“MARCELLUS AND UTICA SHALE GAS POTENTIAL IN NEW YORK STATE”

Wednesday, October 30, 7:00 PM
Hollister Hall Auditorium (Room B-14), 4 Central Avenue, Cornell University

Jerry Acton, B.S. from U.S. Naval Academy; Former Systems Engineer at Lockheed Martin.
Lou Allstadt, M.B.A. Columbia; B.S. U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; Retired, Executive Vice
President Mobil Oil Corporation for Exploration and Production.
Brian Brock, Retired geologist who has done work for the U.S. Geological Survey and New
York Geological Survey.
James “Chip” Northrup, MBA Wharton; retired, oil and gas investor and former planning
manager at Atlantic Richfield.

Co-sponsored by LWV-TC — — Free and Open to the Public — — more on page 5

TAKE ACTION!

Join the Tompkins County
Health Care Committee

"Action is agitating, organizing, educating,
pleading, and persuading" said Carrie Chapman
Catt, a leader of the women’s suffrage
movement and founder of the League of
Women Voters.

The New York State League adds that "Today,
action is whatever the League does to influence
government officials to implement the League's
program goals. Action is sending emails, writing
letters, visiting public officials, mobilizing
public support and testifying at hearings." The
Tompkins County League Health Care
Committee invites you to become a member of
the committee and take action regarding health
care issues.

The League of Women Voters at the National,
State and local Tompkins County level support
measures that: expand access to basic levels of
health care; ensure parity for mental health care;
support disease prevention and promotion of the
public’s health; and support patient self-
determination. The Tompkins County Health
Care Committee has been closely following
state and national health care programs — those
in existence now and those proposed for the
future — especially including the gradual
implementation of the healthcare bill and any

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congressional modifications and single-payer/Medicare-for-all initiatives.

Toward this goal, the Health Care Committee hosted: Health Care: What's Up in Albany? earlier this year. Dr. David Evelyn, Vice President for Medical Affairs, Cayuga Medical Center, and Linda Smith, Legislative Aide to New York Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton presented information on the Affordable Care Act including Health Insurance Exchanges and state specific concerns about the New York Medicaid Redesign Team recommendations.

We invite you to take action with us as a member of the League's local Health Care Committee! For more information, please contact Rebecca Elgie, renelgie@earthlink.net or Sarah Jane Blake, sjblake@twcny.rr.com

Sarah Jane Clark, Secretary

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HEALTH CARE

The Health Care Committee is sponsoring a timely and important public forum to be held on Monday, November 18, 2013, 7:00 to 8:30 PM, at the Tompkins County Public Library, Borg Warner Room. The Forum will be a discussion of New York State of Health, the official name of the Health Insurance Exchange in New York State.

Betty Falcao, Health Planning Program Director at the Human Services Coalition will be the speaker. She will be discussing basic New York State of Health insurance issues including:
what is the Health Care Exchange;what are the “meal plans”; who will be helping people to enroll;what insurance plans are available;when can insurance coverage be purchased;how much will it cost;who is eligible for government assistance;what other programs can be applied for through the Exchange; andwhere can County residents apply for coverage?

In addition, Sarah Jane Blake will present information that Medicare beneficiaries need to know about the Health Care Exchange.

Florence B. Smith, VP Programs

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VOTER SERVICES

Although the weather decided to turn very warm, a few of our League members were on hand to register voters at this year's Apple Harvest Festival. Mostly, there were address changes but also several new voters.

Pictured is Deborah Levin, an active board member, registering her 18 year-old. grandson. There also were a few first-time voters, including a newly naturalized citizen. In total, we registered over 50 voters.

Preparations are underway for several candidate forums in October. Join us with an email or phone call to Lucia at luciasciore@gmail.com or 351-0221.

Lucia A. Sciore, Director of Voter Services
NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

The Natural Resources Committee has been discussing several different issues of interest and is beginning to plan our spring program. Two topics have emerged as areas we would like to learn more about.

