



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

APRIL 2017

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748

lwvtompkins.org

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, DINNER AND PROGRAM

MONDAY, MAY 8, 5:30-8:00 PM
SALVATION ARMY: 150 NORTH ALBANY ST.

CHOICE OF:
MEAT/VEGETARIAN LASAGNA,
GREEN SALAD, BREAD,
DESSERT, TEA, COFFEE

— \$15:00 —

Details on page 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you know, our League held an educational program on the Constitutional Convention this Fall. Just the process and philosophy behind the Convention were presented. The State League has now taken a position in favor of holding the Convention (see page 6). They believe that holding the Convention will provide an opportunity for the League to focus on critical reforms that cannot be adequately addressed in any other way. Therefore, we as a local League need to speak in favor of the Convention. If you are talking as an individual, instead of a League member, of course you can express your own opinion.

The Ithaca community has been reading and discussing Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow Laws: Mass Incarceration in an Era of Colorblindness*. Several of those community members attended our League program on "The Rockefeller Drug Laws and the Alternatives to Incarceration." The two agencies that provide direct services to drug addicted people were asked if they had persons of color on their staff.

Both said "no". The Alcohol/Drug Council of Tompkins County's Executive Officer explained that some of their interns were persons of color, but these interns leave the agency despite opportunities to stay on as staff. Angela Sullivan, Executive Director of the Council, did say that her agency is writing a grant to fund students of color to get their degree in treatment

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of addictions in a short amount of time. This would, hopefully, increase the pool of potential staff. Several members of the community thanked the League for sponsoring this program.

The State League is holding its Convention this June 10-11 in Syracuse. It is always interesting to attend. A registration kit is on their website. Go to our website for the link. If you can't afford the registration fee, you can always be a volunteer. They really need volunteers. As a volunteer you can attend the plenary sessions. As a volunteer, you cannot vote. I can remember back when I first joined the League, I volunteered. Contact Joan Johnson, the Volunteer Coordinator at atjaj62@twcny.rr.com. I'm going to the Convention on Saturday and Sunday. If you would like a ride, I can take 5 passengers. Just let me know. I am not staying for the dinner on Saturday evening.

A separate field trip to Seneca Falls is being offered on June 9th for an additional fee. The tour will include a visit to Elizabeth Cady Stanton House and to the Women's Hall of Fame. Dinner and a speaker are included. Registration for the tour is also at the same website. I am going to this also. Let me know if you would like a ride.

We are busy planning our Annual Meeting for May 8th. In last month's bulletin, you received some of the annual reports. The rest are in this newsletter. The proposed budget was in last month's bulletin. The Bylaws were reviewed and no changes were made. Please review these documents before you come to the Annual Meeting, as we will need a formal vote of approval. If you find something that is incorrect in these materials, let me know.

I hope you and a friend will join us for our Annual Meeting, Dinner and this year's Special Program.

Kay Sharp, President

MEMBERSHIP

Currently there are 78 members of the Tompkins County League of Women Voters:

68 Primary Members and Life Members;
9 Additional Household Members; and
1 Student Member.

We will give special recognition to our honorary members, members who have served for 50 years or more, at the Annual Meeting on May 8th.

Sadly we must honor Nellie Corson posthumously, and will also miss long-time member Ceil Spero who is also no longer with us.

We miss some members, too, who have left the area or have dropped off our list and may return at some future time. We would surely welcome them back.

We now welcome with pleasure our NEWEST 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 members:

Anne Bell	Carol LaBorie
Carolyn Cox	Deborah Dawson
Ronny Hardaway	Megan Nettleton
Sheila Stone	Ann Warde

As always, we want to encourage people who are interested in the issues of the day and in helping others to vote, and vote intelligently, to join with us in that endeavor. Mostly it seems that interesting friends in what we do in our committees and speaking to the public as we pursue our voter registration efforts have been ways our new members find us. Articles in the local media may also have been helpful, as well as the publicity for our public programs and of course the programs themselves.

