LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

September/October 2024 .Volume 72, Issue 2

# The VOTER

## President's Message

Dear Members,

Welcome back to each and every one of our wonderful members! Whether you have been with the League for more than 40 years or, whether you are just beginning your adventure as a League member; we welcome all of you back to a fall and winter which will be very, very active in an important election year!

Many of your Board members and members have already been very, very busy. Three of us attended the National League of Women Convention in Washington, DC in June (Ellen Iobst, Lisa Dolan and I) and brought back some great ideas to grow our League. We had members Julie Ambrose and Sarah Barrett recently complete the information for vote411.org as well as extract the information for the up-coming *Morning Call Voters' Guide*.. Cheryl Winters-Tetreau completed our 2024 Government Directory, (posted on our website) while Donna and Charles Barker coordinated the distribution of them.

Barb Connolly has been working on tabling events and Book Club and Barb, Rochelle Kaplan, Tinku Khanwalker and, Terri Purdy have been helping me with a project to get: notices, directions and voter registration forms in most of the food pantries throughout our counties with the help of Dawn Godshall of the Community Action Lehigh Valley (CALV) which numbers about 200! Our aim is to help our marginalized neighbors be ready to register and vote. We have also received support from Sen. Nick Miller, Cohesion Network, and Rep. Mike Schlossberg, and other organizations.

We have a few events where we will have the chance to meet new members and see some of our faithful members at an info night where hopefully we will "inspire you to activism!" Stay tuned!

My personal goal this year is to personally meet and encourage as many of our members to become active - even if it is one small thing for which you volunteer. This year we need all hands on deck. So, enjoy these last few days of summer and let's get to work:

"Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy" for all citizens!

Again, welcome back to all!

Mary Erdman, President

## FALL MEET & GREET

Wednesday, September 18, 6 to 8 pm

Lehigh Valley Active Life

1833 W. Elm Street, Allentown

Details on page 3

## Community Outreach Report

The 2024 General Election, with many twists and turns on the national level, is upon us in just a number of weeks. While the Presidential race seems to get the greater part of media attention, Pennsylvania voters will also be choosing an Attorney General, Auditor General, and State Treasurer, as well as one US Senator, and Pennsylvania US District and State Representatives. Our league and LWV leagues state-wide continue to encourage voters to register, research candidates, and make a voting plan!

Thanks to Cheryl Winters-Tetreau, Rochelle Kaplan, Mary Erdman and Tinku Arandhati Khanwalkar for helping at our August events. The American Red Cross Drive at the Univest Public Media Center in Bethlehem allowed our league a unique opportunity for tabling. In addition, we were able to connect with Allentown families at a number of before school year events, including Harrison-Morton Middle School's 6th Grade Welcome and the Rock the Block Party at Sheridan Elementary. The Rock the Block Party and Bookbag Blast at Franklin Park was a night of games, food, music and best of all, new bookbags to start the year.

Fran Derhammer, a league member, is assisting with a voter registration and information program at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in Emmaus. We were happy to provide Fran with resources and information. We appreciate the opportunity to help get out the *Voting is Your Superpower* message!

During September a number of tabling events are scheduled. If you have never assisted at a tabling event before, fall is a great time to get involved or drop by!

***Constitution Day - Saturday, September 14 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM***

*Bethlehem Rose Garden Farmers Market*

***Coopersburg Community Day - Saturday, September 21, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM***

*Southern Lehigh Living Memorial Community Park*

***Little Lehigh Manor Voter Registration - Wednesday, September 25 at 1:00 PM***

*824 Jackson Street, Allentown (bi-lingual speaker appreciated)*

***Key Club Voter Registration Drive, Saturday, September 28 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM***

*Salisbury High School Vestibule, 500 East Montgomery Street, Allentown*

If you would like more information on tabling events, want to help out, or have suggestions for partners, please contact me at 610-216-9448. ***All help and ideas are most appreciated!***

Barbara Connolly, Vice President, Community Outreach

## Membership Report

I am pleased to announce we now have **102 members** in our League. We had a banner year for new members. Since May of 2023 we have had 35 new members join our League! Our website has been extraordinarily successful in bringing in new members.

