



Chester County
VOTER
 The League of Women Voters of Chester County, PA

610-644-5960

www.lwvccpa.org

May/June 2015

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Save the date and register for our annual luncheon meeting on June 23 - details on page 3.

President's Message

Susan Carty

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PRIMARY 2015: IT'S JUDICIAL CANDIDATE DECISION TIME

How does the average voter have any knowledge of the qualifications of candidates for State Supreme Court? Pennsylvania voters have the historical opportunity to choose 3 new judges to the highest and oldest court in the Commonwealth. A situation that has not occurred for about 300+ years! The outcome in the November election will set the stage and tone for our state Supreme Court for a very long time. The role of the courts in upholding our Constitution and protecting our rights is a vital component to our democracy. Yet, through the election process, we perceive judges just like other elected officials. And in that process we can ignore the fundamental differences in their role. Judges are not supposed to be our representatives. "Judges make decisions based on the facts and the law, not according to their personal beliefs or popular will."

So.....How does one “Judge a Judge”?

- Look at the ratings from the bar associations.
- Attend candidate forums.
- Read Voters Guide.
- Consider the following questions suggested by Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts:
 1. What is the candidate’s level of legal knowledge and experience?
 2. Does the candidate have a good reputation for fairness and impartiality?
 3. Does the candidate demonstrate a commitment to high ethical standards?
 4. Has the candidate demonstrated a commitment to the community, including ongoing legal education, mentoring young lawyers, pro bono work and charitable activities?

Don’t forget – we also have decisions to make for the PA Commonwealth Court, the Superior Court, and the Magisterial district courts. For more information on the Pennsylvania Unified Judicial System view the following link:
www.PACOURTS.US

SEE YOU AT THE POLLS!

Susan

2015 Election: Important Dates to Remember

Municipal Primary: May 19

First day to register after Primary: May 20

Last day for County to receive military and overseas absentee ballots: May 26

Last day to Circulate and file nomination papers: August 3

Last day for withdrawal by candidates who filed nomination papers: August 10

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated in primary: August 10

Last day to register for November election: October 5

Last day to apply for civilian absentee ballot: October 27

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive civilian absentee ballots: October 30

Municipal Election: November 3

First day to register after November election: November 4

Last day for County to receive military and overseas absentee ballots: November 10

Annual Meeting Luncheon: Tuesday June 23 at noon

Location: The Elks, 401 West Washington Street, West Chester PA

We are delighted and honored to have Chester County District Attorney, Thomas P. Hogan as our guest speaker.

In addition to sharing his years of experience in Criminal Justice, Mr. Hogan is a vocal supporter for funding quality early childhood education:

<http://www.timesherald.com/social-affairs/20150429/philadelphia-region-district-attorneys-agree-pay-for-pre-k-education-now-or-prison-later>

Please plan to attend, bring a friend and spread the word! This event is a great way to share the work of the League and recruit new members.

Cost: \$25 per person. Checks Payable to LWVCC

RSVP By June 15 by sending the below information, with payment and meal choice, to:

LWVCC

1442 Pottstown Pike, #238

West Chester, PA 19380

Name:

Contact Information:

Menu Choices:

- Choice of **one, please circle:** Spinach Salad
Tossed Garden Salad
- Choice of **one, please circle:** Virginia Baked Ham with Citrus Glaze
Boneless Breast of Chicken Marsala with mushrooms and herbs

All Entrees include: Choice of potato, vegetable dujour, rolls, butter, coffee or tea and dessert

Agriculture

Sarah Caspar

scaspar@comcast.net

Notes from Chester County Agriculture Meeting, April 27, 2015, Shoo-Mamas Restaurant

Present: Mary Ciarrocchi, Mina Johnson, Connie Eash

Shoo-Mamas buys all its produce locally. I asked about the coffee used for my Cappuccino, it came from a roaster in West Chester. The food is simple and delicious. We would all recommend. It is located on the corner of Rtes. 926 and 202 in a small shopping center. We used a room in the back with ample tables and seating, and most important, quiet.

Discussed at the meeting were the issues faced by the small farmer and the organic small farmer. Overwhelmed by regulations some vendors have stopped selling certain organic foods. The growers also face regulations that are often a deterrent simply because of the cost of complying. Each of us present has agreed to research the various organizations: federal, state and local that impact small farmers. The time, date and location of the next month's meeting depends on when a speaker from Chester County Food Bank is available and will be announced in the Voter.

Notes From April 28 East Nantmeal Township Speakers Series

Speakers: Sam Cantrell, Samantha Smenkowski and Zachary Heacock, Full Circle CSA, www.fullcirclecsa.com, located in Glenmoore and Farm2 Go, a program to help farms grow and help people eat, www.farm2go.net .

