LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

July/August 2025 Volume 73, Issue 1

The VOTER

A Message from Your New Co-Presidents

Greetings League members!

We hope you are having a relaxing summer so far, because right around the corner is a busy fall. We have mid-term elections this year, and preparations are already underway for local school board candidate forums, so stay tuned and plan on coming out to meet the candidates in your district this October.

As Mary explained last month, the governing body of our League is now the Executive Committee, which consists of:

Barb Connolly, Co-President and Chair of Voter Services/Community Outreach

Cheryl Winters-Tetreau, Co-President, Chair of Programs and the Government Directory

Barbara Williams, Treasurer

Margie Dunn, Membership

Molly Faust, The Voter, DEIBA

Donna and Charles Barker, Publication Distribution

Lisa Dolan, Susan Gilbert Zenca, Molly Faust, Website Team

Cheryl Winters-Tetreau

Barbara Connolly

There are many ways for you to become more involved with our League, including volunteering for one or more of the upcoming Community Outreach activities that are detailed in Barb Connolly's report on page 2.

Have a safe, healthy, and happy summer!

Yours in League,

Barbara Connolly and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau

Join us Monday, September 8, 2025 for the first Hot Topic gathering of the 2025-2026 season. Meet at 11:30 a at the Hamilton Family Restaurant.

Topics are the Book Nook program and an explanation of the new Membership Portal (Chapter Spot).

Please pre-register for our luncheons on our events calendar.

Community Outreach

Summer is the season when our community outreach activities are primarily outdoors and coupled with community celebrations. This summer we are again participating in the pre-movie activities of Allentown's Park and Recreation Movie Nights, affording our members time to connect with residents in a relaxed family atmosphere. We encourage city residents to consider the importance of the close-to-home municipal elections, with a focus on what offices are on the ballot for the upcoming November 4, 2025 General Election and how to find non-partisan candidate information. We also have information available about the Pennsylvania judicial elections, both retention elections and the special general elections for the Pennsylvania Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court.

The Juneteenth Celebration was held at Cedar Beach Park in Allentown on June 21. A number of individuals and families inquired at our table about our local league, our mission, and activities. For children, we had a supply of treats on hand as well as a Juneteenth coloring page.

Thanks to Roberta Whitcomb, Lisa Dolan, and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau for manning the table on a hot but important day.

Allentown's June Movie in the Park was held on Saturday, June 7 at Union Terrace Park. The pre-movie activities were lightly attended, likely due to the rain date change from the original Friday night. We are scheduled to attend the Saturday, August 2 movie at Valania Park in Allentown and hope for more cooperative weather.

Other upcoming summer events include National Night Out on Tuesday, August 5 at Cedar Beach Park and the 2025 Back to School Bash on Wednesday, August 13, also at Cedar Beach Park. On August 22 we will be at Ripple Church on 1421 W Turner Street for the Franklin Park Backpack Event, where neighborhood students receive backpacks and school supplies for the coming school year. This is a fun and motivating family celebration.

Dates already on the calendar for September include the Civic Resource Fair at the Bethlehem Campus of Northampton Community College on National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 16. This fall we will attend for the second year Coopersburg's Community Day at the Southern Lehigh Community Living Memorial Park on Saturday, September 20. Thanks to league member Kathie Parsons for again taking the lead on this well-attended event. We had a wonderful time in Coopersburg last year and this year is sure to be the same.

Cheryl Winters Tetreau, Roberta Whitcomb, Lisa Dolan at Juneteenth Celebration

Please continue to check ***Upcoming Events*** on our website. As we approach September additional events will be added and help is needed, welcome, and appreciated!!

Barbara Connolly, Co-President/ Vice President of Community Outreach

Local League Capacity Grant

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania has offered local leagues the opportunity to apply for a small grant program to support local League capacity building. The grants offer local leagues from $750 to $1,000 to "*support investment and work that supports strengthening your local league,"*

In keeping with the stated purpose of the grant we have applied for grant monies to support initiatives including voter education, membership engagement, and community outreach.

We are already in the process of planning candidate forums prior to the November General Election, and anticipate holding a panel discussion for the general public relating to a current issue. Grant monies could also help support membership engagement activities including member and voter education presentations and tabling resources.

