



VOTER

January-February 2020

County Council Luncheon Feb. 19

This year is very different. We are having lunch with the new County Council, which is now all Democrat and majority female for the first time in Delaware County history. This will be our first opportunity to hear the new council's ideas and plans. Make your reservations early. The Annual LWV Delaware County Council Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 19, at Noon at DiFabio's Restaurant, 1243 N. Providence Rd., Media PA. Here's your chance to meet with members of Delaware County Council and talk about issues that affect the county. Each council member will describe their role on council and there will be time for questions. New voting machines, Act 77 election reforms, the county prison and a need for a county

health department will be discussed but you can ask about your own issues.



Left to right: Monica Taylor, Brian Zidek, Elaine Schaeffer, Christine Reuther and Kevin Madden.

And it's our birthday!

This is also the League's 100th Anniversary Celebration luncheon. Join in celebrating the work of the League of Women Voters in empowering voters and advancing democracy. See Page 6 for a bit of history about how the League of Women Voters came out of the suffragist movement.

Cost of the luncheon is \$25. Reservations are required. Deadline is Feb. 14. Please mail your check, payable to

LWV Delaware County, to P.O. Box 131, Wallingford PA 19086. For further information email [Rosemary Kesling at kesling@voicenet.com](mailto:Rosemary.Kesling@voicenet.com) or call her at 610-789-2680.

Act 77 Voting Reforms and Voting Machines

The Delaware County Interleague and the Central Delaware County League are going to be very, very busy for the next couple of months working with the county government and the Election Bureau trying to get poll workers and voters trained on how to use the new voting machines.

With the new machines, we will be voting by paper ballot,

which then will be fed into a scanner for counting at each polling place. The advantage of going to paper ballots is they can be stored and used to recount close elections.

Delco League President [Olivia Thorne](#) and CDC-LWV Board Member [Anne Mosakowski](#) need volunteers to help with the training (which is not hard). Please email one of them and

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President's Message

February 14, 2020 is LWV's official 100th birthday. The nationwide theme is *Women Power the Vote* and events are being held all over the country. Locally, we will be celebrating too with a 100th birthday party in conjunction with our annual County Council Luncheon on Feb. 19. We will celebrate again with a fundraiser on April 22 at the Brandywine River Museum to enjoy a personalized, curated tour of "Votes for Women: A Visual History of Women's Suffrage," followed by lunch overlooking the gorgeous Brandywine River.

Five LWV-CDC members have been chosen to participate on DELCO Transition Working Groups to help inform the new County Council on important areas of county government such as public health, elections and ethics and transparency. More than 800 community members applied and were vetted for 12 working groups. Two hundred people were finally selected to participate in a working group. Congratulations LWV-CDC for playing such a vital role in good governance.

This year is also the year of NEW Voting Machines and election reforms as a result of Act 77 changes to the Election Code. Delaware County voted to purchase the Hart Intercivic voting machines providing a paper ballot and optical scanner. The LWV-CDC has been selected to take part in the "Train the Trainer Program" in January, February and March to educate poll workers and community groups to use the new machines in time for the April 28 primary. We are seeking trainers and if you are interested, please contact Olivia.Thorne@verizon.net.

By April 1, 2020, every home will be notified of the 2020 Census. The U.S. Constitution requires that "every person" be counted. As you know, there are 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. These are distributed to the 50 states by population, and an accurate census count helps each state get the right amount of seats. Please participate by responding: online, by phone, or by mail. Our League is actively working with Delaware County and the Complete Count Committee to educate the public about the importance of the 2020 Census and why participation matters.

Hot Topic Luncheons begin again on March 20 with a program on the Census and Redistricting. The May Hot Topic addresses the Updated Public Health Consensus by LWV-CDC Study Committee with Rosemarie Halt. Our third Hot Topic in June will feature Roberta Winters, President of the Radnor LWV, with an update on Pipelines in Middletown Township.

We have contracted with a new caterer, Cannelle Café in Wallingford, for our Hot Topic Luncheons. Members at our last Hot Topic responded very favorably to the delicious and beautifully presented buffet of soup, sandwiches, salad and homemade cookies. We look forward to many delicious lunches ahead!

Happy New Year!

Barbara Amstutz

Examining Criminal Justice in Delaware County

By Civic Education Committee

Barbara Amstutz, Viola Crawford, Ralf Graves, Marita Green, Denyse McCurdy & Anne Mosakowski

Pennsylvania now has the nation's second-highest rate of people under correctional control and the rate of incarceration in Pennsylvania state prisons and county jails has nearly quintupled. (*Philadelphia Inquirer* 2019)

In light of these discouraging trends, a civic education seminar, sponsored by the LWV-CDC, was held Nov. 2, 2019, at the Matchbox at Swarthmore College to address the problems and issues related to sentencing, parole and probation in Delaware County and to articulate strategies for change.

