers, this year was no different. The first speaker was **Jennifer Lawless, Director, Women & Politics Institute, American University**. Some notes of her presentation, *Engaging Millennials in our Elections*:

- Fewer than 1 in 5 people trust members of Congress
- In previous election, although people distrust Congress as a whole, they liked their own representatives. In 2014, that started to change.
- The political dysfunction of our time, will have political consequences for future generations (based on a book she wrote with another professor – *Running from Office*)
  - 89% of young people say they will never run for office
  - Young people in general don't engage in political discussions with their parents or friends; in general, they don't want conflict or don't want to know there is disagreement
  - To them, politics is confrontational, politicians are horrible people.
  - Their goals are to improve the world and society but they feel they must do this by working behind the scenes, working with non-profit non-government organizations (NGOs) and doing Facebook posts.
  - In the 18-25 year old range, 20% more men than women say they would run for office
  - Women in college lose their interest in politics. But the small percentage of women who said they would run for elected office also express interest in politics as a career.
- Recommendation for League: work to show young people that to make the changes they want, they need to be involved in government and elected offices. Tie their goals of "doing good" to elective office and civic involvement. Facebook posts can't effect all changes!
- Topics for League to focus on that interest 18-25 year olds are: healthcare and student debt as well as jobs. We need to show that women are effective in office and that they can participate in politics fairly.

The second speaker was **Amanda Taub, Vox News and The New York Times**: Understanding American Authoritarianism: "What on earth is going on?" in this election cycle. Ms. Taub addressed the "Rise of

American Authoritarianism.” There has been a slow change in the electorate toward acceptance of, and even desire for, an authoritarian candidate. This happens, historically, when the status quo is threatened; “sick candidates,” who appeal to out-groups, can thrive and rise. This segment of the electorate values order and distrusts outsiders. Today there are more children of immigrants, our society has become more urban, and society is changing. Those threatened want a strong punitive response, they want a “champion of traditional values,” they want someone/group to blame, and authoritarianism appeals to them. Can this happen again in the future? Yes, this is only the beginning. Authoritarian looks for groups that are dissatisfied and appeals to their basest concerns. Authoritarians target vulnerable groups.

How to counter:

- Appeal to empathy – remind them of times they felt discriminated against
- Show that we've weathered other crises and survive
- Adjustments to change don't come quickly

**Convention Business:**

Now we get down to the business of the Convention. Marty Rollins, Parliamentarian and LWV-VA member, discussed appropriate parliamentary procedures and Robert's Rules of Order for the Convention. The Convention approved the Rules and the Order of Business for the Convention.

LWVUS (outgoing) President Elizabeth McNamara gave a stirring and challenging opening address: The League fights for voting rights for ALL the same way our foremothers fought for suffrage in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Our goal is free, fair and accessible votes for all. We work to get information to people so they can cast well-thought-out and educated ballots. League is fighting Big Money in Politics and for redistricting reform. We are fighting to include all rightful citizens in “We the People.” We are working to give all a voice; in a democracy all voices must be heard in the halls of power. We are working to make democracy work for ALL; we are working to build a more perfect democracy. Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of LWV, said that the vote is a symbol of equality. The League's mission is to get all citizens to vote and to use their vote well. We are working to make Democracy work for ALL, not just some.

**Panel:**

The Friday afternoon plenary session started with a panel discussion “Protecting the Right to Vote and Expanding the Electorate.” Speakers: Kristen Clark, president, National Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Arturo Vargas, Executive Director of National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO); and Christine Chen, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islanders American Vote (APIAVote).

Ms. Clark spoke of racial voting discrepancies. Texas law provides that Gun Permits may be used as voter ID, but only 6% of African Americans and 24% of women have gun permits. Texan law is both racists and sexist. The nation needs more people working for voters' rights. We need same day registration, early voting, and the quick restoration of voting rights. She told the story of Fannie Lou Hayes. Fannie tried to register to vote in the 1960s prior to the Voting Rights Act. She was told she had to take a literacy test; she passed on the third try. But then, the KKK blocked her at the polls and she

withstood repeated beatings. We can't let this happen again. All have the right to democracy and the vote!

Mr. Vargas: Voting rights are under attack. 19 states have passed voting laws that will directly affect 900,000 Latinos. In Texas alone, 750,000 Latinos may not have the proper ID to vote in 2016; these are people who voted successfully without incident in previous elections. For decades, voting rights were a bi-partisan issue. Why has this changed now? Because Latinos are making a difference. There is a serious flaw when the system actively discourages voting. There is also partisan manipulation of Latinos. They are targeted in Nevada, Colorado & Florida but ignored in other states that are all red or blue states. 67% of all Latino voters have never been contacted by candidates or their volunteers. Every election is important and yet there is no follow-through for Latino voters. Promises are made but not kept. Latinos currently have the lowest registration rate because groups are not targeting them with registration drives. We need to invest in civic engagement over a lifetime. It's not about November, it's about the next generation.

