

May 2007

The Importance of Immigration in the US in 2007

May 22, 2007

We will also be announcing The First Recipient of the Founder's Award

Neptune Diner

6:00 - Social Hour

6:30 - Dinner

Reservation deadline: May 17

President's Message

2006-2007 - a year of service to our community, study and action.

We began the year with a very informative talk by Onondaga County Social Services Commissioner, Daniel Iannotti. Dan gave us an overview about Charter Schools and reaching consensus on policies we consider appropriate for New York State. Our Year of study continues as we explore the underlying values and principles regarding the reasons for immigration, current federal policy and the impact of immigration in American society. It's not too late to join the study committee.

Action continued throughout the year as we lobbied our election officials about the importance of a verifiable paper trail and urged them to adopt the optical scan machine. No decision on that yet. New York remains the last state to adopt new voting machines. Perhaps our state will learn from the experience in other states and select machines which are accurate, easy to use, and reaffirm the public's confidence in the process.

Continued inside

President's Message continued

Our voter service committee, chaired by Karen Owens, provided registration opportunities throughout our area and organized a standing room only debate between the candidates for US House of Representatives, Thomas R. Carlini for Onondaga County Sheriff and the 8th Judicial Circuit Court District also met the public. Organization of a debate and preparation of the Voter Guides requires untold hours of phone calls, e-mails, and writing notices with frequent delays of frustration.

You will meet our delegate to Students Inside Albany at our Annual Meeting. Anne Pappas worked with area school districts to encourage applicants to this opportunity to view state government on the ground. Your board worked hard on many other vital issues such as soliciting community support for our activities, arranging meeting locations, and recruiting and welcoming new members to us just a few.

Last but not least we've our inaugural Highway Warrior who drove across each state after our period of US. Thank you, warrior, for organizing this effort.

Did our notice of articles on choosing the president by direct national vote intrigue you? I have a book on the topic I'd be happy to lend you. Barbara Thomas of the LWVNY Board and President of the LWV of Saratoga County prepared the article.

I appreciate the support of our board and all of you, our members, during these two years.

As our year comes to a close, I hope to see you at our Annual Dinner and Meeting at which we will make important decisions for the year to come. Read the bulletin carefully for the proposed budget, before changes, program recommendations, and nominations for the 2007-08 Board of Directors. Nominations are welcome from the floor, but the consent of the nomination committee is a must. We will be glad to help you.

Key

Budget change still possible in next budget

By Barbara Bartelme, LWV #395
First published Sunday, April 15, 2007

Senators Majority Leader Joseph Broten introduced the Legislature's Budget Conference Committee that it should not "evolve into debating," he said. Reforms promised to fix New York's broken budget process were a start.

The goal of the conferring system - begun in 1996 and perpetually late budget - was to start a reform process in which budget talks would be more transparent, more legislative, could help craft budgets and voters could follow the process and share views with their legislators. Legislators enacted a budget law reform in January, Gov. Eliot Spitzer signed it. Legislators enacted a budget law reform in January, Gov. Eliot Spitzer signed it. Legislators enacted a budget law reform in January, Gov. Eliot Spitzer signed it.

The governor and legislators have negotiated the budget in private. Even other legislators remained in the dark until the details emerged to harry report - not to discuss and certainly not to debate - what back-room deals already had decided.

In the fiscal year before the April 1 budget deadline, leaders studied a committee with cutting details based on numbers too mired to add to, discussions too cordoning in length and schedules too busy for considered proposal.

As closed-door deals trickled on, lobbyists and lawmakers packed hearing rooms, sending us a clear message: budget changes proposed with no time to digest or effect policies on taxes, health, education, and other issues. As the deadline passed, lawmakers rubber-stamped a budget of budget bills, but not the process, before they were public. On one, three

we zero debate. Disclosures required by the new budget reform law to explain the amount of money being spent were missing and, in some cases, the Legislature could not say how much it was spending.

So much for reform.

Now that the budget process has broken down yet again, it's time for New Yorkers to recall what a healthy budget process is and why a healthy process is as important as a good outcome.

The governor and the Legislature must reinvent the budget process now - when pledges of reform still echo about the gross of the budget details. The changes must be real reforms, not window dressing, or we will be doomed to repeat the chaos that clouds the budget process.

