



THE LOCAL VOTER **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS** **SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

Syracuse Metro LWV
PO Box 11862 Syracuse NY 13218
Phone: (315) 396-8225
Email: league@lwvsyr.org
Web Sites:
Local: www.lwvsyr.org
State: www.lwvny.org

Calendar

- Thursday, April 27th**
Constitutional Convention Forum
- Friday, May 5th**
LWVSyr Legislative Breakfast
- Saturday, April 6th**
LWVSyr Board Meeting
- Friday-Sunday, June 9th-11th**
LWVNYS Convention
- Friday, June 23rd**
LWVSyr Annual Meeting

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REMINDER

INFORMATIONAL MEETING:

**2017 NEW YORK STATE
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONVENTION
REFERENDUM**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 27
OCC RECITAL HALL
6:30PM - 8:30PM**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE SYRACUSE METRO AREA ANNUAL BREAKFAST WITH YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS



Friday, May 5, 2017
Craftsman Inn
7300 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville NY 13066

7:45AM—9:30 AM

Breakfast Buffet —\$20.00

- Come and meet your state legislative representatives -
- Learn where they stand on the issues you care about-
- Take a chance on our annual basket raffle-

Moderator: Laura Hand
NBC3 News Anchor/Community Relations
CNYCentral.com

RESERVATIONS

Phone: 315-396-8225
Email: league@lwvsyr.org
Mail: PO Box 11862, Syracuse NY 13218

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number of Reservations @ \$20.00 _____ Total \$ _____

If paying by check, make payable to: **LWV Syracuse Metro Area**

RESERVATIONS BY MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017
THE EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

BOARD NOTES

VOTER REGISTRATION OPPORTUNITIES

Registering new voters is one of the most inspiring things we can do to promote good government. We often give “on the spot” civics lessons including reminding folks that there is an election **EVERY NOVEMBER**.

This spring we will be working with the NAACP on youth registration activities in our schools. In addition we are always in need of volunteers to register new citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies. Volunteers will be trained when they arrive at the event.

Thanks to Jayne Humbert for organizing many of these voter registration events.

Please email Voter Service Director, Joan Durant at joandurant69@gmail.com or give her a call at 315-345-5860 for more information.

LWVNYS BIENNIAL CONVENTION

A reminder that the State League Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool June 9-11. We are in need of volunteers to help the state league staff register attendees, volunteer in the sales and publications office, serve as time keepers, floor pages, ushers and door keepers during the Plenary Sessions and welcome members in our Hospitality Room There will be training for all these positions.

This is a great opportunity to learn how the league works and to meet fellow members from across the state.

Contact Joan Johnson at jaj62@twcny.rr.com or by phone at 315-488-4339 to volunteer.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is searching for new board members. Opportunities include planning and running our programs, maintaining our membership data base and planning membership events.

Serving on the board is a great way to learn how the league operates and to meet other members. Much of our work is done via email and we normally meet every other month. New members are especially encouraged to contact us and learn what serving on the board offers.

Please contact us if you are interested or have questions at lwvsyr.org or by phone at 315-396-8225.

Officers

Leadership Team...	Joan Durant Joan Johnson Margrit Diehl Roberta Millert Harold Bertram
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Secretary...	Diane Dwire
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Treasurer....	Roberta Millert
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Directors

Education Membership ...	Margrit Diehl
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Publications/Public Relations... Voter Service...	Joan Johnson Joan Durant
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Directors-at-large...	Mary Ann Barth Peggy Chase Michele Jones Galvin Ann Jamison
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Off-Board Positions

Budget Director....	Harold Bertram
Membership Data Base...	Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee.....	Lisa Alford Ona Bregman Diane Chappell-Daly

Technical Support...	Roberta Millert
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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information please call the League office at (315) 396-8225 or e-mail to league@lwvsyr.org

Diversity Statement

The Syracuse Metropolitan League of Women Voters is committed to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, or national origin.



Please let us know your email address or if your address has changed. It is the most efficient way to communicate. You will be notified of upcoming local events and LWVUS and LWVNY National & State Action Alerts and news.

