

# State Board Updates: September 2016

## Local League To Do's (email: <a href="https://lwvny.org">lwvny.org</a> or call 518-465-4162)

- Schedule a membership meeting in the Fall, 2016, to consider the state update on legislative procedures more info below and packets being mailed later this summer.
- Complete and return Voter Service Survey by Nov. 30, 2016
- Complete and return the 2017 Legislative Agenda Survey by Dec. 1, 2016.
- Schedule a community forum/membership meeting in Jan or Feb, 2017, to present program on constitutional convention and upcoming ballot proposal (see below for more info)
- Mark your calendar for Lobby Day, April 25, 2017, in Albany.
- Mark your calendar for LWVNYS State Convention, June 9-11, 2017

## <u>President's Report: Dare Thompson, darethompson@gmail.com</u> LWVNYS Centennial Celebration Plans

As a member of the New York Women's Suffrage 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission, I was asked to introduce Kathy Hochul and Sen. Montgomery at a well-attended Commission kick-off in NYC on Women's Equality Day (August 26). It was more a photo op and an opportunity for speeches but no decisions were made or plans announced as to the operation of the Commission - and still there has no mention of how to get at that money authorized for the Commission! Perhaps because of my introduction several speakers mentioned the League, so I was really glad I agreed to do it.

Meanwhile, our **LWVNYS Centennial Committee** co-chairs Aimee Allaud, Barb Bartoletti, and Barb Thomas are moving forward as are the subcommittee chairs. The co-chairs and others are helping separate the wheat and chaff in our basement and we recently had a phone call for all of us so we could see where all the subcommittees are. There's too much detail to share but the good news is that we're well underway and there is fun to be had by all of you!

	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dates
November 6, 2017	100th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State
November 19, 2019	100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State
February 14, 2020	100th Anniversary of National League of Women Voters
August 26, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official certification of the ratification of the 19 <sup>th</sup> amendment by the US Secretary of State

### **Voter Services Report: Judie Gorenstein, JudieL728@aol.com**

Voter Services has been extremely busy this past month as Leagues prepare for 2016 Election. Over twenty members were on the Sept.7 teleconference where holding successful voter registration drives and candidate nights, as well as turning out the vote, was discussed. The importance of not only being, but being perceived, as nonpartisan was stressed and agreed upon. Everyone agreed that no one volunteering at a voter registration drive should be running for a political office, an elected public official affiliated with a political party or a board member or employee of a political party. Leagues shared places where they held or were holding their drives. Leagues are planning their candidate nights and we discussed recommended practices and policies. Leagues welcomed the idea of getting templates for invitation to candidate nights, press releases, and policy statements including policy on videotaping. (These templates were emailed to attendees on phone call as well as presidents and voter service chairs of local Leagues. There are also templates available for co-sponsoring a candidates night if Leagues are considering this). During the phone call, Leagues looked at ways to make their candidate nights more interesting and were pleased to hear how a red card could be used to give candidates time for a rebuttal. As for turning out the vote, some Leagues were using sign up sheets at voter registration drives so that people could get reminders by phone or email; others were using letters to the editors, press releases, and also PSAs. Not everything could be discussed; more situations and questions will arise and members were encouraged to join the lwvnyvoterservices google group. As of now, there are 37 members in this group. The conversation will continue and any League members can request to join.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, a nonpartisan community service action organization is reaching out to Leagues in Buffalo, Rochester, Westchester and Nassau and Suffolk Counties to partner at candidate nights and VR drives. They have partnered with NYC Leagues already. I was assured they are nonpartisan and never support or oppose a party. For Leagues interested in partnering with them, you can contact Keisha Alleyne at <a href="mailto:kgaillan@travelers.com">kgaillan@travelers.com</a> or 9176873143.

#### **Election Protection Hotline**

This year with their being talk of rigged elections, we should remember to let people know about Election Protection. The Election Protection hotlines, 866-OUR-VOTE (led by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law), 888-VE-Y-VOTA (led by NALEO Educational Fund) and 888-API-VOTE (led by APIAVote & Asian Americans Advancing Justice—AAJC) are nationwide, non-partisan toll-free voter assistance helplines available to anyone to promote. Voters can call the hotlines to receive answers to their questions and report problems to be addressed by trained Election Protection volunteers. More information is attached.

#### 2016 Voter Services Survey

The annual 2016 Voter Services Survey is attached. Please review it now and then complete and return it right after Election Day. Please boast about all the good work your local League performed during this very busy election year!

