



League of Women Voters of Saratoga County

LOCAL LEAGUE HANDBOOK

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League of Women Voters of Saratoga County

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*some of these policies or procedures will be updated and revised as necessary

I. League Practices and Procedures

Board of Directors:

- The Board of Directors meets once a month; **but**, only once during the summer.
- Please notify the President if you are not attending.
- Reports to the Board should be e-mailed or hard copied to the entire Board at least 48 hours before the Board meeting.
- Committees must receive Board authorization to spend monies in excess of budgeted amounts.

General Meetings:

- There are 6 to 10 general meetings for the membership each year. They are usually held at the Saratoga Springs Library in the Community Room. There is someone who is in charge of arranging these meetings and getting a volunteer crew to help.
- General meetings are either presentations of study items, talks or other items of general interest
- All meetings are open to the public and advertised by the PR Chair in advance.

Catt Award:

The Carrie Chapman Catt award is given at the annual meeting each year. See Annual Meeting job description for specifics about the award.

Legislative Breakfast:

The Legislative Breakfast is held every other year in odd years when there are no local elections. All sitting legislators who represent a Saratoga County district are invited. After breakfast, the moderated program gives each legislator a few minutes to speak followed by a question and answer session with the audience.

LWV Mail - Getting and Distributing:

The LWV post box is 1029 located in the downtown Saratoga Springs Post Office, corner of Broadway and Church Streets. There are 2 keys to the box. One is held by the President; the other, by a designated league member.

It is preferable that the person who picks up and distributes the mail be the President, since s/he is the person who is most aware of who is the most appropriate to deal with a particular piece of correspondence.

General Rules:

- Memberships - Send an e-mail to the Chair of the Membership Committee, the database at LWVUS manager, the Treasurer, the Bulletin list manager, the President with the following information [if provided on the form, envelope or check]: name, address, phones, e-dress, amount of check.
- Contributions - Send an e-mail to the Treasurer, the Development Chair (and the person who

sends the thank you's), the President, the Bulletin Editor and the person who maintains the LWVSC mailing lists with the following information: name, address, phones, email address, and amount of the check.

- Bills - Transfer [mail or otherwise] to the Treasurer promptly.
- Everything else - Should go the President for any further distribution.

June 2009, Amended 2014

II. Job Descriptions

Officers:

President

Responsibilities:

1. Know what is happening in the League at the local, regional, state and national levels.
2. Ensure compliance with LWVUS and LWVNYS positions and actions.
3. Receive and disseminate LWV related information as widely as possible to members.
4. Serve as OR designate a spokesperson for LWVSC. All public speaking must be based on LWV principles and positions, not personal opinion.
5. Prepare agenda for and chair Board meetings.
6. Recruit volunteers for and oversee volunteer activities for designated tasks.
7. Be a resource for committee chairs and others working for the League.
8. Know that ultimately you are responsible for everything that happens in LWVSC. HOWEVER, you should not do it all; you should delegate tasks according to leadership functions identified.

May 2009, Amended 2014

Vice Presidents

Responsibilities:

1. Support and advise the President.
2. Know what is happening in the League at the local, regional, state and national levels.
3. Substitute for the President when necessary or when s/he asks.
4. Chair a committee.
5. Supervise and/or assist such other committees as assigned to you by the President.
6. Be aware of the membership and able to identify potential leaders for the nominating committee.
7. Participate actively in development activities.

May 2009, Reviewed 2014

Secretary

The Secretary needs to be an involved member of the LWVSC Board of Directors. S/he must be able to attend all BOD, general and consensus meetings. S/he must have access to the internet and the correct computer software, and have mastery of the skills required to carry out the tasks of this position.

Responsibilities:

1. Record minutes at the monthly BOD meetings, promptly distribute minutes to all appropriate members and make corrections as directed.
2. Record discussion at consensus meetings for submission to local Board, and, if necessary, LWVUS OR LWVNYS.
3. Maintain records of minutes and accompanying reports.
4. Support LWV committees and activities as requested.

December 2008, Reviewed 2014

Treasurer

The Treasurer carries out the fiscal responsibilities of the LWV Saratoga County. These include:

Banking

- Deposit checks in a timely fashion, balance checkbook, and reconcile monthly bank statements.
- Update savings account quarterly and certificates of deposits as needed.
- Help secure underwriting by Adirondack Trust Bank of our cost of Voters' Guides and Online Guide by working with Voter Services Chair and the bank. Inform the Adirondack Trust Bank of the total cost of the Voters' Guides, which they underwrite, and request that they make their check out to the Education Foundation.

Bill paying

- Pay bills when due.
- Pay up to 50% of State and National PMP using Education Foundation funds as needed.
- Maintain an adequate balance in the Post Office bulk mail account.

Education Foundation

- Photocopy and send EF checks with a deposit form to the LWVNYS EF Grants Management Service.
- Submit Project Approval forms to the Grant Management Service for new projects or for changes in existing projects.
- Submit Withdrawal forms to request EF grants for approved projects.

- Submit a Final Report form describing the activities completed with a grant when appropriate.

Taxes

- Submit a NYS and Local Annual Sales and Use Tax Return (ST-102-A) by the March due date each year.
- Submit the IRS Form 990-N electronically by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the fiscal year.

Budget Committee

- Serve on the Budget Committee each year.
- Prepare a report of year-to-date income and expenses for use of the Budget Committee.

Reporting

- Prepare a Treasurer's report for each Board meeting including all financial transactions since the last meeting or, in the case of the first Board meeting of a new fiscal year, all financial transactions since the beginning of that fiscal year.
- Prepare a Treasurer's report for the Annual Meeting including all financial transactions since the beginning of the fiscal year to date.
- Prepare a Treasurer's report including all financial transactions from the last Board meeting to the end of the fiscal year to submit at the first Board meeting of the new fiscal year. As a result, two reports are presented at the first Board meeting of a new fiscal year.

Record keeping

- Maintain financial books in good order.
- Maintain a file of all bills, receipts, bank statements, and other important papers.

Audit

- Arrange for an annual audit.

June 2009, Amended 2014

Committee Chairs:

Annual Meeting Chair

This Chair works in coordination with the President of LWVSC to orchestrate the League's Annual Meeting.

Tasks:

1. Summer or early fall: Organize a committee which will help with the details of planning and implementing the meeting. Choose a list of topics to be addressed by a speaker. These topics should pertain to a League position or area of interest to League members. Submit ideas to Board of Directors for decision on specific topic. Determine budget limits, acceptable dates, ideas for potential speakers and possible locations for meeting.
2. Winter: Contact potential speaker in chosen field to determine willingness to speak, acceptable dates and financial restrictions. Locate a suitable location; the room should be large enough to seat about 50 people. Plan a meal and negotiate price with the facility. Do not forget to plan for the necessary technology details that will be needed that day.
3. February/March: Get a biography of speaker and outline of topic. Send to the Bulletin editor, the Web Master, and the PR Chair so s/he can generate local publicity.
4. April and May: Working with the Committee and the President, make sure that all the details that combine to create a successful meeting are in place. Details include, but are not limited to: annual meeting requirements as found in the by-laws, Catt award participation, speaker, technology needs, timing and flow of event, meal, registration needs, paying the bill.

June 2009, Reviewed 2014

Budget Committee Chair

The Chair of the Budget Committee is appointed by the Board at least two (2) months prior to Annual Meeting. The Committee consists of the Chair (not necessarily a Board member), the Treasurer, and at least one (1) member-at-large from the local league. The Treasurer sits on, but may **not** chair, the Committee.

Responsibilities:

1. To assure that the budget is prepared and presented to the local league board, either electronically or hard copy, at least one week prior to the meeting at which it must be approved.
2. To be present at that Board meeting to discuss the budget.
3. To write up the budget message for the bulletin.
4. To present the budget at the Annual Meeting.

February 2009, Reviewed 2014

Bulletin Editor

The editor's job is to publish a periodic bulletin to keep the membership informed of upcoming events, the progress of ongoing projects, and general news of our local league, as well as state and national leagues.

Tasks:

1. Collect articles and reports from the Board, committee chairs, state and national leagues.
2. Edit [rewrite if necessary] to fit available space and improve clarity.
3. Layout or arrange for layout of The Bulletin.
4. Take to the printer.
5. Make sure it is posted on the web site immediately after printing.

Design:

Try to maintain a consistent "look". Use the same size type, font(s), headings, columns and paragraph spacing. Display the LWV logo. Arrange The Bulletin so that similar information is always in the same order.

