



**The LOCAL VOTER**  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
**SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

MARCH 2010

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

**SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION LUNCHEON**

**MARKING THE SIGNING OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT  
 AND  
 THE FOUNDING OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010  
 12 :00—1:30 pm**

**RENAISSANCE HOTEL (TOP FLOOR)  
 701 EAST GENESEE STREET, SYRACUSE NY 13210**

**GUEST SPEAKER: KAREN DECROW**

**WITH COMMENTS FROM  
 COUNTY EXECUTIVE JOANNE MAHONEY**

**\$21.00 LWV Members - \$25.00 Non Members**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Tuesday, March 11th**  
Study Committee Meeting
- Thursday, March 25th**  
Women's History Tea
- Friday, March 26th**  
90th Anniversary Luncheon
- Thursday, April 1st**  
Study Committee Meeting
- Tuesday, May 4th**  
Study Consensus Meeting
- Thursday, June 17th**  
LWVSyr Annual Meeting



*March 14- 20  
 Recognizing the impor-  
 tance of open govern-  
 ment and freedom of  
 information*

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**STAYING INFORMED ON  
 THE ISSUES AND EVENTS**

Local: [www.lwvsyr.org](http://www.lwvsyr.org)  
 State: [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)  
 National: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)



**Luncheon Choices**

- Cobb Salad
- Asian Chicken Salad
- Caesar Salad

Luncheon includes soup of the day, coffee/tea and dessert.

- Number of Reservations @ \$21.00 (LWV Members)
- Number of Reservations @ \$25.00 (Non Members)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your luncheon choices by Thursday March 18th to Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11866, Syracuse NY 13218.

*The event is open to the public—Bring a friend*

# BOARD NOTES

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES WELCOME NEW MEMBER KAREN PALMER

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**Women's History Month Tea**  
**Thursday, March 25h**  
**Fayetteville Library, 300 Orchard St.**  
**-2 PM-**  
**Fashion, Fads & Fun: Retro Couture**  
**from the**  
**Onondaga Historical Association Closet**  
**ALL ARE WELCOME**



## NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES 2010 SCHEDULE

**We need volunteers for the following dates:**

March 24 - 11 am	Federal Building, Court Room 5
April 22 - 2 pm	County Court House, Room 400
August 19 - 11 am	Federal Building, Courtroom 1
Sept. 16 - 11 am	Federal Building, Court Room 1
Sept. 16 - 2 pm	County Court House, Room 400
Oct. 14 - 11 am	Federal Building Courtroom 1

If you have not participated in this League activity in the past, you will find it a very rewarding and moving experience.

Please contact Voter Service Director Susan Bush to volunteer. Email: [sjbushywca@cnyemail.com](mailto:sjbushywca@cnyemail.com)  
Phone: 424-0040.



## CORRECTIONS/CHANGES

Please note the following changes to "*Who's Who, A Guide To Your Elected Officials*"

### NYS Senate:

**John Sampson:** Phone (518)455-2788

**John A DeFrancisco:** Email [jdefranc@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:jdefranc@senate.state.ny.us)

### Onondaga County Legislature:

**Linda Ervin:** Phone (Res) 449-1050 (Bus) 435-2070

**Syracuse website:** [www.syracuse.ny.us](http://www.syracuse.ny.us)

### Syracuse Board of Education:

Phone Number: 449-4691

Board President: **Richard Strong**

## Officers

Co-President...	Rae Rohfeld
Co-President...	Open
Vice-President...	Open
Secretary...	Karen Smith
Treasurer....	Donald MacLaughlin

## Directors

Advocacy...	Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello
Fund-Raising...	Open
Membership...	Mary Lou Green
Program....	Open
Publications...	Joan Johnson
Public Relations...	Lenore Rapalski
Voter Service...	Susan Bush

## Off-Board Positions

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

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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](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org)

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## 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.

