



League of Women Voters of NYS STATE VOTER

May 2016



From the President

My husband, Doug, and I are heading off soon to help chaperone **Students Inside Albany** - our second time! - and I encourage all of you who are sending students to make sure you use the stories and pictures they bring back to promote the good work the League does. It is truly a rare and rich opportunity. Many of the students last year became interns for legislators or had other good follow-up experiences. Share that good news too.

We'll help at our end by encouraging the students to get pictures with key people they meet and to send them off to you. Laura and I will be taking pictures too and we'll be happy to share. The legislators often have a formal shot taken but may prefer a more informal one from us or a student for their newsletter. So **don't hesitate to show them pictures of them with "their" students and to thank them for their participation.**

By the way, Doug recently ran into a Congressional candidate and happened to mention the League, and he exclaimed, "Oh, I love the League" and then went on to explain that it was this program that first got him interested in politics quite a few years ago! This program really makes a difference.

Soon we'll be heading off to the **LWVUS Convention** and I look forward to seeing you there in the NY hospitality suite and elsewhere. Don't forget picture-taking and story-sharing there too. Try to capture moments that are startling, humorous, colorful or otherwise media-grabbing and share it in print, social media, wherever you can. Perhaps tweet and post news as it breaks. Let's not keep all the excitement and energy to ourselves.

Meanwhile I know your league is probably making fall plans. We hope you'll all save time in your fall schedule for a membership meeting on our **Legislative Procedures update** and in early 2017 for some serious discussion - with feedback to the state board - about the **Constitutional Convention**. These are not simple issues!

Of course, as we stressed at the regional meetings, include FUN in you summer and fall plans too. Has your League laughed lately? Of course it has, but do it more. It's free!

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Travel with the League



Click [here](#) for trips and itineraries.

1919 Society

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.

LWVUS Convention, June 16-19, 2016, Washington, DC

[Online registration](#) closes on June 6. After June 6 members will need to register on-site during Convention, beginning June 16 at noon. Early bird registration fee (\$395) applies only until May 31. A \$50 late fee will be added to registrations received June 1-June 6. If you know of anyone still needing to register, be sure to tell them about this late fee. Access the online registration form [here](#).

To see how many delegates your local League is entitled to, to register and more, go to the website at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2016>.

There is also a google group for discussion of the upcoming Convention; join the conversation here: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/join-conventionprogram-planning-google-group>

The Elections Continue



We are developing Vote 411 for the US Representative primaries being held in June. If you have a primary race in your area, encourage the candidates to respond and join Vote 411. Contact Jennifer (jennifer@lwvny.org) for details and info or go to www.vote411.org to get the information.

COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY 2016 CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARY - TUESDAY, JUNE 28th

- Register in person by Friday, June 3rd
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, June 3rd and received by June 8th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, June 27th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, June 21st
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, June 28th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, June 27th and received by Tuesday, July 5th

STATE AND LOCAL PRIMARY - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th

- Register in person by Friday, August 19th
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, August 19th and received by August 24th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, September 12th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, September 6th
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, September 13th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, September 12th and received by Tuesday, September 17th

GENERAL ELECTION-TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8th

- Register in person by Friday, October 14th
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, October 14th and received by October 19th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, November 7th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, November 1st
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, November 8th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, November 7th and received by Saturday, November 12th

VOTER SERVICES

Judie Gorenstein, JudieL728@aol.com

Following the April 19th presidential primary, local Leagues were asked to email us the problems that occurred in their areas. I wish to thank those Leagues who responded. Two Leagues did report that there had been no difficulties they were aware of in their counties, which was great news. The other Leagues wrote of numerous and varied problems which ranged from untrained or unconcerned poll workers, to inaccurate poll books where names of registered and enrolled voters did not appear, to disenfranchised voters who did not know about new YORK'S closed party system and either thought that because they always voted for a certain party, they were enrolled in that party or who believed because they were "independent " and unaffiliated that they could vote in the primary. One League reported a high voter turnout where some of their poll sites had to be kept open past 9 PM while another League reported low turnout. Most reported a high amount of affidavit ballots being filled out. The percentage of affidavit ballots that were ultimately counted ranged from 42% in Onondaga County to only 10% on Long Island. Reasons for the discrepancies are not known at this time.



