Fair Financing for Public Education – General Meeting Feb 22

Whether we own property or rent, whether we have children in the system or not, we are paying for their education and it should be the best. Where are the funds for all that’s needed?

Come to our General Membership Meeting on Tues, February 22 to learn more about this important topic. Marti Stayton, Oneonta School Board President and area director of the New York State School Boards Association, will explain how school finances have evolved and how equity might be achieved. The meeting will be held at 7:30pm at the First United Methodist Church, corner of Church and Chestnut Streets.

A recent court decision requires New York State to develop a plan for equitable funding of New York City schools. The Governor is considering appealing this decision. Proposed cost shifting will result in ever higher local property taxes - what does this mean for ‘free’ public schools? New York State is clearly in a position where we have separate and unequal school systems based on class. Disparities here are great – perhaps the most of any state.

Our public schools are one of the greatest assets that we have and financing them is a continual concern. Come, listen, learn and discuss with us. ☆

An invitation from AAUW-Oneonta:

Brunch Buffet
March 19, 2005, 11 AM
Milford BOCES
Cost: $13.00

Program: Just What Is CCAL?
Jane Ford-Richards and Bob Consigli will be the presenters. We hope the group will have questions and will share some experiences as well.

Checks to: AAUW-Oneonta Branch
Mailed to: Debby Clough
199 Highland Terrace
West Oneonta, NY 13861

Deadline for reservations:
SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2005

Questions? Debby Clough 432-8417

The League of Women Voters was founded on February 14, 1920!
State & Local Program Planning Meeting Report

A small but enthusiastic group of members met at Rowe House on Saturday morning, Jan 22 to review our local and state League positions. Those attending chose to continue support for each of our existing positions at this time, and no new studies were proposed.

Thanks to Georgia Schadt for coordinating this year’s Program Planning meeting.

Complete information on LWV-Oneonta’s local positions appears in the membership handbook and on our website. ☆

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LWV of the Oneonta Area
Officers & Board of Directors

Maggie Winnie  President
Kay Stuligross  Vice President
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Catherine LaFontaine  Health Care
Elizabeth Orton  Death Penalty Study

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The LWV does not support or oppose candidates or political parties, but does support or oppose issues after study and member agreement.

Membership is open to all men and women of voting age.

The LWV Oneonta Bulletin is published 10 times per year for members and friends. Contributions & constructive criticism are welcome. Would you like to receive this Bulletin via e-mail? Contact baba17@dircom.net or call 433-8807.

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Upcoming LWV Events

Mon. Feb 14
LWV Oneonta Board Meeting*
Maggie Winnie's home, 7pm, 432-6206

Tues. Feb 22
General Meeting on Financing Public Education
Speaker Marti Stayton, 7:30pm at First United Methodist Church, Oneonta.

Mon. March 14
LWV Oneonta Board Meeting*
Maggie Winnie's home, 7pm, 432-6206

Sat. March 19
LWV/AAUW Luncheon
Milford BOCES, 11am, see info on page 1

April 3-6
Students Inside Albany Conference

*All board meetings are open to any member, please call for info/directions.

LWVNYS Legislative Agenda 2005

The LWVNYS Board of Directors has determined our legislative priorities for 2005, using input from member leagues. This year, the League will place emphasis on:

➤ Reforming NYS Government
➤ Equity in School Financing
➤ Containing Sprawl through Smart Growth
➤ Opposition to the Death Penalty

along with the other issues that are part of our legislative agenda.

Brochures on the LWV statewide Legislative Agenda for 2005 will be available from local officers and directors, or you can find complete information on the LWVNYS website (www.lwvnys.org). ☆
FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK:

Dear Members and Friends of the League,

EDUCATION! What can be more important for us all but how should it be financed. This month’s General Membership meeting will give some insight into the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. Not all schools are created equal when it comes to how they are financed. Are some students being shortchanged because of it? Let’s get out on February 22 and see what Marti Stayton has to say and what the local school boards are currently involved in when it comes to finances.

