



LWV LEHIGH COUNTY VOTER

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

February

Thurs 5		Last Day to Reserve for !Hot Topics! Lunch
Mon 9	Noon	!Hot Topics! Lunch Andrea Naugle, Lehigh County Clerk of Judicial Records
Thurs 12	4:00 p.m.	Board Meeting

March

Thurs 5		Last Day to Reserve for !Hot Topics! Lunch
Thurs 5	4:00 p.m.	Naturalization
Mon 9	Noon	!Hot Topics! Lunch Immigration, Will Miller, Speaker
Thurs 12	4:00 p.m.	Board Meeting, Sunrise Senior Living

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear League Friends,

I hope everyone is having a busy and exciting New Year. If any of you attended the Inauguration and/or related activities, could you please write about it for the next issue of the Voter? I am sure that everyone would like to hear your first-hand accounts of those events. It is such an amazing time.

I wanted to take a moment to mention that it is time for the annual Legislative Interviews. They were announced at the Hot Topics Luncheon, but it is important that everyone who would like to participate is aware of this opportunity to meet with your state representative. If you are interested, please, contact Mary

Anne Rood or any League board member for additional information. We also will be setting up a study to review the "Election of the President by Popular Vote." The preliminary research is available at the LWVUS website if you are interested in reading some of the material in advance. We will be getting information about making the consensus to you pretty soon. I believe that there is a May due date for local deliberations and recommendations.

If you are interested in participating in a League activity on a small scale, you may be able to help with calls for our Phonathon this spring. We are conducting the event a little differently this year. We will meet at a

LWV member's home making the calls using our personal phones. It has become almost impossible to find public phone banks to use for fund raising. The local Leagues receive 20% of all contributions raised for the LWVPA through this particular fund raising event. We usually finish in one evening since we only place calls to our local members. It is fun to work with other members and we usually net about \$200.00 for our local treasury.

See you at the next League event,

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Rood,
President, LWVLC

FEBRUARY !HOT TOPICS! LUNCH

Monday, February 9,
Noon

Ruffino's
19th & Allen Streets
Allentown

Andrea Naugle, Lehigh
County Clerk of Judicial

Records, will be our
speaker. She will speak on
Row Office Reform.

Make your reservation by
calling or e-mailing **Sue
Phillips at 610-821-1118,
or at suep@entermail.net
no later than Thursday,
February 5th.**

The cost is \$14.00 per
person.

Bring a new or gently used
book for Cops 'N Kids!

Pat Swan, 610-435-4148

NEWS FROM THE BOARD —

FEBRUARY 2009

Activities:

!Hot Topics! luncheon was held at Pat Swan's home. The program was a spirited and informed review of the leagues water and transportation positions. Consensus was reached on updating the Local Water Consensus position. Transportation consensus needs more time for study and discussion. The new position will be published in the VOTER and presented for the approval of the membership at the annual meeting.

Ann Bartholomew presented a statement from the PA Campaign for Clean Water asking League members to contact Gov Rendell to speak against DEPs proposal to eliminate its review of storm-water plans.

Membership: Margie Dunn reporting - 2nd notices have been mailed to those who have not renewed, noting the January 31 deadline. Three former National members have joined the local League and one new member, L. Sydney Davis.

Government Directory: Ann Bartholomew reported funding has been received from PPL, Keystone Consulting and a NC Business. 15,000 directory updates will be printed and distributed.

Program: Pat Swan reported on the December Hot Topics luncheon at her home. Those attending contributed not more than \$5.00 each to the delicious luncheon prepared for us. The balance remaining after expenses was deposited into the League account. Jennifer Mann will speak this month on the status of government in PA.

Voter's Guide: Molly Faust reported work on the guide will begin in March and will be the last one directed by Faust. The board will look for her replacement and will consider dividing the job into compiling and distribution.

Special Projects: Mary Ann Rood reported additional notebooks with information on "How to Run for Office" have been prepared and are for sale for \$35.

Community Outreach: Monroe County is holding a "How to Run for Office" Seminar in February.

OLD BUSINESS:

Legislative Interviews - The interview questions have been prepared and members will be encouraged to interview legislators in person. Those who cannot be reached will have an opportunity to respond through email.

Local Policies:

Popular Vote Election Study - Materials are available on line. Our response is due by May 2009. Rood will explore with the LWVNC developing a study seminar on a Saturday in March.

Phone-a-thon - Swan reminded the Board of the phone-a-thon to be held at her home in March.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Seaman,
Secretary

The review of the League's water and transportation positions was spirited.

