



THE LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS
of Schenectady County New York

BULLETIN

www.lwvschenectady.org

July/August 2015

September Event

Save the Date

Wednesday, September 16
Noon

Kickoff League Luncheon

Stockade Inn
1 N. Church Street

more information to come



Message from the Steering Committee

Former New York State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk told the LWV that its efforts to inform citizens about both sides of issues are needed and the League is one of the few organizations that has credibility to provide this kind of information. In her speech to the League at its recent annual dinner, she exhorted the League to continue in these efforts and also to be forceful in making its positions on issues known since they are well researched and thought out.

Ms. Tkaczyk expressed dismay with the role of money in politics and the distortion that money brings to campaigns that are targeted with PAC and other big money. The majority of the money was targeted to just three districts in the last State Senatorial race, according to Ms. Tkaczyk, and one of the districts was the one in which she ran for office. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is asking local Leagues to study money in politics to update the policy position on campaign finance. The LWVUS believes that there is a lack of understanding and agreement by League members about financing of political campaigns and whether that is protected free speech under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

After the end of the New York State Legislative session, the League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) used a press release to express "disappointment" with the State Legislature's failure to act to reform the State's "extraordinarily lax campaign finance laws" including closing the Limited Liability Corporation loophole that allows a corporation with many incorporated entities to donate money in each of those names, although it represents the parent corporate interests. Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director for the LWVNYS, declared until big money is taken out of politics at the state level, New Yorkers will be apathetic about voting and disdainful of State government.

The League, at its old/new Board meeting, brainstormed ideas for programs for the 2015-16 year. Programming ideas that we discussed included:

- Juvenile justice including raising the age in which juveniles are considered adults when committing crimes and

reform efforts related to youth and criminal justice issues

- Mergers and shared services in the County
- Livable communities and cooperative "aging in place" efforts
- Casino development and implications for the community
- State Minimum Wage
- Gun control and the dichotomy between gun rights advocates' positions and the general public's positions
- Income inequities and redistribution
- Underperforming schools
- Perceptions of urban safety and fears
- Schenectady Police Review Board update
- County Legislative updates related to committee assignments
- Flood control and environmental/economic concerns
- Economic implications of Fire/EMT responses to emergencies

If you have program ideas, please share them with the Steering Committee or League Board. Those ideas can come now or during the year.

Planning is beginning for the four town and city political candidates' forums to be held in October. We will be looking for volunteers who can help with the forums that Kay Ackerman is coordinating for the League and Maxine Borom is coordinating for the AAUW Schenectady County chapter. We hope to strengthen our two organizations' collaborative effort.

I want to thank my Steering Committee colleagues, Ruth Bonn, Carol Furman, and Cheryl Nechamen, as I "depart" from the Steering Committee as my term concludes. They have been an extraordinary team that has been supportive, knowledgeable, and dedicated to making our League work. I also want to thank all the League members who help in so many ways to make leadership a positive experience.

Joan Elliott, Lead

Health Committee Annual Report

The Health Committee spent much of its time and attention this year on issues related to aging and on the New York Health Act which describes a single payer health insurance plan for New Yorkers. We invited Laurie Bacheldor from Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services and Ann DiSaro, consultant in aging services, to present "Aging in a Changing Landscape of Services and Resources- Challenges and Opportunities". Collaborating with AAUW, Schenectady County Retired Teachers, the Jewish Community Center and the Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services brought out a sizable audience and enthusiasm for the program.

We spent time in the winter studying the New York Health Act and participated in a public

hearing sponsored by Assemblyman Gottfried. The Assembly passed the Act but the Senate did not bring it to a vote before the session ended.

In April, we examined the Community Health Assessment done in 2013 and invited Erin Simao, Outreach Health Coordinator for Ellis Medicine to speak with us about the Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community, its action plan to address certain health outcomes, and what the League might do to help the Coalition improve community health outcomes. We have started to look at a collaborative project to prevent falls among residents over 65 years of age and will continue with this work into the Fall of 2015.

Carol Furman, Chair

Voter Services Volunteer Opportunities!

Voter Registration The League will provide opportunities for voter registration again this year. We will join in National Voter Registration Day on September 22nd at several sites around the County. Other dates/sites are now being identified. Please let us know if you could help us with this League endeavor---especially on September 22nd.

