

HER VOTER

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

VOLUME 28, No. 10

JULY-AUGUST

2022 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) KICK-OFF WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 7:00-8:30 PM

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh
Our theme for the year is: Our League History and Your History Intersect to Make "Her-story" a Great Legacy!

SANDRA KERR – Speaker for this meeting (previously scheduled to speak at our annual meeting)

Sandra (Sandy) Kerr, a resident of Pipersville, joined the Bucks County LWV in 2018. She is Co-president; is responsible for the Speakers Bureau and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; serves as League representative on the LWVPA Equity team; and is a member of the LWVPA Equity education subcommittee.

Sandy is a retired pharmaceutical executive with over 30 years of industry experience, 15 of which were focused on regulatory compliance. Sandy currently serves as a Board member and Foundation Trustee of KidsPeace, a private charity dedicated to serving the behavioral and mental health needs of children, families and communities. Sandy is also a volunteer with the Coalition to Shelter and Support the Homeless.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85699366057?pwd=QWpXK09Demp3Mi9mS2dqRG1SdXFYdz09>

CIVIC STAR AWARD 2022 TO RUTH QUINT by Nancy Naragon

Throughout its 102-year history, members of the League of Women Voters have valued and embraced the Constitutional concept of a democratic republic and have worked hard to be part of that visionary implementation.

That's why League members promote citizen participation in government – registering, voting, working on campaigns, running for office, communicating and working with elected officials. It's why we study and try to understand public issues and share what we have learned with other citizens. It's why we promote elections and try to ensure they're fair and accessible.

All League members are involved in these processes, but at different times, some individuals contribute extraordinary time, effort and creativity toward fostering the League's mission and achieving our goals. It's why the League of Women Voters of

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LWVPGH AND LWVPA WIN LWVUS AWARDS

Both LWVPA and LWVPGH won awards for their innovative work at the LWVUS Convention 2022. Although the monetary amounts are not huge (\$500) the prestige of being recognized among Leagues nationwide makes it a big win – 3 awards in PA out of 6 nationwide. The combined activities of Judy Clack's Voter Service Committee and sub-committees and Amy Kleissas' Civic Education Committee were highlighted in the application we submitted. We are so proud of the work we do!

LWVPGH was recognized by LWVUS as the top nominee for the "Innovating Our Power" award. "This category showcases the way Leagues have had to innovate their work over the past biennium. The catalyst for innovation could be anything from the pandemic to severe voter disenfranchisement to natural disaster or something else that required a League to come up with a new way of performing parts or all of your work."

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HELLO —



Allow me to introduce myself. I am Michele Knoll, your newly elected President of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh. I am honored to have been selected to lead this storied organization in these times when our Democracy remains under threat. Our

mission, of assuring every person in this region, this Commonwealth, this Nation, can vote unhindered and easily, remains at the forefront of my mind as I embark on this journey with you, the largest, most active League in the State.

I am a lifelong resident of Allegheny County and a Super Voter, in the vernacular of election speak. I want us as a League to encourage and support new voters, voters with disabilities, older voters, and marginalized voters as well as the larger voter pool to be able to vote knowledgeably in every election.

Our candidate forums and Civic Education programs inform voters with background information that will enable them to make judicious decisions at the polls. Our website is an invaluable tool, one that many leagues across the nation model, for members as well as the general public. Our members attend naturalization ceremonies to help new citizens register to vote. We distribute thousands of packets of information to schools, senior housing facilities, and organizations so that voters understand how to

find out more about candidates and issues. Just this year, we created a postcard with pertinent websites for voters so that they can easily access information. Our Facts for Citizens remains a vital informative piece of literature that finds its way into many hands prior to an election. Here's a [link](#) for easy access. Please pass it on to neighbors, relatives, and friends so that they too can cast the most informed vote possible. Our Birthday Card Invitation to vote reaches High School Students across the region just as they are reaching 18. If you have someone you know is turning 18, here is the [link](#). (See our website for a birthday card if your recipient is from another state.)

