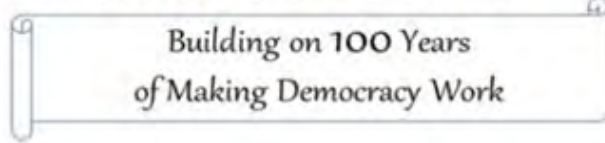




LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF SARATOGA COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023





ANNUAL REPORT

League of Women Voters of Saratoga County (NY-639)
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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization, fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Through education and advocacy, we encourage informed and active participation of all citizens in government and major public policy issues.

The LWV of Saratoga County does not support or oppose any candidate or political party. We take positions on issues. This has been the League's policy since our founding in 1920.

YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVOCACY

The past year was a sobering year for women and human rights advocates. Severe rollbacks on hard fought rights, including reproductive rights, were put in place. Oppression has surged and human rights are on the defensive. Equal rights are essential for democracy. The League of Women Voters, including the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, is as needed now as it has ever been in the fight for democracy and equal rights for all.

To meet this moment, the **Women's Rights Awareness Campaign** was formed. The Campaign's first goal is to educate members of the *Alice Brigade* (named in honor of Alice Paul) about the history, obstacles, and path toward equal rights under the law. Brigade members will then go forth into the community to increase public awareness of the disparity women have faced and why we must change that. This new initiative is already making waves. Heading into a year where both the New York State ERA and the federal ERA can finally be achieved, this work will multiply in effort and impact.

Along with our League's **Environment Committee**, members of the Capital District Leagues, which includes Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady Counties, worked to educate the public and get out the vote to pass The Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. This Capital District League coalition also worked together on two educational events, the Meetup on the *Electrification of Buildings* and *The Story of Plastic* film viewing and discussion. This coalition of Leagues also submitted our **Four League Position on Waste** for concurrence statewide. The group lobbied to get the position recommended by LWVNY for concurrence and were successful. The position was adopted as a statewide position at the LWVNY Biennial Convention in June.

Our League organized a panel discussion entitled **Religious Medical Systems and Bodily Autonomy** focused on reproductive healthcare, healthcare access for transgender individuals, and end-of-life care. The conversation addressed the impact of religious directives that dictate the types of care that healthcare facilities owned or affiliated with religious institutions can and cannot deliver to the community. Our League co-sponsored this event with the Capital District Leagues and the organization **Compassion and Choices**.

The **Advocacy Committee** coordinated small groups of members in visits with state Assembly and Senate representatives to advocate for the League's most pressing issues. Topics included voting, elections, campaign finance, and good government; environmental issues; equality of opportunity; criminal justice; and healthcare bills.

Statewide studies on **Ranked Choice Voting** and New York's voting system approval process were discussed and approved for League support. Our League also drafted an update to our local position on **Economic Development** which will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

PARTNERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Banned Book Reading LWV Statement of Support:

"We strive to ensure and expand on individual rights as guaranteed by the Constitution, essential to an inclusive democracy. We challenge any attempts to suppress civil liberties and work to safeguard them through our education, advocacy, and lobbying efforts."

- Members from the LWV Saratoga marched in the annual Elks Flag Day Parade. Our League was part of a group of organizations that included MLK Saratoga, Saratoga Pride, and Saratoga Education Equity Network (SEEN). We united to celebrate diversity and inclusiveness under the banner "One Nation, Indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for All."
- Our League was one of eight sponsors of a banned book reading at Caffe Lena.
- We tabled in support of AAUW's Women's Equality Day event in Glens Falls.
- League members volunteered in support of the bench dedication to honor Lt Colonel Clarence Dart.
- Our League set up a 'trunk' and a table at BLM Saratoga's Trunk or Treat to give out voter guides as well as candy and kid bracelets.



MEMBERSHIP

Our Membership

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.
The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County continues to be over 200 members strong. Our active membership is continually increasing visibility, expanding opportunities to collaborate with diverse community organizations, and working our mission.

The **Membership Committee** now includes volunteer match makers who work to connect members, both new and old, with League opportunities that match their passions. One way to accomplish the League's mission is to grow the League and the Membership Committee worked hard all year to do just that. They updated the outreach brochure, created the membership directory, and reached out by phone and email to connect members more closely to the work of the League.

Our **Famous Person Fundraiser** brought a performance entitled *Remarkable Women of the Adirondacks* by Sandra Weber and David Hodges. Their vignettes gave us a glimpse into the lives of local heroines. This fundraiser was held in Saratoga National Golf Club's Bluestone Tent. The weather brought us a lovely July day to gather and the event raised \$5,000 for the League's educational work.

