



The Broome-Tioga Voter

Bulletin of the *League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties*

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Election Calendar 2008

Primary Election – September 9, 2008

Only voters enrolled in a political party may vote in that party's primary.

- August 15 Last day to register to vote in person
- Last day to postmark voter registration form
- August 20 Last day for local Boards of Elections to receive notices of change of address
- September 2 Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot
- September 8 Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot
- Last day to postmark an absentee ballot
- September 9 Last day to deliver an absentee ballot in person to your county Board of Elections

General Election – November 4, 2008

- October 10 Last day to register to vote in person
- Last day to postmark voter registration form
- October 15 Last day for local Boards of Elections to receive notices of change of address
- October 28 Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot
- November 3 Last day to apply in person for absentee ballot
- Last day to postmark absentee ballot
- November 4 Last day to deliver absentee ballot in person to the Board of Elections

For more information, call your county Board of Elections: 778-2172 (Broome) or 687-8261 (Tioga); or go <http://www.elections.state.ny.us/PoliticalCalendar.html>

To access & print forms, visit the Broome County Board of Elections at <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/elections/index.php>

Co-Presidents' Column: Report from Convention

The PMP increases proposed by the LWVUS Board were approved: for 2008-2009, \$28.00; and for 2009-2010, \$29.20, approved with little dissent.

All Nominating Committee candidates for officers and members of the National Board were elected. There were no nominations from the floor, so the election was not particularly interesting except that we broke a glass ceiling by electing our first man to the Board. It seemed to me there were more male delegates to Convention than at previous LWVUS Conventions. Also, our state League's own Marcia Merrins was elected to the LWVUS Board.

There were a few amendments to our bylaws, including a provision allowing meetings by electronic means (such as telephone conference call, video conferencing, or email) when a decision is needed before an in-person meeting is scheduled, a provision allowing extra delegates to a state's members-at-large when there are over 100 of them, a provision allowing for special LWVUS Council Meetings in the event of an emergency, a change of the composition of the Nominating Committee from seven members to five, and a provision that allows the LWVUS Board to propose a concurrence at Convention.

The current National Program was approved, amended to include adoption of a healthcare program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do healthcare advocacy as needed, a multi-level advocacy campaign to promote solutions to global climate change, and the non-recommended study item entitled "the advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method for electing the President."

Former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts spoke of writing a memoir about her experiences as Governor. Much of what she said was personal, noting that her grandchildren will have the unusual perspective of having a grandmother who used to be Governor of their state.

Former Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber spoke on healthcare. According to my Oregonian brother, he's a recognized authority on the subject. What stuck most in my mind was that there is a lot of equity trapped in the current system, with all its faults. The necessary transition period to a new health care policy is sure to be costly.

We heard a panel on climate change. One speaker in particular brought up things that were new to me - poor people in India and Africa use cooking fuels (cow dung, wood) that are bad for air quality - the family cook would cough for hours after preparing the family meal. We need to develop environmentally friendly options for them that are economically feasible. An inexpensive metal stove has been developed that will ease the pollution problems from crude fuels.

In our free time, we sampled a variety of wonderful local cuisine, toured the Portland area, and experienced the "fareless square" area in the center city of Portland where you can ride the city public transit for free. The Saturday market is a combination craft fair (bigger than anything I've seen in Binghamton) and "food court" with a variety of light lunch options for sale. There is a lovely paved walkway by the river used by walkers, runners, bicyclists, and skateboarders singly, in pairs, and even in family groups.

Legislative Lobbying

Each year League members lobby their state legislators, after the state budget is done, giving League members and legislators an opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss the League's legislative agenda for the session. The interview gives legislators an opportunity to learn about League positions and share their ideas and agenda. This exchange of information is of tremendous importance to the state League in its efforts to develop strategies that promote our legislative agenda. Their influence in Albany depends on our contact with our state senator and assemblyperson(s).

The three items, which were selected from the recommendations sent in by local Leagues for the LWVNY 2008 Legislative Agenda are:

- Good Government
- Cost Effective and Accessible Healthcare
- Energy and the Environment

We would like to thank Marilyn Myers, Carol Oestrich and Mary Johnson who were able to get twenty minutes to speak with Senator Libous and at another time, with Assemblyperson Donna Lupardo.

