

# WEIGHT VOTER

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

VOLUME 29, No. 5

FEBRUARY 2023

## PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY – by Terrie Griffin

We have canceled our regularly scheduled DEI session for February, in support of the **LWVPA Equity Initiative's webinar for Black History on February 27 at 6:00 pm**. Our LWVPGH Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative and our new partners, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) Rankin/Mon Valley/Pittsburgh, PA Section, are collaborating with LWVPA. The theme is, "Celebrating the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and Dr. Dorothy Height's 40 Year Legacy as President!" The stories of Black American women speak of courage, purpose and resilience. They belong centered in our consciousness. We feature a discussion with those who led the way to forge freedom, and speak with leaders continuing the struggle for equity and inclusion today.



The panel will be presented by the Tameko Patterson, president of the PA State Coalition of the NCNW, and section presidents from Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Dr. Height was known for wearing famous hats. Participants are encouraged to do likewise in honor of her! So pull out the biggest brightest most unique hat you have and join us for an event you won't want to miss!

This meeting is on Zoom. [Register here](#) to receive the link

### 2023 LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS by Kathy Herbst

This year LWVPA has decided on a less structured approach. Allegheny County has a total of 25 state senators and house representatives. The goal of these "meet and greet" sessions is to:

- give the legislator a sense of the issues that are important to us
- provide the legislator with resources that may help them in their work
- help us build and maintain a working relationship with them

Guidance is provided on how to set up and conduct the interviews.

If you are willing to meet with one (or more!) of our state legislators or have questions, please contact Kathy Herbst [boardsecretary@lwgpgh.org](mailto:boardsecretary@lwgpgh.org) for more information.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



As we move toward the Primary, with petitions being collected, I feel compelled to ask you to beseech your friends and relatives to vote in a very important election. We know that in Presidential years, voter

turn out is high, but statistics show us that in "off years" very few registered voters cast a ballot.

This election season, as voters, we choose the people who will run our County Government, our School Districts, and adjudicate traffic tickets, in other words they have a great impact on our daily lives and our bank accounts. These newly elected officials: County Executive, School Board Directors, and Magistrates have the tremendous power in local government. Whether we have our homes reassessed or our local taxes raised all comes down to who is elected this year. Who we elect will dictate what is taught in our schools and how it is taught. Who we elect to guide our County will guide the direction our County will move environmentally and if our County Jail is run fairly.

As the League of Women Voters, we have the influence and numbers to convince voters to

go to the polls to vote in the Primary and General Elections. We provide Civic Education to High School and College students showing them that their importance in determining elections is growing. Our Voter Service Committee registers hundreds of voters every year in schools, at fairs, and New Citizen swearing in ceremonies. These new voters are enthusiastic about voting when they register, we can be the cheerleaders that help to get them to the polls in every election.

Best,

Michele Knoll, President

#### ALCOSAN ANNUAL MEETING by Barbara Grabowski

Have you ever wondered where all the water that swirls down your sink, toilet, bathtub or washing machine goes? Chances are pretty good it is collected and treated by the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority, or ALCOSAN.

ALCOSAN is holding its Annual Meeting on Thursday March 2, from 6 pm to 8 pm (Virtually). ALCOSAN will provide an update on its Clean Water Plan and other activities it has planned for 2023. The Clean Water Plan outlines how ALCOSAN will build out the infrastructure and facilities to treat wastewater and to separate wastewater from stormwater (the water that flows into storm sewers and rivers from streets, parking lots, building roofs and other sources when it rains and as snow melts). This work is required to protect the waters of the Commonwealth from pollution and to comply with the federal Clean Water Act.

You can submit public comments but must register with ALCOSAN by Noon on February 24 by sending your name, phone number and email address to [public.relations@alcosan.org](mailto:public.relations@alcosan.org), and someone will respond with further directions. All public comments will be limited to 3 minutes. Viewers will also have an opportunity to use the chat feature to submit questions during the presentation.

