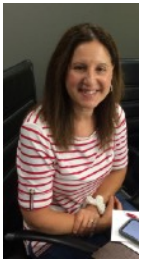


WEST VIRGINIA VOTER

Volume 27, No. 3

November 2020

PROGRAM by Chris Beuger, Program Chair



Last month we hosted an informative Voter Suppression Panel moderated by KDKA Talk Show Host, Lynne Hayes-Freeland. The panelists included: William Anderson, B-PEP; Brenda Tate, Black Vote Coalition; Marian Schneider, ACLU; Andy Szefi, Allegheny County Solicitor; and Marybeth Kuznik, VotePA. The meeting is available for viewing on our Social Media platforms.

Since COVID-19 put a hold on our August event the Centennial Committee was planning in honor of the passage of the 19th Amendment, we will celebrate it Zoom style in November. Our November meeting will also honor our 50-year members of our League. Please be on the look-out for the day and time of our November meeting in upcoming Blasts!

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



Election Protection

ELECTION PROTECTION



If you observe or experience voter intimidation or voter suppression at the polls or anytime year-round, call the Election Protection hotline, **866-OUR-VOTE** or **866-687-8683**, 24/7/365.

The national, nonpartisan Election Protection coalition was formed to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Election Protection is made up of more than 100, local, state, and National partners, including the LWVUS, led by Common Cause and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law. They work year-round to advance and defend the right to vote.

Sign up to be an Election Protection Volunteer at <https://protectthevote.net/>. They will help you find the best way to get involved — whether that's monitoring polling places (from your vehicle, or with proper personal safety equipment), watchdogging social media for disinformation, or reaching out to voters to make sure they know their rights. You'll connect voters with trained legal professionals who can help them navigate the voting process and cast their ballots safely and securely by calling the hotline.

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CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

VOTING RUNS IN MY FAMILY



I am writing this before the election on November 3rd, so I do not have any statistics to share – how many votes cast, how many in my demographic (yes, senior citizen) or our daughter's (millennial).

I have been thinking about those who have voted before me. I am interested in genealogy and have found records of naturalization for one of my great, great grandfathers, who is shown on census records as being able to vote, another record showing that one of my immigrant great grandfathers died in an accident at work before he had the chance to become a voter, and knowing that both of my grandmothers were over 21 when women won the vote in 1920. I remember the excitement in my high school when my classmates and I were in the first group eligible to vote in 1971, after the voting age was lowered to 18. Our daughter's first vote was done as an absentee, since she was in college and would not be in Pittsburgh on election day. Pennsylvania has now allowed mail-in no excuse voting, and my husband and I both took advantage of this option this year. Our daughter took advantage of early voting in the city where she now lives and works.

The constant in all of this for my family has been – changes occur in who can vote, how we can vote and where we vote – in a polling place, via a mail box or drop box, but the constant that runs through all of these years is the same. Our vote is our voice. No

matter what the outcome of this year's election, remember to vote – each and every time. The primary vote will help to determine who is on the ballot for the general election, and those we elect – whether president, senator, congressperson, state elected officials, county officials, local officials and school board members – will be responsible to us – the voters.

Thank you to all of our members – for being members and giving us a larger voice in the community; for volunteering to work with other members to help the League let citizens know, through forums, through [VOTE411.ORG](https://vote411.org), and through outreach in our community about issues and the candidates; for being involved citizens and for being VOTERS!

Maureen Mamula

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November 2020

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The League is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to encourage the informed participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

Email: info@lwvpg.org

To unsubscribe from the VOTER, send email with subject "Unsubscribe"

Hard copy subscriptions are available for \$20 per year.



LWVPGH member Linda Schneider noticed this voter registration display at Riverstone Books in McCandless.

LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee		Local Area Meeting Chairs	
Co-President	Maureen Mamula	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak
Co-President	Maureen Grosheider	North Hills 412-364-7329	Nancy Mott
V.P.1 Development, Gun safety	Nancy Naragon	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
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Civic Education	Amy Kleissias	Book Club	Judy Donohue
Program, Debates, Vote411	Annette Shimer	Housing	Adelaide Smith
		Legislative Interviews	Michelle Zmijanac, Kathy Nagle
Staff			
Community Information Center	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpg.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palw.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	



League member Mary Molloy conducted voter registration at Pittsburgh area bus stops on her own initiative! THANK YOU, Mary!



