



Yesterday...Today...Tomorrow



**The League of Women Voters
in Indiana County
1974 ~ 2024**



Dr. Amy Widestrom
Executive Director
League of Women Voters
of Pennsylvania

Amy Widestrom is a graduate of Oberlin College and Syracuse University. As a Congressional Fellow of the American Political Association in 2008-2009, she worked for the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs on economic recovery efforts following the 2008 financial crisis. Throughout her academic career at California State University (Long Beach) and at Arcadia University in Pennsylvania, she has focused her research, publications, and teaching on American politics, policies,

and institutions. At Arcadia University she served for more than five years as chair of the Department of Historical & Political Studies. She also served for two years as Judge of Elections in Cheltenham Township until she took the post of executive director of the Pennsylvania League.



Ms. Maria Delgado-Santana
President, League of Women Voters
of Pennsylvania

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Maria Delgado-Santana was brought by her parents to the US as an infant. She is a graduate of the Community College of Philadelphia, PA, and Eastern University in St. David, PA. She retired in 2022 after working 25 years for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Working with the state, she became a leader for the Service

Employees International Union (SEIU) and remains a leader with SEIU. She continues leadership with multiple boards, including the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, United Way, American Federation of Labor, and AFL-CIO. She is regional chair of National Puertorican Agenda (NPRA), and serves on the executive board for the LWV in Lawrence county. Maria's passion is to advocate for the labor movement, human rights and the underprivileged. She teaches ESL (English as a second language) part-time and she is an advocate for the Latino population.

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County Celebrates Fifty Years

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County (LWVIC) began with provisional membership in the national organization, during which members studied local issues and government and produced an informational booklet, *Know Your Schools*. Founding President Jean Knowlton wrote for the group's twentieth anniversary in 1994, "I remember our long year's work on the booklet, on taxes, on acid rain, nuclear fallout, solid waste disposal, mine acid....The focus of contemporary issues shifts, no matter the era, but what remains is our desire to be enlightened, contributing members of a world society."

In its early years the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) supported equal opportunity in education, employment, and housing; child labor standards; protections for workers; equal pay for women; and the Social Security Act. For more than a century, League members have worked for voting rights, civil rights, and on local, state and national issues that affect our communities. The organization promotes non-partisan citizen participation in civic life and the democratic process. While men have been welcomed as members since the 1970s, the League retains its original name to honor the women who struggled for generations for independent citizenship and the right to vote.

As LWVIC moves forward, we will continue our focus on the national mission, *Empowering Voters – Defending Democracy*, while working locally and with LWVPA on equitable school funding, reproductive health rights, gun safety, and the environment. We also will reach out to engage more young people and underrepresented people, helping them to make their voices heard.

LWVIC Anniversary Celebration February 17, 2024 St. Andrews Village, Bristol Court

Welcome and Acknowledgments

Dr. Deanne Snavelly, Administrative Vice president, LWVIC

Buffet Luncheon

Presentation: *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*

Dr. Susan Boser with Members of LWVIC

Welcoming Remarks

Ms. Maria Delgado-Santana, President, LWVPA

Keynote Address

Dr. Amy Widestrom, Executive Director, LWVPA

Closing Statement

Original Charter Members of LWWIC Who Remain Active in 2024

Susan McClure • Olga Platt • Sandy Whitson



The First LWWIC Board of Directors, 1974

President: Jean Knowlton

Vice-President: Vivian Bennett

2nd Vice-President: Geri Axford

Secretary: Sheila Miller

Treasurer: Norma Aho

Board Members:

Edith Cord, Beth Crozier, Beth Handler, Susan McClure

Analiese Schaeffer, Teresa Strong, Sally Zellum

By-Laws:

Jean Knowlton and Margery Nix

Budget Committee:

Sandy Whitson, Kathy Quirk, Iris Holtz, Gwynn Grant

Nominating Committee:

Sheila Miller, Sally Abrams, Geri Axford, Edith Cord,

Beth Handler, Sue Oliver

Program Committee:

Teresa Strong, Barbara Jones, Winnie Bernat, Clarice Reber, Peg Bears,
Helga Freund, Grace Auer, Jane Hegner, Vivian Bennett, Kate States

