



VOTER



LWVGP RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE LWVUS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2020 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.

by Terrie E. Griffin, Grantee
Director and Chair, Membership Committee
Co-President, LWVPA



Last year, as chair of the Membership Committee (and as a Shur Fellow), I shared the LWVUS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy with the LWVGP board. I did so at the request of some of our leaders and members who were and are unfamiliar with our DEI policy and practices. Also, there was a need to begin the process of laying a foundation to better understand ourselves and others as we strive to incorporate a “DEI lens” in our League work. This work may include our interactions with each other, outreach to others (including our partners), recruitment considerations, future programming, and internal membership activities.

Specifically, the DEI grant will afford me an opportunity to participate in 15 hours of training (to be completed by June 15) that includes: taking pre and post assessments; participating in 3 learning modules; developing an action plan; and reviewing best practices and resources to aid Leagues in developing a DEI focus. As the grantee, I was asked to outline how funds will be used to expand DEI efforts. After sharing with the board my intent to apply for the grant and, to gain approval to utilize the board in a pilot project, the activity I’m proposing is the development of a DEI training of trainers’ initiative. This will involve training the board and unit leaders so they can in turn can present DEI trainings to local Leagues both in-reach (sharing within the membership) and outreach (sharing outside the membership with partners and others). If time and funds are available, a DEI video will be developed that can be utilized by local Leagues for training and discussion purposes. We want to be able to assist our over 300 members in the development of an effective DEI policy and future programming activities.

OUR LEAGUE IS BEGINNING TO USE GOOGLE G-SUITE. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

by Preston Shimer, Treasurer

In ancient times, when email was just becoming a part of our lives, the Leagues at all levels saw the value of this new communication tool. The LWVUS encouraged local and state leagues to use email by setting up an Internet domain for itself (LWV.ORG) and subsets which are called subdomains. Our current office email address still uses a subdomain created at this time. It is our familiar LWV.PGH.ORG. When our league established its website, it also obtained its own domain, LWVPGH.ORG and it is the URL for our website. We have lost email service from time to time because of this arrangement and LWVUS wants us to be on our own. We dragged our feet a bit because that was going to cost money. Then we became a 501c3 non-profit and became eligible for getting the powerful Google G-Suite of products at no charge.



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A MESSAGE FROM LWVGP

Statement of The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh



The death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police has broken open a dam of frustration and pain in cities and towns of all sizes across the country.

Concerned Americans of all ethnicities, genders and ages are leading a tidal wave of largely peaceful protests saying that we must agree that Black Lives Matter; that innate systemic racism in our nation's police forces must be rooted out and held accountable; and that we must confront the racism that exists in our society at large if we wish to truly become a people and a country that believes in equal justice for all under the law.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh could not be prouder to see the number of people of all ages protesting and exercising their fundamental political rights of free speech and assembly in a sustained manner our country has not seen since the childhood of many of us. We know that not all are able to protest; however, we are donating, reading, and learning about how to be better allies to the people of color in our lives. We know that we can be better here at the League, and to that end our

leadership will commit to amplifying the voices of all – women and men of all ethnicities, genders and ages in our ranks and our leadership and our actions. To truly be a League that represents and advocates for all of Pittsburgh, we know we must do the work to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion of representation and ideas in our own ranks. If you have ideas, please reach out, because we are here to listen, learn, and grow together.

On a closing note, Georgia Rep. John Lewis often said that his philosophy in the 1960s civil rights movement was “When you see something that’s not right, not fair, not just, say something, do something, and make good trouble.” We have seen that things are not right for all in this country; be safe, make good trouble, and share it with us.

Google G-Suite, Continued from previous page

Google G-Suite is a Internet Cloud-based information management system designed to provide a complete email system, a common calendar which all can use, a central cloud repository for our league documents and files, collaborative ways to all work on a given document, spreadsheet or presentation either on your own or together, sequentially or at the same time, to have online meetings and quick chats, and much more. Because it works via a web browser, a person only needs an Internet connected computer, tablet or Smartphone and can be anywhere in the world. Needless to say, there is a learning curve and we won't be able to learn how to do all this stuff at once.

