

# WE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

VOLUME 30, No. 3

NOVEMBER 2023

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

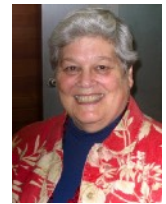
At the Kick-Off meeting in September, the membership agreed to hold a follow up meeting in November to discuss and agree on consensus questions for **Gun Safety in a Free Society**, which would then be voted on with the goal to have a formal position on Gun Safety. The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 29 from 7 - 8:30 pm by zoom**. The following article by Nancy Naragon and Preston Shimer is designed to prepare the reader to have some background on **Living with Guns** for that meeting. **This article is long. It continues for the following 5 pages. Please read it all carefully to prepare for the meeting.**



### Gun Safety in a Free Society Position Discussion

We live in the most gun-intensive country in the world.

Gun violence is prevalent throughout the country—so much so that it has become a societal issue. Citizens are fearful to go about their everyday activities—shopping, going to work, taking kids to the park, going to a game.



Too common a response is to adjust one's life to avoid "dangerous" places, to change one's life to accommodate the changed circumstances—watch the ball game on TV, have Giant Eagle deliver the groceries, wait for reruns on TV, build your own swimming pool, etc.—ANYTHING rather than attack the real problem: too many guns, too easily accessed, too little oversight, too few meaningful regulations, etc.

The League wanted to explore the issue of guns in our community with the goal of trying to devise a meaningful, effective way to change the current gun culture. We prepared a discussion guide, which follows, that provides background facts and information about four approaches to improving gun safety:

On November 29, you will have the opportunity to discuss gun safety for the purpose of establishing a local League position on gun safety. These positions will be based on already completed research conducted during 2013-2014. Small groups, supported by trained moderators, developed the concepts we hope to convert into League positions for adoption at this time.

Our positions will address four areas. Remember that individual action and government action have roles to play:

- A. Guns and public health strategies
- B. Violent criminals and illegal guns
- C. "Root causes" of gun violence
- D. Guns and individual rights and responsibilities

As you read and reflect on the information in this discussion guide, please consider how individual strategies or approaches fit with your concerns and experiences. For example, you decide not to go to a Pirate game or a theater production as your strategy to reduce gun violence in your life. Please consider if your approach is sustainable. For example, if everyone adopts your strategy for the experience of going to a baseball game, will it cease to exist? Consider if your strategy and potential outcome create the kind of world you want to live in.

**Guns in the U.S.**—We have more than any other country in the world. Our consensus positions are intended to cover guns used in homicides, suicides and non-fatal injuries; guns used for domestic violence; stolen and illegal guns; guns in the home; and the role of guns used in the military to be a change agent. Please consider these approaches to try to make living with guns more possible.

### **A. Guns and Public Health Strategies**

Public health campaigns have successfully reduced unintentional poisoning, tobacco use, and motor vehicle deaths. A public health campaign for guns would focus on promoting gun safety and training, improving the safety of guns, and conducting research on firearm deaths and injuries.