La Roche University's American Association of University Women (AAUW) Student Organization held a fundraiser for LWVPGH. The "Donate a Drink" event asked for a donation of what one would normally pay for a cup of coffee in honor of 100 years of women's suffrage. Peggy Schmiedecke (LWVPGH member, retired La Roche staff, and former AAUW co-advisor) organized the event. LWVPGH materials were distributed.

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 412-477-7572 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 Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or namott001@gmail.com
 - ✓ **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, education@lwvpgh.org 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 voterservice@lwvpgh.org.
 - ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or development@lwvpgh.org
 - ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-224-2395 or lpdrey@verizon.net

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER CALENDAR

November

3 Tue	Election Day
9 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom
17 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30pm by videoconference
20 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:15 am
25 Wed	Education Committee Meeting, 10:00 pm
26 Thu	Thanksgiving, office closed

December

1 Mon	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30pm by videoconference
14 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom

NON-FICTION BOOK REVIEW by Judy Schryer

The GMO Deception - edited by Sheldon Krimsky and Jeremy Gruber

This book is a collection of essays by scientists and public health advocates from around the world. In 1972 a scientific paper was published about transgenic DNA splicing across species including bacteria, viruses and insects. In 1980 there was a supreme court decision (5-4) allowing patents on life forms. These two events were the start of a process by a fledgling biochemical industry led by Monsanto to genetically modify crops.

Using massive PR campaigns GM crops have intensified some of the most harmful aspects of industrial agriculture. By increasing pesticide use biodiversity is reduced. Soy, maize(corn), canola, sugar beets, wheat and alfalfa are some of the Round-up Ready Crops. The inert ingredient in Round-up is toxic and an endocrine disruptor in human cell lines. When the herbicide Round-up is applied it eliminates everything except the GM crops thus saving on labor costs. Stronger and tougher weeds grow back and more and more herbicides are applied.

GM crops will not feed the world because some are used to feed animals and fuel cars in rich nations. The technology is controlled by multinational firms intent on controlling the seed supply which cannot be saved for future planting. They have become terminator(sterile) seeds and the farmer must go back to the supplier and buy the most recent strain.

On supermarket shelves 75% of processed foods from soup to crackers contain genetically engineered foods. Everything is beautifully packaged. The U.S. consumers do not know what they eat.



A Project of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund

Eighth Annual Shale & Public Health Conference Tuesday November 17, 2020

&

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

from noon to 4:30 p.m. EST

The conference is presented by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and hosted by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

The conference is free, but you need to register!

More information and videos from past conferences: www.shalepalwv.org/events

www.ShalePALWV.org

Featuring new research presented by national experts on shale and public health impacts, and practical applications.

The conference will feature five topic segments. Each includes a panel discussion led by a top researcher offering framing remarks.

- Novel Methods of Assessing Air Exposures & Public Health
 - Nicole Deziel, PhD, Yale
- Unconventional Oil & Gas, Community Impacts & Environmental Justice
 - Lara Cushing PhD, UCLA; Jim Fabisiak, PhD, U Pittsburgh
- New Research on Birth Outcomes
 - Lisa McKenzie, PhD, U of Colorado Anschutz
- New Research on Other Health Outcomes
 - Seth Shonkoff, PhD, PSE Healthy Energy/UC Berkeley
- Climate Change, COVID 19, Fossil Fuels and Plastics
 - Brian Schwartz, MD, Johns Hopkins

There will also be a networking session on Tuesday from 3:45-4:30pm.

Voter Service, Continued from Page 1

Committees Continue Outreach

All of the subcommittees of the Voter Service Committee are continuing to be active right through Election Day. Both the Senior Subsidized Housing Committee (led by **Jane Butler and Linda Schneider**) and the Religious Institutions Committee (led by **Jan Harrison**) are still pushing out new and updated information to all those on the lists of contacts they have developed over the past few months. This includes announcements of satellite voting locations and of rides to the polls. The Voter Resources and High School Outreach Committee (led by **Amy Kleissas**) prepares new infographics for the League to distribute as current events warrant (like eliminating “naked” ballots, publicizing satellite voting locations, and promoting Election Protection and Rides to the Polls.) They have also done virtual presentations to both college and high school classes.

