

WE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

VOLUME 29, No. 6

MARCH 2023

PROGRAM FOR MARCH by Eileen Olmsted and Amy Kleissas

Member Program, March 28, 2023, online. Register [here](#). The link in the illustration will not work.

MISINFORMATION: Sharing false information without the intent of harm.

DISINFORMATION: Creating and sharing false information with the intent to harm.

Where does it come from? How can we educate ourselves on recognizing it? What can we do about it?

The worldwide community as well as the American people, and especially disenfranchised communities, are constantly bombarded with lies and misleading information about our election system, public policies, and government actions. These falsehoods fuel attacks on voting rights and sow dangerous distrust in our democratic processes.

False narratives about our democracy continue to spread and require countering with trusted, factual information that does not repeat the falsehoods. Until we address the underlying narrative that is driving these falsehoods, we will continue to see attacks on voting rights and disinformation seeking to sow distrust in our election system and limit voter participation.

The LWVUS has embarked on a program to educate our members, as well as the public we serve, on the how and why of misinformation/disinformation. LWVPGH is part of this initiative. We'll start with an interactive educational presentation in which we will learn how to recognize and distinguish between the types of false information and learn specific techniques for combating it. See the illustration of our poster above for a visual picture.

Strategies for Countering Mis- and Disinformation

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

online MARCH 28, 2023 7PM



We encounter mis- and disinformation almost everywhere we look for news.

Attend this important meeting to learn not only how to recognize the misleading and inflammatory information in our public spaces, but to learn

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION! [Register here for Zoom link](#)

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh celebrates the swearing in of the first woman to become House Majority Leader in Pennsylvania, The Honorable Joanna McClinton. She is the

first woman in the entire history of Pennsylvania's Legislature to rise to this role, a role once held by one of our Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin.

This is not the first time Speaker McClinton has made history. She was the first woman and first African American to be elected as a Caucus Chair of her Party in 2018. She was also the first woman elected as the Leader of her Party in the 244-year history of our State Government.

Women have been voting for 103 years, yet no woman has held this role in all that time. Yes, we have accomplished much, but we have much more to aspire to in the years to come. Speaker McClinton inherits a chamber rife with acrimony that stalls progress in our illustrious Commonwealth founded with such lofty ideals. She steps into a role, as a Black Woman, in a State that harbors insurrectionist and domestic terrorists that

are the antipathy of what she has achieved in her lifetime.

The League of Women Voters defends Democracy and the voice of every citizen to be heard. We are encouraged that a woman who has been a public defender may lead us into a more fair and equitable future for our state's educational system, remember that our Constitution guarantees us a clean environment, and pave the way for more women to enter Leadership in our State.

Best,

Michele Knoll, President



Naturalization candidates being sworn in as new citizens of the United States of American at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at Penn Center in Wilkins Township.



Dorothy Valimont, Judy Schryer, and Eileen Brennan pose at the favorite spot for new citizens to have their photos taken after their naturalization ceremony. They assisted the new citizens in completing their voter registration applications. Contact Judy Diorio, naturalization@lwvpgh.org, if you're interested in volunteering.

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412-261-4284

The League is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to encourage the informed participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

Email: info@lwvpgh.org

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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**
Currently not meeting.
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
 - ✓ **Advocacy Committee**
Currently not meeting. Chair Michele Knoll 412-389-1387
advocacy@lwvpg.org
 - ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or 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
- This column will be updated as in-person meetings become possible or changes in League programming are made.