1. **Conduct “Awareness and Education” campaigns.** Mr. Yuk and anti-smoking campaigns worked through many channels to make people aware of the dangers of poisons and tobacco use. Teachers, celebrities, physicians and others helped make these campaigns successful. A public health campaign for gun safety could educate people about safe gun storage (always store firearms locked, unloaded, and in a safe separate from ammunition when not in use); encourage gun owners to get training; work to limit media that shows gun violence as acceptable or normal; and show people how to notice signs of suicide or domestic violence among their family, friends, or co-workers.
2. **Require design safety standards on guns.** Utilize smart gun technology! Seatbelts, airbags, and crash-testing are required for automobiles. Currently, the federal government does not require any safety features on domestically produced firearms, although gun manufacturers do include them on some guns. Eight states (not including PA) require design safety standards for handguns. These include chamber load indicators, showing whether a gun is loaded; fire testing to ensure that guns fire properly; drop testing to ensure guns will not fire accidentally when dropped or handled roughly; and a continually updated roster of all guns approved for manufacture or sale within the state. Smart gun technology has great promise to effect major changes. Smart gun technology would turn guns improperly accessed into harmless pieces of steel. The concept is to equip every gun with a device that locks the gun until the authorized user holds the gun and the ownership is verified by a sensing device such as a fingertip reader which unlocks the gun for use.
3. **Enact laws to limit children’s access to guns.** Studies find that a third of children with guns in the home know where the guns are kept and will handle them, despite their parents’ warnings. 28 states (not including PA) have Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws. These laws hold adults criminally liable if they leave firearms accessible to children or otherwise allow children access to firearms. Safety campaigns and CAP laws are credited with contributing to a 60% decline in unintentional gun deaths over the last twenty years.
4. **Require mandatory firearms safety training and licensing.** Drivers must receive training and have a license before they take to the road. In Allegheny County, people can carry guns openly on the street without having a license or training. Research suggests that more guns make communities less safe, although some believe that requiring training and licensing for gun owners might make communities safer without unduly infringing on the rights of gun owners.
5. **Permit research and data collection.** Careful and credible research is needed to address public health problems. However researchers find it difficult to receive support for firearm deaths and injuries research. In 1997, the US Congress banned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from conducting research that could be used to promote gun control. In 2011, this restriction was expanded to all US Department of Health and Human Services Agencies.

### **B. Gun Safety: Violent Criminals and Illegal Guns**

This approach focuses on the relatively small number of criminals responsible for the majority of gun-related homicides and assaults. Vigorous law enforcement is just one element of a comprehensive strategy for dealing with members of violent groups and gangs.

#### **1. The Pittsburgh Initiative to Reduce Crime (PIRC)**

Launched in 2010 in the City of Pittsburgh, PIRC involves collaboration among law enforcement, social service providers, and community leaders. PIRC employs a model developed in Boston from 1996-2000

that was credited with a 50% reduction in homicides and a 25% reduction in gun assaults. The initiative focuses on sending a message to individuals involved with violent groups or gangs:

- Violence is wrong, and homicides must stop.
- We care about you, and we need you doing good.
- There are services available if you need help.
- If you do not stop, your entire group will be punished.
- Take this message back to your gang/group.

Cities that have employed this model have experienced significant short-term success, typically a 35-50% reduction in homicides. However, many have found success—and the collaborations on which this model relies—difficult to sustain over the long term. The Boston initiative, for example, was shut down in 2000.

As of 2013, PIRC has targeted 1,500 individuals; 77 people have responded to its message by contacting the PIRC helpline seeking assistance. Recently homicides rates in Pittsburgh have declined, although the annual reports of the Pittsburgh Police do not attribute recent reductions to PIRC. There were 57 homicides in 2010 when PIRC was launched. In 2012, there were 40, the fewest in the last decade. Last year also marked the first year that more homicides in the County occurred outside of Pittsburgh than within it.

Some have raised other concerns about the Boston model. Pittsburgh's Community Empowerment Association (CEA), for example, believes the model is flawed because it provides "no specific intervention system for prevention of crime or rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals." CEA is also concerned that aggressive law enforcement is "loaded with the potential liability of young people mistakenly caught in the sweep because they happen to fit the profile of or look like those who are truly involved." In fact, a 2011 evaluation of PIRC noted that law enforcement contributions resembled traditional "crackdowns" and "saturation" patrols targeted at communities rather than at specific members of violent groups.

## 2. Law Enforcement Task Forces

Police throughout the County also coordinate with a federal task force responsible for the investigation of firearm trafficking, gang violence, and unlawful firearm possession. The work of this task force recently led to the imprisonment of over 68 gang members, which has contributed to the recent homicide-rate reduction. This task force finds that "crime guns" in the County come mostly from two sources. Almost half are acquired by "straw purchasers"— friends, family members, or romantic partners who legally purchase guns for someone not allowed to own a gun. The majority, however, have been stolen from lawful gun owners living within the County. Both sources pose problems for the police. By state law, police must return recovered guns to their lawful owners, but owners are not required to report loss or theft of a gun. When police return guns, owners can simply claim loss or theft. Straw purchases are difficult to prove, and lawful gun owners who fail to report loss or theft cost police time that could be spent apprehending criminals

## C. Gun Safety: "Root Causes" of Violence

This approach focuses on addressing the social issues fueling violent crime: poverty, drug abuse, low educational achievement, breakdown of the family, and limited employment opportunities. Public officials, institutions, and businesses are encouraged to collaborate with residents in communities that experience gun violence to promote civic engagement, to create education and job opportunities, to implement strategies of prevention and intervention for youth, and to provide rehabilitation for those who have already turned to crime and violence. The following action items are selected from "Strategies for Change," a comprehensive violence prevention guide developed by the Black Political Empowerment Project's Coalition Against Violence (B-PEP/CAV).

