



The
LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

Syracuse Metro LWV
 PO Box 11866
 Syracuse NY 13218
 (507 Plum St -2nd Fl. Syr. 13204)
 Phone: (315) 448-7199
 Fax: (315) 448-7299
 info@lwvsyr.org
 Web Sites:
 Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Tuesday, November 18th**
NPV Study Committee Meeting
- Tuesday, December 2nd**
League Day at the UN
- Friday, December 5th**
Legislative Breakfast
- Tuesday, December 9th**
LWVSUR Board Meeting

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STAYING INFORMED ON THE ISSUES AND EVENTS

Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org



DIRECTORY UPDATE

We are in the process of updating our Membership Directory. Please let us know if you have moved or if there has been a change in your phone number or email address. Please contact Mary Lou Green, Membership Director, at 457-3004 or mgreen77@twcny.rr.com.

SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008
 7:45 AM - 9:30 AM**

**STEAK & SUNDAE RESTAURANT
 1830 TEALL AVENUE, SYRACUSE 13203
 (JUST NORTH OF SHOP CITY)**

All signs point to a very difficult year ahead for our state representatives - budget shortfalls, the economy, property tax relief, and health care for all are just a few of the issues they will face when the 2009 Legislative Session convenes in January. This is your opportunity to learn where your state leaders stand on the issues and what they hope to accomplish in Albany next year. Join us and bring a friend.

Family Style Breakfast \$16.00

If paying by check, make payable to the Syracuse Metro LWV

Reservation must be received by November 24th
 The breakfast is optional. There is no charge to attend the program at 8:15 AM.

To make your reservation:

Phone: 448-7199
 Fax: 448-7299
 E-mail: info@lwvsyr.org
 Mail: PO Box 11866, Syracuse NY 13218



Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

BOARD NOTES

MEMBERSHIP

Don't know what to give that special friend or relative this holiday season? How about a year's membership in the League? For \$55 the gift will provide membership in a respected organization known for its non-partisan role in providing information on the electoral process and the issues that affect our daily lives. The League also offers the opportunity to form new friendships and share our dreams and ideals for future generations.

Remit the amount of the dues with the name and address of the recipient, and we will mail them the certificate found on Page 7. This sure beats that trip to the mall trying to find the perfect gift.



****WELCOME****

We welcome **Jean V. Westfall** who has joined the League on the National Level.

LWVNY CONVENTION 2009

The next LWVNY Convention will be held in Syracuse May 15-17 at the Double Tree Inn. The Convention theme will be "Fair, Vibrant and Strong". This is an exceptional opportunity for our League. As the host League we will need volunteers to help with the activities. Please call 448-7199 to volunteer. More in our next "Local Voter."

FINANCE /FUNDRAISING



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 to **Make Democracy Work**. Fund raising letters are on their way 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.

Officers

Co-President....	Joan Johnson
Co-President...	Rae Rohfeld
Vice-President...	Joe Sammarco
Secretary...	Karen Smith
Treasurer....	J. Arthur Johnson

Directors

Advocacy & Issues....	Lenore Rapalski
Fund-Raising...	Elizabeth Nicoletti
Membership...	Mary Lou Green
Program....	Don MacLaughlin
Public Relations...	Sherly Day-Bernthal
Voter Service...	Susan Bush

Off-Board Positions

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENT

Election 2008 is behind us and we can all be proud of the role the Syracuse League played in motivating the community to learn what the candidates stood for and then cast an informed ballot. Although not a record breaker, Onondaga County voters turned out in numbers we have not seen in several years. I wish to thank all members who helped put the events together and to all who volunteered to help carry them out. Beginning in August and on into November we registered voters, participated in candidate's forums, provided speakers to area churches and civic groups, made available printed materials, produced a public service announcement, published our annual Election Guide in the Syracuse Newtimes and reported for the Associated Press on election night.

Special thanks go to Barbara Olum for her efforts in organizing the Intelligent Conversation Series presentation: "Selecting the Next President." Working with LeMoyne College and Syracuse University, this event brought out a record crowd at LeMoyne's Grewen Auditorium. Our thanks also go out to League member Nina Tamrowski, Professor of Political Science at Onondaga Community College, for moderating the event.

We also wish to acknowledge Janet Mallan for moderating the Rotary Congressional Forum and the Human Services Forum at Grant Middle School. Thanks also go to Mary Lou Green, Nina Tamrowski, Roberta Millert and Joan Johnson for covering our speaking engagements.

