



May 2021

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The League of Women Voters of Chester County is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to serve the local community by promoting informed active citizen participation in government and by acting on selected governmental issues*

#### **Upcoming Events**

Monday, May 3: Last Day for In-Person Registration  
Tuesday, May 11: Last Day for Mail-In Registration  
Friday, May 14: Naturalization Ceremony & Voter Registration  
For info: Mary Lou Dondero 610-692-3299  
Saturday, May 15: Board Meeting 10 AM- Noon (Zoom)  
Tuesday, May 18: PRIMARY ELECTION DAY  
Wednesday, May 19: HOT TOPICS 7:00 PM (Zoom)  
Sandra Strauss: "The Impact of Covid-19 on Vulnerable Populations."

#### **From the President**

APRIL 2021

Susan Carty

Dear Members,

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in Valley Forge Park, we held our latest gathering of League members from Chester County, Delaware County, Philadelphia and Montgomery County. The day was gray, damp, cloudy and a wee bit buggy. A day to contemplate. While listening to our speakers I could not help but think about the history that occurred right there in that location. A bit of a spiritual experience!

We sat on the tract of land that was a part of a district that was once characterized as Donald Duck kicking Goofy, one of the worst gerrymandered Congressional districts.

Our fantastic speakers did not let us down! They spoke with conviction and enthusiasm.

We heard from:

Mary Gay Scanlon U.S. Representative of our Congressional 5<sup>th</sup> District  
Madeline Dean U.S. Representative of our Congressional 4<sup>th</sup> District (who also read a message to the group from Attorney General Josh Shapiro.)  
Hakim Jones Norristown NAACP and the Norristown City Council  
Khalif Ali Executive Director of Common Cause  
Ben Geffen Attorney from Public Interest Law Center

Justin Villere  
Jaimie Mogil

Managing Director of Draw the Lines  
Lower Merion- Narberth League – Voter Services Chair

George Washington and his Army had been housed in that same park area for approximately six months from late December 1777 to June 1778. Who were those brave soldiers? What did they do, where did they come from and how did they really feel?

Of course, the theme focused on voting. But we heard much more from our speakers than just “go out there and vote”. They were motivational as well as educational. We were clearly reminded of **why** we cannot take our right to vote for granted. **Why** that precious right to vote will always need to be defended. Our Democracy will always require protection as well as promotion. Its strength comes from us.

We the citizens are that Democracy!

And now, that time is here once again! That special time in American lives that serves as the reminder, that yes, we **must** register our Voice. We **must** weigh in on what we believe to be the right choice.

We must **act** on our right to vote!

Education **with** action is what we, the League of Women Voters are all about!

In League....  
Susan Carty

### ***HOT TOPICS: “PA COURT SYSTEM, JUDICIAL REFORM & JUDICIAL GERRYMANDERING”***

Deborah Gross, Judge Megan King, and Virginia McMichaels

April 20, 2021

On April 20, the public was invited to hear a discussion of the court system in PA, judicial reform, and judicial gerrymandering. Deborah Gross of Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, Appellate Judge Megan King of the PA Superior Court, and Virginia McMichaels of The Appellate Law Group were our speakers.

Deborah Gross is an attorney with 35 years of experience in primarily commercial law. She was Chancellor of the PA Bar Association and a member of the Philadelphia Bar as well. She is the president and CEO of the non-profit group, Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts. See [www.pmconline.org](http://www.pmconline.org).

Megan King grew up in Chadds Ford. She graduated from Vanderbilt University and the University of Pittsburgh Law School. She clerked for Judge Thomas G Saylor, former PA Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, now retired. [Saylor has left a vacancy on the Supreme Court to be filled after the General Election in November.] Judge King previously served on the Court of Common Pleas in Chester County. She won her seat on the PA Superior Court in 2019.