March-April Calendar

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.
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 here . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.
28 Tue	LWVPGH March Program: Strategies for Countering Mis- and Disinformation. See Page 1

April

4 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 12:30-2:30 on Zoom
10 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm
18 Tue	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch here . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.
21 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2, Squirrel Hill Library

PA HOUSE RULES

FIX
HARRISBURG

2021 -2022 SESSION

- 1 hr training on discrimination & sexual harassment; no prohibitions or consequences
- No rules regarding Constitutional amendments
- Discharge petition requires 25 sponsors; committee chairs & leaders can move, gut or amend bill before resolution vote
- No rules regarding congressional redistricting bills
- Committee composition: 15-10, requiring 11 Yea votes to move a bill from committee

2023-2024 SESSION

- 1 hr training on discrimination & sexual harassment PLUS new prohibitions against any form of harassment or discrimination on any House property or event
- Constitutional amendments must cover only one subject, must have a public hearing before second consideration, and must go on the ballot in the General Election
- Discharge petition requires 25 sponsors from each party; bill CAN'T be moved or amended before resolution vote
- Any bill describing new congressional districts must be accompanied by a map, visible to the public on a General Assembly website
- Committee composition: 12-9, requiring 10 Yea votes to move a bill from committee

See more about the PA House rules on page 10.

Do You Like Working with Kids? *BizTown – Volunteer with 4th - 6th Graders*

by Amy Kleissas, civic.education@lwvpgh.org



The LWVPGH Civic Education team was asked to partner with the YWCA to provide printed materials and volunteers for Junior Achievement's BizTown simulation in Bridgeville, PA. Approximately 4,000 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students will visit BizTown from early March until early June. Many adult volunteers are needed at each of 30 dates. 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, ANSYS Software, Children's Hospital and so much more. One hundred students visit per day with four to five students staffing each "store." It's all hands-on for the students as they complete a task, from building a bench to ordering materials for the pharmacy to voting in City Hall. They handle funds, make business decisions, and live with the consequences.



New this year is a civic education component in the classroom and a new Voting Booth outside City Hall. Many adult volunteers are needed. 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. Those LWVPGH printed materials will already be on site.

[Click here](#) for the list of date and times, and to register. Choose from 30 dates from March 1 – June 2. Time required is about 5.5 hours. A lot of information is provided at each link noting a specific school's class you'll be working with at BizTown. Registering for a date requires three steps: 1) You sign up to be a Junior Achievement volunteer. (You may note in the comments that you prefer to work in the Voting Booth.) 2) You immediately receive an email from Junior Achievement. Follow the directions to log into your account. 3) Your name will appear in the box of volunteers for your chosen date. Before your date, you'll receive specific details from Junior Achievement including the reminder to bring your driver's license for ID. All events take place at Junior Achievement of Western PA, 90 Emerson Lane, Bridgeville, PA 15017. [Link to Map](#). All volunteer arrangements will be made through BizTown staff. Email all questions to Andrea Imro aimro@jwesternpa.org.

VOTER SERVICE REPORT by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair

March 7 Voter Service Meeting; Reminder of Calls for Help

Food Bank Project: March 16 – April 15 (Kathy Herbst, kathy.herbst@lwvpgh.org)



Twenty more LWVPGH members are needed, several per date, at ten drive-up or walk-in food distributions organized by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Click on this sign-up link, to find a complete street address and a GoogleMap link as well as the specific time which is about three hours. Follow the instructions at the top of the sign-up form. LWVPGH voter education refrigerator magnets will be distributed to every person or every car in line.

Continued next page

Candidate Forums, Meet and Greets, Video Galleries

Plans are underway for the LWVPGH to collaborate with other non-partisan organizations to hold candidate forums for specific races as well as large multi-office candidate meet and greets. In addition, we may produce video galleries on our website of other races. Let Judy Clack know if you'd like to help, pending your availability: voterservice@lwvpgh.org.

Senior Subsidized Housing Outreach

Contact is being made with over 200 managers of senior subsidized housing buildings. Informational flyers about the Primary Election will be provided by email. Large-font door hangers will be produced for the residents with key election information. Volunteers are needed to distribute the door hangers. If your care about our senior citizens and would like to help, contact Linda Schneider at linda.schneider@lwvpgh.org.