Your e-mail address will not be shared or sold. Please respond to league@lwvsyr.org and/or let us know the best way we can reach you.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

After a quiet winter we are gearing up for a very busy spring. In this newsletter you will find information on our upcoming programs. We begin on April 27th by hosting an informational meeting on the 2017 Constitutional Convention Referendum. You won't want to miss it so that when you vote in November you will have done your homework and can answer the question on whether to support or oppose calling a convention to revise our New York State Constitution. On page 7 of this newsletter you will find information on the process of electing delegates to serve if a convention is approved by voters across New York State.

On Friday, May 5th we invite you to attend our annual legislative breakfast with our state senators and assembly members. This date was changed from April 7th to May 5th because we anticipated there could be a delay in reaching an agreement on a state budget and our legislators would still be in Albany. And we were right!

June 9th thru June 11th we will host the LWVNY Convention at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. We hope you will volunteer to help us out (see details on page 2). We are entitled to 3 voting members to guide the state league for the next two years. If you are interested in becoming a delegate, please call us at 315-396-8225 or email us at league@lwvsyr.org.

We end our fiscal year with our annual meeting on June 23rd. Please see details on page 4. In keeping with the 100th anniversary of women suffrage and the role central New York played in this movement, we have as our special guest Pamela Vittoria.

We hope you will be able to participate in many of these activities. Remember all our events are open to the public. Please invite friends, family members and co-workers to join you. You may even learn they are interested in joining our 100 year organization.

LWVSyr CALENDAR

Thursday, April 27, 2017 6:30PM-8:30PM	De-Mystifying the NYS Constitutional Convention Process OCC Recital Hall, Academic II Building
Friday, May 5, 2017 7:45AM - 9:30AM	LWVSyr Legislative Breakfast Craftsman Inn, Fayetteville NY
Tuesday, May 16, 2017	School Board & Budget Elections
June 9-11, 2017	LWVNY Biennial Convention Holiday Inn, Liverpool NY
Friday, June 23, 2017 11:45AM - 1:30PM	LWVSyr Annual Meeting & Luncheon Nick & Angelo's Restorante Liverpool NY

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

November 6, 1917	New York State Women secure the right to vote.
November 19, 1919	League of Women Voters of New York State is founded.
1919	Onondaga County League of Women of Voters organization meeting.
February 14, 1920	National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) is founded.
August 26, 1920	The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution is ratified giving women the right to vote.
January 31, 1923	First official meeting of the Onondaga County League of Women Voters later changed to League of Women Voters of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

2017 ANNUAL LUNCHEON & MEETING

**Friday, June 23, 2017
11:30AM -1:30PM**

**Nick & Angelo's Ristorante
7376 Oswego Road (Route 57)
Liverpool NY 13090**

AGENDA:

**GUEST SPEAKER
Pamela Vittorio**

"From Boats to Votes : Suffragists & the Erie Canal"

BUSINESS MEETING:

**Treasurer's Annual Report
Adoption of 2017-2018 Budget
Adoption of Local Issues/Positions Program
Election of Officers & Directors
Closing Remarks**

Luncheon \$25.00

**More in our next Local Voter
Friends and Family Welcome
The Luncheon and Program are open to the public.**



Our guest speaker. **Pamela Vittorio** is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of English Language Studies at the New School University in New York City. She has done extensive research on the Erie Canal over the past decade on a wide variety of topics and conducts various workshops and programs on the Erie Canal social and cultural history, language, and as a professional genealogist, conducts genealogy workshops throughout the year. Currently, she is the editor of the Chittenango Landing

Canal Boat Museum (CLCBM)'s ***From the Boatyard*** newsletter and on the CLCBM Board of Trustees.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE
ELECTION LAW REFORM**

