

Annual Report League of Women Voters Utica/Rome Metro Area May 20, 2017

Our 2016 – 2017 organizational year was a busy time for our members as you will note as you read the various reports of our activities. The Shared Leadership model instituted two years ago resulted in considerable support and reaching out to help our League become stronger and even more active. The members of the team shared their expertise and knowledge in planning and carrying out chapter responsibilities along with a great Board of Directors, smoothly and with graciousness. Lorrie Wasielewski, Nancy Agen, Barbara Gibbs, Karen McBride, and Shirley Hilts-Adams, aided by Carole Torok-Huxtable undertook the task of this relatively new League model with interest and commitment. The coming months will undoubtedly provide us many challenges and opportunities as we experience an ever-changing political landscape.

Several members of our local League joined with other women's groups in welcoming New York's Senator Kirsten Gillibrand for the announcement of the Woman's Suffrage Centennial Commission Act at Munson Williams Proctor Institute on October 3, 2016. Over 100 women attended the announcement ceremony in which Representative Richard Hanna and his young daughter also participated.

We've had a busy, interesting year with several informative meetings on topics related to our community. In addition to monthly voter registration activities at Federal and County Citizenship Ceremonies; a judicial candidate forum and Constitutional Convention information meeting; the selection of a student from local schools to participate in *Students inside Albany*; and members Mary Chapin, Dawn Laguerre, and Florence Wood receiving community recognition awards, general meetings were held on:

- *Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence Prevention*
- *Recycling in the Mohawk Valley*
- *Oneida County Food Policy*
- *Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse* had to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control

Our Annual Meeting speaker, Dare Thompson, LWVNY State President, recounted her *Journey as a Leaguer*, rounding out a very informative and activity-packed League year.

Thank you for your support and interest this past year. We have in our local League a great many talented and knowledgeable members who have contributed much to their community through their activities and involvement.

Shirley Hilts-Adams
First Vice President

Membership (Loretta Wasielewski)

Our membership grew slightly to a current membership of 54. We are very grateful to members who bring friends to our meetings and encourage them to join. Membership for 2016 - 2017 expires at the end of June. Members are asked to renew membership at the Annual Meeting or the September meeting or anytime by sending dues into our post box. If dues are not received by September, members will be reminded by mail to renew. That was done this past year and was successful. Failure to renew in a timely fashion causes a lapse in membership to occur and National and State information ceases to be sent to your emails.

Centennial Committee (Loretta Wasielewski)

November 6, 2017 is the 100 year anniversary of New York State's approval of women's suffrage. The committee has been joined by AAUW to sponsor a cocktail party on that date. PUT IT ON YOUR

CALENDAR now and plan to celebrate and appreciate the hard work and persistence of our foremothers. Expect tickets to be available for this event by early fall.

Additionally, our league convened a meeting of women's organizations this spring. The goal was to avoid duplicating efforts and to promote each other's suffrage events. A shared calendar was created and is now on our website promoting suffrage events locally. Our members have since attended many interesting and educational programs throughout the community. The coalition discussed ways to work together such as our group doing voter registration at certain events and people in attendance expressed an interest in regrouping in three to four months. Our league will facilitate that.

Our league has arranged for a bus trip to the New York State Archives/Museum in Albany to see the special suffrage display of items of their own and borrowed from other museums across the State that show how New York State women and some men built momentum to pass suffrage. The trip is planned for Saturday April 14, 2018. Plan on bringing friends, your children or grandchildren to this event.

Full suffrage was not obtained nationally until 1920 and its success was the rationale for the start of the League of Women Voters so expect many more acknowledgements of women's efforts in the next few years.

Secretary (Barbara Gibbs)

Minutes of monthly Board meetings and the Annual meeting were prepared. A copy of each approved set of minutes is maintained on file. Links to the minutes are posted on the Members Only page of our website, http://www.lwvuticarome.org/members_only.html

Treasurer (Nancy Agen)

We have maintained a solid financial position during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Although the funds that we retain from our dues are limited to \$8 per individual/\$12 per family, with careful planning we have preserved other sources of income and kept expenses to a minimum. Last year we were in need of someone to carry on the responsibility of contacting newsletter sponsors for advertising renewals which is a great source of income for us. Thankfully, Elizabeth Pattengill volunteered and we are most grateful to her. We have continued the holiday plant sale and election night reports. Affiliating ourselves through the auspices of the LWWNY, with the N. Y. Alliance for Donation (organ donation enrollments), we were able to add \$375 to our treasury. This has been a very beneficial arrangement and it is hoped that it will continue in years to come. Links to the monthly financial reports are posted on the Members Only page of our website, http://www.lwvuticarome.org/members_only.html

Nominating Committee (Mary Monaco, Karen McBride)

The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of officers for the upcoming organizational years, 2017-2019:

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term</u>
Mary Monaco	1 st Vice President	2017-2019
Barbara Gibbs	Secretary	2017-2019
Donna Goodwin	Director	2017-2019
Karen McBride	Director	2017-2019
Shirley Hilts-Adams	Director	2017-2019
Dawn Laguerre	Director	2017-2019

Officers and Directors who will continue in office, elected for 2015-17 terms

Lorrie Wasielewski	2 nd Vice President
Nancy Agen	Treasurer
Dianne DiMeo	Director
Carol Fitzgerald	Director
Lucretia Hunt	Director
Donna Rubin	Director
Sally Swierczek	Director

There will be a call for nominations from the floor for any of the open positions during the Annual Meeting, including 2016-18 Nominating Committee.

