



# Utica/Rome Voter

Issue 34; October/November 2010

**Newsletter of the League of Women Voters, Utica/Rome Metro Area**

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### Off Board Specialists

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**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**



**WHEN:** **Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**10:00 a.m. (9:30 a.m. registration)**  
Speaker begins after breakfast

**WHERE:** **Dorothy Smith Advocacy Center -- RCIL**  
**1607 Genesee Street, Utica**  
(corner of Scott St., formerly Temple Beth El)  
 (THIS LOCATION IS FULLY ACCESSIBLE)

**TOPIC:** **New Voting Systems in NY State: Post-Election Follow-up and Evaluation**

**SPEAKER:** **To Be Announced**

**COST:** **\$12.00 per member/\$15 per guest**  
Call or email Reservations to Trudy  
(trewck@roadrunner.com, 733-6244) by **Mon., Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Bring a guest!**

Karen McBride  
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**CO-PRESIDENTS' CORNER**

This has indeed been a busy fall for our League with candidate forums, naturalization ceremonies, voter registrations, as well as our general meetings in September and November. At our September 25<sup>th</sup> breakfast meeting, we appreciated the presentation and opportunity to ask many questions of Michael Myers, Chief of the Affirmative Litigation Section of the Environmental Protection Bureau of the State Attorney General's Office.

For the Saturday November 20th breakfast meeting at The Dorothy Smith Advocacy Center of RCIL on Genesee Street, we are planning to discuss the new voting systems in New York State, post election follow-up and evaluation. Our League is also planning a presentation on open meetings featuring Robert Freeman from the Department of State's Committee on Open Government on the evening of Monday November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Polish Community Club on Columbia Street in West Utica. See more information on these events in this newsletter.

We appreciate all the work Voter Services does and extend our thank you to Karen McBride and Barbara Brookes and all who assisted them. There was much planning involved in the Candidate Forum for Oneida County Sheriff on September 9<sup>th</sup> and for the 24<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Candidate Forum on October 19th. Along with these undertakings, there were many Voter Registration events as well as Naturalization Ceremonies at Fort Stanwix on September 16<sup>th</sup> and in Utica on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The next federal Naturalization Ceremony is scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> in the Alexander Pirnie Federal Building in Utica and the next county Naturalization Ceremony is planned for December 2 at the Oneida County Office Building in Utica.

As noted in our September newsletter, we will be undertaking the issue of redistricting in conjunction with New York State LWV. Liz Pattengill is our point person for liaison with LWVNY and will keep us informed about this hot topic. If you are interested in helping Liz, please let her know.

If you have not updated your current contact information and areas of interest for our Local League directory, please call Meg Pfeiffer to provide her with your information. We hope to have the directory available this fall for all our members.

Remember that Board meetings are generally held on the first Saturday of each month at the New Hartford Library, 10:00 a.m. to noon – next meeting is November 6th. Please let us know any agenda items, issues, or concerns that you would like your board to address.

-- Donna Gillette and Carole Torok-Huxtable, Co-Presidents

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**ELECTION SEASON 2010 – VOTER REGISTRATION**

We just wrapped up a fruitful voter registration season – 7 days of voter registration during the past two months – September/October 2010 -- registering a total of 88 persons to vote. It was fruitful if one considers that we, the LWV of Utica/Rome and the American Association of University Women (our co-sponsor), registered on average 12.5 persons to vote during those 7 days. A total of 13 League members and friends of League volunteered to staff the registration tables, and 800 Voter Guides, Parts I and II were distributed. We staffed our voter registration table for four Wednesdays at the downtown Farmer's Market held each Wednesday during September/October at Chancellor Park in Utica. Again we were fortunate to work with the Public Policy Students at Mohawk Valley Community College, where together on September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, we registered a total of 59 persons! The Student Activities Office at Utica College extended a welcome to us to set up our registration table on October 5<sup>th</sup>, where we garnered 18 new registrations. We partnered also with Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency to assist them in voter registration at a Rome elementary school open house in mid-October. Had we more volunteers and worked more closely with our co-sponsors, perhaps we could have sponsored even more voter registration drives at a variety of sites around town. We will work towards this goal next year. The above registration figure does not include those individuals registering once they became U.S. citizens during the two most recent naturalization ceremonies.

The Voter Guides Parts I and II were most helpful this election season acting as a "conversation piece" and serving as a teaching tool. Part I highlights the deadlines by when registration must be completed and explains how to use the new optical scan voting equipment, while Part II further explains what to expect at the polling site, and lists the statewide candidates for office, along with the responses they gave to questions posed by the NYS League of Women Voters. We are most grateful to have had these opportunities to bring more individuals into the "registered" fold, hoping that they made a pathway to the polls November 2<sup>nd</sup>. We thank all those volunteers who contributed their time and efforts to help extend the franchise to their fellow citizens again this election season.

