



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

SUMMER 2007

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MEMBERSHIP: MARIA EISNER 277-4404

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MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

First, I want to thank you for your vote of confidence in me as your new president. I thank Tee-Ann Hunter for a job well done for the past two years.

We are in the process of planning an exciting agenda of programs for our monthly general meetings next year. We will start off in September with a speaker on immigration. This will be the kick-off meeting for our newly formed study group.

We are initiating a committee that will keep us up-to-date on healthcare issues. Rebecca Elgie attended the LWV State Convention's workshop on this topic and has a wealth of information. You may remember that Rebecca gave a presentation on single-payer health insurance last year. If you are interested in being a member of this committee contact Rebecca.

You will soon receive a letter from our membership officer, Maria Eisner, announcing a newly instituted membership fee structure. It is amazing to know that from the current \$45 membership dues, our local league ends up with approximately 20 cents! Most of our membership dues goes to the state and national leagues. I hope you will consider paying the higher membership dues of \$55.

In the membership letter you will also have an opportunity to sign up for our study groups and committees. These activities are at the heart of our local league's work. Come on board and get involved.

Kay Sharp, President.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome three new members:

Ms. Barbara J. Foote 474 Savage Farm Dr.
Ms. Christine M. Olson 1 Lowell Place
Ms. Joan Sears 309 E Court Street

Please tell your friends about the League this summer. We will be studying immigration this fall, an intriguing subject, especially for an immigrant — like myself.

Maria Eisner



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WELCOME TO OUR THREEE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Voter Service: Barbara Curit Thorp

Born and raised in New England, Barbara Curit arrived in Ithaca as a Cornell Freshman in 1955. Her plan was to go on to medical school and she received her BA degree in Zoology in 1959. However, she married Jim Thorp the week after graduation and helped support their family, while her husband completed graduate degrees in Electrical Engineering, by assisting Professor Bill Wimsatt in his bat studies, both as a Laboratory Assistant and a Research Associate.

Jim and Barbara's children, Jeffrey and Betsy, were born in 1961 and 1962. Unfortunately, the marriage did not last and Barbara and Jim were divorced in 1975. Barbara shifted gears and found work in the construction industry, working for Triangle Steel as Contracts Administrator and Project Manager from 1975 until 1992.

Her love of science never abated and, when an opportunity arose in 1992 to join the fledgling Sciencenter, she jumped at it; first as a volunteer on the planning committee for the new facility and finally as Director of Operations, a position that she held until her retirement in November of 2006.

Barbara now spends time as a volunteer with several Ithaca service agencies. She also can finally take the time to walk with her neighbors, visit her daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren in Brunswick, NY, and, of course, hang out with Thunder and Lightning—her cats.

Secretary: Jane W. McGonigal

Jane W. McGonigal first joined the LWV in Schuyler County 40+ years ago. She moved to Tompkins County in 1978 and has been active in the Tompkins County LWV in various ways since then—selling UNICEF cards, chairing Voters Service, training moderators, working in

study groups and now as secretary. She retired from Cornell Cooperative Extension in 1996, as director of the staffing and professional development unit. At present Jane is a member of the Cornell Protestant Cooperative Ministry Board of Directors and chairs the Endowment Committee. She and her husband, Carl Crispell, operate an organic farm near Ithaca, and keep travel options active, both in the United States and other countries. Our most recent trip was a two week journey in Egypt.

Vice President, Programs: Martha Hamblin

Martha Hamblin grew up in small-town New England and spent her twenties in upstate NY, New Jersey, and Oregon. She moved to Ithaca in 1982 to take a job at Cornell and has mostly lived here since then. She currently studies the genetics of crop plants, primarily sorghum and maize, and is quite interested in (but not very knowledgeable about) agricultural policy and the food system.

