



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2017

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748

lwvtompkins.org

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436

League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON

Saturday, March 4 (note change of date) at 12 noon
Unitarian Church Annex, 208 East Buffalo Street

Good Food, Good Conversation, and a
**PREVIEW OF THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS OF
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN NEW YORK**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In *The Book of Joy* the Dalai Lama states, "One great question underlies our existence... What is the purpose of life? ... After much consideration I believe that the purpose of life is happiness ... From the very core of our being, we simply desire joy and contentment."

My hope is that you found within yourself happiness in the recent Women's March. I saw many happy faces in the women's desire to be heard. We all want to be given respect and to be treated with dignity. We want our equal share of industry and benefits.

It is not easy to maintain a sense of contentment in these difficult times. But we can find it in moments when we display compassion toward each other. Even in times when we think that women's rights are being dashed aside, we must look to each other with compassion, then we will experience happiness. We will continue to march for women's equal rights.

Recently, I traveled to Albany to demonstrate our consensus on raising the age of criminal responsibility. The Senate Committee was holding its hearing on this topic. I listened to three of the ten panels who spoke pro and con in raising the age from 16 years of age to 18 for kids who have committed a crime and sentenced to go to an adult prison. For the most part, the panels were in support of this legislation. I will continue to watch for the outcome of this debate. (continued)

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Speaking of joy, **the Soup and Bread**

Luncheon is coming soon. Be aware that the date has changed due to some programming conflict. The Luncheon will be on **Saturday, March 4, 12 - 2 p.m.** at the Unitarian Church Annex. Please come, bring a friend, as we have a short program arranged that you will enjoy. Also, we will discuss what studies we want to propose to the State League. This is an opportunity for you to have an impact on the League's direction in the future.

I and a few members attended the History Center's Awards Ceremony. We were given an award for "Making a Difference." I took the opportunity to mention a few of the events our League has sponsored in the past two months such as voter registration at the Naturalization Ceremony and our program on the "Constitutional Convention." I invited the attendees to join the League.

We received from State League our 2017 Legislative Agenda. I will bring copies to the Luncheon. It was gratifying to see that all the areas that we wanted to focus on were included. For example, we wanted to continue our focus on natural resources such as the electric grid, on women's issues such as pay equity. We will meet with our legislators this spring to discuss their position on the various issues in the Agenda.

Looking toward the future, our March program will address the Rockefeller Drug Laws that were established in the 1970s, subsequently revised in 2004, 2005, 2010. There continues to be a debate about the efficacy of these laws to decrease crime, drug offenses, to fight the "drug war. With mandatory sentences to prison for small amounts of drugs, our state has looked for alternatives to incarceration. The March program will look at a number of those alternatives.

So, I hope that this message finds you in a moment of happiness. See you on March 4th at the Soup and Bread Luncheon.

Kay Sharp, President

JANUARY PUBLIC PROGRAM

The January 23rd meeting "*Does NY Need a Constitutional Convention?*" was attended by 14 persons who braved the threatening weather. The group was small but fully engaged in the presentation by Dr. Henrik (Hank) Dullea, Vice President for University Relations Emeritus, Cornell University, and a leading scholar on the convention. Dr. Dullea explained that the NY constitution can be changed through a convention or by amendments. We are now governed by the 1894 constitution that has since been amended 228 times. Every 20 years, New York voters are asked whether they want to hold a constitutional convention where delegates elected by the people can strike current text, add new provisions, or change the language for greater clarity. All convention proposals must be put before the people who decide whether they will support or oppose the recommended changes. Dr. Dullea's talk was an introduction, an effort to open the conversation about the purpose, the process, and the pros/cons of such a convention.

What happens next?