Sam Cantrell introduced his favorite topic: creating a good soil creates good plants which will in turn create a good and healthy planet. Zachary's philosophy of farming is permaculture which is a Zen philosophy between farmer, soil, plants and surrounding. It includes experimenting, accepting failure and trying again. It is a harmonious approach to, not only farming, but to life. Jason Mesarik, who is responsible for the series is a member of the LWV AG committee and members of the committee have been attending the series.

Next month's series will be on May 28, 2015 at 7 PM. The topic will be Genetically Modified Organisms and PA Senator Daylin Leach will be the speaker.

Campaign Finance Committee

Jean Goerth

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484-359-4159

Marg Perina 610-827-7364

Our new name reflects our new focus! Please join us on Thursday, May 21, 10am -12 noon, at the West Chester Borough Building, Gay and Adams Streets (parking and entrance in rear).

All League members are welcome! Do consider coming.

Education

Toni Keg

akeg@verizon.net

Spread the Word: Statewide Call to Action for Public Education, Thursday, May 14

Contact your Representative, Senator and Governor Wolf to insist on developing an equitable funding formula that provides adequate resources for ALL students in PA to meet state-mandated academic standards. For talking points, see: http://fairfundingpa.org/publication_files/call-to-action-day-2015.pdf

Commonwealth Court Rejects School Funding Lawsuit

The plaintiffs will take their case to the Supreme Court. "This is a legislative policy determination," Judge Dan Pellegrini wrote, referencing state Supreme Court rulings that eliminate any role for the courts in officiating school funding questions. In 1999, the School District of Philadelphia tried to sue the state for not providing it with enough funding. Commonwealth Court turned that lawsuit aside and the high court zapped the district's appeal.

Noting the current work of the Basic Education Funding Commission, Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati said he saw 'no reason' for the plaintiffs to pursue an appeal. The Commission's recommendations will be made public this summer, most like before the suit reaches the Supreme Court. For more:

<http://paindependent.com/2015/04/pennsylvania-commonwealth-court-rejects-school-funding-lawsuit/>

Senator Pat Browne, co-chair of PA Basic Education Funding Commission injured in motorcycle accident

Senator Browne was charged with DUI, his third offense. The work of the Commission continues with co-chair, Representative Mike Vereb. Senator Kim Ward will take over Browne's position as Senate Appropriations co-chair while he recuperates: <http://www.mcall.com/news/breaking/mc-t-pa-senator-pat-browne-drunk-crash-20150508-story.html#page=1>

Keystone Exams Legislation: Update

No movement to report on any House or Senate bills introduced to date. However, there is encouraging news in a co-sponsorship memo recently circulated by Senator Dinniman, proposing legislation that would *'establish a moratorium on the use of the Keystone exams as a graduation requirement while the Basic Education Funding Commission continues its efforts to make recommendations to the General Assembly for a fair funding formula. The moratorium will continue while the General Assembly reviews the recommendations and designs a fair funding formula for enactment, then for a period of time afterwards so we can to ascertain the impact of that formula. Throughout the period that the moratorium is in place, the Department of Education will be responsible to continually review and ascertain any and all approaches for accountability so that it will be prepared to make recommendations on the different methodologies for accountability and assessment when the moratorium ends.'*

The moratorium has bi-partisan support in the Senate and we will keep you posted on its path!

Senate Bill 1: Pension Reform

As promised, this session's '#1' priority, pension reform, has been introduced by Senator Corman and is currently in Senate Appropriations Committee. *The proposal does not reduce in any way or makes changes whatsoever to benefits already earned by existing employees or retirees.*

Senate Bill 1 seeks to impact future costs and sustainability through the following:

New Member Benefits

- Defined Contribution for new employees: All new state and public school employees will be enrolled in a mandatory Defined Contribution Plan.
- Employers will be required to contribute the amount equal to the current DB normal cost of post Act 120 employees.
- For State Police, the employer contribution rate is 12.2%.
- Mandatory Retirement Security Plan: New employees will be required to contribute 3% of payroll into a cash balance plan. Employees will earn interest at the long term treasury rate capped at 4%.
- Members of the General Assembly, upon election and/or reelection, will be enrolled in the Defined Contribution Plan. The Defined Contribution plan provision will be consistent with state and public school employees.

