

LWW VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF INDIANA COUNTY

SPRING 2024

State Representative Jim Struzzi Cites LWVIC for 50 Years of Service to Indiana County Voters



On March 13 State Representative Jim Struzzi presented a citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to the League of Women Voters of Indiana County, recognizing 50 years of our chapter's service to county voters. The presentation took place in his Indiana office, attended by League board directors and three of the original founding members of the local chapter, Susan McClure, Olga Platt, and Sandra Whitson.

Attending the presentation were, standing left to right: LWVIC founding member Sandra Whitson, board director Donna Cashdollar, founding member Susan McClure, State Representative Jim Struzzi, board treasurer Ellen Chinn, founding member Olga Platt, and program vice president Cindy Rogers. Kneeling, left to right: board secretary Susan Welsh, board director Kay Smith, and administrative vice president Deanne Snively.



May 11 & 12

**Indiana Co. Fairgrounds Picnic Pavilion
(next to the playground)**

Regular Sale

**Saturday May 11
8:00 am-4:00 pm**

\$5 Bag Sale

**Sunday May 12
12:00 - 4:00 pm**

Donation Drop-Off Times

May 6-10

9am – Noon

May 8 & 9

5-7 pm

Please contact us at
lwvindianacounty@gmail.com
with any questions or for pick up

No clothing please!



Thank you!



You're Invited—Salad Extravaganza Luncheon Meeting

Saturday • May 18 • 12:00 noon-2:00 p.m.

Grauer Hall, UU Church

285 Twolick Drive, Indiana, PA

I. Potluck Lunch – Spring Salad Extravaganza

Main dish salads including vegan and gluten-free options, breads, tea, coffee, and water will be provided by the LWVIC board. **Please bring a dessert to share and your own place setting.**

II. Annual Business Meeting

- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's 2024-25 proposed budget
- Committee reports and 2024-25 program
- Nominations and election of board directors and officers for 2024-2026



Show League Strength on Lobby Day in Harrisburg, May 8

by Susan Boser

This event is sponsored by the state League of Women Voters, to encourage people from the local leagues to come together in Harrisburg to lobby our own senators and representatives on issues that matter to us. The purpose is to project the LWVPA as a visible force in Harrisburg, and increase the voice of women on issues that we care about.

I will try to schedule visits with Rep. Jim Struzzi and Sen. Joe Pittman. We will meet with them late in the morning, have lunch with other



League members, and then attend the League's short press conference in the rotunda.

The event is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8. I will drive to Harrisburg, planning to leave at 7:00 a.m. and return by 5:00 p.m. There is no cost to anyone who attends. The League will provide lunch to us, and League members will also get a T-shirt for participating.

PA Schools Work, the coalition for school funding, is also having their lobby day on the same day, so we can also visit with them.

I did this last year, and it's a very powerful experience to be physically in the Capitol building, calling on our representatives, and lobbying for what we care about. It's also energizing to be part of a larger group of League members from across the state. It left me feeling like I was making a difference. The issues I propose we raise are Gun Safety, Reproductive Choice, Education Funding and Campaign Finance Reform. I will have information and talking points available for all of us.

Anyone who would like to attend should contact me directly at sboser12@gmail.com.

LWVIC Awarded Democracy Defender Grant for 2024

by Donna Cashdollar

For the second consecutive year, LWVIC has been awarded a competitive grant from LWV of Pennsylvania to support Voter Services projects in 2024. These projects encourage eligible residents over a wide range of ages and locations in Indiana County to register and vote in 2024, and relay official information about the process.

Using digital and print media, the projects take varied forms for different demographics.

- **High School Voter Initiative** provides voter information cards to high school seniors in the eight Indiana County School districts. (See the article “High School Classes...” below.)
- **Bookmarks for students at IUP** provide information about registering, finding their official polling places, and where to find official information about candidates.

• **Digital advertising** through the Student Coop Association (SCA) at IUP will promote voting with assurance that Indiana County conducts safe and secure elections. In September and October 2024, ads will appear in the electronic campus newsletter (*The Penn*), on large screens in the student union building, on exercise equipment screens, and on SCA social media accounts.

• **Front page ads in four issues of the Shopper’s Guide** tabloid leading up to the general election of 2024 will promote the security of elections in Indiana County and encourage citizens to register and vote.