Content:

Every issue includes: the league mission statement; our diversity policy; a letter from the President; a list of on/off Board officers; a calendar of events; a membership coupon.

Also include:

- Names of any new members
- List of current contributors
- Reports from on-going committees
- Photographs taken at recent events

Postal Requirements:

LWVSC uses bulk mail rate. The bulk mail department of the post office will supply you with a stencil of their format.

Membership List:

Once a year we include a full membership list in a mailing that is separate from the Bulletin, and is mailed only to members with

Name, street address, e-mail address, phone numbers

Mailing List:

Whoever is in charge of maintaining the Bulletin mailing list should:

1. Promptly add all new members to the list
2. Include all current LWV members
3. Include all NYS legislators who represent Saratoga County

4. Include all County Supervisors (delete those who are no longer in office)
 5. Include all current donors on mailing list
 6. Include prospective members for a limited number of bulletins
 7. Include selected other individuals we want to inform of our work
 8. Promptly make address corrections when items are returned by the P.O.
 9. Include the following items in the database: first and last names, street address, City, State, ZIP, membership expiration date, whether or not a member
- (As of 2011, Donna Dardaris is in charge of the bulletin mailing database)

June 2009, Amended 2014

Carrie Chapman Catt Award

In the February Bulletin the LWV should solicit nominations from the membership for the award. At its March Board meeting the Board should select the person to receive the CCC Award (from the nominations received or from Board nominations). The Award is presented at the Annual Meeting by the previous year's winner.

Winners of the Carrie Chapman Catt Award, given for outstanding and long standing service to the LWV, receive a decorator plate with a picture of Catt, which they may display in their home for a year before passing it on to the next awardee.

Carrie Lane was born in Ripon, Wisconsin in 1859 and attended Iowa State College, graduating in 1880. She became a High School Principal and then one of the first female Superintendents of Schools in 1883. In 1885 she married the editor and publisher of the Mason City (Iowa) Republican, Leo Chapman. When he died in 1886 she joined the Iowa Woman's Suffrage Association, and began organizing chapters all over Iowa. In 1890 she was a delegate to the National American Woman Suffrage Convention and also a bride for the second time. She moved with her second husband, George Catt, an engineer, to Seattle and New York and continued her organizing work in these other parts of the country. George died in 1905, and Carrie kept on organizing women. She became president of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association in 1910. She devised the "winning plan" that led to state by state enactment of suffrage and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. She then transformed the Suffrage Association and its two million members into the League of Women Voters, and served as its first president. She spent most of the rest of her life working for peace and disarmament, dying in 1947 in New Rochelle, NY.

Previous winners:

Maki Jacknowitz - 1997
Janice Burns - 1998
Carol Green - 1999
Mally Sue Hennig - 2000

Carol Fleming - 2001
Libby Smith-Holmes - 2002
Francine Rodger - 2003
Barbara Thomas – 2004
Helen Crawshaw – 2005
Audrey Thomas – 2006
Margot Ammon – 2007
Mary Lou Classen – 2008
Diane Whitburn – 2009
Pat Reed – 2010
Lori Dawson – 2011
Christine Alexander – 2012
Pattie Garrett – 2013
Ann Kril – 2014

Development Chair

LWVSC has a multi-pronged development approach. The Development Chair on the Board oversees the portfolio, is responsible for just one project and oversees others who chair the other approaches.

Fund-Raising Annual Letter:

The annual letter is usually prepared in October and sent out right after the November election.

Tasks:

1. Obtain mailing labels for members and past donors from the LWVSC Database Manager.
2. Write member fund-raising letter. Include league activities for coming year [see prior letters: Dear Friend].
3. Copy letters at Staples or Kinko's; have them triple-folded by machine for envelopes. Include: League return envelope, not stamped, with all letters.
4. A minimum of 200 qualifying pieces is required for bulk mailing. Complete the USPO form, available at P.O. Mail at the bulk mail office entered at the rear of the Washington Avenue post office. Call for hours because they are more limited than regular P.O. hours. Trays are available from P.O. for sorted envelopes-
5. Contributions to LWVSC are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to LWVNYSEF ARE tax deductible. Draft Thank You letters. E-mail acknowledgments may be sent out for contributors to LWVSC. Send hard copy letters to contributors to LWVNYSEF.

Special Fund Raising Activities:

4. Our local league receives compensation for volunteer poll reporters at specified elections. Poll reporting is coordinated statewide by a League member (currently Sally Colclough of the Saugerties LWV).

2. Specific letters are written by the President or Development Chair to Stewart's or other potential corporate donors. Clarify who is to send a thank you letter.
3. Grant applications to area Foundations and Organizations should be submitted and pursued, as authorized by the Board.

Major Fund-Raising Project:

Each year LWVSC sponsors a major fund raising project centered around a famous person.

Other Fundraising Projects: In addition to the major project, LWVSC sponsors a number of smaller fund and friend raising events during the year. These include things like bus trips, parties, plays and parking cars at *The Saratogian*.

December 2008, Amended 2014

Membership Chair

Reports to: Local League Board

Objectives: Marketing membership by directing the recruitment, retention and involvement of members in the League

Note: Membership is the key to League success. Two principles should be included in every effort: Be Visible; Ask.

Responsibilities of Chair:

1. Appoint at least 2 non-Board members to work with the Chair as a team to develop a membership plan for events and activities that attract and retain new members.
2. Since membership recruitment is the responsibility of every member, encourage all members to assist with membership efforts.
3. Develop methods to involve members in League activities. Plan with The Bulletin Editor and Board to send out materials and information that all members should know and have.
4. Review flyers and pamphlets available to provide information about the League to prospective and new members.
5. Keep in touch with your state and national membership directors either directly or through your regional director or the State Board Report to be up to date with the latest materials and ideas for recruiting and retaining members.
6. Assist Nominating Committee with recommendations of members to serve on committees and the Board.
7. Arrange for the Fall League Orientation Event

Committee Responsibilities:

1. Work with the Event Planning Committee to schedule events with the potential to recruit members and serve the needs of the membership & community.

2. Membership Renewal
 - a. Send membership renewals prior to due date: July 1.
 - b. Compose renewal letter with input from Membership Committee.
 - c. Obtain mailing labels from the President; both addresses of members and return address labels.
 - d. Make copies of letter.
 - e. Stuff, label and stamp envelopes.
 - f. Mail them!
 - g. Send reminders, if necessary, for two [2] months.
3. Compose and send welcome letter and enclosures to all new members either by e-mail or hard copy. Suggested enclosures: Welcome note, Volunteer Opportunities List, local League event calendar, membership list, LWVNY *Welcome to the League* brochure, legislative agenda and/or candidate events list (if appropriate), League principles bookmark, and any other pertinent information.
4. Follow up with prospective members either by phone, e-mail or hard copy.
5. Involve members in League activities: Call every new member to ask if they saw something on the volunteer opportunities list in which they are interested. Link new members with current member mentors and/or committee chairs.
6. Maintain and update a list of League members including name, address, e-mail, telephone and cell numbers, interests and skills. Share this information with committee chairs reminding them to involve new members. Use this information to print out labels for mailings and to print out the membership list sent to all members around March.
7. Report membership changes to national League by updating the national database.
8. Keep LWVUS Database Membership Statistics. To keep our roster up to date:
 - a. Send membership additions, changes and deletions to the National League using the LWVUS Online Database on a regular basis, usually once a month. This information comes from the person who picks up and opens the mail and proceed to our League's person in charge of updating the LWVUS database (currently Janice Burns).
 - b. Help members who are moving to transfer their membership.
 - c. Make sure that the membership count is accurate on the LWVUS cut - off date (currently January 31) so that the PMP is correct.
9. Because several people maintain the data for members, be certain to send changes to everyone maintaining the data: Treasurer, National data base person, local League member's list person, Membership Committee and President.
10. Provide League membership information and staff at all events.
11. Welcome members/public & provide sign-in sheet and badges at League events.
12. Assist the event facilitator with following the "welcome & introduction guidelines"
13. Coordinate recruitment activities/events such as tables at the Farmer's Market and the Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church Peace Fair.

Saratoga Springs Farmers' Market:

Current scope: Alternate Saturdays from July to September, the League staffs a table under a tent to recruit members and provide election registration forms and voter information to the public. The coordinator of the Market arranges to have a site at the market, plans the dates and recruits volunteers to staff the table. The coordinator also provides the volunteers with instructions and guidance on how to be more visible and how to ask people to become members. Current recruiting paperwork includes: prospective member sign-up sheet, recruitment guidelines, and recruiting stat form. Suggested literature includes: voters services information (including election dates), voter registration forms, and membership brochures. Arrangements need to be made for setting up/taking down the tent and bringing the supplies to the site as well as getting completed registration forms to Board of Elections office and getting the stats and contact information to membership director.