1. We collected attendees' ideas and concerns about the constitutional convention to incorporate into a report that we will submit to the state LWV. They will use our feedback and that of other local leagues in their decision to support, oppose, or remain neutral during the November 2017 vote.
2. Dr. Dullea volunteered to repeat the program for folks who were discouraged by the weather. We will discuss this possibility further, but you can make your interest known by contacting our president Kay Sharp, phylliskaysharp@gmail.com or myself, cwc4@cornell.edu
3. We plan to follow-up with a debate-style meeting in September that examines more closely the pros and cons of holding a constitutional convention
4. In the meantime, short articles will appear in the Bulletin addressing different aspects of the possible convention. (continued)

5. On November 7, 2017, a referendum for a constitutional convention will be on the ballot.

Learn more about the constitutional convention:

Full New York State Constitution:
<https://www.dos.ny.gov/info/pdfs/Constitution%20January%202015%20amd.pdf>

Rockefeller Institute of Government
 Constitutional Convention Project:
http://www.rockinst.org/NYS_ConCon2017/

New York Public Interest Group Roadmap to the Convention:
http://nypirg.org/goodgov/concon/con_con_merged_final.pdf

League of Women Voters Links to Convention Documents:
<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon-edu.html>

The League's book on the 1967 Convention: Seeds of Failure:
<http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/concon/2016/LWVNY-Book-1967-Con-Con.pdf>

Anti-Convention website featuring cons of holding a convention:
<http://www.nyconcon.com/>

History of Conventions, countdown clock,

reform proposals, pro and con listing, and blog on convention:

<http://www.newyorkconcon.info/>

New York State Library documents from previous elections:
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandocs/nyconstitution.htm>

Original Constitution of 1777:
<http://consource.org/document/constitution-of-new-york-1777-4-20/>

Charlotte Coffman, Program Chair

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee is currently focusing on local housing needs and how they relate to environmental issues, especially energy and land use. Some of us attended the housing summit that was held by Tompkins County in November. The summit was quite interesting and we learned a lot about both the current housing needs and ideas for meeting those needs. Unfortunately, there was no discussion of how attempts to meet the needs would impact our environment. For those who are interested in listening to some of the talks, the summit was taped and is available at the county website. The committee was excited to learn that the

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

LWV NYS website				www.lwvny.org
LWV US website				www.lwv.org
LWV-Tompkins County	contact website	272-4748		lwvtc@twcny.rr.com lwvtompkins.org
Board Members				
6/17	President		Kay Sharp	272-4748 phylliskaysharp@gmail.com
6/17	Secretary	(January-June)	Ann Warde	241-0192 amw38@cornell.edu
6/18	Treasurer		Diane Kelleher	257-5551 diane2110@icloud.com
6/18	VP1	Program	Charlotte Coffman	272-7551 cwc4@cornell.edu
6/18	Co-VP2	Co-Membership	Lory Saltzman	257-7240 lorysaltz@gmail.com
6/18	Co-VP2	Co-Membership	Alene Wyatt	257-1894 alene@lightlink.com
6/18	Co-Director	Co-Voter Services	Mandy Qualls	405-210-6598 mandyqualls@gmail.com
6/18	Co-Director	Co-Voter Services	Amy Panek	617-448-6841 amy.panek@gmail.com
6/17	Director	Natural Resources	Kay Wagner	539-3322 cmw18@cornell.edu
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	Co-Webmaster; Action		Linda Duttweiler	277-0006 ldutt@twcny.rr.com
	Co-Webmaster		Michael Duttweiler	277-0006 mduttweiler@twcny.rr.com
	Bulletin		Robert Silsbee	273-1436 rhs1@cornell.edu
	History		Florence Smith	273-6147 fbarrthims@gmail.com

LWVUS has filed an amicus brief in the federal climate case that was brought by a group of 21 children. The case addresses their concerns about climate change and the contributions that the United States has made to this problem. A link to the description on the LWVUS website, which in turn contains a link to the brief, is:

<http://lww.org/press-releases/league-files-amicus-brief-federal-climate-case>

The members of our committee are also pleased that the Tompkins County Legislature has established an Energy Task Force. The description of this task force and its goals as stated on the legislature's website are:

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, established the Tompkins County Energy Task Force, to be charged with providing input and guidance to the County Planning Department and the Legislature on the topics of energy, climate change, and energy-related economic development, and will be available to provide advice to other community groups on these topics, as requested.

The task force is still being formed and will have 15-20 members. Our committee will be interested to see who is selected for the task force and believe it could be a valuable resource for our county.

