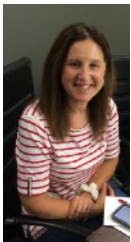


WEST VIRGINIA VOTER

Volume 27, No. 9

June 2021

PROGRAM by Cris Beuger, Program Chair



The month of May was an extremely busy one for the League for obvious reasons, the PA May 18th Primary. But we were able to host our Harvard Case Study community event, Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Black Voting Rights, on May 24th. This virtual event was moderated by the teachers our League sponsored to train in Cambridge with Professor Dr. David Moss: Mt. Lebanon Social Studies teacher, Karina Montgomery and North Allegheny Social Studies Director/Teacher, Joelle Keats. Participants, including students, took part in an engaging discussion about the struggle for voting rights over the course of U.S History. The event demonstrated the value of the Case Study Method and how our teachers have incorporated the method into their classrooms.

In June, we will have two membership meetings, via Zoom. As you all know we live in an area with high air pollution, and we have positions recommending reducing it. **ROCIS, Reducing Outdoor Contaminants in Indoor Spaces**, is a research project funded by the R.K Mellon Foundation to improve the air quality in your home. On **Thursday June 3rd at 1:00pm**, you will hear from the project manager, Linda Wingington, about the program and how you can participate! And, our **Annual Meeting** will take place on **Tuesday, June 22nd at 7pm**. Please review your workbooks and plan on attending this very important meeting.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Invites you to attend the
54th Biennial Convention
The League: Keystone of Democracy

Friday, June 18
5 pm - 8 pm

Saturday, June 19
10 am - 4 pm



The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is pleased to invite you to the 54th Biennial Convention! This year's theme is *The League: Keystone of Democracy*. The 2021 Convention offers the chance to embrace our history and celebrate 101 years of the League of Women Voters.

In keeping with the very different circumstances that have presented since we were last together, and given our continued commitment to accessibility for all, this year's one and a half-day Convention will take place virtually on Zoom.

Though our format has been modernized, Convention will focus on upholding League tradition. You can expect plenary sessions on bylaws, budget, program and election of officers, as well as delegate voting and awards distribution. In keeping with years past, you'll hear from influential speakers on a number of timely and relevant topics. There will also be plenty of opportunities for connection and engagement among members. [View full Convention schedule here.](#) Cost is \$74. [Register for Convention here.](#)

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUMMER IS COMING BUT THERE'S STILL WORK TO BE DONE!



With the Primary of 2021 now over and summer beckoning, we can turn our attention to other things. This year's Primary had some expected results and a few surprises. Many thanks to all those League Members who were poll workers on Primary

Day. Your commitment to this important function is critical to the smooth operation of our elections. I was thankful that the League had provided so much information on the candidates and their positions as well as facts about the ballot questions. Unfortunately, placing amendments to the PA Constitution on the Primary ballot meant that only a small percentage of voters got to weigh in on these critical issues.

This year is the time for the Biennial State Convention, which will be held virtually on June 18th and 19th. LWVPA has a terrific lineup with many interesting speakers on a number of topics. It's worth noting that three of our Pittsburgh League members will be presenting at the convention: Emily Ferri, Nancy Naragon and Preston Shimer who will be speaking about our fundraising efforts. There is still time to register so take a look at the schedule of events: <https://www.palwv.org/2021-convention> and consider registering. There's even a terrific LWVPA virtual store where you can purchase just about anything related to LWV. (See photo)

Close behind the State Convention will be the LWVPGH Annual Meeting. It will be held virtually again this year so you can attend from the comfort of your very own home. The Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday June 22 at 7 PM. Please keep an eye out for the Annual Workbook because it will be published by June 1. There will be nominations for officers and directors, the budget for 2021-22, some slight changes in program positions, and reports from various committees highlighting their work over the last year. We need as many members as possible to attend the meeting to ask questions, express opinions and vote on these important items. So, mark your calendar now!

One of the other exciting things going on is the development of a statewide Advocacy team for LWVPA. A number of interested League members from all areas of the state are meeting together virtually to research topics and determine how best for the League to advocate for our positions. Having positions on issues isn't enough unless we advocate for those positions with our elected officials. Right now, the Advocacy group is focusing on election issues because the State Legislature has held a number of hearings and is crafting legislation to correct some of the problems associated with Act 77 of 2019 and may potentially make other changes that might be less favorable. If you have any interest in learning more about this Advocacy team, please contact me. We'd love to have more people involved.

