



November 2007

The LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

Syracuse Metro LWV
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Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org



Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 1st
 County Executive Forum - OCC
Nov. 6th
 Election Day
 Polls open 6 AM - 9 PM
November 14th
 Advocacy Workshop
Nov. 28th LWVNY U N Event
 Briefings on the Effects of War on
 Women Around the World

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ADVOCACY - Speak Up and Be Heard
An Interactive Workshop
SPONSORED BY THE SYRACUSE METRO LWV

Presenters:
Betty DeFazio, Corporate Director, Community Affairs & Public Policy, Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region.
Barrier Gewanter, Director, CNY Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union. (NYS Affiliate of the ACLU)

Date: Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Time: 11:30 am Registration, brown bag lunch (bring your own or purchase at deli in building). Cookies, fruit, drinks provided
 Noon-2:30 Workshop

Location: CNY Chapter, New York Civil Liberties Union
 Skyline Apartments, 753 James Street (at Lodi)
 First floor conference room (Suite 7)

Parking: In L-shaped lot behind the building. Enter off Lodi Street. Park in lower lot, or drive around and park in lot above (corner of Lodi & Willow). Don't worry about "Customers Only" signs. Arrangements made.

Fee: Free. Register by Monday, November 12.

To Register: By email: lwvsyr@twcny.rr.org
 By phone: 315-448-7199
 By fax: 315-448-7299
 By mail : P.O. Box 11866, Syracuse, NY 13218

----- **Mail or Fax Registration Form** -----

Name: _____

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____ **Fax:** _____

BOARD NOTES

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome and look forward to meeting new member, **Carol Ginsky**.

ARE YOUR DUES DUE ?

Belated renewals for July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008 are needed NOW to complete our December count to LWVUS, If you don't remember if you renewed, please call the office at 448-7199. Thank you.

Mary Lou Green, VP/Membership

Getting Our Message Out

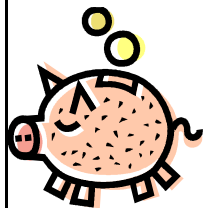
Effective use of the print and electronic media is critical for the LWV to achieve its objectives of reaching the community. Recently members of the board met with a group from Syracuse University's The Firm and Steve Kimatian, Regional VP of Clear Channel Television and previously with a marketing specialist.

The Firm will assist us in a design and campaign plan to implement promoting the LWV and getting our message out into our community.

Steve Kimatian provided excellent guidelines for the development and dissemination of our outreach messages. Keep it simple and direct. All messages should not exceed one page and be "on target". That is, decide what message is to be conveyed, then stay on the message – don't be distracted. He also cautioned that public service messages (free advertising) works best when the announcement (film, written material) is complete and can be handed over to a media outlet that does not have to do anything other than present the materials.

We have plans to meet with other representatives of other groups to continue to learn how to strengthen and best present the LWV and its messages to the community.

Gwen Grant, Vice-President/ Public Relations



No one likes asking for money but no organization can flourish operating in the red. The Syracuse Area Metro League is no different. We need your financial support to continue our work of **Make Democracy Work.**

Fund raising letters were recently sent to members and friends of the League. Your dues alone do not support our advocacy and voter service activities. We need your financial support. Please respond generously. **Thank You!**

Elizabeth Nicoletti
Roberta Millert

Officers

President....	Joan Johnson
1st Vice-President	Janet Mallan
2nd Vice-President/Membership...	Mary Lou Green
3rd Vice-President/Public Relations...	Gwen Grant
Treasurer....	J. Arthur Johnson
Secretary....	Vacant*

Directors

Advocacy& Issues....	Lenore Rapalski
Fund-Raising...	Elizabeth Nicoletti
Program....	Rae Rohfeld

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director....	Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee.....	Roberta Millert, Chair
	Eleanor Feitler
	Barbara Olum
Onondaga Lake Partnership....	Reginald Durant
Optical Scan Liaison.....	Lenore Rapalski
Technical Support....	Roberta Millert
Publications....	Vacant

***Serving on the Board is the best way to learn what league is all about. If you are a new member, please consider serving as our secretary. It's not a difficult or involved job. The Board meets about 9 times a year. Questions? Call us at 448-7199 or email president@lwvsyr.org.**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information please call the League office at (315) 448-7199 or e-mail to info@lwvsyr.org

Diversity Statement

The Syracuse Metropolitan League of Women Voters is committed to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, or national origin.

