Mission Statement
The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political 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.

Leadership Award: Nominations
In 2006, the LWV of the Oneonta Area, established an award and named it “The Founders Award of the LWV of the Oneonta Area” to honor outstanding and loyal leaders who have served the organization. Award requirements include: 10 years of membership; at least 2 years on board; committee service, including 1 chairmanship, committee visibility, and a familiarity with the League’s mission. Additionally, the nominee should possess personal qualifications of leadership, initiative, creativity, and Sa willingness to accept responsibility.

If you have an individual in mind that you wish to nominate this year, please contact Shirley Fioravonti at 432-8397. Thank you.

“Nonpartisan Politics, Then and Now: The League of Women Voters”
Wednesday, March 5, 5:00-6:00 pm
The Eaton Lounge, 2nd Floor, Breshe Hall, Hartwick College
In celebration of Women’s History Month, please join us for a workshop on nonpartisan civic organizations and U.S. politics. As we head into another presidential election, there has been a lot of buzz about “postpartisan” and nonpartisan politics. Members of the Oneonta chapter of the League of Women Voters will share their insights on what the League contributes to political life in the U.S. today, and on the ways that anyone can participate more actively in local, state, and national politics. Prof. Laurel Elder of the Hartwick College Political Science department will place this in context with a brief overview of nonpartisan civic organizations and the U.S. political system. This event is free and open to the public. For directions, advice on parking or accessible entrances to the building, or any other questions, please contact Prof. Cherilyn Lacy, Coordinator of the Women’s & Gender Studies Program, at (607) 431-4885 or lacyc@hartwick.edu.

Program Planning – 2008 - Grassroots Speaks
The League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area met on Saturday morning, January 26, 2008 to develop program recommendations for 2008-2009 for our local league and for the LWVUS program for 2007-2008. The meeting began with the entire group of fourteen discussing local program issues. One item already voted on for our local League is to go forward with the recommended study of the Oneonta City Charter. The group decided to retain the current program as it was voted on in May 2007. Another local league position discussed was that of a county administrator. The group agreed that we look into the possibility of updating the current League’s position of support for an appointed county administrator. It was suggested that we consider organizing a poll of county residents as to the feasibility of a county administrator.

Next, the group broke into small groups for discussion of LWVUS positions that include the following: Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. Throughout the small group activity, there was lively and productive discussion on a wide range of issues within the broad based LWVUS positions. Each group brought back items when they convened to the larger group. Additionally, local leagues were encouraged to discuss the Compact for a National Popular Vote for Electing the President. The local League agreed to recommend that a new study be proposed to LWVUS at this year’s national LWVUS convention. The proposed study is entitled: “The Advancement of the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”

There are additional local items that will be voted on at the LWV of the Oneonta Area’s Annual Meeting to be held in May. Program Planning consists of governmental issues chosen for study and action, and includes both adopted positions upon which action is taken and issues for study that will lead to a position and action. In Program Planning we consider both aspects but are primarily concerned with issues for update or study that will lead to a position and action.

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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.

LWV Officers
Co-President: Cathy LaFontaine.......... 431-1125
Co-President: Maggie Winne............. 432-6206
Vice-President: Karen Geasey.......... 432-8158
Secretary: Alice Collins................. 432-7378
Treasurer: Sandee Fleisher.......... 432-3783

League of Women Voters
P.O. Box 434, Oneonta, NY 13820

February 2008
A Special Thank You

The League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area wishes to take this opportunity to send a big “THANK YOU” out to Vivien Anderson. For the last several years, Vivien has tirelessly and with much patience continued to serve as the editor of our monthly Bulletin. In March, Vivien and her family are moving to another part of NYS. We all wish her the very best in her new location. We truly appreciate her dedication to the League. You will be missed Vivien!!

Bulletin Transition Time

You may have noticed with this month’s edition of the Bulletin that we are trying out a new layout and format for the bulletin. Please hang in there with us while we go through this change. We are hopeful that you the readers will give us feedback if you like the change or if you would rather that we keep the changes as well. We welcome comments from our readers. Please send e-mail to clfontaine@stonyrt.com or phone the LWV of the Oneonta Area at 607.436.4050.

There is a milestone event that took place during the month of February. On February 14, 2008, the LWV celebrated its 88th birthday! It is with this birthday that the LWV reaches out to all citizens with a renewed commitment to help Americans get involved in their democracy! Visit your local LWV at www.lwvoneonta.org.

March is shaping up with a new event that will be held on Hartwick’s College campus, Eaton Lounge, 2nd floor, Bresee Hall, on Wednesday, March 5th, 5:00-6:00 PM. The event is taking place to coincide with Women’s History Month. Please join us for a round table discussion relating to nonpartisan civic organizations and U.S. politics. For further details, please see article “Nonpartisan Politics, Then and Now” in this edition.

