LWV LEHIGH COUNTY VOTER

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County

June/July 2019 Volume 67, Issue 9

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Mark your calendar:

- **Aug. 1** Last day for independent candidates to circulate and file nomination papers
- **Aug. 8** Last day for independent candidates to withdrawal
- **Aug. 12** Last day for candidates nominated in the Primary Election to withdrawal

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

President's Message

Dear League members,

The annual meeting for our League was held Saturday, May 11, 2019 at Morgan's Restaurant. This meeting provided an opportunity for members to have input into the direction our League will take in the coming League year.

Members who attended voted on the 2019-2020 budget, approved the nominating committee's slate of executive officers and readopted our local program.

Members also gave the board direction on issues they would like to see addressed in the future and made suggestions for Hot Topics luncheon speakers. Business aside, we enjoyed each other's company while sharing an excellent lunch. All in all, it was a productive annual meeting.

Molly Faust, President

Upper Saucon Township Candidates Forum

The Concerned Citizens of Southern Lehigh Township, along with the LWVLC, co-sponsored a forum for candidates running for the office of Upper Saucon Township Supervisor on Tuesday, May 6. All three candidates, John Inglis, Phil Spaeth and Kimberly Stehlik participated.

Over the course of the evening, the candidates fielded questions submitted by township residents who attended. One issue was a concern about land that was previously purchased via eminent domain and committed to public use, now possibly being sold to a developer. The candidates were asked if they would support a "tax increment" to allow for increases of open space and farmland preservation, and if they could, what would they change in the zoning code.

Residents were interested in each candidate's qualifications for the office, their greatest strengths for the job, what other community organizations they were active in and how they would increase residents' involvement in the decision-making process in the township.

Another major concern was with the aging township comprehensive plan which according to Pennsylvania law needs to be updated every 10 years.

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Upper Saucon Township Candidates Forum (continued from Page 1)

Other questions dealt with the sale of Lehigh University lands, new housing growth, school taxes and if they would support the construction and operation of a township community center. The audience chuckled when the candidates were asked, if they received a $1 million grant for the township, what would they use it for?

Many thanks to Southern Lehigh Public Library for hosting and for residents and League members who helped make the evening a very informative event. League members as pictured in the photo on Page 1 are, left to right, Barb Williams, Jan Little, Barbara Connolly, Mary Erdman, Molly Faust and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau.

Barbara Williams, Voter Services

2018 and 2019 Voters Guides

Over the last membership year, we produced Voters Guides kindly printed at no cost by The Morning Call as usual. But, for the first time, we piloted the use of the website called VOTE411 as a way to capture candidate information to submit to the newspaper and to make available to voters using VOTE411 itself. Candidates, not League volunteers, input the information into their own, password-protected online questionnaire.

The state League captured state and local candidate information for Election 2018. Half of the candidates for the state legislative races used VOTE411. For the rest, we relied on the information compiled in the spring for the primary by Ann Bartholomew.

For the spring 2019 Municipal Primary, Trevor and Jan Little captured local candidate information using VOTE411; the state League provided that to candidates for the statewide Superior Court Judge.

As it is a closed primary, we contacted the local offices of both political parties inviting them to encourage outstanding candidates to complete their questionnaires before the copy submission deadline. Then, Jan sent lists of outstanding candidates to the corresponding offices. In the end, two-thirds percent of the 175 local candidates for 57 races participated, a good level of participation.

For both elections, Jan edited the information to the newspaper's specifications and submitted it to the newspaper. A week later, Jan and Trevor joined Kay Browne and Julie Swan at the office of The Morning Call Editor Ann Lowy to review and sign off on the final draft. Jan later oversaw the distribution of 2,500 additional printed copies to libraries and community centers throughout the county.

Jan and Trevor will use VOTE411 for the Voters Guide for the Municipal Election taking place on November 5. The board of directors will then decide if we will use VOTE411 for Election 2020.

Distribution

On May 9, The Morning Call printed the Voters Guide for the 2019 Municipal Primary. Subscribers to the daily newspaper received a copy with the edition for that day. Jan posted the PDF version on the current election section of our website.

The newspaper printed 2,500 additional copies that Burke and Pat Swan picked up early that morning then took back to their home. After the "bundling party" hosted by Burke and Pat Swan that morning, members received a copy in the mail. Volunteers delivered copies to many locations in Lehigh County. We want to thank the Swans for, once again, hosting the "bundling party."