We are starting with email, the Cloud based storage system called Google Drive and the collaborative documents. We have set up the email system for board members and others who have league portfolios by the position they hold. For example, my league email is now treasurer@lwvpgh.org. Barbara Simpson is now info@lwvpgh.org and her previous email info@lwv.pgh.org is being phased out.

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V.P.2 Program	Christina Beuger	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
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Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	

Google G-Suite, Continued from previous page

The advantage to this approach is that I can now keep my league emails separate from my personal email. When someone replaces me as treasurer, that person will begin to use treasurer@lwvpgh.org and I won't have to sort through years of my personal email to forward important league emails to the new treasurer. A list of our new league email addresses is available on the next page (Page 4).

The minutes, reports and other communications needed for board meetings will be stored in the Google Drive by meeting date. I will be posting the financial reports there and I will no longer have to email copies to each board member who then has to save them to their own computers. The reports will be available when they are needed centrally.

Intellectually our board members have embraced these changes, but practically it will take a while to learn how the Google software works, sometimes in ways that are familiar and at other times, in ways that are different. But in the end, we believe that the benefits we see intellectually will become real as we gain experience.

Standing Meetings

Board Meetings

- ✓ **Second Monday** of the month. Lunch at 11:30 a.m., at Einstein Bagels in the Koppers Building. Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the LWVGP CIC (office) conference room at 436 Seventh Ave., Suite 350

Local Area Unit Meetings

- ✓ **Pittsburgh Central:** 2nd Friday, 1:30 p.m. at the Squirrel Hill Public Library, 5801 Forbes Ave., Pgh. PA 15217. Contact Martha Raak at 412-802-7266 or marbiker1@gmail.com
- ✓ **North Hills:** 3rd Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. at St Paul's Methodist Church at 1965 Ferguson Road in Hampton. Contact Shirley McIvried at 412-364-7329 or howardmciii@comcast.net
- ✓ **South Hills:** 1st Thursday, 12:30 p.m. at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library, 16 Castle Shannon Blvd., Pgh, PA 15228 (unless otherwise announced). Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or mamula159@hotmail.com

Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**
4th Wednesday, 1 pm. Contact Joan Franklin at 412-422-7909, fjoan1960@gmail.com or Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-808-6028, lpdrey@verizon.net.
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
1st Tuesday, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or jbclack@yahoo.com.
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or nancynaragon@msn.com
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-808-6028 or lpdrey@verizon.net

SUMMER CALENDAR

June	
02 Tue	Primary Election , at reduced number of polling places open from 7 am to 8 pm, or mail-in ballot due at Allegheny County Election Division by 8 pm.
02 Tue	Voter Service Committee meeting cancelled due to Election Day
30 Tue	Annual Meeting, 7 pm, by Zoom meeting.
July	
07 Tue	Voter Service Committee 12:30-2:30pm by videoconference
August	
04 Tue	Voter Service Committee 12:30-2:30pm by videoconference

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh - Portfolio Email Addresses

First Name	Last Name	Email Address
Amy	Kleissas	civic.education@lwvpgh.org
Annette	Shimer	vote411@lwvpgh.org
Barbara	Simpson	info@lwvpgh.org
Cris	Beuger	program@lwvpgh.org
Eileen	Olmstead	communications@lwvpgh.org
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Judy	Diorio	naturalization@lwvpgh.org
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Maureen	Grosheider	copresident.admin@lwvpgh.org
Nancy	Naragon	development@lwvpgh.org
Preston	Shimer	treasurer@lwvpgh.org
Ron	Bandes	election.integrity@lwvpgh.org
Sue	Broughton	voter.editor@lwvpgh.org
Terrie	Griffin	membership@lwvpgh.org

A Note from the Editor

There were more reports from committees and individual program specialists received for the 2020 Annual Meeting Workbook than in recent years. Please read them. There is excellent information in these reports.

