



The Anchorage VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ANCHORAGE
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JUNE 2020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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	Jasmine Carter
	Keri Clark
	Margaret McDonagh
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Hi League Members: We are starting a new fiscal year 2020-2021. Our world has changed. We are dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and now protests and rioting across the country. Let's all take a moment to breathe and regroup. Let's focus on healing and moving forward.

LWV Anchorage Board Members



**CONSIDER
BECOMING A
BOARD MEMBER**

Former board members – consider accepting a board position.

Never been a board member -- attend a board meeting, become familiar with board member responsibilities and upcoming activities.

Currently, the position of "President" has not been filled for the term 2020-2021. LEADERS come in all shapes and sizes. League membership, just like other organizations, is filled with every-day LEADERS.

Are you motivated, do you look for solutions, believe in people, do you ask "why" and "why not", have a sense of humor, communicate well with others, are you willing to take risks, accept challenges, are you personally organized and accountable – if so, you are a LEADER. We NEED you!

Will you consider becoming a board member? LEADERS help plan and carry out strategies to implement the League mission. Join us in realizing this mission. You'll have a strong, committed Board working with you.

Contact Cari Zawodny, Vice President, if you are interested. Phone: 223-0477 or email: cariboltz@gmail.com

YOU'RE INVITED

You are invited to join **our monthly board meetings via Zoom**. A notice and agenda will be sent out each month to all LEAGUE Anchorage members which will include information on connecting via Zoom. Board meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month and begin at 7 p.m. They can last anywhere from 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. You may want to attend the entire meeting or maybe you are interested only in the discussion about a certain agenda item or items. The board welcomes your input, expertise and suggestions.

What better way to become informed and become involved in LEAGUE!

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Any person 16 years of age and older, male or female, may become a League member.

Important Information About Voting During a Pandemic



Normally in an election year, LWV Voter Registrars would be busy assisting newly naturalized citizens to vote; but in a pandemic when large gatherings have been deemed unsafe, Naturalization Ceremonies have been suspended. During the upcoming Fall, LWV Voter Registrars would normally be visiting local high schools to assist high school seniors who have reached the age of 18 to register to vote; but given the pandemic there is no certainty that school will resume on schedule or that the school schedule will allow time for voter registration activities. Even small civic events and gatherings, where attendees might take advantage of the presence of LWV Voter Registrars to update their registration status, are not being held.

However, LWV members may be called upon to provide information to potential voters in the upcoming August primary and November general elections about the options they have to exercise their right to vote. For that reason, the following information is shared to help respond to questions.

CHECK OUT YOUR CURRENT VOTER STATUS

Go to <https://lwvanchorage.org> and click on “CHECK YOUR VOTER INFORMATION”

Registering to vote is the first step to becoming a life-long voter.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

REGISTER TO VOTE OR TO UPDATE VOTER INFORMATION – Go to <https://voterregistration.alaska.gov> – have your Alaska Driver’s License or Alaska ID Card handy – You will need that information to complete your registration. Complete the registration:

For the **PRIMARY ELECTION (August 18) – by Sunday, July 1**
For the **GENERAL ELECTION (November 3) - by October 4.**

REQUEST ABSENTEE BALLOT: You can apply to receive your ballot by mail, by electronic transmission or by FAX, but timing is important. Absentee ballot applications can be downloaded from <http://www.elections.alaska.gov/doc/forms/C06C.pdf> Deadline for receipt of application by the State Division of Elections:

TO RECEIVE BALLOT BY MAIL

PRIMARY ELECTION (August 18) – Saturday, August 8
GENERAL ELECTION (November 3) – Saturday, October 24

TO RECEIVE BALLOT BY FAX OR EMAIL

PRIMARY ELECTION (August 18) – Monday, August 17
GENERAL ELECTION (November 3) – Monday, November 2

IF YOU VOTE ABSENTEE

- + Sign the return envelope sent with your ballot -AND-
- + Have your signature witnessed by an individual at least 18 years old.

