SUMMER BULLETIN 2023
VOLUME VIII

LWVNY Convention Recap

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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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https://www.vote411.org/

https://www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersOfTompkinsCounty/

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The League of Women Voters of NYS held its 60th Biennial State Convention in June in Albany. Sally Grubb, Kelly S, and I were voting delegates at the convention representing LWV of Tompkins County.

We were very lucky to hear from Libby Post, President of Progressive Public Affairs and Government Relations at Communication Services. She presented The Power of Communication: Turning Values into Action and gave us a lot to think about regarding how we present ourselves to members and the general public.

During lunch on Saturday, former Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney spoke to us about her work on the national Equal Rights Amendment. Ms. Maloney, now with the ERA Coalition and the Fund for Women’s Equality, is working to get signatures on a petition to support legislation removing the deadline standing in the way of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) becoming the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

A very proud moment of convention was being the runner up for the Anna Lord Strauss Membership Award—For outstanding membership growth in medium-sized Leagues (membership under 50-150). Congrats to us!

The highlight of Convention was the people, of course! Having dinner with the leaders from all over the state, including Buffalo, Cortland, Rochester, and Niagara Leagues was a great evening. We talked about what our strengths, passed around ideas, and hopes for the future.

We hope that you will consider attending a convention with us in the future! We would love to have you!
Voter Services Report
By Sally Grubb

What we have been doing, and what we plan to do over the coming year...
We need member volunteers to help!

Voter Services covers three main areas – Voter education and registration, candidate forums, and Getting out the Vote.

Voter education and registration go hand in hand – We educate voters at programs, events, and tabling on the Commons and other locations. We register people to vote, either at the same time or later.

Your Voice + Your Vote - Tompkins Civic Engagement Coalition (YV2) – LWVTC is now an active member of this new organization! We collaborated with them last year on voter registration, and they supported us on National Voter Registration Day. Members worked at an Alliance of Families for Justice Event, and at Reggae Fest. YV2 co-sponsored the Candidates Forum we hosted for the City Democratic Primaries on June 8.

Democracy Fest 2023! #Unmute Yourselves! A Celebration of Democracy and the Right to Vote – This is the next event where we will work together with YV2, and member support will be needed. The event is on Sunday August 6, 2-5 pm. A march from the Martin Luther King Jr. sculpture on the Commons to the Southside Community Center will honor the Selma marchers who supported the passing of the Voting Rights Act. The march will be followed by a party with speeches, music, dancing, poetry, and other performances.

Education and Voter Registration tables are coming up next, at the following events:
- International Democracy Day on Sept 15, with celebration at GIAC on Sept 23
- National Voter Registration Day on Sept 19
- Apple Harvest from September 29 to October 1

Voter Registration Grants – We have two grants for increasing VR numbers and need help with both!
- New Citizens grant - We will be working with other organizations including Tompkins Learning Partners, Catholic Charities, and Open Doors English. A celebratory educational event with refreshments is planned at a location such as TCPL for people who have become citizens since the beginning of the pandemic, and those hoping to become citizens in the future. New citizens will be encouraged to register and all will be encouraged to become involved in our local democracy.
- The Incarcerated and Recently Incarcerated grant – We are planning two approaches. Kelly Speiser is spearheading a public program, possibly at LACS, where we hope to have a dynamic speaker on the topic of civic engagement and the importance of using our voices by voting to improve the local community. We also plan to work with URO to ensure that people incarcerated at the local jail receive information about registering to vote, and with Alliance of Families for Justice, to register as many people as possible.
Candidate Forums – Candidate Forums take place before elections, such as the recent School Board elections and the Democratic and Republican Primaries which were held on June 27. We can anticipate being invited to host or co-host candidate forums before the November elections. We will need moderators, timekeepers, and volunteers to collect and sort questions – training will be provided.

Getting Out the Vote – This involves following up with people we have registered to encourage them to vote, providing rides to the polls, and distributing information about absentee ballots, early voting, and voting day.

Please become involved!

The more people who take on leadership or smaller roles, the more Voter Services can do in the community. Here are some additional ways to help!

Coordinate a Voter Registration event – register with the event organizer, create a volunteer schedule, recruit volunteers, and collect a voter registration kit. It is not difficult!

