

THE ROAD TO THE VOTING BOOTH

Part I

A Handbook for Voter Service Directors

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INTRODUCTION

It is Voter Service activities that usually come to mind when people think of the League of Women Voters: voter registration drives, candidate forums and debates, Voters Guides. The League is perceived as the most dependable source of factual, unbiased information about the candidates, the ballot issues, and the intricacies of the voting system. ***The Road to the Voting Booth: A Handbook for Voter Service Directors*** is written as a guide for local League Boards and Voter Service Directors as you strive to provide nonpartisan information and services to voters and to increase citizen participation in government.

In compiling this publication, no effort has been made to divide Voter Service projects for large or small Leagues. The main thrust is to provide all local Leagues in New York State with as much information as possible so you can pick and choose which activities will be successful with the League resources available in your area.

To a large extent, Voter Service is synonymous with citizen education, but an important by-product is heightened visibility for your League, which in turn leads to increased membership and financial support.

Marguerite Wells, third president of the LWVUS, said, "...within the first few years of its existence the League found itself committed to no lesser purpose than to help make the democratic government in the United States a success." A rather large order! But as you plan your Voter Service activities, don't let the sense of inadequacy overwhelm you, for one League (or even all the Leagues together) obviously can't do it all. You will find, however, that Voter Service is one of LWV's most rewarding portfolios.

Part II, Handbook for Candidates Meetings, and Part III, How to Conduct a Successful Voter Registration Drive, complete ***The Road to the Voting Booth*** series by focusing on the specifics of two of the most important Voter Service activities.

THE BASICS

What is Voter Service?

The primary objective of Voter Service is to encourage citizens to register and vote, and to provide them with accurate, nonpartisan information about the issues, the candidates, and the political process, which they can use as a basis for decision-making.

Voter Service activity and the visibility it provides is most intense immediately preceding elections. Leagues run and advise others how to run registration and get-out-the-vote drives; compile Election Law requirements for distribution to voters and potential candidates; sponsor candidates meetings/debates; and publish Voters Guides to disseminate information about the candidates and the ballot proposals.

Voter Service is a year-round activity, however, and during the remainder of the year, Leagues focus on citizen education: providing basic information about government and the political system for community groups and schools; publishing directories of elected officials; conducting forums on issues; setting up workshops on a variety of subjects, such as how to become involved in a political party, run for office, or become a citizen lobbyist; and monitoring local administration of the Election Law.

Nonpartisanship

The League of Women Voters as an organization does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Annually, every local League Board draws up specific guidelines for implementing this nonpartisan policy within its own community. It is the responsibility of the Voter Service Director and the Board to maintain the League's nonpartisanship. Some Leagues' policies are stricter than others, but **at the very least, the Voter Service Director and the President must sever partisan political connections for the duration of the term**—no endorsements, no campaign contributions, no buttons, bumper stickers, or partisan letters to the editor. For some, this separation is a burden; for others, a welcome respite!!

The League of Women Voters does support or oppose legislation after serious study and substantial agreement among its members. This does not conflict with the nonpartisan policy. Problems can arise, especially when the League supports or opposes a ballot proposal. It is improper to insert League position materials into your Voter Guide, or to have such material available at candidates meetings. The purpose of Voter Service material is to provide objective information on all sides of an issue, not to promote League positions. Promoting League positions is the responsibility of Issues and Action Directors. Leave the job to them! If asked, of course, tell people what our positions are.

Political parties, factions within parties, candidates, and issues must be treated in an unbiased way if the League is to maintain its credibility and reputation for fairness.

(See **In League in New York State: A Guide for Managing Local Leagues** (both LWNYS and LWVUS) for discussions of nonpartisan policy. These can be found on their respective websites: lwny.org and lww.org.

Getting Started

Directing Voter Service is one of the most enjoyable and challenging assignments you can have. You have one of the most visible roles and the responsibility to preserve the League's reputation for credibility and nonpartisanship. You will develop and use skills in administration, interpersonal and group relations, public relations, speaking, writing, and research, all of which will be invaluable to you personally.

Because so much Voter Service activity takes place in a short period of time, a director's feelings often fluctuate between panic and guilt – panic because there is so much to do, and guilt because there is much more that needs to be done. To avoid these extremes, careful and early planning is essential.

- Meet with your predecessor as soon as possible after assuming the job. Discuss details that are specific to the portfolio, ask questions, and pick up the Voter Service files. If there is a job description, review it together. (See Appendix A for sample job description.) If no job description exists, begin to formulate one immediately, as it will be invaluable during your tenure and will enable you to pass one on to your successor.
- Secure all available Voter Service publications. (See Appendices B, J, and K for publications lists and for additional recommended resources.) Review the literature so that, in the midst of the election season, you will know where to find quick, accurate answers to a myriad of questions.
- Schedule a meeting with your local Elections Commissioners (in coordination with any other Leagues in your county). In addition to gathering information about what is scheduled to happen on the election scene, establishing a rapport with the commissioners will make it easier to work together for a common goal.
- Do not try to do everything yourself. Assemble a committee to meet well in advance of the first board meeting to generate ideas and help carry out assignments. Invite the Public Relations, Membership and Finance Directors:
 - The Public Relations Director will be responsible for notifying the public about Voter Service activities and ensuring that the League is given credit for its work.
 - The Membership Director can help recruit League volunteers for projects and can include Voter Service events in the League's membership development program.
 - The Finance Director can seek funding for Voter Service projects and should therefore be included in all aspects of planning and decision-making, just as the Voter Service Director should be involved in setting finance drive goals.

At the meeting, begin to formulate a calendar, keeping in mind that it is better to do one or two things well than to do a mediocre job with several activities. (See Appendix C for a sample calendar.) Think in terms of twelve months, not just the high activity months of September and October. Begin by filling in the political deadline dates that affect Voter Service: dates of the general election, primary election, school board election, town or village election; dates by which candidates must file petitions; the last day to register; the last day to enroll in a party. (Much of this information will be provided by LWVNYS.) Do this first, because these are the dates around which you have to plan your activities. Check also any League dates which have already been set.

Then:

- Examine the needs of your community for the coming year and set priorities:
 - List expected elections and issues of particular concern, such as low voter turnout in recent elections or low registration of local youth or a particularly complex or divisive ballot proposal. Use your contacts on and off the Board to find out what's going on in

the political arena: what are the hottest issues and which issues are being ignored by the media.

- Evaluate your League’s on-going activities to be sure they are still needed:
 - Are the League objectives being met?
 - Does your League enjoy these activities?
 - Is another organization successfully providing the same service?
 - Should a traditional activity be dropped if it crowds the calendar and attendance has been poor?
 - Should new activities be added to the proposed agenda?
- Assess the resources of your League (people, time and money):
 - Fortunately, Voter Service projects are generally considered to be both worthwhile and fun, so members often volunteer readily. However, you have to be very careful not to overwork those who do.
 - Consider carefully projects that will mean recruiting a lot of people, such as voter registration drives, information booths, addressing and mailing (or delivering) Voters Guides, and election reporting. Perhaps you can enlist the help of other community groups.
 - Consider projects that can be handled by only a few people although they may need detailed advance planning: candidates meetings, a newspaper questionnaire, and sale of local and/or LWVNYS Voters Guides are examples.
 - Consider “dream projects.” These are the activities you would like to do if you could: a forum on the location of the new power line or a reception for members of the Town Council, for example. Schedule them when there are no elections if possible.
 - Review the budget. Many activities will not cost money, only time; however, money will be essential for some projects. Some projects may even raise money. (See Chapter X for ideas.) Will the Board need to consider fund-raising activities? Voter Service activities are often a favored target for grants, in-kind donations, and tax-deductible contributions to the LWVNYS Education Foundation. (See below for a description of the Foundation.)
- Each Voter Service project will need a calendar of its own. Working back from the date of the actual event, write in deadlines for completing phases of the work. See Appendix C for a hypothetical time-line calendar.) The person responsible for the project needs this time-line and you should keep a copy to be able to check progress at critical times.
- At the first meeting of the Board of Directors, get approval of your proposed activities. Be prepared to answer questions and to modify your calendar if necessary.
- Keep good records to which you, yourself, can refer and for which your successor will bless you.

The LWVNYS Education Foundation

The LWVNYS Education Foundation is the tax-deductible entity of the League of Women Voters of New York State. The Foundation, formed under Section 501-c-3 of the US Internal Revenue code and the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of NYS, accepts contributions at any time. These funds are used to support educational activities of the LWVNYS. Local Leagues can also solicit tax-deductible contributions, made payable to the LWVNYEF to be used for local educational programs and projects.

Many businesses that will not donate to the League’s general operating fund, will donate to the League for a specific nonpartisan, community-related project. Some will underwrite an entire project. Donors

may be willing to increase their level of support if made aware of the tax-deductibility of their contribution to the Education Foundation.

To explore the many benefits offered to local Leagues by the Foundation, contact:
LWVNYS Education Foundation, 62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Telephone: 518-465-4162 Website: www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

All major contributions, whether from a foundation, a business, or an individual, should receive public recognition (unless the donor prefers to remain anonymous). This may be in the form of a note of appreciation on a Voter Service publication, a credit line on a printed program, or recognition from the podium.

What LWVNYS Provides for You

- Memoranda in ***State Board Reports*** on important and timely subjects concerning registration, voting, and election law;
- Current year dates and deadlines for registration and voting;
- Information on statewide candidates and Congressional candidates, questions for New York State Legislative candidates (See Chapter VII, Interacting with Candidates.);
- An opportunity to purchase the annual ***State Voters Guides*** which contain information about registration and voting procedures, explanations of ballot proposals, including pro and con arguments, and information about candidates running for statewide office;
- Speakers Notes, which contain detailed information and sample speeches for use in the preparation of Voter Service speeches;
- In-service training and workshops;
- Camera-ready copy for use as flyers that can be duplicated at a reasonable cost;
- Fund-raising advice and assistance;
- Suggested copy for Voter Service press releases and letters to the editor;
- New publications on the website available for downloading;
- A hard copy of each new publication, if requested;
- Assistance to local Leagues and Voter Service Directors. Simply write or call.
- Access to and partial underwriting for electronic Voters Guides facilities such as Smart Voter and Vote411, and training/assistance in using them.

What You Can Do for LWVNYS

- Fill out and return annual Voter Service questionnaire.
- Send newspaper clippings of your activities.
- Send reports of your successful and/or unusual projects.
- Send two copies of all publications.
- Inform LWVNYS of any unique or unusual situations you encounter so they can be shared with others in the State Board Report.

ELECTIONS

Most elections in New York State are governed by **the State of New York Election Law**. It is therefore advisable for Voter Service Directors to become familiar with it. The most current version of the Law is available on the NYS Board of Elections web site in a searchable PDF format. (Appendix E provides a quick reference to the State of New York Election Law.) For more assistance, contact the State Board of Elections.

The political calendar, set each year by the New York State Legislature, is usually built around the date of the primary. It specifies dates for parties and candidates and voters, such as party caucuses, gathering and filing petitions, and election days. A copy of this calendar is available at your county Board of Elections, as well as on the NYS Board of Elections website, many local Board of Election websites, and the LWVNYYS website.'

General Elections

A general election is held every year on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Presidential elections are held every fourth year (in a leap year). In even-numbered years, elections are held for U.S. Representatives, one third of the members of the U.S. Senate, state legislators, and some county officials. There are elections for governor, lieutenant governor, comptroller, and attorney general every four years. Most local officials are elected in odd-numbered years. Judges may be elected at any election depending on the expiration of their terms. State and local ballot proposals may also appear on the ballot at any election.

Primary Elections

Primaries are party elections. They are held in New York State only when there is a contest within a party for nomination as a candidate to a public office or for election to a party office. Where there is no contest, there is no primary.

The primary is usually held on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September. The legislature occasionally changes the date by amending the Election Law. The timing of the primary has important political implications: a late primary is thought to benefit incumbents; early primaries are preferred by challengers who need time to become known. In presidential election years, an additional primary is held in the spring for the election of delegates to the national nominating conventions which take place in mid-summer.

Only enrolled party members may vote in that party's primary election.

Special Elections

When someone in office dies or resigns, a special election may be held to fill the vacancy. In those cases, the governor sets the date for the special election.

Village Elections

Village elections are usually held on the third Tuesday in March. Village residents who are registered with their county Board of Elections are eligible to vote. In some villages, there may be a village registration day.

School District Elections

School elections and annual meetings are governed by the New York State Education Law rather than the Election Law. They are usually held in May. In central and union-free school districts, school budgets must be submitted to the voters. Members of all Boards of Education are elected except for members of the New York City Department of Education and the Yonkers Board of Education, who are appointed.

