



Volume 21, No. 8

May 2015

ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 5:00 P.M.

KOPPERS BUILDING, GRANT ROOM, 9TH FLOOR

5:00 p.m.: Meet, mingle, have a glass of wine. Discuss any issues with board members.

5:30 p.m.: Business meeting to adopt budget and program and to elect officers and directors

6:30 p.m.: Dinner buffet

7:00 p.m.: Presentation by Larry Schweiger, former President of National Wildlife Federation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Please note: The only door to the building that will be open is the 7th Ave. door.

Under Larry Schweiger's leadership, fighting climate change became the National Wildlife Federation's top priority. His book, *Last Chance: Preserving Life on Earth*, has won two first prize awards. He retired from the Federation in 2014 and is currently finishing his second book tentatively entitled: *The Nature of Tomorrow*. He has been president and chief executive officer of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and, among other positions, the founding chairman of the National Institute for Conservation Leadership, an organization dedicated to strengthening volunteer leadership in America's conservation and environmental organizations.

The dinner menu includes baked herbed chicken and barbecue chicken, a vegetable medley, Caesar salad and potato salad, and bread pudding with butterscotch sauce for dessert.

The cost is \$25. There are three ways to pay: Send in the form below with a check, call Barbara at the office (412) 261-4284 to reserve your meal, or click here to do it on line: [Annual Meeting Reservations](#).

We are fortunate to have as distinguished a speaker as Larry Schweiger. Several board members have seen his presentation at a LWVPA event in Harrisburg. It is superb. It would be great to have a larger audience – larger than our business meeting attendance. ***Please invite friends to come to hear Larry's presentation – either for the dinner and presentation for \$25 or for just the presentation at 7:00 – free.***

Annual Meeting Registration Form (Due in LWVGP office by May 7)

Name _____ E-mail (or phone) _____

Check for \$25 made payable to: The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh (LWVGP)
Mail to: 436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 350, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (or call 412-261-4284).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MAY IS CANDIDATE FORUM MONTH



Here is the schedule for upcoming Candidate Forums.

When you receive this VOTER, (if it gets out Wednesday afternoon), the forums for Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice of the will be about to start. On Wednesday, April 29, the Democratic party candidates are

debating. The debate will be broadcast live on PCN at 5:00 p.m. and rebroadcast at 8:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. You can also catch this debate on PCN Saturday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.

On Thursday (today if this VOTER is emailed on Thursday), the Republicans will debate. The debate will be broadcast live on PCN at 5:00 p.m. and rebroadcast at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

The moderator for both debates is Lynn A. Marks of Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, which is cosponsoring the debates with the LWVPA Education Fund and several other organizations listed on the flyer at <http://www.palwv.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/supreme-court-debates-flyer-UPDATED.pdf>

We expect the debate videos to be posted (probably in the evening of each night) to the PCN website (pcntv.com) for viewing throughout the rest of the primary season.

Pittsburgh School Board: LWVGP is cosponsoring a debate among the candidates for the Pittsburgh School Board.

Date: May 6, 2015
Time: 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Location: Hillman Auditorium, Kaufmann Center, 1835 Centre Ave., Pittsburgh PA 15219

This is your chance to learn more about the candidates and find out what they plan to do to help improve equity and excellence in our schools.

Register at <http://bit.ly/2015CandidateForum>

Allegheny County Controller: LWVGP, AAUW of Fox Chapel and the Fox Chapel Area Democratic Committees are sponsoring a debate between the candidates: Mark Flaherty and Chelsa Wagner.

Date: May 12, 2015
Time: 7 p.m.

Location: O'Hara Elementary School Auditorium, 115 Cabin Lane, Pittsburgh 15238.

The debate will be moderated by Jon Delano, KDKA.

– Annette Shimer

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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.

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League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	pittsburgh.palwv.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	www.palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	www.lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	

Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network
PIIN Celebrates 15 years of Action for Justice



PIIN's 12th Annual Banquet
 Sunday May 3, 2015, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
 Reception at 4:00 p.m.
 Westin Convention Center
 \$50 per person

For reservations, please call PIIN at 412-621-9230
 Email: office@piin.org
 564 Forbes Ave., Suite 808, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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Standing Meetings

Board Meetings

- ✓ Held on the **second** Monday of the month (a change in 2014 from the first Monday)
- ✓ Meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m., probably 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 Meetings

- ✓ **Pittsburgh Central:** 2nd Friday, 1:30 p.m. at the Squirrel Hill Public Library, 5801 Forbes Ave., Pgh. PA 15217. Bring a bag lunch (optional). 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

- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 a.m. at the Squirrel Hill Public Library. Contact Naomi Frenkel at 412-818-2240 or nf1428@gmail.com
- ✓ **Education Committee**
4th Wednesday, 1-3 p.m., Squirrel Hill Library
Contact Caryl Beal at 412-531-1764 or carylbeal@aol.com