Ms. Chen: Asian & Pacific Islander Americans are the fastest growing population in the U.S. Currently they have the lowest registration rate. Because, just as Latinos, no groups are targeting them in voter registration drives. 45% of API-Americans have trouble with English. They are threatened by the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant rhetoric. They are often thought of as 1 issue voters but they have many issues that need to be addressed by our elected officials.

#### **Convention Business:**

Following the panel discussion, L WVUS Board member Barbara Zia presented the 2016-18 Program focused on empowering groups that are traditionally underrepresented in our electorate, including young people, especially those who do not attend college, people with limited incomes, communities of color, single women and new citizens. To accomplish this, we will:

- **Grow the vote**, by registering a quarter million voters, informing them about voting procedures and preparing them to arrive at the polls with everything they need to cast their ballots.
- **Protect the vote**, by working with local election officials, organizing poll watching programs, and continuing to fight voter suppression efforts at the state & local levels; and
- **Empower six million voters with information**, through our nonpartisan voters' guides and candidate forums and debates, and through our online tools – especially VOTE411.org.

**The Convention unanimously accepted the L WV National Program for 2016-18.** This was a change from the tradition to vote on the Program in the next day's plenary session. The motion to approve was made and the vote was taken in the same plenary session.

In another change of the approved order of business, the Convention next considered and voted on the Board-Recommended Concurrences. In a significant break with tradition, there were no "not-board-recommended" study-items or "not-board-recommended" concurrences brought to the floor of the convention. In past years, not-board-recommended items produced healthy and hearty discussions. *Commentary: It appears that all delegates recognized the magnitude of the recommend program and are unanimous in the support of the program. The Convention clearly recognized the battle for voting rights as our most important focus.*

**Two Concurrences were approved** related to redistricting and behavioral health.

- In a break with tradition, the Redistricting position was a concurrence with a study done by a task force. The reason it was not a nationwide consensus is because 40 state Leagues already have redistricting positions specific to their states; the task force worked from the various state positions together to make a general LWVUS position.
- **Redistricting Position in brief:** *Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.*
  - The pre-vote discussion of this position included comments that redistricting is a state issue. This position may not be strong enough for some states.
  - However, there are 10 state LWVs that do not have positions on redistricting. The task force looked assessed the positions of 40 State Leagues and developed this position.
  - In a break with tradition, this position does NOT supersede any state League position. But it does provide a Position for 10 State Leagues to use to lobby their legislatures. There is not enough time or resources for each of these State Leagues to develop their own redistricting positions.
- **Behavioral Health position in brief:** This is a concurrence with the LWV Colorado position on Behavioral Health including amending the LWVUS Health Care position to include the following as the second sentence under *Basic Level of Quality Care: Every U.S. resident should have access to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services, that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care.*

The next item on the agenda was the Executive Director's Address – Wylecia Wiggs Harris. Ms. Harris stressed the need for LWV to **CHANGE** to meet current needs. We must evolve and redefine our future. We have to embrace change and engagement, we must diversify our membership and reach rising voters. We must adopt communication methods that have been shaped by the new generation. We must use technology! We must have a bias toward action. It may be that we will not affiliate the same way as we have in the past. We must represent the diversity of the U.S. population. Are we a 21<sup>st</sup> Century organization? We must address our technology gap. VOTE411.org is a beginning.

- Note: as you can see, Wylecia's emphasis was on change. Notice that we already faced change in how we approved positions and adopted the Program. Wylecia's speech was an alert that more change was to come at the Convention and surely even more as the next 2 years progress.
- *Commentary: So far, I believe this is good change but I do believe we have to keep watch to assure that the mission and basis of the League is not jeopardized.*

Following a break, the Convention took up **Finances and Budget**. The LWVUS Treasurer presented her report for 2015 and 2016 to date. The budget chair, Henrietta Saunders, CFA, presented the proposed 2016-2018 LWVUS Budget.

- The Treasurer's report showed an investment loss of **\$797,273** for the 22 month period ending April 20, 2016. The 2014-16 Biennium budget showed a loss of more than \$2 million.
- The Proposed budget was difficult to track from previous years because there was a significant change in accounting. Many accounts have been restructured to allow for better internal control.

