



May 2023

## **President's Annual Report**

This year has been no different from other years in our LWV Lehigh County charter. We have enjoyed a wonderful, hard-working Board of Directors and volunteers who have accomplished a number of very worthwhile events, debates, publications and behind the scenes work that keeps us moving forward.

First of all, a sincere “thank you” to all Board members for your dedication, hard work and support as we have completed another year serving Lehigh County. Your hard work and ideas are both amazing!

**Molly Faust** - past president, longtime member and DEI representative for our League who sits on the state-wide committee steering DEI policies for the State League as well as local leagues. Molly also does the layout for our bimonthly *The Voter*.

**Margie Dunn** - also a longtime member and our Director of Membership. She keeps our renewal of membership on a very timely basis.

(**Ann Bartholomew** creates our handbook with information from Margie)

**Barbara Williams** - also a longtime member who maintains our budget and watches our spending that has kept us in great financial shape.

**Barbara Connolly** - our Community Outreach Director who covers our Voter Services and making the necessary connections with our community partners to educate and guide voters. Barb also leads our League Book Club.

**Chery Winters-Tetreau** - who has the responsibility and organizational skills for the Government Directory and is always willing to give a hand at almost *all* of our events. Her efforts have streamlined the process and made the Directory more efficient to prepare. Cheryl has also taken the lead on our Local Programs project which will be presented next year.

**Charles and Donna Barker** - have taken over the job of dispersing our Government Directories and the Voters Guide across Lehigh County.

They have streamlined and added great partners to whom we distribute the Guide and Directory. Their work helps us to distribute our publications wisely and efficiently. Donna also is a contributing editor for *The Voter* for every issue we publish.

**Chris Herbener** - who valiantly struggled through a few surgeries to get the job done as far as our HTL speakers. Compiling their bios, sending our reminder emails and introducing our speakers monthly.

These last three Board members we shine a special light upon at this time; they have left or are leaving the Board and their contributions have been immense and will be sorely missed:

**Michelle Graupner** - has been our resident Social Media go to person. She maintained our Instagram and has given me advice on Facebook and Twitter. But more importantly, she has organized and published many issues of the Voters' Guide over the last number of years. She has streamlined and made the process much easier. Michelle has also updated and edited the Handbook we give participants in our Running for Local Office Workshop. She left the Board in January to run for Lehigh County Clerk of Courts and we are extremely proud of her and wish her the best.

**Rochelle Kaplan** - has been our Board secretary who has been nearly perfect in her note taking and production of the minutes each month. Rochelle has also been a Board member upon which we can always depend on to step-up and help out no matter what the job. She has kept us updated on what is happening at the state level because she has been elevated to the position of state-wide Director of Voter Services. Make sure you check out the webinars and meetings Rochelle has arranged; especially the Ballot Box Basics (on our website and the state website) - they are very helpful!

**Terri Purdy** - last but not least, Terri has been the master of our wonderful website and has kept it meticulously updated with any information you need to know about our League and what is going on at the state level. All those wonderful graphics you see on Social Media, our website or in *The VOTER* represents her mastery of Canva and her creative spirit. She is

also the master of our Zoom Meetings. Terri is also an ideas person who helps me “see” the benefits or not of some of my ideas!

We will miss these very exceptional woman and are still hoping to see people step-up to help with their work. We thank you sincerely and appreciate all you have done, and know we will see you involved in regular League activities during the upcoming year.

**Julie Ambrose** - we want to thank Julie for stepping up as the new editor of the Morning Call Voters’ Guide. This edition is Julie’s first edition, it is a massive project, and it went extremely well. We appreciate Julie’s take-charge ability for getting the job done and done well. So glad to have you onboard! Thanks to Michelle for her guidance along the way.

The other events and projects I will allow the Board members to explain and give much more detail in their reports. I mention them just to give our members an idea of all the work that has been accomplished by our wonderful Board members. I will say at this point, that we are very anxious to get our members involved in any of these projects, whether it is a week, a day or even a few hours during this upcoming year. This is collectively OUR League and my goal is to see as many of you get involved as possible in the next year.

As far as major activities we held a summer “**Meet ’N Greet**” to develop interest in our League at the Emmaus Community Park. We had a pleasant evening and did get a few new members. It was truly a group project. We will be working on another activity hopefully at River Rising Brewery later this summer.

Another major project was the biannual **Running for Local Office Workshop**. We have a great template to follow and had a decent turnout and very good speakers from *both* parties imparted their wisdom and advice. It took a group of us to make this a successful morning for all participants. And our surveys over the last two events have been very positive and suggestions have been very valid.

We also held three **Debate/Forums** for those running in the new 22nd Legislative District, the newly drawn 134th districts and the new 14th Senate District. We had very good attendance, excellent questions and the candidates came prepared and anxious to give their views. We will most likely be holding forums for County Commissioners, and a few school district boards; they present voters with a unique challenge this election cycle. We will need your help preparing these forums.

We participated in a number of community events and we have found a way to address our **DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)** challenges in many different ways. First of all, in consideration of all of our members ages, health and physical abilities; we chose Madeline's as our home base for Hot Topic Lunches, as well as for our first Annual Meeting/Dinner combination.

We began a **Book Club** dedicated to reading about diverse people and groups of people in our country and throughout history. I am very proud of our decision to address the **voting needs of our inner city residents**. The voter turnout is low, there are more pressing issues in the city, and often this community does not feel that their vote counts. We are learning so much and hopefully during the next few years, we will be able to continue to "empower these voters." The community partners are wonderful and Barb Connolly will tell you more in her report.

Rochelle has kept us up to date over the year about important legislation, changes in procedural rules, the issues the LWVPA finds most important and tips on how to address our legislators in person, emails, letters or Letters to the Editor. We had a very successful **Day of Action** with many of our members sending emails to legislators about a number of different issues. We hope to get even more members involved next year.

Our **Hot Topic Lunches** were well attended and our speakers came from many different backgrounds and experiences. Planning for next year will take place in June sometime; and if you have any ideas please pass them on to Chris Herbener or to me. To refresh your memories, you can check our HTL on our website to see what great speakers we had last year. I

already have a list of about eight suggestions, but it is okay to have more than we need!

There was also a lot of work behind the scenes, like our **Local Programs Group** which is doing wonderful research and reporting. There were also brainstorming, organizing and assignment of tasks which our Board members took on and worked very hard to accomplish to get projects completed.

In conclusion, I have three major goals next year which I want to share with each and every one of our members:

1. Create a standard strategic plan for the future of our League.
2. Create events that will encourage younger voters to join our League.
3. Engage more of our members in the very satisfying work of the League.

In order to achieve these goals and adequately fulfill our mission of: “Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy,” will take more than just our Board members. We need you and we look forward to working with you. We also want to get to know all of our members. We know that there is a lot of experience, talent and concern among our members. These are difficult political times which takes more effort to advance our missions. Have a wonderful summer and watch for those emails and info about events. Also don’t hesitate to check-out our website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!

Thank you all for your support and encouragement this year.

Yours in League,

Mary Erdman, President