Summer may be coming, but LWVPGH always has work to do.

Maureen Grosheider

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VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

Email: info@lwvpg.org

To unsubscribe from the VOTER, send email with subject "Unsubscribe"

Hard copy subscriptions are available for \$20 per year.



Look at all the stuff at the LWVPA Merchandise Store.
Terrie Griffin says, "Shop 'Til You Drop' I DID!!"

LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee		Local Area Meeting Chairs	
Co-President	Maureen Mamula	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak
Co-President	Maureen Grosheider	North Hills 412-779-3089	Nancy Mott
V.P.1 Development, Gun safety	Nancy Naragon	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
V.P.2 Program	Cris Beuger		
Secretary	Jen Stewart	Interest & Service Area Specialists	
Treasurer, Funding, Gun Safety	Preston Shimer	PR, Communications, Blast	Eileen Olmsted
		Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon
Directors		Environment	Don Naragon
Election Security, Voting Mach.	Ron Bandes	Education	TBD
Voter Service	Judy Clack	Website	Ruth Quint
Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	Transportation	Barbara Simpson
Evening meetings/social media	Emily Ferri	National / State Program	Carol Walton
Voter Service	Terrie Griffin	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton
Civic Education	Amy Kleissias	Health, Water	Shirley McIlvried
Program, Debates, Vote411	Annette Shimer	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta
Communications	Clare Porac	Housing	Adelaide Smith
		Legislative Interviews	Michelle Zmijanac, Kathy Nagle
Staff			
Community Information Center	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	

League member Becky Kretschmann and her husband Don won the Lodestar Award on May 20th.

Becky has been a League member for many years and has represented the League when our positions on natural gas fracking, air pollution and organic farming have needed local representation. On Thursday, May 20th, the [Pennsylvania Solar Center](#) recognized the [Kretschmann Farm](#) with its **Lodestar Agrivoltaic Award**.

The Agrivoltaic Award recognizes a farm that replaces its use of fossil fuels with solar power. Their organic farm, located in Rochester, PA installed solar panels in a section of the farm that was not suitable for crops and generated more electricity than it needed for the farm.

The elimination of electric bills and the sale of the extra power paid for this system in four years. Don Kretschmann said that he likes the economic benefit, but he is much more concerned about doing everything he can to reduce the impact of climate change. **Congratulations to Becky and Don!**



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
 - ✓ **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
 - ✓ **South Hills:** 1st Thursday, 12:30 p.m. at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library, 16 Castle Shannon Blvd., Pgh, PA 15228 (unless otherwise announced). Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or mamula159@hotmail.com
- ### Other Ongoing Meetings
- ✓ **Education Committee**
Committee is reorganizing. Meeting date and chair TBD
 - ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or voterservice@lwvpgh.org
 - ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or development@lwvpgh.org
 - ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Joan Cucinotta, 412-708-2335 or joancucinotta@gmail.com

JUNE CALENDAR

June

1 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm by videoconference
3 Thu	Membership meeting, 1:00 pm, on Zoom, Speaker on ROCIS
12 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom, 12:30 pm
18 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:30 am, Anderson Shelter
18-19 Fri-Sat	LWVPA State Convention, by Zoom, Friday 5 pm-8 pm Saturday 10 am-4 pm
22 Tue	Voter Service Food Pantry Committee, 11:30-1:00 by Zoom
22 Tue	Annual Meeting, 7:00 pm on Zoom

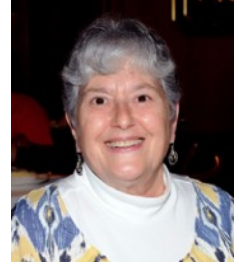


Eleven of twelve candidates for the Pittsburgh School Board are pictured. The twelfth, Terry Kennedy, participated orally but was not on screen due to eye surgery that day. Chandi Chapman of WTAE-TV moderated the LWVPGH forum which was broadcast live on May 6, 2021. Since then, 2,234 have viewed the forum online either on Facebook or YouTube.

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair

College/University Committee Report, Cynthia Cominsky

From the January 6 Capitol insurrection until the Primary Election, messages (Teasers) were sent to all area campuses with links to voter and civic education information. Teasers are short summaries that could be easily sent out to campus networks via social media. The College/University committee is now making plans for how best to provide election information for the fall.