1. **Create** a web of block watch programs that stay connected with one another in every neighborhood to enhance community engagement.
2. **Establish** an open relationship with the police. Strengthen existing relationships between the community and the police. Practice the proper way to conduct oneself when stopped by the police. Be aware of one's rights and responsibilities when dealing with the police.
3. **Provide** an outlet in each community for resolving conflicts before they escalate into violence, by creating community-based mediation offices staffed by community residents trained in conflict management and dispute resolution.

4. **Establish** safe havens for youth and families where they can work to reduce causes that can lead to violence through discussion and treatment.
5. **Examine** school suspension/expulsion policies so that they are corrective, yet supportive, to help students without having to disrupt their education. Incorporate diverse cultural-values models with the current school's discipline processes.
6. **Provide** incentives, including tax incentives, for businesses participating in the economic revitalization of blighted areas.
7. **Develop** training/apprenticeship programs; employee wellness programs; and employer sponsored childcare.
8. **Train**, hire and provide long-term employment for persons who have served time.
9. **Discuss** the difference between real gun violence and the glorified violence in video games and movies with children and other household members.
10. **Secure** all firearms in the home to reduce the risk of accidents, theft, or unauthorized use. Be a good role model about gun safety and responsible behavior.
11. **Enable** tracing of guns used to commit a crime to apprehend straw purchasers who provide guns for those not authorized to purchase them, often as part of drug deals

#### **D. Gun Safety: Guns and Individual Rights and Responsibilities**

This approach emphasizes the constitutional right to bear arms. While recognizing that constitutional rights create individual responsibilities, advocates of this approach believe that citizens should vigorously oppose any attempt to place limits on a constitutional right.

##### **1. Trained and responsible gun owners are the most reliable form of gun safety**

Advocates of this approach emphasize that there are no safe guns. Guns are a tool designed to injure or kill. Advocates do promote gun safety and encourage gun owners to pursue training, but they do not support laws that would require mandatory training or “force” gun owners to practice gun safety.

##### **2. Children should be taught gun safety, not gun avoidance**

Education programs, like the NRA's “Eddie the Eagle” program, teach children to avoid guns (Stop. Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.) Advocates of this approach believe that everyone, including children, should be taught the rules of gun safety instead.

##### **3. Gun-use is not a public health problem.**

Advocates of this approach believe that comparisons between gun use and public health problems like smoking are not valid. Smoking in any amount causes health problems, but guns can be used safely. Organizations such as gun clubs and sportsmen's associations can be engaged as a resource for campaigns that promote gun safety and provide firearm training.

##### **4. Gun violence is a crime problem, not a gun problem.**

Advocates of this approach believe that people should focus their concerns and actions on the behavior of criminals rather than the guns they use. More police and longer prison terms would be the best way to reduce gun violence.

#### **The League consensus process**

With this background on guns and understanding the impact of guns on our daily lives, citizens typically arrive at the conclusion that there must be a role for government policies, legislation, and regulations to enable people to live together in a safe and civil society. We develop League positions to understand and advocate for government action designed to achieve these goals. We will evaluate the recommendations of our gun study in arriving at these positions. These positions will empower the League to work with related groups and to advocate for badly needed changes.