However, there may be those who are not involved in the particular issues we have committees studying, but have important interests and would like to suggest and perhaps lead us to tackle other important problems, or even the same problems from a different perspective. How can we reach them?

Suggestions have been to send out mailings, and/or to invite members of the public to our more private League events. If you have any suggestions please don't hesitate to let us know; and do plan to bring a friend to our May 8 Annual Meeting.

Lory Saltzman and Alene Wyatt, Co-VPs

PROGRAMS

The Rockefeller Drug Laws: Alternatives to Incarceration: Member and Public Meeting

Our March 27 program was attended by 35-40 community members who asked a variety of questions about the legacy of the Rockefeller laws, the capacity of local organizations, the success/challenge of drug court, the public's attitude toward addicts, and the relationship of alternative programs to the proposal to increase the size of the local jail. Several people referenced the Community Book Read, *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander (Tompkins County Public Library still has lots of copies if you haven't yet read the book). The applause you hear represents our thanks the Health Committee and the five speakers for an excellent and timely program!

Annual Meeting, Dinner and Matilda Gage: Members, Guests and Visitors Meeting

Monday, May 8, 5:30 – 8:00pm
Salvation Army, 150 North Albany St.,
Ithaca, NY.

Choice of meat/vegetarian lasagna,
green salad, bread, dessert, tea, coffee
Price: \$15

***THIS IS OUR FINAL MEETING
OF 2016-2017 SO
LET'S MAKE IT COUNT!!!***

It counts as recruitment: Please share this information with persons who might be interested in joining the League, invite a friend to be your guest, or organize a carpool from your neighborhood. This is an easy way to acquaint folks with the workings of the League as our committee chairs and board members will report on the year's activities, and our new officers will be introduced.

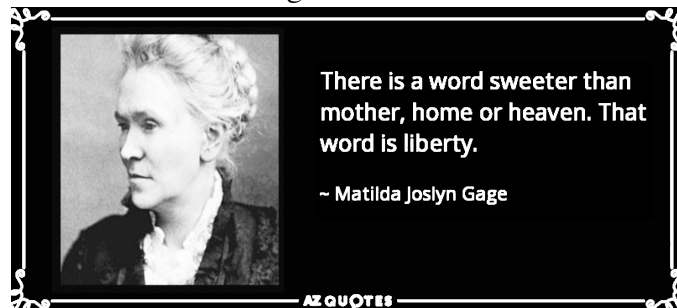
It counts as celebration: We will celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in NY by recognizing our local honorary life members. These folks have been active members of the League for 50 years (or more). They served on the board (again and again!), led study groups, attended conferences, promoted the League, identified issues, collaborated with various agencies, and more – they have literally “done it

all.” Their dedication and vision inspire us. Join us as we say, “Thank you.”

It counts as fellowship: We can chat over dinner, catching up with old friends and welcoming newcomers. The familiar dinner of meat/vegetarian lasagna, green salad, bread, dessert, tea and coffee will be served. The cost is \$15/person. A quick RSVP to cwc4@cornell.edu is appreciated.

It counts as education and entertainment:

Pamela Poulin, Professor Emerita, John Hopkins University, will portray Matilda Joslyn Gage, an early suffragist and abolitionist from central NY. You can learn more about this distinguished and courageous woman by visiting the Gage Home in Fayetteville <<http://www.matildajoslyngage.org/>>. Or, you can relax and enjoy the talents of Dr. Poulin as she recreates Mrs. Gage in Ithaca.



Charlotte Coffman, Program VP

VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Spring is in the air and the opportunities to register new voters are right around the corner. The Voter Services chairs have identified the events listed below as likely opportunities for voter registration drives in 2017. We are open to adding events around the county to the calendar and welcome suggestions. Please feel free to contact either of us with your ideas. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the events listed below, please contact Amy Panek at amy.panek@gmail.com. We do not have specific dates/times for all the events yet, but will provide updates as this information becomes available.

Also, if you belong to other organizations that are interested in hosting their own voter

registration drives, we are happy to offer information and lessons learned. The Tompkins County Board of Elections can also provide a one-page information sheet regarding registration drives.