The College/University Committee is looking for **two more volunteers** to serve as liaisons with these academic institutions: **University of Pittsburgh** and **Westmoreland County Community College**. A list of developed contacts would be shared. Each committee member emails LWVPGH voter education documents and teasers to each campus. Contact Cynthia Cominsky for more information: cynthialcominsky@gmail.com.

On May 12, members of the committee met with PA representatives of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. The goal of the meeting is to learn about components of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the requirements of participating colleges/universities. Several of the schools we support participate in the challenge. We will take what we learn in the meeting to determine what we have that can assist our schools in participating in the challenge. The All IN Campus Democracy Challenge is a nonpartisan, national program that rewards schools for registering, engaging, and educating students. At this time, helping schools participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, means sharing LWVPGH resources (infographics, education, and registration events, etc.); many of these resources already exist.

Food Pantry Committee Report, Kathy Herbst

A group of LWVPGH members worked on distributing 5,000 rack cards to 140 food pantries in Allegheny County. The heavy-weight cards contained information on the primary election including dates, deadlines, closed primary definition, and the existence of ballot questions on which everyone could vote. We met and prepared the packets for distribution. The pantries were selected based on information and contacts by the Junior League, who initiated this outreach along with the LWVPGH in 2020. Members reported varying degrees of success in contacting food pantry staff. Last year most distribution was done through the Food Bank, with some in-person drop off, and some mailing.

The committee will begin meeting monthly, on the **fourth Tuesday of the month**, beginning on **June 22**, from 11:30 to 1:00 pm. A Zoom invitation will be sent to everyone who participated during the latest distribution. Please send an email to **Kathy Herbst** (kmherbst0917@verzon.net) if you are interested in helping future food pantry voter education outreach. The group will develop a timeline and work plan to be used for the fall election.

Naturalization Committee Report, Judy Diorio

Although LWVPGH members have been unable to participate in person at Naturalization Ceremonies since March 2020, our League has continued to provide information to new citizens. The administrators at both sites, USCIS Penn Center and US Federal Courthouse Pittsburgh, have distributed LWVPGH information at the end of the very small ceremonies where only the candidates can attend. We provided our Facts for Citizens (both 2020 and 2021 editions) and line-by-line instructions on how to complete a voter registration form. In addition, we created, printed and distributed a new two-sided flyer containing information about the PA May 2021 primary election.

Continued next page

From June 2020 – May 2021, 1, 776 new citizens received voter education information from our League. As soon as volunteers are allowed to register voters at naturalization ceremonies, LWVPGH members who are fully vaccinated will be recruited. Contact Judy Diorio if you are interested: naturalization@lwvpgh.org.

Public Access TV Committee Report, Jane Butler

A new endeavor by the LWVPGH is providing content to public access TV stations. We have several very engaged partners at public access TV stations who have broadcast all the statewide judicial forums (co-sponsored by LWVPA) and a few short LWV videos. The programs aired up until the May 18th primary. Jared Robinson of Monroeville, Glenn Ward of Upper St. Clair, Ron Bandes of PCTV21 and Nick Shalles of Mt. Lebanon have enthusiastically participated in this effort for the primary.

We will be evaluating this program after the election to see how it worked and what more we can do. Providing short LWV educational videos would be welcome. **Eileen Olmsted** asked if there is a way a way to publicize Vote411.org on this platform. **Amy Kleissas** volunteered to help us in the effort to make a video about Vote411 before the General Election. **We need more members** who could develop the content and others with video creation experience. Please contact Jane Butler: jbutler.mac@mac.com.

Senior Subsidized Housing Committee Report, Jane Butler

The committee designed and had printed 2,500 door hangers to distribute with basic voting information about the Primary election. It was created in a bigger font that was requested from our senior survey after the November election. Each committee member called certain buildings who had done significant outreach in the fall. We asked if the manager would agree to put these door hangers on residents' apartment doors. **Linda Schneider** spear-headed this effort. There were 600 door hangers left. Since their information was time-sensitive, they found a home, again thanks to the outreach of **Linda Schneider**.

Kathy Herbst was in charge of our first in-person voter registration and change of address event since the pandemic started in March 2020. Two Leaguers, **Kathy Croft** and **Sue Ellen Ganz**, assisted the manager at Midtown Towers, a newly renovated senior housing building downtown whose residents had recently relocated there. Fifteen residents were able to register, do address changes, or apply for a mail-in ballot.

