



# VOTER

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anne Simmons, President • Cindy Rogers, Vice President • Ellen Chinn, Treasurer • Sue Welsh, Secretary  
Donna Cashdollar • Laurie Lafontaine • Aida Shotts • Kay Smith • Kay Snyder • Dreama VanCise • Sandy Whitson

## IMPORTANT DATES

### ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 3, 2020

#### Deadlines

- October 19, 2020
  - \* Last day to register to vote
- October 27, 2020
  - \* Last day to apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot; Must apply prior to 5:00 p.m.
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day
  - \* Vote in-person
    - ♦ Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
  - \* Vote-by-mail
    - ♦ Last day to return completed mail-in or absentee ballot; Must be hand-delivered to Indiana County Courthouse prior to 8:00 p.m.

## SCHEDULE

- **July 2020**
  - \* Register to vote OR  
Check your voter registration ([www.votesPA.com](http://www.votesPA.com))
- **Mid-September 2020**
  - \* Request mail-in or absentee ballot
- **Early October 2020**
  - \* Look to receive mail-in or absentee ballot via the United States Postal Service (USPS); Ballots are printed three to four weeks prior to Election Day
- **Mid-October 2020**
  - \* Vote-by-mail
    - ♦ Mail completed ballot using USPS OR
    - ♦ Drop off completed ballot at Indiana County Courthouse
- **November 3, 2020**
  - \* Election Day

## UPDATE ON REDISTRICTING REFORM

*Joyce Rizzo, LWVIC Board Director Candidate*

Current PA law puts state legislators in charge of redistricting. Legislators work behind the scenes with no oversight to redraw voting districts (both congressional and state legislative districts) every 10 years after the census. The result has been irregularly-shaped voting districts, drawn using voter data and sophisticated mapping technology which allows legislative leaders to pick the voters they want, minimizing their accountability to all voters.

Fair Districts PA is a non-partisan, volunteer organization working to put redistricting power into the hands of PA citizens. Since 2016, members have been lobbying their legislators, educating voters and writing opinion pieces and letters-to-the-editor in local newspapers.

The organization has been supporting legislation (House bills 22 and 23; Senate bills 1022 and 1023) which would establish an 11-person independent, non-partisan citizens commission to draw voting district lines, currently drawn by political party leaders. The bills also advocate for more transparency in the process. The independent commission would have to hold public meetings across the state before maps are drawn and would be required to collect public feedback after the maps are drawn and before they are approved.

In order for these changes to have been in place for the 2021 redistricting after the 2020 census, the bills had to be passed before the end of the 2018-2020 legislative session which ended June 30. The state legislative leaders failed to bring these bills up for a vote in the PA General Assembly despite over 100,000 citizens signing a petition, 385 governing bodies passing bipartisan resolutions, 250+ letters to the editor, 285+ editorials and op-eds and 530+ news articles about gerrymandering and redistricting.

The 2020 census will likely result in PA losing one congressional district because of a decrease in population. Without passage of the bills to establish a citizens' commission, political party leaders will again be drawing voting districts in 2021.

This issue will not go away in Pennsylvania. Leaders of Fair Districts PA and other partner organizations have committed to continuing the fight for a fairer method of drawing voting districts. It's crucial for all of us to consider the positions on redistricting reform of our candidates running for state office in November.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Email: [lwvindianacounty@gmail.com](mailto:lwvindianacounty@gmail.com)

Newsletter: [alisonelizabethsimmons@gmail.com](mailto:alisonelizabethsimmons@gmail.com)

Telephone: 724-465-2824 • Website: [indiana.palwv.org](http://indiana.palwv.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PowertoCitizens/](http://www.facebook.com/PowertoCitizens/)

## INTERVIEW WITH INDIANA COUNTY'S CHIEF CLERK AND DIRECTOR OF VOTER REGISTRATION

Anne Simmons, LWVIC President

On June 25, 2020, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to talk to Robin Maryai, Chief Clerk and Debra Streams, Director of Voter Registration about the Pennsylvania Primary held on June 2, 2020. I sent an email with a list of a few questions and was pleasantly surprised when Robin Maryai and Debra Streams called me on the telephone and gave me the “gifts” of their knowledge and time.