However, we do know that there were problems with many people in New York feeling disenfranchised. We know that our Election Laws are archaic and need to be changed but that this will not happen this year. We also know there will be a congressional primary on June 28 (and are pleased several Leagues will be holding congressional primaries), a state primary in September and a general election on Nov.8th. At our May board meeting, we discussed what local Leagues can do now. We urge local Leagues to contact their Board of Elections and meet with them to discuss ways to improve voting, including educating poll workers as well as informing voters of dates and poll sites. We ask Leagues to see if their Board of Elections holds open meetings and if so to attend them. Leagues also need to explore new ways to educate voters about the Election Laws and rules as well as important dates. We all do voter registration drives and put information on our web sites and in our Voters. We need to write letters to editors of our local papers (only the President can submit one in the name of your League). We need to increase our use of social media. We need to think out of the box. We also need to continue to explore reasons for some of the problems and how they can be alleviated. Recently I learned from an Election Protection lawyer that some voters had not checked their party enrollment when they re-registered to change their name or address thinking that they were not changing their party. As a consequence, they were no longer enrolled and not allowed to vote in a primary. Therefore we now know to make sure when someone re-registers that they complete the form and check their party affiliation. Knowing what went wrong, will help us set things right. More people are engaged and aware of what occurred on Primary Day. This is the opportunity to educate them and turn out the vote.

Remember there is now a LWVNY Voter Service Goggle Group to discuss turning out the vote and successful candidate nights. Join us in the conversation. Contact JudieL728@aol.com .

ISSUES AND ADVOCACY

Sally Robinson, robinwins@gmail.com



Advocacy Training/Lobby Day: May 10 in Albany

On Tuesday May 10th, the League had its annual lobby day in Albany. We had a great turnout with over 30 members attending despite the chaos happening around the Capitol. A special thanks to all our issues specialist who presented. Thank you to Aimee Allaud, Barbara Bartoletti, Marian Bott, Anne Burton, Gladys Gifford, Helga Schroeter, and Barbara Thomas; excellent presentations from everyone! Several of our members from Schenectady also attended the Raise the Age press conference and lobbied with the group. We were very happy so many of you chose to partner with the Raise the Age coalition of this important piece of legislation. The rest of our members lobbied their legislators on voting and ethics reform the Issues Specialists below.orms, access to contraception, education, and the upcoming Constitutional Convention delegate selection process. All of the documents distributed at lobby day are now on the League website (click [here](#)); a link is also available from the homepage of the state website. Read updates and reports from Issue Specialists below.

Photo is Dan and Roberta Millert, LWV of Syracuse who met with Senator DeFrancisco on the floor of the Senate on Lobby Day.



ELECTION LAW ISSUES

Aimee Allaud, 85aimee@nycap.rr.com



Now that the budget has been passed, League members should be visiting their legislators to talk about our Election Law Reform Agenda 2016. Attendees at the May 10 Lobby Training Day were updated with two handouts (click [here](#) or see homepage of state website for link): a chart with the current status of bills we support and a brief narrative paper with virtually the same information. Notice that a new bill that would allow counties to replace printed poll books with electronic poll books (like an I-Pad) has been added to the Legislation agenda. There is greater interest in this measure now that the Senate Elections Chairperson, Fred Akshar, Repub, Senate District 52, is the Senate sponsor.

You will be sharing the meeting with the other League Legislative Agenda topics so I suggest that you prioritize the Election Reform topics as follows: 1) Electronic poll books, 2) allowing pre-registration of 16 and 17 yr. olds, 3) improving the ballot layout by re-designing it to be more "voter-friendly."