The first topic we have been discussing focuses on Cayuga Lake and the land surrounding it. We are hoping to learn more about the current state of the lake and the risks it faces. Some of the questions we might ask include how the lake changed in recent years and decades; what invasive species are putting the health of the lake at risk; what are the problems associated with runoff from the land surrounding the lake; what efforts have been made to control the pollution contributed by this runoff; and what do we know about the health of the rivers and streams feeding the lake.

The second topic of interest concerns the New York state forests. There are many conflicting pressures concerning what happens in these forests. In the Adirondacks, for example, there is a clear policy of preserving the environment and protecting the land. But at times this policy conflicts with the needs and desires of the residents who live within the green line. How do we preserve the park while at the same time not hurt the residents? Proposition 5 on the New York State ballot this fall calls for allowing the mining company NYCO to swap some of its land for land within the park that it would later reclaim and then return to the park. Unfortunately the land in question contains old growth forest. Other state forests have similar issues. What are those issues and how should we respond to them?

In addition to our current discussions of Cayuga Lake and the state forests, our committee spent time last summer learning about the possible repowering of the Cayuga Plant in Lansing, converting it from coal to natural gas. We have been quite concerned that most of the filings placed on the website for the Public Service Commission had the key economic and environmental information redacted. We were fortunate, however, that the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club was able to obtain some of the redacted information and hired two consultants to analyze the material. We used this analysis to help us write a response, available on our website, to the proposal and present an oral comment at the public hearing. It supports the option of upgrading the transmission lines and, once that project has been completed, shutting down the plant since it will not be needed. We also objected to the fact that the PSC allowed only two options, i.e. repower the plant with natural gas or upgrade the transmission lines. We stated that we would like to see a third option, namely, repower the plant so that it becomes a major source for clean renewable energy while also upgrading the grid. At this time we are continuing to learn more about both the decision making process and the proposals.

Kay Wagner, Chair
SENECA FALLS TRIP

On Saturday, September 21 a group from our League spent a wonderful day in Seneca Falls, NY. It was a comfortable one and one half hour ride in Kay Sharp’s van. Seneca Falls is a comfortable hospitable Village. The Historical district was well marked with directional signs and the Park Rangers, all knowledgeable and helpful, answered questions and informed and entertained us with facts and stories.

Our first stop was at the Visitors Center of the Women’s Rights National Historical Park. I was especially impressed by The First Wave statue exhibit by Lloyd Lillie, of the first Women’s Rights Convention organizers. It was moving for me to stand among the likenesses of my heroes; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Martha Coffin Wright and Thomas and Mary McClintock.

We went on a tour of the Wesleyan Chapel, the site of the first Women’s Rights Convention in 1848. We toured the Stanton House, where Elizabeth Cady Stanton lived with her family from 1847 to 1862. We were able to stand in her parlor where she met with important visitors like Lucretia Mott and Frederick Douglass. We saw pictures of Elizabeth’s children and husband and could imagine their daily lives in the house and village. After lunch in a nearby Italian restaurant we toured the National Women’s Hall of Fame and viewed the extensive photograph collection and descriptions of the remarkable American women who made history.

The National Women’s Hall of Fame continues to grow with the induction of 9 women this fall: Betty Ford, Ina May Gaskin, Julie Krone, Kate Millett, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, MM, Bernice Resnick Sandler, Ana Jacobson Schwartz and Emma Hart Willard.

I admit to being tired at the end of the day and my head was swimming with the mass of new learning and the familiar stories of the beginnings of the Women’s Suffrage movement and the League of Women Voters, but I am inspired to learn more.

Perhaps we should visit Seneca Falls again—maybe next year.

Florence B. Smith, VP Program
CANDIDATES’ FORUM

Our forum for Democratic Primary candidates for Tompkins County Court Judge drew a near overflow crowd to the Borg-Warner Room at the Tompkins County Public Library, co-sponsor of the event. League president, Kay Sharp, kept the program moving smoothly while timer, Sarah Jane Clark, firmly held the candidates to their allotted times.

