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**Does the Current State of Politics Get You Angry?
Don’t Just Explode!
Join the League of Women Voters
and Do Something About It!!**

Join an organization that makes an impact in the community, the state and the nation.
Nonpartisan: We do not support candidates, elected officials or political parties.

Membership Information: call Myra Decker 643-2742 or send:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. (home) _____ (work) _____ Email: _____

Membership Dues: _____ \$45.00 Individual

(Check desired level) _____ \$65.00 Family

Make **check** out to: **Plattsburgh Area League of Women Voters**

Mail to: Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hills, Morrisonville, NY 12962

THE INFORMER



**League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area**

April 2008 No. 8

**7 Woodland Hills
Morrisonville, New York 12962**

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Visit Plattsburgh LWV Web Site at www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org

Special

OFFER TO THE PUBLIC

If you wish to be put on the League's mailing list and receive the League Newsletter, "The Informer", to keep in touch about the League's activities, please submit \$5.00 to cover cost of postage and printing for 10 issues. Make check payable to **League of Women Voters, Plattsburgh Area** and send it to **Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hill, Morrisonville, NY 12962.**

NYS PAY EQUITY COALITION

Presents

A GLORIA STEINEM DAY FOR FAIR PAY

Wednesday April 2, 2008

Albany, NY

LOB (Legislative Office Building)

9:45-11:30 AM – program begins at 10, light refreshments at 9:30

Hear Gloria Steinem speak and field questions from the press about pay equity. Other invited speakers: Governor Eliot Spitzer, Lt. Governor David Paterson, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm Smith, Assembly Minority Leader James Tedesco, Senator George Maziarz, Senator Craig Johnson, Assemblymember Susan John. Attendance is free. For parking information – barbandbob220@verizon.net

Steps to access the Informer:

Log on to www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org. Click on "The Informer" either on the side bar or main part of the page. Click on <http://www.lwvny-bulletins.org/Capital%20Region/Plattsburgh.htm> The next page enables you to click on the latest or past editions of the newsletter. It will ask to either open it up or save it to a disk. You can then print it if you desire. You will get a larger print if you use **legal** size paper.



TAKE ACTION ON THE BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL



It is very EASY!



Go to our League Web site: www.lwvny.org Click "TAKE ACTION" at the top of the page. You will then see the "ACTION ALERT"

Read the letter and FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS

- April 4, 2008 First Friday Forum: Andrew Wylie, Clinton County District Attorney, "What's Happening in the DA's office?"
- April 27, 2008 Earth Day
- April 30, 2008 League Annual Meeting see p. 2
- May 2, 2008 First Friday Forum



REMEMBER: Donations to the local League of Women Voters are **tax deductible** if the checks are made out to the **LWV Educational Fund.**

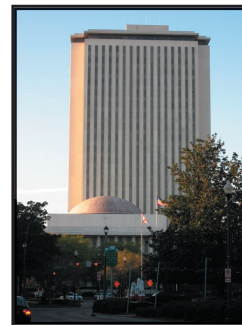
Greetings from Florida



Hi Everyone,

Still warm and sunny in Florida. Take heart, spring will get up there.

Several of us Leaguer's made the 400 mile trip to Tallahassee and the League's Legislative Seminar. Approx. 60 attendees representing 19 local Leagues attended two and one half days packed with presentations, speakers and lobbying. We heard from several legislators regarding bills appropriate to League's positions and had a chance to meet our legislators to lobby for several key issues such as: campaign finance reform, transportation, coastal management, civic education, and redistricting. I also had the opportunity to sit in on the Taxation and Reform Commission that meets



Florida State Capitol



The old state capitol (now a museum which sits in front of the new state capitol)

every 20 years to evaluate the taxation system. You may have read about their decision regarding school taxes. They propose to eliminate school taxes and to make up the monies in part with elimination of the state sales tax exemptions (such as ostrich feed, the dog races, etc.) that are not a benefit to the citizens and a one cent addition to the sales tax. Additional monies will have to be found from the state budget. This proposal will be voted on in Nov. as a constitutional amendment. I anticipate fierce lobbying efforts on the pro and con sides.

There was also a presentation by the League State Climate Change Committee that is encouraging all of the mayors to sign on to the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement that will strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communi-

ties. Education and lobbying are also part of their focus.

It was an interesting experience and I was impressed with the political knowledge of the League members.

Candace A. Morin, the Director of Mental Health at the Lee County jail, spoke at the March League meeting. She said that the community could not afford NOT to pay for prevention programs to keep children out of trouble. If you "catch it early, you don't have to use the prisons." Seven hundred juveniles went through the Juvenile Assessment Center in 2003. After funding for prevention programs for local children was cut in favor of corrections and detention, the number that used the Center increased to 2,818 in 2007. After working with 12-15 yr olds, she realized that children under 12 yrs of age were also abusing or selling drugs, breaking into homes and having sex often occurring after school is out and before the parent(s) came home from work.

