



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

BULLETIN

JAN/FEB 2014

OUR MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

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

This means:

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, national origin or disability.

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Saratoga County.



Saturday, January 11

THE STONE THAT STARTED THE RIPPLE

Filene Auditorium, Skidmore College, 7pm, \$10

(Snow Date is January 18)

See page 3



Monday, January 20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Dutcher Community Room, SSPL,

9:30am—4pm *See page 5*

Monday, February 3

LWVNY Lobby Training Day

Legislative Office Building, Albany

NYS legislative agenda *See page 7*

Wednesday, February 26,

Agriculture Study Consensus Meeting

Prestwick Chase, Saratoga Blvd., Saratoga Springs, 7pm



See page 5



**League of Women Voters
of Saratoga County (NY-639)**
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Schedule of LWVSC Board Meetings

United Methodist Church, Henning Road, SS
7—9pm 1st Wednesday of each month

September 4, October 2, November 6, December 4,
January 8, February 5, March 5, April 2,
May 7, June 4.

All members are welcome to attend board meetings.

**League of Women Voters of New York State or
League of Women Voters of New York State
Education Foundation**

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From the President...

We had a marvelous turn out for the Holiday Party! It was fun to see and actually have a chance to socialize with so many of you. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did.

Looking back at **The Year That Was** we can be proud. We took action in support of Gun Safety, the Women’s Equality Coalition, and protecting our air and water quality from irresponsible Fracking. We presented programs on Agricultural issues, Climate Change, Using Social Media, The Influence of Money on our Elections and Democracy. We met Abigail and John Adams at the Famous Person Fundraiser and we took a bus trip to Seneca Falls. Our Book Club concentrated on agricultural issues this year. And we held a lot of candidate forums and registration events! Plus, thanks to a grant from the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust, we made video recordings of many events, posted candidate opening statements on 411. The 411 online voters’ guide had about 1500 hits and was the basis for several print guides by local media. Thanks to all of you who made these things happen!

Exciting things are in the works for **The Year That Is Coming!** Pat Nugent’s play, *The Stone That Started The Ripple*, has been updated for a performance by SPYA (that’s the group who were so great at our Annual Meeting). Pick up and pay for your tickets (\$10) at the door before the 7 pm performance at File-ne Auditorium, Skidmore College, on January 11th. Leaguers will be contributing to the community observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 20th by serving the lunch for volunteers and providing voter registration materials. We’re looking forward to a Famous Person Fundraiser with either Harriet Tubman or So-journer Truth sometime in March. We’re planning a bus trip to the newly renovated FDR Library and to Valkill. We’ll be reaching consensus on an updated Agricultural Position, Studying Ballot Access and Term Limits, lobbying for many issues of concern to our members, And So Much More!

Have a Happy, Healthy New Year and be active in the
LWV, Donna

Thanks to Our
LWV Education Fund Contributors

Soroptomist International of Saratoga
(For the grant that is underwriting the January 11, 2014 fund-raising performance of *The Stone that Started the Ripple*).

Chris Alexander & Peter Martin

Amy Durland Richard Harlow

THE STONE THAT STARTED THE RIPPLE

Featuring -
Saratoga
Performing
Youth Artists
(SPYA)



Skidmore
January 11,
7pm

CRUSADE FOR SUFFRAGE TO BE RE-ENACTED!

“I wrote this play. I’ve attended numerous rehearsals. I’ve seen it performed four times to sell-out crowds. Yet, when I attended the rehearsal of the upcoming performance, tears rolled down my cheeks. I don’t know if it’s because the young actresses are so passionate about the story or because women are still struggling for equal rights. Whatever it was, I felt our foremothers’ pain all over again.” said Pat with great emotion.

We all know our League’s past president, Patricia Nugent, is passionate about the suffragists. She reminds us of their struggle whenever she can and, thanks to a grant from Soroptimists, she is bringing their story to life again as a fundraiser for our League.