## Supplemental information

### Rules of Gun Safety: An Individual's Responsibility

1. Store guns and ammunition separately in locked containers. Ensure the containers are not accessible to unauthorized persons (children and criminals).
2. Always use ammunition designed for use in your firearm.
3. Always keep guns unloaded until ready to use.
4. Assume your gun is loaded until you verify that it is not.
5. Never put your finger on the trigger until you are ready to fire your gun.
6. Point your gun only at what you intend to hit, injure, or kill.
7. Always know what is between you and your target, as well as what is beyond your target.
8. Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.
9. Mechanical locking devices, like the mechanical safeties built into guns, can fail and should not be used as a substitute for safe gun handling.
10. If you keep a firearm and ammunition readily accessible for your protection, you should still secure them in some manner. There are many commercially available locking devices and containers, which provide a reasonable amount of security while allowing quick access to firearms and ammunition.

### Pennsylvania Firearm Regulations

- Individuals can openly carry a rifle, shotgun, or handgun in most public places.
- No license is required to possess rifles, shotguns, or handguns in one's home or place of business.
- Individuals must have a License to Carry Firearms or a Sportsman's Firearm Permit if they wish to carry a firearm concealed on or about their person or they are transporting a firearm in a vehicle.
- No training is required to receive a License to Carry Firearms or a Sportsman's Firearm Permit.
- Firearms are prohibited from court facilities, grounds and buildings of elementary and secondary schools (K-12), within 1000 feet of a school (K-12), detention facilities, correctional institutes, mental hospitals, casinos, Department of State buildings, federal government buildings, military installations, beyond a security checkpoint in airports, any private property where the property owner or tenant has placed signs or placards denoting that guns are forbidden.
- It is unlawful for the following to possess a firearm:
  - Persons convicted of a crime of violence (murder, rape, aggravated assault, etc.)
  - Fugitives
  - Persons convicted of a controlled substance offense punishable by more than 2 years,
  - Persons adjudicated mentally incompetent or involuntarily committed to a mental institution,
  - Persons adjudicated as a delinquent for an offense that would disqualify one from possessing a firearm if committed by an adult
  - Persons subject to a protection from abuse (PFA) court order that prohibits possession of a firearm. Persons subject to a PFA court order that prohibits possession of a firearm must relinquish all firearms.
  - Illegal aliens,
  - Persons under 18 cannot possess a handgun, unless the handgun is unloaded and the minor is transporting it for a lawful purpose, or the minor is lawfully hunting or trapping in accordance with the Pennsylvania Game Code, or the minor is engaged in a lawful activity (training, target shooting or competition) under the supervision of a parent, grandparent, legal guardian or adult acting with the consent of the minor's custodial parent or legal guardian.

### The Cost of gun violence

**No one can name the cost of a life now suddenly gone, nor of the changed life of someone suddenly physically disabled or emotionally compromised. But the cost to society of gun violence annually runs between \$289 million of medical expenses to as much as \$557 billion when you factor in surviving victims' related costs of continuing medical and surgical needs, various therapies, inability to continue in one's**



chosen employment, needing to learn new skills, and necessary lifestyle changes and societal accommodations. How do we replace these lost skills in our workplaces?

The question is one of priorities—where do we want to spend our public funds?

Do we want to spend them on fortifying our schools and public buildings? Building impregnable walls around public parks, pools and tennis courts? On militarizing our police? On training teachers, school nurses, librarians, retail clerks, waiters, and performers, etc. to be able to react to active shooter incidents?

Or would we rather spend our public monies on improving our schools, building playgrounds, bridges and airports, paving our roads, building a new hospital, training Emergency Services personnel, providing after school activities and caregivers, or universal daycare? Which are the choices that will benefit the most people and provide a more livable community?

Only a third of our population falls into the gun enthusiast category. Most of them are responsible gun owners, storing their guns safely, getting training, following safety guidelines, or are serious collectors. It's only a small number of gun owners that are misusing guns and shattering lives—but even a small part of 100,000,000+ people is a lot of people, and they are costing our society a lot of money trying to fix what they have broken.

We need the responsible portion of gun owners to join with the 2/3 of non-gun owners to help us change this dynamic. Most citizens do not care if others own guns—but they care deeply about how they use their guns. We need to manage our gun ownership so that responsible gun owners can continue to enjoy their legitimate gun activities while such privileges are denied to those who want to use guns for illegal and threatening actions. This will require serious commitments and some changes of individual habits and mind-sets from all citizens to create a peaceful community that supports both responsible gun owners and non-gun owners.

