



League of Women Voters of Warren County The Voter: Fall, 2018

Hello fellow League members,

Time for the Fall newsletter though the fall we know and love seems elusive this year. Where are the beautiful fall leaves? Hopefully by the time you read this newsletter the rain will have given way to sunshine and color.

The League continued our own fall tradition with our **Fall Membership Meeting** held on October 18. We had hoped for a larger turnout; but, the members and the several potential new members and friends who gathered that evening at the Wilder Museum in Irvine, enjoyed a truly wonderful evening. Michelle Gray had asked museum volunteer Keith Oviatt to guide us through the museum. His many historical tidbits and great knowledge of our area made for an interesting tour. Afterward we all enjoyed some snacks before the main program began. Jane Dunshie first spoke about League history and then she, Susan Swab and Phyllis Wright guided us through a League PowerPoint program about the League of Women Voters: our Mission, Structure, What we do at each level (Local, PA and US) and the topic of Positions and Programs within the League. We ended with a short business meeting and lots of interesting conversation.

You may recall that in the Winter 2018 Newsletter, Jane Dunshie presented a first installment of “League 101” in which she presented information about the League and also two member essays. In this Newsletter, she has prepared another look at the League to help us better understand our history, plus a third member essay about why that member chose to join us.

#2: Understanding our League of Women Voters (September, 2018)

Excerpted from *WHAT IS THE LWV* PowerPoint published by the LWV-PA in April, 2016

This second installment in our Warren County series will elaborate on the beginnings of the National League and then describe what occurred in Pennsylvania.

Why Women Voters? It all has to do with our history. If you want to know about the suffragists, see the movie, *Ironed Jawed Angels*. A 2-hour DVD copy is available from The Warren Public Library. To know more about the League at the time women gained the right to vote, read on.

On February 13, 1920, 2,000 women from 48 states were in Chicago for the last convention of NAWSA – the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The 19th amendment to the US Constitution had already been ratified by 31 states and only 5 more states were needed for women to get the right to

vote. NAWSA had already heard from the governors of New Mexico and Oklahoma and three other governors were calling their legislatures together to vote to ratify the 19th amendment. So Carrie Chapman Catt, the president of NAWSA, and the delegates began the work of disbanding NAWSA and forming the League of Women Citizens with a plan to change the name to League of Women Voters as soon as 5 more states ratified the Amendment.

It took until **August 18th 1920** and the state of Tennessee to get the 35 states needed to give women the right to vote.

But now came another challenge..... 2,000 women in PA needed to be registered before the fall election and there was a three step process that had to be completed by Sept 12th.

Step one: First women had to be assessed and only 2 days had been set aside for the process.

Step two: Women had to pay a poll tax UNLESS they owned property and could show proof of the paid taxes. If they could do that, they were exempt. Wives had to pay a poll tax unless their name was on the deed. People between the age of 21 to 22 were also exempt from the tax.

Step three: Women had to register, and 3 days had been set aside for the purpose. During the registration process you had to give your name, address, date of birth, and approximate weight and height.

The League, being nonpartisan, was the perfect solution to getting women registered in such a short time frame. We were allowed to help women get through the arduous process of becoming registered by the Sept 12th deadline.

This began the process that we know so well today, educating women voters on how to register and understand the election laws. This happened all over Pennsylvania.

Many argued that women did not know enough to vote. Our mission rapidly became that of educating people – particularly women – on registering to vote, the election process, information regarding critical issues, running for office, and how the government works. In PA we even had Government Academies at state Universities, such as West Chester and women's colleges such as Bryn Mawr. **State League Board Minutes in 1925 stated they had decided to expand the Academies to include men as they needed to know more as well.**

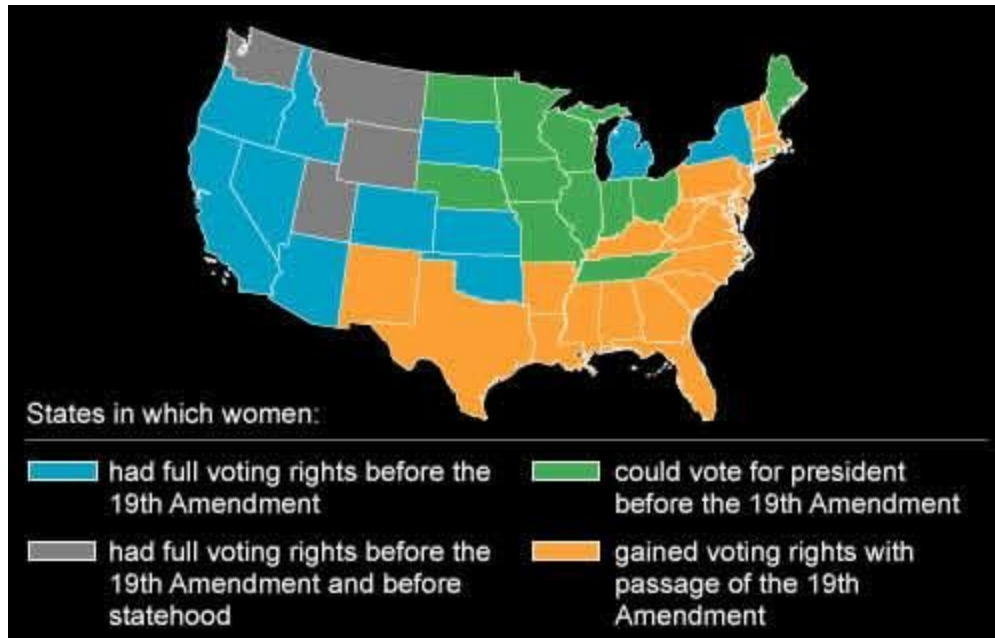
From Jennifer Bliss, one of our more recently elected local board members:

For years I associated The League of Women Voters with their Candidates Forums (on the radio) and Voter Registration, but it wasn't until years later I really looked into the other things they did. At that time, I was looking for others to discuss current events and issues in a civilized manner, based on the facts and NOT opinions from solely one side or the other. I appreciate that the LWV is non-partisan and does NOT promote/endorse candidates or parties. They educate members and the public on topics and then you can form your own opinion based on the information you receive. We have members of all different backgrounds and beliefs and

difference in opinions are respected. We are able to have intelligent conversations and always learn something new. These are just a few reasons why I joined the league.

In Jane's text above, note that women were granted the right to vote nationwide on August 18, 1920 with the passage of the 19th amendment to the US Constitution. In the map below, note that in Pennsylvania, women had no voting rights until passage of the 19th amendment. So in 2020 we celebrate 100 years of voting rights in the US and also in Pennsylvania.

Map found on Website of the National Constitution Center, Independence Mall, Philadelphia, PA



The local League is planning to commemorate this major milestone throughout 2020 with some major events, now in the planning stages. We may need your help as things develop. Stay tuned! Better yet, call any board member and volunteer to help us plan! Some ideas being considered are participation in the 4th of July parade, speakers, a play, a trip to Seneca Falls, a relevant movie. **Don't you kind of feel we owe it to the brave women who came before us to celebrate their remarkable achievements?**

Membership Report

Michelle reports that we are 32 members strong and.... it is time to pay your dues....

Annual Memberships are due by October 1st, but no later than December 1st.

Please consider rounding your dues up to help support the membership scholarship fund. If you would like to become a member, but need financial assistance, please email lwwwc@yahoo.com

Clip the dues form below and send in your dues soon.

Warren County League of Women Voters Membership Form

Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Please include a check for \$55 for your annual dues made payable to League of Women Voters Warren County and mail to:
LWVWC, PO Box 912, Warren, PA 16365
Thank you for your support!

Sunshine Week - Looking ahead

In 2019 our Sunshine Week event will be held on March 14. Commissioner Kafferlin would like us to feature the County 911 Dispatch Center and Hazmat. The Commissioners would like Sunshine Week to be incorporated into the County Bicentennial Event Calendar so we will be working with them.

Erie Refugees

You may have been following continued refugee events in the Warren paper. It has been suggested that since this program is self supporting now, the League need not be formally attached to it. Members can still volunteer as they wish.

Voter Registration

Michelle reports that September registration in County schools was successful with 45 students signing up. We also had volunteers at Riverfest in Warren resulting in at least one sign up and a few folks taking forms.

Candidate Forum

In July of this year, Jennifer and Phyllis began planning our Candidate Forum prior to the Nov. 6, 2018 election. League forums are a long-time tradition to prepare and inform local voters for upcoming elections. U.S. Representative Glenn Thompson and his opponent, Susan Boser were contacted early on in order to give them time to fit our Forum into their schedules in October. Susan Boser affirmed her willingness to participate. However, Representative Thompson declined our invitation citing scheduling conflicts. Because it is not permitted to hold a debate without at least two candidates, we had to cancel this year's Forum. It has come to our attention that candidates have declined to participate in forums and town hall meetings elsewhere in Pennsylvania and in other states as well. The Board decided to write a release for the newspaper explaining why the League is not holding the Forum this year. This resulted in an article in the Times Observer on October 2.

Something New

Looking ahead, Jennifer has been working on a joint program with Zonta to focus on child marriage: facts and figures and risk factors. Zonta will pursue the issue on an international level while the League would focus on the U.S. Look for this as a Coffee and Conversation program early next year.

Election Information

October 30, 2018 - Absentee Ballot Request deadline: Last Day to Apply for a Civilian Absentee Ballot

November 2, 2018 - Absentee Ballot return deadline : Last Day for County Board of Elections to Receive voted Civilian Absentee Ballots

November 13, 2018 - Absentee Ballot return deadline- UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) citizens: Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted military and overseas absentee ballots (submitted for delivery no later than 11:59 P.M. on November 5)

Vote
Vote November 6, 2018 - GENERAL ELECTION Vote
Vote