This panel identified six topics of importance related to the Delaware County criminal justice system:

- Everyone on the panel unanimously agreed that the criminal justice system in Delaware County is vastly under-resourced. There is a significant shortage of housing placements, treatment programs for substance use and mental health disorders, and public defenders to provide legal representation.
- Panelists Tamika Hayward and Lee Awbrey discussed how excessively restrictive rules and requirements attached to probation often lead to technical violations that can land the offender back into incarceration. Ironically, probation is meant to keep people out of jail.
- As a private criminal attorney in Media with extensive experience appearing before different judges, moderator Wana Saadzo explained that judges have significant discretion within sentencing guidelines as well as parole

and probation terms. Judges typically punish relapses with long sentences, in some cases this occurs because of a lack of alternative treatment resources.

- Dr. Keith Reeves emphasized that every individual can have an impact improving the criminal justice system in Delaware County. He believed non-partisan community engagement at George Hill County Prison would help to hold the administrators accountable. A recent local development is the formation of a new Jail Oversight Board to replace the current County Board of Prison Inspectors. It includes three citizen members appointed by the county's executive director with consent of the County Council. He believes this new development will help to support reforms moving forward. The new board began functioning in early January.
- Olivia Thorne, President, Delaware County League of Women Voters, asked the panel to address the impact of the Marcy's Law on criminal justice. Danita Sherman and Lee Awbrey agreed that victim rights must be balanced with the rights of the accused. They both opposed the legislation as it is written now, since it clearly restricts the rights of the accused to confront the victim in court proceedings. In addition, the law fails to provide an opportunity to vote on each provision separately. They recommend that everyone vote no on this ballot question.
- The ACLU has been involved with new bipartisan legislation (H. B. 1555) to reform the prolonged terms of probation resulting from technical violations that can perpetually extend the clock on a probation term. Technical violations could range from com

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January — February — March Events

Feb. 19 (Wednesday) — County Council Luncheon and LWV 100th anniversary party, 12 Noon, DeFabio's Restaurant, 1243 N. Providence Rd., Media. Come out and meet the new County Council and celebrate the League of Women Voters 100th birthday. Cost \$25. Reservations required. Mail checks to P.O. Box 131, Wallingford PA 19086. For further information email Rosemary Kesling kesling@voicenet.com or call 610-789-2680.

March 14 (Saturday) — League 101, for new members, Olivia Thorne, 10 a.m. Free. Helen Furness Library, Providence Rd. Wallingford, downstairs conference room.

March 20 (Friday) — Hot Topic Luncheon: Census and Redistricting, Noon, Community Room Media Borough Hall, 302 N. Jackson St. \$20.

March 31 (Tuesday) — Jeanette Ross Lecture — Election Reform Update with Pa. Sens. Tom Killion and Tim Kearney, 7 p.m., Centennial Room, Swarthmore United Methodist Church, 129 Park Ave., Swarthmore. Free.

Criminal Justice in Delco Civics Program

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mitting minor traffic offenses or transportation issues such as getting to court proceedings on time. However, recently, an amendment passed by the state House Judiciary Committee has stripped away the most significant elements of the House bill, H.B.1555, and added dangerous provisions such as warrantless searches without even reasonable suspicion. If the amended bill passes, Pennsylvania's already broken probation system will only get worse.

Dr. Reeves invited four of his Swarthmore students to tell their personal stories after attending probation hearings in Common Pleas Judge Richard M. Cappelli's court.

(Their comments paraphrased):

Millie Amilcar – Access to good legal representation is a big problem. Some lawyers knew their clients cases very well, yet other lawyers had not spoken to their clients prior to the hearing. Many defendants did not understand what was happening and were at a significant disadvantage.

Elizabeth Gonzalez – There is such a lack of resources for defendants. There is a shortage of beds for substance-abuse treatment, legal counsel and mental health services. It was sad to see all the needs and so few services.

Bridget Silveira – The Judge was very compassionate. He gave everyone a chance to speak. The Judge showed care and concern, but he was constrained by the system. The sheer number of defendants can overwhelm the proceedings.

Vivian Fernandez-Ravelo – How do you send the defendant home with a severe disability like an opioid addiction? The Judge tried to balance keeping the family safe and bringing the defendant home.

Moderator Saadzi and panelist Reeves summarized the discussion on the importance of working together in a non-partisan way to hold the county accountable to provide greater resources for treatment, social support, education and legal representation. Working together we can address the apparent inequities in the system by studying best practices in other jurisdictions and educating ourselves to ask the right questions and



Panel, from left to right: Lee Awbrey, Montgomery County Public Defender's Office; Danita Sherman, ACLU Pa. campaigns director; Tamika Hayward, Pa. Board of Probation and Parole field agent; Dr. Keith Reeves, Swarthmore College professor of political science, and (standing) Moderator Wana Saadozi, criminal defense attorney.

