LWV LEHIGH COUNTY VOTER

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County

February 2019 Volume 67, Issue 5

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Mark your calendar:

Feb. 11 Hot Topics Luncheon "Election Trends" at the Superior Restaurant, Emmaus

Feb. 21 Redistricting Town Hall at Muhlenberg College

March 11 Hot Topics Luncheon "The Work of the Wildlands Conservancy and its Impact on the Local Environment"

President's Message

Dear League Members:

Legislative interviews are coming!

In recent years, members of our league have contacted and spoken with our local legislators on behalf of our local League and the Pennsylvania League. As you know, the purposes of these legislative interviews are:

• To learn where legislators stand on specific issues so the League can be a better advocate on our positions.

• To educate legislators about issues the League cares about and to let them know our position on those issues.

• To help Leagues build a relationship with their legislators.

We are ready to start the process of contacting the local offices of our nine legislators to schedule interviews using the following questions about current issues recently received from the state League.

1. Voting and Elections Modernization

2. Redistricting Reform

3. Criminal Justice Reform

4. Environmental Protection

The packets containing a cover letter and these questions are posted at the top of the webpage "Legislative Interviews" in the "Special Interests' section of our website. Scroll down for the reports submitted by members who interviewed all nine of the state legislators representing Lehigh County.

As reports are due to the state League by March 15, the appointments need to take place in February. If you would like to lead or join the team of members interviewing your legislator, please contact Jan Little.

Running for Local Office Workshop 2019

On January 26, workshop attendees learned how to run a successful campaign for local office in Pennsylvania in 2019. Local League members Ken Mohr, Ann Bartholomew, Doris Glaessmann and Jan Little joined Dr. Kellen Gracey, political science department, DeSales University, and student volunteers to put on this

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January Hot Topics Luncheon

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not. –The Lorax

Karen Feridun, founder of Berks Gas Truth, presented "The State of Fracking in PA in 2019." The original topic was "Electoral College and Electoral Reform" but Dr. Kellen Gracey was unavailable. Feridun was scheduled for the luncheon on April 7 but she was kind enough to fill in at the last minute.

Almost 50 attendees listened to Feridun give a remarkable overview of the history of hydro fracking for natural gas in our state starting in 2005 to date.

In 2005, a national energy bill included the exemption of hydraulic fracturing from the Safe Drinking Water Act to date. But, natural gas is not only used for heating

Continued on Page 2

President's Message (continued from Page 1)

event at DeSales University Center. Gracey made the opening remarks. Lehigh County Executive Phillips Armstrong spoke about preparing oneself to be a candidate. Pete Leffler, state editor, The Morning Call, shared how to work with the press. Ed Hozza, Lehigh County Democratic Committee and a representative from the Northampton County Republican Committee spoke about working with your political party. Naturally, Tim Benyo, chief clerk, Lehigh County Board of Elections, reviewed the required paperwork. Ken Mohr facilitated a panel discussion "Running a Successful Campaign" with Parkland School Director Marie Maritch; Allentown City Council member Julio Guridy; Lehigh County Commissioner Nathan Brown and Upper Milford Township Supervisor and LWV Lehigh County member Joyce Moore. President, LWV Lehigh County Janet Little made closing remarks. There will be more information about the workshop In the next issue of The Voter.

Board members

Erin Ondush and Audrey Danek are stepping down after serving on the board during the first half of this term. We appreciate the active roles they filled during this time. Erin sent messages about our Hot Topics Luncheons that contributed to increased attendance. Audrey attended naturalization ceremonies with Caryn Shoenthal. We wish Erin and Audrey the best in their new endeavors.

Intern

Emma Lewis, a senior at Muhlenberg College, has joined our local League as an intern for the spring semester. You can read Emma's bio inside this issue. Welcome, Emma!

January Hot Topics Luncheon (continued from Page 1)

buildings and powering vehicles. Many industries in the U.S. and other countries use the gas to manufacture products such as plastics. (This relationship is described in detail on the "Shale" web page in the "Special Interests" section in our website.) Finally, Feridun listed the many ways hydro fracking has impacted the environment in our state and other gas-producing states. She described the regulations that the Delaware River Basin Commission is considering that would ban hydro fracking in the watershed. Yet, the regulations enable drilling elsewhere. Water from the basin would be transported to these drilling locations and waste would be trucked in and buried. We have been following environmental groups' campaign asking municipalities to sign a resolution against the regulations.

