

BULLETIN

League of Women Voters
Arlington, Massachusetts
www.lwva.com

September 2020

Calendar

9/1	Tuesday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.	State Primary Election.
9/12	Saturday 2 p.m.	LWVA Board meeting at a location still to be determined, to be held outdoors with physical distancing. All members welcome. Watch your email for details.
	Fall 2020?	Art exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters, co-sponsored with the Arlington Center for the Arts. See page 5 for details.
	Saturday 10/24	Registration deadline for the November 3 election (10 days ahead).
11/3	Tuesday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.	General Election.

The League of Women Voters of Arlington Board thanks all the members who participated in the online vote in June for our two essential items: the budget and leadership for 2020-2021. Both items were approved.

We have been hoping to hold the postponed Annual Meeting this fall, but we'll probably have to wait till next spring.

Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
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Ann FitzGerald: Membership AnnFitz@rcn.com

Kim Haase: Bulletin Editor c.haase@comcast.net
Margaret Reiners: Bulletin Mailing mlreiners@gmail.com

Co-President's Message

I hope you all are safe and well during this difficult time.

In our old normal, I expect that I would have been writing about rides to the polls, encouraging voter registration, and asking you to volunteer at our Town Day booth. This year, I am writing about League-reimagined.

- Contactless communication: Our remember to vote signs are being placed around town — many thanks to Phyllis Maddox for organizing this.
- Virtual events: Joan Martin has been invited to speak about the League at the First Parish UU Women's Alliance Program on October 2nd.

Anne Linn continues to coordinate with the Arlington Center for the Arts so that we can hold a version of the art exhibition and program, Created Equal, our co-hosted event. We are planning to host a social distance board meeting this month, then will move back to Zoom.

I would also like to note with sadness the passing of Jean Potter, longtime LWVA member and a well-respected member of the Arlington community. She will be greatly missed. Please see page 12 in this bulletin for remembrances of Jean.

Angela Olszewski

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2020–2021

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Susan Born, Candidates Night	617-448-4179
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The BULLETIN is published monthly except during the summer and December by the League of Women Voters of Arlington, PO Box 461, Arlington, MA 02476.

How Did the Spring Election Go? What Is in Store for the Fall Primary?

By Patti Muldoon, Warden for Precinct 6

This spring's town election was unlike any other. Everyone was quarantined and Town Hall was closed thanks to the pandemic, yet the local election happened successfully.

The usual leadership was largely absent for this most challenging election, which needed novel planning and quickly. In a long-standing division of labor, both the Clerk and Select Board offices are responsible for administering elections.

Then-Town Clerk Stephanie Lucarelli was absent on long-term medical leave. She retired shortly before the election. Janice Weber, Assistant Town Clerk who was also a candidate for Town Clerk, had responsibility for maintaining the clerk's office. This was just part of the background for an already complicated election.

The Select Board hires election staff. Marie Krepelka, Select Board Administrator, was working some from home, but she was sick, too. In past years on election day, Marie would visit every precinct to address problems and ensure all was going smoothly, but her hands-on management wasn't possible this year, either.

Eventually the Select Board authorized Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine to manage the election. He started having weekly meetings with Select Board staff, Assistant Town Clerk, Facilities, Public Health, Town Counsel, and Jim O'Connor.

Jim O'Connor stepped into the election planning void in a big way. Jim has several roles in town. He is Assistant Town Meeting Moderator, Chair of the temporary Election Modernization Committee (EMC), and the long-standing election day warden for Precinct 20. (Note: Jim recruited and trained me as a precinct poll inspector then clerk before I became a warden for another precinct.)

On behalf of the EMC, Jim chaired public listening sessions about election plans as they developed. He attended all the Town staff meetings on elections and proposed many ideas that were implemented. He and I went with Facilities to all the polling locations to help establish new safety protocols such as determining voter entry and egress and laying out floor plans for where barriers and tables needed to be placed. We also helped to set up a new polling location for Precinct 20 at the Dallin School, as the previous location at a church/childcare center was no longer available. Jim designed the new precinct floor plans. He also trained via Zoom as many wardens and inspectors as could be available with two days notice on the new procedures.

I am very grateful for the way many Town staff and volunteers pulled together, working extra hard to create a safe and fair election. Facilities ordered and installed three heavy ballot drop boxes across town and made the plexiglass shields for voting booths and to protect the poll workers. Volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corp staffed the long election day, offering voters masks and sanitizers at all polling locations. This year's training was instrumental to the day's success.

