



The Broome-Tioga Voter

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

www.lwv-broometioga.org

csimeone@stny.rr.com

Volume 63, Number 6

March 2011

League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties

P.O. Box 944, Vestal, NY
13851-0944

President

Clare Simeone 775-0035
csimeone@stny.rr.com

1st Vice-Pres./Ed. Finance

Carol Oestrich 797-0026
coestrich@aol.com

2nd Vice-Pres./Program

Raney Colvill 722-0862
lcolvill@stny.rr.com

Secretary

Joanne Gee 775-4856
raygee@echoes.net

Treasurer

Alice Brooks 754-8277
fbrooksjr@stny.rr.com

Voter Service

Sara Wokan 785-6703
riskalark@yahoo.com

Doris Lawton 723-0890
dal22@verizon.net

Membership Database

Mary Diegert 785-1236
mdiegert1@stny.rr.com

Public Relations

Isi Trapper 723-3410
isitrap@hotmail.com

Election Reform

Jane Park 748-4192
janepark@stny.rr.com

Local Government

Richard Paden 797-2535
rpaden1@stny.rr.com

Director at Large

Anne Kalayjian 797-1623
askalayjian@yahoo.com

"Voter" Editor and Submissions

Sue Garing 775-5041
sgaring@verizon.net

MARCH PROGRAM

“What’s Happening in Albany?”

Presentation by

Blair Horner

NYPIRG



Tuesday, March 22, 2011

7:00 pm Coffee

7:20 pm Program

Vestal Public Library

Vestal Parkway E., Vestal, NY

Public Welcome

(The Library is accessible to people with disabilities.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Because the redistricting happens only every 10 years, it is of utmost importance that legislators develop a reapportionment plan that provides equal weight for all voters of Broome and Tioga Counties. Very few can explain this better than Barbara Bartoletti has done in her testimony before the Senate Majority and Legislative Task Force on Reapportionment.

~ Clare Simone

The following is from http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/issues/Testimony_121610.pdf

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE MAJORITY CONFERENCE SENATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT VAN BUREN HEARING ROOM A-LOB DECEMBER 16, 2010 ALBANY, NEW YORK

My name is Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director of the League of Women Voters of New York State. Thank you for having this hearing on the 2011-2012 redistricting process and for inviting us to speak. The League is not a newcomer to this subject, having first proposed guidelines for redistricting in 1966.

We believe that in addition to improving goals and criteria for the redistricting process, this is an opportunity to fundamentally change elections in New York State by removing the process from partisan influences. The most important point we wish to make today is that the drawing of district lines for legislative and Congressional district lines should not be done by legislators. The current process allows elected officials to choose their voters before the voters have a chance to choose them. It is in the self-interest of legislators and legislative leaders to preserve both the careers of individual legislators and the dominance of their political party. The resulting partisan gerrymandering has significantly reduced the rights of New Yorkers to be fairly represented and resulted in one of the highest rates of incumbents being reelected in the country.

We believe that an independent commission to draw the lines for legislative and Congressional districts can operate under existing state constitutional requirements. The mem-

bers of the commission should be fairly chosen, nonpartisan, and reflect the diversity of the state. The lines should be drawn in a manner that does not favor any incumbent or political party, and under guidelines that provide for fair and effective representation of racial and language minorities. The process should be transparent and open to public input. Finally, there should be an effective mechanism for legislative approval of the commission's plans. We believe that Senator Valesky's bill S.1614B accomplishes all these things and strongly support its passage as soon as possible to draw the lines for the next decade.

We urge that the following criteria and guidelines for redistricting, which are to a large extent listed and prioritized in the Valesky bill, be adopted. Districts should be of contiguous territory with the smallest perimeter possible. Areas divided by water should not be included in the same district except if connected by bridge or tunnel. Districts should be drawn to protect the voting rights of racial and language minorities.¹ Districts should not be drawn to favor or disfavor any candidate or political party.

Subject to the above guidelines, state legislative districts should be drawn with no more than a 1 percent deviation from the mean population of districts within that house. Counties and county subdivisions should not be divided, except when necessary to comply with the requirements described above, and in that case, more populous counties or subdivisions should be divided before those with smaller populations. Villages should not be divided. Again subject to the first set of guidelines, districts should be as compact as possible and legislative districts should be drawn to keep communities of interest together.

Open source software designed by social scientists and computer programmers has been developed recently to make the process more transparent.² We believe that the process should be transparent in all respects both through multiple public hearings throughout the state and by using technology to have citizens participate at all stages of the process. All data on which the commission relies should be available to the public, both in writing and electronically through the Commission's website, including all draft and proposed final maps of districts, criteria

used to generate each draft and proposed final map of districts, software used to generate each draft and final proposed map of districts, and proposed plans.