Thank you to all who have volunteered in the past and we hope to see you, as well as new faces, for the upcoming League events!

- 5/3: Naturalization Ceremony, TC County Courthouse (approximately 12:30-2:30)
- 5/27: Farmers Market
- 6/3-4: Ithaca Festival
- 6/17: Juneteenth Celebration
- 8/2: Naturalization Ceremony
- 9/2: Farmers Market
- mid-September: Porchfest
- 9/26: National Voter Registration Day
- early-October: Apple Harvest Festival
- 11/1: Naturalization Ceremony

Amy Panek & Mandy Qualls,
Co-Directors, Voter Services

Director of the Alcohol/Drug Council of Tompkins County, outlined the services provided at the Council for drug addicted persons and the Council’s involvement in the Drug Treatment Court. Finally, Bill Rusen, Chief Executive Director of Cayuga Addictions Recovery Services (CARS), described the challenges in working with drug addicted individuals. The program was well-received by an audience of 35 people, several of whom thanked the League for offering this program.

Next year the Health Committee will focus on the New York State mental hygiene law. A panel of mental health providers in Tompkins County will be invited to discuss the services provided by each. In addition, the Committee will meet with the Natural Resources Committee to discuss the possibility of a joint program sometime in the future.

Kay Sharp

HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Health Committee was re-vitalized last fall, with members Alene Wyatt, Lucia Sciore, Debbie Levin, Kay Sharp, Mandy Qualls, Diane Kelleher and Ann Warde.

The Committee organized a program in March: *Rockefeller Drug Laws and Alternatives to Incarceration*. There were five speakers. Professor Kohler-Hausmann of the Cornell University History Department spoke on the Rockefeller Drug Laws that became State law in 1973. The second speaker was Mr. VanHouten, Tompkins County District Attorney, who spoke about the adjudication of non-violent drug offenders. Third speaker was the Honorable Judge Cassidy who spoke about the Tompkins County Drug Treatment Court and the many ways that the Treatment Court assists non-violent drug offenders avoid sentencing to prison. Then Angela Sullivan, Executive

WEB SITE

Our League 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*, which 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 and we are grateful for their generous contribution.

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

Linda Duttweiler

LWV-TC CALENDAR—2016-2017

May 8	Mon	5:30 pm	ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER	Salvation Army
Jun 6	Tue	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Kendal

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Natural Resources Committee planned our November program, *Roads to Our Energy Future: The Tompkins County Roadmap; and How Do We Get There?* Our speakers were Katie Borgella from the Tompkins County Planning Department and Jonathan Comstock from the Heat Smart Tompkins Program. Katie did an excellent job of explaining what is in the new Tompkins County Energy Roadmap and discussed the role that methane emissions play in evaluating our progress with respect to reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Jonathan explained the Heat Smart program and what their goals are for this year. We had several co-sponsors for the program: The Campaign for Renewable Energy; Fossil Free Tompkins; Sustainable Tompkins; and The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council. The program was well attended and the audience had many interesting questions for our speakers.

Our plan for the coming year has been to learn about our local housing needs and how solutions to these needs impact our environment and our land use. Several of us attended the *Housing Summit*, an informational meeting on housing held by the county in November. We learned a

lot about the current housing needs in the county and some ways of addressing the problems, particularly the need for affordable housing. We were disappointed that little was said about how to do new construction or update old buildings in ways that are good for the environment.

Recently members also attended a summit on *Water and Law* organized by the Sierra Club and held at the Cornell Law School as well as a presentation by Cornell University concerning their plans for becoming carbon neutral. The centerpiece of Cornell's plan consists of developing a deep earth source of energy from heat stored 10,000 to 15,000 feet into the earth. They have been doing research on the local geology and other issues for a while now but it will likely still take a few years before they know if the plan is viable.