Because the votes were so close and with concern that some ballots may not have been properly counted, a recount was requested for the Select Board race in all precincts and Town Meeting races in precincts 6 and 7. I don't know when the last recount in Arlington happened, but it was quite some time ago. Happily, the recount found that all race results stayed the same as previously announced (with some adjustments to the numbers of votes).

(Continued on page 5)

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Spring and Fall Elections (Continued)

Problems and Changes to the Spring Election

Thanks to quickly-passed state legislation, voters were able to safely vote by mail, regardless of whether they had an excused absence. Voters could either mail or use a Ballot Drop Box to leave their ballot without entering the polling location. Many voters chose the drop box option quite late into election day. While the League is in favor of vote-by-mail with or without a pandemic, the way Arlington implemented it resulted in challenges.

All the vote-by-mail ballots had to be opened manually, checked in and checked out against the voter rolls, then put through the precinct's ballot counting box. While being put into the old ballot counting boxes, the folds caused many jams. Each jam meant the warden having to find the police officer, get the key, and unjam the box. Once the ballots fell through the box many refolded, causing more jams within the box. The upcoming fall election will be the swan song – the farewell aria – for these legacy ballot boxes.

Ballots were accepted at the drop boxes until 8 pm on election day, then had to be delivered to the Town Clerk's office to be sorted, then delivered to the 21 precincts. At Precinct 6, the last of the ballots were received at 10:30 pm. Only then could we start to tally the ballots.

Precinct staffing was reduced from six all day workers plus two relief workers to three who worked the whole time plus one-third of a floating worker. As a warden, I worked from 7:00 am until almost midnight without being able to leave my precinct, according to the Town's restrictions.

The fall primary and general elections are expected to have many more voters than in the spring at our local town election.

News on the Upcoming Primary Election

VOTER OPTIONS for the September 1st State Primary and the Nov. 6th General Election:

- Request a ballot by mail and return it by mail.
- Request a ballot by mail and deliver it yourself to a drop box.
- Early voting in person at Town Hall.

VOTERS - DON'T WAIT! Please drop off ballots BEFORE Election Day so there is time to sort them into their correct precincts. Many of our hard-working inspectors are elderly. Please help us avoid having to tally ballots late into the night.

According to the election FAQ on the Town's website: "The Early Vote by Mail law allows Clerks the option of running ballots through the voting machines before Election Day, but we will not be doing that for the September 1st primary and will explore whether we can manage that for the November election."

I asked our newly elected Town Clerk, Juli Brazile, why not. She replied:

"They haven't issued the regulations yet, but we would have to declare a central tabulation location and without more information and old machines, I'd prefer to wait for the new machines and complete details. The basic concept is [that] one announces the date and time where we would scan ballots and it needs to be observable by the public. We can set up one or more machines and swap the cards as we shift to new precincts. With 21 precincts, I'd prefer to learn from others who are trying this."

(Continued on page 7)



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Spring and Fall Elections (Continued)

(Note: the Town is making plans to reduce the number of precincts. How that will play out is uncertain. Efficiencies might be improved as we have 21 precincts, but only 8 polling locations.)

Juli Brazile responded to concerns about the upcoming elections possibly causing even longer election work hours. "We will work on a better plan to get the final ballots to the polls that night. Which I think will require 7 runners because we may have to confirm to the State that we can get the final delivery there by 9 pm. A lot is happening behind the scenes that creates ripples for us."

The State allows running ballots through the voting machines before Election Day, but Arlington will not be doing that for the September 1st primary. The Clerk will explore whether her office can manage that for the November election. Accomplishing that would significantly reduce election day challenges and speed tallying results.

A CHANGE: The September primary and all elections going forward will no longer have voter check-out tables next to the ballot boxes. Arlington has done it this way as long as anyone can remember, but apparently the State doesn't require checking the voter list twice for each ballot. It is unclear if this once was required. This change will reduce the number of poll workers needed.

A GIFT: On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Arlington, I bought stickers saying "I Voted" and "Future Voter" for the Clerk's office to distribute at early voting and to the precincts for the primary and general election. They won't be included with vote by mail ballots. As has been done before, they should be offered along with a sign indicating that they are contributed by the League. It's not yet clear how they will be given out, since there will be no check-out table.