Grants offered by the LWVPA have been of tremendous value in the past few years, enabling our local league to improve our voter education materials, both in printing bilingual voter resources and developing communications targeted to specific groups. Most importantly, they help us broaden the outreach of our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

Barbara Connolly, Co-President/Vice-President Community Outreach

Harrisburg Happenings

1. **The PA Budget.** Perhaps by the time you read this issue of The *Voter*, the House, Senate and the Governor will reach an agreement and, we will finally have a new budget. According to the PA Constitution, the budget is due on June 30th, the day before the new fiscal year. The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives passed their version of the Budget on July 14th. As of today, the Republican-controlled Senate has not yet reached an agreement with the House and the Governor.

Governor Shapiro proposed a $50.6 billion budget and the PA House trimmed it by about $900 million. The Senate believes more should be cut. They also believe that needed funds should *not* come from reserves, like the Democrats are willing to do since we do not know how bad the effect will be in losing millions of dollars from the Federal Government with the signing of the "Big, Beautiful Bill!"

The major points of disagreement are the amount of spending and from where some of these necessary funds will be derived. Right now, the Chairmen of the Appropriations from the House and Senate and the Governor's office are in negotiations. The Senate has no immediate plans to return to Harrisburg until September 8th.

There is critical funding needed for our public transit, schools and non-profits, especially. Major services and salaries for government workers are not being withheld. Let's hope for a resolution very soon.

2. **HB1396 -** The LWVPA is paying close attention to this bill after it was sent to the Senate after a 102-101 approval by the House. There are many excellent changes in this bill that the League has been advocating for and we are hoping that not much is changed or objected to by the Senate. A few key changes are: In-person early voting, guaranteed drop boxes in every county; no more need to date the envelope of your mail-in ballot; you may have a family member, someone in your household or a caretaker drop you mail-in ballot in a dropbox without penalty and, a possibility of pre-canvassing up to a week before the election.

The indication is that the Senate will counteroffer with a mandatory Voter ID. The concern of the LWVPA is that if this does occur, no person or group of citizens will find it harder to vote based on required identification specifics.

We will be looking toward our members to *advocate* for the standards held by our LWVPA and our LWVLC, when that issue is being debated.

3. As time goes on, look to this column for other legislation and topics that are being discussed in Harrisburg and, will need your attention in advocacy.

Stay tuned. *There is a lot more to come!*

Mary Erdman, Past President

The Fries Rebellion Movie

Come to a screening of this historic tale on Wednesday, August 27, at 6:15 pm at Lehigh Valley Active Life, 1633 Elm Street, Allentown.

League members Ann Bartholomew and Sarajane Williams, the movie's screenwriter, have been instrumental in creating, filming, and showing this movie throughout the Lehigh Valley. It is a short, entertaining film about the tax revolt among Pennsylvania Dutch farmers that happened in Lehigh and Upper Bucks counties between 1799 and 1800.

Please plan to attend, and bring a friend! We are asking for a donation to help defray costs—pay what you can. Snacks and water will be available at no charge.

Strawbridge Honor Roll

The league work of two of our members—Mary Erdman and Rochelle Kaplan – was recognized at the convention by naming them to the Anna E. Strawbridge Honor Roll.

The Strawbridge Honor Roll was established to recognize League members who have made enduring and exceptional contributions to our work and mission. Named for Anna Estes Strawbridge, a founder of the League in Pennsylvania and a lifelong advocate for nonpartisan civic engagement, this honor is reserved for individuals whose leadership, service, and values have shaped the League at the local, regional, or state level.

These are the people who show up, year after year and who quietly make things happen. They strengthen our democratic institutions not through accolades, but through action. We congratulate Mary and Rochelle on being honored.

Amy Widestrom, LWVPA Executive Director and Mary Erdman, Strawbridge Honor Roll inductee. Rochelle Kaplan not present.

Membership

Our league membership has increased to 84 members. We had three new members join this summer. They are Sara Fevig from Center Valley, Lynn Wallace from Fogelsville and Carol Obando-Derstine from Center Valley. Carol is running for the US Representative seat in the 7th Congressional District, currently occupied by Ryan Mackenzie. It had formerly been held by Susan Wild.

I encourage members to attend the September Hot Topics luncheon. We will be going over the new procedures set up by the national league for renewing your league membership. The major change is that members will be expected to rejoin online. This is a break from the past where members mailed renewal checks directly to our membership chair.

