



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
 62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207  
 Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812  
 www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

**THE LEAGUE  
 OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
*of New York State*

**State Board Updates: February 2017**

**Local League To Do's (email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org) or call 518-465-4162)**

- **Schedule a community forum/membership meeting in Jan or Feb, 2017**, to present program on constitutional convention and upcoming ballot proposal (see website for materials); response form is attached and due **by March 10**
- Complete and return **Program Planning form** to state office **by March 3, 2017** (see info below)
- Mark your calendar for **Lobby Day, April 25, 2017**, in Albany.
- Mark your calendar for **LWVNY State Convention, June 9-11, 2017, in Liverpool, NY** (read more details below).

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dates**

November 6, 2017	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State
November 19, 2019	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State
February 14, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> 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

A new packet of resources for local Leagues to organize programs and events on women's suffrage history has been mailed to every local League – and a new page has been created on the state website with links to all the info, as well as a calendar to see what events are scheduled, and a blog on significant events and locations in women's history in NYS. Check it out at: <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/womens-suffrage/index.html>.

**President's Report: Dare Thompson, [darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com)**

I was one of over 1,000 people who turned out for a Rochester luncheon on February 15th honoring Susan B Anthony's birthday and was lucky enough to get this picture with the "star" (an impersonator, of course). I was also lucky enough to be wearing - just by chance - the red and black colors the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House is now featuring, so Susan and I matched.

The museum has never had a response like this before - and it follows their great success this past Election Day and the day after when many thousands of people lined up (some waiting for hours - even with kids in tow) to attach a



sticker to her grave saying they'd voted.

There is clearly a new and renewed appreciation of the critical role Anthony played in helping women win the vote and it has become deeply personal for many. "Susan B Inspires Me" is their new slogan, and keynote speaker Ann Dexter Gordon, a prominent Anthony scholar, reinforced that message.

As the living legacy of Anthony's (and ultimately Carrie Chapman Catt's) suffrage organization, the League rejoices in all the recognition she is getting. I enjoyed meeting many Rochester area League members in the crowd and I know I missed many others.

Since 1917 was the year NY women won the right to vote, the celebrating has begun across our state and as LWVNYS president, I serve on the state Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (chaired by Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul). I was also recently appointed to the LWVUS 100th Anniversary Committee. NY's head start in planning has provided valuable insights and materials to the national effort. "Wow!" was the reaction of fellow LWVUS committee members to our toolkit for local Leagues - so kudos to all of you who helped on it.



We are also proud of our new FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY pins which just arrived. When I wear one of these with my "Watch Out, I'm a Voter!" button, I get lots of good reactions from strangers. I highly recommend it. It's our time to shine!

### **League's State Convention Is Coming!**

The 57<sup>th</sup> State League Convention is scheduled for June 10-11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Express in Liverpool, NY (just off the Thruway near Syracuse). We will be sending out the registration kits next week. In the meantime, we need some help from our local Leagues and members.

### **Field Trip!**

To celebrate women achieving the right to vote in 1917 in NYS, the state League is organizing a field trip from Liverpool to Seneca Falls on Friday, June 9 (day before Convention actually begins). This is will a separate charge and everyone is welcome (not just convention attendees); tours of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home, Women's Hall of Fame and the Women's Rights National History Park (and Wesleyan Chapel), as well as dinner and a speaker at an historic restaurant in Seneca Falls, will be included. You will need to be in Liverpool by noon on Friday to join this trip. Watch for more information in the registration kit.

### **Program Planning**

In a grassroots organization, it is vital that all members have the opportunity to participate. The League "Program" is determined by members and consists of federal, state and local issues. National issues are adopted at LWVUS Convention, state issues at LWVNYS Convention and local issues at local Leagues' annual meetings. This process provides every member an opportunity to influence new areas of study and the issues that will direct League action during the 2017-2019 League years.

