



PRESIDENT'S LETTER – APRIL 2020



It's time to say farewell to all of you. It was a tough decision to step down after the first year of my 2-year term. I served 4 years in the leadership of my local League and now 3 years on the LWVCO Board. It's time to move on.

I gladly came to the LWVCO board because the board was determined to develop a strategic planning foundation to change, modernize, and move our organization forward and to enhance the working relationship between the state office and local Leagues. That Plan was developed in the Spring of 2018, and still guides our work. The board vowed that the LWVCO would become a "force to be reckoned with." The LWV would no longer be a study-club for retirees but would become an outward-focused organization more relevant to the community. I am so very proud of the teamwork of the LWVCO board, staff and members in embracing and moving this Plan forward. The Plan has laid the foundation for a strong non-profit organization that can facilitate the reason we all joined the League – to adopt sound public policy. We are making some progress. There is still a great deal of work to do. I believe there are some Big Hairy Audacious Goals ahead!

I thank the countless members across the state with whom I worked over the last 3 years; you work tirelessly every week for the LWV in your community. I enjoyed getting to know you. I wish I could name you all individually. The President's Calls grew and were well received and well attended. Board Briefings effectively communicated our work in a more timely manner. You are committed to the mission of this organization, defending our democracy in a non-partisan manner. I applaud you!!

I would like to thank individual board members, staff, and members. Initiatives outlined in our Strategic Plan, came to fruition because of their hard work.

- Judy Beerbaum led our work on Governance this year. Judy always had a strategic perspective. She tells her truth, assisting with the Executive Director task force and then working on the tough jobs: policies and procedures, nominating committee, bylaws.

- Lena Brown worked on the Voter, special projects and shared her passion for the environment.
- Gerry Cummins continued to lead Voter Service and assist local Leagues with their Voter Service questions.
- Jean Fredlund worked on policies and procedures and action and advocacy.
- Beth Hendrix led our communications and fundraising efforts, the use of tele-conferencing, partnership expansion, data collection, coordinated the office and staff, and generally kept our operations moving forward.
- Toni Larson worked on action and advocacy, Legislative Action Committee, census and redistricting.
- Cameron Manning kept the office, website and operations running smoothly.
- Barb Mattison took on fund development, starting a more diversified portfolio of fundraising strategies.
- Jean McGuire worked tirelessly on behalf of the local Leagues, developing a local League support program, revising the grants program, improving the document library and launching webinar trainings. Jean enthusiastically led our 100th anniversary efforts.
- Andrea Mitchell was always there to document our meetings, assist with new evaluation processes and add her wisdom to the Executive Team, technology, and bylaws.
- Rionda Osman became our first technology director transforming websites across the state and linking our state network for the first time. Our association management system is now national. Rionda also took on the challenge of data management and is linking LWVCO with the LWVUS data program.
- Cath Perrone continued to lead the effort on the vitally important VOTE 411.
- Bonnie Seals, led us through our first audit, moved the office to a remote professional accounting system and watches over our finances and investments.
- Linda Sorauf and Sylvia Bernstein, my personal heroes, took on action and advocacy around the issue of National Popular Vote from the grassroots and developed a statewide program that links local Leagues. Thanks for teaching us!
- Andrea Wilkins led the Legislative Action Committee through an interesting and challenging year helping to bring our legislative letter online.

I thank the board members of previous years who have moved on but laid the groundwork for the organization to change and grow! You know who you are!

Finally, I am thrilled to leave LWVCO in the capable hands of the new diverse slate of officers assembled under Ruth Nerenberg's leadership on the nominating committee. Thanks, Ruth N.!

Get in trouble: good trouble, necessary trouble, John Lewis.

Onward!

Ruth Stemler
President