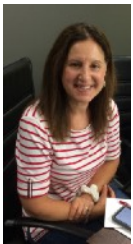


League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

W V O T E R

PROGRAM by Cris Beuger, Program Chair



There are no program meetings in July and August. Mark your calendar for our 2021-2022 Annual Kick-Off for Wednesday, Sept 22nd, 7pm. Linda Wigington discusses how our greatest exposure to outdoor particle pollution occurs while we are indoors. Learn why particle pollution is a health concern. Find out what has been learned from low-cost particle monitoring of 400 homes in Southwest PA through the ROCIS (Reducing Outdoor Contaminants in Indoor Spaces) Low Cost Monitoring Project (LCMP). The LMCP involves 12 to 15 participants in a month-long virtual air quality monitoring cohort. The ROCIS team guides the cohort in using low-cost air quality monitors in their home or workplace. Throughout the process, ROCIS provides technical support, management of the inventory or monitors, data analysis, and visualization tools. Building operation, occupant behavior, and technical interventions can have a significant impact on indoor particle pollution. Explore strategies to reduce intrusion of outdoor pollutants into homes, as well as options to address indoor generated sources and learn what is involved in participating in the Fall 2021 Cohort. Linda provides indoor air quality and residential energy consulting services through her firm, Linda Wigington and Associates. She brings 30 years of building performance experience to her role as the leader of the Pittsburgh, PA-based ROCIS initiative funded by The Heinz Endowments. Find out more about the program at <http://rocis.org>.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LWVPA

WITH HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2021 NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 24-27, 2021

Greetings League Members,

Now that our 54th Biennial Convention is behind us, I want to take this opportunity to thank the members who were able to attend virtually and those whose “heart” was with us but were unable to attend. Convention presentations and resources are available on our website (www.palwv.org). The newly elected board stands ready and more than able to focus on our program priorities with input from local League members from across the Commonwealth.

The following persons were nominated to serve the LWVPA for the next two years.

Executive Committee:

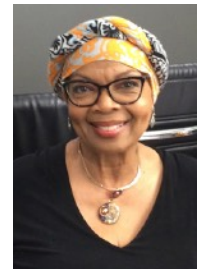
Terrie Griffin, President (2nd term)
Samantha Apgar, Vice President Administration (2nd term)
Alison LaLond Wyant, Secretary
Melissa Wright, Treasurer (2nd term)

Staff:

Meg Pierce, Executive Director
Rae Nuebaum, Office Administrator

Board of Directors:

Susan Gobreski, Director of Government Policy
Kathy Cook, Director of Environment
Jennifer Hanf, Director of Equity
Carolyn Cavaness, Director of Membership
Tara Woody, Director of Voter Services
Betsy Murray, Director of Development
Tania Hyman Issac, Director of Civic Education
Sarah Miller, Director of Social Policy



Continued next page

Continued from page 1

Outgoing Board Members:

A special thanks to Carol Kuniholm (former VP of Government and Social Policy, Eileen Olmsted (former director of Communications), Don Narragon (former VP of Environment), and Kerry Saunter (former VP of Voter Services) for the service over the years. We are pleased that they have agreed to continue their volunteer service by mentoring the newly elected directors and serving on their statewide committee when time permits. Carol will continue as chair of Fair Districts PA in partnership with the LWVPA.

Statewide Committees: There's a new statewide committee structure in place to ensure more input from all local Leagues. Each director will operate with a statewide committee. As president I will be asking local League presidents (during an August 3rd Zoom meeting) to appoint a member from their local League to each portfolio. The appointee should have interest in and some knowledge of their portfolio of interest. Members, please share your interest with your president so when we have our first Zoom meeting, they will be able to submit their recommendations to the LWVPA. For clarity the appointees will be given a position/description of their role. Each committee member will assist their director in developing an action plan complete with goals, measurable objectives and tasks (who will be responsible for what) for the year. This input should reflect the interests of your local League. A template will be designed by the Board, so all portfolios operate from one structure. This will help us minimize confusion as we collect data for use in seeking funding and reporting outcomes to the LWVUS. Currently, there are three functional statewide committees within the LWVPA operational structure with representation from most of our Leagues. The statewide committees are Voter Services, Equity and Government/Advocacy.