July 2010, Amended 2014

Nominating Chair

It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to provide a slate of nominees for officers and directors for approval at the Annual Meeting. Refer to the current Bylaws to confirm deadlines and requirements.

Responsibilities of the Chair:

1. Chair the Nominating Committee. Oversee the preparation of a slate of possible nominees. The Chair must have access to and be able to use the Internet.
2. Starting in the fall, organize a plan for the nominating process. Over the year the Chair and Committee should get to know the membership.
3. Be familiar with League job descriptions, Board responsibilities and the non-partisan policy.
4. Provide opportunities for League members to suggest possible nominees.
5. Beginning in January, with the Committee, review names proposed for leadership.
6. Prior to meeting with the committee, speak with current board members to determine willingness to serve and to assess strengths and weaknesses of the current board.
7. As a courtesy, report proposed slate to the Board; the Board, however, does NOT act on the proposed slate.
8. Send the proposed slate to membership at least one month before the Annual Meeting.
9. Present proposed slate at Annual Meeting OR arrange to have the slate presented by a member of the Committee.
10. Maintain records to be used in filling possible Board vacancies, and to pass on to the next committee.

June 2009, Amended 2014

Observer Corps Chair

At present, the Observer Corps is not active. This write-up sets out a broad plan to organize and implement an active corps should the interest resurface.

Objective: to observe governmental bodies for the league and report back, particularly when there are issues of importance to your local league. **The Chair of the corps coordinates the committee's work.**

June/July: go over report forms to assure they are pertinent, useful and understandable. Gather any materials which may be important for the observers to have.

August: build a committee of members who are/might be interested in the important work of observing for the league.

September: have an organizational meeting during which boards/agencies will be assigned to individuals, forms/ materials will be distributed, practices will be reviewed/explained, new members will be oriented to the tasks, LWV observer corps identification badges will be distributed, questions will be answered.

January: as soon as the County Supervisors' Chair changes committees, the chair obtains the list of new members and chairs of the twelve committees and distributes them to each volunteer who has agreed to attend a committee/authority/agency meeting.

Ongoing tasks:

1. Make sure that downloadable copies of the newest report forms are available on-line. At this time, Chris Alexander is the League's webmaster and can help, if need be, with this chore.
2. Following each committee or general meeting, the chair should receive reports from the volunteers, read them through noting especially any references to possible LWV follow-up on specific agenda items. Reports are then filed by committee for future reference along with clips from news stories that may have appeared in the media.
3. For those who are observing County boards/agencies, the schedule is available on the supervisors' web site: www.sartogoaacounty.gov. Updates of the schedule are posted at different times during the month. Call the supervisors' office 885-2240 to double check meetings.

Tips:

- It is important that you be familiar with League program; see local and national Impact on Issues.
- Understand the function and responsibilities of the board/agency being observed.
- Know the names of the board/agency members and staff.

- Report forms should include:

the name of the observer, the board/agency, date, place and names of officials present/absent.

- Note the use of timely agenda and whether it is followed.

- Describe the business covered particularly if it is pertinent to League program.

- Make note of the meeting conduct and standards used in reaching decisions.

- Include pertinent personal observations on attitude of members and public

- Remind all observers that as a courtesy, they should introduce themselves to the meeting chair.

- Remember: they are there only to observe and must remain impartial. Observers may ask questions for clarification or information only.

- An observer may speak for the League only if authorized to do so. If so authorized, use written comments approved by the board, leave a copy for inclusion in the minutes and have extra copies for the board/agency and for any media in attendance.

Understanding how local government functions is basic to league activity in a community or county. Those members who consistently attend either local or county board meetings, who keep alert for issues that are now or may become study items or opportunities to lobby are indeed the eyes and ears of the league. This consistent attendance at a given board meeting adds to the league's visibility and credibility. The more often a particular person attends a specific meeting, the more likely it is that you will become a recognized part of the general public; the league and you benefit from this acknowledgment. It is the Chair's responsibility to facilitate this important aspect of League activity.

December 2008, Amended 2014

Public Relations Chair

Public awareness of, and participation in, League events is paramount to the success of the local League. League activities and events must be well publicized in various media, with a fairly consistent media presence. Event coordinators should "feed" the PR Chair with information about upcoming events.

To ensure a high visibility for the local League, the Publicity Chair performs the following duties:

1. Maintains and updates an electronic list-serve of all media contacts (print, television, web-based, radio)
2. Writes exceptionally well in order to provide a "camera ready" story for reporters to submit

- to an editor without a large investment of their time
3. Generates newsworthy releases out of even ordinary League events
 4. Reaches out to specific media to ask for coverage of a specific event
 5. Thanks reporters when exceptional coverage is provided

Press releases should contain the following elements and the papers prefer it to be in the actual email instead of an attachment:

- Proposed headline
- A request to cover an event if appropriate
- Date/time/location
- Background on the topic/issue/event
- A quote from the event chair or president
- Definition of "who" the League is (i.e. The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization.....)
- Contact information

Press releases should always be copied to the League president and event chair.

Daily Newspapers: Saratoga County is served by several daily newspapers: Saratogian, Gazette, Times Union, Troy Record, Post Star. The Gazette covers the western and southern portion of the county, the Times Union covers the Southern “half” of the county, The Troy Record covers the Eastern portion of the County, the Post Star covers the Northern portion of the County, the Saratogian covers Saratoga Springs and nearby communities

Weekly Newspapers have a longer lead time for articles. Currently we have The Community News (Clifton Park and Halfmoon), Saratoga Today (western towns through Saratoga Springs), several Pennysavers, at least five covering portions of the county, Mechanicville Express (Mechanicville and Stillwater) and The Chronicle (Glens Falls). These weekly papers come and go so care must be taken to keep track of them.

Online “newspapers”. These continue to increase and the PR Chair should continue to seek them out and add them to our listing.

Calendars are increasingly important. There are many online calendars where events can be posted. Again, the list needs to be kept current and postings should be made whenever possible. Posting events on line could be a separate task given to a committee member.

The League also maintains a Facebook Page as well as a website. Coordination between PR Chair and those members doing the website and the Facebook page is extremely important.

Public service announcements (PSAs) may also be pursued on local radio stations. Timing and submission of these is tightly choreographed, and specific guidance should be obtained from the radio station. Stories should also be forwarded to state-wide media for topics that lend themselves to broader coverage.

Letters to the Editor are another vehicle for public relations. Often there are templates on the State or National Websites which are available to be customized and sent to local newspapers. Coordination with the other Leagues in the area (Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany and Warren County) is often useful for maximum exposure.

June 2009, Amended 2014

Study Committee Chair

"The League's legislative program consists of those governmental issues that the League has chosen for concerted study and action at the national, state or local level. The program process is specified in the bylaws and includes the following steps:

1. Formal adoption (by members at an annual meeting or by state/national convention delegates) of an issue for study.
2. Member study and agreement on broad concepts.
3. Formulation of a position by the appropriate board of directors.
4. Legislative action as directed by the Board of Directors.
5. Annual or biennial re-adoption of the position.

The following outline provides a basis for conducting a thorough study of a chosen subject.

For LWWNYS or LWWUS Studies:

When working on a state or national study, you are provided with lists of resources and materials to study, with already prepared consensus questions, with guides on how to conduct your meetings. While it is important that you and your committee must set up realistic time lines and make sure you adhere to them to get you to the consensus meeting in organized, well prepared fashion, much of the preparatory work has been done for you. [There will be times when the national or state level does not work in timely fashion and then you may have to begin researching resources and materials on your own, but these are not common occurrences]

For Local Study Committees:

- Start early.
- Gather a committee. Stress that it is a working participatory group. the size may depend on the topic, size of league, interest of the members.
- Study the issue and make sure the whole committee understands it
- Set up a realistic time line for coming to consensus; set interim goals to make sure you are on target to reaching the meeting dates.

