CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE AND REQUEST

2022 ELECTION REPORT

YOUR VOICE + YOUR VOTE: TOMPKINS CIVIC EMPOWERMENT COALITION

VOTER SERVICES

NATURAL RESOURCES

LWVNYS HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

OPENDORE VISIT

SAVE THE DATE

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

HOW TO CONTACT US

Fan memorabilia from Emily Howland House
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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  Natural Resources - Kay Wagner and Susan Multer
  Health Committee - Ann Mueller
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  History Committee - Florence Smith
  Website Management - Ann Warde
A message and important request from your Co-Presidents Sally Grubb and Kay Wagner

Dear Friend’s in League:

As we look back over our history and the work we have done over the past 102 years, for a mid to smaller sized League we have achieved an enormous amount in our community. One of the first local leagues to be founded in 102, our membership grew out of the Ithaca Women’s Club and then the Political Study Club with a membership of over 100 very active members. Our membership today is around 90, including family members many of whom are men, a couple of students, and several lifetime members. Unfortunately, the number of active members has dropped considerably with many of our senior members providing their support through donations. In addition, some of our younger members are working full time at demanding jobs and have limited time to devote to League activities.

Our past achievements included publishing the VOTE supplement in the Ithaca Journal. We participated in the Dumbarton Oaks Campaign to educate the public on the establishment of the United Nations. Our study on the advisability of consolidation of County Welfare services resulted in a County Welfare unit. For many years, until websites took over, we published the booklets Know Your City Government and Know Your County Government. We were very active in local educational issues among other issues published the Know Your Schools booklets and created a nomination committee to select qualified school board candidates. We studied and commented on the organization and operations of Tompkins County Government and worked to improve assessing procedures, welfare services, and city government and charter revision. We were involved in local and regional planning at city, town and county levels. Our work creating an Ithaca Walking Tour booklet and leading some of those tours resulted in the preservation of several historic buildings in the City.

In the late 1960’s our Natural Resources Committee contributed enormously to stopping the building of Miliken Station Nuclear Power Plant on Cayuga Lake. Their work continued and we also participated in the work to stop Fracking in New York State. The Committee has also been involved in the prevention of energy use by cryptocurrency that employs proof of work mining. We have always had an active Health Committee as well. More detailed information about what we have achieved through membership activity can be found on our website and in the archives at the History Center on the Commons.
In recent years our Natural Resources, Health, Students in Albany, and Voter Services Committees have been active. But as our active members have aged and the number of active members has decreased substantially our ability to continue the same level of work has reduced. We continue with Voter Registration events but often have too few volunteers for an extended period of tabling. This year we were unable to table at Apple Harvest because we lacked a member to coordinate the activity. We were unable to select students to go to Albany in the spring through lack of a Youth Services committee. Our Natural Resources and Health Committees are active, but their membership numbers are very low. Our Membership Committee has a Chair but no members to help with the work involved with renewing memberships and, oh so important, recruiting new members. Our Voter Services committee has many members willing to volunteer for one-time events, but we need people to help organize those events. At the end of this year our Program Committee will cease to exist unless someone steps forward to chair this committee. And then there are all those little administrative jobs we have to do every month that could be parceled out among several members.

In the coming weeks we will be meeting to discuss exactly what roles we need to fill and what small jobs there are that we and other Board Members and Committee Chairs would like help with. And then we will be reaching out to our members to see what you would like to do to ensure we continue to be a thriving effective LWV.

In addition, if there are new programs or issues that members, or potential members would like addressed we will need to find the volunteers from amongst us to make these happen.

As a start you can all tell us what you would like your ACTIVE involvement to be – non active financial supporter, will volunteer for xxx when asked, will become a liaison or leader for some activity, or will do one of those administrative jobs. WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.

By the time you read this letter all the election results will be in. Like other local leagues we will be planning on how we need to move forward with program planning, and advocacy on legislative issues both local and State as well as National. For this we need your responses to our plea for help above.

Finally, as we head toward the holidays, we wish you a healthy and happy time with family and friends.
Democracy prevailed in 2022.

