



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

JANUARY 2015

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748

lwvtompkins.org

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436

## SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Save this Date!**

T.C. Public Library

Entertainment by  
**THE ACCORDS**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope you had a good holiday with family and friends. Now that you are energized for the new year, we can get down to some League business.

The Nominating Committee may be contacting you asking you if you or someone you know might serve on the Board. We are looking for a President, VP-Programs, Secretary, and Director of Communications. Also, we will have a new Treasurer to finish Maria Eisner's term. Fortunately, Diane Kelleher, one of our Directors at Large has been working with Maria and will fill in for one year. We also would like to have at least two Directors at Large. We have found that these positions on the Board help new persons become acquainted with the Board's function and provide for an easy transition into an officer's position. If you know of someone you think would be an enthusiastic Board member, please contact Linda Duttweiler, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee (277-0006). I hope you will consider serving on the Board yourself.

The New York State Board has taken a stand on single-payer insurance. It encourages our state to move forward with this project. Our Healthcare Committee has been reviewing this possibility, contrasting it with the current *Affordable Care Act*. You can read the State's position statement on single-payer insurance on our website under "ABOUT LWV-TC/LWV-TC Membership Booklet/Health Care."

The Board has completed its review of our League's Bylaws and Policies. A few changes to the Bylaws were made to reflect our actual practices. We used the New York State Bylaws sample as a guide. The revised Bylaws will appear on our website in a short while. Also, the Board made some changes in our Policy Statements, again to reflect our current practices. The revised Policy Statements will also soon be on the website. They will most likely be on the website in two weeks for your review. The revised Bylaws will be presented for your vote at the Annual Membership Meeting in May.

The State Board has asked that each local League review the many positions that the

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League of Women Voters has developed over the years. Please go to our website for a summary of these positions. They appear in the *Membership Booklet*.

A more complete summary of the many positions the League has developed over time can be reviewed on the National League website under *Impact on Issues*. This publication provides the history of development of each League position. You will see that the League of Women Voters has developed a position for numerous topics that we as a local League hold in high regard: for example, affordable healthcare for all, the protection of our natural resources, pay equity, etc.

In your review, if you believe a position should be modified or deleted, or a new policy developed through League study, please contact me by phone or e-mail. The Board feels it is important for you, as a general member, to have input on positions the League stands for. Please contact me with your suggestions by February 28<sup>th</sup> so the Board can review them and then pass them on to the State Board for their March meeting. The State Board will review the suggested studies/positions and “recommended” items will be presented for consideration at the June 2015 New York State Convention.

Don’t hold back, thinking that what you as an individual say will not change things. Your voice can make a difference. The League of

Women Voters is a multi-layered organization and functions in that fashion when developing positions: the first step to getting anything accomplished starts with you.

As you may know, the *Women’s Equality Act* was not passed by the State Senate. The Assembly developed a bill that encompassed all ten points and the bill was passed. The Senate took a different route. They developed ten separate bills and passed only nine of the ten points. As you may have guessed, the tenth bill, which addressed women’s right to make individual reproductive health decisions (which includes the choice of having an abortion), did not pass. Therefore, we did not get any of the ten points passed into law. Because of this, we must put the Women’s Equality Agenda back to the New York State Legislature. We must have pay equity, elimination of sexual harassment, elimination of human trafficking, and protection for women who are victims of domestic violence to name a few of the ten points Governor Cuomo wrote in his Women’s Equality Plan. The Board is preparing a plan of action to focus on our campaign to get the ten points back to the Assembly and Senate.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we have always risen to a challenge and we will do that again in 2015. I look forward to seeing you at our Soup and Bread Luncheon in February.

Kay Sharp

#### LWV-TC CALENDAR—2014-2015

Feb 2	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
<b>Feb 28</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>noon</b>	<b>Soup and Bread Luncheon</b>	<b>T.C. Public Library</b>
Mar 2	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
<b>Mar 23</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>7:00 p m</b>	<b>Environmental Impacts Upon Health</b>	<b>T.C. Public Library</b>
Apr 6	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
<b>May 5</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Annual Meeting</b>	<b>TBA</b>

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources Committee is very excited about Gov. Cuomo's decision to ban fracking from New York State. It is our understanding that there was overwhelming evidence of health problems associated with fracking and that this was a major factor in the decision. There will be a rally in Albany on January 21 (the day of Gov. Cuomo's State of the State address). The rally will focus on thanking Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens (head of the DEC) and Doctor Zucker (Acting Commissioner of Health) for the decision, while also calling for major efforts to increase the use of clean, renewable energy resources. If you are interested in going contact Kay Wagner and she can give you the details.

Our committee is currently working with the Health Care Committee to plan our joint program in March. We are still discussing the precise focus and who the speakers will be, but the theme will be on connections between our environment and our health. There are, of course, numerous connections, so we are talking about doing one or more follow-up programs in the future. It has been fun and interesting working together, sharing our different points of view and sources of knowledge on the subject.

Our November program, *Responding to Climate Change Can't Wait: Two Examples*, was a big success. The speakers did a wonderful job. The audience was well informed and had numerous interesting questions. The focus was on storm water runoff and on problems affecting agriculture in light of the effects of climate change that we are currently seeing and will see more of in the near future.

If you are interested in being on our committee we would love to have you join us. Contact Kay Wagner (539-3322, cmw18@cornell.edu).

