

League of Women Voters Annual Report 2019-2020

A local and national advocacy and nonpartisan educational organization to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

*2020 Year of the National LWV of 100th anniversary,
and 100th anniversary of passing of 19th amendment – Women’s Right to Vote*

Business section – Susan Swab - President

Hello to all League Members,

Due to the unexpected interruption in our lives we have had to change how we present our traditional LWV (League of Women Voters) Annual Meeting. I want you to know the League is still alive and well. The Board has kept in contact via email and has met through conference calls.

Our Board; President-Susan Swab, Secretary-Debbie Haines, Treasurer -Christa Williams, VP Membership - Michelle Gray, VP Programs --Jennifer Bliss, with Phyllis Wright assisting, VP Communications - Phyllis Wright. We also have as Voter Registration Chair - Sally Beckerink, and Nominating Committee - Susan Stout and Annette Sivak.

Part of the business we must conduct is election of officers. The Nominating Committee Susan Stout and Annette Sivak have presented this slate of nominees; Susan Stout for Secretary, Michelle Gray for another term as VP for Membership, and Jennifer Bliss for VP Programs. If there is no opposition to these nominees we will accept their appointment to the Board as well as the budget* (see next page). Debbie Haines will retire from the Secretarial position, but will continue with the Harvard Project.

We will need a volunteer for next year's Nominating Committee -Susan Stout will Chair, but will need a second chair, who will then become chair for the following year. We also need a volunteer to audit our account.

After reading the reports from our wonderful Board you will be able to see the many activities that have been going on this year. Our hope is members will find our projects interesting and stimulating and will be encouraged to become more active in the League's mission and goals

I personally wish to thank the Board and Members who have helped make this an interesting and productive year.

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2019-2020 Annual Report section

FINANCIAL REPORT – *Christa Williams- treas.*

2019-2020 expenditures of \$2499.04 (include national per member due \$832 and state \$520 dues) * The proposed budget for 2020-21 is \$3,335 expenses with \$2,600 income. A finance drive may be needed of \$735 to balance the budget, and draw from our current bank balance.

MEMEBERSHIP REPORT – *Michelle Gray - chair.* As of May 31, 2020 membership was 34 members. For 58 years, the League of Women Voters of Warren County's membership has devoted time and effort to the fulfillment of the organization's mission. On October 19, 2019, the membership meeting program featured Yesteryear Productions in an historic rendition of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention. As we are all aware, that was the beginning of the concentrated effort put forth by many brave steadfast women and men in the fight to bring an end to women's suffrage and gain rights to vote. The league is committed to actively participating in our government as a nonpartisan politically informed entity serving as educators to the community on the topics that matter. Please welcome our newest members Sally Beckerink, Kim Adams, Ruby MacWithey, Bob Sokolski, and student members Amanda Gray and Hannah Johnson. Please recognize our dedicated life members Mary Schorman and Ellen Ruffolo, and 47-year member Mary Conarro. Keep up the good work, you will make a difference!

VOTER REGISTRATION – *Sally Beckerink – chair*

The week of September 16, Sheffield, Youngsville, Tidioute and Eisenhower schools welcomed Jane Dunshie, Phyllis Wright, Michelle Gray and Sally Beckerink to classrooms to assist eligible students with the application to register to vote. Lisa Rivett also graciously gave her time, allowing students to operate the new voting machines. In addition, League members presented programs on Gerrymandering, the importance of the census and the scheduled dates for voting. Over 40 students completed the applications for voter registration for the combined fall and spring elections.

The League of Women Voters of Warren County, in partnership with the Warren Public Library, provided voter registration assistance and information in recognition of National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 24 from 10 AM to 8 PM in the lobby of the Warren Public Library.

Thank you to Zonta Club of Warren for supporting the Leagues attempt to provide activities for students familiarizing them with the fight for women's right to vote. Five locked boxes and lock sets were purchased with the money from Zonta. The activities had students reading biographies and passages about the suffragettes and their battles. After reading, puzzles and riddles were to be solved to obtain the codes and keys to the unlock the boxes. Unfortunately, the closing of schools prevented us from visiting the classrooms. The hope is to reschedule in September when schools open again.

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PROGRAM REPORT & COMMUNICATION REPORT – Jennifer Bliss & Phyllis Wright

Harvard Case Study Method for Teaching History- Debbie Haines

In the Spring of 2019 we discovered an amazing opportunity for our League to sponsor a county high school history teacher to attend an all expenses paid workshop at Harvard University to learn the Case Study Method for teaching topics in history and democracy. We sponsored Melissa Becker, who attended the Harvard Workshop last August. Melissa returned home very excited to teach her American History class this year using the Case Study Method. She had to commit to teach at least 4 Case Studies throughout the school year and also to present a Community Case Study, open to the public during 2020. The Community Meeting was to take place in April; however, because of restrictions on public meetings due to COVID-19, it is tentatively scheduled for sometime in June and will take place as a ZOOM meeting on your computer, tablet, iPad or phone. We hope every League member will register for the meeting so please bone up on ZOOM (it's not too hard) and wait for an announcement and instructions. If you would like to learn more about the program, there is more information on our League Website at www.lwvwc.org

April 6, 2019 – Crary Art Gallery Exhibit – featuring Marie Hines-Cowan – who is a member of the National Association of Women Artists – and showcased her paintings - inspired by Greek mythology and contemporary culture. A few LWV Members attended the opening and wore their LWV pins.