There were two major “take-home” messages from our conversation.

**First**, if you need assistance or information, do not hesitate to call or send an email to Robin Maryai or Debra Streams. Robin can help you with election related information and Debra can assist you with voter registration.

**Ms. Robin Maryai**

*Chief Clerk, Indiana County Election Office*

- (724) 465-3805
- Email: rmaryai@indianacountypa.gov

**Ms. Debra Streams**

*Director of Voter Registration, Indiana County Election Office*

- (724) 465-3852
- Email: dstreams@indianapacountypa.gov



**Second**, please be patient and increase your awareness of mail-in voting. In brief, citizens expected to receive their mail-in ballots for the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Primary within a few days of submitting their applications. However, the ballots are not printed until three to four weeks prior to election day. Therefore, in looking forward to the General Election on November 3, 2020, please expect to receive your mail-in or absentee ballot via the United States Postal Service in early October 2020.

Robin Maryai and Debra Streams thoughtfully discussed the security procedures for mail-in and absentee voting. In brief, each ballot is unique with a specific bar code. This bar code enables you to track your ballot ([votespa.com](https://votespa.com)) and ensures that only one ballot per voter can be counted. In addition, the signature on your mail-in ballot must match your voting record signature, the same as in-person voting on Election Day.

In reference to mail-in ballots, there are three separate components: the security envelope, the official envelope, and your ballot. In brief, you complete your ballot, place your ballot in the official envelope, and then place your official envelope inside of the security envelope. The security envelope contains your bar code and the information you need to complete. On the outside of the security envelope write your signature, address, and date that you mailed your ballot or dropped your ballot off at the courthouse. The Indiana County Courthouse has a secure “Drop Box” located with our security officers just inside the front door.

In the conversation with Robin Maryai and Debra Streams, I was impressed to learn that they received and processed 7,314 mail-in and absentee ballots in June 2020. These ballots were organized and placed in trays depending on the precinct of the voter. Then, with the use of a letter opener machine, the 7,314 outer security envelopes were removed. After completing that step, the 7,314 official envelopes were removed. Last, the ballots were opened, folded back, and placed into the ballot scanner. The success of the process is a testament to our county employees, including county office administrators, assistants, and instructional technology personnel. These county employees worked collaboratively and seamlessly to process all of the mail-in and absentee ballots for Indiana County Voters. Of the 17,417 ballots cast in Indiana County in the Pennsylvania Primary, 7,314 were mail-in or absentee ballots. Therefore, 42% of Indiana County voters used mail-in or absentee ballots ([indianacountypa.gov](https://indianacountypa.gov)).

In closing, I want to thank League member Sherene Hess for encouraging me to contact Robin Maryai and Debra Streams. Commissioner Hess is a member of the Elections Reform Committee of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. According to Commissioner Hess, “Indiana County has always been a leader in delivering secure elections to its citizens, and even with significant new procedures we remain effective, due in large part to the caliber of our staff.”

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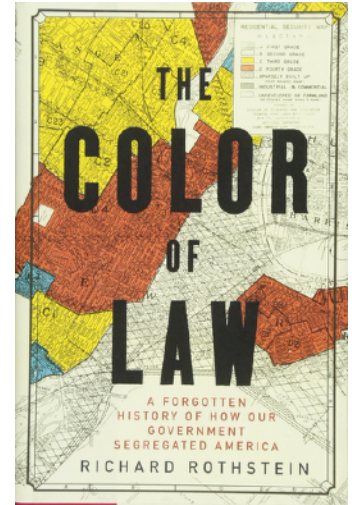
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### BOOK GROUP

*The Color of Law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*

You are welcome to join League members in a discussion of the book, *The Color of Law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*, by author Richard Rothstein. This New York Times Notable Book reveals how the racial segregation of American cities occurred in the twentieth century. Please send an email to Anne Simmons if you are interested in joining the group. (lwvindianacounty@gmail.com)



### MONTHLY MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Any voting member of the LWVIC is welcome to attend the meetings of the LWVIC Board of Directors. These meetings are usually held the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2020. If you plan to participate, please send an email to Anne Simmons (lwvindianacounty@gmail.com) to receive an email invitation to participate in the ZOOM meeting.

