The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government.

The league works to increase and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Any person 16 years and older, regardless of gender, may become a League member.

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A message from your Co-Presidents
Submitted by Sally Grubb and Kay Wagner

Dear Friends in League,

The end of summer is here and as fall begins we look forward to the many LWV events and activities that will be taking place Nationally, Statewide and locally. We hope that all of you had a good summer and were able to enjoy time with friends and family in spite of the need to stay safe from COVID with the advent of the Delta variant.

Key issues at the National level are DEI and Voting Rights. At the State level the issues are Redistricting and the State Ballot Proposals that will be voted on in the November 2 elections. Locally we continue to be concerned about Natural Resources, and Health, but are currently focused on Voter Registration, with National Voter Registration day on September 28 and Apple Harvest on October 1, 2, and 3; candidate forums for the November elections; and Redistricting which is likely to affect Tompkins County in Congressional and NYS Senate districts. Watch for news on all these issues. The Program Committee, together with the relevant committees, will be arranging public meetings on Natural Resources and Healthcare as well as members only meetings, including one or more on redistricting.

November Elections The focus of our elections this year will be on both local candidates and important propositions that will be on our ballots.

Locally there are 80 candidates running in 50 races. Our Vote411 committee is working overtime to get all the necessary information about the candidates and the races entered into the Vote 411 data base. The Committee is also putting together a local Voter Guide which will be available shortly and posted on our website. The State League Voter Guide parts 1 and 2 which include the State Ballot Proposals can be found at https://lwvtompkins.org/voting/#votingyote411

The State League recently sent out an invitation to a Virtual Campaign Kick off on 2021 ballot proposals which took place on Tuesday, September 21. We hope many of you were able to attend. A recording of the event should be on the LWVNY website soon.
**Redistricting** While we are gearing up for the November elections, we are also following the state and local redistricting processes. Decisions made concerning the new districts will have a significant impact and will be in place for the next 10 years. Program Committee Co-Chair, Ann Ward, started what is hoped to be a series of local league meetings to discuss and strategize on how we should address this issue.

An initial meeting was held on Monday, September 20. It was agreed the we will: 1. Inform the general public about how to participate in the redistricting process and encourage them to do so. 2. Prepare for the Oct 25 Southern Tier hearing by gathering and providing data to support our position—that is, our sense of how the maps should be drawn based on communities of interest in our region at the FederalCongressional level, and at the State Senate and Assembly level. At the time of this writing, a second meeting is planned for Monday, Sept 27, at 3pm via Zoom. If you would like to receive emails on these meetings please email Ann Warde at AMW38@cornell.edu

The LWVNY has been holding a series of events on the topic of DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion). Many of our members attended the presentation entitled “I’m a Good Person! Isn’t that enough?” given by Debby Irving on August 17. The follow-up workshop is on October 19 and you may join this meeting even if you missed the first one. We have purchased 8 copies of Ms. Irving's book for individual members and 2 copies for general league circulation. Let Sally know if you wish to borrow one of these.

Most of our meetings will continue to take place over Zoom but as soon as possible we will move to hybrid and in person meetings.

Many of you may not be aware but thanks to the work of Linda and Michael Duttweiler and David Quinn-Jacobs we have a new website. Please let us know what you think of it. Sad to say, Michael and Linda are retiring from web management and we are looking for a new web manager. Thanks to the design of the new site this is a much less onerous task than the one Linda and Michael did for over 20 years. If you have a techie soul and would like to be involved in the web site please let us know.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events even if it is over zoom.
Chris St. Clair and Nancy Skipper have been hard at work, preparing the VOTE411 Voter Guide to go ‘live’ for the public on October 12th to help Tompkins County voters prepare for the General Election coming up on November 2, 2021. Early voting starts on Saturday, October 23rd.

Many county, town and city positions are up for election, or re-election. So there are nearly 50 races and 80 candidates! In addition, county residents will be voting on the Supreme Court Justice position for the 6th Judicial District in New York State, which covers 10 counties including Tompkins.