Jane Butler recorded a 90 second voting message about our partnership with PCTV21 (the Pittsburgh city public access tv channel): how to access the channels, YouTube, LWVPGH.org, Vote411 and the importance of voting in this Primary election. This message was broadcast by our contact for the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and were aired to all employees and residents on Fridays until the election. More LWVPGH members are needed to continue our expanding outreach to seniors in subsidized housing in the county. If you'd like to join us, please contact Jane Butler: jbutler.mac@mac.com.

Vote411 Report, Annette Shimer

For our May 2021 municipal primary Vote411.org voters guide, we included **1,181 candidates in 22 race categories from 140 municipalities, 40 school districts, and 21 magisterial districts** as well as the state-wide judicial races and all the statewide and local ballot questions. New this year were the GIS files for magisterial races. Elected official job descriptions were defined and/or refined. 172 candidates were invited to participate (that is, those candidates for whom an email address was found), 114 candidates responded (66%). Due to the number of Court of Common Pleas candidates (39), the price for our printed Voters Guide jumped to \$4,200. At 32 pages this was the largest we have ever printed. In the fall, the cost was \$3,000 for the 24-page guide.

Coming up next includes carefully cleaning out the losers remembering that there will be a number of third-party candidates appearing, some will change party, and more two-year terms races will be created. The LWVPGH must do an analysis of the races to determine potential candidate forums: some school board races

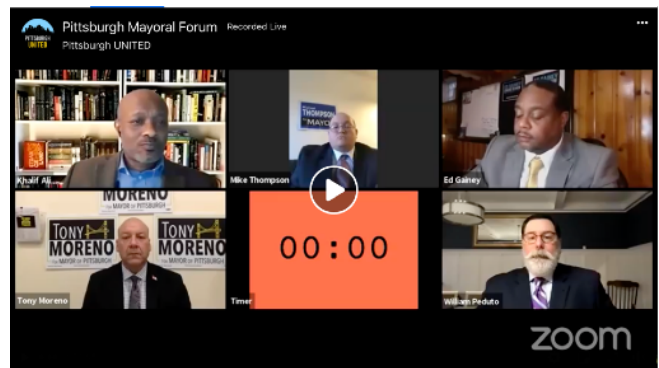
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have two slates of candidates in the fall as well as 15 Common Pleas candidates for nine seats. We will need LWVPGH member help to obtain more email addresses and encourage more candidate participation in Vote411 for the fall General Election. Contact **Annette Shimer**, vote411@lwvpgh.org, to help research candidate email addresses.

Primary Candidate Forums Report, Judy Clack

For the 2021 Primary, the LWVPGH organized or partnered in **ten** virtual candidate forums. We co-sponsored most with local non-partisan organizations, some of which took over the Zoom duties since they had a Webinar account or were TV stations. Recordings of all candidate forums, sponsored or co-sponsored by LWVPGH as well as the three LWVPA statewide judicial forums, were available at <http://lwvpgh.org/forums>. In addition, forums recorded by LWVPGH were available on our Facebook and YouTube pages: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvpgh> and <https://www.youtube.com/c/lwvpgh>. Moderators for the co-sponsored events were TV reporters or anchors, LWVPGH members, and the local Common Cause executive director.

(1) Thurs. April 8, **Pittsburgh Mayoral Forum**, broadcast live on Zoom Webinar by Pittsburgh United with the LWVPGH and multiple other co-sponsors. 300 attended the live Zoom Webinar. Moderator, **Khalif Ali** of Common Cause, Pittsburgh. Chair, **Judy Clack**. (4,000 views as of 05/17/21) (Photo to the right)



(2) Wed. Apr. 14, **Magisterial District Judge 05-02-19** covering **Mt. Lebanon/Dormont**, organized and recorded by LWVPGH. Moderator, **Maureen Grosheider**. Chair, **Cris Beuger**. (1,200 views as of 05/17/21)

(3) Mon. April 26, **Video Gallery, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas Judge**. 39 candidates for the 9 open judicial positions, sponsored by LWVPGH. Candidates recorded two 90-second responses to two LWVPGH questions. Chairs, **Ruth Quint**, **Emily Ferri**, **Judy Clack**. <https://lwvpgh.org/common-pleas>. (2,500 hits as of 05/18/21).

(4) Wed. April 28, **Pittsburgh Mayoral Forum**, organized by WTAE and LWVPGH, recorded live by WTAE-TV on April 26 and broadcast on April 28 on WTAE. Moderator, **Andrew Stockey**, WTAE. Chair, **Annette Shimer**.