Our efforts have been tireless in reaching voters to make them aware of the opportunities to find out more about candidates and voting. We also want our region's residents to remain vigilant when voting this year since our Legislators have included Constitutional Amendments in the ballot. The statement in which the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania roundly condemns these amendments can be viewed at this [link](#). Please refer voters to our website for the facts on what SB106, a package of 5 Constitutional Amendments, includes.

My background as an educator, most recently of very young children with delays and disabilities, has prepared me to fight for the rights of the most marginalized of our citizens. As I attended the National Convention of the League of Women Voters this year, I listened avidly to the exhortations of LWVUS to look at all our work through a DEI (Diversity, Equality, Inclusivity) lens. The League of Women Voters started with a disenfranchised group of peoples, women, so we must always strive to reach those among us who are ready and able to vote but feel they don't have a place at the table.

We, as a League, have been honored to receive a National Award "Innovating Our Power" at the National Convention. Our State League of Women Voters won two awards "Innovating Our Power" and "Increasing Power Through Partnerships". These awards are proof that we are working hard to reach voters and empower them through education. I am empowered by our past successes and excited by our future possibilities.

Michele Knoll, President

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LEAGUE MEETING STRUCTURE

Board Meetings

- ✓ **Second Monday** of the month.. Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., currently by Zoom.

Local Area Unit Meetings

- ✓ **Pittsburgh Central:** Currently not meeting. Contact Martha Raak at 412-477-7572 or marbiker1@gmail.com
- ✓ **North Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or namott001@gmail.com
- ✓ **South Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or mamula159@hotmail.com

Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**
1st Wednesday by Zoom.
Chair is Kathy Nagle,
education@lwvpgh.org or
1-814-241-8149
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 12:30 pm.
by Zoom. Additional meetings
occasionally added as needed.
Chair is Judy Clack at
512-731-0280
voterservice@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ **Advocacy Committee**
3rd Monday by Zoom.
Chair Michele Knoll
412-389-1387
advocacy@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Currently not meeting.
Contact Nancy Naragon at
412-366-2446 or
development@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Meeting
place determined each month,
see calendar. Contact Joan
Cucinotta, 412-708-2335 or
joancucinotta@gmail.com

This column will be updated as in-person meetings become possible or changes in League programming are made.

August-September Calendar

August

2 Tue	Voter Service Committee meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm on Zoom
8 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm, on Zoom
10 Wed	2022 DEI Kickoff Meeting, 7:00-8:30 pm on Zoom
19 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting
16 21	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch here . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.

September

6 Tue	Voter Service Committee meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm on Zoom
12 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm, on Zoom
16 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting
20 Tue	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch here . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.



Re-erecting our canopy due to heavy winds at the Juneteenth celebration were Tracy Battle, Maureen Grosheider, Sandra Almond (Tracy's mom), and a volunteer from the State Farm booth. Also registering voters in Point State Park were Judy Clack, Tené Croom, Dallas DiLeo, Lucine Fulgueras, Julie Gatti, Maripat Kwaczala, Annette and Preston Shimer.

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Greater Pittsburgh created the Civic Star Award – to recognize those extraordinary efforts and thank those individuals who make that special contribution to that visionary implementation.

This year, we recognize **Ruth Quint** as our awardee. Although Ruth has not been a long time League member, she has had an outsize impact on our League. She first got involved with the League as a non-member marching in the Juneteenth parade. She brought along a group of her friends and they had a bunch of homemade signs – signs that we are still using today!

Ruth joined after that first parade with us and has been an active member ever since. After our previous Webmaster resigned due to family commitments, we needed a replacement and Ruth raised her hand. It was while we were making the transition to Club Express for our website and membership records, so we only had a framework of what we wanted. Being the former teacher that she is, she took charge, learned all the ins and outs of how to create a website using Club Express, and what we have today for our website is a marvel. It is the envy of Leagues not just in PA, but also across the country.

Now creating a website is sometimes just creating a template of boxes into which you put some information, but Ruth has done far more than that. She is always asking herself the question – what kind of information do voters want and need and how should that be presented. She researches, seeks out information and collaborates with other League members to create content on things like, How does the Legislature Work; What is PA's Court system like; What kinds of cases does each level of the Court system handle; how does our public education system work? All of that material can be found on our website.

