



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

MARCH 2015

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748

lwvtompkins.org

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436

HEALTHY WATER — HEALTHY PEOPLE WHAT'S IN OUR WATER?



**Monday, March 23,
7:00-8:30 PM
Borg Warner Room, TCPL
(more on page 2)**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone from the “frozen tundra.” I’m looking out my window at the snow falling as I write this message. I was recently in Southern California. The weather was cool and raining, so I didn’t get much sunshine there either.

Probably by now you know that we are looking for new Board members. The Nominating Committee has been calling everyone, hoping to get some volunteers. We still have a few vacancies to fill. Please consider serving the League in this capacity and contact Linda Duttweiler, Chair of the Committee, if you are willing to be on the Board.

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The Soup and Bread Luncheon was a huge success. It was great that so many of you came. We enjoyed *The Accords*, a singing group who entertained us with songs from the 50's and 60's. There were some fond memories for us all. We had fun just having the opportunity to talk with one another.

The Health Care and Natural Resources Committees have put together an exciting program for our March membership meeting. I hope to see you there.

For the past two years I have had the honor to represent you in the community and throughout the State. Our League has an excellent reputation made possible by you the members. It is a healthy League with many members who are active in civic duties such as voter registration and election poll workers. It is healthy with its membership writing letters to legislators advocating for important issues such as pay equity and lobbying against human trafficking. It is healthy with two vibrant committees seeing to it that the League membership is kept abreast of essential issues such as fracking and hazardous waste, and the quality of our water. It is healthy with members like you who are adamant about universal health care. We are a strong League and we will continue to be that way with members like you. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Kay Sharp, President

PROGRAM

Our Annual Soup and Bread Luncheon, at Tompkins County Public Library, Borg Warner Room on Saturday, February 28th was a wonderful and warm occasion.

For those who missed it, members of the Board provided three delicious pots of soup, wonderful bread and tasty extra's for our enjoyment. There were about 30 people, including new and familiar League friends and supporters who enjoyed the luncheon and conversation together. In addition we were entertained by the five-part harmony of *The Accords* led by Jim Blake. We took part by clapping and singing along with

MARCH PUBLIC PROGRAM

***HEALTHY WATER--HEALTHY PEOPLE:
WHAT'S IN OUR WATER***

Monday, March 23rd;
7:00 to 8:30 PM,

Borg Warner Room,
Tompkins County Public Library.

The featured speakers are:
DR. ADAM LAW, M.D. Internal Medicine and
Endocrinology, and
LIZ CAMERON, Director of Environmental
Health, Tompkins County Health Department

What contaminants most seriously
threaten our water supplies?
What actions provide the focus of our public
health efforts to improve water quality?

Co-Sponsors: Sustainable Tompkins, New York
StateWide Senior Action Council, Ithaca Journal,
Ithaca Health Alliance, Community Science
Institute, Coalition for Safe Medication Disposal,
Cayuga Watershed Network and AAUW.

some numbers. If we were so inclined we could have gotten up to dance! Maybe next time.

We also displayed the large album composed of Ithaca Journal clippings from the early forties to the 1960's collected by Libby DeProse. We are thankful to Libby for keeping those memories alive for us. It was amazing to me that the efforts of the League were so often featured on the first pages of the local newspaper, an indication of the community's appreciation of the important accomplishments of the League during that time.

Florence Smith, VP Programs

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Your nominating committee has been working since late January to complete the slate of officers that will be presented at the annual meeting for election. We are still recruiting for the offices of Vice President for Program and

Secretary — both are two-year terms. We also need to fill our nominating committee with three members, including one chairperson. The nominating committee members serve for 1 year. Please consider a board role. You will receive orientation and support in learning what each portfolio entails. Our League will continue to remain effective and continue its mission, but it needs your willingness to assume a board position occasionally. Please contact a committee member to find out how you can best serve.

