First Annual LWV of the Oneonta Area
Founders’ Award

May 2007 marked the bestowing of the first annual LWV of the Oneonta Area Founders’ Award. It was an honor for the League, its committee and its presenter to award it to non other than Peg Hathaway. Who else could be more deserving? Peg, over the years has kept the Oneonta League alive and healthy with her enthusiasm and energy. While she served as president, chaired committees and studies, she also stepped in to cover emergencies. Peg has served as well at the state level for voter service.

Continued inside on page 2

President’s Message

As I begin to collect my thoughts on what to convey in the first message as co-president, I am struck by the fact that it is already JULY! I hope you are enjoying the summer season. As a new co-president, I am beginning to find out firsthand why I am pleased that Maggie Winne and I are sharing the office for the 2-year term. Maggie has been coaching me on the many areas of “League” that I was not accustomed to previously. It is all good and I am grateful for her willingness to “show me the way” and for her insightfulness.

I would also like to thank Kay Stuligross for the countless ways in which she has gotten me on the path of “The League”. Without her example, dedication and commitment to the League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area, I might not have considered serving in this position as your co-president. Although Kay is not serving on the board this year, she remains a strong advocate and member of our League. It is reassuring to know that Kay is only a phone call or an e-mail away if we needed her advice.

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President’s Message continued

Please take some time to read through your newsletter. We can be proud of the contribution our board, our members and our community make to the League. You will find that our Annual meeting in May was a full evening. We sponsored Gerald Murray, a student who attends Oneonta High School, as the representative for Students Inside Albany this year. He spoke to our guests about the learning experiences he had while visiting our state Capital this past spring. Also included in the program, was our featured guest speaker, Mr. Andreas Kriefall, who spoke about the “Importance of Immigration in 2007 to the United States”. Our League will be conducting its own study of immigration. A study committee has been formed and the chair of that committee is Sandee Fleisher.

We are quite fortunate to have an active League here in Oneonta. One of the League’s roles is to provide non-partisan advocacy on issues that are relevant, timely and important to our community. Along with studying issues, the League also sponsors forums and debates for candidates running in the elections. This fall we will keep the public informed via our newsletters, the local newspapers and the media. The League’s visibility and accessibility is as important today as it ever has been in the past. The League and the democratic principles it stands for may be more important to our future than at any other time in our recent past.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer. I look forward to the year ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact Maggie or me with questions or concerns you may have. I would like to encourage all members of the LWV of the Oneonta Area to invite a friend to the September membership meeting. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Cathy LaFontaine
Co-President - LWV of the Oneonta Area

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area, in both its values and practices, is committed to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in the League. The League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

Founders’ Award – continued from page 1

We are used to seeing her provocative and informative letters in the press or perhaps seeing her serve as moderator for various candidates’ nights. She has been a presence in city government, in education and her church have felt the touch of her influence.

Peg’s inspiration and leadership have been a part of the experience of all the members involved in our local League. This year’s award is certainly in keeping with the visions of our charter members and their dreams for a strong and active League. Peg Hathaway has definitely been a vital force in its growth and development. Congratulations, Peg!

Shirley Firovanti

Officers

Co-President …..Cathy LaFontaine 431-1125
Co-President …..Maggie Winnie
Secretary …….. Alice Collins
Treasurer …….. Sandee Fleisher 432-3783
Bulletin Editor … Vivien Anderson 432-1224

NYS Political Calendar Fall 2007

Primary Elections: Primary Election Day – Tuesday, September 18th

Voter Registration
Last day to postmark applications – August 24th
Last day for applications to be received by the Board of Elections – August 29th
Last day to register in person – August 24th

Absentee Voting
Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot – September 11th
Last day to apply in person for absentee ballot – September 17th
Last day to postmark absentee ballot – September 17th
Last day to deliver absentee ballot in person – September 18th

General Elections: General Election Day – Tuesday, November 6th

Voter Registration
Last day to postmark applications – October 12th

Absenete Voting
Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot – October 30th
Last day to apply in person for absentee ballot – November 5th
Last day to postmark absentee ballot – November 5th
Last day to deliver absentee ballot in person – November 6th

www.elections.state.ny.us

Voter Service Report

I am happy to report that we had 35 new voters register at the Oneonta High School at the end of the school year. All the youth that I spoke with were excited and enthusiastic about voting in the fall elections for the first time.