Listed below are the names of those members who processed copies for mailing to members and also bundled for distribution. Then, they delivered the bundles to locations within the county. Many thanks to Charles Barker, Donna Barker, Ann Bartholomew, Barbara Connolly, Ruth Dex, Molly Faust, Lynn Kokolus, Jan Little, Sue Phillips, Dorothy Shackelford, Kathy Stagl, Burke Swan, Pat Swan and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau. I hope I did not leave out anyone's name! This is the largest number of members involved in this important effort in recent years. We need at least one volunteer to oversee distribution of the Voters Guide for the next Voters Guide that The Morning Call will probably print on Thursday, October 24. Please contact Jan Little if you would like to learn the ropes with her.

Jan Little, Edtor,Voters Guide

May Board Notes

The Board of the Lehigh County League of Women Voters met Thursday, May 16, 2019 at the Rittenhouse Village of the Lehigh Valley. Here are highlights of the meeting:

- Barbara Williams, treasurer, reported that the treasury balance for the month ending April 30, 2019 was $22,554.96.
- The board was in agreement on the members who will represent our League at the LWVPA state convention to be held in June. Our local League is entitled to four delegates. The delegates are Ken Baumert, Molly Faust, Chris Herbener and Jan Little. Mary Erdman is also attending the conference.

Molly Faust, president, said she wants to keep the nominating committee together to work on filling open board positions.

Molly Faust, Acting Secretary

TOGETHER WE MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK!

Hot Topics Luncheons

We will continue to hold Hot Topics Luncheons at the Superior Restaurant, 102 State Ave., Emmaus, in the banquet room downstairs. The events start at 11:30 a.m. and end about 1 p.m. on the second Monday of every month starting in September through April. Save the dates of the upcoming Hot Topics Luncheons in late 2019: September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9 and in early 2020: January 13, February 10, March 9 and April 13.

At the annual meeting we held on May 11, we started planning for the speakers and topics. We have already confirmed the speakers for the first two luncheons. As we are confident that we can continue to find and confirm speakers and topics quickly after this head start, we won't need to hold a special planning session in July.

On September 9, Timothy A. Benyo, chief clerk, registration and elections, and Terri Harkins, deputy chief clerk, Lehigh County Voter Office, will demonstrate "Lehigh County Voting Machines 2019." Voters are eager to experience these new voting machines before they actually use them for the first time when casting a vote. Please send your e-RSVP to Chris Herbener at crizzy49@yahoo.com by September 5.

On October 14, Susan Sherer, Ph.D., member, LWVLC and associate professor of business at Lehigh University, will present "The League of Women Voters and the United Nations." This is a topic near and dear to Susan's heart. For The Voter in April 2019, she wrote about the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York March 11 to 22, 2019. Please send your e-RSVP to Chris Herbener at crizzy49@yahoo.com by October 10.

Our plan is to confirm the speakers for all eight luncheons by the end of the summer. Then, we will update the bookmarks we developed last year and make copies for our tabling events. You may recall that the URL of our new website, www.lwvlehighcounty.org, and new email address, email@lwvlehighcounty.org, appeared on the other side of the bookmark. The finalized bookmark will also appear in the following issue of The Voter.

Mary Erdman, Program Chair

"19: The Musical" — League gets a sneak peak

The location was the Ice House in Bethlehem, on Saturday, May 25, when this League member was very fortunate to catch a preview of a new show: "19: The Musical," celebrating the right of women to vote in 1920.

This started out as a tabling event for the League and turned into a wonderful opportunity for me, as I was invited to watch the entire show. I was almost moved to tears as the cast brought to life Susan B. Anthony, the mother of the movement, Alice Paul, Ida B. Wells and Carrie Chapman Catt, the founder of the League of Women Voters, along with a number of other suffragists.

The script is an ongoing project originated by Jennifer Schwed and Doug Bradshaw of Through the 4th Wall Productions in Washington, DC. The music is being composed and scored by Charlie Barnett, who is a native of Easton. He has written all the songs and they each tell the story of this movement in history. It comes alive because it is not a story right out of the history books, but taken from news accounts and private correspondence as well as the real history of the era which included references to race and class. Co-author, Jennifer Schwed states: "It is a story of real human beings with real flaws, issues, blind spots, dealing with race, class and lots of issues that came up," during this time period. The musical deals with the hurt of disenfranchisement of the woman's vote and is very relevant to the voting issues of today like gerrymandering, voter ID, early voting and absentee voting, and how these issues can easily disenfranchise voters who have been presently placed at a disadvantage. It is still a timely and relevant story.

This was a very moving production, although simple in costume and staging. Each song is a story in of itself. I fully intend to work on trying to bring some of the cast back to this area in the next year in some capacity. Right now they are working on a larger production to be held in Washington, D.C. this fall. I will keep you posted and if anyone has any ideas how we can bring this back to the Lehigh Valley, please let me know.

The cast was thrilled to see The League tabling at this event as they have never had a League present for their shows. Most of the cast posed for a fun picture and they took some literature along with them. They were delightful.

