

March 2021

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 13: Board Retreat

Saturday, March 20: Board Meeting 10 AM- Noon (Zoom)

Thursday, March 25: Open House 12:00-1:00 PM (Zoom)

Wednesday, March 31: All About Gerrymandering. Speaker: Mr. Charles May of Fair Districts PA. Sponsored by West Chester- Chester County AAUW. Open to the Public. [See flyer on page 7 for how to register.]

Monday, May 3: Last Day for In-Person Registration

Tuesday, May 11: Last Day for Mail-In Registration

Tuesday, May 18: PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

From the President

SEDITION ON YOUR MIND?
HOW MIGHT THE “EVENT OF JANUARY 6th” IMPACT FUTURE VOTERS?
By Susan Carty , March 2021

Be honest, who thought we would be discussing “sedition”? Isn’t that something out of our history books? A term in the definition list. A term from the past.

Stories and movies surely give credence to acts of violence against the authority of a state or monarch whether through speech or conduct. Seditious speech is meant to inspire and encourage a rebellion or civil disorder with ultimate purpose to overthrow the government.

We all read those stories about **rebellious actions, mobs, riots**. But we all had never seen or felt the reality of its occurrence.

Who were “those” people? How did they know to gather? Who sent them a golden invitation? Were they active voters? And seriously, how did they all pay for their travel and hotel stays?

There was a plan, an end game. There was an unimaginable threat to our country. It failed, but not completely. Some pundits warn us that there will likely be a repeat. That repeat may appear with a different look, a different sound and a different result. We have been warned, and we must now be more vigilant than ever before.

Did you know that sedition is a serious felony, punishable by fines and up to 20 years in prison? I wonder if all those excited participants understood the possible outcome of their actions. Some are currently experiencing the U.S. legal systems’ response to their actions. And yes, some participants believed that the outcome of their actions would bring about the destruction of our governmental process that very day. Even worse, some participants aimed for and prepared for the possible demise of members of our government.

Threats of destruction and demise are terms we have not seen applied to the governmental authority we currently live under since the last war. The January 6th event now lives in our citizens' memories. We understand that our minds eye view of the immediate world has changed. That view will continue to change as we absorb the realities of January 6th.

The question for all of us to contemplate now is "How did that act of sedition impact the League, the work that we do and the voters we serve? Who are we now? How did that event impact our mission?"

These questions are topics for serious and thoughtful League discussions. And more than just discussions, we need to anticipate translating the discussions into outcomes; into serious, meaningful actions. Let those discussions begin!

Free – Fair – Unfettered Elections Open to ALL Eligible Voters!

Annual Program Planning Meeting Held on February 13

Thank you to all the Chester County League members who attended the annual planning meeting. Every two years, members of each chapter League sit down to discuss the positions of the state and local leagues. [See positions in <https://www.palwv.org/where-we-stand> or pp 20-26 in the chapter Directory & Handbook]. We make recommendations for changes to the existing positions. At next year's planning meeting, we will discuss the positions of the National League.

We went through each state position and updated them with a word here and there. We recommended the elimination of the financial obligations [of released prisoners] when they realistically cannot be paid. The existing Criminal Justice position just recommended minimizing them. [See page 25.] Our members want to eliminate private prisons completely. At the local level, we advocate the elimination of private juvenile facilities and the increased use of diversionary programs as opposed to incarceration. On the environment, we added protecting the quality of our water resources as a separate position. We strengthened education positions on equitable financing and added holding charter schools to the same standards as other public schools. Under education, we inserted the word "safe" in the sentence, "We support equal and safe access to quality public education." [See Education on page 26.]

Another portion of our day was spent prioritizing issues posed by LWVPA. We had to reach consensus on the top three issues to be addressed by the PA League.

The Chester County League's top three included*:

- (1) Redistricting [Congressional, Legislative, and Judicial Gerrymandering]
- (2) Election Reform [Keep Mail-in Voting, Secure Ballot Boxes, etc.]
- (3) Reform the Rules [restoration of the legislators' power to vote on bills; restriction of committee chairmen from keeping bills with bipartisan support from reaching the floor.]

**Notice that all three priorities are aimed at preserving democracy so that a voter's vote is meaningful and legislators ideas can more easily be brought to the floor for a vote.*

The other three priority issues on the State list were education, environment, and gun rights. The LWV has well- established positions on these. In 43 of the 50 states, legislators are trying to restrict voting rights and to limit decision-making power to that of a few powerful legislators. For the preservation of democracy itself, we chose redistricting, election reform, and reforming rules in the legislature as our top three priorities. Our selections will be considered by the state at our next convention.

In the afternoon Planning session, members discussed several ideas developed by attendees at our Retreat of January 2020.