- The magnitude of the losses and the budget changes, resulted in 2 question & answer sessions. Although we were not able to attend either session, I talked with a trusted LWV-VA colleague about the situation. Additionally, Elizabeth McNamara gave an excellent summary on Sunday before the 2016-18 budget was formally voted on.
  - The investment loss resulted from holding on to risky investments too long. The investments were made with the knowledge of LWVUS administration and the Board. The investments resulted in high returns that benefited LWVUS in previous years. However, when the investments turned, the external investor advisor advised to stand pat. The Board did, until too late. The losses are significant. The LWVUS CFO and the investment advisor were replaced. The Board now believes that investments have the appropriate risk for our organization. However, LWVUS is proposing a very tight budget to rebuild reserves while yet accomplishing our Program goals.
  - Budget changes: Previously support costs were shown in program areas; this resulted in difficult internal control (in addition to the difficulty with the investments). Therefore, with new direction, professional outside consulting and a top-notch (according to our LWV-VA colleague) new treasurer, the LWVUS administrative expenses will be shown in one place – enhancing internal control. Among other staff changes, quality skill sets have been added to the Grant Proposal section to enhance LWVUS ability to attract and capture new donations from corporations and foundations. These funds often result in pass-through grants to state, and then to local, Leagues.
- **The budget was approved**, according to tradition and after extensive Q&A sessions with delegates, on Sunday, June 19.
- **The Per Member Payment** was presented on Friday as **\$32** for full voting members and, as provided in the bylaws, \$16 for each additional household member and \$16 for each student member. Following tradition , the Convention approved the PMP on Sunday, June 19.

### Saturday, June 18

#### Plenary Session

##### Speakers:

After the traditional report of the Credentials Committee and the Report of Previous Day's Activities, **Peter Overby, Correspondent for National Public Radio**, spoke on "Money in Politics." Mr. Overby recognized Falls Church as his hometown and said that Beverly Rousch (sp), former LWVFC member & president, always inspired him. He then explained "Independent Expenditures" (IE) are contributions to candidate's campaigns. Corporations, Unions, and other entities can & do make unlimited donations. Donations may not be accepted from foreign sources of any type. This money has a significant impact on campaigns and has grown in recent years. In 2008 independent expenditures provided \$150 million; in 2014, total IE's exceeded \$1 billion; to date in the 2016 campaign the amount already exceeds \$400 million. There are many loopholes in the IE law: candidates attend Super Pac events as "guests"; they raise money for the Super Pac but the limit is \$5,000 once announced as candidate. It is smarter for candidates to raise money before they announce candidacy (e.g., Jeb Bush in 2016). Super Pacs are not supposed to be coordinated with the candidate's campaign – but they are, it's very coincidental how similar Super Pac and campaign ads and activities are considering "no coordination." Super Pacs enabled "minor" candidates to stay in 2016 race longer. Supreme Court, in Citizens United decision, said

they did not see that corruption and influence would come with Independent Expenditures. Some opponents to the decision say all donation caps should be lifted but disclosure should be instantaneous. Justice Kennedy, who wrote the assent, said that corporations should disclose political expenditures so investors could determine the value of the company's contributions to candidates to their investment in the company. Later when asked "What system of effective disclosures?" was he referencing (in a speech a few years after the decision), Justice Kennedy acknowledged that disclosure is not working as he/the Court expected. Mr. Overby later pointed out that most Super Pac donations are from wealthy individuals, not corporations. He attributed the Supreme Court decision to the fact that, since Sandra Day O'Connor, there are no justices that have ever run for office. They don't know or understand the campaign process. In the Q&A, Mr. Overby acknowledge that the Citizens United decision will be hard to challenge but cited Montana disclosure requirements as effective, MT is exploring instant disclosure. Another problem is that the Senate's reports are all done on paper, even though their records are computerized, they manually complete & submit their reports on paper – very inefficient. Mr. Overby said that now Representatives are required to invest 40% (this could be 4 hours/day, Overby wasn't sure of the number) of their time on fund-raising (this is included in the "guidebook new members are given at orientation). The IRS is currently handicapped by the scandal – which was "a mess," 3 local Leagues were on the list of 501(c)3 applications that were delayed approval by the IRS.