Among the cast members is a doctor, lawyer, law professor and full-time actors.

"19: The Musical" is a wonderful story of the era by telling the truth — whether it was about the torture, imprisonment or the celebration of final ratification. You can go to their website and keep track of upcoming shows by visiting www.19themusical.com.

Mary Erdman, Program Chair

Emmaus Public Library Teen Voter Night

Voting was the headliner topic at a recent Teen Night at the Emmaus Public Library. The youth librarian who schedules monthly teen nights at the library had asked our League to present a program on voting for interested teenagers, many of whom will be first-time voters. The librarian had publicized the program well in advance.

Barbara Williams and Molly Faust showed up ready to speak on the scheduled Wednesday evening in May but no teenagers appeared. We suggested to the youth librarian she might have better success holding a program this fall highlighting the new voting machines and inviting adults in addition to teens. Barbara gave her the contact information for the voter registration office to schedule a demonstration.

Continued on Page 5

Meet and Greet

This is a follow-up article on the Meet and Greet event, our first ever, which was held April 5, 2019 at the First Presbyterian Church in Allentown. As I have written before, our League membership has more than doubled in the past two years. The growth in membership is wonderful but our League's organization doesn't provide many opportunities to get to know each other.

The Hot Topics luncheons, which are well attended by members, are not really set up for much socializing. In addition, a number of our members have expressed an interest in being active with the League but aren't sure what committees needed help. It was deemed that a Meet and Greet would address both areas.

The board set up a special committee to put together a program. A venue was secured and the committee designed a program. Then board members made phone calls so that every League member was personally invited to the event. The first part of the evening was devoted to committee chairs giving a very brief synopsis of the work of their committee. Wall posters were put up which highlighted the committee choices and tables had sign-up sheets. The rest of the evening was spent getting to know each other and to enjoying the food donated by Wegmans and the coffee and tea provided by the church.

The turnout on such a rainy night was heartening – we had a good mix of new and longtime members. And we had members signing up for committees.

Members have already stepped forward to help with the Upper Saucon Township Candidates Forum, with the bundling and delivery of the Voters Guide and have attended our May annual meeting. These events are described elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. A satisfying conclusion to a successful event.

Molly Faust, President

Emmaus Public Library Teen Voter Night (continued from Page 4)

It was ironic to note that the only person who showed up was a reporter for the East Penn Press sent to cover the event.

As a result of this experience, Barbara and I are ready to give the presentation to interested members of the public at public libraries and other public forums in the near future.

Molly Faust, President

The League of Women Voters participates in Rally in the Valley

On Sunday May 19, the third annual Rally in the Valley was held throughout the entire SteelStacks facility in Bethlehem. This was a rally celebrating recovery from substance and/or alcohol use disorder for individuals and their families and friends. It was a day of information, support, activities, great music and many different foods. The number was estimated at over 3,000 attendees.

The keynote speaker was Ryan Hampton, the author of the best selling book, "American Fix — Inside the Opioid Addiction Crisis and How to End It." Hampton was a White House staffer during the Clinton Administration who injured his ankle, was given opioid painkillers by his doctor and he eventually became dependent on them and spiraled into a heroin addiction which almost cost him his life. He has been in recovery for a number of years and is a well-respected advocate for those in need of treatment and support who often testifies in Washington and various state legislatures.

Hampton makes one important request when he speaks — voter registration. As a member of the committee for the Rally, I offered the services of the League. We tabled and were able to help 51 people in recovery register to vote.

We did discover an upsetting set of facts. Many people who had been in active drug use find themselves arrested and serve time as felons for different drug-related issues. Many of these people who are now in recovery and have paid their debt, did not realize they have regained the right to vote! Most did not understand that the laws of Pennsylvania are among the fairest in the nation and were not aware that they had regained the right to vote the day they were released from prison. Based on research published in the Columbia Law Review in 2004, those who regain the right to vote and do vote, have a better chance of successful recovery because they feel more engaged and accepted by the community. Hopefully in the future, The League of Women Voters will extend our services of education and voter registration to the recovery community. Ryan Hampton was very pleased and complimented our literature (in English and Spanish) and the assistance we gave to the individuals in recovery at this year's Rally in the Valley. This was a very worthwhile and supportive opportunity for our League.

Mary Erdman, Action Chair

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County

2019-2020 Officers

President – *Molly Faust*

Secretary – *Open*

Vice President, Program – *Mary Erdman*

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

Vice President, Voter Services – *Barbara Williams*

Treasurer – *Barbara Williams*

Members offer views at Governor Wolf's Commission on Redistricting Reform

May 29 was a dark and stormy evening, but that did not prevent about 35 people from attending the Governor's Commission on Redistricting Reform held at Alumni Hall at Northampton Area Community College. The chairman of the committee, David Thornburgh of The Committee of 70, Philadelphia, conducted a very organized and efficient meeting.