We look forward to reader participation and invite your questions regarding issues and columns. Kindly mail your queries to the office or e-mail to info@lwvsyr.org

Please let us know your email address.

- It is the most efficient way to communicate
 - You will be notified of upcoming local events
 - LWV National & State Action Alerts
- Your e-mail address will not be shared or sold. Please respond to info@lwvsyr.org

President's Message

It has been a busy election season for the League. We have participated in several candidates forums, spoken to various groups and assisted voters with questions on the voting process. Our annual Election Guide has provided information on the candidates. Many thanks to all members who volunteered to make the League an integral part of this election.

On November 14th we will be sponsoring an Advocacy Workshop. We tried this last year and we were upstaged by one of our worst snow storms of the winter. The workshop gives both new and old members as well community activists an opportunity to learn how to advocate for the issues we believe in and how to become an active part of the political process. We hope you can join us.

Our annual fundraising letter has been mailed. We hope you will consider the League in your annual giving. As we have often said, we cannot support our work on dues alone. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

I would like to remind you to visit the LWV websites often to learn what is happening on the national, state and local level.

www.lwvsyr.org - www.lwvny.org - www.lwv.org

Joan Johnson, President

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday, November 1, 2007
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

County Executive Forum
Onondaga Community College - Storer Auditorium

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Election Day - Polls open 6 AM - 9 PM

Tuesday, November 13, 2007
10 AM - 5 PM

NYS Department of Health & Insurance Public Hearing
Onondaga Community College - Storer Auditorium

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

LWV Advocacy Training Program
ACLU Offices - 753 James Street, Syracuse

Wednesday, November 28, 2007
9 AM - 3:00 PM
UN Headquarters, New York City

LWVNY Annual United Nations Day
"Briefings on the Effects of War on
Women Around the World"

COMING IN JANUARY OUR ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING



Electing the President by National Popular Vote

HOW THE PROPOSED INTERSTATE COMPACT WOULD WORK

At the present time, the Electoral College reflects the voters' *state-by-state* choices for President in 48 states, while reflecting the voters' *district-by-district* choices in Maine and Nebraska. The United States can have nationwide popular election of the President if the states reform the Electoral College so that it reflects the voters' *nationwide* choice. This means changing the state laws that establish the state-level winner-take-all rule (or the district-level winner-take-all rule).

Under the state legislation proposed by National Popular Vote, the popular vote counts from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together to obtain a national grand total for each presidential candidate. That is, state election officials would simply perform, in an official manner, the adding-up of the nationwide vote for President that is now performed by almanacs and news media. Then, state elections officials in all states participating in the plan would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Under the proposal, no state would act alone in offering to award its electoral votes to the nationwide winner. Instead, the National Popular Vote plan would take effect only when the plan has been enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is 270 of the 538 electoral votes. This threshold guarantees that the presidential candidate receiving the most popular votes nationwide would win enough electoral votes in the Electoral College to become President. The 270-vote threshold corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States. Note that the popular votes from all 50 states and the District of Columbia are included in the nationwide count (not just the popular votes from the states that enact the compact). That is, every vote throughout the United States is counted and treated equally.

Note that the National Popular Vote plan entails no significant administrative burden or fiscal cost to the state because the voting by the people in the presidential election inside the state would be conducted in the same manner as it now is.

The National Popular Vote plan is an interstate compact—a type of state law authorized by the U.S. Constitution that enables states to enter into a legally enforceable contractual obligation to undertake agreed joint actions. There are hundreds of interstate compacts, and each state in the United States belongs to dozens of compacts. Examples of interstate compacts include the Colorado River Compact (allocating water among seven western states), the Port Authority (a two-state compact involving New York and New Jersey), and the Multi-State Tax Compact. Some compacts involve all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Interstate compacts are generally subject to congressional consent.

To prevent partisan mischief between the November voting by the people and the mid December meeting of the Electoral College, the compact contains a six-month blackout period if any state ever wishes to withdraw from the compact. The blackout period starts on July 20 of each presidential election year and runs through the January 20 inauguration. Interstate compacts are contracts. It is settled compact law and settled constitutional law that withdrawal restrictions—very common in interstate compacts—are enforceable because the U.S. Constitution prohibits a state from impairing any obligation of contract.