The next speaker **Joe Goldman, President of the Democracy Fund**, addressed Our Democracy – Complex Systems and Major Forces at Play in 2016. The Democracy Fund was established by the founder of EBay, he has invested \$30 million to date. The purpose is to "take back our Republic," the public needs to regain faith in our public institutions/system. The Democracy Fund provides funding to a wide variety of organizations, even CATO, when the purpose is to enlighten fairly. Small donor matches are effective. Two-thirds of people believe they are on "the losing side." There are 2 options: Politics or Dictatorship. With politics, one never gets everything they want – there's compromise. The media is in dire straits, they have to figure out how to better interact with the community to provide information the People trust. Facts matter, the media (and others, including the League) have to challenge inaccurate statements. Journalism needs to return to former effectiveness and journalists need to stop reporting "he said/she said" – effectively implying "I'm just reporting what the candidates said, of course it's not what I believe." Journalists have to go back to challenging candidates statements, to make them review positions and intent. He talked about an Oregon group that has citizens come together to discuss current measures before they are voted. He said, "Like" buttons on social media should be changed to "Respect" when issues are presented. He said, the people who make decisions must be willing the listen. He finished with a challenge to the League to reach across the aisle, to help find common ground on issues and to continue to gather people to participate in civic issues – Federal State & Local.

#### **Convention Business:**

The next business taken up by the Convention was Bylaw amendments. The LWV of Minnesota presented two amendments the LWVUS bylaws. They both relate to Article III. All State & Local Leagues are required to incorporate Article I, II, & III appropriately into their bylaws.

The first amendment proceeded smoothly and was approved after reasonable discussion; it removed the requirement that voting members of the League be citizens. The word “Citizen” is **changed** to “People.”

The second proposed amendment was to remove the age requirement for voting membership in the League. This involved a long discussion of the pros and cons. The original motion was defeated because it did not garner a 2/3 vote. Many opponents were concerned that local Leagues would have to abide by the safety requirements when children are included in an activity. A parliamentary error was pointed out; the Convention chair had ruled any amendments to the proposed amendment as “out of order.” However, according to Robert’s Rules & the Rules of the Convention, amendments to proposed bylaw amendments are allowed only when in the “scope” of the proposed amendment. The proposal was revisited and amendments “within the scope of the original amendment” were allowed. Discussion ensued as to whether the age should be 16 years or 14 years. The amendment was approved with 16 years as the age requirement.

**Article III Membership** now reads:

**Sec. 2. Types of Membership**

- A. Voting Members. Persons, at least 16 years of age, who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS; (1) individuals who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members and excused from the payment of dues.
- B. Associate Members. All others who join the League shall be associate members.

Another proposed amendment to the bylaws was submitted by the LWV-Needham, MA. This was to add “to join as a state member-at large” after “any other local League” in Article III Sec. 2 (1). The Board did not support this amendment and it was not brought forward by LWV-Needham because it is “a solution for a problem that does not exist.” The Board clarified that persons may join state Leagues as members-at-large if they do not want to be a part of the local League. This is already happening in a number of states. The Board indicated the right approach to the issue is to educate state & local Leagues about this understanding rather than to amend the bylaws.

**Sunday, June 19**

**Plenary Session**

**Convention Business:**

Again, the session started with the report of Credentials and the Report of Previous Day’s Activities. Then the Convention adopted the PMP for 2016-18 - \$32 for primary, \$16 for each household member after the first, and \$16 for students.

The Convention proceeded to the final discussion and approval of the budget. (see report under Friday, June 17)

Next we moved to consideration of resolutions. Unfortunately, I did not get a handout of the resolutions so I don't have the exact wording.

- The first resolution was presented by LWV-Florida – Response to gun violence and a statement of support for the survivors and for the families of the victims of the June 12 hate attack in Orlando. The Convention observed a moment of silence and prayer as requested.
- The second resolution, again presented by LWV-FL, was to strongly reassert the League's position on gun violence that will allow the Centers for Disease Control to study the effects of gun violence.
- The third resolution approved was presented by LWV-DC. It called for statehood and full voting rights for the citizens of the District of Columbia. (In caucus, LWV-DC pointed out that the Federal area of DC would remain independent as the capital city. The area of the new state would encompass the business and residential areas of DC.)
- The fourth resolution approved was presented by LWV-Washington State as were the fifth and sixth. It provided that the LWVUS consider signing on to an *amicus brief* with "Our Children's Trust" regarding the protection of the environment for future generations.
- The fifth resolution approved asked the UNCOP (United Nations chief of party) to sign on to the Paris Agreement regarding the environment and global warming.
- The sixth resolution approved endorsed EPA's Clean Power Plan to 'bring the CO<sub>2</sub> level to 400 ppm by 2100. A proposed amendment reworded the resolution to read 'with the goal of bringing the CO<sub>2</sub> level to 400 ppm.' That goal may prove achievable in the future but cannot be achieved at this time. The amendment to this resolution did not pass. However, the Convention approved the resolution in its original form.

