LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

January/February 2025 Volume 72, Issue 4

The VOTER

President's Message

Dear members,

As we head into February, we have much to celebrate!

We have reached 105 members, as we plan on celebrating our 105th birthday as the League of Women Voters! On February 14th 1920, Carrie Chapman founded the League with the sole purpose of preparing women to vote for the first time in our national history. We will celebrate this milestone at our **February Hot Topic Luncheon on February 10th** Although it was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when *all* women were finally guaranteed the right to vote. We will also honor our long time members, so please try to attend!

That is why the National League of Women Voters strongly supports the passage of the J*ohn Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* that will guarantee voting rights for all citizens without question and condition. This will help to avoid acts of voter suppression that still exist in a number of our states.

So far this year, we held a very successful *Running for Local Office Workshop* -which you can read about in this issue. We are planning for the future, as my second term is up in May of this year, and we need help in replacing me and other members who have been doing jobs that now need to be shared. If you are interested in Communications, Graphic Design, and leadership; please contact me, personally at: maryc.erdman@gmail.com.

We are also planning another Happy Hour which was a great first experience last year. This brought together: members, organizations, candidates and politicians. The last thing we heard as we were packing up for the night was "When is the next one?" If anyone wants to help plan this event, contact me again. We do need a few helpers.

We are now heading into the next campaign season and we will also need members to help if we are able to plan any candidate forums in time for the Primary Election on May 20th, or the General Election on November 4th, 2025. These local elections do not generally get the attention they deserve as our local politicians make decisions which affect our daily lives. Please get involved.

We are entering into an Administration which is already challenging our Constitution and our Rule of Law. The League is taking a wait and see approach; but as one of our sacred missions is: "Defending Democracy," we will not hesitate to act to protect our Constitutional rights and freedoms. We will keep you informed.

Finally, as I have been struggling with a second knee replacement (extra work was done on this knee), I want to thank all of our Board and members who have stepped up to help me complete some important tasks. We have a great group and we need a few of our 105 members to step up in May and help move our League forward. Please think about becoming involved. We really need YOU!

Thank you to all of our faithful members, you are appreciated!

Yours in League,

Mary Erdman, President

COMING EVENTS

- **Hot Topic Luncheon**—February 10 —Celebrating 105th Birthday of LWVUS and speaker on Building 21, District Charter School
- **LWVLC Happy Hour**—March—Date to be announced.

Community Outreach Report

The past year was a busy one with interest and eyes focused on the presidential race. Next up on the election calendar is the Municipal Primary on Tuesday, May 20, 2025. In addition to nominating Democratic and Republican candidates for county and local offices in November's election, May's primary will include nominations for a Judge of the Pennsylvania Superior Court and one Judge of the Commonwealth Court.

While presidential elections continue to get the attention and press we all know the importance of the offices close to home. Help us to get the word out to friends, family and neighbors thinking of sitting out the primary and municipal elections in 2025. If you know of groups needing encouragement or information, tell them the League of Women Voters of Lehigh County is ready to plan a program, talk with groups, or provide resources about the "what " and "why" of municipal elections.

At this time we have one potential community outreach event on the calendar, the 3rd Annual Parkland Community Resource Fair on March 15th from 9 AM to 12 Noon.

As other opportunities become available, we will get the word out for assistance. Thanks for all your support and please call with any questions, suggestions, or ideas.

Barbara Connolly, Vice President Community Outreach

LWVLC Book Club

The LWVLC Book Club will meet on Monday, February 3, 2025 at 1:30 PM to discuss Louise Erdrich's ***Antelope Woman.*** Previously published in 1998 under the title ***The Antelope Wife,*** Erdrich revised the novel, renamed as ***The Antelope Woman, and*** described it as a "completely different novel…the true novel that was hidden in the first version."

Antelope Woman is the story of the Roy and Shawano families, "intertwined for generations,and how that history affects the contemporary descendants of these families who are products of two cultures, Ojibwe and white, which sit in uneasy relationship to each other."