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



Candidate Forums for June 2, 2020 Primary Election



Thanks to the 10-person subcommittee who spent hours each week for over a month making the six remote primary election candidate forums a reality including holding many mock forums for practice: Ron Bandes, Cris Beuger, Judy Clack, Steve Clack, Emily Ferri, Greg Garbinsky, Maureen Grosheider, Eileen Olmsted, Annette Shimer, and Preston Shimer. They served as moderators, hosts, co-hosts, timers, publicists, and post-production gurus. Thanks to this team who screened and reworded submitted questions into “League-alese”: Cris Beuger, Kathy Herbst, Paula Hopkins, Amy Kleissas, Nancy Mott, Lynne Preisser, Martha Raak (Chair), Ellie Siegal, and Julie Zavon.

Checking out all the Zoom settings prior to the 36th House District forum on May 6 are Leaguers Emily Ferri, Maureen Grosheider, and Ron Bandes, and Candidates Jessica Benham, Ed Moeller, Heather Kass, and Mark Johnson.

The League’s five Facebook forums have gotten between 560 and 2,700 views and 12 – 37 shares, with the 4-way race for the 36th House District the most popular. You can see the forums for the 43rd Senate, or the 20th, 30th, 34th, and 36th House Districts at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/lwvpg/videos/>. Here’s the link to 18th Congressional District Debate on WTAE: <https://www.wtae.com/article/pennsylvania-18th-congressional-district-democratic-primary-debate/32616074>



Broadcast on May 20, WTAE-TV and LWVGP hosted a debate for the 18th Congressional District with WTAE’s Shannon Perrine as moderator.

Vote411 won a Webby Award!

Vote411.org is the People's Voice Winner in the category "Government and Civil Innovation." This category includes sites that “enable online citizen action.”

The 2020 Webby Winners represent the organizations and individuals using digital technologies to uplift communities, and keep them entertained, inspired, and connected. There were over 2.5 million votes for this year’s People’s Voice awards.

Congrats to Annette Shimer for her years of leading the LWVGP participation in Vote411.

Annette Shimer and Barb Simpson led our League’s effort on Vote411.org and the hard copy Voters Guide enabling voters in Allegheny County to find information about the candidates appearing on their ballot.

YOUR VOTERS’ GUIDE

Personalized Ballot Information

Learn where candidates running for office in your community stand on the issues. You can print or email the information to use as a reference when you actually vote. We do not save your information, it will be lost when you leave this page. Only candidates that appear on your ballot will be listed. Additional information may be available for your area so be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page for other voters’ guides.

VOTE411 Voter Guide Change Address

Finish

Your guide has 6 races. Choose one to get started.

US President	Make Selection >
Pennsylvania Attorney General	Make Selection >
Pennsylvania Auditor General	Make Selection >
Pennsylvania State Treasurer	Make Selection >
Pennsylvania US House District 17	Make Selection >
Pennsylvania Representative District 30	Make Selection >

LWVGP Civic Education – High Voter School Project

Amy Kleissas, Chair

We kicked off the High School Project in February with a successful visit to **South Allegheny High School**. Six more uplifting visits followed which are listed below. Feedback forms returned to us from these schools continued to be overwhelmingly positive. Our three-year goal of reaching **Pittsburgh Public Schools** came about with our visit to **Westinghouse Academy on March 11**. We were heartened by the enthusiastic students and staff. The chief of staff of Representative Gainey's office and the PPS School Board president provided coordination, attended our lessons, and offered their support.



More exciting news was that many of the high schools we visited may qualify for the **Governor's Civic Engagement Award**. We promoted this award, administered by the PA State Department, in our contacts with schools. This award is presented to high schools where the number of eligible seniors who register to vote is 65% - 85% and above. High Schools are permitted to count students who were previously registered to vote in this count and the cut-off date for schools was extended to May 22nd.

More about the High School project:

- Eight presenters trained, all with teaching experience.
- In March, we added five more visits with firm dates; Westinghouse Academy (March 11), Steel Valley HS (April 3), and Montour HS (April 7- classroom, April 24- Table Event), Chartiers Valley HS for another lunchroom drive; (March 19).
- Beth Dolinar from WQED filmed our presentation at Brentwood HS on 3/2/20 as a part of **WQED's Voter Information Project-- Campaign U**. Six amazing student interviews were also filmed. **"The Youth Vote" segment is now posted on the WQED website, which will run at least through May.**
- Diana Nelson Jones (Post-Gazette) positively highlighted Voter Service and the High School Project in an online article on 3/2/20.

