League Members and Friends are invited to our

Holiday Party

Sunday, Dec. 4, 2005
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Home of Jim and Karen Elting, 18 Brigham Rd.
Bring wine or a holiday snack

President’s Letter

Happy Holidays,

As I write this Thanksgiving is upon us and the December festivities will soon be here. The League has much to celebrate and be thankful for this year. This is our fortieth anniversary and we have enjoyed those years in public service, study and making good friends. Ten years ago we began cleaning “our” section of I 88. This year we invited the media to participate directly in the candidate debates and we hope to make that an enduring tradition.

Our many activities happen only because of dedicated volunteers. Many thanks to Karen Geasey, who spent untold hours registering voters, organizing the debates, and preparing the Voter's Guides. See her article on page 5 for a list of the many members who helped her.

Continued inside
President's letter continued:

Thanks also to Lucille Wiggin, the head honcho of the road clean up crew. See her article on page 3 for a description of the hard work and good laughs of her committee.

We will gather Dec. 4, at the home of Jim and Karen Elting to inaugurate the season of festivities. We have invited our elected officials and members of the media. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to join us that afternoon. This party is always great fun. Although we try not to do business there, some discussion of government issues inevitably takes place.

When you bring out your 2006 calendar, mark the January 28 for our annual program planning brunch. That will be a time of good food, good conversation, and suggestions for study for the coming years. I hope to see you there.

Meet Your Board

Kay Stuligross, President

Kay joined the League in 1966 in Warrensburgh, MO. Since then she has served on that local board, the boards in Waukesha WI and Oneonta and on the LWVNYS board where she directed the first health care study. This is her third term as a local League president. Previously she has served as voter service, finance, county government, and health chair.

She enjoys singing in the Catskill Choral Society and her church choir with her husband and fellow Leaguer, Jack. Book Club, Social Action committee at the UUChurch are other major interests. She has five sons and 10 grandchildren.

Maggie Winne, Vice-President, Membership Chair

Maggie joined the League to be more involved in politics in a non-partisan way and to encourage citizens to understand the reasons for voting as well as engaging in some positions of interest to her. She previously served as secretary and as president. She has three children and two granddaughters of whom she is especially proud. Maggie also enjoys volunteering not only for the League, but also for Fox Hospital and her church. Reading, playing bridge, and walking her dog Maya are some her activities.

Liz Burns, Treasurer

Daughter of League member, Annette Lindell, Liz grew up with the LWV and joined twelve years ago. In her first term on the board she served as publications chair. A registered nurse, she works at St. Mary's School. She lives in Oneonta with her husband Brian, also a League member and their three children.

Shirley Fioravanti, Program Coordinator

Shirley joined the League directly after retirement from a career of 38 years teaching Spanish, 29 1/2 of this at the State College. The love of her life is the Spanish language and the culture it represents. She also participates in the Italian American Club, Eastern Star, Garden Club, a book group, and the board of CCAL. She previously served as Voter Service Chair on the LWV board. She enjoys traveling with her husband Joe visiting her 5 stepchildren and 13 grandchildren as well as travel to many other places.
Cathy LaFontaine, Health Care, Action, Bulletin Data Base

Cathy joined the LWV a little over two years ago because she knew the League had a reputation for getting things done and is a non-partisan political organization. She joined the Board soon after she joined, serving as health care director. She has organized two public meetings on health care.

She grew up in Plattsburgh, but lived in Schoharie County for nearly twenty years before moving to Otsego County in 1998. While working at Mils Library on the SUNY campus, she earned a BS in Adulthood and Aging Studies in 2004. She has two grown daughters.

Barb Hein, Public Relations

Barb has been involved with the LWV for about ten years, serving on the board for most of that time. She says, "League membership has given me some great opportunities. In 1999, I traveled to Uganda for two weeks with Kay for the LWVUS Global Democracy program. We worked with non-governmental organization representatives and elected officials to present civic education workshops for hundreds of Ugandan citizens. This experience gave me a much broader perspective on what democracy is all about."

Barb has served as our bulletin editor and as co-president with Karen Geasey. She's been active in voter registration drives, candidate nights and various League studies. "I've learned a great deal about issues such as welfare reform, local government and the electoral college thanks to my work with LWV."

A New Jersey native who spent her childhood summer vacations in Otsego, Barb chose to move to the area permanently in 1989. A freelance writer who has published in several magazines, Barb lives with her partner Dave Deforest, his dog Sabacl and her cat Figaro.

Karen Geasey, MSW, Voter Service

Karen joined the League in Jan. 1996 and was elected to the board the following May. Since then she has served as public relations chair, secretary and web-site maintenance and observer corps coordinator as well as her current position as voter service chair. She served as co-president with Barb Hein from 2002-2001 and as president from 2001-2003. She has been League Liaison to the Community Awareness Task Force since its inception in 2002.

Karen currently has two part-time positions: social worker for the Otsego County Law Guardian's office and at LEAF as consultant at the Drinking Driver Program and substance abuse consultant. Her husband, Dave, IRC-TV Producer/Director has worked with us for all our broadcast candidate forums. Karen and Dave have three children: Michelle, 5; Jon, 17; and Matt, 19.

