



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

BULLETIN

MARCH 2011

OUR MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity.

This means:

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

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Saratoga County.



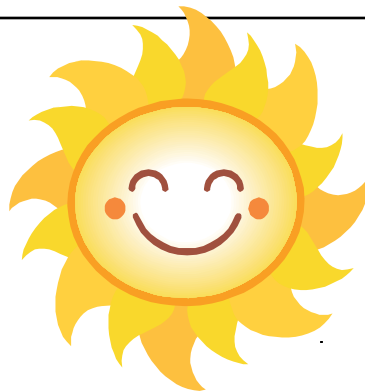
Have Breakfast with Your Legislators

at The Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs

Saturday, March 12, 2011 at 9 am

An opportunity meet face-to-face with your representatives at an interactive breakfast followed by a panel discussion.

Extended deadline: Reserve by March 4th
Send in coupon on page 7



LET THE SUN SHINE IN!

HOW TRANSPARENT IS OUR GOVERNMENT?

Wednesday, March 23rd

Speaker: Robert Freeman

*Executive Director –
Committee on Open Government
NYS Department of State*

Mr. Freeman will discuss
the recent amendments to the open meeting law. *See p.3*

Desert and beverages at 6pm - Program at 7pm—SSPL
The general public and public officials are encouraged to attend.

Forum sponsored by The Saratogian and the LWV of Saratoga County



**League of Women Voters
of Saratoga County (NY-639)**

Official address: LWV of Saratoga County
PO Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
www.lwvsaratoga.org

Board of Directors

All phone numbers in 518 area code, unless noted

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Selma Harwood, 230 Nelson Av., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 584-3794

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Mary Lou Classen, 4 Blue Spruce Lane, Ballston Lake, NY 12019 877-8874(h)

Poll Reporting

Katherine Chansky, 3168 Route 9, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 893-7817

TAKE ME TO VOTE!

Mary Ratzer, 433 County Rd. 68 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 587-8376

Voters Service- Candidate Events

Ann Kril, 60 Hillcrest Drive, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 584-1436(h)

**League of Women Voters of New York State or
League of Women Voters of New York State
Education Foundation**

62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
465-4162 www.lwvny.org

Executive Director: **Laura Bierman**, laura@lwvny.org
Project Administrator: **Stephanie Lopez**, stephanie@lwvny.org
President: **Betsey Swan**, betsey@lwvny.org

League of Women Voters of the United States
1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-4508
202-429-1965 www.lwv.org



From the President –

Does your NYS Senator or Assembly member know where you stand on the issues? Come sit down at breakfast with your representative on March 12th at the Holiday Inn and actually engage in conversation about things that matter to you. Please read the LWVNY 2011 Legislative Agenda **Fix New York State Now!** enclosed in this Bulletin so that you will be up on the LWVNY legislative priorities.

Leaguers seemed to delight in questioning President Theodore Roosevelt on his policies and actions. Paul Stillman was so believable as Roosevelt that attendees at our Famous Person Fund-raiser forgot that he was an actor playing a part. **Who can we get to be next year's Famous Person?** Some people are already doing research on people they'd like to meet, but we welcome suggestions and also people to work on the logistics of the event, especially names of prospective attendees.

As you know the League of Women Voters has positions on a lot of issues, which we have adopted over the years, following serious and intense study of the many facets of the issue, and then actually reaching consensus on the issue. Although we can, and should, support positions developed at our county, state and national level, **when we want to lobby our U. S. Congressional Representative or Senators we need to get permission from LWVUS to do this unless we are responding to an Action Alert from LWVUS.** The reason for this rule is so that Leagues across the county will speak with one voice on an issue.

Our LWV just applied for and received permission to lobby our Congressional Representative Chris Gibson to support H.R. 308 which would ban ammunition clips with more than 10 cartridges, and gun control in general. It is conceivable that some other League would want to oppose this bill on the grounds that it doesn't do enough to prevent gun violence. Which is the reason for requiring that Leagues obtain permission before lobbying on their interpretation of the position.