When PA State Senate and House districts were realigned earlier this year, Ruth decided that every voter should be able to go to our website and see the new map of Allegheny County Districts, but she also decided that they needed to know which neighborhoods were in each district. That required a painstaking effort to take maps and overlay them on top of the neighborhoods in the region and then to translate that into understandable data on our website. Ruth did it, and our website is one of the best locations to find that kind of specific information.

One of the things LWVPGH prides itself on is our Voters Guide, which is a comprehensive list of which candidates are running in which districts. The printed version appears in The Pittsburgh Courier twice a year, but it really only covers those races in which City of Pittsburgh residents vote. It doesn't cover things like school board or legislative races outside of the city. Ruth created digital mini-guides for many of these races. It was a first for us and meant we reached a lot more voters than previously.

Most of you are aware of our little blue printed brochure called Facts for Citizens. We print and distribute thousands of those each year. This year, Ruth decided that we needed a digital version of Facts for Citizens. She convened a special committee that worked on getting all the relevant information to go in the on-line version and added hot links that allow readers to simply click and go immediately to a website for additional information. It has the added value of being able to be updated in real time as events occur. For example, there were two special elections in Pittsburgh to fill legislative seats when Mayor Gainey and Representative Wheatley resigned their posts. Ruth easily changed the digital Facts for Citizens to reflect the new elections. Even though we still had some copies of the printed version, we had to do a reprint to reflect the special elections.



Ruth's award, almost hidden among her lovely orchids.
Can you find it?

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Rather than have our website be a static set of information, Ruth is constantly updating, changing information and providing relevant data to voters. She has added blogs – one on climate; one on voting and elections; and one highlighting our monthly Book Club. As soon as the Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe V. Wade was published, Ruth had it up on our website with links to both the state and national League reactions.

Ruth also understands the importance of collaboration in all this, so she has created a Web Team, which she chairs. The Web Team meets monthly to discuss how to improve the website and what our focus should be.

Ruth Quint is the embodiment of what the League is about – we gather information and we disseminate it to our fellow citizens. Ruth is doing that each and every day and we are delighted to recognize her extraordinary contributions with the 2022 Civic Star Award.

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Credit for the award goes to all the LWVPGH volunteers, chairs of committees, and board members who created new ways to provide voter education and election information to the residents of Allegheny County during the pandemic.

Here's how LWVUS summarized the work LWVPGH described in our application for the award:

"Voter outreach has always been a major component of the efforts by LWV of Greater Pittsburgh to Make Democracy Work by engaging with marginalized groups of voters. Because the coronavirus pandemic prevented us from implementing our usual person-to-person contacts, we had to revamp our voter outreach to reach a maximum number of potential voters.

One way was by completely redesigning the LWVPGH website with greatly enhanced online material which became a resource of unique printable materials for individuals and non-partisan agencies in the community. Besides housing these printable resources, the new website connected online users with comprehensive voter, election, and government information. An example was the Municipal Election 2021 web page with short videos of all the 39 candidates for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, which received more than 1200 views.

Because pandemic data informed us that 40% of citizens in underserved communities did not have reliable access to the internet, we realized we needed other ways to reach potential voters with trustworthy information. Our Voter Services Committee reorganized their efforts by creating nine subcommittees, each of which targeted a specific component of our outreach: Social Media, Poll Workers, Rides to the Polls, Naturalization Ceremonies, Food Pantries, Senior Subsidized Housing, Religious Institutions, Civic Education in Schools and Community, and Colleges and Universities. Each subcommittee developed new avenues for reaching their unique constituents. These avenues included partnering with The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Carnegie Public Libraries, Allegheny County Library Association, the local Junior League, local HUD office, senior housing managers and management companies, local university representatives, and staff and students in high schools with underserved populations. We also collaborated with resilient community partners including the Black Political Empowerment Project, Voter Empowerment Education & Enrichment Movement, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Casa San Jose, and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh."