The Stone that Started the Ripple, a one-act play written by Nugent, will be performed on Saturday, January 11 at 7pm in Filene Hall at Skidmore College. (Snow date is January 18.) It is a humorous yet historical representation of a modern-day reunion of the women who initiated the crusade for women’s right to vote. Using their actual words from the 1800’s, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

Sojourner Truth, and Lucretia Mott offer commentary on the status of women’s issues today.

Bob Warren’s music *Only the Message Mattered* will open the dramatic performance by Saratoga’s Performing Youth Artists (SPYA), directed by Lezlie Dana.

The Stone that Started the Ripple was previously directed by LWV member Cliff Ammon and featured several of our members, receiving an exceptional review by a respected Saratoga Springs art critic. It has since been updated and expanded by Nugent as the political landscape for women has changed over the years.

Help with ticket sales to the public would be greatly appreciated to raise funds for our League.

3 Ways to Assure Your Reservations

1. Call 728-0237 or
2. Go to lwvsaratoga@gmail.com
3. Contact a board member

ONLY
\$10.

All tickets can be picked up and paid for at the theatre the night of the performance.

Visit the LWVNY.org, website and check out these items under News:

- LWVNYS Education Foundation
- 2012-2013 Annual Report (12/12/2013)

League State Studies Materials
(11/25/2013)

The term limit study and ballot access study web pages are now available!

Check back every month for new updates as the studies progress!

LWV Saratoga members (Janice Burns, Barb Thomas and Donna Dardaris) are on the front cover of the Annual Report and the Citizen Education page. I spotted other LWV Saratoga members, can you find them?

Plan to read the materials for the two state studies. They are not overwhelming. We’ll need to reach consensus on these issues before the LWVNY Convention in 2015.

MONEY IN ELECTIONS

The League's November 20 program, Democracy in America: A Post-Citizens United Agenda for Reform turned into a rousing discourse on the many ways that U.S. democracy is affected by the influence of money in elections.



The presenters were Bob Turner, Government Professor, Skidmore College and Blair Horner, Legislative Director, New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). Both used power point presentations to underscore their positions. (Turner later indicated that his is now available on his Skidmore website).

Following an impromptu march around the room of LWVSC's own 'suffragists', an enthusiastic audience learned from and participated in a lively discussion. The two speakers were both well informed. Their occasional points of cordial disagreement heightened the level of scrutiny of the topic.

Both Horner and Turner expressed the strong need for regulations requiring more transparency in disclosing the sources of funding for campaign financing. Both felt that some form of public funding of elections is to be encouraged but the level of funding must be realistic in order to be effective.

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There was disagreement between the two panelists about the level of money needed to run a successful political campaign. Prof. Turner held that more money is desirable in order for candidates to effectively get their message out to the electorate. Blair Horner contended that huge sums of money from a few large donors, whether corporate or individual or PACs have a corrupting influence on politicians.

Both noted the difficulty and time involved in attaining a Constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in the *Citizens United* case which allows greater concentration of campaign funding. They differed in that the professor did not see the desirability of undertaking such an effort while NYPIRG's spokesperson did.

The audience brought their own political issues, such as local casino gambling, to the discussion and seemed to agree that there needs to be a curbing of the corrosive influence of hidden and largely unfettered sums of money in political decisions.

NOTICES

WE NEED YOUR HELP, REALLY.

As many of you know, we were able to purchase a camera so we could record videos of programs and other activities. Well, that is great. But it does require someone to push the start button. Really, that, and the physical ability to carry the itty, bitty camera and the tripod into the meeting room.

We recorded candidates' opening statements at our Candidate Forums this fall, and were amazed to find they were viewed almost 1500 times! It is easy to do, and the training takes about 10 minutes, so, won't you consider becoming one of our video volunteers? Just call Francine Rodger (371-8032) to set up your training session and you will be all set to help us record our events and our candidates.

CLIFTON PARK COFFEE HOUR

League members, and prospective members from the Clifton Park area got together in November at Francine Rodger's home for coffee, snacks, and conversation. It turned out to be a very pleasant afternoon, and we benefited from having Nancy Bellamy share her wide knowledge of water and environmental issues with us.

We decided we would like to schedule a pot luck supper in the spring, and possibly invite some local representatives to discuss issues specific to Clifton Park and Halfmoon. Often these local issues get "lost" as we work on County, State and National projects.

