



## **LOCAL LEAGUE HANDBOOK – SARATOGA COUNTY**

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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. A/O this writing, the League serves desserts before most membership meetings. 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 Development Chair, the President, and the Treasurer with the following information: name, address, phones, e-dress, 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

## **II. Job Descriptions**

### **Officers:**

#### **President**

##### Responsibilities:

1. Receive and disseminate LWV related information as widely as seems feasible without annoying members.
2. Know what is happening in the League at the local, regional, state and national levels.
3. Be, or designate, a spokesperson for the LWV. All public speaking must be based on LWV principles and positions, not personal opinion.
4. Prepare agenda for and run Board meetings.
5. Recruit people to perform League tasks.
6. Be a cheerleader for committee chairs and others working for the League.
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 LWV Saratoga County. However, you don't have to do everything; just try to be aware of everything.

May 2009

#### **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

## **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

## **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.

Bill paying

- Pay bills when due.
- Monitor Staples charge account online, and pay bill either online (bank debit) or by check.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

#### Ordering

- Order LWV publications and supplies not available locally such as *Take Me to Vote!* stickers and buttons.

#### 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

## **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

### **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

## **The 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 Bulletin mailing.

Name, street address, e-mail address, all phone numbers we have for the person

### 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 June, 2009, Barbara Thomas is in charge of the bulletin mailing database)

June 2009

### **The 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

## **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 League President
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. Sort envelopes by zip for bulk mailing. A minimum of 200 pieces is required for bulk mailing. Complete USPO form 3920-NZ, 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; zips 120-123 and 128 can be bundled groups.
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:**

1. Our local league receives \$250.00 for poll reporting volunteers at specified elections. Poll reporting chair is contact person with The Saratogian. [See Poll Reporting Chair report.]
2. Specific letters are written by the President or Development Chair to Stewart's and State Farm or other potential corporate donors. Clarify who is to send a thank you letter.

3. Cultivation of contributions from Saratoga National Bank and Ballston Spa National Bank were conducted in person by the league President and a co-chair of LeaderSpark. These contacts need to be followed up at least annually.

Major Fund-Raising Project:

Each year around the League's birthday, February 14, LWVSC sponsors a major fund raising project centered around a famous person.

December 2008

### **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.

Tasks:

1. In January, establish committee and revise materials.
2. If needed, get "First Vote" from the State League office.
3. Make copies of the Q & A at Staples or Kinko's.
4. Get voter registration forms from the Saratoga County Board of Elections.
5. Solicit from League members specific programs that we can offer social studies teachers and include in our introductory letter.
6. Send letters to superintendents.
7. Follow up with phone calls if necessary.
8. Follow up with additional school personnel as requested.
9. Take materials as requested, or deliver through BOCES.
10. Follow up in any way necessary.

May 2009

### **LeaderSpark Chair**

LeaderSpark is a curriculum designed to enhance the leadership skills of high school youth. It employs high quality, interactive skill building workshops to produce strong emerging leaders. It utilizes a practical, proven leadership curriculum with:

1. Specially designed sequenced topics
2. Youth-driven discussions

### 3. Hands-on interactive activities

Coordinating the LeaderSpark program involves the following tasks:

1. Recruit sponsors for financial support
2. Find a site and choose dates/times for the program; schedule 15 - 20 hours of in-class time
3. Recruit students, facilitators and other volunteers; about 22 - 30 is ideal with 15 - 20 community leader volunteers to chair the various classes
4. Schedule facilitators and volunteers
5. Arrange for publicity in the local media
6. Execute weekly program
7. Choose Student Inside Albany participants
8. Evaluate and report on program results

In past years the program has run for 5 consecutive Sunday afternoons from 1 - 4 pm in March and April. The Military Museum on Lake Avenue in Saratoga Springs has provided space for the program at no cost. A list of past participants and facilitators serves as a base for recruiting participants and volunteers each year. A list of county schools and youth organizations also exists. Extensive materials including detailed plans for each session and supplementary materials as well as participant, facilitator and coordinator guides are available for the program.

