



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

APRIL 2009

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www.lwvtompkins.14850.com

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

HEALTH CARE ROUNDTABLE: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Staying the course is not an option.
What are the alternatives?

Monday April 27, 2009

Salvation Army Worship
and Service Center

150 North Albany Street
(Additional parking available in
Human Service Building parking lot)

6:00 pm-dinner (\$15.00 — registration
required)

7:00 pm-program (free – public invited)

(More information on page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a year! We had numerous voter service activities, including voter registration and moderating local candidate forums. We had our Consensus on National Popular Vote. We were involved in the Women Making History in which we honored Rebecca Elgie for her tireless work on national healthcare reform. We are sending a student to "Students in Albany." We're updating the pamphlet Knowing Your Schools.

I want to thank all of you for your active participation in the League activities. Your energy and commitment to the League is essential.

I also want to thank you and the Board for supporting my service as President of the League. I have had a great time. It has been rewarding to be active in the League in this capacity.

Have a wonderful Spring. See you at our Annual Meeting on April 27th.

Kay Sharp

SYMPATHY

Long-time League and Board member, Synnova (Sunny) Hagen Gooding, passed away on March 5, 2009. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family. Her spirit, grace, and generous sharing of her time and talents continue to touch us all.

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ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Don't miss the LWV annual meeting dinner and program, **HEALTH CARE ROUNDTABLE: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**, on Monday, April 27th. The event will be held at the Salvation Army Worship and Service Center, 150 North Albany Street.

At 6:00 p.m. we will begin with a catered buffet dinner* followed by a brief business meeting. The program, beginning at 7:00p.m., will be free and open to the public.

Dr. Vivian Lorenzo, Dan Lamb and John Kuder will speak about some possible alternatives to the present 'health care system'; the Massachusetts Plan, the Obama Principles, and a Single Payer Plan. The speakers welcome questions and expect a lively discussion with the audience.

This program is the result of the hard work, study and research accomplished by the LWV Health Committee headed by Rebecca Elgie and Lucia Armstrong. The LWV Health Care Committee co-sponsored, along with other churches and community organizations, an informative meeting, "Health Care 2009: Difficult Decisions Ahead," on Saturday, March 21, at the First Presbyterian Church.

Because the Health Committee has promoted our April 27th program to those who attended the March 21st event and in the wider Community, a good turn-out is expected.

* note to LWV members: **Please make your reservations** before Friday April 24, by contacting Florence Smith 273-6147 or flosmith42@aol.com so we will have enough food to serve you. (\$15.00 per person at the door.)

HEALTH FORUM OF MARCH 21

As a prelude to the program for our Annual Meeting, a Health Forum, "Difficult Decisions Ahead," was held on Saturday morning, March 21, at the First Presbyterian Church.

Three speakers, Dr. James Henery, pastor of the church, Dr. Robert MacKenzie, a surgeon and CEO of the Cayuga Medical Center, and Dr. John-Paul Mead, an internist, offered a description of some of the health issues facing our nation. The speakers raised issues such as the moral right to health care and how much the Iraq war is costing in relation to what our government spends on health care, the difficult choices and approaches to enacting a national health care program, and some personal examples of how patients are affected by not having any or enough personal health insurance.

There was a diverse audience of about 70 persons, including many doctors and other health professionals. Questions covered numerous issues, and there were still many people with additional questions that were not addressed within the time limit of the forum. Individuals were encouraged to send their questions to the League, and to attend the April 27 Health Panel in which the League will look at several specific health plans.

The Forum was co-sponsored by many other groups in the community and well publicized both by these groups and local media. Watch for a screening of a videotape of the forum on Channel 13.

Rebecca Elgie

LWV-TC CALENDAR — 2008-2009

6:00	Mon. Apr. 27	ANNUAL DINNER MEETING—Health Care Roundtable	Salvation Army
7:00	Mon. May 4	BOARD MEETING	Kay Sharp
7:00	Thur. May 7	CANDIDATES' FORUM—ICSD School Board	IHS Cafeteria
	Tues. May 19	SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS	
7:00	Mon. June 1	BOARD MEETING	Kathy Burlitch

2009 STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY CONFERENCE

Ray Henninger, a student at the Charles O. Dickerson High School, has been chosen to attend this year's Student Inside Albany program sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. This ninth annual Students Inside Albany program will take place from April 19 - April 22, 2009, and will bring approximately thirty students from across the state to Albany to get a first-hand education about their state government and civic participation, a core value of the League of Women Voters. The program is designed to increase high school students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide information about the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County is sponsoring Ray to attend the conference as the Tompkins County student representative. While at the conference, Ray will join his peers in a hands-on learning experience about how state government works. He will participate in a series of interactive lectures on topics such as the state budget process, the role of lobbyists in the legislative process, citizen rights to access government information, the role of media in politics, and the move to reform state government. While in Albany, Ray will have an opportunity to tour the state's Capitol, shadow his Senator and/or Assembly member for an afternoon and attend a session on the Chamber floor.

We look forward to having Ray share his conference experience with the League membership.

