League of Women Voters
of Albany County
Bulletin
April 2019
"Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy."

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

Policy on Inclusiveness
The League of Women Voters in both its values and practice is committed to inclusion and diversity. This means:

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making;

We believe inclusiveness enhances our organization's ability to respond

Down to Earth: Practical Actions You Can Take to Heal Our Planet
April 30, 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm
405 Washington Ave, Albany
LWVAC is a proud sponsor of this event for our April meeting that will help you take action in your home and community to heal our planet. See bulletin insert for full description - come to the First Unitarian-Universalist Society of Albany, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany, for a fun and informative time. Food available, raffle and give-aways! Bring family and friends!

League of Women Voters of Albany County
May Meeting
Shape Your Future - Start Here!
2020 Census
Monday May 20, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Albany Public Library
161 Washington Ave, Albany
Learn about the status of the 2020 census operations to ensure a complete and accurate count in our communities. Speakers will include representation from the US Census Bureau, local community organizations, Albany Public Library and more. The program will cover The Facts, Areas of Concern, Taking Action, Q&A. For more information - contact Christine Primomo cprimomo2@gmail.com
effectively to changing conditions and needs; We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Albany County; and There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, ability, age, sexual orientation, creed or national origin.

Officers
President, Patricia Sibilia, patriciasibiliany@gmail.com

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At Large, Stephen Winters, sdoxie@aol.com

At Large, Virginia Gutman, ginnygutman12@gmail.com

A complete list of committee chairs is available on the LWVAC website, www.lwvalbany.org under Contact Us

LWVAC Board meetings are held monthly (see calendar) email Regina Tillman, rmt370@gmail.com. Bulletin editors, Aimee Allaud, 85aimee@nycap.rr.com., and Marian Schwager, welcome comments and suggestions

League of Women Voters of NYS and LWV NYS Education Foundation
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY., 12207, Tel: 465-4162. www.lwvny.org., e-mail:lwvny@lwvny.org Dare Thompson, President

League of Women Voters of the US, Chris Carson, President

President's Message
"Assorted Goodies"

Hi everyone,
I'm feeling really positive right now about a lot of good things happening! I write this as the State Budget just passed and it's chock full of items we were fighting for including funding for the election reform measures, banning single use plastic bags, criminal justice reform, and although it's not everything we hoped for, a commission to study whether New York should adopt a public finance system for statewide elections (fingers crossed on that one!).

And as we head toward Earth Day, I'm excited not just about the program we have been busily planning for later in the month, but also the win that was achieved in the Town of Coeymans in passing a Clean Air Law. At a standing room only town meeting, the Town Board voted 3-2 to shut down plans by the world's largest cement corporation, LafargeHolcim, to burn tires at its giant cement kiln across the street from a high school. Neighboring towns of Bethlehem and New Scotland supported it as well, and as we look to keep the momentum going, we'll push and try to get similar legislation started at the County level.

I'm also really pleased to announce that not only have we made significant progress in steering the County's proposed redistricting legislation in the right direction, but in the process we've formed a coalition with other like minded groups. The recently formed "One Person, One Vote" coalition is just about to do a press release, and the work we'll undertake will also include ensuring a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census, which is the foundation on which redistricting is built. The League is planning a key public event in May on the census which is sure to bring focus to this important decennial process.

Lastly, I was elated at the energy and enthusiasm that was in the room during our March Membership Orientation meeting. We are nothing without our members, as you are the ones who really make it happen! As always, please reach out if you feel you want do more but not sure how to get engaged as there is lots of things we could use help with. We have the State League Convention coming to Albany in June, and if you'd like to attend/volunteer it's a sure way to get energized and meet other Leaguers from across the state.

Lots going on, lots yet to do! Let's keep it going!

Yours In League,
Patricia Sibilia, PatriciaSibiliaNY@gmail.com, 518-221-6460
PS - I'm always open to feedback of any sort. Don't hesitate to drop me a line if you have thoughts/opinions you want to share!!
Join us for this very special Earth Day event.

Down To Earth: Practical Actions You Can Take To Heal Our Planet

Find out what you can do to protect our planet and mitigate the climate crisis. Visit exhibitors and info tables, plus enjoy your choice of mini-presentation sessions.