Despite anti-voter laws, mis- and disinformation, election deniers, and poll worker shortages, the American people voted in record numbers.
Your Voice + Your Vote: Tompkins Civic Empowerment Coalition
From by Sally Grubb

During our voter registration activities in September, and as a result of Kathy Yen’s outreach to them, Finger Lakes Independence Center invited us to join a new coalition of organizations that had formed in response to the need to increase civic engagement, knowledge and voting amongst the communities they serve. This was a wonderful introduction for our League as we often have difficulty reaching out to groups such as these particularly during voter registration and to recruit new members. The Coalition supported our activities on National Voter Registration Day enabling us to be present at 13 different locations.

As part of the Coalition’s efforts to get out the vote which we supported with election materials, we helped organize and both the League and Vote411 participated in the coalition’s first public event held at Southside Community Center on Saturday October 5. The event was covered by the Cornell Sun [https://cornellsun.com/2022/11/07/your-voice-your-vote-makes-debut-with-voting-event/](https://cornellsun.com/2022/11/07/your-voice-your-vote-makes-debut-with-voting-event/) as well as other media. I quote from Sam Johnstone’s excellent report in the Sun and include two photos by Jason Wu/Sun Assistant Photography Editor as well as a couple of the wonderful photos that Connie Stirling-Engman took for us.

Visitors wandering the information tables

photo by
Connie Stirling-Engman

Your Voice + Your Vote, a brand-new coalition of local nonpartisan groups — including the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Human Rights Commission, Finger Lakes Independence Center and Rejoice the Vote — hosted a celebration of voting event on Saturday.
“Your Voice + Your Vote grew out of a conversation we had in the Human Rights Commission and with the Office of Human Rights back in July, and we've been meeting every two weeks with this group of partners that we've pulled together,” said Joanna Green, a member of the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission.

Green explained that while the group has been meeting since July, the event marked their first time meeting in person and launching the coalition to the public. Held at the Southside Community Center, the event featured voter registration aid, information tables for each of the attending groups, local speakers and music.
Voter Services Report
From Sally Grubb

We have not undertaken as much Voter Services activity as usual this year. There are many reasons for this but the impact of covid and the ability of individual members to take part in in-person events has been a big factor. Last year almost everything took place online and we responded accordingly.

We had wonderful participation in the Ithaca Festival and were able to do outreach particularly about Vote411 through distribution of flyers to the enthusiastic audience. The summer had many of us sheltering at home and wary of too much activity with crowds. We opted out of many of the events where we usually table, but we did participate with a vengeance at Women's’ (IN)Equality Day both on the Commons and at TCPL. The Commons turns out to be a great place to see people but many are tourists and many are already registered to vote and just waving as they go by.

We have continued the outreach to Tompkins County Libraries which we started last year and we now have liaisons to all 5 Rural Libraries as well as TCPL. We now regularly reach out to them to participate in disseminating voting information, registering people to vote and helping get out the vote. We plan on doing this on an on-going basis in the future.

Our activities on National Voter Registration Day started with the libraries, but thanks to an invitation from the Finger Lakes Independence Center we have joined a new coalition of community organizations “Your Voice + Your Vote – The Tompkins Coalition for Civic Empowerment.” As a result, we were able to work with 12 different organizations and together register voters in 13 different locations, including the libraries, Green Star Cooperative Food Market, Cayuga Medical Services, The Creative Hub, part of Alliance of Families for Justice, and the Salvation Army. Altogether we spoke to over 500 people about registering to vote and why we should vote. Surprisingly at many locations we spoke with people who had no intention of voting. The age range was between 30 and 50, all genders and many reasons but primarily “Voting makes no difference.” “The System is broken and voting won't mend it.” “If no one listens to me, why should I vote?”
Our Get Out the Vote activities included distributing Vote! Flyers, Vote411 flyers and Voter Guides for all the elections in Tompkins County as widely as possible and particularly at the rural libraries and interested Coalition Organizations. Individual members helped to get people to the polls and several members worked at the polling stations as election workers or poll watchers.