During our seven in-person high school visits, we presented to 600 students and received 490 registrations. Thank you presenters and volunteers for your commitment to this important project!

Unfortunately, everything changed just as we were gearing up to *double* our reach by adding even more new school visits. **On March 12, the High School Project was suspended due to the coronavirus emergency and we canceled visits to the six remaining high schools.** Nevertheless, school personnel were extremely positive noting that the pandemic crisis will only *postpone our visits*. They supported the option of a **digital "Voting Made Easy" lesson** which now includes a Voter Registration Application, opportunities for teachers to extend student learning and a copyright line. This online lesson was created with expert editing help from the team. Anticipating that PA schools would remain closed for the balance of the school year, it was important to fast-track the digital lesson to high schools. One significant positive of our lesson is that it is easily accessible, with links, to students on their *phones*, in addition to their computers and iPads. **By early April, the digital lesson, updated to include new Primary Election information, had been emailed to all Allegheny County High Schools (including the Pittsburgh Public contacts) to Career and Tech schools, to Charters, to community organizations like Job Corps and B-PEP, and to the presidents of the teachers' unions (PSEA and AFT). On May 5th, those emails were sent again to all with an emphasis on League and state resources; our new LWVGP website (with links to the digital lesson), Vote411 and VotesPA.**

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The **digital lesson** is linked from our new website Home page. It appeals to high school seniors, teachers and *anyone* who is interested in learning more about the voting process and voter registration. Information about the digital lesson has been published in the COMMUNICATOR and in the BLAST. The digital lesson was also sent to LWVUS as requested in response to an email which extended LWVEF grant deadlines and to the social media coordinator at LWVPA.

The lesson directs students to send a photo or screenshot of their voter registration application to their teachers. That tally is forwarded to my email. So far, we have received positive responses from six high school principals potentially reaching at least an additional 1000 students. Community organizations that have shared LWVGP social media posts about our digital lesson are North Hills News, West Hills Women's Democratic Organization, McCandless PA Community Forum, Point Breeze Association, North Allegheny PA Association for Gifted Children, East Liberty Lutheran Church and Vibrant Pittsburgh. We had a very positive response from Job Corps and Montour High School.

The digital lesson is a way to increase voter registration of not only high school seniors, but also of *any citizen* who might have access to it. *Please feel free to promote the digital lesson through the LWVGP website under "Voter Education" or contact me at civic.education@lwvpg.org (412.600.2581).*

Completed Visits by March 12:

- South Allegheny HS – 2/5/20: Presented to 72 seniors, [56 registrations.](#)
- McKeesport Area HS – 2/12/20; Presented to 140 seniors, [94 registrations.](#)
- Elizabeth Forward – 2/18/20; Presented to 137 seniors, [112 registrations.](#)
- Chartiers Valley – 2/21/20; Presented to 90 students, [106 registrations.](#)
- "My Place" at Uptown Lofts – 2/26/20; Presented to 20; [7 registrations.](#)
- Brentwood HS – March 2; Presented to 59 seniors; [55 registrations.](#)
- Clairton City – March 4; Presented to 16 students; [16 registrations.](#)
- Westinghouse Academy (PPS)– March 11; Presented to 68 students; [48 registrations.](#)

Postponed School Visits and Events:

- Plum Borough – March 17
- Chartiers Valley – March 19
- Penn Hills – March 25
- Propel Braddock – March 31
- Cultural Trust Table Event- March 28; "Bookish in the 'Burgh (6:15pm – 8:30pm); Judy Clack coordinating;
- Steel Valley HS - April 3
- Montour HS - April 7
- Montour HS – April 24

EDUCATION ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT by Joan Franklin

The League Education Advocacy Committee returned many signed petitions to the Education Voters of PA (a coalition with which we collaborate). Thanks to all of you who worked so hard to get as many signatures so we could to support Governor Wolf's proposals to reform charter school rules, especially regarding cyber schools. We have not been meeting but have been closely following education issues and also the Secretary of Education with her continued efforts to divert monies to private schools. At this time there are so many issues around education (to open or to continue on line and to evaluate the effectiveness of on line learning) that we must be sure that nothing goes under the radar that will further diminish the necessary funding for public schools.



