



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

APRIL 2011

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lwvtompkins.org/

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SOUP AND BREAD MEMBER LUNCHEON

Saturday, April 16, Noon – 1:30

**Unitarian Church Annex
206 East Buffalo St., 2nd Floor**

Please reserve at 273-6147
or flosmith42@aol.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My goal as interim president for 2010-2011 was to increase the visibility of the League in the community. I believe that we have been successful in accomplishing that goal. We broadened our voter registration activities to cover the Grassroots Festival, Farmers' Market, Ithaca Festival as well as the Apple Festival. We held several well-attended candidate forums, two of which were co-sponsored with the Ithaca Journal and the Library. We co-sponsored two community action programs, one on fracking in Pennsylvania and one on healthcare hosted by Ithaca College. We held well-attended programs on redistricting and healthcare, both of which were covered by the media. We had several letters to the editor of the Ithaca Journal. These are some of the ways that we stood out in the community for others to notice. Thank you all for meeting this goal.

In February I conducted a Board Survey asking, among other things, what they felt were the biggest challenges for our League. They clearly responded — membership. They want to see increased numbers, but also increased

MONDAY, MAY 2

**ANNUAL MEETING
WITH REFRESHMENTS**

5:30 pm

PUBLIC MEETING

7:00 pm

THE LONG TERM ECONOMICS OF FRACKING

**Tompkins County Public Library
Borg-Warner Room**

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involvement in the activities of the League. Unfortunately, we see only 20% of our 125 members volunteering to participate in activities such as study groups, committees, voter services, etc. Thus, if I am elected in May as President for 2011-13, these are the two issues I plan to focus on for 2011-12.

To start working on this goal, Debbie Levin, Vice President for Membership, is going to the State Convention with me. There are workshops on the State developed "Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI)." Debbie is going to look into the possibility of our League adopting this program.

Regarding the second issue about membership, I plan to conduct a Membership Survey in June-July. In the Survey I will ask members to discuss obstacles they face, and that as President I can help overcome, in being more active in League activities. For example, we may need to start providing car pools if transportation is a problem. Maybe the Board needs to offer more opportunities to members. For example, we might need a new study group that would have a wider appeal. Whatever the obstacles are I want to know so I and the Board can develop an action plan. We want to see you more involved. So through the Survey, you can tell me what your wishes and needs are.

Speaking of study groups, State League will be sending me materials on the new study of "Role of Federal Government in Public Education." This has been studied by National, now is our time to get involved. We will have May - November to discuss and come to consensus on this issue. I'm excited; I hope you are too.

I hope to see you at the Annual Soup and Bread Luncheon. Again, if transportation is a problem let me know. I especially hope to see our new members.

Then on May 2 will be our Annual Membership Meeting. We have a lot of business to cover so please come join us for dessert and beverage and help make this a vital meeting.

Kay Sharp

PROPOSED PROGRAMS FOR 2011-2012

Health Committee

Education, Advocacy, Lobbying: Collaborate with other community organizations to get out information on current legislation (Federal) and NYS efforts: e.g., FACT SHEETS, ACTION ALERTS, FLIC's, offers to provide information for newspaper columns, and letters to the Editor. Consider posting links on our website to reports, useful websites, fact sheets, etc. More specifically:

1. Provide federal action alerts (e.g. in opposition to defunding efforts to weaken existing legislation).
2. Focus on development of NYS insurance exchanges and legislation; track what is happening with a state universal bill (sponsored by Assemblyman Gottfried), push for a report on cost effectiveness of a single payer plan, and perhaps revisit and highlight the report commissioned by Spitzer on the impact of single payer for NYS and make the connection between the high cost of health care and budget problems.
3. Follow what is happening with Vermont's campaign and universal bills in other states.

Rebecca Elgie, Chairperson

Natural Resources

The Natural Resource Committee plans to continue its work on the issue of drilling and mining for energy resources, with a particular focus on High Volume Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing (fracking).

As we have studied this issue we have become more and more aware of the ways in which drilling and mining can connect to almost all aspects of our lives. With this in mind, we plan to move more broadly into exploring the economic, sociological and health aspects of drilling and mining and continue to ask the question "What will be left behind?."

