Local League To Do’s (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- SIA has been cancelled
- Regional Training Workshops have been cancelled
- State League Annual Advocacy Training Day has been cancelled
- LWVUS Convention is still scheduled for June 25-28, 2020

President’s Report, Suzanne Stassevitch, smstass@mac.com

We are hoping our League community is safe, healthy and staying strong during this abrupt, about face, upheaval to the conduct of our daily lives and our plans; well so many changes.

At the state League, we know that the most important action the League community can take during this pandemic is to keep our state voters informed about rescheduled elections and ongoing updates about how elections will be conducted so we can GOTV (get-out-the-vote)! The state League will keep the home page on our website and on Facebook up to date with election news and deadlines. Links to official sources are usually included. Many thanks to our office staff, working from home 7 days a week to keep up with official announcements that will affect our 2020 election schedule and procedures and get the information out to you, members and the public.

Now, what can you do? Be safe and pick up your phone. It is a great time to reach out to each other. Start a telephone tree in your League and pass on the information about election schedule changes, questions about absentee voting and early voting. Ask your League members to reach out to their book clubs, congregations and families to make sure everyone gets the information they need about elections. You can give them our website or Facebook address, or, as we get closer to the June primary, VOTE411.

If you would like to hold a Zoom video or teleconference and need help, we are here to help you communicate with your members.

About the website…. The Homepage is our face to the PUBLIC and information for the PUBLIC, League members and leaders. Information for and resources for Local Leagues is accessed through the Local League menu tab. We are endeavoring to put links to pertinent information and frequently requested information where local Leagues can find it under this menu tab.

We can all try something new to communicate with voters and members in this new paradigm. Take care everybody, stay strong.
Advocacy: Sally Robinson, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com and Jennifer Wilson, jennifer@lwvny.org

Constitutional Convention Position Update
At the June 2019 convention, delegates approved an update that would delete the Constitutional Convention position’s first sentence to confirm state Board responsibility to apply the position to support or oppose using the criteria in the position. Update materials were sent out in September 2019 and responses were due March 1, 2020.

Although the geographical distribution requirement was met by the 22 Leagues who responded, the Yes results failed to meet the 2/3 agreement necessary to drop the first sentence of the current Constitutional Convention position. The position remains as written. In addition to 22 Leagues, 7 members submitted individual responses for the first time under the new process approved last year. The responses were almost evenly divided between Yes and No.

Under the new Study and Update Process adopted by the state League board in 2019, members, local Leagues and ILOs may suggest a future update to the position. If a member or local League would prefer a position that does not allow the state League to take a position, or a position that only allows the state League to take a position relying on a separate consensus process to determine member agreement, then the local League or member may initiate and/or become part of a future update. A future update could seek to establish member agreement with either of these options.

Spring Primary Election Postponement
The League worked with our good government and voting rights partners to postpone the April primary and special elections to June. We sent out a statement and letter calling on the legislature and Governor to take action and consolidate the April elections to June.

We were successful in our efforts and the April special elections and primary were postponed and consolidated with the June state and congressional primaries. Village and school board elections have also been postponed until after June 1st but dates for those elections have not yet been set.

The League is continuing to work to expand the list of “excuses” to vote absentee to include public health risks. Expanding the reasons for absentee voting will allow more voters to have the option to vote via absentee in June.

We are also finalizing a page for the website with many FAQs on voting in this year – about the postponement, use of absentee ballots, early voting and more. We hope to post this new page this week and will announce it when it’s live.

Legislative Actions Related to COVID-19
This month the League supported a paid sick leave bill to guarantee paid leave for New Yorkers under quarantine. You can find information about the reform on A Better Balance's website here. The bill has been signed into law and the League and the New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition sent a letter to the Governor asking for clarity on certain aspects of the legislation and making recommendations for expansions to the bill.

The legislature also passed a bill to allow for the extension of the deadline to submit petition signatures to qualify for the June primary. The bill extended the deadline set by the Governor last week. The number of petition signatures required to qualify for the ballot was also reduced by 30%. Candidate filings are available on county board of elections websites and on the state board of elections website here.
The Assembly and Senate are continuing to work on reforms related to COVID-19 including a bill to expand absentee voting to allow anyone concerned about the virus to request and absentee ballot. The two houses have passed a resolution to allow for remote voting on legislation but are currently continuing their work in Albany.

When performing legislative duties, the League believes that legislators must continue to ensure the greatest level of transparency to the public. The League sent recommendations to the legislature on best practices to maintain transparency and accountability during this time of isolation. We will continue to update members of any urgent changes.

**Voter Services: Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com**

Voting in the time of COVID 19 is changing and we are staying on top of the changes as they are announced. We all need to think about ways to educate voters for June and urge them to still vote even during this crisis. The Voter Services Committee is calling every local League to see what you are planning or discussing. We’re looking for creative ways to still get-out-the-vote – and will share with everyone the ideas we gather.

**PLEASE EMAIL** Laura@lwvny.org **WITH ANY NEW IDEAS – AND BE READY TO DISCUSS THESE IDEAS WHEN THE VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBER CALLS YOUR LEAGUE.**

We need your help in planning for new ways to energize and engage the voters and we think you can help. We are developing a webpage with lots of FAQs that we’ll share as soon as it’s live (hopefully in the next day or so).

Presidential, Congressional, State and Local Primaries June 23, 2020
- Early Voting June 13 - June 21
- Deadline for Voter Registration May 29 in person and postmarked
- Application for Absentee Ballot June 16 postmarked; June 22 in person

General Election November 3, 2020
- Early Voting October 24 - November 1
- Deadline for Voter Registration October 9 in person and postmarked
- Application for Absentee Ballot October 27 postmarked; November 2 in person

**Executive Director: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org**

**Regional Training Workshops**

The state League was able to hold the regional training workshops in NYC prior to the shutdown of all meetings in NYS. We have posted all the handouts from these workshops on the state website, under Local Leagues (on top toolbar). We are very sad to have cancelled the other locations but are looking into providing some of the information by Zoom for those interested – stay tuned!

**2020 March Event to Honor Barbara Bartoletti**

The event honoring Barbara Bartoletti, former Legislative Director for over 40 years, was a huge success and lots of fun. The video of the conversation between Barbara and Liz Benjamin is posted on our state League homepage, as well as photos from the evening. A big thanks to the NYS Archives Partnership Trust who co-sponsored the event and provided critical help for us throughout the planning. Also a big thank you to our co-chairs, Aimee Allaud, Joanne Esposito, Barb Thomas and Dare Thompson, as well as the full committee for their leadership on the event.

**2020 Students Inside Albany Conference**

The 2020 SIA conference has been cancelled. We did host a Zoom meeting for all selected students, however, last week and presented some of the information they would have received at SIA. Almost 30 students joined the session. Any student who is not a senior should be considered for SIA next year (dates to be announced shortly).
Publications
With the state League staff all working remotely, we are unable to fill any publication orders right now. We hope to get back into the office soon and will ship asap. We have just printed the new Your Right to Vote series (Homeless Individuals, College Students, Individuals with Mental Disabilities, Individuals with Physical Disabilities, and Individuals Convicted of Crimes or in Jail and/or Prison). The updated versions are all posted on the state website under Local Leagues (Publications) AND on the Voting page.

From LWVUS
Talking points for Leagues around elections and COVID 19 are available on the LWVUS website at: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/coronavirus-prevention-guidance-leagues