The next business of the Convention was to "Thank the Outgoing Board." Many state and local League delegates stood to welcome their members back to their home Leagues after completing the LWVUS Board service. Additionally, many state & local Leagues thanked the LWVUS board and staff for excellent support.

#### **Election of the 2016-18 Board of Directors:**

The 2016-18 Slate, including officers and Nominating Committee, presented by the Nominating Committee, were elected by acclamation after there were no nominations from the floor. The Nominating Committee explained that it listened to the direction of the 2014 Convention that desired more diversity (ethnicity, age, location) on the Board. There are only 3 returning members (\*) to the Board, including the new president. And, one 2014-16 Board member was elected as chair of Nominating Committee. Members are:

- Officers:
  - \*Chris Carson (CA), President & LWVEF Chair
  - \*Karen Nicholson (TX), Vice President & LWVEF vice-chair
  - Toni Zimmer (NJ), Secretary
  - Henrietta Saunders, CFA (IL), Treasurer
- Board members
  - Maribel Balbin (FL)
  - Amy Hjerstedt (VA)
  - Kim Lauth (TN)

- \*Anita Loch (WI)
- Jessica Lowe-Minor (FL)
- Brenda Rogers (NC)
- Jessica Rohloff (MN)
- Deborah Turner (IA)
- Nominating Committee
  - \*Peggy Appler (SC)
  - Mary Ann Reeves (TN)
  - Susan Kay Smith (MI)

**Address by New President Chris Carson**

Next two years will be time of “engagement.” LWVUS will work to improve the redistricting process and continue the fight to halt the influence of Big Money in Politics, including helping state & local Leagues propose and push for limits on campaign financing at state and local levels. We will continue to work to protect the election process. LWVUS will continue to help state & local Leagues develop new leaders and expand memberships through the Membership & Leadership Development (MLD) program.

LWVUS, as well as state & local Leagues must work to engage communities through social media. We must learn how to use social media to reach voters & prospective voters and to engage our communities. We will not abandon the personal-touch.

The role of state Leagues may **change** somewhat. State and local Leagues are call upon to register voters in record numbers. State Leagues may become training centers for leadership development, membership recruitment techniques, and use of social media. Activities of state Leagues may vary from state to state but each is called upon to strengthen local Leagues and increase civil engagement.

The League is facing change but “...our greatest progress has come out of challenging and difficult times.”

**Question**

A delegate asked about EZ Web (California hosted web service). The Convention chair explained that LWVUS had supported the initiative as a start-up. Although LWV-California presented a proposal for continuing the LWVUS/EZ Web relationship, it was beyond the means of the Board especially considering the new budget. State and local League may negotiate with LWV-CA for EZ Web or find other solutions (which many have already done).

The Chair & Board promised to provide state & local Leagues talking points that can be used to address specific issues of the 2016 presidential campaign and yet maintain our nonpartisan status. Talking points will address issues such as the history-making first woman candidate, 96 years after we gained suffrage. Increased voter registrations – due to particular candidate(s) or other concerns. And more....

Directions to the Board, in light of the reduced length of the Convention, will be solicited in the electronic Convention Evaluation form, which will be sent to all delegates before the end of June.

The Convention Adjourned at 11:30 a.m. on June 19, 2016.

**Saturday Afternoon Training:**

Saturday afternoon included 2 training sessions for all delegates 1) "Tactical Training for this Election Year." And, 2) "League Impact: Data and Messaging."