- Apple Harvest is important takes place on a weekend at the start of the academic year and is a great venue.
- In 2024 many other Voter Registration opportunities can occur at events such as Streets Alive, Porch Fest, Ithaca Festival, and local events in Trumansburg, Dryden, Groton, Newfield, and Lansing.

Become a liaison to another organization such as a library, community center, school district, or an individual school. Liaisons reach out to the organization to find out if they will participate in events such as National Voter Registration day. If they agree to participate, the liaison finds out what they can do - a display table, a staffed display table, just a notice in the window, possibly a program, and then you take the necessary kit to them.

Recruit volunteers or volunteer – You can help recruit league volunteers to help at events such as Democracy Fest on August 6. Or, just volunteer for a couple of hours at an event.

If Voter Services is not what you want to do, please let us know if you would rather help elsewhere! Other areas to help are advocacy, recruiting new members, organizing programs, fundraising, writing letters to legislators, or working with another committee. Email sally.grubb@gmail.com or any member of the board. Thank you!
Voter Registration Events
By Nancy Skipper

On Saturday, April 15, 2023, the Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ) held a 'Community Outreach & Give Away' event at the Creative Hub located at 516 MLK, Jr. St. The mission of AFJ is to ‘support, empower, and mobilize families and individuals impacted by the criminal justice system so they can marshal their collective power to create a just world.’

On behalf of Your Voice + Your Vote (YV2), Joanna Green invited the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County to participate by providing voter registration information and assistance. Based on an idea developed by the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission, YV2-Tompkins Civic Engagement Coalition was formed from local organizations became a coalition of local organizations working together to promote local, nonpartisan civic engagement and voting.

Nancy Skipper and Susan Multer staffed the League’s table in the early afternoon. Upon arriving to cover the late afternoon shift, Charlotte Coffman provided thoughtful, knowledgeable and reassuring voter registration assistance for a person who was planning a move to Ithaca in the near future.

The event was interesting and meaningful. It provided good opportunities to meet and interact with a variety of community members including Joanna Green (YV2), Kenneth Clarke (Office of Human Rights), AFJ members from New York City as well as Ithaca, and several Ithaca community members who work for other civic organizations, or were attending the events — and people simply passing by on the sidewalk.

Kenneth Clarke, Tompkins County Office of Human Rights Director, helped staff the Your Voice Your Vote table which was next to our League of Women Voters table!
Voter Registration at Reggae Fest, June 23, at Stewart Park
Again working alongside YV2, LWVTC members were invited to join the Reggae Fest’s first involvement in Civic Engagement when they hosted a civic engagement information area during the opening events on Friday. Unfortunately, while several members reached out to the organizers we were unable to fit in with their schedule. Other YV2 members and Rejoice the Vote were able to be there.

Voter Registration at LWVTC Candidates Forum for City Primaries, June 8
The Voter Services committee was very pleased that YV2 was able to co-sponsor the Candidates Forum for the City Primaries on June 8. Besides staffing their own informational table and providing volunteers at the event, YV2 actively reached out to attendees to encourage them to register to vote.

This partnership is proving very helpful to both organizations and we are grateful to Finger Lakes Independence Center for introducing us to the group and encouraging us to join.

League of Women Voters and Your Voice Your Vote tables at the Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ) "Community Outreach & Give Away"
Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) news
By Susan Suarez

LWV-NYS & national Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) news

The NY State Constitution currently includes equal protection because of race, color, creed, and religion. The new ERA for NY would expand and codify additional basic protection for all New Yorkers, adding equal protection to include “a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex - including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes." The New York State Legislature passed the constitutional Equal Rights Amendment in two consecutive legislative sessions – as required - and it will be on the ballot in November 2024.

For more information, please see https://www.lwvny.org/nyera.

In addition to the movement to pass the NY ERA, there is movement to pass the stalled national ERA, which states: Equality of Rights under law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex. For more information, and the opportunity to sign a petition to support legislation removing the deadline standing in the way of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) becoming the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, please see https://www.sign4era.org.
The League of Women Voters of the United States and a board game designer are excited to launch a new board game highlighting the women’s suffrage movement.

Votes for Women, designed by Tory Brown and published by Fort Circle Games, recounts the story of how suffragists won the right to vote in 1920 through the 19th Amendment. The card-driven game detailing events from Seneca Falls, New York, to the ratification of the 19th Amendment features period artwork and historical documents.