- Research and gather your background materials and resources; circulate them for the committee to read. be sure there is lots of background material.
- Use bulletins, web sites, Facebook, email, informational meetings to communicate information to the membership along the way
- It is **imperative** that the committee not predetermine the results even if they feel strongly about a direction.
- Develop consensus questions that aid in reaching consensus:
- Avoid questions with multiple choice answers and either/or scenarios
- Avoid vague, leading or misleading language
- Scrutinize questions to be certain they do not contain bias
- Consider pretesting questions with a wider group of members including those with a strong point of view and by people who have no point of view, since they may see problems which those "steeped" in the issue would not see.
- Arrange for a facilitator and a recorder - neither of whom should be committee members. Work with both of them in a meeting at the end to make sure the presentation is smooth, organized and understandable.
- After the consensus meeting, work with the committee facilitator and recorder to write up a consensus report that must be submitted to the board for their approval.
- **REMEMBER:** Never publish, distribute or act on any consensus before the appropriate board has formally adopted the position.
- After the board approves the consensus, consider publicizing it in the local newspaper. Be sure to put it on your league's web site.

June 2009, Amended 2014

Voter Services Chair

The Voter Services Committee promotes voter registration and provides non-partisan election information to citizens. Voter service is the essence of the League's mission, and the work of the Committee tends to involve many members.

The Voter Services Committee Chair is responsible for convening a Voter Services Committee to plan and organize voter service activities for the year, such as:

1. Educate citizens about candidates and issues through events such as forums and candidate nights;
 - a. Collaborate with other local leagues, news media and chambers of commerce
2. Conduct voter registration drives at different venues, e.g. Saratoga Springs Farmers market, malls, etc. Work with Membership Committee to make best use of our mutual teams' time and resources
3. Voter Guides
 - a. Coordinate with the Online Guide Chair to produce an Online Voter Guide

- b. Order and Distribute as needed the State Voter Guides I (yearly voter registration requirements and dates) and State Voter Guides II (candidate information). These guides are available from the LWVNY.
4. Continue appeal to Adirondack Trust Bank to secure underwriting of our cost of Voters' Guides and Online Guide. (Our contact there is Rob Ward.) Notify Treasurer of amount expected from the bank in early to mid-summer.
5. Maintain on the League website a directory of elected and appointed public officials, a list of candidates seeking public office and webcasts of selected candidate events;
6. Arrange training for moderators for candidates meetings;
7. Work with the chair of the Publicity Committee to ensure adequate PR for important voter service activities including all local media.
8. Coordinate with the Membership Committee to inform new and prospective members about Voter Service Activities and encourage them to participate.

January 2009, Amended 2014

Online Voter Guide Chair

This is a sub-committee of the Voter Service Committee and coordinates closely with the Voter Service Chair.

On line guides may be established for any election, school district, primary or general elections, depending upon the decisions of the voter service committee. For each election to covered, candidates must be contacted in order to determine their email address. Then the invitation to participate can be sent to the candidate. Follow up is often necessary in order to achieve a maximum of candidates participating. Questions and biographical information must be defined before contacting the candidates.

There are many ways to get training in the current system, Vote 411. Training is available from both LWVUS and LWVNY. It is helpful to have several members of the committee familiar with how to create races, enter candidates and initiatives, invite and remind candidates, and then publish the guide.

Coordination with the Webmaster is important in order to get the information posted on the website.

Coordination with the public relations chair is important to publicize the guide both in newspapers and to disseminate links to either the guide or the league website to maximize exposure.

During the odd years (2013, 2015, 2017) the elections are primarily local and coordination with the Saratoga County Board of Elections is critical in obtaining all of the candidates who are running, especially those who are not in the “regular” parties.

During the even years (2014, 2016, 2018) coordination with neighboring leagues is critical. Below is the current list of races which we share with other leagues. This will change following the 2020 census redistricting. LWVNY is currently coordinating these statewide races, but that is subject to change. In previous years we have produced a Capital Area Guide in collaboration with LWV Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer and Warren Counties.

Congress

20. Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga and Warren ([Columbia](#), [Dutchess](#), [Delaware](#), [Essex](#), [Greene](#), [Otsego](#), [Rensselaer](#), [Saratoga](#), [Warren](#), and [Washington](#))

21. Saratoga, Warren and numerous other leagues ([Clinton](#), [Essex](#), [Franklin](#), [Fulton](#), [Hamilton](#), [Herkimer](#), [Jefferson](#), [Lewis](#), [Saratoga](#), [St. Lawrence](#), [Warren](#), and [Washington](#))

State Senate

43. Rensselaer and Saratoga

49. Saratoga and Schenectady.

State Assembly

108 Saratoga, Albany, and Rensselaer.

112 Saratoga and Schenectady

113. Saratoga and Warren

114. Saratoga and Warren

December 2014

Webmaster

The Webmaster is responsible for production and maintenance of a website for our local league.

The purpose of the website is as follows:

- Notice of upcoming events and news
- Organizational information for current members
- Recruitment tool for new members
- Public relations vehicle in the community
- Solicitation of support for the league

Tasks:

1. Collect information from the Board, committee chairs, state and national leagues.
2. Write or edit information about league activities, upcoming events, and recent news.
3. Keep website updated with the most recent information available.
4. Include images to make the site more attractive.
5. Link to or embed videos of recently recorded candidate events.
6. Collect analytical statistics about visitation to the website.
7. Maintain a consistent look through uniform page layouts, colors, fonts.
8. Display the LWV logo on the main webpages.
9. Link to state and national league websites, and to social media sites related to the local league, such as Facebook, photo sharing and any blogs.
10. Link to LWV voter guides and voter information sources, such as Vote411.
11. Keep domain name registration and website hosting up to date.

August 2010, Reviewed 2014

Youth Programming Chairs

LWVSC conducts a variety of youth programming which may vary from year to year. In the past we have participated in the LWVNY *Students Inside Albany Program* and run the Leaderspark Program. Currently we are sponsoring the following programs: Students Inside Albany, First Vote, Take Me to Vote!

First Vote Chair

FIRST VOTE is a program to help facilitate voter registration of high school seniors as they become 18 years old. We offer to deliver materials - the LWV pamphlet "First Vote: A Guide for New Voters in New York State," the LWV flier "Voting Q & A for college students in NYS" and voter registration forms. We offer not only materials but also talks by members of the League or materials such as PowerPoint or web-based teaching aids.

Tasks:

1. Before January, establish committee and revise materials.
2. If needed get copies of First Vote and Voting Q & A for college students from the State League office in Albany after verifying we have the funds available.
3. Get voter registration forms from the Saratoga County Board of Elections.
4. Solicit from League members specific programs that we can offer social studies teachers and include in our introductory letter.
5. Send letters to superintendents and high school social studies departments or teachers.

6. Email Senior Social Studies teachers RE how many materials they will need
7. Follow up with additional school personnel as requested.
8. Take materials as requested, or deliver through BOCES.
9. Follow up in any way necessary.
10. Report numbers to Board of Directors

March, 2014

Students Inside Albany Chair

Students Inside Albany is a LWVNYS program for high school students to introduce them to state government and citizen action. Local leagues can send one student paid for by LWVNYSED or add a second student using the local league's funds. Saratoga LWV Board of Directors decides if we will be sending one or two students. The BOD of LWVSC can choose the SIA students a different way, but this is the way we currently do it.

1. By the beginning of the school year, form a committee or locate an individual willing to take on the responsibility of choosing a student(s).
2. Get the current year dates, deadlines and materials from LWVNYS. The timeline may be different depending on the dates of the program.
3. By the beginning of November, locate the names of two contacts in each high school in the county including the school districts that overlap the county borders. Most helpful contacts have been school guidance councilors, government teachers, and social studies department chairs. We have also gotten publicity from the state legislators offices.
4. Send a letter to each contact describing the program and asking for them to encourage students to apply. Send a copy of the state pamphlet and application form and include the LWVSC's web site, application deadline, and LWVSC address.
5. Make sure all the SIA information and application is on the LWVS web site.
6. Closer to the application deadline, send publicity to the media and email a reminder to all the contacts that got letters.
7. Committee reads all the applicant information and assigns points based on predetermined criteria. The students with the highest points are chosen.
8. Students are notified. Chosen students are sent the packet of information and permissions. The other applicants and all teacher references are thanked.
9. Follow up to be sure all paperwork is in on time.
10. Write a report for the bulletin.
11. Provide for transportation to Albany if necessary.
12. After the program ask the student(s) to speak briefly about their experience at a LWVSC meeting and/ or to the media.

March 2014

Take Me to Vote! Chair

TAKE ME TO VOTE! is a get-out-the-vote program for fourth and fifth graders and their parents. The program is held in even years. Parents receive information about registering to vote

and dates for going to the polls. The young people, when they go to the polls with their parents, get a taste of what their responsibilities will be as adult voters.