Virginia McMichaels grew up in East Whiteland Township and now resides in Delaware County. Seven years ago, she started a virtual law firm, The Appellate Law Group. Ms McMichaels was an English major in college; as a practicing attorney, she found that she enjoyed writing briefs critical in appellate law. She recently published an article in *The Legal Intelligencer* on her opposition to HB 38 which would create

gerrymandered judicial districts at the appellate level. *[This bill has been tabled for now, but we can expect it to be reintroduced at some point.]*

The discussion began with a Judicial Civics lesson. The gist of this part of the evening is best summarized by a very short video at this address: [www.pacourts.us/learn/judicial-system-educational-video](http://www.pacourts.us/learn/judicial-system-educational-video)

**Magisterial:** Entry level courts ; judges not required to be attorneys

1. Civil Suits less than \$12,000
2. Minor Criminal trials
3. Traffic cases
4. Warrants for arrest and for searches
5. 17 magisterial courts in Chesco; 517 magistrate's courts in PA

**Philadelphia Municipal Court:** 27 municipal judges

**Pittsburgh Municipal Court:** 12 municipal judges

**The Court of Common Pleas:** Trial courts, 451 judges, elected to 10-year terms, civil and criminal cases

**Superior and Commonwealth Courts** are both appellate courts. Judges elected to 10-year terms.

The **Superior Court** has 15 judges: 1 vacancy, 7 Republicans, 7 Democrats;

The **Commonwealth Court** has 9 judges, 7 Republicans and 2 Democrats

The **Supreme Court** of PA consists of 7 justices with 10 year terms.

Keep this in mind: the lower courts consist of 1,007 judges with the state divided into 556 minor court districts and 451 Common Pleas districts. These judges are familiar with local issues and perhaps unique local-connected concerns of those defendants that appear before them. The 31 appellate level judges are now elected state-wide and represent 3% of the judiciary. The lack of local ties may contribute toward judicial objectivity.

Judge Megan King, elected in 2019, shared her reflections on the Superior Court. The Superior Court is the busiest appellate court in the country. It receives over 17,500 motions each year, and its judges annually hand down over 5,000 decisions. During the pandemic, the court has heard oral arguments remotely. Even though politics are so polarized in Harrisburg, Judge King has experienced extraordinary collegiality among her fellow justices. The Superior Court judges form panels of three for each case. Sixty percent of cases are criminal. Civil cases have had delays in being heard, because criminal trials are considered more urgent. Because jury trials were reduced in the lower courts during the pandemic, cases have been backed up. Still, there has been only a 16% decline in decisions at the appellate level.

The Supreme Court of PA handled about 300 appeals last year. The cases before this court involve matters of constitutionality and include death penalty appeals. This court performs a lot of administrative tasks for the entire judicial branch. The PA Supreme Court consents to hear only a small proportion of the petitions filed; last year, this amounted to 3%.

Judges are up for election in the "off" or odd years. To choose judges, voters should refer to [Vote411.com](http://Vote411.com) and consider the ratings of the PA Bar Association. Each judicial candidate must submit 20 references which are carefully evaluated by a committee of 35 attorneys and non-legal individuals. Candidates are each rated by a 5-member panel as Recommended, Not Recommended, or Highly Recommended. Virginia McMichaels discussed the push by some legislators to create judicial districts for appellate judges. For more information on this specific topic go to the Fair Districts PA website at [www.fairdistrictspa.com/updates](http://www.fairdistrictspa.com/updates). To summarize

this issue, see a flyer put out by FDPA. Just **CLICK** on this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xsEu0b3rfaY4NM49oWnf0u-vO-1J39/view?usp=sharing> .

### **OPEN HOUSE on April 22, 2021: EARTH DAY**

*by Meryle Rothman*

Thank you all for attending our April 22 Earth Day OPEN HOUSE. And to Elaine Friedlander for hosting our events. A special thank you goes out to new member Matt Zencey for educating us about environmental issues and sharing his story.

