LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

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The VOTER

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President's Message

This has been a very busy few months for our Lehigh County League as we prepared for this election season. This is a very important election and part of or mission is to "empower voters," which we take very seriously. We invited all candidates from the candidates for the 7th Congressional District, as well as for each of the newly drawn Senate and House Districts. Read about those who accepted our invitations and how you can view those debates which are linked on our website.

Also, the League one-stop shop for all things relating to elections has posted a very complete source of information for all candidates who answered the questions they were invited to answer. Michelle Graupner has again done a great job of editing the Morning Call Voter's Guide for the convenience of all our Lehigh Valley voters (Northampton County League also contributes). As soon as the election results are concluded and certified, Cheryl Winters-Tetreau will begin work on the 2023 Government Directory.

Many of our Board members have been attending many outreach tabling events in our recent committed mission to register, educate and encourage voting among our urban minority communities under the guidance of our Community Outreach chair, Barbara Connolly. And Terri Purdy has been updating our website with a tremendous amount of information for your convenience. I encourage each of our members to visit our website often and see where you can become involved!

We encourage you to visit all of our social media as well: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - we are doing our best to keep all of our members informed and invited to participate in any way you can.

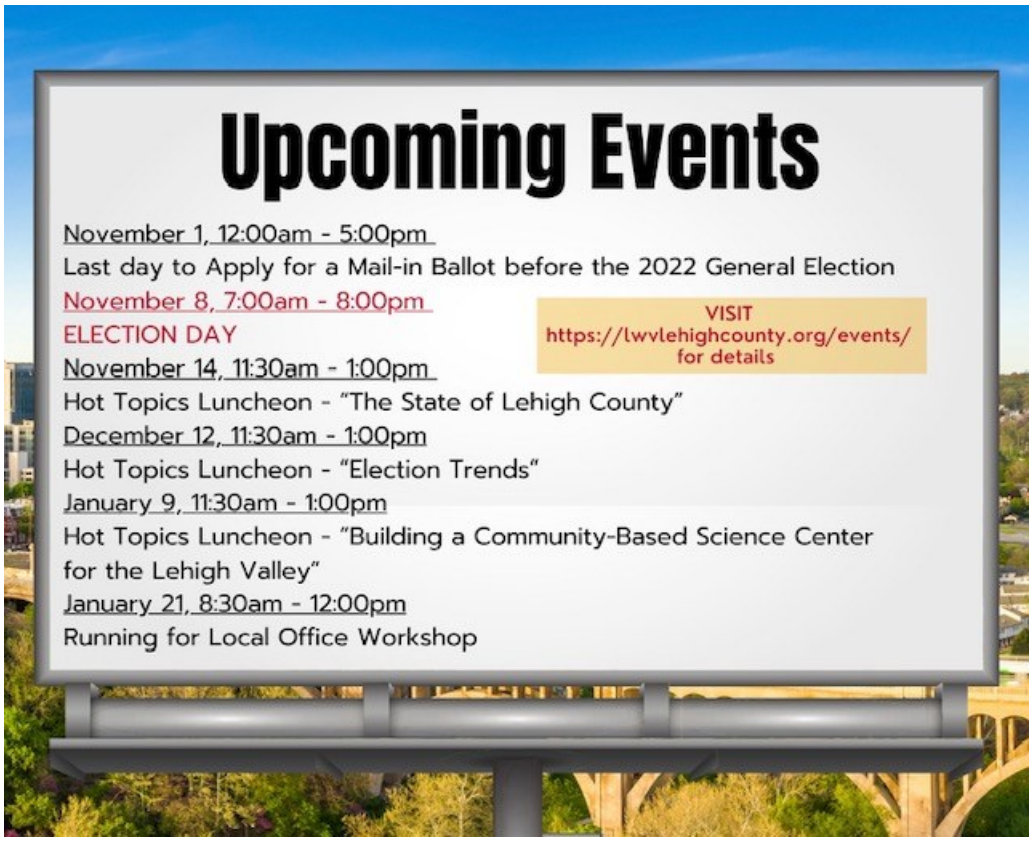
Presently, we are asking our members to be very active in our campaign to oppose the elements of Senate Bill 106 which will most likely become a series of democracy-reducing constitutional amendments of which we oppose. These are democracy damaging actions and we have to let our legislators know how we feel. This is a serious campaign and we need every member to help in whichever method you feel most comfortable. More details will be coming soon. Read the Op-ED piece written by local and state Board member Rochelle Kaplan which thoroughly explains this issue (10/16 Sunday Morning Call).