Some school districts do not require voter registration; others have special registration for their own elections and use voter registration lists from the local Board of Elections. Absentee voting for School Board candidates is allowed only in those districts which require voter registration. The same voting requirements (except for the registration requirement) pertain to school elections as to general elections. (See Appendix B)

Voting Qualifications

To be eligible to vote in NYS, you must be:

- A United States citizen;
- 18 years old by Election Day;
- A resident of your county, city, town or village for at least 30 days preceding Election Day;
- Registered to vote with the Board of Elections in your county of residence.

Also, you cannot be in jail or on parole for a felony conviction, and you cannot claim the right to vote elsewhere.

Ex-felons who have been pardoned or restored to the rights of citizenship by the governor, or whose maximum sentence of imprisonment has expired, or who have been discharged from parole may register and vote.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Registration: A License to Vote

Article 5 of the State of New York Election Law governs voter registration. In New York State, citizens may not vote unless they are registered in the county of their residence.

Nobody can be forced to vote on Election Day. The League's job is to encourage the informed use of the franchise. In addition, the League works for registration of all citizens of voting age. Voter registration drives are one of the League's most highly visible and recognized ways to pursue that goal.

It is important to remember that League members do not register people to vote; rather, League members assist citizens in completing mail registration forms which are then processed by the Board of Elections.

For an in-depth discussion of voter registration drives, see *The Road to the Voting Booth, part III, How to Conduct a Successful Voter Registration Drive*.

"Motor Voter" Law

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 was designed to make registering to vote more convenient and accessible to more citizens. It had a significant effect on voter registration, but it did not replace the League's voter registration activities.

Planning for the Year*

Your Board of Directors, the Voter Service committee, and the subcommittee on voter registration should begin the year with an assessment of local conditions, considering these issues:

- What percentage of the population is registered in your county, city, or town?
- Which groups are under-represented on the voter rolls?
- Which groups need extra encouragement and assistance?
- Who else conducts regular voter registration drives in your area? Can efforts be coordinated?
- Should your League use a people-to-people approach with high visibility and a large crew of workers, or a program that is less labor-intensive, saving resources for voter education projects?
- How can voter registration coordinate with other League activities?

Voter Registration and Public Relations

Because a voter registration drive is a public event, organizers should make sure that the League looks its best. Keep in mind that every contact with the public is also an opportunity to further other League goals such as public relations, membership, and fund-raising.

League members should be prepared to answer questions and challenges about League activities. They should understand the distinction between the League's citizen education activities and its advocacy activities and never undertake both at the same time. To adhere to the League's nonpartisan policy, display only educational League publications such as the *LWVNYS Voters Guides*, but never advocacy materials such as the *LWVNYS Legislative Agenda* or League statements supporting or opposing ballot proposals.

Another excellent opportunity to spotlight the League is by mounting a media campaign to publicize registration deadlines. This is most easily accomplished by writing letters to the editor and op-ed

pieces. You may also want to consider public service announcements on radio and TV and talk show appearances, as well as posters in public areas, and notices on your website.

Getting Out The Vote*

Conducting voter registration drives and educating voters on the issues are only two-thirds of the job. Some will need reminding, encouragement, persuasion, and even physical assistance with the act of voting itself. Work with your Board of Directors and Publicity Director on an approach that is appropriate to your local needs. It may be possible to join forces with other respected organizations on a get-out-the-vote effort.

Consider the use of editorials, letters to the editor, ads (include your League telephone number, email address and website), posters, call-in shows, public service announcements on radio and TV, stuffers in bills, messages on grocery bags, banners across the main street, flyers, and even door-to-door, person-to-person contact.

You can produce a flier that explains how to vote by absentee ballot. This is especially appropriate in college towns. Keep the League telephone staffed in the final days before the election to help voters through obstacles that they find frustrating or intimidating.

In emphasizing the seriousness of voting, don't forget to spice your efforts with that aspect of voting that is funny and fun. The positive, light-hearted approach is often the more powerful.

VOTING SYSTEMS

New York State first used a mechanical voting machine for an election in 1892, in Lockport. The inventor was Jacob Myers, a safe maker from Rochester, New York. Until 2010, the basic concept of the voting machine had remained relatively unchanged. As a result of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), however, things changed significantly. The old lever machines, which were inaccessible to many disabled persons and which did not comply with several federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirements, were replaced in NYS by paper ballots and optical scanning equipment. In addition every NYS polling places has at least one ballot marking device (BMD) that makes it possible for individuals with disabilities to vote independently and privately. To see the machines, go to the NYS Board of Election's equipment information website at www.vote-ny.com.

In general, delegates to the 2004 National Convention voted to revise the LWVUS position on voting technology to state that any system chosen must be **secure, accurate, recountable and accessible**. In March 2005, the LWVNYS board voted to support the use of optical scan voting systems, a type of electronic voting in which voters record their votes on paper ballots either with a marking instrument (pen or pencil) or a ballot marking device for persons with disabilities and those with different language requirements. Both types of paper ballots are then counted by an optical scanner. Subsequently, at the 2006 National Convention, the LWVUS position was expanded to affirm that LWVUS supports only voting systems that have a voter-verifiable paper ballot that can be verified by the voter while still in the process of voting and can be verified by an independent hand count of the ballots.

Types of Voting Machines

While voters in NYS use paper ballots and optical scanning equipment, there are different models of machines, and they will change over time. Voting machines must be approved by the State Board of Elections. All voting machines in NYS are purchased, owned and maintained by the counties.

Optical scan voting systems use electronic technology to tabulate paper ballots. An optical scan system is made up of computer-readable paper ballots, appropriate marking devices for accessible voting, privacy booths, and a computerized tabulation device. The paper ballot lists the names of the candidates and the issues. Voters record their choices using an appropriate writing instrument (or ballot marking device) to fill in boxes or ovals. Ballots are tabulated at the polling place or precinct by optical-mark-recognition equipment which counts the ballots by sensing or reading the marks on the ballots.

NYS also requires that a voting system be equipped with a voter-verified paper audit trail system which allows the voter to preview the ballot before casting it. It does not provide a receipt for the voter to take away. This feature is intended to provide voters and/or election officials with an opportunity to check what is printed against what is recorded and displayed. In an optical scan system, the paper ballot meets this requirement

Ballots

All ballots are printed in English; however, they are also printed in Spanish, Chinese or Korean in counties where the population speaking those languages reaches the threshold set by the federal Voting Rights Act.

Order of Parties on a Ballot

The number of votes cast for governor in the last gubernatorial election determines the placement of each party on the ballot. The party which received the most votes has the first position. This is not necessarily the party of the incumbent governor because the outcome of the election may have been determined by a combination of votes on more than one line. Offices are listed on the machine in the order of the size of their District with the President/Vice-President or Governor/Lieutenant Governor in columns one and two, other statewide offices next, and so on, with the smallest districts last. Election commissioners can exercise discretionary power in positioning local offices; practices may differ in different parts of the state.

Security

Your vote is secret, and poll workers are not permitted to view your ballot for any reason unless you give them permission. Private voting booths and privacy sleeves are provided at the polling place.

Counting the Votes

When the polls close, the scanners' record of the vote is transmitted to the Board of Elections. The results from the tally performed after the polls close are unofficial. The Board of Elections certifies results at a later date including the absentee ballots.

How to Use Voting Machines

Check with your Board of Elections for specific instructions regarding the operation of the voting machines used in your locality. The equipment is simple to use, and poll workers have been trained to assist voters in using it; be sure to request their assistance if you are not clear about the new process. Voters who need to because of disability, or who wish to, may use the Ballot Marking Device.

There is provision on the paper ballot for write-in candidates. It is very important to spell the name of a write-in candidate correctly. If you know you intend to write-in, bring a piece of paper with the name of your write-in candidate on it so you can spell it correctly. (A write-in vote for someone whose name appears on the ballot will not be counted.)

At the polls, voters are given a pre-printed paper ballot with a "privacy sleeve" (which allows poll workers to help you, if necessary, without being able to read your ballot). Voters complete the paper ballot in a privacy booth, then carry it (within a privacy folder) to an optical scanner, where it is scanned, the vote is counted, and it drops into a locked container. Ballots with write-ins drop into a separate section to allow the write-ins to be counted. If errors are made, the voter can request a new ballot before going to the scanner. Over-votes and under-votes are picked up by the scanner and the voter has the opportunity to change them.

DEMONSTRATIONS

One of the major reasons that people do not vote is ignorance of how to use the voting machine. Except for Boards of Elections, nobody knows more about the voting process than the League of Women Voters. Local Leagues can provide a vital service to the community by educating citizens about how to use the voting machine. This can be done via talks to community organizations or via a mobile demonstrator firmly anchored in a van or truck with scheduled stops at shopping centers in your area. It can also be done when registering high school students in the spring. Work with your Board of Elections to help select and publicize demonstration sites. Be sure that League members are fully trained in the operation of the voting machine used in your locality.

Take care not to talk down as you demonstrate the voting machine. Most people are embarrassed about not knowing how to vote. Giving potential voters a preview of the Election Day ballot can stimulate voter curiosity, and is a good way to begin. The best demonstration is one which gets the onlooker to use the machine. If the demonstration is not performed at election time, try using the machine as a public opinion poll by placing issues of community interest in the ballot proposal slots. Have the candidate section offer a choice of famous people, not necessarily politicians. Show clearly that voters can vote any way they please: a straight ticket (all candidates from one party), a split ticket (candidates from more than one party), or a write-in. Make it clear that they can vote for every office and proposal on the ballot or for as few as they like, and that being members of political parties lets them vote in their party primaries, but does not obligate them to vote for that party's candidate in November. Voting machine demonstrations are a good public relations tool, which will pay off on Election Day.

In addition, the public is interested in:

Sample Ballots

A sample ballot looks like the actual ballot as it appears on Election Day. The major disadvantage is that ballots are not printed until a few days before the election and therefore are not available until the last minute. By saving sample ballots from year to year, you can use them to demonstrate different kinds of elections. They are available from your Board of Elections.

Absentee Ballots

Voters who will be away from their counties on Election Day, or will be unable to go to their polling places because of illness or disability, can request absentee ballots from their county boards of elections, or download them from the New York State Board of Elections website. Once a county board of elections receives an application and verifies the registration of the applicant, an absentee paper ballot is sent by mail. The absentee ballot must be postmarked by the day before Election Day or hand delivered to the board of elections on Election Day. The mechanics of voting by absentee paper ballot are more complicated than voting by machine, because the voter must take great care to avoid making any mistakes. Any mark, writing, or erasure outside the voting squares or blank spaces provided for voting can void the ballot. A place for write-in votes is provided on the absentee ballot.

MONITORING THE ELECTION PROCESS

Election Violations

Responsibility for monitoring the performance of Board of Elections personnel lies with the New York State Board of Elections. In turn, this body delegates the authority for oversight of Election Day activities to local Boards of Elections. No formal violation-monitoring programs have been established by either the State or County Boards of Elections. Both are available as a clearinghouse for complaints, which can be resolved on the spot, however. In addition, the State Board of Elections will send one of its investigators to check into those complaints they consider to be valid.

Poll Watching

Local League members can be instructed through newsletter articles, email, postings on a website or a special mailing to be alert to possible Election Law violations when they go to the polls to vote. They should be encouraged to report violations they see either to the Board of Elections or to the LWV Voter Service Director.

See Appendix F for a checklist of items to be noted. The checklist can be used as an educational tool as well, by publishing it in the form of a simple flyer so that other groups and the public can become informal poll watchers also. A checklist that is used by the general public will help people become more observant and better-educated voters.

Note: According to the Election Law, formal poll watchers must be appointed by the chairperson of a political party or independent body, or by the candidates.

It may not always be possible to correct violations quickly. However, if local Leagues discover that election officials are doing all they can, within the limits of the law, to make the electoral process equitable and accessible to voters, their poll watching efforts have been worthwhile. If results are not positive, local Leagues may wish to produce a report, meet with the Election Commissioners to discuss the problems, and offer to work together to eliminate the problems.

A further step may be necessary if your local Board of Elections is not willing to admit violations or show a willingness to make needed improvements. It may be necessary to distribute the report to the New York State Board of Elections and to the public through the media. Turning the matter over to the local League's Action Committee and going to court to get compliance with the law is another possibility. These may be the most effective ways of reaching the goal.

Exit Polling

LWVUS does not oppose exit polling per se, but recommends that state and local Leagues not contract with networks to participate in them because the material gathered can be used for early projections. Exit polls are performed by a variety of organizations such as the media, political parties, pollsters, and other groups under contract to networks, etc. Data collected from these polls (sometimes as the voter leaves the polling place) are usually fed into computers for later use on a variety of topics.

