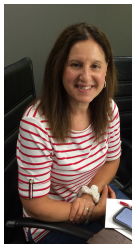


# WE VOTER

Volume 27, No. 5

February 2021

## PROGRAM by Cris Beuger, Program Chair



At the beginning of every year, we meet to review and discuss League Positions. In even numbered years, we review the National and Local League Positions, and in odd numbered years, our State and Local Positions. The LWVPA has put forth three primary focuses: Election Law, Judicial Districts and Redistricting, and Open Primaries and National Popular Vote.

Since we will also be discussing and reviewing local issues, which differ between the South, Central and North Hill Units, this month we will host Zoom Unit meetings, at the usual Unit meeting day/time (South Hills – 2/4 at 12:30pm, Central – 2/12 at 1:30pm, North Hills – 2/16 at 10:00am). **The links for these meetings are on Page 4 of this Voter** and will be in the weekly BLAST. Your input is extremely valuable! Please plan on attending your usual Unit meeting. However, if the day/time of that meeting doesn't work for you, please attend one that does fit your schedule.

## FROM CIVICS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

– Amy Kleissas, Chair

**Are you a Parent, Grandparent, Teacher, or School Counselor?**

**Do you have an 18-year-old in your life? Give them the gift of democracy!**

The events of 2020 – the pandemic, disrupted school schedules, economic vulnerabilities including access to technology, food insecurity, and a chaotic news cycle – have affected students. We will learn just how they have been affected as time goes on. This much seems certain. *Young people want to be seen and heard.* Help young people take ownership of the **power** that comes from the **rights and responsibilities of turning eighteen.** Our democracy is strong when young people are engaged in shaping the future!

This birthday card contains a link to **Pennsylvania's online voter registration form** to help make "adulthood" easy! In a challenging world, it gives students the power of *agency* – helping them to take action, to register to vote, to have a voice. **Active participation in our democracy is a civic duty** that has a positive effect not only on our country but also on young peoples' own lives.

To share this infographic on social media, please copy this link: [www.lwvpgh.org/docs.ashx?id=737050](http://www.lwvpgh.org/docs.ashx?id=737050).



## CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### PA LEGISLATIVE ISSUES



Now that the federal election of 2020 is over, we really need to turn our attention to all that is happening in the PA Legislature or may soon happen.

The State League is working on putting together a Policy and Advocacy group aimed at rebuilding a strong LWV Advocacy structure. Carol Kuniholm, the VP of Government and Social Policy, is spearheading the effort. Several of us in the Greater Pittsburgh League have participated in the initial meetings. Initial topics certainly will include Election Law, Judicial Districts and Redistricting. Other issues such as Open Primaries and National Popular Vote will also be part of the discussion.

Right now, the Legislature is considering a possible constitutional amendment (HB 38) that would create judicial districts for electing appellate court judges. Currently, judges for these appellate courts are elected statewide, not by geographical location. Issues that the appellate courts consider are normally complex legal issues that affect all areas of the state. For that reason, it's important that judges for these courts have a wide breadth of judicial knowledge and experience in complicated and varied legal matters. That's one of the reasons that LWVPA has long advocated for merit selection of judges. However, this proposed constitutional amendment would move even farther away from that and would reward geographical location rather than legal expertise. The bill was laid on the table in the House on January 13 and was not brought up the following week.

Both LWVPA and FDPA are strongly opposed to HB 38, as are many other good government groups such as Committee of 70, Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, Common Cause, ACLU and others. In addition the PA Bar Association is opposing this amendment.

Constitutional amendments must pass in two successive legislation sessions and then be put on the ballot for voters to weigh in. This amendment to create Judicial Districts passed in the last session with no hearings or other public input, no consultation with members of the judiciary, and exactly 9 minutes of debate. It must pass during this new session and be put on the ballot before it can become law. LWVPA and FDPA are working hard to convince legislators that this is a bad bill and should be voted down. Please call your legislator and ask that he/she vote against this bill. For more information, you can go to this link:

<https://www.palwv.org/news/oppositionhb38>

Other legislative issues that may be upcoming:

1. Introduction of a new bill (HB22) to provide transparency and accountability in redistricting our Congressional and Legislative voting districts.
2. Hearings and proposed changes to PA Election Law. These could potentially alter the mail-in ballot provision in PA law. Watch closely.

Maureen Grosheider

### MEMORIAL FOR JOAN FRANKLIN

by Phyllis Dreyfuss

It is rare that a person comes into our lives for a short time and makes such a strong impact: Joan Franklin, chairwoman of the Education Committee, member of the non-fiction book group and good friend, was that person. We are still in shock, for she was ill for a short, but most difficult time.

Joan joined the League after her retirement from the School of Education at Pitt. Her timing was perfect. Just as our beloved Evelyn Murrin decided to "pass the baton," Joan was there with her passion for education, her knowledge of the issues, her patience, her positive and sensitive approach and her intelligence to link these things together. In her position as Education Advocacy Committee chair, she followed closely current issues, wrote and communicated with legislators, newspapers and County Boards of Education. There are no words to convey the loss of this very special woman. She has left her mark. We carry on in her memory.