Sally Grubb, Debbie Levin,
Lory Saltzman, Kathleen Yen,
Linda Duttweiler, chair

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual dinner and business meeting of the LWV-TC is scheduled for the evening of Monday, May 5th. The dinner part is easy. The business meeting requires your participation in: electing new officers and directors; approving a proposed budget for 2015-2016; approving proposed programs for 2015-2016; and approving revisions to the bylaws

A slate of candidates proposed by the nominating committee will appear in the April bulletin; the proposed budget and future programs follow below; for those receiving the bulletin via an e-mail notification, the proposed budget and bylaws revisions are included as attachments to the notification; for those receiving the bulletin as hard-copy, the budget and revisions are included.

Finally, a copy of a set of recently modified policy statements is included in the same manner. It does not require approval by the full membership.

Voter Services

This was an exciting year for Voter Services as we built new relationships with members of our community through forums, tabling, and outreach. One of our new developing partnerships is with the League of Women Rollers, which represents our region’s roller derby leagues: SufferJets and Blue Stockings. We tabled at several of their bouts and look forward to working with their league in the coming year.

We hosted two candidate forums this past year – one for the Ithaca City Judges candidates and a second for our local State Assembly race. These forums were well attended and covered by our local press. Additionally, over 100 new (and new to this area) voters registered through the efforts of the League. We presented voter services information at local festivals, the Ithaca Farmers’ Market, colleges and other areas where people gather. The League was specifically invited into an Ithaca College class on climate change; the professor requested our help to register students and encourage them to vote because of the critical importance of addressing climate change.

This past year saw an increased use of VOTE411.org, the League's groundbreaking one-stop election website, which provides information on how to register, state candidates and ballot initiatives, voting hours, absentee and early voting and polling place location. Locally, we promoted VOTE411.org through information sharing at various tabling sites.

Our thanks to the members who help make all of these activities possible. We are always open to recommendations for new outreach opportunities and we invite all to join us in our future activities!

Lucia Sciore and Amy Panek
Co-Directors of Voter Services

LWV-TC CALENDAR—2014-2015

Mar 23 Mon	7:00 p m	Environmental Impacts Upon Health	T.C. Public Library
Apr 6	Mon 7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
May 5 Mon	TBA	Annual Dinner and Business Meeting	TBA

Health Care

The TC League of Women Voters Health Care Committee undertook an ambitious program that proved immensely successful this past September! The Health Care Committee organized the program, *Challenges to Women's Health & Well-being*. During this four-part Women's Healthcare series, speakers presented critical information about the four topics: Reproductive Rights, Domestic Violence against Women, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, and Pay Equity.

We would like to thank our speakers: Renee Bracey Sherman, Fellow – MPA Candidate 2015; Editor, Online Content, Cornell Policy Review Communications Chair, Women in Public Policy and Reproductive Justice Advocate; Kristi Taylor, Adult Community Educator at the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County; Karen W. Baer, Director, Tompkins County Office of Human Rights; and Barbara Thomas, 1st Vice President, Pay Equity Specialist, League of Women Voters New York State.

We would also like to thank the co-sponsors of the series: American Association of University Women (AAUW), Ithaca Health Alliance, National Organization for Women (NOW), New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Tier, and the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission. We look forward to working with them again and expanding our partnerships in the community.

In 2015, we will continue talking with our local and state legislators as we monitor local, state and national health care legislation, laws, and programs that promote access to a basic level of equitable and affordable care for all and control health care costs. In particular, we will be tracking the progress of New York State's single-payer health insurance bill, the *NY Health Act*. We will be responding to these and other health-related issues as the opportunities arise.

This month on March 23rd, the Health Care and Natural Resource Committees are jointly sponsoring: *Healthy Water – Healthy People: What's In Our Water?* Our scheduled speakers, Dr. Adam Law (specialist in Endocrinology) and Liz Cameron (Director of Environmental Health for the T.C. Health Department), will be talking about water contaminants — identifying the ones that are already in our water, establishing how they arrived there and looking into the future to see why these contaminants continue to be of great and increasing concern. In the future we look forward to continuing work with the Natural Resources Committee on other programs that identify and emphasize the local and global relationships between the health of individuals and the health of the environment.

We invite you to join Health Care Committee members as we continue our work on current and critical health care issues. We have lots of work to do and anticipate a very busy and productive 2015!

