League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

January 2018

lwvtompkins.org
lwvtompkins@gmail.com

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

A note from the Natural Resource Committee

The Natural Resources Committee will be presenting a program on February 26, 2018, at the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Library. The title will be “Housing Needed: Affordable for People – Friendly for the Environment, It Can be Done!” Our speakers will be Megan McDonald, Associate Planner, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability; and Joe Bowes, Director of Real Estate Development, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. The focus of the program will be on the need for more affordable housing and how we can succeed in increasing the supply while also keeping in mind climate change, land use, and other environmental concerns. We hope that all of you will be able to attend.

We want to let you know about some of the local and national environmental issues we are following. First, the efforts to build a new natural gas pipeline through Dryden is at least temporarily on hold (and hopefully permanently). Instead, NYSEG will be installing four mini-compressors that will solve the current reliability problems in Lansing. We hope this will set an example for other areas of the state and country. A second problem we have been watching is the storing of old oil tanker cars on railroad lines along the Boreas River in the Adirondacks. Comptroller DiNapoli sent a letter to CEO Warren Buffett in December concerning this problem and Buffett is now planning to move these rail cars (we do not know where the new location will be). A third issue we are concerned about is the removal of most of the scientific information about climate change from the federal EPA website. This is valuable scientific information that we need to be able to easily access.

We hope to see you at our February program. If you would like to join our committee contact Kay Wagner (607-539-3322, cmw18@cornell.edu).
Interested in becoming a league member?

The league would love to have you!

Who can join LWV-TC? Membership is open to all U.S. citizens, men and women, 18 years or older.

What does membership bring?
Joining the League of Tompkins County automatically enrolls you in the League of Women Voters of New York State and the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Membership includes our Voter newsletter with reports, legislative action, events, news, membership updates, and more. For more information, here is our Membership Booklet.

To join LWV-TC, print and complete the membership form and return it to the address indicated on the form.

You will receive a packet from the Membership Chair. If you have problems accessing or printing the form, please contact lwvtompkins@gmail.com

New York ranked 41st in the country for voter turnout in the 2016 general election, with just more than 57 percent of the "voting-eligible population" casting ballots.
Voting Reform Rally: January 23rd
On January 23rd, the LetNYVote coalition is planning a rally in Albany to push for voting reforms in New York State. The rally will be followed by lobby visits. The coalition is planning buses from NYC and potentially buses from Long Island and the Hudson Valley.

You can register for the rally [here](#). If you do register, please let us know so we can keep track of League members and make sure you get a lobby visit!

Join the nominating committee!
Are you looking for an easy way to be involved with the league? The nominating committee is looking for three additional members, to help find individuals to fill upcoming board positions.

This committee only goes through May, and you can do this from home! Please contact Kay Wagner if you are interested.
Neither National nor New York State League has a position regarding physician-assisted deaths. At the State Convention, it was decided that we would have a state-wide concurrence on this subject and we would use Utah State League study as our background. There are five states that have a law allowing physician-assisted death; they are Washington (2008), Oregon (1994), California (2015), Montana (2009), and Vermont (2013). Additionally, there is a law under review in New Mexico. In 45 states assisted “suicide” is illegal.

Throughout our history the subject of “euthanasia” has been argued, as early as our original thirteen colonies. It was until recently consistently outlawed. In 1976 California became the first state to recognize living wills as legally binding documents that authorize the removal of life-sustaining treatment in the face of imminent death. In New Jersey in 2005 there was a court battle about removing a feeding tube of Terri Schiavo, who had been in a coma for many years. The subsequent argument in support of euthanasia was autonomy – the right of a person to choose how much suffering to tolerate and when to die.
The Death with Dignity Laws all include qualifying criteria:

- A competent adult over the age of 18 can request a prescription to end his or her life only if diagnosed as terminally ill and likely to die within six months.

- The request for a prescription from licensed physicians must be made both in writing and orally.

- The individual must be able to self-administer the medication.

- The individual must be of sound mind and capable of clear communication.

The laws often require a series of requests and waiting periods to guard against abuse. Patients diagnosed with mental illness and people with disabilities are ineligible. There are “pro” and “con” debates that cover a number of considerations. The argument for autonomy in end-of-life decision-making advocates for a person being able to determine how she/he lives and dies. Advocates for autonomy see no reason why they shouldn’t have the right to die “on their own terms”. Relief from pain and suffering is the other primary argument for the legalization of Death with Dignity. The patient must view accelerating death as the only acceptable way to alleviate his or her intolerable pain and suffering.

Most people who argue against such death have a strong conviction about the wrongness of killing. Others argue that Death with Dignity is suicide, and that suicide is intrinsically wrong. This argument has been made particularly by religious groups. Saving lives is ingrained in all healthcare professions, from physicians and nurses to lab technicians. They are committed to healing and saving lives. The possibility that a Death with Dignity law opens the door for abuse, which raises fears and strong objections. In some situations, it is feared that family members may want to hasten the death of a sick relative in order to receive their inheritance, or end the cost and burden of caregiving.

