

League of Women Voters of Wood County WV

President: Charmaine Dotson 304-428-1076, cyde6262@suddenlink.net
Local Voter: Kathy Stoltz, 304-295-7880, ksstoltz@suddenlink.net
LWVWV www.lwvww.org LWVUS www.lwv.org

2020 General Election Calendar

- Now** - Oct. 28 Voters may apply for absentee ballots*
Sept. 18 Mailing absentee ballots to voters begins
Oct. 8- 14 Sample ballot published during this period
Oct. 13 Last day to register to vote
Oct. 21-31 Early in-person voting at Judge Black Annex
Oct. 27-31 Early in-person voting at Community sites**
Oct. 27-Nov. 2 Sample ballot published during
this period
Oct. 28 Absentee ballot requests must be in the County
Clerk's office by this date
Nov. 2 Deadline to hand-deliver absentee ballot to Clerk's
office.
Nov. 3 GENERAL ELECTION DAY
Nov. 9 Canvass by County Commission
Absentee ballots postmarked no later than Nov. 3
and received before the canvass will be counted.

*Absentee ballot applications

As most are aware by now, absentee ballot applications will not be sent to every registered WV voter as they were for the June Primary. The League joins other groups in continuing to advocate for this, but so far the Secretary of State's office says it will not be done. (See page 2)

Voters can obtain an application in several ways:

- Request by phone, fax, or email to the County Clerk and one will be sent to you.
(www.woodcounty.com)
- Print the form from either the County Clerk's or the Secretary of State's website (www.sos.wv.gov), fill it out and send it to the County Clerk.
- Use the online portal at Go Vote on Secretary of State's website to complete and submit your application. (Note that filing the application this way requires a digital signature that will be compared to the signature on the registration records. People have been reporting difficulty producing a legible signature using a mouse.)
- As noted on the form, any voter can check the box for illness as a reason to get an absentee ballot.
- Due to possible mail delays, apply as soon as you decide to vote absentee.

** Lubeck Volunteer Fire Dept., Mineral Wells Volunteer Fire Dept., Vienna City Bldg., Williamstown City Bldg.

e-Voter

August 2020

We're back – sort of

Obviously League activity has been very limited since mid-March as we all try to stay safe during the pandemic. Sadly our annual meeting and pre-Primary candidate events had to be cancelled. We adopted the essential business of the annual meeting by email.

The board met in July outdoors and again regretfully concluded that we cannot have the kind of public candidate forums that we usually do. We will be cooperating with WTAP for a televised debate for Parkersburg mayoral candidates. The Voters Guide will be published in the Parkersburg News & Sentinel and posted online and on Facebook.

The board will met again on September 8th at 10 a.m. spread out on Jane Burdette's patio. We will keep you informed of dates and any and all new information you may need about the election.

The 2020-2021 LWVWC Board of Directors

President	2019-2021	Charmaine Dotson
1 st Vice President	2019-2021	Kathy Stoltz
2 nd Vice President	2020-2022	June Rhodes
Secretary	2020-2022	Mary Ann Layne
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	2020-2022	Jane Burdette
	2020-2022	Kathy Moran
	2019-2021	Lydia Cobranchi

Help Wanted



Wood County Clerk Mark Rhodes is looking for more poll workers. Having as many regular polling places open as possible on Election Day requires a lot of poll workers, and many of the "regulars" are sitting out this year's elections because of health concerns. Younger workers are especially welcome. Anyone interested can contact the Clerk's office for more information.

If there aren't enough poll workers for all the precincts, precincts can be consolidated as they were for the Primary. *Voters whose usual voting location is changed will be notified by the Clerk's office of the new location.*

You may print absentee ballot applications and give them to others. Instructions for those assisting a voter in filling it out are on the form.