Candidate Forums This is a year of major local elections. In October we will hold candidate

forums in the city of Schenectady and towns of Glenville, Niskayuna and Rotterdam for citizens to meet and hear candidates' views and positions on local issues. Many volunteers are needed to carry out this important community service to inform County residents of candidates and their positions on local issues.

Contact Kay Ackerman, kaydonack@aol.com, 393-5000, if you would be willing to help.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ruth Bonn	(384-0804)	Lead for August – November 2015
Carol Furman	(346-2746)	Lead for December 2015, January, February, June 2016
Cheryl Nechamen	(346-4820)	Lead for March – May, July 2016

Bulletin Editor: Cheryl Nechamen (346-4820)

League of Women Voters of New York State 56th Biennial Convention June 6-7th, 2015

Helga Schroeter, Joan Elliott, Judy Middelkoop and Carol Furman of the Schenectady County LWV attended the State Convention on June 6-7th. A number of significant events occurred including the re-election of our member, Judy Middelkoop, as Treasurer of LWVNYS.

Our Schenectady LWV was awarded Recognition of Outstanding Accomplishment for Voter Service specifically for the regional collaborative project with other local Leagues which informed our residents about the VOTE411 web site with candidate information by advertising this on CDTA bus signs. We also received a stipend of \$150 for participating in a grant program to inform citizens of organ donation options at the time of registration to vote.

The Convention is always interesting and gives a first-hand view of how League positions are developed. Local Leagues hold program planning meetings during the winter and send recommendations for study, updates and concurrences to the State League. The State Board reviews these and recommendations from specialists, and then recommends studies or other program options. At the Convention there is an opportunity to approve these recommendations or to further pursue suggestions which were made but not recommended by the Board.

The Convention delegates approved an update of our position on Legislative Procedures, which dates back to 1997. According to the Convention Toolkit, "This position is critical to our core mission as a State good government group. Much of the corruption scandals involving the State Legislature involve the outside income of Legislators and banning or limiting that income is a very important issue in ethics reform. The National Conference of State Legislatures considers New York as one of only 3 full-time State Legislatures, according to their criteria. Our current position in favor of a part-time Legislature warrants reexamination in this context since it constrains our approach to the outside income issue. Also, the recent term

limits study demonstrated that many local Leagues are interested in the length of legislative terms."

The delegates also approved a concurrence on raising the minimum age from 16 to 18 as consideration of "adult" in the criminal justice system. According to the Convention Toolkit, "New York continues to be the only state other than North Carolina that prosecutes ALL youth as adults when they turn 16 years of age. Further, New York allows children as young as 7 years old to be arrested and charged with acts of juvenile delinquency.

The recent research has shown:

- As the cognitive skills of adolescents are developing, adolescents' behavior is often impulsive and adolescents lack the ability to focus on the consequences of their behavior;
- Because the adolescent brain is still developing, the character, personality traits and behavior of adolescents are highly receptive to change; adolescents respond well to interventions, learn to make responsible choices, and are likely to grow out of negative or delinquent behavior.

In April of 2014, Governor Cuomo appointed a Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice to make recommendations on reforms to improve youth outcomes while increasing community safety. These recommendations are based on the premise that the age of criminal responsibility should be raised and that young persons accused of criminal behavior should be treated differently than adult offenders.

Governor Cuomo included a comprehensive legislative package designed to re-frame the way young people are treated by our criminal justice system in his budget package. The Legislature approved the allocation of funds to implement the principles of the proposals, but the details were left to be determined. Thus, the details of the legislative proposals, collectively referred to as Raise the Age will be reconsidered during the regular legislative session.

Convention Report (continued):

LWVNYS has been asked to participate in the Raise the Age campaign. Although much of the philosophical underpinnings of the proposal are consistent with the goals of our positions on Alternatives to Incarceration and Alternatives to Bail, and, indeed, many of the legislative changes can be supported under those positions, other aspects of the proposed laws do not fall under those positions. Consequently we are proposing a concurrence with portions of the LWV Ohio's position on juvenile justice, thereby enabling us to support aspects of the Raise the Age proposal that do not fall under our current positions.