During her thirties, Martha was very involved with the Greenstar coop, and was part of a failed attempt to start a second coop in Collegetown after Egan's sold out to the housing developers. She also served as Greenstar's representative to the (now defunct) Alternatives Fund for several years. During those years she lived downtown on the Northside, in a somewhat funky house that she bought by herself, and walked up the hill to Cornell every day.

Martha's now-husband persuaded her to move to East Hill in 1994, where she lives in a non-funky house and has to go to the gym because the walk to work is too easy. In 2001, motivated in part by the unfortunate activities of the Bush administration, Martha became involved in Democratic politics. Distressed by the increasing influence of money in politics and the decreasing quality of political discourse and journalism, she decided last November to join the LWV. Martha reads too much, and is trying to learn to play the violin.

52nd LWVNY Convention Highlights

Cheryl Graeve, Membership Director, LWVUS, presented a workshop on the new Membership Recruitment Initiative. The average LWV member today is 72.9 years old, and membership has been declining by about 3%/year for the past 30 years. The LWV is targeting recently retired women ages 50-65 as the low-hanging fruit, appealing to women's desire to have an impact outside the home after retirement, to have opportunities to serve as leaders, and to make their communities strong, safe, and healthy. She discussed ways to increase League visibility in our communities and the importance of extending invitations to all potential members. She also discussed ways to elicit more participation from inactive members. While women ages 50-65 are the group targeted by LWVUS, many participants felt that we needed to bring in younger women as well. The LWVUS does not have any recommendations for this group at this time.

Cheryl Graeve also presented a workshop on Fundamentals of LWV process: consensus, non-partisanship, speaking with one voice. These values distinguish the League from some other organizations that are more ideological, less deliberative. The League's thorough, process-oriented approach to reaching policy positions is what gives us such strong credibility with government and with the public. She distributed a new guide to *Observing Your Government in Action*, just published by LWVUS. It details the best practices of "observer corps" programs in which LWV members attend public meetings of city councils, school boards, planning boards, county legislatures, etc., and write reports that are made available to the public. Especially considering the poor coverage of local government by our local media, such a program would be invaluable in our community and would greatly increase the visibility of the League.

In her first speech as new president of LWVNY, Martha Kennedy emphasized the need for the League to fully utilize modern technology in its

communication and outreach. Better use of e-mail and the Internet will make us more accessible and save money.

Bo Lipari and Aimee Allaud gave an update on implementation of HAVA and in this case having moved slowly on this issue has proved to be a good thing. The certification process was suspended when it was discovered that Ciber did not have approval to conduct all phases of the security testing of voting machines. No voting machines are certified to the 2005 guidelines. Therefore no voting machines now available meet the standard set by the federal government. The hope is that this process can be delayed until after the 2008 elections. A5170 is a bill for a statewide optical scan voting system. Although the Troy City School District used uncertified voting machines in their recent elections, the LWV and New Yorkers for Verified Voting are advocating against the use of uncertified equipment.

Donna Packard-Mahoney, off board health care director, organized a workshop entitled *Universal Health Care in our Time?* presented by Dr. Oliver Fein, a Professor at Cornell Medical School. He gave an excellent overview of the problems and the advantages of a Single Payer, publicly financed, privately delivered system which would avoid the "swiss cheese policies which are full of holes" such as the Massachusetts plan. He notes that none of the state plans which have been enacted in the past 10 years and provided incremental changes has decreased the number of uninsured and in fact in most cases the numbers have risen. That evening we had a caucus and continued the discussion and talked about actions leagues could take part in, such as holding hearings, forums, urging their Representatives to sign on to the bills, passing resolutions, etc. We did propose a motion to change the order of the positions and include the wording that "a single payer system is an acceptable way to control cost and provide equitable access," which was the wording in the legislative agenda brochure, in place of "support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through

public financing.” This change carried by a small margin with some still hesitant to use the term single payer.