Possibly, there are other areas in the county where members might feel the need for a smaller gathering and we should think about how to make this happen.



By Barbara Murphy and the Good Government Committee



AGRICULTURE STUDY

Consensus Meeting to Update our LWVUS position on Agriculture

Wednesday, February 26,
7pm at Prestwick Chase

More than half of our country's private land is used for agriculture. The choices farmers make in managing those lands affect the quality of our waters, the ability to feed our people and the future of the land itself. Those choices to a large extent are influenced by the actions of the federal government through the departments and agencies that provide support to farmers and consumers in a variety of ways, promulgate regulations to ensure safe, nutritious food and to protect the environment, and enable competitive markets.

Every League member is invited to join us, but you will be a more informed participant if you view at least some of the videos in the link below.

<http://www.lwv.org/content/agricultural-update-multimedia-resources-background-information>

Find a topic that interests you and then view the videos so that you get many opinions on a topic. This will give you a better understanding of the complexity of each issue than trying to view one video on each topic.

If you were unable to attend the Spring Forum on Agriculture you can go to our website to see videos of the presenters.

The actual consensus questions will be coming to you via a Mail Chimp message early in February.



Welcome New Members

Susan Owens

Patricia Lane

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY



Who was
Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.?

**What made him the man he became?
How is his message still relevant today?**

Monday, January 20

Day of Service and Remembrance

9:30am – Volunteers meet at the Library for service assignments

10:15 – 12:15 - Community Service activities

12:30 – 1:15 – LWV Saratoga serves lunch to community volunteers

2:00 – 3:45 - Remembrance Program

Music, Singing,

Welcome by Mayor Joanne Yepsen, Student Essay Readings, Performance by Saratoga Performing Youth Artists (SPYA), Film Clips,

Discussion of Meaningful MLK, Jr. Quotes

League members will be serving the lunch and giving out voter registration forms for participants to take to an unregistered member of the community. **LWV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED 11:45 – 2pm**, contact Donna at 884-9070 or ddar1@nycap.rr.com to let her know you will be there.

Co-Sponsors: Frederick Allen Lodge, League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, Temple Sinai, Saratoga Friends Meeting (the Quakers), Saratoga Peace Alliance, Saratoga Springs Public Library, Saratogians for Gun Safety

Contribute to History—

CLIP NEWS ARTICLES

Marian Potter keeps a scrapbook of LWV Saratoga activities, as reported in newspapers and online blogs BUT only when someone sends the clippings to her. If you see something about our League clip it, or if it is online print it, then mail it to her: Marian Potter, 173 Saratoga Blvd., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. If it doesn't get saved it will be lost to history.

VOTER SERVICE



CANDIDATE FORUMS

We had a very active fall season of Candidate Forums and Voter Registration. Candidate Forums were held in Saratoga Springs (two of them), Malta, Clifton Park and Halfmoon, but unfortunately our only pictures are from Saratoga Springs.

Some impressive numbers

We rarely get to brag about what we have done, but we have logged in some impressive numbers this fall, and want to share them with you.

- We had 1911 separate visitors to our website between Oct 1 and Election Day
- Our peak day for visits for our website was 475 people on election day
- We had 1504 folks who viewed one of the videos we posted from our candidates' forums
- Vote 411 logged in 2518 visitors from municipalities in our county

We had our candidate responses printed in The Saratogian, the Community News, and Saratoga Today, which gave us additional coverage.

Six area libraries posted a link to our website.

So all in all, lots of residents of Saratoga County received information from us this Fall and they sure know we are around. So, thanks to you all for the work you all did to help us achieve this result.

Voter Turnout

The Saratoga countywide percentage of registered voters who voted in the 2013 general election was 35 percent; for the City of Saratoga Springs it was 47 percent. (Editor's note: Many of the towns in the county had uncontested elections).

By Francine Rodger and Janice Burns



LWV BOOK CLUB

Book Club has selected four books which we will read and discuss in the next four months. They all center around political parties and government, each from its own perspective. Each month there will be a discussion leader to get us started, but we never seem to lack in conversation.

