



The
LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

OCT/NOV 2009

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

JOIN THE LWVNYS STUDY ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATION & SHARED SERVICES

- 57 Counties
- 62 Cities
- 932 Towns
- 556 Villages
- 996 School Districts/BOCES
- 991 Authorities
- 6,927 Special Districts
- 10,521** Total Government Entities in New York State



UPCOMING EVENTS
Wednesday, Oct. 21st
 Syracuse Board of Education Forum
Wednesday, Oct. 28th
 Town of Cicero Candidates Forum
Tuesday, Nov. 3rd
 General Election
Friday, Dec. 4th
 Annual Legislative Break fast

The LWVNYS 2009 Convention here in Syracuse approved a new state study on local government consolidation and shared services. Over the course of this year leagues across the state will participate in the study. The issue of increasing local government efficiency through consolidation is complex. Consolidation is not limited to a simple merger of two local governmental units or the merger of school districts but also contemplates the consolidation of special districts such as fire, library, water, sewer etc., the consolidation of local public authorities, the consolidation of a municipal service without the loss of the underlying governmental units, for example civil service hiring, assessing, purchasing etc. all with the intent of reducing costs.

A timeline for the study has been established (see page 6 under State News). The topic is hot here in central New York as well as around the state. We hope you will join us in participating in the study. Let us know of your interest by calling us at 448-7199 or email at league@lwvsyr.org.

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SYRACUSE BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES FORUM
 LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL, 1613 JAMES STREET SYRACUSE
 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST

MEET THE CANDIDATES:

- PAT BODY
- MICHAEL HUNTER
- BLASÉ PARUS
- KIM ROHADFOX-CEASAR
- RICHARD STRONG
- MONIQUE WRIGHT-WILLIAMS

6:30 - 7:00 PM - CANDIDATES RECEPTION
 7:00 - 8:00 pm - FORUM



STAYING INFORMED ON THE ISSUES AND EVENTS

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



OUR ANNUAL ELECTION GUIDE - COMING OCTOBER 21ST IN THE SYRACUSE NEWTIMES



BOARD NOTES

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Arlene Bolton
Mary Lou Karrat
Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello

IN MEMORIAM

John Wulf (member)
Manley Sherman
 (husband of our former secretary Marion Sherman)

*There are three classes of people. Those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and the overwhelming majority who have no idea what is happening. Save a friend from the majority. Bring her to a League meeting.” Ruth Schur**

*The late Ruth Schur served on the LWVNY Board from 1977-1989. See Betsy Swan’s notes on Page 6.

NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES

Registering new citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies is a vital part of our Voter Service Activities. Volunteers are needed to provide this service to our newest citizens. Please contact Susan Bush at 673-7253 or email Susan at sjbushywca@cny.ail.com.

2009 SCHEDULE

Oct 15	11 am	Federal Bldg., 3rd Floor
Oct 22	2 pm	County Court, Room 400
Nov 5	11 am	Federal Bldg., 12th Floor
Dec 17	2 pm	County Court, Room 400



Going Green -



If you would like your Local Voter sent to you electronically, please let us know. Not only does it save us money but it’s environmentally sound also. To receive your Local Voter on line email us at league@lwvsyr.org.

Officers

Co-President...	Rae Rohfeld
Co-President...	Vacant
Vice-President...	Joe Sammarco
Secretary...	Karen Smith
Treasurer....	Donald MacLaughlin

Directors

Advocacy & Issues....	Hilda Pato
Fund-Raising...	Joe Sammarco
Membership...	Mary Lou Green
Program....	Clyde Ohl
Publications...	Joan Johnson
Public Relations...	Lenore Rapalski
Voter Service...	Susan Bush

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director....	Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee.....	Roberta Millert
	Joan Durant
	Vacant
Optical Scan Liaison....	Lenore Rapalski
Technical Support...	Roberta Millert
Onondaga Lake Partnership Liaison...	Nina Tamrowski

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 league@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.

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 league@lwvsyr.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our first program of the year took place last month at Camillus Erie Canal Park. It focused on life when the canal was bringing people and goods to Syracuse and points west. Both the park site and the activities were eye-openers for many attending. Now we are finishing our program plans for the year. If you have any suggestions for topics, locations, or arrangements, please send them to us. You're welcome to join the program committee, but you don't have to – you may just give us your ideas.