## <u>Issues and Advocacy: Sally Robinson, robintwins@gmail.com</u> Legislative Agenda

As in the last two years, we will create a Legislative Agenda booklet with a short description of many of the issues we're anticipating to work on during the next legislative session; the booklet will be available to all local Leagues in January. Attached please find the annual survey on legislative issues; please complete and return this survey by **December 1, 2016**. We still want to hear from the local

Leagues and our members what issues are most important to them. The responses help to ensure that our legislative activity is in line with our members' concerns.

#### **Lobby Day 2017**

Mark your calendars for Lobby Day 2017 on April 25 in Albany. We will hear from our issue specialists on "hot topics" and coordinate visits with your own legislators to lobby on issues.

## From the State League Office: Laura Ladd Bierman, laura@lwvny.org Legislative Procedures Update

Each local League President/Co-Presidents received the packet of info and update questions (one paper copy mailed and electronic to all) to complete consideration of an "update" to the state League position on Legislative Procedures. **Each local League should schedule a membership meeting in the fall to discuss the issues of this update**. The issues concern outside income by legislators and lengths of terms. Local League responses will be due **by December 15** so that, if a revised position is accepted, we can use this updated position to lobby during the 2017 legislative session.

#### **Voter Guide Part II**

The Voter Guide Part II will be available on Monday. We had hoped to have them on Friday, but the printer wasn't able to do that. We'll ship them out on Monday to all who ordered them. This Guide includes some general voting information, but also candidate information for the Presidential, and US Senate races candidates. It has been posted to our website.

### **Constitutional Convention Educational Program**

We continue to work with the Rockefeller Institute on their educational programs related to constitutional convention (con con). On Oct 20<sup>th</sup>, there will be public forum at Columbia Law School (NYC) on the issues of home rule; this topic will also be discussed at another public forum later in the year in Albany. Rockefeller experts have also presented issues at meetings of other organizations across the state. Also, Susan Arbetter of WCNY (PBS in Syracuse) has aired a 6 part series on the issues of con con. The schedule of airings is as follows (archived episodes are available at <a href="http://www.wcny.org/connect-ny/">http://www.wcny.org/connect-ny/</a>):

May 16, 2016

NY's Constitutional Convention: Halley's Comet of Change

**June 2016** 

Re-imagining New York: Environment

**July 2016** 

Re-imagining New York: Crime & Punishment

August 2016

Re-imagining New York: Ethics & Power

September 2016

Re-imagining New York: Education

October 2016

Con Con 2017: From Imagination to Reality?

Episodes of Connect:NY air Mondays at 9 p.m. on WCNY, and on local PBS stations across New York. The programs are available via streaming at wcny.org.

### **League Con Con Educational Program**

The state League is developing a power point presentation and briefing paper, with additional resources, to be distributed to all local Leagues in November. We are asking all local Leagues to schedule a full community forum in January or February, 2017, to present the materials or host a speaker on the topic. We will also include a form to be completed by the local League on the comments or discussion that follows the educational program. The state League Board will be using these comments as they discuss at their March meeting whether the state League should support, oppose or remain neutral on the ballot proposal of the constitutional convention (on the ballot in November 2017). Plan a meeting and watch for the materials.

### Special Exhibit and Panel Discussion on Original NYS Constitution

From Nov. 8-27, 2016, the Archives Partnership Trust Foundation has arranged for a special exhibit of the original NYS Constitution at the NYS Museum. The League has joined the Foundation in organizing a panel discussion of the history of the NYS Constitution, including its original creation and adoption – and changes since first ratified in 1777. Panelist include **Gerald Benjamin**, Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement and Director of the Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz, and **Peter Galie**, professor emeritus of political science at Canisius College in Buffalo, with Susan Arbetter, Director, News and Public Affairs at WCNY and Host of The Capitol Pressroom, moderating the discussion. Please advertise the event with the attached flyer – and view the original NYS Constitution at the Museum.

### **State Fair**

We had a successful and fun time at the State Fair from August 25-Sept 5. With over 35 volunteers from about 6 local Leagues, we accomplished the following:

- Total Voter Registration Forms: 485
- Total Absentee Applications: 77
- Total Organ Donor Half Sheets: 17

It turned out to be a lot more work than we expected, but Jennifer kept it all organized and the volunteers greatly appreciated all of the preparations and information we provided for them before and during the Fair. We also had membership info out (our NEW membership brochure) and 24 people signed up to receive more info from their local League; we've already shared their contact info with the appropriate Leagues and hope for new members! Thanks to all who helped with this registration drive.

