



The Broome-Tioga Voter

Bulletin of the *League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties*
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**League of Women Voters of
Broome & Tioga Counties**

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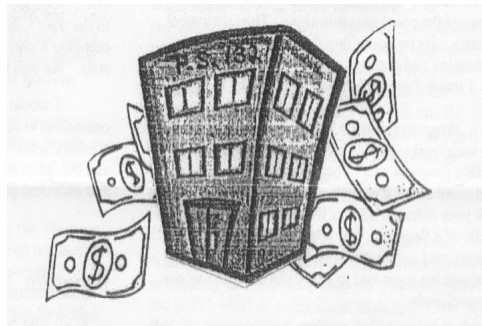
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Tuesday, March 27, 2007



EDUCATION FINANCING: DOES GAMBLING MONEY REALLY HELP?

Presentation & Discussion led by
LWVBTC Education Finance Committee

7:00 p.m. ~ Refreshments

7:30 p.m. ~ Program

Hubbard Auditorium
Tioga County Office Building
56 Main Street
Owego, NY

(See page 2 for directions.)

President's Message

There's an old saying that we should watch out what we wish for, because we might get it. I was reminded of this saying as I was considering whether to cancel the February 13 Board Meeting because of the Winter Weather Watch. I've missed the severe snowstorms we usually get in the winter and had wished for a good storm this winter. Well, I certainly got what I wished for, but not exactly when I wanted it! I hope you all weathered the storm safely.

Last month we enjoyed a program at the American Civic Association about Immigration Policy. For some of you, this may have piqued your interest in the National League's study on Immigration Policy. If you thought a three-year study was too long, you were not alone. In response, LWVUS has shortened the study to two years. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me.

This month we will go to Tioga County for a program on Gambling and Education Finance. You'll recall we had a Consensus on Charter Schools and Education Finance last year, Part Two of a three-part LWVNYS Education Finance Study. Part Three was to be about Gambling and Education Finance, but it was cancelled. I'm sure Leaguers just felt we'd had enough of studying education finance. Come out on Tuesday, March 27, to hear about this interesting topic – no pressure, no test, not even any consensus questions to answer.

Daylight Savings Time begins on March 11, and the official First Day of Spring is March 20. Days are already getting longer. (It's so nice not to have to rush home from an afternoon meeting to walk my dog in the daylight.) Think Spring!

~ Anne Taft

Identification Statement

The Broome-Tioga Voter is published 9 times a year (January, February, March, April, May, July/August, September, October, and November/December) by the League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties, 38 Oakridge Drive, Binghamton, NY 13903.

Women's History Month – Join the Celebration

The Status of Women Council is partnering with the YWCA and the Triple Cities Business and Professional Women's Club to sponsor the 5th Annual Women's History Month Breakfast. You are cordially invited to attend this popular annual event.

This year's breakfast will be held Tuesday, March 13, from 7:45 to 9:00 a.m. at the Binghamton Regency. The cost is \$16 per person.

Eileen Ruggieri, Story Teller and Spoken-Word Artist, will relay the life story of Rebecca Kellog Ashley (1695-1757), who is believed to have been the first white woman to live in what is now Broome County.

Reservation checks for the Women's History Month Breakfast should be made payable to "YWCA/ENCOREplus" and mailed to 80 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901.

Directions for March Meeting (Alternate Routes from Broome County)

1. Take Route 17 West to Exit 64. Cross the "new" bridge. Turn left at the light by the Courthouse, onto Front Street. Take the first right onto Academy Street.

OR

2. Take Route 434 West for 13 miles. Turn right and cross the "new" bridge. At the light by the Courthouse, turn left onto Front Street and right onto Academy Street.

OR

3. Take Route 17C West into Owego. Keep going straight and go past the River Row Shops. (This is Front Street.) Take the first right (onto Academy Street) AFTER you pass the Courthouse.

When you get onto Academy Street, you'll see the Tioga County Office Building entrance and parking on your left.

Local Government

The committee recently met with Doug Schneider, Public Service Editor of the Press & Sun Bulletin, who explained Sunshine Week and asked for our participation in it. Sunshine Week is a project created by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. It is focused on open government in America and the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) in particular. The LWVUS and President Mary Wilson have encouraged local Leagues to participate in Sunshine Week activities.

This project was conducted nation-wide. Across the country, volunteers went unannounced to appropriate local government offices and requested to see a copy of their Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan. (In New York, that meant the county level.) There was a short form concerning the visit to fill out and send back to Mr. Schneider who will forward it to the ASNE headquarters. The goals are to learn if there is compliance with the FOIL and to find out if our country is ready for any unforeseen disaster.

Doug explained the procedure thoroughly and answered all questions as best as he was able. The committee voted to participate in the required activities, and volunteers from our League contacted officials in Broome and Tioga Counties.

How did we fare? Look for Sunshine Week Stories in the Press and Sun-Bulletin from March 11 through March 17.

~ Clare Simeone

Member News

We heartily welcome two new members: Barbara Buckenzie of Port Crane and Julie Larson of Binghamton.

We sadly note the deaths of two formerly active, long-time members of our League: Finkle Rosenberg and Muriel Rossie. Our condolences go to their families and friends.

~ Eva Anderson



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.

Men and women of voting age are welcome to join.

Be Part of the Action – Join Today!

Membership Application

- Individual membership \$45/yr.
- Household membership \$65/yr.
- Student membership \$20/yr.
- Send me information about the League.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable to LWVBTC and mail with this coupon to LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY 13851-0944.

