



## Special Interest Articles:

- Next consensus meeting will be on Immigration Reform.
- Election Night Reporting goes smoothly.
- Solid Waste recycling the topic at General Meeting.

## **Individual Highlights:**

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## ***League of Women Voters, Rensselaer County Ny***

### **Save the Date: Post Holiday Get Together**

All members of the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County are very welcome to attend the Annual Get Together.

We will meet on **Thursday, January 17, 2008**

At **6:00 pm** for a catered meal and conversation

Followed by a **Presentation on Immigration Reform**

By our fellow League member **Jill Nagy** at 7 p.m.

The LWVUS Immigration Study consensus questions with background information for each as well as suggested discussion questions are available in print from Marcia Easterling. These are also available online at [www.lwvus](http://www.lwvus). Invitations will be mailed once the date, time and place are determined. An immigration consensus meeting will be scheduled for some time in February.

### **League Sponsors Vote Smart Bus Visit to Troy**

Vote Smart's National Bus Tour is coming  
To deliver the Voter's Self-Defense System

November 17 Downtown Troy  
Near the Winter Farmers Market  
At Third St. and Broadway  
9:30 am – 2:00 pm

*Presentations on the hour and half hour*

Get the facts, not the spin  
[www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)

Co-sponsored by Mayor Tutunjian and the City of Troy, Emma Willard School, RPI, Troy Farmers Market, NAACP, ARISE, and the LWV of Albany County as well

**Members of the Board**

**Co-President** Marcia P. Easterling  
273-5412

[measterling@nycap.rr.com](mailto:measterling@nycap.rr.com) *Bpard Meeting Agenda/Mail, Maintain Calendar, Board List, New Member Orientation*

**Co-President** Gail K. DeMarco 434-2413 [gdemarco@nycap.rr.com](mailto:gdemarco@nycap.rr.com)

*Public Spokesperson, Receive/Distribute State and National Mailings, Arts Center Mail and Phone Calls, New Member Orientation*

**Vice President** Mary Muller 274-0846 [mullers@mac.com](mailto:mullers@mac.com) *"Voter" editor*

**Secretary** Margaret Story 272-1566 [Mrgstry@aol.com](mailto:Mrgstry@aol.com)

*Minutes/Correspondence*

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*Treasurer, Budget Committee, Co-Chair Membership/Finance Drive, Co-Chair THA Elections*

**Director** Diane Bell 273-5172

[dbell1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dbell1@nycap.rr.com) *Web site, Voter Services, Local Voter Guides and Local Section NYS Voter Guide, General Meeting Program Coordinator*

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*Membership records Management, Prospective Member Mailings, Member Directory/Mailing Labels, Chair: Troy Charter Review, Co-Chair THA Elections*

**Director** Donna Packard-Mahoney 283-6423 [dmahoney@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dmahoney@nycap.rr.com)

*Action, Issues/Advocacy*

**Director** Fred D. Stein 663-5230

[fstein@nycap.rr.com](mailto:fstein@nycap.rr.com) *Natural Resources, Rensselaer Co. government Financing Education*

**Letter from the Co-Presidents**

What a busy couple of months this has been for the members of our League, mainly because of all the Voters Services activities in which we have been involved. We have met with several groups to register voters and discuss the voting process. We have been involved in four Candidate Forums and one Meet the Candidates night and wish to thank the moderators, timekeepers and question takers at those events. Thanks to **Diane Bell** for preparing our local Voters' Guides and to all our members and friends who distributed local and state Voters guides. Many of our members collected results at the polls on Election Night.

Did you see our Letter to the Editor in the *Troy Record* on November 11<sup>th</sup> which highlighted the mission of the League of Women Voters in relation to Candidate Forums? It offered an opportunity to educate the readers on what we do at the events and to highlight those groups who sponsored events with us this last legislative season.

October 24<sup>th</sup> was the Solid Waste Membership meeting. All those in attendance left with a plan for reducing their personal amount of garbage.

We hope to see each of you on November 17<sup>th</sup> when the purple VoteSmart bus comes to Downtown Troy near the Winter Farmers Market. We'd like to thank **Marcia Easterling** for working with VoteSmart and the local endorsing organizations to bring the bus to our area on its national tour.

Mid-January is our next membership meeting and the topic will be Immigration. You will receive a separate mailing regarding this post-holiday event.

We look forward to seeing you in the New Year. Have an enjoyable THANKSGIVING and PEACEFUL HOLIDAY SEASON.

Gail

DeMarco and Marcia Easterling

## Election Night Reporting

Thanks to the many League members who volunteered this year to report results from individual polling places to the Capital District Election Service on election Night. Special thanks to Jane Ducatt for recruiting and administering the effort.

NOTE: If you had any problems at your polling place with uncooperative or rude poll workers, please forward that information to Gail DeMarco, [gdemarco@nycap.rr.com](mailto:gdemarco@nycap.rr.com) (434-2413) so that we can advise the Rensselaer County board of Elections.