To date nearly all information and data about impact on patients, physicians and the health care system are based on the Oregon Death with Dignity Law. There the two drugs typically received are Secobarbital and Pentobarbital. Overall, 0.2% of all Oregon deaths were associated with the Death with Dignity Law. Typical patients who have received the prescription were over 65 years of age, had cancer, were white, died at home, were enrolled in hospice and had some form of health insurance. The reasons given for electing the end-of-life options were loss of autonomy, decreasing ability to participate in activities that made life enjoyable and loss of dignity.

Various healthcare organizations and religious denominations have taken a stand on the “death on their own terms” and death by medically-assisted death. The AMA and ANA conclude that physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with their role as healer. The VA does not prescribe lethal medication nor help a veteran fill out paperwork relating to Death with Dignity. Religious denominations vary substantially and would be best discussed with clergy.
Death with Dignity

Our League’s January program is on Death with Dignity: Physician-assisted Death: Pro and Con. We have invited four speakers to discuss the pros and cons of such end-of-life option; they are a clergy, attorney, physician and a family member. Following the program, League members will be asked about their stand on the following concurrence position:

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.

2. The League of Women Voters of New York believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse of dying and medical personnel who act in good faith compliance with the law.

At that time, we will ask League members to decide to support or oppose the concurrence position on Death with Dignity.

Program Committee Update

First, the program committee is thrilled to welcome Sheila Stone! Sheila put together a very informative program in October 2017, on the topic of "Fake News." She is great addition.

Coming up we have the January program, Death with Dignity on 1/22. The natural resource committee will be hosting the February program “Housing Needed: Affordable for People – Friendly for the Environment, It Can be Done!”

The next major event we are working on is the Annual Meeting, which will be held May 7, 2018. If you have any suggestions for a program you would like to see, please let us know. Our last annual meeting was very well attended, and we would like to see even more members this year.
LOWV in the Community: LOWV members Kathy Yen and Sally Grubb both sit on the board of the City Federation of Women's Organizations (CFWO). This important organization recently gave out grants to twelve projects, totaling $30,000. Through the grant process, the board identifies challenges facing women and girls in our community. The mission of the CFWO is to support women and girls and to act as a catalyst for the improvement of the lives of women and girls in Tompkins County, thus making a contribution to the entire community. The CFWO owned the Women's Community Building on West Seneca Street where Ithaca Neighborhood Housing now operates an affordable housing complex called Breckenridge Place. The proceeds of this sale and existing CFWO resources have created a fund which makes WBC grants possible.

The new CFWO is managed by a Board of Directors that includes individuals representing the community and individuals recommended by the CFWO Legacy Organizations: American Association of University Women, Cornell Campus Club, Eckankar, Ithaca Downtown Business Women, Ithaca Garden Club, Ithaca Music Club, Ithaca Woman's Club, La Leche League of Ithaca, The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County, Service League, Tompkins County National Organization for Women, Tompkins County Quilters Guild and Writers Association of the Ithaca Area. For more information, questions may be directed to grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org or by phoning 607-272-1247.
February Program

“Housing Needed: Affordable for People – Friendly for the Environment, It Can be Done!”

When: February 26, 2018,
Where: Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Library.

Our speakers will be:
Megan McDonald, Associate Planner, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability;
Joe Bowes, Director of Real Estate Development, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc.

*March 24th is the Soup and Bread Luncheon.*
The program will be “Clothing from the Suffragette Era” by Denise Green, Curator, Cornell Costume Collection.
Location-To Be Determined

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

Looking Ahead in 2018

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

*The Voter Registration committee will very soon be announcing the 2018 voter registration dates. Keep an eye out for opportunities to volunteer.*
You can donate while you shop!

You can support the League’s Education Foundation with every purchase you make on Amazon.com.

From your desktop:
1. Sign in to smile.amazon.com
2. Go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity.
3. Just select the LWVNYS Education Foundation as the organization you wish to support, and Amazon provides .5% of each purchase price.

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 that will be held May 20-23rd, 2018.

The league will be represented by Kelly Proctor, a junior at Trumansburg High School. She will be immersed in the process by which public policy is proposed, enacted and changed in New York State. The goal is to educate the next generation as to how they can influence and affect this process.

With the mentorship of Kay Sharp, Megan Nettleton and student liaisons Jack Ross-Pilkington and Liel Sterling made up the committee which selected Kelly. We are thrilled to have her represent us!
As individuals, what can members do to advocate?

Tip of the month: Attend a community meeting. Learn about local issues and hear from elected officials. You can connect and organize with people already active in your community. Check your local government’s website or contact your local League.

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

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

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

Want to contact Governor Cuomo?
Email  gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us or
http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact/GovernorContactForm.php

http://www.vote411.org/
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;
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www.schumer.senate.gov

REPRESENTATIVES:

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

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.

http://www.lwvtompkins.org/voting.html