



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

State Board Updates: September 2011

The *State Board Updates* will replace the old State Board Report. All local League leaders will receive an emailed *Update* after each state Board meeting (September, November, January, March, May and July) with information from the Board members that is important to all local Leagues. We are trying to keep the notices short and there will often be attachments and links to longer reports in case you would like more information on that topic. We will also provide each *Update* as an attachment in case you want to print out the entire report. We strongly urge all leaders to read the entire *Update*.

We will also have a section at the top, entitled **Local League To Do's** in which there will be a list of items which your local League must return or respond about to the state office; this will summarize what you need to do and hopefully encourage you to respond to all more quickly. Information about each of these tasks is included later in the full report.

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Email or call with tentative date for community forum on Voter Participation project; and whether you want to participate in training on this program.
- Return by email, mail or fax the [Legislative Agenda Response Form](#) (also attached).
- Email or call with Youth Coordinator name and contact info (or confirm same as last year).
- Email or call with name and contact info for person in your local League who organizes Public Relations activities to state office (lwvny@lwvny.org) and to ahinkemeyer@optonline.net.
- Update your local League membership and board/officer information in LWVUS database.

President's Report: Betsey Swan, betsey@lwvny.org

If your life is like mine, the summer has disappeared, and you are unaware of where it has gone. Before being swept away by the hurly burly of League work, it is important to reflect on the vision that motivates us and to plan for how that vision can be implemented most effectively in the early 21st century. Read more in Welcome attachment.

At its biennial convention, the board was directed to register its displeasure with the LWVUS at its political ads against US Senators Claire McCaskill and Scott Brown. Read attached letter sent by LWVNYS Board.

At its June retreat, the national Board reviewed and amended the [League's nonpartisan policy](#). It added a statement concerning social media behavior. Local League boards should annually review their respective nonpartisan policies at their new board orientation and/or planning sessions. [Here are Guidelines](#) to consider when establishing your nonpartisan policy. And, please remember that your policy should reflect the politics and perceptions in your community. For questions, please contact LWVUS/EF Governance Committee Chair Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti, wheatley@tampabary.rr.com.

Did you know that you can make a gift to the League, obtain a current tax advantage, and receive income for life? We offer a vehicle with which to do this through the League's pooled income fund. Within certain parameters, you can choose which level of the League to benefit. For more information, contact Betsey@lwvny.org.

Voter Service Report: Susan Multer, GSMulter@stny.rr.com

All local Leagues should be busy with voter registration drives, candidate forums and more election activities. A few local Leagues have asked for assistance or clarification on voter service policies; all local Leagues should have written policies for activities such as candidate forums. Also, don't forget the September 30 deadline for applying for \$1000 pass-through grant from LWVUS for registering students to vote next spring. *Click [here](#) for the information to apply.*

Webinar on Debate Moderating

On October 6th at 2 PM, the LWVUS will present an interactive "Do's and Don'ts on Debate Moderating" webinar in which two moderators (one experienced and one new) respond to "sticky" questions and issues that may arise during a debate. [Register for this webinar](#) and you will receive information on running a debate/forum and submitting your own "sticky" questions or situations for the moderators.

Vote 411

There are 15 local Leagues participating in the Vote 411 development of electronic voter guides this fall. Thanks to Christine Alexander of LWV Saratoga who has provided great assistance to the many Leagues developing this program. There have been a number of problems to tackle, but there is now a base for expanding next year, with leagues able to see the possibilities and more league members trained in the Vote 411 software. Some websites are already live; some will be live in the very near future. You can look for candidates listed in your area by clicking on the [link](#).

Issues and Advocacy: Sally Robinson, robintwins@gmail.com

Redistricting

ReShapeNY has continued to keep pressure on the state to enact redistricting reform in a fall special session through both testimony and through the media. Governor Cuomo reiterated his pledge to veto district lines drawn by LATFOR, the current commission, on August 4, the day the LATFOR held its public hearing in Albany. In addition to the League, Citizens Union, NYPIRG, Campaign for a Better New York, Common Cause, ACT NOW, Citizen Action, and the Korean American Voters' Council (KAVC) all have testified that legislators should honor their commitments made during campaign season to end gerrymandering and put the redistricting pen in the hands of an independent commission drawing fair district boundaries according to defined and objective criteria. Redistricting reform would have to be accomplished in a fall special session for a new independent commission to take over from LATFOR in time to draw the lines for the 2012 primaries.

Thanks to our local Leagues in Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Binghamton, Westchester and NYC for presenting testimony at each of the LATFOR hearings. In some cities, press conferences were also organized and attended by local members. Thanks to all who helped make the League visible and active on this issue.

Voter Participation Project

As a reminder, this is a project for which the state League will provide program ready materials (power point and background paper) for local Leagues to present in a community forum on nontraditional voting methods and their impact on voter participation. We are in the process of finalizing the background paper for the power point. We have asked each local League to schedule a date for this community forum; *please email the state office the tentative date of this meeting (it can be anytime between October and June) and also whether you would like to participate in a training session on the materials sometime this fall (by webinar, conference call or in person in certain areas of the state).* This is an interesting topic that we expect to generate a great community forum.

Local League Input on 2012 Legislative Agenda

Attached please find the form to voice your League's opinion on the state League's 2012 legislative agenda. ***Please complete and submit the [form](#) (hit submit at bottom or print out and mail) to the state office by November 1.*** The responses will be discussed with the issues specialists and the draft 2012 Legislative Agenda will be presented at the November state board meeting. This is your opportunity to provide input on the state League's lobbying efforts next spring.