VOTER SERVICE REPORT by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



Voter Service Committee Meeting is Tues. Aug. 2, 12:30 – 2:30 pm on Zoom. All members are welcome to attend. Hear about our preparations for the General Election. Would you like to reach out electronically to senior housing buildings or faith-based institutions, join a packing bee of voter information for food pantry families, deliver door hangers to senior subsidized housing buildings, create educational videos, assist at a candidate forum, research candidate email addresses for Vote411, or conduct voter registration at colleges, community festivals, or farmers' markets? Attend our meetings to learn how. If you can't attend, let me know what appeals to you and I'll connect you with the chair of that endeavor. Contact Judy Clack, voterservice@lwvpgh.org, for agenda, Zoom link, or to join a committee. You can also find Zoom link on the online Member Calendar.

Candidate Forums: A 17th Congressional debate is being planned with WTAE between Chris Deluzio (D) and Jeremy Shaffer (R), as well as a **Gubernatorial** debate with WTAE and LWVPA between Josh Shapiro (D) and Douglas Mastriano (R). For which **PA Senate** races and which **PA Representative** races should the LWVPGH hold candidate forums? If you live in a district that has a "hot" race, let me know to add it to the list of possible forums. For example, the 38th PA Senate race pits two incumbents against each other: Lindsey Williams (D) [currently the 38th District Senator] vs Lori Mizgorski (R) [currently the 30th District Representative]. **What other races should be covered?**

Busy Committees: In July, committees were busy getting ready to conduct voter education outreach to their constituents. **Senior Subsidized Housing** is authoring a PDF handout to distribute to over 250 housing managers with voter education information for the Fall General Election. **Food Pantry Committee** is designing refrigerator magnets with LWV URLs of voting websites to distribute to all Allegheny County families who access food pantries. **Civic Education in Schools and Community Committees** have been very busy revising multiple PowerPoint presentations, preparing online and in-person materials for universities, and learning how to make videos at the PCTV-21 studio. **Voter Registration Committee** is gearing up for multiple events at community fairs, universities, and farmers markets.

Protect Democracy. Fight Voter Suppression. Be a Poll Worker.

Many of us are concerned about our democracy. Being a Poll Worker is one way to help ensure our elections are fair and open to all eligible voters. The Allegheny County Division of Elections wrote: "With 1,323 polling places, Allegheny County relies on nearly 6,600 poll workers each election day. Interested in serving? Complete the poll worker application, learn more about the process, and get general information at <https://alleghenycounty.us/elections/poll-workers.aspx>. Poll workers earn from \$150 to \$175 for the day and new poll workers also receive paid training. Know a student who may be interested? Allegheny County has a Student Poll Worker Program too where youth can receive community service credit or pay. Learn more at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/elections/student-poll-worker-program.aspx>."



The heat was brutal, "feeling like 96 degrees," but these volunteers smiled throughout their voter registration efforts at the McKeesport Good Neighbor Day on June 15, 2022. Pictured are Carol McCullough, Julie Zvon (our ever-energetic chair), Carol Frieze, and Danny Sleator. Not pictured are Judy Clack, Diane Lassman, and Susan Smith

LWVPGH AIMS TO BUILD AN EVEN STRONGER MEMBERSHIP

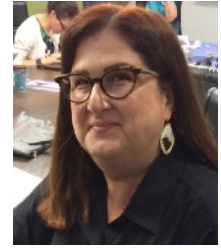
by Judy Diorio, Membership Chair

With about 290 active members, LWVPGH is the largest local League in Pennsylvania, and does its best to empower voters and defend democracy in Allegheny County. With our League colleagues across the country, we have an even greater influence on both voter services and issue advocacy, but we are also eager to increase the League's impact by growing our membership in number, and in diversity of age, income, and demographic profile.

With that goal in mind, LWVPGH now offers free student memberships to 16- to 26-year-olds who are enrolled full- or part-time in a secondary or post-secondary institution. We also provide scholarships to potential members of any age who may not be able to pay our dues. Currently, of the \$60 we collect for membership dues, our League retains only \$8, with the remainder going to our state and national Leagues. The amount we transfer to LWVPA and LWVUS is called Per Member Payment (PMP).