NOTE:

- ♦ If decide to apply for and receive an Absentee Ballot but then decide to vote in-person on Election Day instead, you can still do so as long as you haven’t mailed your completed absentee ballot.
- ♦ There will be 160 plus Early Voting locations throughout the State if you decide to vote in-person prior to Election Day.
- ♦ The State Division of Elections will be conducting a major public relations campaign informing voters of the options to vote in this year’s elections due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Watch for news on the radio, TV and printed articles!



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ATTENDING LWVUS CONVENTION AS AN OBSERVER - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

This Photo by Un-

The LVWVUS Convention is being held via ZOOM due to the pandemic. The convention will be held Thursday June 25, Friday June 26, and Saturday June 27. Attending is a wonderful opportunity to hear great speakers and learn about LWV topics and concerns. Observer Registration is now open to all Members and is free of charge. As an Observer you can experience the Convention but you will not be a voting delegate. Registration is free for Observers.

If you are interested in attending the Convention as an Observer, you must register to receive the Video Conferencing access. Register at: <https://www.lwv.org/2020Convention>

Click on this link to find more information about the Convention: <https://my.lwv.org/district-columbia/national-capital-area/event/lwvus-2020-convention-will-be-virtual>

Brief Overview of Agenda

Thursday, June 25 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. EDT

Keynote Speaker: Nora O'Donnell, CBS News Anchor

Friday, June 26 3 p.m.- 8 p.m. EDT

Plenary Session

Saturday, June 27 3 p.m. – 8 p.m. EDT

Plenary Session

Topics to be discussed and voted on by delegates:

2020 Proposed Convention Rules

Resolutions Process for Convention 2020

2020-22 LWVUS Board & Nominating Slate

2020-22 Proposed LVUS & LWVEF Budgets

2020-22 Proposed LWV Program

2020-22 Proposed ByLaws Amendments

CAUCUS PRESENTATIONS AT CONVENTION

Many caucus presentations are given by various leagues during convention. Due to the pandemic, these presentations will take place prior to actually convening the Convention.

Anchorage Youth Vote

Our very successful Youth Vote program students will be presenting

**“BUILD YOUR OWN YOUTH VOTE: GET THE TOOLS TO
EMPOWER YOUTH VOICE”**.

Presentation: **Monday, June 22, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. EDT**



RECAP OF OUR ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 25, 2020

Due to the pandemic, the annual meeting was held via Zoom. Eighteen members attended the virtual meeting.

Margaret McDonagh was thanked for her outstanding work during her terms as President. We welcomed new board member, Jasmine Carter, a former Youth Vote student. At the May 19th board meeting, Margaret McDonagh and Joyce Anderson were appointed to the board under the provisions of Article V, Section 1 of our By-Laws.

Board Member Reports

Margaret McDonagh, President, gave an overview of our work during 2019-20.

- ◆ Supported our ever-impressive Youth Vote students. See separate report.
- ◆ Planned for the Centennial Celebration – 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment.
- ◆ Donated \$1,000.00 to the Alaska State Museum’s traveling exhibit *Alaska Suffrage Star* which will be at the Loussac Library mid-May.
- ◆ Continued voter registration efforts at naturalization ceremonies, in high schools, and in community events by request.
- ◆ Continued our partnership with Alaska Common Ground and co-sponsored forums on climate change and the State budget.
- ◆ Submitted the necessary paperwork to become a 501(c)(3) organization.
- ◆ Had a fantastic “Roaring 20’s” Christmas Holiday party at Beth Nordlund’s home.
- ◆ Produced the Ballot Review for the April 7 Municipal Election.
- ◆ Long-time Board member Diane Mathisen sadly passed away in February.

Cari Zawodny, Youth Vote (YV) Coordinator, presented on Youth Vote activities.

