



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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**THE LEAGUE
 OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

State Board Updates: August 2017

If you are no longer President or on your local League board, please forward this to the appropriate board member – and be sure that your League has submitted the changes in your board to the state office.

Local League To Do’s (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Each local League has been asked to complete a survey from LWVUS by **Thursday, August 24 (TOMORROW)**– [click here](#) to take the survey and see more information at end of this email.
- Mark your calendar for **Saturday, Nov 4th, to be in Albany!** We are hosting an opening reception at the NYS Museum to kick-off their special exhibit on women’s suffrage history. Be sure to join us – it’ll be a great celebration! A flyer is attached that you can share to help promote the reception.
- Order the Voter Guide Part II **ASAP** – (order form attached)
- Schedule membership meeting before Feb. 15 to discuss state Update and Concurrence (see info below)
- Send a copy of your local League bylaws and current budget to the state League office (mail, email or fax is fine).

100th Anniversary Dates

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

Check out the resources on the state website to help plan your events: <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/womens-suffrage/index.html>.

President’s Report: Dare Thompson, darethompson@gmail.com

One of the most pleasant tasks of being state board president is visiting local Leagues all over this amazing state of ours. While the glow has not yet faded from my last visit - in this case, to the Schuyler County LWV in the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes - let me share all the things that League did to make it such a great occasion.

THEY HAD A CLEAR GOAL. They wanted to rejuvenate their League by charging up current members and getting some new ones.

THEY HAD A TEAM. Four members made up a coordinating committee and other members supported them.

THEY USED THEIR ASSETS. Located on one of the Finger Lakes, **Seneca Lake**, they used a fine **winery** that overlooked a huge flower garden, vineyards and the lake. They mined their old League lists and personal connections throughout the county to develop a targeted invitation list. Word-of-mouth helped too.

THEY PICKED THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME The Atwater winery they chose was not only beautiful, with great wines, but was physically accessible to all and had an owner who was delighted to work with them to make the occasion successful. He charged no fee either! They also figured out that the summer was better than the fall for such an event.

THEY MADE IT WELCOMING: It was FREE and the big spread of food was homemade and *really* good! Members and the winery owner and staff mingled and made people feel comfortable. They invited a state League person (me) to make it not just about them but still about the League. And they had many younger speakers and audience members - and men as well as women - who asked and answered good questions. It was both substantive and happy.

One of the organizers has already reported that three people there that night have become members (or rejoined) and three others who couldn't attend but got the invitation have signed up too. "And it went exactly the way we wanted it to," she said. Congratulations to all!

They won me over not just for the League but also for the whole area. The central town of Watkins Glen has a lot of charm, much of it not even connected with the famous race track, and the lake and the gorges and the rural country all around made me want to go back, rent a cottage, and spend a relaxing week there just staring at Seneca Lake. And I now have new friends at the Chamber, the winery, the WG Harbor Hotel and the WG mayor's office - and elsewhere in the county - to check in with. Thank you, Schuyler County!



Glenda Gephardt, president, speaking at left. Current Watkins Glen, Sam Schimizzi, is 2nd to the right from Glenda.

Voter Service Report, Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com

During the past year, it became evident that past LWNYS voter guide policy on CANDIDATE NIGHTS needed to be clarified and amended. Leagues were confused as to whether different kind of events, i.e., debates, forums, meet the candidate nights, etc. all needed to follow same rules. Many local leagues had questions and were confused as to the different rules for candidate nights for federal candidates vs other candidates. While we had stipulated that there could be no "Empty Chair" for federal candidates based on FEC and FCC regulations, we had only strongly recommended that all leagues do the same for other candidates. There were leagues that followed our recommendations and there were some who did not. Thus, there was not one format all leagues followed. Inconsistencies can only lead to confusion.