Tasks:

1. Early summer: form a committee and update handouts. Let Saratoga County Board of Election Commissioners know the program is going forward. Locate the handbook which has sample materials.
2. Mid-August: send notice of the program to superintendents and heads of school districts in Saratoga County. Ask for approval of materials.
3. If you can obtain names and/or email addresses for the teachers, email the letter announcing the program. These may sometimes be found on each elementary school website. If not, send one letter to each elementary school for their office to distribute to their teachers asking teachers to communicate back to you via email. Once communication is initiated by individual teachers, e-mail communication is possible.
4. Assemble materials into classroom packets. Materials in each classroom package: Timeline for Teachers, Information for Parents about TMTV, Voter Registration Basics, Stickers, Certificate sheets and enough buttons for the entire class. Arrange to order stickers, buttons, and to print enough copies of information for parents for a possible 5000 students. It is hard to judge how many you will actually need, as it depends upon how many teachers participate. You must estimate there are 2500 students in each grade. You will probably need less buttons than information sheets, but this is a guesstimate. If you can get a generic sticker, it is often less expensive than a custom designed one. The same goes for the buttons.
5. Because of the buttons the packages are cumbersome, so it may be better to take materials to each school. Try to get volunteers to deliver the materials.
6. The ideal time for delivery is at the end of September so that parents who need to register and who want to vote in the primaries will get advance notice. However, two teachers have said it is too early and later would be better.
7. Make phone calls to teachers who have not responded to letters or emails.
8. Write letter for poll workers with a simple step-by-step direction guide in large print and sets of stickers and send it to the Election Commissioners for distribution. Ask them to be sure to tell workers about the program.
9. Arrange publicity for TMTV! The best would be a staged photograph of fifth grader going to the polls with a parent prior to election day. Besides media coverage you could also include a poster for the classroom or suggest the students make posters.
10. After Election Day, receive information from teachers. At the same time, write letter to Jones School Supply, Inc. or another inexpensive source to facilitate ordering the plaques. Order one for each school participating.
11. Make phone calls or send e-mails to teachers who have not let us know results. Usually, though, the teachers who have the most interest and enthusiasm have wonderful results and phone early.

12. After three weeks, declare winners. Order plaques, one for each school, and deliver them either through the mail or in person. Include a letter.
13. We have five Assembly members in the county. Arrange for a visit by the Assembly member to the top school in his district which participated in the program. You may also decide to do one public and one private school if you want. The Assembly members really enjoy the visits and it is very good for the league. Contact the office of the Assembly person in the district of the school class. Help arrange a visit by him or her to the school. Arrange for publicity if possible, and be sure a League representative is present during the visit.
14. Announce the winners in a bulletin article, with photos if possible. Work with Public Relations Chair on this phase of the project.
15. Alert the news media of the programs with the Assembly persons.
16. Write thank you notes to all involved in the final programs. Include any sponsoring organization that provided funding for the program.
17. This program is conducted every other year.

March 2014

III. Policies

Candidate Participation in Meet the Candidate Events

Purpose: The LWV of Saratoga County sponsors candidate forums on the issues to stimulate voter interest and to encourage informed voter participation in elections.

Criteria: Candidates who meet all New York State election law requirements to be on the ballot are eligible to take part in candidate forums.

Citizens running as write-in candidates may participate in candidate forums if they show evidence that a formal campaign is being waged e.g. presence of a campaign headquarters (may be out of a home); staff consisting of at least a treasurer; issuance of campaign positions; campaign appearances, etc.; must show evidence of voter support e.g. having at least three volunteers working on his/her behalf and show financial support from at least six contributors.

(It is the candidates', not the League's, responsibility to demonstrate that all criteria have been met.)

Adapted from Road to the Voting Booth, Part II, 2002

LWV - Saratoga County June, 2009, Reviewed 2014

Conducting Productive Board Meetings

1. E-mail information, questions and committee minutes to Board of Directors at least 48 hours prior to the monthly meeting. An example: If during a committee meeting an issue arises that needs the BOD attention, the committee chair should e-mail all BOD members about the concern so they are ready to discuss it. A sort of “heads up” on the topic.
2. BOD meetings should be less conversational and more formal; getting to the issue and a decision. Wait for the chair to recognize you. Listen to others.
3. A committee representative should be at the meeting or a Board member shall be appointed to report BOD action back to the committee.
4. The BOD should always have a motion. This will ensure that the issues are decided and all are clear about the decision.
5. The agenda will be followed and after each item, the discussion will be summarized for the minutes. Again, this will clarify the issue.

June 2009, Reviewed 2014

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity. This means:

1. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation, national origin or disability.
2. We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.
3. We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.
4. We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Saratoga County

LWV - Saratoga County
Originally adopted February 2004

June 2009, Amended 2014

Facebook Posting Policy

Welcome to the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County Facebook page!

We welcome a diversity of opinions and encourage discussion of the issues on this page. We will be posting news, stories from other Leagues, ways you can get involved and other great information.

We want to keep our Facebook page an open forum and make sure everyone feels comfortable participating, so please keep comments and wall posts clean and relevant. We want you to tell us what's on your mind, but if it falls into any of the categories below, we'll have to remove it:

- We do not allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization. We will not tolerate harassment or bullying of any kind. In other words, be nice and respectful of others and their opinions.
- We do not allow third party solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsements, in addition to attempts to defame or defraud any third-party organizations or groups.
- In order to maintain nonpartisanship, we do not allow endorsement or opposition of political candidates.
- We also do not allow spam. We encourage you to share material with us, but please remain germane and relevant.
- We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- By participating on this Facebook you are taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.

Also, the appearance of external links on this page does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the League of Women Voters, our chapters or our members.

Adopted May 29, 2012, Amended 2014

Guidelines for Presenting Differing Views of an Issue at an LWV Information Meeting

1. When the LWVSC does not have a position on an issue every effort must be made to secure representation from all sides of the issue and locate knowledgeable speakers.
2. When the LWVSC has studied an issue and arrived at consensus, it is legitimate that we inform the public of our position and why we support the stand. In such cases, it is not necessary to present opposition views.
3. For Voter's Services activities, for a question that will appear on a ballot it is important that the pros and cons be presented, even where the LWV has a position.

Adopted March 10, 2011

Reviewed 2014

Miscellaneous Policies

Board of Directors: Each section of the handbook should be reviewed annually by a committee of the Board appointed annually. Each section should be dated and labeled revised with the current date.

Financial: The Budget Chair should arrange to have an audit completed at the end of fiscal year. The auditor need not be a CPA nor even a League member. No person shall serve as auditor for more than three (3) consecutive years.

Web Policy: Nothing may be posted on our Web Site (www.lwvsaratoga.org) without the knowledge of the President of LWV Saratoga County. The Web Master is responsible for sending the electronic version of The Bulletin on to other League web sites.

Adopted: June 2009; Revised June 2010, Reviewed 2014

Nonpartisan Political Policy

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. The League may and does take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest.

Board members shall not run for or hold partisan political office. If a Board member declares for partisan elective office, the member must resign from the Board.

No board member may work actively for a political party in a race that includes a voting opportunity in Saratoga County. Board members shall not chair or administer fundraising for political campaigns or chair campaign events. Board members may make campaign contributions as private citizens.

A Board member may be appointed as a private citizen to a nonpartisan public board, commission, committee or coalition; however, that Board member does not represent the League unless officially designated as a League representative by the League board. Board members must advise the board of such current and proposed affiliations and excuse themselves from League events that might blur the lines of their distinct affiliations.

A Board member may not speak or in any way work against a League position when representing the League.

The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member are considered as separate and distinct from the activities of a board member.

Contributions to the LWV from office holders or candidates shall be reviewed by the full board to ensure there is no perceived favor, benefit or conflict of interest as a result.

Board members shall present questions about specific situations to the board where the foregoing policies do not resolve a question.

The Nominating Committee should be made aware of this policy and properly vet potential board members during the recruiting process.

Adopted: July, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,
Reviewed 2014

Privacy Policy

Since we now publish our Bulletin online, the Board has adopted this policy to help protect members' privacy.

1. Publish only names of new members in the Bulletin – not address, phone & e-mail.
2. Send member contact information revisions to Board & off-Board via e-mail – not published in Bulletin.
3. Send member list to members only.
4. Continue to send mass e-mail communications to members via blind copy.
5. Add line to membership brochure & web membership form: “Information distributed to

LWV of Saratoga County members, LWVNY & LWVUS. For LWV business only.”

6. Add line to new member welcome letter: “Information distributed to LWV of Saratoga County members, LWVNY & LWVUS. For LWV business only.”