!HOT TOPICS! LUNCHEON

JANUARY 12, 2009

Speaker: State Representative Jennifer L. Mann from the 132nd District, Lehigh County

Pat Swan introduced Representative Jennifer Mann, the third woman to serve in a House Democratic leadership position in the history of the Pennsylvania legislature. Representative Mann is beginning her sixth term. She has served on the House Finance, Environmental Resources & Energy, Consumer Affairs, Insurance & Transportation committees; and she is the co-chair of the New Democratic Coalition, the Community College Caucus and the Arthritis Caucus.

Representative Mann thanked the League for caring about the community and for being engaged at all levels of politics. She said the more local the politics, the more direct impact there is on people's lives, but much less attention is usually paid to local politics. In local politics or community service, there is "no place to run and hide." Ms. Mann spoke of the participatory process of government, emphasizing that the government should respond to the needs of those who elected their representative. In her case, she represents about 60,000 people.

Representative Mann described the current time as "one of the most exciting but challenging." By contrast, when times are easy and there's a surplus, one doesn't have to use that word

"No" as much. She stated that she is eager for the new leadership in Washington and predicts that there may be money forthcoming for state governments.

Nevertheless, the state is facing two choices to meet expenses. One is to cut money out of the budget. She avers that there is no unnecessary spending. If it's in the budget, it is deemed necessary; but there are more needs than resources available for them. Options in economic crisis include a freeze on hiring, restrictions on travel, and frozen line items in the budget. But what happens when times get tough is that more people turn to government for help. The other choice for the state government is to raise taxes but she said "we want to do all we can to help people keep money in their pockets."

One encouraging thing is that the state may receive millions of dollars in funds from the new Obama administration's economic plan. Pennsylvania wants to build infrastructure -- bridges, etc. -- which is a priority for the new administration, and luckily, every billion dollars spent on infrastructure creates 30,000-35,000 jobs. The other encouraging thing, said Mann, is that the economic crisis is coming when we are halfway through the state's fiscal year. Conversations have already begun on how to address these challenges.

Of course, all other needs, such as education, health-care, energy, business issues, "cannot sit on hold." These all "come with a price tag" as well. Mann suggested that we'll see significant positive changes in education because of the priorities of the Obama administration. Health insurance is a challenge because it is tied to employment. When people become unemployed, they lose their health insurance.

In the current session, Mann is serving as the House Majority Democratic Caucus Secretary. The Majority Caucus consists of eight leaders in the Democratic Party. The Caucus has hired a consultant to find ways to cut down costs so the resources available can stretch farther.

Representative Mann spoke about her district, the 132nd, which lies completely in Allentown. She spoke of its diversity in terms of national origins, racial backgrounds, income levels, and so forth and said this diversity forces her to consider issues from the perspective of several different groups.

She wanted to reserve time for questions but ended her remarks by saying "if we don't do the right things now, it'll only prolong the situation."

There were questions about redistricting, possible gas tax increases, credit card fees

"Representative Mann thanked the League for caring about the community..."

(Continued on page 4)

!HOT TOPICS! LUNCHEON NOVEMBER 2008

(continued from page 3)

that add penalties on top of penalties, healthcare for seniors who have trouble finding primary care doctors and dentists (especially for those on Medicaid). There was also a question about enforcement of water pollution laws and collection of fines which, aside from helping to curb pollution would be a source of revenue for the state. Mann's response was that the polluting entities often cannot be collected from for various reasons, including bankruptcy. She explained that such fines, especially higher fines, are harder to collect than the smaller fines such as traffic/parking violations, and that fines are far from meeting the actual cost of the reparation for polluted water bodies.

the rules, you can stay out of trouble. As for the current economic crisis, she said she felt sure there would be a rebound but "my crystal ball just doesn't tell me when."

Representative Mann encouraged League members to contact her with any comments or concerns even, she said generously, if we are not in her district. See Representative Mann's website at: <http://www.pahouse.com/mann/>

Elizabeth Bodien

To conclude her talk, Ms. Mann said she likes to keep things simple. She believes that if you work hard and play by

*Important dates for filing
petitions and nomination papers
for the 1st quarter of 2009 are
listed....*

IMPORTANT DATES—2009

Listed below are important dates for filing nomination petitions in the first quarter of 2009.

February 17— First day to circulate and file nominations petitions.

March 10 — Last day to circulate and file nomination petitions.