A prevention program is needed that is available to all parents with affordable costs, staffed with counselors experienced in conflict resolution and teaching children, many of whom are from dysfunctional families. "Behavior that is reinforced tends to be repeated." One of the legislators present said that the money is there. Floridians need to convince the Legislature to levy a sales tax on Internet sales and other measures that would raise \$3 billion a year. He also mentioned that effective programs, such as a school-suspension prevention program once offered at Suncoast Elementary School, could be restarted with the cooperation of the county, the school board and the sheriff's office. A School Board member said that along with such programs, the school district needs to focus on improving academic skills, particularly in math and reading, for minority and low-income children.

Our annual meeting is in April and then program planning for the next year will begin.

continued from p. 4 "Merrin's Bio"

She is a Brooklyn bred New Yorker that has lived in Chautauqua County since 1974. She graduated from Hunter College in NYC with a dual degree in Biology and Elementary Education and continued with graduate work at SUNY Fredonia. Ms. Merrins has served on numerous boards in her community. She is a "foremother" of the Chautauqua County Commission on Women's Issues. Marcia has served on the local school board for five years. Currently, she is vice chair of the Chautauqua County Department of Health board.

Jogging and tennis are enjoyed almost daily. Marcia always finds time for bridge, mah jongg, gourmet cooking, and a good book, although often on tape as she drives to Albany. She has been a certified ski instructor. For fun, annually for 15 years, she portrays Elf Holly on the local access "Talk to Santa Show."

Marcia and husband Jim enjoy day hiking on adventures around the world as well as crewing on the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race each fall. They are the proud parents of three adult children and two amazing grandchildren (of course), Mabel and Collin.

S.2191. America's Climate Security Act

March 20, 2008
TO: Members of the U.S. Senate
FROM: Mary G. Wilson, President



The League of Women Voters urges you to strengthen and support S. 2191, America's Climate Security Act, sponsored by Senators Lieberman and Warner and reported by the Committee

on Environment and Public Works. The legislation will establish the basic framework that is necessary to curtail the pollution that is causing climate change.

Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts.

S. 2191 establishes a "cap and trade" system that will, if properly carried out, achieve two essential goals: cutting green-house gas emissions enough to prevent the worst impacts of global climate change, and doing so in an economically efficient manner. The "cap" sets a limit on allowable emissions from electric power, transportation and manufacturing sources that will decline over time to meet the pollution-reduction goal. The "trading" system sets up a market that allows sources to buy, sell, borrow and trade emission allowances so reductions can be achieved in the most cost-effective ways.

Significantly, the legislation also provides that a portion of emission allowances will be auctioned, with the proceeds to go toward speeding the transition to new technologies and mitigating impacts. The League urges that the legislation be strengthened in two ways. First, the bill should ensure that pollution reduction goals are consistent with the best scientific analyses. Currently, the legislation does not achieve all the reductions that will likely be needed, and advances in scientific knowledge may later indicate a need for quicker or greater reductions. Second, the auction system should be expanded to include more emissions earlier in the process. This will both speed compliance and increase the economic efficiency of the program.

We also urge you to oppose weakening amendments, particularly loopholes that undermine the emissions cap through such mechanisms as a so-called "safety valve" that would allow sources to purchase unlimited emission allowances.

The League of Women Voters urges the Senate to take quick and strong action against global climate change.

The Informer

League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area



April 2008

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League of Women Voters First Friday Forum



April 4, 2008

12 noon

Butcher Block Restaurant

Speaker: Andrew Wylie, Clinton
County District Attorney

**Topic: "What's Happening in the
DA's Office?"**

(This will be a chance to meet our District
Attorney and learn more about the work
that he and his staff are doing)

\$12.00 Soup and Salad Bar

RSVP by April 3rd to Carole Cao-Ba
563-3903 or tzivia12@aol.com

Annual Meeting

April 30, 2008

Anthony's Restaurant

5:30 - Social
6:00 Dinner
7:00 Speaker

Speaker: Marcia Merrins, Presi-
dent LWV Chautauqua and LWVNYS
VP, Nominee for LWVUS Board, Past
President of the LWVNYS, 2003-2007
(See bio. on p. 4)

Menu

Mixed field greens Salad/honey-dijon dressing
Roast Vegetable Cannelloni
OR
Chicken Breast Scaloppine, potato & vegetable
Peach Cake Supreme with Melba sauce
coffee/tea

\$25. incl. tax & gratuity per person

**R.S.V.P. for reservations Myra Decker
643-2742**

March FFF Report

by Betsy Metz



Kristy Sprague, Chief Assistant District Attorney, discussed the development of a Child Advocacy and Resource Center in the North Country at the March 1st FFF. The goal of the center is to more effectively treat children who are the

victims of abuse. A multidisciplinary team [MDT] composed of professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, medical, victim advocacy, and mental health will meet with the victim and non-offending parent in a child-friendly environment. Care and treatment will be on-site instead of through referrals as is currently done, ex. medical treatment via the hospital ER and forensic at the police department. Referrals are also currently made for the services of a victim's advocate - the position in the DA's office was lost when the Rape Crisis Center closed. The above venues and/or referrals can be unsettling and intimidating to already traumatized children.