As computers have become more efficient and communications systems have improved, exit-polling data provide faster, more accurate answers to a variety of questions. Not all uses of the data are bad. Voting pattern analysis, social science information, and the impact of the women's vote are excellent examples of the constructive use of exit polls. On the other hand, exit polling can be intimidating to

voters and can have an adverse effect on the election process when results are compiled and used for early projections.

Early Projections

Projections based on pre-election polls (as well as exit polls and reporting of early election results) are perceived by many as damaging to our election process. Early election results and exit polls reportedly have led to a decline of voter participation in recent presidential elections. Although the major networks continue to pledge not to report projections until all the polls in the continental U.S. close, some still find indirect ways to do so.

Since 1980, the League has been recognized as the major organization most vocal in opposition to the networks' practices. We need to be extremely careful not to participate in activities, the results of which can be used for early projections.

Election Reporting

The League's involvement in election returns should begin only when the polls close. Some local Leagues in New York State contract with news or election services to report election results. (See Chapter 10).

LWVNYS sees no conflict between LWVUS' s policy of not participating in exit polling and early projections, and League participation in key precinct reporting as long as the terms of a contract are acceptable and do not compromise League positions or goals.

INTERACTING WITH CANDIDATES

Some of the most rewarding activities for the League of Women Voters center around candidates. When Leagues sponsor candidates forums and publish Voters Guides, they expect to promote their own visibility. Frequently, however, the print media will report the forum but neglect to indicate who sponsored the event. When a League begins the initial planning for an event involving candidates, the Voter Service Committee should decide exactly what the League wants to accomplish.

Planning Events for Candidates

- Assess the election season. Who are the candidates? What elected offices will be on the ballot? Is it worthwhile to publish a Voters Guide or sponsor a candidates meeting before the primary? Before the general election?
- Assess the volunteer capability of your League. Are there enough League members to work or will the same people have to do everything? Which League members have the skills needed for success? Remember that League members are often more receptive to short-term tasks than two year commitments.
- Assess the community. Are community members likely to read a Voters Guide or attend a candidates meeting? Check on past experiences.
- Assess the candidates. Will they cooperate? Will they fill out a questionnaire, limiting themselves to the specified number of words, and return it by the deadline? If not, can the League afford the necessary personnel to gather and edit the questionnaires? Will the candidates participate in candidates meetings?
- Assess the possibility of co-sponsoring candidates meetings. Does the other organization endorse candidates or embrace a political party? Does the other organization have the ability to provide an audience, generate publicity, or lend itself in any way to the success of the activity? Will the other organization permit the League to set the ground rules? Carefully screen any organization that is a likely co-sponsor and then be prepared to sever relationships if there is a breach of faith. A co-sponsorship agreement is recommended and your Board should participate in all decisions.

Candidates Meetings

For in-depth information on candidates meetings, see *The Road to the Voting Booth, part II, Handbook for Candidates Meetings*.

Publishing a List of Candidates

One of the best community services for any League is the publication of a candidates list. This type of project must be completed in a timely fashion and should be prepared in consultation with your Board of Elections.

As soon as the candidates' filing date has passed, a list can be compiled which includes candidates' names, addresses, telephone numbers, and party affiliations. Be sure all candidates are included and that there are no typographical errors. When duplicated, this list can be widely distributed to libraries, post offices, schools, etc. Publishing a list of this nature can increase voter participation. Voters can follow the activities of their party's candidates and cast a more informed vote. Often voters will remember the smaller, less showy services of the League and thank you by requesting a list each year. This type of activity is fairly inexpensive and demands no long-term consumption of time or personnel.

Publishing a Directory of Elected and Appointed Officials

This list is much easier to prepare than a list of candidates. It can be produced as soon as the election results are official (about 25 days after Election Day). Begin with the President of the United States, then list federal, state, and local officials. Include addresses for home district offices, as well as Washington or Albany offices, telephone, and fax numbers, email addresses, websites and party affiliations. A directory such as this is informative to League members and other groups who lobby on issues, as well as to members of the general public. It can be underwritten by a grant and/or sold as a local publication, and posted on your web site. Alternatively, your web site can provide a link to lists provided on the web by other organizations.

Publishing a Local Government Brochure

Local Leagues may want to expand upon the list of elected officials by publishing a brochure on local government. Area residents often need help in finding answers to the following questions:

- What can I do to get my property assessment reduced?
- How often is the garbage collected?
- Which court will try a case involving a business debt?
- How can I get on a list for jury duty?
- Who is responsible for fixing the pothole in front of my house?
- What do I do to get a traffic light installed on a particular corner?
- Who's to blame for water in my basement after a heavy rain?

A listing of Who's In Charge can be invaluable to all residents of a community. (Appendix G lists questions that could be answered in brochure form.)

PUBLISHING A VOTERS GUIDE

The main purpose of publishing a Voters Guide is to assist voters in making informed decisions. It provides a common basis for evaluating those running for office by listing in one place all candidates for office and by asking all candidates for a particular office the same questions. Voters Guides also provide visibility for local Leagues which in turn attracts League membership and promotes fundraising ability.

League Guidelines

Because it is essential that all candidates be treated alike, the Board of Directors of LWVNYS has issued the following guidelines for use by local Leagues when publishing local Voters Guides:

- The local Board of Elections is the most reliable source of information on local ballot proposals and candidates. Local Leagues should secure preliminary information from the Board of Elections, follow local newspapers, and check with political parties.
- All candidates appearing on the ballot must be included in a Voters Guide. If, after several attempts to secure this information, it is not forthcoming, the League will include the candidate's name, party, and the office the candidate is seeking.
- Depending upon the situation, the local League will print a simple disclaimer for candidates who do not respond; i.e., "This candidate did not respond to the League's inquiry." or "This candidate chose not to respond."
- If a sample ballot is to be used in a Voters Guide, the ballot must match the ballot face that will appear on the voting machine on Election Day. Your Board of Elections may be of assistance in providing an acceptable sample ballot, if the actual ballot is not available by the Voters Guide deadline (and it almost never is.)

Following these guidelines helps to assure the public of the LWV's nonpartisanship and helps to cement the LWV's sense of fairness and its credibility in the local community.

Questions for Candidates: Who has Responsibility?

- ***Congressional Candidates***

Traditionally, the Issues Committee of LWVNYS frames questions on timely topics for candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. All questions are subject to approval by the Board of Directors of LWVNYS.

LWVNYS solicits answers from candidates for U.S. Senator and the U. S. House of Representatives.

- ***New York State Candidates***

Questions for statewide candidates (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, and Court of Appeals judges) are also handled by LWVNYS. Candidate responses are made available by LWVNYS to local Leagues. Local Leagues, however, are assigned responsibility for collecting replies from candidates for the New York State Legislature to questions suggested by LWVNYS.

- ***Local Candidates***

The local League (or County or ILO) Board of Directors decides what questions are to be asked of local candidates (mayor, county legislature, city council, school board, etc.). The local Board will also determine whether or not to send questionnaires for a particular office.

When local Leagues share candidates, activities should be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort. Where candidates are shared, a committee from all Leagues involved should be set up to frame the questions and take them to their respective boards for approval. To use board time efficiently, a small committee should decide the issues to be covered, then draft the questions for Board approval. There are some guidelines for the task:

- Be direct. Use as few words as possible.
- Do not load questions. Questions must be appropriate to ask of all candidates for a particular office.
- Avoid questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no.”
- Questions should be appropriate to the issues of the office the candidate is seeking and cover a broad range of topics.
- Word questions so that voters will learn something of the candidate’s political philosophy.
- Put a limit on the number of words to be used for responding. Let candidates know that failure to comply with the limit will result in the responses being cut off after a specified number of words. Then, if the candidate does not comply, stick to your word. (It is possible to print dashes on your questionnaire—one dash per word!)
- Be sure to provide a place for the candidate’s or the preparer’s signature, authorizing release of the answers for publication.
- In formulating questions, emphasize fairness and quality. Candidate response and the success of the publication will relate directly to the amount of thought put into the questions.

Inviting Candidates to Provide Information

As stated in the League Policy above, all candidates appearing on the ballot must be included in your Voters Guide: those representing officially recognized parties as well other candidates who have been certified by the Board of Elections.

A letter of invitation, on League stationery, should be mailed to all candidates, return receipt requested. Accompanying the letter should be:

- An explanation of the League’s intent in using the responses and the guidelines which have been established;
- Where and when the responses will be published;
- A request for biographical information, which should be limited to the essentials (A request for a current photograph is appropriate);
- A date for return of the requested information;
- The name, address, email address and/or fax number of the person to whom the questionnaire is to be returned or a self-addressed envelope.

The questionnaire should be duplicated in quantity so that two copies can be provided to each candidate. The League should retain a supply of blanks to replace undelivered and lost questionnaires. Some candidates seem to have a penchant for misplacing them.

Assign one or more League members to take responsibility for gathering, editing, and organizing the collected questionnaires. This requires persistence because typically candidates are so busy campaigning that responses are not prepared until the last moment. Deadlines for receipt of responses should be well ahead (10 days to two weeks) of the date the League must send material to the publisher.

It is desirable to keep a log in which you record:

- The date you mailed the questionnaires;
- The date you received each return;
- Each phone call, email or fax message, out-going or in-coming;
- Other contacts made.

Be sure to *provide copies of your Voters Guide to the Candidates (and to LWVNYS)*.

Publishing Candidate Information

Publishing a Voters Guide as part of your local newspaper and/or on your website are probably the least expensive and easiest ways to inform voters about the candidates, since printing and distribution can be quite costly.

Planning three months in advance of the publication date is not unreasonable when dealing with a newspaper. Work out an agreement outlining content, format, publication date, and responsibility. Advise the newspaper that the LWV's nonpartisan policy prohibits endorsement of candidates. If the newspaper will endorse candidates, make it clear that it should be done in an edition published after the Voters Guide appears. Also advise them that there should be no political advertisements on the pages where the voters guide appears.

Editors may want to be involved in drafting questions or in reviewing League-formulated questions. Leagues must be extremely careful not to let editors "strong arm" them into using questions that have a flavor of sensationalism. Some editors may request copies of the completed unedited questionnaires. If at all possible, refuse to do this. Editorial policies must be agreed upon in advance to be sure the Voters Guide is not slanted in any way.

Agree on the form of the final copy that will go from the League to the newspaper, whether by email, PDF or other format. Some newspapers favor computer disks since they lessen the chance of error and require less proofing time. League personnel must check the layout to be sure candidates' pictures, names, parties, and responses have not been mixed up in the transfer of information. Since errors in the publication will be blamed on the League, you should demand involvement in every step of the publication process. Be responsible and protect LWV's integrity.

Publishing Independently

Local Leagues rightly take special pride in their own publications. A Voters Guide, as an independent local League publication, insures that no violation of League policy will occur. You must realize, however, that enjoying the success of an excellent, independent Voters Guide takes time, personnel, and an ever increasing amount of money.

- Early planning is essential for success. Getting layout and printing estimates, formulating questionnaires, compiling candidate replies, data entry, proofreading at all stages, and planning for distribution all take time. A time-line calendar is an absolute necessity.
- The people working on such a project ensure the success of the publication. They make the critical decisions on content, printer, design, layout, deadlines, editing, publicity, and distribution. The size of the League undertaking this type of project may help determine the importance of that project to the annual activities of that League.

- Cost will depend on number of pages, quality of paper, printing, number of copies, method of distribution, and advertising. You may need to find outside funding. Tax-deductible contributions can be solicited to defray costs. Remember that this kind of project is perfect for funding from the LWVNYS Education Foundation, the tax-deductible entity of LWVNYS. (See Chapter II and Appendix D for information on writing a grant proposal.) Be sure to acknowledge contributions (as well as League editors) in your Voters Guide.
- If space permits, consider including additional information about the election and about the League of Women Voters. You may also include a request for donations to help fund the Voters Guide. (Note: If your Voters Guide is totally funded through the Education Foundation you may not solicit memberships but may include the statement, “for further information, contact...”)
- You should have your distribution plan ready before the Voters Guides arrive from the printer. (See Chapter IX for a list of distribution outlet possibilities.) Be sure to issue a press release to local newspapers, television and radio stations announcing where and when the Voters Guides will be available.
- One way to protect local League publication is by copyrighting. Especially in cases where Voter Service material is concerned, the use of the copyright helps to prevent material from being used in inappropriate ways.
- LWVNYS expects local Leagues, as well as anyone else, to obtain permission before reprinting any League publication or part of a publication.