Current Member Benefits

- For all **future earnings**, contributions will be increased by 3% for PSERS and 2.5% for SERS to maintain Act 9 benefit levels. If the employee chooses not to increase their contribution to this level, the employee's prospective benefit rolls back to pre-Act 9 levels (2.0 multiplier and contribution of 6.25% for PSERS and 2.0 multiplier and contribution level of 5.0% for SERS).
- Anti-spiking Provision: Compensation for extra duty service included in each of the three highest years cannot exceed the average for the last five years of service. This provision currently applies to all post-Act 120 employees.
- Prospective Revenue-neutral Option 4: provides all future member contributions will be accessible upon retirement at an actuarially neutral rate beginning January 1, 2016 for SERS employees and July 1, 2016 for PSERS employees.
- Contribution Savings Provision: Every three years, the system will calculate the difference between actual and assumed returns. For every percentage that the system realized a return in excess of assumed returns during the calculation period, an employee's contribution, for those who chose the increased contribution option, will be reduced by ½ percentage point for the following three years. Those employees who did not choose the increased contribution level will not be eligible to have their employee contribution rate reduced.
- Optional Retirement Security Plan: employees will be eligible to contribute up to 3% of payroll into an optional cash balance plan.

Additional Provisions:

- Public Pension Management and Asset Investment Review Commission: A commission of investment professionals and retirement advisors will be established to study, publish findings and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor as to:
 - The performance of current investment strategies and procedures of both state retirement systems as to realize rates of return against established benchmarks and associated fees paid for active and passive management.
 - The costs and benefits of active vs passive investment strategies in relation to future investment activities of both state retirement systems.

- Alternative future investment strategies of both state retirement systems which will maximize future realized net of fees rates of returns with available assets.
- Extensive, detailed on-line publication of information about assets, returns, financial managers, all consultants, RFPs, and investment performance measured against benchmarks.
- The commission will include 3 members appointed by the Speaker of the House, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Governor.
- The commission will submit its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly within 6 months of its first organizational meeting.

Funding Protection Mandate:

- Each member of PSERS and SERS, after the current employer compensation schedule meets the full actuarial amount, will have a contractual right to the annual required contribution made by the employer or by any other public entity.

Board membership/ qualifications:

- Membership: Both PSERS and SERS Board complement will be amended to add the Secretary of Banking and Securities.
- Training: Each member of the PSERS and SERS Board will be required to obtain 8 hours of mandatory training in investment strategies, actuarial cost analysis and retirement portfolio management on an annual basis.
- Independent Counsel: Legal counsel to both PSERS and SERS will serve independently from both the Governor’s Office of Chief Counsel, the General Assembly and the Attorney General.

To view SB 1:

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2015&slnd=0&body=S&type=B&bn=0001>

Environmental & Conservation Issues

Alma Forsyth
610-388-1361

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Penn Environment Oil Train Regulations - Action

Penn Environment has started a petition at MoveOn for the public comment period regarding the new federal oil train regulations that don’t go nearly far enough in protecting communities. They are asking LWVCC and other Frack Action Coalition organizations to sign and circulate the petition to their members. Read more about the exploding oil train protection regulations and the petition at:

http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/exploding-oil-train-protecti?source=c.em&r_by=515795

Flawed Methane Monitor Underestimates Leaks at Oil and Gas Sites. Researchers find there may be drastically more methane in the air than is being reported to industry and government

By Lisa Song, Inside Climate News – May 5, 2015 (Excerpts)

A new study finds that a popular, EPA approved scientific instrument used to measure methane releases from oil and gas operations has underestimated leaks of the potent greenhouse gas. The results could have major implications for federal policies as the Obama administration moves to regulate methane from the natural gas industry. Read more at: <http://insideclimatenews.org/news/05052015/flawed-methane-monitor-underestimates-leaks-oil-and-gas-sites>

Will Oil & Gas Get Their Way? Can We Protect Our Communities? Yes. But Only If We Act!

CLEAN WATER ACTION, EARTHWORKS, DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK, CLEAN AIR COUNCIL, MOUNTAIN WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, PENN ENVIRONMENT, SIERRA CLUB, AND BERKS GAS TRUTH

The drilling industry is trying to block even modest improvements to current regulations. In addition, industry groups like the Pennsylvania Independent Oil & Gas Association (PIOGA) don't want the public to have a voice in the process.

Our voices must be heard, demanding that DEP tighten regulations, including: Prohibiting operators from using open storage pits for drilling waste and other contaminants for both conventional and unconventional oil and gas wells.

- Requiring drillers to check for orphaned and abandoned wells near their drilling pads and paths.
- Implementing noise controls to protect the quality of life of people living near well pads.
- Restoring potable, clean water to those whose water supplies have been affected by drilling.
- Prohibiting wells near schools.