Following the shooting at Representative Gabrielle Gifford's Congress On Your Corner in Arizona many of our members expressed a wish that we do something to help avoid more violence. **We are responding by scheduling a program on Civil Dis-course (April 12) and one on Gun Control (Guns 'N Roses: Why the LWV Supports Gun Control, May 19) and by lobbying for H.R. 308.**

Barb

Thanks to our
contributors

Stewart's Shops
Meg Stevens
Katherine Chansky

LET THE SUN SHINE IN!

Sunshine Week and the LWV

Sunshine Week occurs every year in the week that includes James Madison's birthday (March 16), because Madison is considered the Father of the Constitution. It focuses our attention on Openness in Government and the threats and impediments that can get in the way of access to information about the activities of government. It grew out of attempts to sharply curtail access to government information following 9/11.

Our League has quite a history with Sunshine Week. In 2006, we were one of 14 Leagues in the U.S. to get a LWVUS EF grant which we used to organize **Openness in Government: Looking for the Sunshine Symposium**. Among the panelists were: Robert Freeman, director of the Committee on Open Government, NYS Department of State; and several others.

In 2007, the LWV sponsored two days of Sunshine celebrations: program called **Your Right to Know New York State's Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws**, again featuring Robert Freeman, and **Opening Government to Citizen Participation**, with Mark Lowery, Chief of Public Outreach, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and other panelists. Both days were Co-Sponsored by Saratoga County Supervisors: Paul Sausville (Malta), Tom Wood (Saratoga) and Joanne Yepsen (Saratoga Springs) & The LWVSC.

In 2008 we again spread Sunshine observances over 2 days: March 19 the LWV and the Clifton Park Halfmoon Library co-sponsored **FOILED Again! YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW: New York State's Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws** with Robert Freeman. On March 20, **Opening Government** was the topic of George Latimer, NYS Assemblyman from Westchester and former Chair of the Westchester County Legislature, in a presentation sponsored by our League, Supervisor Joanne Yepsen, and Skidmore College Political Clubs.

In 2009 and 2010, the LWV concentrated on successfully lobbying the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors to post their minutes promptly and to publish committee agendas at least 24 hours in advance.



Speaker:

Robert Freeman

*Executive Director –
Committee on Open
Government
NYS Department of
State*

In his capacity as the director of one of few governmental entities in the United States created to deal with public access to government information, Mr. Freeman has offered advice and consultation to officials and scholars from around the world. He assisted in the development of Japan's first access to records law, which has served as a model for prefectural governments throughout that nation.

Mr. Freeman has spoken or conducted seminars for the New York State Bar Association, the Bar Association of the City of New York, the New York State Society of Newspaper Editors, the New York City Press Club, the American Society of Access Professionals, the staffs of numerous newspapers throughout New York and various government and public interest associations. He also has spoken throughout the United States, in Canada, the Far East, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Freeman is co-author of New York's Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Protection Laws and has written approximately 17,000 advisory opinions on behalf of the Committee on Open Government. He has prepared articles and guides in various publications, including the New York Law Journal and the Legal Handbook for Journalists published by the New York State Bar Association. In 2000, he wrote "The Impact of Technology on the Freedom of Information Law" and in 2003, "Police Review Boards Meet the Public Right to Know", for the New York State Bar Association Government, Law and Policy Journal.

Freeman is a graduate of Georgetown University, and earned his J.D. from New York University.



IT'S THE COLONEL & FRIENDS!



THANKS TO ALL SUPPORTERS OF OUR FAMOUS PERSON FUNDRAISER!

Roughriders

Bolton, Barbara
Design, Bonnie
Rohlee, Mary Lou

Conservationists

Alexander, Chris
Ammon, Cliff and Margot
Baily, Frederick
Baily, Sheelagh
Bellamy, Barbara
Bellamy, Nancy
Borom, Maxine
Brown, Isabel
Burkly, Nancy and Thomas
Burns, Janice
Burton, Susan
Chansky, Katherine
Classen, Mary Lou
Crawshaw, Bill and Helen
Crowell, Ann
Dardaris, Donna
Davidow, Kevin and LeAnn
Dawson, Lori