The LWV has always been recognized as being the experts in running candidate debates. Now with the polarized political climate, it is more important than ever that we continue to be the gold standard. The LWNYS board, after careful consideration of both the intent and wording, has voted unanimously to adopt these two policies.

LWNYS Policy on Voter Services: Candidate Events and Primaries (adopted July 2017)

It is extremely important that all leagues throughout New York state speak with one voice, have clear and consistent policies, and adhere to our nonpartisan policy. Therefore "open or empty" chair candidate meetings will not be allowed at any level of League for any elected position. Any League sponsored public event that invites a candidate for elected office will be considered a candidate meeting. A candidate meeting with only one candidate physically present is an "open or empty" chair candidate meeting.

Any league holding a candidate meeting for a party primary for elected office, must offer to hold a candidate meeting for any party that has a primary for that elected office. This will ensure that the League is not perceived as supporting or opposing a party.

Issues and Advocacy Report: Sally Robinson, robintwins@gmail.com

Constitutional Convention

A wealth of information on the ballot proposal question on whether to hold a constitutional convention, including articles in favor and against the proposal, is available on the state League website at <http://www.lwny.org/programs-studies/con-con-edu.html>. This page is often updated with new articles and one concerning the myth of losing public pensions has just been posted and has been attached to this email. Feel free to share part or all with your members and the public. It summarizes the issue very well.

State Update and Concurrence

At the State Convention, delegates approved two program items:

1. An update on the Charter School position adopted in 2006 to delete the following sentence. "In lieu of amendment of the Charter School Act to increase the total number of charters that could be granted, it supports retention of the current total (100) with amendment of the Charter School Act so that a charter could be reissued if a charter school ceased to function for any reason." The 100 charter school cap has been exceeded over the years and is no longer a relevant number.
2. A concurrence with a LWV of Utah's position on Death with Dignity.

Materials for each of these will be mailed and emailed to all local Leagues in September. The Board, at its July meeting, approved a Feb. 15 deadline date for return of the forms indicating your League's approval or rejection of this update and concurrence (form will be included in the packet of materials in Sept).

PLEASE SCHEDULE A TIME IN YOUR CALENDARS BEFORE FEBRUARY 15 TO CONSIDER THIS UPDATE AND THIS CONCURRENCE. The update should be easy and short and may be accomplished during another meeting. The Concurrence maybe require more discussion and take longer, but it is your decision as to how to present the materials (coming in Sept) and how to schedule this discussion.

Financing Education Specialist Report: Marian Bott

The State League would like to know whether your League either has an education committee (meaning one which focuses on public elementary and secondary schools) or any members with knowledge of the schools in your League's area who would serve as a resource corps via a list serve email communication method. Such a list serve group existed in connection with the Leagues' 2004-2006 statewide education study, but that the list needs updating. Please send your responses (names and email addresses) to the state League at lwny@lwny.org.

State Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, Laura@lwny.org

Local League Bylaws and Budgets

The state League would like to review every local League's bylaws and current budget. Please send a copy of each to the state office by snail mail, email, fax or whatever is easiest for you. Thanks.

New Staff at the State Office

I am pleased to report that we have 2 new staff members starting in September to fill the vacancies when Kate Jankowski, Development and Communications Coordinator, left in June and Katrina McEwan, Office Manager, is leaving at the end of August.

Celeste Steinke will be the new Development and Communications Coordinator and Cyndi Jacobson will be the new Office and Local League Coordinator. Photos and more info about their experiences will be coming shortly.

Voter Guide Part II – Ballot Proposals

The Voter Guide Part II is at the printer and should be available next week – it's posted on the state website now. Part II includes general election information, but also has descriptions and pros and cons of the 3 ballot proposals that will be on the ballot statewide in November. Please complete the attached order form to ensure that your League receives this Guides. As in the past, local Leagues who are participating in the organ donor registration project can obtain 300 Guides for free – and reduced cost for additional Guides. Get your order in now so you'll have a supply for National Voter Registration Day!

