

LWVIC Board of Directors, 2014-15

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Environmental Issues Committee Continues to have Impact in County

The LWVIC Environmental Issues Committee is moving forward with stormwater education activities.

On November 10, partners put in plants at the new White Township rain garden. The rain garden is designed to capture overflow from the parking lot during rainy periods. Special soils and native plants allow the rainwater to soak in slowly, thus filtering pollutants and lessening the chances of flooding on the property.

In addition, on March 13, 2015, the committee will co-sponsor a stormwater management workshop for municipal officials and the general public including landscape professionals, engineers, public works officials, farm owners, water resource professionals, golf course maintenance crews, and university and school district grounds crews.

The workshop, Real World Solutions for Flood Damage and Pollution Prevention, will be held at the KCAC and will provide information regarding how best to manage stormwater runoff that can cause flooding damage to personal and public properties and threatens water quality in local waterways.



Above, Chris Anderson of White Township and Michelle Phillips, a Girl Scout from Indiana, work in the rain garden.

For additional information please contact the Indiana County Conservation District at 724-471-4751.

The LWVIC Environmental Issues Committee wrote and applied for a WREN (Water Resources Education Network, a program of the LWVPA Citizen Education Fund) grant which is funding the workshop as well as a series of videos being made by IUP about rain gardens and rain barrels.

Additional sponsors of the workshop include Evergreen Conservancy, the Indiana Community Garden, the Indiana County Conservation District, the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development, IUP, and White Township. Together these organizations form the Stormwater Education Partnership.

The Future of an Organization, From our President, Sherene Hess

Several LWWIC members recently participated in the Membership Leadership Development workshop. Presented by state and national LWW members, the purpose of this training is to help Leagues recruit and retain members while identifying and developing future leaders. We explored several questions related to getting new members and retaining existing members. We thought about how to better engage our current members and how to broaden our appeal through new programs. We discussed allies and co-sponsors and the nuances of partnerships. We acknowledged the need to identify new leaders and that leadership needs to be shared by many members. We wondered if it was time to be “coached” on how to achieve these critical milestones in order to strengthen the LWW of Indiana County.

LWW is a nonpartisan grass roots organization with an emphasis on civil discourse and the power of impartial facts and research to fuel meaningful discussion – qualities often lacking in today’s public sphere. We must find new members and better engage our existing members to carry out LWW’s commitment to an informed citizenry. Growing membership is about getting the message out about the effectiveness of this organization and its importance to the strength of our democracy. We’ll do this with public relations, a consistent presence in the community, strong programming, and mentoring people today.

Join us in this effort; you don’t need to be an expert in any of these fields. We need people who value a strong democracy and who want our communities to be respectful, aware, enlightened places to live and work. **If you can help us promote our membership development goals, please let me know.** Not only will you be helping strengthen the League overall, but I guarantee that you will find the League of Women Voters to be a wonderful place to forge lifelong friendships. Contact Sherene Hess at lwvic@verizon.net or our secretary Tina Zins at tinazins@gmail.com.

Invitation to Participate in Education Update Study

A group of league members from local Leagues in the southeast region are preparing study guides for an update of the LWWPA education position, including a fine-tuning of the charter school position, based on the LWWUS privatization position, and a consideration of high stakes testing, an issue that is receiving great attention in Pennsylvania at this time. **If you think LWW of Indiana County should participate in the Education Update Study, please contact Sherene at lwvic@verizon.net for more details.**

Based on our League’s interest level, the board will decide whether or not to participate. If LWWIC does participate, we will hold discussion, reach consensus, and add our contribution to the Update study. The outcome will be to present positions at the LWWPA convention next June and seek **concurrence**.

We wish Lea Masiello a fond farewell as she and husband Jim Cahalan have moved to Austin, Texas. They will be closer to their daughters who both teach at Texas universities.

Lea served faithfully on the League board for several years and attended the 2014 national convention in Dallas. We will miss her insights on studies that we conducted during her tenure. Lea also helped us out a great deal by coordinating logistics of our potluck and annual meetings. She has already joined the Austin LWW, and we know she will be a great asset to the group. We wish Lea and her family all the best in sunny Texas.



Pepita Jimenez-Jacobs, long-time LWWIC board member and tireless advocate for children, recently handed out voter registration forms to parents at the 2014 Day of Play.

Environmental Leadership Award Forming Committee and Accepting Nominations in January

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County will be accepting nominations in January for the fourth annual Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Awards. **Currently, a committee is being formed of LWVIC members who would like to publicize and coordinate this year's awards.**

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.

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 ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment
- Grassroots activism to preserve or protect our precious natural resources

This leadership can take a variety of forms including but not limited to the following:

- New or innovative technology to prevent degradation of our environment
- Activities that show a direct positive effect on our environmental resources
- Activities of notable stewardship of the environment
- Activities that reduce pollution in order to protect our water, air and land
- Activities in particular that reduce water pollution from both point and non-point sources
- Development of policies to achieve water quality essential for maintaining species populations and diversity

Past winners for the individual and group awards respectively by year include the following:

2012 - Dr. Tom Falcone and the Indiana Chapter of the PA Senior Environment Corps
2013 - Dr. Brian Okey and the Blairsville Community Development Authority
2014 - Mr. Jim Resh and the Indiana Community Garden

Nominations can be submitted by citizens or groups, or individuals can self-nominate. **Applications will be available beginning in January and the deadline for application submission is April 2015.**

Contact Sherene Hess, president of the LWVIC **to obtain an application or to serve on the awards committee.** Address: 234 Geesey Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Email: lwvic@verizon.net. Phone: 724-762-4162.

A newsletter of the
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CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

Monday, December 15, 7:00 pm—Board Meeting, All Members Welcome, PASEC meeting room, (1005 Oak Street, 2nd floor)

Wednesday, January 28, 2015—Annual Meeting (Details to be announced)

Saturday, February 21, 2015—AAUW NICE! Women's Advocacy Training Smart-Start Workshop (Contact Susan Wheatley at wheatleyse@gmail.com for more information)

Friday, March 13, 2015—Stormwater Management Workshop, KCAC (Sponsored by the Stormwater Education Partnership)

June 5 — June 7, 2015—LWVPA Convention, Pittsburgh

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.