

VOTER

League of Women
Voters of Indiana
County, Pennsylvania



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

Volume XXXII, Issue 3, March, 2014

LWVIC Board of Directors, 2013-14

Sherene Hess
President
724-762-4162

Beth Marshall
Vice President
724-465-8974

Tina Zins
Secretary
724-465-5796

Sandy Whitson
Treasurer
724-463-7205

Pepita Jimenez-Jacobs
Carol Maderer
Lea Masiello
Ann Rea
Cindy Rogers
Aida Shotts
Vicki Stelma,
Newsletter Editor
Dreama Van Cise-Watta

Agriculture Consensus Meeting to be Held on April 5

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County is participating in a national League of Women Voters study to update the agriculture position. (For a summary of our current position, see page 2.) The LWVIC Agriculture Update Committee has been studying the topics at length over the past few months and is working hard to streamline the wealth of information into a manageable presentation for LWVIC members.

Headed by Beth Marshall, the committee **invites ALL LWVIC MEMBERS** (regardless of knowledge of agriculture issues) to attend and participate in this **consensus meeting on April 5.**

The membership will hear short presentations of “both sides” of several issues. Then members will have discussion time and eventually either reach consensus or not on each of the consensus questions. (For more information about what a consensus is, see page 2. In addition, links to more information on the issues can be found on page 2 and in the January and February editions of the Voter.) The results of the LWVIC consensus meeting will be submitted to the national LWV and included in decision making at the national convention in June.

The meeting will last from 8:30 am to noon at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Indiana (285 Twolick Drive). There will be light refreshments available at 8:00. **We need as many members as possible to make the consensus a valid one. Please join us!**

Save the Date!

LWVIC Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 14

Time and Location to be Announced

March is National Women’s History Month

This year’s theme, ***Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment***, honors the extraordinary and often unrecognized determination and tenacity of women. Visit <http://www.nwhp.org> for more information, and visit <http://www.lwv.org/blog> to see how the League is celebrating.

The League's Current Position on Agriculture Policy

In a nutshell, the League supports policies for sustainable agriculture and action to reduce the use of toxic chemicals on the farm. The League also supports targeting research programs and technological assistance to mid-sized farms and to sustainable agriculture. In addition, the League believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally sound, and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices. The League also supports efforts that are directed to expanding export markets for our agricultural products while minimizing negative effects on developing nations' economies, and that farmers should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions.

For the complete position as it currently stands visit <http://www.lwv.org/content/agriculture-policy>.

What is Consensus?

It is easier to say what consensus is not than what it is. Consensus is not a vote; rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has an opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions, created by the study committee and approved by the Board, provide structure for the meeting. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has or has not been reached on each question. A committee will analyze the consensus responses, look for areas of member understanding and agreement, and, using this information, create a position statement.

Current Issues

Many new issues have arisen since the original agriculture study was completed. The League wants to update our position to allow it to address the following items: crop insurance, food safety, specialized crops other than commodities, consolidation in the industry, concentrated animal feeding operations, new technologies (including genetic engineering), and food labeling.

Visit www.palwv.org/indiana and click on *LWVIC Agriculture Update Committee News* for a list of reading materials related to these issues. **Do not think you need to read every single article to attend and fully participate in the consensus meeting.** There is no particular level of knowledge needed, but as a member, it is important to participate in the process. Study and consensus meetings at the local level are the heart of the League and the reason it is a grassroots organization. The League can lobby and advocate powerfully and effectively because our positions on public policy result from FULL MEMBERSHIP input.

The last time the League updated our position on agriculture was in 1988. Please attend the **consensus meeting on April 5** to make your voice heard and to help the League to update our policy.

**Congratulations
to the following members of the LWVIC
on their nominations for the
Leader's Circle of Indiana County awards:**

**Vera Bonnet— Female Civic Leader
Susan McClure—Female Civic Leader
Rod Ruddock—Athena Award
Susan Wheatley—Athena Award**

Correction to Redistricting Maps

In an article in last month's Voter, Saltsburg Borough was mistakenly identified as being in the 60th Legislative District. It is, in fact, a part of the 55th Legislative District.

Redistricting maps for the state of Pennsylvania are available at the following site:
www.redistricting.state.pa.us/Maps/.

**LWVIC Still Seeking Nominations for
Environmental Leadership Award:
Deadline April 1**

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County is currently seeking nominations for the third annual Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award. The award recognizes grassroots citizens, groups or businesses who show exemplary leadership and active participation in policy issues that involve protecting or preserving our environment and will be awarded for the third time this spring.

Candidates for the award should demonstrate grassroots leadership in the following areas:

- Preservation and/or protection of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the eco-system and maximum protection of public health and the environment
- Grassroots activism to preserve or protect our precious natural resources

Nominations can be submitted by citizens or groups, or individuals can self-nominate. **The deadline for application submission is April 1, 2014.** Contact Sherene Hess, president of the LWVIC to obtain an application. Address: 234 Geesey Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Email: lwvic@verizon.net. Phone: 724-762-4162.

A newsletter of the
League of Women Voters
of Indiana County,
Pennsylvania
PO Box 672
Indiana, PA 15701

Phone: 724-762-4162
Email: lwvic@verizon.net



CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, March 17, 7:00 pm—Board Meeting, All Members Welcome, PASEC meeting room, (1005 Oak Street, 2nd floor)

Tuesday, April 1—Deadline for nominations for Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award (see article in this issue of the Voter for more information)

Saturday, April 5, 8:30 am—noon—Agriculture Consensus Meeting, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Indiana (285 Twolick Drive)

Saturday, May 3—LWVIC Annual Garage Sale (527 Shryock Avenue, Indiana) (**May 10, Bag Sale**)

Wednesday, May 14—LWVIC Annual Meeting (time and location to be announced)

June 6-10—LWVUS Convention, Dallas, Texas

Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let President Sherene Hess know at 724-762-4162, and she will send a brochure & short letter describing LWVIC's activities.

Our Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.