The September meeting is Monday, September 8, 2025 at the Hamilton Family Restaurant starting at 11:30 am. Pre-registration is required. Go to our events calendar on our league website.

Margie Dunn, Director, Membership

Notes from 2025 Biannual LWVPA Convention

More than 100 local league members attended the 2025 Biannual LWVPA Convention which was held in Lancaster the second weekend in June. Twenty-four local leagues across the Commonwealth were represented. There were three days of workshops, collaborating and decision-making. The shared vision was for ***"a stronger, more connected League across Pennsylvania"***

Members approved a focused, forward-looking policy agenda – the **Program for 2025-2027**. This agenda includes the following:

Voting rights and election reform

Environmental justice

Equitable education and healthcare

Gun safety

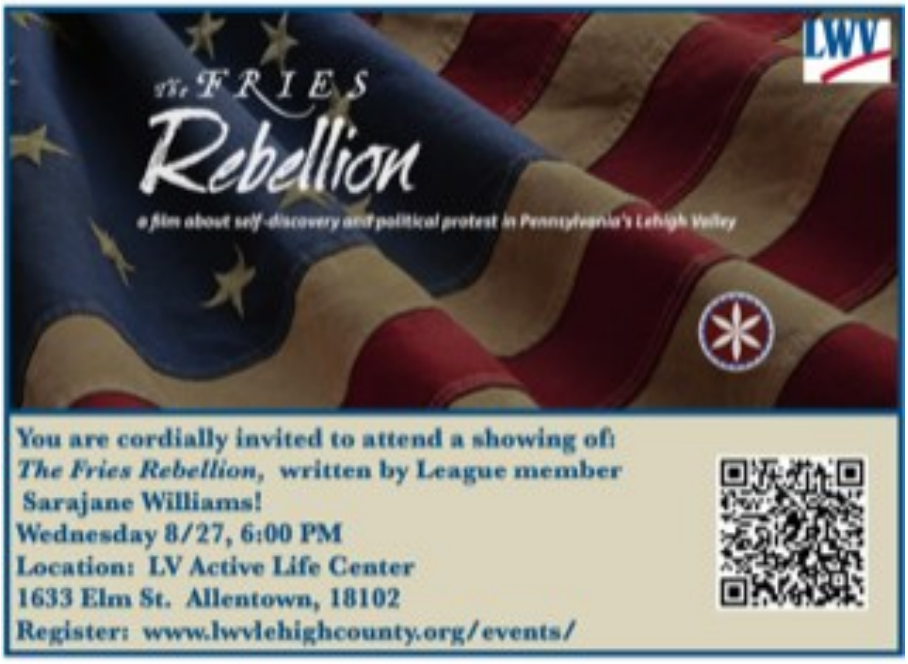
Our league was represented by three members – Mary Erdman, Ellen Iobst and Lucille Piggot-Prawl.

Help us fund this exciting project with the LWV of Lehigh County & PBS39

LWVLC & PBS39 are joining together to supply environmental books to Book Nooks in the underserved communities in Lehigh County. The Book Nooks are small book stands that hold multiple children's books in English and Spanish. They are located in clinics and other places where children have an opportunity to browse through books and take their favorites home. We received a $500 grant from the LWVPA to fund supplying environmental books to the PBS39 Book Nooks and we need another $500 in donations to complete the project. Please join us in supporting this fund raising event to give kids, in the underserved communities, access to free books which they can take and keep.

Please make a donation. Checks can be made out to the LWVUS Education Fund as a tax deductible donation. Thank you for your help to fund this project for our community!

Ellen Iobst, Director Environmental Policy



Movie Night

Featuring

the Fries Rebellion

Come Join Us

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 _____

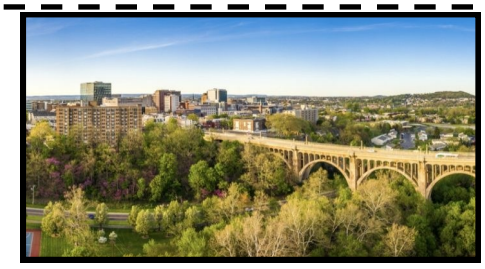
Membership dues include membership in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania (LWVPA) and a subscription to the local and state *Voter.*

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 –Changes to be made in 2025

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

$35 if 35 years or younger