If you can't attend a hearing, you may send comments to DEP Policy Office, 400 Market St. P.O. Box2063, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063. Comments must be received by May 19, 2015. For more information go to:

<http://cogentpa.org/2015/04/06/action-alert-environmental-protection-performance-standard>

Budget Committee

Dear Members,

Members always look at our budget and wonder how in the world we can operate and do all that we do. Our answer has always been lots of volunteer work and gifts in kind. There is so much to be done. ***This year we are especially in need. So we will be asking for a vote to raise our annual dues to \$75. This is our first increase in six years. In that time the national and state portions of our dues have gone up so that we only keep \$14 out of \$65.*** We simply cannot carry on our work without this increase, and more fundraising. We truly appreciate our members' donations of time, effort, and gifts in kind!

Our signature fund raising event in September was successful, but we only broke even. We will have our second annual event this September 19th. Stayed tuned for more details!

When you pay your membership dues this year we encourage those who can to either voluntarily increase their dues payment or make out an extra check for a contribution made out to the LWVCC Education Fund. A contribution to the Ed Fund is tax deductible.

These are the changes of note:

- The new membership income has been adjusted to reflect our current membership of 88 full and 9 halves. This is down from last year. Our 15 honorary members do not pay.
- Our new budget reflects the dues increase to \$75.
- Again we have had to pull money out of the Ed Fund and savings to balance our budget.
- The costs of the Legislative Directories and the bookmarks are donated.
- Smart Voter will be replaced by VOTE411.org
- Printing "The Voter" every other month saves us money.

*Pamela Gray, Budget Committee Chair
Carole Mackrell, Treasurer*

Cheryl Knoell

Susan Carty, President

Jennifer Levy-Tatum

LWVCC REPORT FOR BUDGET 2015-2016:

INCOME	Year to Date	Budget 2014-2015	Budget 2015-2016	Budget 2015-2016
A. Dues				
1. Full Members @ \$65 (@\$75)	5,369.03	6,565.00	5,720.00	6,600.00
2. Household 2nd member @\$32.50 (@\$37.50)	257.81	325.00	292.50	337.50
3. Student Members @ \$20	19.12			
B. Contributions				
1. Member				
a. Cash	447.50	500.00	500.00	500.00
b. Election Work				
c. In-Kind	128.48			
d. Restricted use--educational				
2. Non-member				
a. Donation for Legislative Directory & Bookmarks	837.37	600.00	600.00	600.00
3. Memorial Gifts	50.00			
C. Other Sources				
1. Fund Raisers		2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
a. Boscov's	120.00			
b. General	48.00			
c. Signature Fund Raiser	1,120.01			
d. Restricted				
2. Interest Income	1.83	3.00	3.00	3.00
3. Education Fund from PA004	1,221.50	1,000.00	850.00	850.00
4. Ads (VOTER, Directory, etc.)	50.00			
5. Savings needed to balance budget	1,000.00	1,153.00	1,067.00	142.00
6. Other	125.00			
Total Income	10,795.65	12,646.00	11,532.50	11,532.50

Assets As of Dates Shown

Checking Account 4/28/2015	1,127.67
Less Uncleared Checks- 4/28/2015	
Savings Account 4/28/2015	7,127.32
<hr/>	
Total	8,254.99
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EXPENDITURES

	Year to Date	Budget 2014-2015	Budget 2015-2016
A. Operating Costs			
1. Liability Insurance	140.00	130.00	140.00
2. LWVCC Phone	315.34	360.00	375.00
B. Board/Administrative Expenses			
1. Board Tools/Expenses	180.00	300.00	300.00
2. Administrative Committees			
a. Membership			
1) Directory Printing & Mailing			500.00
2) Recruiting/Retention	101.49	300.00	200.00
b. Public Relations		100.00	100.00
c. Meeting Expenses			
1) Meet The Commissioners Event		250.00	250.00
3) Other	300.00	100.00	100.00
C. Fund Raising	982.97		
D. Delegates/Travel/Affiliations			
1. State/National Conventions	495.00	2,000.00	1,500.00

E. Financial Support LWV

1. PMP LWVPA 14-15: 101 full @ \$20 + 10 halves @ \$10	1,590.00	2,120.00	
15-16: 88 full @ \$20 + 9 halves @ \$10			1,850.00
2. PMP LWVUS 14-15: 101 full@ \$31.00 + 10 Halves @\$15.50	2,464.50	3,286.00	
15-16: 88 full@ \$31.00 + 9 Halves @\$15.50			2,867.50
3. SEPR (estimated Jan. 2013 membership x \$0.40)		50.00	50.00

F. Voter Printing & Mailing 209.04 500.00 350.00

G. Educational Activities

1. Publications Purchased			
2. Legislative Directory, Bookmarks	837.37	600.00	600.00
3. Local Programs/Study Committees	173.63	400.00	400.00
4. Web Site		250.00	250.00
5. Other			
6. Voters Service			
a. Printing & Materials	436.52	400.00	400.00
b. Postage	387.31	350.00	350.00
7. Voters Guide/Smart Voter/VOTE411.org	400.00	650.00	450.00

I. Sales Tax

J. Miscellaneous 1,475.00 500.00 500.00

Total Expenditures 10,488.17 12,646.00 11,532.50

Note: E. LWVCC also has 15 Honorary Members for which we do not pay PMPs.