### ELECTION MACHINE – PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION ON OCTOBER 30, 2020

All Indiana County residents are invited to view the public test of the vote counting scanner. These demonstrations for public viewing are usually held on the Friday afternoon prior to the Pennsylvania Primary and the General Election.

Robin Maryai, Chief Clerk of Indiana County, has extended this invitation to all members of the League of Women Voters. Closer to Election Day, specific information will be published in the Indiana Gazette and Indiana County website (indianacountypa.gov). Tentatively, the demonstration will be held on Friday, October 30, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Hearing Room, second floor of the Indiana County Courthouse.

### 2020 PARTICIPATE PA – WEBINAR SERIES: “EVERYBODY COUNTS AND EVERYBODY VOTES”

League members Donna Cashdollar, Anne Simmons, and Sue Welsh increased their understanding of voting in Pennsylvania by participating in the 2020 Participate PA - Webinar Series: “Everybody Counts and Everybody Votes,” which was held for three consecutive Fridays during the month of May 2020.

Critical information discussed included new legislation and strategies to increase voter involvement. As a result, our League has developed a plan focusing on educating voters and increasing voter participation. (Please refer to page 8.)

The sponsor of the webinar series was the Keystone Progress Education Fund and the invitation to enroll in the webinar was extended through League member Eric Barker.

### FUNDING DONATED TO SUPPORT “EARN A BIKE” PROGRAM

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County donated \$50.00 to support the “Earn a Bike” Program. The host site for the program is the Chevy Chase Community Center where donations of helmets and new and used bicycles are collected. The LWVIC joins other community groups in support of this program (i.e., Indiana Borough Police Department, Citizens’ Ambulance Service, Indiana Cycling Center). The volunteers from these organizations provide the new bicycle owners with eight hours of training that includes how to repair and service a bicycle and how to safely follow the rules of the road. Special thanks to League members Barb Hauge and Laurie LaFontaine for recommending the League support this important program. The Indiana Gazette article can be found at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3gDu0NW>



## PBS FILMS ON WQED – pbs.org



### POINT OF VIEW: “AND SHE COULD BE NEXT: BUILDING THE MOVEMENT”

Summary: “And She Could Be Next: Building the Movement” is a two-part program which tells the story of how women of color impacted the 2018 midterm elections, including the election of female candidates. The documentary depicts the successful formation of grassroots coalitions, the work of campaign organizers and candidates, and the use of voter suppression tactics to deny people access to the polls and voting. (Special thanks to Laurie LaFontaine for recommending this documentary.)

### AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: “THE VOTE”

Summary: “The Vote” is the story of the hard-fought campaign waged by American women for the right to vote. This two-part program depicts how this transformative cultural and political movement resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in U.S. history. (Special thanks to Don Lancaster for recommending this film.)



### 2020 CENSUS

If you have not already responded, please spend a few minutes online today to complete the census at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov). The 2020 Census will help determine how federal funds will be allocated by federal, state, and local lawmakers every year for the next ten years. The Census will also determine the number of seats each state holds in the U.S. House of Representatives. Please be COUNTED!



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES



### NEW PRESIDENT ELECTED

Dr. Deborah Ann Turner was elected as the 20<sup>th</sup> National President of the League of Women Voters of the United States on June 26, 2020. Earning both a Juris Doctor (JD) and Doctor of Medicine (MD), Dr. Turner’s professional career focused on gynecological oncology. Her vision for the League of Women Voters includes:

- ♦ Advancing our diversity, equity, and inclusion work
- ♦ Embracing intergenerational relationships
- ♦ Making VOTE411 a household name





## COMMITTEES

### CHILD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

#### A YEAR IN REVIEW: 2019 – 2020

*Susan Welsh, Chair, CACE*

In the 2019 – 2020 year, the Child Advocacy Committee on Education (CACE) studied school safety legislation, implementation, and funding. CACE chair Sue Welsh and members Lillian Clemons, Jeanna Kutz, and Nancy Westburg explored the public health research on school safety issues, visited area school districts, and attended the state-wide regional School Safety Symposium in March 2019. That groundwork revealed quickly growing and locally based initiatives — administrative, instructional, and physical — to address the safety and security of our schools and school children.