For those who have been educators or are still very interested in the process, the LWVNYS Off-Board Specialist for Education, Marian Bott, is looking for members to be on an ad hoc committee that operates by email, as a general rule. She will send material for her committee to read and they respond with any feedback they deem appropriate. There are no actual meetings. The idea is to contribute whatever local events, spin or opinion they have, based on their current local experience or previous life experience with education.

Marian indicates that if you have taught, administered, tutored or parented, while reading education materials from their local press with an interested vigilance, you are useful to the committee.

Does this sound like something you can do? Please contact me by email at mwinne@prometisp.net or by phone at 432-6206. I know there are many of you that qualify and this would be an easy and interesting way to help the League.

Maggie Winne ⭐

Welcome Returning Member

Anna Marie Lusins
357 County Highway 9
Oneonta
433-1754

Save the Date!
Reform New York Lobby Day in Albany
Tuesday, May 3rd

LWV members will join with other groups from across NY State to lobby our legislators for reform. More info in next month’s Bulletin — or contact Stephanie in the LWVNYS office at 518-465-4162 or lwvny@lwvny.org

LWV-NYS STUDY RESULTS IN CONSENSUS OPPOSING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

After eighteen months of study, the League of Women Voters of New York State released its position on capital punishment in mid-January. In meetings held across the state, members resoundingly rejected this form of punishment as unfair, unworkable, and a waste of taxpayer dollars. Ann Brandon, Chair of the Death Penalty Study Committee said, "The League believes that efforts to revive the death penalty law in New York should now be abandoned."

League members argue that New York, as part of a civilized society in the 21st century, should not be executing its citizens. Most developed countries and 12 states have abolished the death penalty. Today League members join the call for abolition, with the use of life without parole as the primary alternative sentence.

Issues examined by the League included:

- The unchecked power by county district attorneys to decide who should be tried with a possible death sentence. This power has resulted in a gross imbalance of cases, with three of seven defendants sentenced to death coming from Suffolk County. There are no fixed procedures in arriving at charging decisions, nor are decisions subject to fixed standards or to review.

- Racial, ethnic and economic factors. These factors influence who is arrested, with a higher proportion of minorities and disadvantaged persons likely to be on death row.

(continued on page 6)
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Peg Hathaway

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Interested? Contact Barb Hein at 433-8807 or baba17@dmcom.net

Otsego County Government Committee Update
We devised a questionnaire to gather information about the cost of a county manager. NY state counties which are comparable in size to Otsego and have a county manager or administrator are being asked to respond with data on salary, staff, other expenses, the responsibilities of the manager, that county’s experience and a copy of their legislation establishing the office.

Our committee will examine the information and report the results of this research. Anyone interested in joining the group working on this can call Kay Stuligross at 432-6974.

OBSERVER CORPS Corner
Schedule of Public Meetings:

CITY OF ONEONTA COMMON COUNCIL
1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:30, City Hall

ONEONTA TOWN BOARD
2nd Wednesday 7:30, Town Hall

OTSEGO COUNTY BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES
1st Wednesday 10:00 am, 3rd Wednesday 7:30 pm
County Office Building, Cooperstown

ONEONTA BOARD OF EDUCATION
1st & 3rd Wednesday 7:00, call for location 432-8232

(Opposition to Death Penalty continued from page 3)

➢ Ten years of the law have not shown it to be a deterrent, have cost the state an estimated $170 million dollars and cannot guarantee that a defendant is truly guilty.

➢ Reliability of Evidence. Since the law was adopted in 1995, many changes have taken place in evaluating evidence, especially with the advent of DNA testing. This has proven over 100 death row inmates around the country to be innocent. But new evidence cannot be introduced at the Court of Appeals which is the final court for defendants.

Also, research has shown that eyewitness testimony is frequently unreliable, but is often key to conviction. After examining the many issues engendered by the death penalty, the League today calls on the Legislature to abolish the use of this sentence from New York State law.

Not a member? Join us today and support informed, active citizen participation in government!

LWV of the Oneonta Area Membership Dues 2005

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