

2017 MOMENTS IN THE SUN

Local League Accomplishments as Reported at State Convention

LWV Schenectady County “Moment in the Sun”

This year our focus was on voting. We participated in the organ donor program; registered 250 people to vote and handed out an additional 118 forms for people to complete later.

But we couldn't be more proud of our Citizenship Mentoring Group!!

We are so excited to have the opportunity to serve our community by providing citizenship preparation classes. It all started when Martha Butler, Director of the Office for New Americans in Albany, met with league members and talked about the difficulties faced by many legal residents who wish to become U.S. citizens.

In typical league fashion, we felt there was no reason why the LWV of Schenectady County couldn't take action, and so the Citizenship Mentoring Group was formed! We organized a core group to study the area of the greatest need, what we can reasonably offer with the limited resources we have, and how to actually provide the service. We were able to obtain the use of a room at the Phyllis Bornt Library, a location that is easily accessible. Classes will focus on helping eligible residents prepare for the naturalization interview and test; we are planning on holding weekly classes for an 8 to 10 week period starting October 3rd. but first we will have training sessions for teachers, tutors, and conversationalists in September. Only citizens can vote; by helping eligible permanent residents become citizens, we are promoting voting and the democratic process.

LWV of Saratoga County

The Saratoga League is conducting meetups in response to the sudden influx of interested people, wanting to “do something”. This provides opportunity for current and potential members to meet and explore timely topics: voting reform, healthcare, the environment and women's issues.

The meetups include a film or presentation, discussion, and small group collaboration to plan action, that may include making calls, writing letters, and visits to representatives, on lobby day or via an appointment at the home office.

We have a dedicated committee for the upcoming Centennial years.

To date, Elizabeth Cady Stanton visited our fundraiser, breaking records on attendance. We've partnered with our public library and the Chapman Museum to support suffrage programs. Events included a visit from Susan B Anthony, an historical reenactment of a Suffrage Rally, and participation in the Memorial Day parade dressed in attire from the Suffrage era.

When we unite in a common cause— Failure is Impossible.

LWV of Shelter Island

Conducted voter registration drives last summer at several locations around the Island.

Ran a candidate forum for two open Town Council seats and conducted a panel discussion with Town personnel as part of the forum to discuss a proposition on the ballot that would permit the Town to use up to 20 percent of the annual funds collected as part of the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund for other environmental projects. The program was aired on our local access channel.

On election day we distributed over 300 “I just voted” stickers as voters exited the polls which was noted in an editorial in our town newspaper.

Held our 10th Annual State of the Town luncheon with our Town Supervisor as our featured speaker attended by over 100 members of the community. Invited high school juniors and seniors along with their Social Studies teacher so that they had some exposure to the rudiments of town governance. This program was covered by our town newspaper, aired on our local access channel and streamed on the Town website.

Held our annual member/guest cocktail party in July and invited the president of the Suffolk league to speak about the LWV’s non-partisanship as the core value of the organization. Event was held on the water at the home of one of our members and attended by some 50 LWVSI members and guests.

LWV Of (Eastern) Putnam County

Our League of Women Voters is now in its’ eighth year. The original name was LWV of Eastern Putnam County; however, we do “business” as LWV of Putnam County, because we are the ONLY League in Putnam County, and serve all corners of the county. (We have submitted a name change to NYS to address that).

We have had an interesting and very active year:

- We were asked this year to “partner” with one of our public libraries, and with their cooperation, have to date hosted two public educational panel discussions on the Electoral College process in April, and the State of New York State Health in May. In September, we will be hosting a public panel discussion regarding the upcoming ballot vote on the NYS Constitutional Convention.
- We have been invited by the Putnam County Executive’s office to participate in the Naturalization Ceremonies hosted quarterly in the Putnam County Historic Courthouse, where it is our honor and pleasure to register 40 or more new citizens to vote, as well as discuss the option for organ donor donation, at each ceremony.
- We have and will continue to host both Primary and General Candidate Forums for NY State, Putnam County, and elected officials for the six towns in our county. Last year, our LWV was the only organization offering candidate forums, and we have heard from some Republican candidates that our forums are the only events they wish to attend, as they have come to learn that the PC-LWV does not support or oppose any party.
- We have submitted our local league’s position in Letters to the Editor to all of our local newspapers, as well as to our public Facebook page. We “streamed live” on the Putnam County Facebook page, provided YouTube video on our LWV public Facebook page,

and videotaped to Putnam's local cable TV education channels, our panel discussion on the Electoral College, and plan to continue this practice.

