League of Women Voters
Of the Oneonta Area ~ Bulletin
PO Box 434, Oneonta NY 13820 ~ (607) 436-4050 ~ www.lwboneonta.org

September 2006

OPENING DINNER
Sept. 26 - 2006
St James Great Hall
6:00 - social hour
6:30 - dinner - bring guests, a dish to pass and your table service
7:15 - Meeting Human Needs in Otsego County
Speaker: Daniel Denofrio
Commissioner, Otsego County Department of Social Services

President's Letter
Mark your calendar today for our Membership Dinner, Sept. 26. This promises to be an enjoyable evening with friends as we become energized for the coming year. No one surpasses League cooks and table conversation will be stimulating.

The League has long standing positions supporting social and economic justice for all Americans. We specifically support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency. “Ending Welfare As We Know It” is ten years old. Five years ago, then Commissioner Christman explained how Otsego County’s program to assist those in need had changed and that the number of people needing assistance had decreased. This year, our new commissioner will bring us up-to-date on how Otsego County is assisting people in life crises meet their needs. Bring your friends and come prepared to ask questions.

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President's message continued

This is a particularly good evening to invite those who are interested in the League or just interested in this topic.

The election season will be especially busy so call Karen, 432-8158—to help with our debates: Attorney General, and the 24th Congressional District

We will need timers, ushers, and someone to answer the phone.

We will have Voters’ Guides to distribute—call Maggie, 432-6206 to help—and voters to register—call Bette—369-7507.

We are looking for an Action Chair. This is primarily a job that can be done from home. Most action calls are filled by e-mail messages. They come to us with a text which can be edited or sent as is. Sometimes phone calls are more appropriate and there are often toll free numbers to use for this purpose. Interested? Call me, 432-6974.

You will find an Interest Sheet in this bulletin. Please fill it out and return it to Maggie. We have short term “one-shot” jobs and positions with a larger commitment.

We value each and every one of our members. We know that some of you join because you want to support our work but cannot be active. We welcome you. However, we need many members to help us throughout the year as we work for good government. We look forward to seeing you and your guests Sept. 26.

Sizzling Summer Spruce-Up

Thanks to the LWV Highway Crew our section of I-88 is once again looking good. It was a hot day, but with the early hour, a nice breeze and our faithful water girl, Kay Stuligrosh, we finished in fine shape. The crew included Gay Gantvoort, Dave Hutchison, Bob Holstead, Betty New, Marshall Webster and me. The next adventure will be Wednesday, Nov. 1, 8 AM at Denny’s on South Side. We’ve been working on Thursdays, but Wednesdays are better for some of our crew. Let me know what is best for you. 432-1022

Lucille Wiggin

***PS—If you find the weeds growing in the Lettie Highway median and/or the trash we are not allowed to pick up on the I-88 median offensive, please call Senator Seward’s office at 432-5524.

Financing Education Charter Schools Consensus

Plan to participate in this meeting Oct. 10. October will be an extremely busy month, but it is important that we join the rest of the Leagues in New York State in expressing our opinion on this topic. Look for the consensus questions in the October bulletin and read Anne Payne’s article in this bulletin.
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Financing Education

Background for Charter School Discussion

General: Charter schools were authorized by the Charter Schools Act of 1998. They are "public" schools, paid for by school tax and state aid monies, but are exempt from some of the regulations governing public schools regarding performance and teaching methods. No tuition is charged.

Rational/Anticipated Benefits: Charter schools were intended to help students by improving student learning, increasing learning opportunities (especially those at risk), and providing an alternate choice of school for children to attend; this improved learning is to be accomplished by encouraging innovative teaching methods, creating new professional opportunities for teachers, and giving schools the flexibility to move away from rule-based performance accountability.

Creation: Any person wishing to create a charter school (including a school district itself) must submit an application to the Board of Regents, SUNY Trustees, OR the local school board. The application must identify, among other things, the school’s mission and educational program; student achievement goals and method of evaluation (which must meet or exceed state standards); its governance structure; admission policies and procedures; proposed budget; number of students to be served; and projected impact on the school district in which it is located. The Charter is issued by the Board of Regents.

Charter schools may also be created by local school districts by converting an existing school within the district, upon approval of a majority of the parents of students in the public school.

Calendar

Sept 26 - 6:00 P.M. Opening Dinner for the 2006-207 year. Bring a guest and a dish to pass.

Oct. 2 – Board Meeting – All welcome – 7:00 PM – 10 Walnut St.