We did not host a School Board Candidates’ Forum this spring because there were no contested seats. However, this coming fall, we have August 29th reserved in case we need to host a Candidates’ Night for Primary Elections. We also have dates on October 23rd and October 30th reserved for Candidates’ Debates for the General Elections. Please e-mail me now at kgeasey@hotmail.com if you know you will be available for any of those dates to help out as ushers or timers. Bette Wagner and I will also be scheduling as many voter registration opportunities as we can and we will be looking for helpers for those occasions TBA.

I am looking forward to contested races and heated debates about real issues amongst our candidates for the many local representative seats this fall election season. We will have the Voters’ Guides from LWVNY to distribute and we will publish our local Voters’ Guides with information to help our citizen voters make their best decisions. I’m hoping to be in communication with many of you to assist with these very important services that our League provides to our community.

Please see the Fall Election Calendar in this Bulletin for important dates to pass on to people about voting in the Primary and General elections.

Thanks for your help!
Karen Geasey
Voter Service Director

An Award for Kay Stuligross

At the Annual Meeting of our local League on May 22, 2007, Kay was presented with the New York State Sustainer’s Award, in honor of her outstanding service and dedication to the League of Women Voters of New York State and the League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area. This recognition involves having her name inscribed on a plaque in the New York State office of the LWV with a smaller engraved plaque that bears her name as the honoree. This plaque is displayed not only in the state offices but also at all of the New York State League conventions.

Kay as been a member of the Oneonta League since the early 1980’s and has served on our League Board in almost every capacity. She has been finance and membership director, the director of several local studies, the author of numerous League publications and letters to the editor that have informed the public
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of League positions and kept the public aware of League activities. She is recognized and respected in the community as the moderator of countless League forums where her expertise and her consistent fair treatment of all candidates has demonstrated the League’s principle of non-partisanship. In addition to her outstanding contributions to the Oneonta League, she has served as an elected member of the NYSLWV’s Board. During her 4-year tenure as a State Board Member, she was the Director of the State League’s Health Care Study. This study has been recognized as one of the best studies ever conducted in the state, thanks to the research, organizational and leadership skill she was able to bring to it.

If you were unable to attend this year’s dinner, please congratulate Kay when you see her!

Submitted by Maggie Winnie

LWV-Oneonta Immigration Study

The LWVUS is undertaking a study of immigration in the United States to reach a consensus on League position by February 2008. To inform the LWV-Oneonta members, the local committee will offer a series of articles in our Bulletin. We are hoping the articles will help you reach an informed decision when we undertake local consensus in November.

Reasons to Immigrate: People come to our shores to escape political turmoil in their birth country. They seek a sense of freedom to be what they want to be, to achieve things they cannot in their home country and to reunite with family and neighbors. Others may have short-term goals such as education, teaching or work opportunities.

The history of immigration policy in the United States goes back to the 1700’s. The following lists some highlights. See the February 2007 issue of the National Voter and Laurie Wolfevort’s article in our April Bulletin for more information.

*1790 – Naturalization was authorized for “free white persons” who had resided in the U.S. for at least 2 years and swore loyalty to the U.S. Constitution.

*1778 – The Alien and Sedition Acts

*1882 - The Chinese Exclusion Act

*1891 - 1950 – Laws required the ability to speak and understand English and read some language, established a quota system for foreign-born nationalities.

*1950 – The Internal Security Act expanded grounds of exclusion and deportation of subversives.

*1952 – The McCarran-Walter Act opened immigration from countries previously banned; established preferences for skilled workers and relatives of U.S. citizens or permanent residents; tightened security and screening standards.

*1980 – The Refugee Act – first systematic procedure for admitting refugees

*1986 – Immigration Reform and Control Act – amnesty to undocumented residents, punishment to employers who hired illegal immigrants.

*1986-2002 – several laws to raise legal immigration limit to 700,000; toughen border enforcement; and laws dealing with public benefits to immigrants.

*2002 – the Patriot Act


In future issues of our Bulletin, we will highlight how effective some immigration policies have been; what problems were encountered and may be encountered with the new immigration policies that are being debated in our national government.

Submitted by Sandra Fleisher
Committee Members: Sandra Fleisher, Kay Stuligross, Annette Lindell, Shirley Fioravanti, and Dave Hutchinson.

The Russians Are Coming . . .

Our League has been selected to host four Russian women, their facilitator and an interpreter the week of Sept. 8 - Sept 16, with the theme: "Women Leaders and Good Governance." Marlene Wilklow and Kay Stuligross are co-chairing this opportunity but will need everyone's help. Wouldn't you like to join the committee?

