League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

PRESIDENT’S REPORT by Kay Sharp

This has been a busy month for our League. We have been involved in several voter registration events and several candidate forums. At one of the forums, a member of the audience got up and said, the League of Women Voters is “wonderful”. How do you like that as a sign we are making a difference in our county!

One of our members, Linda Duttweiler, spoke on a panel on “Voting Perspectives”; this program was sponsored by the Tompkins County History Center and co-sponsored by our League. There was a good discussion of people who vote—young, disenfranchised, naturalized citizens. Linda did a great job; she made the League proud. Thank you Linda.

Thanks to Program VP, Charlotte Coffman, and a League member, Sheila Stone. They organized a program on how to differentiate fact from fiction in the news. More than 90 people came to this program. I think it’s the largest community attendance that I have ever noted. Charlotte did a great job moderating the program. Kathleen Yen organized a program on a very important topic: impact of the federal budget on county agencies. Thank you Kathleen.

Students Inside Albany is a State League sponsored program for junior and senior high students to visit the State Capitol and visit their representative and senators. Past students have said that the experience made a difference in their understanding of government. Coordination of this program is being accomplished by Megan Nettleton, our Secretary, and our two Cornell Student Liaisons, Liel Sterling and Jack Ross-Pilkington. We hope to send two students this year.

Thank you for each of you who do the work of the League. It is greatly appreciated by our members and the community. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!
A note from the Natural Resource Committee

The Natural Resources Committee has been following several local environmental issues while also planning our program for February 26.

Two local issues are of particular note. First, the group Mothers Out Front has been monitoring the emissions released from the Borger Plant on Ellis Hollow Creek Road in Dryden. They have been working with researchers from the Southwest Pennsylvania Health Project. The study was started because of concerns about current emissions and the likelihood they will increase due to a project that will expand the compressor and bring more natural gas into the pipelines.

In its November 15 paper, the Ithaca Times has a detailed discussion of the results of the study and some of the recommendations being proposed. A follow-up study is to be done in the future. The second issue we have been following concerns the proposed West Dryden Road pipeline. The key problem this was to address is the drop-off in pressure in the current natural gas pipeline when it reaches parts of Lansing.

An alternative to the new pipeline has just been approved by the NYS Public Service Commission. This alternative involves the addition of four small pressure boosters along the pipeline. It is hoped that these pressure boosters will solve the problem without bringing more gas into region or requiring the construction of a new pipeline.

(continued on the next page)
A note from the Natural Resource Committee

The activities around these two issues demonstrate the hard work of local residents and the ability they can have to make a significant difference. But these are just two of a number of major issues that our residents are focusing on in response to concerns about the environment and climate change.

The committee’s plans for our February program are moving along. We have been interested in learning more about local housing needs, especially the need for affordable housing. So, the question we want to look at is how to address this need while at the same time protecting our environment, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and paying attention to how we use our land.

Stay tuned for more on this program.

-Kay Wagner
- New York State women secured the right to vote on November 6, 1917.
- League of Women Voters New York State was founded on November 19, 1919.
- League of Women Voters of the United States was founded on February 14, 1920.
- The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution (giving American women the right to vote) was officially certified on August 26, 1920.

Program Report for October 2017

October 23 Program Provided Real Insight into Fake News
The 53 attendees at the October 23rd presentation learned ways to identify the source and verify the truth of items offered through today’s media. They also heard about a youth-targeted curriculum that integrates media literacy and critical thinking. And, finally, they understood a few of the limitations on today’s news media, including reduced funding and staff.
The League is grateful to our panelists: Michael Engels, Cornell University; Chris Sperry, Project Look Sharp, Ithaca College; and Neill Borowski, Ithaca Journal. We thank Sheila Stone for organizing, Jim Blizzard for videotaping, and the Tompkins County Public Library for co-sponsoring this event.

October 24 Event Shared Voting Perspectives
LWV member Linda Duttweiler participated in a panel discussion with five other community members as each shared their personal stories of why they vote and who inspired them to vote, as well as their views on problems (and possible solutions) within our current voting system.
Perspectives on Voting was co-sponsored by the History Center, the Dorothy Cotton Institute, and the LWV. Twenty-one people were in attendance.

Charlotte Coffman, VP of Programming
November 2 Gathering Explored the Challenges of Women in Politics
Beneath the watchful eyes of suffragettes whose photographs were part of a current History Center exhibit, seven women who have held or run for public office explained their motivations, challenges, concerns and aspirations. A lively interaction with the audience followed. Women’s Suffrage and Political Office: A Seat at the Table was co-sponsored by the History Center and the LWV.

November 13 Panel Examined Budget Impacts on Local Program
A stellar panel presented Impact of Federal and State Budgets on Tompkins County, explaining how budget cuts, reallocation of monies, state and federal mandates and the latest state and federal political struggles over finances affect local resources.

The League thanks the following participants: Kathleen Schlather, Human Service Coalition; Frank Kruppa, Tompkins County Health Dept; Kit Kephart, Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services; Lisa Holmes, Tompkins County Office of the Aging; and Beverly Chin, Human Services Coalition Health Planning Council.

We also thank Kathy Yen for organizing this program and Jim Blizzard for videotaping.