The goal of these voter information projects is to reach between 15,000 and 24,000 Indiana County residents to suggest actions they can take to help protect democracy, and to promote the website www.Vote411.org. The award of \$1,080 covers most of the costs of these projects.

High School Classes of 2024 Prepare to Vote

by Anne Simmons

On March 28, past president Anne Simmons along with Joyce Rizzo (Public Policy), and Sue Welsh (CACE) traveled to seven Indiana County senior high schools to deliver materials for participation in the Pennsylvania Governor’s Civic Engagement Award program. The program recognizes the efforts of high school students to inform and engage their fellow students about the voting process and to encourage volunteers to serve as poll workers. The Indiana League’s support for the program is in its fourth year.

Materials were delivered to principals at Marion Center, Purchase Line, Penns Manor, United, River Valley, Homer Center, Indiana, and (by mail) Apollo Ridge. LWVIC provided “voter cards” for each senior and a link to additional materials needed to host a voter registration event: <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Pages/Governor’s-Civic-Engagement-Award.aspx>.

Students who participate in the voting process while in high school often become “super voters.” A super voter is someone who votes in every



Anne Simmons and Joyce Rizzo delivering voter cards election once they become eligible to vote, including primary and general elections. Super voters vote in local, state, and national elections.

Since 2018, three Indiana County high schools have received “Gold Level School Awards” from the governor of Pennsylvania for their voter registration initiatives: Purchase Line (2018, 2019, 2022), United (2021), and Indiana Area (2023). The award is presented by the Pennsylvania departments of State and Education.

Bipartisan HB1776 Proposes State Constitutional Amendment for Independent Redistricting Commission

by Joyce Rizzo

On Wednesday, April 10, Representative Steve Samuelson, a Democrat from Northampton County, and Representative Mark Gillen, a Republican from Berks County, formally introduced House Bill 1776 (HB1776) at the Capitol in Harrisburg. HB1776 is a bill to amend the PA Constitution, creating an independent redistricting commission to draw voting districts. The proposed legislation includes ideas from past redistricting reform efforts but also contains new proposals that reflect best practices from other states and lessons learned from previous efforts.

The key provisions from the bill are:

- **An 11-member commission** that is reasonably representative of PA's diversity and is independent from legislative influence in the selection of members.
- **An emphasis on a transparent public process** which includes hearings before and after voting district maps are drawn, and an on-line platform where PA citizens have access to all data and information used in redistricting.



- **Clearly prioritized, measurable standards** used in drawing the maps including defined limits on population deviation and attention to compactness, contiguity, communities of interest and geographic boundaries.

The 2021 redistricting following the 2020 Census was an improvement over past decades but the process remained in the hands of partisan politicians.

HB1776 reduces the influence of legislators who want to choose their voters and makes it possible for PA citizens to choose the men and women they want to represent them in Washington and in Harrisburg.

The League of Women Voters of PA strongly supports HB1776. No matter what issues are important to you, fair voting districts are crucial to obtaining the good governance that you want. Go to www.fairdistrictspa.com to learn more and to sign the petition in support of redistricting reform.

LWVIC Supports Governor's Election Threat Task Force

LWVIC was contacted by the Indiana Gazette to comment on Governor Shapiro's Election Threat Task Force. Joyce Rizzo submitted the following response on behalf of the League, and LWVIC was quoted (among others) in a Gazette article by Patrick Cloonan, which was published in the March 23-24 edition.

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County (LWVIC) is pleased with Governor Shapiro's Election Threat Task Force because it is an attempt to be proactive in preparing for possible threats to a fair and secure election. Historically, Pennsylvania has been a swing state with very close election results and a close election is again expected in the Fall. There were many challenges to the 2020 election and it is likely



www.vote.pa.gov/About-Elections/Pages/Election-Security.aspx

they will happen again and so it is vitally important for all organizations who have a stake in a free and fair 2024 election to communicate with each other and share information. The participants on the Task Force include county commissioners and elections officials who are the front lines of any election. Also on the Task Force are IT experts who can be on the lookout for any digital threat and law enforcement personnel to keep voters safe and to deal with intimidation.