December 2008

## **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.
  - 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 three months.
  - h. If no response from 2<sup>nd</sup> notice, assemble team to call non-renewals in mid-September.
  - i. In January, make sure Roster is current so that PMP is correct by January 31 cut-off date.
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 whoever picks up and opens the mail, or who receives membership applications and checks in person.
  - 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

### **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.

#### 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 September, 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 December, with the Committee, review names proposed for leadership.
6. As a courtesy, report proposed slate to the Board; the Board, however, does NOT act on the proposed slate.

7. Report proposed slate to the membership via the Bulletin at least 30 days before Annual Meeting.
8. Present proposed slate at Annual Meeting OR arrange to have the slate presented by a member of the Committee.
9. Maintain records to be used in filling possible Board vacancies, to pass on to the next committee.

June 2009

### **Observer Corps Chair**

The Saratoga LWV Observer Corps has a two-fold purpose: to be a recognizable presence at the Board of Supervisor's various meetings and to track county supervisors' actions for the LWVSC. Should there be an interest shown, the Observer Corps could also be a recognizable presence at different city or town councils.

The Chair of the Observer Corps coordinates the Committee's work in the following ways:

1. Each January when the Saratoga County Supervisors changes committees, the Chair obtains the list of the new members and chairs of the twelve [12] committees and distributes them to each volunteer who has agreed to attend one or more of the committee/authority/general meetings. New LWV reporting forms with the make-up of the new committees are also placed on-line at this time, courtesy of Barbara Thomas who keeps the master copy of the report forms on her computer. The Chair reproduces hard copies of the new report forms and distributes these to the members.
2. Each month the Chair distributes hard copies of the supervisors' schedule of committee meetings which is also available on the supervisors' web site: [www.Saratogacounty.Gov](http://www.Saratogacounty.Gov). Updates of this schedule during the month are also available on the website or by calling the supervisors' office: 885-2240.
3. Following each committee or general meeting, the Chair accepts reports from the volunteers, reads them, noting especially any references to possible LWV follow-up on specific agenda items, and files them by committee for future reference along with clips from news stories that may have appeared in the newspapers. The Chair, if necessary, reports to the LWV Board president.
4. As needed, the Chair orients new volunteers to their tasks, supplies them with the needed reporting forms and the LWV observer corps identification badge. In March or April, when they become available, the Chair obtains the new copies of the official county directory for each volunteer.
5. Whenever a volunteer is unable to attend a particular committee meeting, they are asked to let the Chair know in timely fashion so that a substitute may be recruited.

December 2008

## **Poll Reporting**

### Tasks:

1. Soon after the primaries, contact Barbara Lombardo, Managing Editor of the Saratogian, to see if they want poll reporting in the upcoming election. Make certain they will pay LWV a \$250 fee to be sent to the Treasurer.
2. Go to the Board of Elections or call 885-2249 and confirm the list of polling places has not changed. Update any changes in the database.
3. Email last year's poll reporters to see if they can do it this year. If no response, call them and those without email. Recruit those needed to fill the empty slots: Ask new members who live in or near Saratoga Springs. Look to see who did it in years past.
4. Update the database with those who will report this year. Be sure to check addresses and ask for cell phone numbers. If possible, have 1 extra person willing to fill in as needed.
5. Call the Republican or Democratic City Chair and ask for 25 poll watching certificates so League members can gain access to the polls for the poll reporting. Alternate the request between parties. (Even years we have Republican Certificates; odd years, Democrat). Best to get one certificate signed with felt tip pen that can be copied. Keep original certificate in case it is needed.
6. Call Board of Elections or the Saratogian and arrange to get the sample ballots, usually not available until 10 days before the election. Make copies of the sample ballots and put the polling district # on each one. Note: Districts 7, 19, & 21 have different State Reps, than the other districts.
7. Print form letters and mail with a sample ballot, and a poll watching certificate in time to reach each person by the Friday before the election.
8. Prepare a list of all the poll workers, addresses, phone #s and district. Give one copy to the person checking in the poll reporters so she can check off the reporters as they arrive at the Saratogian. Keep one copy.
9. Bring to the Saratogian on election night: 2 rolls of duct tape to act as doorstops, card table, checklist, pens, & calculator.

