LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

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The VOTER

Message from the Chair of the Executive Committee

Cheryl Winters-Tetreau

Barbara Connolly

Hello League Members.

As we bid farewell to summer, we have a lot to look forward to this fall. First, please see Barb Connolly's article that details all of the community events we will be involved with. Please reach out to Barb and volunteer to help out at one or more of these events.

Next up are local school board candidate forums. This year, we are partnering with our local PBS station, Channel 39, who will be hosting the forums before live audiences in their Bethlehem studio. The events are free, but registration is required. We will be updating you on the details for registration soon. I want to encourage you to join us for these forums, and bring a friend! It is so important this election year that we learn all we can about candidates and where they stand on local issues.

Our upcoming Hot Topics Lunch will be on September 8. We will be hearing about an exciting collaboration between our League and PBS39 to bring free books to local schoolchildren via Book Nooks. We will also get an update on the new League membership portal. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you for all that you do to help empower voters and defend democracy.

Cheryl Winters-Tetreau

Vice President, Programs and Chair of Executive Committee

The speaker for our October Hot Topics Luncheon will be Lehigh County Executive Phillips Armstrong. (Article on page 4). The meeting is Monday October 13, 2025 at 11:30 am at the Hamilton Family Restaurant.

Please preregister fon the events calendar.

We are looking for some volunteers to help with checking in attendees at the Hot Topics Luncheons.

If you enjoy the luncheons and want to get to know our members, this is an opportunity.

The Importance of Municipal Elections

"Why vote."
"They are all the same."
"Makes no difference. Nothing changes."
"I have never voted. Not about to start now."

Like me, you have probably heard these and similar statements. The belief that voting makes no difference and that my vote has no power is not uncommon. Municipal elections are not immune from these sentiments.

A comparison of voter turnout for *general* versus *municipal* elections reflect how interest and engagement drops off for local elections. Voter turnout in the 2023 November Municipal Election was 31.1% of registered voters in Lehigh County. Two years later, in the 2024 General Election (a presidential election year) voter turnout increased in L.C. to 73.9% of registered voters.

What can you say? How do you even begin to describe the importance of local elections and the impact of the offices on our daily lives?

Maybe you have heard of the elevator talk. A response taking no longer than an elevator ride. Brief, to the point, focusing on key points. A few chosen words that might encourage the listener to consider an alternative viewpoint and check out available resources.

"For me, local elections are really important. Since I care about

(fill in the blank) I really want to see people in local offices

who care about these things too. Makes a real difference in my community."

Libraries, zoning, schools, local taxes,

parks and recreation,

roads, community policing

Elevator talks can communicate the impact local government makes on our daily lives. Your personal perspective may become the power that leads to a changed mindset!

The Lehigh and Northampton Counties Voters Guide to the 2025 Pennsylvania Election will be published late October 2025 and available on our website. Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to seek out www. vote411.org for information on their individual ballots and candidates.

Thanks to Julie Ambrose for her work in putting together this important resource.

Lehigh County and Municipal Offices on the Ballot

Lehigh County - one Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, County Executive, County Commissioners

Magisterial District Judges (four districts)

Municipal Offices - Mayors, City Council Members, Borough Councils, Township Commissioners, Township Supervisors, and School Board Directors

Statewide Judicial Offices on the Ballot

Retention elections for three of the seven judges on the Supreme Court

One retention election for the Superior Court

One retention election for the Commonwealth Court (yes/no votes)

Special general elections - one Superior Court vacancy one Commonwealth Court vacancy

For a complete listing of candidates for offices in the November general municipal election in *Lehigh and Northampton Counties* in the Morning Call: https://www.mcall.com/2025/08/21/lehigh-valley-2025-election-candidate-list/

Barbara Connolly, Vice President, Community Outreach and Voter Services

LWVPA Events

The LWVPA has a number of upcoming events focused on the November election, with a number specific to the Pennsylvania Court System. Unless noted, the sessions are offered virtually.

Tuesday September 2 - Understanding the Court System in
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Pennsylvania: A Talk by Thomas Kistler

Monday September 8 - Behind the Ballot Fireside Chat
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM PA Supreme Court Justices
(Virtual or in-person) Retention Elections

Tuesday September 16 - Your Vote in Judicial Elections in PA
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Greensburg, PA (in-person only)

Thursday September 25 - Voting on Judges: Retention Elections &
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Information on Judicial Candidates

Monday October 6 - The Independent Court: What It Is and Why It
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Matters
Harrisburg, PA (in-person only)

Information and registration links are available at the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Upcoming Events page https://www.palwv.org/events

LWVLC Book Club Selection for November 2025

Ginny Moon

a novel by Benjamin Ludwig

Ginny Moon is narrated through the voice of an autistic teenager, 13 year-old Ginny, removed from the home of her mother at the age of nine and placed in a foster home. Although adopted by a loving couple, Ginny continues to obsess about a cherished possession left behind in her mother's apartment.

