



# The Broome-Tioga Voter

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

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## Annual Brunch

Panel Discussion:

# “Impacts of Natural Gas Drilling”



## Saturday, December 6

## Endicott Visitor Center

9:30 - Coffee

10:00 - Brunch

10:30 - Program

## Co-Presidents' Columns

As I write this report my mind is flooded with the varied sights, sounds and emotions I experienced at the Dedication Celebration of the Library Reading Garden in downtown Binghamton. Its initiation took place in 2000, when Bearsch, Compeau and Knudson, Architects provided the architectural, engineering and interior design. On Friday, October 17, the tremendous efforts of local and state government, agencies, foundations, unions, corporation and many individual members of the community culminated in an urban oasis of walks and green lawns set in a protective border of ornamental trees, shrubs and ground covers. A gazebo or bandstand provides shade and cool relief in the hot summer sun and anyone wanting to use their computer can do so in the wireless patio furnished with tables and chairs in the corner of the garden.

If you go, be sure to visit the pocket garden created in memory of Dr. Bronsky, the first chairman of the Garden Steering Committee and don't miss the "Book Tornado" sculpture near it. Last but not least, pause a moment at the bench our League has donated in memory of Susan Cowing, an active member of our League, who held almost every major office in the League. I can truly say that she has been one of other League members who inspired me not only to join but to become an active member of the League.

When the Board was deciding how best to use the donations received in memory of Sue Cowing, our own vice-president Carol Oestrich, also member of the Foundation and Friends of the Library, offered information about the Reading Library and its need for donations. I personally am proud that we took her suggestion and donated a bench in Sue's honor because the League is now part of beautiful public green space in Binghamton which Sue Cowing would have been proud of. We can watch the garden grow as we grow in wisdom and inspiration from the books we read.

- Clare Simeone

When women were first allowed to vote in the United States, many debated the pros and cons of the individual candidates, both in public forums and in private with their friends and families, and voted according to their consciences. We like to think all women voted their consciences, because they fought so hard for the right to vote. But some, like my mother, voted the way the men in their lives told them to. Others, like my grandmother, voted based on the physical attractiveness of the candidate. I can't say I like the idea that women ever voted this way. But is it really any worse than voting for someone who grew up in the same hometown, or goes to the same church, or belongs to the same lodge, or our kids know each other? And it is exactly this kind of thinking that is encouraged in some candidate materials, especially in local races.

It got me thinking. In some elections, I prefer one candidate's views on one issue and the other candidate's views on another issue. In other elections, the candidates' stands on the issues are remarkably similar, with any differences being in the emphasis each puts on different things. The choice is not clear-cut, so how can a voter choose? Prioritize the importance of the various issues of the time? Draw conclusions about each candidate based on the physique, facial features, and mannerisms of each? Vote based on who seems more likeable? more trustworthy? Or perhaps we vote against the candidate whose ideas seem worst. Maybe we'll never figure out exactly why we vote as we do – it often seems necessary to claim that we have totally rational reasons for voting as we do. Even so, let us consider, in the privacy of our own thoughts, what other factors may have influenced our votes. Then we will be informed, not just about the candidates but also about what in ourselves makes us react to them as we do.

- Anne Taft

## “Matilda Joslyn Gage: Forgotten NY Feminist”

Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner, executive director of the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation and Historic Gage House in Fayetteville, NY, will speak at

Phelps Mansion Museum  
191 Court St., Binghamton

Monday, November 10, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
Light refreshments at 5:30, program, 6-7 p.m.

Both are free and open to the public.

Matilda Joslyn Gage worked tirelessly with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to win the votes for women during the suffrage movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A progressive visionary of women's rights and human liberation, she defied laws that denied women and Blacks their autonomy and liberty. She was the author of many speeches, papers, articles, and books on social issues of her time.

This program is open to the general public at no cost thanks to funding from the New York State Council for the Humanities Speakers Program, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

- Linda Biemer

## Member News

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

Richard Paden, Johnson City

Harriet Becker, Binghamton

Joan Ruth, Binghamton

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 - another good way to become acquainted with other League members.