Contact me by phone or email for more information about the LWVLC Book Club. Meetings provide a great opportunity to get to know other league members and fellow readers.

Barbara Connolly, Vice President, Community Outreach

Membership Report

Our membership drive is almost over. If you have not renewed your membership, it is $70 payable to LCLWV. You can send me your check or renew online through our website. The deadline is January 31st, but if you are late, that's ok. Please mail it to, Margie Dunn, 8411 Carpet Rd, New Tripoli PA 18066.

We have 106 members in our League. In December we had one new member join- Sarajane William of Macungie. And Suzanne Hartzell of Fountain Hill joined in January. Welcome to both of our new members!

Margie Dunn, Membership

Hot Topic lunch at Ham Fam Restaurant—Chris Borick , speaker

Equity (DEIBA) Report

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility (DEIBA) committee has proposed to the state league that its name be changed to the Equity Committee.

This committee members voted to make the change at the December Zoom meeting after much discussion. The main reason for proposing the change was that the term DEI has become so politicized it is obscuring our league's message on voting and good government. People are "tuning" us out. Even some league members have shown no interest in pursuing a DEI initiative.

Equity is central to making democracy work. It is hoped that a name change will help people focus on our core mission.

Molly Faust, Equity Representative

LWVLC HOLDS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RUNNING FOR LOCAL OFFICE WORKSHOP, January 11, 2025

The setting was the Tompkins Center at Cedar Crest College. More than 20 participants were prepared to learn all about becoming a candidate in this year's local, municipal primary and general elections.The event began with keynote speaker, Rep. Mike Schlossberg, who gave a talk entitled: "Prepare Yourself to be a Candidate!" As usual, Mike gave an informative, personal and practical introduction to running for office.

He was followed by the founders of *Armchair LV:* Katherine Reinhard and Bob Orenstein. Learning how to :"Work with the Press," is a key part of running a successful campaign and Katherine and Bob are dedicated experts in this field.

Of course, the first barrier is to learn about, and file the necessary paperwork to allow you to have your name entered on the official Department of State Ballot. Tim Benyo, the County Chief Clerk of the Election Board along with attorney Jason Ulrich gave a far reaching overview of what is needed and answered many questions. Next, our own Michelle Graupner gave an explanation of the LWV's vote411.org and the critical importance of answering the request to answer this survey, which is ultimately used for the Morning Call Voters Guide. We impress upon candidates that voters look for this information and very often they tell us if a candidate does not answer; they refuse to vote for that candidate!

Representing both parties, Emily Gehman (R) President of the Southern Lehigh School Board, and Bob Elbich (D), Vice-Chair of the Lehigh County Democrats and former Lehigh County Commissioner as well as former RFLOW attendee, were excellent in sharing knowledge about what to expect and what not to expect from your respective party.

This was followed by a sharing of experiences, advice and answering questions from our four panelists who have run campaigns. Those participants were:

Emily Gehman (R), Jacob Roth (R) South Whitehall Twp. Supervisor and alumnus of RFLOW, Sheila Alvarado (D), Lehigh County Commissioner, and Santo Napoli (D), Allentown City Council. We loved that each of these panelists had a strong feeling of giving back now that they are serving in office.

Each participant left with a 100+ page workbook that was edited by our committee and organized by Michelle Graupner. Once we have made some changes, our goal is to have this workbook copyrighted.

A huge thank you to all who helped organize and guarantee a smooth and organized event. Thank you for your continued support. All reports say that this was one of the best RFLOWs we have held - thanks to the following members for making this possible:

Barbara Connolly, Lisa Dolan, Mary Erdman, Bob Elbich, Molly Faust, Michelle Graupner, Rochelle Kaplan, Terri Purdy and Chery Winters-Tetreau

Mary Erdman, President

Pictures of Running for Local Office Workshop

(Above) Attorney Jason Ulrich, Michelle Graupner and Tim Benyo answer participant's questions at workshop.

(Left) RFLOW participants at Cedar Crest College.

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