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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 effectively to changing conditions and needs;

We affirm our commitment to

National Voter Registration Day Becomes Major Drive in Albany

In 2008, 6 million Americans didn't vote because they missed a registration deadline or didn't know how to register. In 2015, we want to make sure no one is left out. On September 22, 2015, volunteers, celebrities, and organizations from all over the country will "hit the streets" for National Voter Registration Day. This single day of coordinated field, technology and media efforts will create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities-allowing us to reach tens of thousands of voters who we could not reach otherwise.

Our League is mounting a large initiative in collaboration with the Food Pantries of Albany County and will be staffing voter registration tables at many locations during the week of September 22.

President's Message

Summer has always been my favorite season.

When I was a little girl, I loved the long vacation from school. I spent the entire day and evening outside playing with friends or sitting on a branch of our big cherry tree watching the world go by or walking to the library to get a new pile of books to read in the shade of our maple tree. There were also frequent trips to the beach on weekends (I grew up on Long Island.).

Now I like to hang out with my grandchildren in the summer. They are the ones who have the long vacation from school. I still spend as much of the day outside as possible, gardening or lying in my hammock reading books. And then there is always our family's annual trip to Maine. We all start planning it in the middle of winter, talking about our early morning walks on the beach, our favorite places to visit, what flavor ice cream we will choose at the Scoop Deck and how much fun it is to spend an entire week living in a house on the beach. Summer life was good and it still is.

Some people call them the lazy days of summer, but the LWVAC Board has certainly not been lazy. We held our planning meeting on July 13 and have lots of things scheduled for the upcoming year. We have adopted a shared leadership structure for our league for the 2015-2016 year. I am serving as president for the first three months, followed by Margaret Danes. Collaboratively we will ensure that leadership continues beyond Margaret's three month commitment and that the tasks and responsibilities associated with leadership all run smoothly.
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.

Board and Committees

President
(Aug-Oct) Paula Philo
(Nov-Feb) Margaret Danes

Secretary Loretta Simon

Treasurer Marggie Skinner

Directors
Julie Elson (Program)
Margaret Danes (Membership)
Barbara Frankel (Voters Service)
Susanna Martin (Voters Service)
Lois Portnick (at large)
Linda Brown (website)
Herb Gordon (at large)
Aimee Allaud (Bulletin)

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

LWVAC Sponsors
Primary Candidate Forums for County Legislature and County Executive

See Calendar below for dates and times

There will be many voter services events in September and October, including Voter Registration at the Albany Food Pantries (24 locations). Elsewhere in this issue of our Bulletin you will learn more about this important Voter Registration Drive which our League is sponsoring in concert with major state and national initiatives. Vote411 will be going strong and we are looking for volunteers to help with data input, candidate outreach and publicity.

We have come up with some interesting programs for our general meetings. We are looking forward to jointly sponsoring these with other community organizations.

When summer is over and it’s time to come inside, we hope you will join us. Attend the September Pot Luck, help with a voter services event or two, join a committee or volunteer to join the Board. See you in September!

Yours in League,
Paula Philo

Voter Registration Training

Learn about New York's voter registration process or refresh your memory. On September 9, we are launching a training program to help:

- Deepen your knowledge of who can vote, when to register, and how to register
- Train members interested in registering voters at the local libraries or staffing a table at an event
- Prepare members interested in training other organizations on how to register voters

No matter your level of commitment, please consider attending if you feel you would like to clarify New York registration requirements.

When: September 9, Wednesday  Pick one of two sessions:
- Morning Session: 10 am - 12pm
- Evening Session: 7 pm - 9pm

Where: St Sophia Church 440 Whitehall Road Albany, NY

While "walk ins" are welcome, please email Barbara Frankel at Barbarameg@mac.com to register or ask any questions.

Imagine what our country might look like if every eligible American was registered to vote
Please help us make our Voter Registration Week Beginning September 22, 2015 a major success. We hope the shared experiences below will motivate you to sign up as a volunteer!

VOLUNTEERS REFLECT ON THEIR VOTER REGISTRATION EXPERIENCES AT ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY IN APRIL 2015

My experience at the LWVAC voter registration project is very positive. Susanna Martin was forthcoming in providing contact information to me for the Bach Branch as well as all supplies needed for voter registration. Library staff, Lee Ricci was helpful upon my arrival with space near the door to greet the clientele. I felt comfortable as I approached individuals asking if they were registered voters and thanking them if they were. During my time there, two applications were completed and one was given to a woman for her son to complete later. I felt led to keep the applications and get them to the Board of Election myself. It was a pleasure serving in this capacity and I look forward to participating in similar activities in the future.

