

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CENTRE COUNTY **NEWSLETTER**

Volume 66 Number 1

SPRING 2020

Calendar of League of Women Voters of Centre County

- 18 May: LAST DAY TO REGISTER BEFORE THE PRIMARY**
- 19 May: LWVCC Steering Committee Meeting VIA Zoom at Noon
- 26 May: DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR ABSENTEE OR MAIL-IN BALLOT (5PM)**
- 2 June: GENERAL PRIMARY AND DEADLINE TO RETURN BALLOTS (8PM)**
- 16 June: ANNUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM at Noon**

From the Desk of a Presiding Officer

What a time this is! We hope that all are safe and healthy. While practicing social distancing or staying at home, remember that there is still much you can do to support the League. And speaking of support, we thank each and every one who contributed to the League's Education Fund during our Winter Fundraiser. We received \$ 800 in donations! This will support our efforts as we move forward.

We hope you saw the front page article about the League in the February issue of the State College Magazine. We were honored to participate and publicize all the wonderful work you are doing in the community.

We are all learning to do things differently in this time of COVID-19. We cannot be out at Voter Registration Events and our outreach to Senior Living Communities, High Schools, and Penn State have all had to take a different turn. We are learning how to better use our social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (we hope you're following us!). Our website: <https://www.lwvcentrecounty.org/> is often updated and you'll find important information about voting as well as some interesting historical articles. We are looking for some individuals talented in communication skills to help us.

Monthly Meetings are no longer held at the Borough Building. We held our most recent Steering Committee meeting via Zoom. Plans are in place to hold our Annual Meeting. Scheduled for 16 June at noon, also on Zoom. Zoom is free and you can easily sign up and download it to your computer, tablet, or phone via <https://zoom.us/>. There are many tutorials available on how to use Zoom, both online and on YouTube. We hope to "see" you at the meeting! More details on the Annual Meeting will be emailed to you later in May.

Stay safe and strong,
Jan Koch
Co-Presiding Officer LWVCC

LWVCC Membership Election Update Info

In case you have not had the chance to visit our newly updated website, www.lwvcentrecounty.org, please do so as soon as you have a minute to find the most up-to-date election information for yourselves, your family members or your neighbors. Please share with any Pennsylvania residents you may know. Laura Brown and Lori Weider do a terrific job of keeping our website content both current and relevant.

You may also have seen our editorial in the CDT with the new voting deadlines. Also mentioned in that editorial is the clarification from the March 2020 law that will now allow registered voters to choose their own ballot (mail-in or absentee) without fear of being challenged for having chosen incorrectly. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, the news that no-excuse mail-in ballots are universally available is more welcomed than ever. No Pennsylvania resident should have to choose between their health and their right to vote!

Our website, under Voter Toolkit, explains how to apply and cast your ballot by mail. And, very importantly, how to *track the status of your application or ballot at* <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>. Being able to track the status of your application and ballot will bring a measure of comfort to the voters of Pennsylvania.

The Centre County Commissioners have made two brief Public Service Announcement videos regarding the ease of voting by mail, which are posted on our website. Voters who need or wish to vote in person should visit the website of the Centre County Office of Elections at <https://centrecountypa.gov/238/Elections-Voter-Registration> to confirm the location of their polling place, especially important now as some polling places may need to be closed or consolidated for safety.

There are a surprising number of mail-in ballots across the country which are rejected due to errors in filling out the ballot or having an unacceptable signature. Our goal is to educate as many people as we possibly can on how to properly complete a ballot in order to minimize the number of rejected ballots. We are looking at options to better do this.

And, lastly, on our website you will find interesting articles about the history of the LWV as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the subsequent founding of the LWV. One article is especially prescient at this time: "How a Pandemic Nearly Derailed the Women's Suffrage Movement." Another article you may find interesting is about LWV early years that addresses discrimination within the movement. As Virginia Kase, CEO of the LWV says, "As we kick off the centennial year of women winning the right to vote, we mustn't romanticize the story of the 19th Amendment. The truth is, progress towards a more perfect democracy is often messy, and the 19th Amendment did not break down voting barriers for all women -- and even today, there is more work to be done...."

