



# League of Women Voters of NYS **STATE VOTER**

May 2014



## From the State League Office

The state League office is still recovering from our Students Inside Albany Conference. As usual, it was a fun 4 days, but with lots of preparation and planning. Each year, we say that these students are the best yet - so you local Leagues must be getting even better at selecting the students. The students are bright, energetic and interested in issues. I realized that we had the correct students when one evening a group of students (during their free time) was sitting around discussing and debating current issues all on their own. I also want to thank our chaperones, Dare Thompson (LWVNYS VP and LWV of Mid-Hudson), Judie Gorenstein (LWVNYS Youth Director and LWV of Huntington), Betty Ann King and Betsy Metz (LWV of the North Country) and Sarah Podber of the state League staff. We couldn't have the program without great chaperones to ensure the students' safety.

The state office is also beginning its transition from our busy legislative agenda to election season activities. We continue to follow many legislative issues (see Sally's report below) while also beginning to draft and design the Voter Guide Part I. There will also be a Voter Guide Part II this year which will include candidate information for the statewide level races, eg, Governor, Attorney General and Comptroller, and also info on the two ballot proposals: constitutional amendment on redistricting and the proposed bond act to fund education technology. Vote 411 will also provide similar information on all candidates and ballot proposals. Have you offered to help out your local League with voter registrations, candidate forums or Vote 411 activities? The local Leagues cannot do these activities without member assistance. Call now to volunteer.

I am also very sad to report the passing of Sharon Lindsay, President of the Westchester ILO. Sharon served on the League's State Budget Committee for the last 3 years and was also a former Village Trustee and Deputy Mayor of Scarsdale. Sharon will be greatly missed by many friends and colleagues for her great wit, intelligence and her dedication to the League. I enjoyed working on League events with Sharon and will miss her friendship and support. To read more, click [here](#).

Thanks again for all that you do for the League. We are only strong with the continued support and assistance of our members.

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## QUICK LINKS

Have you "liked" the League on **Facebook**? [Click here](#).

Have you donated to the League or the League's Education Foundation? We need your support to maintain our strength, visibility and programs. Click on the **"DONATE"** buttons [here](#).

## Amazon Smile

The State League has just joined a new program to help raise funds. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the State League every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a 0.5% of the purchase price to the State League's Education Foundation. To shop at Amazon Smile, simply go to

[smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) instead of just amazon.com and search for the League of Women Voters of NYS as your selected charitable organization.

## ISSUES AND ADVOCACY

Sally Robinson, [robintwins@gmail.com](mailto:robintwins@gmail.com)

### Advocacy Efforts

The advocacy efforts of the League recently have been mostly within our coalitions. We continue to talk with our coalition partners on **campaign finance reform** although our optimism for some action before the end of the session is diminishing. The **Women's Equality** coalition is also continuing to apply pressure on the legislature to take action. Postcards were sent to each local League with the Council Kit; these postcards were to be distributed and sent to either the Senator or the regional coordinators of the Women's coalition in your area. Hold June 10 for an Albany Lobby Day on this issue - more information to come. We are also continuing to work with the coalition to oppose the **education investment tax credit proposal**; it is rumored that this proposal will be considered again before the end of the session. Finally, the League has been active on the issue of **additional family court judges** in the New York State Coalition for More Family Court Judges; **a lobby day on this issue will be held on June 11**. While the Judiciary Budget included a request for 20 more Family Court judges in New York State, the Legislature has to pass a bill to amend the Family Court Act to increase the number of judges, as well as approve the appropriation. The Governor then has to sign the budget as well as the bill for more judges. Watch for an action alert on any of these issues if the legislature does consider these bills.



### Redistricting

As we have mentioned before, the state League will be asking all local Leagues to help with passage of the redistricting amendment on the November ballot. A power point presentation will be available to all local Leagues; we ask all local Leagues to schedule a community forum in September or October to present the information. A palm card is also being designed with information on the amendment; this card will be made available to all local Leagues for voter registration drives and elsewhere.

## ENERGY, AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Beth Radow, Chair, [enradow@gmail.com](mailto:enradow@gmail.com)



The League submitted comments on the New York State Energy Planning Board's Draft 2014 New York State Energy Plan in May. The study on natural gas commissioned by the state League was attached to the comments. The comments and the study are posted on the state League website; click [here](#) for the study and [here](#) for the comments submitted to NYSERDA.

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY ACT

**Women's Equality Coalition Lobby Day**

**Tuesday, June 10, 2014**

**RSVP to [krich@nyclu.org](mailto:krich@nyclu.org)**

The Women's Equality Coalition (WEC) Steering Committee will be in Albany on June 10, 2014 to demand that the NYS Senate take action on the WEA!

We are sending the message loud and clear: we are here, we are united, and we aren't going away until WEA is passed!

The WEC Steering Committee will be meeting with Senate and Assembly leadership and everyone is encouraged to come and meet with their own elected representatives to ask them to bring WEA to the floor for a vote.

Plans are underway for a visibility event, so bring your signs! More details to come.

