

# League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

# WVOTER



Volume 25, No. 4

December 2018–January 2019

## PROGRAM by Cris Beuger, V. P. Program

**December: Sunday, December 9 at 11 a.m.** Meet your fellow members for holiday cheer and timely information at **the home of John and Eileen Olmsted.**

**Program: Justin Stockdale**, Western PA Director of the Pennsylvania Resources Council will speak to us on **Zero Waste Communities, Policies & Practice.**

**All League members and Civic Salon attendees are invited.** A complimentary meal will be provided. Space will be limited so **RSVP soon!** Contact Eileen at 412-404-2594 or [eileeno31@gmail.com](mailto:eileeno31@gmail.com).

**January:** We will review and discuss our local and state program; that is our positions at both levels.

You can find our local, LWVGP, positions at <http://lwvpg.org/files/policypositions.pdf>.

State, LWVPA, positions are at <https://www.palwv.org/where-we-stand-lwvpas-position-on-the-issues>.

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNOR'S REDISTRICTING REFORM COMMISSION

On November 29, Governor Tom Wolf signed an executive order establishing a redistricting reform commission **to examine ways to improve the state's redistricting process.** David Thornburgh, Executive Director of the Committee of Seventy, was named chair of the commission, and **Susan Carty, President of the League of Women Voters of PA**, will serve on the commission. The commission will be comprised of members from diverse backgrounds, including current and former legislators, leaders from non-partisan civic organizations, and members of the administration.

“The League is proud to serve as a member of this commission and we thank Governor Wolf for the opportunity to lend our voice to this effort,” LWVPA President Susan Carty said. “We are confident that this nonpartisan effort will work to adequately address Pennsylvania’s redistricting problem in a thoughtful, deliberative way and help make Pennsylvania’s elections fairer and more democratic.”

The League encourages our members to remain engaged in the fight against gerrymandering and support the aims of the commission by attending one or more of the six public hearings that will be held around the state and submitting online comments supporting redistricting reform. We thank the Governor for making redistricting reform a priority, and we thank our members for their tireless work toward this important goal.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**HOLIDAY THOUGHTS**



We are in our end of year holiday season and looking forward to getting together with family and friends. Some thoughts for this season – yes, they all involve the League of Women Voters!

Check with family and friends – are all the adults registered to vote? Have them check their registration online at [WWW.VOTESPA.COM](http://WWW.VOTESPA.COM) – and the voter can also check for the assigned polling place. Some will tell you that “my vote doesn’t count, because where I live, everyone else is (fill in the blank!).” If that is the case, by showing up and voting, you help to let the winner know that different points of view are represented in the voting public – please listen to us. Younger voters don’t always have the habit of voting yet – help them to know that their voices need to be heard too, and unless they vote, the message they want to give is not being heard. Help folks who need to do an absentee ballot understand the timing and requirements for returning the ballot. Two big groups here – students who will not be at home on election day, and those who have a medical reason for not being able to vote at the polling place. The students may need a stamp and an envelope to mail the initial request and a stamp or two to return the completed ballot. How about a holiday gift of the envelope, stamps, and the absentee ballot application?? If it is completed while the student is home for winter break, then you can follow up with phone calls and text messages to make sure it is mailed timely! At my polling place, some absentee ballots were not counted, because the

correct procedures were not followed by the voter. If you know someone who is doing an absentee ballot for the upcoming primary or general election, help guide them through the specific steps, so the ballot will count.

I would like to thank the organizations and individuals who have made donations and given grants to the League this year. These individuals and organizations have enabled us to cover the costs associated with the work we do – paying for the printing of our Voters Guide, paying for the printing of our Facts for Citizens, paying for the printing of the business cards we have given out in the area to help folks access our Voters Guide online, paying for the equipment we use to livestream our voter forums, etc. Thank you to all who have donated and given us grants, and THANK YOU to the many members and community members who have volunteered with us this year. You make a difference in our community!

Finally, we are looking forward to celebrating 100 years of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, affirming that women have the right to vote! We are working with other community groups and officials to plan various events to celebrate this important anniversary. I am so happy to be in the third generation of women in my family to vote. I am also proud of our daughter, who is not only in the fourth generation of women to vote’ but is a young person who votes in every election. She will usually call me before 8 am as she is waiting in line to vote, and she stays in line until she does vote!

Happy Holidays, and please help those you know to be an ALWAYS voter!

