

March 2014 610-644-5960 www./wvccpa.org

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A Message from our President

Susan Carty <u>sc51446@aol.com</u>

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!

While watching the news, absorbing the uneasy, unsettling and frightening realities of the continuing struggles across the globe for freedom, democracy, equality and human dignity, I am reminded that March is the month for acknowledging and celebrating Women's History. I prefer to remember.

REMEMBER THE LADIES!

"In a letter dated March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John Adams, urging him and the other members of the Continental Congress not to forget about the nation's women when fighting for America's independence from Great Britain."

The future First Lady wrote in part, "I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors."

That letter was written almost <u>150 years before</u> the 19th amendment was signed into law. And then, approximately 50 years before the 19th amendment became law, Susan B. Anthony became a hallmark of the non-violent campaign to continue the struggle for women's rights. Women were citizens without a voice in their own destiny. Tragically, we are watching citizens of entire countries fighting for their rights today.

This month, you will have the opportunity to meet Susan B., right here in Philadelphia! Really!

The Independence National Historical Park is the place for Remembering The Ladies every weekend in the month of March. Look at their website for all the details. I will be there!

http://www.nps.gov/inde/special-programs.htm



Meet Susan B. Anthony and hear about the uphill battles suffragists faced in gaining the right to vote, including her courageous acts of civil disobedience for women's rights in the shadow of Independence Hall in 1876. Explore with her, after 138 years, how far we've come in the struggle for equal rights in the United States in this special FREE Congress Hall program:

Battling for the Ballot

Date: Sunday, March 30, 2014

Time: 2 PM

Location: Congress Hall – enter at the Independence Square security

screening area at 5th and Chestnut Streets

Action Item: SB411 Reasons to Vote "NO"

1. The General Assembly would be violating the PA Constitution (Article 1, Section 27) if it enacts SB411 without first conducting an environmental impact assessment.

As the PA Supreme Court recognized, the General Assembly must "consider in advance of proceeding the environmental effect of any proposed action on the constitutionally protected features." The December 19 Supreme Court ruling does not allow some Pennsylvania citizens to be

deprived of clean water or to carry heavier environmental burdens than others. The liability exemption for some entities would contradict that ruling.

SB411: "Shall be immune from liability for any cost incurred by a third party, injury to a third party or damage suffered by a third party, including a downstream riparian landowner, which arises out of or occurs as a result of a reclamation project or a water pollution abatement project" SB411 2013 printer no. 431 (amended February 12, 2013)

2. SB411 is far reaching and requires comprehensive hydrogeological analysis and baseline data to look at the impacts of using AMD for Hydraulic Fracturing.

Both the Rand Report on Coal mine Drainage for Marcellus Natural Gas Extraction that was published at the request of the Marcellus Shale Commission in 2012 and the accompanying White Paper written by scientists from the University of Pittsburgh describe serious problems that can occur when combining some AMD with shale fracturing related fluid. These can include reducing the well permeability, precipitating iron hydroxide and/or bacteriological contamination of the well by using sulfate-reducing bacteria (SRB) or acid-producing bacteria (APB) that can lead to corrosion of the well casing. Both reports recommend that a study be undertaken before moving ahead.

3. Senate Bill 411 would amend the Environmental Good Samaritan Act (EGSA), as it changes definitions, adds new definitions and undermines the intent of the EGSA."

SB411 PN 1596 is substantially different from its previous versions SB411 PN431 (on the calendar February 2013 and tabled) and SB1346 from last session 2011-2012. (both attached for your convenience). Also, while the SUMMARY SENATE BILL 411 Printer's No. 431 states at the end, "Comment: This bill is the same as SB1346 which passed the Senate 10/15/12 (49-0) but did not receive consideration in the House. Phenice 3/5/13" This was in error and probably confusing to Senators or their staff who were not familiar with all the changes that had occurred since the October 15 vote.

4. No entities should be immune from our environmental laws. SB411 would exempt the oil and gas industry and other entities involved in transporting, storing or using AMD for a multitude of "beneficial uses" from compliance with 3 major PA laws: the Clean Streams Law, the Solid Waste Management Act and the Hazardous sites Cleanup Act. Granting immunity to the extraction industry and not to other industries is not fair business practice. A law giving immunity can be an incentive for substandard practices because the consequences of pollution are substantially minimized.

March Board Meeting – all members welcome and encouraged to bring a friend.