Feridun pointed out that our state government should be planning for the impact of these industries now and in the future when the gas is gone. Pennsylvania's Better Path Coalition's "Article 1, Section 27 campaign" seeks to tell the government just that. Named after the often-disregarded environmental rights amendment to the PA Constitution, the campaign started on Election Day. Then, their volunteers gathered signatures at their polling locations on the petition. On January 28, children dressed as the Lorax delivered copies of the petition, as well as copies of the book *The Lorax* to every state legislator and Governor Tom Wolf.

More information can be found on the "Environment" web page in our "Special Issues" section of our website.

February Hot Topics Luncheon

The League of Women Voters of Lehigh County will present the topic "Election Trends" at the February Hot Topics Luncheon. Dr. Christopher P. Borick, associate professor of political science, Muhlenberg College, and director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, will share his perspective on how voters see the issues and how that may translate into the choices they make in the voting booth in 2019.

The public is invited! Please tell your family, colleagues and friends. The luncheon will be held in the banquet room at the Superior Restaurant, 102 State Road, Emmaus on Monday, February 11. It will begin at 11:30 a.m. We hope many of you will join us. This is a very timely and important topic. To make a reservation, please contact crizzy49@yahoo.com or call 610-432-1456 by Thursday, February 7. The cost of the buffet luncheon is $11 payable at the door or you can listen to the speaker without lunch.

January Board Notes

The Board of the Lehigh County League of Women Voters met Thursday, January 10, 2019, at the Rittenhouse Village of the Lehigh Valley. Here are highlights of the meeting.

Treasurer Barbara Williams reported on second quarter and budget numbers for the period ending December 31, 2018. The treasury balance for the month ending December 31 is $18,447.45.

Board members decided to work once again with the League's VOTE411 program in gathering candidate information for our upcoming Voters Guide. The next election is a municipal one which will make it more challenging for us to use the Internet for gathering information. Not all local candidates use email which is a requirement for participating in VOTE411. However, board members felt that digital is being used more these days and that we should move in that direction. Our popular guide will continue to be published by The Morning Call and distributed by us.

President Janet Little reported on progress in preparing the 2019 Government Directory for printing. The board voted to proceed with printing a full directory for 2019. At this point, four donors have responded to our solicitation letters for printing funds.

Molly Faust

Secretary

Membership February 2019

Our yearly membership drive is now over. Thank you to all our members that renewed and contributed to our education fund. We are currently updating our membership booklet. You should receive it in March. If you did not send in your renewal it's ok. We can add it late. Our dues are $70. Please send it to: Margie Dunn, 8411 Carpet Rd, New Tripoli 18066. With all the political problems lately, we need all the members we can get to keep people informed.

I am pleased to announce we had five new members join our League since December 2018: Rochelle Kaplan and Bob Elbich, of Fogelsville, Louise Dillensnyder, of Emmaus, and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau, of Zionsville, and student member Emma Lewis, of Allentown. Emma is a senior at Muhlenberg College majoring in political science. She has offered to work with our local League during the spring semester as an intern.

Also, Shawn Strauss is now Shawn Younis. Her new email is sstrauss323@gmail.com. Kaitlyn Moyer is no longer a student. Her new email is Kmmoyer95@gmail.com.

Please add their names and changes to your membership booklet.

Save the date February 21, 2019 for Redistricting Town Hall

A Redistricting Town Hall will be presented by the Pennsylvania Political Science Association in conjunction with Muhlenberg College and Lehigh Carbon Community College 6 p.m. Thursday, February 21, 2019. The event will be held in Moyer Hall at Muhlenberg College.

Panelists include Carol Kuniholm, chair of Fair Districts PA and 1st vice president of the League of Women Voters, Jill Greene, executive director, PA League of Women Voters, Lehigh County Commissioner Amanda Holt, state Sen. Mike Folmer, R-48th, chairman, Pennsylvania State Government Committee, Dr. Christopher Borick, professor of political science and director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, and special guest panelist U.S. Congresswoman Susan Ellis Wild, D-7th.