Adopted: September 10, 2009, Reviewed 2014

Scholarships for LWV Membership

1. To empower the membership committee to make decisions on awarding membership aid to members involved in League activities.
2. The identity of the person receiving the aid would be known only by the Membership Committee and Treasurer.
3. The Membership Committee will limit awards to no more than 3 individuals a year.
4. Usually, the aid would be half the individual dues.
5. The Membership Committee is given the authority to grant one full scholarship per year in special cases for an individual when any amount would be a financial hardship.
6. The Membership Committee will seek Board approval if additional awards are required.

Adopted 2/4/2010, Reviewed 2014

IV. Guidelines

Consensus Guidelines

Consensus, or membership understanding and agreement, is the basis of the grassroots character and effectiveness of the League of Women Voters. The League is a study and action organization. Therefore it is important to have a clear expression of member views to determine what action to take. Consensus-taking is a complex procedure at the local, regional, state and national levels; it is puzzling to new members and challenging to experienced leaders.

What is Consensus?

As noted in League Basics (In League), " The American Heritage Dictionary defines consensus as 'collective opinion or concord; general agreement or accord.' In the League 'consensus' is used (1) interchangeably with 'member agreement' to refer to the overall decision making process . . . by which a League Board determines that there is substantial agreement among members on an issue, and (2) to refer to a specific technique used traditionally in the League to discuss and arrive at conclusions on issues . . ."

"Consensus/group discussion is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement. It is a process whereby members participate in a group discussion of an issue. The 'consensus' reached by members through group discussion is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall 'sense of the group' as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions."

Preparation for the Meeting:

Extensive member participation at consensus meetings must be an overriding goal. It is also important that members be as well informed as possible. General information meetings during the course of the study, fact sheets and bulletin articles can interest members in the subject and increase their understanding of the issues involved.

The resource committee is responsible for preparing or adapting the discussion outline for the meeting. This outline will determine whether the meeting is interesting to those in attendance and whether consensus is, in fact, reached. In its preparation the resource committee should be guided by the advice of a discussion or unit leader who can view the outline from the members' point of view. The carefully planned agenda will have two unequal parts - a brief presentation of background material by the resource committee followed by the consensus discussion. An important objective is to limit the resource material that will be presented to what the group needs to know for informed decision-making. The bulk of the time must be reserved for discussion because it is the members who reach consensus, not the resource committee. Suggested time slots for all parts of the meeting are a valuable tool for the discussion leader.

Consensus questions and discussion questions are not identical nor do they serve the same purpose. Consensus questions are intended to identify specific areas of agreement among members as a basis for action; discussion questions provide the background which helps clarify

member thinking on the subject. They may bring out philosophical differences or raise new implications. Discussion questions permit various points of view to be aired. The discussion outline for the consensus meeting should include both types of questions in order to develop and guide the discussion toward the intended goal: consensus.

The Discussion Leader:

The most important prerequisite for a successful consensus meeting is a good discussion leader. Leaders must be trained to encourage all members to speak. They must welcome all points of view—even unpopular ones. They must be adept at making sure all the facts are presented and all pro and con arguments covered. They must make sure all sides of the issue are examined. Familiarity with the subject under discussion is a necessity in order to recognize the requirements for balance and the essential points to be covered. Leaders do not have to be members of the resource committee; a certain detachment can aid in carrying out the discussion-leading role but attendance at some resource committee meetings or special briefings is advisable so that the leaders can gain a basic understanding of the subject.

A discussion leader must pace the meeting so that all questions can be covered. Often, too much time is spent on the first question leaving inadequate time for the rest. Knowing how to move the group along without cutting off discussion is important. The leader should be attuned to repetition and recognize when arguments and opinions begin to be repetitive and nothing new is being said.

As areas of agreement become apparent, the discussion leader should announce them so that the group can agree or disagree with the interpretation. When a specific consensus question is answered, the leader should say, "We agree that" In this way, members have a feeling of participation in the decision-making.

The Recorder:

Having a recorder at a consensus meeting is imperative. The recorder should also be familiar with the consensus process in advance. Discussion leaders should be free to concentrate on their job without having to take notes or trust their memories. They call upon the recorders to summarize the discussion and agreements periodically for purposes of clarification. Recorders should limit their note-taking to the consensus questions or other areas of agreement that emerge.

The Resource Committee:

The role of the resource committee at the consensus meeting is probably the most challenging. Its basic function is to supply the facts, when asked, without taking over the discussion or forcing its opinions on others. Varying, and even opposite, opinions based on the same facts are possible and valid. Opinions based on fallacies, however, should be corrected. The resource committee should not only give needed information but bring in pro and con arguments not covered and make sure all viewpoints are expressed.

The Absent Member:

Can consensus be valid and representative when only, say, a quarter or even only a tenth of the membership participates? Yes - when two conditions are met:

1. If all members are given the opportunity to participate, and

2. If the subject is discussed from all points of view with all pros and cons fully presented. The quality of the discussion is as important as the quantity.

Adequate notice should be given of an upcoming meeting and its purpose. An effort should be made to see that consensus meetings are held at convenient times and places. Leagues should consider encouraging members to communicate their opinions in advance when they cannot attend the meetings.

What About Polling?

Polling has serious drawbacks as a tool for reaching member agreement. Consensus includes a careful examination and discussion of all facts and opinions. It is a meeting of minds after considering all shades of opinion. A poll is a consensus based on individual opinion rather than group discussion. It deprives the members of the opportunity of interacting with others in the process of shaping their views. It has the further disadvantage of fixing previously-held ideas and polarizing positions. This eliminates an important part of the program process and undercuts one of the strengths of the League - educating and informing its members.

Reaching Consensus:

Does the League ever take a vote at a consensus meeting? Preferably not, because consensus is not based upon a simple majority. Most of the time the sense of the meeting can be determined from the discussion, but this becomes difficult, if everyone does not participate. It becomes almost impossible if many are silent. The discussion leader may say "Are there others who feel this way?" or "Am I correct in saying that we agree that" This will usually produce a response. If there is uncertainty, a show of hands may clarify whether there is substantial minority opinion, and thus consensus is lacking.

Can It Be Done at One Meeting?

Yes, but before solutions can be agreed upon, a full understanding and discussion of the problems must be undertaken. As much background information as possible should be provided. Some subjects require more information than others and, therefore, require more time. Consensus is never really reached at a single meeting; it is merely formalized there. Members at a consensus meeting bring with them knowledge of government, their own basic philosophy, knowledge of past League studies on related subjects, and a backlog of information gathered from newspapers, TV and other mass media.

The Board:

Determining whether there is consensus is the responsibility of the local board. The Board should be presented with recommendations for a consensus report by the resource committee and/or unit and discussion leaders. It should also receive a full report of the meeting(s) in order to evaluate the recommended report. What were the answers to the consensus questions? Was there enthusiasm for these answers or opposition, doubt or hesitancy to come to a conclusion? What other areas of agreement were reached? The minority as well as the majority view must be considered. The Board also considers the number of members participating and the effectiveness of the discussion.

There may be a problem when consensus is taken at several unit meetings within one League. How does the Board reconcile the reports if they differ? To do this it considers membership as a whole, not the individual units. Substantial agreement must be found among the members. This may be arrived at by adding the minority opinion in some units to the majority in others. If there is still a question, the Board may decide to call a general meeting to determine if there are areas of agreement. A fuller discussion of all the pros and cons and all divergent viewpoints may result in a broader understanding of the problem and a clearer agreement on solutions.

When a Consensus Concerns a Regional, State or National Matter:

When participating in a regional, state or national League consensus, it is important that the local League communicate as much as possible about the local conclusion to the appropriate board. This includes not only describing the consensus but evaluating its strength and the degree to which it represents the membership.

Sometimes a consensus question may be answered with one word, but often additional comments are needed to clarify the position. The accuracy of the final consensus depends upon good reporting on the part of the local League. Responses should be concise and direct, but there should also be enough elaboration to guide the reader in determining precisely what views are being expressed.

It is also important to include conclusions which may have come up as a by-product of the discussion, not necessarily as a direct response to a question. If several Leagues arrive at the same spontaneous reaction, it is a strong indication of its significance to members and merits inclusion in a final position.

In the rush to meet a deadline take the time to remember that the information being provided forms the basis of League position and can make a real difference in its formulation.

Finally, it is important that Leagues refrain from announcing their local consensus results (in bulletins or press releases) since their conclusions will become an integral part of a carefully worded statement based on the reports of all participating Leagues. It is that statement which then becomes newsworthy. Also premature announcement of the local League's consensus results may confuse both the public and local members if the final statewide or national consensus differs from that of the local League.