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Co-President	Maureen Grosheider	North Hills 412-364-7329	Nancy Mott
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Community Information Center	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
<b>League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media</b>			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	<a href="http://lwvpgh.org">lwvpgh.org</a>	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	<a href="http://palwv.org">palwv.org</a>	
National	202-429-1965	<a href="http://lwv.org">lwv.org</a>	
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	

## NEW MEMBERS

### **Pittsburgh Central:**

Kristin Bledinger  
[kbledineer@hotmail.com](mailto:kbledineer@hotmail.com)

Renee Pryor  
[Repryor89@gmail.com](mailto:Repryor89@gmail.com)

Joy Sabl  
[jfsabl@gmail.com](mailto:jfsabl@gmail.com)

Michael Thompson  
[michaelthompson@gmail.com](mailto:michaelthompson@gmail.com)

### **North Hills:**

Andrea McGee  
[acrismc@gmail.com](mailto:acrismc@gmail.com)

Sarah Shaffer  
[shafferl35@gmail.com](mailto:shafferl35@gmail.com)

### **South Hills:**

Hilary W. Taylor  
[hwtaylor.05@gmail.com](mailto:hwtaylor.05@gmail.com)

## **NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB MEETING**

by Joan Cucinotta

For February, we voted to look into the topic of "Police Violence" with each member seeking a source on the topic and reporting back. Our meeting will be on February 19th.

## **MEMORIAL FOR GLORIA PASTERAK**

Gloria was a longtime League member mostly in Ohio. She joined Pgh. Central when she came back here several years ago. She attended meetings and helped out with membership calls from time to time.

## 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 412-477-7572 or [marbiker1@gmail.com](mailto:marbiker1@gmail.com)
  - ✓ **North Hills:** 3rd Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. at St Paul's Methodist Church at 1965 Ferguson Road in Hampton. Contact Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or [namott001@gmail.com](mailto:namott001@gmail.com)
  - ✓ **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](mailto:mamula159@hotmail.com)
- ### Other Ongoing Meetings
- ✓ **Education Committee**  
4th Wednesday, 1 pm. Contact Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-808-6028, [lpdrey@verizon.net](mailto:lpdrey@verizon.net).
  - ✓ **Voter Service Committee**  
1st Tuesday, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or [voterservice@lwpvgh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwpvgh.org).
  - ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**  
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or [development@lwpvgh.org](mailto:development@lwpvgh.org)
  - ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**  
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-224-2395 or [lpdrey@verizon.net](mailto:lpdrey@verizon.net)

## FEBRUARY-MARCH CALENDAR

### February

2 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30 PM by videoconference
4 Thu	<b>South Hills Unit meeting</b> by Zoom, 12:30 PM
8 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom, 12:30 PM
12 Fri	<b>Pittsburgh Central Unit</b> meeting by Zoom, 1:30 PM
16 Tue	<b>North Hills Unit meeting</b> by Zoom, 10:00 AM
19 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:15 AM

### March

2 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30 PM by videoconference
8 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom, 12:30 PM
19 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:15 AM
24 Wed	Education Committee Meeting, 1:00 PM

## UNIT MEETING LINKS FOR FEBRUARY MEETINGS

### LWVPGH South Hills Unit Meeting

Time: Thursday, Feb 4, 2021 12:30 - 2:00 PM EST

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85358014220?pwd=T21NTFNxWEhDL0tjazZVNzRhL1BIQT09>

Dial: +1 929 436 2866; Meeting ID: 853 5801 4220; Passcode: 268019

### LWVPGH Pittsburgh Central Unit Meeting

Time: Friday, Feb 12, 2021 01:30 – 3:00 PM EST

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86857760284?pwd=a3hDVVBuWTR5THBoV1drc05VcFFSz09>

Dial: +1 929 436 2866; Meeting ID: 868 5776 0284; Passcode: 712066

### LWVPGH North Hills Unit Meeting

Time: Tuesday, Feb 16, 2021 10:00 – 11:30 AM EST

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84075801224?pwd=SWtCam1FbGw2NkQyaG9BMzZyZThLZz09>

Dial: +1 929 436 2866; Meeting ID: 840 7580 1224; Passcode: 413740

## VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair

Cynthia Cominsky, Ron Bandes, and Heather Wechter of the **Poll Worker Recruitment Committee** and the **College and University Committee** are hosting two Zoom LWVPA Roundtables. Voter service members statewide are invited to share best practices about poll worker outreach and college/university outreach on **February 3** at 2 pm (poll worker recruitment) and **February 9** at 2 pm (college/university outreach). If you'd like to join either Zoom discussion, contact Cynthia Cominsky at [ccominsky@hotmail.com](mailto:ccominsky@hotmail.com).



The **Senior Subsidized Housing Committee**, led by chair, **Jane Butler** and survey creator, **Kathy Herbst**, reviewed responses from their survey sent to managers of over 200 buildings to whom they had emailed fall registration and election information. Committee members now are planning what materials to email prior to the spring primary, and how they might communicate with the buildings over video or internal TV conferencing. Anyone with experience creating video lessons is urged to contact chair, **Jane Butler**, [jbutler.mac@mac.com](mailto:jbutler.mac@mac.com).