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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](mailto:marbiker1@gmail.com)
- ✓ **North Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or [namott001@gmail.com](mailto:namott001@gmail.com)
- ✓ **South Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or [mamula159@hotmail.com](mailto:mamula159@hotmail.com)

### Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**  
Currently not meeting.  
[education@lwvpg.org](mailto:education@lwvpg.org)
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**  
1st Tuesdays, 12:30 pm. by Zoom. Additional meetings occasionally added as needed. Chair is Judy Clack at 512-731-0280  
[voterservice@lwvpg.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpg.org)
- ✓ **Advocacy Committee**  
Currently not meeting. Chair Michele Knoll 412-389-1387  
[advocacy@lwvpg.org](mailto:advocacy@lwvpg.org)
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**  
Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or [development@lwvpg.org](mailto:development@lwvpg.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](mailto:joancucinotta@gmail.com)

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

## February-March Calendar

### February

13 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm, on Zoom
13 Mon	LWVPA Monthly Environmental Policy Meeting. See box below.
17 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2, Squirrel Hill Library
21 Tue	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch <a href="#">here</a> . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.
23 Thu	LWVPA Webinar: Gun Safety in Pennsylvania. See box below.
27 Mon	<b>LWVPGH February Program: LWVPA Equity Initiative's webinar for Black History Month. See Page 1</b>

### March

7 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30 on Zoom
13 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm
13 Mon	LWVPA Ballot Box Basics. See box below.
17 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2, Squirrel Hill Library
21 Tue	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch <a href="#">here</a> . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.

## LWVPA Upcoming Events

### February 13th, 6:00 PM: Monthly Environmental Policy Meeting

Featuring Keith Jack, Director of Facilities Operations at the [Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission](#) (PTC) where he oversees the daily operations of the Facilities Department. Jack is also the Chairperson of the PTC's Sustainability Committee, which leads the agency's sustainability strategy. Under his leadership, the PTC was the first agency to achieve a perfect score from the GreenGov Council. All are welcome to attend. [Click here to join](#), or email [environmentalpolicy@palwv.org](mailto:environmentalpolicy@palwv.org) for more information.

### February 23rd, 6:00 PM: Webinar: Gun Safety in Pennsylvania

Join LWVPA for a webinar on the status of gun safety legislation in Pennsylvania. Panelists: Shannon Flores, Coalition Manager for [Giffords Gun Owners for Safety](#), will provide an overview of gun safety legislation; Carol Latkowski, Southeastern Coordinator for [CeaseFirePA](#) will discuss advocacy work in Pennsylvania; and Sean Holihan, Giffords State Legislative Director will share his insight on the status of legislation in Harrisburg. Susan Boser, LWVPA will be facilitating Q&A. [Register here to attend](#).

**March 8th, 5:30 PM: Ballot Box Basics:** The Importance of Municipal Elections. [Ballot Box Basics](#) will kick off 2023 with a discussion on why municipal elections matter, election day information for 2023, how to research your candidates, and more! [Register here to attend](#).

All events are free and open to the public.

## VOTER SERVICE REPORT by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



### Special Election Report

Thanks to three Special Elections being scheduled on February 7, the subcommittees of the Voter Service committee got off to an earlier start than usual this year. **Ruth Quint** created a very informative webpage, [lwvpgh.org/special](http://lwvpgh.org/special), with detailed information about the Special Elections including voting information, listing of municipalities involved, and candidates' names and miniguides. Due to the late finalization of the Special Election date, the committee did not organize candidate forums. Rather, all six candidates were invited by **Judy Clack** to submit a six-minute video for a video gallery on the Special Elections webpage.

**Annette Shimer** and her new Vote411 crew (**Karey Kluesner**, **Carol McCullough**, **Genevieve Rosselot** and **Michelle Zmijanac**) invited all six candidates to participate in [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). Links to that information were on the Special Elections webpage. The Vote411 crew is already planning on contacting the 1,000 candidates for the May 16 Primary. **Linda Schneider**, **Jen Mankowski**, **Kathy Herbst**, and **Stephanie Watson Haynes** reached out to all the Senior Subsidized Housing building managers in the three districts to inform them of the Special Elections.