The College and University Committee (led by **Paula Hopkins, Sue Ellen Ganz, and Cynthia Cominsky**) composes and distributes short, weekly “teasers” of voting and elections information to be shared with students at all area universities. **Emily Ferri’s** Social Media Committee has kept our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages refreshed with information on every voting deadline as well as creating their own videos and posting two professional videos donated by Pittsburgh Steeler Franco Harris and Mrs. Rogers: “Are You Ready to Vote?” Thanks to Director, Janet Smith, and her professional crew, and to Ellie Siegal for providing the location for the shoots. View and “like” the two videos on the League’s Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/lwvpgh/videos/1023968291349607> and
<https://www.facebook.com/111204162227795/videos/670452060323595>



Mrs. Joanne Rogers
 “Are You Ready to Vote?” Mr. Rogers’ wife, Joanne, and Pittsburgh Steelers star, Franco Harris, donated their time to act in two videos for the LWVPGH to promote and describe voting options.



Heather Wechter’s Poll Worker Recruitment Committee stays active finding additional poll workers and ensuring they are trained. **Janet Jai** initiated a one-person effort to compile a listing of organizations providing Rides to the Polls. The Food Pantry Committee (led by **Judy Clack, Kathy Herbst, and Erin Singh**) completed distribution to 158 food pantries reaching 20,000 families in September.)

Annette Shimer and Barbara Simpson pulled together all information needed for the LWVPGH hardcopy Voters Guide published in the New Pittsburgh Courier. Due to COVID-19, they were unable to distribute hard copies to all area libraries. The supplements would have to be “quarantined” twice: once at the receiving center and again at each library – getting the information there too late. Therefore, a PDF copy was sent instead. Here’s the link to the LWVPGH 24-page Voters Guide.
<https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/votersguidefall2020.pdf>

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Candidate Forums

Two candidate forums, of the ten the LWVPGH attempted to schedule, were successfully held via Zoom: 18th Congressional District with Congressman Michael F. Doyle, Jr. (D) and Mr. Luke Edison Negrón (R); and 23rd Legislative District with Representative Dan Frankel (D) and Mr. Jay Ting Walker, Green. Heartly thanks to those of you who reached out to candidates

refusing to commit to our forums to encourage them to participate.

Thanks also to all those who served on the candidate forum committee with special recognition to **Maureen Grosheider, Jessica Lynch, Ron Bandes, Preston Shimer, Emily Ferri and Cynthia Cominsky and Judy Clack.**



23rd Legislative District candidate forum, Rep. Dan Frankel and Mr. Jay Ting Walker with Jessica Lynch, LWVPGH moderator.



18th Congressional District candidate forum, Rep. Mike Doyle and Mr. Luke Negrón with Maureen Grosheider, LWVPGH moderator

As of October 23, many people had viewed and shared the forums from Facebook: 18th Congressional forum: 1,900 views and 67 shares; 23rd Legislative forum: 616 views and 23 shares. Anyone can view these forums on League's Facebook and YouTube pages

as well as on demand on PCTV as follows:

<https://www.facebook.com/lwvpgh> ; <https://www.youtube.com/c/lwvpgh> ; (18th Congressional), https://pchypercaster.pctv21.org:50001/connect_content/1038/preview ; (23rd Legislative), https://pchypercaster.pctv21.org:50001/connect_content/1054/preview.

Thank You

I am filled with gratitude to the dozens of LWVPGH Voter Service Committee members who have volunteered their time over the past four months to reach out to our community with elections information in a multitude of new ways since we couldn't do so in person. As a result, the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh has provided thousands of voters with our non-partisan messages. I am so proud of our efforts. We'll do a formal de-briefing of all our projects as well as how things went on Election Day at our next Voter Service meeting on Tues., Nov. 17, 12:30- 2:30 pm via Zoom. Email me for an agenda and Zoom invitation. We will not have our usual monthly meeting on Nov. 3.

Voter Suppression Panel with (L-R), Marian Schneider, ACLU-PA; Andy Szefi, Allegheny County Solicitor; Brenda Tate, Black Vote Coalition; MaryBeth Kuznik, VotePA; and Lynne Hayes Freeland, KDKA Radio Moderator. Not pictured: Will Anderson, B-PEP and Cris Beuger, LWVPGH Program Vice President.



The Voters Guide – and Vote411 – General Election 2020 by Annette Shimer

Here is a link to the entire Voters Guide for the November 2020 election. [Voters Guide Fall 2020](#)

The Voters Guide was printed a week early this year, three weeks prior to the election. Because of the pandemic, no copies, zero, were provided to Allegheny County libraries. In previous years we have printed an extra 2000 copies to be distributed around the county. Using the distribution center of the Allegheny County library system, we have been fortunate to make copies available to every library.



