



League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

VOTER



Volume 23, No. 3 November 2016

NOVEMBER UNITS: ELECTION REFORM by Maureen Mamula

The November units will start looking at Election Law Reform for Pennsylvania. We have both the study guide and the consensus questions available:

<http://www.palwv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Election-Law-Review-and-Update-Study-Guide.pdf>

<http://www.palwv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Election-Law-Review-and-Update-Consensus-Questions.pdf>

The consensus questions are due March 1, 2017, so we will be focusing on this update until then. If you would like to be part of the study group to do presentations, please contact Kathie Breckenridge or myself. This is a very timely topic – seeing as we have a large Presidential election concluding in November. With various court cases about voter registration, early voting, etc. making their way through the courts in the last few years, we all want to be up to speed on what the rules are here in Pennsylvania. Increased population, technology, and what changes League members conclude we need to make so that voting works for all. I know that many of us work on election day because we believe everyone's vote is important. If you don't volunteer already, please consider doing so in a future election – Allegheny County can always use more election workers!

We are still looking at our local positions, but won't be wrapping that up until next spring. If you volunteered to help us review our positions, thank you! If you did not have a chance to do so, please email me at mamula159@hotmail.com and I will put you in touch with others who are doing these reviews. I was surprised the first time I looked at all of our local positions to see how wide ranging they are – from housing to libraries to education among other topics.

THINK!: Living with Guns – Deliberative Community Forums

Our region can move beyond polarized debate and towards productive collaboration. Guns are a part of our region's culture and heritage and so we want to think together about how individuals, community groups, and public officials can work together to address the challenges of living with guns: reducing gun-related suicides, increasing gun safety, and addressing the costs of gun-related violence.

This week, in cooperation with WQED, we are convening two forums where citizens with diverse experience, backgrounds and perspectives can share with and learn from one another, enjoy some light refreshments, and have questions addressed by people with practical expertise with this topic. The project will also include an online forum at www.wqed.org/think and a live televised forum on November 17, 2016, that will draw from ideas developed at the two community forums. To register for these forums, please visit: www.wqed.org/think. There, you will also find more information about the WQED THINK! campaign.

Downtown Pittsburgh
Thursday October 27, 2016
5:30 pm-8:30 pm
Koppers Building
436 Seventh Avenue , 9th Floor
Pittsburgh, 15219

Washington, PA
Saturday October 29, 2016
1:30 pm-4:30 pm.
Citizens Library
55 South College St
Washington, PA 15301

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KUDOS!



We went on vacation. Out of the country. No internet access. No phone access. No emails. The first week of October. Just when all the planning for a number of projects were coming to a head: Redistricting, Living with Guns, candidate events, Voters Guide, and more. And then I discovered that more than half of the Board skipped away for at least a few days around the same time. (Barb Simpson is waiting until late November.)

What did I miss most? The stimulating challenging and thoughtful conversation with others right here at home. As Mr. Rogers would say, "You are special."

Kudos to: Barb Simpson

- For always being a pleasant person no matter what the issue or comment comes to the CIC – Sample: "I have TB and have to wear a mask. I'm not currently contagious but I have to wear the mask. Will it be a problem at the polls?"
- For putting in over 60 hours on the immigration naturalization project.
- For contacting candidates for the Voters Guide
- For making a run to the Northside Post Office with a check for bulk mail permit in pouring rain without complaining

Kudos to: Louise Cannon and Judy Clack and Eileen Olmsted plus the committee

- For enthusiastically setting up and handling voter registration events (please someone count how many different ones we did)
- For contacting the members of the committee and continually adding more
- For switching gears and training, explaining to voters why they should vote, what was on the ballot, how to use the machine
- For visiting the North Side storage facility where voter machine are stored and assisting in the testing prior to the election
- For thinking up new ways of talking about the election process to the citizens

Kudos to: Nancy Naragon, Maureen Mamula, Kathie Breckenridge, Arlene Levy and the board and committees

- For being away and immediately getting back to work. See the rest of the Voter for their activities.

And finally,

Kudos to: my companion Preston Shimer

- For being married for 50 years and a League spouse for 48
- For putting up with my tantrums about software
- Listening with full attention at whatever hour to my rambling, rants or efforts to explain an issue

— Annette

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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@ngh.lwv.org

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Hard copy subscriptions are available for \$20 per year.

NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

The book for **November** is *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few* by Robert Reich

The book for **December** is *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atull Gawande

Book Club contact is 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 McIvried
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		Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lww.org	
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Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network
 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 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

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

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2016 CALENDAR

Late October

26 Wed	Voter registration, 777 Penn Center Blvd., Bldg. 7, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
26 Wed	Education Committee meeting, Squirrel Hill Library, 1-3 p.m.
27 Thu	Community Forum, Living With Guns, Koppers Bldg., Page 1
29 Sat	Community Forum, Living With Guns, Washington Co., Page 1

November

03 Thu	South Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Election Laws Study
08 Tue	General Election; Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
11 Fri	Pittsburgh Central Unit meeting: LWVPA Election Laws Study
14 Mon	Board meeting
16 Wed	Shale & Public Health Conf., Pitt U. Club Ballroom, 9a.m.-5 p.m.
16 Wed	North Hills Unit meeting: LWVPA Election Laws Study
18 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
18 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
23 Wed	Naturalization Ceremony at USCIS in Monroeville, 12:30-3:30 pm
22 Tues - 28 Mon	Office closed

December - No unit meetings in December

12 Mon	Board or Executive Committee meeting
15 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, Federal Courthouse, 10 a.m.
15 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 a.m.
26 Mon	Holiday office hours begin, Mon. and Thurs., 9am-3pm, end Jan 2



The Straight Scoop on Shale Drilling
A PROJECT OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA CITIZEN EDUCATION FUND

2016 Shale & Public Health Conference

November 16, 2016, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

University of Pittsburgh University Club, 123 University Place,
Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

Presented by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania's "Straight Scoop on Shale" initiative and hosted by the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health.

APPROVED FOR 8 HOURS FOR NURSING CE's AND CPHCEU's
through Mid Atlantic Regional Public Health Training Center
(More information coming soon on other professional disciplines)

Among the highlights of the conference:

- **Eduardo (Jay) Olaguer, PhD** from Houston's HARC presenting research on benzene emissions from petrochemical plants, air quality and health in the Houston Ship Channel, and citizen air monitoring projects
- **Brian Schwartz, MD** of John Hopkins presenting new research on fracking and asthma, published this summer in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA Internal Medicine)
- A panel with two research studies on setback distances
... and lots more!

More Information and Registration

Or call 1-800-61-SHALE

You may also pass along this information to a friend or colleague who would be interested in attending.

ATTORNEY GENERAL DEBATE IN PITTSBURGH

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters and Point Park College

Hear Josh Shapiro (D) and John Rafferty (R) debate.

Wednesday, November 2, 12:00 noon

Point Park College

Moderator: Jon Delano

Send proposed questions to: info@pgh.lwv.org

Program will be taped for rebroadcast on PCN.

Election Protection News from LWVPA by Carol Walton

Out of concern about issues of voter fraud, voter intimidation and election security that have been in the news lately, LWVPA has joined the nonpartisan **Pennsylvania Election Protection Coalition**. Other Coalition members are Common Cause PA, National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law, ACLU-PA, and Pennsylvania Voice. The Coalition's purpose is to:

1. reassure voters that the election is safe;
2. encourage voters to not be deterred by concerns of intimidation;
3. identify and address any Election Day problems before they happen; and
4. create a comprehensive response plan for any Election Day problems that do occur.



The Coalition's hotline is **866-OUR-VOTE**. The hotline will provide basic voter information as well as help with specific issues or problems. This is a description of the hotline services:

- "Calls to the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline are answered by trained volunteers. Many requests can be handled with one call. However, some problems are escalated and will be brought to the attention of someone with experience in Pennsylvania elections who can directly connect with the Pennsylvania Department of State or county election officials.
- In Allegheny, Berks, Lehigh and Philadelphia counties, as well as some Philadelphia suburbs, there will be legal and grassroots volunteers monitoring polls. If a voter needs help in real time in these counties, field volunteers can help.
- In all 67 counties, lawyers are prepared to go to court if need be for any voter."

Using the hotline as a resource on Election Day (instead of the local Boards of Election) will result in quicker service AND allow them to track data on trends.

Finally, we are encouraged to "change the story." LWVPA Executive Director Suzanne Almeida suggests, "The more we can focus on how exciting elections are, how proud Americans are to exercise their right to vote, and how making sure that eligible voters can access the polls . . . , the less power scare tactics will have."

If you are interested in volunteering to be a nonpartisan election observer on Nov. 8, you can sign up at www.protectthevote.net.

LWVPA SPONSORS CANDIDATE FORUMS from LWVPA the website

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is working hard to provide voters with information about candidates and issues.