Primary Candidate Email Addresses

LWVPGH needs an email address for each candidate running in the Primary to invite him/her to participate in the LWV online Voters Guide at vote411.org. Candidate name, office sought, and email address are required. Click [here](#) to enter an email. After you have submitted one, you will be immediately invited to enter another. If you have many email addresses, you may send them to Judy Clack at voterservice@lwvpgh.org. Include candidate name, office sought, and email address.

Questions for Candidates

The LWVPGH is collecting questions we could ask candidates for all the races in the 2023 Primary Election in Allegheny County. These questions may be chosen for use in the Vote411.org voters' guide, LWVPGH candidate video gallery, or LWVPGH candidate forums. Questions are needed for these races: County Chief Executive, County Controller, County District Attorney, County Treasurer, County Council Member; City of Pittsburgh Controller, City of Pittsburgh Council Member; City of Pittsburgh School Director, School Director for Other School Boards; Common Pleas Judge, Magisterial District Judge; or Municipal/Borough/Town Official. Click [here](#) to enter questions.

2023 PROGRAM PLANNING MEETINGS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

by Barbara Grabowski

In January of every year, our local League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh (LWVPgh) holds program planning meetings. Program planning is an important part of our mission to advocate for a sound government, advance the Policy Positions of the LWVPgh as well as the League of Women Voters of PA (LWVPA) and the National League of Women Voters, and identify all the ways that we have actively advocated on behalf of the citizens of the greater Pittsburgh region and Pennsylvania over the past year. In many respects, it provides the opportunity for our members to reflect back on all the work that we do and consider how best to continue that work going forward.

We held three program planning meetings in late January, all by Zoom, with good turnout and lots of discussion. This year our task was to review both the LWVPA state positions as well as our local positions. It was especially valuable to have a range of participants, including past presidents and members who were able to provide the background and history of some of the local positions. So thank you to all who participated in our meetings.

Continued next page

Most of our positions were first developed between the 1960s and 1980s by our predecessors. Some of those positions were then updated in the 1990s and early 2000s. A handful of new positions were developed in that same time frame. Which prompted us to ask: do we still need those positions; what if the circumstances that lead us to study an issue and adopt the policy have changed; should they be retired or do they have continuing value? There was agreement across all three planning meetings that all the positions should be retained. But, there was also agreement that many would benefit from a review and update.

Some local positions drew more attention than others. Members discussed the Library Position, in particular the “Library Funding” component of that position which focuses on how libraries within Allegheny County are funded. Members expressed concern that some libraries continue to lack adequate resources and funding. We also discussed the issue of stormwater and the research that was done to consider a position on stormwater, and whether we should revisit the stormwater issue with an eye toward developing a formal position. Participants talked more generally about the Property Taxes, County Government and Intergovernmental Cooperation positions. We also had good discussions about ways individual members could be involved in and take action under the Transportation and Air Quality Positions and to monitor progress on other positions such as Schools.

Not surprisingly, we were able to document the many ways that our members take action to advance our local and state positions and further the broad goals of providing valuable information to our members, voters and the public across a broad spectrum. These include the wealth of information we make available on our website; all the Voter Registration projects we carry out, which include schools, community groups, farmers markets, senior citizen housing and food banks; holding Candidate Forums; and civic engagement on the part of individual members who serve on advisory committees, as poll workers and poll observers, and attend public meetings.

What comes next? In mid-March we will submit a Report to the LWVPA that summarizes our review of the state positions, recommends any changes to existing positions, and identifies the positions that we recommend the LWVPA focus on in the coming two-year period of 2023-2025. The participants in our meetings agreed that all the current state positions should be retained, and there was strong interest in requesting the State League consider expanding the scope of the Marcellus Shale and Pipelines Positions and consider a review of the Education Position with respect to Charter Schools.

I will also start to develop the Proposed Local Program for Board review and approval. That Proposed Local Program will then be presented to the members at our Annual Meeting in June for formal adoption. The Local Program, based on the discussions at the Program Planning Meetings, will recommend a review of the Library Position (from 1997) and to consider whether there is merit in reviewing the information that was gathered for the proposed stormwater position and collecting and reviewing additional information that reflects the current status of stormwater management regulations and existing projects.

