



February 2021

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 13:	Annual Program Planning Meeting: 10:00 AM- 3:00 PM
Saturday, February 20:	Board Meeting 10 AM- Noon (Zoom)
Thursday, February 25:	Virtual Open House 11:30-12:30 PM
Monday, May 3:	Last Day for In-Person Registration
Tuesday, May 11:	Last Day for Mail-In Registration
Tuesday, May 18:	PRIMARY ELECTION DAY



In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that the LWVCC announces that Jennifer Levy-Tatum, our friend and past president, has passed away in Knoxville, TN from cancer. In a life ended way too soon, Jennifer accomplished more than most people ever do. She worked as a lawyer and taught law classes at Temple University. Our League grew under her leadership. She is responsible for our work on the Criminal Justice System and on Immigration Policy locally, at the state level, and nationally. Jennifer inspired us to take positions and then act on them. She will be sorely missed.

Dr. Pamela Gray

New Year's Resolutions

The Chester County League's New Year's resolution is to increase member involvement. At the last Board Meeting held on January 16, members of the Board decided to add two new opportunities for members to get involved and informed. *We need YOU!*

- (1) On the 4th Thursday of each month from Noon-1 PM, take a lunch break with Meryle Rothman and other league members for an Open House. This meeting (via Zoom) might include discussions of how the league works, who the Board members are, what our mission is, and what our activities are. In addition, this meeting will be a place to learn what volunteer opportunities are available and what we need volunteers to do. For more information, email Meryle: mgrothman@verizon.net.

- (2) We will start a monthly HOT Topic Speaker Series in March. The day and time have yet to be determined. Sandy Schaal heads this committee. Join her on Saturday, February 13 from 10 AM to 3 PM at the annual Program Planning meeting to come up with speakers and HOT topics. Sandy's email: email606ss@verizon.net. Be on the lookout for an invitation

The Board will continue to meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10 am to noon. At this meeting, board members prepare for upcoming Hot Topics Seminars and Open Houses and tend to other League business. Anyone can attend Board meetings--- just notify Barb Lathroum for a Zoom link: blathroum@gmail.com. Starting February 1st, the Board will publish a monthly newsletter, *The Voter*, to let members know about meetings, forums, and voter registration events. We have 197 members on the books--- there are plenty of jobs for helpers.

WE'RE STILL WORKING FOR YOU AND THE VOTERS!

February 2021

It surely has been a long period of "lockdown" for all of us! From no schedules, to new schedules, to zoom schedules, life in the League goes on, confinement or not! "There is no rest for the weary."

Our League efforts continue toward the accomplishment of our important work. The work of identifying and responding to issues of concern has not stopped. We recognize issues that appear and often reappear as challenges to our quality of life, issues that attempt to manage and control who votes and how they vote. We remain alert for efforts meant to infringe upon the performance of our Constitutional rights whether at the Local, State or National levels. As we read our daily newspapers and watch TV news, there is no shortage of issues! Recognizing them and responding to them is what we do. We are still working!

The good news is that opportunities accompany issues. At times, those opportunities call for new and creative actions --- new methods must be developed and tried on our part. That is where **you**, the members, are most important to the League. Your ideas and your experiences are unique to you, and those experiences and knowledge may also be beneficial to the League. Working together to protect and preserve our freedoms and our rights is what we all can do! Your expertise and interests contribute to the strength and sustainability of the organization. As our League membership continues to grow, we want to stay connected to as well as to understand more about you. We encourage and welcome you to reach out to us personally should you have questions or simply want to extend your hand to help us where needed. Our work is never done! Challenges continue to surface.

This lockdown period has called upon our group creativity and flexibility in terms of timing and methods used for remote communications. For the most part, we have adjusted well to these challenging circumstances. In fact, we have found these new communication methods have led us to increased productivity. A pleasant surprise! We are still working!

Keep your eye out for the next newsletter. Let us hear from you! Be safe and Be healthy!
Thank you again for your support!

Susan Carty Co-President LWVCC

From the Board Room

Members of the Board met on Saturday morning, January 16, via the Zoom platform. One of the issues that kept emerging throughout the morning was how to increase involvement among our 197 members. Some members have complained that they do not know what is going on in the League and are uncertain how they can assist us in our mission which is to educate voters, to register voters, and to encourage them to use their vote in primaries and general elections. The Board decided on 3 action plans.