Broadly speaking, the proposals which address opportunities for diversion from criminal court, expanded bail opportunities and diversion from detention or confined placement are consistent with our present positions. The portions of the proposal which provide for expanded eligibility for youthful offender treatment are arguably covered by the proposal since youth offender treatment generally leads to treatment

rather than incarceration. The other proposals, which delve more particularly into the accusatory and procedural treatment of young persons accused of crime are not covered by our present positions."

We will be increasing the portion of your dues that we pay to the NYS League by \$2. We anticipated this change last year when we increased our dues. The NYS League has had a cash flow problem and reduced donations resulting in the need to increase their income.

Also interesting at the Convention was a panel discussion of a NYS Constitutional Convention presented by John Fasso, former Assembly minority leader and eight time NYS Assemblyman, and Richard Brodsky, a fourteen term NYS Assemblyman. As in the past, the Convention was stimulating and provided an opportunity to exchange ideas with other Leagues and to be impressed by the work of so many interesting people!

Submitted by Carol Furman

Voter Services Committee Annual Report

A key function of the League's voter services activities is to provide nonpartisan information to voters in order to increase participation in government. Voter service is a year-round function of the League with the most intense activity occurring in the periods immediately preceding elections. Voter services, as well as disseminating factual information, deals with the mechanics of voting. The Voter Services Committee was active in three areas in the past year—holding candidate forums, conducting voter registration and poll reporting during the November election.

Candidate Forums

Two candidate forums were held---one in conjunction with the Saratoga and Albany County Leagues for the House of Representatives candidates and one in collaboration with AAUW of Schenectady for the NYS Senate & Assembly Districts and candidates for the vacancies on the

Schenectady City Council and County and City Court judges.

Voter Registration

Last year we offered 18 voter registration opportunities at 12 sites. We registered 71 voters on site, handed out 38 registration forms and 8 absentee ballot forms. We concentrated on meal sites and food pantries but our most successful sites were Schenectady County Community College and Planned Parenthood---the only sites where we registered 10 or more voters. We also participated in National Voter Registration Day.

Poll Reporting

The League and AAUW partnered to visit polling places in Schenectady County on election night to gather returns to report to the local media. In addition, this was a fundraiser for our efforts.

Kay Ackerman, Chair

Working Group on Girls of Schenectady Report

For the past six years, the Working Group on Girls of Schenectady (WGGS) has planned, organized and conducted Girls' Day Out at the Glen Sanders Mansion for 150 City school seventh grade girls with follow-up Girls' Circles for seventh and eighth grade and high school girls, each led by trained pairs of community volunteers (Muses). Field trips took the 8th grade girls to NYSUT for a viewing of 'Girl Rising,' a film from the United Nations about nine girls around the world seeking to get an education. Girls from the high school Circle attended a special 'Etiquette Lunch' at Schenectady County Community College, complete with tips on interviewing and eating out. Eighth grade girls also attended a theater production of 'Hey Bully...Listen to This' plus lunch at the high school, and some girls got to visit MiSci with their Circle.

This year 228 girls participated in 23 Girls' Circles. The Circles reinforce the messages of Girls' Day Out. Jenny Overeynder chaired the Assessment Committee and reported that through seven focus groups, girls were unanimous in their positive opinion of the program. "They found it helpful, fun and commented on the fact that they could have 'real conversation'....Many girls felt they had become better persons, became more confident, became friendlier, had a better attitude and had become more considerate of others."

In addition to completing the sixth year of Girls' Day Out/Girls' Circles, WGGS accepted the challenge of its major funder, The Schenectady Foundation, to demonstrate its sustainability and became an official 501(c)(3) this year (as the Working Group on Girls of Schenectady, Inc.--WGGS) with a Board of Directors and by-laws. After close to 12 years of chairing the Working Group, Joanne Tobiessen is retiring and

Gwynne DeLong will be elected as the new President.

Also, thanks to the Covenant Fund of the First Reformed Church, the organization has a grant for a part-time administrator, Kathleen McLean, who joined the group in September 2014.

With deep appreciation to the League of Women Voters NYS Education Fund (LWVNYS EF), WGGS presented its first annual organizational Roots and Wings award to Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director of the LWVNYS EF for providing the 501(c)(3) umbrella to the organization for the past 5½ years. Also, with great appreciation, WGGS presented its first annual Roots and Wings award to an individual: Julia Helfman, for her contribution as one of the Founding Mothers and major fundraiser for WGGS. Thanks to the leadership of Ebony Belmar, member of WGGS and social worker at Mont Pleasant Middle School, a program of Boys' Day Out in June with follow-up sessions has been running for the past year.