Membership: Lori Rittle

Voters Service: Geri Axford

Voter Editor: Susan McClure

LWVIC Presidents Past and Present

- Anne Simmons • 2019-2023
- Vicki Stelma • 2015-2019
- Sherene Hess • 2001-2015
- Aida Shotts • 1995-2001
- Mary Ann Rood • 1991-1995
- Vonnie Hunter • 1989-1991
- Nancy Fricke • 1987-1989
- Nancy Fricke & Pam Wine • 1987 (Pam served for a short time)
- Beth Marshall • 1984-1987
- Barbara Freund • 1981-1984
- Kathy Quirk • 1980-1981
- Margaret Klamp • 1979-1980
- Rosemary Voelker • 1977-1979
- Vivian Bennett • 1975-1977
- Jean Knowlton • 1973-1975



LEAGUE ELECTS OFFICERS — Indiana League of Women Voters, no longer a provisional league, elected officers at its annual business meeting held Monday evening, April 28, at Colonial Inn. Newly elected officers are from l. to r.: Jean

Knowlton, secretary; Vivian Bennett, president; Clarice Reber, treasurer; and Rosemary Voelker, first vice president. Not pictured is Sandy Whittson, second vice president.

Anna Estes Strawbridge

The League of Women Voters of PA established the Anna Estes Strawbridge Honor Roll in 1985. It is named for a founding member of the State League who served on the state board for 21 years.

Individuals are nominated to the Honor Roll by their local leagues in recognition of their energy and commitment to the ideas, principles and support for the League, as was the example of Anna Estes Strawbridge until her passing at age 100.

As the matriarch of the Philadelphia department store family (Strawbridge and Clothier) she remained active in family philanthropic and corporate affairs throughout her life. She was a descendent of passengers who sailed to Philadelphia with William Penn and was a birthright member of the Society of Friends. She was President of the LWV of Philadelphia, director of the Blue Cross of Greater Philadelphia and a board member of many community and civic organizations.

As a woman dedicated to public service and civic reform her example lives on in the names of the Honor Roll recipients prominently displayed on plaques in the Citizen Information Center of the League's Harrisburg office.

LWVIC Recipients of the Anna Estes Strawbridge Award

- Jane McGregor • 1994
- Nancy Fricke • 1997
- Beth Marshall • 1999
- Sandy Whitson • 1999
- Mary Ann Rood • 2000
- Aida Shotts • 2001
- Sherene Hess • 2005
- Olga Platt • 2007
- Mary Beth Sweeney • 2014



Aida Shotts, Edwina Vold, Sandy Whitson, Mary Ann Rood, and Pepita Jacobs

Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award



The Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Award was established in 2012 by LWWIC to recognize citizens, groups, or businesses who show exemplary leadership in preserving and/or protecting the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the eco-system and maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Peggy Clark herself became interested in environmental issues after her family's farm lost its water due to deep mining. At the time, there were some laws in place to protect some homeowners but nothing to protect those who lost their water or built a home after 1966 who had land subsidence occur. Peggy organized Citizens Against Water Loss Due to Mining (CAWLM) in the 1970s to lobby for a state law against water loss resulting from deep mining. She organized a grassroots campaign and testified, lobbied legislators and DEP employees, and educated the public about this issue.

Each year LWWIC presents an individual award and a group award.

- 2012 • Dr. Thomas Falcone (*individual award*)
Indiana County PA Senior Environmental Corps (*group award*)
- 2013 • Gerald Smith (*individual award*)
Aultman Watershed for Restoration of the Environment (AWARE) (*group award*)
- 2014 • Jim Resh, Indiana County Conservation District (*individual award*)
Indiana County Community Garden (*group award*)
- 2015 • Dr. Ed Donley & Dr Ellen Yerger (*co-individual awards*)
East Run Hellbenders Society, Inc. (*group award*)
- 2016 • Bob & Lori Rittle (*co-individual awards*)
Evergreen Conservancy (*group award*)
- 2017 • Barb Hauge (*individual award*)
Indiana County Parks & Trails (*group award*)
- 2018 • Cindy Rogers (*individual award*)
Friends of the Parks (*group award*)
- 2019 • JoAnne & John Ferraro (*individual award*)
Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (*group award*)
- 2020-21 • John Somonick (*individual award*)
Allegheny Arboretum (*group award*)
- 2022 • Silas Schiera (*individual award*)
Friends of White's Woods (*group award*)
- 2023 • Marie Olson (*individual award*)
Blacklick Creek Watershed Association (*group award*)

