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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: _____ \$50.00 Individual
(Check desired level) _____ \$70.00 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 2010 No. 8

7 Woodland Hills
Morrisonville, New York 12962

- Inside:**
- p. 1 Diversity Statement/Environmental Committee News/
New Member/Nominations /Calendar
 - p. 2 April FFF (Note Date Change)/ Annual Meeting
 - p. 3 March FFF Report
 - p. 4 Women in History
 - p. 5 League News
 - p. 7 Bar Codes/2010 Census
 - p. 8 Election Law Reform/Albany on the Record/For Sale
 - p. 9 League News
 - p. 10 Greetings from Florida
 - p. 11 Membership Form/Legislative Representatives



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

Hard Copy of Informer

To all members and the public: If you wish to receive the League Newsletter, **"The Informer"** by mail, 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.**

LWV Plattsburgh Area Diversity Statement

"The League of Women Voters of the Plattsburgh Area is committed to diversity and pluralism.

There shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, economic status or political affiliation."

Environmental Committee News

We have set the date for the **Global/Environmental Fair**. It will be on **April 25th from 12-2 p.m. at the Champlain Mall**. We will be meeting on the 19th of March at noon at Oak Street School to continue planning for the event.



Our Green Pages continue to get high praise in the Community. I was asked to speak to the Adirondack Mountain Club on March 5th and to the Kiwanis Breakfast Club on March 9th. I gave the background on our Committee's preparation of the Green Pages and cited other activities we are involved in; plus a general overview on the importance of recycling. Members were given copies of Green Pages at the respective meetings. Barbara Landes Chairman

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.

Welcome New Member

Marilyn Smith

Nominations Are Welcome for League Board

Proposed Slate:



Secretary-Madeleine Robinson
Treasurer-Myra Decker

Additional nominations for these offices are encouraged and can be made at the Annual Meeting. If you want to become involved in what the League does, contact Myra Decker.



Calendar

April 4th	Easter
April 9th	First Friday Forum-p.2
April 28	Annual Meeting-p.2
May 7	First Friday Forum TBA

Greetings from Florida



Hi everyone,

It looks as if spring/summer is slowly coming to Florida. The temps have been in the low to mid 70's with a warming trend this week.

As I had mentioned in the previous *Informer*, a survey was taken of voters during the Martin Luther King celebration. Although this was not a science driven survey, information gained from the survey participants revealed that the number one reason people do not vote is because they 'do not know who is on the ballot', followed equally by, they 'did not like anyone running for election' and 'did not know when to vote'. When asked, "what would help you to vote"; respondents indicated that, "knowing what elected officials do", added to, "knowing the candidate". The survey seemed to underscore the importance of the LWV' activities of conducting candidate forums, publishing the Voter Guide and providing Voter Hot lines.

The March LWV meeting had Sharon Weiss-Kapp, an Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor at the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions, speak on "Reading and Literacy". She was the moving force in the development of the video "Jump Start", a video designed to assist parents in enhancing the language development of their baby because spoken language is the foundation for written language. She did various exercises to illustrate the variables that affect the understanding of language.

Our next meeting will feature Jim Nathan, President and CEO of the Lee Memorial Health System. His topic is "Healthcare's Perfect Storm Intensified." We will also have elections.

We also had a successful fund raising event by counting ballots for an election in a village.

Hope the daffodils are showing their color.
Take care,
Stasia Arcarese

continued from p. 7 "Health Care"

American political history. The path that began with Social Security and continued with Medicare is reaching fruition with this health care legislation. Comprehensive health care reform will begin to undo decades of neglect and inaction that has left millions of Americans uninsured and at risk.

"This legislation is a monumental step in the fight for social justice.

"Too many citizens lack adequate health insurance coverage and rising costs threaten everyone. Passage of comprehensive health care legislation greatly expands coverage to include millions more Americans; protects the coverage that currently delivers care to most; reduces costs over the long term; and accomplishes these goals at a reasonable cost.

"It would be difficult to overstate the importance of today's actions, and we commend our elected representatives for standing up for Americans and having the courage to do what needs to be done to confront the health care crisis in our country. The League congratulates the House leadership on a closely-fought victory.

"We can expect transformational reform from these bills. Access to health care will be extended to all Americans. Mechanisms to control rising costs will be put in place. And the marketplace will be expanded and safeguards put in place to protect consumers.

"Truly, this legislation is monumental, historic and transforming.

"Today we took the critical step in dealing with the current health care crisis. Tomorrow, many Americans will wake up to a new week and a new future that looks a great deal more promising."

