
LWV Chautauqua County
PO Box 42
Fredonia, New York 14063

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The Leaguer

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January –February, 2017

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
lwv@lwvchautauqua.org, 672-4275

Understanding the Transgender Community
February 8th at Noon
Clarion Hotel

Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act

The **Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA)** is a proposed New York law which adds gender identity and expression as a protected class in the state's human rights and hate crimes laws, prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and other areas, and providing enhanced penalties for bias-motivated crimes. It was first introduced in both the Assembly and Senate in 2003 and has been passed for the 8th time in the Assembly since 2007, but has never come to a vote on the floor of the State Senate. It is promoted as a priority of Empire State Pride Agenda, which previously promoted the SONDA law, which was enacted into law in 2003.

From Wikipedia



Dr. Boerner serves as the Chief Diversity Officer for the State University of New York At Fredonia. In this role he oversees the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and has Affirmative Action, Title IX, and ADA compliance responsibilities. Dr. Boerner has an extensive background in Student Affairs Administration and Social Justice education. He received his BA in Social Science from Keene State College, an MA in Education from the University of Connecticut, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Johnson & Wales University.

A native of New England, Dr. Boerner presents regularly on topics related to identity, Social Justice, inclusion, LGBTQA issues, understanding bias, and navigating transitions.

Dr. Bill Boerner, CAAP
Chief Diversity Officer & Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Title IX Coordinator, Affirmative Action Officer, & ADA Compliance Officer
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Understanding the Transgender Community
February 8th at Noon
The Clarion Hotel

Traditional Club Sandwich

Crisp Bacon, turkey, ham, lettuce, tomato, and cheese served on your choice of bread

Bacon Cheese Burger - A 1/3 lb. patty flamed broiled on a toasted Kaiser Roll

Sliced tomato, leaf lettuce, crisp bacon, and pickle

Beef on Weck - Slow roasted choice of sirloin served with au jus

Smoked Chicken Sandwich - Marinated grilled chicken breast, pepper jack cheese, sriracha mayo, lettuce and tomato

Chicken Caesar Salad - Char-Broiled Boneless Chicken Breast served on a bed of romaine lettuce Caesar Dressing, Parmesan Cheese and adorned with Croutons

Souvlaki salad - Chicken, Tomato, Olives, cucumbers, feta cheese, mixed greens, greek vinaigrette dressing, and pita points

All entrees include dessert. \$15

Please send selection and payment to: Marcia Merrins, 42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia, NY 14063
If you would like to attend the program only, please contact Marcia at 672-4275,
mmerrins@netsync.net to reserve a place.

Name _____

Phone _____ email _____

From Our New President...

Greetings! The coming year will be challenging! My goal is to *keep up the good work*. My predecessors have been some of the most competent people in our community and I can't say enough about the work that they have done.

Our January 'hot topic' was a presentation of "A Roadmap for Central Avenue" or "The Central Connection" for Dunkirk, Fredonia and the State University of New York at Fredonia. Dr. Virginia Horvath, President of Fredonia, gave a wonderful overview of the endeavor. Central Avenue connects Dunkirk, the University, and Fredonia and is uniquely positioned within Chautauqua County to take advantage of many connections to the region as a whole. The undertaking is an attempt to develop a long-term vision for the Central Avenue corridor. Some of the goals of the project are to focus on economic development within this existing historic corridor and downtowns to create a vibrant and pedestrian oriented place and to capitalize on the waterfront as an economic driver that can fuel local businesses. What is needed are fresh faces from all the communities to join in this project. There are existing cooperative ventures but they need to be expanded to take advantage of our strong recreational, cultural, arts, and trail systems, to name a few of our assets. If you are interested in the 'Central Connection' please contact mcroxtton51@gmail.com to

Warmly, *Mary Croxton, President*

Minda Rae Amiran, Priscilla Bernatz, Gen Ludemann, Marcia Merrins, Judy Reynolds, Rose Sebouhian, Linda Warner



LWVNY Capitol Beat Blog

By Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Lobbyist

The 2017 legislative session is officially underway and what a better way to start the new session than with two totally opposing opening remarks from our legislative leaders. While Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie highlighted the bipartisan nature of his house and the Assembly's willingness to work with the Senate, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan swore to keep his house independent. How will this shake out in the upcoming session? Only time will tell.