**Joyce Beard** organized her Alpha Kappa Alpha sisters to distribute over 500 LWVPGH Special Election flyers, created by **Ruth Quint**, in the three districts. League volunteers packed 1,000 voter information bags at the MLK Day of Service on January 14, 2023, at the YWCA Homewood-Brushton Branch. Included in each clear bag was a voter registration form, VEEEM educational items, and LWVPGH Special Election information, "Voting Resources You Need" postcards and refrigerator magnets with key URLs. 1,000 more of those flyers were distributed with LWVPGH postcards and refrigerator magnets as part of the MLK Day of Service.



Packing bags at the MLK Day of Service: Clockwise from the bottom left are Cathy Garbinsky, Anita Younger, Ellie Siegal, Dorothy Valimont, Megan Rose, Amy Kleissas, Kathy Scheuble, Cheryl Weisberg, Barbara Grabowski, Greg Garbinsky, and Carol Frieze.

### New Name for Facts for Citizens

For years, LWVPGH has published an annual edition of Facts for Citizens, a directory of all officials elected by Allegheny County voters under the leadership of **Annette Shimer** and our Office Managers, **Barbara Simpson** and **Charlesa Nelson Formley**. For 2023, there is an official name change. Fact for Citizens will be published as **Your Government Officials: Facts for Citizens Directory** to better describe that it provides contact information for all elected, and some appointed, office holders.

You can find the 2023 edition of Your Government Officials on our homepage, [lwvpgh.org](http://lwvpgh.org), or by going directly to [lwvpgh.org/ffc](http://lwvpgh.org/ffc). For the past three years, **Ruth Quint**, has led the creation of a digital version of this document. The digital version has more pages and provides links to district maps, meeting times and agendas of county and city councils, and expanded lists of boards and commissions. Searching for 2023 updated information with Ruth were **Judy Clack**, **Charlesa Nelson Formley**, **Barbara Grabowski**, **Maureen Grosheider**, **Mary Beth Guzzetta**, **Genevieve Rosselot**, and **Annette Shimer**.

*Continued next page*



Annually, a hard copy version of **Your Government Officials: Facts for Citizens Directory** is printed by the LWVPGH. Each year, about 40,000 of these documents are distributed throughout the county thanks to the donations of LWVPGH members, LWVPGH community supporters, and generous grantors. The hardcopy version has been delayed to provide results of the three Special Elections as well as the local office information of the three new PA Representatives of the 32nd, 34th and 35th Districts. That office information has not yet been determined. When it is, the Digital version online will be immediately updated, and the hardcopy version will go to print.

### Need Candidate Emails

Who is running in the May 16 Primary? Candidates for Allegheny County Executive, Controller, District Attorney, and Treasurer; 1/2 of County Council, 1/2 of Pittsburgh City Council, 1/2 of Municipal/Borough Councils, 21 Magisterial District Judges, and 1/2 of all local School Boards, 1 PA Supreme Court Judge, 2 PA Superior Court Judges, 1 PA Commonwealth Court Judge, and 1 County Common Pleas Court Judge.

**LWVPGH needs an email address of every candidate** who is running for office in the May 16 Primary Election. Then the Vote411 Committee will invite them to participate in [vote411.org](https://vote411.org). Keep an eye on your weekly e-Blast for a link to a form where you can report any email addresses you learn. Also, we need questions to ask candidates for each office. A link to another form will be provided in the e-Blast for you to suggest questions. These questions will be used in Vote411, video galleries, and candidate forums. Thanks so much for your input.

### Voter Service Committee Meeting

All members are welcome at Voter Service Committee meetings. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 7, 12:30 – 2:30 pm on Zoom. Email Judy Clack, [voterservice@lwvpg.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpg.org), to get the Zoom link and agenda. Since Primary candidate petitions are due on March 8, all the voter service subcommittees will be focusing on outreach to the public about the primary election: senior housing, food pantries, college registrations, Vote411, candidate forums, candidate video galleries, and faith-based communities. See **Amy Kleissas'** article for all that her Civic Education committee is doing.