If you can join us, please RSVP to KaeLyn at [krich@nyclu.org](mailto:krich@nyclu.org) with your name, your organization's name, contact info, and how many people you will bring. Transportation and meals will be on your own. We may be able to arrange carpools from your region if several groups/people are attending. Questions and RSVP to KaeLyn Rich at [krich@nyclu.org](mailto:krich@nyclu.org).

## **MORE FAMILY COURT JUDGES RALLY**

### **Rally for More Family Court Judges June 11, 11:00, East Capital Park, Capital Steps**

We want to have at least 100 people to join us and rally at the Capitol on Wednesday June 11 at 11 AM for more Family Court judges. Please join the League and more than 100 other coalition members to support more judges for NYS Family Courts

For more information or to RSVP, email or call:

Denise Kronstadt [justice@moderncourts.org](mailto:justice@moderncourts.org) 845-664-0200  
or Stephanie Gendell [sgendell@cccnyc.org](mailto:sgendell@cccnyc.org) 212-673-1800

## **BIG LEAGUE RAFFLE WINNER**

We are pleased to announce that Bernice Baeumler from LWV of Buffalo/Niagara was the winner of the Big League Raffle. The winning ticket was drawn during the state League board meeting on May 21. We are still calculating the amount of the winning ticket, but it will be over \$2,000. Thanks to all the local Leagues and members who sold tickets. Local Leagues will be receiving their portion of the net profit, based on the number of tickets sold by their members, in the next week. LWV Buffalo/Niagara also sold the most number of tickets and will receive over \$167 of the profits in addition to the \$400 bonus for selling the winning ticket. Only one local League did not sell any tickets.



## **LEAGUE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Create a Lasting Legacy for the League**

The League has been around for almost 100 years, in part because of the vitality of our members and mission, and also because members who have gone before have remembered the League in their wills. Bequests are the most popular way donors make deferred gifts. By making a bequest to the League, you can maintain control of your assets during your lifetime and still support the League for the next generation of members. You can make a bequest that is a percentage of your estate or stipulate a specific dollar amount. To find out more about naming the League in your will, contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Coordinator, at (518) 465-4162 or via e-mail at [kate@lwvny.org](mailto:kate@lwvny.org).

# STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY CONFERENCE



The 2014 Students Inside Albany Conference was held May 18-21 in Albany. Sixty students from around New York State attended the 3 day conference. The students lobbied Assemblymembers Pat Fahey and Peter Lopez in role-playing exercises, heard from Casey Seiler and Jimmy Vielkind of the Albany media correspondents, Bob Freeman about FOIA and Open Meetings, Billy Easton of the Alliance for Quality Education and Jess Wisneski of Citizen Action. The highlight of the conference, as usual, is shadowing their Assemblymember on Monday afternoon and their Senator on Tuesday afternoon. We are one of a few, if not the only, program in which the students are actually on the floor of the Chambers during the legislative session. Photos have been posted on the state facebook page and a selection will be posted to the state website soon. Thanks to all of you who helped select the students - they were an outstanding and enjoyable group of high school students. And, thank you very much to the chaperones: Judie Gorenstein (LWVNYS Youth Director and LWV of Huntington), Dare Thompson (LWV Mid-Hudson), Betsy Metz (LWV of the North Country), Betty Ann King (LWV of the North Country), Sarah Podber of the state League staff, Laura Ladd Bierman of the state League staff.



## Local League News

The **LWV of NYC** has had a very busy month. Here are some of their accomplishments:

- On April 8th and May 9th we co-sponsored two Equal Pay Day rallies on the steps of City Hall. Our Co-Presidents spoke at both events, Mary Jenkins on April 8th and Mary Lou Urban on April 9th. See a few photos [here](#).
- May 7th Voter registration event at the Brooklyn College Volunteer Fair. See photos [here](#).
- May 2nd Ed Fund Award Luncheon honoring Debora Spar of Barnard College and The Nielsen Company was a great success! [Here](#) are some photos.
- May 31st Annual LWVNYC meeting featuring guest speaker Anthony Shorris, First Deputy Mayor of New York City.



Congratulations to...

- the **Nassau County ILO** for being selected as a finalist for the Strengthening Democracy Power: Our Voices, Our Votes Award. Winners will be announced at LWVUS Convention this week.
- Joanne Tobiesen of the **LWV of Schenectady County** and the Working Group on Girls. Both were recognized for their role in the Working Group on Girls by the Schenectady Foundation. Joanne received the Foundation's Community Hero Award and the Working Group on Girls received their Community Golden Award. The Working Group on Girls program helps Schenectady girls realize their potential and strengths. It has sustained itself for 10 years with the involvement of many volunteers and organizations.