- ◆ Bullying Prevention Awareness Campaign Grants. YV students created the application, selected grant recipients and provided training on safe messaging for bullying prevention to grantees. Over the past 3 grant cycles, 12 YV student-led projects have been funded – each receiving \$3,000-\$5,000 for their work.
- ◆ Youth Link – Anchorage Youth Development Coalition Youth Matter grant of \$4,000 to create a social media campaign “Youth Link” which is a multi-faceted project to connect young people to the resources available to them.
- ◆ People-Powered Fair Maps (PPFM): A three-phase Fair Maps Project to focus on census education and importance of fair maps, planning a mapping event and submitting a youth created map for consideration in the State’s redistricting effort. This project will involve a major fundraising effort by the League.
- ◆ Each League was allocated under the PPFM project \$250 to use for census education. YV students created a PSA on the Census with the help of an outside contractor.
- ◆ YV students workshop presentation June 2019 World Anti-Bullying Forum, Dublin, Ireland.
- ◆ YV students presented at the International Bullying Prevention Assoc Conference in Chicago.
- ◆ Selected to host a Caucus Presentation at the LWVUS Convention in Washington DC.
- ◆ Collaborated with numerous groups of partners.

Tina DeLapp, Treasurer, reported on our finances.

Our checking account balance is \$14,454.09 and our money market account has \$10,021.06 for a combined total of \$24,475.15. Detailed accounting was listed in the last Voter.

Tina DeLapp, Voter Service Chair, gave the following report.

- ◆ Our League registered 89 voters with five registrars participating in various voter registration activities. The Federal Court is moving away from having frequent naturalization ceremonies at the Federal Court House which only allows the naturalization of about 40 people at a time. The plan is to have large ceremonies (200+) away from the Court House four times a year. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic, all naturalization ceremonies have been put on hold.
- ◆ Due to the Covid-19, we opted to not participate in collecting ballots for the Anchorage Municipal Election from hospitalized or otherwise place-bound individuals.



Keri Clark, Board Member, reported on the conversion to 501(c)(3).

We started the process of converting to a 501(c)(3) organization in August 2018 by filing Articles of Incorporation with the State of Alaska. Changes had to be made to some language in the bylaws which were finalized at the 2019 annual meeting. A Conflict of Interest policy was completed in early 2020. The application was sent to the IRS in early March 2020 with an anticipated response in approximately six months. How the coronavirus situation will impact that timeline is unknown. Look for updates in future newsletters.

Shirley Pittz and Beth Nordlund, Board Members, gave the Program Committee report.

Many of the activities were outlined in the President's report. However, some activities have been suspended or delayed due to Covid-19.

- ◆ Will continue planning for the 19th Amendment celebration and in particular how we can support the *Alaska's Suffrage Star Exhibit* virtually and highlight the way suffrage evolved in Alaska.
- ◆ Plan to participate with other Alaska Leagues to promote passage of the *Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA)* and extension of the deadline for enactment of the *Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)*. The LWVAK has received federal grants to promote the passage. (See separate article in the VOTER.)

Pat Redmond, Board Member, reported on the 2020 Municipal Election.

- ◆ Once again we contracted with the Municipal Clerk's Office and produced the *2020 Ballot Review* for our recent Municipal Election. A total of 120,680 copies were printed and 111,678 were mailed to Anchorage residents within the Municipality. In addition, the *Ballot Review* was posted on our Facebook page and website, the Municipal Clerk's Election page, and distributed to local media as well as the Federation of Community Councils. This project is our largest fund raiser. It is a time-intensive project as there is a very short timeframe between the last Assembly action in late January and having the final proof sent to the printer in early March. If you wish to help in this endeavor next year, please send a message to Keri Clark at 907kclark@gmail.com.
- ◆ Our League phone received 51 calls asking for election information. There were questions about the cost (\$.70) for mailing back the completed ballots; many callers felt it was a poll-tax. The cost was noted on the top of the ballot return envelope. Ballot envelopes were accepted at City Hall even if the appropriate postage was lacking. The clerk's office had to reimburse the Post Office. This is an issue we need to consider as VBM continues. A "Letter to the Editor" commending Municipal Clerk Barbara Jones for conducting an outstanding election under very trying circumstances will be drafted.

Dues FY 2020-2021 (same as last year)

\$65.00	Individual Membership
\$97.50	Household (\$65 for 1 st member, \$32.50 for the 2 nd)
\$ 0	College Student Membership*
\$ 0	Youth ages 16-18 Membership*

*Based on current LWVAK and LWVUS policy

Adoption 2020-21 Budget

One item that was noted during the presentation was that the Youth Vote's *People Powered Fair Maps* project was contingent upon raising the necessary funds. Beth Nordlund, Board Member, reported she would approach the same groups that funded our big voter push for the 2019 Municipal election.