LWVIC Environmental Issues Committee Gave Us *The Straight Scoop on Shale Drilling*

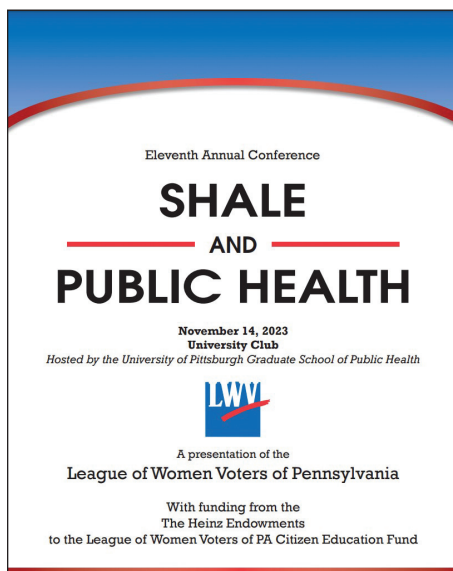
by Ellen Chinn

The Marcellus shale area is the largest source of natural gas in the United States. In 2009 the LWVIC studied all issues around hydrofracking of shale. From this study, a consensus opinion was formed that hydrofracking of shale was detrimental to the environment. The LWVIC brought it to the attention of Leagues across PA at our state convention in June 2009.

Twenty-seven League chapters organized study groups, sponsored public forums with experts representing various viewpoints, visited drilling sites, participated in webinars and other presentations at various colleges and universities and reached consensus on this important issue.

The LWVIC Environmental Issues Committee, sponsored by the LWVPA Citizen Education Fund, wrote *The Straight Scoop on Shale Drilling* in 2011, which was subsequently adopted by LWVPA and LWVUS. Its purpose is to educate and engage the public regarding natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale, its impact on our water and communities, and how government is involved through permitting, taxation and regulation. As part of this commitment, *The Straight Scoop on Shale Drilling* organizes a yearly conference “Shale & Public Health” featuring a large variety of experts speaking to topics related to shale drilling. To further educate the public about environmental topics, *The Straight Scoop on Shale Drilling* supports other organizations by promoting their events.

<https://www.palvv.org/straight-scoop-on-shale>



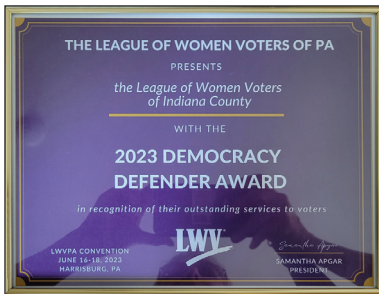
In 2023 the Shale and Public Health Conference took place in Pittsburgh on November 14 and was also offered virtually. As usual, it was a very successful conference with topics including birth impacts, radiation and waste, fracking and water contaminants, abandoned wells, PFAS, and a panel discussion on Blue Hydrogen. This annual event is free and open to the public.

LWVIC Wins Democracy Defender Award

by Susan Boser

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County (LWVIC) was recently recognized in Harrisburg for their work, winning the Democracy Defender Award. The Democracy Defender Award is a competitive, new award presented by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania to a county League in recognition of exceptional commitment to voter services in their community.

The Democracy Defender Award was presented to the LWVIC for their work in multiple ways. The LWVIC expanded voter registration opportunities for citizens living in rural communities through community festivals, public libraries, high schools and the university. In addition, they encouraged participation of diverse citizens in a number of informational initiatives including print media such as the *Indiana Gazette*, radio announcements and interviews with Renda Broadcasting WDAD, and digital media at IUP, including screens in the HUB and on exercise equipment there, and in the campus newspaper, *The Penn*.



