# WILLOW VALLEY DEMOCRATS PLUS NEWSLETTER November 2024

Paid for by Willow Valley Democrats Plus Club Treasurer, Julia Powers Editor Ross Fairweather (rossfair63@gmail.com)



# Addressing the Issues

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If you are not already on our mailing list, contact Jen Porter at jenporter@comcast.net.

## **Dealing with Election Stress**



We're in the breathless final stretch of this election—when new poll analyses drop seemingly every five minutes, "closing arguments" that contain no new information receive detailed reviews, homepages transform into liveblogs, opinion pages swing wildly between imagining different scenarios, and almost none of it is useful because there simply isn't much to do other than wait until Election Day. Or rather Election Week: Chances are that we won't know for days, or even longer, whether the White House will return to a guy who tried to overturn the last presidential election.

In fact, at this stage of the election cycle, *The New York Times*' dining section, with its recommendation of what <u>cookies to bake</u> while watching election night coverage, arguably contains more new and useful information than most politics sections: At least you get some tips about baking with brown butter.

## **Dealing with Election Stress**

But this year, many outlets have added a new genre of article to the mix: how to handle election stress. Experts interviewed by ABC News <u>suggest</u> that people sleep, limit news and social media consumption, and "focus on concrete tasks that they have control over, like helping get people registered to vote or participating in canvassing." People interviewed by the ABC affiliate in West Palm Beach, Florida, likewise <u>endorse</u> action—and also prayer. Austin news station KXAN <u>suggests</u> people adopt a "day-by-day approach" and use "I" statements when "setting boundaries" with family and friends regarding political discussions. Psychologists in particular had a lot of advice: how to <u>identify</u> the root of your anxiety, "<u>boost optimism up until the last minute</u>," <u>relax</u> via "deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, aerobic exercise, a warm bath, relaxing music, a walk in nature." An article from the meditation app Headspace, unsurprisingly, <u>suggested meditation</u>. Washington Post columnist Ruth Marcus <u>said</u> that she knits, "compulsively."

Your mileage with all these suggestions may vary. Personally, I found even collecting them to be overwhelming. (And that's not ideal, given that my boss wrote Monday that we have a <u>moral duty</u> not to panic.)

Recently, I've been thinking a lot about a pair of essays Mary Annaïse Heglar wrote for TNR four years ago: the first about how mourning climate change prepared her to weather the Covid-19 pandemic, and the second about how being both a "climate person" and "a Black climate person" affected her perspective on the 2020 presidential election. Mary is <a href="emphatically">emphatically</a> not a "doomer"—i.e., someone who sees all the bad news and figures it's time to give up. But in these essays, she emphasized the importance of fully acknowledging the weight of the moment, rather than trying to ignore it. "This is painful," she <a href="empirical">wrote</a> in March 2020 about Covid and the climate crisis. "It's supposed to be. We are suffering through a collective trauma. We're watching our world change, and it feels like it's falling apart. That's not supposed to feel OK: It's not OK. As hard as it is, as painful as it is, we have to accept the reality of our crisis. Denial, often a critical step in the grieving process, is not an option."

Her assessment of the 2020 election was similarly unflinching. Being a climate writer means understanding just how high the stakes are, and that there's no such thing as putting the crisis on "pause" for four years. Instead, as writer and activist Bill McKibben has repeatedly observed, in his newsletter <a href="The Crucial Years">The Crucial Years</a>, these next years are more vital than ever—and merely failing to act during this time will put us on a very dangerous path.

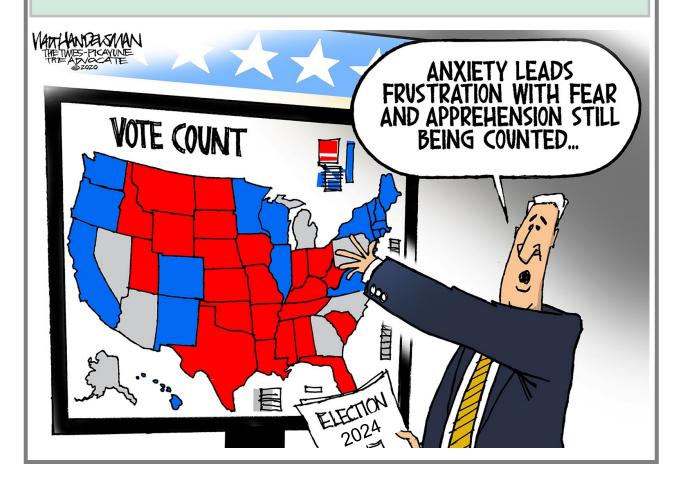
# Dealing with Election Stress (cont'd)

"This election," as Mary put it, "is less about whether we should act on climate than how we should act on it. Should we act with compassion or with cruelty? Given that our national commitment to democracy has become debatable, this election is also about whether we even have the ability to act on climate in any meaningful way in the future." Against all that, her message was simple: "This past weekend, on the first day of early voting in New York City, I stood in line for more than five hours to vote like my life depended on it. Because it does."