HAPPY ★ NEW ★ YEAR

Whatever Happened to the Victims Rights Act?

You might wonder what happened to Marsy's Law, the victims rights amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution that was on the November ballot.

The Pa. ACLU and LWVPA went to court last October and got an injunction against the Secretary of State prohibiting her from counting or certifying the vote on the amendment, but the question was already on the ballot and voters approved it overwhelmingly. Delaware County voters approved it by a vote of about 84,400 to 25,900.

The ACLU and LWVPA opposed the amendment because it violated the state Constitution by asking voters to approve a multi-part amendment that itself was going to require changes to eight other articles of the constitution and which would violate several constitutional rights of the accused.

The state Supreme Court sent the lawsuit back to Commonwealth Judge Ellen Ceisler for a final ruling and she is taking briefing until Jan. 24 and may rule within a month or two. Then it will be appealed to the Supreme Court for its final decision.

Voting Machines and Act 77

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put in your name if you have any time at all to help with this humongous task. Training will take place at the end of January. Stay tuned for dates and places.

Olivia and Anne are both on the election law and voting machine transition working group to advise the new Democratic government as it gets the voting machines up and running and figures out the logistics and procedures for implementing Act 77, the election law reform law. Both the voting machines and the new law will be in effect for the April 28 Pennsylvania Primary Election.

Act 77 makes three huge changes in state election law, each of which will be in effect for the primary election:

1. Voters cannot check a box or push a button to vote a straight Democratic or Republican ticket in the general election. They must vote for each candidate individually.
2. The deadline for registering to vote in the primary election will be Monday, April 13, two weeks before election day. The former deadline was 30 days before.
3. In addition to absentee ballots for those who cannot make it to the polls, voters will now have the option of simply voting by mail, no excuses necessary. The process for applying for either of these ballots and obtaining ballots is the same. See <https://my.lwv.org/pennsylvania/central-delaware-county/voter-toolkit> for further information. A big difference regarding both kinds of ballots is they can be turned in to the Election Bureau up to 8 p.m. election night, which is going to cause delays in reporting election results.



Rosemarie Halt

Merits of a Public Health Department

CDC-LWV member Rosemarie Halt moderated a panel of experts on the topic of the merits of a public health department in Delaware County Jan. 12.

She said Delco may be the most populous county in the United States without a public health department. The county has a population of more than 570,000. The Democrats who won election to County Council campaigned on establishing a health department and are expected to do so later this year.

Rosemarie, the senior director of policy for the Maternity Care Coalition, has long been a leader in the effort to establish a county public health department and is leading the Delco Transition Working Group on Public Health. CDC-LWV President Barbara Amstutz is also a member of the working group and organized the expert panel.

The panel — Montgomery County Health Department Director Brenda Weis, Chester County Health Department Director Jeanne Casner, Delaware County Medical Examiner Dr. Frederic Hellman and former Philadelphia Health Commissioner Dr. Walter Tsou — discussed the practical aspects of forming and running a health department, such as funding, startup, organization, health priorities, operations, data collection and benefits to the public.

Why Our 100th Birthday is February 14

We were formed in February of 1920 at the final annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (often referred to as NAWSA) in Chicago. Carrie Chapman Catt, the president, announced that only five more states were needed to ratify the 19th amendment to



1920 editorial cartoon — origin unknown

the Constitution and give women the right to vote. More than 2,000 delegates voted Feb. 14, 1920, to transform NAWSA into a new organization called the League of Women Citizens with the intent to change the name to the League of Women Voters as soon as women got the right to vote. In August 1920, when we got the vote, two million women in Pennsylvania needed to register in just one month. It was a three-part process:

1. You had two days when poll workers were available to declare your wish to vote.
2. You had two more days to pay a 50-cent poll tax. (You were exempt from the poll tax if you were a property owner, could show a receipt for property taxes and your name was on the deed or if you were between the ages of 21 and 22.
3. And you had three more days to complete the registration, which meant giving your name, age, date of birth and approximate height and weight to prevent fraud.

The newly formed League mailed letters, held meetings, and made phone calls to members and friends to make sure women understood the election laws and how they applied to them. The League was asked to help in the process and by Election Day about 26% of all women across the country were registered.

In Memoriam



Jaydee (Jay) Miller



Henry (Hank) Thorne



Andrea Kovach

The LWV-CDC community was shocked at the loss of Jay Miller Oct. 31, 2019, and his good friend Hank Thorne a week later on Nov. 6. The League also lost member Andrea (Crivelli) Kovach Dec. 27. Jay and Hank together started our Hot Topics luncheons back in the late 1980s and almost always manned the check-in table. Hank was Olivia Thorne's husband and Jay was the husband of Katherine Miller, a longtime LWV-CDC board member for many years who we also lost last February. Andrea, a public health policy professor, had worked on the League's health department study.