The award was presented at the Pennsylvania League's biennial convention on June 17, 2023 in Harrisburg. On behalf of the LWVIC, Cindy Rogers received the award from Meg Pierce, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania League. Also present were LWVIC members Lizanne Porter, Ellen Chinn, Susan Boser, and Vicki Stelma.



Establishment of the Dr. Diane Duntley Memorial Scholarship

by Ellen Chinn



Dr. Diane Duntley joined LWVIC in 1996 and was a Board Director for many years, with many board meetings held in her home. Her passion and involvement within the League was primarily with the Children's Advisory Committee on Education (CACE), a very active committee which advocates for issues related to Pennsylvania traditional and charter school funding as well as school safety.

Diane retired from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she served as director of academic information systems. She was an active professor involved in numerous university activities. Before coming to IUP, she taught at the public schools in both Wilson and Spring Valley, N.Y., as well as at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In Indiana, Diane was involved in many community activities and organizations.

Before Diane's passing in 2022, unbeknownst to us, she generously named LWVIC as one of the beneficiaries on her life insurance policy. We were both saddened by her passing and surprised by the letter informing us of this. A few months later, in late 2022, a committee was formed to oversee the investment of the monies received from the bequeathment. The money was subsequently invested to generate income for the establishment of the Dr. Diane Duntley Memorial Scholarship. As of this writing, LWVIC is set to determine the first-ever recipient, just in time for our League's 50th Anniversary.

We thank Diane for her years of service and commitment to LWVIC in life, and in death.



Diane Duntley with Sara Steelman and Rod Ruddock, planning a civic engagement workshop for League of Women Voters

© The Indiana Gazette, 2004

League Members' Memories

When I started to think back...I at first thought that the issues would be foremost in my memory. They actually became secondary. Yes, I remember our long year's work on the booklet [*Know Your Schools*], on taxes, on acid rain, nuclear fallout, solid waste disposal, mine acid and the ERA....League members were then and most likely still are people with strong, educated opinions. The focus of contemporary issues shifts, no matter what the era, but what remains is our desire to be enlightened, contributing members of a world society.

— Jean Knowlton

Lori Rittle was dubbed "The Solid Waste Queen of Indiana County." Lori could be found amid the garbage talking about the need for recycling. Then there was a very pregnant Kathy Quirk who waddled into Bing's Tavern to give a voter information speech to a group of men.

— Jean Knowlton

LWVIC did a study of the laws which affected underground water supplies. We did the local study and consensus. Then we went to the state convention and campaigned for a state-wide study and consensus. We were successful and the state consensus led to a new law protecting private water supplies. Peggy Clark was one of the leaders in this fight and a League member.

— Beth Marshall

How do you control a board meeting? Like herding cats! Did we follow all the LWV rules on how to reach consensus? Yard sale time in the McClure garage. Many hours on the phone trying to convince members they really did want to volunteer for a League activity! So many trips to the county courthouse – the commissioners called me by my first name. When asked in nursery school "What do mothers do all day?" Ben replied, "Go to meetings."

— Nancy Fricke

Sheila Miller decided Indiana needed a League of Women Voters. I don't remember Sheila's reasoning, but Sheila could talk me into anything!... State Board members who aided our Provisional League stressed the value of being associated with other members. I thought that was a silly reason to join the League. After all, we were studying, learning, and sharing our knowledgeable conclusions. But they were right. Being with other League members is interesting, challenging and stimulating.

— Susan McClure

I just feel so very grateful that I was part of that group of bright and wonderful women that Sheila Miller was able to get together 50 years ago to start the League of Women Voters in our wonderful little town, Indiana, PA.

— Arlene Cohen

Cover Images: Top, Nelle Bly Rogers (seated far right) on a suffrage parade float, Uniontown, PA, 1915. Courtesy of Linda McPherson, her granddaughter
Below, LWVIC in White's Woods on Earth Day, 2022

League of Women Voters Board Members, 2023-2024

Cindy Rogers, Program Vice President

Deanne Snavelly, Administrative Vice President

Ellen Chinn, Treasurer • Susan Welsh, Secretary

Susan Boser • Donna Cashdollar • Lizanne Porter

Joyce Rizzo • Aida Shotts • Kay B. Smith • Kay Snyder

