

WE MET VOTER

Volume 22, No. 7

April 2016

VOTER SERVICE NOTES by Louise Cannon

A Voter Registration and Candidate Forum for Students

An assembly at Allderdice was arranged for students who were or soon to be eighteen to engage them in voter registration. It was also a chance for students to meet candidates or their representatives. John Fetterman with Lydia Moren, Carolyn Mitchell representing Joe Sestak, and Jason Henry representing Katie McGinty were present to answer questions that were written by the students. Dr. Holley, president of the school board was also in attendance. Amy Davis was the teacher who gathered the students. We had a good turn out of students of which 19 completed voter registration forms. The students were engaged and showed interest in listening to what the candidates and their representatives had to say. League members in attendance were Annette Shimer, Heather Harr, Laryn Finder and Louise Cannon. Suggestion for next time. Pass out jolly ranchers and I bet we will double the registrations.

McKeesport

We met with a group of people in McKeesport for the purpose of encouraging members to register to vote. Dinner was served to about 12 adults and 5 young children. A talk was given by a Salvation Army representative regarding summer camp. We then introduced the importance of voting and passed out voting registration forms. We helped one lady complete her form. Two people were registered that night. Carol Emerson presented information on the history of voting rights and the importance of having your voice heard today. A Thursday meeting was cancelled due to lack of people. Hence, if you feed them they will come.

Homewood-Brushton Y Food Pantry

Arranged by Eileen Olmsted. Annette, Louise, Judy, Rosemary, Susan were able to register 12 people. It was a beautiful day.

Others:

- Becky Kretschmann sent questions regarding gender equality, redistricting, voter rights and minimum wage for an AAUW forum with current state legislators.
- Phyllis Dreyfuss spoke with a group of 25 students and a teacher at Fox Chapel Presbyterian church. She called the event a success.



Vanessa Talley (left), student at Pitt, and Judy Clack registering Voters at the Homewood Brushton Y.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IT GETS IN YOUR BLOOD THIS LEAGUE / VOTING / ELECTION THINGY



When did you first vote and how was it that you were interested?

Here are some voter service experiences.

Catch them while they are young we are told. Voter Service chair Louise Cannon is working with 8th grade students in Brookline to interest them in the election. Perhaps the students will provide some questions for the Senate candidate debate April 5. The students at Taylor Alderdice certainly provided good questions. Thanks to Heather Harr for setting up the candidate forum. US Senate candidate Mayor John Fetterman was a real hit. We scored 19 students registering because they can now do it early. Won't be 18 until after the April primary? No problem, the Election Department will hold the registration. Two of students stated they needed assistance when voting. Not because of a physical disability but because they were first time voters.

At Homewood Brushton the neighbors were there to pick up food from the Food Bank. See the picture (on page 1) of Judy Clack enthusiastically addressing all. I failed to get a picture of Louise and the motorcyclist.

Voter service skills I noticed

Louise – quickly picks out those who need assistance. At ease in talking with everyone.

Judy Clack – the most enthusiastic registrar I have ever seen. Calls herself obsessive.

Carol Emerson – one would never know she was a teacher.

Something we tried to share with everyone

Do you understand the rules and roles of the political parties at the convention? When you vote April 26th, at the tail end of the ballot will be the candidates for your party convention. (We will send out a list of them – by Congressional District – soon). Some delegates go to the convention committed to a candidate for the first ballot; others are not committed, but frequently will vote in line with primary election results. We found that most people don't know about delegates.

Look for LWV on TV

In the meantime, we continue to work on the Democratic Senate primary candidate debate April 5 at 7:00 p.m. on WTAE. As of this writing all four candidates have agreed to participate.

— Annette

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436 Seventh Ave., Suite 350
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412-261-4284

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@pgh.lwv.org

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NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

- April: *Notorious R.B.G.: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsberg* by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik
- May: *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The book club meets the third Friday of the month, 10:15 a.m. at the Squirrel Hill Library. Meetings are lively, informative and stimulating.