Heastie highlighted education, health care, and reproductive choice as his top priorities for this session. Flanagan made several remarks about Upstate jobs and the moderate successes of Start Up NY and the Regional Development Council. Much of his speech appeared to be digs at the Governor. The Assembly finished their session rather quickly while the Senate lingered until 3:00pm debating the lack of Democrats on the Senate Ethics Committee and a new rule change that would ban Senators from using their phones to take photos or videos while in the Senate Chamber. The general public has already been barred from using cell phones while in the galleries but now the rule applies to Senators and the press alike.

The day ended with countless receptions held throughout the Capital. We spoke to many members and found that legislators regardless of party expressed anger over the Governor's meddling in the Wage Commission which had been set up to be outside of the political haggling. That feeling seemed to shadow the first day of the session as well as the feeling that the Governor had disrespected the legislature's rightful position by moving the State of the State outside of the Capitol. There was also among many members, a veiled threat of budget negotiations being impaired by this level of animosity between the executive and legislative chambers.

League's State Convention Is Coming!

The 57th State League Convention is scheduled for June 10 - 11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Express in Liverpool, NY (just off the Thruway near Syracuse).

LWVNYS will be sending out the registration kits in February.

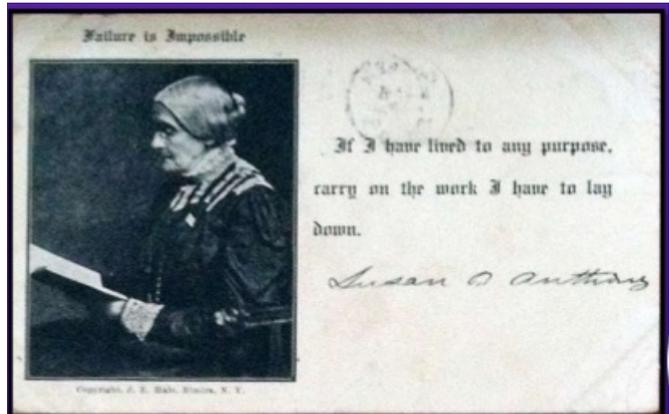
Field Trip!

To celebrate women achieving the right to vote in 1917 in NYS, the state League is organizing a field trip from Liverpool to Seneca Falls on

Friday, June 9 (day before Convention actually begins). This is will a separate charge and everyone is welcome (not just convention attendees); tours of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home,

Women's Hall of Fame and the Women's Rights National History Park (and Wesleyan Chapel), as well as dinner and a speaker at an historic restaurant in Seneca Falls, will be included.

You will need to be in Liverpool by noon on Friday to join this trip. Watch for more information in the registration kit.



100th Anniversary Dates

November 6, 2017 - 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in NYS

November 19, 2019 - 100th Anniversary of the LWVNYS

February 14, 2020 - 100th Anniversary of the LWVUS

August 20, 2020 - 100th Anniversary of the Official Certification of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment by the US Secretary of State

At this time of great division in our country, many have said that we need to reach out to one another, to break horrible stereotypes on both sides and see where we have common ground.

As a very small step here in the north County, the Voter Service Committee of the League is sponsoring a meeting among a few people who voted for Trump and a few who voted for Hillary. The meeting has not yet been set.



If you would like to join in a respectful conversation or know a voter who might, please call Minda Rae Amiran at 679-4636 or e-mail amiran@fredonia.edu.

From the Observer
By Peter Galie and Christopher Bopst.

STATE REFORM BEGINS WITH CONSTITUTION

The U.S. Constitution is the closest thing to a sacred text allowed in a secular republic. It is treated with reverence, stored in a helium-filled, temperature-controlled case that is lowered every night into a waterproof, fireproof and bombproof vault.