"Women had to fight to win the right to vote, and particularly today, when democracy is under threat, we look for new ways of sharing our history and the importance of voting with the next generation of voters," said Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the US. “Votes for Women is an engaging way to share those lessons as we strive to protect every American’s freedom to vote.”

The 19th Amendment was a major milestone in American history and an incredible accomplishment for a social movement; however, it did not guarantee all women the right to vote. The amendment notably enabled states to exclude Black women, especially in the South, and allowed the Federal Government to deny citizenship to other women of color.

Founded in 2017, Fort Circle Games designs board games based on historical events. Fort Circle Games is based in Washington, DC, and is named after the network of fortifications that defended the city during the Civil War. "Games have a unique way of entertaining and educating us at the same time and of reaching new audiences, so history feels real and relevant", said Tory Brown, designer of Votes for Women. “My game about the American Women's Suffrage movement is intended to inspire and mobilize new generations to find their place in our fierce effort to defend and protect democracy. I’m honored to stand alongside the League of Women Voters and their incredible legacy.”

The game, Votes for Women, can be purchased for $75 (including shipping) at www.votesforwomen.com. The League of Women Voters US receives a donation for each game published.
In Memory of Dooley Kiefer
By Kay Wagner

It is with great sadness that we write about the death of Dooley Kiefer. Dooley was a long-time member of our local League, leader of our Natural Resources Committee, and a board member. She led our League and the community in important environmental efforts and played a critical role in our county. In addition to her work with our League, she became a member of the Tompkins County Legislature, representing the Villages of Cayuga Heights and Lansing. The focus of much of her work was on the environment, always for the public good.

Dooley received a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics at Cornell. She was known for the intelligence, time, and care she devoted to doing the research and follow-up needed to be effective, and had a major impact on the resolution of the issues she took on. She was scrupulous when it came to details, with the result that when she testified at hearings she spoke with authority. It is said that she often “blew the opposing side out of the water”.

One of Dooley’s most important achievements concerned NYSEG’s 1968 proposal to build the Bell Station Nuclear Power Plant on land along the shore of Cayuga Lake. She led our league in opposing that plan and created a local citizens committee called Save Cayuga Lake. Under her leadership, so much pressure was put on NYSEG and Tompkins County that the project was finally abandoned in 1973. The land in question is now the wonderful Bell Station preserve, owned and managed by the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

In addition to her active involvement in our Natural Resources Committee, Dooley served on the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council and the Water Resources Council. Her work in all of these included long-term oversight of the county’s Hillview Road Landfill after it closed and the development of a plan for the waste streams managed by the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine.

On a lighter note, during the height of the lamprey problem in Cayuga Lake in the mid 1980’s, Dooley was concerned about the plan to poison the lampreys. She phoned Mary Berkelman to ask if Mary had any recipes for cooking lampreys. Dooley explained that she wanted to show that there were ways to use lampreys instead of poisoning them. Mary did some research and learned of a cookbook called Unmentionable Cuisine. Dooley had a source of lampreys from the DEC lamprey trap and Mary figured out how to skin and gut them using instructions from Euell Gibbons, author of Stalking the Wild Asparagus. Mary and Dooley then prepared dishes and invited people from radio, TV and the Ithaca Journal to a lamprey-tasting at Mary’s house. The event received lots of publicity but unfortunately the lampreys were still poisoned.

To learn more about Dooley be sure to read the obituary written by her daughter which can be found at https://www.bangsfuneralhome.com/obituary/Dooley-Kiefer . A celebration of her life is planned for later this year.
In Memory of Rebecca Elgie
By Linda Duttweiler

Our League lost a very dedicated member in early April, Rebecca Elgie. Rebecca moved to Ithaca over forty years ago and joined our League immediately. She had been active in the Hamilton (NY) League prior to moving to Ithaca.

Rebecca will be best remembered for her passionate health advocacy work, on the local, state, and national levels that spanned for decades. In 2005 she and her partner Bernie Fetterly walked from Kingston to Jamestown in a six-week journey promoting the importance of single-payer health coverage. She worked to mobilize, educate, and register voters throughout her life. During the 1990’s Rebecca served several terms as our President. Her leadership style will be remembered for its respectfulness and persistence.
How to contact your Representatives

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