Contact Judy Donohue: 412-373-8697 or jrdono71@gmail.com.

LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee		Local Area Meeting Chairs	
President	Annette Shimer	Pgh. Central 412-802-7266	Martha Raak
V. Pres. Development	Nancy Naragon	North Hills 412-364-7329	Shirley McIlvried
V. Pres. Program	Maureen Mamula	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
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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	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
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 A diverse coalition of over 50 congregations and faith-based organizations acting together on our values in the community



- Public safety
- Worker organizing table
- Rate payer justice
- Education
- Civil rights for immigrants

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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 Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, 311 Cumberland Rd., Pgh. PA 15237. Contact Shirley McIlvried at 412-364-7329 or howardmciiii@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. Contact Billie Girard at 412-531-6859 or billiegirard202@verizon.net
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Annette Shimer at 412-221-5163 or ashimer@gmail.com
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or nancynaragon@msn.com
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday. Contact Judy Donohue at 412-373-8697 or jrdono71@gmail.com

APRIL - MAY 2016 CALENDAR

April	
05 Tue	Senatorial debate, WTAE, 7:00 p.m.
07 Thu	South Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
08 Fri	Pittsburgh Central Unit Meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
11 Mon	Board meeting
15 Fri	Naturalization, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
15 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
19 Tue	Last day to apply for an absentee ballot
20 Wed	North Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
22 Fri	Passover begins today at sundown, ends 4/30
26 Tue	Primary Election Day
27 Wed	Education Committee meeting, 1-3 p.m. Squirrel Hill Library
May	
05 Thu	South Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
09 Mon	Board meeting
13 Fri	Pittsburgh Central Unit Meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
18 Wed	North Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Criminal Justice Study
20 Fri	Naturalization, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
20 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
25 Wed	Education Committee meeting, 1-3 p.m. Squirrel Hill Library
30 Mon	Memorial Day, CIC closed

NEW MEMBERS

Christine Adamek NH
adamekchristine@gmail.com
 Lola Cline PC
 No email address
 Elizabeth Perkins PC
liz.f.perkins@gmail.com
 Joel Melter SH
Joel.pat@earthlink.net

FLORIDA VOTING – a letter from former co-president Margaret McGrath

I recently moved from Pittsburgh and became a Florida resident. The need for changes in Pennsylvania championed by the League came home to me in the last few weeks:

First is the method of voting. Pennsylvania does not have “no excuse” absentee voting or early voting. Elected representatives have expressed concern that people assisting nursing homes voters would tilt the system. Of course, Florida has no shortage of elder voters, BUT does have both an EASY absentee voting system (including automatic set-up for the next election) as well as EARLY voting, so that you can choose a time without lines. As long as the absentee ballots were received by election day, they count; if you chose to vote in person, they recommended you bring the absentee ballot to void as the easiest process.

Secondly, is the issue of the voting machines. I decided to vote on Super Tuesday, and after checking in with ID, I received a privacy folder and a paper ballot. After filling in the bubbles with the pen provided, I put the paper through the machine myself (facing up or down didn't matter). The machine kept the paper ballot, the privacy folder went to the poll worker, and I got my “I voted” sticker. It was painless, FAR less confusing than the Allegheny County machines, and KEPT a paper trail. While a far cry from the “hanging chad” days, Floridians are thinking about still more ways to improve machines. I would have been thrilled with the Florida system in Pennsylvania.

Finally, I thought about League work on the size of the Legislature and the “full time” status, which together make the Pennsylvania legislature the most costly other than California. Although Florida has a larger population than Pennsylvania, there are 93 more legislators in Pennsylvania, and they are higher paid because they are full time. The occasion of my pondering was that the Florida legislative session is now over, the budget passed, and issues passed or not are ready for non-legislative work.

I appreciate the need for League members to engage on voting methods, machines, and Legislative size all the more as I see better systems in Florida. I encourage all to persist on these important initiatives.