### LWV POLL REPORTERS 2007

Mary Abbott	Caroline Leising & David Wolcott
Judy Armstrong	Wendy Littlefield
Michael Barrett	Mary & Steve Muller
Nancy Barrett	Jill Nagy
Helen Bayly	Joyce Neary
Patricia Beetle	Jane Neilsen
Diane & Don Bell	Trish Noelle
Malcolm Bell	Maureen Noonan
Jean Bolgatz	George & Terry O'Connor
Harriet Borton	Nina Pattison
Anne Burton	Louise Pearce
Joyce Chupka	Chris Salmon
Sue Clark	Dinnie Shanley
Sandra Colatosti	Kathy Sheehan
Mary Colatosti	Margo Singer
Catherine Caruso	Carolyn Smith
Gail DeMarco	Cynthia Smith
Joyce Diwan	Lorrie Smith
Katy Draper & Stacy Draper	Margaret Story
Jane Ducat	Judy Traite
Marcia Easterling	Barbara Urban
Millie Estes	Lorrie Volpe
Barbara Jones Higbee	Irene & Alex Wynnyczuk
Paul Hohenberg	4 Teams of RPI Students
Fran & Jim Hyde	

### **It's Not All Garbage**

Imagine carrying your garbage around with you all day! That's what Debbie Jackson said to do in taking a personal audit of all the things you throw out! In keeping with the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer position on global warming and climate change, a presentation was done on recycling as a means of energy conservation, at the East Greenbush Community Library on October 24. The speakers in the panel discussion were Joanna Reddens of ERCSWAMA, Meg Morris of the Go Green Initiative, Laura Haight of NYPIRG, and Resa Dimino of DEC.

Conservation begins with just one person! A PTA president decided to recycle. Soon, and with some effort, the city of Syracuse school system went "green". Energy savings from recycling can include: 22.9 billion BTU's of greenhouse gas emissions, 10,234,000 gallons of water, 555,560 gallons of oil and 5194 cubic yards of landfill space. Some other facts: 500,000 trees are needed for the Sunday papers in the United States, 1200 plastic bottles can be turned into carpet for an average living room, and aluminum cans take 200 years to decompose!

The present administration of New York State wishes to focus on recycle. But 20 years after the garbage barge, we're still not there!

According to Diane Bell, there is a "survivors guide to recycling" on the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County website, lwvrc.org. Other web addresses for further information include: nypirg.org, gogreeninitiative.org, ercswama.org, and dec.ny.gov. Thanks to all the municipalities in Rensselaer County that sent representatives, the speakers on the panel, the League members and community that attended, the East Greenbush Community Library, and especially to Diane Bell for her excellent organization!

By Anne Burton

### **Candidate Forums**

The League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County participated in five successful candidate forums during the month of October. The forum for candidates for District Attorney and East Greenbush town board was held on Oct 3 at the East Greenbush Community Library. On October 16, The CEO of Troy was the location for the candidate's forum for the Mayor of Troy. October 22 was the date for the candidates for supervisor and town board for the Town of Nassau, sponsored by the Nassau Free Library, and held at the Donald P. Sutherland School in Nassau. The Troy neighborhood Association with Mike Esposito hosted a forum for the Troy Mayor candidates, the District Attorney candidates, and the Troy City Council candidates, all on the same evening at the CYO in Troy on Oct 29. Finally, the Town of Schodack was able to present its candidates at a forum held at the Emmanuel Reformed Church on October 30.

Thanks go to Irene Wynnyczuk, Jill Nagy, Lorrie Smith, and Judy Armstrong who served as the moderators. Also thanks to Lynette Noonan, Sandra Colatosti, Marcie Easterling and Anne Burton who participated as timers and question takers. All of our efforts helped the candidates speak on their positions on topics of public interest via questions from the audience in order to have an informed electorate.

By Anne Burton

## SOME IMPORTANT CURRENT BASIC IMMIGRATION LAW INFORMATION

Family members of legal immigrants, people sponsored by employees, and those who win a visa lottery, a small number of refugees and asylees, and those coming to work, study, etc. are admitted.

Non-immigrant visas are designated by letters A to U. The quota for nonimmigrant professionals for the fiscal year that began 10/02/07 lasted LESS THAN ONE DAY.

The following are excluded: those with criminal records, drug or alcohol abusers, the dangerously mentally ill, those with some diseases (such as AIDS, TB) and those who have previously abused the immigration laws.

Each country is allocated the same number of visas annually, without regard to size or population.

### FACTORS IMPEDING PASSAGE OF A NEW COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT

The following were changes proposed in the Senate immigration reform bill(S. 1348) in 2007 which generated so much opposition that the bill was never voted on:

- A new class of visas for undocumented immigrants that would give the holder the legal right to remain permanently in the US and to receive a Social Security number; after 8 years eligibility for a green card with payment of a substantial fine and any back taxes

- Another new category of visa which would let temporary guest workers stay for 2 years and then return home

- Increased enforcement along borders and by means of a central database to hold immigrant-status information on all workers living in the US; all employers would eventually be required to provide this information and keep it updated for all their employees

- DREAM Act provisions providing a fast-track to citizenship for unauthorized immigrant minors attending college or serving in the US military and also granting such minors in-state tuition rates if attending a public university in their home state

- Limiting eligibility for green cards only to the spouse and children of a new citizen

This bill was largely based on three previous immigration bills which failed in 2005 and 2006.