Glaciers Are Melting World Wide!

by Cindy Rogers

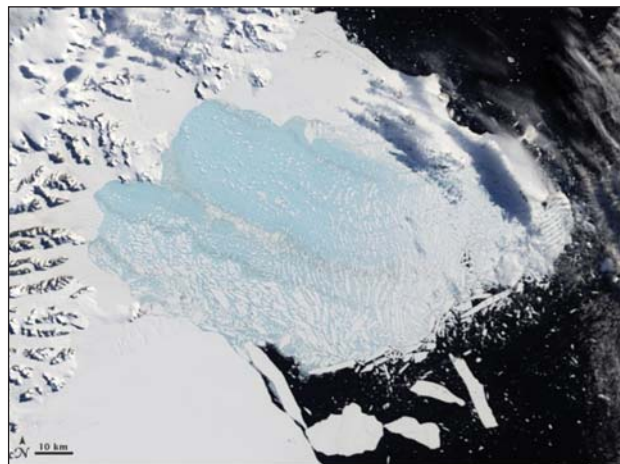
Melting glaciers are a concern world wide. In the Olympic National Park in Washington, west of Seattle, the ice has shrunk over 45 percent and is projected to be gone by the 2070s. When I was in Antarctica in 2019, our boat cruised by the Larsen Ice shelf, which had broken off and was melting. They project that if all the glaciers in the West Antarctic Ice Sheet were to melt into the ocean, sea level could increase by over 15 feet. That is a pretty scary thought.

Glacial melting in places like Antarctica and Greenland can slow ocean currents and cause sea levels to rise, which would change ocean circulation affecting worldwide climate. If the ice covering all our glaciers around the world were to melt, it is projected that sea level could rise over 200 feet. That would definitely affect our coastal cities with flooding—cities like Miami, Seattle, Annapolis, and many others in the next 30 years.

The National Parks Magazine offers an online interactive map about recognizing the issue, remembering the glaciers through an art project called Terminus at:

<https://www.nps.gov/olymp/terminus.htm#terminus-storymap>.

NASA satellite image (2.23.2002) of the collapse of the Larsen Ice Shelf. An area (light blue) the size of Rhode Island broke off that winter, sending melting ice into the ocean.



This project is an effort to educate the public about the effects of climate change and encourage people to do something. That means making changes in what and how you eat, travel, and what you do at home. Don't despair, there are things you can do. The article encourages you to have conversations about climate change and the article offers many things you can do through the following National Parks link:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/athome.htm>

Plant Your Own Climate Victory Garden

by Cindy Rogers



I recently read an article in the magazine *Green American* where they recommended planting a Climate Victory Garden this year. You may have noticed timing and weather patterns have changed for planting different things outside due to climate change. You can get information from *The Old Farmers Almanac* or on line at www.almanac.com/gardening/planning-calendar as to planting times for various crops and lots of

other valuable gardening information. If you do plant a climate victory garden this year, Green America asks that you register your garden at www.greenamerica.org/climate-victory-gardens. If you do register your garden, you will see thousands of others who have registered their gardens and how these gardens are sequestering tons of carbon per year from going into the atmosphere. Your garden can be part of the climate solution to help mitigate climate changes. Green America also offers webinars and resources about gardening and related topics at www.greenamerica.org/webinars. So, start your garden, enjoy the produce you get, save money, know you are doing something to help climate change, and appreciate your garden!

Local League Members Attend CRSP Summit

by Ellen Chinn

The Climate and Rural Systems Partnership (CRSP) is a collaborative research project funded by the National Science Foundation and administered through the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH) to brainstorm ways to start conversations about human-caused climate change, especially in communities where it feels politically or socially unsafe, including rural and underserved communities. Over the past four years CMNH, together with the University of Pittsburgh, have engaged community partners across the region to improve communication and methodologies to effectively address climate change issues among different audiences.

<https://carnegiemnh.org/educator/crsp>

Cindy Rogers and Ellen Chinn from the LWVIC Environmental Issues Committee and Allison Smith, Conservation Coordinator and Ameri-Corps volunteer with the Indiana County Conservation District, attended a two-day Summit at CMNH encompassing a wide range of topics and methodologies including Visioning, Climate Resiliency, Evidence-Based Climate Actions,

Climate Justice, Risk Management, Navigating Politics & Policy, and the new STEELS (Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability) standards for public educators. Activities included small- and large-group discussions and presentations, a tour of the new Climate Change signage at the museum and designing a STEELS-aligned student project. As the discussions and activities were underway, a large-format illustrator was present, diagramming in real time Visioning ideas the first day, and Navigating Politics & Policy the second day. Cindy, Ellen and Allison returned to Indiana with many new ideas and techniques for facilitating conversations about Climate Change and convincing individuals that even small acts can make a difference.