Women's Equality Day, Saturday, August 26th

Saturday, August 26th, is Women's Equality Day, the day the 19th Amendment was certified granting women the right to vote nationwide. The National Women's History Project in California has a wealth of resources to help commemorate this date. Consider using some of these resources to enhance your program or event. This easy to download brochure is a useful handout for your celebration. [Women's Equality Day Brochure](#). If you find you still need items for your programs, order **today using Priority Mail** and items will be delivered on Thursday, August 24th. [Equality Day Celebration Resources](#)

If you would like extra more copies of [How Women Won The Vote Gazette](#) it is now downloadable. In recognition of Equality Day, and following up on the "How Women Won the Vote" Gazette, the NWHP has posted an extensive new List of Resources on suffragists and the suffrage movement. [Additional Print & Online Woman Suffrage Resources](#)

For more info and resources, contact National Women's History Project, 730 Second Street #469, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, <http://www.nwhp.org> or (707) 636-2888

Legislative Action, Jennifer Wilson, Director of Program and Policy,

jennifer@lwny.org

Observer Corps

Do you have members, new or old, who are interested in monitoring your local governmental bodies? Creating an Observer Corps is a great way to get members involved, educate the public and ensure our government is working effectively. Lisa Scott, President of the Suffolk County ILO, recently had an article in the Times Beacon Record Newspaper about the League's active Observer Corps. Take a look (**article is attached**) and talk with your board about organizing one in your League.

Vote411

Campaign season is upon us! This year we have 30 local Leagues participating in the online voter guide, Vote 411. Contact Jennifer at Jennifer@lwny.org if you need any assistance in setting up your races, contacting candidates, or publicizing in your local media. Hopefully everyone's site is going live soon if you have a primary in your area. Jennifer will be posting the info, including pros and cons, of each of the 3 statewide ballot proposals which will appear on the ballot in November. Anyone looking at your Vote 411 site will automatically also see the info on the ballot proposals.

Publicize Vote 411 on your Facebook page, twitter, website and anywhere you can – Vote 411 is only strong if people are using it. We've attached **sample press release** templates that you can distribute to the media as soon as your Vote 411 site goes live – and **sample flyer** templates you can use to print off and have available at voter registration drives, candidate forums or League meetings. If your media doesn't cover it, write a letter to the editor telling people it's live and available.

LWVUS

Local League Surveys, From

In preparation for our 100th anniversary, the League (US) initiated a comprehensive organization transformation to support our ability to act nimbly, powerfully and effectively at the national, state, and local levels. Much work has taken place in the past year and now LWVUS is conducting an organizational assessment to inform the next steps of the transformation process.

We encourage you to [complete a survey](#) that is a critical element of that assessment.

A link to the survey, which will take less than **20 minutes** to complete, was sent last week to local League presidents. **Please note that one response per League should be submitted.** Survey responses are due by **Thursday, August 24** at 11pm ET/8 pm PT. Thanks to all who have already responded! If you have questions, please contact kmcfarland@lww.org.

Sign up for National Voter Registration Day, September 26, 2017

National Voter Registration Day is Tuesday, September 26! [Sign up your League as a partner in this incredible celebration of democracy.](#) All you need to do is agree to host a registration event in your community on 9/26, or otherwise publicize the importance of voter registration. Join thousands of organizations, elected officials, celebrities, and other partners—including hundreds of participating state and local Leagues—by signing up today! *The League has been the single largest on-the-ground partner for NVRD since 2012. Let's keep up the trend!*

LWVUS has created a resource kit to help plan celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the LWVUS in 2020. Feel free to download and utilize the kit in planning your activities. The Kit is available here:

<http://forum.lww.org/document/lww-100th-anniversary-toolkit>

Sign up to receive the weekly League Update from LWVUS President Chris Carson by emailing database@lww.org. It provides a wealth of info each week about LWVUS – do it now!