## Voter Service Report by Judy Clack, Vice President, Voter Service

My article this month is all photos with some information in the photo captions. The photos start here and are spread throughout the Voter. There are 12 photos. See if you can find them all.



Diana Hull raises the one-minute paddle to warn a candidate of the amount of time left. Jane Butler keeps track of the time on her smartphone. These two LWVPGH members volunteered at the October 17 County and City Candidate Meet and Greet at the Postal Workers Hall.



After a request from Nadia Bey (standing on right), Director of Marketing and Transitional Care at Corner View Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, six LWVPGH members registered 31 residents to vote and apply for a mail-in ballots. Nancy Mott, Julie Zvon, Judy Clack, Linda Schneider, Lora Medwid, and Kathy Herbst had a very positive experience with the residents. Ms. Bey had called the Elections Division for assistance and was referred to Judy Clack and the LWVPGH.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Now is the time to ask your friends, family, and acquaintances to vote in the November Election, all hands-on deck.

We know the expression “all elections are local.” This November, that expression could never be more apropos. The people we vote

for will have sway over our children's education, our property taxes, and our parking tickets. They will directly touch our lives in a positive or negative manner. We trust that they will use sound judgement when considering how and when to exercise their newly gained power to make decisions about our everyday lives. We have an obligation to educate ourselves and our friends and relatives or at the very least point them in the right direction, our website at [lwvpgh.org](http://lwvpgh.org) in order to discover for themselves valuable facts that have not been distorted by political ambitions.

We can learn more about them by listening to them at League Forums (or the recordings of our forums on our website) and by going to [vote411.org](http://vote411.org) to read their responses. Please use the links on our website, [lwvpgh.org](http://lwvpgh.org), to investigate the stances of our very important judicial races, both local and statewide. You will find them under 2023 Elections at the top of our home page on the website.

Don't forget to run mailers through the lens of Mis-Disinformation scrutiny by viewing Recognizing

Mis- and Disinformation under Civic Education Resources. There are a lot of questionable TV slots and mud-slinging social media spots that can be confusing.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh encourages our members to not only to vote but to work at the polls and to run for office. Many of our members have served in these capacities and gained inside experience of the electoral process. In that vein, we have recently joined with Chatham University's Pennsylvania's Center for Women & Politics to be a Program Partner for their Ready to Run training for women thinking about running for political office. The next training will occur Saturday January 20, 2024. Our Pennsylvania State Legislature has more women elected recently, but parity has not been reached. Women being at the table will result in the concerns of women being addressed. We are proud to be a Program Partner for the Ready to Run training supporting women who enter the field of politics.

Michele Knoll, President

### NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB SELECTION FOR NOVEMBER

The book selected for our November meeting is *Silver Stone Sword* by Marie Aran. Our meeting will be on Friday, November 17, at 10:30 am in the Squirrel Hill Library. There will be no book commentary for the October reading.

### NEW MEMBERS

Here are the new members from Sept 1 to Oct 26:

Catherine Bowers

[malarabid@gmail.com](mailto:malarabid@gmail.com)

Kathleen Kozachenko

[katekozapittsburgh@gmail.com](mailto:katekozapittsburgh@gmail.com)

Robert Smith

[44kayal77@gmail.com](mailto:44kayal77@gmail.com)

Seren Spence (student)

[ses289@pitt.edu](mailto:ses289@pitt.edu)

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## LEAGUE MEETING STRUCTURE

### Board Meetings

- ✓ **Second** Monday of the month..  
Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.,  
currently by Zoom.

### Local Area Unit Meetings

- ✓ **Pittsburgh Central:** Currently not meeting. Contact Martha Raak at 412-477-7572 or [marbiker1@gmail.com](mailto:marbiker1@gmail.com)
- ✓ **North Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or [namott001@gmail.com](mailto:namott001@gmail.com)
- ✓ **South Hills:** Currently not meeting. Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or [mamula159@hotmail.com](mailto:mamula159@hotmail.com)

### Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**  
Currently not meeting.  
[education@lwvpggh.org](mailto:education@lwvpggh.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@lwvpggh.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvpggh.org)
- ✓ **Advocacy Committee**  
Currently not meeting. Chair Michele Knoll 412-389-1387  
[advocacy@lwvpggh.org](mailto:advocacy@lwvpggh.org)
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**  
Currently working on a position. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or [development@lwvpggh.org](mailto:development@lwvpggh.org)
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**  
3rd Friday, 10:15 am, Squirrel Hill Library. Temporary contact Judy Donohue 412-373-8697 or [jrdono71@gmail.com](mailto:jrdono71@gmail.com).