The following candidate forums have been scheduled:

1. Attorney General Candidate Forum, Widener Commonwealth Law School in Harrisburg on Oct. 24, 11am-12pm (broadcast live on PCN).
2. PA Senate Debate, Temple University Performing Arts Center on Oct. 24 7:00pm (broadcast live on 6abc). [WTAE here]
3. Attorney General debate - tentatively scheduled for Nov. 2 in Pittsburgh. [See previous page]
4. An Auditor General Candidate Forum took place at Northampton Community College on October 5. View the PCN broadcast at <https://pcntv.com/2016/10/05/pa-auditor-generals-forum-live-stream-wednesday-at-7-pm/>

Information about local candidate events and other local League activities is now available on our LWVPA event calendar at <https://www.palwv.org/events/>.

Election News from Florida

by Margaret McGrath, LWVGP Co-president Emeritus

Today, October 24, I voted. My thoughts turned to Allegheny County, not just for the fall colors, but for two projects of the League that I believe are important and becoming urgent.

First is that voting machines are getting older, use a code not owned by the county nor easy to confirm that it is free of abnormalities, need their electronic guts hand carried safely to be counted, and have no backup record in the event a recount would be desirable.

I contrast this with Broward County Florida, which provides a written ballot in three languages inside a confidentiality sleeve to each voter. Ballots are filled out with pens provided in booths with privacy sides, and then you proceed to the reading machines where the poll worker takes the confidential sleeve and the voter inserts their ballot into the machine to be tabulated and kept in the event of a recount.

This easily understandable system also enables an easy early voting process, a second project for the League. When I provided my drivers license as my ID, it was swiped into a machine and a customized ballot for my races was printed at the early voting site I chose. Poll workers asked me to verify my street address on the printout, and then showed me that the ballot number on the printout matched my ballot before they tore that part off for confidentiality. Business was brisk at the early voting site in hour 2 of early voting. The parking lot had a number of handicapped spaces, and they were prepared for handicapped people with special privacy booths. Early voting is permitted for convenience or any other reason, and not limited as it is in Pennsylvania.

Of course, Broward could also make improvements in its voting processes, notably the ease of finding a sample ballot with items customized for your vote (with 32 items on my ballot this time, I don't need to read-up on items not on my ballot). Vote 411 by League remains the best source. Broward also "missed" some ballot items on some mail-in ballots, so vigilance is required there too.

I commend LWVGP for making me aware of voting machine issues in Pennsylvania while I resided there, and urge members to get the problem fixed before it becomes urgent. The mechanics of houses and democracy both need attention to run smoothly.



14th Congressional District debate, October 24, at the Community of Reconciliation Church. Left to right: Incumbent Democratic Representative Mike Doyle, Urban League President Esther Bush, Republican Challenger Lenny Mcallister, LWVGP President Annette Shimer, Community Advocate Will Anderson, and Moderator Jon Delano.

COMING SOON TO PENNSYLVANIA – EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT THE NEXT BIG NEW ACT IN EDUCATION by Evelyn Murrin

Following Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is important. It is growing from the grass roots. Four working groups convene all year. We are all invited to participate. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is dedicating its website to ESSA. Here's the link: <http://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act.aspx#.V2AQidnD-UI> . The website has an abundance of background information and reports which the working groups have used in their deliberations.



When asked about the role of the local LWVGP, Sharon Kletzien, State Board and knowledgeable resource on all matters "Education," wrote:

"The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is watching this closely, especially the Accountability, Assessment, and Educator Evaluation subgroups. Our education position is clear about high stakes assessments and using these assessments to evaluate teachers and administrators. We are also very clear about using the Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.

"There will have to be legislation passed to move from No Child Left Behind to Every Student Succeeds, so we need to watch carefully what legislation is introduced – probably mostly after the election. The Senate and House Education committees have held a series of hearings across the state about these changes as well. They are determined that PDE will not make these changes without working with the legislature.

"We will be taking action on the state level, but as long as LWVGP is consistent with the education position, it can take action on the local level as well."



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LWV GREATER PITTSBURGH HOUSING POSITION – A REVIEW

by Shirley McIlvried and Kathie Breckenridge

After reviewing the LWV Greater Pittsburgh Housing Position, which was written in 1973 and updated in 1996, we concluded that it should be updated or redone.