MORE – from former co-president Arlene Levy on Longboat Key, Florida

I just returned from the local polling precinct where I went to find out about the new optical scan voting machines from ES&S that Sarasota County is using for the first time. The voter fills in the circles to vote and the completed ballot is fed into the scanner and remains in the scanner. I was told that the scanner can read the ballot no matter how it is inserted - upside, downside, and either side of the ballot. The precinct has only one voting machine. It went down for a while this morning so those ballots are held and will be scanned later. If a machine doesn't work at all, the ballots can be scanned at a central location.

The only office for Florida voters to vote for is the president; the legislative districts have not been determined due to judicial cases in time for this primary. The other officials will have an August primary.

There's a large turnout on this island. Besides voting for a presidential candidate, citizens here have to vote on a local matter to put telephone wires underground.

One other interesting thing – the poll workers had iPads to check in the voters.

REMINDER ABOUT THE LWVPA CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDY UNITS

Study Guide link:

<http://www.palwv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Criminal-Justice-Study-Guide-Revised.pdf>

Consensus Questions link:

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/fe897e59001/1b1999a3-fc45-485d-be59-9d82b28d1f4b.pdf>

The April meetings will cover the topics **Appropriate Sentencing, Alternatives to Incarceration, and Prison Conditions: Study Guide, pages 12-27.**

LEAGUE SUES TO STOP DOCUMENTARY PROOF-OF-CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT ON VOTER REGISTRATION FORM by Carol Walton

The following information is excerpted from several press releases available on the LWWUS website.

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. and the state Leagues of Alabama, Georgia and Kansas filed suit in February in federal district court to stop action by the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that allows those states to restrict voter registration.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires the full commission to vote on any changes, but EAC Executive Director Brian Newby ignored that obligation when he approved requests from Alabama, Georgia and Kansas to require documentary proof of citizenship when an applicant uses the federal mail voter registration application form.

In 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court held that Arizona's then-requirement that voter registrants provide documentary proof-of-citizenship was preempted by the National Voter Registration Act when using the federal voter registration form. Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority, explained that "[t]he Federal Form provides a backstop: No matter what procedural hurdles a State's own form imposes, the Federal Form guarantees that a simple means of registering to vote in federal elections will be available no matter what procedural hurdles a State's own form imposes."

HUMAN TRAFFICKING, a Report from the Non-fiction Book Club by Martha Raak

Our non fiction book club group discussed a lengthy article by Joseph Chamie. He has worked at the UN and is a trustee of the Migration Policy Institute.

Trafficking may occur within a country or across borders and affects developed and undeveloped nations. Millions of men, women, boys and girls are involved. It is underreported to government agencies and crosses a myriad of agencies including migration, labor, marriage and family, prostitution and sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation and forced labor are the most frequent types. Trafficking is facilitated by world wide demands for cheap labor. It was noted that the cocoa used in much of the chocolate we consume was processed by child laborers. Aldi and Trader Joe have fair trade chocolates.

Human smuggling has become well known with the huge events happening in the Middle East and Europe. Smuggling involves consent where trafficking is generally coercive. Fifty nine percent are women.

Since the early 2000s UN member states have taken collective action by ratifying the Palermo Protocol. This is facilitating international cooperation in dealing with this issue. 134 countries have adopted the principles and recommendations of the Protocol. Senate Bill 75 was signed into law in 2014 in Pennsylvania making it one of the strongest states in the country in terms of addressing human trafficking.

RECYCLING TVs AND MORE

No recycling service takes TVs these days, or so it seems. Check out **eLoop** in Plum Township: <http://www.eloopllc.com/eLoopLLC/elpwebsite.nsf/web/ewaste?opendocument>. They do.

Not only TVs, but fluorescent lamps – the long tube kind – halogen lamps, lead acid batteries, freon containing appliances and much more – many things except devices containing mercury.

CHARTER SCHOOL POSITION ALIGNMENT WITH LWVUS' PRIVATIZATION POSITION by Jeanne Diana and Lois Goldstein

As our local education committee began to study the complex issue of charter schools, we were grateful for the historical background and leadership provided by Sharon Kletzien, who led the State's study on Privatization, Sharon is now a member of PA's board, and following is our summary of the resulting 2015 paper, *Charter School Position Alignment with LWVUS Privatization Position*.