That's not a warm bath. On the other hand, it is an "I" statement, and I'd argue it does engage with the "root" of election anxiety. It's also a kind of optimism. As Mary put it, "I'll take a shot in hell over a shot to the head any day."

It's a line worth meditating on.

—Heather Souvaine Horn, deputy editor, The New Republic



# What to Expect after Election Night

From Brennan Center for Justice <info@brennan.law.nvu.edu>



### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER ELECTION NIGHT

We look to the election with increasing confidence — the system is stronger than ever before. Unfortunately, that isn't the end of the story. In the coming weeks, we may see baseless charges and attacks. Conspiracy theorists and election deniers are going to make a lot of noise, spreading disinformation, including the Big Lie, in hopes that Americans will disengage and lose faith in democracy. We can never let that be the new normal.

We can fight back by lifting up everything that poll workers and election officials our neighbors and community members — do to keep our elections free and fair. Even if it takes several days to find out who wins the presidency and who wins the House and Senate, that doesn't mean that there's a problem — it means these officials are doing their job.

So after you cast your ballot, what comes next? Please share this information with friends and family so that they also know what to expect on election night and the days after.

# What to Expect after Election Night (cont'd)

- 1. About 98 percent of all voters will vote using paper ballots.
- 2. Most states begin counting mail ballots before November 5. Others, like Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, cannot begin until Election Day and will take longer to count. (Passing the Freedom to Vote Act would fix this!)
- 3. Ballots are tallied using machines that have been tested and certified to federal security standards machine counts are much more accurate than hand counts.
- 4. Voters who made technical errors on their mail ballots are allowed to fix them in some states. Election officials resolve any discrepancies and verify vote totals.
- **5.** Recounts are conducted if the results are close.
- **6.** Election results are officially certified as complete and final.

Despite what election deniers claim, there are checks and safeguards from the moment the first mail ballots are sent to the final certification of results. Officials store ballots securely, and chain-of-custody records ensure that they're always accounted for. The 2020 election was the most secure in history, and since then, election officials have further strengthened our voting systems. But election deniers and vote suppressors have intensified their efforts too.

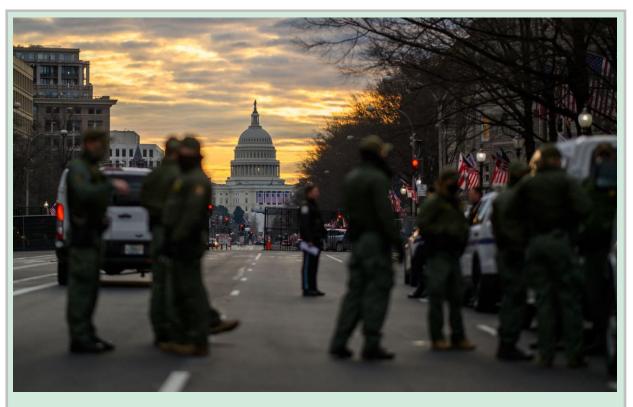
We are ready to stop conspiracy theorists from undermining public trust and upending the certification process after the election is over. The fights are going to intensify in the next few weeks and in the year to come. Help the Brennan Center defend our democracy in the fights ahead.

Safe and secure elections involve many checks. These processes ensure we can trust the accuracy of the results.

Thank you for standing up for democracy,

The Brennan Center team

# The 9 Dates That Matter After Election Day



Pennsylvania Avenue with the Capitol in the background is seen under heavy security in the early hours of Jan. 18, 2021 ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration ceremony in Washington, DC on January 20th.Eric Baradat—AFP via Getty Images

BY **BRIAN BENNETT** TIME MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2, 2024 7:00 AM EDT

Once the polls close on Nov. 5, the path to either Kamala Harris or Donald Trump taking the oath of office will still take several more weeks. There is a detailed <u>process</u> in place to ensure the ballots are counted accurately and that state and federal officials properly determine who won the most electoral college votes.

