



The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County

Steering Committee Annual Report: 2016-2017

It's been a historic year. A year when we marched, lobbied, spoke up, visited legislators, wrote letters, signed petitions, made phone calls, staffed registration tables, and joined rallies. We are energized with a renewed sense of purpose. Our founding sisters are proud.

Let's make the coming year historic, too. Welcome to all new members, with your passion and vision. We need you to continue our work as we enter our next 100 years. Welcome to our continuing members whose experience and knowledge cannot be replaced. We need your guidance and wisdom.

Get on your comfortable shoes for more marching, walking and lobbying. We'll be persistent because we know that failure is impossible. It's in our collective DNA. We are the League of Women Voters. We are 100 years strong.

Our League:

- The second year of the Steering Committee will continue but with three not four members.
- Our newsletter has a new look. Thanks to Paula Jo Smith, a professional graphic designer who is lending her talents to our league.
- In a survey you told us you still want a physical copy of the newsletter along with frequent emails focused on a single topic.
- Our annual famous person fundraiser featured Elizabeth Cady Stanton and was a big success. Thank you Carol Glansberg.
- The book club continues to be a popular monthly get together where members discuss timely topics and books. Thank you Francine Rodger.
- We increased our membership by 20%. Welcome new members!
- Our annual Ice Cream Social was held to a full house of members and potential members. We learned about upcoming plans and how to get involved. Thank you to Nancy Martinez and her committee.
- A new membership brochure was designed that better reflects our league.

Issues and Advocacy:

- League Meetups: We started monthly meetups where members can discuss issues that are important to them and how to take effective action. Each meetup has a theme such as the environment and breaks into smaller groups for further planning and advocacy.
- Electoral Dysfunction: The screening of this film, for a public event, focused on voting in America. The room was full with engaged community members.

- Legislative Procedures Consensus: We discussed lengths of terms for the State legislature and made recommendations to LWVNYS.
- Governance of Local Governments Consensus: A new local position was adopted in April. We believe that it is important to have a clear separation of powers between legislative and administrative functions in all local governments, and checks and balances in County Government and therefore we support having an elected County Executive. A report can be found in the May, June, July Newsletter.
- Fake News: One of the most popular events we held for the public, featured Rex Smith from the Times Union. He discussed the phenomenon of fake news.
- Transportation of Oil: For Earth Day, we held a discussion on how oil is transported in our area. Skidmore students participated in the presentation and shared their research.
- NYS Constitutional Convention: We participated in a discussion with LWVNYS on whether we should recommend a constitutional convention. LWVNYS will support it.
- Lobby Day: More of us than in previous years attended Lobby Day. Organized by the LWVNYS, we visited our state representatives to discuss our position on legislation, e.g. voting reforms.
- Groups of our members got together and visited our US Congressional Representatives and State legislators to lobby for issues that are important to the League.
- We attended the League Day at the United Nations. A full report is in the February, March, April 2017 Newsletter.

100th Year Anniversary:

- We are entering our centennial years for the women's right to vote and founding of the LWV.
- A new committee will make plans for centennial events. Linda McKinney will lead the group, which has already participated in a suffrage rally and suffrage programs.
- Members continue to participate on LWVNYS planning committees.
- We are partnering with the Saratoga Springs Library, groups in Warren and Washington County, to plan and hold centennial events.

Voting:

- National Voter Registration Day: September 27th we flooded the county registering voters in libraries, banks, and YMCAs. Thank you Kathy Koebrich and her team.
- Candidate Forums: The forums were filled with voters wanting to learn more about candidates on the ballot. Forums were held for the 20th Congressional District, 49th and 43rd State Senate Districts, 112th and 113th State Assembly Districts. For the first time ever, we organized candidate events for village elections. Thank you Ann Kril and her committee members.
- We used Facebook Live for one of the forums in an effort to reach a greater audience.
- Vote411 our online voter guide remained an important resource for state and school board elections. Thank you Francine Rodger.

- School Board: The candidate forum for Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake was livestreamed and incorporated questions from the at-home audience.
- Voter Registration: We staffed registration tables at nationalization ceremonies, farmers' markets, Skidmore College, Irish Arts and Music Festival, Prestwick Chase Retirement Community. There was a total of 19 registration events, plus 11 more on National Voter registration day. 175 voter registration forms were completed and we delivered/mailed to the Board of Elections. 151 registration forms and 76 absentee ballots were handed out.
- Take Me To Vote: 26 elementary schools participated in this program which encourages parents to bring their childrento the polls with them. The schools with the most participation (Mechanicville and Arongen) received a visit from their Assembly members (Carrie Woerner and Mary Beth Walsh, respectively).
- First Vote provided brochures about the voting process and voter registration forms for each senior in most of the schools in Saratoga County. Thank you Marian Bigelow.

Our League and the Community:

- Clifton Park Open Space: We wrote a letter to the editor opposing the sale of 34 wooded acres of Shenendehowa School District land to a commercial developer instead of keeping the land in the public domain by selling it to the town for a park.
- Pitney Meadows Community Farm: We made a statement of support for the Pitney Meadows Community Farm to the Saratoga Springs City Council, which voted to approve the conservation easement and authorized \$1.3 million in open space funds.
- Martin Luther King Celebration: We cosponsored the Community Celebration of the life and ongoing work of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Students Inside Albany: Two students from Schuylerville Senior High School will be attending SIA.

Congratulations to all who helped make a successful year. Please get involved as we continue our work in the upcoming year. There are many opportunities that will match your interests. See you at our next event and meeting.

June 2017