

# The Voter

SPRING 2023

newsletter from the  
League of Women Voters  
of Bucks County



## *message from the co-presidents*

We are approaching the Municipal Primary on May 16. There are 367 candidates running in Bucks County this year for County, Borough, Township, Judicial and School Board positions.

Municipal Primaries, held in odd-numbered years, are the least attended elections in the election cycle with fewer than 26% of voters turning out two years ago, and a mere 15% four years ago. This is appalling!

Part of the problem is that only registered Republicans or Democrats can vote in Pennsylvania's closed primaries, thus excluding the 17% of registered Bucks County Voters who are registered with a third party or are Independents. Pennsylvania is one of only nine states with closed primaries.

Primary elections are critical in several elections, but particularly in elections for school directors because candidates for positions on our School Boards can cross-file. This means that nearly every candidate appears on both the Republican and the Democratic ballots and so it is particularly important for voters to know where the candidates stand on important issues.

There are 13 school districts in Bucks County, the largest of which is the Central Bucks School District (the third largest district in the state). Local, state and national attention has brought focus on this district in the past year, and adjacent districts are also being impacted. This spring, our League has been working to highlight the importance of school board elections by presenting a program on the topic. ([You can watch the recording here.](#)) We are also preparing to present a series of one-on-one interviews with Central Bucks school board candidates at the end of April so that voters can become familiar with the 12 candidates running in this race. All candidates have been invited to participate, and the recordings will be posted in their entirety on the League website.

Our League's Voters Guide team, under the leadership of Joyce Schmidt, has also worked to populate our online guide [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org), which will also be available in print in the April 27 th edition of The Bucks County Herald. All candidates have been invited to submit biographical information and to answer a few questions about their reasons for running for office. If you see that a candidate who will be on your ballot has not responded, please contact them and urge them to participate.

- Sandy & Jean



Sandra Kerr  
Co-President

Jean Weston  
Co-President

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# LWVBC – empowering voters

## CELEBRATING WOMEN AROUND THE GLOBE

by Sandra Kerr

Every March we celebrate all the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. International Women’s Day (IWD), which is celebrated on March 8, recognizes women for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. The origins of International Women’s Day date back to the labor movements at the turn of the 20th century in North America and across Europe. The United Nations Observance of IWD, under the theme “DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality”, recognizes and celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advance of transformative technology and digital education. Our League celebrated IWD by attending the Lower Bucks Chamber of Commerce’s IWD luncheon. See LWVBC member Julie Becker’s summary of the luncheon on the following page.

March is also when the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meets. The CSW is an intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. CSW was first established in 1946 and the League of Women Voters played an important role in its creation and has participated in the years since. LWVBC member Savanna Mapelli participated in this year’s CSW as a LWV delegate. Savanna shared her experience as a delegate with League members in a virtual event held on March 28th. If you missed the program, you can watch the recording [here](#) and also view the slide presentation.

As part of this year’s CSW, Savanna also participated in the virtual presentation *The CEDAW Trilogy: Influential Women Take the Stage to Secure Human Rights*. The CEDAW Trilogy is a performance of three short plays that showcase women’s influence in the drafting of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the creation of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and securing city and county-wide resolutions in support of CEDAW in the present day. Savanna performed in the first play which is set in 1948 during the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She played the role of Mrs. Bodil Begtrup of Denmark who was the Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women at the time. You can watch a recording of the performance [here](#).

The LWV US also conducted a panel discussion on the impact of technology on elections. The webinar *Technology: Friend or Foe of Free, Fair and Accessible Elections* explored how to take advantage of opportunities to empower voters while mitigating potential risks to vulnerable populations posed by new technology. You can [watch the recording here](#).

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# LWVBC - engaging members

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCHEON

by Julie Becker

On Wednesday, March 8th LWVBC members Kathy Beveridge and Julie Becker attended a Luncheon hosted by the Lower Bucks Chamber of Commerce at Jericho National Golf Club. Over 100 local women attended the event to celebrate International Women's Day. The League of Women Voters of Bucks County was highlighted with signage and a table of material to share information about upcoming events and VOTE411. It was an excellent opportunity to recruit new League members and spread the word about current work to empower Bucks County voters.



The Keynote Speaker was Cheldin Barlatt Rumer, CEO and Executive Producer of THIS IS IT NETWORK. Her speech entitled "Scream Your Dream: Find Your Marketing Voice" encouraged attendees to use their voices to have productive conversations highlighting their economic impact and worldwide contributions. Ms. Rumer stressed the importance of knowing the answers to 3 key questions: Who are you? What do you want? Why do you deserve it? Too many people put themselves out in the world without understanding their goals. The lecture motivated the audience to leverage their personal connection and resources to make their dream known and heard.