This election is particularly important because county residents will also have the opportunity to vote on five important ballot proposals focused on critical issues, including voting rights and the environment. Voters can simply enter their home address to learn which elections are being held within their specific district.

In addition to the information available online, a print version of the Voter Guide will be distributed, particularly in areas that lack internet access.

If you are not familiar with VOTE411, here is some background information:

WWW.VOTE411.ORG is a national, non-partisan election resource that provides a “one-stop shop” for all the information you need to register and cast your ballot, including when, where, and how to vote.

Every election is different, and VOTE411 provides the up-to-date information needed for each election, including how to register; candidate profiles, goals and priorities; early and absentee voting opportunities; and election day polling places, dates and times.

For more information on the work entailed in producing VOTE411 for Tompkins County, and details on past and upcoming elections, see https://www.vote411.org
Voter Services Report
Submitted By Sally Grubb

Voter Services Committee has had a quiet summer and is late getting back to work on Voter Registration, Candidate Forums and Getting out the Vote. VOTE411, on the other hand has been very active and soon will go “live” with all election information needed for voting successfully in Tompkins County. (See Nancy Skipper’s report.)

Our local Voter Guide is now complete and will be available at Voter Registration events and will be posted on our website.

National Voter Registration Day is on Tuesday September 28. LWVTC will be registering voters and promoting the League and all we do at TC3 – thank you Kerry Curran for organizing this; at TCPL – thank you Librarian Sophia McKissick for your support in making this happen; and at Cornell – thank you Patrick Mehler and Cornell Votes for organizing an amazing Civic Engagement event on the Arts Quad.

All being well, and again with support from Cornell Votes, we plan on registering voters at Apple Harvest on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 1,2 & 3.

Unfortunately, we are short of League Volunteers able to help at these sorts of events. The Delta Variant of Covid is taking its toll and many of us are concerned about working in proximity with other people even in outdoor settings when there is no guarantee people will be wearing masks nor be vaccinated against the virus. When you fill out your membership renewal form, please let us know if you can volunteer at in person events and under what conditions.

We are hoping to hold a candidates forum for City of Ithaca contested races on October 12. This is still in the planning stages but if you are able to help, in person, please let me know.

November 2nd is fast approaching, and we will soon be involved in Get out the Vote activities. Watch for requests for help and please do what you can to support our efforts.

Voter Services is a big job and we used to have to co-chairs. One who organized Candidate Forums and one who organized Voter Registration events. Working as Co-President and Voter Services Chair is proving too big a job and I need help. I do hope someone will step forward and help in a leadership role either organizing Candidate Forums, Voter Registration events or Get out the Vote. Let me know. I will welcome you with open arms. There are toolkits for all these activities, so training is available!
Key Voting Information for 2021

Oct. 8 – Last day to postmark voter registration form or register in person at BOE

Oct. 18 – Last day to apply for absentee ballot by mail, online portal, email or fax

Oct. 23 – Early voting begins

Oct. 31 – Early voting ends

Nov 1 – Last day to apply in person for absentee ballot

Nov. 2 – Last day to postmark ballot for general election

Nov. 2 – Last day to deliver absentee ballot in person to BOE

State Voter Guide Part 11, with ballot proposals

Local Voters Guide
https://lwvtompkins.org
On March 3rd 2021 the House of Representative passed legislative bill HR1, known as The For The People Act. The bill is before the Senate as S1. This bill contains provisions that are widely popular across the country regardless of party affiliation. It seeks to strengthen voting rights, making our election system free, fair, accessible to all eligible citizens. It mandates transparent election funding, and keeps political office from being the means to accumulate personal wealth. Perhaps most importantly, it seeks to end Gerrymandering.

These provisions are non-partisan and popular. The National League of Women Voters, a century old, non-partisan, organization with hundreds of local Leagues, including The Tompkins County League of Women Voters, of which I am a member, was very early in its support of the provisions, of S1, even influencing some of its language. The League remains fully committed to the passage of S1, ending Gerrymandering and instead creating “People Powered Fair Maps”.