Kuniholm

Greene

Holt

Folmer

Borick

Wild

2019 Government Directory Update

For the second year in a row, we are publishing a full directory for Lehigh County. This time, it will feature the results of the 2018 General Election and the latest information from staffs of our county's municipalities, school districts, county government and local courts.

The process began in late September 2018 when we mailed invitations to the staffers to email the results of their review of the online directory to our webmaster. By early October, one third of the 45 offices responded to the invitation. This process saved a considerable amount of volunteer time and effort and established the staffers as partners in updating the directory.

Next, we needed to contact the offices of the 30 municipalities and school districts that remained to invite them to follow the same review process. Cecilia Birdsell, Elizabeth Bodien, Lynn Kokolus, Jan Little, Ann McManus, Ken Mohr, Terry Schettini, Mary Anne Stinner and Tom Ulrich accomplished this by Thanksgiving. Later, Tim Benyo sent the Election Calendar to Jan Little. Finally, Jan Little contacted the staffs of the candidates elected in the mid-term election and consulted the websites of the statewide and national offices.

All along, as she received the corrections or approvals electronically from the staffs, Jan Little made the changes to the online directory. Using these changes as a guide, Kaitlyn Moyer typeset the printed form of the 2019 directory. In January, Jan, Kaitlyn and Trevor Little coordinated their efforts to make sure that the information, punctuation and formatting was the same in both forms of the directory.

We are now asking the staffers to review the current draft of the printed directory and sign off on their listing electronically. Once the sign off is complete, we can send the final draft to the printer.

We look forward to distributing printed copies of the 2019 Government Directory for Lehigh County at Hot Topics Luncheons scheduled for the spring. We will depend on volunteers to distribute copies throughout Lehigh County.

As usual, the back cover will feature the final list of names of the companies that donated at least $150 toward the cost of printing the directory. Audrey Danek, Fran Derhammer, Mary Erdman, Molly Faust, Jessica Ryan and Jan Little followed up with the companies and organizations that received letters soliciting donations last October.

Thank you to the following sponsors for donating at least $150 to the LWV-Education Fund: Barry Isett & Associates, Inc., Keystone Consulting Engineers, Lehigh County Medical Society and Peter K. Ryan, Realtor.

We are very proud of everyone who participated in this effort. We will continue to maintain contact with the staffers so the online directory continues to be up to date. This will make developing the Government Directory for 2020 even easier.

Welcome Emma Lewis

New member Emma Lewis is a senior at Muhlenberg College majoring in political science with specific interests in American government and politics, reproductive justice and women's rights and voting issues. Her hometown is Sellersville and she loves Philadelphia sports teams, watching movies, seeing Broadway musicals and reading.

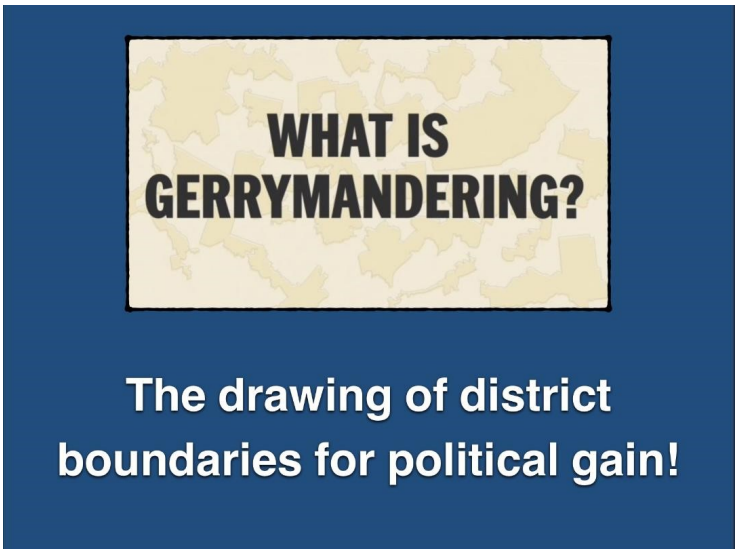
Emma will be serving on the board as an intern for the spring semester. Her first project will be setting up the League's VOTE411 program in gathering candidate information for our upcoming Voters Guide for the Municipal Primary.