It is critical that we look at the full life cycle and all externalities of these activities. In the case of fracking, the direct impacts of the drilling and production — road damage, pollution of air and water, noise and light pollution, landscape fragmentation, problems with drilling-waste disposal — are only part of the story. What will be the nature of the bust portion of our local boom and bust cycle? When the gas wells are exhausted will we still have a major tourist industry? Will agriculture and viniculture remain an important part of our economy? Will the changes in local culture produced by the gas boom affect the ability of Cornell and Ithaca College to attract new faculty? What will be the quality of life that is left behind?

Kay Wagner

Youth Programs

We propose to continue two successful youth programs currently supported by our League. In the *Students in Albany* program students from across the state learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy-making arena by attending workshops, touring the Capitol and shadowing their legislators. And we propose to

continue the get-out-the-vote project, *Take Me To Vote*, in cooperation with the Tompkins County Board of Elections and, we hope, with co-sponsorship from other community organizations.

Kathleen Yen, Sue Henninger

Local Government

A local government Committee is forming again for the coming year. Principally for purposes of education and advocacy, when supported by current League positions, the committee will focus on the following program:

1. Formation of an observer corps;
2. Outreach to and cooperation with other groups in the community who have interest in local government;
4. Following significant issues at the forefront of local government activity now, including but not limited to:
 - a. redistricting;
 - b. the effect of budget cuts on local programs;
 - c. Tompkins County Council of Governments' activities and opportunities.

Beverly Livesay, Marnie Johnson

LWV-TC CALENDAR — 2010-2011

Apr 16 Sat	12:00 noon	ANNUAL SOUP & BREAD MEETING: MEET OUR LEGISLATORS	Unitarian Church Annex
May 2 Mon	5:30	ANNUAL MEETING	B-W room, TC Library
	6:30	THE LONG TERM ECONOMICS OF FRACKING	B-W room, TCL
Jun 6 Mon	7:00 pm	Board Meeting	Sharp

ANNUAL REPORTS

Voter Services

The League held several successful voter registration events in 2010. In July we had a 4 day presence at the Grassroots Festival of Music and Dance. In September we had several sessions at the Farmer's Market and in October we registered many voters at the Apple Harvest Festival.

The new canopy we purchased was very useful and gave us a "home" at Grassroots and at the Apple Harvest Festival. It also allowed us to set up in a more visible spot, since we were not dependent on the shelter of a building. Even with such a good set-up, we found it most useful to walk around and approach people as they were waiting in line for food or to watch performances. Our new sandwich signs identify us as LWV doing voter registration. They proved to be good conversation starters, since people asked us questions about voting and registration, even if they were registered.

Many thanks to those of you who volunteered. However, we still need more members to help out at registration events. In 2010 year we made it happen with the bare minimum of dedicated members, and with the off-year election this fall we may not need to do quite as many sessions. But looking towards 2012, we will have to ramp up the number of events and participating League members to staff them.

We also held several very successful candidate forums during 2010 from the School Board elections in May to local and state candidate forums for the November elections. In October we partnered with Tompkins County Public Library and the Ithaca Journal and sponsored forums for the the primary for the Sheriff's race, local and state wide Senate and Assembly Races. These were very well received and generated large audiences.

Plans are moving ahead for a School Board Candidates forum this May for the Ithaca

School District. We will again partner with the Ithaca Journal and hope to ensure live streaming of the event over the internet.

We welcome members to these events but also need volunteers to help run them. Please contact either Suzanne Lipari at <mailto:sel13@cornell.edu>sel13@cornell.edu, or Sally Grubb at <mailto:sally.grubb@gmail.com>sally.grubb@gmail.com if you are interested in helping in any way.

Suzanne Lipari and Sally Grubb

Membership

Our official membership number, as of February 1, 2011, is 121. Of this number, 8 are households, 8 are honorary members, and 10 are National members. We have gained two members since February.

I can imagine some people scratching their heads and thinking, "what is an honorary member; what does National member mean?" A little explanation is in order.