**1) Messaging**

- **Celinda Lake, President, Lake Research Partners** spoke about "Messaging for Impact – What Resonates with Voters in 2016?" Voters are discouraged, nominees have very high negatives, people don't know how to vote; women are forming their own opinions about candidates. (Husbands still may think their wives are listening to them & following their lead on candidates but, more often than not, the "sure, honey" is a brush off; women make their own decisions about candidates). Women are worried about terrorism, economy, and healthcare. Women are worried about inequality ("Women don't earn less, they are paid less). Record high Latino turnout is expected. Single mothers are an important demographic in this election: 41% of births are now to signal women, in 1980 this was 18%. In this election, it will be the first time there are more single women voters than married women voters. Few people realize that employers are required to give employees time off to vote. Because of this, weekend voting is very popular with women & Latinas. Women rely on voters' guides. Don't assume all know how to vote, even in up-scale areas. Make voting a women's rights issue as our founders did – Election Day we can take away power from big corporations. When voting all are equal. The vote is equality. League must continue to fight for improved voting methods: vote by mail increased voter participation by 80%. Election Day should be a Federal holiday. Millennials like to vote together – groups to polls at one time or complete absentee ballots together (this does not mean they share how they vote). Anyone can get a list of all voters. Public perceptions of the League -- ratings are higher than rating for milk -- but people don't see the League anymore. League needs a higher profile. Studies of voters show that they are attracted by "never endorse parties or candidates." Most people don't know the League started with suffrage – this is a good story to get out. Telling the story that we are the only organization with its roots directly in the suffrage movement is an important and effective message. People love LWV debates. LWV cannot die!
- **Keesha Gaskins, Program Director, Democratic Practice-United States Rockefeller Brothers Fund**, addressed: Understanding and Telling the Story of Impact for Democracy with Data." For the League's outreach to donors, members & prospective members: No one knows what "nonpartisan" means; we have to say, "We never endorse parties or candidates." All membership organizations are changing, we are too; we face challenges and have to more effectively tell our story. Data works to get messages across. We must be "more present: no one ever marched on Washington because of a pie chart." But data will tell who, where, when & how to talk to audiences. We have to collect meaningful data and know how to use it. We have to stop storing forum and other event sign-up lists in drawers. We must use them! Google Drive & Google Docs are good tools to use to make documents and lists available to all Board members for use in their portfolios. The League must build its own meaningful data over time. Good data will help us win funders/donors. We cannot assume the funders/donors know about us. We have to tell our story – and tell it again. The funding community moves very slowly. Be

ready, be prepared to expand what we're doing when we do find a donor willing to fund a particular activity. Develop scalable programs that can be started with a small donation and expanded if more donors jump on board. Having an "elevator pitch" is important for attracting donors and members; e.g., *We are a most important membership organization with deep roots and consistent messaging as well as consistent goals and mission. Our goals have been the same since our founding in 1920 – provide information to voters, protect the vote and work to assure democracy works for all.* When addressing a particular community, focus on that community's issues. Knowing what any constituency cares about will get them engaged and to the polls. State/local Leagues (as well as LWVUS) have limited funds always; first focus on local media. Pay for ads to get coverage; although print media is often the least effective, it should be part of the outreach plan. Building relationships with other groups is critical to efficiently get our issues out to broad audience.

**Caucuses:**

Linda Garvelink: I chose to attend primarily organizational and leadership caucuses this Convention because of my role on LWV-VA Board & as a LWV-VA Membership & Leadership Development (MLD) coach, and my new position on the LWVFC Leadership Team.

- **Nominating Committees.** We must build stronger boards. We need to consciously develop leaders. State/local League (as well as LWVUS) boards must be diverse to be able to diversify the League – people want to see leaders that look like them. This session's tips explained that current Presidents should not serve on the Committee but should be consulted. Nominating committee should be elected at annual meeting and they should work all year long. The nominating committee should begin its work at the beginning of the League year, not 2 or 3 month before the Annual Meeting. Nominating Committee should be led by a Board member. Board should give direction to Nominating Committee but Nominating Committee should work independently of Board influence. All chairs of committees should be on the Board; use the committee structure to build leaders – all committees should include non-board members. Best Practice: members should serve on a committee(s) before they are nominated to the Board. Best practice: The nominating committee should evaluate all members, analyze their skills and determine areas where the League needs particular skills sets. This session recommended the use of a skills survey (provided a sample) to identify members' skill sets. Nominating committees must represent the membership, not just the current board or "traditions" (i.e., that's how it's always been done).
- **Develop Leaders for Greater Impact: A How-to Session.** This session promoted the use of mentoring. If a member comes in with an idea, let them run with it as much as possible – don't worry about that it wasn't in the plan. Be cautious with funding until the idea is well laid out. But just because not a Board member, we shouldn't stop members' initiatives – as long as they are willing to work on it. If League mentors young people, realize that they most likely will move away – don't be alarmed, the hope is that they will move to another League wherever they go. Develop a brief job description for mentors, ask all members, not just board members if they want to be a mentor. Mentor should be sure mentee knows of all local and state meetings/events, go to coffee with mentee to help them understand the League structure and how it works. Be supportive if members prefer to focus on local issues OR prefer more to focus

on state or national issues – find a way to use their interests. Keep them involved, let them report on issues they are involved in. Be intentional about developing leaders. Book Clubs are good way to bring in new people and to start to get to know them for skills and talents. Teachers and retired teachers make good members – target them! Most want to join the League for its mission. Put emphasis on League’s roots in suffrage movement. Incorporate fund-raising into every event. Consider “dinner & discuss” activities to draw in new people (could be dinner and/or lunch depending on targets). Film discussion groups also are effective for attracting new members and determining strengths of existing members for development as leaders. Use Google Docs for communication and sharing.