We do this half as a public service and half as a fundraiser (\$250 made out to Saratoga County LWV). A few weeks after election, check that \$250 received by Treasurer.

Revised: October 2008

## **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:

- 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.

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.

June 2009

## **Study Committee Chair**

It is important to review what the LWV says about Program. The following from *League Basics* describes the Study and Action process very well.

"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.

Local Leagues may work simultaneously on local, state, national and (if applicable) regional program issues, but action may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement. Issues reflect community concerns and range from local park facilities to election reform, from childcare to nuclear waste disposal, from air pollution to international trade, from mental health to energy policy.

#### Reaching Member Agreement:

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about various aspects of the policy issue. The nature of the issue will affect how it is studied and how positions are reached. The Board usually selects the method to be used: consensus (where agreement is reached using League responses to specific questions) or concurrence (where agreement or a vote on a pre-stated position is required). The technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement is consensus by group discussion. It 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, whether in a meeting of the full membership or a series of smaller discussion meetings. **Regardless of the method used, it is essential that members have an opportunity to become informed before being asked to make decisions on the issue under consideration. It is through this process that League members become educated on a given issue, and this is what makes subsequent League action on that issue uniquely credible and respected. During the study phase, members have an opportunity to examine the facts and key pro/con points. They are encouraged to discuss the political realities of action and to contribute ideas for the Board to consider when it formulates an action strategy after a position is reached.** (If the League has a position on a given issue, action can be taken as appropriate. The issue does not need to be studied each time action is thought to be necessary.)

#### Formulating League Positions:

A League's position reflects membership understanding and agreement on a particular public policy issue. In formulating a position, either prior to seeking member agreement through concurrence or following member agreement through consensus, the Board must keep in mind the importance of wording the position in terms broad enough to enable the League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of specific legislative and executive proposals over a period of time.

Determining whether consensus has been achieved and how it should be expressed is the responsibility of the Board. Through an interpretive process, the Board first evaluates the reports of member views and then determines the broad areas of agreement and disagreement that emerge.

Once a League board has finalized a position on an issue, it is announced to members and can be shared with the public. It becomes part of the League's position statements, and the Board can begin taking action on it immediately. Like all statements of position, it must be readopted each year by League members at the annual meeting (or biennial convention) in order to remain on the program of issues for possible action."

What does this mean for someone asked to chair a local study committee?

When working on a state or national level study, you are provided with a list of resource material to study, and with the consensus or concurrence questions, as well as a guide on how to conduct your meetings. If you are doing a local study it is a little more difficult, because you have to find your own

way to getting the resource material and ultimately to find the questions you will ask the membership to come to agreement on.

Your work should include lots of background material, which can be disseminated through the bulletin or at informational meetings.

One of the hardest parts of a local study is not to predetermine the results even if the committee members feel strongly about an issue. Care must be taken to provide enough information for members to make an informed decision. Refer to the underlined material above.

Often you need to look back to the wording which was adopted at the Annual Meeting by the membership to give you guidelines in where to go. You may find that the path you started down is not the right one, and then you have to go back to the group and redefine the scope of the study.

Once your committee is ready to present your study, you should submit your consensus questions to the local board which needs to approve them. It is always good to have another "pair of eyes" look over your questions to be sure you are asking the right ones.