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

## August-October Calendar

### November

2 Thu	Candidate Meet and Greet, 6 -8:30 pm at St. James AME Church, Registration for tickets is required. Get tickets at <a href="#">this link</a> .
7 Tue	Election Day
13 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm
14 Tue	Straight Scoop on Shale Conference. See page 11.
17 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2:00
29 Wed	<b>Program: Consensus discussion on Gun Safety in a Free Society</b>

### December

5 Tue	Voter Service Committee Meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm
11 Mon	Board Meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm
22 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2:00

### More Voter Service Photos



The LWVPGH and WTAE-TV organized a one-hour live debate on October 3 between the candidates for Allegheny County Executive: Sara Innamorato (D) and Joe Rockey (R). You can view the debate by going to this page on the LWVPGH website [www.lwvpggh.org/county23](http://www.lwvpggh.org/county23).



LWVPGH was invited to register new citizens at a naturalization ceremony at Indiana University of Pennsylvania on October 20. Judy Diorio, LWVPGH Naturalization Director, was thrilled to meet LWV Indiana County members who were also invited to conduct registration. Between our two groups, we registered over half of the new citizens after a moving ceremony.



## CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

by Amy Kleissas and Joanne Moore

In time for the **November 7<sup>th</sup> Municipal Election**, our team created graphics and videos that were widely shared with community partners and LWVPGH members. Our newest **“Ask the League” video** entitled “Does my vote really count?” is incredibly powerful (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0iw-MOLUMU>). See our [Video Library](#) for more.



### Classroom Presentations:

**McKeesport High School (October 16):** We were invited to return for the third time to senior English classes. Our updated **“Why Vote” PowerPoint** was well-received by students and staff. We had two teams of two presenters each (Eileen Brennan, Susan Fair, Amy Kleissas, and Joanne Moore), presenting to 12 classes. Particularly important messages for these students were the importance of Municipal Elections, officials we are electing, and who shows up to vote. We always feel so welcome at McKeesport High School!

**Point Park University (October 4 and October 6):** *Youth as Advocates* was the topic for new students in the Honors course *University in the City*. Presenters Susan Fair, Eileen Brennan, and Joanne Moore shared a new civic education program that introduces youth voters to the power of and need for their advocacy. The program encourages students to get involved in their community, introduces potential groups that would welcome them, and provides an easy **Toolkit** for how to get involved. Of course, the League of Women Voters' history and processes provide an excellent example for students to understand this topic. We were a bit surprised to learn that in one of our classes of 18 young women, only ONE was from Pennsylvania!

### Pittsburgh Public Schools: LWVPGH Supports “Student Voice”:

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Amy Kleissas and Joanne Moore were invited to speak to the students before they chose their Student Voice subcommittees for the 2023-24 school year. The **Student Voice Voter Registration subgroup**, composed of at least one student from each of the PPS high schools, will meet for the first time on November 13<sup>th</sup> via zoom. With the support of an assigned PPS Student Voice teacher, students will lead efforts to reach out to their peers with voter and election information. **“Happy 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday” posters** have been distributed and will be posted around their schools by these students.

In addition to the Student Voice subgroup, volunteers from the Civic Education High School team will **meet with students who have turned 18 years old each month at Alderdice and Carrick High Schools**. Our first meetings on October 18<sup>th</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup> went very well. At Alderdice, two Student Voice students helped us round up eligible students. At Carrick, we had a chance to talk with students to provide election and voting information in addition to voter registration. Students were very receptive, and two students signed up to be poll workers! We feel this model of meeting each month with newly eligible students will give us a unique opportunity to work with Student Voice representatives and together with League volunteers, empower students to engage with their peers to promote the civic duty of voting.