Voter turnout for the 2018 midterm elections reached new highs: in all, an estimated 113 million voters cast their ballots, making this year the first midterm to exceed 100 million votes.

CBS News reports

Nov 7, 2018

A New Legislative Session and New Strategies from Fair Districts PA



Since the legislators left Harrisburg for vacation in June; the legislative team from Fair Districts PA led by Carol Kuniholm and Patrick Beaty have been reviewing, researching and developing new strategies with the help of many experts in the field. Also helping FDPA are present and former legislators from both parties. And the new strategies are both different and more specific approaches to foster redistricting reform for both congressional and legislative districts in Pennsylvania.

Fair Districts PA is not giving up and we are not going away until redistricting reform becomes a reality in Pennsylvania.

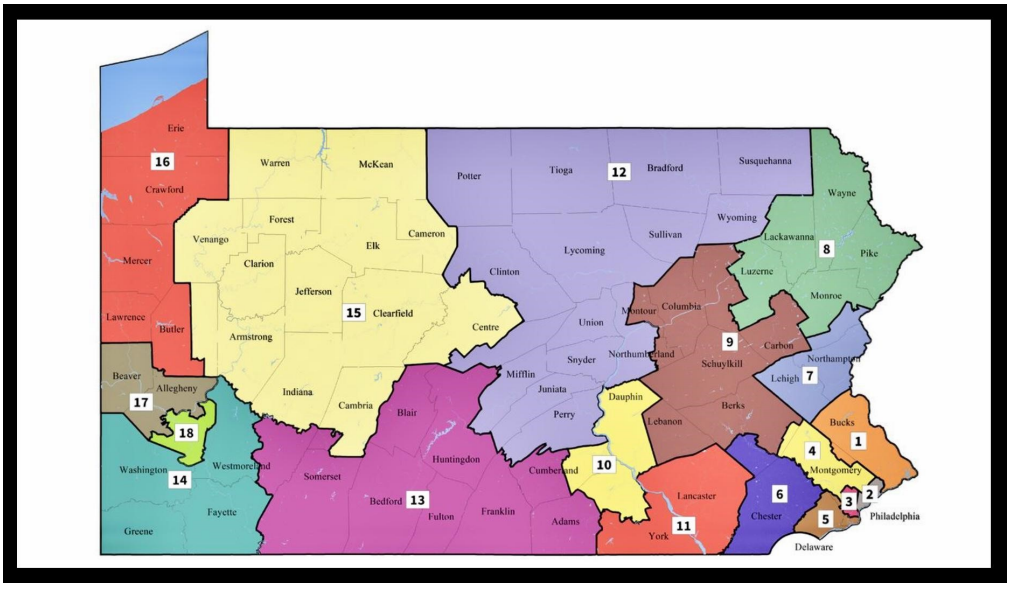
Now, what are we doing legislatively?

First of all, we are starting in the House. State Rep. Steve Samuelson, D-135th, and state Rep. Thomas Murt, R-152nd, of Montgomery and Philadelphia counties are preparing two bills to be introduced by the end of January. Samuelson has reserved the numbers 22 and 23; so the bills will be introduced as HB 22 and HB 23.

They are two separate bills, but will piggy-back on one another as explained here. One bill will create an independent citizens' commission to redraw the congressional districts after the 2020 U.S. Census when reapportionment occurs. This does not require a PA Constitutional Amendment and can be changed by a simple bill/law.

At the same time, the second bill introduced will call for a constitutional amendment to create an independent citizens' commission to redraw house and senate districts in 2021.

The strategy being pursued is for HB 22 to become the statute which establishes the independent citizens' commission for drawing the U.S. congressional districts. HB 23, which would create an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution, would have to be passed twice during session and placed on the ballot. The hope is that by the time HB 23 becomes law; the independent citizens' commission will already have been created and ready to redraw the House and Senate Districts after the 2021 reapportionment process is completed. It is a tight schedule, but it is possible if we can foster the "will" of our present-day legislators to finally pass redistricting reform and end gerrymandering in Pennsylvania.



