

LEAGUE LINE

A Bulletin of The League of Women Voters of the Lewisburg Area
Vol. 61, No. 2, October, 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you will read in another article in this issue of *League Line*, the delegates to last June's national League of Women Voters convention voted to open League membership to **any resident at least 16 years old** (formerly "citizen at least 18 years old"). This is exciting news for our League, since our recently launched Mauch Millennial Project aims to reach young people in this age group and inspire in them a passionate commitment to playing an active, life-long role in our democracy.

Specifically, we are currently fortunate to benefit from the participation of Lewisburg High School senior, Kat Gardner, on our Mauch Millennial Project Committee. We also have two Bucknell Mauch Fellows, Brady Clapp and Emily Cottle, who are organizing and facilitating student forums on election-related topics this fall semester. One of our recent members, Natalie Liston, also represents the millennial age group on our Mauch Project Committee. These "millennials" help bring a fresh new perspective to our efforts and are helping us engage their peers in the work of our democracy. (Please see the update on the Mauch Project later in this issue.)

At the other end of the age spectrum, some of our most vital and active members have found they finally have time to volunteer after they have retired. Our Voter Services Committee Chair, Linda Harris, recently shared a truly inspiring story about helping a 75-year-old woman register for the first time at an event at Heritage House. Please read her report later in this issue for the details of her inspiring story and of how our League volunteers were able to help her turn her rights as a citizen into a reality.

Here is the take away for me: our League is benefitting enormously from having successfully engaged a broad spectrum of community members in a wide variety of civic activities. I am proud to be heading up an organization that so many different people perceive as a powerful vehicle for living out their passion for civic engagement in our community and in our democracy.

Susan Warner-Mills, President

OCTOBER LUNCH FORUM

The October Forum will be held on Tuesday, October 18th at 11:30 am at La Primavera Restaurant. Our two speakers for this Forum will be Frank Leto, Publisher, and Dennis Lyons, Editor of *The Daily Item*. They will discuss their editorial vision for the paper. Lunch will be served at a cost of \$13. Those with gluten allergies may order a special meal by contacting me at 570-523-7961 or emailing me at peltier@bucknell.edu by Friday, October 14th.

Cindy Peltier, Forum Committee Chair

SEPTEMBER FORUM REPORT

"How American Politics Went Insane"

On September 20th, Associate Professor Scott Meinke of Bucknell's Political Science Department led the League's first forum of the year addressing Jonathan Rauch's timely thesis on "How American Politics Went

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Please place the following events on your personal calendar.

Monday, Oct. 3, 4:00 pm
BOARD MEETING
Union County Public Library

Tuesday, Oct. 11
LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE

Thursday, Oct. 13, 5:00-7:00 pm
MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL
*389 Old Schoolhouse Rd., Lewisburg
(Marilyn Murphy's home)*

Tuesday, Oct. 18, 11:30 am-1:00 pm
OCTOBER LUNCH FORUM
*Speakers: Frank Leto, Publisher &
Dennis Lyons, Editor, Daily Item
La Primavera (Lunch \$13)*

Tuesday, Nov. 8
GENERAL ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, Nov. 15, 11:30 am-1:00 pm
BILL Lunch and Learn Program
*Speaker: Chris Ellis, Prof. of Political
Science, Bucknell Univ.
NEW LOCATION: Buffalo Valley
Lutheran Village, 6 Tressler Blvd
(Lunch \$6; reservations required for
lunch, call 570-522-0105)*

Friday, Dec. 2, 5:00-7:00 pm
HOLIDAY PARTY
*Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village,
Common Room*

Insane." Rauch's argument, published in the July 2016 *Atlantic Monthly*, is that there has been a chronic decline in the political system's capacity for self-organization. The weakening of institutions and brokers, i.e. political parties, career politicians, congressional leaders and committees, has led to a decrease in the ability to hold politicians accountable and prevent the pursuit of naked self-interest. Rauch terms it the "chaos syndrome."

He identifies well-intentioned reforms (most supported by the League) of the nominating process (primaries replacing caucuses and conventions), of campaign finance regulations, of Congress (seniority and the committee system), of closed-door negotiations, and of pork as the culprits in promoting chaos. To Rauch these norms are lubricants that advance political compromise. Without an incentive system, disorder prevails with resultant government shut downs, delayed budget agreements, and other extreme actions led by ideological insurgencies to which the political order has become vulnerable. Rauch's solution is to strengthen political parties by allowing them to coordinate with candidates, by lifting limits on donations, and by moving insiders back to the center of the nominating process.