Benjamin Ludwig and his wife adopted a daughter with autism in 2009 and "it was her hunger to be reunited in some way with her own birth mother that created an inspiration for this book."

Book Club Meeting Date

Monday, **November 1, 2025**

For information about our Book Club or a list of books previously discussed contact Barbara Connolly at blconnolly2@gmail.com.

Book Club Meeting

Harrisburg Happenings

Our Legislators will be back in Harrisburg soon, but on different starting dates. The Senate will reconvene on **September 8th.** The House will reconvene on **September 22nd.** There is still a lot of work to be done as soon as possible: The House and the Senate are still in talks about how to help fund the **Public Transit Fund.** The main argument is whether the state should use already appropriated monies (like a savings account) or create new funding that will preserve the fund that is set-up for special projects or emergency situations. Democrats want to use new funding and preserve the "rainy day funds," and Republicans want to only use the monies in this fund exclusively.

Hopefully a resolution will be arrived at soon. The Governor seems to believe the Legislature can do both with some conditions. In the meantime, public transit around the state is suffering and our citizens have been greatly inconvenienced (LANTA). Stay tuned.

We still do not have a **budget**! The House passed a budget this summer after cutting $900 million from the Governor's budget requests. That apparently was not enough and Senate Republicans are still holding out for more cuts. There were talks over the summer; but no agreements were reached. We need to encourage our Senators to get to work and reach an agreement with the House as soon as possible. Schools, non-profits and county services are beginning to feel this pinch of no budget.

HB 1828 was recently introduced by three House members who are in the medical field. This bill protects access to recommended vaccines as they are recommended by the PA Department of Health. Our Legislators do not want to wait and see what is happening in Washington with the controversial decisions being made by RFK, Jr. as Secretary of HHS. His decision would only allow those over 65, and with serious health conditions to be eligible for the COVID vaccines. The creators of this bill want to guarantee that these vaccines and others, would be available to ALL PA citizens. Three local representatives are supporting this bill in the House: Schlossberg, Siegel and McNeill.

HB 1396 - this was explained in the last Voter. This would make common sense changes to the PA Election Code (look it up in the last issue) and make it easier to register, vote by mail, and begin pre-canvassing by our County Voter Services. We need the Senate to take this bill up and begin discussions. It was passed in the House by one vote. Chances are the Republican response will be to initiate Voter ID, which can be okay unless it restricts any voters in any way - then the LWVPA and LWVLC will be against such a bill.

5. **Nationally,** there is one bill upon which we should concentrate right now, and that is the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act or **The SAVE Act** which has already passed in the House of Representatives, voted YES by Rep. Mackenzie. This bill would require "documentary proof of US citizenship," in person, when registering to vote in any Federal election. It would require a birth certificate, passport, or Real ID (the kind that only 5 states issue) and it will mostly affect married or divorced women who have changed their name. Nearly 69 million women could be affected and not be able to vote, which is totally unacceptable! This bill was introduced by Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) as a way to stop non-citizens from voting which they DO NOT do in any measurable way. This bill is referred to as **HR 22.**

Check the **Action Alert(s)** in this Voter and our website to know to whom you should communicate.

Publication Distribution

The Voters Guide for the November 2025 election will be published in The Morning Call on Thursday, October 23. The LWVLC will receive between 500-750 paper copies on that date. League members will delivering on Friday, Oct. 24 & Saturday, Oct. 25.

If you are interested in helping distribute the Voters Guide to local offices and organizations, contact Donna & Charlie Barker at (610)392-0669 or lissabrad@aol.com.

Membership

I hope you were able to attend our Hot Topics Luncheon in September. We reviewed the new membership application and the new membership renewal process. In the past, I sent out the renewal notices and you sent me the renewal form and your check. If you were unable to attend, I will review the basic changes.

First, the national League (LWVUS) will be sending out renewal notices based on when you joined. If you joined or rejoined in January, your dues will be due by January 31st. Dues are $75.

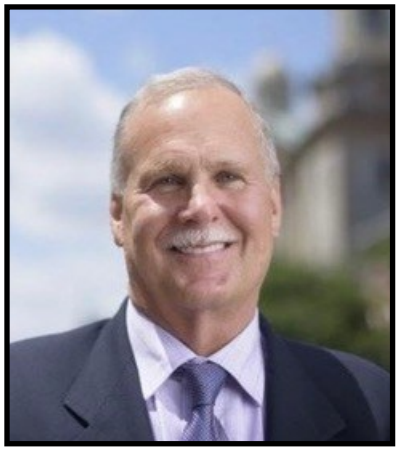
Second, you have the choice of renewing online with a credit card or downloading the form and sending a check and the form directly to the League address.

Third, if you are uncomfortable using the computer, call me at 484 725-4464 and I will mail you the renewal application. You will then complete the form and send it along with your check to the League address.

Many of the Leagues have been using this process and they say it has been successful. If you have any questions, please call me.