This is Part I, in a series of articles that will appear in the Local Voter in months to come. The material is based on information excerpted from materials prepared by National Popular Vote and compiled by Barbara Thomas, LWV, Saratoga County. More information can be found at www.nationalpopularvote.com.

Public Hearings to Address Health Care Issues



The New York State Departments of Health and Insurance have commenced a series of public hearings across the state for the purpose of seeking proposals for health care reform and the ultimate goal of determining ways to achieve universal coverage in New York State. Results of the hearings are a significant part of the process toward the development of Governor Spitzer's May 2008 Universal Health Care Proposal.

On November 13th there will be a hearing at Onondaga Community College. It will take place in Storer Auditorium and run from 10 am to 5 pm. Cost effective Health Care has been a League priority over the years. It is hoped that members of our local league would attend. For more information visit www.partnership4coverage.ny.gov.

Visitors from Iraq -

with members of the Syracuse League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women



From left to right - Joan Johnson, Lenore Rapalski, Ms Al Omaerie and Gwen Grant



Iraq Struggles with Universal Concerns During Rebuilding -

The Syracuse Metropolitan League of Women Voters met with representatives of Iraqi provincial councils and of government agencies. Held on October 18 in conjunction with the American Association of University Women, the meeting provided an opportunity to compare the roles and responsibilities of civic organizations in both the United States and Iraq.

Not only are the people of Iraq dealing with the impact of the war and the implementation of a new government, they are also struggling with social change in their daily lives. The representatives expressed some of the same social concerns of the United States: understanding how mothers working outside the home affect children and the family unit and determining if many women in the work place will cause a loss of jobs for men.

Representatives from Iraqi included Aqeel T. Kadum AL FRIJI (member of Bosrah Provincial Council), Ms. Muna Salih Mahdie AL OMAERIE (Member, Diyala Provincial Council), Mr. Imad Jaleel Abdullah HAIDERI (Assistant Governor of Diyala for Technical Affairs), Mr. Khalid Polus YALDA (Chairman, Health and Environmental Committee, Nissan District Advisory Council, Baghdad.)

Ms. Al Omaerie noted that 25% of the Provincial Council Members are women, a higher percentage than in the American Congress. In addition to being Provincial Council, she is an educational administrator and has experienced very dangerous situations. On one occasion she rode in a military tank to deliver sealed test books to schools while bullets were being fired at her. She stated, "The bullets were like chocolate to me." Her quest to improve life for the children is more important than her safety. As a member of the council she must always have armed guard escorts, but stated that the risk of death is not as important as the mission of her life.

The Iraqi representatives expressed their appreciation to the United States and their help for their country with many things are getting better. "We expect the building process to take a long time and we have faith that the future will be better for us. But we also expect that the United States will honor the wishes of the Iraqi people during the rebuilding processes," said Mr. Al Friji.

Compiled by Gwen Grant

TAKES STEPS TO SAVE THE BALLOT SYSTEM

Phil Billington, Crossville Chronicle

Those who vote decide nothing. Those who count the votes decide everything - Joseph Stalin

Those word could never be applied to American elections. Or could they? The foundation of self-government, whose main purpose is to promote the ideals of liberty, is an honest voting system. In order to provide an easy and uncorrupted system as possible, early election organizers applied sound economic theory, i.e., a division of labor. That is, the three functions of a secret ballot system, (1) registration, (2) voting, and (3) counting, were made separate and independent. Sure there have been voting scandals in the past, but conscientious citizens keep working out the bugs.

The 2000 presidential election fiasco, however, exposed some troubling mechanical difficulties with current voting methods, i.e. hanging chads. The universal solution across the country was to replace the old systems with those dangerous voting machines which combines both voting and counting in one machine, thus providing absolutely no accountability. This bad decision has put the entire election system in jeopardy. Software engineers testified before congress that these machines are very vulnerable to vote rigging without anyone the wiser. In fact, there is evidence that an Ohio election in 2006 was rigged by a hacker to reverse the results. The American People should be outraged and demand these machines be abolished.

But wait , all is not lost with the touch screen voting machine. These devices are convenient, fast and easy to understand. However the voting and counting functions should be split between two machines that have no connection other than the election official passing a ballot copy from one machine to the other. Physically separating the voting and counting functions - as they previously were- makes corruption of the process much more difficult. Furthermore, it is important that the private companies contracted to build the two individual machines must have absolutely no connection.