League News Continued



Climate Change: Sisters on the Planet Ambassadors in the News

We've gotten some great press from the "Sisters on the Planet" International Women's Day event that brought 18 League Leaders to DC last week to lobby Congress on climate change. NY state League President [Betsey Swan](#) sat down with Pete Dominick on Sirius Radio; Pam Locker of Indiana spoke to [Evansville public radio](#) and [Indianapolis TV](#); Michigan League President Jessica Reiser spoke to [WJRW radio](#) in Grand Rapids; Lynn Taborsak of the Connecticut League was written up in the [Hartford Courant](#); and Mary Wilson held her own on not one but two conservative talk-radio shows out of [Connecticut](#) and [Seattle](#).

League Urges Congress to Provide Sufficient Funds for International Programs in 2011

Click [here](#) to read the letter that the League and coalition partners sent to the House of Representatives and the Senate urging Congress to provide at least the amount proposed by the Administration for international programs in 2011. The League is particularly concerned about funding for international adaptation to deal with global climate change.

Elections: Voter Turnout Article



As we gear up for the 2010 mid-term elections it may be useful to take another look at the 2008 elections, which saw an overall increase in voter participation. An article by Michael McDonald, "[The Return of the Voter: Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election.](#)" provides some interesting insight into the 2008 elections and how election reform efforts have helped or hindered voter participation.

Join the Atlanta League for Some Fun and Sweet Treats on Saturday, June 12

In honor of our 90th Anniversary, the LWV of Atlanta invites Convention attendees to join them for sweet treats and a special one-woman show, "Petticoats in Politics," with Kate Campbell Stevenson on the evening of Saturday, June 12. Please click [here](#) for information on how you can purchase tickets to this fun gathering!

Proposed Arms Control Concurrence

The LWVUS Board, in response to Guidance to the Board at Convention 2008, established a Task Force to review the 1983 Arms Control position for relevance, usefulness and practical application. Now the Task Force has proposed a reworded position to the LWVUS Board. At its March meeting, the Board will decide whether to propose a concurrence at Convention 2010 with the reworded position. Prior to making that decision, the Board invited member comment on the process and the proposed concurrence statement. The reworded position, the rationale for using concurrence at Convention as a form of member agreement, and the substantive pros and cons for the rewording can be accessed [here](#). The Board had asked member response to the following questions:

1. Is it appropriate to update League positions through a task force comprised of member experts and concurrence at Convention?
2. Does the proposed rewording make the Arms Control position more relevant and useful, and is the proposed rewording consistent with the scope of the position as developed in 1983?

From the League's Online Store

Please note that the 2008-2010 Impact on Issues is out of print. A new 2010-2012 Impact on Issues will be published a few months after Convention.

9 In the meantime click [here](#) to download a copy.

The Informer

League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area



April 2010

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League of Women Voters First Friday Forum

APRIL 9, 2010



12 noon

Butcher Block Restaurant

Speaker: Judith Layhee, Commissioner
Clinton County Board of Election

**Topic: On-line voter registration?
'update on voting machines'
overvotes / lost vote?**

Cost: \$12. (no checks, please)

RSVP by April 8th to Myra Decker
643-2742 or mystdek7@northnet.org

League of Women Voters Annual Meeting

APRIL 28, 2010



Anthony's Restaurant
5:30 - Social
6:00 - Dinner
7:00 - Speaker

SPEAKER: Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive
Director League of Women Voters of New York State

MENU

Mixed field greens salad-honey/dijon dressing

Sauteed Pork 'Saltimbocca' - prosciutto,mozzarella
in marsala wine & sage sauce

Chicken Breast Stuffed with apple-mango chutney
and goat cheese

Wild Mushroom,Spinach & Gorgonzola Risotto
- with caramelized shallot,vegetable broth

TIRAMISU, coffee/tea

\$27. incl. tax & gratuity per person
R.S.V.P. for reservations and dinner choice by
April 23rd to Myra Decker - 643 -2742

March First Friday

by Betsy Metz

Sally Sears-Mack, president, discussed the Local Development Corporation, Inc. at the March 5th FFF. Founded to foster economic development in the Town of Plattsburgh, members work closely with Town Planning director Phil von Bargen as well as The Development Corporation of Clinton County Director Adore Kurtz. The Local Development Corporation forms partnerships to achieve goals and meet needs.



Sally Sears-Mack

She stressed the importance of residents and communities working together. Sally said she & her committee have spent the first year planning in order to comply with state and federal regulations. They are developing a loan process and looking for money.