Agenda for Earth Day OPEN HOUSE:

- Matt Zencey
- May 18th Primary Election
- Important Websites and Upcoming Events

Matt lived in Alaska for 30 years and among other jobs, he was editor of the area's largest newspaper. He has a very unique perspective about life in Alaska and the impact that oil has on the people, the region and the environment. We discussed ways each one of us is helping to lower our carbon footprint. One thing is certain: we all must do our part along with governmental action to make a difference and mitigate the effects of climate change. Looking forward to hearing more from Matt at our May 15th board meeting.

### **Check out these environmental sites:**

[www.EPA.gov](http://www.EPA.gov) Federal Environment Protection

[www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov) PA State Environmental Protection (RGGI)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/26/president-biden-invites-40-world-leaders-to-leaders-summit-on-climate/>

Regarding the May 18th Primary Election - I am always looking for as much information as I can find to educate myself about elections and candidates. This is how we pass on information and empower our voters. Using Google is the best way.

**Here are some sites that I have found with helpful voting information...some are especially helpful for judicial candidate information and the four ballot questions:**

[www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com)

[www.chesco.org/elections](http://www.chesco.org/elections)

[www.lwvccpa.org](http://www.lwvccpa.org)

[www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org) Committee of Seventy

[www.ballotpedia.org](http://www.ballotpedia.org)

[www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org) - PA Bar Association

[www.pmconline.org](http://www.pmconline.org) - Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts

[thephiladelphiacitizen.org](http://thephiladelphiacitizen.org)

[www.why.org](http://www.why.org)

[www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)

Helpful Tip : Check out each candidate's website and take a look at their Press Releases.

Check out the PA Senate Hearings on Election Integrity

### **Upcoming Events:**

Tues Apr 27 - 7-8:30pm Non-Partisan Forum on Environment with WC Candidates

<https://chescodems.org/>

Thurs Apr 29 - National People Powered Day of Action - [www.fairdistrictspa.com](http://www.fairdistrictspa.com)

- Chester Valley Trail - Hit the Trail for Redistricting Reform

- Valley Forge - People Powered Fair Maps - 1400 N. Outer Line Drive, K of P 19406

Fri May 14 - Naturalization Mary Lou Dondero 610-692-3299

Sat May 15 – Monthly Board Meeting

Tues May 18 – Primary Election

Wed May 19 – Hot Topics

Sun July 18 - Turks Head Festival

## ***From the Board Room***

The Board and interested members met on Saturday, April 17 at 10:00 AM via Zoom.

Pam Gray announced that sadly, two of our Life Members, Fran Beers and Barbara [Bunty] Marshall, passed away recently. Donations were made in their names to the League Educational Fund.

Pam Gray reminded members that a virtual State Convention will take place on June 18-19. The Keynote Speaker will be Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, author of *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters*. If interested in attending, register on the LWVPA website.

The PA Senate Special Committee on Election Integrity will be holding hearings in May. Look for notices on when.

### ***MEMBERSHIP REPORT – April 17, 2021***

***Meryle Rothman***  
mgrothman@verizon.net

It is always great to welcome non-board members to our monthly board meetings. Board meetings are the best place to learn about what we do and to become familiar with our board members, officers and active committees.

We have 168 active members. Join me in welcoming our newest member, Elizabeth Pagano from Malvern.

Some sad news - I want to recognize the passing of three of our Life members - Fran Beer, Barbara Marshall and Joan Safford. I've had the pleasure of working with these members and love hearing stories of what the League was like 50, 60 years ago. We will miss all of these incredible women.

Thank you again to Deb Gallek, Gretchen Cole and Elaine Friedlander who help (usually behind the scenes) with visibility and tech support. And a special thank you to Barb Lathroum for her leadership as Co-President and for editing our *VOTER* for the last year. This is Barb's last newsletter as she is moving to New Hampshire. We could not do what we do without all of you and your contributions.

Fun Fact - Another reminder of how well the Chester County voter turnout was in Nov 2020. Thank you LWVCC for a job well done.