- We have participated in Putnam County celebrations of Women's Suffrage and winning the right to vote in NYS, and will continue doing so thru the 2017 summer months. We have in our possession six of the NYS Museum's Women's Suffrage panels, and have been delivering them for exhibit at Putnam County Ceremonies, museums, libraries, and theater. We will speak briefly at some of these events about suffrage and the League of Women Voters.

Our Moment in the Sun this year is the knowledge that we have nearly doubled our membership from 2016 to 2017! Several years ago, when our small board of President and Vice President were keeping our League alive, I was discussing our dwindling membership with our then NYS-LWV President Betsy Swan, who provided the sage advice to "stick to it even if we only have membership of two"! Well, WE HAVE PERSEVERED!!! WE KNOW THAT FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

LWV of Utica/Rome Metro Area

- We sent an outstanding student to Inside Albany again this year
- We are participating with 8 other women's groups in planning Centennial Celebrations for suffrage, culminating in a cocktail party on Nov. 7 at the Oneida County Historical Center
- We participated in 22 Voter Registration Dries at County and Federal Naturalization Ceremonies, at our 5 area colleges, Framers' Market, and City Stall on tax Day to name a few
- In a recent ceremony, 3 of our members were recognized as Women of the Year in various categories for other organizations to which they belong
- We donated an outstanding basket of a silent auction in the Sales Room at state Convention
- We've ordered shirts with our logo to wear at our voter registration drives
- Last, but not least, we interviewed four of our five elected state legislators in the recent post-budget lobby visits.

LWV of Rivertowns

We had a very busy, active year pursuing typical League mandates (voter registration organizing and monitoring candidate forums, hosting a variety of speakers on myriad topics). Three outstanding events were as follows:

- We hosted a Hot Topics breakfast on Human Trafficking and followed up with our local government officials to bring their attention to this growing problem in Westchester County
- We organized a debate on the pros and cons of the proposal to have a state constitutional convention. This attracted 75 participants from all over Westchester.
- We enlisted the support of all the mayors of the 8 Rivertowns to continue independently to commit to the Paris Climate agreements, despite the current President's action to pull out of these accords.

LWV of Rensselaer

After last local Troy election LWVRC hosted “meet and greet” between new public officials and Troy’s many volunteer civic groups of which the League is one. Our hope was that meeting person to person would foster more collaborative work. More successful among civic groups than with Council.

Our League has a monthly spot at the Troy’s very popular Farmer’ Market to offer voter registration and other info. One of our new members who wished to focus on voter registration dressed as a suffragette and offered pictures with her and also offered stickers saying “proud voter” to kids. The stickers and suffragette costume offered a low threat way to open a conversation.

Partnered with Troy Library to present program about Fake News and each gained larger audiences than either alone which for us was 50 people.

LWV of the North Country (Serving Clinton, Essex and Franklin Counties)

1. In March, in partnership with NYS Archives, Clinton Co. Historical Association, SUNY Plattsburgh Library, and the recently restored Strand Theater, we engaged to have the “Petticoats of Steel” production at the theater after the actors presented at a local school. This was available for free to all attendees.
2. A relationship was established with the Lake Champlain Committee and with them, we organized “April Stools Day.” This was a Sunday afternoon walk at the NYS Park Point Au Roche. Members and interested friends scooped animal waste to help prevent algae bloom in Lake Champlain. A reporter from Channel 3 WCAX in VT came with us and good coverage was telecast during the local news segment.
3. Connections with the Clinton Co. Historical Association has proven helpful and planning is underway for another event to highlight women’s suffrage at an evening event with a competitive “Jeopardy”-like game.