Our chair, Kay Wagner, has also continued acting as an "Observer" at the meetings of the Coalition for Sustainable Economic Development. Through this connection, we have been able to keep up to date on local development projects. Of particular interest has been the Maplewood Project at Cornell. We are pleased by the developer's commitment to doing

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2015-16

LWV NYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWV US website

www.lwv.org

LWV-Tompkins County

contact
website

272-4748

lwvtc@twcnny.rr.com
lwvtompkins.org

Board Members

6/17	President		Kay Sharp	272-4748	phylliskaysharp@gmail.com
6/17	Secretary	(January-June)	Ann Warde	241-0192	amw38@cornell.edu
6/18	Treasurer		Diane Kelleher	257-5551	diane2110@icloud.com
6/18	VP1	Program	Charlotte Coffman	272-7551	cwc4@cornell.edu
6/18	Co-VP2	Co-Membership	Lory Saltzman	257-7240	lorysaltz@gmail.com
6/18	Co-VP2	Co-Membership	Alene Wyatt	257-1894	alene@lightlink.com
6/18	Co-Director	Co-Voter Services	Mandy Qualls	405-210-6598	mandyqualls@gmail.com
6/18	Co-Director	Co-Voter Services	Amy Panek	617-448-6841	amy.panek@gmail.com
6/17	Director	Natural Resources	Kay Wagner	539-3322	cmw18@cornell.edu

Off-Board Chairs:

Co-Webmaster; Action	Linda Duttweiler	277-0006	ldutt@twcnny.rr.com
Co-Webmaster	Michael Duttweiler	277-0006	mduttweiler@twcnny.rr.com
Bulletin	Robert Silsbee	273-1436	rhs1@cornell.edu
History	Florence Smith	273-6147	fbarrthims@gmail.com

the work in ways that will result in few emissions of greenhouse gases.

The members of our committee are still developing plans for the coming year. We will continue to learn about local housing issues and possible ways to address the strong need for more affordable housing. We expect to present a program on this topic in January. There is a great deal of community involvement in environmental issues and how they connect with issues pertaining to social justice, so discussions about affordable housing are at the forefront in our county right now. While continuing to look at housing issues we will stay in touch with other current issues and events and will be keeping in close contact with our LWVNY Committee on Agriculture, Energy and the Environment.

Kay Wagner, Chair

HISTORY COMMITTEE

The History Center has supported and promoted the work of the League of Women Voters for generations and continues to be a driving force in the community wide celebration of the Women Suffrage Movement. I think the League should do something to publicly recognize and express our thanks.

Take the opportunity this month to learn about what's happening at the History Center and to offer our support:

Call [607-273-8284](tel:607-273-8284) to learn about current programs;

Visit The History Center at 401 E State St., Suite 100, Ithaca: (don't miss the LWV display);

Computer users, go to the History Center's web page <www.thehistorycenter.net>, where you can read and print the Current Happenings and sign up for the e-newsletter .

To talk a member of the History Committee and learn about the Archives, contact:

Flo Smith,
(273-6147
fbarrthims@gmail.com>

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee will be placing two nominations before you for a vote at the Annual Business Meeting on May 8:

For President: Kay Sharp;

For Secretary: Megan Nettleton.

Lory Saltzman, Chair

LWV-NYS POSITION ON CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Albany, New York (March 27, 2017) – The League of Women Voters of New York State announced today its support for calling a New York State Constitutional Convention. On November 7, 2017, New Yorkers will have an opportunity, which occurs only once every 20 years, to call for a Constitutional Convention to be convened in 2019 to consider changes to the New York State Constitution. Any proposed changes recommended by the Convention would be subject to voter approval.

“New York State’s political leaders have failed for the past two decades to enact meaningful reform and make democracy work in our state,” said Dare Thompson, President of the League. “In this 100th anniversary year of women getting the vote in New York State, New Yorkers will be able to send a strong message that they are fed up with corruption and dysfunction in Albany.”