MAY-JUNE 2015 CALENDAR

May 2015 - No unit meetings in May

02 Sat	Rebroadcast of the Supreme Court candidates debates on PCN. Democratic candidates at 2:00 p.m. Republicans at 3:30 p.m.
06 Wed	Joint Candidate Forum with A+ Schools for Pittsburgh Public School Board Candidates 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Hillman Auditorium, Kaufman Center, 1835 Centre Ave. 15219.
07 Thu	"Money in Politics" Committee, Mt. Lebanon Library, 12:30 p.m.
11 Mon	Board meeting
12 Tue	Pittsburgh Comptroller candidates Forum, 7:00 p.m., O'Hara Elementary School Auditorium, 115 Cabin Lane, 15238
14 Thu	Annual meeting, Koppers Bldg. Conference Room, 5:00 p.m.
15 Fri	Naturalization, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
15 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
19 Tue	Primary Election, Polls open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
25 Mon	Memorial Day, office closed
27 Wed	Education Committee, Squirrel Hill Library, 1-3 p.m.

June 2015 - No unit meetings in June

05 Fri- 07 Sun	LWVPA Convention at the Hotel Monaco
10 Wed	Board retreat
11 Thu	"Money in Politics" Committee, Mt. Lebanon Library, 12:30 p.m.
19 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
19 Fri	Naturalization, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
24 Wed	Education Committee, Squirrel Hill Library, 1-3 p.m.

NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB

The LWV book club meets the third Friday of every month. Our meetings are lively, informative and stimulating. Please join us at the Squirrel Hill library at 10:15 on May 15 to discuss *Five Days at Memorial* by Sheri Fink. Contact *Naomi Frenkel* at nf1428@gmail.com or 412-586-4088.

LWVPA CONVENTION IS ALMOST HERE



Our Local Arrangements Committee has been working hard to make the 2015 LWVPA Convention a wonderful experience for all attendees. Here are the committee members. Back row from left: Renee Abrams, Eileen Olmsted, Heather Harr, Frank Hynds, Billie Girard, Maureen Mamula, Preston Shimer and Cecile Springer. Front row from left: Virginia Valentine, Mary Larsen, Carol Emerson and Joan Gaul.

As of this writing, there are spaces on all the optional tours for LWVPA State Convention attendees, which can be filled by local members. Heather would particularly like to fill the spaces on the shale gas "fracking" tour. You can find tour descriptions at <http://lwvpgh.org/Convention.html>.

The tour of a fracking site near the Pittsburgh Airport is being offered on Friday afternoon June 5. The tour will be conducted by Consol. It is a "hard-hat" tour and not handicapped accessible. Consol provides the protective gear. If you are interested please sign up at <https://co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=95414>. It is the first tour listed.

The tour will leave from Hotel Monaco in Downtown Pittsburgh on William Penn Way next to the Koppers Building. It will also return to the Hotel Monaco. If you have League friends or colleagues who would be interested, please invite them.

NATURALIZATION CEREMONY by Maureen Mamula



The League is represented each month at the judicial naturalization ceremony on the third Friday of the month. The League members make sure each new citizen receives a Voter Registration form and Facts for Citizens. The ceremony in April was sponsored by the League, so members shook hands with each new citizen and gave each one a small American flag as a souvenir.

One new twist to the ceremony for the League – since the deadline for registration for voting in the May primary was 3 days later (on Monday), we let the new citizens know before the ceremony that we would help them register to vote. Twelve of the new citizens filled out the forms after the ceremony, and a League representative then hand carried the forms to the Allegheny County Elections Department – 37 new citizens, 12 new voters registered!



Shale Waste Disposal Forum by Heather Harr

*Chatham University
Eddy Theater (off Murray Hill Avenue)
Tuesday May 12
5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.*

With increased shale fracking comes lots more liquid and solid waste, including hazardous and radioactive materials; yet oil and gas waste has exemptions from federal and state regulations. Where is all the waste going? How should we handle this waste?

Our panel of experts representing various perspectives on the issue will discuss the scope of the problem, and offer best practices and policy suggestions. Presentations plus Q&A.

Confirmed panelists include:

- Nadia Steinzor, Earthworks Eastern Program Coordinator and Lead Author of Earthworks' new report, *Wasting Away*, about shale waste disposal practice and policy in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and New York
- Scott Perry, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) Deputy Secretary for Oil & Gas Management
- Carl Spadaro, Environmental General Manager, MAX Environmental (firm handles shale waste)
- Barbara Lucia, Citizen Activist, West Warren Alliance

**5:30 Reception 6-8 p.m. Forum
Free and Open to the Public**

A program of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania's "Straight Scoop on Shale" initiative, in collaboration with Chatham's Office of Sustainability and Falk School of Sustainability.