This is a great forum to introduce prospective members to our work!

Saturday, March 15

10 AM - noon

West Chester Borough Hall

401 East Gay St., West Chester PA

Program Planning Update

LWVCC program planning proposals were recently submitted, after January program planning luncheons and board discussion at the January board meeting.

Proposal One:

LWVCC recommends, as does LWVMA, a review and update of the LWVUS position and strategy regarding Campaign Finance in light of the impact of Supreme Court decisions in the last 40 years on the nation's campaign finance system.

LWVUS has made every effort in the past using traditional strategies to eliminate corruption incurred by current campaign finance system to no avail.

Buckley v. Valeo 1976 struck down several provisions of significant amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971; "This was the starting point for judicial analysis of the constitutionality of campaign finance restrictions" (Buckley v. Valeo); followed by FEC v. FEC (2008); McConnell v. Federal Election Commission (2010); Arizona Free Enterprise PAC v. Bennett (2011) restricting state authority culminating in the now famous Citizens United case.

LWVCC believes that it is necessary to find a new strategy that includes the presence at the table of Leagues of the Nation, in order to devise a better way to deal with the corruption incurred by campaign financing, protect our democracy and challenging the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution v. freedom of speech and the first amendment.

Proposal Two (counts at 50% of Proposal One):

LWVCC proposes that the Agriculture Update consensus process be extended into the 2014-2016 biennium. We are concerned that with the wide range of challenging topics and the pressures of limited time a significant number of leagues may simply opt out or return only partially complete responses. Others may feel forced to make hasty decisions without having truly absorbed the background material.

Our advocacy strength lies in our grass roots participation in the formation of positions and the Agriculture Policy Position is too important to shortchange.

We ask for clarification of the assertion that LWVUS protocol does not currently permit extensions. We are aware of the confusion which could arise with an extension when some leagues have completed the consensus and others may opt to postpone. However, we believe it is important to convey our dissatisfaction with trying to cope adequately in a very limited time frame with such a broad study, which includes new technologies, environmental concerns, federal financing, any one of which could be a study on its own.

As part of this extension, we recommend review of the study protocol itself with regard to timeliness of committee appointments, expertise of committee chairs tasked with facilitating the process, and appropriate support from national staff to expedite dissemination of materials.

As the program process is intended to identify priorities of concern to league membership at large, members should be given ample time and opportunity to understand the issues, and reach well-considered conclusions. Failure in this area ensures frustration in all directions.

Civil Liberties

Jean Goerth, Chair

jgoerth@parttimethecat.com

484-879-4024

Plan to join us on Thursday, March 27, 2014, 10AM to 12 noon in Room 234, West Chester Borough Building, Gay & Adams Sets., parking in rear. If available, please bring your latest copy of updated LWVMA study. **All LWVCC members are welcome.** Marg Perina, 610-827-7364



<u>Book Club</u>

The LWVCC Book Group will meet on **Thursday, March 6**, 10:30 – 12 at Second Reading Bookstore, Parkway Shopping Center, High St., West Chester. The book is "In the Balance" (Law and Politics on the Roberts Court) by Mark Tushnet. Contact Margaret Perina, 610-827-7364 for additional information.

Why did YOU join the League?

To new and experienced League members: please share your stories of "Why I Joined the League". Remember, your journey to League membership could serve as an inspiration for others to join us! Send your story to VOTER editor Toni Keg, akeg@verizon.net

<u>Membership</u>

Meryle Rothman, Chair

mgrothman@verizon.net

610-431-9986

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATE BY RECOGNIZING REMARKABLE WOMEN WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MAKING A BETTER SOCIETY FOR ALL OF US.

Stop by the E.O. Bull Center for the Arts at West Chester University. The League of Women Voters has donated Women's History Month posters which are on display in the lower level lobby.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

The League of Women Voters Nominating Committee will hold our meetings in March to discuss vacancies on our board and in our committees. Please send in your suggestions and names of League members that we can consider to fill these vacancies. I will be stepping down as Membership Chair in June, and I'd like to start training a new candidate right away. Moving up the League leadership ladder is fun, interesting and very rewarding.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome new member Juliann Novitsky to the Chester County chapter. Juliann writes: "I am looking forward to being an active member of the Chester County League of Women Voters. I'm a freshman at West Chester University studying economics and finance. I grew up in Downingtown, Pa." We are all looking forward to meeting Juliann and hope that she has the time to attend meetings, join a committee and learn as much as she can about the League of Women Voters. Young members like Juliann are our future. Our "seasoned" members are the role models all of our new members look to as mentors. Welcome them, encourage them, and teach them.