Most of the items on the floor passed without much discussion including the budget and the other program items. It was pointed out that the new school financing consensus had not been included under state finances and that was added. The one non-recommended item that was proposed was the suggestion by the Saratoga Springs league that we adopt a study to decide whether NYS should join the compact for a National Popular Vote. This would mean that the popular vote counts from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together to obtain a national grand total for each presidential candidate. This plan would take effect only when enough states enact identical laws so that collectively they have a majority of the electoral votes: that is 270 of the 538 electoral votes. This means that no state could act alone and it guarantees that the presidential

candidate receiving the most popular votes nationwide would win enough electoral votes to become President. There was discussion pro and con; in the main, con from the State Board was that LWVUS wants all leagues to do the immigration study so they had not recommended any new study at the state level. Many expressed that this is an issue of great concern to young people and would appeal to that age group as well as others. The motion passed. Saratoga League has offered to send out materials, many states have already joined the compact and they feel the study should be relatively short and simple.

In general we found the size and tone of the state convention more flexible and relaxed than the national convention which seemed somewhat rigid by comparison. We appreciate the opportunity to represent Tompkins County LWV.

Martha Hamblin & Rebecca Elgie

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2006-07

LWV NYS website

LWV US website

LWV-Tompkins County

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Off-Board Members

Events Coordinator	Germaine Colvin	257-5446	gcolvin111@aol.com
Web Master	Michael Duttweiler	277-0006	mdutt@twcnny.rr.com

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Sunny is working on the application to the Federal IRS to recognize the LWVTC Education Fund, Inc. as a tax exempt organization under Sec. 501(c)(3). This would let people make tax-free donations to the Fund, Inc. directly, instead of through the Community Foundation, and also give the Fund, Inc. easier access to the money we already have in the Community Foundation. Some questions about the application require information from George Ferrari, the executive director of the Community Foundation, but he hasn't responded yet.

With several new officers of the League assuming their positions, the membership of the Fund, Inc. has also changed: Kay Sharp, as president is also chair of the Fund, Inc.; Debbie Levin moves from membership as 1st VP/Program to membership as Voters Service chair; Martha Hamblin joins as 1st VP/program; as does Barbara Thorpe as Voters Service co-chair. Because the bylaws of the Fund, Inc. require a meeting annually in May or June, and because 6 of the 7 members are present at the League Board meeting, with everyone's consent to waive the advance notice requirement, we conducted the (very brief) annual meeting immediately after the Board meeting ended.

Synnova Gooding

CANDIDATES' MEETING

The Candidates' Forum for the Ithaca City School Board elections took place on Thursday, May 10, at 7 p.m. in the Ithaca High School cafeteria. It was sponsored by the High School PTA Council, the AAUW and our local League. There were between 40 and 50 people present.

Candidates Robert Ainslee, Bradley Grainger and Elizabeth Kunz and incumbents Judith Maxwell and Robert Deluca were present.

Tee Ann Hunter welcomed all on behalf of the LWV, Margaret Nichols on behalf of the AAUW and Deb Casey on behalf of the PTA Council. Lucia Armstrong, the moderator, then explained the rules. The candidates had three minutes for their initial statements. Libby deProse, Sunny Gooding and Kathy Burlitch were the timers. The audience was invited to come to the microphone to ask questions. These touched subjects like "a policy for affordability and sustainability," "high expectation programs that are workable," "the low graduation rate of black students; who is to be held accountable for it, what are ways to improve the situation?," "the need for more teachers' aids," "is school security adequate?," "a fine and performing arts program," "a place for teachers, students, administrators and parents to take concerns to." All candidates responded to each question and concern. The forum was subsequently aired five times on Channel 13.