Adoption of a Local Program by the membership however is only the beginning! If the Board and the membership approve a review of library funding or additional study of stormwater regulations and projects, we will be looking for members interested in serving on a committee to do that work. It will be especially helpful to me to hear from members who worked on the Library position when it was adopted in 1997 or did some of the research on Stormwater. You can contact me at program@lwvpgh.org or 412/897-1327.



**2023 Women Making History
POLITICS... ARTS... EDUCATION**

Saturday, March 25, 2023

LeMont Restaurant

1114 Grandview Avenue, Mt. Washington

Registration: 11:15 am to 11:45

Program: 12 to 2pm

Honoring

**Jessica Lee Jazz Artist and
Community Activist**

SHARING

Michele Knoll, Director & Founder

Progress Through Pages*

President, League of Women Voters, Greater Pittsburgh

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Selena Schmidt Executive Director of Coro

Honorable Mandy Steele, PA House of Representatives

Honorable La'Tasha Mayes, PA House of Representatives

Honorable, Abigail Salisbury, PA House of Representatives

Hosted by: *Celebrate & Share*

Bonnie DiCarlo & JoAnn R. Forrester

Donation - \$70 Pre-registered by March 21, 2023

\$80 at the Door

\$125 Honorary Sponsor one ticket

\$490 Table of eight

RSVP <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-women-making-history-politics-arts-education-luncheon-tickets-537720846527>

Or call/email:

Bonnie DiCarlo: bonnie255@aol.com 412.480.5247

JoAnn Forrester: selfimagebz@aol.com 412.440.6969

***Please bring a new or gently used children book to donate or make a donation to purchase a book in your name. We have made arrangements with a woman owned bookstore to purchase children's books at a discount price.**

Continued next page

Dear Friend:

Since its inception in 2002, **Celebrate & Share** has worked to raise funds for organizations that focus on the needs of women and children, and to highlight the achievements of women in the Greater Pittsburgh area. **This is our 22ND year celebrating Women's History Month.** In twenty-two years, we have recognized over four hundred women for their contributions to our region and have raised thousands of dollars for non-profit organizations.

This year we have chosen Progress Through Books, a local nonprofit founded by Michele Knoll, which provide **books** for children and young adults in Allegheny and Beaver Counties. In five years, Progress Through Books have distributed over 10,000 books to schools, libraries, preschools, and organizations which serve underserved children. Please bring a new or gently used children book to donate. Or make a donation to purchase a book in your name. We have made arrangements with a woman owned bookstore, **Mystery Lover's Bookstore in Oakmont, PA to purchase children's books at a discount price.** Please see attached list.

RSVP

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Number of tickets _____ \$70 registered by Wednesday, March 21st

\$80 registered after March 21st or at the door

Honorary Sponsor _____ \$125 one ticket and mention in program

Table _____ \$490 table of eight mention in program

I cannot attend but would like to contribute \$ _____.

Please make checks to Celebrate & Share and mail to:

Celebrate & Share

P. O. Box 472

Oakmont, PA 15139

Bonnie DiCarlo 412-480-5247 E-mail: bonnie255@aol.com or

JoAnn R. Forrester 412-440-6969 E-mail: selfimagebz@aol.com

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW! Don't forget to bring a new or gently used book or make a donation to purchase a book in your name.



**The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Invites you to attend our
55th Biennial Convention
Friday, June 16 - Sunday, Jun 18, 2023**

Dear Michele,

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is pleased to invite you to our [55th Biennial Convention](#)! Convention offers the chance to embrace our history and celebrate 103 years of empowering voters and defending democracy.

This year's Convention will take place in person from June 16th-18th at the [Crowne Plaza Hotel](#) in Harrisburg, PA. Please note that all programming on Friday will be optional, with voting and business taking place on Saturday and Sunday. This is to give our working members plenty of time to arrive in Harrisburg.