Maureen Mamula

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VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

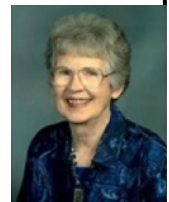
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**REMEMBERING PHYLLIS MAJESKY**

Phyllis Majesky passed away November 3, 2018. Phyllis was the President of LWV of Upper St. Clair in the 80's. She was very influential in getting cable TV going in USC, particularly Community Access Television. Phyllis worked with both the Township of Upper St. Clair and the cable company that eventually became Adelphia Cable to establish Community Access in the township. She learned and subsequently trained others in the use of the cameras and eventually editing equipment. For a while the League of Women Voters put on a live cable report on Township Commission meetings.



<b>LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee</b>		<b>Local Area Meeting Chairs</b>	
President	Maureen Mamula	Pgh. Central 412-802-7266	Martha Raak
V.P.1 Program	Christina Beuger	North Hills 412-364-7329	Shirley McIlvried
V.P.2 Development, Gun safety	Nancy Naragon	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
Secretary	Leagha Courtney		
Treasurer, Funding, Gun Safety	Preston Shimer	<b>Interest &amp; Service Area Specialists</b>	
		Housing	Adelaide Smith
		Death Penalty	Hazel Cope
<b>Directors</b>		Education	Evelyn Murrin
Voter Service	Judy Clack	Legislature Reduction	Mary Larsen
Member, Leg. Interviews, Bk Cl	Judy Donohue	City / Cty & Judicial Reform	Nina Helbling
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Voter Service	Terrie Griffin	National / State Program	Carol Walton
Development,, Redistricting	Maureen Grosheider	VOTER Editor / Website	Sue Broughton
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Civic Education	Amy Kleissias	Civic Salon	Briana Horan
PR, Communications	Eileen Olmsted	Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon
Program, Debates, Vote411	Annette Shimer		
Education, Election Law	Michelle Zmijanac		
<b>Staff</b>			
Community Information Center	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
<b>League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media</b>			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	<a href="http://lwvpggh.org">lwvpggh.org</a>	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	<a href="http://palwv.org">palwv.org</a>	
National	202-429-1965	<a href="http://lwv.org">lwv.org</a>	
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>		Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh



Rosemary Prostko waits for the next questions to deliver to the moderator from screeners Cris Beuger, Becky Kretchmann, and Linda Schneider at the Nov. 1 double forum for the 38th Senatorial District and 29th Legislative District.

## 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](mailto: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 [howardmciii@comcast.net](mailto:howardmciii@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](mailto:mamula159@hotmail.com)

### Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**  
4th Wednesday, 1 pm. Contact Evelyn Murrin at 412-661-3306 or [evelynmurrin@aol.com](mailto:evelynmurrin@aol.com).
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**  
1st Tuesday, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or [jbclack@yahoo.com](mailto:jbclack@yahoo.com).
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**  
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or [nancynaragon@msn.com](mailto:nancynaragon@msn.com)
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**  
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Judy Donohue at 412-373-8697 or [jrdono71@gmail.com](mailto:jrdono71@gmail.com)

## DECEMBER-JANUARY CALENDAR

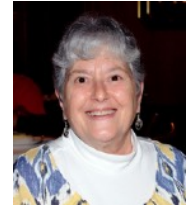
### December – No Unit Meetings and Book Club

04 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30 pm, CIC office
09 Sun	Holiday Brunch at Olmsted's, 11 am, page 1
11 Tue	Naturalization Ceremony, Carnegie Library, 5:30 pm
12 Wed	Naturalization & voter registration, 12:30 & 4 pm, Penn Ctr. Blvd.
19 Wed	Naturalization & voter registration, 12:30 & 4 pm, Penn Ctr. Blvd.
21 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, 9:00 am, Federal Courthouse
25 Tue	Christmas Day, office closed

### January

01 Tue	New Year's Day, Office Closed
03 Thur	<b>South Hills Unit Meeting:</b> Program: Program planning
08 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30 pm, CIC office
11 Fri	<b>Pittsburgh Central Unit Meeting:</b> Program: Program planning
14 Mon	Board Meeting
16 Wed	<b>North Hills Unit Meeting:</b> Program: Program planning
18 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, 9:00 am, Federal Courthouse
18 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club, 10:15 am, Squirrel Hill Library
21 Mon	Martin Luther King Jr, Day, Office closed
23 Wed	Education Advocacy Committee, Squirrel Hill Library, 1-3 pm

## VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



### End of Year Notes:



Maria Magone, Julie Gatti, Joyce Beard, and Diana Bowden flank three-decade Federal Courthouse Administrator, Keith Anderson at the Nov. 16 naturalization ceremony. The LWVGP recognizes Mr. Anderson, who will be moving to a different position in the courthouse, for his thoroughness with and respect for the thousands of new citizens he has shepherded through the process.

school board members, and judicial magistrates. The League will need lots of help finding email addresses of all candidates to invite them to upload their information in our online Voters Guide at [vote411.org](http://vote411.org), as well as to invite them to participate in candidate forums. We also need help in determining relevant issues for all these races. If you know the email address of any candidate or know of an issue impacting a particular area, please email this information to Judy Clack, [jbclack@yahoo.com](mailto:jbclack@yahoo.com).

Students played a big role at many of our fall candidate forums, volunteering to serve as greeters, timers, and question sorters. High school students from Fox Chapel High School and Allderdice High School volunteered for forums in their districts. College students from the CCAC Honors Corps volunteered at forums at CCAC Boyce and CCAC North campuses, as well as the RMU political science club at RMU. The students seemed energized by this experience and handled their duties seriously and completely. We look forward to having students join our volunteer crews at future forums.

### Non-Fiction Book Club

No book club meeting in December.

January: *Leadership in Turbulent Times* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Book Club contact is Judy Donohue: 412-373-8697 or [jrdono71@gmail.com](mailto:jrdono71@gmail.com).

The holidays may be here, but the League is busy covering voter registration at nine naturalization ceremonies, four in November and five in December! Thanks to all of you who have volunteered. January naturalization dates will be announced in the weekly Blasts, or via email by contacting Judy Clack, [jbclack@yahoo.com](mailto:jbclack@yahoo.com).

Amy Kleissas has agreed to chair the LWVGP efforts in organizing voter registration drives in area high schools this winter and spring. Email Amy if you are interested in this venture: [amy.kleissas@gmail.com](mailto:amy.kleissas@gmail.com).

A Special Election will be held to replace PA 37th District Senator Guy Reschenthaler who won the election for the 14th US Congressional District. After Reschenthaler resigns his senate seat, the Lt. Governor will set a date for the special election at least 60 days in the future. The LWVGP will hold a candidate forum prior to that special election.

This spring, elections will be held for various Allegheny County positions, Pittsburgh City Council seats, many municipalities' mayors and commissioners, multiple



CCAC Honor Program student volunteers at the Nov. 1 forums at CCAC North Campus: LWVGP member Rosemary Prostko; Students Lauren Conklin, Alasia McCoy, Olivia Bannister, Julie "Lexi" Hlebik, Zain Aaban, Chinedu "Jude" Aniekwe; with Dr. Srujana Kanjula & Judy Clack. Kirsten Hilbert was not available.

## Education Committee Report by Joan H. Franklin, Education Committee, co-chair

The Education Committee of the Pittsburgh League has embarked upon a study of Early Childhood Education in our area, especially since the amendment to the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter did not pass in the election on Nov. 6th. This initiative would have provided early childhood education, nutritious meals, and after school programs for children up to Kindergarten, in Allegheny County. We want to continue to support Early Childhood Education, asking the questions: where is the information for families about how to access the programs which exist in Pittsburgh, where can parents find resources, what are the costs and fees, access to transportation, and ratings for quality programs.

To this end, we have invited speakers to our January and February meetings, to be better informed about possible resources and leaders in early childhood learning and education. Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019, in the Squirrel Hill Library at 1:00pm.

## News from National by Carol Walton

**LWVUS** has reviewed the results of the November election nation-wide and noted that more and more diverse women have been elected than ever before, and there was a record high turnout for a midterm election. Voting rights made significant gains in several states.

The first Muslim and the first Native American women were elected as were the first African-American women from New England and the first Latina women from Texas.

Floridians restored voting rights to 1.4 million people who have served their time for a felony conviction through approval of a ballot amendment.

Michigan voters passed Proposal 3 which transfers the responsibility of drawing districts to an independent redistricting commission and expands access to the polls. Colorado voters passed amendments creating independent redistricting commissions and setting criteria prohibiting gerrymandering in the state.

Missouri voters passed a multipurpose amendment to increase transparency in the legislature, close lobbying loopholes and lower contribution limits for legislative candidates. It provides for an independent demographer to ensure that political parties are not given an unfair advantage when legislative maps are drawn.