At last spring's state convention, the State League voted to engage in a one to two-year study on government consolidation and shared services. Although a number of LWVUS and LWVNY positions could allow us to take action on some proposals, we have never conducted a comprehensive study and developed a position that would support major advocacy in this area. The State League is now forming a committee and designing the study. Some of the types of questions the study might seek to answer include:

1. Should the League support elimination of state constitutional and legislative barriers to consolidation of governmental units and/or to the sharing of governmental services?
2. Should the League support mandating consolidation of certain local governmental units or services.
3. Should the state encourage consolidation of certain governmental units and/or services by adopting a series of incentives or disincentives to consolidation?
4. Should the League develop, or encourage the State to develop, criteria for deciding whether to support or oppose particular proposals for consolidating governmental units or sharing services?

We will be sharing more information as the State Committee provides study details. This topic is one that attracts increasing attention from many groups. Please let us know if you are interested in participating in any way.

Despite all the talk and activity around health care reform, we're not there yet. The League has held a position supporting universal health care since 1971 and has periodically strengthened its health care position since then. Please watch developments as Congress continues its work, and contact your representatives with your ideas and, when appropriate, your thanks.



held a
care
your

CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 - 6:30 - 8:00 PM
Lincoln Middle School, 1613 James St, Syracuse

City of Syracuse Commissioners of Education Forum

Saturday, October 24, 2009

United Nations Day

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

General Election - Polls open 6 AM - 9 PM

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

Veterans Day

Friday, December 4, 2009 - 7:45 - 9:30 AM
Steak & Sundae, 1830 Teal Av, Syracuse

LWVSYR Annual Legislative Break fast

ELECTION DAY NEWS

A REMINDER – NEW VOTING SYSTEM -

If you live in the towns of Clay, Elbridge, Fabius, Lafayette, Lysander, Manlius, Marcellus, Otisco, Pompey, Skaneateles, Spafford, Tully and VanBuren you will be voting on the new Sequoia Image-Cast machine. This is part of a state-wide pilot program in preparation for next year where all New York State voters will be required to vote on the new system.

This is an optical scan system. Upon entering your polling place you will sign in as in the past and then be handed a paper ballot to fill out. There will be tables and chairs with little privacy boots where you will fill out your ballot. Once you have filled out your ballot, you will insert it into a scanner. If you have made a mistake, such as voting for too many candidates, your ballot will be rejected and voided and you should request another one. The screen on the machine will show you how the machine has read the marks on your ballot, and if you are satisfied with the results you will tell the machine to accept and count your ballot. Your paper ballot is securely stored in the machine after scanning. There is also a provision on the ballot for a write-in vote.

As in previous elections, each polling place still using lever machines will have a Ballot Marking Device (BMD) for use by voters who are disabled.

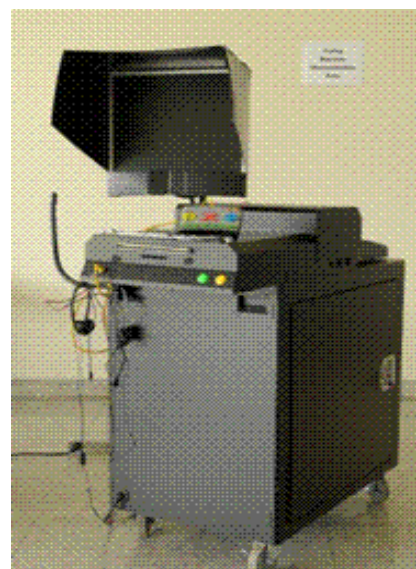
The equipment is simple to use and poll workers have been trained to assist you. Be sure to request their assistance if you are not clear about the new process.

OFFICES TO BE FILLED NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Justices of the Supreme Court (2)
County Court Judge
Nineteen County Legislators
Mayor (City of Syracuse)
President of the City Common Council
Two City Councilors-At-Large
Five District City Councilors
Three City Commissioners of Education

Town Officers including:
Supervisors
Councilors
Justices
Town Clerks
Highway Superintendents
Tax Collectors

Check our website at www.lwvsyr.org for a complete list of Onondaga County candidates



**NEW VOTING MACHINE
IMAGE CAST SCANNER AND BMD
(BALLOT MARKING DEVICE)**

WHAT IF YOUR NAME IS NOT ON THE ROLLS

You should be aware of what to do if you registered and your name is not on the rolls when you go to your polling place. You should ask the poll worker for advice, and you either will be directed to a different polling place or assisted in voting by affidavit ballot. You should also plan to bring identification - a driver's license, valid photo ID, current utility bill, bank statement, government check or some other government documentation that shows your name and address - especially if you are voting for the first time.

NEW YORK STATE GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL NUMBER ONE: AN AMENDMENT

FORM OF SUBMISSION (how the proposal will be presented to you on the ballot):

Amendment to section 1 of article 14 of the Constitution, in relation to the use of certain forest preserve lands by National Grid to construct a 46 kV power line along State Route 56 in St. Lawrence County.