It is annual meeting season with most of our local Leagues holding their meetings in May and June. Here are some highlights:

- The **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara** will be hosting their annual meeting in June. Editor of the Buffalo News, Mike Connelly, will speak and special awards will be presented to Lyle Toohey, Laura McDade, and Bill Nowak for their service to the League. They will also have a picnic in July at which members who attended the LWVUS Convention will update the membership on their experience.
- The **LWV of Albany County** will hold their annual meeting in June. Former NYS Assemblyman John "Jack" McEneny will speak about the restoration of the historic New York State Capitol. They will honor 50 Year Members Monique Roeth and Judith Wing.
- The **LWV of Chautauqua** held their meeting in May. They honored Paula Coats and Laura Sarek as Leaguers of the Year and County Executive Vince Horrigan spoke about current county issues and initiatives.
- The **LWV of White Plains** also held their annual meeting in May. They will have their annual pot-luck picnic in June.
- The **LWV of Schenectady County** will hold their annual meeting in early June. The Executive Director of the Schenectady Foundation, Robert Carreau, will speak and a raffle of restaurant gift cards will be held.
- Retired University at Albany professor Anthony Cresswell will speak on the recent McCutcheon v. FEC ruling and other Supreme Court decisions affecting money in politics at the **LWV of Saratoga County** annual meeting.
- The **LWV of Bedford/Lewisboro/North Salem** will hold their annual meeting in June. County Legislator Peter Harckham will speak.
- The **LWV of Rensselaer County** held their 75th annual meeting recently. Casey Seiler, State Editor, Albany Times Union and Co-Host of New York Now on WMHT was the speaker.





- Members of the **LWV of Utica/Rome** heard about "The Economic Transformation of the Mohawk Valley - Building a Nano-Cyber Corridor" at their annual meeting in May.
- The **LWV of Broome/Tioga Counties** annual meeting in May featured our own LWVNYS Executive Director, Laura Ladd Bierman, as speaker.
- David Burstein spoke at the **LWV of Scardale's** May 2014 Annual Meeting on how the millennial generation is shaping our world.
- The **LWV of Cortland County** will present the Alice Walker Award at their annual meeting in June. Students Inside Albany student representatives will speak and there will be a 40th anniversary tribute to the Aid to Victims of Violence.
- The **LWV of Geneva** will honor Alejandra Molina with the League's Agnes Slosson Lewis Award at its annual dinner in June. After the award presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to hear Iva Deutchman, professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith, speak on "Political Polarization: "Are More Women in Politics the Answer?"
- News12 Political Commentator & NY Times Bestselling Author, Lawrence Otis Graham, will speak about "Why Women & Minorities Still Lag Behind in a World of Powerful Men and How Demographics Will Change This" at the June meeting of the **LWV of Larchmont-Mamaroneck**.
- "Paying for Public Services in the city of Oneonta" was the topic of speakers at the **LWV of Oneonta** annual meeting in May.

There will be a Natural Gas Fracking Forum hosted by the **LWV of Chautauqua** in early June. It will take place at SUNY Fredonia and will consist of a panel of experts to discuss some of the most complex challenges about fracking.

The **LWV of White Plains** has been active with youth programs. They have been gearing up for presentations on their Vote18 program in local high schools and also held their Running and Winning program in April. This year, NYS Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins gave an inspiring talk to a group of girls from schools all over Westchester, emphasizing the important role women play in serving the public.



The **LWV of Somers** hosted an educational session on Hunger in Westchester County recently. Speaker Katy Coppinger from the Food Bank of Westchester discussed the difficulties of dealing with the government cuts in funding and the increased demand for food. The Farm Bill which has cut food stamps has been particularly harmful to efforts to feed the poor.

The **LWV of Albany County** recently participated in "Gardening in a Changing Climate." This program was sponsored by the **LWV of Saratoga Springs** Climate Change Team and presented information about how gardeners can help mitigate climate change.

The **LWV of Rochester** recently held a "Go-See" Tour of Noblehurst Farms, Inc. and the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station for members as a follow-up for the LWVUS Agricultural Study.

The **League of Women Voters of Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester** recently chose its first student to receive the 2014 Student Civic Achievement Award. This is the inaugural year of the award. It will be given annually to a high school student who lives in and attends a high school in the City of Rye, Villages of Rye Brook and Port Chester, or the Rye Neck section of the Town of Rye, in recognition of the student's overall contributions to his or her school and community in the areas of civic engagement, advocacy, leadership or voter education.

The **LWV of Somers** held their annual Book and Author luncheon fundraiser in early May. They had an impressive list of new authors for this popular event.

The **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara** held a Membership Social on April 30th. They welcomed new and prospective members and representatives from the Voter Registration, Term limits, and Local Government committees explained their committees' work. They developed a list for all league and potential members to get involved in short, medium or longer-term League efforts to help volunteers determine which League opportunities and projects would be right for their level of commitment.

On June 25, the **LWV of Saratoga Springs** will host a bus trip to FDR's home, Presidential Library and Museum, Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill, and lunch at the historic Beekman Arms in Rhinebeck. For more information, see [www.lwvsaratoga.org](http://www.lwvsaratoga.org).

The **LWV of New Castle** will be holding a Tapas and Sangria fundraiser in June. The event will be held at a local restaurant and will also feature a 50/50 raffle.

Congratulations to all new and continuing local League Board Members. We know 2014/2015 will be an exciting League year and we are happy to have you as leaders. And, thank you to those board members who are stepping down this year. Your leadership has accomplished so much in your communities.

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