In May 2019, the CACE sponsored the speaker for the League's Annual Dinner Meeting. Dr. Mark McGowan, IUP coordinator of the School Psychology Specialist Program, spoke on "School Climate" as the foundation for addressing school safety and student wellness.



During the summer, CACE expanded research to look at the recommendations of professional organizations, the "Safe2Say Something Program" developed by Sandy Hook Promise, the advocacy work of Moms Demand Action for gun safety legislation, and the revealing PA Attorney General's "Safe2Say Something Annual Report: 2018 – 2019" ([www.safe2saypa.org](http://www.safe2saypa.org)). We gave two presentations, one in September 2019 and one in November 2019, to inform the public about what we were seeing over and over again — the growth of legislative and policy efforts to address two growing public health problems: firearm violence and deaths, and increasing emotional needs at every grade level of public schooling.

The core importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) when addressing school safety was clear. For the Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County's annual "Family Fun Fest" in February 2020, we created a display table on the theme of SEL values and practices: our games, bookmarks, favors, and take-home exercises were themed to support emotional and social self-awareness. Thanks to all League members who helped with the table and games.

CACE has not met since COVID-19 restrictions began, but the pandemic has revealed the concern and creativity of our regional schools as they addressed school closings and as they plan for school safety when they reopen. Please review IASD's document on "Informed Learning Options for Reopening" here: <https://bit.ly/2VV6VhP>. You will see safety and wellness frontally addressed, including both the physical *and* emotional implications of reopening during the pandemic. The plan sustains behavioral/emotional supports for "pandemic recovery."

For the 2020 – 2021 year, CACE plans to focus on key understandings and practices for SEL and also plans on educating and advocating for relevant legislative initiatives. One is PA Senate Bill 749, which offers guidelines for the provision of certified school counselors, psychiatrists, social workers, and nurses to address physical and social/emotional needs as they increase. The others are PA HB 2261 and SB1024, which propose Cyber Charter School Law reform; at issue are Sunshine Act compliance, performance and outcomes assessment, and revision of cyber school funding formulas.

CACE wants to thank the Apollo-Ridge, Indiana, and Penns Manor School Districts for their welcoming spirit as we spoke with School Safety Committees, and Anne Simmons, former CACE chair, who originally launched our public health research and school district outreach and who continues to care deeply about our work.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Nominating Committee of the League of Women Voters of Indiana County, we are pleased to announce the candidates for officer and board director positions. These candidates may serve for a term of two years.

**Ellen Chinn** ..... Treasurer  
**Peggy Eyer** ..... Board Director  
**Barbara Hauge** ..... Board Director  
**Joyce Rizzo** ..... Board Director  
**Cindy Rogers** ..... Vice President  
**Kay Smith** ..... Board Director  
**Sandra Whitson** ... Board Director



The election of board officers and directors by the League membership usually occurs at the Annual Dinner Meeting in May. However, the annual meeting has been postponed. Although the “official” appointments are delayed, we are fortunate that our candidates are already actively participating in LWVIC events and initiatives.

This summer, the members of the 2020 Nominating Committee, Beth Marshall, Ellen Ruddock, and Aida Shotts, have been joined by Anne Simmons and Dreama Van Cise. This group is discussing succession planning and the structure of the leadership team.

## VOTING SERVICES COMMITTEE

### YOUNG VOTERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County is encouraging recent high school graduates to register to vote. Citizens who begin voting at the age of 18 will likely become “super voters” and vote in all subsequent elections. The “Best Wishes to the Class of 2020” poster was designed by Donna Cashdollar.



Here are some of the ways we are striving to reach young voters:

1. League members have been invited to share the poster displayed on the LWVIC website and Facebook with their family, friends, and neighbors.
2. On May 31, 2020 the “Class of 2020” announcement was published in the *Indiana Gazette*, and on June 1, 2020 the announcement was emailed to all Indiana County School District Superintendents.
3. Palm card size announcements were distributed to families by our partners at the Chevy Chase Community Center. On June 23, 2020 and again on June 29, 2020, the announcements were placed in the ‘grab-n-go’ lunch bags for children and adults.
4. Members of the LWVIC Board of Directors and League members Bonnie Adair, Lillian Clemons, Linda Gwinn, and Judy Wanchism have posted “Class of 2020” flyers in Indiana County communities.