In the Pennsylvania Senate both state Sen. Lisa Boscola, D-18th, of Northampton/Lehigh Counties and state Sen. Mike Folmer, R-48th, chairman of the Senate State Government Committee are working on bills from the Senate side. It will take a bit more time and compromise before the Senate bills are ready.

If you are interested in further information about these new bills, you are invited to attend a "Redistricting Town Hall," which will be held at Muhlenberg College 6 p.m. February 21, 2019.

Mary Erdman

Upcoming Hot Topics Luncheons

February 14, 2019

Election Trends

March 11, 2019

The Work of the Wildlands Conservancy and its Impact on the Local Environment

April 8, 2019

Electoral College and Electoral Reform

We're on the Web!
www.lwvlehighcounty.org

1920 Democratic Convention

Pictured are, seated, left: Miss Dortch, of Tennessee, 1st Director from 3rd region who resigned during year and right, Mrs. Richard Edwards. Standing: left to right: Miss Mary McDowell, of Chicago, Miss Adah Bush, of Indiana, Mrs. Patty Jacobs, Mrs. Maud Wood Park, Mrs. Simmons, of Portland, Oregon, 1st Director of 7th Region, and Mrs. James Paige, of Minneapolis. Visit www.library.lwv.org for additional photos.

Pa. Is Heavily Gerrymandered, No Matter How You Measure It

Academics and others have developed several mathematical methods to identify partisan gerrymandering within states. Here is how states rank using five widely used methods, as measured by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law and Princeton University's Gerrymandering Project. Pennsylvania is the only state that ranks among the top five in every measure.

Efficiency gap *Brennan Center* METHOD Measures "wasted" votes cast for losing candidates or victors above and beyond the winning margins.	Seats-to-votes *Brennan Center* METHOD Compares historical vote percentages and seats won by party against recent election results.	Mean-median *Brennan Center* METHOD Tests for "cracking" by identifying large differences between a party's average and median vote share.	Lopsided wins *Princeton University* METHOD Looks for states in which one party wins districts by large margins, while the other party wins more districts.	Simulated elections *Princeton University* METHOD Runs thousands of simulations to determine how often a state's actual results are likely to occur.
STATE RANKINGS	STATE RANKINGS	STATE RANKINGS	STATE RANKINGS	STATE RANKINGS
1. Pennsylvania	**1. Pennsylvania**	1. Ohio	1. North Carolina	1. North Carolina
2. Texas	2. North Carolina	**2. Pennsylvania**	2. New York	2. New York
3. New York	3. Texas	3. Michigan	3. Michigan	**3. Pennsylvania**
4. North Carolina	4. Michigan	4. Missouri	4. Wisconsin	4. Michigan
5. Michigan	5. New York	5. Florida	**5. Pennsylvania**	5. Texas
6. Ohio	6. Ohio	6. Virginia	6. Texas	6. Louisiana
7. Florida	7. Massachusetts	7. Texas	7. Ohio	7. Minnesota
8. Georgia	8. Georgia	8. Wisconsin	8. Georgia	8. Virginia
9. California	9. Florida	9. North Carolina	9. New Jersey	9. Maryland
10. South Carolina	10. Virginia	10. Tennessee	10. Virginia	10. Tennessee

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LWV

New legislative session begins with a bit of hope

The new session of the House and the Senate began ceremoniously January 1 with the swearing-in of all new legislators. As members of The League of Women Voters and as members of Fair Districts PA, we were very interested in how the legislature would approach the key idea of "rules reforms." We did not want to see a repeat of two years ago when the legislature voted to prevent amendments or reforms from being added to the rules, which dictate how the House runs and moves bills forward. Previously, the legislators voted first on House Bill 2, to not amend and then on HR 1 to approve the rules.

The beginning of this session began in almost the same way as the 2017 session. This time, HR 4 was also passed first, before HR 1. We feel that this is an unfair and strategic move by the leaders of the majority party. HR 4 was approved along party lines. Before a vote was taken on HR 1, state Rep. Steve Samuelson, D-135th, and state Rep. Bob Freeman, D-136th, both made requests to delay the vote on HR 1 because legislators had no time to read the resolution. This was a document of at least 60 pages in length which was distributed about an hour before noon. But, the vote was taken anyway and it passed with a decent majority of both Republicans and a number of Democrats.