LWV of Mid-Hudson Region (Ulster and Dutchess Counties)

We have had a surge in membership this year, gaining approximately 23 new members this year. There are two main areas that I want to highlight – electoral reform and the environment.

Electoral Reform – We have had a lot of interest in the area since the last election. So much so, that our league has started a new committee focusing on election reform. The Committee studies Ulster County voting patterns and intends to use the information to influence change in NYS voting laws that would increase voter turnout. One particular focus is getting same day registration.

We sponsored a presentation of the feature film, Electoral Dysfunction, featuring Mo Rocca, which included a presentation and Q&A with a SUNY New Patz professor, which was very well attended. We had a brunch to discuss changing NY voting law, which was very well attended and led to new members.

We also distributed 3000 voter guides through Dutchess and Ulster Counties, and had a very successful national Voter Registration day, focusing on registering college students. We moderated several meet the candidate events for local school board elections.

Our league is also engaged with the Ulster County government to help pass comprehensive campaign finance reform at the local level. A propose local law was rolled out a couple of weeks ago, with our members standing behind the county executive at the press conference.

Environment – The other are we have been very engaged in is the environment. Our league is sponsoring a food recovery challenge, which essentially has businesses and organizations measuring their food waste and then seeking to reduce it. We also helped conduct a food waste audit at the local elementary school, to help educate children about the problem of food waste.

Further, we had a month-long event called Trash Fest Ulster, which married a celebration of the arts with a celebration of the environment. Sculptors installed sculptures at the local transfer state, created pieces using discarded objects and musicians performs on instruments made out of recycled materials.

Additionally, our local league has done many other activities including meeting with our Congressman, presenting and debating the constitutional convention, and participating in lobby day at the state capital.

LWV of Broome and Tioga Counties

Voter Registration – over 15 events, attendance at Naturalization Ceremonies, and visits to food pantries, hundred were registered. Our member, Nick Doran, from Binghamton University spoke this morning about the work of the Center for Civic Engagement – 1098 students registered, 300+ absentee ballots submitted, and an 84% voting level at the University. BU was honored as a Voter Friendly Campus. Youth ARE our future.

In conjunction with other community groups, we held a Civic Action Boot Camp in February, to educate people on how to engage and affect legislators and issues. Over 150 people from 4 counties and NE PA came. Another boot camp is planned for the fall – on environmental concerns. We have had a bout a 20% increase in membership and had more students apply for Sudents Inside Albany than ever before and it was very hard to choose one student to send.

Working with our local PBS station WSKG, two federal congressional district debates were held – the candidate debate was simulcast on TV, radio and CSPAN.

Come to Binghamton on Oct. 7 – join us for re-enactment of a suffrage parade held in 1913. Our local Assembly member, colleges, museums, historians, county legislators, girl scouts and others are working on this. Our heritage honors Esther Morris, a woman from Owego (Tioga County) who moved to Wyoming, helped establish suffrage there and was the first woman in the country to be election to office (judge) and the Ladies from Lisle (town in No. Broome) who were the first women in NY to vote. We are proud of them and proud of the dedication and hard work of our current League members.

LWV of East Nassau

Program Ray – Nugget

Salon – purpose to amuse one another and increase knowledge of participants by conversation.

LWV of Central Nassau

We registered voters at our local high schools and colleges. We also registered voters at a homeless shelter, the Mary Brennan Inn. In the villages of Rockville Centre, Garden City and SUNY Old Westbury.

We co-sponsored candidate forums with the Hempstead NAAXCP Branch and the Coordinating Council of Civics for School Board and village elections.

We sent two student to the “Inside Albany” conference. We hosted a public meeting to show the con con powerpoint and term limits.

Most important event was a forum on “Alternatives to Incarceration.” Our panel consisted of a nun, an ex-felon as well as an assistant District Attorney.

We also have gained 7 new members.