## LWVIC BOARD MEMBERS RESPOND TO LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Letter to the Editor titled, “Mail-in voting safety questioned” was published in the *Indiana Gazette* on June 11, 2020. In response to this message that may undermine the confidence of voters, the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Indiana County decided to submit a letter. This Letter to the Editor was published on June 21, 2020. The members of the League board who researched mail-in voting safety and helped with the content of the letter include Donna Cashdollar, Laurie LaFontaine, Cindy Rogers, Anne Simmons, and Susan Welsh.



### “Mail-in voting has good safeguards”

Mail-in voting gives voters the choice of when, where and how to vote securely.

This letter is in response to the Letter to the Editor published on June 11, 2020. Thank you for starting a conversation about voting in the General Election on November 3, 2020.

We are fortunate that we may continue to vote in-person or if preferred, vote by mail. The passage of Pennsylvania Act 77 of 2019 has made voting more accessible and secure by addressing voter registration deadlines, mail-in voting procedures, and new voting systems purchases.

In reference to mail-in voting, new safeguards include the following:

1. Each mail-in ballot includes a bar code so that only one ballot per voter can be counted.
2. This bar code is unique and can be tracked by you and our county election officials. The [votesPA.com](http://votesPA.com) website will provide you with the date your ballot is received and its status (i.e., “vote recorded”).
3. The signature on your mail-in ballot must match your voting record signature, the same as in-person voting on Election Day.

The members of the League of Women Voters of Indiana County are studying this important community issue, the new option to vote by mail. We encourage all citizens to read about elections and election security measures at [www.votesPA.com](http://www.votesPA.com).

Voting is a precious right. Let’s work together to learn more about mail-in voting. If interested, please contact me by email, [lwvindianacounty@gmail.com](mailto:lwvindianacounty@gmail.com). We will continue to share information at <http://indiana.palwv.org>.

As knowledgeable and confident voters we can choose when, where, and how we vote.

*Anne Simmons, Ed.D.*

*President, League of Women Voters of Indiana County*

## PLAN TO EDUCATE VOTERS & INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

**MISSION:** *Empowering voters. Defending democracy.*

**VISION:** *We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.*

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, League members have been engaged in conversations about how to educate voters and increase voter participation in Indiana County as we prepare for Election Day on November 3, 2020. As a result, our board of directors has developed the plan depicted on page 8.

- GOALS:**
- Educate voters
  - Increase voter participation

AUDIENCE	ACTIONS
<b>LWVIC Board of Directors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research legislated changes to PA voting procedures</li> <li>• Research vulnerabilities that need to be considered</li> <li>• Investigate information/research provided in voting resources               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ vote411.org, votersPA.com, voteathome.org</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Further develop recommendations of 2020 Participate PA (training webinar series)</li> <li>• Interview Indiana County Election Officials</li> </ul>
<b>LWVIC Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update social media/print media</li> <li>• Recommend use of online tools to family and friends               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ votesPA.com, vote411.org</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review and update LWVIC communications               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ VOTER newsletter, Facebook, website, emails</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Host informational meetings</li> </ul>
<b>LWVIC Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share social media/print media communications about voting</li> <li>• Offer to provide informational presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Indiana County Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic/Educational Organizations</li> <li>• Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicize how to register to vote, options for voting (i.e., when, where, how); mail-in application deadlines, and how to identify polling locations</li> <li>• Use radio communications to provide information and discuss issues</li> <li>• Distribute and post print materials (e.g., flyers, palm cards)</li> <li>• Submit articles to the <i>Indiana Gazette</i></li> <li>• Host candidates' forums for the public</li> <li>• Circulate a pamphlet and/or palm cards with key dates</li> </ul>
<b>Political Representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with local representatives</li> <li>• Write a white paper; Send to politicians (e.g., extend early in-person voting period; Election Day – national holiday)</li> </ul>

**LEAGUE MEMBERS:**

1. Please review the plan. Recommendations for changes and additions to the plan are welcome.
2. Please support the implementation of the plan by **volunteering** to help educate voters and increase voter participation.