Highlights from the 2021 National Council Meeting June 24-27, 2021

The LWVUS Council is designed for state presidents and executive directors. It gives all those who participate an opportunity to share in cohorts, network, discuss best practices and gear up for upcoming campaigns. The theme, **"Building Our Power Together"** opened up dialogue to look at leadership beyond the "traditional leadership model." For example, we are encouraged to begin envisioning new leadership with diverse rolls at all levels of our League. This may include bringing people into the League who may not be a member but have a particular skill set that can enhance the overall function of the League. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) continues to be the foundation from which we recruit, implement programs, and interact with potential partners and our diverse communities. It's a great time to be a member of the League. I anticipate significant growth on the horizon as we continue "empowering voters and defending democracy."

ANNONCING – **"WOMEN POWERED DEMOCRACY!"** As of July, we will be receiving details on this new campaign. The intent is to do everything we can to make certain efforts to suppress the vote are overcome through education and advocacy!" Another "confidential" announcement (within the League that will be "officially" announced in 2022) is **the League will be gearing up to tackle the Electoral College**. This means "fighting the good fight" in favor of a Constitutional Amendment.

As you can see, we are off to a GREAT start! As we go forward in this new year, let's do so through a DEI lens: COMMUNICATING, COORDINATING, AND COLLABORATING within and outside the League.

Wishing you the best year ever. You have our support!

In League,
Terrie Griffin, D. Min, M. Div., MHS
President
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

STATE CONVENTION, ANNUAL MEETING AND MORE



June was a very busy month!

Several of us here in Pittsburgh were able to participate in the PA League's first virtual State Convention. Events that normally occur over three days in the typical state convention were compressed into a day and a half

and we were able to do all of it from the comfort of our homes. Even though we were in our own homes, the twelve LWVPGH delegates were able to "caucus" using text messaging on our phones. Thanks to Judy Clack for setting all that up for us. The State Convention featured an impressive array of diverse and interesting speakers including Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Dr. Cathleen Cahill who each provided a perspective on League History and the contributions made by women of color to both the suffrage movement at large and to the League itself. There were several other equally impressive speakers such as LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner.

In addition, we heard presentations from local Leagues across the state about what they are doing to attract new members and increase civic engagement. Several members of LWVPGH had an opportunity to present including Heather Harr who spoke about the Straight Scoop on Shale Project and Emily Ferri, Nancy Naragon and Preston Shimer who explained the fundraising approach we have used here in Pittsburgh.

One important highlight was the Voter Service Committee here in Pittsburgh, chaired by Judy Clack was named to the Anna Estes Strawbridge Honor Roll in recognition of their outstanding contributions and commitment to the ideals and mission of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. It is a very well-deserved honor!

Interspersed through the whole convention was the idea that being non-partisan does not mean that we're not political! The League has well researched and thoughtfully presented positions on many issues. Promoting and advocating those positions should not be construed as being partisan. So, when the League comes out in favor of or against certain issues, we need to remember that.

Following closely after the State Convention, LWVPGH held our Annual Meeting. We conducted our regular business, including election of officers, approval of the 2021-22 budget, and program for the upcoming year. As I write this, our Webmaster, Ruth Quint is hard at work pulling together some new information for our members, including the information contained in the 2021 Annual Workbook. All members will then be able to read the comprehensive reports delineating the work done over the last year by each committee. It's impressive!

On July 13th, the LWVPGH Board held an annual retreat where we covered a number of items, including creating a Bylaws Committee to review and recommending changes to our bylaws; a committee that will look at policies and procedures; and one tasked with developing job descriptions for all Board positions. I'll be reporting on progress on those items over the next few months.

In the meantime, I hope each of us will be able to take a few days off and enjoy time with family and friends.