The proposed amendment would authorize the Legislature to convey up to six acres of forest preserve land along State Route 56 in St. Lawrence County to National Grid for construction of a power line. In exchange, National Grid would convey to the State at least 10 acres of forest land in St. Lawrence County, to be incorporated into the forest preserve. The land to be conveyed by National Grid to the State must be at least equal in value to the land conveyed to National Grid by the State. Should the amendment be approved?

What will this amendment do if approved by the voters?

The "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution prohibits any development in the Adirondack Forest Preserve, including the building of power lines, unless the constitution is specifically amended to allow it. A constitutional amendment requires passage by two separately elected state Legislatures and then approval by the voters. This amendment has been passed unanimously by the Legislatures that took office in 2007 and 2009, and is now being presented to the voters on the November, 2009 ballot.

This amendment will make constitutional an action that has, in fact, already taken place. The NYS Power Authority, with the involvement and agreement of the interested environmental and municipal groups, approved the building of a back-up power line through forest preserve land to protect the health and safety of the residents of the village of Tupper Lake. The line was built and activated in May of 2009.

What is the background on this proposal?

Before this new power line was built, the village of Tupper Lake had frequent power outages caused by damage to its single electrical supply line, principally from falling tree limbs in forested land along its route. There was no back-up line in the event of power failure, and during the winter alternative shelter had to be provided to village residents. This was considered an urgent situation that could not wait for the completion of the constitutional amendment process for relief, since it affected the health and safety of the villagers. The most environmentally friendly route for the new line traverses about two miles of Adirondack Forest Preserve land, affecting a small number of physical acres. While the new line could have been detoured to avoid forest preserve land, the detour would have involved a six mile cut through old-growth undeveloped forest and wetlands, endangering the habitat of wildlife. The chosen route along an existing road through previously cleared preserve land was judged to be more ecologically friendly. National Grid, the builder of the line, will compensate for the loss of existing preserve land by conveying new forest preserve land to the State. This new land must be of equal or greater value than the land that was lost. Environmental and civic organizations are supportive of this remedy to what was a serious and persistent public health and safety issue. Since the amendment is specific to this situation, it does not give broader constitutional permission to other such solutions; each would require another constitutional amendment.

The League of Women Voters could not identify any organizations or opinions in opposition to this amendment.

PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO: AN AMENDMENT

FORM OF SUBMISSION (how the proposal will be presented to you on the ballot):

Amendment to article 3 of the Constitution, in relation to authorizing the Legislature to allow prisoners to voluntarily perform work for nonprofit organizations.

The proposed amendment would authorize the Legislature to pass legislation to permit inmates in state and local correctional facilities to perform work for nonprofit organizations. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

What will this amendment do if approved by the voters?

The NYS Constitution currently prohibits labor performed by prisoners in state or local correctional facilities to be "be farmed out, contracted, given or sold to any person, firm, association or corporation", except the state or any political division of the state and its public institutions. This means that prisoners cannot perform work, even voluntarily, for nonprofit organizations, such as churches, charities, social service agencies or educational institutions. If passed by the voters, this amendment will remove this constitutional impediment, and will authorize the Legislature to allow these inmates to voluntarily perform work for nonprofit organizations.

What is the background on this proposal?

The sponsors for the legislation proposing this constitutional amendment argue that prohibiting prisoners from voluntarily performing work for nonprofit organizations denies these often under-funded organizations access to a willing labor force for tasks such as grounds-keeping. They say that many localities have requested that the prohibition be removed. They also say that allowing inmate work crews to provide labor to these organizations will help fill the gaps in funding them, and will give the inmates a sense of "giving back" to the community.

The sponsors also make the point that passing this amendment would only give the Legislature authority to pass a law allowing inmates to do such work. This "enacting legislation" could include restrictions, in the interest of public safety, on which inmates would be eligible to perform this work. Two separately elected Legislatures passed this constitutional amendment with near unanimous votes in favor.

The League of Women Voters could not identify any organizations or opinions in opposition to this amendment.

NEWS FROM LWVNYS

It is with sadness we note the deaths of **Marion Sinek**, LWVNYS President from 1985-1989, and **Ruth Shur**, LWVNYS board member from 1977-1989. Marion knew that all politics was local, and said, upon becoming New Castle Town Supervisor, "I like to think that I worked my way up to local government." Ruth's husband Walt says she frequently told people that, although she left college to marry, she earned her PhD in government from the League. These amazing women served as inspirations to so many of us in the League and we will miss their contributions and friendships.