Health Care Reform for US (HCR4US)

(The author of this article is Rebecca Elgie, who spoke to our League last September. In addition to her work with HCR4US, Rebecca is on the Health Care Committee of the Tompkins County League.)

As an outgrowth of the National Convention in Minneapolis last May, a group of LWV members from around the United States has formed. We are not a formal LWV entity but currently consist of about 300 members from individual Leagues in 46 states. We function as an independent group and do not use the League name in any of our activities. We do act in alignment with LWV policies and the LWVUS position on Health Care.

We are composed of a **Steering Committee** that “meets” once a month via phone and **supporters** who want to help the cause but do not want to be as involved as the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee sets policy, determines priorities, and acts as the organizing body for all HCR4US actions. Supporters receive periodic e-mails updating them on HCR4US activities, requesting assistance for special projects, and proposing ways to advance our cause.

We embrace the 1993 LWVUS Health Care Position which calls for “policies that promote access to a basic level of quality care at an affordable cost for all US residents and strong cost control mechanisms to ensure the efficient and economical delivery of care” as well as the preference for a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes, commonly known as the ‘single payer’ approach as described in the 2004-2006 Impact on Issues.

The goals of HCR4US are:

1. To make health care reform an issue in elections and create voter demand for universal health care,
2. To create an active network of LWV members dedicated to promoting health care reform by sharing information, expertise, and useful contacts,

3. To prepare Leagues at the local, state, and national levels to be ready to act when health care issues become politically timely,
4. To promote a productive, mutually beneficial relationship between this network and LWVUS,
5. To develop up-to-date materials for use by Leagues at local, state, and national levels, and
6. To coordinate and accomplish these tasks through a nationwide network of League members supporting health care reform headed by an ongoing Steering Committee.

Many Leagues in upstate New York have a representative involved. If you would like to be part of this group and receive the newsletter, contact us by e-mail at HCR4US@yahoo.com. For updates, see our website, www.hcr4us.org.

~ Rebecca Elgie

Gambling Revenues & Education Financing

The LWVNYS Board has decided not to pursue a consensus regarding the issue. Our local committee, however, scheduled a program to comply with the original League issues and deadlines. The program on March 27 will try to answer the following questions:

- What is the background for gambling revenues being used to finance education?
- How much State revenue for education is supported by lottery and video lottery terminal (VLT) receipts?
- How stable are the revenues from gambling?
- Do these revenues affect the overall amount spent on education?
- Are these revenues fairly distributed?
- What is the impact of casino gambling on Indian reservations upon gambling revenues?
- What is the social cost of gambling? Is the cure worse than the disease?

~ Carol Oestrich

Election Reform Delays Good for New York?

Some have already commented that the delays New York has encountered on its road to HAVA compliance have actually been helpful. These delays have given New Yorkers time to observe what has happened in other states. The newspapers and Internet have been full of stories about failures and problems arising from use of DRE high-tech equipment. Many states and counties are currently contemplating abandoning multi-million dollar investments in DREs and replacing them with paper ballots and precinct scanners. If New York can learn from others' mistakes, we can perhaps get it right the first time.

For the League of Women Voters of New York State, the delays have presented an opportunity to try again, not only to promote optical scan, but also to advocate that the state adopt a single statewide system using paper ballots, precinct based optical scanners, and ballot marking devices. Under the current law, each county will decide its own voting system. However, LWVNYS believes that a single statewide voting system would

- allow development of a single set of robust procedures for acceptance testing, machine maintenance and election protocols,
- allow development of a single set of training standards and materials for poll workers and voters,
- result in cost benefits from economy of scale,
- increase negotiating power with voting system vendors, and
- provide a uniform voting system that would benefit voters moving within the state.

Adoption of a single statewide voting system will require changes in New York's election law. A bill (A05170) has been introduced calling for a single statewide optical scan system. The Assembly bill has bipartisan sponsorship. A bill has also been proposed for the Senate by Senator Sabini (D), but it will need a Republican sponsor to introduce a similar bill which could then be conferenced to achieve passage. If this legislation is passed in 2007, its effective date would be 2009.

In the meantime, the Department of Justice (DOJ) lawsuit is still pending. The Consent Decree issued earlier called for New York State to replace its lever machines by September, 2007. At its February 6, 2007 meeting, the New York State Board of Elections reported notifying the DOJ that this deadline is not achievable. Further negotiations will be required.

LWVNYS believes that the next "logical" date for implementation is not 2008, a high turnout election year in which lack of experience and training with the new equipment could mean long lines, frustrated voters, and possibly questionable results. A two-year implementation plan in effect by 2009 would be more successful in the long run.

If you want to be part of this action, contact your Assemblyperson and State Senator urging them to support legislation for the single statewide optical scan system.

~ Jane Park

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CALENDAR

- Tues., Mar. 13 - **Women's History Month**
Breakfast, Binghamton Regency
- Tues., Mar. 13 – **Board Meeting**, Vestal Library
- Tues., Mar. 27 – **Program, “Gambling & Education Finance,”** Tioga County Office Building, Owego*
- Tues., Apr. 10 – **Board Meeting**, Vestal Library
- Tues., Apr. 24 – **Program, “Shared Services/Consolidation,”** Vestal Library
- Tues., May 8 -- **Annual Meeting** (Details TBA)

***Note special location for this meeting.**

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