Chester County - 83%  
Allegheny County - 77%  
Philadelphia County - 66%  
Pennsylvania Voter Turnout - 76.5%

[www.chesco.org/elections](http://www.chesco.org/elections) - Chester County Voter Services Election site is up and filled with important voter information. Check the site for an exact sample of the ballot that you will be using on May 18th. And another reminder that ALL registered voters can vote in the May 18th Primary..

Monthly OPEN HOUSE - EARTH DAY April 22 at Noon - Special guest - Member Matt Zencey  
People Powered Day of Action - Thursday April 29 - Valley Forge and Chester Valley Trail

URGENT NEEDS - We are looking to fill some administrative spots so let us know if you would like to volunteer for a few hours a month or maybe even more. We need your help.  
Voter Service Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, Communications Director, Visibility/Outreach Director, Membership Chair

Thank you all for your time, support and commitment to the Chester County League chapter. Our ability and success in empowering our voters is because of you.

## ***Voter Services Report***

***Mary Lou Dondero***

Our hardworking League volunteers continue to provide much needed voter materials and voting information to the residents of Chester County. We are grateful to our dedicated group—Judy Menzel, Loraine Deisinger, Elaine Friedlander, Ellen Richardson, Pam Gray, Valerie Thomas, Carole Mackrell and Melanie Ryan, who met to assemble and then distribute materials needed for our upcoming primary. Supplies included in the packets are voter registration forms, applications for mail-in ballots, voter information cards, bookmarks, and Legislative Directories. For this election, we have also included a page of explanations regarding the four Pennsylvania constitutional amendments that will be voted on this year. Packets are then delivered to township buildings, libraries, senior living communities, assisted living and nursing homes, and gathering areas such as churches and food banks. Our visits are always welcome and very much appreciated.

League members brought supplies to their nearby communities: Carole Mackrell to Tel Hai, Hickory House, Heatherwood, Villa St. Martha, Simpson Meadows; Marguerite de Wet to the Hickman and Barclay Friends; Elaine Friedlander also to the Hickman, the Mary Taylor House and the Jeans building along with West Chester borough hall; Janice Shreffler to Good Samaritan, Freedom Village, Libraries in Coatesville, Parkesburg, and Downingtown, Spring Run Estates, and Villages at Hill View; Susan Leasure to Phoenixville High School, Phoenixville Tech, Atria C. Woodbridge, Spring Mill; and Judy Menzel to Luther Houses, Ware Presbyterian Village, and Jenners Pond. All of you make the rest of us very proud. Thank you!

LWVCC members wanting to volunteer to distribute materials or to register voters, contact Mary Lou Dondero: 610-692-3299 or [Mldondero528@gmail.com](mailto:Mldondero528@gmail.com). Our work informing the voters and facilitating their inclusion continues. There is always more work in a democracy.

Mary Lou Dondero: 610-692-3299 or [Mldondero528@gmail.com](mailto:Mldondero528@gmail.com).

## ***LWV PA Advocacy Team Notes*** ***Chester County Chapter***

***John Barnett***  
Liaison

The LWV PA Advocacy Team met March 20, 9:30AM by Zoom.

1. The LWV Positions: How does the League arrive at POSITIONS and design PROGRAMS?
  - a. The Board meets periodically to review the national and state LWV positions using two documents:
    - i. "Where We Stand" (state of PA)
    - ii. "Impact on Issues" (National)

The state League positions cannot conflict with the national position

A process of "Study" and "Concurrence" are used: A study group is formed to study an issue and develop a league position. This is presented to the local leagues who can concur or not on a position. After local leagues respond, the board issues an opinion and then it goes to the state convention where positions are voted on.

This is a robust but long and work-intensive process of developing positions both for the Where We Stand and Impact on Issues documents.

Note: The convention is planned for June 18 - 19, 2021. Position change suggestions need to be submitted to the League 3 months prior to the convention.

Local leagues can still do local studies on an issue. *A real strength of the League is that we are thorough and really understand an issue prior to adopting.*

2. LACRA [H.R. 22 and S.R. 222 ]

7 new cosponsors signed on in last few days. We still need captains that can lead teams to meet with legislators. April 29 is a planned Day of Action.