Betsy Swan, LWVNYS President

REFORM NEW YORK 2010 Legislative Priorities Update

Given widespread dissatisfaction of league members with this summer's stalemate in the New York State Senate, the State Issues Committee and the Issues Specialists decide to focus the 2010 Legislative Agenda on making the State Legislature cleaner and more competitive through emphasizing campaign finance, redistricting and other good government legislative and election reforms. The legislative packet will be given to local leagues in January 2010 as usual but will be re-formatted and focused on these issues. The other areas in which the League has positions will continue to be listed on the Legislative Agenda, and we will continue to take action on issues covered by these positions.

UPDATE ON ETHICS REFORM

The State Senate attempted but failed to pass ethics reform during its special session on September 9th. Encouraged by the State Senate's efforts to improve the ethics bill passed earlier by the Assembly, we join with Citizens Union and Common Cause New York to state that it was imperative that both the Assembly bill and the Senate's proposed chapter amendment be passed as a package. The entire press release by these good government groups can be found on the LWVNY website: www.lwvny.org.

BUDGET WOES

The Legislature is expected to return sometime this fall to work on revisions to the state budget because of a large expected deficit.

Sally Robinson, LWVNYS VP Issues & Advocacy
Cheryl Feldman, LWVNYS Grassroots Lobbyist

STATE STUDY GEARS UP

With the advent of fall, we are gearing up for the governmental consolidation/shared services study. Local League presidents should call the state office with the names and contact information of their study chairs.

The initial study schedule is as follows:

Sept: Preliminary bibliography to local Leagues described below.

Nov: Full bibliography and written materials for local Leagues

Dec: Consensus questions developed by committee
Jan: Consensus questions go out after approval by State Board.

Jan - Apr: Local Leagues have meetings and prepare answers to consensus questions

Apr/May: Committee reviews input from local Leagues and prepares a draft position for State Board approval at May board meeting.

The following websites contain valuable information about government consolidation/shared services:

www.nyslocalgov.com (a good explanation of the State initiatives); **<http://www.nytowns.org/core/contentmanager/uploads/GovernmentEfficiency>**.

[TheCaseForLocal.Control.pdf](#) (a publication of the Association of Towns); and **www.dos.state.ny.us/1gss/publications.htm#SharedServices** (a good site with several additional reports).

Take a look. A more detailed bibliography will follow in November. For more information, contact study chair Noreen Fisher at **NQFisher@gmail.com**. There is also more information in the September State Board Report (SBR).
Noreen Fisher, Study Chair

EMAILS WANTED

Currently the state League has e-mail addresses for less than one-third of its members. Given the state League's decision to dispense with the printed Voter, it is essential that members send us their e-mail addresses, so that we may distribute the reconfigured Voter to them electronically. We use e-mail addresses for League purposes and do not share them with outside organizations. Don't miss the electronic boat. Send us your e-mail address today.

Remember to check out the LWVNY website frequently for updates on the issues as well as other news from your state League.

www.lwvny.org

CAMILLUS ERIE CANAL FALL KICK-OFF

Members of the Syracuse League enjoyed an early fall evening at the Camillus Erie Canal Park on Wednesday, September 16th. We toured the facility and enjoyed a boat ride to the newly reconstructed aqueduct on the canal. Following a delicious picnic supper we were entertained by Michelle Henry (aka Captain Kelsey) who portrayed early life on the canal as a ship's captain making her livelihood by carrying goods between New York City and Buffalo. Many of her tales were based on experiences of her great grandfather Captain Kelsey.



Aqueduct taking the Erie Canal over Nine Mile Creek



Listening to "Captain" Dan Willis describe life on the old canal



Waiting to board

Thanks to the many volunteers who have made this park a gem in our community. Visit it if you haven't already done so.



FAIR CAMPAIGNS FOR OFFICE-SEEKERS

Pledges to run fair campaigns this fall have been mailed to all candidates and are being signed and received in the League office. Candidates who sign the pledge are promising to run campaigns that are accurate and honest. Candidates pledge not to engage in personal attacks or appeals to prejudice and to identify the source of all campaign literature.

The Fair Campaign Committee will accept written complaints from candidates about alleged unfair practices and will determine through a hearing if the complaints are legitimate. The Committee will notify the parties of its findings and release those findings to the news media to inform the public. The committee's decisions are based on the principles set forth in the Fair Campaign Pledge, which every candidate for office is encouraged to sign.

The committee heard one complaint in 2007 and another complaint in 2008. Candidates are encouraged to send in their complaints early in the election season to ensure time for a hearing and public disclosure of the findings.

Janet Mallan, Fair Campaign Practices Coordinator



**SYRACUSE METRO
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
PO BOX 11866
SYRACUSE NY 13218**

October/November 2009

**Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Syracuse, NY
Permit no. 372**



**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....\$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