



THE LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS
of Schenectady County New York

BULLETIN

www.lwvschenectady.org

June 2015

June Events

Saturday-Sunday, June 6-7

LWVNYS Convention
Desmond Hotel, Albany
Contact: Cheryl Nechamen, 346-4820

Monday, June 22, noon

Health Committee Meeting
Niskayuna Library
2400 Nott St. E
Contact: Carol Furman, 346-2746

JULY EVENTS

Monday- Friday, July 13-17

SICM Summer Lunch Program
Schenectady County Central Library
99 Clinton St., Schenectady
Contact: Helga Schroeter, 370-5042

Tuesday, July 14, 10 AM- 1:30 PM

Old/New Board Orientation
Location TBD
Contact: Joan Elliott, 346-4414

Annual Meeting and Silent Auction

Wednesday June 10, 5:30 PM

Mohawk Golf Club, 1849 Union St., Niskayuna

Speaker: Cecilia Tkaczyk
Former New York State Senator

Please bring Program Statements, Budget
and Slate of Officers
from April and May bulletins to meeting

Message from the Steering Committee

Our annual meeting always gives us a chance to see League members we have not seen in awhile and to catch up on their lives. So, the annual meeting is fun and social. It conducts business and importantly, it also gives the Steering Committee and the League Board a chance to hear about your ideas for programs and issues that interest you and inform others in the community. We look to you to give us your feedback on new committees you would like to see or tell us if our current committees need to be rethought.

The Board held a special meeting in May to talk about the local League and changes we might consider to make ourselves a more effective organization. (We came up with no magic, no panaceas, and no big solutions.) We did talk of ways that we could collaborate with other organizations in programming, how we could delegate more effectively and how to have more members involved in time-limited activities which fit our membership's often busy, "retired" lives. We also noted that we have a lot of "doers" but need to cultivate more "organizers." We also have a number of "behind the scene" workers whom we want to recognize.

In assessing the past, we agreed some of the most successful programs have been on agriculture (a series), consolidation, common core, educational financing inequities, and the grand jury system.

The Board acknowledged the need for use of more technology but how that would be implemented was uncertain. The key question is how do we begin to use social media to build our community but one that is more than an on-line community.

These kinds of discussions will continue at our

July old/new Board orientation and planning session so any of you who have ideas, please let us know.

The League is fortunate to have as its keynote speaker at its June 10th annual meeting, former New York State Senator CeCe Tkaczyk. Considered a "non-traditional" political office seeker when she ran for a seat in the New York State Senate, she can provide insights into the difficulties of running for office and the pluses and minuses of gender in politics.

Former Schenectady County Judge Karen Drago will be honored with the League's Susan B. Anthony award for extraordinary service to the community. Judge Drago was known for her commitment to alternative treatment courts that dealt with defendants who had alcohol and other substance abuse problems and mental health issues in addition to their legal offenses.

Without competition for the two seats for the Schenectady City School District Board of Education, the League cancelled its candidates forum. The League commends the citizens who run for School Board seats in school districts throughout Schenectady County for their contributions to their communities.

Unfortunate Action: The Schenectady County Legislature, with the exception of Legislator Karen Johnson, voted to ask the New York State Legislature to rescind the SAFE Act which requires strict gun controls. The gun lobby has been persistent in lobbying the County to support repeal of the gun measure passed in the wake of the Connecticut elementary school shootings. The League of Women Voters supports gun control legislation.

Joan Elliott, Lead

STEERING COMMITTEE

Joan Elliott	(346-4414)	Lead for May- July 2015
Ruth Bonn	(384-0804)	Lead (completed)
Carol Furman	(346-2746)	Lead (completed)
Cheryl Nechamen	(346-4820)	Lead (completed)

Bulletin Editor: Cheryl Nechamen (346-4820)

June Meeting Silent Auction

Plan to come to the June 10th Annual Meeting with an extra check in your pocket! We will be offering a wide variety of items and services at the Silent Auction, a major fundraiser for our League. You'll be able to bid on gift certificates for rental of a kayak, hair care, manicures and pedicures, plants or other items from local nurseries, dinners at local restaurants, a book or gift item from The Open Door, groceries at the Niskayuna Co-Op, a trial membership in the

Glenville YMCA, and auto repairs. Items on the auction table will include a handcrafted wooden bowl and pepper mill, bottles of wine, a coffee basket, teas and a Tough Traveler bag. And this is only a sample list of items that will be available. Something for everyone!! Come early so you have time to browse the Silent Auction table.