Highway Clean Up Completed

The LWV "Highwaymen and Women" have done it again. We met at 8 AM Thur. Nov. 5th and enjoyed a beautiful two hour walk on the south side of I-88 from exit 14 (Letts Hgw.) to exit 15 (Price Chopper). At various times over the years members have found item of interest or use such as money, a wallet, items of under clothing, gloves, "girly" magazines, hub caps, trash can lids, lengths of rope and string, two-by-fours and this time a screech owl (no not alive).

Many thanks to this month's crew: Gay and Garrit Ganivort, Norma Lee Havens, Robert Hostad, Dave Hutchison, Betty New, and Kay Stuligross. Special thanks go to the two of these people had doctors appointments that they worked around. Over the past year we have
also had help from Georgia and Dick Schadt, Jack Havens, Dolly Layman Ron Wilcox, Molly and Bill Swain, and Paul Scheele of LWV, Joe Hart and Barb Meeks of ADK, and Ron Plehan (a teen-ager from 1st United Methodist Church).

With the aging (at least one of our helpers will turn 80 next year) and travel addictions of our LWV members, we sometimes find it necessary to call on friends in other organizations. If and when we find it necessary to give this adventure over to another organization, the Highway Dept. tells me there are plenty waiting for a spot to advertise on the "Super-Slab".

Lucille Wiggins

**Chlorine-free Paper Campaign**

I am (Dorothy) Scott Fielder, a new member of the League of Women Voters. I have a great interest in environmental matters and serve as one of 23 on the United Methodist Women’s Green Team, an environmental group whose motto is “A Voice for the Voiceless.” The Green Team is conducting a letter-writing drive that calls on paper supplier chains to carry processed chlorine-free paper. We invite you to join our campaign. There was a time we could not easily find recycled paper, but we asked for it and now it is available and reasonably priced. We can do the same for chlorine-free paper.

Why chlorine-free paper? When paper is bleached with chlorine, the process uses 20 times more water than a chlorine-free alternative, such as hydrogen peroxide or oxygen bleaching. It takes 10.15 gallons of water to produce a 6 1/2 oz booklet with chlorine and less than a half a gallon using a chlorine-free alternative.

Chlorine bleaching releases dioxin into the air, waterways, the soil and ultimately into our bodies. This toxin is harmful to the environment and to human health. It can increase the risk of developing cancer, harm the immune and hormone systems and cause miscarriages, birth defects, impaired child development, respiratory diseases and diabetes.

Please ask paper suppliers to stock processed chlorine-free paper that is certified by the Chlorine-Free Products Association in a variety of selections for all sizes of white and colored paper.

Sam, K Duncan, CEO, Office Max Corporate Headquarters, 150 E. Pierce Rd, Itasca, IL 60143; Steve Oland, CEO, Office Depot Corporate Support Center, 2200 Old Germantown Road, Delray Beach, FL 33445 and Mark Hoffman, CEO, Corporate Express National Headquarters, Environmental Way, Broomfield, CO 80021.

Contact me for a sample letter, other addresses and more information on chlorine-free paper. 638, 5436, scottfielder@stny.rr.com

**County Manager Panel Tells It Like It Is**

The Oneonta League’s Sept. 28th fall membership meeting drew nearly 80 people to the Elm Park Methodist Church to hear a panel of guest speakers explain how county governments can function with professional management.

League member and former Otsego County Board Chair David Brenner set the stage for the panel: Tompkins County’s Board Chair Tim Johnson and County Administrator Steve Whicher, as well as Genesee Town Supervisor Wes Kennison, who is the Chair of Livingston County’s Board of Supervisors, and his county’s administrator, Dominick (Nick) Mazza.

The distinction between the managers’ and legislators’ roles was a key topic: A professional administrator or manager is responsible for day-to-day administration while legislators are responsible for setting overall policy. Johnson explained that the administrator handles issues where established regulations or policy already dictate what needs to be done. “This way we (legislators) have time to deal with policymaking issues,” for example, in Tompkins County, the issue of whether or not a new jail is needed. “Also, we can fight with the state about unfunded mandates, and we can work on economic development strategies,” since the
administrator is handling the more routine matters, including personnel.

The guests discussed the manager’s job description. Both Mazza and Whicher outlined their qualifications, which included formal training in management and experience in government administration prior to taking on their current roles. Mazza pointed out that a model local law is available to guide counties in developing their job descriptions. He and Whicher felt strongly that a manager should have authority over the budget. They also agree that direct responsibility for departments was important, especially purchasing. Johnson suggested “a high tolerance for ambiguity” as a qualification, referring to the possibility that the Legislature may be divided politically and not provide clear policy direction in some instances.