LWVPA supports equal access to quality education, to be achieved by participation of government and citizens at all levels and by adequate financing based on an equitable and flexible tax system. That position was adopted in 1975, updated in 1985 and again in 2003, when the Charter School Law was implemented in Pennsylvania. In 2012, LWVUS approved a new position on privatization, which relates to the creation of Charter Schools, publicly funded but privately managed. The position on privatization is being used here to clarify our charter school position.

Charter Schools, funded by taxes, have been operating in Pennsylvania since 1997. There are 176 charters, costing taxpayers about \$1.2 billion each year. Funding for charters comes from local school districts based on a formula that reflects per pupil spending the previous year. Payment ranges from \$6,600 to more than \$17,000 per student. Special education amounts range from \$13,000 to more than \$43,000 per student. Payments to charters for these students are fraught with problems. A complex, unclear formula leads to a payment rate that is inaccurately high. Charters are more likely to serve less costly special needs students, while local school districts maintain students with multiple disabilities. Funding for cyber charter schools is also based on local school districts per pupil costs but provide services different from regular charters, and many question why they receive the same funding.

Educational success is measured by the same tests taken by local public school students. According to one report on math and reading (CREDO) 30% of charters are more effective than traditional schools, but 39% are not more effective. Cybers do not compare well with local schools in results thus far. Lack of success continues in students from high poverty areas.

Local school boards are responsible for authorizing charters, with detailed contracts regarding their operation and oversight for a period of up to five years. Questions exist regarding local control, accountability, periods of operation, success in operation, as well as funding, which require further attention and clarification.

Legislation that would require greater transparency and fiscal responsibility for all charters is needed, particularly since management companies are not required to explain how they use public dollars they receive in exchange for managing charter schools.

The League supports legislation to create a Commission to address many of these problematic issues.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS by Hazel Cope

The Moratorium on the death penalty declared by Gov. Wolf will continue until the completion of the state's comprehensive study on the DP. This is presently held up while the various subcommittees await Penn State's analysis of the various aspects of the penalty. So, while there will be no executions, the penalty could continue to be imposed, and the huge taxpayer expenses involved in appeals and maintaining death row will be maintained.

One condemned man's case has reached the Supreme Court. Williams v. Pennsylvania case is that the Judge who heard, and rejected, Terry Williams appeal against his DP sentence was the District Attorney who handled his prosecution.

ELSIE HILLMAN CHAIR IN WOMEN AND POLITICS LECTURE FEATURING DONNA BRAZILE AND MARY MATALIN

Chatham University • April 11, 2016 • 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

The 2015-2016 Elsie Hillman Chair in Women and Politics lecture will feature political strategists Donna Brazile and Mary Matalin. The program will be held in Campbell Memorial Chapel. It is free.

Donna Brazile is a veteran Democratic political strategist, adjunct professor, author, syndicated columnist, television political commentator, vice chair of Voter Registration and Participation at the Democratic National Committee and former interim National Chair of the DNC. She has also served as Chair of the DNC's Voting Rights Institute. Brazile worked on every political campaign from 1976 through 2000, when she became the first African-American to manage a presidential campaign.

Mary Matalin is an author, television and radio host, and widely sought after political contributor, pundit and public speaker, she has become noted for her straightforward manner and insightful political repartee. Among her many roles and accomplishments, she has served under President Ronald Reagan, made her mark as George H.W. Bush's Campaign Director and most recently as assistant to President George W. Bush, and as assistant and counselor to Vice President Dick Cheney, making her the first White House official to hold that double title.

Lifelong friends, Donna Brazile and Mary Matalin will discuss their careers, current events, and the 2016 presidential election, offering opposing viewpoints and perspectives from both sides of the aisle.

Register for the event at <http://www.chatham.edu/pcwp/newsevents/register.cfm?EventID=15078>.



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