For those interested in learning more, CMNH has published *Climate Conversations Starter Guide*: https://carnegiemnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/starter-guide_02-03-22_accessible-2.pdf

Tanoma Wetlands Signs Spark Conversations About Climate Change

by Cindy Rogers

The LWV and Evergreen Conservancy recently helped to design and install signs at Tanoma Wetlands and the new Indiana County Conservation District Building on Hamill Rd. to encourage discussion about climate change. Please go walk around the paths and take a look at the signs.



Yesterday...Today...Tomorrow LWVPA Officers Help LWVIC Celebrate Its History



Officers of LWVPA braved February's icy roads and frigid weather to help LWVIC celebrate its history with a luncheon program at St. Andrews Village. Dr. Amy Widstrom, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, was the keynote speaker. Maria Delgado-Santana, president of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Board of Directors, gave opening remarks at the luncheon. They reviewed the growth and transformation of LWVPA as a non-partisan, grassroots organization that promotes civic engagement and works for a democracy where all citizens have the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate in government.

The program included a video accompanied by LWVIC members' replies to a graduate student's questions about the organization. View the video recording at: www.lwvindianacounty.org and also at: <https://vimeo.com/921755961>.



Lizanne Porter replies to a question from Adriana Guth Borowski, a graduate student at IUP.

Yesterday...Today...Tomorrow LWVIC Celebrates Its Founding and Work of 50 Years



Above, left: LWVIC founding members Susan McClure, Olga Platt, and Sandra Whitson. Right: LWVIC past presidents Aida Shotts, Vicki Stelma, Sherene Hess, and Beth Marshall

Center left: Susan Boser, LWVIC board member and director of social policy, LWVPA; State Rep. Jim Struzzi; Deanne Snavelly, administrative vice president, LWVIC; and Cindy Rogers, program vice president, LWVIC



Above: Maria Delgado-Santana, president of the board of directors, LWVPA; Sherene Hess, Indiana County commissioner; and Amy Widestrom, executive director, LWVPA

Right: Sandra Whitson and Ellen Chinn of LWVIC, in historic costume representing the 1970s when LWVIC was founded and 1920 when women won the right to vote

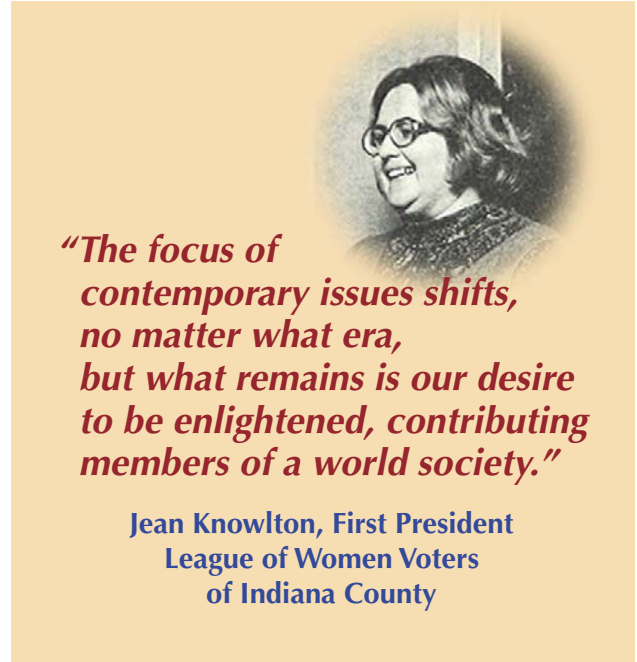


Yesterday...Today...Tomorrow LWVIC Continues to Empower Voters, Defend Democracy



Above: LWVIC member Nancy Westburg with her granddaughter, Adriana Guth Borowski, and board member Susan Boser, who prepared the program questions that Adriana asked about the League's history and mission.

Below: Sandra Whitson responds to Adriana's question about how the League got started.



Why and How to Avoid Using Single-Use Plastic

by Cindy Rogers

Single-use plastic is still on the rise and polluting everything from landfills and especially our oceans. We are actually ingesting micro plastic from the water we drink and the foods we eat. Recycling is an imperfect solution because so much cannot be recycled. So, here are a few things you can do to help reduce plastic use.