Maureen Grosheider

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VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

Email: info@lwvpggh.org

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

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

NEW MEMBERS

Pittsburgh Central

Ember K. Holmes
emberholmes@gmail.com

North Hills

Patricia Hooper
thooper1969@gmail.com

Lena Kemp
lena.kemp412@gmail.com

LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee		Local Area Meeting Chairs	
President	Maureen Grosheider	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak
V.P.1 Development, Gun safety	Nancy Naragon	North Hills 412-779-3089	Nancy Mott
V.P.2 Program	Cris Beuger	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
Secretary	Mary Molloy		
Treasurer, Funding, Gun Safety	Preston Shimer	Interest & Service Area Specialists	
		PR, Communications, Blast	Eileen Olmsted
		Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon
Directors		Environment	Don Naragon
Voter Service	Judy Clack	Education Committee	TBD
Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	Website	Ruth Quint
Evening meetings/social media	Emily Ferri	Transportation	Barbara Simpson
Publicity & Public Relations	Lydia Hatcher	National / State Program	Carol Walton
Voter Service	Terrie Griffin	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton
Civic Education	Amy Kleissias	Health, Water	Shirley McIlvried
Advocacy	Michelle Knoll	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta
Education	Kathy Nagle	Housing	Adelaide Smith
Program, Debates, Vote411	Annette Shimer	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	

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

Plans for the next two meetings are as follows: our July discussion will focus on China with members selecting their own books/articles, and for August we scheduled a conversation on difficult topics – Freedom of Speech (ACLU issues), Religious Freedom (wedding cakes), Critical Race Theory, and Guaranteed Annual Wage. Think about bringing and sharing some picnic food for this meeting.

The following are the book reviews from the May meeting that were summarized in the June VOTER.

The first book discussed at this meeting was *A Fighting Chance* by Elizabeth Warren. This autobiography definitely counters the “school marm” persona foisted on her. It shows Warren balancing her life of political activity and life in DC with playing with her grandson and caring for her sick dog. In some ways, it’s really a “biography of a female politician” in depicting the tricky juggling of the public and the personal. One of Warren’s most notable characteristics is her laser focus on a political target despite an onslaught of legal details and political jockeying. Ever in the service of protecting the American consumer, her determined pursuit brought Wells Fargo to heel despite its corporate clout. *Persist*, another of Warren’s books, is the succinct summation of her strategy. At this, the group noted the similar characteristic in other female political figures: Nancy Pelosi, Eleanor Roosevelt, RBG.

Continued next page

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

JULY-AUGUST CALENDAR

July

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
16 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:30 am, Anderson Shelter
27 Tue	Education Committee, 1:00 PM

August

3 Tue	Voter Service Committee, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm by videoconference
9 Mon	Board meeting by Zoom, 12:30 pm
18 Wed	CMU Graduate Student Registration, 5 – 7 pm
20 Fri	Non-Fiction Book Club, 10:30 am, Anderson Shelter
25 Wed	Education Committee, 1:00 PM

September

22 Wed	2021-2022 Annual Kickoff Meeting, 7:00 pm
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Book Club Report, continued from previous page

The other book discussed today, *Breaking Hate* by Christian Picciolini, brought some insight into the allure and persistence of hate groups in the US. Picciolini himself had been recruited as a young teen, eventually becoming the leader of a white supremacist group in Chicago. Because the extremist groups focus on three trigger elements, Identity, Purpose, and Community, they are especially alluring to teens and young adults who have yet to find their footing in the world. Most recruits have suffered some major trauma (poverty, abuse, wealth, illness, death), making them vulnerable to anything that may seem like support, relief...or justice. The uniform of the group (shaved head, tattoos, boots) lends a sense of identity to the members – and a sense of power when they can see other people begin to avoid them out of fear. Picciolini notes two types of people who seem to frequent these hate groups: ex-military and people with autism related disorders. Ex-military people who suffer PTSD may have enlisted because there was nothing for them at home, and when they return home find there is still nothing. Hate groups are recognizable and comfortable for ex-military since there are so many other former service members there and because the group emulates the military with strict hierarchy, rules, and a 'war' to fight. People who suffer from autism-related disorders are also susceptible to hate groups. These disorders can make one socially awkward (and therefore socially rejected), clumsy with social communications, and impervious to humor or irony. Routine, predictability and clear structure helps them navigate their world. Hate groups' reliance on structure, rules, and a sense of victimhood makes them comfortable places for some with those disorders. The solution, says Picciolini, is compassion. He currently runs the Free Radicals Project which helps people leave hate groups and become deradicalized. Arguing ideology will gain nothing from a white supremacist because they want their hate to be on display. It's their identity. Liberating someone from a hate group involves finding that individual's own personal narrative and making a connection. Compassion is the key. "See the child, not the monster," he says.