Gerrymandering is the effort, by whatever party holds a majority in a state legislature, to use its power to change the layout of electoral districts so that their party's candidates will continue to win future elections. This “Redistricting” process takes place every 10 years after the census tallies our current population.

How is Gerrymandering carried out? The party with a majority in the legislature, now entrusted with creating the new redistricted districts may eliminate the influence of the votes of those voters not expected to support the party’s candidates. One way they might do this is to “Crack” or split the area of opposition voters into parts, and put the parts into different districts, adding enough other areas containing their own supporters to each of those districts to create “Safe Districts” for their party in future elections. We are familiar with this tactic in Tompkins County where a resident’s State Senator is, Pamela Helming, Tom Omara, or Peter Oberacker, depending on where in Tompkins County the resident lives.

Another Gerrymandering tactic is “Packing” a favorable area of voters, keeping it together, and expanding its area to include enough friendly voters as necessary for a “Safe District”, mindful not to “pack” it with unnecessary, wasted, votes that could be used in another district for the same purpose. They might also “Pack” an area containing a fairly large number of opposing voters with more of their own friendly voters again just enough to win. “Packing” can take another form as well. An area of unfavorable voters might be packed with more unfavorable voters creating a “Safe” district for the opposition. Other methods exist as well, like “Highjacking”, combining parts of 2 opposition districts with two popular opposition representatives so they will compete for one seat, or “Kidnapping”, changing the district so that its legislator no longer lives in the district.

The Independent Commission’s redistricting process should, as its name suggests, be clearly free of political influence.

A letter submitted to the
The Independent Redistricting Commission of New York State
By Lory Saltzman
“Health Reform and Social Justice: Opportunities for Reducing Inequity and Addressing Health Disparities” is a virtual forum that will take place on October 6th, 6-8pm PT. Dr Susan Rogers, President of Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP) will speak to current healthcare model issues and health care reform can improve access, quality and equity. This should be interesting and informative.

This event is being sponsored by the LWV Davis Area, and the LWVTC is happy to join as a co-sponsor. It will be taped and available on a LWVDA site on YouTube after.

Any questions for Dr Rogers can be sent before Oct 4 to komalh@lwvdavisarea.org
Registration is at https://LWVDAforum.eventbrite.com

Dr. Rogers's presentation will include an overview of the U.S. healthcare system through a social justice lens, followed by a discussion highlighting disparities resulting from our current policies and opportunities to improve inequities through health reform. The forum will conclude with an audience Q&A.

Dr. Rogers is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and currently an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Rush University. She has recently retired from her hospitalist practice in Chicago at Stroger Hospital of Cook County. She has previously served as co-director of medical student teaching at Stroger and as Medical Director of Near North Health Service Corp, a Chicago FQHC. Most recently, Dr. Rogers spoke at the June California League of Women Voters Annual Convention, providing the presentation: “Health Care: Inequities and Opportunities”.

This forum aims to educate voters about our current healthcare model and how it impacts local care access, affordability, quality and equity. Our guest speaker provides insights into how health reform can improve each of these to optimize community health and wellness. The LWVDA supports the National League healthcare positions in support of an affordable, accessible, quality, and equitable health care system, critical for the health, safety and economic security of all communities. Becoming an informed voter is fundamental to ensuring the engagement needed to affect meaningful reform. The future of our community health and healthcare systems will rely upon votes cast by those with a better understanding of current needs and resources and our opportunities to enact needed change.

Health Committee Report
Submitted by Ann Mueller
The Natural Resources Committee has taken a break over the summer, but we have continued to follow ongoing issue and events. When we come across an article of particular interest we post the information and a link on our new LWVTC website. We hope our members are looking at these items.

Although there is important environmental news and information on both the global and national fronts, there is also a great deal of activity going on within our county. For example, to get a good picture of what is happening in the city of Ithaca, go to the website for the City’s Green New Deal [https://www.cityofithaca.org/642/Green-New-Deal](https://www.cityofithaca.org/642/Green-New-Deal). The city has hired a new Director of Sustainability, Luis Aguirre Torres, who has been working hard to lead the city in its ambitious goals.

