



The Broome-Tioga Voter

Bulletin of the *League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties*

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“Project Sunlight”

Presentation

by

Dennis McCabe

New York State

Assistant Attorney General in Charge

Binghamton Regional Office



Tuesday, March 23, 2010

7:00 pm Coffee

7:15 pm Program

Vestal Public Library

Vestal Parkway E., Vestal, NY

Public Welcome

(The Library is accessible to people with disabilities.)

President's Message

US CENSUS 101

As our thoughts and hopes wend their way around getting a new and better government in Albany with fairer redistricting boundaries for the 2012 elections, we must remember, that in order for this to happen, we must first fill out our 2010 Census forms.

The Constitution mandates a headcount of everyone residing in the US, and this has taken place every 10 years since 1790. To insure that everyone takes part in the Census count, by law, the information is considered confidential and no other government agency has access to it. Census workers take an oath to protect the privacy of respondents and face jail time and/or a heavy fine if they violate that oath.

The 2010 Census, which will be mailed to all households in early March, will consist of the short form, with 10 questions that will take 10 minutes to complete. The questions ask the name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship (foster children, tenant) and housing tenure. If you don't mail back your census form, you will be visited by a Census worker.

Counting homeless populations is given a specific approach by local census bureaus. From what I read about this, it will focus on a 3 day approach, similar to what was carried out in the 2000 Census. They will count persons residing in shelters and temporary arrangements the first night. The second day involves counting persons at soup kitchens or mobile food vans and asking them whether or not they actually have some form of housing. On the third night the census takers will count people at pre-determined "non-sheltered" locations such as public parks and underpasses.

Non-profit organizations have most to gain or lose depending on the accuracy of the count of people using their services. In many cities, local governments have had their own homeless committees work on sharing their information. They stress the importance in participating in the 2010 Census as a way of obtaining funding to combat the causes of homelessness, such as lack of job assistance centers, access to affordable transportation and school programs. Many of the homeless shy

away from the census workers, because they think they are the police or that they work for immigration, which makes the accurate count almost impossible.

Census data is important because:

It determines how the more than \$400 billion in Federal dollars will be spent every year for 10 years, for Medicare, child health, housing, Head Start, special education.

It sets the table for newly drawn political districts for Congress, state legislatures, local county boards and school communities. Government uses census data to locate new schools, health clinics, and other facilities. Businesses use it to identify markets and retail locations.

Data gathered about changes in a community are crucial to many planning decisions such as where to provide specific services. Our 10 minutes will affect our nation for the next 10 years!

~ Clare Simeone

NEW MEMBER

A sincere welcome to Susan Ruff of Binghamton who has recently joined our League. We hope that Susan will attend our meetings and programs so that we may all become acquainted.

Voter Service Report

Our League has been contacted by Raymond Schaffer candidate for Broome County Sheriff in the Democratic Party primary, requesting League sponsorship of a debate among all candidates in the race. I discussed the request with Mr. Schaffer and explained the League's traditional position is to sponsor debates after the primary race with the various candidates. Doing pre-primary debates could become overwhelming for our committee. The Board discussed this proposal and felt we should reach out to members of the committee with experience in this area. I will contact members of the committee and report back on the responses.

~ Sara Wokan

SAVE THE DATE

Save the date: May 11, our annual meeting begins at 5 pm. There will be a guest speaker as well as an excellent dinner.

Government Consolidation/Shared Services State Study

for consolidation/dissolution/shared services in their service area.

On Jan.27th Laura Bierman, Exec. Director, LWNYS, sent by e-mail the following documents: a Leaders Discussion Guide, Consensus Questions and "Consolidating Local Government." The responses are due in the state office by June 1, 2010.

Our purpose in the next few months is to come to consensus on the questions that were developed by the State League's Government Modernization Committee. As League members know, consensus is not a vote, not a percentage of members, but a "sense of the group" - member agreement. Everyone is invited to participate in the discussion, though only the views of League members may be considered for the consensus.