A Constitutional Convention would provide New Yorkers the opportunity to consider critical reforms that Albany has refused to undertake, including in the areas of:

Voting reforms, bringing New York’s elections into the 21st century

Rooting out corruption, including reducing the influence of money in our political system and instituting an effective ethics enforcement agency

Fair legislative redistricting, completely removed from sitting legislators

Streamlining and modernizing our court system, making it more effective

Reinforcing and strengthening our bill of rights, guaranteeing our personal freedoms and meeting our basic human needs.

If voters approve the Constitutional Convention question in 2017, a total of 189 delegates from State Senate districts and 15 at-large delegates will be elected in November 2018. “The League believes it is important that voters choose delegates who will embody change,” said Ms. Thompson. “We will work with other groups in New York State to strengthen the delegate selection process to ensure the election of an informed and diverse group of delegates committed to fundamental reform.”

NEW YORK STATE’S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION – ARE YOU DELEGATE MATERIAL?

This is the second article in a series to educate members and the public about important aspects of the proposed Constitutional Convention. Next month’s article will address issues that might be considered. The summary below is taken from the materials provided by the NYS League of Women Voters.

IF, in November 2017, voters approve the proposal to have a constitutional convention in 2019, success of that convention will largely depend on the work of the delegates elected in November of 2018.

Who Can Be A Delegate?

Any New Yorker can run to become a delegate and, ideally, the delegate selection process will encourage people from all professions and backgrounds to run. The League’s long-standing position is that delegates should represent all racial and ethnic backgrounds, education levels, and occupations. However, the delegates at past conventions mostly have been legislators, judges, lawyers, and academics. **Thus, one of the major concerns is achieving a representative delegation.**

How Would Candidates for Delegate Qualify to Appear on the 2018 Ballot?

Access to the ballot is prescribed in state election law. Current laws include campaign finance regulations, signature requirements for petitions and the content of petitions. Candidates who wish to appear on an established party primary ballot need to submit

petitions with at least 1,000 signatures or 5% of the enrolled party’s voters residing in their district. Candidates running as independents will need 3,000 signatures or 5% of the votes cast in the district in the last gubernatorial election. Statewide at-large positions require 15,000 signatures. State party committees also have the power to appoint delegates at-large. The at-large candidates are listed using slate voting. Slate voting forces voters to vote for the candidates within a given party. **Reformers claim that getting on the ballot is too complicated and discourages many citizens from running. They also dislike slate voting. If the ballot proposal for a convention is passed in fall of 2017, the legislature could pass new statutes that might affect the delegate selection process.**

What Would the Delegates Do?

Once the convention begins delegates determine how they wish to decide leadership positions, how and when they will hold public hearings, seating arrangements for delegates, and their weekly schedules. Committees may be created and be charged with addressing certain aspects of the Constitution such as judicial, environmental, educational, or legislative issues. Their proposed changes and additions will be voted on by the entire convention before submitted to the public. **No mandatory procedure guidelines exist – a situation that in the past has caused conflict since the majority party was able to assign the leadership positions.**

Historically, New York has organized a convention commission before the vote on the ballot question. Such a commission is charged with educating the legislature, executive, and public and can make recommendations to the delegates of how they should precede, what rules they should put in places, and what issues they should address. The Commission can also recommend changes that can be passed by the legislature. Governor Cuomo has expressed interest in forming a commission and supporting a convention but he has yet to dedicate the funds for it.

Charlotte Coffman

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON

SENATORS:

Kirsten E. Gillibrand 202-224-4451 e-mail and web-site: www.gillibrand.senate.gov

Charles E. Schumer 202-224-6542; senator@schumer.senate.gov ; www.schumer.senate.gov

REPRESENTATIVES:

Tom Reed 202-225-3161; 607-654-7566; e-mail and web-site: reed.house.gov

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN ALBANY

SENATORS

James Seward 518-455-3131; 607-758-9005 www.nysenate.gov/senator/james-l-seward

51st—Towns of Groton, Dryden, Caroline, Danby

Pamela Helming 518-455-2366, 315-568-9816 helming@nysenate.gov

54th—Town of Lansing

Thomas O'Mara 518-455-2091; 607-735-9671 www.nysenate.gov/senator/thomas-f-omara

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

League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

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