Sally feels the area has a positive prevailing attitude and is poised for a great future. Past business successes such as Cedar Knoll Log Homes and Multina help offset a few who defaulted on Town loans. 2009-10 activities include the completion of Hampton Inn, Panera Bread, and Cumberland 12 Cinemas. Construction is underway for the new Comfort Inn and Schluter Tile, a 57,000 square foot building. Construction of a second building is under consideration. The Local Development Corporation plans to turn the County airport into a multi-use building.

The Corporation's goal is to have a healthy community by emphasizing the preservation of open spaces, maximizing production of local produce, developing a town center, expanding "green" in buildings and land usage, co-locating housing and retail, tracking demographics, continuing to develop transportation and curtailing

sprawl. The Corporation is working with the Chamber of Commerce to expand "green" tourism. The Corporation also works with the Town of Plattsburgh Land Use Planning Committee which is currently designing the next 10 year plan. [Note: League members Elle Berger and Betty Ann King serve on the committee.]

The Town of Plattsburgh encompasses 25% of the total assessed property value in Clinton County. The town value exceeds the city by \$300 million. Plattsburgh is uniquely sited between Montreal and the Adirondack Park.

Based on her service in local government in Truro, MA, Sally recognized two similar needs in our area: Assistance for unemployed, homeless professionals who have been "down-sized"; safe haven lodging in which families can stay to help prevent family disintegration; daytime activities for women in shelters who are struggling with drug and alcohol abuse and job support, ex. appropriate clothing and training for job interviews. [Note: the Keeseville Methodist Church Thrift Shop gives clothing to the needy for job interviews.] Affordable housing for low income professionals, such as teachers and firefighters. Sally asked the audience for "wish list" suggestions to supplement and enhance existing businesses, organizations and activities. Ideas included



Kathy Felty, Sara Hurwitz, Sally Sears-Mack

Election Law Reform - League memoranda in support of pending legislation

S4960 Concerning Application Process for Absentee Ballots - simplify application process by providing additional time and means to apply
S1836A to Allow Half-Day Shifts for Polling Place Inspectors - county boards of election shall prescribe the necessary rules and procedures to ensure proper poll site operation.

S2868B concerning Simplification of the Absentee Application Form - to conform with NY state constitutional requirements. Currently the application for an absentee ballot calls for unnecessary and intrusive personal information re. the applicant's reason for the application

S5945 concerning Domestic Violence Absentee Ballot Confidentiality - an act to amend the election law, in relation to authorizing registration record of victims of domestic violence to be kept confidential in certain cases. A victim could seek a court order requesting/directing that his/her voter registration records be kept confidential. Currently victims often do not register to vote in fear of revealing new addresses. LWVNYS has long had a position supporting services needed to provide for the safety of victims of domestic violence because of the ever-present physical and psychological danger to the victims. This legislation furthers the goal with no fiscal implication. (Jan. 2010 SBR)

For Sale: League 90th Anniversary Products

The LWVUS is pleased to introduce a number of new products, many carrying the League's special 90th anniversary logo and others displaying the traditional logo, at our [online store](#). We have luggage tags, USB "thumb" drives, padfolios, buttons, lapel pins, pens, keychains and more – all make perfect gifts for friends, family and speakers. Coming soon: a logo-adorned fleece set perfect for keeping ears and hands warm on these cold winter days! Stay tuned.

Mark your calendars for "Albany On the Record"

The state League, in coordination with NYPIRG, Common Cause and Citizens Union, has received funding to organize an educational forum in Albany on **May 5th** on government reform issues. The gubernatorial candidates and current legislative leaders will be invited to respond to questions on their support for reform efforts in the area of campaign finance, redistricting, election law (absentee ballot process, voting machines) and ethics. The event will include free busing from around the state to Albany to encourage people to attend. The goal is to obtain at least 150 organizations to support the event – and approximately 300 people to attend. We need to show the politicians that people want a change in Albany! Lunch will be provided. There will be time after to lobby your legislator, if you wish.

Sign Up to Attend Now!

Name _____
Address _____
Phone number _____
email address _____

__ will provide own transportation and join you there!

Bus Preference (Confirmation of bus locations will depend on number of people). Check if interested.

__ Crossgates Mall, Albany (to avoid parking downtown) __ Other _____

Send or fax information to
LWVNYS, 62 Grand St., Albany, NY 12207
Fax: 518-465-0812

or call (518) 465-4162 to reserve a space or email
May5@lwnvny.org

League-Voice Online

Click [here](#) to keep up with the latest League activities.

How to read Bar Codes ...