Margie Dunn, Director, Membership

October HTL Speaker—Phillips Armstrong



This will be the last "State of the County" that we hear from County Executive Phil Armstrong. Phil has been a great supporter of our League and has been a staple at our Hot Topic Luncheons for the last eight years! He is anxious to make another visit to speak to us about the new County Budget and, his concerns about the late PA State Budget and the upcoming cuts on the Federal level!

Phil has been a huge proponent of working collaboratively and, firmly believes that local county issues should never be partisan; and that the job of local politicians is to solve problems in a sensible way which helps all residents.

We are looking forward to this special appearance by a County Executive who has accomplished much while keeping our tax rate from rising! He also was the politician who challenged our League to get downtown and help those in marginalized areas with voter education and community building - which we have done and on which we are still working.

Phil will be busy even after he leaves office as he holds many positions based on his time working in education and government. Our Country Executive is now Vice-president of the County Executives of America; VP of the National Association of Regional Councils, and Secretary of the Council of Trustees for Kutztown University.

And of course, he remains busy with his two children and seven grandchildren who are a huge part of his life along with his wife, Annette. Hopefully you will see Phil and his wife out walking on the many trails in Lehigh County.

Please come out for this Hot Topic Luncheon and congratulate Phil on a successful two terms as County Executive.

Mary Erdman, Past President

Environmental Policy

The Book Nook Project is off to a good start. We have raised $750 with a goal of $1,000 to supply environmental books to the Book Nook at Casa Guadalupe Center. This is a joint project with the LWV of Lehigh County and PBS39 to supply books to children in the underserved community.

There is still time to contribute. Checks can be made out to LWVUS Education Fund as a tax deductible donation (indicate Book Nook on the memo line).

Thank you for your support.

Ellen Iobst (pictured at the PBS39 Book Nook) and Tinku Khan-walkar (not pictured)

Environmental Policy Committee

Ellen Iobst at Book Nook at Casa Guadalupe

ACTION ALERTS

You have read the **Harrisburg Happenings**, we ask that you choose all or some of the topics and advocate for the best results for our citizens. This will tell you to whom to advocate based on the progress of a bill.

You can find all the contact information on our website in the Government Directory.
Click Here: https://lwvlehighcounty.org/new-government-directory/

For the **Budget** and **Pubic Transit Fund** issue - contact:
Senator Nick Miller (D-14th)
Senator Jarrett Coleman (R-16th)
Senator Lisa Boscola (D-18th)

2. **HB 1828 -** Vaccine protections. Vote YES
   Rep. Peter Schweyer (D-134th)
   Rep. Gary Day (R-187th)
   Rep. Milou Mackenzie (R-131st)
   Rep. Zach Mako (R-183rd)

3. **HB 1396 -** changes to the Election Code Vote YES
   Senators listed above

4. **The SAVE Act** - Federal. Vote NO
   Sen. John Fetterman (D)
   Sen. Dave McCormick (R)

Summer Community Outreach Report

The City of Allentown Police Department extended an invitation to our LWV to participatein their *National Night Out* at Cedar Beach Park on Monday, August 5th. It was a great event, well-organized and attended. We were pleased to be included as a community resource organization for this special evening.

The Allentown School District's 3rd *Annual 2025 Back to School Bash* was held at Cedar Beach Park on Wednesday, August 13th. Described as a day of community, fun, and celebration the event drew a wide variety of organizations offering information about available services for families. It was incredibly well-organized. The Allentown High School students helping with set-up was a special aspect of the day. We will definitely be returning next summer!

Harrison Morton Middle School's *Back to School Event* was held on Tuesday, August 19th. This year the event was held outside and included the inaugural try-out of our prize wheel. A brief but good afternoon!

We had the second opportunity to use our prize wheel at the *Back to School Celebration* held on August 21st at Sheridan Elementary. There is definitely a learning curve to developing the questions and dealing with the line of enthusiastic kids!

An invitation to table at Upper Macungie Township's Movie Night brought us to Breinigsville Park on August 8th. If you have young ones in your family consider attending one of these movie nights. They offer lots of pre-movie activities for the kids, both active and educational. A great night for us too!

Upcoming Registration Events

Tuesday September 16 - NCC's National Voter Registration Day

11 AM - 1:00 PM/ NCC Bethlehem Campus, Civic Resource Fair

Saturday September 20 - Coopersburg Community Day

10:00 AM - 5 PM/ Southern Lehigh Living Memorial Park

Saturday November 1 - Allentown Halloween Walking Parade

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM/ Hamilton Street

Volunteers are welcome and appreciated for all events!

Please contact Barbara Connolly at blconnolly2@gmail.com

or at 610-216-9448 for information.

Thanks for your support!

Lisa Dolan and Terri Leiser-Gross volunteer to register voters at the Sheridan Elementary Back to School Celebration.

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 –Changes to be made in 2026