March 11 — First day to circulate and file nomination papers

March 25 — Last day for withdrawal by candidates who filed nomination petitions.

April 20 — Last day to REGISTER to vote before the primary .

Ann Bartholomew

MANDATORY BUFFERS RULE

Help is needed in the next month to flood Governor Rendell with letters and faxes urging him to support a mandatory buffers rule.

Over the past six months, the PA Campaign for Clean Water has been working with staff at PA DEP to incorporate its Buffers 100 proposal into its regulations on stormwater and erosion and sediment control. Recently, Acting Secretary Hanger has informed us that the Department no longer plans to move forward with regulations requiring buffers on all streams. Instead, DEP is proposing a voluntary program that would encourage developers to include buffers on their sites by eliminating state review of stormwater plans for sites that include buffers.

The Campaign for Clean Water believes that a voluntary program is not good enough. It will have a very limited impact on water quality in our state and is not an adequate substitute for a statewide requirement. DEP already has a voluntary program in place – its Stormwater BMP Handbook includes an incentive program that provides credits to developers who include buffers in their site design. However, this sort of voluntary program will only end up generating buffers on a small number of streams in the state, leaving the vast majority of our streams still at risk of pollution, erosion and

flooding due to stormwater runoff.

In addition, DEP's proposal to eliminate its review of stormwater plans for developers who include buffers is illegal and a bad idea that could lead to even further degradation of our streams. Under DEP's proposal, a stormwater plan submitted under the seal of a professional engineer would be automatically approved with no technical review by DEP staff and no opportunity for public review and comment.

This would force DEP to approve a stormwater plan even if it is clear the plan won't work and would lead to flooding or stream pollution. While DEP could take enforcement action after the development is constructed, by then, it's often impossible to fix the problem. At minimum, it's much more expensive to fix the problem once the development is built than it is to change a plan before construction is started.

In addition, DEP wants to use this permit-by-rule scheme even in High Quality and Exceptional Value waters, leaving it to the developer's engineer to make sure that water quality in the stream won't be degraded! That kind of self-regulation hasn't worked before - there's no reason to think that it will protect our streams now.

Please help. Please write to Governor Ed Rendell and tell him that we need a mandatory buffers program, not a voluntary one. Remind him how important buffers are for improving water quality and stopping flooding. Tell him that DEP's plan to eliminate its review of stormwater plans is a bad idea that will cause more pollution and flooding and degrade our streams. Also, please encourage as many of your contacts to write the Governor too.

The Homebuilders Association has been busy lobbying against our Buffers plan; now we need to turn up the heat in support of a mandatory buffers rule.

Letters can be sent to the Governor's address at 225 Main Capitol, Harrisburg PA 17120 or you can fax them to him at 717-772-8284.

Fell free to contact me, barbarabenson@bensonsails.com, 864-716-0974; Bob Wendelgass, bwendelgass@cleanwater.org, 215-545-0250; or Matt Royer at Chesapeake Bay Foundation at mroyer@cbf.org or 717-234-5550. Thanks for your support of our Buffers 100 initiative, and for your quick response to this alert!

Barbara Benson

"... the Department no longer plans to move forward with regulations requiring buffers on all streams..."

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY
POSITIONS ON LOCAL ISSUES

Additions are marked in italics, and red type. Deletions are marked with strike-through.

2. **LOCAL WATER CONSENSUS** (adopted May 1973; amended 1982, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1993, 2002, 1996, 2006)

The 1973 study indicated the ready availability of water makes the area vulnerable to uncontrolled growth, endangering our natural resources and quality of life. All decisions regarding water use should take into account both immediate and long-range environmental effects. The quantity and quality of groundwater should be protected.

Recommendations:

1. Preservation of watershed areas is a basic consideration in land use policies.
 - a. Preservation of South Mountain *and all recharge areas*;
 - b. Adequate protection measures along streams;
 - c. Protection of wetlands *and flood plains*.

2. Existing laws in Lehigh County governing water quality should be adequately enforced. Therefore we urge:
 - a. That Lehigh County area require compliance with industrial waste ordinances;
 - b. All local municipalities strictly enforce flood-plain zoning *and best management practices (BMP) on stormwater management*;
 - c. *All municipalities and agencies strictly enforce the Stormwater Management Act and use BMP's.*
 - d. Citizen inspection to supplement government inspection;
 - e. Prompt attention *action* by local government and agencies *in response* to citizen complaints about pollution.