At the recent biennial national League convention, the delegates voted to eliminate PMP beginning in 2024. When this policy change takes effect, it will give us the flexibility to join many other Leagues in proffering a sliding scale for dues, with members paying as they are able. In addition to being able to extend free memberships to those who need them, we will be offering tiered memberships, with premium levels for those who would like to donate a higher amount.

If you are interested in helping LWVPGH to strengthen our program for potential, new, and renewing members by contacting them to answer questions, developing informational materials, or helping to manage our operations, please call our Membership Director, Judy Diorio, at 412-241-5769 or email her at membership@lwvpgh.org. Judy is also happy to answer any questions you have about joining or being active in our League, or about our membership scholarships. Our Member Hub page at lwvpgh.org is also an excellent resource.



NEW BOARD MEMBER: BARBARA GRABOWSKI

Barbara Grabowski grew up near Detroit Michigan and moved to Pittsburgh in 1993. Her mother was an active member of the League of Women Voters of Oakland County, and she is proud to continue the tradition of civic engagement. She received B.S. and M.S. Degrees in Natural Resources and Environmental Policy from Michigan State University and a J.D. from Vermont Law School.

From 1991 to 2019 she was an attorney with the Office of Chief Counsel for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection representing the Department before the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board, the Pennsylvania Appellate Courts and the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts.

Barbara retired in October 2019 and soon after joined the LWVPGH to begin working with the Voter Services Committee. She looks forward to serving as the Program Chair in 2022-2024. Barbara lives in Swissvale, State Representative District 34, U.S. House District 17, and School District: Woodland Hills.

NEW BOARD MEMBER: ELLIE SIEGAL



Eleanor (Ellie) Siegal began working with PA Fair Districts in 2017 after becoming educated about the outrageous gerrymandering in PA. She later joined the League with an interest in naturalization registration and various voter services committees e.g. food pantries. She also started working with Preston on budget issues and recently was voted Budget Director.

Ellie has been involved with financial and administrative matters throughout her working career....which has recently ended. She was an accountant with a local CPA firm for 13 years, an administrator for medical, accounting and legal firms. Thirty one years ago she combined her financial and administrative skills and opened her own business. In addition to her career she has been involved with many non-profits such as PAAR, PATF (now Allies for Health), Persad and currently Prevention Point Pittsburgh and Jewish Assistance Fund. Ellie lives in Sewickley on a horse farm with her very significant other, Bill Manifesto. And she loves traveling to Italy and Santa Fe, NM.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY by Amy Kleissas



What I Learned at the LWVUS Convention- Denver (June 24-26)

I attended a workshop entitled, “Intergenerational Collaboration,” conducted by State Leagues from Maine, Arizona, and Ohio. I was truly inspired by the words from the young people on this panel. Here is what they said:

- Youth—now numbering 8.3 million—benefit from intergenerational collaboration with League of Women Voters members whom they trust to be nonpartisan.
- Youth have different skill sets and can bring different strengths to the table.
- They have a voice, so give them a microphone!
- Because of their own lived experiences, youth are very serious about their futures, and they have a deep connection to the issues they are passionate about.
- The older cohort needs to try to understand the younger cohorts’ language and should increase interactions with young people when they can.
- Bringing the generations together makes possible a different way of looking at things. New ideas for old problems and new ideas for new problems become possible.
- The most moving thing these young people said was that connections between the generations gives youth hope—which is what they really need in these times. They need hope to do this work.
- They also need financial support and now with our \$0 cost of student membership, our local League can provide that support. I’m very thankful to Judy Diorio, Preston Shimer, and our members for carrying through with this change.
- Students are ready to get involved—they just need to know how. Which is why the Civic Education team will be focusing more on Advocacy Training for young people.
- The student members asked that we listen to youth, figure out what they already know, then fill in the gaps. And we need to give them a way to take action. They want to be problem solvers. During our presentations, we will reach out to high school, college, and university students with information about LWVPGH membership.