Finally, as we begin many very important holidays, we are thankful for our committed, long-time and new members who have embraced our mission and supported many of our programs. We look forward to seeing you at our Hot Topic Luncheons and our many other worthwhile activities. We need each of you to spread our mission of: "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy."

Happy Fall to each of you and your families.

Yours in League,

Mary Erdman



League Has Active Debate Season

Michelle Graupner, Barbara Williams & Mary Erdman at Lehigh County Conference of Churches Debate

Our League hosted three debates in September and October: two for PA House seats and one for the new PA Senate District 14 which encompasses a wide area from northern Northampton County, parts of eastern Allentown and all the way down to Emmaus.

The first was for the new Senate District between Dean Browning (R) and Nick Miller (D), and was held at the Fellowship Community Center in Whitehall on September 29th.

The next was held on October 6th at the Lehigh Valley Active Life Center. The debate was for the 134th House District and candidates: Brent Labenberg (R) and Rep. Peter Schweyer (D) squared off on a number of topics.

Our final debate was for the newly created 22nd House District and was held at the Lehigh County Conference of Churches in downtown Allentown. This new district covers the eastern portion of Allentown and all of Salisbury Township. This debate pitted Joshua Siegel (D) against Robert Smith (R). This debate also covered many topics at great length.

New to our debate format was the addition of four Allentown Schools District students who asked candidates very compelling and personal questions. For example: more behavioral help for the school district students like one student's brother requires; one young man asked what these candidates would do to help his father's minority business and another young woman asked how these House candidates would answer the overturn of Roe v. Wade in Harrisburg and protect a young woman's choice.

We had two guest moderators: Susan Carty and Connie Borichevsky. Our own Barbara Williams was the moderator of our final debate and she covered a vast number of issues. We did invite all local candidates and the two Congressional candidates. All Democrats accepted our invitations and four Republicans, for various reasons did not. However, we feel that a lot of information about each of the above candidates was readily available to those in attendance. Thank you to *all* who were involved in making these debates a success.

Videos of all three debates are linked and available on our website: www.lwvlehighcounty.org under Events!

Mary Erdman, President

Government Policy Update

Lehigh County Drop Box Litigation

As of the publication of the VOTER, Judge Thomas Capehart, Lehigh County Common Pleas Court Judge, has dismissed the lawsuit filed by four voters in Lehigh County asking that the drop boxes in Lehigh County be monitored by staff from the Voter Registration office instead of video cameras and that the hours of operation for the drop boxes be limited to business hours. Judge Capehart stated that the evidence presented at hearings did not conclusively prove that in-person monitoring reduced third-party ballot dropping. He observed that better education, publicity, and signage had succeeded in doing so.

Drop boxes became operational on October 24. For up-to-date information on the location and times of operation of the drop boxes, please go to www.lehighcounty.org.

SB106

On October 7, LWVPA filed a motion to intervene in Governor Wolf's litigation to stop the constitutional amendment from being voted on a second time in 2023. The arguments to put a stop to SB106 include confusion/illegality regarding the voting age and residency requirements found in the amendments; the process used to pass these amendments; and the harm to individual rights. Here is a link to the press release on the motion to intervene.

The General Assembly must vote on these amendments again if the litigation is not successful. If passed, the amendments could appear on your ballot as early as May 16, 2023 and as late as the 2024 general election in November. We ask you to contact your state senator or representative and the candidates for those offices and let them know that you oppose SB106. Here are talking points when you contact the office. They can also be used for Letters to the Editor.

Talking points for calls /emails/LTE:

That you are unhappy about both the content and the process of SB106!

That you are concerned that such broad legislation was passed in the middle of the night after suspending the rules to accomplish this.

That you do NOT support banning any right to an abortion

That you do not support late night efforts to shift the balance of power between branches of government

You do not support efforts to make it harder to vote or to politicize the election process

You want to know where they stand on EACH of these amendments!

Ask for a response via email.