Households – The By-Laws state, "Consistent with national policy, we recognize a household membership which requires 1.5 times the usual individual dues." This would include, for example, a husband and wife, parent and child, etc. This looks like a bargain; we welcome more households.

Honorary members — According to our By-Laws, "Long-standing members who have contributed much time and effort may be offered **life-time** local membership at the discretion of the Board."

National members – These are people who have been recruited by, and have paid dues to, the National League of Women Voters (LWVUS). We, and National, urge these people to become members of their local League. By joining your local League (LWVTC) you will be kept informed of the meetings and other activities

here in Tompkins County. We also hope that more members become active in the various activities sponsored by our local League. We need people to help with candidate forums, voter registration and to serve on committees

Twenty-one members made contributions to our local League this year. There are two ways to make a contribution. A member may make a non tax-deductible contribution to the League. This is not tax-deductible because, although we are nonpartisan, we are a political organization. It is also possible to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Education Fund.

I hope everyone reading this will rejoin for the coming year when you receive your renewal notice in June.

Deborah Levin

Program

LOOKING BACK

Since September, 2010 the League has increased our visibility in the community with more effective publicity, increased our collaborations with other groups and organizations, taken advantage of the resources of the State League Board members and specialists and connected with other local Leagues in New York and across the country. The success of our programs reflected the work we've done together and I look forward to continuing these efforts in 2011-2012.

Saturday October 30, 2010— MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ALBANY, Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director of the LWV-NYS, drove down from Albany to the Tompkins County Public Library and met with Leaders from the Tompkins County and Cortland County Leagues for lunch and conversation at noon, followed by a Public Program at 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Saturday November 13, 2010— LOCAL LEAGUES: ROUNDTABLE FOR ACTION, Members of the Cortland League joined the Tompkins County leaders for discussion of our

strengths and challenges and arrived at specific actions to work on in 2011 and 2012.

Saturday January 26, 2011—THE CASE FOR REDISTRICTING REFORM IN NEW YORK STATE, Barbara Bartoletti Legislative Director and Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director of LWVNYS, did double-duty by presenting to two separate audiences, our well researched and documented position on the need for an independent commission to draw the voting district lines before elections in 2012.

Wednesday, February 16, 2011— THE IMPACT OF HEALTH CARE REFORM : WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE ? The Health Care Committee hosted a panel facilitated by Fran Helmstadter including: Dr. William Klepak, Beverly Chin, Martha Robinson and Rebecca Elgie. There was a discussion of the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (PPACA), how the legislation may affect us and where can we go from here, with many questions from the audience.

LOOKING FORWARD

Saturday April 16, 2011— SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON.

The Soup and Bread Luncheon is our most popular annual event, especially for League members and their guests. This year it will be held at the 2nd floor of the Unitarian Church Annex Building, 206 East Buffalo Street. We will begin promptly at noon and enjoy homemade soups, fancy breads, desserts and beverages together with old friends, new members and special guests. We've invited our Legislators to share the meal with us and enjoy informal conversations about issues of importance.

The cost is \$5.00 for the Luncheon, payable at the door. Please contact Florence Smith for your seat at the table, tel: 273-6147, email: flosmith42@aol.com.

Monday May 2, 2011— LWVTC ANNUAL MEETING, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Borg Warner Room West, Tompkins County Public Library, Corner of Green and Cayuga Sts. The membership will vote on the nominations for officers, budget and program for FY 2011/2012 and proposed By-Law Changes. Representatives of the Health Care and the Natural Resource Committees and a proposed Local Government Committee will report on their plans for the future. Board members will provide nutritional refreshments for your enjoyment. Plan on staying for the public meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Monday May 2, 2011— THE LONG TERM ECONOMICS OF HYDROFRACKING, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Borg Warner Room of Tompkins County Public Library. This program is free and open to the public and should be well attended. The speakers will be Susan Christopherson, Cornell, and John Schwartz, Ithaca College with Don Barber, town Supervisor for Caroline as respondent. The presentation will be followed by an open question and answer period.