League Voter Registration at the Juneteenth Parade by Lydia Hatcher



On Saturday, June 26th, The League of Women Voter's volunteers got out and celebrated the Juneteenth parade and festival in downtown Pittsburgh. Saturday was the first in-person volunteer event with the League of Women Voters in

over a year. We are thankful to all the volunteers who came out to represent the League. A special thanks to Ruth Quint and Amy Kleissas for organizing the Juneteenth parade signage and the voter registration efforts. We started the morning kicking off the parade holding up the League of Women Voters signage while walking through downtown Pittsburgh. We were directly behind the Emancipation float that took the lead in the parade. It was a festive celebration, and the crowd was very welcoming to the League. It was great to see the LWV holding up a prominent Black Lives Matter sign. A reminder to all in attendance that the League's efforts are focused on voting rights not for a select few but for all within the community.



League volunteers: Martha Raak, Cynthia Cominsky, Michelle Grant, Susan Mucha, Anne Semler, Linda Schneider, Jane Butler, Ellie Siegal, Amy Kleissas, Ruth Quint, Carol Caroselli, Lydia Hatcher

At Point State Park, the Voter registration volunteers were already busy speaking to the crowd regarding their voter status. It was a successful day. We networked with people who expressed an interest in joining and got good feedback from some of the politicians about our primary election voter service efforts. The registration crews handed out hundreds of the "Be Heard" postcards which highlight key voter resources and seemed to be well-received. We partnered with B-PEP, and it was good to be working together in person after months of collaborating by phone and online.

The volunteers worked hard in the heat to inform the masses about the resources available through the League of Women Voters. Our favorite question of the day was, "Do you know about [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org)?" We were thankful to have the opportunity to be a part of the festival. Thanks again to all our volunteers! Hope to see you at the next event.



Laryn Finder

Barbara Grabowski, Ellie Siegal, Michelle Grant, Jane Butler



LET'S NOT DO THIS AGAIN by Preston Shimer



In my career I have been a part of the planning process for corporate annual meetings and League state conventions. This year, the LWV Pennsylvania State Convention was an excellent example of a corporate annual meeting facilitated by the fact that attendance was by Zoom. Public corporations are required by law to conduct a shareholders annual meeting for the purpose of electing the directors and officers, selecting the auditors, approving resolutions supported by management and rejecting initiatives the current board does not want, updating the shareholders with comforting presentations of future challenges faced by the corporation and providing limited and controlled questions and comments from the shareholders to give the impression that the whole thing is a democratic affair. It's not, of course. Our State Board

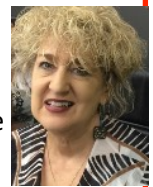
and our new Executive Director and the consultants hired to handle the technical aspects did a good job and achieved all the required objectives: we have a new board, we have officers, we have an adopted budget, we authorized many by-law revisions, and the presentations were really good. While I was a voting delegate, I was also part of the LWVPGH presentation on Fundraising. When it came time to do the presentation, everything worked, and I could speak my piece and show my slides. The rest of the time, I was locked out of participating in any meaningful way except to vote.

As a League spouse, I have been observing this organization for a long time. I've learned that every League event, such as the "State Convention," is designed to be a training experience in addition to satisfying the purpose of the event. Remembering that the League was formed to help its members understand government and politics, our conventions are modeled after the conventions of political parties at the time. Every element of the convention script has its roots in the political convention model. For example, the convention is designed to help members understand the parliamentary processes required by Robert's Rules of Order. Floor debates can be very intense. A critical feature of political organizations and legislatures is the caucus (a faction within a legislative body that pursues its interests through the legislative process). In fact, a great deal of legislative activity takes place in caucuses. League conventions educate attendees by featuring caucuses. If this convention had been a real, physical convention, there would have been caucus meetings about the budget, about each by-Law change, about which candidates to elect, the adoption of the league program as well as educational caucuses about the job of being a board member, a treasurer and how to advocate. I can assure you that there would have been a lively caucus about the by-Law change which established term limits for board members.