One final note: Voters Guides can be produced for online use or in other electronic media, instead of or in addition to those in hard copy.

SPREADING THE WORK

LWVNYS and many larger Leagues maintain offices and therefore have telephone lines that can be used for election information purposes. League members can staff the telephone during the pre-election period provided they have adequate information. Materials available should include:

- A folder of instructions.
- State of New York Election Law (latest edition)
- New York State Political Calendar.
- LWVNYS Voters Guides (Parts I & II)
- NYS Legislative Reference Guide
- LWVUS and LWVNYS publications as available and pertinent at the time
- A list of local officials
- A list of candidates for the current election
- Telephone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses and websites of government agencies and political parties
- Access to polling place information and assignments by street address.

Small Leagues can set up a telephone service by:

- Installing a telephone in a member's home at election time
- Sharing a telephone number with another organization
- With permission, using a neighboring League's telephone number.

The *telephone service* should be advertised, stating the hours it is staffed. When the telephone is not staffed an answering machine can provide callers with a recorded message telling them when to call again, as well as the opportunity to leave a name and phone number for a return call. Be sure your telephone directory lists a number for the League. In many instances the telephone company will also put it under community services.

General telephone procedures:

- Answer "League of Women Voters."
- Be courteous to everyone; you are representing the League.
- Do not allow a caller to monopolize the line—other calls may be waiting. Be firm.
- If you are not sure of the correct answer, take time to check. If, after checking, the answer is still not readily available, provide another number to the caller (e.g., the Board of Elections.)
- If you think you can obtain the answer, offer to call back or ask the caller to call back at a certain time.
- Keep a log of each call, its nature, and the disposition of it. If callers provide their names and addresses for mailing purposes, keep a list that can later be used for direct mail fundraising.
- Have League literature (including the LWVNYS Voters Guides and your local Voters Guide), voter registration forms, and absentee ballot request forms available to mail out. It is also appropriate to ask callers to send a stamped self-addressed envelope, or to enclose a return envelope with the requested materials asking politely for a contribution.

In Newspapers

- *Letters to the Editor and Op-ed pieces*
Whenever your League has something important to say, consider a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece.
- *News Releases*
Press releases must be brief and concise and prepared in the proper format. They should be distributed to all newspapers and radio and TV stations. They can be used to notify the media of an event such as candidates meeting or a new telephone number set up for election information purposes, or to announce a news conference.

Some Leagues report that certain days each week are heavy news days in their communities. Before making extensive use of the news release, observe your area in an effort to determine which days (and times) the media are most likely to respond.

- *Other Ideas*
It may be possible to persuade your newspaper to publish your Voters Guide (see Chapter 8.) Although, for a number of reasons, you may prefer to publish your Voters Guide independently, news-paper publication can be the easiest, least expensive way, and probably reaches the most people.

Your newspaper may be willing to publish a daily countdown of days to registration deadlines.

With Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSAs) on radio or television (especially local cable TV) are excellent for short messages.

- *Radio*
Most radio stations will provide airtime for 10-, 20-, 30-, or 60- second messages. The shorter the message, the more likely it is to be aired. A cassette tape recording accompanied by a written script, plus a starting and ending date for airplay must be provided about 30 days before the first date a League would like to have the PSA aired. A script without a tape recording may be more likely to receive air time because, if taped by station personnel, the station is assured that the taping is done by a professionally trained voice.
- *Television*
Some TV stations are committed to community service and will assist local Leagues in videotaping PSAs, or will accept DVDs or emailed material.

A 10-second PSA is best, since that is the length most likely to be used. Leagues which pursue this kind of publicity should have a script and a clear idea of the type of visuals to be shown. A station may ask you to provide the visuals. With computerized television recording equipment, however, many stations can easily create graphics, charts, and words for visual effect. They usually prefer to use a professional voice also. In some cases, at no charge, a television station will distribute PSAs to other area TV stations.

To insure airplay, it is worthwhile to contact the stations to find out whether they are willing to air a PSA, by what date they need to receive it in order to schedule it into their programming during the desired period, and whether a specific format is required.

Distribution of Voter Service Materials

To help voters make informed choices on Election Day, the widest distribution of Voters Guides and registration and voting information is needed. Since Public Relations, Membership, and Finance Directors should be involved in the distribution phase, include them in deciding what approach, or combination of approaches, for distribution should be taken. Some methods to consider include:

- Hand-to-hand distribution by the League:
 - At booths, vote mobiles, etc.
 - At LWV membership meetings
 - At meetings of other organizations where a League member is speaking
 - Through League member enterprises in neighborhoods
- In response to requests
- Existing and built-in contacts:
 - Members, prospective members, spouses, friends, and their connections
 - Financial contributors and prospects
 - Long-time recipients of League materials
 - Cooperating groups on other ventures in the community
 - Government officials (elected and appointed) and their staffs
 - The candidates included in any of the materials
 - League business connections (stationers, printers, landlords, etc.)
- Direct mail:
 - All households in your community
 - Mailing lists of shoppers' newspapers, etc.
 - All registered voters, or households with registered voter(s)
 - New voters (newly naturalized, 18 year olds, new residents)
- House-to-house distribution (not using mailboxes):
 - Targeted locations
 - Community-wide locations
- Places where people gather or pass through (some sort of permission is usually required):
 - Banks, post offices, supermarkets, drug stores, filling stations
 - Libraries, offices of doctors, dentists, attorneys, etc.
 - Commuter railroad and bus stations
 - Churches, temples, concert halls, museums, galleries, etc.
 - YWCA, YMCA, YM/WHA, community centers, club meeting halls, etc.
 - Government offices
- Through a third party:
 - Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4H Clubs, school service clubs
 - Chamber of Commerce, Junior Chamber of Commerce
 - Business firms
 - Telephone and utility company bills
 - University mailboxes
 - PTA councils and other organizations
 - Cooperative Extension Services
 - Labor unions

- Community service clubs
- Special interest groups concerned about ballot issue(s)
- Special interest groups working for League action items
- When you can get special cooperation:
 - High schools and colleges—for teachers, personnel, and students
 - Adult education centers
 - Housing Authority tenants
 - Housing developments
 - Civil rights organizations, anti-poverty groups
 - Military posts and service clubs
 - Newspaper reprints: LWVNYS Voters Guides (with LWVNYS permission) and/or local League publications
- Newspaper advertisement paid for by a foundation or business to advertise League material
- To reach voters with special needs. These groups may require specially prepared material with large type, languages other than English, simplified text, or tape-recorded information. Initial contact should be made in the spring:
 - Hospitals and nursing homes
 - Groups serving the blind and/or deaf
 - Senior citizen centers, agencies serving the aged, Independent and Assisted-Living Facilities
 - And so on!!

Voter Service Information Sites

Distributing voter service information is a good activity for involving new members and members who have little time. (It is also a natural activity to combine with voter registration, but if you do this, be sure to have at least one trained League member present. ***See The Road to the Voting Booth, Part III, How to Conduct a Successful Voter Registration Drive.*** In addition to using your web site, consider the following:

- Analyze the geographic area of your League and choose several locations in different parts of the territory where there is a concentration of pedestrian traffic.
- Contact several local merchants for permission to set up tables outside or just inside their business establishments.
- Contact local colleges and universities. They will often offer space within college union buildings, cafeterias or corridors outside classrooms.
- Settle on one or two days preceding the voter registration deadline.
- Try to have two people at each table at all times. Usually, members are asked to serve one two-hour shift.
- Have a table and two chairs at the location ahead of time. (Some merchants will store them for a short period.)
- In advance, pick up your supply of literature. Maps or directions to locate polling places are of tremendous help to voters. If this type of information is not available, have the phone number of your Board of Elections, so that voters can inquire there.
- Make signs to attract attention.

Speakers Bureaus

The League is often asked to speak to groups on a variety of topics. Therefore, many Leagues organize a Speakers Bureau made up of members who can speak effectively on a variety of topics. It is imperative to remember that in the area of Voter Service, topics must be approached in a strictly nonpartisan manner.

Speakers Bureaus do not exist solely for Voter Service; they should encompass as many topics as possible in which the League has an interest. The general public associates the League of Women Voters with elections, however, and there is usually a great demand for clarification of election information. Of course, Voter Service is multi-faceted, so there is a wealth of material that can be used at any time of the year.

A Speakers Bureau can be an important factor in improving public relations, generating publicity, recruiting new members, and producing income. If your League has never had a Speakers Bureau, begin by planning on a modest scale. Success will provide the stimulus for growth. To increase the talent pool, Speakers Bureaus can also be created by a network of local Leagues.

Composition of a Speakers Bureau

A Speakers Bureau is usually made up of a core group of seasoned League members knowledgeable about Voter Service, program issues, and action. New League members can also be a vital part of a Speakers Bureau. It may be desirable for speakers to work as a team, with the experienced League member acting as a resource person. The team approach will also enable the new person to understand the important distinction between a nonpartisan talk and an impassioned debate on a high priority action item. Speakers' notes are speeches prepared by LWVNYS that the new speaker can deliver with a minimum amount of background knowledge.

Maintaining a File System

Above all, members of the Speakers Bureau must be up-to-date on speaking topics. There should be a file for each topic and all League members should share in the responsibility of enhancing your League's speaking activities. By clipping, and/or downloading from the internet, pertinent newspaper and magazine articles, position statements for organizations, as well as notes taken during radio and TV programs, etc. for the Speakers Bureau, League members help to make a speakers' delivery more authoritative, with the knowledge that the very latest information has been incorporated into the presentation. Additionally, more members may join the Speakers Bureau because it is being supported by the entire local League.

Workshops

Schedule Speakers Bureau workshops to review topics and do "dry-runs." A canned Voter Service speech is ideal to use at such a workshop. (Appendix H contains material that should be covered in such a workshop.

Requests for Speakers

Advertise the Speakers Bureau with a simple one-page flyer listing topics, contact person and telephone number. This can be sent to community organizations that may have need for a speaker. Newspapers, too, may mention a League's Speakers Bureau if they are notified.

Voter Service speeches will be objective ones where a speaker prepares the delivery to present supporting and opposing arguments on the topic. If the request is for a topic on which the League has

a position, the speaker must be aware that there may be some hostility in the audience and that there may be a question and answer session. When making speaking assignments, a speaker's special skills and area(s) of expertise should be considered along with the speaker's knowledge of the subject, stage presence, and ability to hold the interest of an audience.

Guidelines for a Successful Speech

There are two essential steps to making any speech: preparation and delivery.

Planning your Talk:

- Pick the right subject. It should be a topic about which you have strong feelings. The only way to be comfortable in front of an audience is to know what you're talking about and to believe in what you're trying to get across.
- Organize your points logically, prepare an outline, and become thoroughly familiar with it. You need a beginning, providing basic background information; a middle that enumerates the main points, and a summary. For instance, if you are discussing a ballot proposal:*
 - Begin by explaining the two major aspects of the League: Voter Service/citizen education and action. Make clear that this is a citizen education activity, even though the League may have taken a position on some of the ballot proposals and may be active in campaigns to support or defeat them.
 - Provide basic background information for understanding the proposal.
 - Describe the major features of the proposal; what would happen if it passes; who would administer the changes; how voters, families, and the community would be affected.
 - Outline major arguments for and against the measure and the groups who are supporting or opposing it. While the presentation must be made in a nonpartisan manner, it is appropriate to mention supporters and opponents, even when the League has a position, provided that you present the information in a larger context: "This measure is supported by the League of Women Voters of New York State, the New York State PTA, and the New York State School Boards Associations; while the following groups are in opposition....."
 - End the speech by summarizing the main points. Use the opportunity to mention candidates meetings and other election season activities in which the League is involved. Remind the group of the date of the election and the hours during which the polls are open.
 - An old rule for speakers puts it this way: "Tell them what you're going to tell them; then tell them; and finally tell them what you've told them."
- After you've planned your presentation, practice delivering it.
- Keep notes to a minimum. The worst thing you can do is to read your speech because it is virtually impossible to make reading sound spontaneous. You should, however, list your major headings on index cards when a quick glance will trigger your thoughts.

Delivery

- Make friends with your audience. Be yourself and you will seldom go wrong. Choose your language carefully. Do not use League jargon or acronyms. Your challenge is to present complex matters in clear, simple language without skimping on the important policy issues at stake, and to give enough details without giving too many.