Other members of the commission present that evening were State League of Women Voters President Susan Carty; former U.S. Congressman Charlie Dent (R) and Lehigh County Commissioner Amanda Holt (R).

Those who wanted to speak signed up for about a 4-10 minute presentation which included questions asked by the commission members. The members were interested in ideas to deal with concerns that may arise about a Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission which is supported by both the League of Women Voters and Fair Districts PA.

League speakers included Mary Erdman who gave an explanation of the reasoning behind the desire for an independent redistricting commission and why the League and Fair Districts are in full support of this legislation. She concluded by giving results of surveys conducted by both Franklin and Marshall and the University of Pittsburgh, which calculate that 68.9 percent and 75.8 percent of Pennsylvania citizens, respectively, want to see this reform happen before 2021. Mary answered questions about how the new commission would work and what problems could challenge the adoption of each.

Cathy Dawson, a League member who works as a medical researcher, expressed her interest for a new commission to redraw lines, but recommended that a process be built into the legislation to test, reassess and improve this commission as it progresses. The commission members were impressed with this suggestion which they admit was something which was not brought up very often, but well worth the consideration as legislation is framed and written.

Member Bob Elbich spoke last and basically said the major problem with getting this new legislation passed is the will of the legislators to make this happen. His comments suggested that although we can work on legislation, acquire supporters and legislators as co-sponsors, it is an integral reality that the legislators in Harrisburg have to want to pass such legislation. That is truly the most challenging task of the League, Fair Districts PA and the Committee of 70 who are the three most important outsiders meeting and advising with legislators and committee chairman in Harrisburg.

Fritz Walker of FDPA and former director of the leadership team for Lehigh/Northampton Counties and the Secretary for Cease Fire PA, also spoke and described how legislators picking their voters, the present process, is a inherent conflict of interest and is one of the most important reasons for changing the process of legislators drawing the lines. He strongly suggested that it is time to hand this process over to the citizens. Fritz also answered many questions about the legislation and further offered his advice in meeting and convincing legislators to support House Bill 22 and House Bill 23.

The primary sponsor of House Bill 23 and primary co-sponsor of House Bill 22, Rep. Steve Samuelson (D-135) of Bethlehem, was also present and seemed pleased with the testimony he heard from those who spoke. Samuelson took many notes that night and was able to hear the ideas and concerns presented by each of the speakers.

A big "thank you" to Rochelle Kaplan and Bob Elbich who tabled for Fair Districts PA that evening. They were answering questions and obtaining petitions from attendees to support FDPA. It was good to see that they were very busy.

The commission has one or two more open hearings and then they will compose a report for Governor Wolf who will then make his recommendations to the legislators in Harrisburg.

Mary Erdman, Action Chair and FDPA Liaison

Membership

Our membership is really growing. We now have 82 members. When on vacation with family and friends don't be afraid to talk about the League. Invite then to check out our website to see all the activities and programs we are involved in.

Last month we had one new member join our League. Margaret Keiffer of Center Valley joined our League in late April. We welcome her to our League.

Margie Dunn

Delegates attend Biennial Conference

Jan Little, Chris Herbener, Molly Faust and Ken Baumert served as delegates to the 2019 Biennial Conference held in Reading. Our local League was able to send so many because our membership has increased significantly in the past two years. Not pictured: Mary Erdman attended the first two days but did not serve as a delegate.

A ceremony for The Anna Estes Strawbridge Honor Roll took place on June 22. A special program said, "The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania established the Honor Roll in 1985. It was named for a founding member of the state League who served on the board of LWVPA for 21 years."

Jane H. Grim of LWV Bucks County and Carol Bullock Layton of LWV Berks County were recognized for "their energy and commitment to the ideals, principles and support for the League, as was the example of Anna Estes Strawbridge, until her passing at age 100."

Did you know that our own Ann Bartholomew was recognized in 1995?

State president Susan Carty helmed the plenary sessions where decisions were made. For example, the 72 delegates voted for candidates for the state board. As a result, the co-presidents for 2019-2021 will be Janeth Hendershot of LWV Bucks County and Terrie Griffin of LWV Greater Pittsburgh. The secretary will be Cristina (Cris) Beuger also of LWV Greater Pittsburgh. Susan Madian, LWV Bucks County will be treasurer. All members of the incoming state board appear in the upcoming issue of The Voter by the state League.

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610-432-1456

President: Molly Faust, TBA

Membership: Margie Dunn, 610-298-8946

LWVPA Hotline: 717-234-1576

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P.O. Box 3275
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

Name _____

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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