- (1) We discussed the need for a new *members orientation committee*. Meryle Rothman's Open Houses on the fourth Thursday of each month from Noon to 1PM are part of this effort to make new members more familiar with the mission, procedures, and organization of the League. After Covid, these Open Houses will be a good opportunity for new and old members to meet and chat.
- (2) Sandy Schaal chairs the Speakers Committee. We would like to hold a one-hour meeting on the same day each month featuring a speaker followed by a Q & A. Megan Pierce spoke to us on February 23 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Anyone interested in helping Sandy to choose a set day of the month and time for future Speaker Events, contact her by email or phone. AND everyone needs to send Sandy suggestions for topics. [Sandy's Email: email606ss@verizon.net . Phone: (610) 431-4034]
- (3) Voter Services Committee: Loraine Deisinger and four other regional chairpersons are charged with equipping voter registration volunteers with tables, signs and banners, handouts, and applications to register to vote and to receive a mail-in ballot. Members of the regional committees also distribute voter information materials to churches, senior citizen facilities, township buildings, and community centers. If you would like to help register voters, to help voters with their mail-in applications, or to distribute information, call Loraine Deisinger at (610) 321-0262 or Mary Lou Dondero at (610)692-3299. **WE NEED YOU!**

The 2021 Program Planning Meeting was informative and stimulating. Join us next year----perhaps *in person* and with refreshments!

LWVCC MONTHLY OPEN HOUSE - the 4th Thursday at NOON
By Meryle Rothman

The first new virtual OPEN HOUSE on Thursday Feb 25th was well attended. It was especially great to see so many new members. Our goal with the Open House is to offer "LWV Basics 101" which include information about our mission, vision, strategies, opportunities and greatest needs. As we always say, the best place to learn about the League and what we do is at a monthly board meeting (3rd Sat 10am), and at the OPEN HOUSE. In addition, take time out to explore the links and websites offered below. We cannot wait till we are able to meet again in person, but these virtual opportunities allow us to keep in touch while learning more about the League. Hope to see you on ZOOM.

These sites include:

- On PA LWV Positions: <https://www.palwv.org/where-we-stand>
- On PA LWV DEI Policy: <https://www.palwv.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
- Guidelines for Conducting Candidate Forums: <https://lwvccpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/forum-volunteer-guidelines.pdf>
- Congressional/Legislative Interviews: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/congressional-interview-guide-and-materials?utm_source=LeagueUpdate&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=123120
- National Website: www.lwv.org
- Pa Website: www.palwv.org
- Chester County League Website: www.lwvccpa.org
- Chester County Voter Services: www.chesco.org/election
- State Legislature Info: www.legis.state.pa.us
- Legislation (Bills Proposed, Sponsors, and Stage in Legislative Process): www.legiscan.org
- Who's on the Ballot: www.ballotpedia.org as well as www.vote411.org .
- Voter Info: www.votespa.com
- Gerrymandering: www.fairdistrictspa.com

From the Board Room

By Kay Sharp, Secretary

On Saturday, February 20, 2021, members met for our monthly board meeting --- on Zoom of course.

Membership:

As of 2/15/21 we have 156 active members; 5 new members joined in January-February. [See Membership Report below].

Voter Service:

Activities in preparation for the Primary on May 18:

1. Registering Voters: Contact Loraine Deisinger (610) 321-0262 or Mary Lou Dondero (610) 692-3299.
2. Legislative Directory: This trifold contains contact info for our Senators and Representatives in the U.S. Congress as well as for State Senators and State Representatives. It is compiled by Mary Lou Dondero and will be distributed soon to libraries, organizations, and members.
3. Vote 411 is a National Online Information Guide to the candidates on the ballot. Candidates answer questions (determined by the state LWV) about their background, education, experience, as well as several issues affecting the voters. Contact Lisa Forsyth for more info or better yet, **VOLUNTEER** to help her produce this valuable resource! Lisa's number: (610) 388-1361 and her email: lxfors2447@aol.com. The State LWV is offering training on VOTE411. The electronic voter guidance program has been successfully used to keep voters aware of who is running for office and what positions they hold on the issues.
4. The Voter Information Card that was so in demand before the November election will continue to be distributed to the public! Keep a few with you to give out to friends and relations!

Nominating Committee:

The Committee will meet soon to finalize the slate of candidates. This year, we are establishing three Director positions for more recent members. We want to increase the involvement of newer members in the League's activities.

Next Board Meeting: Saturday, March 20, 2021, 10:00 AM-12 Noon. Members Welcome.

NEW MEMBERS: The best way to learn what the LWVCC does is to attend Board Meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

By Meryle Rothman

Join us in welcoming these 2021 new members - *Eileen Skidmore, Mikki Washburn, Mark Radcliffe, Mark Davis and Sally Warren*. It is great to see supporters from different areas of Chester County. One of our goals this year is to expand our outreach to every section of the county with not only our presence, but also our message. We will be distributing written materials that not only empower and educate our voters but that raise the voters' awareness of the LWVCC as a resource for *non-partisan* voter information.