(5) Mon. May 3, **Magisterial District Judge 05-02-04** covering **Aspinwall, Blawnox, Fox Chapel Borough, Indiana, O'Hara, and Sharpsburg**. Recorded by LWVPGH. Jen Klein's Fox Chapel Area High School AP US government and Politics Classes provided questions. Moderator, Moderator, **Cris Beuger**. Co-Chairs, **Judy Clack** and **George Stewart**. (1,100 views, 05/17/21)

(6) Tues. May 4, **Mt. Lebanon School Board Forum**, organized by Mt. Lebanon Public Library, LWVPGH, and the Denis Theatre Foundation. Moderator, **Jon Delano**. Broadcast live on Zoom by Denis Theatre with 450 attending. Co-Chairs, **Cris Beuger**, **Judy Clack**. (2,224 views as of 05/17/21)

(7, 8, 9) Thurs. May 6, **TRIPLE EVENT: Pittsburgh School Board Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9** (Photo, page 4); **Allegheny County Sheriff; Pittsburgh City Council Districts 2 and 4**. Organized by LWVPGH with co-sponsors B-PEP, and VEEEM and many non-partisan partners. Broadcast live from Zoom to Facebook. Moderator, **Chandi Chapman**, WTAE. Chairs, **Judy Clack** and **Emily Ferri**. (2,200 views and 83 shares, 05/17/21.)

(10) Sun. May 9, **Pittsburgh Mayoral Forum** organized by B-PEP, with multiple co-sponsors including LWVPGH and VEEEM. Moderator: **Lisa Sylvester**, WPXI. Chair, **Judy Clack**.

THE LWVPGH WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TEAM UP FOR THE PRIMARY

by Emily Ferri & Ruth Quint

In the month leading up to the May primary, LWVPGH reached thousands of area voters with voter service information through our website and social media platforms. The web team produced several new pages focused on the primary and used them to promote information in several formats ranging from the League's long-running Candidate Forums, Vote411 and Voter's Guide, to innovative formats like the Common Pleas Video Gallery and infographics on high-interest topics, like the ballot questions, and mail-in voting. Likewise, LWVPGH Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube social media accounts shared infographics, articles, videos, and links (especially to the new resource pages on our own website) to help reach a greater audience.

Social Media and the Website

The new Club Express software makes it easy to include content from our social media on the website. The Twitter feed is always featured on the homepage, and videos housed on our YouTube or Facebook accounts can be embedded in a webpage. This serves to introduce new users to the social media accounts.

The social media accounts in return, advertise new events, infographics and forums, and point new users to the website. When users like, share, or comment on a LWVPGH social media post, their own friends and followers may then in turn see that interaction on their own pages, exposing users that may not be familiar with LWV to our information and resources. By pointing users to additional information from social media pages to the website, and vice-versa, the two processes form a "virtuous circle" of awareness about LWVPGH.

For example, now that voters are able to find the LWVPGH YouTube channel easily from the website, there has been a large increase in video views leading up to the election. In the past 28 days, there were 7,600 views on the YouTube channel – previously, there were usually only 10-50 views per month!

"Classic" LWVPGH Voter Services extend their reach online

During primary season, the social media and the website expanded the audience for the League's long-running voter service programs. For instance, this year LWVPGH organized or cosponsored 12 candidate forums, all of which were held online and live streamed on Facebook or YouTube. After each event, the recording was posted online, in some cases on our own social media platforms, and sometimes on the website of a co-sponsor. The Candidate Forums page allowed us to gather all of the videos in one place and made it easy for people to find them. During primary season, the Candidate Forums page received over 1200 views. Top forum video views on hosted on LWVPGH Facebook and YouTube were the Pittsburgh Public School Board (over 2,200 views), Magisterial District 05-02-04 (over 1,100 views), Magisterial District 05-02-19 (over 1,100 views), and Pittsburgh City Council (800 views).

The Voters Guide, which is printed in the New Pittsburgh Courier every election season, was posted on the homepage and Primary 101 page about a week before Election Day and was downloaded 775 times. Vote411 was featured on every primary page, and while it's impossible to tell how many people "clicked through," it's probably safe to say that 100s of people came to the website looking for Vote411 and used this service.

New digital formats

Some of the popular primary resources on the website were in formats that are new to LWVPGH since last year. The Candidate Forums team was determined to provide a forum for the 39 Court of Common Pleas candidates and came up with the idea for the Common Pleas Video Gallery, which posted a short video statement from each of the 33 candidates who participated. The page was viewed over 2,600 times, with over 6,700 combined individual video views.