All of the material included is based on [VOTE411.org](#). Candidates bios, pictures, and answers to questions are all provided by the candidates themselves. Vote 411 is provided by the League is a vehicle for all to inform the public.

We do have a significant question to ask as a League. **Should the Voters Guide continue to be printed or should we focus on VOTE411.org and only present this information online?** The cost of this issue of the Voters Guide was \$3,000 for an insert in one issue of the New Pittsburgh Courier. We purchased 150 extra copies for 25 cents per copy. In the past, we purchased 2,000 extra copies for distribution at a number of locations including libraries and senior citizen facilities. Should we continue with the printed Voters Guide? **You tell us.**

State-wide, over 60% of Democratic candidates responded on Vote411; just 37% of Republican candidates. Some, perhaps many, of the non-respondents included incumbents who were running without opposition. In Allegheny County Congressional non-respondent candidates included Sean Parnell (R-17), PA Senatorial Candidate Devlin Robinson (R-37), PA Representatives candidates Brandon Markosek (D-25), John Ritter, (R-25), Tony DeLuca (D-32), August Davis (D-35), AJ Doyle (R-36), Mike Puskaric (R-39), Kurt Korinko (R-42), and Danny Devito (R-45). So on the positive side, if you are a constituent of one who responded, let them know. Tell them you appreciate the effort it took to provide us with their thoughts on issues of importance to us all.

The Voters Guide is put together with the efforts of Barbara Simpson and Annette Shimer.

Unfortunately, the Courier failed to include the one ballot question for residents of the City of Pittsburgh. That question is reprinted below.

CITY OF PITTSBURGH PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER AMENDMENT SPECIAL ELECTION QUESTION

Shall the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter, Article Two, Executive, be amended and supplemented by amending and adding new language to Sections 229 and 230 and adding a new section, 231, expanding the powers of the Independent Citizen Police Review Board to allow the Board to require police officers to participate in investigations, conducting performance audits of the Police Bureau and preventing the removal of Board members except for just cause and with City Council approval?

This amendment to the Home Rule Charter, creates a structure between the Citizen Police Review Board, City Controller and Council on Human Relations to audit the review board.

- Provides protection for review board members from being removed. An individual's removal from the board requires a vote of council.
- Requires City of Pittsburgh police to hand over relevant documents for CPRB investigations.
- Also requires city officers to cooperate with CPRB investigations.
- Requires the police chief to heed the recommendations of the board before taking any disciplinary action against an officer.

Voter Resources Website and HS Voter Outreach Committee

Amy Kleissas, Chair

Outreach Coordinators: S. Duncan, S. Fair, J. Moore, R. Quint

Our committee has continued to respond to the challenging and changing election environment. We have begun our High School and College presentations and outreach, maintained the Voter Resources website, and created additional infographics as needed that have been distributed in the eBLAST.



Completed College/University Virtual (Live) Presentations: We have completed presentations in classrooms at Duquesne University, Point Park University, University of Pittsburgh as part of "Civic Action Week," Montour High School (10 classes), and Central Catholic High School.

High School Outreach for Virtual Classroom Presentations: Forty high school contacts were emailed on 9.2.20. Due to the continuing challenges for high schools, future contacts with high schools will focus on scheduling winter and spring virtual lessons. This approach was confirmed by various responses, however the response from Montour High School was the exception.

Printed materials needed to reach citizens without reliable access to technology was expressed by the community and schools: Through our participation in the Campaign for Power Coalition, the JCC-led coalition, and through discussions with low-income housing administrators, and Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Education president and member, an urgent need for printed materials was requested.

Using Heinz Foundation grant funds allotted to our committee, members of our committee felt a strong desire to respond to this need with Joanne Moore taking the lead. **We created and assembled 1700 "Ready—Set—VOTE!" bags of Printed Materials and printed 500 "Be Heard" voter empowerment postcards, for youth and for the community.** The bags included Voter Registration mailers, line-by-line instructions, and multiple infographics.