## League at Latina Pay Equity by Martha Raak

On Nov. 1, LWVGP was happy to table with the Latino Community Center at an event highlighting ethnic and gender discrepancies in pay equity held at Schenley Plaza. Those assisting me were Angeles Stiteler, Renee Hill and Paul Outon. We had some Information translated into Spanish, material for first time voters, posters and more.

Speakers included County Commissioner, Rich Fitzgerald, Controller Chelsea Wagner, city councilwoman, Erika Strassberger and many in the Latino community including professionals and students. They stressed the fact that **female Latinas make .54 for every \$1.00 that white males earn.**

I invited several women who seemed interested to join the League. We were able to interact with various constituencies in the park setting.



## **GUN CONTROL IN ENGLAND: IT WORKS!** By Hazel Cope

We're all horrified and scared at the constant news of firearm deaths. Most people seem to agree that we need to reduce the level of gun violence here, but then add, "It'll never happen." Well gun control worked in England, in Australia, and in many other countries to save thousands of casualties. It *must*, and it will work, here, if only we make it absolutely clear to our legislators that we want it.

I am proud of the measures taken in the United Kingdom (UK), and their success. Strict firearm regulations were instituted very soon after the 1996 ghastly massacre of 16 primary schoolchildren in Scotland. Now it is necessary to go through rigorous hurdles to obtain a license to own each firearm, and firearms deaths are rare.

Gun ownership is by no means completely banned. There are legal firearms in about 4% of households, but the owners must have a legal permit for each weapon. Applicants with legitimate sporting, collecting or work-related reasons who meet the qualifications for licenses can own sporting rifles and shotguns, but automatic and semi-automatic assault weapons and handguns are banned.

The applicants for licences must prove that they have good reason for ownership and can be trusted with the weapon "without danger to public safety or the peace." Self-defense is not an acceptable reason. He or she must provide references from a doctor and two people who've known him/her at least two years. Firearms Enquiry Officers carry out background checks and a face-to-face interview, plus inspection of sites where the gun would be kept. Licences must be renewed each 5 years, and there are severe fines and prison terms for possession of prohibited firearms without certification.

The possession of firearms in the UK is regarded as a privilege to be earned, just as we earn the right to drive a car.

The regulations, and the corresponding buyback of weapons by the UK Government, have worked. The UK now has one of the lowest rates of gun homicides in the world: 0.07 per 100,000 people; an average of 15-38 annually. The US has one of the highest: 3.6 per 100,000 people; an average of well over 30,000 killed each year.

Plus, of course, the pain and suffering caused to the 80,000 injured each year in the USA, the grief and loss to families, and the people in many schools and communities who must now live in fear.

We taxpayers annually spend hundreds of millions of healthcare dollars patching up the wounded and caring for survivors. I'd much rather that victims were saved, and my tax dollars spent on the buyback of weapons.

It's not only mass murders that have been avoided by gun control. Far more frequent, but given much less publicity, are deaths and wounds caused by stray bullets, accidental killings and maimings, murders, and many suicides.

Suicide by gun is a very small fraction of suicides in UK. In the US, about 20,000 lives are ended in that way every year. An emergency room doctor in Pennsylvania told me she didn't see those victims in the ER very often because shooting oneself is so effective. "They are usually dead and taken straight to the morgue."

Restrictions on the right to own firearms unquestionably lower the incidence of gun violence and suicide. This has been demonstrated in many nations around the world. Some of the most effective measures are registration of weapons, mandatory reporting of their theft, and background checks on purchasers. Surely that's not much to ask, if it saves lives. Yet even these measures are still being fought against here.

In this matter of life and death we have apparently turned over our decision-making to the NRA, an organization of people who profit from the continued proliferation of weapons. It seems that we, the lucky inhabitants of this privileged nation, have decided to accept as a fact of life that some people must suffer so that others can own guns. Yet the experience of other countries shows it is possible to curb the scourge of firearms while still allowing legitimate ownership. Can our values really be so selfish that we won't even try?

## NEW MEMBERS

Doreen Karas  
[dkaras1413@verizon.net](mailto:dkaras1413@verizon.net)

Dorothy Valimont  
[Valimont102@comcast.net](mailto:Valimont102@comcast.net)

Mary King  
[Kingmary1@gmail.com](mailto:Kingmary1@gmail.com)

Randi Leonard  
[randileonard@gmail.com](mailto:randileonard@gmail.com)

An Advertisement

### For a Special Trip....



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