If you have time, be sure to mention the single June Primary - for 2017! There is interest in establishing the November election day as a school holiday. LWVNYS hasn't taken a position on this - ask your legislator what she thinks.

We also were a partner with the NY Voting Coalition and the Rockefeller Institute in a forum concerning Practical Modernization of Elections. Donetta Davidson, former Colorado Secretary of State and former Chair of the US Election Assistance Commission, and Matt Crane, Clerk and Recorder of Arapahoe County, CO, joined Peter Kosinski, Commissioner, NYS Board of Elections, and Todd Valentine, Co-Executive Director of NYS Board of Elections, to discuss election reform changes implemented in CO that resulted in an increase in electoral participation. Watch the [video](#) on the state League website homepage.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Barb Thomas, barb.lwv@nycap.rr.com

The League, working in coalition on women's issues, has had some notable successes this year: passing Paid Family Leave and increasing the minimum wage. Now we have a good chance to increase access to all types of birth control and thereby reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by passing the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (CCCA) this session. The CCCA (A.8135B, Cahill/ S.6013A, Bonacic) has already passed the Assembly and is sponsored by a member of the Republican majority in the Senate. Tell your Senator that you support this bill.



The CCCA would build upon existing requirements of the Affordable Care Act by requiring health insurance policies to cover the following services without co-payments: contraceptive education and counseling, voluntary sterilization procedures and related follow-up services, and all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and products; require dispensing 12 months of contraception; allow pharmacists to fill a non-patient-specific prescription for Emergency Contraception. It will reduce unintended pregnancies.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Gladys Gifford, schuford@earthlink.net

I was delighted to see so many Leaguers at the Advocacy Day in Albany, May 10! Thanks to all who made the effort to attend. Amtrak took me to Albany, and taxi to the Empire Plaza area; I hope that others of us can use Amtrak for our travel needs.

Below is the information that I shared on May 10, updated, re: NYS Budget - here's what we asked for; here's what we got:

- Our focus at the LWVNY was generally to increase funding for all modes of transportation, with special emphasis on public transit. The promise of the enacted budget is that all parts of the State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) received increased funding. However, the mechanisms for providing those funds are not clear; there is no direction to change the system so that revenue streams for STOA are growing and not stagnant. The Brennan/DiFrancisco bill which we supported would have changed the structure, but was not included in the budget process.
- Similarly, appropriations for capital projects were increased. A long-awaited 5-year capital plan for the NYSDOT was approved, to the tune of \$27 billion. This plan covers all transportation modes outside of the MTA. A nearly equal amount was approved for the MTA, covering the next five years. Transit systems and jurisdictions must apply for these funds. Net result for transit systems will be to free up revenues to help cover operating costs.
- Governor Cuomo and the Legislature are negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will define how and from what sources the funds will come. Ask legislators and the governor's office: Will that MOU be made available to the public?
- The LWVNY and allies are concerned about rural transit systems that were impacted by the state Department of Health (DOH) rulings about serving Medicaid clients. The enacted budget added \$4 million to the DOH budget.

Update re: Legislative contacts is as follows:

- I spoke with staff at Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi's office (May 18) who reported that the O'Mara/Brindisi bill (S5794/A8202) is likely to pass during this session. This bill, "to improve Interagency Coordinating Committee on Rural Public Transportation", will help rural transit systems cope with Federal regulations regarding Medicaid transportation funding.
- There is bi-partisan support for new bill, Rozic/Lanza A09872/S07608, to require the NYSDOT Commissioner to "develop and present to the governor and legislature a five-year capital plan, with defined projects, that is subject to public review prior to the passage of the state budget." There is no clear momentum for this bill before the end of the session; however, there are many co-sponsors who urge the process be completed.

Between now and early June, we ask the following:

- continue to speak with NYS legislators in support of the O-Mara/Brindisi bill (S5794/A8202)
- urge NYS legislators to support Rozic/Lanza A09872/S07608, so that we may all benefit from clear understanding of the NYSDOT's funding needs prior to debate on the budget.