The following people joined in May and June: Charlotte Safrit of Allentown, Stacey Mondschein of Macungie, Roberta Whitcomb of Macungie, Barbara Janoski of Allentown, and Iris Lehrich of Allentown

Last month we had 2 new members join our League: Nora Goldstein from Emmaus and Rill Ann Miller from Allentown.

I would like to give a special shout out to Ellen Iobst. She has been responsible for recruiting many of our new members. She has been a member of our League for two years and is responsible for developing our Enironmental Policy which the Sate League is also interested in adapting. Thank you, Ellen, for your commitment to our League.

Our big push this year is to recruit new members under 35. Our first Happy Hour Event was attended by over 50 people. We need young people who may have a fresh perspective on our programs and events so we can continue and grow.

As always, invite family, friends, and colleagues to our Hot Topic Luncheons.

Margie Dunn, Membership

# LWVLC Book Club News

The summer meeting of our LWVLC Book Club was held on Wednesday, July 31 with ***Trees b***y Percival Everett the topic of discussion. Trees is a powerful take on the history of racism in the United States. Everett is also the author of ***James***, published this year, described a reimagining of Huckleberry Finn. One of the pluses of the LWVLC book club has been discovering authors new to us and being challenged by texts featuring diverse subjects.

Up next for book club readers will be ***The Sweetness of Water b***y Nathan Harris. Published in 2021, ***The Sweetness of Water*** is described as a historical "*page-turner about social friction so powerful it ignites a whole town."* Carole V. Bell, review of The Sweetness of Water, NPR Book Reviews, August 4, 2021.

The next meeting of the book club will take place late October/early November. If you are interested in information or being added to the book club email list please call or email me at blconnolly2@gmail.com.

Happy Fall Reading!

Barbara Connolly, Vice President, Community Outreach

**Come out and meet your fellow members**!

## FALL MEET & GREET

Wednesday, September 18, 6 to 8 pm
Lehigh Valley Active Life
1833 W. Elm Street, Allentown

**GET INSPIRED! GET CONNECTED!**

Find out about all the amazing things your fellow League members are up to, and discover how you can be more engaged in our community. Meet old and new members who will inspire you with their stories of how they got involved, and the rewards of working toward the League's common goal:

**EMPOWERING VOTERS AND DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**

Please join us! Light refreshments will be served.

# DEIBA Report

The state committee of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility (DEIBA) met monthly by Zoom throughout the summer. Issues dealing with voting and voter registration were identified and discussed. The question members were asked to consider was "Who is missing at the table?"

DEIBA is central to making democracy work. For example, accessibility is important to increase voter registration. Our July meeting was devoted to committee members sharing what their leagues are doing. I reported that our league has been showing up at center city events. The center city neighborhoods are areas with traditionally low voter registration and low voter turnout. We have been present at Community Partners meetings; we attend Movie Nights in the Park to register voters, we represent the league at Naturalization ceremonies and hand out registration materials, and our handouts are in Spanish as well as English.

On another note, Stephanie Sun has been appointed as a Vice President to the LWVPA board. She will continue to chair the DEIBA committee.

Molly Faust, DEIBA Representative

## Environmental Policy Report

The Environmental Committee is off to a great start. Our initial team has a mix of great resources with experience in Environmental Law, Master Gardening, Corporate Sustainability, Organic Recycling, Waste Elimination, Environmental Local Issues Expertise and more. The team is identifying the areas of study and ways to get our messaging out to our community. The top subjects of study are:

Renew of the Solid Waste Management

Local Water Issues

Energy Consensus around Community Solar and Energy Efficiency

Storm Water Management (Lehigh Valley Study)

Air Quality (Lehigh Valley Breathes Study)

Check out our new page on the website of our Environmental Policy and Local Issues Positions: https://lwvlehighcounty.org/local-programs/org. If you would like to join the Environmental Committee, please reach out to Ellen Iobst (contact information can be found in the LWV Lehigh Co. Directory).