Fair Districts PA had a really good conversation this week with Rep Dave Argall (S29), Chair of Senate State Gov. Committee. Argall is very knowledgeable on redistricting, and he has introduced a bill: [Qualifications of Legislative Reapportionment Chair](#) SB441.

Our PA redistricting website is becoming better and better.  
The LWV CC Advocacy team on Rules Reform will embed themselves into the biweekly Fair Districts group focused on exactly the same team.

Note: We use Vote 411 as our voter information channel. It is now live regarding the PA constitutional amendments that are on the May Ballot.

3. Prison Gerrymandering: there will be six offerings of workshops on this. The first one was on Monday, March 22. Go to: <https://www.fairdistrictspa.com/events> to find one to attend.
4. State board nominating committee is for several open board positions such as: Government, Social Policy, and Development. They are looking for nominees now. See the April **Communicator**. The board meets monthly (virtually).

Note: New LWV members can view new-member "League 101" Power Point presentations. Contact Eileen Olmsted. [communications@palwv.org](mailto:communications@palwv.org)

Note that Fair Districts PA has a variety of trainings on YOUTUBE.

### ***Nominating Committee Report: Appointed Directors***

While interviewing candidates for the 2021-2022 fiscal year nomination slate, our committee became aware of several new LWVCC members with an interest in serving on the Board for a one-year term as appointed directors.

In accordance with Article V, Board of Directors, Section 1 - "Number, manner of Selection and Term of Office", pgs 15 and 16 of our bylaws: "The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the LWVCC; six elected directors; and not more than three appointed directors....The officers and elected directors shall appoint directors, not exceeding three, as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the LWVCC. The term of office of the appointed directors shall be one year or until the next Annual Meeting."

It is our recommendation the 2021-2022 Officers and elected directors appoint the following LWVCC members to the Board to serve as appointed directors:

Kate Curigan, Kathleen Chimicles, and Debbie Maynard

We believe these candidates will bring a wealth of experience, enthusiasm, and interest to the Board as well as benefit from the exposure to the overall operation of our League. They can serve as directors at large overseeing various short term projects and/or supporting individual committee needs specific to their skills and abilities. [See *bio sketches below*.]

Our purpose in presenting these recommendations prior to the forthcoming election is to give those officers and directors who will be continuing on the 2021-2022 Board an opportunity to familiarize

themselves with these members as well as begin the process of orienting them and familiarizing them with League policies and procedures at the local, state and national levels.

2021 Nominating Committee: Judy Menzel (chair), Kay Sharp, Brett Dolente, Janice Shreffler, and Cathy Palmquist

The Board voted to approve the three new directors. Welcome Kathleen, Debbie and Kate!!

### ***Debbie Maynard***

DEBBIE MAYNARD is an award-winning US and Global commercial operations, sales and marketing leader with a proven track record of delivering strategic transformational programs to support marketing and sales excellence. Debbie is adept at thought partnership and collaboration with senior executives and key stakeholders to define, implement and evaluate strategies to achieve business objectives. Her most recent position was Senior Director, Global In-Market Strategy, Design and Innovation at AstraZeneca, a global biopharmaceutical company. In this role Debbie led implementation for several enterprise-level programs across the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. She has extensive business Change Management and Communications planning/execution experience. Her keen understanding of people and cultures has enabled her to build strong relationships with global colleagues. Debbie is a graduate of the University of Virginia with a B.A. in Biochemistry.

### ***Kathleen Chimicles***

KATHLEEN CHIMICLES is President and CEO of GlenDevon Group, Inc., a company specializing in corporate financial consulting and litigation support. Previously, Ms. Chimicles was affiliated with Chimicles, Schwartz, Kriner & Donaldson-Smith as the firm's in-house financial specialist and managing director following 11 years in investment banking and venture capital.