The **Nominating Committee** not only fulfilled its duty providing a slate of Directors and Officers for election at the annual meeting, it also revised the committee chair description for the League handbook, updating the responsibilities and guidelines with links to LWVNYS and LWVUS Nominating Committee resources and developing templates to use by future Nominating Committees when preparing the leadership slate. The committee navigated a transition from a Steering Committee model to a Co-President model for the coming year.



VOTER SERVICES

Voter registration and voter education continue to be a cornerstone of the League's work. League volunteers coordinated and staffed tables at the Saratoga Farmers' Market and special events. Trained volunteers educated voters on redistricting, answered questions about polling locations, promoted Vote411 and, yes, registered voters. Redistricted lines in effect for the 2022 general election provided a special challenge and opportunity for the League to assist voters with the new district boundaries.

Our League also has a presence at local naturalization ceremonies. At ceremonies held this year at the Saratoga Battlefield in July and in Washington County in February, we provided voter registration materials, First Vote information, US flags, and copies of the US Constitution to naturalization candidates.

On September 20th, volunteers from our League led other community groups in registering voters and providing voter information as part of **National Voter Registration Day**. We had a presence at 15 venues and registered 56 people, many of them students at the Wilton campus of SUNY Adirondack. Throughout the day volunteers answered many voter questions about redistricting and how it affected them. Prior to the big day, volunteers were trained to register voters and provide accurate and nonpartisan voter information. We shared user-friendly maps and information on Vote411.

The 2022 general election season was exceptionally busy for the League's Voter Services team. LWV Saratoga hosted and co-hosted six **Meet the Candidate Events**: US Congress District 20, NY State Supreme Court Justices 4th District, NY State Senate District 44, NY Assembly District 113, NY Assembly District 112, and the City of Saratoga Springs Commissioner of Public Works. This was a season of firsts: The first election with the newly redistricted lines, the first LWV Saratoga candidate events live streamed via Zoom, and the first judicial candidate forum for the NY State Supreme Court 4th District. The League's Judicial Forum had a replay audience of over 800 views. The candidate forums had almost 2,000 views online following the events and the 20th Congressional Debate alone had over 2,000 views beyond those that watched it live on WMHT.



Our League also worked with three school districts to provide in-person and live streamed Meet the Candidates Events. These gave voters the opportunity to become better informed by hearing directly from their School Board candidates about issues which matter most to them.

Vote411 successfully covered all elections in Saratoga County over the past year: General Election, Village Elections, School Board Elections, and the Primaries. Voters were able to find candidate information, voting access information, and links to candidate forums all in one site. Our League's website provided direct links, race by race, for League members as well as the public.

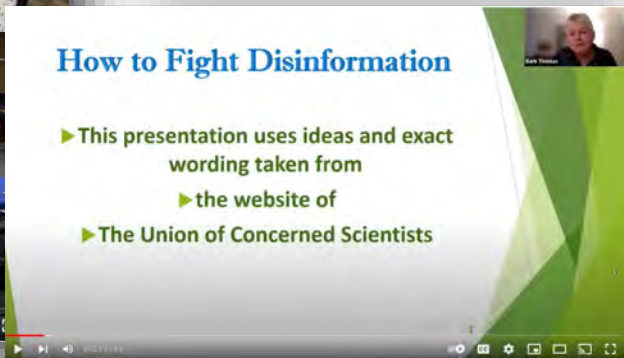
EDUCATION

Youth are the future, and the League's youth programs focus on civics education for these future voters. The League's **Youth Programs** coordinated the process for two local students to attend LWVNY's *Students Inside Albany* program. As the program was canceled last year due to an increase in COVID risk, the two students awarded the opportunity as Juniors were able to finally attend as Seniors. They also received a student membership to the League.

LWV Saratoga held both in-person and virtual **Book Club** gatherings each month for members. Discussions covered a variety of topics, not always based on the books. One of the best things about the League's Book Club is that you don't have to read the book to join in!

MEETUPS

Our **Meetups**, which are our monthly members meetings, explored issues that are aligned with League priorities. Most meetups this year were once again held on Zoom and included: *Ensuring Fair, Accessible, and Accurate Elections*; *Bail Reform and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System*; *The Roots and Rise of White Nationalism in USA*; *How to Fight Disinformation*; and *Electrifying the Empire State with All-Electric, Emission-Free Homes*. We developed Zoom registration guidelines that were included with all Zoom email notices. We also engaged in the work of the League by participating in LWVNY's program planning, and we met to gather initial ideas for topics for the 2023-24 season. We were able to gather in-person for our fall membership orientation enjoying time together with ice cream and laughter. We are hopeful that we will be able to meet in-person for some of our Meetups this season.