-- Barbara Brookes and Karen McBride, Voter Services Committee

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### **MORE ON REDISTRICTING**

The NYS League of Women Voters has produced a power point presentation on redistricting, which we will use for a community forum in the next few months. Some of the questions this presentation will answer include: What is redistricting? Why is it an issue now? What are some of the problems with the current redistricting process?

One of the issues discussed in the introductory notes is the difference between "redistricting" and "reapportionment." Redistricting at the NYS level determines which voters are represented by which legislative seat on the federal and state levels; while reapportionment refers to the shifting of Congressional representatives between states based on population changes (lwnvy.org).

One of the more interesting parts of the presentation is the bizarre shape of the voting boundaries created by the last redistricting commission. These boundaries are designed to protect the incumbents in many cases; however a discussion of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 shows that even legitimate redrawing of districts is not always a neat process.

-- Elizabeth Pattengill

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### **LWV MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 14, 2010**

Present: Lorrie Wasielewski, Lucille Argenzia, Meg Pfeiffer meet at 4 pm at the New Hartford Library. Lisa Ostrander was not able to attend due to a change in her work hours.

The committee met to look over the SHUR membership initiative and to review the Utica-Rome LWV Membership Plan.

SHUR Program: The committee read over the materials sent by Georgia deGregorio from the state league. The SHUR initiative is a program of training and coaching which emphasizes outreach to individuals, organizations and media to make membership recruitment and leadership training more intentional. Each month there would be a visibility garnering activity with components of outreach by league members making a personal "ask," a partnering plan with community organizations, use of media outlets and a leadership development opportunity. After discussion members agreed that The Workplan as suggested by this program involves board training and requires board members who have specific information necessary for outreach to organizations and media.

Membership Plan:

**Visibility/Publicity:** In addition to a portable display, Lucille suggested writing a colorful, concise Trifold that tells about our local league for the league display and for leaving in libraries. On the face would be the logo and contact information such as website. Another side would have bullets highlighting important things the league is doing now, e.g. Candidate Nights, sewer study, studies of hydrofracking, consolidation, voter registration. A "We Want You" page could include an invitation message from the president, a statement about openness to both genders and accessible meeting locations. Another page could be about time and place of general membership meetings and dates of state and national conferences. There should be a "how to join" message on the website. League should have a bank membership so a person could join on line.

At general membership meetings non members and newer league members should be greeted and made to feel welcome. Board members can be especially helpful here. Nametags ? Pins or buttons for league members?

Write a job description for PR person or committee.

**Hot Topics:** Committee members would like to see issue forums and topics of local interest highlighted. Invitations should be sent to schools, colleges.

**New Member Integration:** Committee chairs could use the interest checklist and keep a list of small tasks to involve new members.

**Directory:** Should come out this fall with a statement of mission and purpose, listing of members and interest areas, meeting schedule. Trudy has agreed to put this in directory form.

**Inclusiveness:** In addition to publicizing that meetings are open to all and handicap accessible, ask speakers to address how their topic affects all.

**Multicultural Internship:** Lucille is willing to help arrange this but committee members questioned how deep the interest in this is. What do we want this person to do? Have we developed the involvement from area colleges to make this work? What will the league be able to offer this person? Committee members did not think the league was ready to offer this program this year and recommended eliminating it or putting it off to another year.

--Meg Pfeiffer, Membership Chair

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## BOARD MEETING SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2, 2010

Meeting called to order at 10:27 a.m.

Present: Lori Wasielewski, Meg Pfeiffer, Donna Gillette, Carole Torok-Huxtable, Elizabeth Pattengill, Johanna Albrecht, Lisa Ostrander, Karen McBride, Audrey Sotendahl, Barbara Brookes

Excused: Trudy Kennedy, Sharen Barboza, Shirley Van Marter, Lucille Argenzia

**MINUTES:** Minutes of the August 14, 2010 meeting accepted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Audrey Sotendahl

Audrey presented the current balances, income and expenses for the month. Her report will be filed for audit.

- ◆ Audrey received bill for annual website management. She will contact Sharen for clarification.
- ◆ Audrey reported that we paid \$200.00 + tax to Print Pack 'n Post (which has closed) in March 2010. She estimates that we have lost about half that amount.
- ◆ Cost of printing newsletter: Sharen has information about cost at Mid-York Library System and Carole will enquire about the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency graphics shop.
- ◆ Payment of PMP dues annually at same time: by July 1<sup>st</sup>, start of fiscal year. By-laws change needed. Audrey proposed discussing this change at the January General Membership meeting, publishing it in the bulletin in March and voting in May at the Annual Meeting.
- ◆ 990 Form: Audrey will complete; Carole gave her helpful instructions from Leader's Update.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Meg Pfeiffer

Membership remains stable at 55 members. Minutes of September membership meeting were distributed by e-mail to all board members. Meg summarized the Shur initiative to recruit members through direct outreach with community organizations and the media. Committee recommends publishing a Tri-Fold brochure about our League for display at meetings and libraries. Nancy Agen will be helping with PR. Other recommendations include name tags at meetings, membership/ interest directory and form for new members on website.