Like Holy Writ, the Constitution also enjoys a near immutability. Deemed “functionally unamendable” by some scholars, it has been altered only 17 times since the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791. Recent calls for the abolition of the Electoral College are certain to fall by the wayside, joining the over 11,000 ultimately unsuccessful amendments introduced in Congress during that time.

New York state also has a constitution; in fact, the state has had four of them. Though far less known and appreciated than the U.S. Constitution, the New York state Constitution has much more to say about our daily lives than its federal counterpart in such areas as voting, education, state and local finances, care for the needy and the mentally ill, and the environment. Moreover the state’s constitution gives New Yorkers the power to control their own destiny by establishing rights not recognized by the U.S. Constitution and instituting public policies independent of the actions of the federal government.

More responsive to the popular will than the U.S. Constitution, the current New York Constitution has been amended 228 times since its adoption in 1894. It can be amended two ways: by legislative amendment, which requires passage by two consecutively-elected legislatures and then approval by the voters or by a constitutional convention, the work of which also requires later voter approval. Our state constitution requires that voters be asked every 20 years whether they wish to go the constitutional convention route. That question will next appear on the ballot on Nov. 7, 2017.

To the extent New Yorkers are dissatisfied with the policies of the federal government, a state constitutional convention is our opportunity to reaffirm and extend our constitutional tradition of compassion, diversity and individual liberty. A “yes” vote on the con-con question puts New York’s future in the hands of New Yorkers. If we fail to act we will not have another opportunity until 2037. Can we afford to wait? So what changes could the convention expect to make? It is hard to say for certain, but here is a partial list of issues a convention would be expected to discuss:

- Term limits for members of the legislature or legislative leaders to prevent the accumulation of unchecked power by a small group of individuals.
- An independent redistricting commission to prevent gerrymandering of any kind and to make sure the voters choose their representatives, not vice versa.
- A constitutionally created ethics commission with the power to prosecute violations of state ethics laws unencumbered by the need for legislative or gubernatorial approval.
- A streamlined state judiciary that could save the state an estimated \$500 million per year currently wasted on inefficiencies.
- A thorough revision of public finance provisions originally adopted before the Civil War when the state had one-sixth of its current population.
- Stronger constitutional requirements to educate our youth, take care of our mentally ill and protect our natural resources; and
- New amendment methods that would provide means to achieve constitutional revision that do not depend on the whims of the legislature.

The New York State Constitution needs much work, and the state faces a crisis in governance. New Yorkers have the power to set the wheels of change in motion next November by calling a constitutional convention. A convention would provide us the opportunity to move in a direction of our own choosing and give our constitution “pride of place” consistent with our sobriquet as the “Empire State.”

Peter Galie is professor emeritus at Canisius College in Buffalo and Christopher Bopst is chief legal and financial officer at Sam-Son Logistics in Buffalo. They are co-authors of “The New York Constitution” (Oxford Press, 2012) and co-editors, along with Gerald Benjamin, of “New York’s Broken Constitution: The Governance Crisis and the Path to Renewed Greatness” (SUNY Press,

TO EDUCATE YOURSELF FURTHER ABOUT THIS ISSUE PLEASE GO TO THE LWVNY'S WEBSITE. <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/con-con-edu.html> YOU WILL FIND A **POWER POINT** AND EXCELLENT BACKGROUND MATERIALS

LWVNYS Voting Reform Priorities for 2017

“Opt-Out” Voter Registration

LWVNYS recommends that New York State adopt an opt-out system of voter registration (also known as automatic voter registration).

- It increases the accuracy of the rolls, because paperless systems leave less room for human error and because more up-to-date and frequent registration information from voters means outdated or duplicate records can be eliminated;
- It saves states money because less is spent on staff time, paper processing, and mailing, among other expenses; and
- It boosts registration rates and turnout.