2023 Nominating Committee Report

In 2015, the Nominating Committee learned that LWVUS had issued a ruling that permitted local Leagues to try new leadership models before changing the bylaws because local Leagues across the country were having challenges finding members willing to serve as President. To share leadership more broadly, the Nominating Committee that year put forward a slate using the Steering Committee leadership configuration with up to four Steering Committee people performing the duties of the President. In 2017, the Steering Committee configuration was added to the LWV of Saratoga County bylaws as an acceptable leadership configuration that the Nominating Committee could use for putting together a slate of nominees or they could use the traditional President/Co-President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President configuration for the slate of nominees.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Stacey Lamodi, Joanna Lasher, Susan Ranson, Quency Rene, and Lori Dawson, Chair, present the following report for adoption at the June 14 League of Women Voters of Saratoga County Annual Meeting.

Continuing service in two-year term ending June 2024:

2nd Vice President: Susan Hamlin

Treasurer: Mandy Herrington

Director: Charlotte Druschel

Director: Patricia Partello

Director: Quency Rene

Nominees to be elected for two-year term ending June 2025:

Co-Presidents: Linda McKenney and Ann Marie Pendergast

1st Vice President: Monica Seebode

Secretary: Rick Hasenauer

Director: Christine Alexander

Director: Deb Peck Kelleher

Director: Pamela King-Hall

Nominating Committee off-board members to be elected

for one-year term ending June 2024:

Mary Lou Classen, Stacey Lamodi, Lori Dawson, Chair

∞ **Update from the Budget Committee**

The Budget Committee, consisting of Susan Ransom, AC Riley, Mandy Herrington, and Mary Lou Classen, met on March 10, 2023, to review the actual income and expenses for the year up to February 28, 2023.

The Committee took into account any updated budget requests that were submitted by March 10th, 2023. Based on this review, a few items were changed for the upcoming year. As shown in the actual budget, for **Income**: There is a projected lower income for membership dues and fundraising. Our breakfast fundraiser brought in more money as a result of a refund from the Golf Course. In **Expenses**: Many of our social media expenses have increased. We added a line for Women’s Rights Awareness Campaign (WRAC).

It was brought to our attention that some Committees did not know they had a budget line. If your Committee needs to spend money, check the budget first. If there is no line for your Committee, best practice is to ask the Board for approval to spend money that has not been included in the budget. Committees should ask the Board for approval to spend what is needed to continue the League’s good work.

—Mary Lou Classen, Budget Committee Chair

	General Fund Budget 2022-23	General Fund Fiscal 22-23 YTD	General Fund PROPOSED 23-24	Education Fund Budget 2022-23	Education Fund Fiscal 22/23 YTD	Education Fund PROPOSED 23-24	Total Budget 2022-2023	Total YTD Fiscal 22-23 YTD	Total PROPOSED 23-24
INCOME									
1. DUES	12,000.00	10,025.00	11,000.00				12,000.00	10,025.00	11,000.00
2. CONTRIBUTIONS	1,200.00	1,280.00	1,200.00	300.00	1,360.00	500.00	1,500.00	2,640.00	1,700.00
3. INTEREST	10.00	5.84	10.00				10.00	5.84	10.00
4. VOTER SERVICES	300.00	125.00	300.00				300.00	125.00	300.00
5. ANNUAL MEETING	1,500.00		1,000.00				1,500.00		1,000.00
6. FUNDRAISING PROJECTS				5,000.00	6,660.00		5,000.00	6,660.00	5,000.00
7. CORP & COMMUNITY GRANTS*				1600.00			1,600.00		1,000.00
8. MISCELLANEOUS	100.00		100.00				100.00		100.00
9. HOLIDAY PARTY	1,500.00		1,500.00				1,500.00		1,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	16,610.00	11,435.84	15,110.00	6,900.00	8,040.00	6,500.00	22,510.00	19,475.84	21,610.00
FROM RESERVES	13,165.00		12,210.00	2,075.00		2,600.00	15,260.00		14,810.00
TOTAL RESOURCES BUDGETE	29,795.00		27,320.00	8,975.00		9,100.00	37,770.00		36,420.00