Infographics created for the primary received hundreds of downloads, including almost 500 downloads of a graphic about the "Permanent List" for mail-in ballots, almost 400 downloads of a graphic about the importance of Municipal Elections, and over 1,500 downloads of an infographic about the PA Ballot Questions. This is in addition to the circulation of these documents on Facebook and through newsletters, and circulation by other Pennsylvania local leagues and community organizations.

Continued next page

Infographics were also some of the most popular posts on our Facebook page during this time as well. The graphic announcement of the Court of Common Pleas video gallery had a post reach of over 3,200, an explanation of PA amendment ballot questions with a reach of 2,000, a schedule of upcoming election deadlines with a reach of 1,800, and an explanation of Vote411 with a reach of 1,200.

Primary Outreach By the Numbers

Top Pages in April and May - Unique Pageviews:

Homepage:	6,475
Ballot Questions	5171
Common Pleas Video Gallery	2663
Candidate Forums	1212
Primary 101	851
Mail-in Voting	658



Highlighting the Court of Common Pleas videos in an invitation to join LWVPGH.

Our two social media pages with the largest reach are Facebook and Twitter. From mid-April to mid-May, the LWVPGH Facebook page saw:

- 15,000 post reach (how many Facebook users could have seen the content from LWVPGH posts on their page)
- 2,600 post engagement (how many Facebook users clicked, liked, commented, or shared a LWVPGH post)
- 1,100 page views (the number of times the LWVPGH profile was viewed), and
- 85 new followers

In the same period on the LWVPGH Twitter page saw:

- 3,400 impressions
- 740 profile views
- 10 new followers

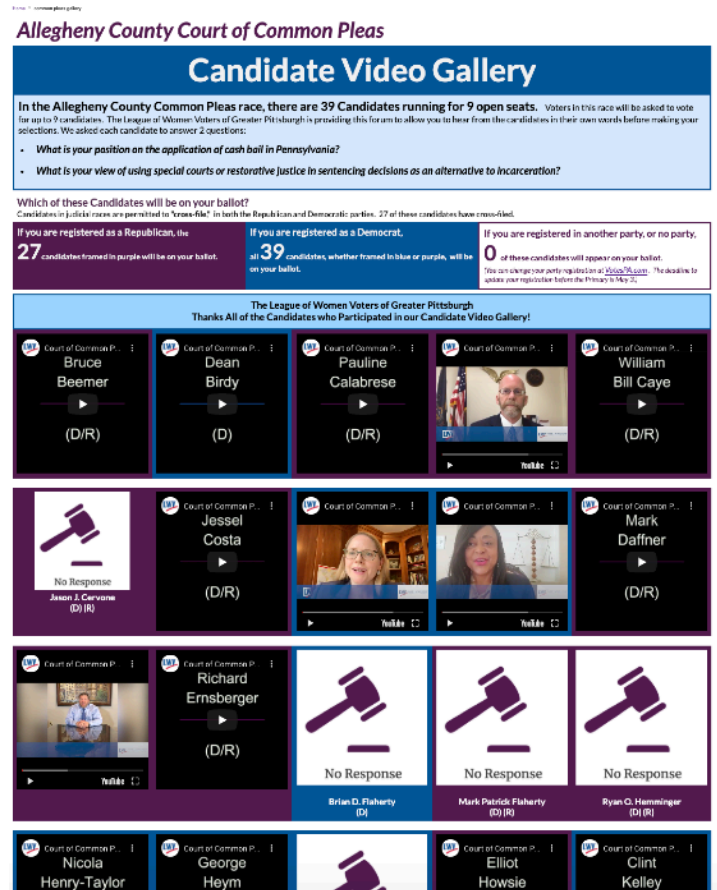
Website Weekly Users

April 5-11	about 200
April 12-18	401
April 19-25	635
April 26-May 2	1,500+
May 3-9	2,200+
May 10-16	3,200+

Single day totals

May 17th	1,300+
Election Day	1,800+

Right: Part of the gallery of links to access the videos created by candidates for the Court of Common Pleas. 33 of the 39 candidates participated. Video length was a maximum of 3 minutes each.