LWV of Cazenovia

Seven years ago the league of Women Voters of Cazenovia helped produce a report on shared services for the Town and Village of Cazenovia to “identify opportunities for cooperative efforts by local government entities in order to achieve more efficient services, control costs, and enhance community life.”

At just about the same time, the LWV of NYS adopted a position on Consolidation of Government Units and Sharing of Major Governmental Services. In that position state, the NYS League supported “a cooperative and transparent process, in which citizens have sufficient and timely information with which to make an informed decision about proposed actions, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.”

The governments of the Town and Village of Cazenovia have not decide to embark on an evaluation of whether or not the two municipalities should consolidate. The LWV of Cazenovia will, as its local program, monitor this process and help provide opportunities for residents to learn about and become engaged in this effort. This is a complex and multifaceted process. We will learn a lot. We have no idea how it will all turn out, but we are looking forward with great interest. Please stay tuned!

LWV of Tompkins County

- Active Natural Resources Committee – 2 of our NR Committee members are on the State Energy, Agriculture and Environment Committee (LWVNYS)
- There are 9 new members and 10 “honorary” members.
- Archiving our League materials 1920 – present
- Received Award “Making a Difference” from our local history museum.

LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck

- Candidate debates for state and local elections
- Sent two student to SIA
- We welcomed Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins as our guest speaker at our annual luncheon with other shoreline leagues.
- Held annual Women's History Month Poster Contest at Hommocks Middle School
- Rolled out Be Earthwise campaign at the luncheon, the environmental committee's online resource
- Co-sponsored a panel discussion on drug addiction
- Formed a voter task force to expand voter registration and research, address and hopefully resolve challenges to voter turnout.

LWV of Syracuse

The Syracuse Metro League conducted several voter registration drives during the 2016 election cycle. Our voter registration drive in 2016 was primarily focused on people from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, minorities and low-income Americans.

Six members contacted 6 specific locations, scheduled and trained volunteers, provided voter registration forms, absentee applications and printed educational materials and delivered completed voter registration forms to the Onondaga County Board of Elections. The sites chosen for this project included OCC, LeMoyne College, Naturalization Ceremonies, Regional Market, Onondaga County Justice Center, and best of all, the Centro Bus HUB on Salina Street. We also provided members for voter registration booth at the NYS State Fair organized by LWVNYS.

Altogether we organized and implemented 19 voter registration drives and collected 825 completed forms with many more forms handed out to people who completed the forms on their own.

The Centro Bus HUB site was a month long event and included a partnership with the NAACP and volunteers representing University Methodist Church Choir, Delta Sorority, Iota Nu Omega (Syracuse Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority), Plymouth Congregational Church and students from the New School. This effort not only produced 303 completed registration forms from an underserved part of the community, but also, provided voter registration training to volunteers from 5 organizations.

These activities also brought in new members, and existing members were energized by the active interacting with the public.

LWV of Wayne County MAL Unit

- Presented our First Vote to 3 classes of seniors
- Registered voters at local and county events
- Sent a junior to the SIA in Albany

LWV of Geneva

- School Board Forum in May, 2016

- Students Inside Albany – Sponsored Katie Taylor, Geneva HS senior in 2016 and Joseph Fletcher, Geneva HS Sophomore in 2017
- Agnes Slossan Lewis Award Dinner at Lochland School, June 2016: Barbara Roesch received the ASL award
- Naturalization Ceremony in Seneca Falls, August 2016, new citizens were registered to vote
- Voter Registration drives at Farmers’ Market and Geneva High School
- I Voter education, used Vote 411 website, distributed pamphlets in Geneva and Canandaigua, presented Should NYS Hold a Con Con in March 2017
- Held candidate forum for 54th NYS Senate District Seat: 3 candidates who were on the ballot were invited but only 2 candidates and 1 representative participated
- Held wine and chocolate fundraiser at Billsboro Winery
- LWV of Geneva oversees, but does not direct the activities of the Court Watch Program. One LWV board members serves on the Court Watch Steering Committee. Court Watch volunteers attended 244 court sessions in their own fiscal year, visiting 13 different courts in Ontario County. Court Watch publishes a newsletter, Eye on the Courts, which reports their findings 3 times a year.
- Held annual meeting in April 2016 with presentation by Attorney Louis Guard titled Congress, the Constitution and the Supreme Court.