- Eva Anderson, Membership

## November/December Program Notes

### Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, November 15

9:30 a.m.

Russell's Steak and Seafood

1001 Main Street

Endicott, NY

In what has become an annual event, league members and guests enjoy the opportunity to discuss important issues with their elected representatives. The brunch will include a buffet of fruit, waffles, eggs, breakfast meats and breads. Invitations have been sent to Congressional, NYS Senate and Assembly representatives, mayors, town supervisors and Broome and Tioga Legislators. **Mail your reservations** by November 8 to Mary Johnson, 28 Jerome Ave., Binghamton, NY 13905 along with your check to LWVBTC for \$15. You can also reach me at [mjohnson23@stny.rr.com](mailto:mjohnson23@stny.rr.com) or 607.797.3225.

### Annual Brunch

The annual brunch will be held on Saturday December 6 at the Endicott Visitor Center. Coffee will be served at 9:30 followed by brunch at 10 and the program at 10:30. Julie Larson has arranged a panel discussion on the impacts of natural gas drilling featuring Donna Lupardo, NYS Assembly, Adam Flint, an earlier panelist on civil rights, and Jim Leonard, a CPA from Endicott who has researched the issue. A small donation will be taken to cover the cost of the food. Please come and bring a guest or two.

- Mary Johnson

### 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.*

## **Carol Oestrich: 2008 Woman of Achievement**

The League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties is proud to honor Carol Oestrich as our 2008 Woman of Achievement. Carol will be among the outstanding women honored at the annual Women of Achievement Dinner sponsored by the Broome County Status of Women Council to be held on November 12.

Since joining the LWV in 2002 Carol has been a very active and valued member. She is presently 1st Vice President and Chair of the Education Finance Committee.

As Chair of the Education Committee she has taken full responsibility for the local League's participation in a study to update the NYS LWV's position on financing education, including charter schools. This involved reviewing The Foundation Aid formula to target districts most in need and development of a product to measure results in student outcomes. As part of the financing of schools study Carol participated in the review of gambling as a means of financing education.

Carol received a B.A. in German Literature from Harpur College, a M.S. in Education from SUNY Cortland, and a M.S. in Library Science from Syracuse University. She was employed by the Binghamton City School District for 35 years, and also did workshops for BOCES, the Teacher Center, etc. on computer and Internet-related topics. Carol was active in the Teachers' Association, PTA units and the Booster Club, and continues to be active in the Booster Club, is historian for the PTSA and a board member for Binghamton Dollars for Scholars.

She is active in educational issues and has served as secretary and president for the Eastern Broome Branch of Retired Teachers and is a member of the Western Broome-Eastern Tioga Branch of Retired Teachers. Carol currently serves as the treasurer for the Friends of the Broome County Public Library and as the secretary for the Broome Library Foundation.

She works at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen and in the Broome County Public Library's Gift Shop.

- Eva Anderson

## **Voter Service**

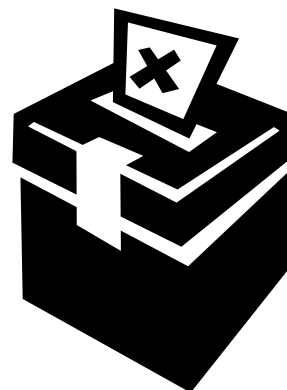
As October voter service activities were winding down, our Tioga County stalwarts put the final wraps on a very ambitious meet-the-candidates evening. It was held Friday, October 24 in the auditorium at 56 Main Street in Owego. Shannon Barbuto-Lewis and Patricia Bence worked long and hard to make it happen.

The event featured candidates for New York State Assembly District 123, - which includes Owego, Newark Valley, Spencer, Candor, Berkshire, Richford and Apalachin - Gary Finch (Republican incumbent) and Barbara Abbott King (Democrat).