Johnson admitted, “There are good county managers and there are bad ones. Steve (Whicher)”s a good one, a consummate bureaucrat.” This was meant as a compliment, as Kennison concurred that elected officials are often not knowledgeable about how government functions. “We (the county legislators) determine policy and then we stand behind it. We pay the administrator to advise us on policy and then to implement that policy.” There was some debate as to what constituted policy versus administration, and the general sense was that a job description with defined spheres of responsibility, along with an annual performance review that included clear direction from the legislature, was important to balance the relationship between politician and bureaucrat. The terms of employment are also a consideration: While administrators or managers are appointed, they may or may not have a renewable contract guaranteeing a specific term of employment.

All the panelists agreed that professional management more than paid for itself. Mazza gave a few examples of how he’d saved Livingston County money. He cited implementation of a comprehensive, businesslike review of existing insurance coverage, which resulted in $600,000 of premium savings. Johnson told how Whicher handled the research and negotiation with vendors to update Tompkins County’s emergency radio system, saving $500,000.

Whicher also discovered that the county benefit program was overpaying for drugs, and set up a system for reviewing all contracts on a routine basis. “Keeping things at a professional level, so no one gets too comfortable,” and saving $150,000 just on the drug contract. Finally, Kennison pointed out that, “Hunting season is open on rural counties that don’t ‘do it right’ with regard to often complex laws and regulations, so professional management saves by avoiding potentially costly lawsuits.

Barb Hein

Voter Service Report

Our fall Voter Service season has come to an end! We published 3 versions of the Voters’ Guide this season. 300 Guides were distributed for residents of County Board of Representative District 5 in Milford, Hartwick and New Lisbon, 300 for residents of County Board of Representatives District 3 in Otsego and Laurens and 900 for City and Town of Oneonta residents. All contained the questionnaires returned by the two candidates for Otsego County Treasurer. We also distributed 1,000 copies of Part I and 1,000 copies of Part II of the Voters’ Guide from LWVNYS. Thanks to our many members who delivered these useful election materials around the area for our voters.

Most recently, the League held two evenings of Candidates’ Debates, co-sponsored by The Daily Star and Central New York Radio Group, WZOZ. On Thursday, October 27, we held our “snowed-out” Candidates’ Forum featuring the candidates for the District 5 County Board seat and the District 3 County Board seat, and we heard statements from the Otsego County Treasurer candidates. The Oneonta Town Justice candidates first made statements on Tuesday, November 1, followed by a very lively debate between the candidates for City of Oneonta Mayor. Sean Farrell and John Nader made great use of their time and intensely discussed their ideas and plans regarding many issues of concern. Kay Stuligross did a marvelous job of moderating both these debates, and she had a particular challenge sorting through the
overabundance of questions that we received from the media panel, studio audience and TV-\-viewers for the mayoral debate. About 120 people attended the mayoral debate, with standing-room only and there were many compliments to the League and candidates for providing the voters with this valuable opportunity. The media panel featuring Sam Pollak, editor of The Daily Star, Eric Malanowski of WZOZ, and Gary Wickham, of WSRK added a nice feature to the debates each evening.

I'd like to thank our League members who volunteered by answering telephones, greeting the audience, handling questions and keeping time: Peg Hathaway, Alice Collins, Maggie Winne, Lucille Wiggins, Cheryl Lacy, Bob Holstead, Laurel Elder, Cathy LaFontaine and Mary Simpson. Special appreciation goes to the faculty and administration at SUNY Oneonta for hosting the debates again this year and to the IRC-TV director Dave Geasey and his student crew members and staff assistants. Our community has come to rely on the Public Access Channel 23 coverage provided by the generous donation of satellite time, preparation and performance hours from these professionals.

Our last activity was to do election reporting for The Daily Star, which is a nice little fundraiser for the League. Kay organized this job and many thanks to our members who participated on an exciting local election night: Julie Pollak, Dorothy Bloom, Liz Burns, Annette Lindell, Cheryl Lacy, Lucille Wiggins, Bob Holstead, Cheryl Carter-Lipari, Alice Collins, Sandee Fleisher, Judith Sweet and Gay Gantvoort.

Thanks again to everyone!
Karen Geasey, Voter Service Director

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**Upcoming LWV Events**

**December 4**
Holiday Party – Karen and Jim Elting’s home, 18 Brigham Road

**January 9**
Board Meeting – 10 Walnut St., 7:00 pm

**January 28**
Local & National Program Planning – Rowe House, 9:30 am

**February 13**
Board Meeting – 10 Walnut St., 7:00 pm

**February 25**
Public Meeting: Civil Liberties

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**Financing Education In New York State**

The State committee has provided a tremendous amount of information - calendar, outline, bibliography - Educating all our children equitably is crucial. Until we have a local chair and committee, we can't participate in this study or the resulting consensus. If you have any interest at all, go to www.lwvny.org, click on education. When the Financing of Education Study comes up, click on the many links to detailed information. Then, call Kay (432-6974) and we will put together a committee.

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**Welcome New Members**

Please add these names to your membership booklet

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Martin Krivin
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**Officers**

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Vice President ... Maggie Winnie 432-6266
Secretary ....... Alice Collin
Treasurer .......... Liz Burns 433-9987
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