COUNTER POLITICAL POLARIZATION THROUGH BRAVER ANGELS WORKSHOPS

The LWVPGH with multiple other community hosts are co-sponsoring a series of **Braver Angels Workshops** to help area residents mend the political divide by teaching communication skills in a series of free workshops over Zoom from June through November 2021. Braver Angels is a non-partisan, national organization run by volunteers which offers these workshops free of charge. Participants can sign up for one or more of these workshops. Each is a stand-alone experience and may be repeated. One workshop was given locally on Zoom on April 19. Over 120 registered and over 80 participated. Here's a full description of the series and then of the individual workshops.

Our country has become increasingly polarized over political issues. These free workshops will teach you strategies for both listening and speaking with people who have differing political opinions – without trying to change anyone's mind. You will learn and practice skills for having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of meaningful dialogue. Come to learn new skills (or reinforce existing skills) and practice in a comfortable, low-stakes environment.

- **JUNE 21, 6:30 – 9:15 PM - Depolarizing Within** workshop teaches participants to look within and develop strategies for engaging politics without demonizing, and to constructively intervene in social conversations with like-minded peers. **Register by June 17 here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/depolarizing-within-standard-workshop-registration-155785788487>
- **AUGUST 16, 7 – 9:15 PM - Families and Politics** workshop shows participants how to talk about politics with their loved ones in a way that brings them closer together — not farther apart. **Register by August 12 here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/families-politics-workshop-registration-155855274321>
- **OCTOBER 18, 7 – 9:15 PM - Skills for Bridging the Divide** workshop helps you through difficult political conversations with people in your life. Learn how to talk across the divide in a constructive, empathetic way. (This is the same workshop we offered in April 2021. Both newbies and returning folks are welcome.) **Save The Date.** Registration link to follow in the Summer.
- **NOVEMBER 15, 7 – 9:15 PM - Families and Politics** workshop shows participants how to talk about politics with their loved ones in a way that brings them closer together — not farther apart. (This is the same workshop we offered in August 2021. Both newbies and returning folks are welcome.) **Save The Date.** Registration link to follow in the Summer.

These workshops are being facilitated by the national non-partisan organization, **Braver Angels**, <https://braverangels.org/>, and are open to anyone interested in having better conversations with people on the other side (or the same side!) of the political aisle. **Questions?** Contact local coordinator, Lindy Ferriss at pghba@braverangels.org, Judy Clack, voterservice@lwvpgh.org, or Amy Kleissas, civic.education@lwvpgh.org.

Local Hosts: Black Political Empowerment Project, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Casa San Jose, Center for Loving Kindness of the Jewish Community Center Pittsburgh, Christian Associates of Southwest PA, Emmanuel Reformed Church of the United Church of Christ, Export PA, Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh – Community Relations Council, **League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh**, Mt. Lebanon Public Library, Social Justice Institutes at Carlow University, and YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh.

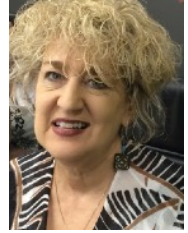


Braver Angels

**Marvelous Members
The Wise Women (and Men) of the League**

With the whirlwind of Primary 2021 behind us, I wanted to interview Judy Clack, Voter Service Director and driving force behind the LWVPGH's Candidate Forums. See her personal, inspiring story below.

Amy Kleissas



1. Describe your early years; where you were born, family then and now.

I was born in Montgomery, Alabama, my mother's hometown, during WWII. We moved to Oakridge, Tennessee where my dad worked on the Manhattan Project building the atomic bomb. We moved north after the war to New Jersey and New York where my dad was a chemical engineer. I spent most of my life in a small town in the Finger Lakes region, Bath, New York, with two brothers and a stay-at-home mom. I was valedictorian of a small high school with 110 in graduating class.

I was married for 13 years, had two sons, Bill and Steve, and then divorced. Next came the working, single-parent gig. Thanks to couples' therapy after the divorce, we were able to congenially attend all band concerts, soccer games, wrestling and swim meets side-by-side. I'm proud of that.

I resigned from my job at Elmira College, Elmira, New York in 1999 and moved to Austin, Texas to care for my dad. After his death in 2015, I moved to Gibsonia, Pennsylvania to help my son, Bill, with his two children.

2. Tell us about your educational background; who was your favorite teacher and why or who inspired you?

BA, Mathematics, SUNY Buffalo; MS Ed, Mathematics, SUC Buffalo; MS Ed, Psychology, Elmira College.

Favorite teachers: elementary school, 3rd grade, Miss Kolpien; 5th grade, Mrs. Spraker. I decided I wanted to be a teacher when I was in elementary school and never changed my mind.