Also, candidates for Tioga County Legislature District 1 Richard Huttleston (Republican) and Daniel Sniezeck (Democrat). And District 4 Donald Burns (Democrat) and Tracy Monell (Republican).

Post election finds us getting the files in order and preparing to write activity reports for League of Women Voters, Albany.

- Doris Lawton, Voter Service Chair



## **Election Night Reporting**

We have had a very busy year with three separate elections and we are grateful for each and everyone of you!

February 5, 2008 Presidential Elections – We needed the full amount of volunteers at the Board of Elections Office: 5 Supervisors; 32 Phone clerks; 5 Runners

September 18, 2008 – Primary Elections - less polling places were used, so less volunteers were needed: 1 Supervisor; 8 Phone Clerks; 1 Runner

November 4, 2008 – General Elections: 5 supervisors, 32 Phone Clerks, 5 Runners

Thanks to Sue Garing who volunteers to gather information for AP Reporting for LWVNYS. Thanks to Jane Ebert (and husband) who do AP Reporting for LWVNYS.

- Clare Simeone, Joanne Gee, Claire Burkhardt and Sondra Pruden

## **LWV-BTC Legislative Priorities List**

After considerable Board discussion the following three Legislative Priorities were sent on to the LWVNYS:

### **1. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

Due to the widespread speculation of drilling for natural gas throughout New York State, we are concerned about its effect on water, land, waste management as well as air quality.

### **2. COST EFFECTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE.**

Many citizens of NYS are suffering from inadequate or no insurance through no fault of their own. It is crucial that there be containment of insurance costs without compromising accessibility and quality care.

### **3. EQUITY IN SCHOOL FINANCING**

The League supports narrowing the spending gap between the wealthiest and the least wealthy school districts in New York State.

## **A Farewell From Marje Norcross**

Saying good-bye to old friends is never easy. As I think about my years with our League many faces come into view. We worked hard and we had a real sense of achievement. Marjorie Greenberg asked me to join in 1975. And I soon learned that a Voter Service Chair was needed to get ready for the bi-centennial doings. The local press had not yet become involved in local elections (believe it or not!) so for a number of years LWV provided candidates questionnaires. Louise Vanderkulk and I spent many hours at the old Pine Street office cranking out endless forms on the mimeograph. Voter registration, debates, appearances on TV, and even a Court Street window display with an OLD voting machine and a dress form in red, white and blue accompanied by LWV members sent us scurrying.

Study group discussions and consensus meetings brought together folks who otherwise might never have known each other. We also were well educated in LWV procedures by Jean Gow and Laura House. Vivian Carlip, Ruth Levin, Barb Griffen, June Bielefeldt and others who have moved on provided valuable information and viewpoints based on their professional and volunteer experiences.

As LWV members we have had challenging opportunities for community service. A number of us visited county polling places, tape measures in hand. Working with the Southern Tier Independence Center, we surveyed for accessibility and published the results. One of the most satisfying achievements for me was the consolidation of Emergency Dispatch at the county level. A classic example of how LWV operates, the Local Government committee studied, interviewed, brought the membership to consensus and then lobbied hard all local governments.

To all of you I say, "Thanks for the memories" and "Good Luck" as the League of Women Voters of Broome and Tioga Counties continues to occupy an important place in the community.

Our new address is: 1413 Ashburton Road,  
Raleigh, N.C. 27606

# The Broome-Tioga Voter

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## Calendar

Tuesday	November 4	GENERAL ELECTION
Wednesday	November 12	Women of Achievement Dinner, Owego Treadway
Saturday	November 15	Legislative Breakfast
Tuesday	November 18	Board Meeting
Saturday	December 6	Annual Brunch

## Contents

Co-Presidents' Columns	2
Matilda Joslyn Gage Event	3
Member News	3
Program Notes	3
2008 Woman of Achievement	4
Voter Service	4
Election Night Reporting	5
Legislative Priorities List	5
Marje Norcross Farewell	5