A timetable and instructions are attached, as well as a summary of our current positions. Local Leagues should review this info and **MUST** respond by **March 3, 2017 (deadline extended)**, to retain or delete

any positions, and to recommend updates, new studies or concurrences. **Changes in Program cannot be suggested for the first time at Convention.**

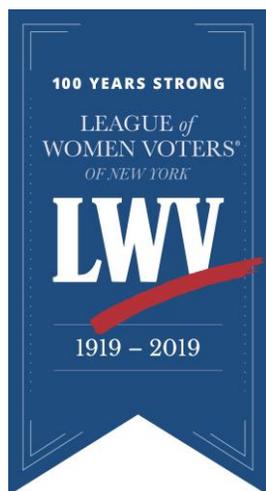
### **Workshops**

Workshops will be organized for Friday evening, June 9, and Saturday morning, June 10. Please email the state office ([Katrina@lwvny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwvny.org)) with specific topics you would like us to offer as a workshop during Convention. Local Leagues and members can also offer **caucuses or info sessions** to share their own concerns or successes and times will be available for these also.

### **State Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org)**

#### **Update on Centennial Subcommittees**

The State League's Centennial Subcommittees are incredibly busy and it's all so exciting. The Resource Kit and Resource List on women's suffrage history has been emailed to all local Leagues to create their own programs and celebrations. These documents have also been posted on the state website so all can share. Don't forget to complete the Local League Event form and return it to us so we can get your event advertised on our statewide calendar of events. Also, check out the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Blog highlighting African American suffragists during Black History Month.



LWVUS has created a new logo to be used during these next 4 years to celebrate the League's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have customized it for NYS. We have also created buttons (see Dare's report above) that are for sale from the state office.

Don't forget to register for the Conference at SUNY New Paltz Commemorating Women's Suffrage Centennial (April 21-22); the state League has also organized a lunch and tour at Val-Kill (Eleanor Roosevelt's home) with LWVUS Executive Director, Wylecia Wiggs Harris, speaking to the attendees. The registration form is attached.

In partnership with the NYS Archives Partnership Trust Foundation, the State League is hosting a Reception and Program at the NYS Museum on Saturday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the opening of a special exhibit on Women's History in NYS. A gavel used by Susan B. Anthony and owned by the state League will be part of the exhibit. A relative of Elizabeth Cady Stanton will be providing a short presentation about her great, great grandmother. Watch for registration info on this exciting program.

A book on the 100 years of LWVNYS is underway with assistance of Martha Kennedy and Phoebe Bender, Co-Chairs of this subcommittee. Diana Waite of Mount Ida Press, an Albany-based researcher and publisher has already begun exploration at Columbia University of the large collection of state League history, consisting of 40 linear feet of records in 68 boxes and 26 volumes, plus some oversized items. We hope that all local Leagues have also begun exploration of old boxes and files to uncover their own history.

### **Grassroots Director, Carol Mellor, [carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto:carolmellor140@gmail.com)**

Recognizing the upsurge in citizen interest in all things political by both members and others, we held a member conference call in late January to talk about active participation in our civic lives. Over sixty members expressed interest in participating in the call. Dare and I shared ideas from national, other

sources and our own experiences on how to engage our members and the newly energized electorate in political activism and action.

We followed up by sending ideas for things locals can do to presidents and membership chairs, and ideas for individual action to all members. Contact me ([carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto:carolmellor140@gmail.com)) if you'd like to receive a copy of what was emailed to participants.

We would like to arrange another call with new (er) members to welcome them, and address their questions and concerns. If you are interested in participating, please let me know at [carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto:carolmellor140@gmail.com)

**Legislative Action, Jennifer Wilson, Director of Program and Policy,**  
**[jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwvny.org)**

**Budget Testimony**

This year the League submitted and presented testimony at a total of three budget hearings. We submitted testimony on election law to the Joint Committee on Public Protection and education testimony to the Joint Committee on Education. We presented our testimony on ethics reforms to the Joint Committee on Local and General Government. The three testimonies that were completed are posted on our website. Click here for: [Election Law](#), [Education](#), and [Ethics Reforms](#).

**New Project with NYS Education Department and NYS Social Studies Supervisor Association**

The State League office has a very exciting project in the works with the State Education Department and the NYS Social Studies Supervisors Association (NYSSSA). The League was contacted by the two agencies during the fall of 2016 about a potential push to get civics back into classrooms. We are just in the beginning stages of this campaign but the goal of the project is to ensure that all seniors are registered to vote before they graduate from high school.

As a first step, the state League will be hosting an exhibit table at the NYSSSA convention in March. We will be distributing information on registering students to vote to all social studies teachers. We will also be handing out our membership brochures, Citizen Lobbyist, First Vote, SIA materials, and Constitutional Convention materials. We will be giving teachers contact information for Local League Presidents in their area. It is our hope that local Leagues will help these teachers in securing additional materials to get their students registered to vote as well as answer any questions they may have about holding voter drives or submitting completed voter registration forms.