Ellen Iobst, Environmental Policy

## Participate in Halloween Parade

Prepare to join us on **Saturday, October 26th** (rain date the 27th) as we table and distribute candy to the kids, and voting information to the adults.

This is a fun experience to view all the creative costumes and adorable faces that are looking for their Halloween Trick or Treats! It is a great opportunity to speak with a captive audience as the kids are very anxious to walk along Hamilton (between 6th and 9th) and collect candy treasures from each organization and politicians' table areas.

Now, if you cannot help out; we have an ask of each of you. Would you be willing to provide us with a bag of candy to add to what we have to buy? We went through an enormous amount of candy as this draws many local Allentown families. This is an exciting time for the trick-or-treaters and fun to see all the costumes worn by children and adults alike. Even some of our politicians will dress for the occasion! We invite you to also table and dress-up if you wish. Any ideas? Let Barb Connolly know if you want to table that day. **blconnolly2@gmail.com**

We will be collecting bags of typical Halloween candy at the **OCTOBER HOT TOPIC LUNCHEON, and/or our MEET & GREET EVENING.** We are only there from **11:00 AM until 2:00 PM**; and we need lots of candy! This is a big deal for many of these kids and families who struggle financially. It is so rewarding to give them a few hours of fun.

## Toiletries for Harrison-Morton

When we held the April Hot Topic Luncheon, we asked our members if you would be so generous as to help the kids at Harrison-Morton Middle School by providing toiletries that would help many families make it through summer. We asked for basics such as: toothpaste, bath soap, shampoo, conditioner and deodorant.

And boy did you answer the call! We found that many of these families in various neighborhoods in Allentown, depend upon the schools to help them with many very basic needs. The results were amazing; in fact, when I delivered the products to the Harrison-Morton representative, she actually became very emotional.

Your generosity provided about $2000 - $2500 worth of toiletries! My entire hatch was full, as was my back seat and floor of my car. You should be so proud of your absolute caring nature! And even more proud that because of your generosity, many families received items to help them when times are tough. There are a number of immigrant families, even from Gaza, who are tremendously grateful and respond by saying when things are better for them; then they will return the generosity!

I want to thank you so much for all you do for our communities.

Mary Erdman, President

# CLASSIFIEDS

We have some opportunities on our Board of Directors for our members who want to be more active in our League. Please consider participating.

## VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS

This Board of Directors position involves managing our advocacy efforts in response to developments in the Senate and the House in Harrisburg. Responsibilities include informing members about legislation, coordinating letters to the editor campaigns, lobbying elected officials, and organizing advocacy actions as directed by the Pennsylvania LWV. Contact Mary Erdman at email@lwvlehighcounty.org if you are interested in the position.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

This Board of Directors position is responsible for developing and implementing public relations strategies to enhance our League's visibility. the role includes serving as the primary media contact, drafting press releases, securing media coverage, and keeping members informed through regular reports. Contact Mary Erdman at email@lwvlehighcounty.org if you are interested in the position.

## WEBMASTER

This League Board of Directors position is to oversee the management of the League's website to include adding, editing and removing content in the website. This position may include the redesign of the website to include menu structure, layout, color schemes and overall aesthetics. Prior website experience is not required. Training will be provided. Contact Mary Erdman at email@lwvlehighcounty.org if you are interested in the position.

## WEB TEAM

These positions help the webmaster develop the content that appears on the website, to include text, images and videos. Contact Mary Erdman at email@lwvlehighcounty.org if you are interested in one of these positions.

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

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 2024

$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