PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Having three primaries this year, we have to begin our voter registration activities early. To get started we are having the program “Increasing Voter Participation” at our Annual Meeting and Dinner on May 7th. We are fortunate to have the State League Executive Director, Laura Ladd Bierman, and State League Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti, present that night. They will be talking about some states’ efforts toward voter suppression as well as ways in which other states make it easier for citizens to register and to vote.

We will have two new Co-Directors for Voter Service this May. They will be contacting you to assist with voter registration. We plan to be at Farmer’s Market this summer. We will have a booth at the Ithaca Festival in early June and at the Apple Harvest Festival in early October. The community looks to us for voter registration. I hope you all will volunteer some of your time.

This year the State League is helping local Leagues develop an internet-based voters’ guide, VOTE 411. They are developing a standard set of questions which we will pose to our legislators, who then e-mail back their responses to State. Anyone in New York state can see where their legislators stand on important issues by going to the website, www.vote411.org. We haven’t participated in

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VOTE 411 before because of its cost. This year the State League is paying all costs.

Both our Healthcare Committee and Natural Resources Committee are planning to participate in information sessions at the National Convention, which is June 8-12 in Washington, D.C. This event should be very exciting. We want to make our views known by the other Leagues as well as join in supporting other states in their similar efforts.

I want to Thank Flo Smith for putting together a great program last month. People complemented the League for showing the film *Iron Jawed Angels*. We hope to have small gatherings later this year to view the film in case you missed the program. The film presents the women who paved the way for us; it’s up to us to live up to their hopes and dreams.

Being on the State League Board this year, I have had the opportunity to hear about the struggles some local Leagues are experiencing. In contrast I see our League as healthy and influential in the community. Each of us can be proud to be a part of the Tompkins County League; I brag about us every chance I get.

I’ll see you May 7th at the Annual Meeting and Dinner.

Kay Sharp

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**ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER**

The Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held on Monday, May 7, 2012, at the Salvation Army Worship and Service Center, 150 North Albany Street, Ithaca. The Buffet Dinner will begin at 6:00 PM, the cost is $12.00, payable at the door. Reservations are required for the dinner: please RSVP before April 27, to Florence Smith, phone (607) 273-6147, e-mail flosmith42@aol.com. After the meal we will hear reports from the two High School Students who participated in the Students Inside Albany program and hold a short Annual Meeting. An informative educational program, open to the public, will begin at 7:15.

Laura Ladd-Bierman, Executive Director, and Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, of the New York State League will present and discuss a briefing paper prepared by the League of Women Voters of New York State and the Education Foundation: *Increasing Voter Participation: Opportunities In New York State*.

Over the last three federal elections, New York had the 47th lowest voter participation rate of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. This low ranking can be partially explained by New York’s paper-based registration system, early registration deadline and other outdated voter registration policies, including the state’s long waiting period for changing party affiliation. Even in comparison to other inflexible states, New York has some of the most rigid voter registration policies in the country. In addition, it is one of only fifteen states that both do not allow any form of early in-person voting and require an excuse for absentee ballots. New York also has a number of out-dated requirements for ballot design that may contribute to voter confusion and errors.

There are many possible opportunities to increase rates of voter participation in New York State through common sense solutions that have been implemented, to varying degrees of success, in other states beginning in the 1980s. These include voter registration modernization, early voting options, improved ballot design, and poll worker training. Find out what other states have implemented and with what results – and how NYS could adopt some of these changes.

Please come to this important event and invite a friend.

Florence B. Smith, VP Program
LEAGUE FINANCES: A BIT OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

A few years ago, money in accounts formerly dedicated to local publications of *Know Your Schools* and *Know Your Local Government* were transferred to start a League account at the Community Foundation of Tompkins County since we no longer produced these publications. In addition, since then, some members have donated to this account as well.

Formerly we were able to earn extra money for the League by staffing Cornell Senate elections and by selling UNICEF cards. These options no longer exist and good substitute projects have not been unearthed.

We have always been committed to keeping dues as manageable for members as possible. (Anyone wanting to join LWVTC can do so regardless of ability to pay the full recommended dues.)

Recently, our required “per-member-payments” to the national and state Leagues use up the lion’s share of our dues. We are left with very little for local needs.

The money in our fund at the Community Foundation earns interest, which helps with meeting budget needs. However, several things must be kept in mind:

- The Foundation Money must be used for educational, non-lobbying sorts of League activities;
- We have to keep this fund robust. We want to think long-term and to be sure our future budgetary needs can also be met;
- We want to continue our commitment to not exclude members because of ability to pay a full amount of dues. We want to be representative of all our community.

This brings us to our annual appeal. We encourage members who are able to contribute some additional amount beyond the stated dues. This could go to our general fund. However, a contribution to the League’s account in the Community Foundation is tax-deductible and can help a good deal to keep us financially healthy. It is a great investment: voters’ services, candidates’ meetings, our committees’ work, public educational meetings, sending students to Albany, our information bulletin, occasional fact sheets, website information, the list goes on … But I think you get the idea.