Thanks go to Elsie Wager, Joanne Gee and Clare Simeone who met with Assemblyperson Clifford Crouch at his office on Kattelville Road.

It is a challenge to get time with any of these very busy people. After a long session in Albany, working on the state budget, they have a growing list of commitments to their constituents back home.

The reports from both these groups were sent to the state League by Marilyn Myers and Clare Simeone respectively. Mary Johnson followed up with a report on questions covered by an aid of Senator Libous concerning his position on topics he was unable to cover during the brief meeting with the League volunteers.

Clare Simeone

Voter Service Report

Voter Service was pleased to participate in "Juneteenth", the multi-ethnic celebration of the African American experience, held June 14 at Columbus Park in Binghamton. Our space was set up to draw attention to the importance of voting and taking the first step by registering to vote. With a red, white and blue color scheme we used our League of Women Voters signs plus a new poster made by Isi Trapper with the message YOU COUNT. VOTE.

Two other groups - The Democratic Party and Citizen Action - were also promoting voter registration. Competing with the music, the food, the games and the festival atmosphere the idea of voting was not to

be ignored. It was a fine day until about 2:30 when the rain came. While brief, it was enough to put an early finish to the day, which had been scheduled from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Many thanks go to Isi Trapper, Sara Wokan, Patricia Donohue, Clair Burkhardt and Carol Taren for making our presence possible.

On May 29 Barbara Shope, Karl Wokan and Doris Lawton attended a meeting at Broome Community College, arranged by BCC's Center for Civic Engagement. The purpose was to develop a campaign debate/forum schedule to avoid time conflicts and duplication and to foster cooperation. Also at the meeting were representatives from the Press & Sun-Bulletin, WSKG, the Democratic and Republican parties - about 12 in all. It was chaired by Doug Garnar, distinguished service professor at BCC. The group will meet again on July 15.

The Voter Registration Committee has scheduled four voter registration drives on each of the Saturdays in August. At Sam's Club on August 2, 9 and 16 and at the Oakdale Mall on August 23. The drives will run from noon to 4 p.m.

The Board of Elections has asked for our help in recruiting inspectors for both the primary on September 9 and the general election on November 4. Inspectors are needed for both parties. Our help with the new optical scan voting machines is not needed this year - Broome has just 13 out of 130 machines that will be coming - but we will be called on to help next year when all new voting machines are in place.

We are keeping a running account of all scheduled contests. After the filing deadline of July 8 for candidates we will be in a position to decide on possible debates. Stay tuned and share your thoughts with the committee.

Please volunteer to help with the voter registration drives. Call Doris Lawton at 723-0890 for scheduling or e-mail dal22@verizon.net.

Doris Lawton

Students Inside Albany Conference

Our student representative at SIA, Bristin Millard, was very happy and felt privileged to attend this Conference. She was impressed with the State Legislature and was delighted to get her picture taken with Donna Lupardo. This is the first year that local coordinators of the Conference were invited to attend the closing Breakfast and Activities, so I decided to observe the program and also took Bristin back home with me. There were about 26 students attending and about 16 of them were members from different LeaderSpark groups. The LeaderSpark students lined up in front of the remaining audience and were interviewed (ala Miss America Pageant) on various questions concerning their opinions and how they benefited from participating in the LeaderSpark program. The students quite comfortably and clearly told of many experiences of meeting and speaking with local government leaders, learning how to speak before an audience and of the friendships they made with other members. All of them spoke quite well when they addressed the question given them.

I think Bristin made two lifelong friends, one from Buffalo, the other from Saratoga Springs, both were part of their respective LeaderSpark Group.

Bristin was recommended by Jim Testani, her Social Studies instructor and will be graduating from Johnson City High School in June.

Clare Simeone

Election Reform: What's Next for NY?

“DREs may be gone, but there's much to do,” according to Bo Lipari, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Verified Voting and the LWVNYS representative on the state's Citizens' Election Modernization Advisory Committee. It took a sustained and highly focused five-year campaign to secure optical scan paper ballot systems for New York, the safest, most reliable method available. This was a critical first step toward assuring New York's election integrity.