Also see part V for more articles on Consensus.

Concurrence Guidelines

Concurrence, the act of agreeing with a statement of position, is one method of determining membership understanding and agreement as a basis for League action.

The use of concurrence on any issue is decided by the appropriate League board on the basis of the nature of the subject, the time available for decision-making and the resources or interest present in the League for research. The Board sets guidelines for the process, particularly those

relating to who will be asked to concur, with whom and how. For example, the Board of a local League might ask its members to concur with a position statement arrived at by the League's resource committee or by the Board itself. The request for concurrence could be presented at a meeting or by telephone or by written questionnaire.

Concurrence can involve the local League in a limited study to evaluate a statement of position or it can depend on generally available community knowledge to stand behind a decision. Local Leagues receive factual background information which describes both sides of the issue, a statement of position, and an outline of the reasoning that led to that position. Leagues could evaluate the analysis and concur or not concur with the position as stated. Local League boards could decide how to involve their general memberships in the process. In advance of receiving responses, the local League sets concurrence guidelines.

Another concurrence process is one in which easily understandable general statements are offered to Leagues for their evaluation. Source material can be chiefly information available from the general media and from everyday life, as well as League Publications. Again, each League can decide on how to measure concurrence.

Considerations that could lead to the use of concurrence:

- The issue in question has been well-studied by many Leagues and position are similar.
- The issue is easily understood by the membership and new research would be redundant.
- The issue is closely related to other League items, and positions could be transferred or broadened if membership understanding and agreement exist.
- The issue is vital to one group of Leagues but peripheral to others.

Whether concurrence or the more structured consensus process is used to seek a League position, the same questions must be answered in the end, "Is there member understanding? "Is there member agreement?"

Speaking with One Voice: Action Guidelines for Local Leagues

Action Not Requiring Consultation:

1. Any action taken in response to an action request from the state or national League does not require any consultations. As they say just do it and thanks. These requests can be the form of Calls to Action or Action Alerts from state or national, or in the *Voter* articles, our state Grassroots Lobby Corps, and *State Board Reports*.
2. Legislation on which the state League has already taken action. Every *State Board Report* (SBR) contains a list of bills in the state legislature that the state League has taken action on; also these bill summary sheets are sent to the action network periodically. You do not need to consult with anybody to contact your state legislator on any of the bills listed in these state action summaries.

The *National League* is a bit stricter in keeping to its current Issues for Emphasis. State and local Leagues wishing to take action on a national issue on which they have not received recent information from LWVUS should consult with the national office.

Action Requiring Consultation:

1. Action by a Local League at the Local Level – The decision to take action that will affect only your community rests with your local board.
2. Action that would affect more than one League requires consultation with the boards of the other League in the area involved.
3. Action that would involve contact with state government officials (senators, assembly, the governor, etc.) where no action has been requested and no state action has been taken (bill is not on the bill summary sheet) requires consultation with the state issues committee or the state Issues and Advocacy Vice-President.
4. Action that would involve contact with government official at the national level where no action has been requested by LWVUS requires consultation with the National office.

No League may take action in opposition to a League position. If your League disagrees with a position statement, you should remain silent.

Other Caveats:

League members may contact their own representatives at the state and national levels and leadership in the legislature.

Generally the President or her designee speaks for the League. The rest of us speak as constituents supporting this particular League position on this particular legislation.

Local Leagues should send copies of all communication with state legislators to the state league; copies of communications with federal representatives should be sent to the national office.

ALWAYS NOTIFY THE STATE LEAGUE AND THE NATIONAL LEAGUE CONCERNING CONTACTS WITH THE RESPECTIVE REPRESENTATIVES. See guidelines for joining coalition.

Reviewed 2014

Joining/Working with Coalitions Guidelines

In deciding whether or not to join a coalition, the following things should be considered:

1. Does the coalition have well-defined goals?
2. Are the coalition goals the same as LWV goals?
3. Are sufficient people and monetary resources available?
4. Is this a League priority?

5. Is the extent of League participation clear?
6. Will the League's nonpartisan policy be compromised?
7. Will the coalition enhance LWV visibility?
8. Will the coalition be limited to the agreed upon issue(s)?
9. Does the coalition leadership respect coalition goals and process?

The League should be certain that all press releases, letters and other material circulated to the public by the coalition will be approved by the League representative to the coalition or the League president in advance of publication.

Local Leagues joining coalitions on statewide issues must inform and get approval from the State Board.

Local League boards should review and approve the joining of statewide or local coalitions. If the League is a member of an ILO, the local League should advise the other Leagues in the area of this desire to join the coalition.

Updated March 2008, Reviewed 2014

V. League Materials on the Study Process and Consensus

- League Guidelines for Consensus Meetings
<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/ballot-access/2014/Guideline-for-Consensus-Meeting.pdf>
- Introduction to the Study Process
<http://lwv.org/content/introduction-study-process-0>
- What Is a Consensus?
<http://lwv.org/content/what-consensus>
- Guide for Study Committees and Discussion Leaders
<http://lwv.org/content/guide-study-committees-and-discussion-leaders>
- Getting to Consensus
<http://lwv.org/content/getting-consensus>
- Tips for Consensus Meetings
<http://lwv.org/content/tips-consensus-meetings>

Reviewed 2014

VI. Web Site information

League Addresses/Web Sites Information

League of Women Voters of Saratoga County
PO Box 1029
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 728-0237
www.lwvsaratoga.org

League of Women Voters of New York State
OR
League of Women Voters of New York State Education Fund
62 Grand Street
Albany, NY 12207
518 - 465 - 4162
www.lwvny.org

League of Women Voters of the United States
1730 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20036
202 - 429 - 1965
www.lwv.org

VI. Bylaws

Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County

ARTICLE I

Name

Section 1. Name.

The name of this organization shall be The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County. This local league is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and of the League of Women Voters of New York State. The Leagues of Women Voters of Southern Saratoga County, (formerly, the Shenendehowa LWV) and of the Saratoga Springs Area merged in 1999.

ARTICLE II

Purpose and Policy

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of the League of Women Voters of the United States is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Political Policy.

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County may take action on local government measures and policies in the public interest in conformity with the principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States. The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. Eligibility.

Any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Types of Membership.

The membership of the League shall be composed of Voting members and associate members.

a. Voting members

Citizens at least 18 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS;

(1) individuals who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other league;

(2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be State members-at-large;

(3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life

members excused from the payment of dues.

- b. Associate members: All others who join the League shall be associate members. Associate members are non-voting members.

ARTICLE IV Board of Directors

Section 1. Number. Manner of Selection and Terms of Office.

The Board of Directors shall consist of the Officers of the League, six elected directors and not more than six appointed directors. Three directors shall be elected by the general membership at each annual meeting and shall serve a term of two years, or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The elected members shall appoint such additional directors, not exceeding six, as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the League. The terms of office of the appointed directors shall be one year and shall expire at the conclusion of the next annual meeting.

Section 2. Qualifications.

All elected or appointed officers and directors must be voting members of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County.

Section 3. Vacancies.

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors by reason of resignation, death or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled, until the next annual meeting, by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors.

In the event that a board member is absent from three consecutive meetings or a total of four meetings within a fiscal year and not excused by the board of directors, that position may be declared vacant by a majority vote of the remaining board members.

Section 4. Powers and Duties.

The Board of Directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization, with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership. It shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program as adopted by the national convention, the state convention, and the annual meeting. The Board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.

Section 5. Meetings.

There shall be at least nine regular meetings of the board of directors annually. The president may call a special meeting of the board of directors and shall call special meetings of the board of directors upon the written request of five members of the board.

Section 6. Quorum.

A majority of the members of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum and a majority of the members in attendance at any board meeting shall, in the presence of a quorum, decide its action.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section I. Enumeration and Election of Officers

The officers of the League of Women Voters of the Saratoga County shall be president or co-presidents, a first vice-president, a second vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer who shall be elected for terms of two years by the general membership at an annual meeting and take office immediately. The president(s), the first vice-president and the secretary shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The second vice-president and the treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years.

Section 2. The President(s).

The president shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the board of directors. The president may in the absence or disability of the treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts and notes. The president shall be ex-officio, a member of all committees except the nominating committee. The president shall have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the president and perform such other duties as may be designated by the board.

Section 3. The Vice-Presidents.

The two vice-presidents, in the order of their rank, shall, in event of absence, disability, resignation or death of the president, possess all the powers and perform all the duties of that office, until such time as the board of directors shall elect one of its members to fill the vacancy. The vice-presidents shall perform other duties as the president and board may designate.

