



League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh



Volume 26, No. 3

November 2019

PROGRAM

November Unit Programs will focus on the new recycling program rules being implemented in several Allegheny County communities. **No Pittsburgh Central Unit this month.**

NEW LOCATION AND DAY OF WEEK CHANGES FOR NORTH HILLS UNIT

Due to the presence of preschool children in the area of St. John's Church where the unit met, that area is now locked during school hours as a safety precaution. The new meeting location is **St Paul's Methodist Church at 1965 Ferguson Road in Hampton**. The meetings will be on **The third TUESDAYS of the month**. The room will be the New Horizon Room. The entrance door is marked as The Genesis Hallway. Meeting time will stay at 10 A M.

2019 Shale & Public Health Conference

Tuesday November 19, 2019

from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (registration/sign-in at 8:30 a.m.)

The conference is free

\$14 for optional buffet lunch - vegan option available

The conference is presented by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and hosted by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh University Club, 123 University Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

[Register Now](#)

This year's conference will feature new research presented by national experts:

- Published in July – **Lisa McKenzie PhD MPH**: Congenital Heart Defects and intensity of oil and gas well site activity in early pregnancy
- Published in April – **Lee Ann Hill MPH** presenting PSE Healthy Energy's examination of how Oil and Gas Waste Management in Pennsylvania has been handled from 1991-2017
- Published in July – **Joan A. Casey PhD** of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health on unconventional natural gas development, maternal anxiety and depression during pregnancy, and birth outcomes in Pennsylvania

...and more

Justin Nobel journalist for Rolling Stone and other publications, on radioactive waste

Nicole Deziel PhD MHS principal investigator for the Yale Drinking WATER study

Tara McAlexander, PhD, MPH Postdoctoral Fellow Drexel School of Public Health, results from research on unconventional natural gas development, heart failure hospitalizations, and the BNP biomarker

Michael McCawley PhD of West Virginia University, on compressor station emissions and health

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIME CHANGE AND THANKSGIVING



Time change is the weekend AFTER Halloween – glad for the kids and parents who will not be walking in the dark for the evening. Time change also signals that an election is only a few days away.

Thanks to all the League members who have helped with the forums we have held this fall, thanks to the members who have helped with VOTE41, and thanks to all who will be staffing the polls on November 5th. Most especially, thanks to all who have encouraged family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and strangers to be informed citizens and VOTE on Election Day.

For some, who may have completed a voter registration form or gone online to register, this will be their first time voting – thank them if you get a chance. We need all eligible citizens to vote to help determine what happens in our local communities and school districts, as well as in the larger communities of our state and nation in other years.

Please get the word out. Whether your street gets plowed after a snowstorm, police and fire department coverage, class sizes in our schools – the people we vote for in November will be making decisions for us on these issues. Don't

forget about Thanksgiving, and thank those who have been willing to give of their time to help our communities in so many ways.

A special thank you to everyone who votes and to the many League members who have volunteered to help in all the work we have done in the last year. Sometimes, members are not able to participate in League activities due to issues such as work, school, health issues and family responsibilities. If that is you, I want to thank you for being a member anyway, since your belonging helps us as a group to have a stronger and more vocal voice in our community. Thank you! And be sure folks vote on November 5th!

Maureen Mamula

Is Your Voting Place Accessible?

Please help us make sure that all Allegheny County polling locations are accessible on voting day! When you go to vote on Nov 5, please take a few minutes to see if the entrance has a ramp or elevator and has adequate signage. Then note your observations on this spreadsheet:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B59alDpe7B5IYVZ4cWd4bDJneVo3Z1ZwUGtmVk1UajVOVzJV/view?usp=drivesdk>

Please sign up in advance so that we can make sure we have coverage everywhere. Thank you!

Questions? Contact Jen Frenchek at jenny.fein@gmail.com

Jen Frenchek

NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB

The Non-Fiction Book Club will meet on Friday, November 22 at the Squirrel Hill Library at 10:15. This month our topic will be IMMIGRATION ISSUES. Once a year we choose a topic that has been very much in the news and also has had many books written concerning the issue. Each person is being asked to choose their own book – depending on their particular interest – and give a short summary (recommendation or not). Barb Jones has compiled a list of possibilities if you need suggestions. Also, if you have found a particularly pertinent article, please share it with us. If you have any questions, please contact Phyllis at lpdrey@verizon.net or 412-802-6028. Even if you don't have time to read a book, join us for the discussion.