- Have relevant material for display or distribution. You may also want to use audio/visual aids, such as PowerPoint, to enhance the presentation. If so, be sure you know how to operate the equipment.
- Maintain eye contact. Seek out the friendly faces (ignore any that are not). Speak to the audience and get them involved in the speech. For the platform pro, humor is a requirement, but for the average person is not necessary unless it makes a point, or unless you use it very well.
- To be confident, act confident. If you feel any shortcomings, ignore them. If you forget to make a point, keep it to yourself. (Your listeners won't know unless you tell them.) If you suffer from stage fright, don't worry about it. A certain amount of tension is helpful.
- Build a climax. There should be a compelling purpose to your talk. Aim toward it throughout your speech. Then close with a call to vote, encourage others to vote, get involved in the voting process, or whatever is most appropriate for the members of the group. Be sure that you stop speaking before the audience stops listening.
- If you choose to field questions, keep the audience on the subject.
- Thank the audience for their invitation and for their attention.

Practice makes perfect. Speak at every opportunity. The Speakers Bureau can be an instrumental factor in educating voters to make intelligent choices on Election Day; an important part of the mission of the League of Women Voters. The rewards are enormous, not only for your League but also for you personally.

Suggested Voter Service Topics

- A speech based on local ballot proposals or on Speakers Notes from the State Board Report
- Fair campaign practices
- Voting Procedures (including voting machine discussion and demonstration)
- Picking a candidate

Relies heavily upon material drawn from the League of Women Voters California Education Fund and is used with permission.

EARNING MONEY THROUGH VOTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

There are many ways in which local Leagues can earn money through Voter Service. Listed are a few types of activities, but you may know of others. (If so, please share your ideas.)

Election Reporting

LWVNYS coordinates a reporting project with the Associated Press for primaries, the general election, and special elections. One League per county is delegated to go to the county Board of Elections and phone in the election results to a specified 800 number as soon as they are available. Leagues are paid for this service and are also reimbursed for extraordinary expenses. A kit of instructions is sent to each participating League. The Leagues doing this find it a relatively easy way to earn money.

Conducting Voter Registration Drives

A voter registration drive is a potential fundraiser. Local Leagues have successfully approached businesses offering to register their employees and customers for a fee. Conversely, some local Leagues have offered to conduct a voter registration drive for major contributors. Co-sponsoring a registration drive with other organization(s) can ease the burden on the League and often brings in new members.

Planning and Moderating Candidates Meetings for Community Groups

Local Leagues may be asked to assist with candidates meetings sponsored by local neighborhood associations, PTAs, special-interest groups, or by political parties of neighboring communities outside the area of the local League. If your Board chooses to provide assistance in planning and moderating such a meeting, a fee for services may be requested. League guidelines must be followed and, although this is not co-sponsorship, a special set of responsibilities similar to a co-sponsorship agreement should be agreed upon.

Administering Community Elections

Organizations such as housing authorities, college student government bodies, health associations, homeowners associations, nonpartisan school committees, and community groups sometimes ask the League to administer their elections. This is a service for which the Leagues can charge a fee. Usually the organization has funds set aside for elections, but has a problem finding administrators.

Your Board will need full details about what will be required before it approves such a request for League services. Election contracts can greatly enhance the standing of the League in the community. Often, the League's involvement can mean the difference between success and failure, and between acceptance or rejection of the election results. On the other hand, Boards must enter into these contracts with their eyes wide open, because they may be hit with some of the political mud that gets slung around, even (or especially!) in these "minor" elections.

See Appendix I for specific suggestions on how to organize such a project.

Speaking for the League

Used to its fullest, a Speakers Bureau promotes the League as well as its message. Income can be generated by charging an honorarium. Many groups have a budget for speakers and are more than happy to pay a fee to the League. In fairness to the organization hiring a speaker, your League should be certain that all talks that will generate income are well prepared and that the speakers are professional in their delivery.

Selling Voters Service Publications

- The LWVNYS Voters Guides

Distributing and selling the LWVNYS Voters Guides is an ideal and relatively easy way to advance the League goal of promoting the informed participation of citizens in government. It is published every year by LWVNYS and is sold to local Leagues at a break-even price in hopes that both LWVNYS and local leagues will be able to turn a profit by selling the publication to outside organizations. With League encouragement and good salesmanship, schools, businesses, banks, corporations, community organizations, professional associations, colleges, political parties, and others may buy the LWVNYS Voters Guides for their students, customers, and clients. Contacts made during the sale and distribution of the guides are often very useful in future finance drives.

If sales are not possible or if your League has a “free distribution only” policy, you can approach outside organizations that might be willing to:

- Sponsor a community-wide mailing of the LWVNYS and/or local Voters Guides.
- Include copies in a mailing they are planning.

Other Publications: Both LWVUS and LWNYS have publications that are excellent resource materials for many business and community organizations. They are typically available for free from the web sites, but Voters Service Directors and Publication Directors could work together to develop creative ways to market the hardcopy materials.

FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

LWVUS

Campaign Watch '92, an election year pilot project of LWVUS, was designed to set standards for fair political campaigns and empower citizens to recognize and deter unfair campaign practices. New York State was one of three states selected to participate in this pilot project. Now, fourteen years later, the Fair Campaign Practices Committees spearheaded by several local LWVs are still alive and well and encouraging honest, positive campaign practices in their areas.

Fair Campaign Practices Committees encourage candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to discuss issues, to refrain from defamatory attacks on the characters of their opponents, and not to use campaign materials that distort the facts. The Committees do not act as censors of political discussion or as bodies to enforce election law or make legal decisions. Their task is to accept written complaints about alleged unfair campaign practices and to determine whether the actions complained about are indeed unfair.

The Committees have no power to compel anyone to stop doing what has been found to be unfair. If a Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. A Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are so notified.

In 1991 the LWV of Westchester established the **Westchester Fair Campaign Practices Committee** as a separate and independent entity. The League plays no role in the Committee's deliberations or decisions, but does provide support services and administers the funding. The Committee is comprised of community leaders who represent a wide range of public interests and are recognized as being independent and fair minded. Members representing recognized political parties serve ex-officio without vote; they contribute political perspective and experience.

In 2001 two representatives from each of the LWVs of **Albany, Rennselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady**, and four members of The Interfaith Alliance formed **Fair Campaign Practices for the Capital Region, Inc. (FCP)**. FCP has no connection with the Boards of Elections. FCP selects people from each of the counties to serve on a Hearing Pool, which then conducts hearings on complaints from candidates that their opponents have committed unfair campaign practices.

The **Rochester Fair Election Practices Committee** is also not affiliated with their Board of Elections but it does have their approval. The current group is made up of five members; two Democrats, two Republicans, and one media marketing expert, who is a member of LWV. They monitor the campaigns from September through November, with a kick-off each year in early September which includes a televised Pledge Signing Ceremony.

When the Rochester FEPC was formed, an attempt was made to include all of the local political parties, but because a couple of them were unwilling to submit to an outside committee, they are no longer part of the process. The current FEPC has been working together successfully for the last 2 years. Their decisions are always published in the local newspapers and sometimes make it to television. The local LWV and the Interfaith Alliance of Rochester meet with the committee occasionally, but the meetings are purely informational; only the committee makes decisions.

After a few years' hiatus the **LWV of Syracuse** is reinstating its Fair Campaign Practices Committee - this time in conjunction with another civic organization, The Onondaga Citizens League. They are well on our way to getting the committee up and running for the 2006 fall election. The **LWV of Chautauqua County** has decided to establish a Fair Practices Committee as well. They have the blessing of both of their election commissioners, and hope to get going right away.

Other Leagues that might be interested in doing so can get more information and a copy of a Fair Campaign Practices manual by contacting one of the LWVs indicated above, and/or checking out the information available on their websites, which can be accessed through the LWVNYS website: lwvny.org.

POLITICAL PARTIES

There are now (2011) six recognized political parties in New York State: Democratic, Republican, Conservative, Independence, Green and Working Family. A recognized party is one whose candidate for governor received at least 50,000 votes on that party's line in the last gubernatorial election. The order in which parties are listed on the ballot is determined by the relative number of votes its candidate for governor received in the previous election. A recognized party is expected to maintain a year-round organization and participate in primaries.

Other political groups, which the Election Law calls "independent bodies," organize to run candidates in a single election. They must choose a party name for identification on the ballot. Their candidates are nominated by petition, and the circulating dates, filing dates and number of signatures are different from the recognized political parties. Because independent candidates are not involved in primaries, a much larger number of signatures is required for their petitions than for regular party designating petitions.

Political parties are part of the governmental structure of New York State and general rules for their organization are established in the **State of New York Election Law**, Article 2. Within the legal guidelines, however, there is some flexibility for the parties to establish their own rules. Therefore, their structure and by-laws vary from one party to another and, to some extent, from one county to another.

Party Organization and Functions

State Committee

The State Committee of a recognized party consists of two enrolled party members (a man and a woman) elected from such districts as the rules of the party may provide. Members of state committees are elected every two years in even numbered years at primary elections.

The State Committee maintains a state party headquarters; elects a state chairperson and other officers; designates the party's candidates for statewide offices, such as U.S. senator and governor; chooses the delegation chairperson and delegates-at-large for national nominating conventions; selects the party's slate of presidential electors; and chooses several men and women to serve on the National Party Committee. It sets policy for the party at the state level and raises money for the party.

County Committee

The County Committee consists of two enrolled party members (usually one man and one woman) elected from each Election District in the county. An Election District, sometimes referred to as a precinct, is the smallest unit of party organization and the smallest political subdivision. It consists of no more than 950 voters. It is the unit from which committee persons are elected and in which they are expected to perform the "grassroots" work of registering voters and getting out the vote on Election Day.

In some larger counties, additional members, not to exceed two, are elected directly by the enrolled party members in each Election District within the county to serve on the County Committee. Committee members are elected either annually or every two years, as the rules of that county committee provide.

The County Committee is the basic unit of party machinery and as such, is the base of party power. It is responsible for designating the party's candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state Legislature, county offices, and county judgeships, and raises money for the party.

Local Party Committee

Local Committees, such as town committees or ward committees may be formed in whatever manner is provided for by the rules adopted by the party. The best way to find out what is done in a particular area is to go to the county chairman of each political party and ask. A copy of the party's bylaws and a list of committee members should be available.

The Local Party Committee is responsible for activities such as circulating petitions, planning local campaigns, raising money, registering voters, and getting out the vote. They also serve as, or are responsible for securing, the party's polling place inspectors. Election inspectors are divided equally between representatives of the two major parties.

All committee persons in a local governmental unit have to be endorsed by a vote of the whole county committee.

Party Organization in New York City

In New York City, which is composed of five counties, there is no formal citywide political organization. In addition to the county committee persons, there are two Assembly District leaders (a man and a woman) who are directly elected by the enrolled party members in each Assembly district within every county in the city. This type of representation is found in some of the larger counties in other parts of the state.

Electing Committee Persons and Party Leaders

Enrolled party members are entitled to vote in that party's primary elections, sign and circulate nominating petitions, hold party office and public office under that party's label, and participate in party caucuses.

Committee persons are elected by the enrolled party members who sign their designating petitions. Five percent of party members in an Election District must sign. Unless there is a contest, no primary election is held. Committee persons must be enrolled party members, but do not have to live in the Election District from which they are elected, provided that they live in the county and Assembly District in which the Election District is located.

Statements of Philosophy of Recognized Political Parties in New York State

In 2006, the LWV of NYS wrote to the five recognized political parties in the state, requesting a statement of each party's philosophy. Following are the responses received.

Republican Party

"Why Am I A Republican?"

- I believe in the promise of America and the goodness of the American people.
- I believe that the roots of our society are found in strong families, personal faith, solid communities, and love of country.
- I believe that our flag, the "Stars and Stripes", is a true and unique symbol of the pride and patriotism Americans share in their beloved nation.
- I believe that America is still the "shining city on a hill", and represents the dreams and aspirations of current and future generations of American citizens.
- I believe that our government is best when it is closest to the people that it serves.
- I believe that government and governmental programs should be efficient, and provide full accountability for the practices and policies its leaders propose and implement.
- I believe in the spirit of free enterprise, in which capitalism is the best means to keep our economy running strong, both now and in the future.
- I believe that while government can and should be the provider of some essential services, it should function with limited taxation, financial efficiency and the adoption of innovations to allow taxpayers to get the most for their hard-earned tax dollars.
- I believe that America's military is the most powerful military force in the world, and that our brave men and women who serve our nation deserve the respect and admiration a grateful nation can only bestow.
- I believe that government's first and foremost responsibility is the providing of safety and security to our citizens.
- I believe that the rights of law-abiding citizens should outweigh the rights of criminals and that the enforcement of existing laws, combined with the addition of innovative, common-sense policies, is the best means of furthering a civil society.
- I believe that our natural environment is a precious resource for all humankind, and that citizens and government should work together to implement common-sense policies that allow for both environmental protection and economic growth.
- I believe that in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, all persons are created equal, and that I oppose discrimination in any form, against any person, and for any reason.
- I believe in an inclusive political party, a party with a "big tent" approach where I am encouraged to share my beliefs and to disagree with those who share opposing viewpoints.
- I believe that Republican Party leaders and officials have brought needed change to New York State and I agree that supporting their efforts is the best way to ensure a brighter future for many years to come."