Here are the key dates that matter for after this Election Day:

## The 9 Dates That Matter After Election Day (cont'd)

### November 7: State certification of results begins

Once votes are counted, it's up to the state election officials to certify that the results are accurate.

The deadlines for states to certify the official vote tallies are staggered. Delaware comes first, and must certify its votes by Nov. 7, according to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. The key battleground state of Georgia must certify its results by Nov. 23, followed by Michigan on Nov. 25 and North Carolina and Nevada on Nov. 26. Wisconsin's deadline for certifying electoral college results is Dec. 1, and Arizona is Dec. 2. Pennsylvania and Rhode Island don't have specified deadlines for certification.

In most states, it's winner-take-all. That means the state popular vote determines whom all of a state's electors will ultimately support. (In Nebraska and Maine, some of the electors can be split and are determined by the popular vote in each congressional district.)

The candidate who secures 270 of the state electoral votes — the majority of the total 538 electors in the electoral college — will be named President. But there are a few more steps before that can happen, including having governors formally appoint the winning candidate's electors.

### November 11: Presidential transition briefings must begin

If there is no clear winner projected by Nov. 11, federal agencies are required to begin briefing both the Harris and Trump campaign teams separately on each agency's most pressing work and the key roles that need to be filled.

When then-President Trump refused to acknowledge Joe Biden's 2020 electoral win, he obstructed the typical process of an orderly transition between presidencies. Biden's team was locked out of briefings from critical federal agencies like the Pentagon, the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. To better prepare an incoming President replacing a recalcitrant one, Republicans and Democrats in Congress in 2022 passed the Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Improvement Act. Previously the General Services Administration would ascertain which candidate had likely won before transition briefings began. But now both campaigns will start separate transition planning if neither candidate has conceded within five days from Election Day.

## The 9 Dates That Matter After Election Day (cont'd)

As the official machinery cementing the outcome of the election churns on, it is entirely possible that Donald Trump will have to report to a courtroom in Lower Manhattan for sentencing in his New York hush money trial. In May, <u>a jury found Trump guilty on 34 counts</u> of falsifying business records to cover up payments he made to a porn star to buy her silence on the eve of the 2016 election.

New York State Supreme Court Judge Juan Merchan will decide Trump's sentence. The sentencing hearing had previously been set for Sept. 18, but Trump lawyers argued that a sentencing so close to the election could unfairly impact the outcome of the race. [Trump's new sentencing date is Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>. ]The conviction carries a possible prison sentence of up to 4 years. But given that Trump's never been convicted of a crime before, he could receive a lighter sentence or probation. There's nothing preventing a convicted felon or a person in prison from serving as President of the United States. If Trump becomes President, he would not be able to pardon his New York convictions, because a President doesn't have power over state charges.

### December 11: Ascertainment

Once the states have certified their results, each state's executive—the governor in most cases—signs "certificates of ascertainment" formally allocating that state's electors to the winning candidate. These are the pieces of paper that Congress treats as the result. Dec. 11 is the deadline for each state's governor to sign the certificates.

The individuals named on that piece of paper will be the electors expected to cast the state's votes in the electoral college. The signed certificates will be paired with the official electoral votes for the state and copies will be sent to Congress and the Archivist of the United States.

A candidate can challenge those certificates in court, but they can only be changed after an expedited judicial review process that is part of the electoral reforms Congress passed in 2022.

### December 17: Electors vote

In every state, the electors will meet and cast votes for President and Vice President. Each election cycle, this happens on the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December. In 2024, that falls on Dec. 17.

The electors' votes are recorded and sealed with the certificates of ascertainment signed by the governor and the whole packet is sent to Congress and the National Archives.

## The 9 Dates That Matter After Election Day (cont'd)

### December 25: Electoral votes arrive in Washington, D.C.

Many of the procedures in place for formally establishing the results of the nation's presidential election were designed when important documents were transmitted across the country on horseback—not by plane or email. Same goes for the deadline by which the official electoral votes must arrive in the capital from the states. They must arrive in Washington, D.C. by the fourth Wednesday in December, which this year falls on Christmas Day.

If the electoral votes haven't arrived by Dec. 25, the president of the Senate or the Archivist can request an extra copy held by the state's top election officer.

### Jan. 3, 2025: House and Senate convene

Every two years, the newly elected House and Senate convene at noon on Jan. 3. If the president of the Senate still has not received a set of electoral certificates by that time, copies can be requested from the Archivist.