In May the City of Ithaca adopted a code for new buildings. All new buildings must now be constructed to produce 40% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than is required by the NYS code. Starting in 2026 new buildings will be required to be net-zero and not use fossil fuels except for cooking and process energy. You can find more complete information at the website given above. The Town of Ithaca and some of the other towns in the county are also in the process of putting new building requirements in place while looking at additional ways to dramatically reduce their fossil fuel emissions.

Our committee is beginning to look at ideas and plans for our annual program. We will keep our members informed as these plans develop. We welcome ideas and thoughts from all of our members concerning program ideas and activities we might pursue.

We would love to have some new members on our committee. If you would like to join us or want to share your thoughts and ideas contact co-chairs Susan Multer (smulter@twc.com) and Kay Wagner (cmw18@cornell.edu)
Program Committee Report
Submitted by Ann Warde and Megan Nettleton

As you can see, redistricting is a hot topic this year. The Program committee has made it a key focus for 2021. We have been hosting meetings on Zoom to talk about the latest updates on the topic, and brainstorming how we can have an impact. If you would like to attend, please email us for the most current information.

On October 20th at 5pm we invite you to attend "Getting to Know the League" via Zoom. This meeting is for long time members, new members, and potential members! We will chat about what each committee has been focussing on, a quick powerpoint about the League, and take down your suggestions for the future. This quick meeting will be a great way to catch up and see how you can be involved here in Tompkins County.

In November, the Natural Resource Committee will be putting on a program, more details coming soon!

On November 22nd, at 5pm the League will hold its quarterly meeting with State Assemblyperson Dr. Anna Kelles. These informal chats are held together with the Cortland League of Women Voters, as we share an assembly district. We invite all members to submit questions beforehand, the meeting will be held on Zoom. These meetings are a product of the April 29th Day of Action meeting, and we are thrilled to host them quarterly.

As we all know, the Covid 19 situation changes rapidly. Our hope is to have an informal get together in December, either at a winery for a tasting and snacks or at a local restaurant. If you have any suggestions, please let us know!
Students Inside Albany
Submitted by Megan Nettleton

Good news! The New York State League of Women Voters has announced that next Students Inside Albany Conference will be held May 22-25, 2022. If you know of any students that would be interested in applying, please email me at Nettleton.megan@gmail.com Application information will be sent out in the next few weeks to our members, the community and the press.

Students Inside Albany is an intensive four-day residential training experience, free to the participant, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State. It is held in the spring. It is designed to immerse students in the process by which public policy is proposed, enacted and changed in New York State, and to educate them as to how they can influence and affect this process. Albany insiders discuss the operations of New York State government including how policy is shaped and enacted. Students develop a knowledge of the disparate forces that influence policy development. Students also observe Assembly and Senate sessions and shadow both their Assembly members and Senators.

Lily, one of our 2020 SIA Students wrote the following,

"I was lucky enough to attend the Students Inside Albany Conference over the past weekend. As a student with an interest in politics and leadership, the conference was an amazing opportunity. Learning more about how the state government works and runs was very informative and educating. Even though the conference had to be virtual this year, it was still a fun experience. The organizers found interactive ways to make it more fun for students such as a Kahoot game and giving out prizes. We had three journalists come and speak to us and about the media and the role it plays in politics. We were able to ask the panelists questions and really dig deep into media and politics which was a really interesting topic. My favorite part of the conference was being able to talk to state senators and assembly members in small groups. We were able to just talk to them for an hour or so and ask them basically any question we wanted or about topics we were interested in. This was so cool and exciting. It was really nice of these busy officials to take time out of their day to come talk to students. Overall, I had an amazing time at the conference and am happy I was able to attend. The League did a great job working with the virtual format and hopefully next year they can hold it in person again."
How to contact your Representatives

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The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County publishes this bulletin four times a year.

Previous bulletins can be found on our website at http://www.lwvtompkins.org/bulletins.html

For information about our league go to http://www.lwvtompkins.org/

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