Elliott, Joan
Ellis, Mary Jane
Finn, Charles and Mary
Finneran, Denny
Garrett, Pattie and Tom
Harrigan, Nancy and Jack
Holmes, Libby and Tim
Gallagher, Betty
Kennedy, Kathy
Kril, Ann and Michel
Kuykendall, Mary
Laverty, Jeannine
Lawton, Holly Schwarz- and Mark
Lowenthal, Terry
Mantell, Frances and Martin
Martin, Peter
Mion, Patricia (to LWVSC)
Mouzon, Mia
Muller, Robert and Susan
Murphy, Barbara
Nugent, Pat and Guest
Pasciullo, Bob and Josie
Potter, Marian
Reed, Pat

Riley, AC and John
Rodger, Francine and Ed
Rohrbaugh, Darnell
Schroeter, Helga
Spiegel, Lorin
Stamas, Barbara
Stanley, Dora
Stephenson, Judi
Stevens, Meg
Stewart, Susan
Stoll, Doris
Thomas, Bob
Van Meter, Margie
Wellman, Laurie
Whitburn, Diane
Woolbright, Larry and Meg

Square Dealers

Barnett, Claire
Chodos, Laura
Green, Millie
Nelson, Lee
Overholt, Kristin
Posten, Muriel
Thomas, Barb



OUR LEAGUE IS LOBBYING FOR GUN CONTROL

Based on the LWVUS (and LWVNY)

Position which states:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a background check waiting period, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. License fees should be adequate to bear costs of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

The League acknowledges that the U.S. Supreme Court and the lower federal courts have ruled consistently that the Second Amendment confers a right to keep and bear arms only in connection with service in a well regulated militia—known today as the National Guard.

[The last paragraph is now outdated, based on a recent Supreme Court decision.]

Robyn Ringler, a member of our League, former LWVNY Issue Specialist for Gun Control, and former Director of New Yorkers Against Gun Control wrote the following opinion piece which was published in several area newspapers:

“Thirty years ago, my life changed when I became President Ronald Reagan’s nurse for ten days at the George Washington University Hospital after he...was brutally gunned down... I imagine I felt very much like Gabrielle Giffords’ nurses are feeling right now....30 years after the Reagan shooting, a similarly deranged gunman shot Congresswoman Giffords, ...and others at a political event in Tucson.

Where has our legislature been for the past 30 years?...New York has some of the best gun control legislation out of all the states. On a federal level, we have made no progress whatsoever. If we had,

the apparently mentally ill gunman who shot Giffords would not have gained access to a semi-automatic weapon with multiple high-capacity magazines designed to kill many people in seconds.

Since Tucson, I have waited for legislators to act. Most have said and done nothing. But a few courageous individuals are trying to make a difference and they deserve our support.

Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy has proposed legislation to ban high-capacity ammunition magazines such as that used...in Tucson. The shooter had four magazines with his Glock pistol: two high-capacity magazines of more than 30 rounds and two standard clips.... We saw how many people can be killed in just seconds with such magazines.

Mayors Against Illegal Guns, a group made up of nonpartisan mayors from around the U.S, is gaining momentum in its efforts to fully fund the National Instant Background Check System Improvement Act so that many more records—of the mentally ill, drug abusers, convicted felons, and domestic violence abusers—will be listed in the national database. Those who should not have guns will not be able to buy them because their information will be in the system.

Third, the mayors are also fighting to require background checks at all gun shows...These reasonable measures are supported by more than 90% of the public, including gun owners.

As a member of The League of Women Voters (LWV), I encourage you to show strong support for these efforts. The LWV believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons is a major health and safety threat. Go to votesmart.com to find out how to contact your legislators. Then, please, call them, email them, visit them, and ask them to support these efforts so we, as a nation, do not have to experience these tragic shootings over and over again.”

Robyn wants to get an appointment with Congressman Gibson to discuss gun control. The LWV officially, and members will be a part of the group to accompany Robyn. To join in, contact her, or call Barb for the info at 885-9769.

Learn more about gun control: *Guns ‘N Roses: Why the League Supports Gun Control*, Speaker: Robyn Ringler—May 19th, SSPL 7PM.

Keeping Civil Discourse Civil

Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 to 9pm
Saratoga Springs Public Library

You say tomato, I say...