Implement Electronic Poll Books Statewide

LWVNYS 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 the processing of voters at the polls on Election Day.

Implement Early Voting in New York State

New York is one of only fourteen states that does not allow early or no-excuse absentee voting.

- Early voting should occur for two weeks inclusive of two weekends, with at least some weekday voting hours scheduled before and after typical business hours.
- In advance of the first day of the early voting period, each county should provide public notice of the days, hours and locations for early voting in that county.
- Revisions of election procedures should be implemented to limit costs of early voting, and mechanisms should be implemented to ease administrative burdens, such as the use of electronic poll books.

Revise New York’s Laws to Make Ballots More Voter-Friendly

New York’s arcane ballot design rules should be revised so that New York voters can vote on ballots that are easy to read and understand. Design standards will assist counties in designing ballots that deliver clear instructions, demarcate races and candidates effectively, and eliminate “split contests” where candidates for a single office spill over onto more than one row, increasing the risk of inadvertent overvotes.

Poll Workers Recruitment/Training and Websites

LWVNYS strongly urges state and county boards of elections to work together to develop ways to increase and diversify the number of poll workers, and improve their training. LWVNYS urges county boards of elections to take advantage of the 2010 election law amendment allowing split shifts for poll workers. Urban county boards of election should develop programs for recruiting municipal workers – and high school and college students – to serve as poll workers. We recommend that poll workers be trained to assist voters with ballot marking devices so all voters can vote privately and independently.

LWVNYS believes that all New York county boards of elections should have websites that are maintained all year and offer access to election information for county residents.

Additional reform measures:

- Make registration portable so voters who submit required information to government officials stay on the rolls when they move within the state or change their names.
- Create an Election Day fail-safe to allow a voter who registers at a government agency, but whose name does not appear on the voter registration list, to cast a ballot that counts.
- Shorten the deadline for registration to ten days before an election.
- Allow pre-registration of 16 and 17 year-olds to vote; research indicates that this reform can help to create life-long voters.
- Expand the current DMV program to permit all eligible voters to register over the internet.
- Provide state funding for modernizing voter registration, including internet registration and electronic transmission by agencies, in the state budget.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FEBRUARY 8 NOON
LUNCHEON AT THE CLARION HOTEL

Topic: TRANSGENDER ISSUES Reservations,
Marcia Merrins, 42 Rosalyn Ct., Fredonia, NY 14063
672-4275 mmerrins@netsync.net

FEBRUARY 13 1:30 pm
6 Ventura Circle, Fredonia

Board Meeting at Rose Sebouhian's , 672-5227
rosesebouhian@netsync.net

MARCH 22 NOON
Barlow's Mill

Topic: "WHAT'S IN YOUR GARBAGE PAIL?"
Reservations. Perce Bernatz,
68 Lambert Ave., Fredonia, 14063 673-1961
priscilla@mainalley.com

APRIL 26 NOON
LUNCHEON AT MOONBROOK CC

Topic: New York State Constitutional Convention:
Promise or Peril?"

MAY 17

ANNUAL MEETING – Celebrating the 100th
Anniversary of NYS Suffrage for Women

MAY 21 – 24

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

lww@lwwchautauqa.org, 672-4275



The League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

Invite a Friend to Join or Give the Gift Of League Membership!!

Make Your Voice Heard!
Join Us Today!

League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County Management Team

- Mary Croxton, President
- Minda Rae Amiran
- Priscilla Bernatz
- Gen Ludemann
- Marcia Merrins
- Judy Reynolds
- Rose Sebouhian
- Linda Warner

Membership Form

Mail to:

LWV Chautauqua

P.O. Box 42 Fredonia, NY 14063

Membership Dues: through December 31, 2017 Individual: \$60; Family: \$90; Student: \$25 (Check payable to LWV Chautauqua County)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

I would like to get involved with:

_____ Local Issues _____ Voter Service _____ State/National Issues

_____ Local Newsletter

_____ Assisting with minor tasks occasionally

Other: _____