The center provides a positive facility where the alleged victim's and family's needs are addressed and evidence is gathered to bring the alleged perpetrator to justice. For example, while law enforcement and child advocacy professionals are interviewing the victim, the other team members can watch behind a two-way mirror or closed circuit television, thus reducing the frequency of recounting the trauma. The MDT works to provide optimum care and counseling to help the victim and family recover. Statistically, the center treatment concept has had the following results:

- * more efficient care
- * higher perpetrator conviction rate [due to more comprehensive testimony and pleas by offenders]
- * greater satisfaction among non-offending parents
- * reduced operation expenses and more highly valued by community residents than alternative

systems

* frequent inclusion of prevention programs, providing outreach to schools and communities to stop abuse before it happens

Issues are complex. A victim frequently admits to his/her abuse to protect other siblings. Aiding the victim may result in the victim's removal from the family setting, thus separation from siblings and non-offending parent. For emotional and/or financial reasons the non-offending parent sometimes denies or resents the victim's allegation against the perpetrator. Conviction after the trial results in the loss of a parent and generally impacts household income. Social stigma remains a powerful motivator in "keeping the secret". Child sexual abuse frequently follows multi-generational patterning; victims become perpetrators. All socio-economic groups are affected.



Ann White, Betty Ann King, Barbara Landes, Janet Forsman

The center will follow the Child Advocacy and Resource Consultation Center plan. Currently over 30 centers operate in New York state and over 600 serve nationally. Kristy is spear-heading the project which will be under the umbrella of the DA's office. Funding will be through grants, federal and state monies, so no cost to the county. The need for a center is significant. There are no centers in the northern tier. The center will be located on Arizona Avenue with access to public transportation. The building has been donated. To date two federal grants have been awarded. These monies will be used for education and training. Outcome of a state grant application is pending.

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continued on p. 4

continued from p. 3 "FFF Report"



Pearlie Rabin, Kathy Schumacher, Linda Leighton, Carole Cao-Ba, Elle Berger

Additional facts re. perpetrators were discussed. After the accused is convicted, the New York state risk examiner assigns a level of 3 (highest) - 1 (lowest) to the criminal. The criminal has the right to challenge the designation. The sex offender list in Clinton County is well enforced. A conviction remains on the perpetrator's record. Some perpetrators will probably never be cured. If an offender is treated at an early age, positive results are possible. The level of the crime depends on the following criteria:

- * victim age
- * presence of force
- * legal age of consent
- * trust relationship

League Expresses Concern With New Ethics Procedures

Washington, DC- The League of Women Voters today expressed concerns about the new ethics procedures passed by a House vote of 229 to 182 last night.

"This does not provide the independent ethics enforcement process that is needed to clean up the House and protect the public interest," said Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League of Women Voters.

"The investigative powers of the Office of Congressional Ethics are simply insufficient," Wilson continued. "Without access to subpoena power, investigators will not be able to compel cooperation from outside entities and individuals, congressional staff and Members," she said.

"Voters in 2006 clearly reacted to the 'business as

usual' approach that Congress took to the scandals that plagued the House. Voters continue to have high expectations for ethics reform. They want changes that will be strong and effective," Wilson said. "This agreement falls short," she said. "This proposal will prove to be inadequate and will have to be revisited, probably when the next wave of public scandals arrives," Wilson said.

"The League is disappointed that this proposal is the best the House is willing, or able, to achieve," Wilson concluded.

Convention 2008

Join the Excitement - Attend the LWVUS Convention in June (New)

Have you ever experienced the excitement of being with a thousand people who care about our democracy? Come experience that energy at the 48th National LWV Convention in Portland, OR, June 13-17, 2008. The delegate body will:

- Adopt the national program for 2008-2010.
- Elect Officers, Directors and a Nominating Committee.
- Adopt the LWVUS Budget for FY 2008-09 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009).
- Vote on Proposed Amendments to the LWVUS Bylaws.
- Use this opportunity to network, attend training sessions and share ideas with each other.

Marcia A. Merrins Bio

Marcia A. Merrins has been the New York State League president (2003-2007), a former local League president for many years, and served in other portfolios on the state board. As a long time active member, she has developed a profound, practical body of knowledge about leadership skills necessary to be a successful League leader. She has instituted the Ida Trager Regional Workshop throughout the state where League leaders receive leadership training and dialogue issues with state board members. She has also served as chair of the LWVNYS Education Foundation.

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