

VOTER



A newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Indiana County, Pennsylvania

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LWVIC Board of Directors, 2006-2007

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**Next Board Meeting
of LWVIC:**

February 13, 2007

11:30 a.m. at

Diane Duntley's home

204 Greenview Ct.

724-349-2718

**All members and guests
are welcome**

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2007

8:30—5:00

RUSTIC LODGE

INDIANA, PA

Voters in each school district in the state will be nominating and electing at least four school board members in the 2007 Primary (May) and General Elections (November). Anyone interested in running as a candidate or encouraging someone else to run, should consider attending a School Director Candidate Workshop on Saturday, January 20, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Rustic Lodge, Indiana, PA.

The workshop provides background in the responsibilities and issues of school directors and the requirements of candidates. The workshop will be presented by Ron Cowell, President of the Educational Policy and Leadership Center, Harrisburg, PA. EPLC has offered this workshop in the metropolitan areas of the state, but this session has been targeted for the West-Central area of the state, primarily the Routes 119 and 219 corridors, and will address concerns par-

ticular to rural areas.

The workshop is open to everyone interested in learning more about the work of school boards—potential candidates, future candidates, candidates' supporters, incumbents, and interested citizens.

The League of Women Voters of Indiana county, long known as a nonpartisan advocate for quality in public education, is the sponsor. The League believes that school boards are an important foundation of local government and are significant in the life of each community, both as policy makers for the lives of children, and as community employers.

For the workshop content outline, additional information and registration form, go to the website www.palwv.org/indiana or phone **724-349-2718 (Diane Duntley)**. Registration of \$30 includes tuition, workshop packet, continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. Registration deadline is January 17.

**POTLUCK DINNER
JANUARY 30, 2007
CHEVY CHASE COMMUNITY CENTER**

The annual potluck dinner will be on January 30, 2007 at the Chevy Chase Community Center. We will start at 6:30 p.m. and end about 9:00 p.m. There will be lots of good food and convivial conversation. Come and bring a non-League friend, or two, or more! We will be talking about the League and its past and future.

In lieu of taking part in the state-wide Phonathon this year, we will be passing the hat at the dinner and collecting donations for the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Education Fund. These tax-deductible contributions support state level education efforts like the gubernatorial and senatorial debates. A few dollars from each of us could make a big difference to the state league.

Call or email Aida Shotts to let her know you are coming.

Phone: 724-354-3482 or Email: ashotts@alltel.net



Great Decisions

Here is an interesting event! The IUP School of Continuing Education has scheduled it's Great Decisions Spring discussion series. It starts February 6 and ends on April 3. There are 8 sessions discussing topics including:

- ◆ the Middle East
- ◆ Migration
- ◆ War Crimes
- ◆ Children

The sessions will be held at St. Andrews Village from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The fee is \$48 and includes a textbook. Registration deadline is January 29. Contact the IUP School of Continuing Education at 724-357-2227 to register.

Legislative Interviews

Aida Shotts is scheduling our annual round of legislative interviews. In this process we have breakfast with each of our state representatives: Reps. Dave Reed and Jeff Pyle, and Senator Don White, and discuss a set of questions on state level issues given us by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. Occasionally, we can include Rep. Sam Smith also, although he represents a very small part of northern Indiana County. Interviews scheduled so far, both at Eat n Park Restaurant:

1. **January 26 with Rep. Reed at 8:30 a.m.**
2. **February 6 with Rep. Pyle at 9:30 a.m.**

The remaining interviews will be held in February and are still being arranged. All interested League members are invited to attend.

The questions this year are on redistricting, election reform, health care and public transportation. The discussions are always lively and informative. It's a great way to talk to y our state legislators in depth about important issues. Members interested in seeing the exact questions may request a copy by emailing Beth Marshal at: nextlife@adelphia.net

MERCURY REGULATIONS

The saga continues! The Governor announced that he was putting the regulations into effect shortly before the Legislature adjourned in November. The Legislature did not object and it looked like the stricter rules were on their way to taking effect. The next step was to publish the regulations in the Pennsylvania Register, a legally required step. The Legislative Reference Bureau, whose job it is to actually publish the Pennsylvania Register, has refused to publish the regulations. The LRB states that it is its opinion that the Legislature did not have enough time to consider the proposed regulations. This is quite unprecedented and the Governor is bringing his legal staff into the dispute.

Reflections on the IASD board meeting, January 8, 2007

(See the *Indiana Gazette* for Tuesday, January 9, for two articles about this meeting.)

The rumor mill was very effective at stirring up parents and bringing them to this meeting. Reaction to the Instruction Committee discussion of moving sixth grades into the junior high was way over the top. It is not helpful to assume negative decisions have been made without getting the full story.

Although everyone present supposedly was there because of concern for the education and welfare of the children of our community, this session was not a helpful model of public deliberation. Many of the behaviors exhibited by both board and audience members would not be acceptable in a school classroom. Listening skills were not in evidence. The audience seemed disinclined to hear board member statements claiming no decisions would be made without due deliberation and public input. Audience members sometimes scorned board member statements. Some board members reacted to audience comments in very confrontational ways as well. Roberts' Rules were ignored and the board chair had difficulty in keeping order.

What was lost in the midst of this parental uproar was the problem of how to find room for all-day kindergarten beginning in the fall of 2007. Early education specialists all seem to agree that all-day kindergarten is crucial in building reading and math skills in the early grades, yet no one addressed this concern at the meeting.

Most of the folks there were attending their first board meeting. Even in this out-of-control atmosphere it was good to see this large group of concerned parents. Perhaps we can make use of their "rumor mill" to encourage them to register to vote if they are not registered, and to vote in the May Primary election.

Comments made by some about informal discussions of school board matters among two or three board members seemed to come perilously close to breaking the intent of the state Sunshine Law which requires all decision-making to occur in public meetings. A minority of board members claim that two or three board members often meet to discuss board issues without the full knowledge of all.

Nancy Fricke, League of Women Voters observer

Wanted: Smart Women With The Ability To Create Good Government

The LWV of Pennsylvania (www.palwv.org) is accepting nominations for candidates for the 2007-2009 LWVPA executive board, board of directors and off-board specialists. If you're interested in serving the League at the state level, contact Sherene Hess at 724-465-2595 or any of the board members, several who have participated on State League board in the past and would be happy to share their experience.

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Women Voters of Indiana
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CALENDAR

- January 20—School Board Workshop—8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Rustic Lodge
January 26—Legislative Interview with Rep. Dave Reed, 8:30 a.m.
at Eat'n Park Restaurant
January 30—Potluck Dinner—6:30 p.m. Chevy Chase Community Center
February 7—Legislative Interview with Rep. Jeff Pyle, 9:30 a.m.
at Eat'n Park Restaurant
February 13—LWVIC Board Meeting 11:30 a.m. (brown bag)
at Diane Duntley's home. ALL MEMBERS WELCOME
April 28—LWVIC Annual Garage Sale—Susan McClure's home
May 5—Bag Sale for leftovers

Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let Olga Platt know at 724-465-2073 and she will send a brochure & short letter describing LWVIC's activities.

Start setting aside all those bits and pieces you want to get rid of—remember one man's junk is another man's treasure. More information in future newsletters.