The voting machine should be modified to provide only two functions: voting and printing a copy of the completed ballot. The voting machines should have no ability to manipulate data. After voter review, the hard copy is handed to an election official who then feeds it through an optical scanner. This machine scans, counts and compiles a final tally. The hard copy is then archived in the event a recount is necessary.

I recently read this editorial in the Crossville Tennessee local paper. Crossville is a small Tennessee town in the foothills of the Smokey Mountains.

The League's position still remains a paper ballot /precinct based optical scan voting system.
Joan Johnson

Joan Johnson

Accessible voting equipment will again be available to voters with disabilities in Onondaga County this year. Contrary to early reports, state law requires at least one handicap accessible machine per county in New York State. Voters with disabilities will be able to cast their vote independently and in privacy at the Board of Elections -15th Floor of the Civic Center on Election Day.

News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

November 2007



State League Resources

The LWVNYS State Board Report comes out in August, October, December, February, and April. It is available on the state League website (www.lwvny.org) in its entirety to anyone who is interested in information on various League issues and in the internal workings of the State League

In addition, our state League website offers a variety of wonderful resources and continues to grow and improve. In addition to Membership Training, Advocacy, and Voter Service materials, you will find updates on league action, speaker notes, League publications, board updates, and much more. Go online and see for yourself.

Gloria Steinem to Visit Albany

NYS Pay Equity Coalition, of which LWVNYS is a primary member, is planning a series of exciting events - a legislative event, a luncheon fundraiser, a press event, and a town hall meeting - on April 2, 2008, when Gloria Steinem comes to Albany to bring attention to pay equity. Watch the state League website for details as they become available.

Urban Sprawl contributes to Global Warming

We have argued all along that curbing urban sprawl helps to preserve farmland and open space, protect water quality, improve health by providing more opportunities for physical activity, reduce pollution from automobile emissions, reduce the isolation of those who can't drive, and save taxpayers money by reducing the costs of the infrastructure. A

recent report raises the stakes even higher. In *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, a 2007 book published by the Urban Land Institute, a team of leading urban planning researchers report that the key to mitigating climate change is less auto-dependent development, and curbing urban sprawl is a key aspect of this. To learn more about this report, go to <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/gcindex.html>

Direct Distribution from your IRA Can Help You and the League

A little-known tax break may enable you to donate to the Education Foundation, while minimizing your own tax liability. The rub is that this provision is set to expire on December 31, 2007.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows some individuals to have a distribution of income from an IRA, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) made directly to one or more charities of their choice. Here is how it works. Individuals 70½ years of age or older during a tax year must take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their IRA accounts or face tax penalties. This distribution is normally subject to income tax. By having the IRA's custodian make a distribution directly to a charity, the amount distributed to the charity is counted in the RMD requirements but is not subject to federal income tax. For individuals who do not itemize deductions and therefore cannot deduct charitable contributions, this provides the opportunity to reduce tax liability through donations to their favorite charities. For higher income

individuals who do itemize deductions, a QCD may serve as a tax-planning device that would reduce income and thus preserve the full value of other charitable deductions.

To learn more about this little known provision, contact us at 518-465-4162 or lwvny@lwvny.org. We would be happy to work with your attorneys or accountants to maximize the use of this benefit before it expires.

Go Global with League-Sponsored UN Briefing on The Effects of War on Women

As we wind our way into fall, it is time to plan for the League's annual United Nations briefing to be held on November 28. This year's topic is the most timely and equally tragic Effects of War on Women.

In a departure from tradition, the League is catering to individuals who travel by holding the briefing after lunch. The day will begin with a tour of the United Nations at 10:00 a.m., followed by a gourmet international buffet luncheon in the elegant Delegate's Dining Room, at 11:30 a.m. The Briefing will begin at 1:00 p.m. Thus, those who prefer the comforts of bed to traveling through the night can begin their trips at a more reasonable hour.

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e-mail: lwvny@lwvny.org
GET INVOLVED!

League of Women Voters
Membership Application
Democracy is not a spectator sport
It's efficient activism

It is a way to make your voice count
It is a way to make politics a process for the people

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail _____

___ **Individual Level....\$50**

___ **Household Level*...\$65**

___ **Student Level **....\$25**

Please make check payable to:
Syracuse Metro Area League of Women Voters
P O Box 11866
Syracuse, NY 13218

* *Two members in the same household*

** *Full time student under 25*

For more information call us at (315) 448-7199 or visit us at www.lwvsyr.org



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