



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2016

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lwvtompkins.org

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LIVABLE WAGE

TOMPKINS COUNTY PERSPECTIVES

Carl Graham: Alternatives Credit Union, Director of Community Relations and Development

Carl Feuer: Tompkins County Workers' Center, Community Organizer

Sue Dale Hall: Director, Child Development Council, a living wage employer

**Monday, February 22, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Borg Warner Room of the Library**

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: LIVABLE WAGE

“The New York State League supports a living wage, based on our national position about meeting basic human needs. A living wage should provide sufficient income without government assistance, for food, clothing, housing, energy, transportation, health care, education, child care and a small amount of discretionary income.”

As the Living Wage report in the January Bulletin described, various League bodies have worked on positions related to a living wage. To further understanding of this issue among our membership and in our community, our February program will feature a panel of three who will describe various aspects of working

out what a “living wage” here in Tompkins County should be and of promoting encouraging and implementing it here. This topic has not

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come “front and center” for our local League as yet, but at the 2015 NYS League convention, its study was encouraged.

In the very early 1960s the LWVUS began a study of “Equality of Opportunity in Education and Employment.” In following years this was expanded into further social policy studies and positions. It allowed Leagues to work on national, state and local issues and Leagues were then able to lobby for and promote many of the anti-poverty programs that came into being in the 1960s and years following.

Here we are fifty years later: social policy challenges still remain; poverty and near-poverty are very much still with us. What does the term “living wage” mean to you? What are the challenges, what are the positives?

On February 22nd (TC Library at 7:00 pm) our speakers can give us some very well-informed perspectives. They are:

Carl Graham: Alternatives Credit Union, Director of Community Relations and Development. He will describe how the living wage for Tompkins County is calculated and the Alternatives experience;

Carl Feuer: Tompkins County Workers’ Center, Community Organizer. He will tell us about workers’ advocacy and local perspectives;

Sue Dale Hall: Director, Child Development Council, a living wage employer. She will describe her agency’s implementation of a living wage: problems and challenges.

We think you won’t want to miss this program.

Marnie Johnson, Dorothy Rinaldo
Program Co-Chairs

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources Committee is continuing to discuss issues around the subject of local development and how it affects our environment. We are in the process of looking through the county comprehensive plan and the county energy roadmap. Both can be found on the Tompkins County website. Our committee will not be sponsoring any more programs this spring, but we expect that our discussions this winter and spring will lead to some interesting ideas for a fall program.

The committee is also monitoring a few current issues. A very important ongoing event is the major leak of natural gas near Porter Ranch in California. Old gas fields containing many old, plugged wells have been used to store natural gas since 1953. The wells were drilled and plugged before California had standards for well casings. A key safety valve stopped working in 1979, but because it was not within 100 feet of a road or park or within 300 feet of a house the valve was never replaced. As a result, a major leak of gas started on October 23, 2015 and about 90 thousand metric tons were released into the air by January 21, 2016. The leak is very difficult to stop and estimates are that it will continue for several more months.

Not only is this a major contribution to the emissions of greenhouse gases but local residents are getting sick with headaches, nosebleeds and coughs due to the other gases added to the methane in order to give it an odor. If you would like to learn more about this, you can google "porter ranch" and you will find a number of links to follow.

On a more positive note, Rep. Barbara Lifton is

LWV-TC CALENDAR—2015-2016

(Tentative dates and programs in italics)

Feb 22	Mon	7:00 pm	LIVABLE WAGE: LOCAL PERSPECTIVES	TCPL
Mar 7	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
Mar 19	Sat	12:00 pm	Soup & Bread Lunch: WOMEN MAKING HISTORY	Unitarian Church
Apr 4	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail
<i>Apr 25</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>7:00 pm</i>	<i>SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE IN NYS?</i>	TCPL
<i>May 9</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>6:00 pm</i>	<i>Annual Dinner Meeting</i>	TBA
Jun 6	Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Old Jail

co-sponsoring a bill (A8372) that would initiate a carbon tax in New York State. LWVNY has not yet taken a position on the bill but it looks quite interesting. The tax would start at no less than \$35 per metric ton of CO2 and increase by \$15 annually until it reaches \$180 per metric ton. The bill also specifies that 60% of the revenue from the tax is to go to the poorest and lower middle class residents, while the other 40% is to go to help with the transition to renewable energy.

We would also like to make sure you know of a very interesting course being held this spring at Cornell. It is open to the public. The course is BEE 2000 and the title is Perspectives on The Climate Change. If you look at the following website, you will find the lectures to be given on each date so that you can decide what weeks you would like to attend. The course is held every Monday, 3:35 - 4:25 in 233 Plant Sciences Building. The website is:

<http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/blogs/news/posts/bee-2000-perspectives-on-the-climate-change-challenge>

As always, if you would like to join our committee contact Kay Wagner at cmw18@cornell.edu, 539-3322.

Kay Wagner, Chair

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for getting your membership dues to me before January 31st. That is the final date for submission of our revised database to national and state Leagues. We have 87 members. We continue to shrink in size but not in enthusiasm for the work our League does in Tompkins County.

We are always looking for new members. I hope you will encourage membership to your other friends, family and neighbors. New members help revitalize our League.

Kay Sharp, President

VOTER SERVICES

Welcome to 2016! Voter Services is preparing for the Presidential Election. Of course voter registration is primary and we encourage suggestions about where and when you would like to see us. Late last year, we started a new program: registering organ donors. New York State has one of the lowest organ donor rates in the U.S. Through a program with LWVNY, we are answering questions at voter registration sites about being an organ donor and registering new donors.