LWV of Rochester

- We hosted 6 public forums on such topics as understanding how “Voting is Not Rigged in Monroe County,” and “Can Rochester Reduce Poverty by 50% in 15 Years?”
- At member meetings, we considered the pros and cons of a NYS Con Con and develop a consensus about NYS Legislature procedures.
- Working with many partner organizations like the Voter Alliance, we registered nearly 4000 new voters, mostly in underrepresented areas in Rochester
- We commissioned a new computer application from the Center for Governmental Research which allows us to analyze areas of low voter turnout and low voter registration to better target our efforts and to educate the public on the effects of gerrymandering.
- We presented in nearly every city high school to illustrate to seniors the history and importance of voting and registered the 18 year olds.
- We welcomed over 1800 newly naturalized citizens at monthly naturalization ceremonies and registered many as new voters.
- WE conducted our Fair Election Practices Campaign and saw a 20% jump in the number of candidates who signed our pledge to run a fair and issues-oriented campaigns.
- We co-sponsored our annual televised candidate debate with WROC-TV Channel 8, this year presenting US Rep Louse Slaughter and her challenger Gates Town Supervisor Mark Assini.
- WE have an active Observer Corps in our city, towns, and county.
- We welcomed 29 new members

LWV of the Hamptons

- Participated in a nation pilot project to encourage citizens in Brookhaven to vote by making individual phone calls to each.

- Conducted 6 candidates debates in national, state and local elections.
- Made Public Service Announcements on local radio and cable access stations on voting information for the public.
- Special Events Committee held fundraisers: tour of Bridgehampton, lunch and lecture by Kathleen King, pancake brunch fundraiser.
- Health Committee presented an update on the coming merger of Southampton and Stony Brook University Hospitals.
- The Government and Health Committees presented a panel to explain the Single Payer option for healthcare.
- Held a public information meeting on the 2017 voter on whether or not to support a NYS Con Con
- Held a reception for new members to encourage participating in our committee works.
- Voter Services helped to register our newest citizens at their naturalization ceremony at the Islip Federal Court House.
- Conducted a consensus on Legislative Procedures issues.
- Held planning meeting and decided our goals for the coming year include advocacy of league positions and better visibility for our local league
- Held popular “Blah’s Luncheon” at Bobby Van’s restaurant in Bridgehampton.
- Natural Resources Committee held a meeting about the recent PSEG approved Deepwater Wind Farm development
- Education Committee participate in “Students inside the Suffolk County Legislature” and “SIA” program.

LWV of Scarsdale

League has been around for 90 years. Very busy with lregular programs on local school budgets, local school elections, voter registrations and candidates forums.

Special programs;

- Preet Bharara, US Attorney for the Southern District spoke about law enforcement, fighting corruption and the scourge of misuse of prescription durgs.
- William Grueskin, former editor of Wall Street Journal online and academic dean of Columbia Journalism School
- Special Candidate forum
- Information meeting on Major library renovations
- Youth program – 2 students to SIA

LWV of Albany

I’m going to reprise an old Sinatra classic and say "it was a very good year".

We achieved some of the goals we set last summer including introducing Twitter, increasing our visibility and fostering partnerships with other groups.

On the visibility front, we:

- Did multiple tabling events under our voter services work, but also did tabling at an MLK program, a Historical commemoration of suffragette movement, and a Social Justice and Community Organization day.

In the past our programs usually were attend by 30 to 40 people, but this year the attendance at our programs jumped so high that we had to scramble in order to seat the unexpected turnout of several hundred people at our Programs.

Our programs included having Blair Horner from NYPIRG speaking on Corruption in Govt, a large panel discussion on Immigration in the Capital District, a program we co-sponsored with the Women's Press Club titled "The Endangered Species: The future of Journalism" and our last program was on Climate change where our panel included Paul Tonko and our state assemblywomen Pat Fahy.