Sarah Jane Blake, Co-Chair

Natural Resources

This has been an exciting year for the Natural Resources Committee and we look forward to an even better year coming up. We held one program in the fall and are preparing for a spring program to be held jointly with the Health Care Committee.

In November we held the program *Responding to Climate Change Can't Wait: Two Examples*. Our speakers were Allison Chatrchyan, Director of the Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture, and Scott Doyle, Senior Planner at the Tompkins County Planning Department. We received enthusiastic responses from a number of groups concerning co-sponsoring our program, indicating that there are many in the community who are concerned about this issue. We had a good audience, many of whom were well-informed about the topics discussed, so the Q&A period brought up many interesting questions and comments.

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Our committee has enjoyed working with the Health Care Committee to plan our joint program, to be held on March 23. We have found that there are far too many common interests to cover in one program and plan another joint program next year. After much discussion we decided to focus on questions concerning the water we use in a program under the title *Healthy Water – Healthy People: What’s In Our Water?* Our speakers will be Dr. Adam Law, an endocrinologist and one of the founders of Physicians and Scientists for Healthy Energy, and Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health for the Tompkins County Health Department. We expect this to be a very interesting and challenging program.

In addition to developing our programs, our committee has continued to monitor issues and events surrounding fracking. We were very excited to learn that Governor Cuomo and the DEC had decided to ban fracking from New York State. However, even though fracking will not occur within the state in the near future, drilling waste from Pennsylvania is already being deposited here. For this reason, the LWVNYS and the LWVTC have supported legislation “for the proper labeling and disposal of hazardous waste products and a ban on importing drilling and other ‘hazardous’ waste from other states.” (see the 2015 Legislative Agenda for LWVNYS)

We are also continuing to monitor the build-up of pipelines, the increase in dependence on natural gas in New York State, and many other environmental issues. The Public Service Commission (PSC) has issued a proposal called *Reforming Our Energy Vision* (REV), which is an important proposal for changing our energy production and transmission to meet the needs of the future and to address the issue of climate change. Our committee has been learning about this proposal, both its positive and negative aspects, and plans to look into it more carefully over the coming year.

Next year the Natural Resources Committee plans to hold a program that focuses on the electrical grid in NYS, both its current state and

what will be needed in order to enable us to move away from fossil fuels and towards an energy supply based on clean renewable resources. We believe it is critical for the public to be better educated on this topic and it is particularly important if the public is to be actively engaged in our energy future. It is important to present such a program soon due to the PSC’s REV proceedings, which are moving along. This means that the PSC may be putting plans in place soon (although it is unclear exactly what their timeline is).

As we mentioned above, the Natural Resources Committee and the Health Care Committee also plan to do another joint program concerning the effects of the environment on our health. We have discovered many areas of common interest and will welcome the chance to explore them some more. Our joint work has been fun and also enriching as we share our different perspectives.

At the same time that we are planning our programs the Natural Resources Committee wants to meet to learn more about land use issues. This will likely include looking at public vs. private land, the future of agriculture in our region, and many more topics. We hope that more of our LWVTC members will be interested in joining these discussions.

As always, if you are interested in joining our committee please contact Kay Wagner, CMW18@Cornell.edu, 539-3322. If you are interested in learning more about the REV proceedings at the PSC she can also give you some useful references.

Kay Wagner, Chair

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. This year the League celebrates its 95th Anniversary and accomplishments that would not be possible without the dedication and support of its members and supporters.

(continued)

Welcome to our sixteen new members and thank you to all of our members and “Friends of the League” for supporting the work of the League of Women Voters at the national, state, and local level.

Your membership and contributions support a range of national, state and local League activities that include: (1) nonpartisan voter service and education such as candidate forums, voter registration, voter guides, and www.VOTE411.org the online source of election, candidate, and voting information; (2) community education programs on a variety of topics, (3) studies on issues; (4) advocacy and action on local, state, and national public policy issues; and (5) youth leadership and civic engagement programs such as *Students Inside Albany*.

As of January 31, 2015, the date used by the national League to determine the number of active League members, the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County had eighty-two active members — 49 individual memberships, 20 household memberships (with two members per household), and 13 life memberships. These numbers are used to determine the “per member payment” (PMP) owed to the state and national League, and the number of voting delegates that the local League can send to the state and national conventions. Since that time six more people have joined, four as individuals and two as a household.