Kay Wagner

## MEMBERSHIP

*Informed and active citizens joining together to explore common problems and identify shared goals, can resolve the tough issues that confront our community, our nation, and our world.*

Thank you to all our new and returning members and "Friends of the League" for supporting the work of the League of Women Voters, at the national, state, and local level, through membership and contributions.

If you haven't had time to renew, please consider doing so before January 31st. This date was established by the national League for determining the number of active members used to determine the per member payment due to state and national and the number of delegates for the state and national conventions. Memberships not renewed by January 31st will become inactive and no longer receive action alerts or the *Bulletin*.

Kathleen Yen

## PROGRAM

The Board is planning something special to warm us up during these dark and cold winter days.

Come and Celebrate with your old and new League friends at our annual Soup and Bread Luncheon. We will gather at the Tompkins County Public Library, Borg Warner Room on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 1:30 p.m. Members of the Board will provide a meal based on home made soups and good bread.

We will recognize the achievements of our foremothers who led the struggle for Women's Suffrage, and enjoy the delightful 5 part harmony of the *The Accords*, a choral group featuring Jim Blake. Don't miss this fun event!

To assure your place at the table, call Flo Smith 273-6147 or email [fbarrthims@gmail.com](mailto:fbarrthims@gmail.com)

Florence B. Smith VP-Program

## NEW YORK—SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE BILL

Madeline Zevon, chair of the state League's *Committee on Health Care*, testified at one of a series of hearings seeking public comment on proposed legislation to establish a single-payer health care system for New York State. The major portion of her testimony was as follows:

“...

“Access to affordable, quality health care is pivotal in determining the quality of life for New Yorkers. The League has advocated on behalf of all New Yorkers for over 20 years on the issues of health care, and has lobbied and testified on numerous bills that safeguard public access to health. The League believes that affordable, quality health care should be available to all New York State residents and that health care policies should include equitable distribution of services and the efficient and economical delivery of care.

“First, I will focus on the issues of equity, and then address efficiency and cost control. Equitable distribution of services means that individuals should have access to a basic level of care regardless of income, age, health status, geographical location, or any other factor. As long as private health insurance corporations are the middleman between patients and providers, services will not be distributed in an equitable manner. Persons who are less likely to need care will have greater access to coverage, while those who are in need will go without.

”The *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) has gone far in mitigating some of the shortcomings of private-for-profit insurance, such as refusing coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions and imposing annual lifetime limits. What's happening now that the ACA is unfolding, there's a lot of cost shifting to the consumer with high deductibles and co-pays. Before the ACA was passed, there were 2.9 million New Yorkers uninsured. However, even when the plan is fully implemented according to the Urban Institute of New York, there will be

1.675 million New Yorkers still uninsured. The ACA is not a universal plan. The League opposes a strictly private market-based model of financing the health care system. We believe that the way to achieve substantial and lasting reductions in the cost of care is to adopt a universal single-payer system such as New York Health. Health care does not fit the market model. By consolidating responsibility and thus accountability for health care into a single-payer system, we will be better positioned to achieve quality health care for all.

“In a single-payer system of publicly financed, privately delivered health care for all New York State residents, citizens will decide the level of basic care. Under this system, the long-term health of each person is valued equally. If we opt to cover effective wellness and disease prevention programs now, we will spend less in later years. It will make more sense for us as a group to pay for regular dental care now in order to avoid more costly procedures later in life.

“Under the single-payer model, coverage for disease prevention and health promotion programs and services will also make good economic sense. Private health insurers are not motivated to achieve long-term benefits in health status, especially with the employer-based system. The pool of participants in a given plan is transient, individuals change plans as they change employers, and besides, it is all too easy to drop coverage if the costs get too high. The existing system is too shortsighted to make substantial commitment to prevention and wellness programs.

“The League supports the standardization of basic levels of service for publically funded health care programs as a step toward equity. Under the single-payer model, every New York resident would be eligible to enroll. There would be no premiums, deductibles, or co-payment. Coverage would be funded based on ability to pay through a progressively graduated state payroll tax. Federal funds now received for

Medicare, Medicaid, Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus would be combined with state revenue in a New York Health Trust Fund. The “local share” of Medicaid funding--a major burden on local property taxes--would be ended. It is projected that New York State would save \$20 billion by 2019 under a single-payer system according to the Urban Institute. All New Yorkers would be covered for all medically necessary services, including: primary preventive, specialists, hospital, mental health, reproductive health care, dental, vision, prescription drug, and medical supply costs - more comprehensive than commercial health plans.

“Over 2,000 New Yorkers die each year because they do not have adequate health insurance coverage according to Physicians for a National Health Program. After the ACA is fully

implemented, based on the number of additionally insured, the estimate would drop to about 1500 death per year. Here in New York we have the opportunity to lead the way in implementing cost-effective, universal health care, effectively making health care a right for all New Yorkers.

“Thank you for this opportunity to share our views with you.”

The full text of the “Gottfried bill” is at

<http://legiscan.com/NY/text/A05389/>

Information about how to support the bill is at

<http://www.nyhcampaign.org><http://www.nyhcampaign.org>

An excellent history of the LWVNY’s positions on Health Care is [available](#) on its website.

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2012-13

LWV NYS website

[www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)

LWV US website

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

LWV-Tompkins County

contact  
website

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59th—Towns of Ithaca, Newfield, Enfield, Ulysses, & City of Ithaca

## ASSEMBLYWOMAN

Barbara Lifton 518-455-5444; 607-277-8030 [www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Barbara-Lifton](http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Barbara-Lifton)

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