A PROBLEM: Check your primary ballot when you receive it to ensure you have the right precinct listed. Some voters have reported receiving the wrong ballot mailed to them.

Vote by Mail Information for Sept 1 Primary and Nov 3 Election

Ballots are being mailed - the deadline to submit an application for a ballot is August 26.

- Applications must reach the Town Clerk's office by August 26 for the Sept. 1 Primary.
- Applications must reach the Town Clerk's office by October 28 for the Nov. 3 Election.

Returning Your Ballot

Drop boxes are in place to return your ballot safely

You can mail it to the Clerk's Office (postage is paid) or use one of the three secure ballot return boxes. Before you put a ballot in a box, please be sure it is clearly marked for ballots.

- East Arlington - Outside the Fox Branch Library (175 Massachusetts Ave)
- Arlington Center - In front of Town Hall (on the lower plaza, pictured on page 9)
- Arlington Heights - Outside ACMI Studios (85 Park Avenue)

The [Elections Page](#) on the Town website has vote by mail forms and voter registration forms you can download.

(Continued on page 9)

Women's Suffrage Stamp Issued



On August 22, 2020, the United States Postal Service issued a [new stamp](#) honoring the passage of the 19th Amendment.

We'll all want to stock up on this one!

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Spring and Fall Elections (Continued)

Primary Reminders

- Submit your application for a ballot by August 26th
- Return ballots by 8 p.m. on September 1st

[Download a voter registration form or register online.](#)
[Look up your voter registration status.](#)

Track Your Ballot

When the Clerk's office starts mailing the ballots, you will also be able to see the date that the ballot is mailed to you and then the date your completed ballot is received using the Secretary of State's website tool [Track My Ballot](#). Please give the post office a few days before checking.



The drop box in front of Town Hall, 730 Mass. Ave.

Photo by Colleen Kirby

LWV and Other Groups Sue Postmaster General over USPS Changes

From the State League

On August 18, the League of Women Voters of the United States, the National Urban League, and Common Cause filed a lawsuit against the Postmaster General and United States Postal Service asserting that recent changes to postal service procedures and equipment presents an undue burden on fundamental right to vote, infringes on voters' free speech rights, and violates the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

The Postmaster General issued an announcement on Tuesday that the agency would suspend certain "operational initiatives" until after the election, though it did not offer many details. Many questions remain as to whether this suspension of initiatives covers the most concerning changes already made, such as the removal of hundreds of mail sorting machines and the treatment and timeframe for delivery of election-related mail. Furthermore, the erosion of trust and major delays that resulted from the changes to procedures and equipment remain.

"The League supports the US Postal Service, one of our country's oldest and most trusted agencies. Yet, even with the supposed suspension of changes to USPS's system, the damage has already been done," said **Virginia Kase**, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "The distrust has been sown. Voters are left confused and uncertain as they navigate how to vote safely during a pandemic. We must not allow the proposed changes to USPS to be implemented, for this election or any future election. We must restore voters' faith in our mail system."

The lawsuit, *National Urban League, et al v. DeJoy*, defendants intentionally made changes that would undermine the upcoming election. The lawsuit requests the court to weigh in on whether the U.S. Constitution was violated, restrict future action by the Postmaster General to implement nationwide changes to the mail system without proper oversight, and take immediate steps to mitigate the damage caused by these changes.

"As a century-old organization, the League understands the importance of being a credible and trusted beacon for American communities. The shenanigans that postal workers and USPS agency officials have had to endure are shameful," said **Celina Stewart**, chief counsel and senior director of advocacy and litigation at the League of Women Voters of the United States. "The taint of the Postmaster General's flippant changes will not be removed until a clear plan is outlined detailing how the agency will mitigate the damage done and establish transparency. Only then will trust begin to be restored for millions of individuals who rely on the vital services that the US Postal Service provides."

The League and its partners are represented by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and Arnold & Porter LLC.

"There is nothing more precious in the Constitution than the sacred right to vote, and the law will not and cannot stand idly by when that right is infringed for political purposes," said Kenneth Chernof, partner at Arnold & Porter.

Voters are strongly encouraged to act early with their voting plan this year, whether it involves voting by mail or voting in person. [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org) has timely updates and information related to voting options in all 50 states and DC.