Volume 26 No 3

November 2019

Published monthly except January, June and August by

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh
436 Seventh Ave., Suite 350
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
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.

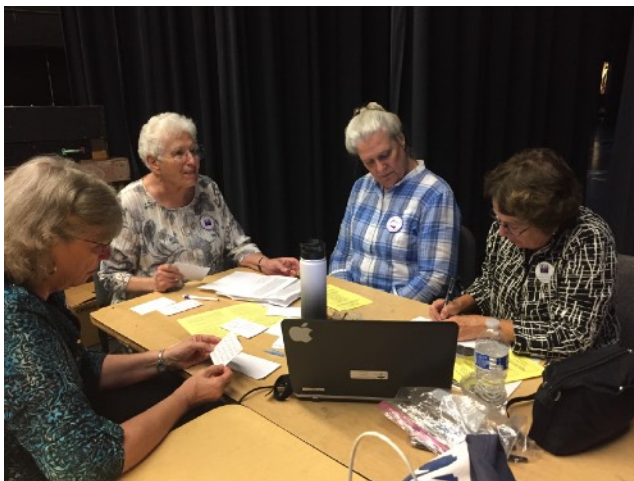
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V.P.2 Program	Christina Beuger	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
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Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	



Sorters Linda Schneider, Sue Broughton, Cris Graham and Arlene Levy review many questions submitted for the North Allegheny School Board forum.



Maureen Grosheider did double duty moderating both the Plum Borough Council and Plum School Board forums on October 17.

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 Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. at St Paul's Methodist Church at 1965 Ferguson Road in Hampton. 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, 1 pm. Contact Evelyn Murrin at 412-661-3306 or evelynmurrin@aol.com.
 - ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
1st Tuesday, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or jbclack@yahoo.com.
 - ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or nancynaragon@msn.com
 - ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Judy Donohue at 412-373-8697 or jrdono71@gmail.com

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER CALENDAR

November – No Pittsburgh Central Unit Meeting

05 Tue	General Election, Polls open 7am - 8pm
07 Thur	South Hills Unit Meeting – New recycling programs
11 Mon	Board Meeting
15 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, Federal Courthouse, 9:00 am
15 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 am
16 Sat	Shale Committee Conf. Call - 11 am - 12 pm
19 Tue	Shale and Public Health Conference, University Club, see page 5
19 Tue	North Hills Unit Meeting – New recycling programs
20 Wed	Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremony, CCAC South
27 Wed	Education Advocacy Com. Meeting, Squirrel Hill Library, 1:00 pm
28 Thur	Thanksgiving Day - office closed

December – No unit meetings in December

03 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30 pm, CIC office
04 Wed	Naturalization & Voter Reg., U.S.C.I.S. Penn Center, 12:30, 2:15 pm
09 Mon	Board Meeting
20 Fri	Naturalization & voter registration, Federal Courthouse, 9:00 am
20 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, Squirrel Hill Library, 10:15 am
25 Wed	Christmas Day, office closed

NEW MEMBERS

Pittsburgh Central

Eddie Shaw
Household with Wendy Shaw
eddiebshaw@gmail.com

Juliet Zavon
Household with Gerard Cornuejols
julietzavon@gmail.com

North Hills

Mary Kerstetter
marybjk@comcast.net
Marilyn Mulvihill
Mimi15143@yahoo.com

Marie Jackson
Household with Miles Jackson
mariejacksonlibrarian@gmail.com

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair

Nine of Fifteen Forums Held



The LWVGP Voter Service Committee planned candidate forums for fifteen local races from October 2 – October 29. Of those fifteen, nine unique forums were held: Allegheny County Chief Executive, Bellevue Borough Council, Hampton Township School Board, Hampton Township Council, North Allegheny School Board, Pittsburgh City Council District 1, Pittsburgh City Council District 9, Plum Borough Council, and Plum School Board.

The six that cancelled (due to insufficient candidates agreeing to participate) included Allegheny County Controller, Allegheny County Council District 2, Allegheny County Council District 5, Allegheny County District Attorney, Magisterial District Judge 05-02-25 (Coraopolis), and Upper St. Clair School Board.