Marnie Johnson

PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

I am grateful for the dedication and commitment of our Committee Chairs and members for the work done throughout the year on behalf of the League and the community. Full reports of our informative and successful programs have been published in our Bulletins since September 2011.

Here are a few highlights:

The League completed the LWVUS Education Study *The Role to the Federal Government in Public Education*. To provide information relevant to the study, the Public Education and Youth Program Committee sponsored two programs:

- September 26, 2011: Part I *An Overview of Legislation, Funding and Equity, and its Impact*;
- October 24, 2011: Part II *Common Core Standards and Assessment*.

Our Health Care and Natural Resources Committees organized two public information programs:

- February 27, 2012: *Treading Lightly on the Planet*.

We recognized Women’s History Month with a public screening on March 29 of *Iron Jawed Angels*, a moving dramatization of the efforts of two activists in the Suffrage Movement.

Florence B. Smith, VP Program
MEDICARE FRAUD, MEDICARE SCAMS, IDENTITY THEFT, ... WHAT NEW YORK SENIORS NEED TO KNOW

Wednesday, May 9
9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Unitarian Church Parlor
306 North Aurora St.

Our League is pleased to be a co-sponsor of a presentation developed by the New York State-Wide Senior Action Council: Medicare Fraud, Medicare Scams, and Identity Theft — What They Mean To New York Seniors. The main program involves two different but related topics.

Tim Kovarik, Aging Services Program Coordinator, NYS Office for the Aging and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Director for New York State will be talking about the nationwide SMP projects, what they are, what they offer, and how SMP volunteers help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries avoid, detect, and prevent health care fraud. Mr. Kovarik will identify current Medicare scams and frauds and discuss what beneficiaries can do to prevent health care fraud and abuse. Becoming trained as an SMP volunteer is always a possibility!

Helen Ranck, Financial Management Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, will talk about how to Deter, Detect, and Defend Against Identity Theft. Ms. Ranck will provide tips on what one can do — and not do — to avoid Identity Theft. Vigilance in monitoring financial accounts and billing statements to detect any discrepancies or suspicious activity is a must!

You will enjoy as well a performance by the Lifelong Theatre Troupe, and refreshments generously provided by the Ithaca Bakery.

Please join us for this program, free and open to the public, on Thursday, May 10, from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM in the First Unitarian Church, corner of Buffalo and Aurora Streets, Ithaca.

Other co-sponsors for the event: Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Lifelong, and Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County.

For more information contact: Sarah Jane Blake, sjblake@twcny.rr.com.

WOMEN’S HISTORY PROGRAM

The League recognized March as Women’s History Month with a public screening of the HBO movie Iron Jawed Angels on March 24, 2012. The movie tells the true story of two political activists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns who revolutionized the American Suffrage movement to win the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920.

The audience was enthusiastic and appreciative; many said the movie was a powerful introduction to a part of the Women’s Suffrage Movement they knew little about, or gave them a better understanding of the events and people involved in the birth of the League of Women Voters.

We are thankful to our two co-sponsors that contributed to the success of the program: the Tompkins County Public Library staff including: Sally Grubb, Exhibit Coordinator; Carrie Wheeler, Public Programmer and Community Relations Coordinator; and Terry Harbin, Audio-Visual Trainer, Technician, who assisted in the planning and preparations; and The History Center staff: Paul Miller, Education Director; Donna Eschenbrenner, Archivist; and Carl Koski, Photographer and Museum Technician, who provided advice and technical assistance, and reproduced several historical photographs for display in the Borg Warner Room.

For those who haven’t seen Iron Jawed Angels, we will include the movie in program planning for next year. If you have ideas or want to participate in the Program Committee in any way, please contact Florence Smith at 273-6147 or flosmith42@aol.com.
COMMITTEE PROGRAMS, 2012-13

Health Care Committee
Our focus for the coming year will be to monitor the progress of developing state exchanges and encouraging a plan which will move us closer to universal health care. We will follow the progress of Assemblyman Gottfried and Senator Duane in promoting a single payer plan for New York State which would cover everyone in the state with affordable, comprehensive health care; and using petitions, videos and educational programs will work to educate groups throughout Tompkins County on this topic.

Rebecca Elgie, Chair

Natural Resources Committee
The Committee will continue to monitor issues related to hydrofracking for natural gas respond, as it deems appropriate, to actions by the DEC and other events as they arise. At the state level Kay Wagner will continue as a member of the state committee working on fracking related issues. And in the short term we are developing a “fact list” for use at the national convention in June to alert the general League membership to these issues.

We plan to continue to expand our outlook beyond the fracking problem to more general issues of sustainability, an effort started with our program in February, *Treading Lightly on the Planet*. Possible focus areas are alternative energy sources and water quality. A review of programs in other countries may provide a new and useful perspective for our local community which is, at the moment, so completely immersed in the fracking issue.