The Fair Districts team did submit about 10 rules to be considered and they actually accepted one: the suggestion that you cannot suspend the rules to continue a legislative session past midnight. This was a good change.

The bit of hope was that during this process, state Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, R-18th, of Montgomery County, stated that he would be introducing a resolution to create a commission of 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats to study the rules and make recommendations for change. This was a very courageous and admirable move by DiGirolamo. Although most legislators will admit privately that the rules greatly stand in the way of progress, few have the fortitude to come forward with suggestions to correct this weakness.

State Rep. Bryan Cutler, R-100th, the Majority Leader of the House and the head of the Rules Committee (confirmed) promised to hear DiGirolamo's ideas. Whether the resolution receives co-sponsors (which we hope) and is treated fairly is something about which we should be vigilant. Cutler also promised to have talks with Samuelson, Freeman and state Rep. Pam DeLissio, D-194th, of Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties, who are leading the charge concerning reforming the rules.

Fair Districts PA and The League of Women Voters have been researching and discussing the changes that would help make the Pennsylvania Legislature more efficient and able to better represent their constituents. Now we need to address our individual legislators to co-sponsor DiGirolamo's resolution once it is introduced. If legislators are not willing to support this, then it is safe to say that they are content with the status quo. According to the Bi-Partisan Policy Center, Pennsylvania received a score of zero as our rating of best legislative practices and results. Colorado received 100 percent, just to give some perspective.

Now is the time to contact your legislators and encourage them to support the work of DiGirolamo as soon as possible. Hopefully, we can expect wide bi-partisan support for this resolution.

To view the resolution go to: legis.state.pa.us, go to DiGirolamo's page and read his resolution dated January 4, 2019.

Rules changes will more likely succeed if there is a significant grassroots pressure on our legislators. It is possible.

"The most important political office is that of the private citizen." - Louis D. Brandeis

Mary Erdman

Submit news to the newsletter! Members are welcome to write articles, 100 words or less, about League events they have participated in or other pertinent subjects. Please attach your copy to an email and send to Janet Little and/or attach any photos and captions. We can also post this information and photos to our Facebook account.

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County

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President: Janet Little, 610-398-7228
610-442-1733 (cell)
Membership: Margie Dunn, 610-298-8946

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County

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Vice President, Action – *Mary Erdman, FDPA Liaison*

Vice President, Voter Services – *Barbara Williams*

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OUR MISSION

LET PEOPLE KNOW. MAKE PEOPLE CARE. HELP PEOPLE ACT.

The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does not support or oppose any political party or candidate but does take stands — and always has — on issues its members have studied. The purpose is to create in citizens a sense of responsibility for its nation's problems. Through research and advocacy, LWV seeks to encourage the informed citizen who actively participates in government.

The League of Women Voters of Lehigh County is one of 35 local Leagues in Pennsylvania.

Members of a local League are automatically members of:
League of Women Voters of the United States
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

Running for Local Office Workshop 2019

Panelists Lehigh County Commissioner Nathan Brown, Allentown City Council member Julio Guridy, Facilitator Ken Mohr, Parkland School Director Marie Maritch and Upper Milford Township Supervisor Joyce Moore share tips on "Running a Successful Campaign."

Thirty-four people attended a workshop January 26 at DeSales University to learn how to run a successful campaign for local office in Pennsylvania in 2019. Topics included campaign strategy and timeline, campaign management and planning, campaign tactics, campaign finance, using a campaign website and social media and working effectively with volunteers.

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County
P.O. Box 3275
Allentown, PA 18106

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

Name _____

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City, State, Zip _____

Membership dues include membership in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania (LWVPA) and a subscription to the local and state *Voter*.

League dues and contributions are <u>not</u> tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

Contributions to the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) <u>are</u> tax-deductible.

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all citizens. Voting members must be at least 16 years old.

ANNUAL DUES 2019

$70.00 individual $105.00 household $25.00 full-time student

Contact membership secretary Margie Dunn for details of prorated dues amounts.

Please make check payable to LWVLC and mail to:

LWVLC
c/o Margie Dunn
8411 Carpet Road
New Tripoli, PA 18066