In an effort to counter some of the incivility and polarization that is happening in the political arena today, your League is sponsoring a workshop for the community entitled, **Keeping Civil Discourse Civil**. The session will be based on research and training by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), and facilitated by Nancy Belowich-Negron, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at State University of Albany. Participants will learn techniques for talking about controversial topics without getting personal or heated.

The training will take place at the Saratoga Public Library Community Room on Tuesday, April 12 from 6:30-9pm. Attendance is free but will be limited to 30 participants, with preference given to public officials.

Strong Members, Strong Leaders,

Strong Government is the theme of LWVNY's biennial convention, which will take place May 20th-22nd, at the Desmond Hotel in Albany. The Saturday Night Banquet Speaker will be John Zogby, creator of the Zogby Poll. Let us know if you are interested.

Welcome New
Members

Judith Fiore

Nancy Harrigan

Kendall Jeter

Vera Prosper

"Diane Whitburn Does a Great Job as Treasurer"

Nancy Bellamy

January, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The Financial Records and Bank Records of League of Women voters of Saratoga County for the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 have been reviewed and audited. The Treasurer has followed all accounting procedures; and the records have been found to be in order and accurate.

Letter from Auditors of Education Foundation to verify \$6727.58 on June 30, 2010. A letter sent back to auditors that that figure is correct. There is a vast amount of work required for Grants Management to show deposits and expenses clearly. Treasurer has done superb job.

All Adirondack Trust Certificates of Deposit, Savings and Checking Accounts are up to date with interest and statements balanced.

(signed) Nancy Bellamy
147 East Side Drive
Ballston Lake, NY 12019

Deadline Extention for the Legislative Breakfast: March 4th

Name(s) _____

Please seat me with my legislator _____

Number in your party _____ **Members, \$20.= \$** _____.

_____ **Nonmembers, \$25.= \$** _____.

Total enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to: League of Women Voters of Saratoga County

Mail to: Diane Whitburn 11 North Hill Dr., Ballston Lake, NY 12019

Questions?? Call Pattie Garrett at 518-584-4271

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 12 – Saturday – Breakfast with Your Legislators – 9am, Holiday Inn, SS - \$20 members, \$25 non-members Coupon p.7

March 23 – Wednesday – Let the Sun Shine – 6pm desserts and beverages, 7pm Speaker: Robert Freeman, SSPL

April 12 – 7pm Workshop on Civil Discourse SSPL

May 19 – Thursday – Guns ‘N Roses: Why the League Supports Gun Control – 7pm, SSPL

May 20, 21 &22 – LWVNY Convention, Desmond Hotel, Albany

June 5, Sunday- LWV Saratoga’s 45th Annual Meeting & Luncheon at the Vista Restaurant (at the Van Patten Golf Club, Clifton Park)

Who Speaks For Me? Free Speech, the Constitution and Corporations
Speaker: Ron Seyb \$25 per person



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY

P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2011

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NOTICES!

The Nominating Committee is looking for a board secretary for next year. Call Janice Burns at 587-3436 with any suggestions.

Voter Services is looking for New committee members, Prospective timers, Prospective Moderators willing to take training

If you are interested in working on candidate events in any of these areas, please let me know so I can put your name and email on the list and include you in our meetings. Please specify where you would most like to contribute. **Our next meeting is Thursday, March 3rd at 7 pm. Call Anne Kril at 584-1436 for more information.**

LeaderSpark is our League’s prestigious leadership training program for High School sophomores and juniors. This year , under the direction of Kristin Overholt, sessions will be held every Sunday afternoon from 2-5pm, March 6th through April 10th, at the Salvation Army Building on Woodlawn Avenue in Saratoga Springs. Thirty-three students from Saratoga County Schools are signed up to participate, as well as volunteers from Skidmore, State Farm and the community at large.

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- YES! I Would like to join the League.
- \$50. Individual \$75 Family
- \$20 Student
- Please send more information
- I would like to contribute\$_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PREFERRED PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Make your check to: LWV of Saratoga County
Mail to: Membership, LWVSC P.O. Box 1029,
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

State Farm and Stewart’s Shops are major funders of LeaderSpark. This is a great program and YOU should see it in action! Come by to observe.