3. If protective long-range planning is adopted and our water resources are not overtaxed, it should be possible to avoid future projects that may have negative environmental effects. We urge:
 - a. Conservation of water resources and *maximum* protection of *all creeks in Lehigh County and their tributaries*;
 - b. Use of the Lehigh River as a backup source of water supply; (deleted because this is being done) *Mandatory accountability on all sewer and water allocations*;
 - c. Closer cooperation among municipalities with planning policies *and all governmental agencies delegated with responsibility to protect water resources*;
 - d. Local governments *and responsible agencies to* seek greater citizen participation in all planning;
 - e. Continued *diligence in monitoring* activities of the Delaware River Basin Commission concerning impacts on the Lehigh River and its tributaries, including any basin transfer proposals *and opposition to any basin transfers of water*.
 - f. *Practice of smart-growth concepts to revitalize inner cities and preserve open space.*
 - g. *Encourage educational programs that support watershed protection.*

LWVLC OPPOSES DEP PROPOSED BUFFER PROGRAM

The following letter was written to Governor Rendell to express our League's opposition to DEP's position regarding water use.

Governor Edward G. Rendell
225 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Department of Environmental Protection - Proposed Buffer Program

Dear Governor Rendell:

The League of Women Voters water position states that all decisions regarding water use should take into account both immediate and long-range environmental effects.

DEP's proposed plan to eliminate review of stormwater plans for developers, who would include buffers, not only violates the Clean Water Act, but would cause more pollution and flooding. The DEP plan would also jeopardize High Quality and Exceptional Value waters.

We need a mandatory buffers program, not a voluntary one at the discretion of the developer. Under DEP's proposal, a stormwater plan submitted under seal by a professional engineer would be automatically approved with no review by DEP and no opportunity for public review and comment.

It is DEP's mission to protect all the waters of the Commonwealth.

We oppose any plan that weakens the ability of DEP to monitor and protect streams.

Very truly yours,

Mary Anne Stinner, Action Chair
2510 Green Acres Drive
Allentown, PA
Mas27@ptd.net

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA

2009 QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL LEAGUE INTERVIEWS WITH STATE LEGISLATORS

REDISTRICTING REFORM In the 2008 session, 95 members of the PA House cosponsored a League backed proposal to amend the PA constitution to assign redistricting to a non-partisan bureau that would redraw lines using strict criteria to prevent gerrymandering. However, the bill died in committee. Passage of proposed constitutional amendment legislation by the end of June 2008 was necessary to meet the requirements for a constitutional amendment to take effect in time for the 2011 round of redrawing legislative and congressional district boundaries.

Since it is no longer possible to pass a constitutional amendment reforming the redistricting process in time to take effect in 2011, would you support an alternate proposal to reform the process through legislation that would take effect for 2011?

The proposed legislation would do the following:

- Provide that the Legislative Reapportionment Commission constituted under the Pennsylvania constitution would conduct congressional as well as legislative redistricting.
- Assign standards for meeting redistricting criteria already in the constitution to be applied to congressional as well as legislative district boundaries.
- Set requirements for transparency and public input.

ELECTION REFORM Protecting the right of every qualified citizen to vote is a central tenant of our democratic system. But this right is often compromised by laws and practices that discourage voter participation.

Which of the following, if any, would you support to remove unnecessary barriers to voting?

- Provide that any eligible citizen can register and vote on Election Day.
- Establish a system for early voting to alleviate problems such as long lines and excessive waiting times associated with high voter turnout in some elections.
- Remove the requirement that registered voters have an excuse in order to cast an absentee ballot (no excuse necessary absentee voting).

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION Pennsylvania last held a constitutional convention in 1967 – 1968.

Do you think the time is right for Pennsylvania to hold another constitutional convention?

Should such a convention be limited or open ended?

How do you think the delegates should be selected?

Should recommended amendments go directly to the voters or should they go to the legislature first which might or might not vote to send them to the voters for approval? What recourse should citizens have if the legislature fails to act?

What other recommendations do you have should a constitutional convention be held?

LEGISLATOR'S PRIORITIES

Do you have any legislative priorities related to the current economic crisis?

2009 NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES SCHEDULED

Four Naturalization Ceremonies have been scheduled for 2009. The dates are as follows:

- Thursday, March 5
- Thursday, May 28
- Thursday, August 27
- Thursday, November 19

At each ceremony, the League gives each new citizen a packet of information about voting, including a Voter Registration Form for their use.

The ceremonies are brief, taking about one hour, but are very moving.

If you would like to attend any of the ceremonies, you are welcome to attend. Either put the dates on your calendar now, or when the next one is published in the Voter.