The most recent commission to address government efficiency, the Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, was formed by Gov. Spitzer and issued its report in April 2008 (the "Lundine Report"). Along with recommendations regarding cost containment, school reforms, election reforms, and state aid, are recommendations to consider, and in some cases require, the consolidation of certain local government entities.

Consolidation Committee,

Louise Vanderkulk
Jane Ebert
Richard Paden

The Attorney General responded with a piece of legislation, the "New York Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act" (the 2009 "Reorganization Act") which was passed by the legislature and signed into law in June 2009. This legislation will become effective March 2010. It facilitates the consolidation of towns, villages or districts (but not school districts), city districts, county created special purpose districts, and the dissolutions of villages and certain districts. It also grants counties additional powers to initiate dissolutions as well.

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☆ **March Program: Project Sunlight** ☆
☆ "Project Sunlight" This is a power point presentation by ☆
☆ Dennis McCabe, Assistant Attorney General in Charge, ☆
☆ Binghamton Regional Office. The goal of the presenta- ☆
☆ tion is to promote citizens' ability to know and monitor ☆
☆ government decision-making. Project Sunlight allows ☆
☆ you to research any bill, learn about lobbyists, see how ☆
☆ your tax dollars are being spent in your area and much ☆
☆ more. Project Sunlight allows you to search candidate's ☆
☆ finance records and find out who made contributions and ☆
☆ how much was raised. It also offers access to financial ☆
☆ reports filed by charities across New York State. The ☆
☆ Project Sunlight webpage is www.sunlightny.com. ☆
☆ ☆
☆ The program will be held at the Vestal library, 7pm, ☆
☆ Tuesday, March 23. ☆
☆ ☆
☆ ~Raney Colvill, Programs ☆
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Currently, the state League has no criteria by which to evaluate local proposals, and it has no standards with which to address state legislation. Given the immediacy of these issues, the study committee has decided to devote the first portion of the study to exploration of consensus in the following areas:

Is there agreement on the standards that the League should apply in assessing changes to state law that would facilitate the consolidation/dissolution process and/or the expansion of shared services.

Is there agreement on standards that local Leagues should apply in assessing proposals

Program for Women's History Month
All are invited to a program presented by the Status of Women Council on Monday, March 15th, at Riverside Towers, 5 Riverside Drive. Refreshments will be served at 5:30 pm. At 6:00 pm, Mary Pat Hyland, a local author, will speak. Ms. Hyland formerly worked at the *Press & Sun-Bulletin*, where she wrote some challenging editorials.

~ Alice Brooks

The Broome-Tioga Voter

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Calling All Cooks

The Washington DC League is preparing a recipe book in conjunction with the 90th birthday of the National League the LWVDC Chapter. The book will be edited by Goody Braun, whose byline, Goody Solomon, has appeared on food and nutrition articles in the local and national press for many years. The volume, which will contain members' and friends' favorite recipes (often made with heavy doses of fat, sugar and salt) converted into modern, healthier, still delicious versions. All categories – appetizers, snacks, soups, salads, entrees, vegetables, desserts, etc. – will be included.

Send your recipes to Goody. She will update them and return revisions to you for review. Brand new 21st century recipes are also welcome. Please note: these should be individual recipes. If a favorite comes from a cookbook, be sure to give an accurate reference. Also please indicate whether you want your name on the recipe – and include any anecdotal information you may wish, such as family history related to the recipe. Please send your recipes by end of March, if at all possible. Or at least let Goody know by then whether you intend to send something. Email is preferred: goody.solomon@verizon.net. Or send by regular mail to Goody Braun, 1712 Taylor St. NW, Washington, DC 20011. Thank you very much - Billie Day, President, LWVDC

Calendar

Mon., Mar 15	Status of Women Council meeting for Woman's History Month
Tues. Mar. 23	“Project Sunlight” - Transparency in Government Program Meeting
Tues. Apr. 27	“School Board Elections” Program
Tues. May 11	Annual Meeting - Regency Hotel

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