Democratic Party

"The Democratic Party is the people's party, founded on basic principles that value the rights of individuals and respect for the dignity of all New Yorkers.

Democrats believe our communities are stronger when we join together and work toward a common goal. Democrats are dedicated to building futures of hope that are based on the ability of all New Yorkers to find work when they want it and need it.

To achieve that, we need a strong business community that is rewarded for its investments with lower taxes.

Children must be given new and better opportunities through a free and quality education that shows them positive ways to succeed.

And government surely must help the most vulnerable among us, whether they are homeless, elderly, infirm, or otherwise unable to care for themselves.

We are the party that has always showed the way toward change through real leadership – whether it was Franklin Delano Roosevelt leading us out of a depression, John Kennedy leading us into a new world of aspiration and possibility, or Bill Clinton leading us to an era of economic expansion that helped lift and extend opportunities to all Americans.

The Democratic Party will always be the party that fights to provide new answers for our time.”

Independence Party (from the website of the NYS Independence Party)

“The Independence Party of New York is organized around a core of values, beliefs and principles, and these are embodied in the objectives described in this platform. The following elements define the mission of the party:

- To restore democratic choice and electoral accountability.
- To put an end to budget deficits, unfunded pension liabilities, and other under- funded long term liabilities.
- To create a modern budgetary process that uses professionally acceptable accounting standards and accrual accounting, avoiding mandates, understated liabilities, and off-line budgeting.
- To diminish the pervasive and pernicious role of campaign contributions in buying access to legislative decision making and in promoting claims to public money.
- To promote public policies that are more directly consistent with the desires and needs of the public:
 - In welfare, where Americans want a system that discourages teenage pregnancy, encourages work, and encourages families to stay together.
 - In education, where Americans want to promote improvements that move us toward a world class education system.
 - In crime, where Americans want a system that keeps violent felons off the street, and which promotes more creative alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent criminals.
 - In taxation and spending, where Americans want solutions that do not require continually increasing the burden of taxation on Americans and do not require continually expanding the scope of government activity.”

Conservative Party

“The Conservative Party is dedicated to upholding the principles championed by America’s Founders in the Federalist Papers and the Constitution. These principles include an unwavering commitment to a democratic-republican form of government; to the rule of law; to a strong national defense; to the free enterprise system that has produced the unparalleled abundance that our nation enjoys; and to individual liberty.

The Conservative Party believes that to safeguard these principles, this country must maintain an economic system which is controlled by the people and not by omnipotent government. Toward this end, the Party supports efforts to rid the economic system of unnecessary government intervention.

In foreign affairs, the Conservative Party is an advocate of policies which will give the United States the military power it needs to defend its national interests in a hostile world. We further

believe that this country should support its allies and truly democratic movements around the world.”

Working Families Party

“The Working Families Party is a grassroots, community and labor based political party with a goal of injecting the issues of working-class, middle-class, and poor people—like jobs, health care, education, and housing—into the public debate, and holding candidates and elected officials accountable on those issues. We fight for families, parents, children, seniors and students. Our organizing strategy is to start local, think long-term, combine campaign work with organizing and education. We build from the bottom up -- from local communities and the elections that are decided in them -- rather than the top down. We believe it is essential to a healthy society that politicians be held accountable to working people rather than loyal to corporate special interests.

We're guided by the principles of equality, responsibility, community and freedom. We stand for "the commons" -- all the creations of society and nature that we inherit jointly and hold in trust for future generations. We think there's a need for a principled defense of the public sphere. A vigorous, effective public sector is a vital part of a good society, providing many goods and services that would be far more costly - or out of reach entirely - to working people without it. More broadly, we want to reinvigorate "the commons" all those public spaces and institutions that people maintain and use collectively. In a society devoted with increasing single-mindedness to the pursuit of profit, we think there's a place for a party that stands up for the public good.”

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE VOTER SERVICE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

The Voter Service Director is responsible for:

- Upholding the League of Women Voters' nonpartisan policy;
- Determining which Voter Service activities to undertake, with the approval and assistance of the Board of Directors.

Additional responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Appointing a committee and holding planning meetings for pertinent events of the coming year. Overseeing the committee as it carries out the planned projects such as:
 - Providing accurate, timely, and interesting information regarding registration and voting procedures and deadlines;
 - Conducting voter registration drives;
 - Publishing a list of candidates seeking public office;
 - Sponsoring candidates meetings;
 - Publishing a Voters Guide;
 - Publishing a nonpartisan (pro-con) statement regarding local ballot proposals;
 - Promoting fair campaign practices;
 - Providing a telephone information service at election time;
 - Conducting a get-out-the-vote drive;
 - Publishing a directory of elected and appointed public officials;
 - Promoting a Speakers Bureau;
 - Training and providing moderators for candidates meetings.
- Being aware of public relations opportunities provided by Voter Service activities and working with the Public Relations Director as needed;
- Keeping in mind the membership recruitment opportunities of Voter Service activities;
- Working closely with the Finance Director to ensure adequate financial support for Voter Service projects.

APPENDIX B

VOTER SERVICE RESOURCE MATERIAL

Voter Service Directors are the key to successful election season activities. The following publications are available to assist you. All Voter Service Directors should have and be familiar with those marked with an asterisk (*). Some are free; others have a fee (most of which are nominal). Refer to corresponding publishing catalogs.

FROM: LWVUS/EDUCATION FUND
Publications Sales, 1730 M Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
202-429-1965
www.lwv.org

- ***Face to Face: A Guide to Candidate Debates***
The newest edition of this tried-and-true League handbook on sponsoring candidate debates for any elective office. Based on the combined experience of LWV debate sponsors at all levels. 1996, LWVEF
- ***Get-Out-the-Vote Kit***
A comprehensive resource for encouraging voter participation in your community. Includes a wide range of materials providing basic information to support community-level efforts to "Get out the Vote." 1996, LWVEF, Pub #1051, \$15 (\$12 for members)
- ***Helping America Vote: Safeguarding the Vote***
Safeguarding the Vote outlines a set of recommended operational and management practices for state and local election officials to enhance voting system security, protect eligible voters and ensure that valid votes are counted.
- ***Helping America Vote: A Guide to Implementing the New Federal Provisional Ballot Requirement***
Helping America Vote provides recommendations that ensure provisional ballots serve their purpose. The report highlights model state practices on specific points and provides useful guidance to state decision makers, Leagues and other advocates working to protect the fundamental right to vote.
- ***Navigating Election Day: What Every Voter Needs to Know (Second Edition)***
This booklet walks first-time and long-time voters through the voting process and answers questions such as: Why is voting important? How do you register to vote and why do you need to? How do you know who or what to vote for? What do you do on Election Day? What can you do after the election? This is a valuable booklet for students and new citizens. 2004, LWVEF, English Pub #2055, Spanish Pub #2054, Printed copies NOT available. PDF Chapters Available for Download in English and Spanish
- ***Getting Out the Vote: A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives***
A comprehensive citizen's guide. Contains practical information on organizing, working with volunteers and officials, and maintaining nonpartisanship. 1984, LWVEF, 16pp., Pub #424, \$1.25 (\$.75 for members), ISBN 349-6.
- ***Pick a Candidate***
Citizen's how-to tool for evaluating candidates at all levels, identifying personal issue priorities and spotting misleading campaign tactics. 1984, LWVEF, 16pp., Pub #259, \$.35 (\$.25 for members), ISBN 348-8.
- ***Seleccione a Un Candidato***
The Spanish edition of the LWVEF's bestseller, Pick a Candidate. Ideal for targeted Get-Out-the-Vote drives. Pub #1044, \$.35 (\$.25 for members).

- ***Su Voto Cuenta***
This Spanish brochure answers common questions about the voting process and lists ways to make your vote count. 1995, LWVEF, 8pp., Pub #1039, \$1.00 (\$.50 for members).
- ***LWVEF VOTE Brochure*** (in English and Spanish)
This tri-fold brochure is a succinct, step-by-step guide to voting and Election Day, especially designed to reach out to new young voters. It covers the five basics: Who can vote; what we'll vote on; when we'll vote; where we'll vote; and why we should vote. 2004, Pub. # 2062 (English) and #2063 (Spanish). Price \$.12 each, minimum order of 30 (\$3.60)
- ***Choosing the President: A Citizen's Guide to the Electoral Process***
This is an up-to-date, nonpartisan, voter-friendly guidebook to the players and events in a presidential election. Pub. 2017
- ***18-30 VIP: Questions Every Candidate Should Answer to Win 20 Million Votes***
This brochure urges candidates to address questions on issues that young voters have said are most important to them. Pub. 2066 (2004) Price \$.08. Minimum order of 100 (\$8.00)
- ***Helping America Vote: Statewide Voter Registration Databases***
This report details recommended operational and management practices for election officials as they work to implement the federal mandate for the establishment of a statewide computerized voter registration list. Pub. 2072 (2005).
- ***League Poll of Voters and Nonvoters Shows Alienation Is Not a Factor in Nonvoting***
In 1996, the LWVEF commissioned the first-ever national survey to probe the key differences between voters and non-voters. Conducted by the Mellman Group and Wirthlin Worldwide, the survey found that voting is all about connections.
- ***League of Women Voter/Ladies' Home Journal Poll: Women See Responsive Role for Government***
A poll conducted by the League in conjunction with The Ladies' Home Journal explores women's attitudes about politics and identifies factors that might make them more likely to vote.

FROM: LWVNYS/ LWVNYS EDUCATION FOUNDATION
62 Grand Street
Albany, New York 12207
518-465-4162
www.lwvny.org

- ***LWVNYS Voters' Guide****
The LWVNYS Voters Guide is currently produced in two parts. The first provides citizens with basic information on voting, such as registration dates and deadlines, absentee ballot procedures and deadlines, voting machine instructions and important information for voters on new procedures mandated by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The second part includes an overview and pro and con information on ballot proposals and information on candidates in years in which there are statewide elections. The Voters Guides are available in print in English, and in both English and Spanish on the LWVNYS website.
- ***Voter Registration and ID Requirements***
- ***Your Right to Vote in New York State****
 - ***College Students***
 - ***Homeless Individual***
 - ***Individuals with Disabilities***
 - ***Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities***
 - ***Individual with Criminal Convictions and Those Detained in Jail or Prison***

This series of five brochures is geared to physically and mentally disabled voters, former offenders, college students and the homeless. They are all available in camera ready format on the LWVNYS web site.

- **First Vote***
A terrific primer for first-time voters. This brochure contains the basics of voter registration, selecting a political party, voting procedures, when elections are held, how to vote absentee, and how to vote while away at college, among other voting basics. Multiple copies of this brochure are available FREE for high school and college classes, or classes of naturalized citizens, by contacting the LWVNYS office at 518-465-4162 or lwwny@lwwny.org.
- **A Guide to New York State Government**
- **The Citizen Lobbyist: Quick Start**
- **State Board Report, Voter Service Section**

**Suitable for handouts*

FROM: STATE OF NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS
40 Steuben Street
Albany, New York 12207
518-474-6220
www.elections.state.ny.us

- **State of New York Election Law**
- **Annual Political Calendar**

FROM: NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION
119 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
518-465-3474
www.nyssba.org

- **School Law (\$80.00 – available through lexisnexis.com)**

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE VOTER SERVICE CALENDAR*

- May/June** Prepare annual report.
Review Voter Service material to make sure your files are complete.
If retiring, turn your files/computer disk over to your successor.
Meet with your committee to develop plans for the coming year and present to your Board.
Develop a time line for each voter service activity planned.
Order LWVNYS Voter Guides Part 1 and/or Part 2.
- July** Contact Board of Election for political calendar and list of offices to be filled in the general election.
Begin to organize for fall voter registration drives.
Decide how you will best be able to focus on Primary Elections.
Plan ahead for candidates meetings.
If you publish a Voters Guide, work with issues committee to develop questions to submit to your Board for approval. Prepare cover letters and questionnaire so they will be ready when needed.
- August** Start your voter registration drive. Contact other organizations and form coalitions with them. Bring public attention to the need to register now in order to be able to vote in the Primary.
- September** Primary Elections
Before the Primaries, send out candidates questionnaires and compile your Voters Guide.
Prepare your Voters Guide for the printer.
Follow up on candidates meetings arrangements.
Sell LWVNYS Voters Guides
Continue voter registration.
Receive Speakers Notes from LWVNYS.
Give speakers' training on ballot proposals.
- October** Have Voters Guide printed.
Sell and distribute local and/or LWVNYS Voters Guides and have them available at candidates' meetings.
Conduct and/or moderate candidates' meetings.
Have League speakers available to speak to organizations on voting and ballot issues, etc.
Publicity month: publicize candidates' meetings, availability of League speakers, registration deadline, absentee ballot application deadline.
- November** Get out the vote!
Poll-watching projects.
Election night reporting.
Note winning candidates for Voter Service records.