On the more "Bread and Butter" areas of our work:

- Our naturalization efforts resulted in registering over 500 voters in 17 ceremonies, brought in some new members who are with us today as part of those efforts, and laid the foundation for other counties to begin their own efforts on naturalization.

- In Voter services we tried the "Train the Trainer" approach and worked with other groups to have them successfully run their own efforts in voter education and registration.

We also put our efforts toward working with several mosques, 4 colleges, and hosted 2 candidate events, and we stepped up our use and promotion of Vote 411.

The work of our County Observer Corps included the passing in the November election of over 50 changes to our charter to make it accurate and extensive research on redistricting and legislative size in preparation for further reform.

Lastly, we're proud to say that our membership has grown by almost 30 people to 188 members, and our constant contact list is just shy of 500 people.

LWV of the City of New York

The New York City League last year wrapped all our activities into the 5 borough voting challenge. All five borough Presidents agreed to join the League in the hopes to increase the abysmal voter turnout rates of the city.

In order to handle the increased request for voter services, a computer program that could track some 150 volunteers that were willing to do a voter registration drive was used. The program allowed Barbara Ettington and the office to mobilize a team to go out and do some 100 events from July and October where the League registered some 3000 voters (not partnered with any other groups). This voter services also ran our "train the training" program and trained some 100 people to run their own voter registration drives.

Although the Borough Presidents and the League called the contest a draw because the increase in turnout was marginal in all boroughs, the NYC turnout was greater than the national average.

With all the work attention and energy and the results of the election, the Voter Services took on an increase in phone calls to office inquiring about the League. They started open houses explaining what the League was and did to a record number of people. They shifted to offering advocacy workshops to conduct more train the trainer sessions. Now they are gearing up to tackle a speakers' bureau for the con con.

LWV of Port Washington/Manhasset

- Held numerous candidate night forums for state assembly, state senate, library board and school board elections
- 10-15 new members, 2 joining the board
- Women in Politics Event - 60 attendees. Director of Eleanor's Legacy, local reporter and female candidate on a panel discussion with fulsome audience participation.
- Sent two students to Students in Albany program
- Participated in Lobby Day and met with Senator Elaine Phillips
- Screening of Equal Means Equal film which covers the Equal Rights Amendment with a discussion with former Assemblywoman Michelle Schimmel

LWV Brookhaven held a meeting to review the presidential election with the help of two assistant professors from Suffolk Community College. This followed up three meetings on basic voting issues (primaries, etc.) that we had held the previous year, targeting not just League members but community members at the invitation of three local libraries. We are discussing grant proposals so that we can have an ongoing relationship with the professors and offering an honorarium.

Thus we achieved several goals... discussing timely topics, collaborating with several local libraries (who requested this program), attracting members of the general public and recruiting new members.

LWV Smithtown has several Community Conversation lunches each year. There are held at a local restaurant for lunch in a private room. Only LWV members and others we invite (heads of organizations we collaborate with, and "not-yet members) attend. We invite a local elected official, head of govt department, local civic/chamber head, public institution head, etc. to an intimate conversation. It helps the League cement its reputation with local leaders, clarify its positions, ask questions, and establish or grow relationships. In the community.

LWV of Suffolk County ILO had our second (first in 2015, then 2017) Student Day at the Suffolk County Legislature program. This year it was held twice (2 dates, 2 locations in eastern and western Suffolk) with about 50 students at each location.

The program was developed by LWVSC board members working with the SC Legislature Presiding Officer's Chief of Staff. Students (as small groups or individuals) are recruited by our local Leagues, their teachers attend, and materials and links are sent out in advance.

Students learn about how a bill becomes a law, how the Legislature operates and hears from county elected officials and department heads. In the morning

In the afternoon all students participate in a mock legislative session, with an introductory resolution (determined on in advance by LWV). This year's was "Should Suffolk be a sanctuary county?"

We expect to hold this program annually, and it strengthens our relationship with the SC Legislature, and with our schools, teachers and students. New members have begun observing the program as well.