All are welcome to attend one session, or all sessions. We vary locations, so be sure to check the bulletin to see where we will be meeting.

In January, we will meet at the McDonalds in Saratoga Springs, from 1:30 to 3:30pm on the 15th.

In February we will meet in the Piraici Board Room, CP/HM Library, 1:30-3:30pm, on the 19th.

Hope to see many of you there.

Here is the list.....all are available at local libraries and/or Amazon.

January: Its Even Worse Than It Looks,

Thomas Mann and Norman Orenstein

February: The Centrist Manifesto, Charles Wheelan

March: Republic Lost, Lawrence Lessing

April: The Righteous Mind, Jonathan Haidt

ONE VOTE MADE THE DIFFERENCE!!!

We are always telling people that their vote makes a difference, and once again we can point to a local example to prove our point. The race for Supervisor in the Town of Malta was decided by one vote, in favor of Paul Sausville (which also meant that he'd become chair of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors). Had the judge allowed the two contested absentee ballots (with writing on the back) then Sausville's opponent Cynthia Young would have won by one vote. The results may still be appealed to a higher court.



EVERY VOTE COUNTS!



Our information table offers candidate literature as well as LWV information

MORE FROM LWVNY

Learn more about the issues that make up the LWVNY 2014 Legislative Agenda at the Lobby Training Day on February 3. (Details will reach you by email, but save the date).

2014 Legislative Agenda: Making New York State Work

Campaign Finance Reform

Support lower contribution limits, increased disclosure and a system of small donor matching funds. In particular, support stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement with increased penalties for violations.

Election Reform

Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including paperless and Election Day registration, early voting, better ballot design, improved polling place management/poll worker train-

ing, a single June primary, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.

Natural Resources

Support protection and management of New York's natural resources in the public interest, including energy conservation and energy options from renewable sources.

Women's Equality Agenda

Support equality for women and their families through preserving access to reproductive health care, ensuring fair treatment at work, and helping survivors of violence.

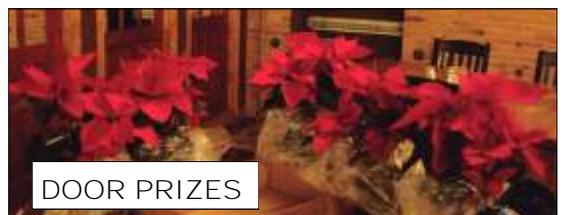
Other League Positions

The League also has positions on other Government Issues including Ethics, Transparency, and Individual Liberties, as well as Health Care, the Judiciary, State Finances, and Social Policy, including Transportation Policy, under which we can and do take action.

HOLIDAY PARTY *HERE'S TO US!*



It's the company
that makes
the difference!



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 11, Sat., *The Stone That Started the Ripple*, Filene Auditorium, Skidmore College, 7pm, \$10

January 15, *Book Club*, McDonald's, 197 South Broadway, Saratoga Springs, 1:30-3:30pm

January 18, Sat, *Snow Date for The Stone That Started the Ripple*, Filene Auditorium, Skidmore College, 7pm, \$10

January 20, Monday, *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*, Dutcher Community Room, SSPL, 9:30am-4pm

February 3, Monday, *LWVNY Lobby Training Day*, LOB, Albany

February 19, Wednesday, *Book Club*, Piracci Board Room, Clifton Park/Halfmoon Library, 1:30-3:30pm

February 26, Wed., *Agriculture Study Consensus* Prestwick Chase, Saratoga Blvd., Saratoga Springs, 7pm



**THE LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS
OF SARATOGA COUNTY**
P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

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The 2013 NYS Legislative Session ended without passage of Campaign Finance Reform, Ballot Access Reform or the Women's Equality Act. *Our work continues!*

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- YES!** I Would like to join the League. 2013/14 dues enclosed.
(Note: The Bulletin is free with membership) \$55. Individual \$80 Family \$25 Student
- Please send more information I would like to subscribe to the BULLETIN, \$15. enclosed

- In addition, I would like to contribute \$_____
- Please send a gift membership to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (home) _____ (work) _____

E-MAIL _____