Still ahead are such issues as:

- Audits – New York election law requires a 3% audit of machines in each county. (Keep in mind that optical scanners are electronic voting machines and thus potentially flawed.) Current research, however, suggests that fixed-rate percentage audits are often not good enough at detecting problems. More sophisticated methods called risk-based auditing are being explored.
- Voter Registration Database – The HAVA-mandated state database, NYSVOTER, is now operational and in use for the first time this year. NYSVOTER compares voter registration records against other government databases (e.g., DMV, Social Security death records). It flags records as unclear if there are mismatches or duplicates. County Election Boards must determine if the flagged voters are actually registered. Here is a red flag: As of March 25, 2008, there were more than 60,000 unresolved voters in New York State.
- Voting System & Election Oversight – As our new voting systems are launched, it will be especially important that citizens pay close attention to such aspects of the election process as training, testing, ballot programming, and ballot/machine chains of custody. A related problem is the growing shortage of poll workers.

Precisely what the League's role is in tackling these issues is yet to be defined. In the meantime there are things we can do:

1. Check your own voter registration status by going to the State Election Board's website at <http://www.elections.state.ny.us> and look for the Voter Registration section. It's quick and easy.
2. Actively support our League's Voter Service efforts.
3. Consider becoming a poll worker.

Jane Park

Election Night Reporting

Please keep September 9 and November 4 in mind. They are the dates for the Primary Election and the Presidential Election. It should prove to be one of the more exciting years. We will be voting on the lever machines, but 13 new optical scan machines will be available for the visually impaired voters.

Please, if you are able, volunteer to help with the Election Night Reporting.

Clare Simeone

In Memory of Harriet Marsi

Sadly we note the passing of Harriet Marsi. Articles in the Press & Sun-Bulletin on June 13 and on June 14 wrote about her love of nature and the environmental awards she won. She was also an active member of our League for 50 years, serving on our Board of Directors as well as on several committees. She had great admiration for our nonpartisan approach to issues.

Louise Vanderkulk

Garside Environmental Award

In honor of Fran Garside, a long-time League member and true environmentalist, the League gives the Fran Garside Environmental Award to a full-time student enrolled in environmental or closely related studies at either Binghamton University or Broome Community College. We consider both financial need and nontraditional student status. The student receives an award of \$500, which is sent to the student's account at the college bookstore to help defray book expenses. The committee members are Eva Anderson, Carol Carpenter, Sandi Junker, Ruth Levy, Nancy Pellicciotti (Fran's daughter), and Anne Shelton.

This year we wish to honor Kristen Randall of Binghamton University. She is an Environmental Natural Resources major. She is a nontraditional student having transferred from Sullivan Community College last

fall. As well as pursuing her college degree, she holds a job and is raising a son. Her future goals include combining teaching and research in the environmental field. She strives to serve a year as a Congressional Science Fellow working closely with the EPA. Another area of interest is in environmental educational materials for students in the elementary grades.

We congratulate Kristen Randall.

Carol Carpenter

Member News

A sincere welcome to the following members who recently joined the LWV of Broome and Tioga Counties:

- Patricia Bence, Owego
- Barbara King, Aurora
- Cynthia Connine, Endicott
- Fritz Lowenstein, Binghamton
- Elaine Doupe, Kirkwood
- Carla Sullivan, Maine

As a way to get acquainted with other members, we encourage you to join a committee that deals with a League issue of interest to you. This is a wonderful way to make new friends and takes very little of your time. We also hope that you will attend our meetings which is another good way to become acquainted with other League members.

Eva Anderson, Membership

Identification Statement

The Broome-Tioga Voter *is published 9 times a year (January, February, March, April, May, July/August, September, October, and November/December) by the League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties, 38 Oakridge Drive, Binghamton, NY 13903.*

New LWV Products Available at Meetings

Did you know that items available for sale at local League meetings have no markup? They are the price we paid for the items. While you might consider some a bit pricey, they are a means for our national and state leagues to generate income. So, when we purchase items, bottom line, the League benefits and you have something useful that says, "I'm a proud member of the LWV".