Oct. 3 – Regional Meeting, leave Oneonta 8:00 AM

Oct. 10 - Financing Education Charter Schools consensus meeting

Oct. 24 – Attorney General Debate

Nov. 1 – Highway Cleanup

Nov. 1 – 2 – Local Debates

Nov. 6 Board Meeting

A school’s charter expires in 15 years unless renewed for a longer period or revoked or terminated at an earlier date.

Operation: Charter schools operate as educational corporations with their own Boards of Trustees. Oversight is conducted by the local school district, the Board of Regents, and the charter entity; an annual report to the Board of Regents details measures of academic and fiscal performance.

Admissions, hiring, and programs must be nonsectarian. Student admission is based upon an application; admissions criteria cannot discriminate based on intellectual ability or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed,
gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry; schools may be single sex and may be limited to "at-risk" students; schools may also refuse admission to students expelled or suspended from public school for the duration of the suspension. All who qualify and apply must be accepted unless capacity is exceeded; in the latter case, a random selection method must be used.

Up to 30% of teachers can be uncertified, if they have relevant other teaching experience, are college faculty, or have "exceptional business, professional, artistic, athletic, or military experience." Public school teachers are entitled to up to a 2-year leave of absence to teach at a charter school. In large charter schools and converted public school charter schools, teachers are considered part of the local district's collective bargaining units. Others may form their own bargaining units.

Finance: Charter schools are financed primarily by the local school district, including per-student payments, plus transportation, textbooks, library materials, computer software, health services, and special education services (if the district provides these directly).

Role of Local School District

Unless the charter school is created by the local school district or the application is made through the district, the local district has no guarantee of input at the application stage, and has no governance or control of the operation of the charter school.

The local school district has the following responsibilities and obligations regarding charter schools located in the district:

--Finance of charter school operations (as detailed above)

--Special Education plans and costs (the local district must develop educational plans for each special education student and arrange and pay state and federal aid amounts for the recommended services)

--Oversight of compliance of the charter school with its charter, and the applicable law and regulations.

--Permitting its personnel leaves of absence of up to 2 years to teach at charter schools.

--Administering retirement plan contributions and records for charter school personnel who choose to participate in the district's retirement plan.

--Accepting the return of students removed by the charter school for disciplinary or other reasons.

Anne Payne

Officers

President ........ Kay Stuligross 432-6974
Vice President ...Kathy LaFontaine 431-1125
Secretary ........ Sandee Fleisher 432-3783
Treasurer ......... Alice Collins
Bulletin Editor .. Vivien Anderson 432-1224

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.
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FORM

LWV OF THE ONEONTA AREA

How can you help as a member of our League?

Your membership is important and your participation will help keep this League a vital part of the community.

Look over the following and see where we can best use your time and talents. Fill in the following and send it back to Maggie Winne, 3 Handsome Ave. Oneonta, NY 13820, or bring it to the September 26 dinner meeting at St. James Episcopal Church. Thanks.

Name __________________________
Telephone ________________________

REFRESHMENTS: Provide refreshments for General Membership meetings

VOTER SERVICE:

___ Debate Coordinator
___ Timer
___ Usher
___ Register voters at various locations.
___ Distribute voter information

ACTION: Observing local public meetings such as the City Council, School Board, County Board, etc. keeps your League informed.

___ Common Council
___ County Board
___ Town Board
___ School Board

Action calls come from the State and National Leagues throughout the year. Legislators need to be constantly informed on our positions; therefore, select the area of interest for your participation:

Letter Writing ___ Phone Calls ___
E-mails ___ Lobbying ___ Monitor Program Items
___ Social Policy ___ International Relations
___ Natural Resources ___ Government

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Advertising special events with flyers, etc.

BULLETIN: Write articles about local League programs, action on positions, or other issues of interest to the members

___ Copy-edit or proofread
___ Take photos at LWV programs/events for publication in newsletter

___ Word processing or desktop publishing
Putting the pieces together (basic typing skill required, expert help and FREE professional computer training available for someone willing to learn).

FINANCE:

___ Explore/write grant proposals to support local LWV projects

___ Help with follow-up phone calls for appeal letters

ROAD CLEANUP ON I-88:

___ November 1 at 8:00 A.M.
JOIN US
LWV of the Oneonta Area
Membership Dues 2006-07

Name(s) ________________________________

Address _______________________________________

Phone __________________________ Email __________________________

Individual Dues ($45) $ ____________

Add. Household member ($22.50) $ ____________

Additional Contribution to LWV Oneonta
(NOT Tax-deductible) $ ____________

Total (payable to LWV Oneonta) $ ____________

You can also make a tax-deductible contribution to The LWV Education Foundation (Make separate check payable to Oneonta LWV EF)

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