Program (Barbara Gibbs)

Local Program - Smart Growth 2016-17

Continued to monitor progress of the Oneida County Sewer District Permit Compliance and Abatement Project as it moves steadily toward 2021 completion.

UPDATES

- Operation Ripple Effect (Reroute, Reclaim, Recharge) outreach and awareness expanded its public/private partnerships, presentations, events and website. See: rippleeffectocsd.org for bi-monthly updates.
- Fall 2016 marked the start of a five year series of construction projects, \$44.73 million, at the Pollution Control Plant to address overflows. Upgrades of primary and secondary aerobic digesters will better handle sludge and provide ability to convert the methane gas produced to electric power for sustainable on-site heat and power needs of the building.
- Contracts awarded to upgrade and expand biosolids handling.
- Village of Yorkville assisted in development and realization of a sewer rehab project.
- Working with the Town of Paris on a property I/I (Inflow and Infiltration) program.
- Continuing in 2017-18 are sewer lining, spot repairs and grouting in New Hartford, Village of Yorkville, Village of Whitesboro and Town of Whitestown.

Through 2016, 104 miles of sewer lines and 1345 manholes have been repaired since 2007.

Publicity (Barbara Shuck)

Monthly news releases were sent to all local newspaper and TV stations. The Utica Observer-Dispatch used the articles as submitted. They were usually put in the middle of the page which is a good placement for viewing.

Are you on Facebook? LWVUR now has its own page! Search for and “Join” League of Women Voters Utica/Rome to receive timely notices of our activities that you can share with your Friends.

Students Inside Albany (Dawn LaGuerre)

We have selected an excellent candidate for this year’s Students Inside Albany conference sponsored by the LWV/NYS Education Foundation. The conference will take place May 21-24 and includes high school students from across New York State.

The student that has been selected to represent LWV Utica/Rome this year is Nakiesha Newton, currently a senior at Thomas R. Proctor High School. She holds a 94.5 GPA, is a varsity sports athlete, is a talented musician and is fluent in Mandarin. Despite her rigorous schedule, Nakiesha finds time to volunteer in the community and is an active member of her church. Her career goal is to become a civil rights attorney. We are excited about the talents that Nakiesha will bring to Albany as she represents the Mohawk Valley.

Voter Services (Karen McBride)

Since our May 21, 2016 annual meeting, our Utica/Rome League of Women Voters held a total of 22 voter registration drives registering a total of 180 voters at colleges, farmer’s markets, Utica City Hall, outdoor festivals, and health fairs. Also since the 2016 annual meeting, we registered 207 new citizens to vote. With 2016 being a presidential election year with 3 scheduled primary elections, we finished the calendar year, (Jan. – Dec. 2016) with 586 people registered to vote 359 from registration drives, 227 from 9 naturalization ceremonies. In addition, we signed up approximately 41 people wishing to donate tissues and/or organs via a tear-off section on the NYS voter registration form. We’ve been doing this since mid-2015 to assist the New York Alliance for Donation gain donors.

We distributed to libraries and the general public, over 400 LWVNY-issued Voter Guides, which list registration deadlines, explain the voting process, and describe the platforms of state-wide candidates for office.

Since our quest is to inform and educate the public on issues that affect their every-day lives, on Tuesday, October 25, 2016, at the New Hartford American Legion Post 1376, we sponsored a debate for the two candidates vying for the Oneida County Court Judge position – which drew a crowd of about 85 people. In addition, on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at the same legion hall, we conducted a public forum to inform voters on a prospective New York State Constitutional Convention, (Con-Con), to review and amend the NYS Constitution. This proposal will be on the ballot for the November 7, 2017, General Election. This forum gave attendees an opportunity to learn more about this complex issue from LWVNY Executive Director, Laura Ladd Bierman and LWVNY Program and Policy Director Jennifer Wilson.

We were delighted also for the opportunity, on February 13, to appear on the Bill Keeler Show, WIBX Radio-AM950, to announce and discuss the February 16 public forum, which raised awareness within the community and heightened attendance. Of course, our Voter Service Committee knows well that none of the above-mentioned events could have happened without the support, enthusiasm, and commitment of our associates and fellow League members.

VOTER Newsletter (Dianne DiMeo)

Six editions of the “VOTER” Newsletter were prepared and distributed during the 2016-17 year. In addition, it is posted to our website for wider viewership and archival purposes. Since most members are able to receive the newsletter by email, printing/mailing costs have continued to decline. To help offset the expenses of the newsletter, we have advertisements from local businesses. We ended the year with a total of 9 advertisers.