Voter Services’ future plans include joining with Vote411 to meet with the BOE to discuss how we can work more effectively together. We are also planning on applying for grants from LWVUS for Voter Registration activities amongst youth, new citizens and the incarcerated or recently incarcerated during 2023. At the present time we are reviewing how much member interest there is in participating in and helping organize these different voter registration events. We are also reaching out to the new Your Voice + Your Vote Coalition for their support. Unfortunately there have not been any Naturalization Ceremonies in Tompkins County at the CourtHouse since February 2020 and there are unlikely to be more ceremonies until 2024. This is going to hamper any activities amongst new citizens.

We are always looking for more members to become actively involved in Voter Services activities, whether it is just volunteering at an event or agreeing to help organize that event. Members who have contacts within our school districts would be more than welcome, and appreciated, if they would agree to act as liaison to a school. Just let me know.

LWVTC members Charlotte K and Ann W registering voters on National Voter Registration Day
The Natural Resources Committee is looking forward to the coming year. Important efforts addressing climate change are happening locally and throughout New York State. We hope that many of you will share your thoughts and interests on this and other environmental issues as we plan our program and activities for the year. We would love to hear from all of you whether you are on our committee or not. And check out our website for news, events, and other items.

We are very pleased and excited that the resolution declaring Climate Change a National Emergency was approved at the LWVUS convention. Here is the language of the motion: “…move that we, as delegates of local Leagues assembled at the 2022 LWV US Convention, call upon the LWV US Board and state and local Leagues to urge state and local governments to adopt and publicize Declarations of Climate Emergency appropriate to local conditions and take appropriate action to implement the Declarations of Climate Emergency.”

At the time of this writing, Governor Hochul has not yet called for the cryptocurrency bill to be brought to her desk. Through the LWVNY committee on Energy, Agriculture and the Environment, we have worked with Beth Radow, Chair, to send a second letter to Gov. Hochul on behalf of LWVNY. The letter urges her to sign this legislation. It is now posted on both our website and the one for LWVNY.

On election day this month the NYS Environmental Bond Act was on our ballots. LWVNY strongly supported this act and we are excited that it passed. “The Bond Act is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect clean drinking water, modernize infrastructure, and improve quality of life across the state. This ballot measure will help communities throughout New York make critical upgrades to water and sewer lines, replace lead pipes, and maintain water treatment plants to ensure that our drinking water is safe and clean.” (Quote from LWVNY resources.)
LWVNYS Health Committee Report
From Kathy Yen

LWVUS
The LWVUS Goals for Healthcare include Universal access, quality and affordability and the update would further address Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI)-Access with expanded delivery options, staff and patient safety, patient decision-making, and cost-controls that reduce, not shift costs to beneficiaries, or exacerbate outcomes disparities.

LWVUS “Impact on Issues” – Health-Related Positions are included under:
• Representative Government (Individual Liberties, Public Policy on Reproductive Choices; Privatization);
• Natural Resources (environmental protection and pollution control, air quality, water, waste; climate change);
• Social Policy (health care, basic human needs, equality of opportunity, violence prevention, human trafficking and gun policy)

LWVNYS
LWVNYS “Impact on Issues” – Health-Related Positions are included under (some examples included):
• Health Care (e.g. access, disease prevention, public health, personal health decision-making, financing)
• Social Policy (e.g. social determinants of health-welfare reform, childcare, safety, gun control, trafficking)
• Natural Resources (e.g. pollution, environmental quality, solid waste management & hazardous waste)
• Women’s Issues (e.g. ERA, domestic violence, medical aid in dying)

Some Health-Related New York State Legislative Highlights:
• Gun Law Reform Package (signed into law)
• Equality Amendment (state-level ERA constitutional amendment; NYS Legislature passed in 2022 and would need to pass it again before the amendment appears on the ballot for voters to consider.
• John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (signed into law)

Your input on health issues is critically important.
OpenDore Visit
From Sheila Stone