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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](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org)

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Even as we are busy enjoying the League's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are engaged in studying proposed changes in the way our local governments deliver services to citizens. During our recent local elections, we heard candidates talk about their interest in exploring sharing services or merging governmental units. The best-known local merger is that of the village of Clay's police department with the county sheriff's department, so that Clay no longer maintains a police department. This has enabled Clay to reduce property taxes somewhat. Many local league members have asked how to judge proposals that may be presented to them. As a result, the State League has initiated a study and consensus process in which local leagues in the state are addressing the complex issues involved.

Frequently arguments favoring these changes emphasize that they will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services. Communities often look for tax decreases and/or improved services. Based on our study committee's reading, costs sometimes are lower, but certainly not always. Sometimes communities wish to achieve other goals by consolidation or sharing services, such as lessening disparities in services and costs between communities or increasing racial and ethnic diversity in a community. When proposals are put forward for changes in the structures for delivering services, how are citizens to evaluate them? Trying to answer such questions is the goal of this study.

This year's study will try to reach consensus in two general areas: 1) Identifying standards the League should apply when evaluating statewide legislation or constitutional amendments concerning the implementation of local government dissolution/consolidation/major shared services proposals; 2) Identifying standards local Leagues and citizens could apply in evaluating proposals of local government entities (villages, towns, cities, counties, districts, authorities) for consolidation or dissolution of local government entities and/or for any major sharing of services.

Anyone is welcome to be part of the study group or just attend events that are held. A great deal of material is available to read which will be helpful when we come to answering the consensus questions in May. To locate readings, go to the State League web site, [www.lwvny.org/home](http://www.lwvny.org/home). In the left column, click on "Programs & Studies"; then click on Consolidated/Shared Services Study. From there you can go to the Bibliography, and select some items of interest, or go to the League materials for an overview. Do join in learning about these challenging issues.

**Rae Rohfeld**

## CALENDAR

Tuesday, March 11, 3:15 pm  
Dewitt Community Library

\*Government Consolidation & Shared Services  
Study Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 25, 2 pm  
Fayetteville Library  
300 Orchard Street, Fayetteville

Women's History Month Tea  
Fashion, Fads & Fun: Retro Couture from the  
Onondaga Historical Association Closet

Friday, March 26, 12 Noon  
Renaissance Hotel  
701 East Genesee St. Syracuse

90th Anniversary Luncheon  
Guest Speaker - Karen DeCrow

Thursday, April 1, 7 pm  
Unity Mutual  
507 Plum Street (Franklin Square)

\*Government Consolidation & Shared Services  
Study Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 4, 7 pm  
Unity Mutual

\*Consensus Meeting on Consolidation & Shared Services Study

Thursday, June 17, 2010

LWVSYR Annual Meeting and Dinner

\* All League Members may participate in the Study meetings and consensus

## WOMEN'S RIGHT CONVENTION AT OHA

On Sunday February 7th, League members and friends enjoyed taking part in a Women's Rights Convention at the Onondaga Historical Association. Elizabeth Cady Stanton called for the Convention to debate the role of women in the 19th century. The Convention was conducted by Henry Stanton, Elizabeth's husband, because it was improper for women to do so at the time. Some of the questions raised by the ladies included:



***" I have the reputation of being an excellent baker and I would like to open a bake shop. As a woman, can I own and run my own business.?"***

*OHA Volunteers as Convention Delegates*

***" I have been asked for my hand in marriage by a very nice gentleman. Will I lose the financial assets that my father has left me?"***

***"I have been criticized for wearing "men's" clothing. Do I not have the right to wear what I feel is comfortable?"***

***" My husband and I are freed slaves. Do we not have the right to vote?"***



**We enjoyed the skit and the reminder that it was not that long ago that these were appropriate questions women would ponder in the 1860's.**

*Left to right—Kathy Brown as Elizabeth, Scott Peal as Henry and League President Rae Rohfeld*