Kathleen Yen

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING

Our luncheon meeting took place on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at noon in the Women's Community Building. Our gratitude to the board who cooked up several delicious soups, brought breads and fruit and to Kay who contributed a LWV cake. Thanks also to all the volunteers who helped set up before and clean up after the meeting. And most of all kudos to Flo for organizing the whole occasion, contacting the superintendents and being in charge of a flawless operation. There were 35 people attending.

The theme of the meeting was "The State Budget and the Schools." Flo had invited all 7 superintendents of Tompkins County; 5 attended. Marnie Johnson was our moderator (Thank you, Marnie!). Ellen O'Donnell, BOCES, talked about her job as the link between all other local superintendents and Albany. Sandra Sherwood, Dryden, showed an impressive record of renovation and building of school property during the last years, even though the Dryden population is poor compared to Ithaca. Paula Hurley, Trumansburg, pointed out that her school population is shrinking, 133 seniors vs. 63 kindergarteners. Brenda Myers, Groton, emphasized that the Groton population cannot be burdened with higher school taxes. Judith Pastel, Ithaca, talked about her attempt to cut her budget by the \$3 million Governor Patterson is withholding this year. What all participants had in common was the desperate attempt to keep the high quality of education at the present level or raise it, and at the same time manipulate the enormous restraints on their budgets. Apparently the stimulus package may not be the solution to their problems, because it does not provide a permanent increase in funds. What became apparent was the deep concern all participants had for their students, every single one, and how difficult it will be to provide a good, solid education to help them to excel, not just in Ithaca, but in the country and around the world. A short discussion period followed.

Maria Eisner

KNOW YOUR SCHOOLS PUBLICATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Follow-up appointments with administrators and agencies to update information for the Know Your Schools booklet is continuing. The revised booklet will be made available in pdf format to view or print. If interested in joining the committee, please contact Kathleen Yen, 257-8199, or e-mail to kyen@twcny.rr.com

Lamb and John Kuder presenting possible solutions. The group is planning a caucus on Health Care for the May LWVNYS Convention. If you are interested in joining this committee please contact Rebecca Elgie at 272-0621 or healthylink@earthlink.net

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following new members and add their names to your membership list (see February 2009 Bulletin).

Maria Coles, 502 Warren Place, Ithaca

Ms. Gwyneth J. Lymberis, 1012 West Falls Street, Ithaca

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE, ANNUAL REPORT

The Health Care Committee has been actively meeting every month. There are more than 20 on the committee with normal attendance between 9-12 members at the meetings. We usually have an active agenda of state and local information and a sharing of articles of note. Our first activity of the year was to help with a caucus at National Convention in Portland Oregon called "Healthcare Reform: Strategy for the Future," where various leagues shared information about activities in their state. We developed a Health Care Brochure, which outlines problems and statistics, proposed plans and listed resources and contact information for more data. We are circulating them at meetings. The group helped plan a health care forum in March entitled "Difficult Decisions Ahead," which outlined some of the difficulties with our present system as outlined by Drs. MacKenzie, Mead and Henery and also a sequel to that meeting talking about proposed solutions to the problem entitled "Health Care Roundtable - Possible Solutions," with Dr. Lorenzo, Dan

ANNUAL REPORT: LWV-TC WEBSITE <http://lwvtompkins.14850.com/>

The League web page, maintained by Michael Duttweiler, includes a calendar of events, meetings, and general information on the League. It also includes sections on local programs and projects, legislative priorities, and how to join the League. Bulletins and action alerts are posted. There is a designated area to contact us. Finally, there are links to State and National League sites and various voter information links.

The website tallied 978 hits this past year, posted 17 state and national action alerts, and replied to 53 web inquiries.

Linda Duttweiler, 277-0006

ANNUAL LWV-TC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The League membership numbers as of February 2009 are the numbers that the June 2010 Per Member Payment (PMP) Invoice from LWV-US will be based upon. As of February 1, 2009, the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County had one hundred thirty (130) members. This number includes eighty-seven (87) local individual members, twelve (12) first household members, thirteen (13) second household members, ten (10) national members, and eight (8) honorary members. Since February 1, 2009, two long-time League members passed away and four new members have joined.

Kathleen Yen, Membership

VOTER SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

On May 8, 2008 a meeting of candidates for the Ithaca City School Board was held at the Ithaca High School Cafeteria. Six people were running for three positions. The candidates stated their positions on the issues facing the Ithaca schools and answered questions from the audience. The event was sponsored by the LWVTC, the Ithaca Council PTAs and the American Association of University Women.

Also on May 8, a representative of the League attended the Naturalization Ceremony at the Tompkins County Court House. We had a table where we handed out literature about the League and about voting. We registered new citizens on the spot.

The presidential election of 2008 was a very exciting and important one. The country was clearly ready for a change, and that made for a very busy season for LWV Voter Services. The LWVTC sponsored a Candidate Forum on October 28 at Tompkins Cortland Community College between incumbent State Senator James Seward and challenger, Caroline Supervisor Don Barber. In spite of terrible weather, it was very well attended, with 70 people in the audience. Questions were submitted in writing and were asked by the League's very able moderator, Marnie Johnson. Libby DePross did a fine job as time keeper. Questions about health care and the economy predominated. There were clear differences between the two candidates views. Thanks to Marnie and Libby for their contribution, and also to Lucia Armstrong who was in charge of collecting the questions and passing them on to Marnie.