We distributed the 1000 bags and 500 postcards to: Campaign for Power Coalition (underserved communities like Beltzhoover, Arlington Heights, North Versailles, Arnold, New Kensington, Lower Jeanette, St. Clair Park in Greensburg), VEEEM-led in-person voter drives (Central and Oakland Catholic schools), JCC-led coalition (distributed fairly among members with a focus on young voters), Duquesne University students (30), and Children's Hospital clinics (distributed among 12 locations).

Pittsburgh Public Schools: Another 700 bags were distributed by Dr. Nina Sacco, Assistant Superintendent to high school principals for seniors and eligible juniors. This project was made possible with the support of school board members and central administration individuals and realized a 4-year goal for our committee. Dr. Sacco has expressed the intent to maintain our partnership in the future.

Presentations, Interviews and Webinars: In addition to our High School and College presentations, we have participated in a number of interviews and webinars. Amy Kleissas participated in the PA Department of State's Governor's Civic Engagement Award kick-off webinar on August 20th, in the September 16th YWCA "YW Wednesday's" webinar on *Barriers to Voting*, and in the September 21st LWVPGH kick-off as part of the Voter Service presentation. Ann Howley, from the online Pittsburgh Parent Magazine, interviewed Amy on September 9th for a cover story that will be published mid-October. Nardos Haile, editor of Point Park's "The Point", interviewed Amy on October 1st for a project regarding elections. Joanne Moore will be speaking with a female Boy Scouts of America troop, grades 7-10.

As part of providing digital voter outreach resources to the community, new or relevant infographics and flyers are frequently emailed to members of the community organizations with whom we are involved, to our many contacts and to LWVPGH members via the eBLAST.

MARVELOUS MEMBERS WISE WOMEN (AND MEN) OF THE LEAGUE

In this election season, it seems fitting to highlight a dedicated member who has really made a difference—our Social Media expert, Emily Ferri.

--Amy Kleissas

1. Describe your early years; where born, family then and now?

I grew up in Murrysville, right over the Westmoreland County line. My mom is a nurse at Forbes Regional Hospital, currently in the NICU. My dad had us all helping at the family grocery store starting when we could stock a shelf, and our whole family would run the store together on holidays. Now I live in Point Breeze North with my husband and our two dogs and two cats.



2. Tell us about your educational background; who was your favorite teacher and why or who inspired you?

I graduated from Franklin Regional then went to Carnegie Mellon University for my bachelor's degree (Romance languages, student defined major) and master's degree (public policy and management). I had a lot of great teachers and professors, but the two that had the greatest impact would probably be English teacher Deb Bryson, who taught me to carefully consider my reasoning and arguments, and Spanish professor Carrie Ruiz, who taught me to look at the multiple perspectives and experiences that different people can have in the same situation.

3. What is your professional or work history?

After graduate school I started working at Vibrant Pittsburgh, where I had been previously interning. Vibrant Pittsburgh is a nonprofit organization that seeks to attract and retain a diverse workforce in the Pittsburgh region. I then worked for the City of Pittsburgh controller's office for several years. As of about a month ago, I am a diversity and inclusion data analyst at FHLBank Pittsburgh.

4. Why and when did the League become important to you?

I learned about the League while attending naturalization ceremonies as a speaker and sponsor for my job. I decided to join the League in 2015 after leaving Vibrant Pittsburgh. I had previously done a lot of community work professionally, which I missed when I started working for the city. The League was a great outlet for that! In the past few years, I've become more interested in empowering and educating voters, especially given the disinformation and divisive rhetoric that is so common.

5. Who was a notable or first League mentor to you?

Eileen Olmsted. I had contacted her about volunteering at an event, this led to that and the next thing I knew I was on the board!

6. What is your League "portfolio"?

I've primarily worked on social media since joining the board, first helping with Facebook and Twitter and then adding Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok accounts. I've also helped to plan and execute events and am involved with the voter service committee.

7. What do you feel is the most important things you are accomplishing for the League (and our democracy)?

I try to stay ahead on reminders voters might need and questions they might have during election season, especially this year with all the new changes. This is made a lot easier with Leaguers that have created or connected us to really great content! With social media so often used as a tool for confusion, I try to use it to spread as much accurate information as possible.

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

I hope that, rather than returning to "normal," we look at ways the old system wasn't working environmentally, civically, socially, etc., and create a new, stronger normal based on what we've learned.

9. What are your wise words for the rest of us?

(My husband agreed with me that this sounded like a rather judgmental quote, but it is one of my favorites!)

"Anytime you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth." —Roberto Clemente