GOAL 2020-2021

Continue increasing the visibility and influence of League by informing and educating the community about the various levels of government and how they affect our everyday lives.



COMPLETE YOUR 2020 United States Census

Encourage your Family, Neighbors and Friends to COMPLETE their Census

- ◆ 2020 Census data will determine how billions of dollars are distributed to states and communities every year for the next 10 years.
- ◆ Census results have an impact on planning and funding for health clinics and highways, fire departments and disaster response, education programs such as Head Start and college tuition assistance, and so much more.
- ◆ Census data determines how many congressional representatives for each state for the next 10 years.
- ◆ Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to keep your information confidential.

The U. S. Census of 2020 is the 24th U. S. States Census. Other than a pilot study during the 2000 census, this is the first U.S. census to offer options to respond **online** or **by phone**, in addition to the option to respond on a **paper form** as with previous censuses. The Census records where people live on a particular date: Census Day, April 1, 2020. So, no matter when you respond to the Census, remember to answer the questions in relation to where you resided on Census Day.

If you need help completing the Census or have misplaced your form:

- ◆ Contact a Customer Service Representative
- ◆ Available every day from 7am to 2am Eastern Time: [844-330-2020](tel:844-330-2020)

Anchorage Daily News

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, SUNDAY, May 24, 2020

Thank You to Barbara Jones, Municipal City Clerk

By Margaret E. McDonagh, Outgoing President, LWV Anchorage

The Anchorage League of Women Voters wishes to acknowledge and thank Anchorage Municipal Clerk Barbara Jones and the entire team at the Anchorage clerk’s office for a well-planned and professionally executed municipal vote-by-mail election in the midst of a global pandemic.

Anchorage voters were lucky to already have a vote-by-mail system, and it did not happen overnight. Meticulous work has been done over the past few years to build, prove out and protect our vote-by-mail system. As 232,000 ballot packets were being prepared in early March and COVID-19 was taking hold in the U.S., some people called to postpone the election. However, our city was well-positioned to handle ballots and everything went ahead as planned.

More than 71,300 Anchorage voters mailed in or delivered their ballots to free neighborhood drop boxes during the quarantine time. This is impressive. More than 30% of our voters participated in a vote-by-mail system that is still new and had some unique aspects this year, such as a two-page ballot and a 70-cent postage requirement for mailing. Since the League of Women Voters is a group supporting voter access and fairness, we tracked all of these items and were happy to learn how the clerk’s office handled every aspect.

Because of COVID-19 social distancing and other health precautions, the municipal election team had to use fewer election workers to process ballots in a year when turnout was higher than usual. Our members were impressed with those working to get the job done and grateful for the continued texts and updates on the website and by email. Further, when we raised questions and concerns, Barbara Jones and her team answered our inquiries quickly and efficiently and we were able to pass information on to concerned voters.

We thank the Assembly members and city leaders who made vote-by-mail possible and commend the municipality for conducting an election during a crisis. We see the value of vote-by-mail and hope other entities such as the state of Alaska consider this system for future safe, secure, accessible elections.

LWVUS

Public Policy Positions

- ◆ **Equal Rights Amendment**
- ◆ **Voter Registration Advancement Act**



URGENT: PLEASE CONTACT **SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI AND SEN. DAN SULLIVAN**

The League of Women Voters of Alaska received two grants from LWVUS to advocate and educate for the following:

- * The Equal Rights Amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 6, a bill to remove the deadline date now that the required number of states ratified this Amendment.
- * The Voting Rights Advancement Act, Senate Bill 561, a bill to update the Voting Rights Act of 1965 after SCOTUS struck down part of the Voting Rights Act in 2013 in *Shelby County vs Holder*.

The ERA and VRAA bills are now in the Senate after passing the House. LWVAK has organized a seven-member committee representing the four local Leagues to work on the LWVUS grant requirements. Joan Diamond, LWV Anchorage, represents our League on the Committee. LWVAK will send out periodic Action Alerts throughout the summer and early fall; and is also working with other groups interested in these bills. One of the grant requirements is to report the number of contacts made.