Maria Eisner

LWVTC CALENDAR—FALL 2007

--- Tues., June 19	ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE	
--- Thurs., Aug. 9	NATURALIZATION DAY	
7:30 Mon., July 9	Planning Meeting	(Martha Hamblin)
7:00 Mon., Aug. 27	Board Meeting	(Kay Sharp)
7:00 Mon., Sept. 10	Board Meeting	(Kathy Burlitch)
7:00 Mon., Sept. 17	GENERAL MEETING (Immigration)	TBA
7:00 Mon., Oct. 1	Board Meeting	(Jane McGonigal)
7:00 Mon., Nov. 12	Board Meeting	(Debbie Levin)
9:30 Sat., Dec. 1	Board Meeting	(Maria Eisner)

HISTORY EXCERPTS OF THE LWVTC**League Studies:**

Financing education: studied several times
 Alternatives to incarceration: Drug courts 1993
 Voting rights amendments of 1970
 18 year-old vote
 Equal rights for women (ERA failure)
 Voter registration—Motor voter, HAVA
 Urban renewal: Downtown walking tours
 Housing needs of Tompkins County
 Transportation 1972

Bell Station, Save the Lake organization
 Barge Canal Administration
 County Charter 1968
 Foreign policy in the nuclear age
 Voting rights for D.C. (on-going)
 Tompkins County assessments
 Reapportionment 1969
 New York State budget process
 Household hazards
 Clean water: ground water and aquifers
 Clean air
 Energy needs—future problems
 Health care

Campaign finance reform
 Death penalty

PPR—Permanent personal registration
 Title VII, Civil Rights Act

Extension of Civil Service rules in all Counties
 Merit system
 Consolidation of County Welfare services
 Study of County taxes

Tompkins County government—publications followed
 City government—Charter revision 58-59
 Disarmament and support of League of Nations
 International cooperation—trade and tariffs
 United Nations

Political Contributions of League Members:

Helen Heafer: First women on the County Board of Representatives

Ruth deWire: Tompkins County Hospital organizer

Virginia Bizzell: BOCES Board of Education

Beverly Livesay: Board of Representatives

Shirley Raffensburger: Town of Ithaca Supervisor

Cathy Valantino: Town of Ithaca Supervisor

Cally Grigorov: Town of Ithaca Board

Barbara Holcomb: Chairman of Planning Board, Town of Ithaca; Health Planning Council Central New York; Tompkins County Charter Commission

Eva Hoffmann: Town of Ithaca Board, TOI Conservation Board

Barbara Caldwell: Planning Board of Dryden Township

Doris Brown: Planning Board of Lansing Village, Housing study; Bell Station—Save the Lake

Lynn Leopold: Planning Board of Lansing Village; Tompkins County Recycling Dept.

Aurora Valenti: Clerk of Tompkins County

Nancy Schuler: Tompkins County Legislator

Dooley Kiefer: Tompkins County Legislator; Board in Cayuga Heights

Mary Russell: Ithaca Town Board

Pat Leary: Ithaca Town Board

Mary McGinnis: School Board Ithaca

Nancy Ramage: Ithaca School Board

Margaret Harding: President Ithaca School Board

Carol Sisler: Director of Historic Ithaca

Jean McPheeters: Chamber of Commerce

Connie Hill: Save the Lake—preventing Nuclear Plant on Cayuga

Marty Allee: Save the Lake—preventing Nuclear plant on Cayuga

Libby deProsse: Town of Ithaca Conservation Board

Human Services Leaders:

Sandra Lyon: Displaced Homemakers founder

Marian Van Soest: Suicide Prevention administrator

Nina Miller: Suicide Prevention administrator; Planned Parenthood; Hospicare of T.C.

Jane Segalkin: Breast Cancer Alliance

Marnie Johnson: Health Planning Council of Central New York; Board member of Tompkins County Action (EOC)

Ruth Pettingill: Family and Children's Service founder

June Rogers: Founded Tompkins County Day Care Council

Debbie Levin: one of the founders of The Science Center

Hortense Gibbs: Board of the Southside Center

Lucia Armstrong: English as a second language

Mary Berkelman: Taught GRE students at the County Jail

Joan Bechhofer: PPTC consultant for patients

Sara Pines: scavenger for food for the poor

Nancy Potter: Cooperative Extension

Rebecca Elgie: Health care for all—Single Payer

Janet Fitchen: Author of book on rural poverty



YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

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