- **Leading to Action: Leadership, Decision-making, Delegation:** Both Martha & Linda attended this session Friday evening after The Capitol Steps performance. Maybe because of time constraints, we agreed that this session was not particularly successful. Three or 4 LWVUS Board members outlined the types of leadership from “tellin” to “consensus.” The focus was on the handouts which described various leadership styles. The suggestion was for Boards to analyze (individually & together) the leadership styles of each person on the Board so as to work together more effectively.
- **VOTE411.org: Online Voters’ Guide System Training – PR & Fund-Raising** This session shared ideas of how to promote the use of VOTE411.org, how to create awareness, and how to find funders/donors for the program. Assure users that although address is asked for, it is never used other than to find information, including polling place, specific to this voter. This year LWVUS is entering info for all presidential candidates. The “average Joe” expects the League to provide Voters’ Guides. VOTE411.org has had some changes to make it more user friendly. LWVUS wants Leagues to continue to provide feedback to Megan Brown, LWVUS VOTE411 Coordinator. However, because of the League’s severe budget, all requests will be prioritized by cost and how necessary they are for effectiveness for all layers of the program. Suggestions for fund-raising specifically for VOTE411 costs: Leagues may use Ed Fund donations to fund VOTE411, most important suggestion is to **ASK** donors specifically to fund VOTE411.org. Sponsors can be recognized online but each sponsor will appear on the entire State’s pages. Sponsors may be listed on printed Voters’ Guides too. Ask for individual members donations for this – many members understand that this is a critical service and will want to support it specifically. Patty Griffin (singer who did concerts to promote voter registration) is a national sponsor. Talk to other groups, such as AAUW, they may want to participate if they can be shown as a sponsor. AAUW & other groups may also be willing to promote use to their members as a service to their members. The important thing is to ASK. Sponsorships by or promoting any political party or candidate, etc. are not allowed. How to promote: Bus wraps are surprisingly cost effective. Ads in bus shelters or on Metro (work across region, *e.g.*, via *LWNCA*). Social media, frequent tweets & Facebook posts (not just 1x). Link from website. Include on communications – encourage members’ to include on their personal emails, etc. Co-brand with newspapers of other media (local or statewide). Don’t’ be afraid to spend money on paid ads and billboards, etc. Make street overhang signs. Promote VOTE411.org regularly and often.
- **Coaching for Impact: A How-To Session.** This session was led by LWVUS Shur Fellows for the Membership & Leadership Development program. It was a review of some of the MLD material that coaches use. All Leagues and members can access this information from LWV.org in the

League Management section – the Develop Members & Leaders. The session emphasized use of the Event Planning Guidance – many attendees commented that this is very helpful to event organization and a record to pass on to incoming leaders. Other MLD guidance featured: “5 Steps to Develop New Leaders in Your League!”; “Power Thank You” –= thank members, leaders, donors, all volunteers, make them feel appreciated and included: the GROW-ME Coaching model: **Goal, Reality, Options, Will and Monitor & Evaluate.**

**Martha Cooper:** I chose sessions on Vote411.org basic training, making Twitter work for your league and DC statehood caucus. At Friday lunch roundtables, I joined the discussion about the opportunity to register local leagues as 501 (c) 3 entities instead of dual 501 (c) 3/501 (c) 4 entities. Linda reviewed the leadership styles workshop we both attended.

**Vote411.org: Online Voters’ Guide System Training – Basic.** This information session walked us through the process of establishing a site for local voters. It is up to the local league or leagues that share a voting district to write the questions and invite candidates to answer them. The candidates receive a username and password to fill in their own answers. Candidates only have access to their own entries. LWVUS takes care of the presidential elections. Megan Brown, who runs the site at the national office, provided all the slides from the presentation. It will be good to review them with all who are interested in VOTE411.org. This links to a webinar on how to set up a voters’ guide on VOTE411.org: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cminxHOh-lQ&feature=youtu.be>. The LWVVA will provide the referenda/VA Constitutional amendments we are to vote on and the pros and cons. The leagues take no positions on referenda. The Invitation to candidates to answer the questions and add biographical data should go to candidates one month prior to the publication date. It should be published online and in writing before early voting starts. The cost per voter varies from year to year. Recently it ranged from a high of \$0.35/voter in 2012 to a low of \$0.07/voter in 2015. We will share some costs for using VOTE411.ORG with LWVVA.