Analyzing Rauch's thesis, Professor Meinke argues that Political Science agrees with Rauch that representation keeps factions under control and that parties are indispensable

to promoting debate, imbuing elections with meaning and increasing political participation. The discipline's evidence suggests the following: reforms such as term limits have negative effects on governance; widespread adoption of primary reform has made legislators scared of challenges at the ideological extreme, pulling them to the extremes; Americans are skeptical of professional politicians. However, it is less clear, according to Meinke, that the weakening of political institutions and brokers is the core problem in American politics. Rather, some observers argue, it is the increased political polarization characteristic of the late 20th and early 21st century that has rendered compromise more difficult and driven changes in political rules. Indeed, Meinke suggests that according to some scholars, inability to compromise is primarily the fault of the Republican Party, which has become more ideologically pure and conservative compared to a Democratic Party that more nearly resembles a coalition of diverse groups.

Pat Longley, for the Forum Committee

VOTER SERVICES REPORT

The Voter Services Committee is focused on several major efforts this fall.

Voters Guide

Our able and committed *Voters Guide* volunteers are hard at work putting the finishing touches on the *Guide* before sending it off to the printer. It is due out the week of October 23, at which point our distribution volunteers will convey *Guides* to all corners of Union County.

Additionally, we continue to disseminate resource information to voters seeking to educate themselves on the candidates for this fall's General Election. Please check out these resources, including the *Voters Guide*, on our website at <http://lewisburg.palwv.org> and watch for press releases in local newspapers.

Voter Registration

We have had three very successful Voter Registration events, providing greater visibility for our organization. We brought a voting machine to our third event, which was at the Heritage House in Lewisburg. During that event, a woman in her 70s told us that she had never voted in her life, because most of her life had been spent in rural Pennsylvania. She recently moved to Lewisburg and wanted to vote. Since she is already a registered voter, we were able to show her how to use the electronic voting machine. She told us that she plans to vote for the first time in the Presidential Election. We felt honored to be able to be part of her initial experience and to have helped her exercise this crucial right as a U.S. citizen.

We have also worked on publicizing the newly created opportunity to register to vote online at <http://www.vote411.org>. To support National Registration Day on September 27th, we have scheduled 3 separate events at Herr, Lewisburg and West End Libraries.

My profound personal thanks go to all of our dedicated Voter Services Committee volunteers. If you have questions, or would be interested in being part of our efforts, please
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contact me at 267-337-5986 or
Lsb413@hotmail.com.

Linda Harris, Voter Services Chair

MAUCH MILLENNIAL PROJECT CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Expanded Coverage and Increased Visibility for LWVLA

This month's *League Line* is full of information about our League's activities. Voter Registration/Voter Information events abound. We have planned lunch forums for the year on a variety of topics that should interest League members and the public. Membership activities happen year-round. With all of these activities, along with the Mauch Millennial Project, our League is enjoying increased visibility to the residents of Union County and beyond.

The Mauch Project in particular is generating expanded coverage for our League, including the development of an exciting new website. Content is now being worked on and we hope to go "live" in the next few months. Media coverage of our Mauch Project activities is also expanding; the *Bucknell Magazine* will contain an article featuring our BU Mauch Fellows, Brady Clapp and Emily Cottle as well as our president, Susan Warner-Mills, and Mauch Project Committee member, Pat Longley. Please be on the lookout for this publication in October. Other media outlets have been contacted and interviews will be scheduled soon.

Last, but certainly not least, a folding business card is presently available for use by League members to explain the Mauch Project to people who are interested in promoting civic engagement about millennials. This card, developed by Roberta Greene, Natalie Liston, Bridgette Thompson, and Janice Bigelow, will be available at League events.

Janice Bigelow, Publicity Coordinator

LWV CONVENTION REPORT

At this year's convention, there were two significant changes to the by-laws that all Leagues are required to adopt. The first change modified the requirement for membership from being a citizen of the United States to being a resident of the United States. A number of the Leagues had people who wanted to join but were still in the process of obtaining citizenship. The second change, which was fiercely debated, reduced the required age for membership from 18 to 16.