- **In the laundry:** Plastic containers you use to do your laundry can end up in landfills or in the ocean. There are alternatives to buying large plastic containers of laundry detergent, like laundry sheets and detergent powders that do not come in plastic containers. Unfortunately, washing clothes also causes microplastics to get into our water. You can help change that by buying non-plastic clothes like cotton or linen clothes or using microplastic-catching laundry balls that go in your washing machine and catch from 26% to 87% of micro plastics before they go into our waste water stream.

- **In the kitchen:** Don't store your food in plastic containers and never heat food in the microwave in plastic containers. Plastic can leach into your food when it is heated. Use plastic-free cleaning supplies to clean up. Keep your cleaning supplies in glass bottles.

- **DON'T use single use plastic water bottles!** They all contain nano-plastics that you ingest when you drink the water. Not only does the water in those bottles harm you, they end up in landfills where they take thousands of years to degrade. They account for so much ocean waste. Carry reusable water bottles. Bring your own coffee cups to get filled, sustainable straws, and reusable take-out containers to your local restaurants.

- **In the Bathroom:** Here you can find so much plastic! Switch from plastic bottle shampoo, conditioners, and body wash to good old-fashioned soap bars.

- **Business and legislators:** Encourage local business owners to use less plastic, and lobby legislators to recognize the plastic problem and

take appropriate action. Ask owners of your favorite restaurants to switch to more sustainable products like paper straws, sustainable take-out containers, and other non-plastic products. Ask your local leaders to ban single-use plastic. Learn about and support the Break Free from Plastic Act introduced in the House and Senate in 2023 and encourage your representatives to do the same.

YOUR choices will make a difference!

Information source for this article is Green America magazine, spring 2025.

Evergreen Conservancy and LWWIC Donate TREX Bench #11 to the Community

by Cindy Rogers

Our plastic-recycling efforts continue to place attractive benches in the county while helping to keep plastics out of water sources and landfills.

We collect soft plastic wraps and bags you can deposit in the collection bins at the YMCA and S&T Arena in White Twp. and the Borough Building in Indiana. For every 1000 pounds of plastic we send to the TREX Company, they return a bench made using recycled soft plastics.

Bench #11 was recently donated to the Chevy Chase Food Forest Community Garden.



Above: Cindy Rogers, Deb Dotts, Marie Olson, and Lizanne Porter represent Evergreen Conservancy, Chevy Chase Food Forest Community Garden, and LWWIC.

LWVIC Participates in Community-Based Activities

Youngsters Get a Taste of Voting

At Family Fun Fest this year, LWVIC invited children to vote for their favorite snack. The winners were popcorn at 43 votes, cereal at 26, pretzels at 24, and PBJ sandwiches at 16. Eighteen “other” write-ins included grapes, wings, pizza, cookies, and seaweed snacks. Thanks to Ellen Chinn, Lillian Clemons, Denise Dragich, Lizanne Porter, Joyce Rizzo, and Susan Welsh for planning the activities and helping the kids with voting, playing a game, and a craft activity.



Environmental Issues Committee at Earth Day Celebration

An Earth Day Celebration at the Indiana Theater featured a series of short films sponsored by Friends of White’s Woods. The films covered a variety of topics related to climate change. LWVIC was among several local organizations participating, including Indiana Community Garden and Indiana County Conservation District. Two hundred red oak trees were distributed, courtesy of One Million Trees.



Above, left: Ellen Chinn (in the green hat), Denise Dragich, and Lizanne Porter at Family Fun Fest. Right: Susan Welsh at the Earth Day Celebration with Theda Ray, co-president of FDWIC.

Upcoming Events

May 8 – Lobby Day with LWVPA
State Capitol, Harrisburg PA
See page 3 for details.

May 11/12 – Annual Yard Sale
Mack Park Picnic Pavilion,
next to the Playground
Donation and sale times on page 2

**May 18 – Annual Membership Meeting
and Potluck Salad Luncheon**
12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m.
UU Church, Indiana PA. Details on page 3

**June 1 – Nature Palooza: Children’s
Advisory Commission of Indiana County**
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Blue Spruce park

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF INDIANA COUNTY • BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Smith • Deanne Snavelly • Kay Snyder

Editor, *Voter*: Donna Cashdollar

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

The LWVIC hosts board meetings on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. using the Zoom platform. LWVIC members are welcome to participate. To request the Zoom invitation and meeting agenda, please send an email to:
lwwindianacounty@gmail.com.