

*(Unpublished Daily Item newspaper article, March 2020)*

## **League of Women Voters Hosts Centennial Celebration**

It was a double celebration on Sunday, March 8 for the League of Women Voters of the Lewisburg Area. The gala event was held at the Campus Theatre in Lewisburg on a sunny afternoon.

The Theatre was decorated with beautiful yellow, blue, and white flowers. Blue delphiniums and yellow chrysanthemums were League founder **Carrie Chapman Catt**'s favorite flowers. Thanks to the League's **Marilyn Murphy** for providing the lovely arrangements.

Many attendees were dressed in the clothes of the era, from head to toe.

The lobby was buzzing with excitement as guests circulated. It was wonderful to see **Marilyn Brill** and **Susan Warner-Mills** who drove to Lewisburg from Vermont to attend. They were both active members of the Lewisburg League. A slide show was catching people's attention as it scrolled across the big screen. The show presented the League through the years. Everyone was enjoying the trip back in time, seeing the League's history unfold, and spotting friends and acquaintances included in the show.

I said Hi to **Jacquie Barone, Ruth Burnham, Theresa Bzdil, Leslie Harris, Susan Mathias, Farida Zaid, Janice Butler, Pat Longley, Steve Guttery, Grace Mahon,** and past local, state, and national League president **Nancy Neuman**. The guests were primarily women, although a large contingent of men were on the scene.

**Stacy Richards**, Union County commissioner, was talking with **Betsy Noyce** when I walked over. Lewisburg League president **Teri MacBride** looked wonderful in her late 1900s apparel, as did the League's **Linda Harris**.

I spoke with the League's **Janice Bigelow**, who had invited me to the celebration. She shared a wonderful Fralinger String Band story with me. I loved it! Philly was the major topic when I chatted with **Paul** and **Pam Mauger** too.

**Del Kennedy** arrived with her granddaughter, **Laurel Kennedy**. It was wonderful to see Del who told me that she wanted Laurel to learn this important history.

The Packer House did a stellar job with the refreshments. The delectable array featured food from the Suffragist era. Guests enjoyed deviled eggs, egg salad or chicken salad finger sandwiches, cucumber and cream cheese hors d'oeuvres, and pimento dip.

**Marty Gates** introduced me to League member **Chris Woodruff** and I caught up with **Emily Johnson** who attended with **Kathy Boushie**.

I waved to **Sam Pearson, Cindy Peltier, Ro Gabriele, Diane Meixell, Bruce Jackson,** and **Ann** and

**Allan Grunstrom.** Years ago, I worked on the Voters' Guide for the League at Ann's request.

I was delighted to talk with **Ann Trudnak** and **John Ackerson**. They were thrilled to be attending the celebration.

**Amy Reed** was with the Girl Scout Cadet Troops 61083 and 60351 who served as volunteers during the celebration. Great job Scouts!

It was fun watching **Arlyne Hoyt** try out the photo board where people have their picture taken as a Suffragist. The photo board was very popular.

The program was about to begin and guests were asked to find a seat. League president Teri MacBride welcomed everyone to the festive celebration. Teri told the audience that “Today is our Day” as the League celebrates two centennials—the founding of the League of Women Voters and the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote. Teri spoke about League founder Carrie Chapman Catt. Carrie succeeded Susan B. Anthony, heading up the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Teri praised all of the women who worked tirelessly so that women could vote and reiterated that the League is a non-partisan voice that is heard above the “tumult of party politics.”

Teri talked about Carrie Chapman Catt's founding of the League of Women Voters. She wanted to make sure women would be prepared to vote when the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified which also happened in 1920.

Teri introduced **Kj Reimensnyder-Wagner** whose beautiful voice filled the theatre. Kj said that she was standing upon the shoulders of the women who came before her. We were asked to join in with “We Will Rise.” Each song was an inspiration. **Bruce Teeple**, president of the Union County Historical Society, spoke next. Bruce shared the history of suffrage in Union County. What an interesting story! There were many roadblocks, lots of opposition, and newspaper editorials condemning the idea of women having the right to vote. I applaud every woman who fought for suffrage in Union County. Thank you Bruce for a very enlightening presentation.

As the program continued, Commissioner Stacy Richards read a proclamation honoring the League. All women serving in elected offices in Union County were recognized next:

East Buffalo Township  
**Char Gray** – Supervisor

Lewisburg Borough  
**Debra Sulai** – Council  
**Susan Yohn** – Council

Lewisburg Area School Board  
**Virginia Zimmerman** – Member

Mifflinburg Area School Board

**Amy Wehr** – Member  
Mifflinburg Borough  
**Linda Lewis** – Council Member

New Berlin Borough  
**Betty Kratzer** – Council Member  
**Barbara Stamm** – Council Member

Union County  
**Louise Knight** – Senior Judge Court of Common Pleas  
**Diane Reigle** – Treasurer  
**Stacy Richards** – Commissioner  
**Lisa Seward** – Register & Recorder

The celebratory afternoon concluded with a “Toast to Tenaciousness” by Mifflinburg mayor David Cooney. The Girl Scout Cadets served sparkling cider before the toast was offered. The use of a non-alcoholic beverage was in keeping with Prohibition which began in 1920, when the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified. Everyone raised their glasses, sipped the cider, and, cheered. A fitting conclusion to a marvelous celebration.

Kudos to the Anniversary Committee: **Marilyn Murphy, Carole Madle, Kathy Fornataro, Theresa Bzdil, Ruth Burnham**, and 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee chair **Janice Bigelow**.

Until next time...

Be safe. Be well. Be kind, as we navigate through this difficult time.

*Look for Freddi Carlip, of Lewisburg, at coming “scenes.” She can be reached by e-mail at [onthescenefsc@gmail.com](mailto:onthescenefsc@gmail.com)*