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## VOTING RESOURCES

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**[votesPA.com](#)****PENNSYLVANIA WEBSITE**

Information about all aspects of voting in Pennsylvania; How to register to vote, check your voter registration, track your absentee and mail-in ballots; Enhanced in February 2020

**[vote411.org](#)****LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND**

Information about voting and elections including the following: 1) Check your voter registration; 2) See what's on your ballot; 3) Find your polling place; and 4) Discover upcoming debates in your area; Launched in October 2006

**[voteathome.org](#)****VOTE AT HOME**

Research and resources about voting from home including primary sources and best practice guides; National Vote at Home Institute is nonprofit and nonpartisan; Founded in 2017

**[wevote.seventy.org](#)****WE VOTE BY COMMITTEE OF SEVENTY**

Information and resources for Pennsylvania voters; Nonpartisan civic awareness campaign to ensure votes count; Founded in Philadelphia in 1904

**[ballotready.org](#)****BALLOT READY**

Produces digital voter guides; Provides nonpartisan information about the candidates and referendums on your ballot; Founded in 2015

**[inspirepa.org](#)****INSPIRE PA**

High school focused voter registration program; Provides training materials for teachers and students; Instruction on democratic processes, voting laws, and impact of voting on communities; Founded in 2019

**[whenweallvote.org](#)****WHEN WE ALL VOTE**

Non-profit, nonpartisan organization focusing on increasing voter participation and closing the race and age voting gap; Co-chairs Michelle Obama, Tom Hanks, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Janelle Monae, Chris Paul, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw; Founded in 2018

**[rockthevote.org](#)****ROCK THE VOTE**

Formed by music executives in response to the censorship of hip-hop and rap artists; Encourages young people to vote; Nonprofit and nonpartisan organization founded in 1990

**[democracy.works](#)****DEMOCRACY WORKS**

Software developers and civic organizers developed online tools to facilitate voting; "Turbovote" created for voting registration, absentee and vote-by mail applications, locating polling places, as well as text and email reminders of deadlines; Nonprofit and nonpartisan organization launched in 2010



## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

### EIGHTH ANNUAL PEGGY CLARK GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

**Individual Award:** Mr. John Somonick

**Organization Award:** The Allegheny Arboretum at IUP

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County (LWVIC) recognizes local efforts and leadership in attending to environmental issues by granting the Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Awards to an individual as well as an organization each year. The members of the selection committee were Laurie LaFontaine, Ellen Chinn, and Kay Snyder.

The awards will be presented at the LWVIC Annual Dinner Meeting on a date to be determined. In June 2020, the award recipients received a congratulatory letter and notification of the bestowing of the award at a later date.

John Somonick is the 2020 recipient of the Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award for an individual. He was nominated by Ellen and Rodney Ruddock. In the letter of support written on behalf of John Somonick, the following was indicated, "This proactive effort in grassroots activism has been John's life since childhood – learning, initiating, organizing, funding and supporting people, activities and organizations that engage the community in the environment especially in the geographic area of his birthplace and this region of Pennsylvania."

Many of us know John Somonick for his authorship of a book on racoon trapping titled, *Coon Come Easy* as well as his leadership in preserving our natural resources and service as a board member in numerous Indiana County organizations including Ducks Unlimited, Indiana County Solid Waste Authority Board, Indiana County Parks and Trails, and White Township Farmland Preservation Board, just to name a few. He was a founder of the following organizations: PA Cleanways in Indiana County in 1997, Aultman Watershed Association in 2000, Indiana County Fur Harvesters in 2001, and Indiana County Evergreen Conservancy in 2004. John Somonick also educated others through his abundant and varied workshop presentations.

The organization receiving the 2020 Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award is the Allegheny Arboretum at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The award will be presented to Dr. Jerry Pickering, Chair of the Allegheny Arboretum, who led the establishment of the arboretum and continues to spearhead the continued growth of the arboretum. Dr. Pickering is a retired Professor in the Department of Biology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The Allegheny Arboretum was nominated for the award by Dr. Thomas Simmons.