The Zoom format plus the tight schedule with very limited time allocated for discussion did not provide anything equivalent to what occurs in a live caucus. (As delegates, we were told to submit a written comment via the Q&A feature when a given item was under discussion prior to the vote, but the Zoom capability to do this was blocked for me, because as a presenter I could only use Q&A to respond to questions, not raise them.) While I understand the need to have a virtual convention this year, I fear that the fact that we achieved our corporate responsibilities with this mode will result in the current board not setting in motion the planning process for a physical convention in two years. Very few of the newly elected board members have ever experienced a real state convention, and I suspect that setting up the next one is not high on their to-do list. It should be, and our task is to caucus for a resolution to the state board to get this on their agenda.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY by Amy Kleissas, Chair

For the past six weeks, our team has worked to document our team's experience over five years and the creation of our unique resources in conducting High School Voter Outreach. We will share the **LWVPGH Civic Education Model** with the new LWVPA Civic Education Director and others in the hope that it will serve as a model for Pennsylvania local Leagues to use in developing their own programs. It make take a little time, but we invite you to take a look at what we have accomplished.



Click on this link to view or download and COPY this link to share:

<http://www.lwvpgh.org/docs.ashx?id=831952>

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



Food Pantry Work Bee

The Food Pantry Committee is developing a voter information rack card to distribute to about 16,000 Allegheny County families in September. A Work Bee is set for Sat., Aug. 14 to package the cards. Sign up on the new **Member Hub** page to be active about August 1 or contact our chair, Kathy Herbst, kmherbst0917@verizon.net.

Voter Registration In-Person Events

See Member Calendar. Sign up on the new **Member Hub** page to be active about August 1.

- Wed. Aug. 18, CMU Graduate Student Registration, location TBA, 5 – 7 pm
- Sat. Sept. 11, Pittsburgh Recovery Walk (addiction support), 11th and Waterfront, hours TBA
- Sun. Sept. 12, Out of Darkness Walk (Suicide Prevention), Highmark Stadium, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm
- Fri. Sept. 17, Constitution Day, usually all CCAC campuses, locations and hours TBA
- Tues. Sept. 28, National Voter Registration Day, locations and hours TBA

Fall Candidate Forums

The candidate forum committee is considering organizing forums for these races. Contact Judy Clack, voterservice@lwvpgph.org, to volunteer in any capacity.

- Common Pleas Judge (15 candidates for 9 positions)
- 7 school boards with 7 or 8 candidates for 4 open seats: Avonworth, Bethel Park, Moon, Mt. Lebanon, North Allegheny, Penn Hills, Plum
- Pittsburgh Mayor
- Pittsburgh City Council District 4
- County Council Districts 1, 3, 8 (possibly)
- Magisterial Judge for Fox Chapel, Mt. Lebanon, PGH Wards 26/27 (possibly)

Voter Service Honorees

At the June 2021 Convention of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, **the entire Voter Service Committee** of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh was awarded a spot on the Anna Estes Strawbridge Honor Roll which honors individuals and groups who have demonstrated energy and commitment to the ideals and principles of the League. Anna Strawbridge was a founding member of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. Thanks to every volunteer of the Voter Service Committee who expanded our outreach during this pandemic year.

Our local League Board wanted to go one step further and give **individual recognition to 12 members** who served as chairs of voter service sub-committees over the past year. They each received an inscribed token of our appreciation. Many thanks go to each of the following: **Jane Butler**; chair of both the Senior Subsidized Housing Committee and the Public Access TV Committee; **Cynthia Cominsky**, co-chair of the College and University Committee and moderator of two LWVPA Roundtables; **Judy Diorio**; chair of the Naturalization Committee; **Emily Ferri**, chair of our League's Social Media efforts and editor of the video gallery page; **Jan Harrison**, chair of the Religious Institutions Outreach Committee; **Kathy Herbst**, chair of the Food Pantry Outreach Committee; **Paula Hopkins**, co-chair of the College and University Committee; **Janet Jai (or "Jai")**, chair and originator of the Rides to the Polls Committee; **Kathy Nagle**, chair of the Legislative Interviews Committee; **Ruth Quint**, Webmaster, creator of much of our election-related content including ballot questions and the video gallery; **Linda Schneider**, co-chair of the Senior Subsidized Housing Committee; and **Heather Wechter**, chair of the Poll Worker Recruitment Committee. In addition, marvelous **Amy Kleissas**, chair of the Civic Education in Schools and Community Committee, was the recipient of the **LWVPGH 2021 Civic Star Award** which you can read about on the next page.