### ***MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO EQUALITY -***



- 1849— Elizabeth Blackwell graduates from Geneva College (a forerunner of Hobart College) with the first medical degree awarded to a woman. It is said she was accepted at Geneva College because the faculty put it to a student vote and the students thought it was a hoax.***
- 1863—Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony organize the Women's Loyal National League and gather 300,000 signatures on a petition demanding that the Senate abolish slavery by constitutional amendment.***
- 1865 —The 13th amendment to the U. S. Constitution officially abolishes slavery.***
- 1866—The American Equal Rights Association is founded with the purpose to secure for all Americans their civil rights irrespective of race, color, or sex. Stanton runs for Congress receiving 24 of 12,000 votes.***

## ***THE LEAGUE THROUGH THE YEARS***

***The Founding*** – From the spirit of the suffrage movement came a great idea that a non-partisan, civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded on that idea.

***The 1920's*** – The first League convention voted 69 separate items as statements of principle and recommendations for legislation including support for collective bargaining, child labor laws, a minimum wage, a joint federal-state employment service, compulsory education and equal opportunity for women in government and industry.

***The 1930's*** – The League took a firm position in support of U. S. membership in the League of Nations and launched a nation-wide campaign for support of the merit system for selecting government personnel that led to the removal of federal jobs from the spoils system and placed them under civil service.

***The 1940's*** – The League's primary efforts during the war years centered on support for price control, rationing, and higher income taxes. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals for the establishment of the United Nations became the focal point for the most vigorous citizen education effort ever undertaken by the League.

***The 1950's*** – The witch hunt of the early fifties inspired the League to undertake a two-year community education program focusing on the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

***The 1960's-*** In response to the growing civil rights crisis the League directed its energies to equality of opportunity and built a solid foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing.

***The 1970's*** – The League 1972 convention overwhelmingly approved support for ratification of the equal rights amendment. Two years later, League membership was broadened to include men.

***The 1980's*** – The League was in the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982 and contribute significantly to the enactment of the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986.

***The 1990's*** The League launched "Take Back the System", a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections.

***The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*** – The League was instrumental in the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century holds promise for a strong vibrant organization dedicated to "Making Democracy Work."



## LWVNY STUDY ON GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATION AND SHARED SERVICES

On Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup> the Syracuse Metro Study Committee and members of the League were privileged to hear remarks by James Rowley and James Farrell.



*Left to right James Farrell, Carol Wixson, study committee chair, and James Rowley*

Rowley, who as supervisor of the Town of Clay, was the driving force behind the merger of the Town of Clay Police Department and the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department described the process that led up to an election where the citizens of Clay approved the merger of the two police departments by a large margin. He now is chief fiscal officer of Onondaga County.

Farrell, former county legislator and mayor of the village of Liverpool, briefed us on how not to achieve the goal of merging police entities. His message was that it must be an open and transparent process with citizen participation. Farrell, a local business man, now chairs the Syracuse/Onondaga Chamber of Commerce Committee on Government Modernization.

Both Rowley and Farrell agreed that we need to look at government structure and explore changes that might or may not add to more cost effective governing in Onondaga County.

The committee has scheduled meetings on March 11 and April 1 leading to a Consensus Meeting on May 4 (see calendar on page 3). All local League members and other interested citizens are welcome to join the discussion.

For more information on the Study, see President Rae Rohfeld's message on page 3.

## THE IMPACT OF THE 2010 CENSUS AND HOW WE REDISTRICT THE STATE LEGISLATURE

**FACT:** At present, the majority party leaders of the Senate and the Assembly essentially determine how districts lines will be drawn allowing them to manipulate district lines to suit their political aims.

**FACT:** Only 29 of the 212 Legislative districts are within one percent of an "ideal size." NY districts can be dramatically different in size so that some districts with greater population are effectively denied the same level of representation as those with many fewer residents.