The letter written in favor of the Allegheny Arboretum stated the following: "The Allegheny Arboretum demonstrates grassroots leadership by the collective action of community leaders and Indiana University of Pennsylvania professors in their efforts to effectively change how our regional flora is preserved and protected by educating others about local environmental conditions and the need to protect natural resources."

On behalf of the Environmental Issues Committee of the LWVIC, we look forward to honoring John Somonick and The Allegheny Arboretum for demonstrated leadership in addressing environmental issues in Indiana County.



## CHEVY CHASE TEAMS WITH LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS AND EVERGREEN CONSERVANCY

Chevy Chase Community Center received \$7,000 in grant funding to support their community Soup Kitchen Program. The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and Evergreen Conservancy facilitated the grant funding process. Cindy Rogers, Evergreen Conservancy President and LWVIC Vice President, recommended the funds be directed to Chevy Chase and Barbara Croce, Executive Director, Chevy Chase Community Center completed the grant application.

This funding was offered by the Ohio River Valley COVID-19 Response Fund and made available from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. This foundation supports local organizations working to provide crisis relief to individuals and families.



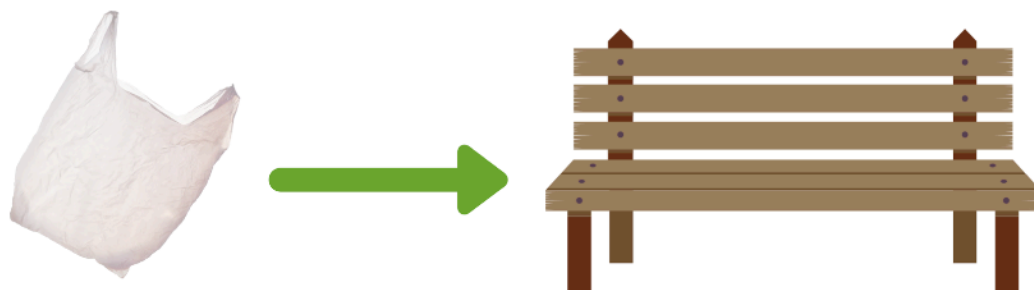
This summer, the Soup Kitchen Program has been distributing 200 to 400 grab-n-go lunches to children and adults each day, Monday through Thursday. The center receives reimbursement for children's lunches through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The funds awarded from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies have been used to provide 3,000 lunches to adults.

## PLASTICS COLLECTION

Please continue to save your plastic to support the "Bench Project" led by the Evergreen Conservancy and the League of Women Voters of Indiana County. The goal of the Bench Project is to re-purpose collected plastics into poly-lumber outdoor benches.

The types of plastic bags that may be recycled include the following: grocery bags, bread bags, water case and soft drink case overwraps, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood pellet bags, Ziploc and other re-sealable bags, bubble wrap, salt bags, and cereal bags.

Please contact Cindy Rogers ([rogers944@comcast.net](mailto:rogers944@comcast.net)) for additional information.





## IN THE NEWS...

### ARTICLES ON MAIL-IN VOTING

This article presents evidence that voting by mail gives neither party a clear advantage in an election. The key take-away is that the advantage goes to the party that most vigorously promotes the process and educates voters on how to apply and follow through. Reminders to mail in the ballot are important in the parties' efforts.



♦ <https://53eig.ht/3f9oTVb>

These articles from the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* and *Indiana Gazette* describe the announcement of the Trump campaign lawsuit of mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania.

♦ <https://bit.ly/3iC6jY6>

♦ <https://bit.ly/2BFul41>

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## BEHIND THE SCENES

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League members working “behind the scenes” to provide information to League members include Sandy Whitson and JoAnne Ferraro who distribute the VOTER newsletter by electronic mail and the United States Postal Service, and Cheri Widzowski who manages our Facebook communications, [www.facebook.com/PowertoCitizens/](https://www.facebook.com/PowertoCitizens/).



Sandy Whitson



JoAnne Ferraro



Cheri Widzowski