Having to cancel a forum when candidates do not agree to appear is very disappointing. All the planning has gone into getting a site, inviting the candidates, and recruiting volunteers. More importantly, the public loses out on the opportunity to hear answers to their written questions from the range of candidates vying to represent them. LWV is not allowed to conduct a forum if only one candidate of two running agrees to participate because it would appear that the LWV were endorsing that one candidate.

The LWVGP live streams each of our candidate forums on the Facebook page of the “League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh.” Anyone may view the forum live. At any time thereafter, an individual may view the forum or share it to their own or their organization’s Facebook page. MANY people view our forums. As of October 21, views ranged from 261 for the County Executive, to 401 for Pittsburgh Council District 1, to 789 for Pittsburgh Council District 9, to 720 and 776 for the two Plum forums, to 875 for North Allegheny School Board. (The two Hampton forums and the Bellevue forum had not yet been held.) Livestreaming our forums greatly increases the number of voters who hear the candidates’ answers to the audience’s questions.

The LWV likes to collaborate with other non-partisan organizations. When students are involved, like at North Allegheny Senior High School or CCAC Allegheny, the LWV volunteers step back into a mentorship role and let the students fulfill the duties. We hope that encourages these young adults to be civically engaged volunteers in the future. Co-sponsoring organizations providing volunteers for the forums included Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, (ACLU), Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP), CCAC Phi Theta Kappa Honor Students, CCAC Political Science Club, Hampton Parents and Professional Education Network (HAPPEN), North Allegheny Senior High School Student Council, Pittsburgh UNITED, and Voter Empowerment Education & Enrichment Movement (VEEEM).

Each candidate forum required from 8 – 15 LWV volunteers. Thanks to each of these 45 individuals for helping at one or more forums: Ron Bandes, Joyce Beard, Phyllis Bianculli, Cris Beuger, Sue Broughton, Jane Butler, Judy Clack, Joan Cucinotta, Judy Diorio, Susan Fair, Cris Graham, Maureen Grosheider, Cynthia Cominsky, Phyllis Dreyfuss, Emily Ferri, Laryn Finder, Moe Finder, Debra Fyock, Judy Gifford, Barb Grover, Dorothea Hall, Kathy Herbst, Amy Kleissas, Bridget Kruszka, Arlene Levy, Jessica Lynch, Maria Magone, Maureen Mamula, Lora Medwid, Joanne Moore, Nancy Mott, Don Naragon, Nancy Naragon, Kathy Nimmo, Eileen Olmsted, Clare Porac, Rosemary Prostko, Ruth Quint, Kathy Scheuble, Linda Schneider, Ellie Siegal, Deb Simak, Doug Spindler, Dorothy Valimont, and Heather Wechter.

Rest up, volunteers! The Primary Election is Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Besides the Presidential Primary, some State Senators, all State Representatives and all members of the U. S. House of Representatives could have primaries.

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of Pennsylvania

Question: Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to grant certain rights to crime victims, including to be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity; considering their safety in bail proceedings; timely notice and opportunity to take part in public proceedings; reasonable protection from the accused; right to refuse discovery requests made by the accused; restitution and return of property; proceedings free from delay; and to be informed of the rights, so they can enforce them?

League Explanation of the Issue:

Marsy's Law will alter the state constitution to significantly expand rights to victims, and in some cases victims' families or relatives directly harmed by an accused. Marsy's Law is named after Marsy Nicholas, a woman stalked and killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. One week after her death, her mother and brother, Henry, walked into a grocery store where they saw the accused murderer. The family had no idea that he had been released on bail. Her brother, Dr. Henry T. Nicholas, a billionaire from California, is the key backer and proponent of Marsy's Law.

The "Marsy's Law for all" campaign seeks through ballot measures to enshrine in state constitutions a set of victims' rights laws, like that proposed in Pennsylvania. The campaign's goal is to pass this in every state constitution and then to amend the U.S. Constitution to include victims' rights. Nearly \$850,000 has been spent lobbying in Pennsylvania since December 2017. Nationwide, since the first Marsy's Law passed by ballot measure in California in 2008, \$102.26M has been spent. Of this, Dr. Nicholas contributed about 97%.