**VOTER SERVICES:** Karen McBride and Barbara Brookes

Carole distributed LWVUS publications, "Planning a Successful Registration Drive" and "Registration Drive Checklist," and Brennan Center for Justice, "A Guide to Vote Caging" and "Brennan Center Policy Brief on Student Voting."

Karen reported that the voter registration drive at Mohawk Valley Community College on September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> was successful; volunteers registered 59 students! Also a registration drive is planned for Utica College students on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Karen pointed out the new voter registration form. Upcoming Debate: Arcuri-Hanna debate planned for Tues., October 19, 2010 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at MVCC IT Bldg. Auditorium. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Carole, Lori and Liz will help screen the written questions submitted by the audience. The index cards will be collected by 7:00 p.m. and handed to the Moderator during a break at 7:30 p.m. Lisa and MVCC public policy students will hand out index cards to people as they come in. Donna inquired about cost of interpreter during the debate. She will find out if RCIL will donate the services of an interpreter for the hearing impaired. American Cancer Society/Cancer Action Network, one of our sponsors, will provide funding for an Ad in the OD on 10/11, 10/14 and 10/17. Ad will give time, date and place of Candidates Forum and list names of candidates and sponsors. Websites and logos of sponsors may also be included. Naturalization Ceremonies: Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>—volunteers needed to help new citizens to register to vote.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Special Committee Status Report Update: Sewage: Johanna Albrecht reported that all information was presented at Oneida County Board of Legislators meeting; report sent to NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Report of Steering Committee of July 22, 2010 is available on Oneida County website under link "Oneida County Sewer District." Link to report will be published in next newsletter.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- ◆ Next program on November 20 at RCIL. Topic: New Voting Systems in NY State: Post-Election Follow-up and Evaluation. Carole will contact the following speakers: Barbara Bartoletti, Bo Lipari, Maggie Moehringer and Aimee Allaud.
- ◆ Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency—vacancy on board. Donna Gillette may fill this vacancy. Meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month for nine months. Let Donna know if anyone is interested in this board position.
- ◆ Redistricting Reform: Liz Pattengill participated in a conference call on September 11. A draft of powerpoint presentation on CD will be sent. The Brennan Center redistricting memo is a key document in preparing the DVD. Redistricting may be a hot topic in 2011.
- ◆ Newsletter and Website: October 30<sup>th</sup> is deadline for newsletter articles. Sharen will update website with information about Candidates Forum on Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>. Information will be sent to Sharen.
- ◆ 501©3 tax exempt status update: Defer until after Lucille’s surgery.
- ◆ State Board Report: Carole reminded board members to read September SBR on Convention, membership, issues and advocacy and Voter Services.
- ◆ National LWV Update: Refer to Leader’s Update e-mailed to all board members.
- ◆ Voter Education: Another meeting with Election Commissioners is needed to discuss issues of concern to members.

Since there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

-- Barbara Brookes, Secretary

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**DEBATES : FALL ELECTION SEASON 2010**

Our League conducted two debates this Fall election season: one for Oneida County Sheriff candidates on September 9, 2010 and one for the two 24<sup>th</sup> Congressional District candidates on October 19, 2010.

The debate on September 9<sup>th</sup> was the first time our League has held a pre-primary Meet-the-Candidates Forum. About 100 people attended this event at the New Hartford American Legion. Sheriff candidates Rob Maciol, James Masucci and Angela Gumbarevic engaged in a lively discussion covering such topics as consolidation, improving workplace morale and the need to add women and minorities to the ranks. Assemblyman David Townsend could not attend because of previous multiple commitments.



We were indeed impressed with the outpouring of support from our own members, especially Barbara Shuck who agreed to be our Moderator and Ibbey Chiquoine and Shirley Hilts-Adams who served as time-keepers. This was one of the most successful candidate forums held to date because of the team effort of so many League members.

The second debate, televised by WUTR-TV and held at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), featured incumbent Congressman Michael Arcuri and challenger Richard Hanna. This second Hanna-Arcuri debate was attended by over 200 people in the Auditorium of the Information Technology Building at MVCC. It was most exciting working with our five co-sponsors: Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL), American Association of University Women (AAUW), Cancer Action Network of the American Cancer Society (CAN), WUTR-TV, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). We are grateful to Stephen P. Merren and Al Bangs of WUTR-TV who produced this live televised debate which enabled us to reach a wide audience. We also thank our host MVCC, especially Marianne Buttenschon and Bill Dustin, who helped us make arrangements for this event.