Send letter of congratulations, over President's signature, to newly elected and newly re-elected office holders in your area.

Thank all League members and friends of the League who helped during the election season.

December

Enjoy the post election season!
Publish and distribute "Who Represents You" or similar publication.

Winter-Spring

Village and School Board elections are held between March and July.
Plan candidates meetings.
Publicize election dates.
Get out the vote.
For school elections, consider coordinating efforts with PTAs.
Give moderators' training.
Conduct high school voter registration drives.

* This is a *sample* calendar, not a list of what must be done. These are *suggestions, not mandates*. The local Voter Service Director and the local Board have to decide what can and should be done in their community.

APPENDIX E
REFERENCES TO THE NEW YORK STATE ELECTION LAW

| <u>TOPIC</u> | <u>ARTICLE</u> | <u>SECTION</u> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Absentee voting | 8 | 400 et seq. |
| Ballot applications | 8 | 400 |
| Ballot deadline | 8 | 412 |
| Affidavit voting procedure | 8 | 302 |
| Board of Elections | 3 | 200 et seq. |
| Definitions | 1 | 104 |
| Elections Districts | 4 | 100 |
| Enrollment | 5 | 300 et seq. |
| Change of | 5 | 304 |
| Fair Campaign Code | 3 | 106 |
| See also SBOE Rules and Regulations, part 6201 | | |
| Military voters | 10 | |
| Name change | 8 | 302 |
| Polling places | | |
| Location | 4 | 104 |
| Hours | 8 | 100 |
| Political Calendar | 13 | |
| (available from the Board of Elections) | | |
| Political Party organization | 2 | |
| Primary election, date | 8 | 100 |
| Qualifications of voters | 5 | 102 |
| Reasons for exclusion | 5 | 106 |
| Registration | 5 | |
| By mail | 5 | 210 |
| Cancellation of registration | 5 | 404 |
| Change of residence form | 5 | 210 |
| Local registration | 5 | 202 |
| Protection against fraud, mail check | 5 | 712 |
| School elections | 5 | 612 |
| Special elections, date | 13 | |
| Special federal voters | 11 | 200 et seq. |
| Voting at the polls | 8 | 300 et seq. |
| Assistance to voters | 8 | 306 |
| Dates and hours | 8 | 100 |
| Identification of voters | 8 | 302, 304 |
| Paper ballot | 7 | 120 |
| | 8 | 310, 312 |
| Time limit | 8 | 300 |
| Write-in | 8 | 308 |
| Voting machines | 7 | 200 et seq. |
| Village elections | 15 | |
| Violations | 17 | |

Special district elections: See New York Town and County Law.

School district election: See State of New York Education Law.

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE POLL-WATCHER’S LIST

Violations should be reported to the County and/or State Board of Elections.

- Was polling place clearly marked?
- Was 100-foot marker displayed 100 feet from polling place?
- Was there partisan electioneering inside 100-foot marker?
 - If yes, by inspectors? By voters? On candidates? On ballot proposals?
- Did inspector conceal previous signatures on poll card?
- If a voter’s poll record was missing, was the voter advised of alternate options?
- Did inspector allow appropriate amount of time for each voter to cast a ballot?
- Was polling place orderly?
- Were inspectors’ table and voting machine at least four feet apart?
- Were there appropriate writing implements for write-in voting in the privacy booths?
- Was sample ballot posted in plain view?
- Were *official* extracts of ballot proposals posted in plain view?
- Was election district map posted?
- Was a privacy sleeve provided for the ballot?
- Were the privacy booths truly private?
- Did the poll worker refrain from handling the ballot unless asked for help?
- Were facilities and access for handicapped adequate?
- Were inspectors competent and courteous?
- Were inspectors from both major parties on duty?
- Were absentee ballots counted or recorded before 9:00 p.m.?
- Was partisan campaign literature found at the polling place?
- Were instructions adequate for filling out the ballot and using the scanner?
- Were only authorized people behind the inspectors table?
- Were inspectors from both major parties in the booth when needed to assist a voter?
- Was there adequate poll worker support for the use of the Ballot Marking Device?

Note other irregularities and complaints:

Town:
 Election District Number:
 Complainant:

APPENDIX G

OUTLINE FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT BROCHURE

The Power to Govern

- What is your local legislative body called?
- How many members are there? What are their names?
- Do you elect them? Or are they appointed?
- If they are elected, is it by districts? Or at large?
- If elected, is it on a partisan basis? Or nonpartisan?
- If on a partisan basis, how many members at present are Democrats? How many Republican?

Third Party?

- What is their term of office? Salary?
- How often does this legislative body meet? Where? When?
- Are meetings open to the public?
- How does the legislative body report to the public on its activities and decisions?
- What does your local legislative body do? Adopt a budget? Pass local ordinances?

The Power to Administer

- Do you have a single executive officer? What is the title?
- Is this person elected or appointed?
- If elected, to what party (currently) does this person belong?
- If appointed, by whom?
- Does this person initiate policy?
- Does this person have appointing power?
- What are the duties of the office?
- Is it a full-time job?
- What is the current salary?

Local Government Departments

- What departments does your city government have?
- Which departments are headed by elected officials? By appointed officials?
- What are their names?
- What are their parties?
- Where are their offices?
- Do you have official advisory boards or commissions? To whom are they responsible? How are the members selected?
- Is there a merit system in operation in your city government?
- Is there a civil service commission? Who acts as a personnel officer?
- How are salaries set?
- Who is responsible for managing and maintaining property?
- Which officer is in charge of recording deeds and other public documents?
- Does your local government issue an annual report? How is it distributed to the public?
- In what other ways is the public kept informed of your local government's plans and policies? Are departmental hearings open to the public?

- Are there special districts other than school districts set up within or partly within your municipality, e.g., special assessment districts, improvement districts?
- Does the state exercise any control over special districts?
- Are their municipal services administered by officials of another local government unit, e.g., county, special district, or township?
- Are any city-county departments consolidated, such as city-county health departments?
- Is your local government part of a metropolitan area association? Do you have metropolitan citizens' councils or advisory groups?

Fiscal Affairs

- Is there a department of finance that coordinates all fiscal activities in your area?
- If so, which official is in charge? How is the official selected?
- If there is no finance department, how are the financial matters of your local government administered?
- How does the authorized official (treasurer or other) determine in which banks to deposit local government funds?
- Is there a municipal assessor? Appointed or elected?
- How often is property assessed?
- How is valuation determined?
- Who prepares your town's budget?
- Who reviews it and who administers it?
- Are there public hearings?
- Who has the power of appropriation in your town? Who, if anyone, may shift budget items?
- What was the total cost of operating your local government last year? Per capita cost?
- Who collects property taxes?
- Is a maximum rate of property taxation set either by the state constitution or by acts of the state legislature?
- What kind of bonds is your local government allowed to issue?
- What percentage of popular vote, if any, is needed to pass bond issues?
- Are regular audits made by a city, county or town auditor, by independent firms, by the state?
- Is there a central purchasing department for your town?
- Are bids received on an open competitive basis with specifications?

APPENDIX H

OUTLINE FOR A SPEAKERS BUREAU WORKSHOP

Select a time and place for a workshop that will draw the largest attendance, especially new Speakers Bureau members. The person who leads the workshop must be one who is knowledgeable about the League and about the activities of the Speakers Bureau.

It would be helpful for a speaker to review this Appendix before preparing for a speaking engagement.

Getting the Act Together

Researching

Learn as much as possible about the audience to whom you're scheduled to speak. Telephone the contact person and ask the following questions:

- How many people are expected?
- What is the time allocation for the talk?
- Will there be a question and answer session?
- Specifically, what is this organization interested in hearing?
- Is the organization politically active?
- Does it support causes? Which ones?
- Has it had a League speaker before?

Some organizations will use League speakers to get a brief rundown on a topic while others will want an in-depth presentation. Knowing this in advance can help in tailoring a talk to a specific group. The talk can be planned to match the interests and degree of political sophistication of the audience. This will help the speaker to be more effective.

Initial Planning

If the local League has a canned speech, use it as an example at a workshop. The canned speech may be useful to practice with, because it will help to identify which parts flow freely and which parts need modification for a comfortable delivery. It may also be used as a presentation, by omitting or expanding various parts, depending on the topic and time requested by the particular organization.

Speakers Bureau members are speaking for the League and not as private citizens. Care should be taken to ensure that a personal point of view is not stated. If the audience has had no prior contact with the League, their first impression may depend on the speaker.

Opening remarks should contain a brief introduction to the LWV's policy of nonpartisanship. Be sure the audience understands that the policy refers to political parties and candidates; it does not mean that the League does not take positions on issues after study and consensus by the membership. Introductory (or concluding) remarks may include a brief introduction to the League such as how many local, state, and national members there are, a brief description of League activities, how to join, where the League is located in the area, and how to acquire League publications. The topic of the speech will largely determine how much time should be spent talking about League.

Writing

For a new speaker very little writing may be necessary. A new speaker should rehearse a canned speech and edit phrases that create stumbling and hesitation. For those with experience, who speak with ease, an outline may work best. Others may prefer index cards with key words written in large dark letters. Those with little or no confidence will want a complete text. In this case, use large, double-spaced type.

A speaker should not try to incorporate everything known about the topic into the speech. Withheld information can be used when fielding questions after the presentation. By presenting new information, the group will have more confidence in the speaker's credibility and the speaker also gains confidence in public speaking skills.

Fine-tuning

Rehearse in front of a mirror to monitor stage presence. Keep track of how many times eye contact was made. Rehearse with a clock. Know which sentences can be deleted and what can be added in the allocated time. Rehearse in front of a friend or family member. Slurred phrases, "ums" and "ers" may denote trouble spots that need further editing. Get criticism on posture, ease of delivery, and believability. A simple change, like holding a pen in one hand, can noticeably change a delivery by providing a sense of security to the speaker.

In the Spotlight

The Meeting Place

Be dependable. Arrive early to become familiar with the surroundings.

- Is a microphone provided?
- Is there a lectern?
- Is the audio/visual equipment in place? in working order?
- Can the room be darkened easily?

If everything is not in order, the speaker may need to exercise some flexibility. Last minute adjustments may have to be made to the presentation depending on the room configuration and/or the lack of requested equipment.

Delivery

Even professional speakers and school teachers get nervous sometimes. It is natural to get sweaty palms just before a speech. Almost as soon as the presentation begins the butterflies disappear and the speaker gains control of the delivery. Nervous speakers should keep in mind that they are there because they have more knowledge of the topic than the audience.

Make eye contact. Statistics show that a speaker has the attention of the audience for the first five minutes and then again when some indication is given that the speaker is preparing to conclude. In the middle, an audience will fade in and out of what the speaker is saying. By looking at the audience a speaker draws attention to what is being said.

Be congenial. Smiling helps. League topics are not usually thrillers even though they may make newspaper headlines. A smile here and there can generate interest in a dry topic.

If a speaker learns that the group will be small, a discussion group format may be a viable alternative. In this case, a brief introductory statement providing the essentials of the top is appropriate followed by an exchange of questions and opinions. By getting the audience involved, the session will be livelier. The quality and quantity of the questions can serve as a measure of the group's interest. Have a prepared summary statement ready in which other issues are mentioned that will stimulate and brighten the presentation.

Questions and Answers

When time permits, questions are in order. If there are questions that cannot be answered, promise to get back to the person asking the question, or have someone with the answer get back to them.

Speakers are sometimes challenged on some point of their speech. If a speaker is less than absolutely sure of any point, the best policy is not to argue and not to guess. Check the information and respond to the questioner within a day.

Do not let the session drift off the subject. Members of the audience who know the League as a multi-issue organization may want information on another topic. The speaker is in control of keeping the audience on the appropriate subject.

Handouts

Bring support material with you. If there are no free publication or flyers available, bring material that is available for sale, and explain where they are being sold and how much they cost.

Finally

Be sure to thank the organization for the invitation. Go home with a sense of personal pride that being a member of the Speakers Bureau has helped to promote citizen education and good publicity for the League.