Ms. Chimicles serves on the Board of Trustees of Drexel University where she is a member of the Finance and Investment Committees; the Board of Advisors of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law; and member of and past chair of Drexel University's LeBow College of Business Dean's Advisory Board. Ms. Chimicles is the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Juvenile Law Center and member of the Nominations & Governance and External Affairs Committees. She serves on the Investment Committee of the Archbishop Lakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund Inc. Ms. Chimicles is an Emeritus Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra where during her active service, she served on the Finance and Community Partnerships Committees. Previously, she served as a member of the Board of Directors of WHYY, the Wayne Arts Center and White Williams Scholars; a member of the Leadership Council for The Haverford School; and served on the Strategic Planning Committee and as Board Chair Advisor for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy.

Education: Bachelor of Science in Finance and Computer Systems, Drexel University; Master of Taxation, Villanova University; Accredited Senior Appraiser, American Society of Appraisers and member of the CFA Institute

### ***Kate Currigan***

KATE CURRIGAN is a retired teacher and Human Resources executive. She learned about the League of Women Voters from current members and through her important community work. From 2009 to the present, Kate has served as president on the board of the Friends of Tredyffrin Public Library, as manager of

the Red Fox Book Shop, and as a member of the Party in the Park event planning committee from 2016 to present.

Her hobbies include participation in Villanova University Personal Enrichment Program; film study; serving as OLLI instructor at Widener University; researching and writing family histories; being an avid reader and book club member. Kate is interested in event planning, education policy, and serving on the Hot Topics committee.

### ***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee***

***Sandy Schaal***

**D.E.I.** is the acronym that League members often forget the meaning of; the letters stand for **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**. What it means in functional terms is that our membership should “look” like a cross-section of the country. When advocating for issues, we should be measuring our stands by a “DEI” yardstick. Will a policy benefit everyone or exclude certain groups? Will a policy provide equity in wages, opportunity, and funding across the state/country? Will our voting laws remain inclusive?

So that our members can be on the same page, it is important to have some uncomfortable conversations among ourselves and with the public. Sandy Schaal is interested in having us explore the concept of “white privilege” which may result in some of these uncomfortable conversations. Discomfort itself is not the goal. Growth as individuals because of the discomfort is the goal. I cannot help but feel discussions like these will contribute toward group cohesiveness and a sense of joint purpose.

Toward this end, Sandy suggests that we read an article by Peggy McIntosh called “The Back Pack of White Privilege.” Google Peggy McIntosh and you will find it to read or print. Another book suggested by Sandy is by a former president of the national LWV, Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins: The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters. Several of us on the Board own copies and can lend it out if you are interested. Call Pam Gray at 610-431-6850. [Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins will be the Keynote Speaker at the LWVPA Convention in June.]

### ***HOT TOPICS:***

***Sandy Schaal***

The next Hot Topics meeting will be on Wednesday, May 19 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Sandra Strauss will speak on “The Impact of Covid-19 on Vulnerable Populations.” You won’t want to miss this!

### ***VOTE411.ORG AND THE VOTERS’ GUIDE***

***Lisa Forsyth***

Lisa Forsyth is organizing our Voters’ Guide which will be published before the primary on May 18<sup>th</sup>. It will contain bios of candidates and answers to questions posed by the state sponsored LWV. The Board has agreed to purchase a \$400 subscription for the Vote 411 service. Lisa will hold a committee meeting ASAP. Ellen Richardson, Carole Mackrell, Pam Gray and others have volunteered to serve on Lisa’s committee

### ***LASTLY***

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

This issue of The Voter will be my last issue as editor. (I mean it this time!!) I am moving to New Hampshire in June.

I recommend that YOU 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 and connect the articles into 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 Susan Carty [cartysusan@gmail.com](mailto:cartysusan@gmail.com) or Pam Gray [pag172@aol.com](mailto:pag172@aol.com) if interested in helping.

**By the way, my new address will be 232 Old Nottingham Road, Epping, NH 03042. My cell remains (484)995-2008 and my email stays the same too: [blathroum@gmail.com](mailto:blathroum@gmail.com).**