High School Voter Project Governor's Civic Engagement Award 2019-20 Winners by Amy Kleissas

The High School Voter Project Team received exciting news! **Two of the high schools our team visited have won the Governor's Civic Engagement Award for 2019-20: Brentwood High School (Gold) and Elizabeth Forward High School (Silver).** Information about the Governor's Civic Engagement Award, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of State, was shared with all of the thirteen high schools we were scheduled to visit this year. We completed seven high school visits before the pandemic crisis resulted in the suspension of our in-person visits.

Forty-one Pennsylvania schools were awarded the Gold Award for registering to vote greater than 85% of their eligible students. Seventeen high schools won the Silver Award for registering 65%-85% of their eligible students.

Congratulations and well-done to the staff and inspiring students at Brentwood and Elizabeth Forward and to our High School Voter Project Volunteers!

MARVELOUS MEMBERS WISE WOMEN (AND MEN) OF THE LEAGUE

We all need some uplifting news. What better time to honor and appreciate the many amazing League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh members and their trailblazing work for our organization and our democracy?

Thank you to Martha Raak, League member for 55 years (20 in Pittsburgh), who agreed to be the first in this series.

Amy Kleissas

A "Marvelous Member" Interview with Martha Raak on May 14, 2020

What is your professional or work history?

I married my high school sweetheart at twenty-one when he returned from Germany during the Korean conflict. I worked as a Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) field nurse in the Philadelphia area. After having five children in six years, I devoted my non-family time to volunteerism, especially the League.

I worked as a rehab social worker and then as a geriatric social worker, after receiving my degree from Geneva College. In Greensburg, Pennsylvania I began a 20-year career at Seton Hill University. For the last ten of those years, I served as the Dean of Adult Education. It was an extremely rewarding experience as I counseled returning adults. At this time, my husband spent a work year living in the UK. While he was gone, I obtained my MA in Adult Education at IUP.

In 1985, I ran for an open seat in the Pennsylvania Legislature. Ten candidates ran and I came in second. However, I used that experience to offer "**How to Run for Office**" seminars which were quite successful and were emulated in Pittsburgh.

Why and when did the League become important to you?

I first joined the LWV in Boston as a mother of four young children (one more came later when we moved to Western PA).

At that time, my education was as an RN, a graduate of the renowned Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. It was the 60's and full of agitation. The League opened up a world of research and of listening and learning from very well-educated women from MIT, Boston University, Simmons, Harvard, Radcliffe, and others. It became an intellectual lifeline and source of inspiration for a young mother in her 20's. I learned to speak in public, to write letters to the editor, to attend hearings, to organize, and to be involved in the community.

I remember going door-to-door with my double stroller to push for various causes. At that time, the League emphasis was on *study groups* where I learned so much about the three levels of government and the League's nonpartisan agenda, as well as Voter Service.

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Who was a notable or first League mentor to you?

Jane Darby and Louise Syversen

What was your League “portfolio”, including offices you held?

Eventually, our family moved to Western Pennsylvania to the small town of Beaver. Of course, I joined the League and eventually became President. We worked hard and were soon the *LWV of Beaver County*. I served as Voter Service Chair and later served as the first woman on the Beaver Area School Board.

This was the era when many women who had not earned a college degree were doing so and one of my LWV friends encouraged me.

I graduated from Geneva College the same year that my husband, Ray, finished night Law School at Duquesne University. He worked full time in Human Resources at Crucible Steel. I look back in wonderment as to how we managed it all!

What do you feel are the most important things you accomplished for the League and for our democracy?

- Encouraging and supporting women to run for office.
- Demonstrating that democracy is NOT a spectator sport.

What are your concerns and/or hopes for a post-pandemic America?

We need to be vigilant in preserving open and fair elections for all.

I desperately hope that our country becomes reengaged with the world community providing leadership in world peace and climate change.

What are your wise words for the rest of us?

“You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.”

– Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan

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