The League had Voter Registration tables various places prior to the election in November. We were at the Farmers' Market every Saturday in August and September and the first two weeks of October. We handed out many forms for people to fill out and send in on their own, and had numerous others register at our table. We also answered lots of questions about voting in general. We had other registration tables at Loaves and Fishes at St.

John's Episcopal Church, the Ithaca Apple Festival, the Ithaca Festival and at the Cayuga Radio Group event. We registered 109 new voters, handed out numerous forms for people to send in, and answered many questions about voting.

On March 11, 2008 we provided a moderator, timer and publicity for a candidates forum at Kendal for Cayuga Heights Village councilors.

Barbara Thorp was a great help as co-chair of Voter Services but, due to a very busy work schedule, had to resign earlier in the year. I would like to welcome Sally Grubb as the new co-chair of Voter Services.

Debbie Levin

CONSENSUS MEETING

Our consensus meeting took place in the Women's Community Building on March 23, 2009. There were 14 League members present. The committee, Kathy Burlitch, Libby deProsse, Maria Eisner, Marnie Johnson and Flo Smith, led the discussion of our study: "The advisability of using the National Popular Vote Compact among the states as a method for electing the President and the Vice President."

We reached consensus on all but one question. We were sometimes confused about the precise meaning of a statement and even found, in one case, that we would have liked to agree with both statements rather than making a choice. In our comment we suggested to the LWVUS that, in the future, the questionnaire be sent to a few local leagues for a trial run. The consensus results were electronically transmitted to the LWVUS by M.E.

The LWVUS study committee will formulate the League position after May 1st, and the LWVUS Board will adopt it at its next meeting on June 11, 2009.

We missed Sunny who had expertly guided us in this, as well as in past, consensus studies.

Maria Eisner

ON CLIMATE CHANGE — FROM THE LWV-US

The United States Must Take Aggressive Action To Cut Its Greenhouse Gas Emissions To Stabilize Earth's Climate

The evidence is clear that human-induced climate change is underway.

The emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases—primarily by the burning of fossil fuels—has increased the blanket of heat-trapping gases in Earth's atmosphere. Global temperatures have risen approximately 0.8°C (1.4°F) above pre-industrial levels, and this small increase is already causing significant adverse effects. These effects—documented by the world's leading climate scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—include rising sea levels, intensified storms, higher global temperatures, and severe droughts and floods that are already having adverse impacts on human health, food supplies, and ecosystems, as well as national economies.

The United States has made a commitment to stabilize the climate.

The United States Senate ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, joining over 180 nations in a commitment to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

Prompt action is required to slow the build-up of greenhouse gases.

According to the IPCC, global emissions must peak and begin declining *before 2015*. There is strong scientific consensus that warming of more than 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels will lead to irreversible damage to our planet. The pre-industrial concentration of CO₂

in the atmosphere, expressed as CO₂-eq (CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and aerosols), was 280 parts per million (ppm). It was 375 ppm in 2005 and is increasing each year. We must start now to limit CO₂-eq below 450 ppm, adjusting the target periodically as necessary, to reflect our understanding of the rapidly evolving science of climate change. Eventual stabilization at even lower concentrations of CO₂-eq may be necessary.

The United States must adopt an aggressive trajectory for reducing its emissions.

The United States must stop the “Business as Usual” emissions of greenhouse gases and impose aggressive emission reductions starting in 2010. We support adoption by the U.S. of a firm, verifiable cap that reduces emissions at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. Even with these aggressive reductions in the U.S., the global decrease in emissions may lag, as shown in the graphic, resulting in dangerous warming. Furthermore, part of the emitted CO₂ remains and accumulates in the atmosphere; thus, the atmospheric concentration will continue to increase until the global rate of removal exceeds the rate of release.

We have the capacity, responsibility and economic imperative to lead this effort internationally.

The U.S. has met great challenges before—such as World War II and space exploration. Since we are responsible for much of the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, we need to accept responsibility for being the leader in solving the global climate challenge. Our efforts will transform our way of life by creating a new clean-energy economy and will allow the U.S. to maintain its technological leadership.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2008-09

LWV NYS website
 LWV US website
 LWV-Tompkins County

leave message at 272-4748

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JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010 MEMBERSHIP DUES

To join, or renew your membership **early** for 2009-2010, please fill out the form below and send it with your check(s) to Alene Wyatt, 380 Savage Farm Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Name: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____

Membership Dues

Individual: contributing \$48.-; supporting \$58.-

Household: contributing \$72.-; supporting \$87.-

Friend of the League (No membership; Bulletin only) \$10.-

Contribution (not tax-deductible)

TOTAL (payable to LWV-TC)

Contribution (tax-deductible)

Separate check, payable to Community Foundation of TC with memo: Ed. Fund of LWV)

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

SENATORS:

Kirsten E. Gillibrand US Senate, 531 Dirksen Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4451 web-site: gillibrand.senate.gov

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