For more information or to RSVP: <http://shalemarcella@gmail.com> or 1-800-61-SHALE (800-617-4253)



Some of the League members at the Public Lecture at Chatham University given by Cokie Roberts as the Elsie Hillman Chair in Women and Politics recipient. Photo credit: John Altdorfer

CAMPAIGN FINANCE STUDY GROUP by Kathie Breckenridge

The Campaign Finance Study Group met in April and agreed to continue study of this topic as follows:

Meetings will be at:

The Mount Lebanon Library (bottom floor)
16 Castle Shannon Blvd
Pittsburgh, PA 15228-2252

The May meeting will be on **May 7th at 12:30** in the Mount Lebanon Library (rather than the originally scheduled May 14th since most League Members will be attending the LWVPA annual meeting that evening)

Future meetings will be in the Mount Lebanon library on the **2nd** Thursday of the month at 12:30.

May 7th Meeting:

The focus of the May 7th meeting will be a review of the background of campaign financing laws.

Before the May 7th meeting, please view the outstanding U-Tube video prepared by the Massachusetts LWV. For this meeting, we will focus on the beginning of the video which discusses laws regulating campaign finance before the Roberts Supreme Court's rulings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CuKKx58dac>

If you have a chance before the May 7th meeting, please look through the document summarizing the Roberts Court's rulings and their impact on earlier laws at:

<http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/pro-money-supreme-court>

I will bring copies of the Brennan Center document to the meeting.

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WHY DOES PENNSYLVANIA NOT HAVE AN EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA?

by Billie Girard and Phyllis Dreyfus

[Editor's note: Billie and Phyllis both submitted reports. What follows is a blend of their reports.]

“Why does Pennsylvania not have a funding formula?” was the focus of the Education Advocacy Meeting on April 22. Patrick Dowd, Allies for Children, and Carey Harris, A+ Schools, who are members of the organization, The Campaign for Fair Education Funding, were present to discuss the lack of a funding formula to distribute sufficient resources both fairly and predictably. Pennsylvania is one of only three states without a basic education funding formula and has the widest funding gap between wealthy and poor school districts in the country. As a result, the system does not provide adequate resources to educate all children according to academic standards. It produces racial disparities, widens the gap between the rich and poor districts, and creates an atmosphere of unpredictability in terms budget planning.

According to Carey Harris, Governor Rendell had developed a funding formula, but it was set aside along with one billion dollar reduction from the state allocation under Gov. Corbett. We now have no system to distribute educational money—fairly and equitably and predictably. It is basically unfair to the tax payers and certainly to the students. A funding formula will be the most fair and efficient way for the state to allocate educational funds. The formula needs to ensure that all public school students have access to a quality education no matter where they live—urban, rural, suburban. The Campaign for Fair Education Funding, after many hours of hard work has developed a formula, which would provide funding for the instructional needs of all students to receive quality education instruction. The Campaign’s funding formula is based on five principals: accurate, equitable, predicable, accountable and understandable.

Mr. Dowd said that a new funding formula must be transparent, sustainable, equitable, long range and adequate to meet the needs of all students. After adjusting for the federal share of education funding for Pennsylvania, the base cost per student would be \$7,266. This number is for INSTRUCTIONAL COST only meaning It does not include building maintenance, transportation, special programs. The formula recognizes the additional needs of some children, such as those living in poverty or learning English, or being homeless or in foster care. To account for the above needs, the formula is weighted. Districts that are sparsely populated and geographically large are considered in the formula as costs may be higher although enrollment small. Differences in district tax effort and wealth are not adequately reflected in current taxation measures. The state must develop new measure for taxation. The state currently spends \$5.7 billion as basic funding. If the proposal is approved, the number will increase to \$9.3 billion paid to all district over 8 years. Fewer than 20 districts receive more than the formula will project—they will continue to get same amount—under the formula no child should receive less. Pittsburgh is spending above this number but will not receive less—no child under this recommended formula will receive fewer dollars.

There followed a question period where specific questions about taxes, Pittsburgh and the details of the formula were discussed. The meeting concluded with the sense that we now have a clearer picture of what the formula should include and how it is to be used. The work of the Campaign has been enormous and now needs to have much publicity by all the media and by individual groups. It is vital for all League members to understand what the Campaign for Fair Education Funding has proposed. The state League has signed on as a supporter.

What can we as individuals and League members do to be sure that the formula from The Campaign for Fair Education Funding is accepted? Mr. Dowd suggests that we contact and influence the commission members to accept this formula—public response will be important. There is further important information at the Campaign’s web site <http://fairfundingpa.org>

Another website that has good information is http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/pa-schools-are-the-nations-most-inequitable-the-new-governor-wants-to-fix-that/2015/04/22/3d2f4e3e-e441-11e4-81ea-0649268f729e_story.html?hpid=z3

Our appreciation to Carey Harris and Patrick Dowd for their work on behalf of fair funding and their clear explanation of the proposed formula.