At present there is a crisis involving the quantity of affordable housing available and the funding available to assist low income families. PUBLIC SOURCE reported that 23,000 people in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County are waiting for public housing. Pittsburgh's housing wait list for new families is closed. A phone call to the Allegheny County Housing Authority, which works only with low-income people, revealed that HUD funding is currently nonexistent. Section 8 housing subsidies for low-income families* has 6000 people on the approved list but no money to pay for the housing. In addition there are 14,000 on the waiting list. There is no additional funding available from the federal government**

Not only is funding lacking to assist low-income families in obtaining housing, but PUBLIC SOURCE and other publications report that the supply of public and low-cost housing has not expanded and that public housing is being torn down and replaced with mixed income developments resulting in fewer subsidized units. Many areas in Pittsburgh that previously provided a range of costs for housing have seen the 'gentrification' of their housing with a rapid rise in housing costs. For example, in Lawrenceville, the average cost of a 1-bedroom apartment went from \$895/ mo in August 2015 to \$1,350/mo a year later (Trulia, quoted by Sarah Anne Hughes, *The Incline*, September 15, 2016) Similar concerns have been expressed about the construction in East Liberty with accompanying loss of lower rent housing. Costs have risen and availability has declined.

Several nonprofit groups in Allegheny County are working toward the goals of providing and subsidizing affordable housing for low-income people. Petitions were being circulated for a referendum to establish an affordable housing trust fund financed by a transfer tax on real estate sales. The City of Pittsburgh Council, after seeing the large number of signatures, picked up the idea and are holding discussions about the plan.

Our housing position has support for housing policies and for regulations for housing inspections. In updating our policy, these should be reviewed.

* for information on HUD Section 8 housing, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8

** for information on the housing assistance to PA from the federal government go to: <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/4-13-11hous-PA.pdf>

LWV Greater Pittsburgh Current Housing Position (1973, last updated 1996)

Support of a county housing code enforcement program that enforces minimum health and safety standards and promotes methods by which standards can be met.

Amplification: A county housing code should be developed that would require the inspection of housing units in the county on a periodic basis. Funding should be made available to aid those who are financially unable to correct violations of codes. Tax credits, loans, grants and use of revenue sharing funds were suggested methods of financing. Information concerning code enforcement and alternatives for financing and upgrading of under-code properties should be made available to the public.

The LWVGP supports policies and regulations that would provide for:

1. Standardized inspections throughout the county;
2. Training and/or certification of all inspectors;
3. Inspection of all sale properties before transfer of ownership;
4. Periodic inspection of all rental properties, at least once every 3-5 years, to verify that the dwelling is safe and in compliance with the housing code;
5. Assistance to low-income people in obtaining housing, and monitoring and assistance provided to help maintain that housing.

The LWVGP believes it is the responsibility of all levels of government to promote programs that provide adequate housing to people with limited income and special needs, including partnerships with business and nonprofit groups. Minimum federal standards and a process of accountability should be determined. All levels of government should support local initiatives, including appropriate oversight.

OCTOBER VOTER REGISTRATION by Judy Clack, Co-chair, Voter Service

Voter registration efforts ended with a bang in the first week of October with our League participating in six drives in one week along with a second naturalization ceremony later in the month: Allegheny Community College West Hills, Braddock Carnegie Library, Naturalization Ceremony at the Federal Courthouse, Naturalization Ceremony at Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh Job Corps Center, and Squirrel Hill Library with a coalition of Latina organizations. **436 registrations.**



Susanne Fox registering an employee of the Kraft Heinz Company on National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 27 in Warrendale.

Many League members, with several community and AAUW members joining us, registered voters at these October events: Louise Cannon, Francie Cech, Judy Clack, Norma Clouse, Hazel Cope, Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner, Phyllis Dreyfuss, Laryn Finder, Frank Hynds, Katherine Keith, Maripat Kwaczala, Maria Magone, Maureen Mamula, Judy Mancini, Lora Medwid, Eileen Olmsted, Christine Peters, Betty Ann Wade, and Michelle Zmijanac. Warm thanks to each and every one of you.

There are two naturalization ceremonies on the calendar for November: Fri., Nov. 18 at the Federal Courthouse on Grant Street, and on Wed., Nov. 23 at the Monroeville site. Let me know if you are interested in helping at either of these special events. Please contact me if you can help: jbclack@yahoo.com or 512-731-0280.



Voter registration balloons created by the Allegheny Family Network for the LWVGP voter registration, September 30, at the Lloyd Hayden Community Center in Natrona Heights. We registered the parents of kids who are AFN clients.

The League had a very successful voter registration event at The Pittsburgh Job Corps, Tuesday, October 4. Thanks to their librarian, Kammy Kemmer, for organizing this event. This photo shows Maria Magone helping a student register.