With all the food and pet products now coming from all over the world, it is best to make sure you read labels at the grocery store. Many products no longer show where they were made, only give where the distributor is located. It is important to read the bar code to track its origin.

However, you may now refer to the barcode - remember if the first 3 digits are:

690-692 ... CHINA
00 - 09 ... USA & CANADA
30 - 37 ... FRANCE
40 - 44 ... GERMANY
471 ... Taiwan
49 ... JAPAN
50 UK

League Launches 2010 Survey on Democracy

2010 will shape the political landscape for the next decade. The League is asking supporters to complete its [2010 Survey on Democracy](#), available online [here](#). We've already received thousands of responses; add your voice today!

2010 CENSUS: League Working to Eliminate 'Undercount'

As the 2010 Census approaches, US LWV President Mary Wilson has said that: "Our goal is to work with others to eliminate the 'undercount' that occurs, particularly within low income and minority populations.We have been fighting to protect the rights of under-represented communities in many arenas, including voting, immigration and health care reforms." Census data is used for many important purposes. Here's what's at stake:

The distribution of \$400 billion in federal funds per year to communities around the country; Funding to build infrastructure, such as new hospitals, roads, tunnels, and schools; Funding to improve public services, such as emergency services, job-training and senior centers; Critical demographic data informing businesses where to invest in local economies; Perhaps most importantly, for the next 10 years the Census will help determine how we are represented in Congress, in every state legislature, and in many local legislative bodies, e.g. city council districts, state senatorial districts, and everything in between. As the U.S. Census Bureau prepares for the census, the NYS League is urging local leagues to help educate the public about the census process and to be vigilant for any short-comings that may arise.

Beware! If a "census bureau representative" knocks on your door and asks for personal information like your Social Security number or your e-mail address, they are not who they say they are. **Legitimate census takers will be equipped with a badge, a census canvas bag, a hand-held electronic unit and a confidentiality notice. During their initial visitation period, census takers are strictly trying to determine how many individuals live in the residence. They will not ask for names, ages or Social Security numbers. Neither will the Census Bureau contact people by e-mail.** Anyone who receives an e-mail supposedly sent by the Census Bureau is advised not to open the messages or attachments.

House Finally Passes Comprehensive Health Care Reform

Washington, D.C. – Statement from Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States:

Today's vote by the U.S. House of Representatives marks an historic milestone in
continued on p. 10

continued from p. 3 "FFF Report"

the following: increase bike, walking, and cross country ski trails; locate restaurants and grocery stores for bike or walking access; community center where one can join others for family-oriented, low cost, on-going activities; place for dancing, esthetically appealing entrances/approaches to the Town, clothing stores for mature ladies; and a theater featuring art films [as was originally promised at Cumberland Corners]

In closing, everyone agreed with Sally that our area is a very desirable place in which to live.



L to R: Pearlie Rabin, Cesca Hartnett, guest Hope Coryer, Elle Berger, Nancy Perry, Jan Forsman, Sally (foreground)



L to R: Sally-Sears-Mach, Kathy Schumacher, Inge Sapp, Betty Ann King



Women in History

Paulina Kellogg Wright Davis (1813-1876) was born in Bloomfield, NY. She wanted to become a missionary but was unable to as the orthodox Presbyterian church did not allow single women to become missionaries.



She married Francis Wright in 1833. They both had similar values and both resigned from their church to protest its pro-slavery stance and served on the executive committee of the Central New York Anti-Slavery Society. They also supported women's rights reforms, associating with feminists Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ernestine Rose. After her husband died in 1845, she studied medicine and gave lectures to women on anatomy and physiology and was instrumental in opening the medical profession to women. In 1849 she married Thomas Davis and adopted two daughters. In 1850 she started to focus her energies on women's rights. She stopped lecturing and helped to arrange and head the 1850 National Women's Rights Convention in Massachusetts, delivering the keynote address. In 1853 she founded the first women's rights news-paper, *The Una*, which she edited till 1855 when she handed it over to Caroline Wells Healey Dall.