Wrap-Up

- At the workshop, discuss how the Speakers Bureau is organized.
- Additional time may need to be spent with new speakers. They may feel more confident with Voter Service topics and activities at first. A team approach works well, whereby certain Speakers Bureau members are designated to act as resource persons to assist new speakers.
- Conclude with words of enthusiasm. The Speakers Bureau builds self-confidence, personal knowledge, and public awareness.

APPENDIX I

ADMINISTERING COMMUNITY ELECTIONS*

Before agreeing to administer the elections of a community group, the request must be taken to your Board for approval. You first need to gather the following information:

- General background of the organization.
- Type of election to be administered.
- The role of the League. Among the possibilities are:
 - Full monitoring of the election;
 - Full administration of the election;
 - Assistance with writing election bylaws or procedures;
 - Certification of candidates;
 - Certification of voters;
 - Counting ballots and certifying and announcing results;
 - Providing materials: petitions, ballot boxes, numbered ballots, tally sheets, sign-in sheets. If paper ballots are used, a League representative should check the copy before it goes to the printer. Avoid the opportunity for fraud by having a League representative pick up the ballots directly from the printer.
 - Cleaning up and putting things away after the election.
- Has it been done before? Are there any files or records of past elections for this group or district? Does the organization have election bylaws or will you have to start from scratch?
- Check previous rules, if you are expected to follow them. Determine whether they fit the requirements of the bylaws. If they are incompatible, settle this issue immediately. Sometimes it makes sense to have the bylaws changed if time allows.
- Other questions to resolve include: Will voting be by paper ballot or machine? If paper, who will print them? If machine, who will set it up? In either case, who make the arrangements? How many polling place will be necessary? For what hours? How will you determine who is eligible to vote? Will a list of eligible voters be provided? Or a list of street addresses in the area of each polling place? Must voters produce identification? Will there be a procedure for “challenging” ballots and deferring a final count until challenged ballots have been verified or disqualified?
- Who will be in charge of the election committee? What will be the balance of power on the committee? Will the organization appoint members to the committee and share in the work?
- How much can you charge for your service?
 - In setting a fee, charge what it would cost to pay people to staff the polls. Call a temporary employment agency to find out how much it would cost to hire someone. Then if you are unable to fill all the slots with League volunteers, you will be able to cover expenses; if you are, the money belongs to your League.
 - In addition, the time of the person who will organize the election, settle the contract details, go to numerous planning sessions, and write the final report should be estimated and charged for at a rate higher than that charged for poll workers. The League’s fee will probably be a lot lower than that of other organizations (like the American Arbitration Association).
 - Finally, your League should pay for producing copies of instructions and, if necessary, for a training session and charge for these expenses.
- Can the League be assured that its expenses will be fully covered?

- Is there time to plan and carry out the plan in a meticulous, League-like manner?

Before agreeing to organize an election, put in writing your understanding of the procedures and get it approved by the other organization. Make sure that the role of the League is clearly defined and satisfactory. Don't start organizing the election without such a written agreement. Some organizations and districts are poorly organized and have not carefully considered the details before seeking the League's help; in fact that may be why they need the League's help.

The election plan should define who is responsible for which tasks and which expenses. The detailed plan should include a budget and a calendar. Working from the bylaws, begin with the date the election is to be held. Create a time-line calendar for each phase that must be scheduled. Include nominating procedures, even if it is not the League's responsibility, because a delay could significantly change the rest of the schedule.

Review your plan with someone experienced. In some elections, an appropriate consultant would be the county clerk. There may be details you have overlooked that can cause a lot of trouble later on. Changing the rules of the election in midstream can threaten the credibility of the entire project.

- Once you have determined what rules, will guide the election, print them and make sure that they are distributed to those who might be affected by them. Rules may include:
- Definition of the positions that must be filled, duties, terms, pay/compensation for expenses, etc.;
- Eligibility of candidates;
- Eligibility of voters, identification requirements at the polls;
- Filing procedures and dates, and who will process filing forms;
- Petition-gathering procedures and who is eligible to sign petitions;
- Which errors are serious enough to disqualify candidates;
- Who is responsible for dissemination of information to voters;
- Absentee voting requirements and procedures;
- Size of vote margin needed to win;
- Circumstances under which a run-off would be required;
- Procedure for challenging the election.

The next step is to establish the rules for Election Day itself, for instance:

- Location and hours of polls;
- Assignment, training, and shift schedules of poll workers;
- Ground rules for poll workers;
- Instructions provided to voters;
- Procedures for identifying eligible voters and challenging ineligible voters;
- Procedures for dealing with spoiled ballots;
- Procedure, if any, for write-in votes;
- Provision for counting ballots and whether observers may be present;
- Form to use for certifying election results and announcing them; who will sign the form and make the announcement.

After ballots are counted, give the unofficial results to a representative of the organization. Be sure to submit your formal statement of the canvass in typed form, signed (“certified”) by the League’s election administrator and/or president.

After the election, meet with League members who worked on the election for a review and evaluation. A report should be prepared for the League files and also for the organization that held the election. In the report for the League files, be sure to include a candid assessment of the project, including pitfalls, whether the benefits outweighed the problems, and any changes you would recommend for future projects of this nature or with this organization.

**Relies heavily upon material drawn from The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund and is used with their permission.*

APPENDIX J

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE MATERIAL

The information contained in this appendix complements the activities of the Voter Service Director referenced in Appendix A. The materials cited can be obtained from various web sites, offices, or agencies at all levels of government. Certain libraries have been designated as Federal Depository Libraries, and many of the materials referenced can be used in their printed version at these libraries; go to the web site; <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/libraries.html> to locate these depositories. Many public and university libraries have very good collections of government reference materials and periodicals.

ON STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

FEDERAL:

- ***United States Constitution***
FirstGov: The Federal Government's web portal; for information on voting and elections, go to <http://www.firstgov.gov/Citizen/Topics/Voting.shtml>.
- ***GPO Access Web Site***-<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/>
A service of the U.S. Government Printing Office that provides free electronic access to a wealth of important information products produced by the Federal Government, including some of those cited below.
- ***United States Government Manual:*** The official handbook of the Federal Government. Provides comprehensive information on the agencies of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, quasi-official agencies, international organizations in which the United States participates, and boards, commissions, and committees. Begins with reprints of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html>, for browsing or purchase, and at many libraries.
- ***Congressional Directory:*** The official directory of the U.S. Congress. Presents short biographies of each member of the Senate and House, and additional data, such as committee memberships, terms of service, administrative assistants and/or secretaries, and room and telephone numbers. Lists officials of the courts, military establishments, and other Federal departments and agencies, including D.C. government officials, governors of states and territories, foreign diplomats, and members of the press, radio, and television galleries. Available at many libraries, and online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cdirectory/index.html>.
- ***Congressional Quarterly Publications:*** Available for sale and on the web (<http://www.cq.com/>) through subscription, this company and its subsidiary CQ Press publishes a wide variety of books, periodicals, electronic products and directories on Congress and its affairs. Publications include the Congressional Staff Directory, the CQ Weekly, the Washington Information Directory and Federal Regulatory Directory.

STATE:

- ***New York State Constitution:*** available at the NYS Department of State web site: <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/info/publications.htm>.
- ***State of New York Election Law:*** Available at the NY State Board of Elections web site: <http://www.elections.state.ny.us>.
- ***Book of the States:*** Comprehensive collection of data about state government and its inner workings. Published annually by the Council of State Governments (<http://www.csg.org/>).

- ***New York Red Book:*** The Red Book is an encyclopedia of state government, containing facts about the state, its political subdivisions and public officials. The electronic edition is available to subscribers via the New York Legal Publishing Company at <http://www.nylp.com>.
- ***National Directory of State Agencies:*** Published annually by Information Resources Press. Lists names of agencies and agency heads in each state, organized and indexed by functional responsibilities .
- ***New York State Executive Branch and Agency Listing:*** <http://www.ny.gov>
- ***State manuals and agency reports:*** available on individual agency web sites.

LOCAL:

- ***New York State e-Government Web Portal:*** <http://www.nysegov.com/>; links to state and local government and voting/elections information.
- ***County, City, and other local charters*** (village, town, etc.): available on municipal and county web sites.
- ***Municipal Year Book:*** Available from the International City/County Management Association (<http://www.icma.org>). Information about local government, containing hundreds of pages of facts and figures. A special directory describes 83 professional, special assistance, and educational organizations that serve local and state governments.
- ***National Association of Counties:*** <http://www.naco.org/>; provides comprehensive data and information on counties.
- ***Local Government Handbook:*** Authoritative source of information about the origins and operations of the Empire State, including a brief history and overview of federal, state, and local government and describing their evolving relationships, structures, and functions; available at the New York State Department of State web site (<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/>)

ON LEGISLATION

FEDERAL:

Statutes:

- ***United States Code:*** codification by subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States. Available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/>.

Pending legislation:

- ***THOMAS web site:*** Online Federal legislative information from the Library of Congress: (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>).
- ***Congressional Quarterly, Weekly Reports Magazine:*** Contains synopses of both committee and floor action on national legislation.
- ***National Journal:*** Weekly on politics and government. Selected stories and columns are available online at <http://nationaljournal.com/> .
- ***Congressional Record:*** The Congressional Record is the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress. It is published daily when Congress is in session. Available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/>.
- ***Congressional Information Service:*** Index to congressional hearings, publications, and laws, printed indexes and archival microfiche collections. Available through LexisNexis <http://www.lexisnexis.com/>
- ***Committee hearings, committee reports, copies of bills:*** Available online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

STATE:

Statutes:

- The Consolidated Laws of New York is available online at <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/>.

Pending legislation and annual action:

- New York State Legislation: <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/>

LOCAL:

- Local laws, ordinances, resolutions, budgets, “Proceedings,” or minutes, of town and village boards, city councils, county legislative bodies are often available online.

APPENDIX K

USEFUL INDEXES AND MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS

- ***Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature:*** Index of author/subject articles appearing in English language periodicals of general interest; quarterly and cumulative, available in libraries
- ***New York Times Index*** (weekly and cumulative): includes an article archive for more than 15 million articles from Sept. 1851 to Dec. 1980.
<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>, and for earlier articles,
<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/nytimes/advancedsearch.html>.
- ***Social Sciences Index:*** Produced by The H. W. Wilson Company, a bibliographic database that indexes articles from a broad array of social sciences journals.;
<http://www.hwwilson.com/Databases/socsci.htm>
- ***Almanac of American Politics,*** Published every two years; a somewhat subjective reference on the people, places and issues of American politics. Authors Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen.
- ***National Civic Review,*** published monthly by the National Municipal League, essays on democratic governance and civic engagement; <http://www.ncl.org/publications/ncr/>
- ***Empire State Report:*** Monthly magazine of politics, public policy and the business of government in New York State; <http://www.empirestatereport.com/>

APPENDIX L

ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST

- ***New York State Executive Branch and Agency Listing***: <http://www.ny.gov>
- ***New York State Unified Court System***: <http://www.nycourts.gov/>
- ***New York State Senate***: <http://www.senate.state.ny.us/>
- ***New York State Assembly***: <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/>
- ***New York State Board of Elections***, 40 Steuben Street, Albany, NY 12207; 518-474-6220; <http://www.elections.state.ny.us/>
- ***New York State Association of Counties***, 111 Pine Street, Albany, NY 12207; 518-465-1473; <http://www.nysac.org/>; info@nysac.org
- ***New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials***, 119 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210; (518) 463-1185. <http://www.nycom.org/>; info@nycom.org
- ***New York State School Boards Association***, 24 Century Hill Drive, Latham, NY 12110; 518-783-0200; <http://www.nyssba.org/>; info@nyssba.org
- ***New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)***, 107 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210; 518-436-0876; <http://www.nypirg.org/>; capital@nypirg.org
- ***Common Cause***, 155 Avenue of the Americas, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10013; 212-691-6421 or 1-800-300-8707; <http://www.commoncause.org/>; cocauseny@aol.com
- ***New York Citizens Union***, 299 Broadway Suite 700, New York, NY 10007, 212-227-0342; <http://www.citizensunion.org/>; info@citizensunion.org
- ***County Cooperative Extensions*** (of Cornell University) offers valuable assistance and resources to local Leagues. <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/>
- ***Committee on Open Government*** (part of the Department of State), 41 State Street, Albany, NY 12231; 518-474-2518; <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/coogwww.html>. Established in conjunction with the Freedom of Information Law; provides advice and assistance with public access to records.
- ***Federal Elections Commission***; 999 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20463; 800-424-9530. <http://www.fec.gov/>; info@fec.gov