Poll Worker Safety During the Pandemic

To those of you who will work the polls during this pandemic, a HUGE thank you! As you can imagine, there will be a need for poll workers now and for future elections. Please consider volunteering for a half-day and whole day. Financial compensation is provided. Please contact the Centre County Office of Elections at 814-355-6703 to apply or online at <https://expressforms.pa.gov/apps/pa/DOS-VotesPA/County>

Here is what we know about working the polls at this time:

- Masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes for poll workers and blue painter tape to mark the floor for voter distancing will be provided for each polling place. Enough ink pens will be provided so that every voter has one to sign the poll book, vote and take the pen with them.
- Masks and gloves will NOT be provided to voters. They must supply their own. If they refuse to use a mask and/or gloves, poll workers will not be able to force them. They will vote as normal.
- Officially, no limits have been set for the number of voters allowed into each facility at this time. That will be left up to individual polling places to decide. One example might be, if enough poll workers are available, one could be stationed at the entry door allowing voters in and out, and tracking the number to ensure that just enough voters to fill their number of voting booths are permitted in at one time. When those voters are done, the booths would be cleaned by poll workers. Then the next batch of voters would be allowed to enter. That would be similar to what several grocery stores are already doing to limit crowd sizes.
- Even though poll workers will be wearing masks and gloves, they will still need to follow social distancing as they work. How to go about that will be left up to each polling place since each layout is different.

Please keep in mind this information may have to be altered by June 2 depending on conditions on the ground. In the meantime, please encourage as many people as you possibly can to **vote by mail**.

2020 Census

One specific way to continue moving the League's work is through encouraging our community members to complete the [2020 Census online](#). If you haven't already completed your census we encourage you to do so. It takes only a few minutes and provides data that impacts school lunches, plans for highways and support for firefighters and families in need.

Sunday, May 3: Bells Across Pennsylvania Day

The threefold purpose of the initiative is:

- To recognize;
- To show solidarity with elected officials and residents of municipalities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all of whom are fighting COVID-19 on the frontlines together; and
- To demonstrate a collective resolve that Pennsylvanians will prevail over COVID-19 and work tirelessly to ensure that their businesses and civic life will thrive once again.

The State College Borough is encouraging residents to hold whatever events “sheltering in place” will allow. Then at **7:00 p.m.**, all Pennsylvanians and churches will be encouraged to ring bells for three minutes – one minute for each of the above purposes

Songs of the Suffragists: Lyrics of American Feminism from 1850 to 2020

One of the local leagues in New Jersey has spent the last two years putting together a terrific read in celebration of the LWV Centennial. The book encapsulates the history of the suffragist movement behind the music of the time! You will follow the suffragist movement and watch it unfold through the extended narration behind each song. Each paperback book is 66 pages long and includes many graphic illustrations as well as a well-researched narrative for each song.

This book is available for purchase on Amazon!

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1711686433/ref=sr_1_8?keywords=songs+of+the+suffragists&qid=1585395777&sr=8-8

National League Joins Efforts to Support Funding in 4th COVID-19 Stimulus

LWVUS has actively been supporting additional measures for inclusion in the next emergency funding stimulus bills related to the coronavirus. The provisions the League support cover \$4 billion in elections funding, economic measures, access to broadband internet, support for the classification of the District of Columbia as a state, and support for families in need of financial or healthcare assistance no matter their immigration or economic status. Read a [summary and get links to the full letters](#).

League Supports H.Res 908, Denouncing Asian American discrimination

The League joined a letter drafted on behalf of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), the Democracy Initiative, and more than 150 undersigned organizations to denounce the continued increase in racist attacks and discrimination against the Asian American community, and to express our support for H.Res. 908, introduced by Representative Grace Meng (D-NY-6) and its Senate companion to be

introduced by Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) which condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment related to COVID19.

McCourtney Institute for Democracy Virtual Book Club

The book *How Democracies Die*, written by Harvard political scientists Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, examines the factors that lead democratic governments to slide into authoritarianism. It is a *New York Times* bestseller with good reason — it makes a clear and compelling argument that you do not need a Ph.D. to understand. The book also discusses how people who are passionate about democracy can work to defend it, and the role that each of us has to play as a democratic citizen.

Join the McCourtney Institute for Democracy for a discussion about the book and the state of democracy in the U.S. and around the world. Discussions will be led by Chris Beem, the Institute's managing director. He taught an undergraduate seminar based on the book during the first half of the spring 2020 semester.

RSVP at democracy.psu.edu/book by May 15 for either Wednesday, May 20 at 7:00PM or Thursday, May 21 at noon.

Follow us:

Website: lwvcentrecounty.org

Facebook: League of Women Voters of Centre County

Twitter: [lwvcentrecounty](https://twitter.com/lwvcentrecounty)

Instagram: [lwvcentrecounty](https://www.instagram.com/lwvcentrecounty)

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