Linda Harris and I attended the plenary sessions together, but we often went to different caucus sessions, some which were informational and some which essentially provided training. The overall theme of the plenary sessions was that voter participation is under attack and Leagues must do everything they can to encourage voter registration and to enable registered voters to vote. A second strong theme was encouragement from the national League to move out of "our comfort zone." League members were strongly urged to take stands on League positions while emphasizing that we do not endorse any candidate or party. Speakers at the convention placed enormous emphasis on the need for the League to change the way we do business and expand our use of social media. A large number of the caucus sessions were devoted to the use of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Linda did an excellent job of collecting information and learning about how to use social media to the League's advantage. Her report follows.

Mary Zimmerman

LEAGUE LINE OCT. 2016

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Social Media and Other Conference Suggestions

I attended a session that discussed how to create an effective Facebook page that uses pictures with text to convey a message rather than text alone. Presenters stated that Facebook is mostly used by people 40 and over, and if we want to recruit and influence younger members, we also need to use Instagram and Twitter to publicize our League events. The handout given at the session said, "While Facebook is no substitute for a robust website, it provides an easy and effective way to promote your content and communicate with both League members and the public at large." The trainers recommended that in addition to using a Facebook site specifically for the local League, individual League members should use their personal Facebook pages to document our LWV activities and to post pictures of events to remind people of the importance of voting.

Presenters also discussed using Twitter as a quick way to broadcast information to League members and to engage with supporters of the League. Twitter involves short messages of 140 characters or less that can be re-tweeted and shared with other Twitter users. We can use Twitter to describe our activities briefly and to generate support and interest from a wider audience. Organizers emphasized that "social media is about recycling, reusing, and repurposing." In other words, if you create a blog post about an event, share it to Facebook and tweet about it. If you organize a voter registration event, take pictures of the event, post them to Facebook, and share them on Twitter as well. We should consider having training on how to use Facebook and Twitter to support the work of the League.

In addition to the social media session, I attended a fund-raising session that provided

many helpful ideas. Presenters suggested, for example, that we create decals that stores can put in their windows to express support for the League. To increase visibility for the League, we can host student programs (such as essay contests), send reminder post-cards about Election Day, develop a know-your-county book to sell to residents, and conduct a get-out-the-vote event.

Linda Harris

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

New Members

We are very pleased to welcome two new members since our last issue of *League Line*:

Barbara Kolmen
bkkolmen@att.net
570-523-8584

Sharon Jeffers
sharonjeffers325@gmail.com
570-966-5014

We look forward to seeing Barbara and Sharon at future meetings. Welcome to the League!

LWVLA Membership Renewal

2017 membership renewal letters were mailed at the end of August to all members. If you have not responded or have misplaced your form, please use the form below. LWVLA is vibrant in our community due to our members' support, which enables us to provide non-partisan forums and *Voters Guides* for the region. Your local membership makes you a part of the state and national organizations. According to the state League office we are the THIRD largest League in the state. Let's keep that going! If we haven't heard from you by the end of October you will receive another reminder letter.

Prospective Member Reception

A reception for current and prospective members will be held Wednesday October 13th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Marilyn Murphy's home, 389 Old Schoolhouse Rd, Lewisburg. She has a wonderful home in a very lovely country setting, so please come to enjoy the beauty of the area as well as the camaraderie. There is limited parking so carpooling is encouraged. If you know anyone who may be interested in membership in the League or in learning more about our organization, please invite them to attend. If you give me their contact information I will send them an invitation to the event as well. Contact Marilyn Brill at 570-522-9254 or email mfb@dejazzd.com.

Thanks to all of you for what you do to keep our local League strong and active in our community.

Marilyn Brill, Membership Chair

LWVLA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017

Membership dues: Individual \$50; Additional Household \$25 each; Student \$25. Dues include membership to the local, state, and national League, and information and notifications from all three levels (*League Line*, *Pennsylvania Voter* and *National Voter Online*).

I/We wish to join the League of Women Voters of the Lewisburg Area.

Name/s _____

Address _____

Phone (cell, work or home) _____ Email _____

I am interested in participating in the following League activities:

____ Voters Service ____ Study Groups ____ Community Forums ____ Special Events

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

(Please make your check payable to LWVLA and mail your check and form to: LWVLA Membership, P.O. Box 206, Lewisburg, PA 17837.) For more information, phone 570-522-9254 or email mfb@dejazzd.com. Thank you!

Marilyn Brill, Membership chair