CONGRATULATIONS

To League member Molly Morrison, President of Natural Lands Trust, who will receive the Rebecca Lukens Award on March 19 in the Lukens National Historic District: http://www.dailylocal.com/general-news/20140212/long-time-open-space-advocate-to-be-honored

For event information and reservations, contact the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum at 610-384-9282 or www.steelmuseum.org.

JOIN or RENEW YOUR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MEMBERSHIP

http://lwvccpa.org/join-us/

LWVCC Annual Membership \$65 (make checks out to LWVCC or pay online)

(2nd and 3rd person in same household **\$32.50**)
Student Membership **\$20**

League Tax-Deductible Contributions - LWVCC Education Fund

(make checks out to LWVCC ED FUND)

(Amount of your choice. Donate IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF someone special.)

PAY ONLINE or MAIL YOUR CHECKS TO:

LWVCC 719 Price Street West Chester, PA 19382 mgrothman@verizon.net 610-431-9986

Thank you for including the following information with your checks. (For gift memberships – include name and address of recipient.)

Name				
Address			Zip Code	
Township		Email Address		
Telephone		Cell Phone		
New Membership	Renew	Gift Membership	Amount	

SEPR

Southeastern Pennsylvania presents:

Natural Gas Development Its Impact on Southeastern Pennsylvania

Saturday, March 22, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn

Fort Washington, PA (Exit 339 - PA Turnpike)

Forum Features:

Cynthia Dunn, CEO and President PennFUTURE

Andrew Levine, Environmental Law Partner, Stradley Ronan Attorneys at Law

Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Nicholas Walsh, Director of Strategic Planning and Development, Philadelphia Regional Port Authority

Invite others! Find out what might be in store for your community!

Forum cost, with lunch is \$30.00/person (Lemon Chicken or Pasta Primavera)

RSVP - Olivia Thorne (olivia.thorne@verizon.net) or call 610-566-5474



Fundraising

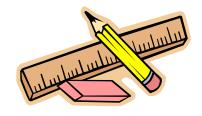
Cheryl Knoell, Chair

caknoell@gmail.com

610-430-1444

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

The LWVCC invites small businesses to post business cards on our website and newsletter. We will show them each month for a year for the nominal donation of \$50. For a quarter-page ad the fee is \$90; and for a half-page \$175. Cards can be mailed to LWVCC at 1442 Pottstown Pike, #238, West Chester 19380. We look forward to hearing from you.



Education Committee

Toni Keg <u>akeg@verizon.net</u>

2014-15 Education Budget Recap:

Early Education:

- Pre-K Counts \$97.3 million, increase of \$10 million, or 11.5 percent
- Head Start Supplemental Assistance level at \$39.2 million
- Early Intervention \$237.5 million, increase of \$841 thousand, or 0.4 percent

Basic Education:

- PA Assessment \$58.3 million, increase of \$4.6 million, or 8.6 percent
- Ready to Learn Block Grant encompasses the \$100 million Accountability Block Grant and adds \$241 million for a total of \$341 million
- Hybrid Learning (new line item) \$10 million
- Special Education Funding \$1.046 billion, increase of \$20 million, or 1.9 percent
- School Food Services \$32.5 million, increase of \$467 thousand, or 1.5 percent
- School Employees' Retirement \$1.112 billion, increase of \$105.3 million, or 10.5 percent
- Governor's Schools (new line item) \$350 thousand

Flat –funded at 2013-2014 levels:

- Information and Technology Improvement
- Basic Education Funding
- Basic Education Funding Enhancements
- Teacher Professional Development
- Career and Technical Education
- Authority Rentals and Sinking Fund Requirements
- Nonpublic and Charter School Pupil Transportation
- Education of Migrant Laborers' Children
- PA Charter Schools for the Deaf and Blind
- Special Education Approved Private Schools
- Services to Nonpublic Schools
- Textbooks, Materials and Equipment for Nonpublic Schools
- Safe School Initiative
- Community Education Councils
- All sectors of higher education

• PA Council on the Arts' administrative budget. However, *Grants to the Arts* receives \$8.6 million, increase of \$411 thousand, or five percent

Decreases:

- General Government Operations \$23.5 million, decrease of \$154 thousand, or 0.7 percent
- Youth Development Centers Education \$7.9 million, decrease of \$2.3 million, or 22.2 percent
- Mobile Science and Math Education Programs completely defunded from \$864 thousand
- Adult and Family Literacy \$11.7 million, decrease of \$400 thousand, or 3.3 percent
- Career and Technical Education Equipment Grants completely defunded from \$3 million
- Pupil Transportation \$546.7 million, decrease of \$709 thousand, or 0.1 percent
- Tuition for Orphans and Children Placed in Private Homes \$48.5 million, decrease of \$10.2 million, or 17.3 percent
- Payments in Lieu of Taxes \$163 thousand, decrease of \$34 thousand, or 17.3 percent
- School Employees' Social Security \$482.5 million, decrease of \$3.8 million, or 0.8 percent
- Job Training and Education Programs completely defunded from \$8.05 million

On February 10, the <u>Senate Appropriations Committee</u> held its budget hearing with the PA Department of Education, and on February 18, the <u>House Appropriations Committee</u> held its hearing with the Department.

Click <u>here</u> for charts and specifics on current budget proposals from the PA Department of Education.

Both House and Senate reconvene on March 10 and we are sure to hear numerous issues, such as pension reform, safe schools, charter/cyber reform, and the need for an equitable education funding formula debated in the remaining months before a budget is finalized by June 30.

Florida LWV Charter School research

Kudos to the <u>Florida League of Women Voters</u> for their commitment to come to consensus on the role of charter schools in Florida's education system.

Nineteen Leagues, representing 26 counties, are collecting data and meeting with school officials to gather information on Florida's charter schools in the following areas:

- Who do charter schools serve?
- Do charter academic programs differ from those in traditional schools?
- How are charters owned and managed?
- What types of facilities do charters use?

LWV Alachua County/Gainesville is leading the study. Research articles are posted at www.lwv-alachua.org.



Environmental/Conservation Issues & Actions

Alma Forsyth, Chair

jalkforsyth@verizon.net

610-388-1361

A PA Consultant Ecologist, professionally involved in wetlands protection for the past 40+ years, wrote this week: The most encouraging court decision I have seen lately is Chief Justice Castile's decision in Robertson Township v. PA, the oil and gas case in PA Supreme Court. PA Supreme Court also rejected the state's motion to reconsider. Commonwealth Court has not yet begun to consider the remand. The PA bar seems to think the Castile decision is well written and potentially very significant for environmental protection in the Commonwealth going forward. It expands standing for environmentalists as well as ability to appeal to Environmental Rights Amendment of 1971 to PA Constitution that has been buried for 40 years. Let's hope so.

EPA's Potential Changes to CWA (Clean Water Act) Protections Could Impact Marcellus Boom: Amid questions about the impacts of the Marcellus Shale boom on area wetlands, EPA is considering a new rule that might extend Clean Water Act protections to streams and wetlands not previously protected under the Act. The rule could "redraw the map" for oil and gas activities in the Marcellus Shale region, but also could have implications for mining, farming, and homebuilding industries.

See: http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2014/02/11/stories/1059994398

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE BILL 1576

This bill would undermine the ability of wildlife professionals to list any species in Pennsylvania as state threatened or state endangered. It would politicize and subject decisions to a lengthy review process involving those with no expertize in science or wildlife management. It would erode the Fish and Boat Commission's ability to designate wild trout streams. Pennsylvania has a long and proud tradition of allowing independent commissions to manage and protect birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. House Bill 1576 would end that tradition. **Contact your PA House Representative** to stop the attack on our wildlife and prevent their decline and extinction.

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK ALERT: Write a letter to DEP by March 8, 2014.

Columbia's Eastside Fracked Pipeline is under review for wetlands and stream impacts. Write a letter to tell them PA wetlands and streams need to be protected from proposed gas pipelines. More time is needed for public comment and review.

Columbia Gas Transmission (Columbia) proposes to construct two new pipelines to carry radioactive fracked methane gas from Marcellus shale to other markets that would cut across areas of the Delaware River Basin. Currently, Columbia's application for a Chapter 105 Water and Wetlands Obstruction Permit is out for public comment and under PADEP review.