Kay Wagner, Natural Resources Chair

FUTURE PROGRAMS

MARCH 2017: Soup & Bread Luncheon

Date: Saturday, March 4, 12 noon

Place: Unitarian Church Annex (upstairs)

Program Title: *The Suffragette Spirit Lives*

Speakers:

- Flo Smith and colleagues from the History Project will present an overview of activities related to Women's Suffrage scheduled for our area.
- Kay Sharp will lead a discussion and collect input for State League Convention questions.

LWV members and our colleagues from the City Federation of Women's Organizations are

invited to attend this annual gathering. We look forward to good food, interesting conversations and an informative program. PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND.

NOTE: The board usually prepares most of the food, but others are welcome to bring a soup (in a crockpot), a vegetable relish tray, or a platter of sliced fruit. Questions can be directed to Charlotte Coffman, cwc4@cornell.edu.

March 2017: Member and Public Meeting

Date: Monday, March 27, 7pm

Place: Borg Warner Room, Tompkins County Public Library

Program Title: *The Rockefeller Drug Laws: Alternatives to Incarceration*

Speakers: TBA

May 2017: Annual Meeting and Dinner

Date: May 8, 6pm

Place: Salvation Army

Charlotte Coffman, Program Chair

MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome six new members to our local League.

Megan Adams

mjadams1.me.com

Deborah Dawson and Ronny Hardaway

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Carol LaBorie

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Sheila Stone

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272-1751

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Ann Warde

209 East Jay Street

241-0192

mw38@cornell.edu

Alene Wyatt, Membership Co-Chair

OUR PRESIDENT AT ALBANY

President Kay Sharp attended a Senate committee hearing in Albany on "Raise the Age." There were 10 panels that presented their reasons for changing/not changing the age of teens who have committed a crime and who are then sentenced to an adult prison. Currently, 16



and 17 year olds are sent to adult prisons, whether their crime is violent or nonviolent. The legislation that the League supports increases the minimum age to 18. Children under the age of 18 years who have committed a non-violent crime would be diverted to specially designed programs that address the youngsters' unmet needs: for example, drug rehabilitation, mental health treatment, education completion or job skill training.

FROM THE U.S. LEAGUE UPDATE

League Calls on U.S. House to Keep Key Elements of the ACA

The League sent [a memo](#) to the U.S. House of Representatives urging them to not disrupt the health coverage of millions of Americans. The

League strongly urged House members to ensure that a full replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act is in place before repealing any of its elements.

League Joins Letter in Support of DACA

The League joined [a letter](#) with the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and other groups in support of the Obama Administration's 2012 executive action on "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)." The action puts in place common sense and compassionate measures for immigrants who were brought to this country as children, have grown up here, and cannot rationally be blamed for their lack of legal immigration status. If President Trump moves forward with his vow to overturn the action, he would disrupt the lives of 750,000 immigrants and their families across the country.

Invitation to a Webinar: The Case for Pricing Carbon

As the evidence of accelerated climate change and its impact on society mounts, there is an increasing sense of urgency to find solutions. Join a webinar hosted by the LWVUS [Price on Carbon Steering Committee](#) to learn how putting a [price on carbon](#) works and why scientists, economists and world leaders view pricing carbon as an essential strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. [RSVP](#) to join us on February 21, 2:00-3:00 pm EST, for an insightful and informative presentation by internationally renowned science historian and author, [Dr. Naomi Oreskes](#). For more information, please contact Eleanor Revelle, Chair, LWVUS Climate Change Task Force, at er@revelle.net.

LWV-TC CALENDAR—2016-2017

Mar 4	Sat	12 noon	SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON	Unitarian Church Annex
Mar 7	Tue	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Kendal
Mar 27	Mon	7:00 pm	ROCKEFELLER DRUG LAWS; ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION	TCPL
Apr 4	Tue	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Kendal
May 8	Mon	6:00 pm	ANNUAL MEETIG AND DINNER	Salvation Army
Jun 6	Tue	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Kendal

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

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
 Michael Nozzolio 518-455-2366; 315-568-9816 www.nysenate.gov/senator/michael-f-nozzolio
 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

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