SCOTUS order and DOS Guidance on undated mail in ballots

On October 11, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed a Third Circuit court of appeals ruling that Pennsylvania's dating requirement for mail-in ballots violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The US Supreme Court did so because the case became moot with the swearing in of Attorney Zac Cohen as Judge in June. According to the ACLU, the Supreme Court's short order did not address the merits of the case, so the issue is still ripe for litigation.

In the meant time, Acting Secretary of State Leigh Chapman issued a press release stating that counties are "expected to include undated ballots in their official returns" for the November election. She based the guidance on two decisions by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court holding that undated ballots must be counted.

Thereafter, the Republican National Committee filed an emergency petition in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court asking the Court to rule that undated ballots must not be counted. As of the date of the publication of this newsletter, there has been no ruling by the Court.

Voters should be sure that they have completed the ballot, placed the ballot in the yellow secrecy envelope; placed the secrecy envelop in the mailer envelope; and **signed and dated** the outside of the mailer envelope to ensure that their vote is counted.

Rochelle Kaplan, Member of LWVPA Government Policy Committee

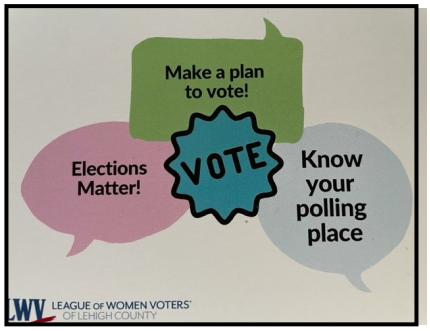
Community Outreach Report

Community outreach is especially important before elections. This fall high interest in midterm elections, coupled with the changes due to redistricting, has resulted in a number of requests and opportunities for the League to provide voter information. Of special note, we have been able to collaborate with other community organizations to get the word out about the power of the vote.

Community programs have included two presentations for the young clients of the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, focusing on voting basics and using www.vote411.org for candidate research. Diane Gordian, Lehigh County's Deputy Chief Clerk of Elections, participated by Zoom to describe how the Office of Voter Services works to get ready for elections.

The Adult Forum of St. John's UCC Church in Allentown was welcoming and most interested in exploring the process of amending the Pennsylvania Constitution and implications for potential ballot questions in the May 2022 primary. Huge thanks to Rochelle Kaplan for her always insightful knowledge of a complex subject.

Other scheduled pre-election events include a Zoom presentation for the Adult Forum of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley (UUCLV) and tabling at the Ripple Community Inc. in Allentown. We will also be participating in the Lehigh County Office of the Public Defender's *Community Outreach Day* on October 22nd. Legal professionals are available during this event to provide information on clearing criminal records in Pennsylvania. The LWVLC is pleased to be able to partner with the Public Defender's Office to provide information on registering to vote, voting options, and the importance of making a plan to vote.



We were lucky to have eager collaborators for the GOTV initiative with Vote411postcards provided to local Leagues by LWVPA. More than 800 postcards were sent to voters in areas where midterm voting turnout tends to be low. Thanks to Jan Herzog and Julie Thomas of RAC-PA, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism and to Sue and Jan Phillips of the UUCLV for coordinating numerous volunteers in the addressing and mailing of postcards.

Thanks also to LWVLC members for their help delivering postcards to libraries, senior centers, and organizations throughout Lehigh County. The GOTV effort has been an all hands on deck endeavor!

Barbara Connolly, Community Outreach & Voter Services

The Liberty Bell Museum Celebrates Sixty Years

This past September 25th, the League of Women Voters was invited to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Liberty Bell Museum. We have developed a wonderful relationship with the museum ever since they asked us to collaborate with them in celebrating 100 years of the woman's vote as well as the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters in 2020. If you remember, shortly after the celebratory exhibit's grand opening the museum was forced to close due to the Covid pandemic.

When the museum recently reopened, we were thrilled to be present to help celebrate the anniversary of this historic gem. We presented them with a "Certificate of Celebration" as one of the last events held in the Old Zion Church. Also present were: Rep. Susan Wild, County Executive Phillips Armstrong, County Commissioner Chair Geoff Brace, and many members and relatives of those responsible for creating this museum. Dave Fry sang a song exclusively commissioned for this event.

Although a sale of the Zion Church is in the works, there is a provision in the agreement of sale to allow the museum to continue to operate as a historic location uniquely significant to the history of our nation. As you remember, the State House Bell (as it was called before being named the Liberty Bell) as well as several other bells were hidden under the floorboards of this church before the British took control of Philadelphia in 1777.