**FACT:** NY's incumbent return rate is one of the highest in the country- close to 95%. Does this provide a real choice for voters?

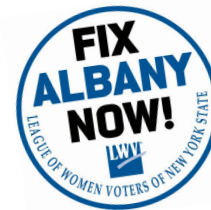
**FACT:** New York State Legislators have one of the highest rates of incumbency in the nation.

**FACT:** Over the last 30 years, New York has seen dramatic changes (particularly in population), but our legislature has not changed much.

**FACT:** The New York Legislature has been identified by the Brennan Commission as one of the poorest run governments in the nation. (49 out of 50).

**FACT:** With a more responsible and objective method of drawing the election district lines, legislators elected would need to be more responsible to the electorate rather than to the majority leader.

The 2010 Census will most likely see a population count different from the last census data and will require the adjustment of district lines. Now is the time to pressure our sitting legislators and the governor about the need for an independent commission to set the new lines.



## NEWS AND NOTES

### **CITIZEN UNITED DECISION SETS OFF REVOLUTION IN CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

#### ***Supreme Court Erred, Decision Undermines Basic Pillar of American Democracy -***

The following is a statement by Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States on the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizen United v. FEC*.

"The Supreme Court has made a tragic mistake. Their decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* is constitutionally irresponsible and will surely bring about an anti-democratic revolution in how we finance elections in this country. Basic pillars of American democracy have been undermined – that elections should not be corrupted by vast corporate wealth and that the voters should be at the center of our democratic system.

Justice Stevens had it right when he said, in his dissent, 'The Court's ruling threatens to undermine the integrity of elected institutions across the Nation. The path it has taken to reach its outcome will, I fear, do damage to this institution.'

In creating a new constitutional right for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of their shareholders' money to determine the outcome in candidate elections, the Court has unleashed into our elections tremendous sums of money from for-profit corporations that cannot possibly be matched in quantity by contributions from ordinary citizens. The only possible outcome of this is that big money and special interests will have an even tighter grip on democracy.

Congress and the President enacted campaign finance laws over a series of decades for a reason – to protect our democracy from the perverse influence of big money in our elections. In making this decision, the Court has ignored the best interests of the American public and our representative form of government."

**Mary G Wilson, President  
LWVUS**



### **LWVNYS BLOG –KEEPING TABS ON ALBANY**

The State League has launched a blog on New York State Politics, thanks to Jay Gallagher, retired Albany Bureau Chief for Gannett News. You may recall Jay spoke to the League at Convention last May.

Jay will be writing about Albany happenings and posting his stories on the LWVNY Blog. You can read the blog at <http://lwvny-blog.blogspot.com> or by going to the LWVNY website( [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)). You will find the link at the top right corner of the header.

To comment on the blog, you will have to "sign in" on the blog website. You can view the site without signing in.

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### **NYS Board of Elections Certifies Voting Systems**

A milestone in the six year saga of the state's implementation of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was reached in December when the NYS Board of Elections voted unanimously to approve two voting systems for use in New York State for the 2010 elections.

Now, that the machines have been selected the League will be needed to educate voters on the machines and monitor the machines usage. Watch for more information on how your League can assist in your community

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### **Reforming the Absentee Ballot Voting Process**

LWVNY has gone on record in support of legislation revising the application form so that eligible voters can participate in exercising their right to vote. Routinely, eligible voters choose not to vote by absentee, although they are entitled to, because of the personal information which the application requires. The New York State Constitution does not require the disclosure of personal details and the restrictions which the current form impose on the voter inhibits voters from participating. Simplifying absentee ballot application requirements will encourage eligible voters to exercise their right to vote.

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### **Election 2010 Debates**

The state League is talking with major PBS affiliates about co-sponsoring a series of debates for statewide offices this fall. The statewide offices include US Senate, NYS Governor, lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and Comptroller



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

MARCH 2010

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**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](http://www.lwvsyr.org)