Section 4. The Secretary.

The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the League and of all the meetings of the board of directors. The secretary shall notify all officers and directors of their election. The secretary shall sign, with the president, all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the board and shall perform such other functions as may be incident to the office.

Section 5. Treasurer.

The treasurer shall collect and receive all money s due. The treasurer shall the custodian of these moneys, shall deposit them in a bank designated by the board of directors, and shall disburse the same only upon order of the board. The treasurer shall present statements to the board at their regular meetings and an annual report to the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI Financial Administration

Section I. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County shall commence on the first day of July each year.

Section 2. Dues.

Proposed annual dues will be presented to the membership at least one month prior to the annual meeting. Annual dues will be set by a majority vote of the membership present at each year's annual meeting.

Section 3. Budget.

A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the board of directors to the annual meeting for adoption. The budget shall include support for the work of the League as a whole.

Section 4: Budget Committee.

A budget committee shall be appointed by the board of directors at least two months prior to the annual meeting to prepare a budget for the ensuing year. The proposed budget shall be sent to all members one month before the annual meeting. The treasurer shall not be eligible to serve as the chair of the budget committee.

ARTICLE VII
Meetings

Section I. Membership Meetings.

There shall be at least six meetings of the membership each year. Time and place shall be determined by the board of directors.

Section 2. Annual Meeting.

- a. An annual meeting shall be held during May or June, the exact date to be determined by the board of directors.
- b. The annual meeting shall:
 - (1) adopt a local program for the ensuing year;
 - (2) elect officers and directors, members of the nominating committee;
 - (3) adopt an adequate budget;
 - (4) transact such other business as may properly come before it.
- c. Quorum: One fifth of the membership of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VIII
Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominating Committee.

The nominating committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the board of directors. Three members, including the chair, shall not be members of the board and shall be elected at the annual meeting. Nominations for these three non board nominating committee members shall be made by the current nominating committee. The board members of the nominating committee shall be appointed by the board of directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting following the annual meeting. Any vacancy on the nominating committee shall be filled by the board of directors. Suggestions for nominations for officers and directors may be sent to the nominating committee by any voting member.

Section 2. Report of the Nominating Committee and Nominations from the Floor.

The report of the nominating committee of its nominations for officers, directors and the off-board members of the succeeding nominating committee shall be sent to all members one month before the date of the annual meeting. The report of the nominating committee shall be presented to the annual meeting. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Elections.

The elections shall be by voice vote or ballot. When there is but one nominee for each office, the secretary may be instructed to cast the ballot for every nominee. A majority vote of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

ARTICLE IX
Program

Section 1. Authorization.

The governmental principles adopted by the national convention, and supported by the League as a whole, constitute the authorization for the adoption of program.

Section 2. Program

The program of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County shall consist of:

- a. action to implement the principles of the Leagues of Women Voters of the United States and of New York State, and
- b. those local governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action.

Section 3. Action by the Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall act upon the program using the following procedures:

- a. The board of directors shall formulate the proposed program with consideration of recommendations from members made two months prior to the annual meeting.
- b. The proposed program shall be sent to all members one month before the annual meeting.
- c. Proposals for programs submitted two months before the annual meeting but not included in the board's proposed program may be voted consideration at the annual meeting by a majority vote.
- d. The program shall be adopted by an affirmative vote of the majority of members at the annual meeting.

Section 4. Changes in Program

In the case of altered conditions, program changes may be proposed by the board of directors and submitted to members at least two weeks prior to a membership meeting at which the change will be discussed. At the succeeding meeting for membership action, a quorum of one-fifth of the membership is required to accept the program change.

Section 5. Member Action

Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters only when authorized to do so by

the appropriate board of directors. They may act only in conformity with, and not contrary to, a position taken by the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, the League of Women Voters of New York State, and the League of Women Voters of the United States.

ARTICLE X

National Convention, State Convention and Council Section

Section 1. National Convention

The board at a meeting shall select delegates to that convention in the number allotted the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County.

Section 2. State Convention.

The board at a meeting shall select delegates to that convention in the number allotted the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County.

Section 3. State Council.

The board at a meeting shall select delegates to that council in the number allotted the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County.

ARTICLE XI

Parliamentary Authority Section

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority.

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

ARTICLE XII

Amendments

Section 1. Amendments.

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the annual meeting or other special meeting, provided that amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance of the meeting.

Last revised: June 5, 2011

VII. Annual League Calendar

Annual Calendar - 360 Days of League

Red=Voters services Green=membership Blue=Youth Services Brown=Bulletin
Purple=Fundraising Fuschia=Financial Aqua=General membership

AUGUST

Plan fall kick-off event
Plan new member campaign
Ready TAKE ME TO VOTE! materials and contacts
Line Up membership help for Students Inside Albany and First Vote
Bulletin Deadline - August 10
Begin voters service activities - Primaries
Recruit committees
Farmer's Market Saturdays

SEPTEMBER

Voters service activities
Bulletin Deadline- September 10
Primary Day- 3rd Tuesday in September
General Membership Meeting
Farmer's Market - Saturdays
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
9/30 - Bank quarterly interest due
Organize Nominating Committee

OCTOBER

Deliver TAKE ME TO VOTE! materials to schools Fall kick-off event
Take Me to vote stickers and directions to Board of Elections

Candidates Forums

New Member Orientation Meeting
10/31 - State PMP due
Prepare Fund raising letters for mailing
General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
Arrange for PR on TMTV! to appear just prior to Election
Bulletin deadline – October 10

NOVEMBER

Election Day - 2nd Tuesday after 1st Monday
Arrange for photographer to take TMTV! poll pictures
Mail Fundraising Appeal Letters – Day after Election Day
Students Inside Albany announcement mailing to High Schools
Follow up on membership renewals
Year-end membership recruitment

Order Plaques or certificates for TMTV! Classes
TMTV -Check with schools and legislators about timing of presentations
Plan for Holiday Party – Send invitation instead of December Bulletin
General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
11/15 - IRS e-filing date due

DECEMBER

Holiday Party
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
Revise Application used to select students for Students Inside Albany, post on website
Bulletin Deadline - December 10
Arrange for Assembly member to visit winning TMTV! classes
Nominating Committee begins work
Begin planning for annual meeting

JANUARY

Reminder to schools on Students Inside Albany deadlines
First Vote planning and ordering materials
Mail grant request to Soroptomist International of Saratoga
Send in Grant request to Stewart's
Send out First Vote materials
Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration
Update membership roster by 1/31 for state/national count
Arrange for publicity for SIA applications
Appoint budget and bylaws committees
Bulletin Deadline – January 10
State or national program planning
1/31 - 3rd quarter State PMP due
General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening

FEBRUARY

Select Students Inside Albany attendees and get their paperwork in
Local program planning meeting
Board approves program planning results for state/national
Famous Person Fund-raising event - around LWV Birthday (February 14)
General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
Bulletin Deadline – February 10
Voters Service - begin planning for School Board election

March

Legislative Breakfast/ Odd numbered years
Board determines recommendations for Annual Meeting
Annual meeting kit preparations

General Membership Meeting
Bulletin Deadline – March 10
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
Prepare materials to be distributed to School Board candidates
Begin planning next year's Famous Person Fundraising Event
3/20 - NYS annual sales use tax due

APRIL

4/30 - State PMP due
Deliver First Vote Materials to Schools
Annual Meeting kit sent to members in Bulletin that is at least 30 days before the event
[budget, bylaws, slate, program]
General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
Determine which school districts have contested elections, by end of April
Bulletin deadline – April 10

May

General Membership Meeting
Board Meeting – 1st Wednesday evening
School Board and Budget Elections – 3rd Tuesday
Bulletin Deadline – May - 10
Arrange for SIA attendees to go to annual meeting
Board Elections – Annual Meeting [or in June]
State Convention - odd years

JUNE

6/30 Update interest on bank account
6/31 Fiscal Year ends
Arrange for audit/review of financial matters
Annual Meeting [or in May]
National Convention – even years
Board Orientation/Retreat
Review non-partisan policy
Appoint Board members to new nominating committee
Fill remaining Board positions

JULY

7/1 - Fiscal Year begins

7/1 - Send out membership renewal reminder

Annual National PMP due

1st quarter State PMP due

Audit submitted

Board calendar planning meeting

Summer Issue of Bulletin (reporting on Annual meeting, etc.)

Voters Service Planning Meeting

Farmer's Market Saturdays

Updated 2014