For the House of Representatives, its first order of business is electing the Speaker. If the Republicans hold the House, Speaker Mike Johnson will likely retain that gavel. Democrats would likely support House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries for Speaker, if they take control of the chamber.

### Jan. 6, 2025: Counting the electoral votes

The sitting Vice President—as president of the Senate—has a ceremonial duty to oversee the final step of the Electoral College process at 1 pm on Jan. 6, 2025 during a joint session of the House and Senate. Whether or not she wins the election, that role will be handled by Vice President Harris, who will preside over the ceremony as electoral certificates for each state are counted and tallied and a winner is declared.

After Trump pressured Vice President Mike Pence to try to overturn his 2020 election loss on Jan. 6, 2021, Congress clarified that the vice president's role in the process is to perform "solely ministerial duties" and has no power to reject electoral votes.

### Jan 20, 2025: Inauguration Day

Around noon on Jan. 20, 2025, the President-elect will take the Oath of Office on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. When he was the outgoing President in 2021, Trump did not attend Biden's inauguration. This time around, Biden intends to attend the ceremony regardless of who wins. "This President believes in the peaceful transfer of power, and that's what you're going to see this President do," Karine Jean-Pierre said.

# **Mentoring Local HS Students**

Interested in mentoring a local high-school student? The Lampeter-Strasburg School District invites you to become a MENTOR.

INTERESTED IN MAKING A
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A YOUTH?

# BECOME A MENTOR

### **For Information**

Email:
Allyson\_Gipe@
I-spioneers.org

OR Use the QR code below







#### **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

- Attend a 30 minute information session
- After the information session, any individuals still interested in being a mentor would be required to complete a mentor application and a L-S volunteer application, which includes obtaining clearances.

# Coming Events (cont'd)

Join our
Understanding Our Democracy Series
on Tuesday, November 19th
10 AM Cultural Center Education Room
Election Preliminary Review

Join us for
a get-together to celebrate
the great job done by all.

1 PM in the Cultural Center Ballroom
November 19th

Beverages and snacks will be served

Join our General Meeting
on Tuesday, January 28th 2025
1 PM Cultural Center Education Room
for our first meeting of the year.

### Willow Valley Dems Plus General Meeting October 30, 2024

President Jen Porter called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. with the business meeting.

**Treasury:** Julia Powers reported the current balance of \$4,934.80 with \$3,542 reserved for 2025 scholarships. Membership stands at 284 with 91 new members since year beginning. **Advocacy:** 

President Porter has received thank you notes from the Democratic candidates for the donations to their campaigns from the Club. The three Democratic candidates running for election are Bob Rudy (PA House District 97), Trex Proffitt (PA Senate District 13), and Jim Atkinson (US House, District 11). The thank you notes are attached.

Advocacy Chair Barbara Bonanno reported that the recent postcard campaigns for Democratic candidates were highly successful with 202 volunteers writing 4,346 cards between early August and the end of October.

Recent Events: President Porter gave a brief summary.

The bracelets made by member Margaret Babb earned \$2,320 for the 2025 scholarship. The West Lampeter Fair held September 25-27 was successful with the majority of volunteers manning the Democratic table from Willow Valley Communities.

### **Report from Vice-President Ross Fairweather:**

**Club Name Change:** After approval by Willow Valley Communities administration, the new Club name will be **Democratic Club of Willow Valley.** The new name will appear on all communications.

#### **Mission Statement Revision:**

Our mission is to tackle bread-and-butter issues while protecting and lifting up our vulnerable populations via:

Offering educational programs aimed at widespread issues;

Providing guest speakers who can keep us informed;

Endorsing local Democratic candidates and providing financial support;

Offering scholarships to local high-school students;

Keeping our constituents informed through monthly newsletters;

Promoting more progressive legislation and government at all levels.

#### **Vision Statement Revision:**

The Democratic Club of Willow Valley strives to be a relentless force in empowering voters to overcome injustices. We believe that the economy should work for everyone, health care is a right, our diversity is our strength, and democracy is worth defending.

#### **Vista Print Orders:**

Business cards with a blue background and the Vision Statement on the back: 500 cards for \$29.99.