- (1) After much discussion, one solution was to revive ***The Voter***, our monthly newsletter. Knowing what events are coming up, what volunteers are needed, and what issues we need to educate our voters and legislators on is crucial to our success as a League branch. Putting out *The Voter* is a big job and requires articles and information from our members. Ellen Richardson and I (Barb Lathroum) have agreed to put a newsletter together. My email is blathroum@gmail.com and Ellen's is ellenrichardson@gmail.com. We depend on YOU for news items and ideas.
- (2) We have talked for the last year about reviving ***Hot Topics*** speakers once a month. At a time to be determined, we will hold seminars with a speaker or a panel followed by a time for questions. The Hot Topic seminars will be available on Zoom or some other platform during the pandemic. On February 13, those interested in getting Hot Topics off the ground can join Sandy in planning speakers and determining a set day and time of the month for the seminars. If any of you have ideas for speakers and/or "hot topics", please let Sandy know. Better yet, come to Planning Saturday via Zoom. Watch for an invitation.
- (3) Upon joining LWVCC, many of you may be mystified about what the League does and how we operate. You may be confused as to who to contact should you wish to volunteer or what volunteer services are needed. Not to worry. Meryle Rothman, our membership chair, will conduct virtual **Open House** meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month from Noon-1:00 PM. The purposes of the Open Houses are two-fold: to inform members about the workings of the League organization and to answer questions about the League..

Saturday Program Planning Meeting: February 13th

Our yearly Program Planning meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, February 13 beginning at 10 AM. Members will soon receive a Zoom invitation to join us. *Program is the heart and soul of the League, and serves as the basis from which we educate and advocate.* Our local programs are adopted annually. State and national programs are reviewed prior to their respective conventions. Details of the LWVPA June 2021 convention will be sent in the coming weeks.

The program review process is used to introduce and reinforce what the League has done and bring up ideas for new study. All members are involved in this process. To prepare for Program Planning members should go to the PALWV website (palwv.org/wherewestand) . Please review "League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Positions" on the website. You should also read over these positions in your Membership Directory pages 22-26.

As we review these positions, we must come to a consensus to determine if each position:

- Is relevant and should be re-adopted as it currently exists
- Needs to be changed or updated
- Should be dropped or eliminated
- Is being used at the local level, and in what ways

The State is asking Local Leagues to identify positions you believe should be LWVPA legislative and advocacy priorities for the next two years. You will be asked to discuss the issues that seem most urgent or that should be given the highest League priority.

When consensus is reached on all program areas, and the Board has approved all the decisions, results are recorded and sent to LWVPA.

Dr. Pam Gray
Co-President

Voting Reform

Despite the trumped up controversies about voting practices in the last election, voter participation was higher in the November elections than it has been in some years --- 83% in Chester County! Mail-in ballots augmented by conveniently placed drop boxes and two satellite Voter Services offices made a huge difference in voter participation. League of Women Voters has as its mission to remove barriers to voting and to encourage all citizens to use their franchise. To this end, our Chapter wrote a letter to the Chester County Commissioners expressing our support for the current voting law (Act 77).

Here is the letter:

To our Chester County Commissioners Marian Moskowitz, Michelle Kichline and Josh Maxwell

Happy New Year. Thank you for your continued leadership in keeping us safe and prepared for the future. The League of Women Voters is especially appreciative of your efforts to facilitate the distribution of the Covid Vaccine and the vaccinations of our Chester County health care, senior and essential worker communities, to name a few.

As you know, voting is the League's #1 Priority. We need to be able to encourage and empower our voters and, in turn, we want the voters to feel confident in knowing that the League and all elected officials are supporting and doing everything that we can to expedite positive voting initiatives. Some states have a 60% - 80% voter turnout every year. The Chester County 83% voter turnout in the 2020 November Presidential election is indeed something to celebrate and the League is proud to have been part of the GOTV effort. We have the power and the resources

to maintain and improve our voter turnout in future elections. Let's take advantage of all that is codified and available.