Kay Ackerman, Fundraising Committee, Chair

News from Schenectady Recycles!

Schenectady Recycles! will be participating in the Kids' Art Fest on Jay Street on Saturday, June 6th, noon- 4 PM. We're planning activities using recycled materials, primarily bottle caps and paper towel and toilet paper cores. We would like more volunteer help for this project. Both you and your teen-age relatives are very welcome. Please contact Lesley Cutting at lacutting1@yahoo.com.

Our April activities were built on our observations from the Woodlawn Recycling pilot program. We prepared resource/information folders and presented them to Neighborhood Association leaders at the Schenectady United Neighborhoods (SUN) meeting on April 21st. Strategies are developing to fit each community, while working with the City. LWV and ECOS members who live in the city of Schenectady are encouraged to participate in their own Neighborhood Association and help with their recycling effort. The list of NA meeting times and locations is available at http://www.cityofschenectady.com/neighborhood_associations.htm.

We participated in an early evening family program on Earth Day at Central Park International Magnet School. Recycling games for the children included hopscotch action as students decided which bin (paper, container, or trash) for items they chose. Susan Van Vorst's game was led by her and Nancy Peterson. Roberta Farrell provided literature for students and parents, including four free recycling pails.

The May/June "Woodlawn Connection" newsletter continued its Schenectady Recycles! page, this time with a report on some Woodlawn recycling pilot streets and thank yous, by Roberta Farrell.

For May, we are requesting another planning meeting with the City, especially to learn the new Commissioner's preferences for the recycling program. This impacts our materials and plans to assist Neighborhood Association leaders. A few recycling education events are in the works, as well.

Submitted by Nancy Peterson

Voter Services

Looking forward to summer and next fall, the Voter Services Committee will be planning a number of voter registration opportunities. Also we will be holding candidate forums for the local elections which will be taking place on November 3, 2015. We need many volunteers to carry out this important work of the League, so we hope you will give us some time, as much as you can spare, to help out. Stay tuned for

announcements of dates and times for these events. And, if you know of an event or occasion that would be an opportunity for us to reach unregistered voters, please inform me (kaydonack@aol.com) or Lisa Dufek, Voter Registration Chair (lisadufek@gmail.com).

Kay Ackerman, Voter Services Chair

Schenectady Sees New Direction to Improve Housing Efforts

Schenectady has developed a strategic plan to make resources go farther in meeting housing needs in the City, Jaclyn Mancini, Schenectady Director of Development, told the League of Women Voters of Schenectady County in a program May 6th at the Schenectady County Public Library.

Ms. Mancini, in charge of Schenectady's management and administration of housing, community development, neighborhood redevelopment and planning, said housing plans are "interactive" in a dozen places and aim to bring together efforts on the municipal, non-profit, and volunteer organization fronts. She cited as an example that the City's Land Bank effort would work with non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity and Better Neighborhoods Inc. when the City demolishes a substandard building and replaces it with a new dwelling. A demolished site also could result in "pocket parks" or green spaces. The City has designated four strategic corridors for housing renewal and development: Eastern Parkway; Broadway; North Side, and Mont Pleasant.

One of the audience expressed skepticism about the adequacy of planning for affordable housing. Richard Russo, Chair of the Land Bank, said Schenectady has an overstock of housing but acknowledged that housing that met standards was not necessarily available. The Municipal Housing Authority apartments and the Section 8 housing all have long waiting lists and little turnover. Schenectady has a policy that requires vetting of prospective buyers of City foreclosed houses, often two-family homes, because it does not want absentee or slum

landlords with property that does not meet codes.

Individuals in the audience who deal with housing issues declared that Schenectady is seeing a "turnaround" in housing and that more people are moving in than moving out of the City.