CONTACT OUR TWO SENATORS AND STRONGLY URGE THEM TO CO-SPONSOR AND/OR SUPPORT THESE TWO BILLS.

***The effort of each LWVAK member is needed to get the word out that
these bills need to heard and passed.***

Remember that your email does not have to be long – 3 or 4 sentences expressing your support is sufficient. The final step is to contact Joan Diamond, LWV Anch member and LWVAK Grant Committee member, and let her know you contacted Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan and if you received any responses – buddy4@ak.net.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: Co-sponsored both bills. She is encouraging more bipartisan support. Send an email thanking her for her support and in a sentence or two why we feel the bills are important.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Has not co-sponsored either bill. The LWVAK grant committee has asked him to explain his thinking about each bill and we hope to hear from him soon. Send a brief email asking for his support on both bills going forward.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email Go to senate.gov
Select your state at “*Find Your Senators*” box on top, left-hand side.

Phone
Sen Sullivan 907-271-5915 or 202-224-3004
Sen Murkowski 907-271-3735 or 202-224-5301

Mailing Address
Sen Sullivan 510 L Street, Suite 750, Anchorage, AK 99501
302 Senate Hart Office Bldg, Washington DC 20510
Sen Murkowski 510 L Street, Suite 600, Anchorage, AK 99501
522 Senate Hart Office Bldg, Washington DC 20510

TALKING POINTS

Equal Rights Amendment

- ⇒ Introduced by Alice Paul in 1923, passed by Congress in 1972, and crossed the 38-state threshold for ratification in 2020. Passing S. J. R. 6 would be a fitting way to celebrate the 19th Amendment 100th anniversary.
- ⇒ Women’s history in the U. S. illustrates the unequal view that society has created for the female gender. The suffrage movement took years of determination and protesting before it was successful. Even with that success, women still have little power in this country unless it is offered by men.
- ⇒ Women have made great strides, but many of these advancements have come as the result of laws or court decisions which can be overturned by a Constitutional Amendment.
- ⇒ Additionally, women comprise about 50% of the population but hold a mere 25% of the state and federal government positions, are represented by 5% of CEO positions and 33% of state court judges.
- ⇒ Women have made great strides in many areas, but many of these advancements have come as the result of laws or court decisions which can be overturned by a Constitutional Amendment.
- ⇒ Women continue to battle discrimination in the form of unequal pay, workplace discrimination, domestic violence, and more. We must address the root cause of inequality by amending our Constitution with a clear statement that equality of rights shall not be denied on account of sex.
- ⇒ The ERA will encourage further legislative progress toward gender equality and allow the courts to scrutinize sex-based discrimination. We are in the throes of a pandemic the likes of which we have never experienced in our lifetimes. The COVID-19 era is still an unknown. As the danger subsides the passage of the ERA will be even more important to assure that gender is not used to deny civil rights and that ethnicity, social class, or income levels are used to hinder equal access to public services.

Voter Registration Advancement Act

- ⇒ States guilty of showing bias toward groups based on ethnicity, race, or social status would fall under a modernized preclearance requirement for any changes to the state-level voting laws. Former preclearance requirement was struck down in 2013. Some states have a history of imposing voting regulations/processes that hinder voting for certain groups of people. Since 2013, attempts to limit voting for certain groups of people have included last minute polling place changes, unequal allotment of voting equipment and materials, closing polling places all together, requiring voter photo ID’s costing the voter money, gerrymandering voting districts so that various groups are concentrated in fewer districts. When SCOTUS issued its ruling in 2013, it left the door open for modernizing the preclearance process, and this effort is the VRAA.
- ⇒ The Constitution grants the right to vote to all eligible 18 year old citizens. There are six Amendments that address voting rights. Yet actions are taken at the state level to hamper voting rights for some citizens. The VRAA offers a way to stop these practices and protect the voting rights of all citizens.
- ⇒ At one time, Alaska was subject to preclearance, but is no longer as it fulfilled its obligations under preclearance, obligations mainly relating to language issues.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME
TO CONTACT OUR SENATORS**