#### **Membership Brochure**

The state League has created and printed a new Membership Brochure (attached). We will be sending 100 copies free to each local League with an order form to purchase more, if you wish. We also created a template for an insert that you can create and print – and then insert in the brochure to give people information and dues rates for your own local League. Watch for the new brochures in the mail!

#### **League Visibility**

I was recently interviewed on a local cable TV show, *The Jewish View*, to discuss the upcoming centennial celebration of women voting, this year's election cycle, the controversial Long Island

congressional race, voter fraud, the services and educational materials the League provides, alternatives to one day voting at a polling place and other trends in election law and voter turnout. Watch the video on: <a href="http://jbiztechvalley.com/view/laura-ladd-bierman-executive-director-League-of-women-voters-of-new-york-state/">http://jbiztechvalley.com/view/laura-ladd-bierman-executive-director-League-of-women-voters-of-new-york-state/</a>

## Program and Policy Director, Jennifer Wilson, jennifer@lwvny.org

**Vote 411** (<u>http://www.vote411.org/</u>)

This year we have 34 Leagues participating in Vote411. Several Leagues opted to not participate this year because they felt it wasn't as big a year for local races. We were able to post races for all three New York primaries with National covering the Presidential, State covering Congressional, and our local and State Leagues covering local and state races. For our September primary we posted more than 100 races including all New York Senate and Assembly primaries, and many local races including county legislators, county judges, city and town council primaries, and city court judge. The Presidential and US Senate races are now live on Vote411. We will be posting Congressional races on October 3rd. The local Leagues are posting their local races at different times. So far two Leagues have published their local and state races, more will follow in the coming weeks

### Development Director, Kate Jankowski, kate@lwvny.org

### Four Simple Steps to Great Donor Relationships

We all enjoy giving and receiving gifts. That quick smile we get when someone opens something they know we've carefully chosen for them, or the joy of using that perfect gift given by a loved one. And gifts received for our League are no different. We get a warm feeling knowing that someone values the League as much as we do and they get a good feeling knowing they are helping us make our important programs happen.

When we get gifts in person, it is easy to let the giver know we appreciate their thoughtfulness but how do we do that when we get a donation for the League online or in the mail? Here are four simple steps to help you do just that:

- 1. Keep track of your donors and their gifts—Whether you use a database, excel file, word document or even a list on paper, this step is crucial. You must keep track of what donors are doing for your League. Ideally, you will track their contact information, gift amount and date, and the program they support. This is the first step to not only thanking them appropriately but also keeping them in the loop when you put on programs or need to ask for support in the future.
- 2. Thank them right away—Donor research clearly shows that donors value receiving a thank you quickly. They want to know that you got their gift and that it will help you with your program. If you can, send out a note or make a call within 2-4 days of receiving a gift. Perhaps you have someone on your Board who can volunteer to be your "thank you" person or you can add this job to a Board position. You can have a letter prepared that you edit for your donor or do handwritten notes or even calls. Donors just want to know you got their gift and that it will make a difference.
- 3. Keep them appraised of the programs you are holding—People give to impact other people and make the world a better place. They like to see the results of their gifts. So, invite them to attend a voter registration program or naturalization ceremony. If you know they are interested in youth programs, ask them to come to the school with you when you conduct yours. Or, if they can't be there in person, send them a follow-up note from a program participant or Board

- member to let them know how everything went. We all like to see people use the gifts we gave them and this will make it easier the next time you need to ask them for support.
- 4. When you solicit again, personalize their letters—People want to be recognized so even if you solicit them in your annual dues mailing, taking the time to hand write a brief note on the letter can make a difference. It can be as simple as, "Thank you for your support last year. Hope you can help us again this year." Knowing that they helped you make change in your community will make it easier for them to give again.

We all have many choices when it comes to volunteering and making gifts and most of us have limited resources. You can stand out with your donors and let them see that they are impacting your community by thanking them quickly, showing them the results of their gifts and recognizing their past support when it comes time to ask again. Thanking donors does not have to be an onerous task. They are already predisposed to like us so it just takes a little bit of attention to keep them engaged and feeling like family.

If you would like specific suggestions for your League or have any questions about this, please contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, by email at <a href="mailto:kate@lwvny.org">kate@lwvny.org</a> or by phone at (518) 465-4162.