Note: J. Purchase of laptop, projector, etc. with restricted funds contributed in last fiscal year.

EDUCATION FUND

	Year to Date	Budget 2014-2015	Budget 2015-2016
Income			
Phonathon			
Member Contributions - Unrestricted	875.00	500.00	500.00
Member Contributions - Restricted			
Member- Election Work			
Unrestricted NonMember		500.00	
Restricted NonMember			
Memorial Contribution			
Total	875.00	1,000.00	500.00

Expense

Up to 50% PMP to LWVUS Legislative Directory Bookmarks	821.50	500.00	500.00
Other Voter Service Activities - Voters Guide	400.00	500.00	500.00
Educational Activities - Grand Jury Report Public Meeting			
Total	1,221.50	1,000.00	1,000.00

Education Fund Assets

LWVUS Education Fund PA004 as of 3/31/15

Restricted to Civil Liberties

General Restricted 6.98

Unrestricted (available for PMP) 1,699.88

K W Rauschenberger Memorial Fund

Total 1,706.86

Social Media

Deb Gallek debra@lwwccpa.org

Keep up to date with the League! Sign up for updates at: www.lwwccpa.org

Connect with us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/LWVofChesterCounty

Fundraising

Cheryl Knoell caknoell@gmail.com

610-430-1444

LWVCC invites small businesses to post business cards on our website and newsletter. We will show them each month for a year for the nominal donation of \$50. For a quarter-page ad the fee is \$90; and for a half-page \$175. Cards can be mailed to LWVCC at 1442 Pottstown Pike, #238, West Chester 19380. We look forward to hearing from you.

Monthly Board Meetings

League Board Meetings occur on the third Saturday of the month. ALL members are welcome and encouraged to bring a friend. Board meetings are a great forum to introduce prospective members to the positive work of the League.

Location: West Chester Borough Hall, 401 East Gay Street, West

Chester Time: 10 AM – noon



DEBRA GALLEK

DESIGN & WEB DEVELOPMENT

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JOIN or RENEW YOUR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MEMBERSHIP

<http://lwccpa.org/join-us/>

Thank you for renewing your membership and supporting the League for another year.

LWVCC Annual Membership \$75

(make checks out to LWVCC or pay online)

(2nd and 3rd person in same household **\$37.50**)

Student Membership \$20

League Tax-Deductible Contributions – LWVCC Education Fund

(make checks out to LWVCC ED FUND)

(Amount of your choice. Donate IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF someone special.)

PAY ONLINE or MAIL YOUR CHECKS TO OUR NEW ADDRESS:

LWVCC
1442 Pottstown Pike, #238
West Chester, PA 19380

Thank you for including the following information with your checks.
(For gift memberships – include name and address of recipient.)

Name _____
Address _____ Zip Code _____
Township _____ Email Address _____
Telephone _____ Issue of Interest _____
New Membership _____ Renew _____ Gift Membership _____ Amount _____

The logo for 'Water Policy News' features the word 'water' in a stylized, bubbly font with a blue and white water-like texture, followed by 'Policy News' in a bold, teal, sans-serif font.

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters PA-CEF Water Resources Education Network

*A monthly Update from the Water Resources Education Network
a project of the League of Women Voters of PA - Citizen Education Fund*

<http://wren.palwv.org/wren/index.html>

Want a BIGGER PICTURE of the League?

Check out the State and National sites at:

League of Women Voters of PA: www.palwv.org 717-234-1576

League of Women Voters United States: www.lwv.org 202-429-1965

The VOTER is published every *other* month during the year and relies heavily on committee chairs and members for reports, summaries, announcements and comments submitted to the VOTER – thanks to all for their contributions. Thanks also to the individuals/businesses supporting the VOTER through monthly advertisements.

Please continue to send submissions and any/all comments and suggestions to Toni Keg, akeg@verizon.net.

DISCLAIMER – The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates running for office or political parties. Any use of the League of Women Voters' name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Horrocks
194 Phillips Mill Rd.
Cochranville, Pa. 19330

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