**The Board must formally adopt the position once consensus is reached before any action may be taken under that position.**

June 2009

## **Take Me to Vote! Chair**

TAKE ME TO VOTE! is a get-out-the-vote program for fifth graders and their parents. 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: find committee and update handouts. Let Saratoga County Board of Election Commissioners know the program is going forward.
2. Beginning of August: send materials, except buttons, to superintendents and heads of school districts in Saratoga County. Ask for approval of materials.
3. With approvals, contact principals. Offer option of sending letter to each teacher who will then contact us for materials, or simply sending materials to teachers. Once communication is initiated by individual teachers, e-mail communication is possible.
4. Materials in each classroom package: Timeline for Teachers, Information for Parents about TMTV, Voter Registration Basics, Certificate sheets and enough buttons for the entire class.
5. Check with BOCES about delivery. In 2009, the person to contact is Tony Muller, Director of School Services. Because of the buttons the packages are cumbersome, so it may be better to take materials to each school.

6. The ideal time for delivery is at the beginning of the school year 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.
8. Write letter for poll workers and send it to the Election Commissioners for distribution.
9. Arrange publicity for TMTV! The best would be a staged photograph of fifth grader going to the polls with a parent.
10. After Election Day, receive information from teachers. At the same time, write letter to Jones School Supply, Inc. 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 and deliver them either through BOCES or in person. Include a letter.
13. Contact the office of the Assembly person in the district of the top public and private school class and the top combined fifth grade. Help arrange a visit by him or her to the school.
14. Alert *The Saratogian* of the programs with the Assembly persons.
15. Write thank you notes to all involved in the final programs. Include the Director, Northeast Zone Public Affairs, at State Farm Insurance if letter has not already been written.

December 2008

## **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;
2. Conduct voter registration drives. As the national "Motor Voter" legislation has made it easy for people to register when they obtain or renew their driver licenses, there has been less emphasis on this function in recent years. The Membership Committee currently is the League's chief outreach point for voter registration, as it distributes voter registration materials during the summer at the Saratoga Springs Farmers' Market.
3. Contribute to the production and distribution of Voter Guides, including an electronic voter guide;
4. 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;
5. Arrange training for moderators for candidates meetings;
6. Work with the chair of the Publicity Committee to highlight Voter Services activities.
7. Coordinate with the Membership Committee to take advantage of the membership recruitment opportunities of Voter Services activities.

January 2009

## **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

### **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

#### **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~~ "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

## **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, 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

## **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

## **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.

**Recording Policy:** It is the policy of the LWVSC that recording of Candidates Events is only permitted with prior authorization by the LWV. All recordings must be shown unedited and in

their entirety with the exception of short clips used by valid broadcast news

Web Policy: Nothing may be posted on our Web Site ([www.lwvsaratoga.org](http://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

## **Nonpartisan Political Policy**

–The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.” -- Article II, Section 2, LWVUS Bylaws & Article II, Section 2, LWV of Saratoga County Bylaws.

The League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. However, it shall not support nor oppose any political party or any candidate.

Recognizing that the League experience uniquely equips members for public life and wishing to encourage members to utilize their knowledge and abilities, non-Board members are urged to participate fully in activities (on an individual basis). Board members activities must be limited to preserve the League’s nonpartisan position.

No Board member shall run for or hold partisan political office. If a Board member declares for partisan elective office the member should resign from the Board.

Public notices released by the League announcing the resignation of a Board member to run for political office should be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning Board member’s candidacy.

The President, voters’ service director and the holder of any other Board position deemed sensitive shall not undertake any action which will cause them to be identified publicly as supporting any candidate for office or any political party. Other Board members shall not chair or administer fundraising for political campaigns, or chair campaign events. Board members may contribute to candidates or parties in any amount below that which will trigger public disclosure.

A Board member may serve on any 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.

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

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

The League’s nonpartisan reputation is strong enough to ensure that contributions to the LWV from office holders or candidates can be accepted without being misconstrued as endorsements

of the donors.