Florence Smith

LWVTC Web Page

The League web page, <http://www.lwvtompkins.org/> maintained by Michael Duttweiler, is designed to serve League members as well as the community-at-large. The goal is to have information available on many voter issues and local, state, and national programs. League publications, such as *In-League* (NYS) and *League Basics* (US) which elaborate organizational functions of boards and leagues, and *Impact on Issues* (NYS and US), which include statements on all of the positions are available (click on *Board Resource* at the left). Monthly bulletins and calendar items are posted. Clarity Connect, Inc. continues to host our site and we are grateful for their generous contribution.

Linda Duttweiler

Natural Resources

This has been a busy year for the Natural Resources Committee. It started with the LWV national convention in June. At the convention, our Tompkins County League presented a resolution calling for strengthening the regulations of drilling and mining for energy resources. League members from around the country helped with our caucus, the information table, and the lobbying for passage of the resolution. We were quite excited to have it pass by unanimous consent. The complete statement of the resolution is on our website (lwvtompkins.org).

During the summer and fall the committee continued to work on the issue of High Volume Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing (fracking) for natural gas in shale. We prepared an oral statement plus a longer written one for the EPA hearings in the fall. The oral statement was presented at the hearing in Binghamton and the written one was submitted at that time. A copy of the statement submitted is also on our website.

Our local League, working with the LWVNY, took the lead in composing a letter to send to then Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo highlighting the League's concerns about Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing and asking for a meeting with him or key members of his staff. Arrangements for such a meeting are still being worked on and a second letter is about to be sent. We are hopeful that a meeting will occur soon and we will be helping to prepare materials to support our positions.

As we have continued to learn more about the issues surrounding fracking we have seen that it has the potential to affect many aspects of the lives of residents throughout the state. We have focused first on the likely long term economic impacts of fracking and will be holding a program, open to the public, on this topic on May 2. The speakers will be Prof. Susan Christopherson, a geographic economist who

specializes in planning; Prof. John Schwartz, a retired physics professor at Ithaca College who has been studying the current local economy and the possible impacts fracking will have on it; and Don Barber, Supervisor for the Town of Caroline and Chair of the Tompkins County Council of Governments.

At the state level we now have a new issues person for natural resources, Elizabeth Radow. Beth is from the Larchmont League. She is already hard at work and has many interesting ideas for moving ahead. Kay Wagner is working with Beth and other League members from around the state to plan a workshop for the state convention in Albany this May. The workshop will cover various topics surrounding Hydraulic Fracturing, including the risks to food supplies and possible economic impacts as well as general environmental issues.

Kay Wagner⁹

Health Committee

The LWVTC Health Care Committee met throughout the year and was involved in the following activities:

- . 2010 LWVUS Convention:—LWVTC delegates advocated for and supported the resolution presented and passed at the National Convention to support legislation which promotes *Improved Medicare for All*
- . Panel Discussion — General Membership Meeting (open to the public): *The Impact of Health Care Reform: Where Are We and Where Do We Go From Here?*
Dr. William Klepack, Medical Director—Tompkins County Health Department and Family Practice Physician, *Impact of PPACA on Doctors, Patients and Social Agencies*
Beverly Chin, Health Access Co-coordinator — Health Planning Council, *Impact of PPACA on Seniors and the Uninsured*

Martha Robertson, Tompkins County Legislature Chair, *The Health Care Consortium and Medicaid Reform*

Rebecca Elgie, LWVTC Health Care Committee Chair, *Impact of PPACA on States*

Fran Helmstadter, LWVTC Health Care Committee Member, Facilitator

- . Co-sponsored a public presentation by representatives of the Vermont Workers Center about their *Campaign for Health Care as a Human Right*
 - . Discussions of the provisions of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (PPACA) and its impact
 - . Reading and discussion of the book *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*, by T. R. Reid, which examines the health care systems of six countries (France, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and India), and their strengths, weaknesses, unique features, myths, and common principles.
 - . Viewed and discussed a presentation by Dr. Rob Stone, *Improved Medicare for All – We Are Not There Yet*
 - . Attended meetings on the PPACA and Patient Centered Medical Homes sponsored by the Human Services Coalition Health Planning Council
- We would welcome new members to the committee