CIVIC STAR AWARD — 2021 TO AMY KLEISSAS by Nancy Naragon

Our Founding Fathers enshrined a new type of government in the words of our Constitution—one where citizens would govern themselves rather than having a king or ruler do it for them. It was a great and visionary experiment and history has shown us that it has sometimes been more successful than at other times. That Constitutional framework, however brilliant it may be, did have some weaknesses. One was the lack of input from women, half the citizenry. The weakness was remedied in 1920 when women won the right to vote after years of valiant effort, including demonstrations, marches, letters, lobbying, and even going to jail.

Once the vote was obtained, the former suffragists joined together to form a national League of Women Voters to ensure that the newly enfranchised women would be voting from informed and thoughtful positions. That same year, a League of Women Voters was established here in Allegheny County.....so this year we celebrate 101 years both nationally and locally.

Throughout its 101-YEAR history League members have valued and embraced the Constitutional concept of a democratic republic and have worked to be part of that **visionary implementation**.

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

League members are involved in these processes to some extent, but at times there are certain individuals who contribute extraordinary time, effort and creativity toward fostering the League's mission and accomplishing our goals. It is to highlight such efforts and to thank these special people that the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh created the **Civic Star Award**—our special contribution to that visionary implementation.

This year's awardee is **Amy Kleissas**. Amy is relatively new to the Greater Pittsburgh League, but has had an out-sized effect on our League! She has been enthusiastic member since joining a Civic Education Committee chaired by Eileen Olmsted that involved reaching out to high schoolers. She joined the Board and kept asking questions about what we were doing and why—which revealed to many of us that we often pursued our activities without really thinking about our motivation (we've always done this).

So, Amy led and guided the Board through a process of strategic thinking to identify, and re-identify, our goals and determine how our projects and activities worked to support and accomplish them....and how to keep that process fresh.

Amy is one of those people who is meant to be a teacher—now retired—and we are so fortunate to have her working on one of the most important aspects of the League: educating citizens about how their government works and how they can contribute to this participatory democracy.

Once on the Civic Education Committee, Amy picked up the ball and ran with it. Along the way, she added several more members (mostly former teachers, as well) to the committee. They developed a great power point and classroom presentation and began to market it to high schools in the area. Teachers and students were very enthusiastic, repeat requests came in, and they expanded the committee.

Then the pandemic hit—suddenly this very successful project stopped as we all settled into quarantine—all in the middle of a Presidential election year! Undeterred, Amy and her committee turned this successful classroom project into a virtual digital project that any teacher could present, which included multiple support resources for teachers. Additional information kits were developed for students to take home, thereby expanding this educational outreach to the families.



Award on a table with a lot of other stuff at the July 13 Board Retreat.

Continued next page

While we were all sitting home in quarantine, bathed in election overload, it became obvious that there is a real CIVIC DEFICIT among our citizens. Amy and her team turned their attention first to explaining about elections, registering, absentee ballots—how to apply, how to fill out the ballots and mail them back, voting in person and what to expect there, all the little stuff that people don't know they don't know yet often keeps them from actually casting a vote. With a special graphics computer program the League subscribes to, Amy and friends created a whole library of brief, engaging Infographics that guide people through the processes of citizen engagement. These are copyrighted and available on our website for anyone to not only use, but to download and distribute to other interested people.

But, not waiting until the next election cycle (do they ever end nowadays?) to produce more, Amy and crew have now tackled the larger civic deficit with infographics about such democratic concepts as What is the Common Good? Why vote? How to be an Active and Involved Citizen. Tracking a Bill in the Legislature. Understanding Municipal Elections. There's lots more, and they are attracting people to our web site, and attracting attention from others in the community that appreciate our democracy and all that it promises for self-government.

This is the core of the League—we gather information, and we distribute it to our fellow citizens, free of charge and without bias. The fervor, enthusiasm and integrity of our League's Civic Education activities are a perfect example of the League's commitment to Civic Engagement. It's Amy's enthusiasm for the League and its mission, and for her great leadership in these projects that we enthusiastically give her the **2021 Civic Star Award**.