Once again, Janet Mallan convened the Fair Campaign Committee to hear any complaints brought by candidates against their opponents.

Now it's on to other business. We hope you will attend our annual Legislative Breakfast on December 5th. It is going to be a tough year in Albany and we all want to know how our state delegation will deal with it. Rae Rohfeld is gathering material and planning for the LWVUS study on the National Popular Vote Compact – a new way of looking at the Electoral College. Please contact Rae if you are interested in participating in the study. In January we will conduct our annual Local Issues Planning Meeting. League volunteers are needed in May when we host the State League Convention. This is a great opportunity for our League and I hope you will join us.

Joan Johnson
Co-President

CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 2, 2008

League Day at the United Nations

Friday, December 5, 2008 - 7:45 AM - 9:30 AM
Steak & Sundae, 1830 Teal Avenue, Syracuse 13203

Annual Legislative Breakfast

Tuesday, December 9, 2008. 5:00 pm
League Office, 507 Plum Street

LWVSYR Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2009
League Office, 507 Plum Street

Local Issues Planning Meeting

May 15 - 17, 2009
Doubletree Inn, East Syracuse NY

LWVNY Convention



Staff Sergeant Dan Kauppila, United States Marine Corps, is a Broadcast Journalism student at the Newhouse School, Syracuse University. The 10 month program is sponsored by the Department of Defense. During the election season one of his assignments was to produce a photo story of an election activity or a specific campaign. Dan chose the League and we are pleased to share some of his pictures with you. More can be found on our website - www.lwvsyr.org

Dan and his wife Sarah are spending the academic year in Syracuse. He became interested in media/video in high school and joined the Marine Corp upon graduation. He has been deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq as a combat videographer/photographer and now is participating in this special program at the Newhouse School. He hopes to work as a documentary producer once he leaves the Marine Corp. He has been a joy to work with.



Don MacLaughlin (left) registers Students at SU' Rock the "Cuse" event

Parents for Public Schools Congressional Forum
Henninger High School



Congressional Candidates - Dale Sweetland & Dan Maffei



Congressional Candidate Howie Hawkins & Dr. Eric Kingson at the CNY Alliance for Retired Citizens Forum

SU Student Registration



FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES UPDATE

The Fair Campaign Practices Committee met on October 31st to hear a complaint brought by Assemblyman Al Stirpe against his opponent for the 121st district, Dave Knapp. Both candidates had signed the Fair Campaign Pledge early in the election season.

Mr. Stirpe brought several charges against Mr. Knapp that he thought violated the Pledge. Mr. Stirpe attended the hearing and presented his charges to the committee. Mr. Knapp did not attend but did send a volunteer from his office to represent him. After presentations from both sides the committee deliberated the various charges and found Mr. Knapp in violation of the pledge in some, but not all, instances. The full hearing results can be found on the League's website at www.lwvsyr.org.

The League wishes to thank all members of the FCP Committee for their serious attention to the work of the Committee. The members are: Honorable Minna Buck, Bishop Thomas Costello, Steven Kulick, Joseph O'Hara, Marilyn Pinsky, Bernhard Molldrem, Jr., Prof. Grant Reeher, and Prof. David Rubin, chair. It is the hope of the Committee that through its work candidates for public office will come to understand and appreciate the intentions of the Fair Campaign Pledge and will act accordingly in their campaigns.

Janet Mallan
Coordinator, FCP Committee

2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Governor Patterson has directed the Secretary of State, Lorraine A. Cortes-Vazquez, to prepare an assessment of the November 4th election and an analysis of voting processes. The directive will ask the Secretary of State to review voter participation and the effectiveness of local Board of Elections in managing record turnout, as well as an identification of the most pressing barriers which interfere with full participation in elections by New Yorkers eligible to vote.

The Governor has requested information on the potential benefits, disadvantages and costs of moving toward an early voting system, including easing the process of filing absentee ballots, extending the number of days citizens may vote and mail-in voting.

Paterson has also asked for an update on the progress the State is making in modernizing voting equipment; ensuring that the voting machines and ballot are accessible to all voters; and meeting the highest standards to ensure accurate vote counts.

JOIN THE NPV STUDY COMMITTEE

The National Popular Vote Study Committee will meet on Tuesday, November 18th at 1:00 PM in the League Office. If you are interested in participating in the study contact Rae Rohfeld at rrhofeld@twcny.rr.com or 475-9554.