Resources:

4-15-16 NYS Budget analysis (N. Lemmon) <http://blog.tstc.org/2016/04/07/new-york-state-budget-includes-big-wins-for-transportation-followed-by-big-question-marks/>
New York Public Transit Association https://nytransit.org/images/Budget_Analysis_4.4.16.fd.pdf

DEVELOPMENT

Kate Jankowski, Kate@lwvny.org

Father's Day Tribute

Many of us wear buttons saying, "League of Women Voters-Not for Women Only." In 1973, the League's charter was amended to allow male members and we have benefitted from that change ever since. Any study of the history of woman suffrage includes the men who stood alongside the suffragists and fought for woman to have an equal say in government. So, this Father's Day, we are giving you a chance to honor the inspiring men in your life. [Make a gift to the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation today \(EF\) and we will send a Father's Day card on your behalf to a man in your life who has inspired you.](#)

Whether it is your husband, father, son, or someone else who helps you celebrate your civic responsibility, you can honor them this Father's Day with a gift to the League. Let's let everyone know that the League is not for women only and that all of us must value our role in this democracy and work together to ensure an educated electorate!

Click [here](#) to make a gift by June 10th and we will send a Father's Day card on your behalf to the person or people you designate. Or, if you prefer to mail in your gift, simply send a check, made out to the LWVNYS EF, to us at 62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207. Enclose a brief note indicating that your gift is for the 2016 Father's Day Tribute and include the name and address of the person you'd like to honor with your gift. To guarantee that your card gets there by Father's Day, please make sure your gift arrives by Friday, June 10, 2016.

Join our Monthly Donors

We hear from more and more donors that they prefer to make regular, monthly contributions to the LWVNYS Education Foundation (EF). [When you make a monthly donation, you increase the impact of your gift by ensuring support we can plan on.](#) Your monthly donations to the EF allow us to create new programs for voter education as well as continue to provide key resources like vote411.org to the voters in our communities. When you become a monthly donor you receive one acknowledgement per year totaling your annual support, a copy of our annual report detailing all you do to help educate voters, and you will also be removed from our regular fundraising mailings. If you feel that you can make a monthly commitment to give \$5, \$10, or even \$25 per month, please click [here](#) or call Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, at (518) 465-4162.

"I give to the League of Women Voters Education Foundation because I believe in what the League does and for whom and what it stands. I give monthly because it allows me to give at a higher rate than I would be able to if I only gave one gift annually and I can easily budget my gift and calculate it at tax time. If everyone gave even \$10 per month, what the League could achieve would be even more amazing."-Janalyn Travis-Messer, LWV of Shelter Island



LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS



In April, members of the **League of Women Voters of Utica Rome** spoke to students at BOCESNew Visions. The students commented that "it was reassuring to hear someone inform us that the voter registration process is a lot easier than most of us thought". The League also held a voter registration drive at City Hall on the last day to pay property taxes (photo left).

LWV of Huntington is working with the **Nassau County ILO** to organize a primary debate for the 3rd Congressional District.

On April 11, 2016 members of the **Albany County League** met and held a reception at the County Courthouse for members of the Albany County Legislature. It was an opportunity for members of the Albany County League to meet their representatives and, in turn, for them to meet and know a little about the League. There are issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the coming months and, it is their hope that the League will have an opportunity for constructive input.

On April 19, twelve members of the **LWV of Rochester** helped the Monroe County Board of Elections open Presidential Primary absentee ballots at the Board of Elections Service Center. This is a fundraiser for the LWV-RMA, receiving money for each volunteer who opens ballots.

The **Buffalo/Niagara League** presented *Increasing the Minimum Wage is Good Economics*, Wednesday, April 27. Speakers were Dr. Fred Floss, Chair, Department of Economics & Finance, and Sam Magavern, Co-Director, Partnership for the Public Good (PPG). League members learned the facts about how a boost in the minimum wage would affect.