A REPORT FOR THE LWV ON PITTSBURGH FOR CEDAW: WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED! by Barbara Jones

More than five years ago our own LWV member, Marcia Bandes, and a group of determined women from several organizations established the Pittsburgh for CEDAW coalition to advance women's rights significantly in the city of Pittsburgh. To understand how this happened we need to know more about CEDAW.

The acronym means the United Nations *Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*= CEDAW. This is an international human rights treaty that went into effect as international law in 1981. It provides a clear, comprehensive, and internationally recognized legal definition of discrimination against women, which is currently lacking in U.S. law. We are one of the few countries not to have ratified the treaty.

Because CEDAW has not yet received the ⅔ vote of the US Senate needed for ratification, several American cities have taken matters into their own hands. They have acted locally to make things better for women. In 1998 San Francisco became the first municipality in the world to adopt a local ordinance which reflects the principles of CEDAW. This was the first time in UN history a human rights treaty was adopted at the local level.

Since then, CEDAW ordinances have been passed in the following cities: Los Angeles; Berkeley, CA; Miami-Dade County, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Honolulu; San Jose, CA; University City, MO; and Santa Clara County. The list grows constantly. We can take pride in being one of the first cities to have written our own CEDAW ordinance.

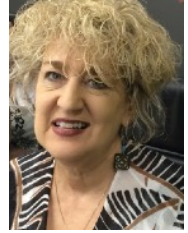
On December 6th, 2016, the Pittsburgh City Council passed an ordinance to fund an Executive Director of Gender Equity and to establish a volunteer Gender Equity Commission. How did we do this? We built a coalition, we sought endorsements, we created a "CEDAW for Pittsburgh" brochure, we spoke to council members, and we secured a sponsor of the ordinance, and we held a formal launch to educate and attract interested participants.

The efforts of our **Pittsburgh for CEDAW** organization have borne fruit! The Gender Equity Commission has executed the first phase of an **Intersectional Gender Analysis** which compares and quantifies discrimination against women and girls in Pittsburgh. They have rolled out a **Workforce Equity Initiative** and have published **Policy Recommendations**. The mayor even cited their work in the recent mayoral debates. Now we have a local CEDAW committee organizing to get such an ordinance passed for Allegheny County.

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

This VOTER's interview is Nancy Naragon, Development Director, Gun Safety Committee Chair, and driving force behind the consolidation of the five local Leagues in Allegheny into the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh.

Amy Kleissas



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

I was born and raised as an only child in Southern New Jersey. The house I grew up in was built in 1810, a New England saltbox style – no two rooms were on the same level, and the kitchen had hooks in the ceiling and a huge fireplace with a crane for big pots and a bread oven next to it. There was no insulation either, so my curtains moved when the wind blew, and squirrels stored nuts in the walls. It was on a small lake, and I enjoyed swimming, sailing, fishing and ice skating.

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

I walked to the nearest elementary school, Bank Street, which was the original high school. In 10th grade I went to Westtown Friends School outside of Philadelphia, which I loved. I really enjoyed the Quaker approach to education, and I had two special teachers. One was in Latin, and reading Cicero really peaked my interest in government and the ways that people arranged themselves in order to live together. The other was in American Government, where I had a teacher that taught ideas and trends and led me to appreciate the high-minded ideals that define and support our Constitution and democratic republic.

3. What is your professional or work history?

I graduated from Oberlin College with a major in political science (there's obviously a trend developing here), and went to graduate school at Case Western Reserve University for a Masters in Library Science while working full time at Cleveland Public Library. My husband was there also getting his PhD in chemistry. I worked in the Children's Dept. at Cleveland Public and then in a branch library until we moved to VA. I worked part time for the public library in Martinsville – there's an interesting story involving small town politics behind that.

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

I knew little about the League until we moved to Martinsville, VA, where the Civil War was still fresh in peoples' minds....northerners not especially welcomed. I joined the Federation of Women's Clubs, which had a Saturday AM radio program. One time I interviewed a woman from the LWV of Danville (the last capital of the Confederacy) and was blown away with all the things they did and their commitment to good government and the Common Good. There was no League in Martinsville, but when we were transferred to NJ, I joined up right away.