LWVUS Convention



Voting By Mail

Members of the LWVWV board have been meeting with representatives of other interested groups to discuss election related issues and share concerns with the Secretary of State.* (See note in column to right) This group strongly favored having applications for absentee ballots sent to all registered voters, as happened before the Primary. Despite half the votes in the Primary were cast absentee. With the Governor’s emergency order not currently in effect, the Secretary announced that this would not be done for the General Election. Some counties had problems handing the increased volume of applications and ballots. The myth persists that voting by mail leads to election fraud even though there is no evidence of this occurring in the states that have years of experience with mailed ballots

When you apply for an absentee ballot, the information you provided is compared to registration records to make sure that all of the information matches. If it doesn’t, the voter will be notified. Only when it’s verified that the applicant is in fact a registered voter will a ballot be sent.

The ballot has a double envelope so that when returned it can be verified that it came from the person entitled to use it without revealing the votes inside. The actual ballots are then scanned by a device, but votes not tallied until the polls close on Election Day. That’s why Wood County can announce absentee vote totals on election night. State laws vary as does equipment used, which is why vote counts can be delayed beyond election night in some places.



The political parties aren’t the only ones having virtual conventions this year. The LWVUS scrambled to create a new kind of convention when the planned June event in Washington DC had to be cancelled. Pre-convention caucuses and the plenary sessions were virtual with participants from all over the US. Without the expense of travel and lodging, many more leagues than usual were able to have delegates and observers. All 50 states were represented by a total of 1241 voting delegates.

Convention action adopted the following bylaw amendments that affect all local leagues.

- This language was added to Policies “*The league is fully committed to ensure compliance—in principle and in practice—with LWVUS’ diversity, equity, and inclusion policy.*”
- Student member was defined and per member payment to LWVUS for student members waived.

New officers and directors were chosen. The new LWVUS president is Deborah Turner, MD, JD. She currently resides in Nebraska. Her impressive resume is in the “About Us” section on www.lwv.org



When the WV Legislature convenes in 2021 there will be quite a few new members. Three state senators and seven delegates were defeated in the Primary, all Republicans. Four senators (3-Dem, 1-Rep) and twenty delegates (8-Rep, 11-Dem, 1-Ind) declined to run again.

Conducting elections during a pandemic has brought to light a myriad of questions about what could and what could not be done within existing state election laws and what could and could not be funded using money from the federal government for pandemic-related issues. Governor Justice chose not to call a special session of the Legislature so the Secretary of State had to make decisions based on interpreting existing laws and guidelines that varied according to whether or not there was a declared state of emergency.

The League will continue to advocate for some changes in election laws to make voting more accessible whether or not there are unforeseen circumstances at election time.

**I am a member of this group and would like to hear about your experience if you had any kind of difficulty registering, applying for an absentee ballot, receiving a ballot, voting in person, etc. Wood County is fortunate to have an efficient County Clerk’s office, but neither they nor the Secretary of State can fix glitches they don’t know about.*

Kathy Stoltz ksstoltz@suddenlink.net



August 18 was the 100th anniversary of the day when one vote by one young Tennessee legislator completed ratification of the 19th Amendment. He changed his mind from no to yes on the urging of his mother. The amendment didn’t mean that all women got to vote, or that all women wanted to, but it was a giant step in the ongoing process of assuring that all Americans have the right to vote in a system that is accessible to them. For the same 100 years the League of Women Voters has been working toward that goal.

Elections are run by states, counties, and cities. Barriers to voting have been erected at all of those levels. They can be knocked down by a constitutional amendment, a change in a law, lawsuits, and by movements led by citizens clamoring for change.

The President marked the 100th anniversary by pardoning Susan B. Anthony for her crime of voting for Ulysses S. Grant for president in 1872. Ms. Anthony likely would have declined the pardon. She was tried by an all-male jury and not allowed to testify on account of her sex. She refused to pay the \$100 fine. She did not believe she had committed a crime.

This piece by Lynn Sherr and Ellen Goodman about the centennial was a good one.

<https://billmoyers.com/story/the-mother-of-all-celebrations/>

If you’ve paid your dues for 2020-21, THANK YOU. If not, the treasurer will be happy to receive your check payable to LWVWC at 1 Fox Hill Drive, Parkersburg WV 26104. Dues are \$45 (plus \$25 for each additional member at the same address) Note that a limited number of memberships for **new** members at \$25 for the first year are available.