The **League of North East Westchester** moderated a candidate forum in early May. A forum was held May 3, for North Salem School Board Candidates. It was moderated by LWVNEW President Susan Auslander.



The **League of Women Voters of Brookhaven**, along with the Patchogue-Medford Library, is presenting an informative talk which will explain primaries, delegates, conventions, and the process by which presidential candidates are selected. The presentation will take place on Wednesday, May 25 / 7pm - 8:30pm at the Patchogue-Medford Library. Two Long Island professors will explain the details of our sometimes confusing process: Neil P. Buffett is Assistant Professor of History at Suffolk County Community College and holds several degrees in History and Political Science; and Nicholas P. Giordano is Professor for Political Science, also at S.C.C.C.



Running and Winning, one day program that encourages young women to go into politics was held April 14th. The program is run by the **LWV of Westchester County**. Young women from high schools in Westchester County participate in the program. They meet elected officials and participate in a campaign exercise.

The **League of Women Voters of New Castle** held their annual Luncheon on May 18th. Political Analyst and Professor at Iona College, Jeanne Zaino, PhD, was guest speaker. The topic was The State of the Race on the Eve of the General Election.

LWV of Mid Hudson held a forum about the Constitutional Convention on April 20. It featured speakers Paul O'Neill, Jerry Benjamin, and LWVNY President, Dare Thompson discussing the 2017 constitutional convention vote and providing context for the issue. Paul O'Neill spoke first, discussing the history of the New York State Constitution, Jerry Benjamin addressed the NYS constitutional convention process and its history and Dare Thompson, spoke about the League's position on the constitutional convention.

The **Saratoga League** will hold their 50th Annual Meeting on June 4th! Saratoga League member, Cliff Ammon, keynote speaker, will channel the words and writings of Thomas Paine, one of the founding fathers of the United States.

Paul LaFond, Commissioner of General Services for the City of Schenectady, and Jason Pelton, Groundwater Management Planner for Schenectady County, gave a well-attended talk on water infrastructure on April 14th, co-sponsored by the **LWV of Schenectady County** and ECOS.

Onondaga County Board Of Election Commissioners, Dustin Czarny (D) and Helen Kiggins Walsh (R), will be the speakers at the **LWV of Syracuse** Annual Meeting in June to discuss election reform issues that could increase voter participation.

A major goal of the **Chautauqua League's** Voter Service Committee is to increase voter turnout for elections. Pursuing this goal, Chautauqua League members have held a number of meetings with student groups and faculty at SUNY Fredonia, where few students vote, in an effort to change their perceptions about the value of voting

To help voters learn more about their choices school board, the **Larchmont-Mamaroneck League of Women Voters** held a candidates' forum moderated on LMC-TV by Alice Bloom.



May Highlights in US Women's History

- May 1, 1950 - Gwendolyn Brooks becomes the first African-American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, named Library of Congress's Consultant in Poetry (later called Poet Laureate) in 1985
- May 5, 1938 - Dr. Dorothy H. Andersen presents results of her medical research identifying the disease cystic fibrosis at a meeting of the American Pediatric Association
- May 6 - 12 Nurses Week
- May 8, 1914 - President Woodrow Wilson signs a Proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day
- May 10, 1872 - Victoria Woodhull is nominated as the first woman candidate for U.S. president for the Equal Rights Party
- May 12, 1968 - A 12-block Mother's Day march of "welfare mothers" is held in Washington, D.C., led by Coretta Scott King accompanied by Ethel Kennedy
- May 21, 1932 - Amelia Earhart Putnam becomes the first woman to complete a solo-transatlantic flight by flying 2,026 miles from Newfoundland to Ireland in just under 15 hours
- May 21, 1973 - Lynn Genesko, a swimmer, receives the first athletic scholarship awarded to a woman (University of Miami)
- May 29, 1977 - Janet Guthrie becomes the first woman to qualify for and complete the Indy 500 car race
- May 29, 1943 - "Rosie the Riveter" by Norman Rockwell appears on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post

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