The Lower Bucks Chamber of Commerce is an organization that focuses on the advancement of its regional members through programs and networking. Our League is proud to offer support as a member.

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[FOR UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

# LWVBC - defending democracy

## ELECTION MIS- AND DISINFORMATION: TIPS ON HOW TO SPOT IT AND STOP ITS SPREAD.

*adapted by Sandra Kerr from LWVUS Blog Last Updated: July 12, 2021*

Mis- and disinformation are two of the most insidious tools used to undermine our democracy and the value of every person's voice. Misinformation is inadvertently sharing false information without intent to harm. Disinformation is intentionally sharing false information with the intent to harm. Mis- and disinformation have eroded the public trust in our democracy and the electoral process.

We're all susceptible to mis- and disinformation. As we enter the 2023 primary election season, here are some steps you can take to help spot election mis and disinformation before you take part in its spread.

1. **Research the source:** Who's sharing this information? If it's online, does the website sound familiar or have any political affiliations? If it's in-person, is this individual a frequent exaggerator, or do they have a job/experience that would give them insider info?
2. **Check the date:** It's easy to get incensed over an article on Facebook...only to realize it was published years ago and no longer applies.



3. **Cross-check:** Are reliable news sources reporting the same information? If not, it's unlikely that your smaller source just happened to get a super-exclusive, juicy scoop.
4. **Read past the headline:** You know how tabloids post scandalous headlines and follow them with articles that are relatively mundane? Unfortunately, political outlets do that too. It's easy to take a snippet out of context to make an article look like it will be more dramatic than it actually is.
5. **Question emotionally charged content:** Is the person or outlet sharing this information using emotionally manipulative language to get you upset or excited? That's a red flag. Reliable sources let the facts fuel your response, not emotional language. Check out some examples of loaded language.

Once you've spotted the inaccurate information, here are a few tips to keep it from spreading:

**Don't engage:** It may be tempting to comment on an inaccurate Facebook post about how wrong it is, or to click on it to read all of the writer's claims, but don't! Every like, click, share, and comment contributes to the piece's rate of engagement, which tells whatever website you're on that it's good content that they should show to more people.

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# LWVBC - defending democracy

**Share correct information:** For every incorrect piece of info you see or hear, try to share one that's correct.

The LWVUS is working to counter mis- and disinformation and in 2021 launched the Democracy Truth Project to provide information and tools in an effort to advance public understanding of our government and reduce inaccurate information. Our League is working to develop a Speaker Program as well as tools and resources to help counter mis- and disinformation about elections. If you are interested in helping, please send an email to [lwvbuckspa@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbuckspa@gmail.com).

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Interested in learning more about election misinformation?  
Check out LWV of Central Delaware County's recent "Hot Topic" session  
"Election Misinformation Can Sabotage Democracy."  
<https://youtu.be/MMcN04UEazg>

## WHAT DOES NON-PARTISAN MEAN?

Are you ever asked this question by family or friends? This [recent article](#) by Cathy Morano in the Bucks County Herald does an excellent job explaining the League's non-partisan stance and delineates the League's roles in Voter Services and Advocacy.

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# LWVBC - empowering voters

## MEMBER TRIBUTES

Betty “Kullie” Mellor died peacefully at home on March 1st. She was 97. After a career in social work she became active in our League. Serving on the Board, she was secretary, action director and welfare specialist.

Kullie and Shirley Hart began the Hunger, Nutrition Committee in 2001. She was a member of the team developing and producing the video and booklet “Food for Thought” in 2011. On a lighter note – Kullie sewed the aprons our League sold as a fund raiser when we hosted LWVPA Convention in 2011. As Tam St. Claire noted, “Kullie was a great, caring lady, she made a difference in advocating for fairness and justice. Truth to power...always respectfully.”

*-written by Susanne Hewitt*



Kyle St. Claire, The family and friends of Kyle St. Claire are mourning his death on March 26, 2023. He was a member of the League of Women Voters and we know our community has lost a dear friend and an important citizen. Husband for 50 years, father, grandfather, Minister, Drug and Alcohol Addiction Counselor, AA Mentor, poet, artist, fiction writer and advocate for peace, justice and equality are some of the hats his wore.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at 2:00 PM at the Trinity Episcopal Church (2631 Durham Rd, Doylestown, PA 18912). In lieu of flowers or gifts, contributions can be made to Episcopal Relief and Development (<https://www.episcopalrelief.org>), PlanUSA (<https://www.planusa.org>), or Trinity Buckingham Episcopal Church (<https://www.trinitybuckingham.org>).

*-written by Jean Weston and Lydia Winderman*

## IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

Last day to Register to Vote: May 1, 2023

Last Day to Request a mail-in or Absentee Ballot: May 9, 2023

Municipal Election: May 16, 2023 Polls Open from 7am to 8PM