PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What great January programs! Professor Galbreath gave us a lot to consider about simplifying the New York State court system. I hope this becomes a League's focus for lobbying. We all should write a letter to Governor Cuomo to express our concerns about the morass of our court system. For example, the legal process of settling a divorce, which in addition to the divorce proceeding may involve issues of child custody and child support, can require working independently in three separate courts. The criminal and civil court process is even worse.

The Healthcare program was well attended. It gave us a good idea of the benefits and costs of the Affordable Care Act and the State's Health Exchange and the potential impact of each on our health care. The speakers gave us a view of the important issues to consider as citizens navigating the system. We saw the impact of the system on quality control measures that hospitals will need to take to gain funding.

We look forward to the February program on Renewable Energy: Global and Local.
alternative sources of energy. There are options that our nation needs to explore and models in Europe we should consider.

Don't forget to put on your calendar our March 16th Soup and Bread Luncheon. It is a way we can get together and share stories of the many ways women have had impact on our country's history. We women are a powerful force to attain change in our system of government. We see the League's contribution to State laws in, for example, the process of increasing voter's rights to express their choice of candidates. We saw how several State Leagues were successful in blocking efforts to disenfranchise whole segments of their population.

I am pleased to announce that the 2013 State Legislative Agenda includes women's issues. It is a surprise to me that it was not there before. Governor Cuomo in his 2013 State of the State Address announced plans to advance a 10-point Women's Equality Act that will break down barriers that perpetuate discrimination and inequality based on gender. Our League endorses this Act and the New York State Board is voting on support as I write. I, as a member of the State Board, wholeheartedly endorse this Act. I will continue to keep you informed of the State League's work on the ten points in the Act. Once the State League has fully endorsed the Act, I think we can offer programs on some of the points in the Fall.

There is hope for all women to have a better state in which to live.

Kay Sharp

NATURAL RESOURCES

SAVE THE DATE! Our natural resources committee is planning a program in February that we hope will be very interesting to our members and to the public. The program, “Renewable Energy: Global and Local,” will be held on Monday, February 25, at 7 p.m. in the Unitarian Church parlor. Our speakers will be: Francis Vanek, Senior Lecturer in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell, who will summarize international and national activities concerning renewable energy resources; Guillermo Metz, Green Building & Renewable Energy Program Coordinator at Cornell
Cooperative Extension, who will talk about regional and agricultural aspects; and Jonathan Comstock, Co-chair of Energy-Independent Caroline and Chair of Solarized Tompkins, who will report on the many projects already under way in the town of Caroline. The program will be co-sponsored by Sustainable Tompkins and The Ithaca Journal.

In addition to organizing this program, the committee has responded to the DEC concerning its proposed new regulations for high volume hydraulic fracturing. A copy of our letter is now on our website. We expressed great concern about the timing of both the writing of the regulations and the comment period, the process used to write the regulations, and their content. The regulations fall far short of what we called for in our 2010 LWV Resolution on Strict Regulation of Drilling and Mining for Energy Resources. We are concerned about the weakness of material in the regulations and about the many issues that are not addressed. We hope you will read the letter we submitted.

This spring we plan to continue our work on both fracking and renewable energy resources. In particular we hope to lend support to the project Cleaner Greener Southern Tier, which has been put in place by people in the Tompkins County Planning Department as well as others in the region.

If you would like to join us contact Kay Wagner (539-3322, cmw18@cornell.edu).

Kay Wagner

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

When many Leagues are struggling to keep members, the Tompkins County League of Women Voters is quite healthy. We have a total of 103 members. This includes nine family memberships and ten honorary members. Family members pay just $35 for the second family member – either a spouse or a son or daughter living at home. Stick around for fifty years and you too can become an honorary member.

This is not to say that we do not wish to add new members – we certainly do. If you have a friend, neighbor or acquaintance that you think might be interested in the League, invite him or her to the next League meeting.

Debbie Levin

PROGRAMS

The educational program, *Health Care: What’s Up In Albany?*, on January 28th was a great success. Thanks to Sarah Jane Blake and Rebecca Elgie, co-chairs of the Health Care Committee, the members of the Health Care Committee, as well as other volunteers who worked to make an enjoyable program for all 50 persons who participated. We’re pleased to thank our 2 co-sponsors, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Ithaca, and the New York State Wide Senior Action council.

David Evelyn, MD, MPH, Vice President for Medical Affairs, Cayuga Medical Center, saved the day by filling in for Nate Shinagawa who could not attend. His talk focused on the hospital’s program to comply with the quality requirements of the Affordable Care Act, and the ways it will affect hospital finances as well as the costs to patients.