The pipeline as proposed would cut a new 300 foot swath across 9.5 miles of Chester County's Piedmont region in PA to construct a 26-inch diameter pipeline (there is a second loop also proposed in Gloucester County, NJ). The Eastside Expansion pipeline would extend from the Eagle Compressor Station in West Vincent Township to the Downingtown Compressor Station in West Bradford Township, PA, disturbing over 128 acres of land and water along its path. The linear project is proposed to cross 38 wetlands and 55 water bodies. This means there is potential for tremendous damage and tree clearing. Many streams to be impacted are designated High Quality-Trout Stocked Fisheries. Pickering and Brandywine Creek, both of which feed public water supplies, would also be crossed by the gas line. Marsh Creek, Shamona Creek, and Beaver Creeks would be crossed as well. The public needs more than 30 days to review this application (700 pages long). To learn more about Columbia's proposed pipeline, visit DRN's on-going issues page at: http://bit.ly/DRN-columbiapipeline and/or to sign onto a group organization letter, contact faith@delawareriverkeeper.org



Mary Lou Dondero, Chair

610-692-3299

Voter Services

We are receiving responses from the high schools we contacted offering to register their eligible students. If you would like to help at a high school near you, please give me a call.

Dates on our spring calendar are March 14, the Naturalization Ceremony, and April 12, voter registration at Exton Square Mall. Help would be welcome at both these events.

2014 PA Elections: Important Dates

Last Day to circulate and file nomination petitions: March 11 First Day to circulate and file nomination papers: March 12

Last Day for withdrawal by candidates who filed nomination petitions:

March 26

Last day to register before primary: April 21

Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot: May 13

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted civilian absentee

ballots: May 16

PRIMARY: May 20

First Day to register after primary: May 21

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted military and overseas

absentee ballots, postmarked no later than May 19: May 27 Last day to circulate and file nomination papers: August 1

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated by nomination papers:

August 8

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated at the primary: August 11

Last day to register before November election: October 6 Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot: October 28

Last day for County Board of Election to receive voted civilian absentee

ballots: October 31

GENERAL ELECTION: November 4

First Day to REGISTER after November election: November 5

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted military and overseas absentee ballots, postmarked no later than November 3: November 12

ELECTRONIC AND HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTIONS

All sites are open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information, check www.chestercountyswa.org

SATURDAY, APRIL 12 CAT Pickering Campus, 1580 Charlestown Road, Phoenixville, PA

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 Octorara High School, 226 Highland Road, Atglen, PA *Proof of residency may be required*

SATURDAY, MAY 17 Owen J. Roberts Middle School, 981 Ridge Road, Pottstown, PA

FRIDAY, JUNE 20 Coatesville 9/10^t Grade Center, 1425 East Lincoln Highway, Coatesville, PA (Across from Dairy Queen)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 New Garden Township Maintenance Building, 8934 Gap Newport Road (Route 41), Landenberg, PA *Proof of residency may be required*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11 Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA



Website and Social Media

Deb Gallek debra@lwvccpa.org

Sign up for updates at our website: www.lwvccpa.org

And remember to connect with the League on Facebook: www.facebook.com/LWVofChesterCounty

Odds & Ends

On March 4, please tell the US Congress: Women's History deserves a home!



For details, visit the National Women's History Museum:

http://nwhm.org/support-nwhm/events/lobby-day/

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE LEAGUE?

Please take the time to visit: http://www.lwv.org/

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS National Website

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE

Our history, mission, positions and priorities.....and so much more!

Your business could be advertising HERE!

For a donation of \$50, we will advertise your business card each month for a year. A ¼ - page ad is \$90 and a ½ -page \$175. **Cards can be mailed to LWVCC at** 1442 Pottstown Pike, #238, West Chester 19380. We look forward to hearing from you. caknoell@gmail.com



A monthly Update from the Water Resources Education Network

a project of the League of Women Voters of PA - Citizen Education Fund

http://wren.palwv.org/wren/index.html

Thanks!

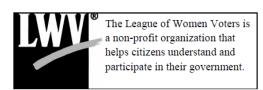
...to our committee chairs and members for the reports, summaries, announcements and comments submitted to the *VOTER*. We hope to hear from even more of you in the upcoming months. Please send your submissions and any/all comments and suggestions to *VOTER* Editor Toni Keg, akeg@verizon.net.

...to the individuals/businesses supporting the VOTER through monthly advertisements.

DISCLAIMER – The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates running for office or political parties. Any use of the League of Women Voters' name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Horrocks 194 Phillips Mill Rd. Cochranville, Pa. 19330

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

We want to be part of the solution to better government.