Having started under the auspices (and with the support) of the LWV of Schenectady, this program for girls in Schenectady has benefited tremendously from these ties. Many thanks for the support of so many of you.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this dynamic organization at the monthly meeting of the Planning Committee or as a Muse for 7th grade girls in Girls' Circles, contact Kathleen McLean, administrator, at mcleanconsultinggroup1@gmail.com, or Miranda Rand, Muse, League member and member of WGGS, at mirandarand411@gmail.com.

Submitted by Joanne Tobiessen

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We work to increase the understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Fundraising Committee Annual Report

Fundraising efforts this year focused on securing advertising for the Bulletin and conducting the silent auction at the annual meeting in June. We were able to renew or add for a total of nine ads for the Bulletin and deposit \$1125.00 to the treasury from the silent auction.

Special thanks go to committee members Flora Ramonowski, Betsy Chase, Pat MacKinnon, Ruth Bonn, Joan Elliott and Judy Middelkoop who did the major work of collecting the items and conducting the auction. And special thanks to League members who contributed items for the auction: Carol Furman, Cheryl Nechamen, Helen MacDonald, Joan Elliott and Pat MacKinnon.

We wish to thank the following businesses who provided items or gift certificates for the auction:

Albany Marriott	Kulaks Nursery
CeCe's Wool	Niskayuna Co-Op
Colonie Marriott	One Huge Sale
CTC Tire Warehouse	Open Door Bookstore
Divinitea	Regular's Liquor Cabinet
Eastern Mountain Sports	Schultz's Greenhouse
Eastern Parkway Price Chopper	Sherri Paul's Salon & Spa
Famiglia Salon	Sondra's Fine Jewelry
Fantastic Sams – Hannaford Plaza	Stanley Blanchard woodworker
Fantastic Sams – Crosstown Plaza	Stewarts
Five Star Frame & Art	Stockade Inn
Gil's Garage	Thai Thai Bistro
Glenville YMCA	Tops American Grill
Head to Tails Pet Wellness Center	Union Cafe
Hartz Family Cleaners	Worth Repeating
Joyful Quilter	YWCA of Northeastern NY
King Cork	

The Committee is looking for new members and new fundraising ideas. Please come forward if you are available.

Kay Ackerman, Chair

Students Inside Albany

This year, the Schenectady County League of Women Voters sponsored two students from Schenectady High School to attend the Students Inside Albany Conference held May 18-20, 2015. Many thanks to the Schenectady Federation of Teachers for their donation towards the students' expenses for this conference.

We reached out to Ms. Anne Sharpe, Teacher of Participation in Government/Economics at Schenectady High School to identify Orlando Hundley and Peter Fitzgerald to attend. Orlando Hundley was a senior in high school, who aspires to work well and succeed as a team

player and who wishes to allow history to influence his future actions. He considers politics, acting, public speaking and detection to be activities he is drawn to. Peter Fitzgerald, also a senior this year, is interested in politics and was a close observer of the last presidential campaign. He participated in study circles, Best Buddies, marching band, theater, and the Jazz Combo at school.

The two students felt that the best part of the conference was the opportunity to shadow their representatives in the State Legislature.

Submitted by Carol Furman

GIL'S GARAGE INC.
Established 1966
♦ Complete Car Care Center ♦
Family Owned and Operated Since 1966!
Burnt Hills | Halfmoon
518.399.3363 | 518.631.6700
WWW.GILSGARAGE.COM

Hartz
Family Cleaners
Suzanne Hartz
Stephen Hartz
1714 Union St.
Schenectady, NY 12309
374-6647
M-F 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat 8 a.m. to Noon

Smith's
AUTOMOTIVE
346-3000
2867 Aqueduct Road
Schenectady, NY 12309-2107
www.SmithsAutomotive.com
Skip Smith
Owner
skip@smithsautomotive.com

ELECTRIC CITY
FOOD COOPERATIVE
YOUR COMMUNITY MARKET
We are building a new, full-time cooperative market featuring local, organic and sustainably produced natural foods in downtown Schenectady.
Electric City Food Cooperative
PO Box 1416, Schenectady, NY 12301
Contact: Kat Wolfram
(518) 322-6628
www.electriccityfood.coop

Our League goals are to educate citizens about government and public policy, encourage citizen participation in elections, and influence public policy relating to issues we've studied. Dues money makes working on our goals possible.