Linda Smith, Legislative Aide to New York State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, talked about the Health Benefit Exchange and how it will be implemented in NY State.

Both speakers provided important details and responded to several insightful questions from the audience. They have also posted copies of their power point presentations on our website, lwvtompkins.org. Please take advantage of the website to learn how you will be affected by the Affordable Care Act.

Upcoming events:

The Natural Resources Committee will present, *Renewable Energy: Global And Local*, on Monday, February 25, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM,
in the Parlor of the first Unitarian Church of Ithaca, located on the corner of Buffalo and Aurora Streets. The scheduled speakers are Francis Vanek, Senior Lecturer in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University; Guillermo Metz, Green Building and Renewable Energy Program Coordinator at Cornell Cooperative Extension; and Jonathan Comstock, Co-chair of Energy-Independent Caroline and Chair of Solarized Tompkins.

The event will be co-sponsored by Sustainable Tompkins and The Ithaca Journal. Please attend to hear up-to-date information from experts.

The SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON, Sponsored by the Board, will take place on Saturday, March 16, from 12:30 until 2:00 PM in the Parlor of the First Unitarian Church of Ithaca. Come to enjoy a meal of homemade Soup, bread and dessert provided by members of the Board and other League Leaders. Please plan to come.

RSVP-Florence Smith 273-6147 or flosmith42@aol.com.

Finally, mark your calendar for the ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER, which will be held at the Salvation Army, 150 North Albany St, Ithaca. The Dinner for LWV members and guests will begin at 6:00 PM and will be followed by a recognition of the Students Inside Albany participants, and the Annual Meeting.

At 7:30 the public program will begin with invited speakers from Ithaca and Tompkins County government who will discuss the current issues facing our community. Watch for more details.

Florence Smith

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**CAPITOL BEAT**

Excerpts from the Capitol Beat, a blog written by Babara Bartoletti: a great source for what’s going on in Albany!

[http://lwvny-capitolbeat.blogspot.com/](http://lwvny-capitolbeat.blogspot.com/)

**Short, But Exciting Week**

We’re now more than half way through the budget hearings and this past Monday’s hearing on environmental conservation was even more contentious than the education hearing.

…Fracking, of course, dominated the hearing and there was a major turnout of anti-fracking activists … The morning started with DEC Commissioner, Joe Martens, in the hot seat, being grilled about the potential health and economic impacts of hydrofracking. Martens’s answers bunted a number of the health issues back to DOH and also confirmed that there isn’t any funding in this year’s budget for DEC operations that would oversee fracking. A number of Martens’s answers drew boos and groans from the audience. The most cheers and applause came during Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton’s questions and comments. Lifton criticized the DEC’s process in developing the environmental impact report, calling the process “convoluted and not transparent.” She later highlighted a report from Pennsylvania that 400 families in Washington County need to have water delivered due to contamination of their water supply caused by fracking. … She concluded with asking Commissioner Martens “Does it make you uncomfortable to hear these things coming out of Pennsylvania?” The commissioner responded that he’s uncomfortable with any instance of corporate irresponsibility, but that he thinks it unfair to paint the entire drilling industry as irresponsible. …

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**LWV-TC CALENDAR—2012-2013**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>RENEWABLE ENERGY: GLOBAL AND LOCAL — Francis Vanek, Civil &amp; Env. Eng., Cornell; Guillermo Metz, Cornell Coop. Ext.; Jonathan Comstock, Co-chair of Energy-Independent Caroline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>SOUP AND BREAD LUNCH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>ANNUAL DINNER AND MEETING and Board Meeting</td>
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YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON

SENATORS:
Kirsten E. Gillibrand  202-224-4451  e-mail and web-site:  www.gillibrand.senate.gov
Charles E. Schumer  202-224-6542;  senator@schumer.senate.gov;  www.schumer.senate.gov

REPRESENTATIVES:
Tom Reed  202-225-3161;  607-654-7566;  e-mail and web-site:  reed.house.gov

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN ALBANY

SENATORS
James Seward  518-455-3131;  607-758-9005  www.nysenate.gov/senator/james-l-seward
51st—Towns of Groton, Dryden, Caroline, Danby
54th—Town of Lansing
59th—Towns of Ithaca, Newfield, Enfield, Ulysses, & City of Ithaca

ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Barbara Lifton  518-455-5444;  607-277-8030  www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Barbara-Lifton

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