The Moderator, Tina Shively, news anchor from WROC in Rochester, did an excellent job of keeping the debate moving along on schedule and reminding the responsive audience to refrain from applause. Also, the panelists are to be commended for asking outstanding questions and holding the

attention of the audience: Beverly Quist from MVCC, Jeff Monasky from WIBX, Bryon Ackerman from the Observer-Dispatch, and Dave Chanatry from Utica College.

Thank you also to all League members who did so much to make this event a memorable one.

-- Karen McBride and Barbara Brookes, Voter Services Committee

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Utica/Rome LWV Board meeting:** 10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>  
New Hartford Public Library, New Hartford
- General Membership Meeting:** 10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>  
RCIL – 1607 Genesee St., Utica
- Oneida County Board of Legislators\*: Oneida Cty Off Bldg., 800 Park Ave, 10<sup>th</sup> Fl., Utica  
11/10; 11/24; 12/15 & 12/29 2:00 p.m.
- Rome Common Council: 7:30 p.m., Rome City Hall  
Wed., Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, and Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Utica City School District Board: 6:00p.m. Conkling Building, 1115 Mohawk St.  
Tues., Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> & Dec 28<sup>th</sup>
- Rome City School District Board\*\*: 7:00 p.m., Wednesdays  
Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> (Stokes); Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> (Gansevoort)  
Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>/Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> District Office (Business Meeting)
- Oneida County Naturalization Ceremonies: 10:30a.m., Oneida County Office Bldg, Utica  
Friday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>
- Federal Naturalization Ceremonies: 11am, Alexander Pirnie Bldg, 10 Broad St. Utica  
Thurs. Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>

\*Meetings can be seen on cable TV: Utica area - Channel 3 on the following Tues at 1p.m., Wed. at 8:00 p.m. and Sat at 2p.m.; Rome area - Channel 99 on the following Wed at 8:00 p.m.; \*\* Televised on Channel 99 on Tues at 9p.m. and Thurs at 7:30 p.m.

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### **ROBERT FREEMAN, DIRECTOR OF NYS COMMITTEE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT, TO SPEAK IN UTICA NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> AT POLISH COMMUNITY CENTER**



Robert Freeman, head of the NYS Committee on Open Government, will be the featured speaker at a public forum Monday, November 15, 2010 in Utica sponsored by the Utica/Rome Metro Area League of Women Voters, Tim Trent, West Utica Concerned Citizens Block Association, Utica Common Council members Jim Zecca and Frank Vescera.

Mr. Freeman — a national expert on open government issues and an open government resource for media, government officials and citizens around the state — will speak at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov.

15th, at the Polish Community Center, 810 Columbia Street in West Utica(in back of the Utica Club Brewery).

During the presentation, Mr. Freeman will provide valuable information to citizens and public officials about the Freedom of Information Law and the Open Meetings Law. He will also discuss how to use the laws effectively.

Mr. Freeman is a very dynamic speaker who will answer any and all questions you might have. If you haven't heard him speak and you're interested in open government, we urge you to take advantage of this opportunity.

The event is free. Citizens and government officials at all levels are encouraged to attend.

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**REQUEST FROM THE STATE LEAGUE  
LOBBY CORPS**

The League of Women Voters of NYS is developing a Lobby Corps, similar to that of LWVUS. The purpose is to train a group of volunteers who will then communicate the League's position on proposed legislation in person directly to the members of the state Senate and Assembly. The volunteer lobbyists will receive background information, talking points and individual assignments of legislators. A meeting will be held prior to the start of the legislative session in Albany to train and brief the Corps.

These volunteers are not to replace the Issue Specialists on whom the League currently depends for specific information, testimony and memos on particular issues as they are considered by the legislature. Instead, the Lobby Corps will be generalists who will provide the direct contact with the legislators on the key talking points. The Corps will also attend legislative committee meetings to report to the state League on important discussions and votes. It would be expected that the Lobby Corps volunteers would agree to lobby on a regular basis as assigned in Albany, for example, at least 2 days a month.

The Corps will work very closely with the state League's Vice President for Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, and our Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti. The volunteers will "shadow" Barbara to meet the legislators, become familiar with the capitol and the legislative procedures, and learn the aspects of good lobbying techniques, especially during the volunteers' first year.

Come make a difference - and try something new in the League! Submit your name and contact information to Stephanie (stephanie@lwny.org) at the state League office and we'll send you more information and an application.

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**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