Hydrofracking

Now that the DEC has produced its complete revision of the SGEIS (Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement) on gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing, the public has until Monday, December 12th to comment. In accordance with LWV positions on air and water quality, protection of watersheds, etc., it is critical that we identify areas that are weak or omitted and suggest appropriate revisions. Many local Leagues have been asking about possible speakers on this issue. The following are some possibilities:

- Deborah Rogers, contact: Nicki Woosley at 214-871-8787 to schedule talk on economic impact; click [here](#) to see article on Ms. Rogers.
- Elisabeth (Beth) Radow, Chair LWV-NYS Hydraulic Fracturing Committee – contact her for more info on speakers and questions (ERadow@CUDDYFEDER.COM)
- Contact the State office also for a list of more speakers on this topic

Membership: Georgia DeGregorio, georgiatd@frontiernet.net

Here are some suggestions for a packet you can prepare for your “welcome” to new members. One way to use these documents is to review briefly the brochure “Welcome to the League”. You could then go around the room and informally ask each new member if he/she has any questions and tell what his/her expectations are in joining the League. You would be amazed how a conversation will develop about the League with excellent ideas being suggested. You should have at least 2-3 board members present who also can share their story about why they joined the League as well as tell what they are doing now and how the new members could help.

- a. *Welcome to the League*
- b. *Your Right to Vote in NYS*-- 5 different brochures that focus on specific groups of potentially disenfranchised citizens: disabled, homeless, detained in jail or prison, college students, and with mental health disabilities.
- c. *Voters Guide Part I*
- d. Your membership list with leaders' names and contact information
- e. Your calendar of events/activities for the year
- f. Your current Voter or newsletter

Contact Katrina McEwen at the Albany office to obtain the first three items.

Update Your Local Membership and Board/Officers

Each local League is responsible for updating their membership list and their list of officers and board members on the LWVUS database. This is important to ensure that all members receive information from LWVUS and LWNYS and that all local League leaders receive appropriate announcements. To see the step-by-step instructions on how to update in the national database, see attached instructions. It's really not that hard if you follow each step. Call the state League office and we can assist you. ***It is your responsibility, however, to keep your League's membership information current in the LWVUS database.***

Youth Programs and Citizen Education: Judie Gorenstein, JudieL728@aol.com

The Youth Program webpage on the state League website (www.lwvny.org) and click on Youth Programs on left side) has been updated to contain the information that was gathered from the questionnaires sent to all the local leagues and MAL Units. We had a 100% response from the leagues. Although it is impossible to estimate the

number of youths that are involved through all the local programs, I can report that 39 do have one or more youth programs . Ten leagues that do not have any youth programs have indicated an interest to start one and this webpage can be a starting point for them.

Youth programs are an excellent way to carry out the mission of the league in encouraging citizens to be active and informed participants in government. Youth programs reach our young citizens and if not of voting age yet, our future voters. However, youth programs also are an excellent tool to get some of our older members involved. Working with youth is a stimulating and positive experience and brings enthusiasm and energy to our leagues. Therefore, we hope that this [new web page](#) encourages leagues to take a look at the programs other leagues are doing. The descriptions of the programs are given in order to give an idea of what each is. In cases like, "Take Me To Vote", where several leagues have adapted programs to fit their needs and communities, each is described. There are contact names and email addresses in order that those interested can find out more and then either follow or adapt the program.

Students Inside Albany Conference

The Students Inside Albany Conference has been set for March 25-28, 2012. It is a bit earlier this year and we're hoping that will encourage even more participation (farther from AP exams). On the state League website under Youth Programs are sample brochures, flyers, recruitment ideas, etc to try and make it even easier for local Leagues to find a student. All of these brochures and documents will be emailed to the President and Youth Coordinator for each local League next week. ***Please call or email the state office with the name and contact person for your youth programs – or confirm that it's the same person as last year.*** Remember that the Conference is **free** for the student and the local League; the only cost to the local League is to arrange for the student to get to Albany and back home (either by train, bus, parent car or League member car).

Public Relations: Arlene Hinkemeyer (ahinkemeyer@optonline.net)

I am pleased to report that 39 of our 57 Leagues in NYS now have websites. Welcome LWV of Bedford/Lewisboro/North Salem in Westchester County. For the remaining 18 Leagues, go to LWVnet.org if you would like to use the California League's Easy Web system.

The LWVNYS office is trying to compile the name and contact information for the person who is handling the PR/publicity function in each League. Please send this ASAP to the state office (lwvny@lwvny.org) and to me at ahinkemeyer@optonline.net so that I can forward information to you. Also, don't hesitate to contact me with any successes/problems you encounter.

Treasurer: Ellen De Gregorio, etdegregorio@hotmail.com

As State League Treasurer and a CPA for over 24 years, I wanted to let each of the local leagues know that I am available for any questions you might have of a financial nature. While there are documents on-line which provide guidance to local treasurers (please see *In League* on the Local League Resources page of the state website), they don't cover every situation and sometimes a discussion is just what you need. I am available via email at etdegregorio@hotmail.com or you can call the state office at 518-465-4162 and leave a message and I will get back to you. I am looking forward to working with all of you.