Summary of Issues Supported by LWVNY S

Issue	Description	Bill Numbers
Early Voting	The League supports enacting early voting in New York State. Currently 37 states allow for some form of early voting. Early voting should be implemented in a manner that will allow equivalent access to the polls for all voters.	A.2064(Kavanagh)/S.2950(Stewart-Cousins) Allows for early voting for up to eight days before the general election.
Voter Registration	The League supports paperless forms of voter registration as a means of decreasing costs and increasing accuracy of the voter rolls. The League supports Election Day registration, (registering and voting) on the same day, as a proven method of increasing voter participation. The League supports pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds to ensure that their voting participation is routine before they attend college or enter the workforce.	A.1070 (Kavanagh) / S.1661 (Carlucci) Allows for pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds. A.2090(Kavanagh)/S.2478 (Gianaris) Amends Constitution to remove requirement to complete voter registration 10 days before an election.
No-Excuse Absentee	The League supports a constitutional amendment to allow for no-excuse absentee voting. Currently 27 states and the District of Columbia allow for no-excuse absentee voting.	No legislation at this time.
Ballot Design	The League supports improvements to ballot design that would include: (1) A clear delineation between offices with a bold vertical bar between offices and a fine line between the candidates (2) A larger font with an absolute minimum size (3) Fill-in circles in black instead of gray.	A.3379 (Kavanagh)/S.1512 (Avella) Creates the Voter Friendly Ballot Act which would create a ballot layout that is easy for voters to read and use.
Single June Primary	The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports legislation that would create a single combined congressional and state June primary date and would bring New York State into compliance with the Military Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act.	A.3052(Cusick)/ S.3562(Stewart-Cousins) Allows for the consolidation of state and congressional primaries to create a single June primary.
Electronic Poll Books	The League strongly supports replacing printed poll books with electronic poll books to eliminate time and resources spent producing paper poll books and updating voter information, and to speed up processing voters at the polls on Election Day.	A.5547 (Cusick)/S.2788 (Akshar) Authorizes counties to employ computer generated registration lists; updates the list of supplies to be delivered to poll sites.

LWNYS STATEMENT ON POSITION ON THE 2017 CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BALLOT QUESTION

We know that many of you want to know what the state League board decided at its March 23-24 meeting about the position the League will take on the 2017 Constitutional Convention ballot question (oppose, support, or remain neutral). And we want you to know that the discussions many local Leagues held on this topic and shared with us were very much on our minds as we discussed it. We also want you to know that this wasn't an easy or lightly made decision.



A press release was distributed explaining that we will be supporting the Convention as a rare opportunity for citizens to take control of government and enact voting, ethics, and redistricting reforms. We have been urging these same reforms for many decades and getting almost nowhere. This past year the leaders of both houses were convicted on corruption charges and even then the legislature failed to adopt meaningful reform.

The option of a Constitutional Convention was put in the Constitution specifically for those times when the government was not responding to critical issues. It was intended to give citizens the power to act when the government will not. It is hard to argue that this is not such a time.

We know very well that there are real concerns in the public and within our League membership over the possible impact of an unlimited Convention even though any proposed changes would have to be approved by the public. The League shares some of these concerns. But we are the League of Women Voters and considering our inability to achieve critical reforms in the voting process and elsewhere, the state board could not see us passing up this opportunity to address the League's long-standing commitment to repair our broken state government.

Be assured that we will continue to educate the public on the ballot issue as we also educate on many of the prospective issues such as campaign finance and voting reforms on which we have clear advocacy goals. We will also be advocating for a delegate selection process that will help us all elect delegates that will put voters first, not their own political interests.

And that is what we are asking of ourselves. Whatever specific risks we are personally concerned about in opening up the whole constitution, as League members we need to stress the potential for reforms that we feel we cannot achieve any other way. We do not expect you to keep quiet as individual citizens about other concerns and Leagues are always welcome to put on forums that discuss all sides in our usual impartial way. In fact we *want* local Leagues to continue to educate the public on how the Constitutional Convention will work and some of the important issues it may address.

But in discussing the Convention you need to be sure to state the League position. Members can always take action as individuals, but in order for the League to speak with one voice, local Leagues may not express opposition to that state board decision. Local Leagues, using the League name, must support this ballot proposal and cannot state that they are opposed or neutral on the proposal. A Constitutional Convention is an opportunity to achieve critical reforms that Albany has refused to make. We cannot allow this point to be drowned out by all the other noise that will surely surround this question.