Sponsored by First Unitarian Universalist Society-Green Sanctuary Committee, Zero Waste Capital District, League of Women Voters of Albany County, Capital Region Earth Day, PAUSE/350.org, Sustainable Albany Meetup Group, Sierra Club, Solidarity Committee of the Capital District, Solarize Albany County, City of Albany Sustainability Advisory Committee

WHEN: Tuesday April 30, 2019 - 5 pm to 8:30 pm
WHERE: First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, 405 Washington Ave., Albany

RSVP HERE. Share our Facebook event: [https://www.facebook.com/events/263416447896650/?active_tab=about](https://www.facebook.com/events/263416447896650/?active_tab=about)

5:00-6:30 pm: Visit our Earth-Friendly Exhibitors and Information Tables
6:30-6:45 pm: Welcome
6:45-8:15 pm: Presentations
8:15-8:30 pm: Closing

6:45-7:30 pm Renewable Heating/Cooling and Solar Options For Everyone - Whether you're a renter or homeowner, you can be saving money on electricity, heating and cooling - plus reducing your greenhouse gas emissions right now! Come find out how. Plus check out the latest on air source heat pumps, geothermal and wood. Also, if you've been thinking about purchasing solar panels, this is the last year for the 30% Federal tax credit. Next year it goes down to 26% and will eventually be phased out. Presentation by William Reinhardt of Solarize Albany County & Malcolm Bliss of Common Energy.

7:30-8:15 pm - (choose one below)

Are you a Wishful Recycler? - Most of us are. That's why our local recycling facility says we need to clean up our act. Come find out what items do not belong in your single-stream recycling bin, where to recycle odd items, which plastic bags/film can be recycled and where. When in doubt, throw it out. And never ever accept styrofoam.

Control Carbon Emissions by Reducing Wasted Food & Composting - According to the book Drawdown, reducing food waste is #3 of the 100 most effective actions we can take to address the climate crisis. Find out why with DEC expert Gary Feinland and consider taking the "Food Waste Reduction Pledge". Got food scraps, peels and rinds? Keeping your food scraps out of the landfill reduces methane, a most potent greenhouse gas, and is great for your garden too. We'll explain the basics of backyard composting and why in nature nothing ever really dies.

RSVP with EventBrite: [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/down-to-earth-practical-actions-you-can-take-to-heal-our-planet-tickets-59648819224](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/down-to-earth-practical-actions-you-can-take-to-heal-our-planet-tickets-59648819224)
On March 26th, a well-attended 2nd Annual Orientation Meeting was held in conjunction with the LWVAC Membership Committee, our Board of Directors, and chairs of various committees. The immediate feedback heard at the end of the program was heartening to the planners! Many attendees were of the opinion that the event was well worth attending and had exceeded their expectations! And, the runaway favorite segment was the remarks offered by past and present leadership! Our "Passport" approach to visiting the informational tables was all so very well received.

photo on left: League newcomer, Laura Brignull, celebrated her Grand Prize win at the Annual Member Orientation Meeting with LWVAC President, Patricia Sibilia (r) and 1st Vice President, Regina Tillman (l). Photo by Cindy Schultz

We gained six new members by the end of this orientation event, one of them winning our raffled Grand Prize! We had offered a chance for meeting attendees to participate in a drawing of a paid year 2020 membership, provided in acknowledgement of the 100 Year Anniversary of the League of Women Voters! And the winner was newcomer, Laura Brignull!

We thank all who took time out to help with this event... with a special thanks to our featured guest speaker and past president of LWV Broome and Albany Counties, Lois Griffin.

The Membership Committee's goal for this meeting was to introduce attendees to the wide assortment of volunteer opportunities that currently exist within our League. Our hopes are that everyone that came found a niche for themselves! If you left unsure of the skills needed, time commitments desired, or need any other clarifications made for any of the Volunteer Position Descriptions you picked up, please feel free to connect with the contact person listed on the bottom of your handout. As a grassroots organization, our success is rooted in your involvement with us and we welcome you to make further inquiries as needed. We will also reach out from time to time, based upon the inputs provided thru your submitted "Member Interest Form".

And... we look forward to connecting again at the June 2019 Annual Meeting! Watch for an announcement of date and time appearing in your email box! For any questions about your membership status and to be sent a hard copy (or emailed an online link) for a Member Interest Form to fill out and get back to us, please contact Regina Tillman, Vice President/Membership Committee Chairperson: rmt370@gmail.com

The Engagement Corner

Each issue, we are featuring a Volunteer Recruitment effort. We welcome further inquiry if you see something of interest. There are usually limited slots available so contact us ASAP!

Membership Team

• WANTED! Event and Public Educational Program Greeters! Member that are willing to act as ushers and be stationed at the sign-in tables. Time commitment: rotated into the position twice per year for events that may be 2-3 hours in duration. Be a welcoming presence at our events plus get free admission to any programs that charge an admission fees!

Outreach "Tabling"

• WANTED! Tabling Volunteers! Members that are willing to be the face of the League at community and city events, indoor and outdoor! Answers questions about what the League is and what it is doing, how to become a member, and how to get more information. Also, passes out relevant print information to the public. Willing to be assigned twice per year at time frames that are to your convenience for minimum of 2 hour durations. Contact: Stephen Winters, sdoxie@aol.com.

Contact: Email Regina Tillman, LWVAC Administrative VP at: rmt370@gmail.com
WE'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR IDEAS.....