LWVA, ACA Continue to Plan *Created Equal* Exhibition

August 1 was the deadline for submissions to the Arlington Center for the Arts' upcoming fall exhibition, *Created Equal*. Presented in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Arlington, MA, the ACA is excited to showcase artwork that exemplifies the mosaic of voices that contribute to our society, and to amplify voices of those most marginalized by societal oppression, racism, and discrimination.

The exhibition also celebrates the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment and the successes of the Suffrage movement, but it is not limited to this historic moment. It serves as a reminder that these rights are hard won and need to be protected and not taken for granted. The Suffrage fighters give us inspiration, courage and hope to move forward and face the struggles we see in our community, our country, and our world today.

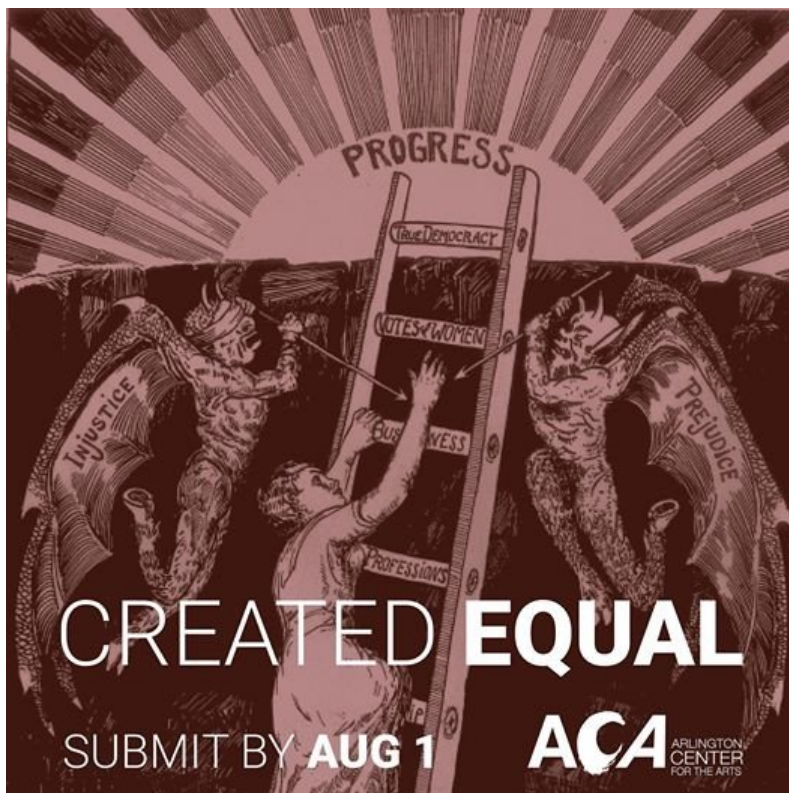
The exhibition was planned to run from September 25 through November 6, 2020, but the dates are likely to change. A public reception is hoped for, and an exhibition talk is also in the works. Some events could be virtual.

The exhibition will showcase art works in all forms and mediums that address concepts of fundamental rights and freedoms in our society. This includes, but is not limited to women's rights, civil rights, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, veteran's rights, disability rights, freedom of speech, voter rights, criminal justice reform, and environmental protection.

The Arlington Center for the Arts is pleased to welcome **Jill Harvey**, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator for the Town of Arlington and artist **Liz Shepherd** as our jurors for this exhibition.

Additional Programming:

- Our Opening Reception, when it happens, will feature Juror Awards presented to up to three (3) exhibiting artists, as well as a Voter Registration table if the reception takes place before the deadline.
- An exhibition in the ACA Hallway Gallery will feature a collection of prints of political cartoons created by artist and suffragette Blanche Ames. These cartoons, created between 1915 and 1920, depict a variety of political statements related to the suffrage movement and at the time, were published in *Women's Journal*. This exhibit will be on view for the duration of *Created Equal*.



In Memoriam: Jean Potter

Jean Potter, a member of the LWVA for 50 years, died July 3. She served as Director of the Arlington Heights Nursery School from 1971 until 2005, fostering the growth of generations of Arlington children. She leaves four children, including Margaret Potter, who now directs the AHNS. Jean's remarkable life story is told in the obituary at <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/jean-potter-obituary?pid=196480100>.