The Program Committee organized a tour of Opendore/Howland Stone Store Museum for members and guests of both Tompkins County and Cortland County chapters of LWVs on October 23. Located in Sherwood NY, about 40 minutes north of Ithaca, Opendore/ Howland Stone Store Museum tells the history of a family active in social justice causes over the course of several generations. The Howlands first settled in Sherwood in the early 1800's, part of a community of Quakers. Slocum Howland (1794-1881) established his store which thrived in the busy farming community. In addition to being a successful entrepreneur, Slocum, in keeping with the values of his Quaker beliefs, was an active abolitionist who offered his house and store as a station in the Underground Railroad, giving safe passage and shelter to enslaved seeking freedom.

His daughter Emily Howland (1827-1929 )and great niece Isabel Howland (1859-1942) continued the work for equality for all, focusing their efforts in support of women's rights, emancipation and education of African Americans. They named their family home Opendore, and welcomed like-minded to convene there. Opendore, which had fallen into disrepair, has recently been beautifully renovated by volunteers and now houses exhibits based on the family's efforts as well as other relevant areas of interest.

Listening to Marilyn Post in the beautifully restored reception area.
Opendore provided our group with the very knowledgeable volunteer docent Marilyn Post. Marilyn gave a detailed presentation on the history of the Howland family and graciously fielded our many questions. We also viewed two documentaries, one on the collection of suffragist posters found in the attic space of the Howland Stone Store Museum. The second documentary was focused on the restoration of the Opendore, a remarkable story in itself. The restoration, completed in 2021, partially funded by various grants, involved many volunteers who brought the collapsing house and its history back to life. Their efforts mirrored the spirit and community generated by the Howland family.

There are currently several exhibits on display at Opendore. One is a gallery of daguerreotypes of members of the Howland family. Of note is the image of Emily Howland as she headed out to vote for the first time in her life at the age of 92 in the 1920 election. At long last! There is a unique collection of suffragist posters, some American, some from England. Andrea Rankin, a member of the Cortland LWV and also a docent at Opendore, presented an exhibit based on her research of Elsie Gutchess (1930-2119). Elsie left her husband after he attempted to strangle her and went on to found Aid To Victims of Violence, in Cortland County. Elsie was also a historian who sought out the stories of accomplished but unknown women so their stories could be told and remembered.

We finished our tour in the Howland Stone Store Museum, a unique building of cobblestone construction, and viewed historic artifacts from the era the Howlands were active, including a facsimile of an Underground Railroad "ticket".

**Womens Suffrage Memorabilia**
Opendore recently received an award from the Preservation League of NYS. Take a look at the video for your own quick tour of Opendore: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReLpa8FTbsw
Save The Date!

Monday, December 19th at 4pm!

Our next quarterly informational Zoom meeting with Assemblymember Dr Anna Kelles. The meetings are held with the Cortland League of Women Voters.

If you wish to attend this meeting, please email Megan.Nettleton@gmail.com

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Looking forward

In the next year the Program Committee wants to focus more on building partnerships in the community. This will be a concentrated effort to reach out to other organizations, with offers to help, collaborate, or provide assistance. Our community has so many amazing organizations within it, we are really excited to work in community with them.

This is a shift in focus for our League, and we are thrilled with the idea of being more involved in our community. If you have an organization within the community that you would like see the LWV partner with, please let us know! The League and the community are better when we all work together. We would love all League Members to join us!

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Healthcare Committee

From Anne Mueller

The healthcare committee has been busy behind the scenes, and will meet soon. 2023 Program Planning to prioritize issues (retain, drop, update) is the next step for state and local leagues for LWVNYS Issues Committee and Board review and approval so look for notice of upcoming meetings. Your input on health issues is critically important.

Anyone interested in joining us please email Anne at celticac12@gmail.com
How to contact your Representatives

Washington DC.

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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/

Reach us by email at lwvtompkins@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersOfTompkinsCounty/

Communications and Public Office Information https://www2.tompkincountyny.gov/pubinfo