Please be sure to visit this museum with your family, children, and grandchildren and help keep our local history alive! And keep an eye out for a commissioned wall mural that will be created right across the street from the museum this coming year. Go to: libertybellmuseum.org for more information.

Mary Erdman, President

Upcoming Hot Topic Luncheons

November 14

In 2020 when he was running for reelection Phil Armstrong said this about his job as Lehigh County Executive; "This job is a 24/7 position, and I love it," he said. "As Teddy Roosevelt once said about being president, I am having a splendid, good time."

Well, Phil Armstrong, the Lehigh County Executive, is the November 14th speaker at out Hot Topics Luncheon speaking to us about the state of the county and we expect it to be excellent. Madeline's restaurant once again will be the wonderful location.

December 12

Of Dr. Chris Borick, some of his students said, "I actually wanted to go to class every day. I loved every day in this class. We had great discussions, and he gave fantastic lectures. His assignments were reasonable, and the workload was manageable."

"THE BEST! Dr. Borick has so much enthusiasm, makes all students feel welcome, overall, an amazing teacher. if possible, TAKE A CLASS WITH BORICK. you will love it! my favorite teacher."

Dr. Chris Borick, professor at Muhlenberg College, is the Speaker at our December 12 Hot Topic Luncheon. Following the January 6 Committee hearings and issues with the economy, etc., hearing about the election trends and analysis following the 2022 midterm election will be interesting.

Madeline's marvelous restaurant on Rte. 100 is the site of our Hot Topic Luncheons. Please join us there where lunch is served at 11:30 and the speaker at noon. The meeting is free if you want to have lunch the cost is $18.00. The link to make a reservation is always within the invitation you receive through email.

Chris Herbener, Vice President , Program

Membership

November is the kickoff month for membership renewals. After Thanksgiving, you will receive the renewal letter. Our dues will remain the same: $70 for primary membership, $105 for household membership. $35 for members 35 years and under, and $25 for student membership. You can pay by check, credit card, or PayPal.

Our membership has grown significantly throughout the year. Our website, Instagram, and Twitter accounts are really getting the word out virtually. Our Hot Topic Luncheon last month was very well attended. We also had 3 candidate forms which helped the public become informed about their local candidates. We are a very active League because of our hardworking members.

As of November 18th, we have 88 members. I am pleased to announce we have had one new member join our League this month. Victoria Levi from Brighton, Massachusetts checked out our website, liked what she saw, and decided to join our League as an out of state supporter. We welcome her to our League.

Margie Dunn, Membership

Local Issues Initiative

We are looking to form a committee to review and establish new positions on local issues. Some of the topics we are considering are local water issues, transportation needs, and environmental concerns.

Anyone who is interested in joining this committee and contributing to the discussion is welcome. We are hoping to hold an inaugural meeting sometime in November.

Please reach out to me, Cheryl Winters-Tetreau, at: cheryl.tetreau@gmail.com.

Voter's Guide Editor Needed

Be involved in obtaining candidates' information from the Voter Registration Office and inputting it into Vote411 for candidates to be able to participate in our questionnaire that will be published in The Morning Call. The questionnaire provides the citizens of Lehigh County with election information they need.

Reach out to Michelle Graupner by phone at 570-972-6246 or by email at michellegraupner817@gmail.com if interested.

We are also looking for a person who would be interested in leading our environment portfolio. See ad on front page.

Mayor Tuerk Updates on the City of Allentown at October HTL

The League views the city as a focal point of many of our programs. So much of what happens in Allentown and surrounding municipalities is of great interest to each of us. Many of our members are residents of Allentown and much of the voter education we are doing at present; revolves around the inner city.

We were fortunate to have Mayor Tuerk visit with us and explain so much about the programs going on in Allentown to improve life for the residents and, continue to increase economic development that the city has enjoyed these past number of years.

Mayor Tuerk explained the many challenges facing Allentown at great length. Increased affordable housing as well as parking are two of the most important needs for the city. He also explained that having ample parking and feeling safe in the city are two items which will bring more people into the city for special events, the PPL Center and to the number of restaurants we see downtown.

Education and helping the Allentown School District get the funding and programs that are needed are very close to his heart. He sees the future in our students and wants them to have the best possible chances for success.