As always, we welcome new members to our committee. If you are interested in joining us or contributing to our efforts please contact Kay Wagner (CMW18@cornell.edu, 607-539-3322).
**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The nominating committee will submit the following slate of nominees for officers and directors for 2012-2014 at the annual meeting on May 7. At that time, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member, provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

**Officers:**
Vice President-Membership — Debbie Levin
Treasurer — Maria Eisner

**Directors:**
Co-Director-Voter Services — Debra Dibartolo
Co-Director -Voter Services — Lucia Sciore
Director-Communications — Kathy Burlitch
Director at Large — John Harding
Director, Youth Program — Susan Henninger
Director at Large — Lucia Armstrong (1 year)

The Nominating Committee for 2012-2013 will be Beverly Baker, Sally McMillin, Dorothy Rinaldo, and Ann Kanter, Chair.

Ann Kanter, Chair

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

This has been a relatively good year for membership, but our numbers are down a little bit from last year. Some of the attrition is due to an aging population, some may reflect the economy. We also added some new members, whom I would like to welcome now. They are Robert Dunphy, John Melvin, Christine Olsen and Elizabeth Sciore-Jones.

In addition to paying their dues, quite a few of our members also have contributed additional funds. There are two ways to do this. You can give either to the League or to the Education Fund. The latter is tax-deductible, the former is not. Thanks to all who have contributed this year.

Membership renewal time will be here in a couple of months. Watch for your renewal letters!

Deborah Levin, Membership Chair

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**LWV-TC CALENDAR—2011-2012**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Annual Meeting/Dinner: VOTER PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>MEDICARE FRAUD/IDENTITY THEFT (Senior Action Council)</td>
<td>Unitarian Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Tue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local School Board Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 4</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Board Meeting (Changing of the Guard)</td>
<td>Kay Sharp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 26</td>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>noon-9:00 pm</td>
<td>Federal Primary Elections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 25</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Program Planning Meeting</td>
<td>Flo Smith</td>
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FROM LWV-NYS

Capitol Beat — Barbara Bartoletti
While our students were getting to know each other during the Students in Albany program, the leadership in the Legislature was negotiating the last two sticking points in the 2012-2013 state budget. Those two issues being education and health. In the education budget, the sticking point dealt with the governor who had proposed $250 million in competitive grants statewide and the legislature who wanted that money to go to the high needs districts. After many days of negotiations, the legislature won this one. The governor ended up getting $50 million and the legislature put $200 million back into high needs districts. As many League members may remember, in last year’s budget the governor had agreed to add 4% more in education money to this year’s budget; on top of that, the executive budget appropriated a total of $805 million to this year’s education budget.

The major controversy in the health care budget concerned the creation of a Healthcare Exchange. The Senate Republicans staunchly refused to go along with the Healthcare Exchange in the fear that they will be accused of supporting “Obamacare.” With the Supreme Court debating the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act this very week, the Senate Republicans said they wanted to wait and see if this continued to be the law of the land. Governor Cuomo is expected to issue an executive order, as this update is being written, that will create the Healthcare Exchange in a state agency. Although the advocates had wanted the healthcare exchange to go into its own public authority, the governor only has jurisdiction over the state agencies. This action would mean that New York State could access federal dollars which would otherwise be lost to the state without these healthcare exchanges. If the Supreme Court upholds the Affordable Care Act, then it is possible that later this year the governor can go back and ask for new legislation.

Redistricting Update — Sally Robinson
On March 15th the Legislature passed both new state legislative district lines for 2012 and a proposed constitutional amendment establishing an independent commission for 2022. A joint statement with Citizens Union describing our support for the amendment and a FAQ on the amendment was sent to all members and is attached again to this Report.

We supported the constitutional amendment because we believe that it affords an opportunity for structural reform to the process even though it falls short of our ideal, as often happens with legislative reforms in Albany. While we understand some Leagues may be concerned over this support in light of the disappointment many felt over both the gerrymandered 2012 lines and the failure to achieve an independent process for 2012, we believe that it is fully consistent with our position on redistricting. If you have any concerns or questions, please e-mail me at robintwins@gmail.com or call the state office.

Congressional lines have been finalized by the federal court following a failure to reach an agreement by the state Legislature. The state legislative lines agreed to on March 15th will stand unless they are successfully challenged under either voting rights grounds or the Senate Democrat's litigation over the addition of a 63rd senate seat.

Students Inside Albany
**YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS**

**SENATORS:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles E. Schumer</td>
<td>US Senate, 313 Hart Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510</td>
<td>202-224-6542; Binghamton Office: 607-772-6792</td>
<td><a href="mailto:senator@schumer.senate.gov">senator@schumer.senate.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.schumer.senate.gov">www.schumer.senate.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Hinchey</td>
<td>2431 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515</td>
<td>202-225-6335; Ithaca Office: 607-273-1388; 123 S. Cayuga St. #201</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mhinchey@mail.house.gov">mhinchey@mail.house.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.house.gov/hinchey">www.house.gov/hinchey</a></td>
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League of Women Voters of Tompkins County
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