Charlotte Coffman, VP of Programming
Monday, January 22, 2018 at 7pm
Location: TGPL Borg Warner Room

“Death with Dignity”
Currently, the League of Women Voters of the United States does not have a position on Death with Dignity. At the last New York State LWV Conference it was decided that our State League consider a position on physician-assisted deaths.

This program will have a panel of 4 diverse speakers, on both sides of the issue. A question and answer period will follow, focused on the pros and cons of allowing physician-aided death.

After the program, we will ask our League members to consider a concurrence.

May 7, 2018 is the League’s Annual Meeting with dinner. We hope all members are able to attend!

Looking Ahead to 2018

*February 26th, the Natural Resource Committee will be presenting the program. 7pm in the Borg Warner Room, TCPL

*March 26, 2018 is the Soup and Bread Luncheon. Details to follow!

*The National Convention is scheduled for June 28th-July 1st, in Chicago! Welcome to the Windy City!
A note from the Health Committee

DEATH WITH DIGNITY
There are five states that have a law allowing individuals to obtain a physician-aided death. They are Oregon, Washington, Vermont, California and Montana. In 45 states such deaths are illegal. It is anticipated that this issue will begin to be on legislative agendas in numerous states.

Currently, the League of Women Voters of the United States does not have a position on Death with Dignity. At the last New York State LWV Conference it was decided that our State League consider a position on physician-assisted deaths. Rather than conducting our own study, it was decided to consider the issue through concurrence. We would use materials from Utah’s League for our review of pros and cons. It was felt that Utah’s study was sufficient to hold concurrence.

State League sent to all local Leagues materials from Utah’s study conducted in January 2016. Also materials from Washington and Oregon were sent. You can find all this information about physician-aided death on the State website www.lwny.org.

Our League’s Health Committee is organizing a program on Death with Dignity for January 2018. The program will consider the pros and cons on allowing physician-aided death. After the program, we will ask our League members to consider a concurrence.

The concurrence position will support or not support the following two principles (1) The League of Women Voters of New York believes state laws should grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one’s life; and (2) The League of Women Voters believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse of the dying and medical personnel who act in good faith compliance with the law. If concurrence is adopted, these principles will form our position on Death with Dignity.
WE WANT YOUR HELP!

Support Educational Initiatives of the LWV-TC

We need your help to support our educational initiatives in the community. We do not have a paid staff to accomplish our many projects. Still, to run our organization we have to raise funds. We have an account with the Community Foundation of Tompkins County and a long time supporter of our League has offered to match up to $15,000 of contributions made to this fund. We need your help. Click the link below.

Community Foundation of Tompkins County

Report: Students Inside Albany 2018

The League of Women Voters of New York State believes that educating and empowering the youth of our country is vital to maintaining a strong democracy. The State’s primary youth program is called Students Inside Albany. This Conference is an intensive four day training experience held in the spring and is designed to immerse students in the process by which public policy is proposed, enacted and changed in New York State and educate them as to how they can influence and affect this process. The next conference will be held May 20-23rd, 2018.

With the mentorship of Kay Sharp, Megan Nettleton and student liaisons Jack Ross-Pilkington and Liel Sterling kicked off the program by reaching out to local school districts. They contacted local high school guidance counselors and civics teachers, asking them to nominate interested students for this all expenses paid experience. They hope to pick two students to attend and represent Tompkins County.

If you know of any junior or senior year high school students who would be interested in applying, please contact Megan Nettleton for more information and an application. She can be reached at Nettleton.Megan@gmail.com or (330) 962-5448.
As individuals, what can members do to advocate?

Tip of the month: Newspapers print concerns from readers and love to hear about local concerns. Tailor the issue for your community and support local newspapers when possible.

"Action is agitating, organizing, educating, pleading, and persuading." -- Carrie Chapman Catt

Calling all bookworms!

The natural resource committee recently started compiling a list of interesting books that focus on environmental issue. The plan is to post the list on the LWVTompkins website, giving a short description of each book.

If you have any suggestions of books to include, please send them to Kay Wagner along with a short description.

In keeping with the League’s commitment to unbiased with regard to political parties and candidate, please keep or non-partisan stance in mind.

This November the League participated in VOTE411, an electronic voter guide, for the first time. Kathleen Yen coordinated this huge project. Thank you Kathy!

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

Pamela Helming 518-455- 2366, 315-568- 9816
helming@nysenate.gov
54th—Town of Lansing

Thomas O’Mara 518-455- 2091; 607-735- 9671
www.nysenate.gov/senator/thomas-f-omara
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

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
Our League web page, is designed to serve League members as well as the community at large.

Our fantastic webmasters are Michael & Linda Duttweiler.
lduttweiler@gmail.com
mduttweiler@gmail.com

Important Links

http://lwvtompkins.org/bulletins.html
See all of the League’s Past Bulletins

http://lwvtompkins.org/calendar.html
The League’s Calendar of Events

http://lwv.org/
The National League Website

http://www.lwvny.org/
The State League Website

http://lwvtompkins.org/stand.html
Where the Tompkins County League stands on important issues

http://www.lwvtompkins.org/program_archive.html
A link to previous league sponsored programs which were videotaped.

Clarity Connect, Inc. continues to host our website, and we are grateful for their generous contribution.