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## CIVIC EDUCATION NEWS by Amy Kleissas

### High School Outreach begins!

On February 6th and 7th, the High School Outreach team had a successful 2023 kick-off at **Avonworth High School**. Two teams presented the new, interactive classroom lesson for seven English-12 sections. Staff and students were very receptive and one enterprising student is making sure that all eligible seniors are registered to vote. A small team of students and teachers will continue to support students' voter registration throughout the remainder of the school year. They are working towards the **Gold Governor's Civic Engagement Award** where over 84% of eligible students will have registered to vote. We will continue to provide updates of the number of QR code scans to voter registration platforms that were used in our printed materials. There are 27 scans to date out of 100+ students. Many students will be turning 18 after the May Primary, so more scans should follow.

### BizTown – a terrific new volunteer opportunity!

The Civic Education team was asked to partner with Sebastian Lacy of the YWCA to provide printed materials for **Junior Achievement's BizTown** simulation in Bridgeville, PA. Recently, I was welcomed for a tour and found the impressive installation to be run like a well-oiled machine.



*Continued next page*

Approximately 4000 4th-5th-6th grade students have already visited BizTown this school year and approximately 4000 more will visit from now until the end of May. The four-hour student field trip to the installation is preceded by nine hours of classroom instruction and is open to school districts throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. There are 21 storefronts/sponsors like Giant Eagle, Ace Hardware, ASNYS, Children's Hospital and so much more. One hundred students visit in the four-hour block, with four to five students staffing each "store." It's all hands-on as they complete a task, from building a bench to ordering materials for the pharmacy. They handle funds, make business decisions, and live with the consequences. Last week, I was told that the Sheetz crew decided to try a "buy one get one free" campaign. When they ran out of Skittles half-way through the day, they had to handle many angry customers!



## Be a Super Voter!

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER EPHRATA TOWNSHIP  
**ywca** YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

### WHY Vote ?

Our Democracy depends on the voters to tell their leaders what problems need to be solved.

### WHAT Does Voting Do?

Voting chooses the leaders who will help all people where they live--like their city, state, and country.

### WHEN Do Voters Vote?

ELECTION DAYS are chosen by the leaders in each state. On that date, voters go to a special place to mark their secret paper ballots.

### HOW Are Votes Counted?

The votes are carefully counted and may be recounted to figure out who has won. Voters show good sportsmanship and accept who wins.

New this year is a **civic education component** in the classroom and a **new Voting Booth** outside City Hall. In a few weeks, you will find **League volunteer opportunities** for March, April, and May in the eBlast. You can request to role-play as a Poll Worker at the Voting Booth helping students mark their choices or just volunteer to help in any of the stores. The Civic Education team is providing resources for the students' swag bags: the *Voter Resources You Need* postcards for parents and the double-sided *Be a Super Voter graphic* for students.

### A shout-out for the League of Women Voters!

A short excerpt follows from Bill White's article entitled: Government is more likely to help than hurt us. He is a commentator for the Morning Call, an Allentown, PA newspaper.

*"I participated recently in the League of Women Voters' 'Running for Local Office Workshop,' held every other year to help new candidates negotiate the paperwork, fundraising, communication and other challenges of running a campaign. I found it profoundly uplifting.*

*"The League somehow has become a partisan issue, mostly because its opposition to partisan*

*gerrymandering and advocacy for good government have run afoul of politicians who prefer our dysfunctional state government — controlled in recent years by Republicans but abused just as badly in the past by Democrats — just the way it is.*

*Continued next page*

*In recent years, we've seen candidates shunning League debates or its Voters Guide. Lehigh County Republicans even ran their own candidate event the same day as this one, although several Republicans still participated in the League workshop.*

*"What I have found over and over as a speaker and observer at League events is that they are people who want our elected officials to be open, honest and accountable, and to be chosen in fair elections. The fact that this has become controversial speaks volumes about the way our political environment has been polluted.*

*The good news is that there still are men and women out there who care enough about their communities to seek office anyway. Unlike too many politicians in Congress, the people at that workshop won't be transformed into millionaires if they're elected. In many cases, winning elections will earn them more headaches than most of us would care to tolerate, and they'll receive no compensation beyond the knowledge that they think they can make their city, their school district, their township, their borough serve its people better."*