Rebecca Elgie, Chair

COMING EVENTS

Youth Power Summit

On Saturday **April 9**, students and youth from every background across Central New York will converge in Ithaca for a large regional gathering of young people uniting for clean energy, local food, and social justice in our schools and communities. The event will be held from

10am-5pm at the Holiday Inn in downtown Ithaca. Registration is now open! Register at: <https://spreadsheets1.google.com/viewform?>

Poverty in America: Finding Solutions

a panel discussion (free & open to the public):
Monday, **April 11**, 2011, 5:00-6:30 p.m. at
Cornell University, Goldwin Smith Hall, Lewis
Auditorium

Panelists:

- Melissa Boteach, manager of nationwide Half in Ten Anti-Poverty Campaign
- Robert Frank, Professor of Economics
- Svante Myrick, Ithaca Common Council 4th Ward Alderperson
- John Ward, TC American Red Cross-Director of Homeless Services

(numerous co-sponsors: Catholic Charities, Cornell University, Food Bank of the Southern Tier, GIAC, Ithaca Common Council, Ithaca Youth Bureau, Tompkins Community Action, TC Human Services Coalition, TC American Red Cross and more)

Earth Day Event

On Monday, April 18, at 7:15 in the auditorium at Kendal at Ithaca, there will be a showing of portions of the DVD *The Eleventh Hour*. This video explores the many ways in which mankind's activities are stressing and damaging the earth, as well as the prospects for developing technologies critical to the survival of the planet. After the video there will be refreshments and the opportunity to enjoy photos celebrating the *Beauty of the Earth* and a short, cycling slideshow illustrating a dozen different technologies, past, present and future, for the generation of energy.

CFWO Annual Dinner

The City Federation Of Women's Organizations will hold its Annual Spring Dinner Meeting on Wednesday, **June 8**, 2011, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Women's Community Building, 100 West Seneca Street. For dinner reservations (\$12) and information: Contact Sarah Johnson at 607-272-1247 or womens@lightlink.com

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2010-11

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LWV US website

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FROM THE NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER: for more details on these stories go to the LWVUS site at <http://www.lwv.org/>

Health Care Defense

One year ago last week the Affordable Care Act became law! Already, some provisions of the law are making a difference: Current beneficiaries of this historic Act are children with pre-existing conditions, young adults to age 26 who can now stay on their parents' health plans and those whose coverage had lifetime limits. We laud those states that have started important groundwork for implementing provisions of the complex Act. As for those states working to overturn the law through court action and members of Congress intent on repealing, defunding, and simply whittling away at the law, our fight continues. Going backwards is not an option, and the anticipated financial and human cost of such a move is indeed great.

Money in Elections

Late last month, the League and its coalition partners filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of Arizona's public financing law. Oral arguments in the case, *McComish v. Bennett*, were held this week.

Redistricting

Leagues Take Charge to Impact Redistricting: Leagues across the country are working to promote a more transparent and fair redistricting process in 2011. Last week, the Virginia League hosted a special event to announce winners of the Virginia College and University Redistricting Competition, in which student teams from 13 Virginia colleges produced maps of new districts in an effort to promote public participation and awareness about the impact of redistricting. In Florida, the League is active in leading the diverse Fair Districts Florida coalition that is urging state leaders to properly implement the new state redistricting rules overwhelmingly approved by Florida voters last year. Learn more by visiting our redistricting page.

Congressional Ethics

Concerned over the stalled ethics investigation, the League and coalition partners sent a letter to the House Committee on Ethics leadership asking when the inquiry into possible ethics violations by Representative Maxine Waters will be resumed and completed.

The Quest For A More Diverse Judiciary

At this month's "League Day at the Capital," the League of Women Voters of Kansas held a press conference to highlight key successes of the state-wide education campaign, "Quest for a More Diverse Judiciary." The event featured Professor Jeffrey Jackson, Washburn University, and Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Lawton Nussurt.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

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