5. Who was a notable or first League mentor to you?

Everyone in the Westfield Area (NJ) LWV was welcoming and they got me involved right away studying local zoning...Who knew zoning was interesting? I went that first year to a state convention, where we were picketed for supporting a state income tax! I loved the way the League conducted meetings to get consensus. And I enjoyed League members – they always have an informed opinion and want to share it!

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

Currently I am chairing Development and the Gun Safety Committees. I've held most board positions, except treasurer, secretary and Voter editor. I have been president of the North Hills LWV, the Allegheny County Council LWV, and the Greater Pittsburgh LWV in PA. In NJ I was president of the Westfield Area LWV and was on the NJ State Board. Also, I chaired the committee that brought about the consolidation in 1994 of five Allegheny County Leagues and one County Council into the LWV of Greater Pittsburgh.

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

Our democracy is dependent on an engaged citizenry in order to be vital and effective, and I think the LWV is key to promoting just such informed participation. Never have I felt such concern about the future of our very

Continued next page

special democracy as I feel now, when there seems to be such a civic deficit among our citizens, and a real lack of appreciation and understanding about the value of our democratic institutions and infrastructure. Too many people do not understand the great experiment that we are still in, all together, counting on individual citizens to willingly give up some of their personal freedom and personal treasure (taxes) to support the greater good of collaborative government. This is a challenging time for our League and our country. But I have hope, as we have a great board working on these concerns locally!

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

I want people to get excited about and inspired by what it means to be an American citizen, and to work together to help America live up to our ideals.

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

We are all immigrants (except native Americans), yet our common goal has always been to be or become an American. We do not want to abandon or forget our roots and personal heritage, but I think one of the worst things we ever did was to start hyphenating Americans – it divides us into groups that emphasize our differences and builds walls between people. I think we need to appreciate our differences, but we need to focus on the special qualities and commitments and high-minded ideals that we all share and that have always set America apart, and work hard to include all of our people in the process.

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY: ARTICLE I SECTION 27 , PENNSYLVANIA CONSTITUTION by Don Naragon

On May 18, 1971 by a four to one margin (1,021,342 - 252,979) PA voters approved a ballot question that amended the PA Constitution to add Section 27 to Article I. Article I is entitled: **DECLARATION OF RIGHTS**. Section 27, which is also called the Environmental Bill of Rights, is entitled: **Natural resources and the public estate**. Section 27 states:

“The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.”

Former Rep. Franklin Kury, the primary author of the bill (H.B. 958) that became Section 27, credits support from “outside the legislature” as being key to the passage of the bill. The state League of Women Voters of PA is cited by Rep. Kury as being one the four groups instrumental in generating support for the bill. Therefore, we should celebrate this accomplishment and anniversary.

In reading Section 27 much has been accomplished. However, one only needs to think about climate change/global warming, continued development of fossil fuel based industries, capping/rehabilitation of abandoned wells and mines, clear cutting of land for residential/commercial/industrial development etc. to realize that the goals of Section 27 are far from being attained. While we pause to honor the addition of Section 27 to the PA Constitution, we must realize that much remains to be done and we should be about it. It's true that we can't do it all, but we should start with the corner where we live.

This article based in part on the book by Franklin L. Kury: *The Constitutional Question To Save The Planet – The Peoples' Right to a Healthy Environment* (Environmental Law Institute, 2021).

Editor's additional note: Upon final passage of the bill, Rep. Kury included in the House Journal an article by Professor Robert Broughton of Duquesne University School of Law, which was subsequently published in the Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly (41 Pa. B. Ass'n Q. 421 (1969-1970)) and appears the appendix to the book referenced above. This article was an analysis on the legislative process leading to the passage of the bill, particularly an amendment that changed the phrase “Pennsylvania's natural resources, including the air, waters, fish, wildlife, and public land ...” to simply “Pennsylvania's public natural resources...” Professor Broughton (my late husband) had forcefully suggested the change. He was concerned that despite the word “including” a court would interpret the list as an *exclusive list* that did not apply to any resource not mentioned in the list. Had that happened, wetlands, for example, which were not considered a resource at that time, would not be covered by Section 27, and climate change would not be recognized under the wording containing that list.