In addition to attending the convention, we are working on a joint letter with NYSSA and SED to all School District Superintendents telling them about our goal to get all students registered and asking them to help us achieve this goal. In the long term, we hope to help SED get civics back into the schools and possibly do civics programs for the general community and new citizens. We ask you to help us with this new project – if you would prefer the Social Studies teachers contact someone other than your Local League President, please email Jennifer at [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org) with the contact's name, phone number, email address, and title (if applicable).

**Voter Services Report: Judie Gorenstein, [JudieL728@aol.com](mailto:JudieL728@aol.com)**

Although it is only February it is certainly not too early to review your league's written policy on candidate nights and if you do not have one, to do so. A thorough and clearly written policy is the foundation for a successful program. I am pleased to report that two leagues have already begun

preparing for candidate forums for 2017 primaries and asked questions regarding this topic. In the Road to the Voting Booth Part II page 5, it states “Leagues may hold candidate meetings for any party’s primary race and are not required to sponsor a meeting for all parties that are primarying a candidate for a particular office.” It goes on to say that “As long as the League follows League procedures, it cannot be construed as partisan.” However, with perception being so important, we are now strongly recommending that if a League does a primary for one party and the other party is also having a primary for that particular office, that the League should offer to do a second candidate meeting for the other party. This is only one of the changes we will be making as we revise this important guide. Before we do so, we are asking you, our local leagues, to give us suggestions on changes or additions you would like included. As you go over your policies this year and begin planning for your candidate meetings please let us know your ideas. What information might you like included that has not been? Are there areas that need further explanation? Would you like to have a conference call discussing this, just email your recommendations, or use the voter service google group to share your ideas? Our goal is to have the revisions done this summer.

March is a good time for your voter service committee to visit high schools and do voter registration drives. Although the schools are supposed to be doing voter registration, this is not always being done. Many of our leagues have programs either their voter service committees or their youth committees bring to the schools. Young people are showing concern and an interest in government. Now is the perfect time to reach out to them. A suggestion I have is to try to engage some students in the process of planning voter registration programs. This can make a big difference and lead to more effective programs.

This is also a good time to visit with your local Board of Elections. It is always a good idea to share with them what you have found they did well in the prior year as well as concerns you have. Find out how they are conducting their voter registration outreach program. Each local BOE is supposed to prepare an annual report for submission to their local legislative body as well as NYSBOE which is then supposed to review their action plan and assist them in development. Find out from your local BOE if this is happening. See if you can get their report. Explore ways your League and your BOE can work together to turn out the vote!

## **LWVUS**

### **Money in Politics Action Kit Now Available**

We’re pleased to announce a new [Money in Politics Action Kit](#), developed by LWVUS Board member Amy Hjerstedt and MIP co-chair Barbara Zia. The kit provides tools for both seasoned leaders and newcomers, League members and nonmembers alike, to take action related to reforming money in politics. Other issue-related toolkits will be considered in the future and we welcome your feedback.

### **LWVUS Board Sets Legislative Priorities for 2017**

The LWVUS Board set the following as the legislative priorities for 2017:

- Campaign for Making Democracy Work™ (MDW), with special emphasis on protecting voting rights.
- Watchdog: Respond strategically on issues with LWV positions when needed, but focus on the campaign for Making Democracy Work™.

The board recognizes that the next year will be full of the unexpected. The main focus for LWVUS should be our MDW Campaign, but other topics are expected to pop up that are important to the

LWV—including the Affordable Care Act (ACA), immigration and climate change. There will doubtless be other, unpredictable legislative issues. Advocacy staff, working with the president and advocacy chair, will respond to watchdog issues as time allows. The board can re-examine or re-align legislative priorities as the situation may dictate during this next year.

**2016-2018 Impact on Issues Now Available**

The League’s 2016-2018 guide to public policy positions is now [available for download HERE](#). Those Leagues who wish to receive a printed copy may make a purchase [on Amazon or download for Kindle](#). Thanks to Joyce Corrington, president of the LWV of Louisiana, for driving this partnership with Amazon to make print copies available to those Leagues who desire them without large printing, shipping and storage costs to our organization.