In the League's calendar year, it's time for members to dig deep into the positions that our local league supports to review and think about new possibilities (that's what Spring is about!). Our Bylaws require that two months before the annual meeting members recommend local program. The areas we choose to monitor and advocate for frame both committee and public program agendas for the coming year. We're a grassroots organization - that means you have the opportunity to decide what direction the LWVAC takes. Your elected board of directors takes seriously how we go forward and will review suggestions at the May 6 board meeting.

Below is the current (2018-2019) adopted program for your review. This list can be re-adopted, modified, deleted or new topics added. We are already proposing some changes to the Albany County Charter Review Study so that we break it out into its component parts and re-open our study and position on downsizing. Members vote on the program at the annual meeting.

LWVAC Adopted Local Program 2018-2019

* Albany County Charter Review Study - Continue following developments in Albany County concerning revisions to the Albany County Charter and take action to support the positions on it adopted by the Albany County League.
* Environment- Monitor proposals for landfills in Albany County, based on our existing four-county solid waste position with the recognition of responsible and sustainable use of natural resources by municipalities. The League will monitor the environmental, public safety and health impacts associated with the transportation of crude oil shipments into the Port of Albany, and the extension of a natural gas pipeline into and through Albany County.
* Long Term Care in Albany County - Continue monitoring long term care options and issues in Albany County.

If you have an idea and would like to discuss how it fits with LWV positions and potential study and action, please contact Mary Beilby, LWVAC Vice-President/Advocacy, mary.beilby@gmail.com, by April 15.

Albany County Legislature Observer Corps

After Public Testimony the League gave on February 26th for the Public Hearing on the legislation on redistricting (Local Law O for 2018), it was modified by the Sponsors to address a number of our concerns. We then joined together with other concerned organizations to form a One Person, One Vote Coalition, and as of this writing further edits are underway to move the proposed commission further away from political appointments, and to add more transparency to the process. We expect the legislature to hold another Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 23rd for review of the revised legislation, which we are hopeful will be strong enough to fully win our support. After Public Hearing, the legislature will vote, and if passed, it will go to County Executive and upon approval be on the ballot in this year’s general election.

After much debate and press coverage, it was decided in the February legislative session to go forward with the move of the Board of Elections to 260 South Pearl Street. They amended the proposition to have it take place after the Primary elections in June, but before the start of the new Early Voting period.

A public hearing was held in March on real property tax exemption from County property taxes for non-residential real property converted to mixed-use property within the City of Albany (Local Law B for 2019). It's expected to go to vote in the April session.

April 23rd Public Hearing is expected for Local Law C for 2019 that updates the requirements on item pricing by retail stores.

Local Law E for 2019 was introduced in February on the prohibition of the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

Advocates of proposed legislation on paid sick days (Local Law C) continue to regularly speak during the Public Comment period before each Legislative session. While a Public Hearing was held late last year, the legislation is still sitting in Committee.

Proposed County legislation on the ban of single use plastic bags was progressing quickly. Now the State passed legislation that the County will be involved in implementing, and they most likely will decide to include a fee on paper bags with exemptions for low income residents.

For more information on any of these or other topics, or to become involved, please reach out to PatriciaSibiliaNY@gmail.com.
NY Leagues Celebrate 100+ year-old Declaration to Make Democracy Work on July 4th, 2019

We need a member to organize a reading of the Declaration of Sentiments on July 4, 2019 at an appropriate local event. Reader(s) will wear white and the LWV gold sash.

More than 100 years ago on July 4, 1915 suffragists read the Declaration of Sentiments in front of every County Courthouse in this state, in an event organized by Carrie Chapman Catt to call attention to the campaign for women's suffrage in NYS.

A suggested script including the full Declaration of Sentiments to be read is available at [https://www.lwvnyonline.org/LLresources/SBR_StateNews/2019/March/Declaration-of-Sentiments-and-intro.pdf](https://www.lwvnyonline.org/LLresources/SBR_StateNews/2019/March/Declaration-of-Sentiments-and-intro.pdf). LWVNY will send out press advisories and press releases, and also provide a sample press release and Letter to the Editor for you to send. You can add any embellishments you desire to enhance the reading such as adding this to a local community event, a picnic, a parade, music, whatever, BUT we implore you to at least carry through with the reading. We have potential locations in mind and we'll welcome your suggestions too (even if you can't read the document!)

LWVNY Advocacy

The 2020 State budget and many LWVNY policy issues were resolved on April 1 but there are three months left in the legislative session. The LWVNY will soon issue a Post-budget lobby packet with info on key issues, talking points and handouts to leave with legislators. Election reform, fusion voting and campaign finance proposals were assigned to a commission to resolve. Court Simplification that the League has advocated since the 1950’s may also have a chance of passing.