---Nell Stokes-Holmes, LWVAC member

Our recent voter registration drive was a great reminder to me on the core values of the League of Women Voters and why we remain a non-partisan organization. I volunteered at the Arbor Hill library and had multiple registrations, but the deep connections the neighborhood has with one another was just as rewarding. Residents sat down and talked to me about their views on our schools, our representatives, and voting in general. A woman registered to vote after not voting for thirty years and simply being asked made her feel included in our democracy. Perhaps the most profound registrations were from men with past criminal records who have a right to vote in the state of New York, but have been denied the opportunity to register by individuals with a personal agenda. These examples signify the important place the League of Women Voters has in our democracy.

---Karen Wagner, LWVAC Board Secretary

The HOWE Branch of APL is located in the Historic South End of Albany around the corner for Schuyler Mansion, the only NY State Historic Site in the City of Albany. It was a warm Spring Day at the HOWE Branch, and the librarian was very accommodating & receptive to the League presence for the voter registration project. In fact, the library made a laptop computer available with web access for inquiries a for a person (or me on their behalf) to check voter registration on the VOTE 411 site; and agreed to post a small flyer at each of their FREE public computers about how to access the VOTE 411 for information about elections!

I was present between the hours of 3 to 5:30pm and ready to speak with any and spoke to 39 persons about their voter registration, and nearly the same number about the prospect of their ability to sign up for the “DONATE LIFE” program of New York State on the same form. Even though I registered only one NEW voter, I was able to have some informative conversations about voting and provide education information to persons that had a past felony conviction. Hopefully this is the first of many opportunities to have a working partnership with the Albany Public Library.

----Stephen Winters, LWVAC Vice-President

2015 State League Convention Moves on Several New Agendas

At the June 6-7 2015 Convention of the League of Women Voters in NYS, the programmatic efforts of the League for the next and coming years were articulated and agreed upon. Local leagues such as our Albany county organization will be asked to participate in these policy formation and study efforts in addition to supporting League lobbying and advocacy efforts once the Legislature is in session.

Based on these agreements, there was a letter sent to the Governor on June 12 urging him to appoint a study commission to prepare the electorate for voting in 2017 on the acceptance of a Constitutional Convention. The state’s constitution requires such a referendum every 20 years. The State League amended its position on the merits of holding such a convention to reflect its interest in a broader, more inclusive delegate election process. With this update, it was believed that the process for preparing for such a public referendum should be promoted with adequate public education efforts occurring well in advance of the referendum’s November 17, 2017 voting date. Prior votes had similar commissions established to educate voters but no actions have been taken to date.
Additional efforts resulting from the state convention were the formation of a committee on long-range program planning and a committee to further study efforts to improve the state's minimum wage.

In the fall, local leagues will be asked to form concurrence groups to study whether or not the state should raise the minimum age for trial as adults from 16 to 18 years of age. We are one of only two states having the age set at 16. We will also be asked to form study groups on the topics of money in politics and the process to amend the US Constitution.

**STATE CONVENTION DELEGATES REFLECTIONS**

**Herb Gordon**  
I was privileged to attend the League's State Convention held in Albany this past June. It was a great opportunity to learn about our current agenda and to be reminded of the length and breadth of the LWV activities. In a day filled with workshops and information sessions, a multitude of public policy issues were discussed and debated including education, transportation, election reform, ethics, judiciary, pay equity and the environment among others. One could not help but be impressed and educated by the technical knowledge of the participants as they detailed the engineering, legal and scientific factors supporting the League’s positions.

Saturday afternoon saw all delegates gather for the Plenary Session. The room overflowed and I was somewhat embarrassed when a League volunteer insisted on giving me her seat. A lively business meeting was followed by a panel discussion entitled Constitutional Convention: How, Why and What if? The subject and speakers, former Assembly members John Faso and Richard Brodsky, were ably introduced by Barbara Bartoletti. It has been some time since I roamed the halls of the Capitol but it seems as though not much has changed. It was a cordial debate by two articulate speakers with little in common. Brodsky, the Democrat, stressed the potential for social policy changes in any revision of the Constitution; while Faso, the Republican, argued that a convention primarily serves as an opportunity to make necessary administrative corrections. I believe the League has taken a position that would bar elected officials from serving as Convention delegates, not an easy one to enact.