June 24, 2019 – Warren County Courthouse Steps – celebrated the PA Legislature ratifying the 19th Amendment 100 years ago. The Warren County Commissioners hosted this event. It all started with 19 bells ringing from the bell tower. Laura S. Bauer was a speaker among others in our community. Those who attended dressed up, had signs, and enjoyed the beautiful weather that day.

August 15, 2019 – Wilder Museum of Warren County History – speaker Traci Langworthy – a professor at SUNY JCC spoke on one of Warren County's leaders in Women Suffrage – Elnora Monroe Babcock. This was FREE and open to the public – thanks to Warren Co. Historical Society.

September 10, 2019 – Struthers Library Theatre – in partnership with Warren Historical Society and Zonta Club of Warren. Award Winning actress Christina Rausa portrayed Susan B. Anthony in a one-woman-show. It was FREE and open to the public. There was a good showing from the community for this event. Prior to the event many league and community members gathered in front of the entrance in historical attire and sang and chanted phrases from 100 years ago.

November 2, 2019 – Cynthia Catlin Miller Historical Marker Ceremony took place throughout Sugar Grove. Those attending had the option of touring her home where she welcomed slaves during the days of the Underground Railroad Era. Phyllis Wright and Jane Dunshie set up a table at the nearby church with Women's Suffrage, LWV of Warren Co., and Voter Registration information.

Feb 14, 2020, marks the centennial anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters and the passing of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote. There are more than 750 local Leagues in the USA which engage in advocacy, voter registrations, and outreach and leadership development. The League is the only “nonpartisan” group that provides education on issues affecting citizens and their voting privileges and information on legislation in our democracy. Vote411.org is the “one-stop-shop” for registration forms, voter photo ID requirements, early voting options, polling place locations and more. Jane Dunshie and Phyllis Wright prepared a display of “League of Women Voters Then and Now” in the Warren Public Library entrance window.

March 11, 2020 – 4th Annual League of Women Voters of Warren County Sunshine Week – Warren Public Library with speaker Sean Silman of the U.S. Census. Topic: Sunshine & The Census.

Through emails members were asked to contact legislators on passing Marsy's Law regarding rights of crime victim, financial support for United Postal Service, and several consumer rights issues.

Dec 2019, Susan Stout and Phyllis Wright met with Representative Kathy Rapp to discuss the Independent Commission for drawing voting district to reduce gerrymandering. Other actions included community programs on gerrymandering with a power point, citizens sending post cards to legislators that draw attention to gerrymandering, Warren Times Observer “ Readers Speak” column.

Suffrage group activities- Several plans for celebrating 100th anniversary of 19th amendment were conducted through a community Suffrage Centennial community group led by a some LWV members. Actions included historic window displays in our business community. Historic suffragettes were portrayed by Jane Dunshie during the Historic Oakland Cemetery event and community social groups. Wes Ramsey created a Geo Cache - finding the “Justice Bell” (replica of the Liberty Bell) which travelled through Warren Co., PA and US in 1917 -1920 to promote voting for the 19th amendment giving Women the Right to Vote. A tote box of suffrage display items was developed by the Warren Public Library and LWV members. Historic information resources files and bookmarks listing books and DVDs on the suffrage era was available for the public. Individuals made wearable banners and pins to promote women's right to vote. A collection of “Notable Warren Women” names of historic reference was begun. Due to COVID 19 virus beginning in February with isolation required and social districting, further planned actions were put on hold for 2020.

The Warren League joined Erie County League for monthly Erie TV RoundTable discussion on current topics as census, gerrymandering, etc.

New releases were published regarding the work of the League and programs. Examples were and non partisan issue, on line Vote 411 as a resource for candidate information, importance of the 2020 Census, gerrymandering affecting citizen voting, mailing in ballots for elections, Real ID, etc.

Professional personalize League of Women name tags were prepared for members

Other-

Phyllis Wright attended PA LWV state meeting in June at Reading PA. Workshops include Gerrymandering and Fair District PA, Importance of Census, Later School start time study, and more plus business of the League - budget, election of officers, bylaws, etc.

Plans for updated 2021 Government directory lead by Sally Eton and Jane Dunshie

Local web site www.lwvwc.org and email lwvwc@yahoo.com are maintained by Michelle Gray.

Information compiled by Phyllis Wright- VP Communications, thanks for each board members reports.