

**LWVIC Board of
Directors, 2018-19**

Vicki Stelma
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Newsletter Editor
724-599-9225

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Opportunities to Make a Difference in Our Community Abound—Get Involved in 2019

If you have been looking for an opportunity to get more involved in our community and the League, or if you haven't yet thought about how you can contribute, now is the time to take that step.

At our annual meeting in May, we will be holding elections and are seeking members to take on leadership positions.

We are still without a **chair for the Voter Services committee**—the committee which is tasked with the core League work of empowering voters and defending our democracy through organizing registration events, publishing voter guides, and holding candidate events.

In addition, we are **currently seeking board members who can help to guide us in increasing our diversity, equity, and inclusion** as we approach the 100th anniversary of the League in 2020.

If you are interested in serving in any of these capacities or would simply like more information, please contact Vicki Stelma at lwvindianacounty@gmail.com.

Please don't miss this opportunity to become more involved.

Change in Membership Renewal Procedure

In order to align our local membership renewal process with both the LWVUS and LWVPA calendars, we changed when your membership renewal payment is due.

Membership renewal notices were sent out in January, and, once paid, are not due again until January 2020.

If you haven't already paid your dues, please forward your membership (\$55 for individuals, \$55 + \$27.50 for additional family members, and \$0 for students) to Sandy Whitson at 403 Elm Street, Indiana, PA 15701. If you have any questions about the status of your membership, please contact Sandy at swhitson8@comcast.net.

LWVIC & Fair Districts to Host Draw the Lines Event

Fair Districts Indiana County in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Indiana County is hosting a Draw the Lines (DTL) event on Saturday, April 6 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm in the Humanities & Social Sciences building (Room B11) on the IUP campus. This event is free and open to the public.

DTL is a rigorously nonpartisan organization with the goal of helping to foster a more public, transparent, accountable redistricting process that produces election maps voters can understand and trust.

Currently, in Pennsylvania and across the country, there is a push to end gerrymandering - the practice of dividing voting districts to give one party a majority in many districts while concentrating the voting strength of the other party into as few districts as possible. But every 10 years, voting districts are redrawn. The next time our voting districts will be redrawn will happen after the 2020 census.

Citizens are working now throughout the state to urge our legislators to pass legislation that would appoint an impartial, independent citizens commission to direct the redistricting process, and this DTL event will help to spread the word.

This event will engage and educate citizens about the redistricting process by providing attendees with the software and data they need to draw their own maps based on objective criteria like compactness as well as their own values and priorities. Attendees will also be encouraged to submit their maps to public mapping competitions which will be held by DTL twice a year through 2021. Cash prizes are given for the best maps drawn by high school and college students, as well as adult non-students.

DTL is an initiative to engage and educate citizens to prove to our elected officials that Pennsylvania citizens are ready, willing, and able to draw common sense political maps in a fair, transparent, and accountable process just like legislators should be able to do.

To learn more about this problem and its solution, please join the League and Fair Districts at this educational event.

Fair Districts is a nonpartisan, citizen-led, statewide coalition founded in part by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania working to create a process for redistricting that is transparent, impartial, and fair.

For more information about Fair Districts Indiana County, contact by email at fdpa.indiana@gmail.com or by visiting <https://www.fairdistrictspa.com/local-groups/indiana-county>. For more information about DTL visit drawthelinespa.org.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As the League nears its 100th anniversary, we have been taking a hard look at our organization so that we can continue to move forward and continue to help make democracy work in the future.

One strategy that LWVUS has identified is to increase diversity in our membership. For more information about this initiative, visit <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning>.

100 Years Strong

The League turns 100 years old in 2020, but we should start celebrating now because there is no other national volunteer organization in America that inspires such a great degree of commitment from its members. As a direct result of that commitment, the League of Women Voters has evolved from what it was in 1920, a mighty political experiment designed to help 20 million enfranchised women carry out their new responsibilities, to what it is today: a unique, nonpartisan organization that is a recognized force in molding political leaders, shaping public policy and promoting informed citizen participation at all levels of government.

For more information about the history of the League, and to continue to be inspired, visit <https://www.lwv.org/about-us/history>.

Announcements of Interest

The **Environmental Issues Committee**, chaired by Vera Bonnet, is currently working on learning more about plastics, their health and environmental impact, strategies for dealing with plastic disposal, and environmentally safe alternatives to plastic. **The development, writing, and publication of educational materials is in the works.** If you would like to join this effort, please contact Vera at verabonnet@gmail.com.

The **Child Advocacy Committee on Education** has a new chair, Sue Welsh, and continues to meet on a regular basis, so if you're interested in monitoring issues (including school safety), activities, and policies related to the welfare of children in Indiana County, please contact Sue at sbwelsh48@gmail.com to find out when the next meeting is taking place.

The LWVIC continues to partner with **Fair Districts, Indiana County**, and members recently attended a Southwest Region brainstorming event to learn more about past strategies for redistricting, to help develop and prioritize regional initiatives, and to learn about statewide goals for the 2019-2020 legislative session. Contact Vicki Stelma at lwvindianacounty@gmail.com if you would like to become involved in local efforts to end gerrymandering.

In a matter of weeks, the LWVIC will be rolling out a **new membership brochure**. Thank you to Donna Cashdollar who donated her expertise to create the brochure, and thank you to the membership committee of Ellen Chinn, Laurie LaFontaine, Anne Simmons, and Sandy Whitson for shepherding the brochure to completion. Please contact Sandy (swhitson8@comcast.net) if you know of anyone who would like to become a member of the League. **Wouldn't it be great to have 100 local members when we celebrate our 100th anniversary next year? If each one of us recruited just one new member, we would easily exceed that goal.**

At our annual meeting in May, we give out the **Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Award** to both an individual and a group. Laurie LaFontaine is currently chairing the award committee and is seeking nominations. Please contact her at trailsrme@hughes.net if you have a nomination or would like to join the committee.

A newsletter of the
League of Women Voters
of Indiana County,
Pennsylvania

1105 Water Street
Indiana, PA 15701

724-599-9225

lwvindianacounty@gmail.com



CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, March 18, 7:00 pm—Board Meeting, All Members Welcome, PASEC meeting room (1005 Oak Street, 2nd Floor) (Regular Board Meetings are held the third Monday of each month.)

Friday, March 22, 9:00 am—Legislative Breakfast with Representative Jim Struzzi, Eat N Park (**MEMBERS ONLY**)

Saturday, April 6, 11:00 am—2:00 pm—Draw the Lines event in partnership with Fair Districts Indiana, IUP Humanities & Social Sciences Building, Room B11

Monday, April 22—Last day to register to vote before the primary

Tuesday, May 14—Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot

Tuesday, May 21—Primary election day

Friday, June 21—Sunday, June 23—LWVPA Convention, Reading, PA

Know someone who
may be interested in
membership?

Let Membership
Chair Sandy Whitson
know at
swhitson8@comcast.
net, 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.