Jessie Bagley, AHNS Assistant Director, reported Jean's loss as follows:

It is with great sadness and heavy heart that I share with you the news that Margaret's mother, Jean, passed away peacefully on Friday morning. Jean's family was present and Margaret was by her side.

Jean was not only an incredibly gracious and kind-spirited person, she was also an inspiring and passionate leader, educator, mentor and advocate in the field of early childhood education. Her commitment and dedication to the field and her belief that every child is capable and should be treated with kindness and respect was the impetus for the growth and success of Arlington Heights Nursery School. To this day, under Margaret's leadership, AHNS still embodies Jean's core values and continues to provide children and families with the highest quality early childhood education experience.

We thank Jean for the powerful impact she has had on our lives as people and as early childhood educators. Her beautiful legacy is being carried forward by Margaret and all of the incredible AHNS teachers and staff who truly believe in the importance of early childhood education. Jean's impact will be felt for generations to come and she will always be remembered and dearly missed by her Arlington Heights Nursery School family.

Meredith Zona first became a member of the LWVA Board, as membership chair, when Jean was LWVA president. As a "newbie" to the Board, Meredith needed a lot of guidance, and Jean was always willing to accommodate. Meredith remembers one League-sponsored event for which Jean volunteered the use of her nursery school facilities because there were no other options. Jean continued to attend LWVA activities following her presidency, where Meredith would introduce her to newer members as "the nicest woman in Arlington," which Jean would always deny, even though it was so very true.

Kathy Fennelly recalls, "I met Jean at the Arlington Heights Nursery School. My older child had gone to a home daycare, but Jeff needed boys in his life, which AHNS provided. One day he came home and told me he didn't have any friends. As any parent would be I was alarmed. I called Jean and she told me to come the next day and visit. There was Jeff, playing with boys and girls, but hanging back when they moved to a play table. Jean went over and quietly whispered something in his ear and he joined the others. She told me that he'd soon get the hang of it. But it proved to me that she understood children and their parents. She became a lifelong friend."

Update on LWVMA-Supported Criminal Justice Bills

By Colleen Kirby

1. Not yet voted out of Committee. Support treatment not jail if an addict relapses. We are in an informal coalition with ACLU and various health care organizations advocating for this bill. This is in response to the SJC decision in the Julie Eldred case and would not affect a large number of individuals.

HB1343 - An Act relative to treatment, not imprisonment

Sponsored by: [Rep. Ruth B. Balse](#) (D)

08/06/2020 - H - Extension order filed (until 11/12/2020) - see

HB4929

SB937 - An Act relative to treatment, not imprisonment

Sponsored by: [Sen. Cindy Friedman](#) (D)

08/04/2020 - S - Extension order filed (until 11/12/2020) - see **SB2885**

2. May be part of omnibus or stand-alone bill not yet reported out of committee. (The omnibus bill is the police reform bill now in a conference committee.) Raise age of juvenile jurisdiction gradually to include 18-20 year-olds. We are in a formal coalition with Citizens for Juvenile Justice, who have prioritized this bill. The Senate has included an amendment to the omnibus bill supporting this, but the House does not include it, so it could come out in the conference committee as part of the omnibus racial justice bill. This would make a huge difference in the lives of 18-20 year olds who are caught up in the criminal courts: DYS is a far better caretaker of young people and understands how to address their particular developmental needs.

HB3420 - An Act to promote public safety and better outcomes for young adults

Sponsored by: [Rep. James J. O'Day](#) (D)

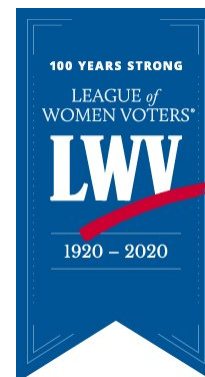
08/06/2020 - H - Extension order filed (until 11/12/2020) - see **HB4929**

SB825 - An Act to promote public safety and better outcomes for young adults

Sponsored by: [Sen. Joseph Boncore](#) (D)

08/04/2020 - S - Extension order filed (until 11/12/2020) - see **SB2885**

3. May be part of omnibus bill. H1386/S900 Expungement of certain charges against juveniles. This was a proposed amendment to the omnibus bill, so it is possible it could end up in the final conference committee bill. I am not sure if it is actually in the bill, but there are still people advocating for this, especially Citizens for Juvenile Justice and Greater Boston Legal Services, CORI project. I think the amendment was withdrawn from being voted on in the hope that it would be better to move the discussion into conference committee.
4. Reported favorably out of House committee. H3457 became H4607 to Expand the Parole Board from 7 people to 9, and to make sure at least 3 "shall have at least five years of experience in fields of psychiatry, psychology, social work, or the treatment of substance use disorder. One of those three members must be a licensed mental health professional, as defined in section 1 of chapter 123." This bill was shortened and voted out of Judiciary positively and is in House Ways and Means. (23 cosponsors) The companion Senate bill went to study. This bill is mainly being advocated for by the Community for Effective Public Safety.