Pennsylvania has existing statutory laws supporting crime victims, specifically the Crime Victims Act of 1998. Marsy's Law would go further altering the state constitution to expand existing statutory rights to ensure that crime victims and their families have a meaningful role throughout criminal and juvenile justice systems; provide crime victims with specific constitutional rights, including the right to be treated with fairness and respect for the victim's safety, dignity, and privacy; to be notified about and present at proceedings; to be heard at proceedings involving release, plea, sentencing, disposition, or parole of the accused; to a prompt conclusion of the case; to reasonable protection from the accused or those acting on behalf of the accused; to be notified about release or escape of the accused; to refuse an interview, deposition or discovery at the request of the accused; and full and timely restitution from the individual or entity convicted of the criminal offense.

Marsy's Law is premised on the notion that victims should have "equal rights" to defendants yet the U.S. Constitution and all 50 state constitutions guarantee defendants' rights because they are rights against the *state*, not because defendants are valued more than victims and their families. Defendants' rights only apply when the state is attempting to deprive the accused – not the victim – of life, liberty, or property. They serve as essential checks against government abuse, preventing the government from arresting and imprisoning anyone, for any reason, at any time.

Marsy's Law initiatives started in California and doubled from 6, to 12 passed, in 2018. However, many states' legislatures have not passed Marsy's Law or it was overturned as unconstitutional or improper after it was passed into law.

Pros:

- This proposed amendment will increase the legal rights and privileges of victims and their families.

Continued next page

- It will ensure victims and their families are informed when the accused offender is released from custody.
- It will require crime victims be informed of their rights.
- It will protect victims and their families from the accused, or from those assisting the accused.

Cons:

- The amendment would override state law, eliminating judges' abilities to weigh the rights of victims and defendants.
- The amendment would alter nine existing provisions of the constitution without submitting each constitutional change separately as a ballot question as required by the PA Supreme Court.
- Victims are already protected by the PA Crime Victims Act of 1998.
- Victims could refuse to be interviewed or to turn over pertinent evidence or testimony. The right of accused persons to face their accusers and to see the evidence against them is a bedrock principle of the American judicial system that would be damaged by this provision.
- Passage would create additional costs and needs on law enforcement, courts and government officials.

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GOVERNOR WOLF PROPOSES IMPORTANT SCHOOL REFORMS

The Education Study and Advocacy Committee has been studying and reviewing issues surrounding Charter schools—both brick and mortar and cyber – for several years. We have been concerned about accountability on how tax dollars are spent, how the students are being taught, transparency of the selection process and testing results.

Governor Tom Wolf has taken executive action, overhauling regulations, and has proposed legislation to comprehensively reform the law. The governor outlined his vision that will strengthen charter school quality, accountability and transparency in order to control costs and improve outcomes for students. He announced comprehensive charter school reform through executive action, regulation, and legislation.

Governor Wolf said, “While many charter schools are succeeding, others, especially some cyber charter schools, are underperforming, and we are not doing enough to hold them accountable to the taxpaying public and the children they serve. Brick-and-mortar charter and cyber charter schools, and for-profit companies that manage many of them, are not held to the same ethical and transparency standards of traditional public schools. Despite the rising costs of charter schools to school districts and property taxpayers, school districts and state government have limited authority to hold charter schools accountable.” Governor Wolf has tasked the Department of Education (PDE) with developing regulations.

These are just a few examples of what Governor Wolf has proposed.

- Allow school districts to limit student enrollment at charters that do not provide a high-quality, equitable education to students.
- Require transparent charter school admission and enrollment policies that do not discriminate based on intellectual or athletic ability, race/ethnicity, gender, or disability, among other student characteristics.
- Establish a clear process that requires charters to accurately document their costs.
- Prevent charters from over charging districts and taxpayers for the educational services they provide.
- *Transparency and Accountability for All School Leadership/Fair and Predictable Funding for All Public Schools/Accountability on Behalf of Taxpayers*
- In addition to executive action, the governor will propose comprehensive charter school reform legislation containing the regulatory changes.

Our committee will continue to follow closely and keep you informed of the follow up to Governor Wolf’s proposals.

Phyllis Dreyfuss and Joan Franklin



A large LWVGP crew was on hand to register the new citizens to vote on October 11 at Heinz History Center: Arlene Levy (LWV Speaker), Phyllis Dreyfuss, Judy Clack, Clare Porac, Deb Simak, Lynne Preisser, Christine Peters, Bonnie Gillis, and Marie Jackson.



Forty-six newly naturalized citizens happily wave American flags at Heinz History Center on October 11.