Some discussion focused on landowners and banks that did not maintain property and the City's inability for years to force property maintenance. Ms. Mancini said some of the banks are beginning to either divest themselves of the property, for example paying the City to acquire a property, or doing more on maintenance. Part of the impetus, she said, is legislation nicknamed the "Zombie Bill" that would force banks after 90 days of bankruptcy or abandonment to move the property to a "for sale environment" or suffer penalties. The legislation that speakers urged the League to support is the Abandoned Property Neighborhood Relief Act.

Ms. Mancini described the H.O.M.E.S. "umbrella" program the City espouses as including: open market sales working with realtors and not-for-profit banks; Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs that also include federal block grant funding; first time homebuyer assistance programs (that include "gap" financing); redevelopment or demolition of distressed/abandoned buildings; Land Bank; and foreclosures and sale of City property. Some \$1 million of property value has been recently put back on the tax rolls, according to Ms. Mancini.

Joan Elliott

Abandoned Property Neighborhood Relief Act

Current status: Senate SO4781: in Judiciary Committee

Assembly AO6932: in Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee

Bill would: Make lenders and banks responsible for delinquent properties soon after they are abandoned, rather than at the end of a lengthy foreclosure.
Require lenders to pay for upkeep.

Support: 16 mayors including those of Schenectady, Albany, and Amsterdam

Annual Meeting and Silent Auction

Wednesday June 10, 5:30 PM

Mohawk Golf Club, 1849 Union St., Niskayuna

Speaker: Cecilia Tkaczyk
Former New York State Senator

Please bring Program Statements, Budget and Slate of Officers from April and May bulletins to meeting

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of reservations: _____

Dinner entrée choice:

_____ London Broil *with bordelaise sauce*

Please indicate any dietary restrictions

_____ Chicken Francaise *with lemon wine sauce*

_____ Herb Crusted Salmon *with vin blanc sauce*

Mail with your check for \$37/person to Connie Young, 1400 Keyes Ave., Niskayuna, NY 12309, cyoung50@nycap.rr.com, 518-393-7061 or pay at the door. Your reservation is a commitment to pay unless we are able to fill unexpected vacancies with last minute reservations.

SFT Supports Students Inside Albany

The League thanks the Schenectady Federation of Teachers (SFT) for their generous donation of \$300 toward a Schenectady High School student's expenses for the Students Inside Albany conference.

Health Committee

The Health Committee will meet on June 22nd at the Niskayuna Library, 2400 Nott Street East, at noon to discuss plans for a community coalition to address the prevention of falls and adapting the community for persons aging in place or disabled. New members are welcome to join the group.

Volunteers Needed to Staff the SICM Summer Lunch Program

The Schenectady League will cover staffing at the downtown library during the week of Monday, July 13, through Friday, July 17. Volunteers will need to plan for about two hours during lunch time to set up, serve lunches and clean up as we have done in previous years. Three to four volunteers will be needed for each of these days. Please contact Helga Schroeter at 370-5042 or at helgasasquith@verizon.net, if you can help. The site has become more popular because children also come for other programs at the library.

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.

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.)

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_____ *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) _____

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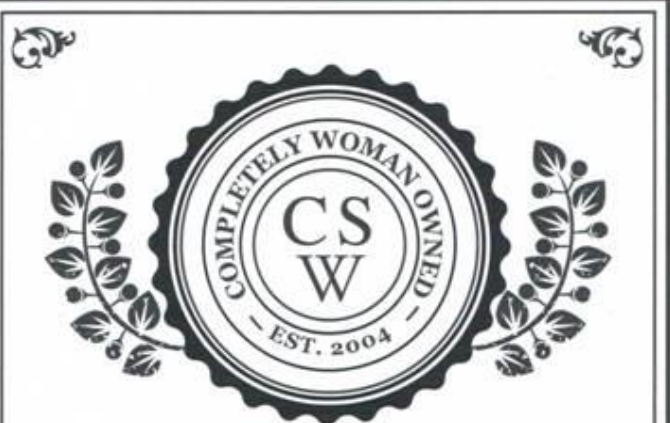
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Calendar of Events

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Desmond Hotel, Albany

Mon. June 22...Health Committee
Noon, Niskayuna Library

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