Soon the LWV’s nominating committee will begin its work in helping to build a board for next year. Please give serious thought to accepting an offer when you receive and invitation to join the board. League involvement can be a self-rewarding experience while at the same time serving on the board or a committee, individuals have the opportunity to help bring our community closer together on the local level. When we have active, involved and purposeful board members supporting us, the greater good of those in our community are served well. Working together is how we will accomplish our mission: to promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on governmental issues that we have studied and taken a stand.

The League of Women Voters is open to men and women of all ages.

Cathy LaFontaine
Co-President

Program Planning – 2008 - Grassroots Speaks continued

A big thank you goes out to all those ‘Leaguers’ who took time out of their busy schedules to meet and go through the process of “Program Planning” this year. Program Planning is just one example of the “grassroots activities” that take place throughout the year that are sponsored by the LWV of the Oneonta Area.

President’s Message

On January 26, 2008 the LWV of the Oneonta Area held its Annual Program Planning Meeting at Rowe House. We discussed and planned program positions on the local as well as on the national level. Please see the article on ‘Program Planning’ in this bulletin for more details. Thank you to Ruth Rater, Program Coordinator, for organizing the refreshments for this League sponsored event.

As it turns out the month of February is quieter than usual for the League. However, we are transitioning to a new format for our monthly bulletin. We are looking forward to the new look and hope our readers will benefit from the changes as well. We welcome comments from our readers. Please send e-mail to clfontaine@stonyrt.com or phone the LWV of the Oneonta Area at 607.436.4050.

Immigration Study Consensus

Fifteen members met at the end of December to discuss the Immigration study consensus questions and arrive at our League’s consensus for LWVUS. The questions were extensive and some prompted much discussion. Our League’s results have been submitted and the following is a summary of our results.

Question 1. Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as: high priority was given to Economic, business and service employment needs, family reunification, humanitarian/political persecution. We did not reach consensus on the statement of rights of all individuals in U.S. to fair treatment under the law. Our high priorities were ranked 1. Employment needs, 2. Humanitarian crisis/political persecution, 3. family reunification.

Question 2 dealt with treatment of unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. High priority was given to deporting/allowing some to earn legal status based on length of residence in the U.S. and the needs of U.S. employers; allowing legal status based on paying taxes, learning English, study, etc.

Question 3 was whether Federal immigration law should provide an efficient, expeditious (no backlogs) system for legal entry into the U.S. for certain groups. We gave high priority to all of them: Immediate family members joining already admitted for permanent residence, to meet labor needs, as students, and because of country persecution.

Question 4: We gave low priority to whether law should include use of social security card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for ALL persons residing in the U.S.

As to dealing with unauthorized immigrants we gave high priority to enforcing more effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country; verification documents with secure identifiers; improved technology to facilitate employer identification of visa status and sharing of information among Federal agencies, program to make allowance for season and sporadic workers for those labor needs, and significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees.

We reached no consensus on whether law should address ad balance the long-term federal financial benefits from immigrants with costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations, or whether law should be coordinated with foreign policy to pro-actively help improve opportunities and conditions of nations with large emigrating populations.

We unanimously agreed that existing laws need stricter enforcement, and many felt that the questions were sometimes ambiguous and open to different interpretation.

Sandra Fleisher, Chair

Calendar March/April

March 5 – Hartwick College Campus, “Nonpartisan Politics, Then and Now” 5-6 PM, Eaton Lounge, 2nd flr, Bresee Hall.

March 10 - LWV Board Meeting -35 So. Belmont Circle, Oneonta, 7 PM

April 2 – AAUW/LWV – Annual Brunch – Clarion Hotel, Oneonta, 10 AM-12:30 PM

April 14 – LWV Board Meeting – 35 So. Belmont circle, Oneonta, 7 PM

THOMAS C. POTTER Certified Public Accountant

POTTER, C.P.A.

11 State Drive
Oneonta, New York 13823

By Appointment (607) 432-4931 (cell)

April Linton Gates, LMT, NCTMB Therapeutic Massage and Aromatherapy

11 State Drive
Oneonta, New York 13823

By Appointment (607) 287-4931 (cell)

Tamey Hyneman

The Country Cubby

Retail & wholesale

187 Main St
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-5444

The Country Cubby Store & Firewall

187 Main Street
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-5444

The Country Cubby

Wholesale

187 Main St
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-5444

THE PINE SHOP INC

84 Main St
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-0140

Woody’s Market

187 Main St
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-0141

THE COUNTRY CUBBY

Retail & wholesale

187 Main St
Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-5444