PPS Alderdice Student Voice members, Kofi Opoku-Dakwa and Sophia Hadi

### Community Media Awards (October 19):

Our **LWVPGH Video Team** was honored as two of our videos (“Understanding the Next Election” and “5 Myths”) were nominated in the Community Impact category at this event hosted by PCTV21.

*Continued next page*

These videos were recorded in the PCTV21 studio last summer, when we engaged a sign language interpreter who added real energy to them. Kudos to our **Video producer, Michelle Grant**, for her work on those videos and her amazing creativity in creating our newest short videos. Alas, we did not win, but League members were present to support the Video Team and our partners, the RMVP Section of the National Council of Negro Women who were nominated in the “Nonprofit” category. It was an inspiring event which put a spotlight on all the efforts of Public Access TV stations to provide valuable information to viewers and to highlight the positive initiatives that are happening in our communities. Kudos to **Video Team member, Jane Butler**, who has worked passionately to create the relationships that promote our LWVPGH videos with Public Access TV stations in our surrounding communities.



LWVPGH Members Judy Clack, Jane Butler, Michele Knoll, Amy Kleissas

## **SIGN UP TO HELP THE ASSOCIATED PRESS MONITOR VOTER TURNOUT THIS ELECTION!**

FROM THE LWV OF PENNSYLVANIA

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is partnering with the Associated Press on an Election Day Voter Turnout Pilot Project – and we need your help!

If you are planning to vote on Election Day (or if you are working at the polls), please sign up to volunteer. It's easy to do and will only take a few minutes of your time. You'll be helping the Associated Press provide faster and more accurate results on Election Night.

You can sign up by sending an email to the AP with your name, your county and your precinct location to [paturndout@ap.org](mailto:paturndout@ap.org). Reid Magney, the project coordinator, will confirm your participation and send you detailed instructions. Here's a sneak peek:

When you vote on Election Day, make sure you ask the poll worker what voter number you were (i.e., you were the 250th voter today).

Also, remember exactly what time you voted.

After you vote on Election Day, call the AP's Election Call Center at the toll-free number you will be provided. Tell them your name, the name of your county and precinct, the time you voted, and your voter number.

If you are working at the polls on Election Day, you can call the AP a few times throughout the day and provide the number of voters so far at your precinct.

That's all!

The information you share about voting will help the AP refine its voter turnout data models throughout the day before the polls close. That helps them know how far along they are in tabulation after polls close and helps with accurate and timely race calls.

The League of Women Voters and the Associated Press share many of the same values. We're both independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit and fact-based organizations. We hope you will consider participating in this pilot project designed to improve Election Night reporting.

# **The Straight Scoop on Shale**

A Project of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund

Eleventh Annual Shale & Public Health Conference

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

From 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM – registration/sign-in opens at 8:30 AM

University of Pittsburgh University Club

123 University Place, Pittsburgh. PA 15260

The conference is presented by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and hosted by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

We are so happy to see you in person this year! If you cannot attend the live event, the conference will also be available online, via Zoom. More info at 1-800-61-SHALE

The conference is free and lunch will be provided at no cost, **but you need to register!**

[Register](#)

More information and videos from past conferences: [shalepalwv.org](https://shalepalwv.org)

## **Featuring new research and practical applications**

Pitt/PA Department of Health Studies

Bernard Goldstein, MD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health

James Fabisiak, PhD, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health

## **Shale gas development waste and radiation**

Justin Nobel, MS, MA, Investigative journalist writing on science and the environment for Rolling Stone

## **Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure**

Sandra Steingraber, PhD, Concerned Health Professionals of New York, Science and Environmental Health Network

## **Fracking and Water Contaminates**

Susan Brantley, PhD, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Department of Geosciences, Penn State University  
Jennifer Baka, PhD, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Department of Geography, Penn State University

## **Maternal and Birth Impacts**

Mary D. Willis, PhD, MPH, Boston University School of Public Health

## **PFAS use in shale gas development**

Dusty Horwitt, JD, Consultant, Environment & Health Program, Physicians for Social Responsibility  
and more...