DUES for July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

Return to: LWV of Schenectady County, P.O. Box 9135, Schenectady, NY 12309

New or Renewing Members Please Confirm this Contact Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

_____ \$60 Individual _____ \$85 Household _____ \$20 Full-time student

_____ Additional support for the League, dues plus \$10 contribution (\$70 or \$95 – circle one)

(Confidential arrangements for special payment or partial assistance can be made. Contact Connie Young at 393-7061 with any questions. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.)

.....
_____ I am sending my membership dues payment, but please consider me an **INACTIVE member**.
.....

ACTIVE MEMBERS: The League depends upon the work of its members, even for a short task. Please check any activities that interest you. We appreciate your help.

Committees Judicial _____ Health Care _____ Working Group on Girls _____
Environment _____ Observer Corps _____ Housing _____ Education _____
Membership _____ Fundraising _____

Voter Services Voter Registration _____ Candidate Forums _____ Voter Information _____

Computer Skills Graphics/Layout _____ Databases _____ Website Work _____

Facebook _____ Electronic Publicity _____

Other Technical Skill? (Describe) _____

Bonnie McGuire Jones PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Trust & Estate Planning and Administration
throughout the stages of your life.™

4 Emma Lane
Clifton Park, NY 12065
Phone: 518-373-0333
www.bmjlawoffice.com

Serving the greater Saratoga-Capital Region for over 30 years

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
northeastern ny

YWCA NorthEastern NY
44 Washington Avenue
Schenectady, NY 12305
518.374.3394
Domestic Violence Hotline
518.374.3386

- Domestic Violence Services •
- Housing •
- Early Childhood Education •
- Health & Wellness •

Visit our website or "like" us on
facebook to get the most current
information about our
YWCA programs & services.
www.ywca-northeasternny.org

The Open Door
Bookstore & Gift Gallery

*A Locally-Owned Independent
Bookstore Since 1971*

128 JAY STREET • SCHENECTADY
(518) 346-2719



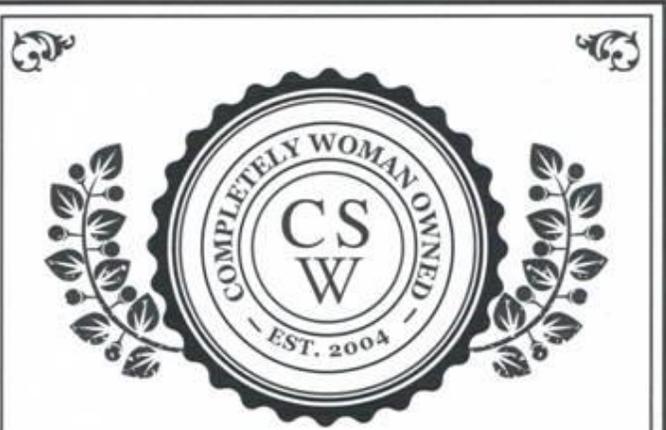
KING CORK

Wine & Liquor

Tom Pacelli, owner

2430 Watt Street
Crosstown Plaza
Schenectady, NY 12304

(518) 393-3955
www.kingcork.com



Estate Planning / Estate Administration / Elder Law
Real Estate / Business & Corporate Law

CIOFFI • SLEZAK • WILDGRUBE P.C.
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

2310 Nott St. East, Niskayuna, NY 12309-4303
T: 518.377.6700 • F: 518.377.6110 • cswlawfirm.com

NOTT STREET OFFICE

"Your Office Away From Home"

Copies / Fax
FedEx / UPS
Color Copies
Digital to Paper
Office Supplies

Monday-Friday 8:30-6
Saturday 10-3



fedex Authorized ShipCenter



2215 Nott Street
Niskayuna, NY 12309
518.382.2663

**League of Women Voters
of Schenectady County
P.O. Box 9135
Schenectady, NY 12309**



Non-Profit
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID PERMIT NO. 402
ALBANY, NY

Bulletin
10 issues per year

Or Current Resident

Save the Date

Wednesday, September 16
Noon

Kickoff League Luncheon

Stockade Inn
1 N. Church Street

more information to come