

VOTER

League of Women
Voters of Indiana
County, Pennsylvania



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

LWVIC Board of Directors, 2012-13

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Looking ahead to a new year in the League: The 2013-14 Program

“Program” is the heart and soul of the League. It is our basis of education and advocacy. Issues are based on matters of national, state or local concern and are chosen by members. This is what makes the League truly GRASSROOTS. Local programs are adopted annually with state and national programs reviewed prior to their respective conventions. LWVIC participated in the development of the LWV of Pennsylvania’s 2013-14 Program, which was approved at the convention in June. We build our “Annual Program” using established positions or enacting the consensus process to form new positions. Though sometimes lengthy and unwieldy, this process reinforces the League’s “one voice” advocacy.

Below is a summary of the activities which the League will undertake locally. **Join in if you are interested at all—contact any of the board members for more information.**

The **Voter Services Committee** will publish Voters’ Guides, coordinate nonpartisan voter registration events, hold candidates’ nights, and provide membership updates on legislation related to voting and elections.

The **Environmental Issues Committee** will continue to monitor new legislation and studies on the effects of drilling for unconventional natural gas in the region, with special emphasis on health effects, both to individuals living near drilling operations and to overall community health. The committee will also continue outreach and education about the Indiana County Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use and Natural Resources sections and will work with the county and other organizations to implement recommendations of the plan. (See article on page 2.)

The **Library Issues Committee** will monitor emerging issues and work with local libraries towards financial sustainability.

The **Child Advocacy Committee** will monitor emerging issues, activities, and policies related to welfare of children in Indiana County, especially early childhood education. The committee will also advocate for public policy based on established positions and promote annual events designed to educate and improve the quality of life for children.

The **Civic Participation Committee** will continue working to increase diversity in elected and appointed officials and raise awareness of the duties of elected officials to those considering public service.

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Environmental Issues Committee Tackling Comprehensive Plan

Submitted by Clarice Reber

The LWVIC Environmental Issues committee is committed to studying the new Indiana County Comprehensive Plan in an effort to determine how our local League can be involved in its implementation. We found that much of the land use part of the plan is based on the following "Smart Growth Principles."

Anyone who is interested in joining this committee can contact me at ckreber@verizon.net.

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
Compact Building Design	Control sprawl. It will reduce the need for more
Create range of housing opportunities and choices	Build for all citizens, e.g., low, middle, and high income, young and old. It will retain current people
Create walkable neighborhoods	Reduce car/truck use when possible; Make it easy
Encourage community and stakeholder	Open conversation reduces conflict and increases
Foster distinctive, attractive communities with strong sense of place	Keep what you like while increasing the tax base. Don't sacrifice the traditions and unique features of your municipality just for the sake of develop-
Make development decisions predictable,	Don't change the rules in the middle of the game.
Mix land uses	Place services and shopping places near homes,
Preserve open space, farmland, natural	Preserve the best parts of your municipality for
Provide a variety of transportation choices	Encourage as many types of transport as possible for people and business. Encourage business de-
Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities	Increase the value (your tax base) of current communities. Don't write them off. It will concentrate infrastructure needs.

Looking ahead to a new year in the League: The 2013-14 Program Continued from page 1

The **Observer Corps Committee** will encourage members to attend public meetings to let officials know that someone is watching to ensure that government agencies are fulfilling their responsibility to be transparent and accountable to the citizenry.

The **Agriculture Study Committee** will form a study committee, examine study materials, hold public meetings, and otherwise educate members and the public regarding an update to the LWV United States' agriculture position. (See article on page 3.)

LWVIC to Participate in Agriculture Update

At our annual meeting in May, the LWVIC members voted to participate in the LWVUS Agriculture Update. “The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.” (<http://www.lwv.org/content/about-agriculture-update-and-committee>).

Currently, the national committee is selecting and preparing study materials for use at the state and local levels. At our local level, we will be forming a study committee to review and examine these materials, hold public meetings, and generally become familiar with the issues so that we can hold a consensus meeting no later than April 1, 2014. The position of the LWVUS will then be announced in May 2014.

Anyone interested in serving on our Agriculture Study committee should contact Beth Marshall, who will serve as chair, at nextlife@comcast.net or 724-465-8974. She will begin organizing our local involvement later this summer, so keep your eyes on the Voter for more information.

Presentation on Shale Gas “Fracking” and Public Health to be Held

What do we know about the impact of shale gas hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and processing on our health? How might it affect vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and young children? What is the potential impact on the health of those working at drilling sites? Residents of Apollo and nearby areas will have a chance to learn more at the League of Women Voters of Indiana County’s informational evening, “Shale Gas Development and Public Health” at the Apollo Memorial Library in Apollo, PA on Thursday July 18, 2013 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. For directions and to RSVP, please contact the library: apollolibrary@hotmail.com, (724) 478-4214.

Members of the League of Women Voters’ Shale and Public Health Committee will present the latest research information about the impact of shale gas development on our health. The committee, which includes nurses, a physician, and other health professionals, has developed a study guide on this topic for publication. According to Indiana League president Sherene Hess, “The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania supports the maximum protection of public health and the environment in all aspects of shale natural gas production. This study on the health effects of gas drilling is one more step towards that goal.”

In addition to the general public, health professionals are encouraged to attend this event. The presentation will include information on best practices for physicians, as well as helpful advice for those who live near shale drilling or compression operations. This event is part of “The Straight Scoop on Shale” initiative funded by a Colcom Foundation grant to the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund.

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 LWWIC's activities.

Thursday, July 18, 6:30-8:30 pm—Shale Gas Development and Public Health Presentation, Apollo Memorial Library (See article on page 3)

Monday, August 12, 9:00 am—noon—Board Retreat,
(This is a tentative date and the location is still to be determined)

Tuesday, September 24—National Voter Registration Day

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.