"Teasers," short informative blasts, are being sent regularly to all county colleges and universities by the **College/University Committee**. These teasers include links to related infographics on the LWVPGH website. Current timely topics have included The Peaceful Transfer of Power, Divided Government, Checks and Balances, Cynicism, and How to Contact Elected Officials. To join the College/University committee, contact **Cynthia Cominsky**, [ccominsky@hotmail.com](mailto:ccominsky@hotmail.com).

The **Naturalization Committee**, chaired by **Judy Diorio**, updated registration and voter education materials for the county's two naturalization sites at the Federal Courthouse and USCIS at Penn Center. League members still cannot attend the ceremonies, but updated documents as well as *Facts for Citizens* were delivered to the sites. Contact Judy Diorio at [naturalization@lwvpgh.org](mailto:naturalization@lwvpgh.org).

The LWVPGH is a member of a consortium of multiple religious and civic groups developing a program called "Listening across the Aisle." This is an effort to bridge the blue/red divide in our area by helping people with different partisan leanings better understand each other through learning listening and speaking skills. The group will use materials of the non-partisan **Braver Angels** and their program "With Malice Toward None." <https://braverangels.org/>. For more information, contact **Amy Kleissas** ([civic.education@lwvpgh.org](mailto:civic.education@lwvpgh.org)) or **Judy Clack** ([voterservice@lwvpgh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpgh.org)).

The LWVPGH is already planning for the 2021 Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, May 18. The Pennsylvania 2021 Election Calendar is [here](#). Candidates may circulate Primary nominating petitions from February 16 – March 9. The LWVPGH needs help in gathering emails for candidates so we can invite them to participate in the LWV online voters' guide at Vote411.org. Send any emails you find to **Annette Shimer** ([vote411@lwvpgh.org](mailto:vote411@lwvpgh.org)) or **Judy Clack** ([voterservice@lwvpgh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpgh.org)). Races include many common pleas judge at-large positions, half of all school board and municipal leadership seats as well as half of Allegheny County Council, half of Pittsburgh City Council and the Pittsburgh Mayor. With the pandemic still raging, our forums will continue to be held on Zoom. Email me your ideas for how to handle a large group of candidates in one Zoom event: ([voterservice@lwvpgh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpgh.org)).

The monthly meeting of the LWVPGH Voter Service Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 12:30 – 2:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at [voterservice@lwvpgh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpgh.org) for the Zoom link and Agenda. All members are welcome. The March meeting will be on Tuesday, March 2 at 12:30. Starting in mid-March we'll meet twice monthly to plan primary candidate forums.



## ANNOUNCING THE NEW DIGITAL “FACTS FOR CITIZENS”

– by Amy Kleissas

Put together a pandemic, time on your hands, and the words “e-book” ringing in your ears, and “Facts for Citizens,” *the digital version*, was born.



### *The history of “Facts for Citizens” printed pamphlet*

From 1967 to 2020, LWVPGH has done a meticulous job of researching, checking, and rechecking the directory and other information in “Facts for Citizens.” With proofreading volunteers, “Facts for Citizens” has been a nonpartisan, trusted resource for Allegheny County citizens. Thousands of pamphlets have been printed and distributed to libraries, schools, senior high rises, legislative representatives, labor unions and throughout the community each year. Donations from individuals and foundations have funded this massive effort.

For those unfamiliar with this pamphlet, “Facts for Citizens” lists local, state, and federal elected officials, including contact and salary information. Included also are local and state judges and under “City of Pittsburgh,” Pittsburgh Public School district information. And finally, voting and election information has also been an important part of the printed “Facts for Citizens” pamphlet. Many like that “It fits handily in your jacket pocket for easy reference!”

Found on the “History” page of our new website ([lwvpgh.org](http://lwvpgh.org)), this paragraph is included in the “60’s-70’s” section which describes the collection that is currently being archived by the Heinz History Center:

“Publications include a *near complete run of “Facts for Voters/Citizens” from 1967 to current.* This widely popular publication for citizens provides contact and other information of local, state, and national elected and appointed officials.”

The printed “Facts for Citizens” is updated following every General Election and swearing in and should be available in February 2021. It is evident that “Facts for Citizens” has been one of the most consequential and valued products of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh for many, many years.

### *Creating the digital “Facts for Citizens”*

Creating the digital version began with the suggestion of using an “e-book” format in our graphics application, Vennage. The goal was to reproduce the original format as much as possible. Amy Kleissas manually entered the text while checking websites and other sources for 2021 information and adding hyperlinks as she went along. Ruth Quint contributed to the design. After extensive editing and review led by Judy Clack, a digital version came to life.

The addition of a digital “Facts for Citizens” to those resources already provided by the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh will be key in drawing the public and our members to our new website, [lwvpgh.org](http://lwvpgh.org). A digital “Facts for Citizens,” with hyperlinks, will enable users to view comprehensive information and to contact elected officials more easily.

**To view, download, or share the new digital “Facts for Citizens,” please use this URL: [lwvpgh.org/ffc](http://lwvpgh.org/ffc).**