The 2023 Convention will focus on honoring League tradition while planning for our future. You can expect plenary sessions on bylaws, budget, program and election of officers, as well as a keynote speaker and awards distribution. There will also be plenty of opportunities for connection and engagement among members.

To see the most up to date information on Convention planning, registration, committees, and awards, please visit our website [here](#). This page will be updated regularly.

More information on registration, ticket prices, and lodging will be available in early March. Please email samantha.anthony@palwv.org with any questions in the meantime.

We look forward to seeing you in June!

In League,

Meg Pierce
Executive Director

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

NEXT MEETING

The reading selected for March is *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* by Kathleen Belew. **Our next meeting is March 17 at 10:30 A.M. in the Squirrel Hill Library.**

BOOK CLUB FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY

For this month, the members elected to explore the topic of the US Budget and issues surrounding raising the Debt Ceiling. We found it quite a challenge. Our separate research did address the current budgetary crisis facing Congress and the skirmishes to settle on an agreed method to balance this year's Federal Budget.

Nonetheless, we were left with more questions than answers. What does it mean if the US defaults on its debt? What does it mean that the US has borrowed money from foreign governments? Is there some kind of federal level Repo Man here? We found disagreement between economists on how to approach balancing the budget from those demanding a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget to those who propose simply cutting spending on entitlement expenditures like Social Security and Medicare.

One source, *The Deficit Myth* by Stephanie Kelton, has put forth a radical new approach called Modern Monetary Theory, which takes issue with the whole idea of balancing the federal budget like a household and says we should not fear having a deficit.

Given that economics directly impacts compelling social issues, the takeaway thought from our meeting was that we want to visit this topic again in the future, perhaps with more direction and a possible speaker.

From Fair Districts PA:

On March 1, the House gathered to consider rules for the remainder of the session. In most past sessions, the vote on rules has been hurried through with little discussion and scant attention. This year, that vote was preceded by weeks of attention with Speaker Mark Rozzi's Listening Tour, plus extended discussion in both caucuses.

More details on process and outcome are available in [our latest Fair Districts PA update](#).

The bottom line: there are changes to the rules that will make it more likely for bipartisan solutions to receive a vote.

There are also changes to protect the constitutional amendment process and to allow minority members more voice in committee. An important change receiving much public attention: for the first time ever, the rules include protections against discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, in any interactions with PA House representatives "in or on House designated offices, property or facilities; or at a House-sponsored meeting or event."

As might be expected, some legislators, long accustomed to rules benefiting their party, are complaining loudly about changes. In reality the changes will benefit members of both parties, no matter who holds the majority. More importantly, the changes open the door to more robust representation and the hope that needed reforms may find an avenue forward.

Better House rules won't ensure action in the Senate. And even with better rules, voter attention will be needed.

We are celebrating significant progress, but there's still much work to do.

<u>LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee</u>		<u>Local Area Meeting Chairs</u>	
President (and Advocacy)	Michele Knoll	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak
V.P.1 Administration	Preston Shimer	North Hills 412-779-3089	Nancy Mott
V.P.2 Voter Service	Judy Clack	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
V.P.3 Development	Nancy Naragon		
V.P.4 Program	Barbara Grabowski		
Secretary	Kathy Herbst		
Treasurer	Preston Shimer		
<u>Directors</u>		<u>Interest & Service Area Specialists</u>	
Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	Election Integrity	Ron Bandes
Social media	Emily Ferri	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Terrie Griffin	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta
Pres emerita, Leg update	Maureen Grosheider	Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon
Civic Education	Amy Kleissas	Science and Environment	Don Naragon
Webmaster	Ruth Quint	Blast	Eileen Olmsted
Vote411 & Voter Guides	Annette Shimer	Vote411 & VG assistant	Michelle Zmijanac
Budget	Ellie Siegal		
<u>Staff</u>			
Community Information Center	Manager: Michelle Grant	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
<u>League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media</u>			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576 Ext 0	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	