The Pennsylvania in-person delegation:
Top row: Meg Pierce, Executive Director LWVPA, Brett Dolente,
Bottom Row: Amy Kleissas, Roberta Winters, and Mary Erdman.



Wisconsin delegation after making their motion “to amend the LWVUS Bylaws, Article III, Section 2A, ‘Voting Members. Persons at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS,’ by striking ‘at least 16 years of age.’” The motion failed.

Continued next page

- The youth panel asked us to build relationships, build trust, give hope, and empower ALL youth, not just students in high school or colleges/universities, to participate in our democracy. Our Civic Education teams are going to broaden outreach with resources to different groups of post-high school youth like trade and technical schools and to young people in the workforce.

Series of College-University Slide Decks (Presentations):

Our Civic Education teams have been working all summer to finalize a menu of presentations (slide shows – some with narration, which makes them videos) in addition to revising the Voter Resource Library. The menu of resources is being developed in collaboration with CMU's Civic Engagement team of Student Affairs. We plan to have this work ready by mid-August so we can share our series with other colleges and universities, just as students come back to campuses for orientation. We also are scheduling in-person presentations on campuses and will assist student-led voter drives.

VIDEO TEAM

Our newly organized VIDEO team started up again thanks to Jane Butler's contact with folks at PCTV21. We had an enlightening tour of the studio. Staff at this Public Access TV station are extremely supportive, encouraging our efforts to just jump in and start making videos.

High School Team Member, Michelle Grant, has agreed to become our producer and has signed up for 7 training sessions in the next two months.

OTHER PROJECTS:

We will be delivering our **"Claim Your Power"** voter registration posters with trackable QR codes and "Facts for Citizens" posters to college campuses in August.

Team member, Joanne Moore, has created a proposed program to send the **"Happy 18th Birthday"** voter registration posters with trackable QR Codes to ALL Allegheny County high schools by the end of September. I sent a list of 2022 Midterm Election resources, including our first Canva video, the **"Journey of an Official Election Ballot,"** to my 30-plus community contacts and will continue to update them throughout election season. Please take a few minutes to view our video on our YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/lmjRm4LH_n4.

ATTENDING THE CONVENTION ON ZOOM by Eileen Olmsted

I was happy to attend the 2022 LWVUS National Convention this year remotely via Zoom, and it was a generally satisfactory experience. It certainly helped bring out more people for the convention. Between live attendees and those of us logging in remotely there were over 1000 delegates. There were some glitches particularly during the voting in plenary sessions and with respect to the time allowed for debate in the Plenaries, which was not sufficient. Most problems were resolved by the tech-savvy staff and I was glad to have been there to see the changes that are coming for the League and that many younger members were both online and present at the Denver site.



I attended excellent workshops where Leagues shared new and interesting ideas on engaging with partners, forming youth groups in League, and combating misinformation in social media and other outlets. The following are some of those I attended. Young Voters; New & Returning Citizens; Winning Voter Outreach Campaigns; Maximizing Election Outreach Through Partnerships.

SUMMARY OF THE LWVUS CONVENTION from LWVUS Executive Director Virginia Kase-Solomón

Dear League members,

Sunday concluded the 55th League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) National Convention.

This was the League's first hybrid Convention, with 1000+ members from all 50 states joining both virtually and in-person in Denver, CO.

Notably, the 2022 Convention coincided with the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion. In her [opening remarks](#), LWVUS board president Dr. Deborah Ann Turner reflected on her experiences as an obstetrician/gynecologist and the League's dedication to reproductive justice.

"We hold the power to create a more perfect democracy. Women's rights are human rights, and we will continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored," Dr. Turner stated. "This is the work that the League of Women Voters does...We fight for our freedom. And that's why we are here today at Convention."

Dr. Turner closed by announcing the League's next "moonshot" goal: abolition of the Electoral College. The League has [long supported this goal](#) due to the college's racist history and many shortcomings.

Friday evening, Convention attendees joined Denver activists in marching to the Colorado State Capitol Building and rallying for abortion justice.