COMBINED RESOURCES	
Beginning Balance 2/1/23	\$ 36,933.59
Current Balance 2/28/23	\$ 36,866.36
GENERAL FUND	
Checking 2/28/23	\$ 13,664.43
Savings 2/28/23	\$ 23,201.93
Total Cash Balance 2/28/23	\$ 36,866.36
EDUCATION FUND 2/28/23	\$ 10,514.47

EXPENSES	General Fund Budget 2022-23	General Fund Fiscal 22-23 YTD	General Fund PROPOSED 23-24	Education Fund Budget 2022-23	Education Fund Fiscal 22/23 YTD	Education Fund PROPOSED 23-24	Total Budget 2022-2023	Total YTD Fiscal 22-23 YTD	Total PROPOSED 23-24
10. GENERAL OPERATION COSTS									
10a. SUPPLIES	220.00	161.36	220.00				220.00		220.00
10b. POSTAGE	700.00	323.96	700.00				700.00	323.96	700.00
10c. POST OFFICE BOX	200.00	182.00	200.00				200.00	182.00	200.00
10d. ZOOM	200.00	383.84	550.00				200.00	383.84	550.00
10e. PAYPAL EXPENSE	125.00	143.90	150.00	25.00			150.00	143.90	150.00
10f. MISC OPERATING EXPENS	100.00	155.86	200.00				100.00	155.86	200.00
10g. COMMUNICATIONS	600.00		600.00				600.00		600.00
10h. EQUIPMENT	3,000.00		3,000.00				3,000.00		3,000.00
11. LWV STATE & NATIONAL PR	12,000.00	3,165.39	11,000.00				12,000.00	3,165.39	11,000.00
12. CONFERENCES & CONVEN	4,000.00		4,000.00				4,000.00		4,000.00
13. NEWSLETTERS	1,500.00	590.00	800.00				1,500.00	590.00	800.00
14. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE	600.00		600.00				600.00		600.00
15. VOTER SERVICES									
15a. VOTER REGISTRATION				300.00		300.00	300.00		300.00
15b. CANDIDATE EVENTS				1000.00		500.00	1,000.00		500.00
15c. VOTER GUIDES				150.00	315.00	300.00	150.00	315.00	300.00
15d. NAT. VOTER REG. DAY				500.00	100.00	500.00	500.00	100.00	500.00
15e. VOTE 411				50.00		50.00	50.00		50.00
16. MEETING EXPENSES/RENT	500.00		300.00				500.00		300.00
17. ANNUAL MEETING	1,500.00	157.25	1,000.00				1,500.00	157.25	1,000.00
18. FUND RAISING EXPENSES				4,500.00	3,279.70	4,500.00	4,500.00	3,279.70	4,500.00
19. YOUTH PROGRAMS									
19a. TAKE ME TO VOTE				850.00		850.00	850.00		850.00
19b. FIRST VOTE				950.00		950.00	950.00		950.00
19c. STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY				650.00		650.00	650.00		650.00
20. MISCELLANEOUS									
21. GRANTS AND GIVING	250.00		200.00				250.00		200.00
22. (SOCIAL MEDIA) WEB FEES	400.00	313.04	450.00				400.00	313.04	450.00
23. COMMUNITY EDUC. EVENT	1,500.00		1,000.00			500.00	1,500.00		1,500.00
24. HOLIDAY PARTY	1,500.00		1,500.00				1,500.00		1,500.00
25. ADVOCACY	150.00		150.00				150.00		150.00
26. DIVERSITY	750.00	100.00	500.00				750.00	100.00	500.00
27. WRAC			200.00						200.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	29,795.00	5,676.60	27,320.00	8,975.00	3,694.70	9,100.00	38,770.00	9,209.94	36,420.00

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Adopted April 13, 2000, Revised June 8, 2013

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County believes that the individuals who live in Saratoga County are entitled to a basic level of emergency response - emergency medical, fire, police - regardless of their place of residence or ability to pay.

We believe that combining emergency medical services (EMS) and fire responders in one organization would typically result in quicker response times and more efficient delivery of services. This would be especially true if these services were co-located in buildings housing the more numerous fire stations. Such efficiency would be gained through streamlining of administrations, more effective deployment of personnel, and cost saving in space sharing. Further, we believe that combining medical and fire emergency services should be a goal that all municipalities in this county work toward in situations where the staffs of both services are all paid employees.

We believe that paid employees can be required to have the level of cross training necessary to make the combined response work. We believe that having a combined service is not a goal the county should work toward in those municipalities where the staff of the services are all volunteer or some combination of volunteer and paid. There is some evidence that requiring cross training of volunteers, no matter how desirable, will not be effective and ultimately will result in a reduction of the total supply of volunteers.