The ceremonies begin at 4:00 p.m. in the Old Lehigh County Courthouse.

Caryn Shoenthal

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONROE COUNTY RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE WORKSHOP TO BE HELD

A workshop to help aspiring candidates for public office and campaign workers in Monroe County will be held Saturday morning, February 7 at the Hughes Eastern Monroe Pubic Library Community Room, Rt. 611, Stroudsburg, beginning at 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Registration is required by the postmark deadline of January 29 for reservations.

Sponsored by the nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Monroe County and the co-sponsoring Leagues of Lacka-

wanna, Lehigh and Northampton Counties, the workshop requires a registration fee of \$30.00, which includes all materials, binder and refreshments.

Please include name, mailing address, e-mail, day and evening phones, along with \$30.00 made payable to the LWVMC and mailed to Kathy Boyle, A-2 Gardner Lane, Stroudsburg, PA 18360. Snow date is the following Saturday, February 14.

For further information about the workshop call 570-629-2543. For inquiries about the League and membership or future programs call 570-646-2344.

Contact: Robin Mastrocola,
570-646-2344
robvin@frontiernet.net

VOTERS GUIDE COORDINATOR STEPS DOWN

I have coordinated publishing the Voters Guide for approximately ten years. I will not be able to continue in that capacity, so I am asking that anyone who would like to become more involved in the functions of the League, step in to fill my spot.

The Voters Guide is published twice a year. There are always other League members available to assist in getting the in-

formation for the Guide, and for distributing the finished product. If you are interested in finding out more about the duties involved in publishing the Guide, contact me at 610-965-6974.

Molly Faust

MEMBERSHIP

League of Women Voters
of Lehigh County

P. O. Box 3275
Allentown, PA 18106
610-432-1456
LWVPA Hotline: 1-800-692-7281

President: Mary Anne Rood,
610-395-3464
Membership: Margie Dunn,
610-298-8946

Caryn Shoenthal, Editor
Email: CarynCW@yahoo.com
Phone: 610-261-0596



Our membership drive is now over. Thank you to all who renewed your membership. I will have a final report in the March Voter. I will also be mailing your 2009 membership booklet in March.

We had one new member join our League last month. Please add her name to

your membership booklet.

L. Snyder Davis
135 N 28th St
Allentown 18104
610 351-6732
Lsd135@rcn.com

Maryann Barone changed from a national to a local member.

New e-mail address for member, Madeleine Reilly is mareilly4@verizon.net

Judith Murphy, Caroline Dobrowolski, Beverly Hensler re-joined our League.

Margie Dunn

LWVLC CALENDAR

February 9, 2009

Row Office Reform, Andrea Naugle, Lehigh County Clerk of Judicial Records (see page 1)

March 9, 2009

Immigration, Will Miller, Program Administrator, Refugee and Immigration Services, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Allentown

April 13, 2009

Renewable Energy and Sustainability, Archie Follweiler, President, Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Association.

All meetings will be held at Ruffino's, 1840 Allen Street, Allentown.

Pat Swan

ANNUAL MEETING

The date and location of the annual meeting has been confirmed with Mango's restaurant on Hamilton Boulevard.

It will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 5:30

p.m. for social hour, and 6:00 p.m. for dinner.

Mark the date on your calendar. There will be an announcement at the next

!Hot Topics! lunch confirming the date.

Jan Seaman

WHEN PATRONIZING OUR SPONSORS, PLEASE REMEMBER TO
LET THEM KNOW YOU SAW THEIR ADVERTISEMENT IN
THE LEHIGH COUNTY VOTER

Dan's Camera helps non-profit organizations with fund raising by offering a fifty cent rebate to the organizations for each roll of film members bring in to be developed. Members must sign a logbook for LWV. This is a very easy way to help raise funds for the League. Please see Dan's advertisement.

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County
P.O. Box 3275
Allentown PA 18106



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone, E-mail _____

Membership dues include membership in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania (LWVPA) and a subscription to the local, state and national *Voter*.

League dues and contributions are not tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

Contributions to the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) are tax-deductible.

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all citizens of voting age. Associate membership is available for non-citizens and for those under age eighteen.

ANNUAL DUES \$55.00 individual
2009 \$82.50 household
\$25.00 full-time student

Contact membership secretary for details of pro-rated dues amounts.

Please make check payable to
LWVLC and mail to:
LWVLC
c/o Margie Dunn
8411 Carpet Road
New Tripoli, PA 18066