***Dare Thompson, President
LWNYS***

VOTER SERVICE

The good news I have to report is that NY is no longer in the lowest five states for voter turnout in a presidential election. According to "America Goes To The Polls 2016: A Report on Voter Turnout in the 2016 Election," NY now ranks 41 out of 51. Although it is an improvement, we are still abysmally low. LWNYS was one of the groups attending a March 3 meeting at Citizens Union focused on increasing vote turnout. Changing and modernizing our election laws would greatly increase turnout. Assemblyman Kavanaugh who attended part of the meeting spoke of some of the laws already in the Assembly and pointed out that it was important to look at not only what could boost turnout the most but what was feasible to accomplish. While it was thought that same day registration could have the biggest impact, moving registration to 10 days before Election Day was seen as most feasible, especially since this did not need a constitutional amendment. Many of the changes recommended and bills being introduced required additional funds which are not in the budget and for which there are no moneys. Early voting is one such example. Cost saving by combining primaries was discussed. Having the federal and state primary on one day would not only save a significant amount of money which could then finance some other changes but would certainly increase turnout. However, the two major parties have not been able to agree on one date in the past and there was not optimism that they would in the future.

***Judie Gorenstein
IST Vice President, Voter Service***



LEADING UP TO A POSSIBLE NYS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

The New York State Constitution mandates that every 20 years voters be presented with the ballot question: *“Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?”*

NYS Voters play a prominent role in the constitutional convention process. Starting on November 7, 2017 when they will be asked to approve or oppose convening a constitutional convention. If the referendum is approved, on November 6, 2018, voters will elect delegates to serve at the convention. Any proposed changes to the constitution most likely will be placed on the November 5, 2019 ballot although this is only an estimate providing the work of the delegates has been completed.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATE SELECTION PROCESS

Leading up to the forthcoming public discussion of the 2017 mandatory ballot measure on a state Constitutional Convention, fundamental and long-called-for statutory reforms to delegate selection and the convention process should be enacted as soon as possible. Key measures need to be taken to make a possible convention more open, fair and representative of the state.

Reduce Signature Requirements for Ballot	Signature requirements to get on the ballot for convention delegates should be significantly lowered, and the petitioning process should be made easier for individuals without substantial party support.
Abolish Slate Voting	The names of the 15 at-large delegates elected statewide have not appeared on the ballot in the past; voters have instead voted for a slate identified by party. Voters should be able to vote for up to 15 individual candidates.
Public Education	State-sponsored voter pamphlets (both in print and electronic form) that provide biographical information on candidates, including their past and current experience as elected officials or government employees, should be provided to voters.
Transparency	Current freedom of information, ethics and lobbying rules should be amended as necessary to ensure that they apply to convention delegates. The convention should meet the same standards of openness as other important government processes.
Delegate Salary	While the Constitution requires delegates be paid the full annual salary of a state legislator, reforms should be put in place that restrict elected officials from receiving two salaries. Delegates who hold any government position (elected or appointed) should not be able to use delegate service to enhance pension benefits.

Starting this debate during the 2017 legislative session could both educate the public on the importance of the looming constitutional convention vote in November and encourage legislators to make these changes.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
 SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA
 PO BOX 11862
 SYRACUSE NY 13218

May 2017

REMINDER
 Constitutional Convention Program
 April 27th at OCC -6:30-8:30pm

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN NEW YORK SINCE 1919

_____ Individual Member \$55.00 _____ Household* \$80.00 _____ Student** \$25.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Date _____

To join call us at (315) 396-8225, email us at league@lwvsyr.org mail this form with a check payable to Syracuse Metro LWV. Mail to Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11862, Syracuse NY 13218.

ANNUAL DUES—July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017

* Two members in the same household ** Full time student 16-25

Please share this information with others who have expressed interest in our work or who have thought about becoming a member of the League..