In 1870 she arranged the twentieth anniversary of the Women's Suffrage Movement meeting and published the proceeds as *The History of the National Woman's Rights Movement*.
4 (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Observations on: The New NYS Law on Reorganizing Local Governments

By Marie Bellon

The New NY Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act, which takes effect on March 21, 2010, establishes a comprehensive procedure to consolidate or dissolve several kinds of local government entities: towns, villages, and special districts including fire, fire protection, fire alarm, water, garbage, sewer, parks, special improvement or other improvement districts, library districts and other districts created by law. The law does not include school, city or special purpose districts created by counties under county law. Special districts and villages were created by town boards or by petition of residents to address increased residential needs brought on by suburban growth that were not necessarily being addressed on a town-wide basis. Recently, however, media coverage of some local government entities has raised concerns over the lack of transparency, oversight, accountability and the potential for abuse of tax revenue. Governor David A. Paterson heralded this new law as “empowering citizens” and as a vehicle to reduce property taxes by consolidating or dissolving local government entities. Whether or not the new law fully accomplishes these aims is arguable. For example, it should be noted that the procedure for consolidation or dissolution is more easily accomplished when those actions are initiated by government. When voters initiate the action, the process is more cumbersome and the requirements more strenuous. In addition, voter approval is something not permitted for certain consolidations or dissolutions, such as when special districts are involved. As for reducing property taxes, this law does not necessarily apply to the greatest portion of the property tax bill. According to one report, the law applies to only 12% of the total property tax bill with the greater tax revenue going to

schools and the county government. This law provides two paths for consolidation or dissolution: The Government Board-Initiated process and the Voter-Initiated process. The law also amends the NYS Municipal Home Rule Law providing for how counties can abolish local governments.

Arms Control Task Force Paper Available Online

Click [here](#) to read “A Focus On Arms Control and Conventional Armaments” written by Task Force member W. Michael Slattery (*LWV of Manitowoc County, WI*) and [here](#) to read all Arms Control Task Force published papers.

Elections: LWVEF Launches 2010 High School Voter Registration Project

The LWVEF is pleased to announce a major new initiative to bring more young people – especially young minorities – into the democratic process. Through a joint collaboration with Project Vote, the LWVEF will be working with Leagues in five states (AZ, CA, FL, IL and TX) this spring to encourage voter registration in 100 high schools with a high-percentage of minority students. This project will provide voter registration and education through classroom activities and assemblies, and expects to help 27,000 17- and 18-year-olds apply to become registered voters. It will also serve as a ground-breaking, statistically significant experiment to determine the comparative effectiveness of registration strategies. The resulting analysis will help determine the most effective strategies for engaging high school students and help inform an upcoming manual for Leagues and other organizations to utilize in planning their own high school voter registration activities. Stay tuned for more details.

Update Your Will

Have you recently moved to a new state? Had a child? Did you get married last year? Or maybe there’s a new grandchild or step-child in your life? Any one of these major life events is reason enough to update your will. It is always important to stay in touch with your attorney regarding any changes in estate and probate law. While you’re updating your plans, don’t forget to include a gift for your favorite charities, like the League of Women Voters Education Fund to strengthen the pillars of our democracy for years to come. If you have already included a gift for the LWV in your will or trust, but have not previously informed us, or if you have been thinking about setting up a gift that provides income, such as a charitable gift annuity, please contact Lauren Frank, at 202-263-1355 or lfrank@lwv.org.

Updating Campaign Finance Laws for the 2010 Elections

With the Supreme Court’s recent decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*, it is critically important for Congress to update campaign finance laws, especially disclosure requirements governing corporate and union spending. With the 2010 elections fast approaching, delay is simply not a viable option.

The Court’s decision in *Citizens United* allows corporations to make unlimited independent expenditures in candidate elections, thus changing the foundation on which decades of congressional enactments on campaign finance are built. Such fundamental change requires a considered response from Congress. We support a variety of approaches, but we do not expect legislation adopted this year to address every possible issue. However, some steps clearly are vital to govern the conduct of the 2010 elections.

After *Citizens United*, we urgently need enhanced disclosure. This is the most basic step toward protecting the role of the voter in making decisions in elections. It is now possible for corporations to secretly provide funds that another corporation uses to intervene directly in an election. This is simply unacceptable.

The Court pointed in the direction of enhanced disclosure when it said that disclosure is important to “providing the electorate with information.” It also supported disclaimer requirements “so that the people will be able to evaluate the arguments to which they are being subjected.” We couldn’t agree more.

After providing enhanced disclosure, the next most important step for Congress is to do no further harm. A decision as far-reaching as *Citizens United* will provoke proposals that could make our election system and government processes even worse. Such steps as raising contribution limits to candidates and PACs, or allowing corporations and unions to donate huge sums to political parties or even to candidates, could increase corruption or the appearance of corruption and further distort our political processes.

Rep. Van Hollen and Senator Schumer have released a legislative framework providing for heightened disclosure, more complete disclaimers, barring election spending by foreign corporations, barring election ads by government contractors, clarifying coordination rules, and ensuring candidates can afford to respond to heavy corporate or union spending. We believe this is a responsible and balanced approach. Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. Congress must act quickly in addressing the Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*.