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

## **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

## **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

## 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.

## **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.

### **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

## V. 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](http://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](http://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](http://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**

#### **AUGUST**

8/1 - Send our membership renewal reminder  
Plan fall kick-off event  
Plan new member campaign  
Ready TAKE ME TO VOTE! materials and contacts  
August 15 – Bulletin Deadline  
Begin voters service activities - Primaries  
Mail September Bulletin: Friday before Labor Day  
Recruit committees  
Farmer's Market Saturdays

#### **SEPTEMBER**

9/1 - Send our membership renewal reminder  
Deliver TAKE ME TO VOTE! materials to schools  
Fall kick-off event  
Voters service activities  
Bulletin Deadline- September 16, 2009  
Primary Day- 3rd Tuesday in September  
State League fall workshops?  
General Membership Meeting  
Farmer's Market - Saturdays  
Board Meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
Mail October Bulletin- Sept 28, 2009  
9/30 - Bank quarterly interest due  
Send out 4th Membership Renewal reminder  
Organize Nominating Committee

#### **OCTOBER**

10/1 - Send our membership renewal reminder  
Candidates Forums  
Organize Poll reporting  
New Member Orientation Meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> quarter National PMP due  
10/31 - State PMP due  
Prepare Fund raising letters for mailing  
General Membership Meeting  
Board Meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
Arrange for PR on TMTV! to appear just prior to Election  
October 15 - Bulletin deadline  
Mail November Bulletin – October 28, 2009

## NOVEMBER

Election Day - 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday after 1<sup>st</sup> Monday  
Arrange for photographer to take TMTV! poll pictures  
Mail Fundraising Appeal Letters – Day after Election Day  
Follow up on membership renewals  
Year-end membership recruitment  
Order Plaques for TMTV! classes  
Arrange for Assembly member to visit winning TMTV! classes  
Plan for Holiday Party – Send invitation instead of December Bulletin  
General Membership Meeting  
Board Meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
Report to State Farm on activities for the year  
11/15 - IRS e-filing date due

## DECEMBER

Holiday Party  
Deadline for January Bulletin, December 15, 2009  
Nominating Committee begins work  
Begin planning for annual meeting  
12/1 - Bank quarterly interest due

## JANUARY

Mail grant request to Soroptomist International of Saratoga  
Send in Grant requests to Stewart's and State Farm  
Send out 1st vote materials  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration  
Update membership roster by 1/31 for state/national count  
Appoint budget and bylaws committees  
Bulletin Deadline – January 15, 2010  
Mail January Bulletin- Jan 4, 2010  
Mail February Bulletin – January 27, 2010  
State or national program planning  
3<sup>rd</sup> quarter National PMP due  
1/31 - 3rd quarter State PMP due  
General Membership Meeting  
Board meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening

## FEBRUARY

Request in kind donations for LeaderSpark  
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 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
LeaderSpark Sessions  
Mail March Bulletin – March 25, 2010

Bulletin Deadline – February 15, 2010  
Voters Service - begin planning for School Board election  
LeaderSpark sessions begin

#### March

Legislative Breakfast/ Odd numbered years  
LeaderSpark Sessions continue  
Board determines recommendations for Annual Meeting  
Annual meeting kit preparations  
General Membership Meeting  
Board meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
Prepare materials to be distributed to School Board candidates  
Begin planning next year's Famous Person Fundraising Event  
Bulletin deadline, March 15, 2010  
Mail April Bulletin – March 29, 2010  
3/20 - NYS annual sales use tax due  
3/31 - Bank quarterly interest due

#### APRIL

4<sup>th</sup> quarter National PMP due  
4/30 - State PMP due  
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 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
Determine which school districts have contested elections, by end of April  
Bulletin deadline – April 15  
Mail May Bulletin – April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

#### May

General Membership Meeting  
Board Meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening  
School Board Elections – third Tuesday in May  
Annual Meeting [or in June]  
State Convention - weekend after Mother's Day: odd years

#### JUNE

6/31 Fiscal Year ends  
6/30 - Bank quarterly interest due  
Arrange for audit/review of financial matters  
Annual Meeting [or in May]  
National Convention – usually Father's Day weekend: 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

1<sup>st</sup> quarter 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