Thoughtful action remained a focus throughout Convention. On Thursday, June 23, a [panel of women leaders](#) in the voting rights and social justice movements spoke to the ways in which women can power democracy. Later, [MSNBC political analyst Joy Reid reflected](#) on the essential nature of our work in her keynote address.

The League also shared its [2020-2022 biennium report](#), which showcased the League's impact over the past two years.

Throughout three days of plenary, delegates elected the [2022-2024 LWVUS Board of directors](#). Dr. Deborah Ann Turner was once again elected as board president, a role she has held since 2020.

Delegates also voted on several motions, including the LWVUS budget and various bylaws amendment proposals. Read the [decision summaries](#).

Delegates had the opportunity to attend dozens of workshops and caucuses throughout Convention on topics as diverse as mis- and dis-information, activating young voters, using OutreachCircle, and more.

Due to time constraints, the presentation of Biennium Awards was postponed and will be held the week of July 11. Be on the lookout for a virtual invitation to this celebration!

Thank you again to everyone who made our 55th Convention a time of community, action, and inspiration. This past week reminds us of both the urgency of our work and the power of our members to create a more perfect democracy.

The next two years will determine the course of our nation; as Dr. Turner said, we will "keep on keeping on."

And we will win.

Yours in League,

Team LWV

NEW MEMBERS

NorthHills

Theresa Doerfler

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Sarah N. Maynard-Murray

sarahmaynard@gmail.com

Pittsburgh Central

Tracy Battle

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Tene Croom

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Nadine Klinkenberger

Nink715@gmail.com

South Hills

Renee M. Bourg-Giarrusso

reneebg.lpc@gmail.com

Hillary Frisbie

No email

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

UPCOMING BOOK SELECTIONS

August 19 -- *Political Tribes* by Amy Chu

September 16 -- *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realities around Us* by Ed Yong

We plan to continue to meet in the Anderson Shelter.

Book Commentary – *Walking with the Wind* by John Lewis

If you read John Lewis's memoir, *Walking with the Wind: a Memoir of the Movement*, you'll know he wrote it to preserve the origins and complexities of one of the most important movements of the 20th Century, the Civil Rights Movement. From the watershed moments of bravery in registering Black citizens to vote to the water cannons that responded to the marches against segregation, Lewis uses this book to record and illuminate the many paths within the Civil Rights Movement, not just to pay homage to the bravery of so many activists, but as a register of the true level of systemic racism that existed then but was whitewashed in his own time.

Because Lewis was there at the lunch counters, on the buses, on the Selma Bridge, at the voter registration tables, in Parchman, he had a part in making history itself. Lewis's history of the movement is not linear and neatly sequenced. *Walking with the Wind* tears off the neatly packaged school book histories we have about the Civil Rights Movement. His account comes tumbling out in a volcanic series of violent fits and starts, full of messy bits and pieces, power struggles, and lacerated with bitter recriminations between many of the Black activists.

Who is this book written for? First, anyone who wants to learn more about John Lewis's remarkable life. He sources his intrinsic inclination to care for the welfare of others with his first chore on the family farm, taking care of the "forsaken" chickens. From there Lewis graduates to his heady days of theological and philosophical inspiration while studying to be a preacher at a theological seminary, then to activism that included being beaten in the streets and over forty arrests for political activism. Later he rose to prominence as a leader in important civil rights organizations (SNCC especially), and finally, after working for various political outreach associations, he reached the halls of Congress. All of these details of Lewis's life depict Lewis the historical figure, but the book is more a history of the Civil Rights Movement. I would wager that Lewis wrote the book to help those white people who feel they have a fairly good understanding of the history of the American 20th century but who need to understand that the Black experience cannot be pigeonholed and that the drive for Civil Rights did not follow a straight line. The primary audience may also be those today who feel that the 50s and 60s were a kind of golden era to harken back to, a time of greater civilized behavior, family values, respect for law and order, and respect for justice. As *Walking with the Wind* details, it was nothing like that. Although Injustice was expected in places like Birmingham from people like Bull Connor, the Public Safety Commissioner who used fire hoses and attack dogs, injustice was not expected from high-level politicians like John Kennedy who had made campaign promises and then backpedaled on them. This book offers a reminder that civil rights were won only after many years of deaths, traumas, and torture. This book offers some clarity to the fable that the mid-20th century was a golden age in America.