It took the concluding program called "Moments in the Sun" to fully appreciate what a remarkable impact the LWV has made in communities across New York State. Delegates from communities, both large and small, lined up to take the podium and proudly described - to resounding applause - their success. No one applauded more vigorously than I when our own Barbara Frankel took the mike and said, "I'm from Albany County."

**Sue Cypert**  
My thanks to the LWVAC for the great opportunity of being a delegate to the LWVUS Convention in Dallas June 2014, and a delegate to the LWVNY Convention a few weeks ago during June 2015.

While the two conventions were very different in size, the sense of a commitment to the work of the League was strong at both events. At both conventions serious discussions about programs and finances on the national and state levels were held. The comments from League members showed, once again, how smart, respectful (League members really listen to each other, something you can't take for granted these days!) and thoughtful members of the LWV are. New officers were elected at both, and again, hearing from these new leaders was inspiring.

Our new president in New York state, Dare Thompson, emphasized how much she wants to hear from all NYS League members. Important new committees for the state were created. Program and caucus sessions were held on important topics such as membership. There are so many important issues before the League and the involvement of every member - at local, state, and national levels - is needed and welcome. I encourage you to consult the national and state websites for information about how you can become involved. Everyone is needed and any amount of effort is welcome.

My attendance at both of these conventions reinforces the importance of the LWV, especially as we approach the 100th Anniversary of the League and as we watch events around the country that challenge what the League stands for. That's what's really important as a message from these conventions: the League has been here for a century and plans to stay for many more. The League has earned a reputation for being trustworthy in all respects, something that many institutions have lost.

We are all members of each level of League activity. We can be very proud and have a lot of work ahead of us. Do whatever you can, RECRUIT all your friends, OUR League needs each of us and as many committed and active members as possible.

Thank you Albany County LWV for sending me to both conventions!
County Charter Reform to go to Voters in November with Significant League Reservations Being Noted

The standing committee on Charter Reform, co-chaired by Ann Brandon and Judith Wing has been active both behind the scenes and in the media in commenting on the recent Albany County Legislature's vote to send its' revised version of a new county charter to voters this coming November. It was pointed out both in the Albany Times Union's July 19, 2015 editorial and commentary in its online "Observation Deck" blog that despite the League's extensive public oral and written comments, the efforts of the legislatively appointed Charter Review Commission and dissenting legislators such as Charles Dawson, the document to be presented for vote falls short of its mark to improve representative government in the county.

Our July 26, 2015 letter to the Editor of the Times Union is available on our website, as is the July 19, 2015 Times Union editorial. In commenting online, the Editorial Staff of the Times Union remarked, "The result is a proposed charter which will go to the voters in November that not only falls short of what it could be, but actually erodes citizens' ability to have a say in their county government." The central issues driving this conclusion were expressed by the League in our letter to the editor as being the new charter's failure to address its uniquely large size and its unwillingness to have districts drawn by the electorate rather than the elected.

Midsummer LWVAC Calendar

August 25 6:30-9:00 PM, Albany County Legislative Candidates Forum
100 Black Men of the Capital District, 388 Clinton Avenue, Albany.
Barbara Frankel, barbarameg@mac.com for info.

August 26 7:00-8:30 PM, Albany County Executive Primary Candidate Forum,
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany
Barbara Frankel, barbarameg@mac.com, for info

August 26 7:00 PM-8:30PM Filene Hall, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs,
Celebrate Women's Equality Day with "The Stone that Started the Ripple," an original play about the women who started the crusade for women's right to vote, $15,
LWV Saratoga Springs event, tickets online or to Saratoga County League of Women Voters, c/o Mary Lou Classen, 4 Blue Spruce Lane, Ballston Lake, 12019.

September 8 LWVAC Board Meeting, 7:00PM, St. Sophia's Church, 440 Whitehall Road
Albany, all members welcome, contact Paula Philo, paula.philo@gmail.com Tel: 475-9213

September 9 Voter Registration Training Day, two sessions: 10-12AM, 7-9PM
St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, 440 Whitehall Road, Albany
contact: Barbara Frankel, barbarameg@mac.com

September 10 Primary Election

September 21 Nat'l Voter Registration Week: LWVAC members volunteer at 19 food pantries (see article)

September 29 Pot Luck Supper and public policy forum, 5:30PM, St. Sophia's Church, 440 Whitehall Road, Albany
Topic: "Raise the Age" with guest speaker, Kate Breslin, President, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, public is welcome. Details in September bulletin.
Membership 2015 - 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

___ Please send me more information

Scholarships are available on an individual confidential basis.

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Albany County, PO Box 611, Slingerlands, NY 12159

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