GREAT LAKES COMPACT

The Great Lakes are a unique and precious resource, providing fresh water for the 40 million people who live within the basin. Each year, rainfall and snowmelt replenish only about one percent of the water in the basin; the remaining 99 percent is finite and nonrenewable. The Great Lakes Compact, for the first time ever, treats groundwater and surface water as one system subject to the same standard; considers the Great Lakes and their tributaries to be one ecosystem; establishes protection of Great Lakes ecosystems and economies as priorities everywhere in the basin; and ensures that every Great Lakes state will have the same fair set of rational protections, while allowing each state flexibility. The U.S. Senate and House have approved the Compact and the President has signed it into law.

Much of the success of the legislation is due to a coalition, aptly named Healing Our Waters (HOW). HOW consisting of over 100 groups in the Great Lakes Region, including the LWV of Michigan, Ohio and New York, recognizes the need to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

Ann Ingleman, LWVNY Off Board Specialist
Great Lakes Issues

PROPERTY TAX REFORM THE LEAGUE'S POSITION

The League of Women Voters of New York State has weighed in on Governor Paterson's Program Bill 62, introduced in the Senate as S8736, imposing a tax cap on school district increases, and Assembly Bill A11838, a need-based real property tax circuit breaker program and millionaire's tax. The League opposed both bills on the grounds that they represented one-house bills designed to provide political cover for the recent election rather than the series of serious recommendations for real property tax reform and education finance reform outlined in the Suozzi Commission preliminary report, available on-line at www.cptr.state.ny.us/reports/CPTR.

The League recommends that any action by our state leaders:

- Wait for the final report from the Suozzi Commission
- Strive for a foundation approach to education, with annual cost-of-living adjustments
- Create a reserve fund for education that would stabilize foundation funding (generated primarily by the state income tax) in times of economic downturn
- Fold the entire STAR program into a real property circuit breaker program
- Implement additional Suozzi Commission recommendations for cost saving as a part of the reform package
- Raise any additional state funds necessary to fund a foundation approach to education
- Implement a tax cap only in conjunction with an entire reform package

Information compiled by Marion Bott
LWVNY Off Board Specialist for Education

***“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”***



A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Citizenship has long been one of the most important privileges the United States can bestow. Each year, hundreds of thousands of immigrants complete the naturalization application process and take part in swearing-in ceremonies across the country. These ceremonies may involve a handful of people at a local courthouse or several thousand at a sports arena. Regardless of a ceremony's size or venue, those taking part share a common experience as they repeat the oath of citizenship, declaring their allegiance to the United States Constitution and loyalty to their adopted country.

By 2005 (the last year for which figures are available), naturalized citizens accounted for slightly more than one-in-two legal foreign-born residents. Legal citizens are not only becoming citizens at a higher rate than in the recent past, but they are also naturalizing more quickly. Whatever the reasons for this, it is clear that today's legal immigrants are signing on to a closer relationship with the United States than was the case a decade or two ago.



League member Debbie Cornell assists new citizens.

According to a recent report issued by the Pew Hispanic Center, the makeup of the naturalized population has also changed. Immigrants from Europe and Canada no longer are the largest group. Over the past decade, they have become outnumbered by naturalized U.S. citizens from both Latin America and Asia. The naturalized citizen population from the Middle East is relatively small but its numbers grew by 156% from 1995 to 2005.



New citizens pledging their allegiance to the United States

The League of Women Voters of the United States urges local and state Leagues to attend naturalization ceremonies to register new citizens on a regular basis. More than 650,000 immigrants become new citizens each year.

Here in Syracuse; the League has been taking part in these ceremonies for many years. All of us who have participated in the program are inspired by the ceremonies and the individuals who choose to become citizens of our country. Soon a new schedule for 2009 will become available. We hope you will consider volunteering to take part in this important League activity.

For more information, contact Susan Bush, Voter Service Director, at 424-0040 or sjbushywca@cnyemail.com.

Photos by Dan Kaupilla

*A GIFT MEMBERSHIP
TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
GIVEN TO YOU*

FROM: _____

DATE: _____

You are hereby entitled to the following:



One year membership in the League of Women Voters



A subscription to the National Voter & the NYS Voter



Our local newsletter for information and appreciation

PRESENTED TO YOU IN FRIENDSHIP

AND APPRECIATION



(see page 2 for details)

**League of Women Voters
Membership Application**

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*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....\$55*

____ *Household Level*....\$80*

____ *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*

____ ***I would like to support the League with a donation.***

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



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Nov/Dec 2008

**Non-Profit
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