From Massachusetts LWV we have large, heavy, \$18.00 totes, from Oregon we have license plate frames for \$4.75, from National we have a \$12.00 snappy red baseball cap, sturdy red and blue \$4.70 lanyards for keys or a whistle, and red metallic travel mug (insulated) for \$11.95. From NYS: an \$11.00 cinch sack/back pack and sticky pads for \$2.00.

Also available: A limited supply of Nate Levin's \$5.00 (thanks to Ruth's donation) book about notable New York suffragist, Carrie Chapman Catt, \$4.00 lapel pins, \$5.00 mugs, 100 sheet notepads for \$.80 and other sundry items.

Check out the products display at our meetings.

MaryBelle Mitten

YMCA Voter Drive

Carole Coppens, LWVBTC Board Member and YWCA Binghamton/Broome Executive Director, forwarded the following to me. Let's everyone, especially Voter Service, think about how to make the most of this opportunity.

"Dear YWCA Executive Director,

"The YWCA believes that one of the most empowering activities women and people of color can engage in is voting. This election, with so many important issues at stake, the YWCA USA has partnered with the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWV US) on voter engagement activities during the 2008 presidential election cycle.

"The YWCA USA and LWV US partnership is a natural collaboration between two major organizations that are both dedicated to ensuring, and encouraging civic engagement. You may have heard about this partnership during the Voter Empowerment and Activism session at the 2008 YWCA USA Annual Meeting. The aim of the YWCA USA and LWV US partnership is to encourage collaboration among YWCA local associations and local Leagues. Opportunities for YWCAs and Leagues to collaborate include undertaking voter outreach and education activities; sponsoring voter registration drives; and hosting debate watching parties, voter rights workshops and/or candidate and issue forums.

"The national partnership builds off the success YWCAs and Leagues have had working together in cities and states across the country on initiatives including hosting town hall forums, candidate forums and get-out-the-vote drives. The goal of the national partnership is to encourage even greater collaboration between local YWCAs and local Leagues during this important election cycle and to ensure that YWCAs continue to play a significant role in local, state and national elections. Local YWCAs are encouraged to contact the Leagues in their communities however; local Leagues may contact you first.

"Since 1920, the League of Women Voters, a non-partisan, grassroots political organization, has fought to improve our government systems and public policies through citizen education and advocacy. The League works at the national, state and local levels to give Americans the tools they need to express themselves at the polls. Their site, www.VOTE411.org, is a one-stop resource for election-related information.

"To find the League nearest you, click here or visit www.lwv.org and click on "Find a Local League." To learn more about the initiative or if you have any questions please contact advocacy@ywca.org."

Anne Taft

The LWVBTC Needs YOU!

Would you be interested in filling one or more of these jobs? Can you think of anyone (on or off board) who would be a good match for this job? Being on the board is desirable for PR and Local Government Chair, but not really necessary for the others. A person can always be appointed to the board.

PR - involves sending out press releases to print, broadcast, and cable media for our program meetings that are open to the public. Outgoing PR Chair Sandy Kosty will give you complete information on contact info, requirements (length maximums), and deadlines.

They Represent You – we need someone with word processing skills to put information together for the printer, deliver it to the printer and pick it up, and coordinate distribution. We also need someone (same person?) to gather info for the Broome County edition (Tioga Liaison Jane Ebert updates information for the Tioga County edition). This is a winter job.

Finance Drive - an early spring job - work with the committee to write a letter, update the list by adding new names and deleting those who don't donate, coordinate adding personal notes. We generally ask the Press & Sun-Bulletin for an editorial encouraging donations to our League, timed to coincide with mailing of letters.

Chair of Local Government Committee - long-time past co-chairs Louise Vanderkulk and Jean Gow will continue to serve on the Committee and will be glad to provide advice and background to the new chair as needed.

Voter Editor – The job requires expertise in word processing. An artistic sense (for layout) is nice but not required. Board membership is not required.

Anne Taft



Be Part of the Action!

Join the League of Women Voters – today.

Men and women of voting age are welcome to join.

Membership Application

Individual membership \$45/yr.

Household membership \$65/yr.

Student membership \$20/yr.

Send me information about the League.

Name _____

Address _____

–

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

–

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Make checks payable to LWVBTC and mail with this coupon to LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY 13851-0944.

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