Retractable banner: one for \$164.25 Mesh banners: three for \$140.99 Letterhead stationery: \$157.49

Total cost with 6% sales tax is \$522.28

**Motion:** Julia Powers, second Carole Repici: The Club accept the Vista Print orders as described. A short discussion followed concerning the cost which was deemed acceptable. **Motion passed.** 

#### Club Website:

After a futile search for a webmaster within WVC, Ross presented a draft and layout sections of a new website from GoDaddy with **DemsWVC.com** as the address. She has used the free 7-day trial, and now the Club must decide whether to purchase the program. The site is not yet ready for public presentation. Ross still seeks a web advisor familiar with GoDaddy.

The current cost is \$1,250 plus tax for five years, a cost that will increase to \$1,615 on January 1, 2025.

Discussion followed about how to publicize the new site to the community with ideas ranging from *The Weekly Insider* to the intranet club listings.

**Motion:** Carole Repici, second Jack Dunlap. The Club accept GoDaddy as the website platform with the cost of \$1,250 plus tax to be paid now. **Motion passed.** 

**Motion:** Julia Powers, second Barbara Bonanno: The Club should borrow from the scholarship fund reserve to pay for the website now and to replenish the fund in 2025 with membership dues. **Motion passed.** 

**Bylaws Revision:** Attendees received a handout of the proposed By-law changes to be voted on at the January 2025 General Meeting. The Treasurer will no longer be responsible for Membership as that role will be filled by a new Membership Chair.

A question arose as to the wording in *Article V: Elections* which does not make clear the policy to carry out an election in the case of a Board member's mid-term vacancy. Will the election be held by Board appointment or by a special election held by members? Ross will revise for further discussion at the January 2025 General Meeting. The Bylaws changes are attached.

President Porter closed the business portion of the meeting with a reminder of upcoming events:

Tuesday, November 19, 10 a.m. - *Understanding Our Democracy*, a preliminary 2024 election review

Tuesday, November 19, 1 p.m. Cultural Center Ballroom – Club gathering to express gratitude to members for the hard work in this election year. Snacks will be provided.

Thursday, January 16, 2025, Willow Valley Club Expo in the Cultural Center. The Club will be there with the new name and materials.

Tuesday, January 21, 10 a.m. Cultural Center Education Room, *Understanding Our Democracy*, topic The Tyranny of the Minority

Tuesday, January 28, 1 p.m., Cultural Center Education Room, General Meeting with speaker Chris Baxter from Spotlight PA. **Note the change of day to Tuesday and the time to 1 p.m.** 

### Speaker: Jerry Henige

Jerry spoke on two topics: America's Economic Prospects Given Harris and Trump's Campaign Plans and The Effect of Project 2025 on Women and Children. Some highlights follow:

### America's Economic Prospects:

Trump plans to impose sweeping tariffs and mass deportations of undocumented workers, both creating rise in prices and more inflation.

Harris proposes a higher tax on the wealthy.

Under either candidate, Social Security is at risk for insolvency — by 2034 with Harris, 2031 with Trump. Washington, D.C. has not addressed this issue.

### Effect of Project 2025 on Women and Children:

The Project's plans will directly affect children in lower income families with cuts to programs such as SNAP that benefit them. Other proposals include elimination of Head Start, use of vouchers for private education the removal of the Federal Department of Education, the end of federal protections for LGBTQ youth, and restricted access to abortion.

For those interested in more detailed information, you may contact Jerry at <a href="mailto:ihenige@verizon.net">ihenige@verizon.net</a>.

Lucy Painter, Secretary

### Thank-You Notes from our Candidates

Oct 9, 2024

Ross and Jen.

The \$2,000 campaign donation from Willow Valley Dems arrived today and I just want to tell you both how honored and thankful I feet.

in many campaigns, donations like this come in frequently, but in my very grassroots campaign this is the kind of donation which can move the needle. It demonstrates that we feel equally passionate about protecting our democracy from those who would trade it in for something else.

Keep up the great work, and let's look forward to a Blue Wave in 2024 — and all the safety which will arrive with it.

Jim Atkinson

P.S. please feel free to share this message with your entire membership. Oct. 11, 2024

Dear Willow Valley Dems Plus:

Thank you for your generous contribution of \$1,000 to our campaign to flip the state senate this year and get out the votes for our up-ballot candidates, especially Harris/Walz and Senator Casey. We will put the funds to good use reaching voters through 15,000 mail pieces, 50,000 texts, digital ads, and social media. So many of you wrote post cards for our campaign that we ordered another 10,000 and will get those out to voters, too.