(Continued on next page)

Update on LWVMA-Supported Criminal Justice Bills (Continued)

5. Reported favorably out of House and Senate Committees. Eliminate broad restrictions on prison visits. (Many advocates are also pushing for free or reduced cost telephone and video calls together with this bill.) H2047 reported favorably out of Public Safety Committee and is now in House Ways and Means. S1379 became S2662 and reported favorably out of Children and Families Committee and is now in Senate Ways and Means. This bill is being advocated for by many groups including Prisoners Legal Services, Greater Boston Legal Services, Families for Justice as Healing, Coalition for Effective Public Safety, UU Mass Action and many more.
6. H4652 to Decarcerate due to COVID-19 appears to be no action since July 31 deadline. But since COVID is still with us, I expect if there is any outbreak in a jail or prison, this bill could be brought back as a quicker way to decarcerate.

State and National Leagues Support Racial Justice

By Colleen Kirby

An informal coalition around racial justice bills has formed among the ACLU, the NAACP, Lawyers for Civil Rights, the Council for Juvenile Justice, and others. This group of statewide organizations has been working to ensure that a racial justice omnibus bill is passed. The Senate and House both approved bills, and a conference committee is working on reconciling them.

At the LWVUS convention in June, LWVMA was a charter member in drafting an emergency resolution, Racial Justice For Black People and All People of Color.

Most importantly, in early June LWVUS signed onto a letter with 400 civil rights organizations that specifically calls for an end to qualified immunity. We need to ensure Massachusetts has the law on the books as part of the omnibus bill, as we don't know when and if it will be enacted at the federal level. This issue is the main sticking point as the House and Senate bills are being reconciled. You can find the letter here:

<https://www.lwv.org/league-joins-partners-calling-congressional-action-police-violence>

We welcome new members at all times.

Thank you!

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_____ Bulletin: mailing _____ soliciting ads _____
_____ Membership
_____ Nominating Committee
_____ Publicity Writer
_____ Voter Service: Rides to the polls _____
_____ Candidates Night
_____ Voters' Guide
_____ Attend State League's Phonathon
_____ Be a discussion leader at local meetings
_____ Fundraising activities
_____ Offer meeting refreshments
_____ Post fliers and deliver brochures
_____ Host a meeting in my home
_____ Monitor elections for nonprofit organizations

FOLLOW ISSUES, KEEP LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY INFORMED

- _____ Congress/Presidency/Election Process
_____ Discrimination/Equal Employment/Civil Rights
_____ Education/Child Care
_____ Environment/Recycling
_____ Health Care
_____ Justice/Courts/Prisons
_____ Land Use
_____ Taxation/Budgets/Deficits
_____ Transportation/Urban Policy
_____ Voting Rights
_____ Warrant Articles Review
_____ Welfare Policies/Basic Human Needs
_____ Women's Issues
_____ Zoning/Community Development/Land Use

OBSERVE AT

TOWN BOARD MEETINGS*

- _____ Selectmen (Mondays)
_____ Redevelopment Board (Mondays)
_____ School Committee (2nd & 4th Thursdays)
_____ Conservation Commission (1st & 3rd Thurs.)
_____ Housing Authority

SKILLS LEAGUE COULD DRAW ON

- _____ Computer database _____ Fundraising
_____ Graphic design _____ Writing articles
_____ Desktop publishing _____ Other
_____ Web site maintenance
_____ Membership development
_____ Moderating meetings

BEST TIME TO CALL YOU:

(for phone tree reminders) Call before _____ o'clock

*Some of these can be seen on cable TV

Primary Election Plans

We aren't planning to provide rides for the state Primary Election September 1, because those who usually ask for rides are most likely to vote by mail-in absentee ballot.

September 2020

League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
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