It was evident that this mayor understands the issues and wants to create a collaborative effort to keep the City of Allentown moving forward. His engagement with city workers, police, fire, EMS, and attendance at as many events as possible is evidence of his concern for the success of Allentown.

At the end of his talk we awarded him with an honorary Halloween cape (found out that this is one of his favorite holidays) spelling out our most recent voter campaign: "Voting is Your Super Power" which he readily wore for some fun pictures.

We thank Mayor Tuerk for his talk and wish him the best in all of his endeavors. Mary Erdman

Your League in Action

Sue Phillips at Voter Registration Event

October Hot Topic Luncheon Venue

Candidate Debate at Active Life Center

Spotlight

Katia Reeb

Katia Reeb is a new member to our league having joined in the spring of this year. You might have seen her at the entrance table to our Hot Topic luncheons this fall – she has volunteered to collect money at the door for those who registered for the luncheon.

Katia is fairly new to the Lehigh Valley having moved here two years ago with her husband and young son. Although Katia has lived in a variety of areas in the United States, she regards Atlanta Georgia to be her hometown. She explained that this is where she was raised. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia having majored in music and journalism. One of her early jobs was in the music industry where she handled radio marketing.

The culinary arts had been a major area of focus for her and, to pursue this, she attended culinary school in Portland Oregon. She eventually took over and ran a retail business that had been started by her parents in Atlanta. *Maison Robert* specialized in handmade premium chocolates; Katia said she expanded it to include homemade pastries when she managed the business.

Katia has a wide variety of interests and hobbies. She likes to read, is interested in paper crafts and sewing projects and is a photography buff (In her teens, she had aspired to be a photographer for National Geographic magazine). She has recently taught herself knitting.

Katia is also involved in the community. She has served as a poll worker for the past few elections. It was while working at the poles with Barbara Williams, our treasurer and a longtime poll worker, that she found out about our league. Barbara invited her to join us. Katia said she has been very impressed with our Voters Guide. She considers it to be a great service to the community.

Chris Herbener

Chris was raised during the 1950-60s in the small coal "patch town" village of Upper Lehigh. It's in the coal region of northeast Pennsylvania. She is of Slovak and Ukrainian background; these ethnic groups immigrated to this region to work in the coal mines. After graduating from Freeland High School, she went to work in the offices of a company where she met one of the owners- her future husband. Soon she was the mother of two-and six-year-old children and began to believe she would never carry on an adult conversation again!

While listening to a local radio program one day, she heard women discussing "school bus safety". Bingo, Chris had found it! In 1974 she joined the Hazleton League of Women Voters; it saved her life. She continued to work for the family business from 1979 through 1989. When her husband died unexpectedly in 1989, League members helped once again by organizing people to help with the wake and services.

Chris served in the LWV Greater Hazleton Area as Voters Guide Editor, Finance Chair, and as President for two, two-year terms (1977-1979), (1992-1994). This League expanded the area of organization of LWV Hazleton to LWV Greater Hazleton Area, helped bring better public transportation to the area, and wrote the book "*Coal*: The Burning Question" concerning coal use in Pennsylvania. Chris also served on the Boards of the Hazleton & Freeland YMCAs. She also found time to earn a BA in Psychology from Bloomsburg University in 1998.

Chris relocated to the Lehigh Valley area in 2015 and immediately joined LWVLC. She has served on the Board, chaired the Membership Committee, and organized the Eastern PA Members Conference in 2010. Even though Chris has stayed in a 60 miles radius from where she grew up, she has traveled across the US, UK and Europe, and Costa Rica. She spends time at the beach in Delaware every summer. She has two children and says that the best thing about League membership is the friends you make.

The best thing about being a member in the League, is that I acquired my best friends through the League. I learned so much more than I could have in college and met interesting people around the country.

The **Spotlight** feature is a new addition to The Voter. In each subsequent issue, we'd like to profile one of the members. As our membership grows, and as our face- to- face meetings go virtual, we'd like to keep in touch with one another through these brief interviews.

So, if you would like to nominate a League member to be "Spotlighted", or if you would like to be "Spotlighted" yourself, please let one of our Board members know.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

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

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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 not tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

Contributions to the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) are 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 2022

$70 individual $105 household $25 full-time student

$35 if 35 years or younger

Please make check payable to LWVLC and mail to:

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