3. What is your professional or work history?

For six years I taught high school mathematics in New York and in Vermont. I spent 27 years as a graduate school administrator at Elmira College, Elmira, New York and at the University of Texas at Austin.

4. Why and when did the League become important to you?

In 1976, I was interested in recycling and joined the LWV of Chemung County in Elmira, NY. I was going through a rough time in my marriage. The LWV provided reading materials to study and tasks to do, and both helped rebuild my self-worth. I was "volunteered" almost immediately to be recycling chair and within a year, president. In my first year as president, our League won a state award for the largest percentage of membership increase. When I left after three years as president to go back to work full time, I wrote in the *Voter*; "The League and I had a symbiotic relationship -- I nurtured the League and the League nurtured me." The League had saved me emotionally. I re-learned through the League that I could read, write, lead, inspire. The League (and therapy) rebuilt my self-esteem. The League also helped me get a full-time job when my interviewer at Elmira College gave me "credit" for my years of volunteering and the skills I had gained.

5. What was/is your League "portfolio", including offices you held?

LWV Chemung County, Elmira, NY: Recycling Chair, President, Treasurer

LWV Austin Area, TX: VP Organization; Voter Editor

LWV Greater Pittsburgh, PA: Voter Service Director

6. What do you feel is the most important things you accomplished or are accomplishing for the League and for our democracy?

I am so proud of the multiple voter service subcommittees that were established during the pandemic that increased the LWVPGH's outreach in the community beyond what we had been doing in person. Some members accepted the challenge (voluntarily or after being volunteered) of being committee chairs. Many other members joined one or more committees and followed through by attending virtual meetings, planning actions, and spending hours on tasks adopted by that committee. The LWVPGH reached thousands more voters in our county than ever before.

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7. What are your concerns and/or hopes for a post-pandemic America?

I am most concerned about the laws that reduce the access to the ballot or to the polls that are being proposed in almost every state in our country. The League of Women Voters must fight against disenfranchisement of any eligible voter whether in Allegheny County, the State of Pennsylvania, or any other state in the union.

8. What are your wise words for the rest of us?

Every person has worth, has value, has something to contribute. Recognize each person's contribution. Include all who want to volunteer.

"Life" happens to volunteers and interrupts their service. Be supportive when a member must step away for a while. The LWV will be there for them to return to when they are able to do so.

NEW MEMBERS

Pittsburgh Central

Jacqueline Anderson
sewickleymom@msn.com

Barbara Grabowski
barbara.j.grabowski@gmail.com

Jessica Nulph
nulph.jl@gmail.com

Karen Richter
krichter48@gmail.com

Ashley Pound
aapound@me.com

Genevieve Rosselot
genevieve.rosselot@hotmail.com

Judy Hoffman Shackney
judyshackney@gmail.com

Carolyn Somerville
cfsomerville@yahoo.com

Jeanette Trauth
Household with Stephen Jurman
trauth@pitt.edu

North Hills

Christine Beard
beard115@gmail.com

Cassandre Conti
conti.cassie@gmail.com

Margaret Irwin
m.irwin940@comcast.net

Elizabeth Voltz
elizabeth.voltz@gmail.com

Diana Hull
dh130473@gmail.com

South Hills

Pete DiNardo
pdinardo@mtlstd.net

Lindsay Flinn
lindsayfschmidt@gmail.com

Elizabeth Stork
estork24@gmail.com

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

In May, the book club discussed two books:

- *A Fighting Chance* by Elizabeth Warren
- *Breaking Hate* by Christian Piccolini

Briefly, Warren's book shows her balancing her life of political activity and life in DC with playing with her grandson and caring for her sick dog, depicting the tricky juggling of the public and the personal.

Piccolini's book brought some insight into the allure and persistence of hate groups in the US. Liberating someone from a hate group involves finding that individual's own personal narrative and making a connection.

More detailed reviews of these books will appear in the Summer edition of the Voter.

In addition, our discussion of the recent local elections left us mulling over two things: how much impact voter turn-out had on the results, and how much the verbiage fog in the referendum sentences influenced the responses.

For our next meeting, we will read *Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor* by Steven Greenhouse, et. al. The library has 8 of 10 copies available and a couple of audiobooks on OverDrive. Amazon has a paper copy for \$15 and \$12 for the Kindle. Audible has it for one credit.

We will meet again in Anderson Shelter on June 18 at 10:30 A.M. A reminder and a map to the shelter will be sent out prior to that date.