The League of Women Voters Supports:

- SAFE, SECURE, FAIR, LEGAL ELECTIONS
- The PA 2019 Voting Act 77
- Voter Services Satellite Offices
- Mail -In Ballot Drop Boxes
- Postage Paid Mail-In Ballot Envelopes
- Seasonal Hires at Voter Services for extra assistance for our voters

Thank you again for your leadership. The Chester County League and all of our stakeholders must continue to encourage and empower our voters by removing barriers and making voting more accessible and convenient. The procedures that were used in 2020 most certainly made a positive difference. Let's build on the successes and take advantage of every resource going forward.

Stay safe, stay healthy and keep us in the loop.

League of Women Voters of Chester County

Co-Presidents Susan Carty, Pam Gray and Barbara Lathroum

Nominating Committee

The League's Nominating Committee is meeting this week . We are looking for members who would like to serve on the Board of Directors.

The Committee includes Brett Dolente, Judy Menzel, Cathy Palmquist and Janice Shleffner with Kay Sharp as mentor. The chair of this Committee is Brett Dolente; please contact her at brettdolente@gmail.com if you or someone you know would like to serve on the Board. You can ask Brett about the responsibilities of Directors. The following offices need to be filled. We are especially looking to add *newer members* to our Board.

The following positions need to be filled:

President 2021-2023 (Immediate past president, Dr. Pamela Gray, has agreed to serve.)

Co-Presidents (2) 2021-2023

Directors (3) 2021-2023

We hope you will join us.

Kay Sharp, Secretary

Voter Information and Outreach

Last fall, the Voter Services Committee in the Chester County League created a group of 5 Section Leaders after dividing the county into five geographic sections. In each of the five divisions, the section leader will make contact with volunteers who will help distribute voter information, applications for mail-in ballots, and voter registration forms to township buildings, libraries, religious organizations, food banks and senior citizen facilities. The section leader was also a resource for tables, and materials needed by those members registering voters. A training Power Point for voter registration workers was also created by this group made available.

On September 22nd, National Voter Registration Day, we provided voter registration materials and volunteers to Chester County Library, Henrietta Hankins Library, Kennett Library, Tredyffrin-Easttown Library and Phoenixville Library. The efforts of the Voter Services Committee made information and materials accessible to voters staying home during the pandemic by reaching out to townships and churches. In addition, since township buildings and many churches in the County often have been closed to the public, some townships and churches agreed to add LWVCC and LVWPA links to their websites. This raises the CC League's visibility in the community as a resource for voter information and action.

Ellen Richardson

CALL TO ACTION: Say NO to Judicial Gerrymandering

Some legislators in the PA legislature want to pass a constitutional amendment that would effectively gerrymander our courts. This amendment would require PA's statewide judges to run for election in regional districts drawn up by legislators. This would upset the separation of powers by giving legislators the power to create districts that result in more judges for their own party.

The behind-the-scene plan is to push through this bill quickly, with votes in the House before the end of January and in the Senate in early February. This is without public hearings, without expert testimony, and without any hint of due diligence or transparent response to concerns or objections. Legislators pushing through this bill hope to place a referendum for this measure on the May 18 Primary ballot, a time when fewer voters participate.

House Bill 38 is exactly the opposite of what PA voters asked for. PA citizens have demonstrated significant support for an independent citizens' redistricting commission. Bills to amend the constitution to accomplish that never got a vote. HB 38 has no documented public support yet is moving quickly through the PA legislature. PA voters want to know WHY!

Write your state representatives to vote "NO" on Houser Bill 38. If your representatives support the bill, write to thank them for their "YES" votes.

For more information, refer to the Fair Districts PA website: fairdistrictspa.com. [Most of this article was taken from an urgent email I received from Fair Districts.]

Note from the Editors of The Voter

If we have omitted important items, or if there are mistakes, let us know. Please share with us news about any forums or web events that you hear of that would interest our members. We are also interested in any news about our members. We need your input!

Barb Lathroum Email: blathroum@gmail.com

Cell: (484)995-2008

Ellen Richardson Email: eallenrichardson@gmail.com

*"For there is always light.
If only we are brave enough to see it.
If only we are brave enough to be it."*

*Amanda Gorman
From "The Hill We Climb"*