Always a devout young man, John Lewis had been early on drawn to the aspects of social justice in his Bible studies. After high school, his studies at the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville brought him in touch with thinkers like Thoreau, Gandhi, and Reinhold Niebuhr, who nurtured and strengthened his early commitment to social justice. These philosophers formed the cornerstone of his own approach to social justice that included nonviolent passive resistance, persistent civil disobedience, and the concept of redemptive suffering. But it was not enough to learn about the intellectual aspects of social justice. While in Nashville, Lewis came under the influence of Jim Lawson, an important Civil Rights Movement leader, and tactician. Lawson taught him and others the physical strategies of direct nonviolence, how to apply those strategies to their planning and events, and how to live with the consequences of the physical and emotional pains they would inevitably suffer. There were many other teachers in his life then, but in essence, his time in Nashville gave him the theoretical and the practical fundamentals for the career of his life.

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One might expect that his fundamental commitment to social justice would easily fit into the growing civil rights movement during his time. In reality, there was no monolithic movement of Black activists walking behind Martin Luther King, Jr. in lockstep. Lewis details the realities of the movement with its conflicting goals and sensitive egos. Early on, Lewis's activism specifically drew the explicit disapproval of Thurgood Marshall who preferred the more deliberate, incremental, legal pathways. Martin Luther King Jr. also often disagreed or declined to join in some of Lewis's activities (although Lewis is careful to make plain that he understood and respected each one of King's decisions). Many of them were difficult to swallow, though—for example when Martin Luther King, Jr. would not join the Freedom Rides on the Trailways/Greyhound buses or when King led a second group over the Selma bridge but turned back. The "older" Black leaders frequently disapproved of Lewis's confrontational tactics—the marches, the counter sit-ins at the theaters and lunch counters, and so on. Even some of the firebrand elements of the speech he gave at the March on Washington were purged by more established activists. On the other hand, Lewis had a hard time with the rising militarism of the 'younger' Black leaders like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown. Their approach and style, more urban and Northern, did not include his core values of purposeful civil disobedience and social justice. Lewis became rankled by the sense of entitlement some Black activists had acquired through fame or media celebrity rather than through hard work. This was apparent through his fraying friendship with Julian Bond, a friendship that dissolved when they both ran for Atlanta's Fifth Congressional district in a long protracted hard fight. What Lewis's book makes clear is that the Civil Rights Movement was not about a homogenized group and that skin color alone does not signal a shared experience and shared goal. This is most certainly apparent in his comments about Clarence Thomas. Lewis rejected the idea that he had to support a "brother." He opposed Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court because Thomas was someone who had been a direct beneficiary of the civil rights movement and yet was someone who was going to deny others those rights, someone who had called Brown vs Board of Education "misguided."

If saints are people who will adhere to a principle no matter the consequence, who will use the time given to them to protect and better the lives of others – why can't that term be used for one who does that for a nation? Walking with the Wind shows that John Lewis freely put his body out to be beaten, arrested, and abused for the sole purpose of securing the rights of others. He worked tirelessly to help Black voters register to vote; he worked without rest in programs to help the underprivileged to access assistance and grants, and he thundered unabashedly in the halls of Congress for bills of righteousness until the day he died. The book also shows us how very hard it is to counter racism and how endemic it has always been, in one way or another, in our American culture. John Lewis wrote this book towards the end of his life and that makes one wonder if his real purpose in writing is to ask present and future generations: Will we continue his work?

Reaching Point State Park after the Juneteenth Jubilee March from Freedom Corner on June 18 were (left to right): Ellen Hughes, Charlesa Nelson Formley, Emily Ferri, Mary Beth Guzzetta, Allegra Elson, Mary Molloy and her three children, Genevieve Rosselot's daughter, George Stewart, Barbara Grabowski, Kathy Herbst, and Linda Schneider. More time was spent standing and waiting than marching! Thanks, Everyone!



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