SHALE GAS POTENTIAL IN NYS

Our League is one of eight local co-sponsors of a presentation and discussion of a study assessing the potential for shale gas drilling and extraction in New York State. Research by the presenters on this hot-button issue considered many perspectives, including geology, actual production records, leasing patterns, test well results, analogous trends in other shale gas regions around the U.S., economics, state and local restrictions on drilling, the role of financial institutions, and more.

The event, free and open to the public, will be held in Hollister Hall (Room B-14) on the Cornell campus at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, October 30 at 7:00 PM.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

About two thirds of our members have so far sent in their dues for this year. Our local League has a reasonably large membership for the size of the community. In fact, we are the envy of some Leagues in larger cities. Let’s keep it that way! To those of you who have not yet renewed, please do so now so that we can close the books on this year’s membership numbers. I know how easy it is to put off sending a check—the form gets lost at the bottom of that pile of things to do. And then it gets lost. If you do need another form, I will be glad to send it to you. This may be your last newsletter—so, please send that check and form

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now. And, a special thanks to all of you have responded. A very special thanks to all who sent additional contributions to our local League, and to the Education Fund.

Deborah Levin, Membership Chair

LWV-NY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Each year the New York State League asks the local Leagues to suggest issues for its Legislative Agenda: three topics on which the State League will focus its efforts in the coming year. The board of our local chapter will meet on Monday, November 4 to decide on three topics to recommend to the State League for action during 2014.

Here’s your chance to have some real input. Take a few minutes to think about what state issues are most important for attention by the State League. Then send your suggestion(s), preferably including supporting statement(s) and before November 4, to Kay Sharp at phylliskaysharp@gmail.com or 272-4748.

DVDs OF INTEREST

The Tompkins County League of Women Voters has a small collection of DVD’s available for showings to small groups and organizations.

If you’re interested in borrowing a DVD to show to a few people in your home, or can suggest a group or organization that may be interested, please contact Florence Smith at flosmith42@aol.com or 273-6147.

Here’s a list of three DVD’s. If there is enough interest, we will add other titles.

Iron Jawed Angels, 124 minutes;

Dreams of Equality — commissioned by the National Park Service for Women’s Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY, under 30 minutes;

The Abolitionists- a PBS Special, 180 minutes.

Florence Smith

BALLOT PROPOSALS — 2013

In the September bulletin you can find the texts of the six proposed constitutional amendments that will be on the election ballot on November 5. Below we give some of the background material related to these proposals, taken from the LWV-NYS site, www.lwvny.org. Click on the first item under “NEW! Voter Registration Basics” to obtain the full texts/

PROPOSAL NUMBER ONE: AN AMENDMENT TO ALLOW AN INCREASED NUMBER OF CASINOS IN NEW YORK STATE.

Proponents of the amendment argue that casino gambling has significant potential to be a major economic engine for New York State. They note that gaming already exists in the state, with five Native American owned casinos and nine racinos operating in the state, but that currently the state is not allowed to gain its benefits. They say that the amendment would enable New York to benefit from the tourism, revenue, and good jobs that they believe casinos will provide. Proponents also argue that limiting casino gambling to no more than seven facilities guarantees there will not be an excessive proliferation of casinos within New York State.

Opponents of the amendment argue that expanding casino gambling in New York State could potentially increase gambling addiction, exploit those suffering from gambling addiction and their families, and have harmful effects on the communities in which the casinos are located. They say that even without including non-economic costs, the hidden costs of adding a casino to a region are two to three times more than the touted benefits. Some opponents also argue that increased crime is associated with the addition of a casino to a community.

PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO: AN AMENDMENT TO ENTITLE DISABLED VETERANS ADDITIONAL CIVIL SERVICE CREDIT.

The League of Women Voters of New York State could not identify any organizations or expressed opinions in opposition to this amendment.