Your support through this campaign, from start to now, has given me the confidence, as a new candidate, to push as hard as I can for Progress for PAI This year matters for so many reasons, but for me and maybe you, too, it has been a way to fight for our fallen and ensure that better policies will make all of our lives safer, more enriching, and more prosperous.

For too long, we've treated both extremism and complacency in our state senate as normal. No more! Perinsylvania can do better, and we deserve better!

Sincerely, Trex Proffit for Senate (PA SD-13) Oct 14, 2024

Dear WV Democrats,

I am touched and amazed by your generous contribution to my campaign for a seat representing the 97th Legislative District in the PA House of Representatives.

This is a crazy election year with Democracy literally on the line at the national level, and the slimmest of margins in the PA House and Senate.

I've met some wonderful people throughout my campaign, and unfortunately, some who are not very nice, but that's politics!

However, the support and encouragement I've received from my "home" team(s), the Willow Valley Democratis Plus and the Lampeter-Strasburg Democratic Club have given me the confidence to do everything in my power to win this election and represent you in Harrisburg in January.

When I win the election (how's that for confidence?), I would like to come back to Willow Valley and celebrate with you, ALL OF YOU!

Again, thank you.

Sincerely, Bob Rudy

### Bylaws of the Lampeter-Strasburg Democratic Club

Democratic Club of Willow Valley

#### ARTICLE I: Name

The name of the club shall be: The Lampeter-Strasburg Democratic Club Democratic Club of Willow Valley; it is herein after referred to as "Club."

### ARTICLE II: Purpose

The purpose of the Club is to act as a catalyst for promoting the local Democratic Party and its candidates, and to enhance voter awareness of political issues and candidates.

Our mission is to tackle bread-and-butter issues while protecting and lifting up our vulnerable populations

- Offering educational programs aimed at widespread issues.
- · Providing guest speakers who can keep us informed;
- Endorsing local Democratic candidates and providing financial support;
- Offering a scholarship to local high-school students;
- Keeping our constituents informed through monthly newsletters.
- Promoting more progressive legislation and government at all levels.

### ARTICLE III: Membership

All eligible voters, regardless of party affiliation, who support the purpose of the Club and who reside in the Lampeter-Strasburg District or in a contiguous district are qualified for membership. Interested parties may request membership in the Club to any of its officers. All members are requested to show their commitment to the Club by making an annual, voluntary financial contribution. Any contribution is welcome, but a suggested amount will be determined by the Executive Board. Membership in the Club entitles members to vote on officers, vote on changes to these bylaws, and participate in discussions at all Club meetings.

#### ARTICLE IV: Officers/Executive Board

The Club shall be led by an Executive Board that is empowered to take such actions as are necessary to carry out the purpose of the Club.

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All officers shall be elected by members and will serve for a term of two years.

- The President shall plan and conduct meetings, prepare agenda for meetings, and keep members informed of pertinent news or decisions. The President approves expenditures.
- The Vice President shall assist the President in program planning and fulfill the duties of the President when the President is unavailable.

- The Secretary shall prepare and submit minutes for each meeting, handle any necessary correspondence, retain and file Club documents.
- The Treasurer shall maintain the membership list manage and disperse funds as approved for Clubrelated expenses, keep and maintain an accurate record of all financial transactions and report such transactions at Executive Board meetings. The Treasurer shall also file financial reports as required by law.

Committees and their leaders are appointed by the President. The committee leaders become part of the Executive Board upon approval by the Officers; they shall then participate and vote in meetings.

#### ARTICLE V: Flections

Officers shall be members of the Club and are normally elected at the first meeting of the calendar year but may occur during the year should a vacancy occur. The President and Secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years; the Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd-numbered years. (In the event that a vacancy does occur, the officer chosen to fill that position shall serve for the remainder of that term.) The Executive Board will nominate a slate of candidates that will be distributed by email to the membership at least two weeks prior to the election meeting. At the meeting at which any election takes place nominations from the floor will be entertained. Officers may serve multiple terms.

ARTICLE VI: Amendments to Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority attending any regular meeting provided that the proposed amendment(s) has/have been emailed to the membership-at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

After adoption, these bylaws shall be reviewed at least every two years.

### ARTICLE VII: Dissolution of the Club

Dissolution of the Club shall require approval of the Executive Board and subsequent approval by a majority of the membership present at a meeting held after two weeks' notice by email to all current members. After approval by the membership, assets shall be dispersed to the Lancaster County Democratic Committee or its successor. This final dispersal of the assets shall be the responsibility of the last remaining designated bank signatory.

Adopted on February xx, 2025