Conservatives called the new visa types "amnesty." Liberals criticized the limiting of family reunification to nuclear families as unfair. Labor unions, human rights, and some Hispanic organizations attacked the guest workers program. Others thought requiring guest workers to return home before renewing their visas would lead them to overstay, thus becoming illegal immigrants.

(Information compiled by Marcia Easterling from LWVUS publications, Constitution Rights Foundation documents, and input from Jill Nagy.

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## **SOME US IMMIGRATION FACTS AND FIGURES**

Last major immigration reform act - 1986; it provided amnesty for about 1.5 million undocumented immigrants; most recent changes to immigration law were made in 1990, 1996, and 2000; the latter was the so-called Patriot Act.

Estimates for undocumented immigrants in US today range from 4 to 20 million.

Most sources put the figure at 12 million.

60% of these enter across the Mexican border.

40% entered legally but have overstayed their visas.

In June 2006 USCIS annual report to the Senate reported more than a million immigration petitions were pending and had been "for many years and may not be adjudicated for many more..." thus long processing delays occur because of:

massive backlogs, insufficient staff, administrative 'snafus' and time-consuming FBI background clearances.

By 1997 backlogs totaled an estimated 3,535,430 cases of APPROVED petitions

Mexicans make up the largest group of undocumented immigrants; millions of unemployed Mexican farmers migrate to escape poverty.

Mexican unemployment rate often reaches 25%.

Many families abroad survive from the money sent home by documented and undocumented workers alike; remittances from these to some countries exceed US government foreign aid.

150,000 to 200,000 Mexicans immigrate legally each year.

Number of border patrol agents rose from 4,000 in 1994 to 11,600 in 2006.

By the end of 2008, the number will rise to 18,000.

Each year about 1 million people, mostly Mexican, are arrested by immigration agents.

The budget of USCIS (Citizenship and Immigration Service), now part of the Dept. of Homeland Security and formerly called the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) increased from \$1.5 billion in 1994 to \$10 billion+ in 2007; filing fees that more than cover adjudication costs are very high, running into thousands of dollars for a family.

For the past decade market forces attract 1.5-1.8 million skilled and unskilled immigrants each year but..

US annual legal quotas admit only about 1 million.

The US currently issues 5000 visas annually to year-round unskilled workers but 400,000-500,000 additional such workers are needed.

Less than 3% of immigrants receive food stamps.

Undocumented immigrants pay taxes as consumers, renters, even home ownership

Net US economic benefit from unauthorized immigration but public sector costs and benefits are not evenly allocated locally (Immigrants, legal or not, cannot receive need-based benefits except emergency Medicaid).

States and counties bear most of these costs, especially in the states with the highest numbers of unauthorized immigrants.

Many US employers cannot pay higher wages; they would be undercut by imports.

Higher wages, especially in the agricultural sector, would significantly increase food costs to the consumer.

(Compiled by Marcia Easterling from LWVUS publications, Constitution Rights Foundation documents available on line and input from Jill Nagy)

## END OF YEAR TAX TIME:

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION?

We have an account in the LWV NYS Education Foundation – 501 (c) (3) – that we can access for our educational projects.

If you would like to make a year end **tax-deductible** contribution, please make your check payable to:

#### **LWVNYS Education Foundation**

And mail it to: Irene Wynnyczuk, Treasurer  
LWV Rensselaer County  
11 Diana Lane  
Troy, NY 12180

We send your check to the state Education Foundation for them to deposit. Then when we have an educational project to fund, we apply to them for the funding.

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*This is the time of year to make a contribution to the League and to get a tax break for yourself.*

## **Welcome New Members**

Mark Younger  
(Household member with Kristina Younger)  
69 Werking Rd  
East Greenbush, NY 12061  
283-5373  
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Patricia Fairchild  
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East Greenbush NY 12061  
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Howard Thompson  
627 Miller road  
East Greenbush, NY 12061

## CALENDAR

### December 2007

- 5 Rensselaer County Legislature, Open Forum, Wednesday, 6 pm
- 5 Hannukah, Wednesday
- 6 Troy City Council, Thursday, 7 pm
- 11 Rensselaer County Legislature, Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, 6 pm
- 25 Christmas, Tuesday

### January 2008

- 5 Rensselaer County Legislature, Open Forum, Wednesday, 6 pm
- 6 Troy City Council, Thursday, 7 pm
- 11 Rensselaer County Legislature, Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, 6 pm
- 13 **LWVRC Board Meeting, 7 pm, Krause Center, Troy**  
mid-January Post-Holiday General Membership Party TBA; speaker  
Jill Nagy on Immigration; Date for Immigration Consensus Meeting TBA
- 30 Deadline for submitting items for next Voter



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS, RENSSELAER  
COUNTY NY**

265 River Street  
Troy, NY 12180