### BALLOT SCANNER TESTING OBSERVATION

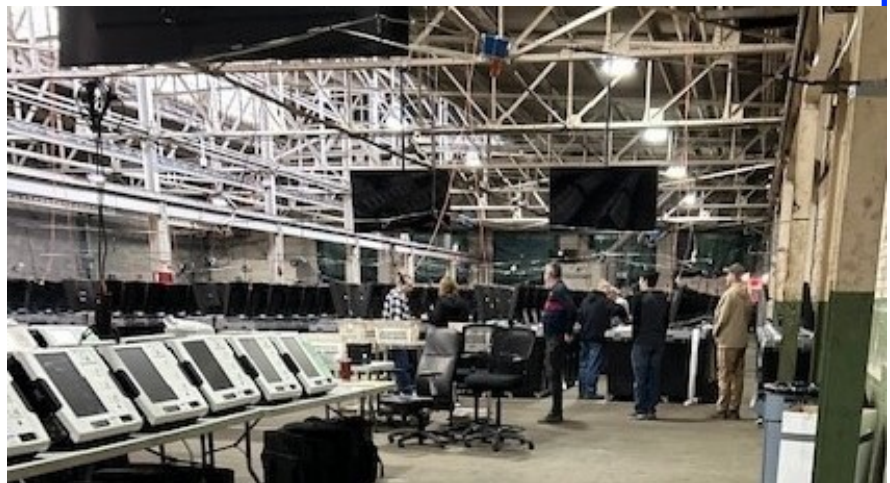
LWVPGH member, Clare Porac [cvp4@psu.edu](mailto:cvp4@psu.edu), volunteered to be the League of Women Voters observer at the "Logic and Accuracy Testing" of the scanners prior to the February 7 Special Elections. Here's Clare's report.

I arrived at the site (XYZ Custom Warehouse, 901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Pittsburgh, 15233) at 9:00 AM on January 10, 2023. Security was tight, and we were met and admitted to the warehouse through a door that is not the main entrance to the building. There were two other observers from other organizations with me. We were given an extensive tour by the manager of the facility. He explained all of the procedures in place to insure an accurate ballot count. There are sixty CCTV monitors throughout the vast facility, and he told us that they have not experienced any violent or inappropriate incidences at the warehouse.

We observed the logic and accuracy testing of the ballot scanners. They were preparing the scanners for the special elections. They were testing scanners for all three special elections even though the legislature had not yet ruled on conducting the three elections on the same day.

The accompanying photo shows the scanners being tested. First, they zero base the counters in the scanner (the long white sheets seen coming from the scanner) and then they begin to feed in ballots with errors to test the detection capabilities of each scanner. They feed in blank ballots and ballots with duplicate markings.

I observed the scanner testing process for approximately ten machines and watched as the error messages for each ballot were displayed when appropriate. We spoke with the technician in charge of servicing the scanners (the man in the black jacket with a red stripe in the photo), and he said there are thirteen service technicians who ensure that the scanners are working properly.



The photo shows the scanners stored in long rows. The ballot scanners are in the background and the testing process of multiple people feeding in ballots is shown. There are sixteen hundred scanners in total. It takes about three hours to test all of them. The white machines in the foreground of the photo are those used for persons with disabilities. One of these machines is placed at each voting precinct. The three of us left the building after one hour of touring the facility and observing the testing procedure.



## FAIR DISTRICTS AND RULES REFORM by Maureen Grosheider

In case you thought that the fight for a fair redistricting process was over with the creation of new Congressional and Legislative districts, think again. The fight against gerrymandering has been going on in the League for years and it will continue until we have a codified process that gives Pennsylvania an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. So, as the new Legislature begins its work over the next year, expect to see legislative bills leading to that end championed by both the League of Women Voters of PA and Fair Districts PA.