## More Voter Service Photos



A large group of volunteers from four organizations combined forces to register voters in the blocks around East Liberty Presbyterian Church (ELPC) on October 7: Black Political Empowerment Project, ELPC, LWVPGH, and students from Leading Women of Tomorrow from University of Pittsburgh. It was a cold, windy day, but these volunteers persevered. Back: Judy Mancini (co-chair), Marianne Novy, Judy Clack, Linda Harrington, Sr. Barbara Finch, and Allan Willinger. Front: DaVonn Brown, Nancy Heastings (co-chair), Enny Ayo-Gbenjo, Seven Hackett, Seren Spence, Olivia Collins, Brianna Toaca, and Ellen Wilson.



LWVPGH was nominated for a media award in the "Community Impact" category at the 7th Annual Greater Pittsburgh Community Media Awards. These awards honor programs created for and run on public access TV stations. Our videos, "Understanding the Next Election" and "5 Myths of Voting" were created by Michelle Grant and Amy Kleissas. Although we did not win, many League members attended in support of our creative members. Attendees pictured here are (left to right) Amy Kleissas, Charlene McAbee, Terrie Griffin, Michele Knoll, Dr. Cheryl McAbee, Tené Croom.





At a very busy Ross Community Senior Resource Fair on October 26, Judy Mancini (left) and Karey Kluesner (right) described the Leagues Voters' Guide for the November election. We ran out of copies. But, we gave out many more Voting Resources You Need postcards and Your Government Officials directories. These senior citizens were very interested in having contact information for their elected representatives. Judy Clack and Judith Kuperstein also volunteered.



LWVPGH and Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts provided an educational program on Magisterial District Judges on October 12. Three judges from Allegheny County participated: Judge Nicholas Martini, Judge Thomas G. Miller, and Judge Kevin E. Cooper, Jr. Nineteen people from across the state joined nine members of LWVPGH on this very informative Zoom program. Led by PMC moderator Leah Simpson, the judges described the criteria needed to become MDJ's, the history of "people's court," and what specific cases they hear. You can find the video [here](#). It's worth viewing.



Julie Zavon explains what is included in the LWVPGH Voters' Guide at an Abiding Missions family event on October 28. All copies we had of the LWVPGH Voters' Guide were distributed.



Household LWVPGH members, Martin Leff (left) and Katherine Nachbar (middle), provide voter education documents to an attendee at an Abiding Missions family event on October 28. Mary King, Julie Zavon, and Judy Clack also volunteered.



Right: At LWVPGH outreach events, we promote signing up to be a poll worker. Here's one happy community member who completed registering to be an Allegheny County poll worker. We were at the Jewish Community Center in honor and memory of Mel Wax who was one of the Tree of Life Synagogue victims. Mel was an enthusiastic voter registrar.



Above: Under the leadership of Kathy Herbst, groups of LWVPGH volunteers distributed League educational materials at nine walk-up or drive-up food distribution events this fall that were organized by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The volunteers enjoyed speaking to community members and distributing LWVPGH refrigerator magnets and Your Government Officials: Facts for Citizens Directories.

<b><u>LWVPGH Officers / Executive Committee</u></b>		<b><u>Local Area Meeting Chairs</u></b>	
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	Laryn Finder
V.P.3 Development	Nancy Naragon		
V.P.4 Program	Barbara Grabowski		
Secretary	Kathy Herbst		
Treasurer	Bridget McDonald		
<b><u>Directors</u></b>		<b><u>Interest &amp; Service Area Specialists</u></b>	
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Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton
Social media	Emily Ferri	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Terrie Griffin	Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon
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Civic Education	Amy Kleissas	Science and Environment	Don Naragon
Webmaster	Ruth Quint	Blast	Eileen Olmsted
Budget	Ellie Siegal	Vote411 & Voter Guides	Annette Shimer
		Vote411 & VG assistant	Michelle Zmijanac
<b><u>Staff</u></b>			
Community Information Center	Manager: Michelle Grant	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
<b><u>League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media</u></b>			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	<a href="http://lwvpgh.org">lwvpgh.org</a>	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576 Ext 0	<a href="http://palwv.org">palwv.org</a>	
National	202-429-1965	<a href="http://lwv.org">lwv.org</a>	
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