New member booklets, containing a summary of the League’s public policy positions, and flyers with local voting/election information and contact information for local government and elected officials, were mailed to new members in 2014. Copies of the LWVNYS *Facts for Voters I* and *Facts for Voters II* were mailed separately to all members. The new state *2015 Legislative Agenda* is now available and can be accessed on the state website, www.lwvny.org.

If you are not receiving the national and state newsletters and action alerts or the local bulletin and wish to, please let us know.

Kathleen Yen, Membership Chair

Website

Our League’s web page, maintained by Michael Duttweiler, is designed to serve League members as well as the community-at-large. The goal is to have information available on voter information/issues and local, state, and national programs. League publications, such as *In-League* NYS and US that elaborate organizational functions of boards and leagues, and *Impact on Issues* NYS and US, which include statements on all of the positions are available. Monthly bulletins and calendar items are posted as well as program announcements and updates. There is an e-mail contact area and place to join. Please check this website out and continue to learn more about your League at the local, state, and national levels.

Clarity Connect, Inc. continues to host our site; we are grateful for their generous contribution.

Linda Duttweiler, Co-Webmaster

RECENT NATIONAL AND STATE UPDATES

Education Finance Issues

- (LWVNYS) The League testified before the joint Legislative hearing on the 2015-2016 Executive budget proposal: Elementary and Secondary Education and called for action to: (1) exclude the Education Tax Credit, (2) fund Foundation Aid, (3) implement Circuit Breakers at lower income level; (4) phase out STAR; (5) reverse unintended negative consequences of the Percentage tax Levy Cap; and (6) seriously fund Pre-K.
- (LWVNYS) The League joined 12 other civic groups and public education advocates and issued a press release calling on the legislature “to reject diversion of public education dollars.”

Health

- (LWVUS) League Joins Amicus Brief in *King v. Burwell*. *King v. Burwell* is the latest challenge to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and it will determine whether tax-credit subsidies can be provided to applicants for health insurance through the federally

facilitated health exchanges or just to those using an exchange established directly by a state. The brief joined by the League focuses on the impact of the ACA on women's health and how the tax subsidies are essential to women's health and critical to the ACA's continued viability.

- (LWVNYS) The League provided testimony in support of the NY Health bill (Single Payer) before the NYS Assembly Health Committee.

Environment

- (LWVUS) Action Alert issued to urge the President to fully reject the Keystone XL Pipeline.
- (LWVNYS) The League sent a letter to Governor Cuomo thanking him for the decision to ban high volume hydraulic fracturing in NYS and asked that the ban include all phases of lifecycle process including waste disposal.
- (LWVNYS) The League submitted a letter regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Liberty Natural Gas

LLC, Port Ambrose Liquefied Natural Gas Deepwater Port License Application.

Government and Election Reform

(LWVUS) Statement made by LWVUS President, Elisabeth MacNamara, for the Federal Election Commission (FEC) Hearing on *Corruption in Our Political Process*; the PDF version the testimony can be found on the national website.

- (LWVNYS) Press Release: the state League joined with NIPERG and other government reform groups and called for ethics reform.
- (LWVNYS) Letter to the Legislative leaders with recommendations for legislative rules reform.
- (LWVNYS) At a press conference at the Capitol, legislators and election commissioners joined Disability Rights New York, LWVNYS, and Independent Living Center representatives from across the state to call for equal voting access for all eligible voters and an end to the use of lever voting machines in local elections.

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

LWV NYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWV US website

www.lwv.org

LWV-Tompkins County

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Board Members

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6/16 Director	Co-Voter Services	Amy Panek	617-448-6841	amy.panek@gmail.com
6/15 Director		Diane Kelleher	257-5551	diane2110@icloud.com
6/15 Director	Communications	Debbie Levin	273-7746	dlevin01@twcny.rr.com

Off-Board Chairs:

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Co-Webmaster; Action	Linda Duttweiler	277-0006	ldutt@twcny.rr.com
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YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON

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