Measures Up for Referendum on the Primary Ballot

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we have what are called closed primaries. Only voters registered as Democrats or as Republicans can vote in the primary. Independents are out of luck when choosing candidates to run in November. BUT INDEPENDENTS MAY VOTE in the May 18th primary! Often measures appear on the primary ballot, and independents CAN vote for or against these measures. Here are the measures presented on the primary ballot (so far):

Title	Type	Description
Equal Rights Regardless of Race or Ethnicity Amendment	Constitutional	Prohibits denial or abridgement of rights on account of an individual's race or ethnicity
Emergency Declarations Amendment	Executive	Addresses the governor's emergency powers, including requiring legislative approval to continue beyond 21 days
Legislative Resolution to Extend or Terminate Emergency Declaration Amendment	Legislature	Empowers the legislature to extend or terminate an emergency declaration by resolution

Source: www.ballotpedia.org

If you are an Independent, please make time to vote May 18 on measures important to all Pennsylvanians. And if you have friends registered as Independents, encourage them to vote on May 18. Help them to apply for a Mail-in Ballot which makes voting quick and easy.

GLOSSARY OF LEAGUE LINGO

There are certain terms that are unique to the League of Women Voters. For new members (and some of us older members too), here is a list of "League Lingo".

ACTION: Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

ACTION ALERT: Request from the LWVUS or state League to take action in support of a League position.

ANNUAL MEETING: Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

CONSENSUS: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

CONCURRENCE: Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

CONVENTION: A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention, local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention.

COUNCIL: An assembly held in alternate years. Local Leagues send delegates to state council, state Leagues send delegates to national council.

DEI: Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

EDUCATION FUND: The tax-deductible arm of national, state and large local Leagues, handling funds to be used only for educational purposes, not for action on issues.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER: A person who has been a member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

ILO: Acronym for an Inter-League Organization, formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League area in scope.

MAL: Acronym for Member-At-Large, a member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

MAL UNIT: A state-recognized group of Members-At-Large, in an area where there is no local League.

MEMBER: Voting Members. Persons at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.

Associate Members. All others who join the League shall be associate members.

PMP: Acronym for Per Member Payment, the amount of money paid to the LWVUS and the state League on behalf of each member.

POSITION: A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

PRINCIPLES: Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

PROGRAM: Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action.

PROGRAMS: Plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

UNIT: Groupings of members within large local Leagues to provide more opportunity for discussion. Units may be time-oriented (day, evening, lunch hour), geographically oriented, or both.

VOTERS GUIDE: Nonpartisan publication giving candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues.

VOTERS SERVICE: Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are basic voters service activities.

Note from the Editor of The Voter: WE NEED YOU---and YOU and YOU and YOU....

Next month's Voter will be my last issue as editor. I am moving to New Hampshire in June or July. **Regular communication** among our members is essential to keeping them informed and involved. We need to form a **Newsletter Committee**. If we have one person to collect reports from committee chairs, a couple other members to attend and take notes on Open Houses, Speakers' events, and other meetings, and a person to organize the articles and type the newsletter, the monthly newsletter would be easy to produce. It would just take a little coordination and collaboration. Or as my mother would say: "Many hands make light work."

Please consider volunteering for the Newsletter Committee. Call or email me if interested: blathroum@gmail.com or (484) 995-2008.

SIGN UP _____ SIGN UP _____ SIGN UP _____ SIGN UP _____ SIGN UP _____ SIGN UP _____



West Chester-Chester County Branch of American Association of University Women

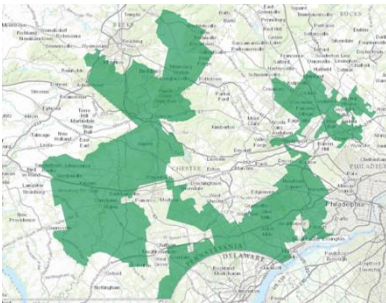
Hosts a Virtual Presentation on Creating Fair Voting Districts

Speaker: Charlie Day, Fair Districts PA

Title: "All About Redistricting"

Date: Wednesday March 31, 2021

Time: 7 PM



Democracy means voters choose their politicians. Current Pennsylvania law lets politicians choose their voters.

Gerrymandering: the practice of manipulating voting districts to benefit parties, not people. The result is voters have less voice and less choice, and this leads to further polarization instead of problem solving in Harrisburg and Washington. (2011 Map of PA 7th congressional district)

- All are welcome to attend this informative presentation followed by Q&A
- To register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscO6rpz8uGtQRfZzWyrQ4nBbBudRnsj>
- **Space is limited to 100 respondents on a first come basis.**

Charlie Day is a volunteer with Fair Districts PA. He has management experience at several non-profit and governmental organizations, including the U.S. EPA, the PA Environmental Council, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Temple University. He served as an officer in the U.S. Navy and holds a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree from University of Pennsylvania.

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

Fair Districts PA is a nonpartisan, statewide coalition of organizations and individuals working to create a process for redistricting that is transparent, impartial, and fair.