The League believes that the current governance methods for supporting emergency medical services are acceptable, be they private non-profit corporations, town government or ambulance district. We also find governance by county government to be acceptable. We do not find it acceptable to have a for-profit ambulance service, unless contractually bound, because it might limit the service to those who can afford it.

Additionally, we believe that county government is the preferable level for taxing, distribution of funds, and administering emergency medical services.

Methods of funding for EMS that are acceptable are local tax district, fee for service, and the county wide tax. Communities need a diversified funding mechanism to provide services in order to make them available to all regardless of income. We do not believe that private fund-raising should be relied on for basic services although it could be used for optional items like incentives for volunteers.

Methods of funding for fire departments that are acceptable: local tax districts and a county wide tax. Again, private fund raising should not be relied on for basic services, but it could be used for optional items. Fee for service is not an acceptable method of funding fire response since public safety might be compromised.

So long as all EMS staff is required to have the same training, we find acceptable methods of staffing to be: all volunteer, combination of paid and volunteer, all paid. We are cognizant of the trend towards more and more paid staff which is usually supported in large part by fee for service payments.

For the quickest response by our emergency services it is important that all properties be clearly and prominently numbered. Relying on a GPS system to be accurate and available is not always an option.

Although police services are considered part of Emergency Services, at the time of the original 2000 study and at the current update, we found it impossible to gather enough information to determine the way that police services and funding are allocated from the State Police, the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department and the local police departments.

THE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OVERSIGHT OF SARATOGA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Adopted January 17, 2007, Updated January 16, 2013 and May 30, 2015, proposed update June 14, 2023

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County believes that Saratoga County's economic development allocations and entities should adhere to the following principles:

Activities should include, but not be limited to, providing assistance to any municipality requesting such assistance in devising economic development plans, while respecting the autonomy and authority of municipalities in creating their own growth scenarios through their Comprehensive Plans.

Any economic development entity created and or funded by the County should be subject to the direction of the County Board of Supervisors and, in order to promote accountability and transparency, should comply with complete and accurate reporting and open meeting requirements. Saratoga County and/or the Saratoga County Industrial Development Agency should have a formal contract for any services to be provided by any such entity. Such contracts should include but not be limited to specific deliverables that are outlined and measurable. Any such entity should be required to provide annual public reports on its accomplishments against the contract deliverables.

Any project should be subject to Smart Growth principles, including focusing development on existing infrastructure and municipal centers while protecting natural resources and open space, in order to revitalize communities and limit sprawl. Projects should adhere to diversity, equity and inclusion principles. Projects involving workforce development should be limited to those efforts that will enhance economic, personal, and social well-being for project employees, including livable wages, health insurance, and other fringe benefits.



GOVERNANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Adopted April 5, 2017

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County believes that it is important to have a clear separation of powers, and checks and balances in County Government and therefore we support having an elected County Executive.

Additional reasons for supporting a County Executive are that because the County Executive would be elected county-wide the Executive would be focused on the needs of the County as a whole; and because the term of office would be longer than the current one-year term of the Chair of the Board of Supervisors continuity and long range planning would be enhanced.

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County believes that Cities in this County should separate their administrative functions from their legislative functions by having a City Council that makes policy and laws and either an elected executive or an appointed administrator to carry out administrative functions. The League supports this separation of functions in order to have a strong centralized administration, to have clear lines of responsibility and to eliminate waste.

Background: In 2015 we adopted a study of whether local governments in Saratoga County (villages, towns, cities and county government) should separate executive or administrative functions from legislative (policy making) functions.

The study committee soon determined that the structure of government for Villages is specified in NYS Law, and calls for a mayor who serves as executive and Council members who make policy, a clear separation of legislative from executive functions.

Likewise, the committee determined that the structure of government for Towns is specified in NYS Law and consists of a Town Council, chaired by a Supervisor, and an elected Highway Superintendent. There is no clear separation of legislative and administrative functions, although many Supervisors function as though the law gave them executive powers.

Note that at the time of this study (2015-2017):

- The County is governed by a Board of Supervisors, with each Supervisor being elected by its Town or City, and casting a population-weighted vote on the County Board. The Supervisors (except those from the cities and one of those from the Town of Clifton Park) also serve as the Supervisor of their Town Government.
- The two cities in this County (Mechanicville and Saratoga Springs) are governed by a Commission form of government, with each Commissioner serving as a member of the City Council and also administering a Department.

The committee confined its study to the County government and to the government of the two cities in the county.