The good news is that the four principles of a healthy budget process are obvious:

First, the process must be public. All decisions must be accessible not just after the fact but long before decisions are made, with time for meaningful public input that can effect outcomes. Second, the Legislature must not be blind. All constituents must know the budgets they vote on, or be able to meaningfully influence them as all points in the process.

Third, the governor must lead. He must enforce a process that fully engages the entire Legislature. Fourth, the process must be fair. Legislators must be able to engage the entire Legislature. There must be enough time and breathing room for full engagement, sound judgment and transparency, and there must be a firm deadline with real consequences.

A healthy budget process disperses power to help prevent abuse of the public purse. It provides lawmakers with the time and tools they need to represent the voters who elected them. And it gives voters the time and tools they need to detect and correct any potential potential misdeeds. By contrast, the flawed and more hidden the real process of the budget is more likely to be the process, before they were public. On one, three

A healthy budget process leads to the best budgets.

But budget openness is not an amount of a case. All of transparency, deadlines and healthy dissent can yield breakthroughs, and breakthroughs may require that New York's broken budget process lacks - time for lawmakers to study and debate and modify budgets, time for the public to understand and affect outcomes, time to let voters prevail, and time to favor the best decisions.

Let's hope the governor and legislature, but not budget details behind closed doors and voted in the dark of night - without even time to read them - can be the most transparent and typical of all.

New Yorkers were promised real reform: Everything - and especially the budget process - is responsible and representative. Hopefully the news that was the 2007 budget report would be the old slogan that the news changes the news they stay the same.

"The Real Story About Utrego Recycling"

Read the excellent guest editorial by Marla Charve, LWV Cooperative, in the April 21 Daily Star, in which she tells us "Utrego County sets a minimum of 20 tons of consumer recyclables and 22 tons of paper recyclables to Recycle Recycling every week. These items are not being land filled. They are being made into new products." Thank you, Marla, for your research and timely reporting.

Founders' Award

We are remembering the visionaries who founded the Onondaga League of Women Voters by establishing the Founders' Award in their honor and memory. The very first award will be presented at the May 22 meeting. We especially encourage our charter and early members to join the current members to join us at the Neptune Diner.

Shirley Fioravanti, chair, Susan Hoggan, Mary Lou Austin

May Dinner and Meeting

Come out enjoy food and fellowship for our closing event of the Neptune Diner.

Menu: Roast 25¢, Roast chicken, Pot Pie, Vegetable Dish, Salad Bar, Cake, soft drink, coffee, tea.

6:00 PM Social Hour
6:30 Dinner
7:30 Presentation of the First Founders' Award

7:45 Introduction of our delegate to Students Inside Albany
8:15 Annual Meeting

Reservation Deadline - May 17

Send your checks, made to the League of Women Voters of the Onondaga Area, to:

Shirley Fioravanti
12 Bugbee Road
Onondaga, NY 13820

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12 Bugbee Road
Onondaga, NY 13820

Report of the Nominating Committee
Paul Scheele, chair, Ruth Larter, Annette Lindell, Maggie Wine, Cathy LaFramme

Co-Presidents Cathy LaFramme
Maggie Wine
Vice-Presidents Ruth Larter
Karen Cheney
Barb Larter

Nominating Committee: Paul Scheele, chair, committee Annette Lindell, Ruth Larter, Annette Lindell, Maggie Wine, Cathy LaFramme, Karen Cheney, Barb Larter

Treasurer Susan Florider
Secretary Charlene Lacy
Finance Panel Diane Slocum

Proposed by amendments - Peg Hathaway, chair

Deletions in parenthesis, additions underlined

ARTICLE II Purpose and Policy

Section I Purpose: The purpose of the League of Women Voters of the Onondaga Area is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and in action selected government issues.

Rational: to comply with amended LWVUS bylaws.

ARTICLE VI - Financial Administration

Section I Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of the Onondaga Area shall commence on the first day of June each year.

Rational: The change of dates will make the financial accounting easier by clarifying the financial activity within one year.

Proposed Program for 2007-2008

GOVERNMENT

Study - Issues of Onondaga

Study - Onondaga County Charter

relationship decision-making and the relationship between the Mayor and the Council.

Center that there is a public hearing for each proposed ordinance and local law before the Common Council is from Board taken action.

LWW of the Onondaga Area - Bulletin

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LWW ONONDAGA BUDGET 2006-07

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