Before that work can happen, however, some serious consideration must be given to the operating Rules under which the state legislative bodies operate. During the hard work done by FDPA over the last several years, it became obvious that the tight control exercised by the majority party impeded the ability to get any meaningful legislation on redistricting addressed at all. And it wasn't just on redistricting. Good pieces of legislation on things like staffing for nurses, mandating carbon monoxide detectors in daycare centers, expanding broadband access for rural areas, telemedicine access, improved environmental regulations all died in committees usually without ever getting a hearing. Committee chairs appointed by the majority party operated in often autocratic ways by refusing to schedule votes or hearings. In one particularly egregious example, a committee chair took a proposed bill and simply substituted language changing the whole meaning of the bill and got his majority members to pass it on a party line vote. The legislative Rules enable this type of thing to happen over and over no matter which party is in the majority. And the Rules traditionally get adopted on the first day of the session with new members having little to no time to study and understand them. The result is dysfunction. Read "Dysfunction by Design?" [here](#).

Both LWVPA and FDPA are bringing attention to the issue of Rules Reform. When the PA Senate reconvened on January 3, Senators Lindsey Williams and Katie Muth proposed changes to the Senate Rules. Although the Senate did not adopt the changes proposed by the two Senators, they did agree to study the issue further.

The PA House did not organize itself as easily as the Senate because of the close division (Technically, 102 D-101 R after the November election, although 3 seats were unfilled). They had difficulty electing a Speaker, which must be done before the Rules are adopted. The members finally agreed on a compromise candidate, Mark Rozzi, a Democrat who said he would operate as an independent speaker. They could not agree on Rules and so Speaker Rozzi recessed the House and appointed a bipartisan committee to develop Rules. Rozzi then announced that he would convene a series of Listening Sessions across Pennsylvania. The first session was held in Pittsburgh on January 25 with subsequent sessions in Philadelphia, State College and Wilkes-Barre. Testifiers at each hearing brought up important reasons why the Rules need to be changed. The Hearings can be viewed [here](#).

Now that special elections in Allegheny County have been held and won by Democrats giving them an actual majority, Speaker Rozzi has called the House back into session as of February 21. Rules will need to be adopted at that time, so we will see if any improvements will be made.

*Editor's note*, from an FDPA email received February 13: We need to be sure all our representatives get our message – key points are:

- We appreciate that Speaker Rozzi took time to listen to the public about legislative rules.
- We want rules that ensure bipartisan solutions get a vote in committee, on the floor and in the opposite chamber. You can reference some (or all!) of the FDPA recommended rules.
- We can't afford another session where important issues, with strong bipartisan support, never get a final vote.

Contact **your legislator** and the legislative leadership:

- Democratic leader Joanna E. McClinton 717-772-9850 [jmccclinton@pahouse.net](mailto:jmccclinton@pahouse.net)
- Republican leader Bryan Cutler 717-783-6424 [bcutler@pahousegop.com](mailto:bcutler@pahousegop.com)



**From Preston Shimer:** It is with mixed feelings that I am announcing that Charlesa's last day with LWVPGH will be Friday, February 10th. She loves her League job and the freedom it provides to devote her energy to work and support the League's missions. The economic reality is that she needs a full time job complete with benefits, and we can't provide this. She will start the new job on February 13th. On behalf of all of us, I know we will miss her very much but, at the same time, wish her every success in the new job.

Below is Charlesa's resignation letter:

January 30, 2023

Charlesa Nelson Formley, Office Manager  
League of Women Voters of Greater Pgh  
436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 350  
Pgh, PA 15219

Dear Board Members:

It is with great discomfort and unforeseen circumstances that I have to give notice of my resignation from the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh as of January 30, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to become a part of this magnificent organization. You know I will miss working with you all. You guys are great! It has been a pleasure working with all of you. The league has given me so much that I shall never forget. My experience here has taught me a great deal about the voting process as well as the inside of this organization. This is hard.

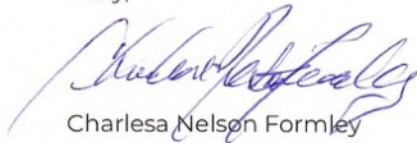
Yes the League as well as myself are not perfect but we try and press ahead. This is purely economical. I can not simply sustain myself. So I have to move onward.

I am sorry for the short notice and I am currently working on some projects so the next person will have some guidance. I am certain that Preston will be handling the task with great care. I will be gone from the office manager position but not with the league.

The League is more relevant than ever. It is my hope and prayer that people will realize that we all need each other to make Pittsburgh; Pennsylvania; America; and the World a better place for us all.