PROPOSAL NUMBER THREE: AN AMENDMENT TO ALLOW MUNICIPALITIES TO EXCLUDE INDEBTEDNESS FROM SEWAGE FACILITY CONSTRUCTION FROM THEIR DEBT LIMITS.

......
The League of Women Voters of New York State could not identify any organizations or expressed opinions in opposition to this amendment.

**PROPOSAL NUMBER FOUR: AN AMENDMENT TO ALLOW SETTLEMENT OF LONG-STANDING DISPUTES BETWEEN THE STATE AND PRIVATE LANDHOLDERS THROUGH LAND SWAPS.**

For the past century, the titles to more than 200 hundred of parcels around Raquette Lake, located in the town of Long Lake, Hamilton County, have been in dispute, with both the state and private individuals claiming ownership. Some cases have been resolved in the courts with mixed outcomes. ... The proposed settlement would allow the private parties to advance their title clearance by paying a fee into a fund held by the Town of Long Lake. When the fund is sufficient, it will be used to purchase replacement land that will be added to the forest preserve. Occupants could reduce their cash payment by entering into conservation easements with the town of Long Lake or by conveying a portion of their land to the state.

Proponents of the amendment argue that it would finally remove the uncertainty and cost of the longstanding land dispute while making significant additions to the forest preserve. They claim that a lack of documentation concerning ownership has made settling the claims in court difficult expensive and unpredictable.

Opponents of the amendment argue that a legislative settlement would establish a poor precedent for other private land ownership disputes in the Adirondak Park, inviting an endless stream of private bills and constitutional amendments. They argue that similar land disputes have been resolved via the judicial system and that that is the appropriate vehicle to settle such disputes because it provides transparency and an independent authority, which they say the proposed process does not. In addition, they claim that the fees to be collected from the occupants are greatly less than the assessed worth of the land and will not be sufficient to acquire comparable or better land to be added to the forest preserve, thus delaying the private parties’ clear land title until the town government and state government can agree upon a land purchase.

**PROPOSAL NUMBER FIVE: AN AMENDMENT TO SWAP FOREST PRESERVE LAND TO A MINING COMPANY IN EXCHANGE FOR LAND OF THE SAME VALUE.**

NYCO Minerals is a producer and supplier of wollastonite (calcium metasilicate), which is a rare, white mineral having commercial application as a reinforcement or additive in ceramics, paints, plastics, friction products and various building products. The Lewis mine produces 60,000 tons of wollastonite annually. NYCO Minerals has indicated that its mine is approaching the end of its pit life because the remainder of the wollastonite vein extends onto adjacent forest preserve land.

Proponents of the amendment argue that the land swap would (1) preserve jobs and ensure one of the largest employers in Essex County remains viable; (2) provide new access to mountain peaks and trout streams for outdoor recreation; and (3) result in the state preserve acquiring a greater quantity of land and higher-quality land than the land it is trading to NYCO Minerals.

Opponents of the amendment argue that the land swap is not vital to NYCO’s survival and that it would diminish the strength of the “Forever Wild” clause. They say that (1) the land swap would set a dangerous and historic precedent because it would be the first forest preserve constitutional amendment to be undertaken for private commercial gain rather than for a clear public municipal purpose and public benefit and; (2) there are viable alternatives to the land swap, given that there are considerable permitted reserves of wollastonite available on NYCO’s current land and that such reserves are expected to last for 15-20 years.

**PROPOSAL NUMBER SIX: AN AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM AGE TO WHICH CERTAIN JUDGES MAY CONTINUE TO SERVE.**

Proponents of the amendment argue that it would enable the state judiciary to continue to benefit from the service of many dedicated, experienced and productive judges currently being lost to mandatory retirement. They argue that the current mandatory retirement age is archaic, noting a longer and healthier lifespan now than when the current retirement age was set.

Some opponents of the amendment argue that the proposal unfairly favors high-level judges on the State Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, while others argue that forced retirement encourages diversity.
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<td>REPRESENTATIVES:</td>
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League of Women Voters of Tompkins County
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Ithaca, NY 14850