The schedule is still being planned but mark Sept. 9 on your calendar for a potluck picnic at Gilbert Lake. Russians love going "to the forest" so this will be a relaxing, fun way to get to know each other. We have been specifically asked to provide opportunities for our guests to meet families with children, so please bring your children, grandchildren or friends and their children. We will need someone to chair this event. Interested? Let Kay or Marlene know.
We will need host families for all but the interpreter who will stay in a hotel. Again, families, especially those with children would be best. A Russian speaking family would be wonderful but the language is not essential. We will probably need other families to host dinners or lunches. We will eat in restaurants some of the time, but they are here to learn about American life as much as about Good Governance.

We will also need drivers during the week to transport our visitors to our meetings with government officials and service organizations. Could you help drive one or more days and then stay for the meeting? Marlene and Kay will set up all the meetings, but our visitors should get to know as many Leaguers as possible during their stay with us.

One of the first activities will be an explanation of city, county and state government. Could you help us with that?

We hope to end the week with a late afternoon reception. This event would include our Russian guests, all Leaguers and all with whom our guests interacted during the week. Could you help with this event?

Marlene - 563-1874 mwilklow@citlink.net
Kay - 432-6974 stuligrossk@hartwick.edu

Reaching Out / Reaching In

The League of Women Voters of New York State held its 52nd Biennial Convention on May 18-20, 2007 at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains, NY. Marcia Merrins, completing her LWVNYS President term of office reminded all to incorporate this year’s theme, which is Reaching Out/ Reaching In. “By reaching we can grow as an organization at all levels. In order to grow, we must reach out to grasp new ideas and new opportunities.”

Catherine LaFontaine, Maggie Winne, Sandra Fleisher, and Bette Wagner represented LWV of Oneonta. They joined with more than 100 delegates to attend many motivational seminars, workshops, plenary sessions, networking opportunities, caucuses, and relevant entertainment events.

Plenary Sessions:
LWVNYS President called the first plenary session to order, Marcia Merrins using the Susan B. Anthony gavel that was given to Carrie Chapman Catt on March 3, 1895 and presented to the LWVNYS May 15, 1969. Both Plenary Sessions demonstrated the democratic process at its finest. Convention Rules, LWVNYS Committee Reports, Proposed By-Laws, Recommended and Non-Recommended Programs were presented. Each were reviewed and decisions to accept or reject were made by the delegates.

Of particular note, recommendations made by the Nominating Committee for LWVNYS Term 2007-2009 were accepted as presented. Martha Kennedy will serve as President and retiring President, Marcia Merrins will become 2nd VP/ Membership.

Some Seminars included Building Membership Momentum, Smart Voter for Smart People, and Order-Not Only in the Courts. A Caucus was held on the following: Should NYS Join the Compact for a National Popular Vote? The State Program Committee thought local leagues were too busy with on going studies to tackle a new one so this topic began the convention as a non-recommended item. LWV of Saratoga promoted this issue, which generated the most exciting and vigorous debate. It eventually became a recommended study!

Featured Speakers:
Eve Burton, Vice President and General Counsel of The Hearst Corporation described her many efforts to make government activity visible.

Lisa Birnbaum, author, TV and Radio Personality offered her humor and unique reflections on life in the new millennium as women come of age and take on roles of wife, mother, and daughter. In recognition of the Reaching Out theme, Lisa uses her TV and Radio access for the call-in and talk format.
Relevant Entertainment:  
OiNk-Only in New York gave its final presentation, a hilarious parody of NY politics.

Moment in the Sun:  
Representatives from each league were invited to the podium to describe outstanding accomplishments. LWV of Oneonta Co-Presidents Elect, Cathy LaFontaine and Maggie Winne cited Financing Education Study, Immigration in Upstate NY, and the first “Founder’s Award” to be presented to Peg Hathaway at the LWV of the Oneonta Area’s annual May meeting.

Welcome New Member –  
Janet Ballute  
672 East Street  
Oneonta, NY 13820  
433-0037

Oneonta LWV Calendar Fall 2007

August

21 – LWV Board Meeting

September

8 – Grand & Glorious Garage Sale
8-16 – Russian Visitors
10 – LWV Board Meeting
18 - Primary Election Day
25 - Opening Membership Pot Luck Supper

October

8 -LWV Board Meeting  
- LWVNYS Regional Meeting
15 - Bank Window Week
23 –Candidates’ Debates for the General Election
30 – Candidates’ Debates for the General Election

November

6 - Election Day 2007
12 - Board Meeting
27 - Consensus on Immigration

- League Day at the UN

December

2 – LWV of the Oneonta Area Holiday Party
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