The Legislature is on recess from April 11 to April 26. We will need to make appointments to meet with legislators to press for LWVNY priorities. Contact Mary Beilby, [mary.beilby@gmail.com](mailto:mary.beilby@gmail.com), if you would like to participate in this lobbying.

WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

We Look Forward to Greeting You Soon!

| Susan Anderson | Albany | Joan Geitz | Glenmont |
| Caitlin Anderson | Albany | Karen Geoghegan | Ravena |
| Janet Aram | Menands | Lisa Kissinger | Albany |
| Carol Bell | Castleton | Rebecca Myer | Albany |
| Melissa Baer Bourgeois | Albany | Marianne Purcell | Selkirk |
| Laura Brignull | Albany | Anne Shermeyen | Alacha Fl (!) |
| Cynthia Fox | Glenmont | Lee York | Albany |

LWVAC Voter Services Director Addresses New Immigrants About American Civics Suffrage History

The LWVAC was asked by USCRI (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants) to assist in educating new immigrants about American civics, especially the Suffrage movement. Curriculum materials from newly developed Civics materials (formulated by LWVNY, BOCES, and volunteer teachers) was combined with information gathered from Suffrage presentations provided by Aiimee Allaud, a longtime League member.

The most critical issues in formulating the talk were remembering that most attendees have had very little or no US history; everything had to be translated in multiple (seven!) languages, and that although the concepts and language had to be kept simple, we were working with complicated topics and an adult audience. All the attendees...
were keen and sharp minded, and in spite of the distraction of multiple languages, kept up well with the information. Attendees found the history of limited suffrage and rights for women and people of color in the USA fascinating! Many were surprised that the ERA has still not passed in Congress. In all about 35 immigrants (all over age 60) attended and enjoyed gathering to learn about US Suffrage. The presentation, including question and answer time, took about two and a half hours and was held on March 20, 2019.

Andy Lee, LWVAC Voter Services Director

LWVAC Member Advocates for Clean Air in Letter Published in Albany Times Union, March 25, 2019

Coeymans set to lead the way on clean air
The town of Coeymans will soon vote on the Clean Air bill, a local law that will limit, not prohibit, some businesses in the town from burning solid waste and tires.

The proposed law covers various waste types (tires, solid waste, medical waste, sewer sludge) and limits facilities to burning less than 25 tons of waste per day. Facilities that burn waste are required to continuously monitor 19 different pollutants and post the results online in real time on a publicly accessible website.

New York state allows local governments to pass stricter air pollution and waste laws than those set by state and federal minimums. If passed, the Coeymans Clean Air law will set a new clean air standard in the Hudson Valley, a notable achievement for a town of about 7,000 people, and is already inspiring action in other towns facing similar challenges.

As a resident, I thank the town board for their work. I am proud that board members from both political parties agree that the town’s future should include clean air, clean water and clean soil, all supporting a healthy population in a successful economy.

CHRISTINE PRIMOMO, R.N. Coeymans, NY [Note: Ms. Primomo is a member of LWVAC and leading LWV action on this issue]

Calendar

April 30, 5-9:00 PM  Down to Earth: Practical Actions You Can Take to Save the Planet, FUUSA, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany, contact Aimee Allaud, 85aimee@nycap.rr.com or Mary Beilby, mary.beilby@gmail.com. SEE FLIER IN BULLETIN

May 2, May 7  Voter Registration in the Jail Project Training restarting soon. Contact Regina Tillman, if interested for more details, rmt370@gmail.com.

May 6, 6:30 PM  LWVAC Board Meeting, First NYFCU, 2 Wall Street, Colonie, NY., contact Regina Tillman, rmt371@live.com. All League members welcome.

May 20, 6-8:30 PM  Shape Your Future - Start Here! - 2020 Census, Albany Public Library 161 Washington Ave, Albany, NY 12210, LWVAC public meeting. SEE NOTICE IN BULLETIN

May 21, 7AM-9:00 PM  School district budget votes in Albany county school districts, library budget votes and elections for school board; voters can call school district offices or Albany County BOE, 518-487-5077.

June 25, 2019  NYS Primary Elections - VOTE!
League of Women Voters of Albany County
PO Box 611
Slingerlands, NY 12159

Membership 2019-20 - Join & Make a Difference

Name: _____________________________________________

Tel: ___________ Address, City, Zip: ____________________________

Email: __________________________________________________

___ Individual Membership$60/year        ___Send me newsletters by mail

___ Household Membership$90/year          ___Just use my email for newsletters

___ Student Membership$25/year            ___ Contribution in support of my local League

____ I’d like to join; this is the best I can do  ____ Please send me more information

____ tax deductible contribution to LWVNYS Education Fund

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Albany County, PO Box 611, Slingerlands, NY 12159
Or join online at http://www.lwvalbany.org/join-renew.html