We are open to organizing “meet the candidates” forums. Contact your candidates and encourage them to call us to request a forum date. Remember, primaries are April 19, 2016.

While keeping warm this winter, think about how and what you would like us to do. Call or email to let us know what you want. Please do not wait until our May membership meeting because we need time to plan.

Add April 19th, Primary Day, to your schedule and get out to vote! Happy Winter!

Lucia Sciore, Amy Panek: Co-Chairs



SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON

Mark your calendar! Saturday, March 19th, at 12 noon in the parlor of the Unitarian Church. Good food, conversations and a presentation on “Women Making History: a Local Perspective,” speaker to be announced.

Marnie Johnson, Program

NEW POSITION OF THE NYS LEAGUE

The "Raise the Age" concurrence met criteria to develop a new position that we can use to lobby with our legislators.

The position is as follows:

- (1) Children under the age of 18 are not adults and their treatment within the juvenile justice and criminal court system should relate to their stage in development.
- (2) Children should not be held in adult incarceration facilities.
- (3) Rehabilitation is the purpose of the juvenile justice system.
- (4) The legal rights of children should be protected.

Contact your assemblyperson and senator and ask that they vote for legislation consistent with this position.

Kay Sharp

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
from NYS Voter**

State of the State: Barbara Bartoletti, bbheck1@yahoo.com, and Jennifer Wilson, Jennifer@lwny.org

The legislative session has finally started and the League attended the Governor's State of the State address on January 13th. It was quite an exciting event that started with a confrontation between Assemblyman Charles Barron and Governor Cuomo over children in poverty and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity which after 15 years has remained unfunded. The Assemblyman shouted at the Governor as he began his speech forcing Majority Leader Assemblyman Morelle to escort Mr. Barron out of the Convention Center.

After the hoopla had died down the Governor laid out an ambitious plan that included ethics reforms that would close the LLC loophole, make legislators subject to FOIL requests, force public servants convicted of a felony to forfeit

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2015-16

LWV NYS website

www.lwny.org

LWV US website

www.lwv.org

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	Director	Communications	vacant	

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Youth Services	vacant		

their pension, and cap the outside income of legislators. He proposed voting reforms such as instituting automatic voter registration when New Yorkers apply for a driver's license and early voting. He also touched upon several social issues including 12-week paid family leave, a \$15 minimum wage, and more funding for breast cancer prevention measures. Although we were excited about some of the Governor's proposals, we were disappointed that once again he has included in his State of the State and budget the Education Investment Tax Credit. This tax credit would give a 75% return on investment for donating to private parochial or charter school. We will continue to oppose this measure which deprives public dollars for public education.

The League will be monitoring and advocating for our positions throughout the legislative session and we will be posting weekly blog updates on the Capitol Beat which can be viewed online at this address: <http://lwvny-capitolbeat.blogspot.com/>

Election Law Reform: Aimee Allaud,
85aimee@nycap.rr.com and **Jennifer Wilson,**
Jennifer@lwvny.org

Report on the NYS Elections Commissioners Association Conference (NYSECA)

On January 12th the League participated in the annual NYSECA Conference at the Hilton Hotel in Albany. Our Elections Specialist, Aimee Allaud, and I staffed a table which featured our First Vote booklets, Legislative Agenda, "Your Right to Vote" pamphlets, November's testimony to the Assembly Elections Committee which can be found [here](#), and our joint policy statement on voting reforms is [here](#).

We were joined at the table by representatives from Citizen's Union, Common Cause, and the Brennan Center for Justice. Several Commissioners approached the table and praised the Local Leagues in their counties; others took our materials before heading off to the workshops. The most popular materials were the League's "Your Right to Vote" pamphlets. Many County Board of Election staff said the

most common questions about voting they get are from those who are currently homeless and those who have been formerly incarcerated. Our materials were very well received.

Aimee and I had the chance to sit in on several of the workshops throughout the day, especially interesting was the report of the ECA Legislative Committee. The Legislative committee presented to the whole body for a vote the proposed list of legislative priorities for 2016. These priorities included closing schools on Election Day, conducting an information and technology survey of the counties, and allowing county board offices to operate on different working hours than the county itself. In total there were 13 priorities to be voted on, 12 passed easily but a proposal to allow counties to utilize electronic poll books was heavily contested by republican Commissioners. The proposal passed with 57 commissioners voting in the affirmative and 39 opposing. County boards are concerned about costs associated with electronic poll books without help from the State and believe that endorsing electronic poll books is the "slippery slope" to endorsing early voting. There is no unanimity on early voting among the ECA members; support is divided, in general along party lines (Dems-yes, Reps-no).

Health Care: Madeline Zevon,
madeline.zevon@gmail.com

The Health Care Committee continues its advocacy for the single payer bill, New York Health, A.5062(Gottfried)/S.3525(Perkins). In the last session of the Assembly the bill passed by 92-52. We are now working on passage in the State Senate, which will be an uphill battle. The Affordable Care Act allows states to innovate in 2017 as long as they meet certain criteria: 1) The new plan must cover as many people as the ACA 2) it cannot cost more in total health care dollars 3) it must offer the same level of benefit that the ACA mandates. The New York Health Act should easily satisfy these requirements, so we are optimistic that we will get the necessary federal waivers to implement it should we get it passed and signed into law.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON

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