**Twitter 101** offered some basics in using Twitter. Some participants are actively using Twitter to get important messages to voters, legislators and collaborating organizations. With its 140 character limit, only 80 to 100 characters should be text because you want to include jpegs (pictures) and other links that take about 20 characters each. **The LWVUS hosts a League Facebook page that talks about new media. It is closed and you must ask to join.** When using Twitter it helps to manage your expectations. It will not be an overnight success. You need a long-term strategy. It can be a very helpful way to remind people of upcoming events and important dates (such as the start of early voting and the deadline for registering to vote in an election). It helps to follow coalition partners and ask them to re-tweet your tweets. Do the same for them. You can find Twitter links through email. Always be clear about the purpose of the tweet. In forwarding another’s tweet you put a (.) before the ‘@’ sign. Do follow elected officials on Twitter. Promoting debate can be unnerving. One TX leaguer promotes the voters’ guide to all TX state legislators. They recommended having two Twitter accounts, a league account and a personal one. Follow the best political reporters such as Cilliza who tweets on The Fix. Buzzfeed Politics is another good site to follow. For help with this medium contact Stephanie [sdrahan@LWV.org](mailto:sdrahan@LWV.org) and Kelly [kceballos@lwv.org](mailto:kceballos@lwv.org) at the LWV’s national office. An alternative to Twitter is Instagram. It seems more popular among young people. Buffer.com allows you to spread messages out.

You compose various messages and schedule when they get posted. Tweetdeck does this on Twitter. A more expensive app, sproutsocial.com will do this more effectively. LWVUS subscribes to it.

**Benefits of 501(c)(4) vs 501(c)(3) status for state and local leagues.** Thomas Carson a finance and tax consultant for the LWVUS, shared his expertise at a booth, at a roundtable discussion and an information session. He has worked with many Leagues throughout the US on this. He wrote a detailed manual on how to convert from a 501 (c) 4 to 501 (c) 3 status. He encourages any league considering this change to contact him for guidance. A league may operate as a 501 (c) 3 as long as no more than 20% of its expenditures go for lobbying. Typically leagues spend very little money on lobbying so that fits well with the guidelines for maintaining that tax deductible status. Converting all league expenses to a 501 (c) 3 simplifies bookkeeping and allows members and donors to declare their membership dues and donations as tax deductible. *I suggest LWVFC discuss this. I am not urging any changes at this time.*

**The DC Statehood** caucus advocated for full statehood for the non-federal portions of the District of Columbia. Because so many other avenues to bringing full representation in Congress to citizens of DC have failed, their current strategy is to seek statehood in the same manner that Tennessee and six other states have received it. DC citizens have no vote and only one representative in the House, none in the Senate. To achieve voting representation in both houses require a simple majority of votes and legislators in all other jurisdictions to vote on this. The DC representative can speak but cannot vote yet. State resolutions on this matter are helpful. Reluctance to granting DC full voting status are due in part to its demographics (76% democratic) and historical -- set aside as a national city in the constitution (10 miles by 10 miles). People often forget that the boundaries shrank when Arlington reverted to being part of Virginia. The citizens of DC advocating for this statehood call the new entity the 'State of New Columbia'. They affirm that is will be easy to shift its government from a city government to a state government. The DC government is financially viable, though Congress has oversight of its expenditures. More people live in DC than in Rhode Island and Wyoming.

Other caucuses were both issue-oriented and practical applications, focusing on Gun Control, Immigration; Engaging New Citizens: Naturalization Ceremony Registration; Developing Presentations; Successful Strategies in Voter Protection Battles; Criminal Justice; Gerrymandering & Redistricting; Breaking Voting Barriers for Transgender/Gender Expansive People; Successful Get Out the Vote (GOTV) tactics; Parliamentary Procedure; Developing Presentations; InterLeague collaborations; Making Facebook Work; Making Voter Information Work For All; Youth Registration tactics as well as LWVUS Budget Q&As and meet the LWVUS Board candidates. *Note: It takes a village to cover all the important and informative sessions at the LWV National Conventions!*

Martha & Linda are both very grateful that LWVFC let us be your delegates at the LWV 52<sup>nd</sup> National Convention on July 16-19, 2016. It gave us a strong sense of our history and the challenges we face in making democracy work for all. Thank you! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact either one of us: [mmcooper11@verizon.net](mailto:mmcooper11@verizon.net) or [garvelink@earthlink.net](mailto:garvelink@earthlink.net).