Again thank you all for your generosity, patiences, and kindness. I will never forget you all.

Truly,



Charlesa Nelson Formley

League member Michelle Grant will be starting on Friday February 17th as our new Office Manager. Michelle is involved in our Civic Education program and is the voice you hear when you listen to our newer YouTube videos. She is between jobs and we know this is only a temporary solution for our office. League members are encouraged to talk to Preston about the position as we still need to find a permanent Office Manager. The League Office is in the Koppers Building downtown. We are open 25 hours per week with some flexibility about starting and ending times. The pay rate is \$16 per hour with 7 paid holidays, but no healthcare benefits. We are using a lot of newer office technology as a League and the Office Manager is at the center of a lot of it. Everyone who has worked in this position has loved the job.

## BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

### NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting is February 17, at 10:30 A.M. at the Squirrel Hill library. The group plans to do separate research into the U.S. economy to help answer the following questions: What does it mean for the U.S. to have a balanced budget? What is the debt ceiling? Why does it matter?

### BOOK COMMENTARY

At the January meeting, the Book Club members shared their separate readings on “topics related to Native Americans of North America.” Here is a list of the readings we found informative and would recommend. Each item is followed by some noteworthy information discovered in the book.

1. *Native American History: A Chronology of a Culture's Vast Achievements and Their Links to World Events* by Judith Niles. Its book covers events from 20,000 BCE to 1999. This book is most notable and useful for its formatting. The two columns on each page list side by side the events for Native Americans occurring at the same time as events for Western cultures.
2. *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Gramm. Non-fiction account. When the Osage tribal members began to reap enormous profits from the oil and minerals suddenly discovered on their reservation, many of them began to turn up dead, murdered, or missing with their land rights conveniently transferred to new white owners, some who had even married the victim just for that purpose.
3. *Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians But Were Afraid to Ask* by Anton Treuer. A good introductory book touching on all sorts of topics from simple things like “do Indians live in teepees” to more thoughtful questions regarding identity, politics, and citizenship status.
4. *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday. In this Pulitzer-winning novel, a young Native American soldier returns from WWII to his family home bringing his new understanding of the wider world back to the settled views of his Kiowa family in Oklahoma during the late 1940s.
5. *Alternative History of Pittsburgh* by Fred Simon. Covers local events from 300,000 BCE to 1995.
6. *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* by Amitav Ghosh. Unlike the colonizers, indigenous peoples did not view land as a commodity, something separate from themselves and something to be used. The Navajo originating myth ties the people directly to the land, seeing its parts as sacred as any part of a cathedral.
7. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of the Native People in North America* by Thomas King. For Native People, the land is not a separate thing. It is something that is sacred, is a home, and even provides a language.
8. Two wonderful children's books:
  - *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom (Author) and Michaela Goade (Illustrator). Caldecott winner 2021. The people lived in harmony with water until the arrival of the Dakota Access pipeline, represented here as a long, corrupting snake.
  - *Frye Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard. A book about Native American home life and the diversity among Native Americans themselves.
9. *The Great Retreat: The Nez Percés War in Words and Pictures* by Pascal Tchakmakian. This book maps and describes the unsuccessful flight of the Nez Percés to Canadian asylum.
10. One member's research into the Native American casino industry yielded interesting facts. These casinos have been fabulously successful, bringing in more revenue than the Las Vegas casinos combined. While they seem to be immune to corruption common in that industry, it's hard to evaluate since the casinos do not have to maintain public records. Because they are often located in reservation and rural areas and because there

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aren't enough native people to staff the casinos, these casinos have been a source of needed employment for the many white residents in the area. Some casinos are plowing the profits into community services like building hospitals or supporting scholarships.

11. Another member alerted us to a case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, Brackeen vs Haaland, in which a white foster family is charging that the Indian Child Welfare Act is discriminatory because the Act places requests for the adoption of Native children by white families below requests made from Native families. The case questions whether being Native American is a racial or a political designation. The Native families consider themselves as part of sovereign nations primarily, not simply racially designated. The court's ruling is expected this Spring.

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