In all of its 90 plus years of history, the League has stood for fair and equitable representation for the people of our state. We believe that the overriding concern in drawing new districts is to provide all New York residents fair representation in Congress and the Legislature. To do otherwise discourages participation in the political process and increases voter cynicism. Ten years ago we went before this body during hearings on the last round of redistricting and lamented the fact that New York had a voter turnout of 49%. That number of 49% ten years ago looks pretty good compared to what the New York Times recently called the lowest turnout in the nation for the 2010 mid-term elections.

The League believes it imperative that an independent redistricting process be adopted so that people, not parties, are protected. We hope that this series of public hearings is in fact the beginning of a fair, transparent and objective redistricting process.

1 Under the Voting Rights Act, states must draw district lines in a way that gives minority voters the same opportunities as other voters “to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice.” District lines in some New York counties, Brooklyn, Bronx and Manhattan must be drawn in a manner which does not leave minority voters worse off than current lines. We recognize that complying with these federal requirements may in some instances result in legislative districts that are not as “compact” as otherwise possible.

2 See <http://news.gmu.edu/articles/4605> for a description of the project and <http://www.publicmapping.org/> for the project’s website.

New Member News
Please welcome our new member
Ann Woodward of Port Crane. She is currently a student at BU.
~ Eva Anderson

Voter Service Report

Members of our committee, Doris Lawton, Sue Ruff, Karl Wokan and I, participated in the Naturalization Ceremony at the Binghamton Court House. We were invited to say a few words, and Doris briefly congratulated the new citizens and reminded them that voting is both their right and their responsibility as citizens. At this point in the presentation I stood up with our yard sign that says, “Vote, it counts” and displayed the sign for all to see. This was Doris’ idea and many in the audience commented on how effective it was. We may need a “sign displayer” again. Volunteers?

Judge Molly Fitzgerald gave a terrific introduction and also emphasized the importance of voting. If you have never witnessed this event, consider coming to a ceremony.

~ Sara Wokan

North Carolina Civic Education Consortium



MaryBelle Mitten would like to share this website with any student and/or teacher you may know, <http://www.civics.org>. Check out the games!

Broome County Legislature Reapportionment Plan

The League of Women Voters of Broome and Tioga County has been asked for a volunteer from our organization to be a voting member on the Broome County Reapportionment (Redistricting) Committee. Legislators are finalizing the plans and will meet as soon as the Census numbers are available. Mary Johnson has volunteered to act as our representative, and I believe she will be the first ever from our League to serve in this position. We commend the Legislators' efforts towards forming a more independent Reapportionment Commission and wish them success in developing fair voting districts in Broome County.

~ Clare Simeone, President LWVBTC

Save these dates:

March 22- "What's Happening in Albany?" presented by Blair Horner of New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG).

April 26- Health Care Panel Discussion- Rebecca Elgie from the Ithaca League, Mary Clark from Citizen Action, and Lenore Boris, Administrator at the Dr. Garabed A. Fattal Community Free Clinic on Front Street will be the panelists. There will be an overview of health care in the United States, discussion of current regulations, and discussion about how the present situation affects those without resources. Following the discussion, there will be a Question and Answer time. The April Health Care panel meeting will begin with coffee at 7:00 pm and the program will begin at 7:20.

May 10- Annual meeting. Our one meeting of the year where we take care of League business, socialize, have a good dinner and are entertained. Menus in next newsletter.

~ Raney Colvill



LWVNYS Convention - SILENT AUCTION.

The state League is asking each local League to put together a basket to be auctioned off at the end of the convention. All the money will support the State League. The State League provides us with literature and guidance throughout the year. This is our way to say thank you.

Our basket will represent items made or found in the GREATER BINGHAMTON AREA. We are asking for donations of locally made spiedie sauce, jelly, honey, maple syrup, Black Bear wine, wine glasses or other items you can think of. Please let a board member know about your donation and arrange to get it to her or him. Someone on the board will arrange the basket. The sooner we get the articles the better, so we can have it ready to take up to the Convention in May.

THANK YOU !

~ Clare Simeone

League Health Care Position

Many of you many have wondered about the League's position on health care. The League's positions briefly are:

Support of measures to assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care for all state residents, including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective alternative methods of delivery, funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs and provisions for effective citizen participation in health policy decisions.

Support of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their personal health and to participate in decisions, including termination of extraordinary life-extending procedures.

Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through public financing. The League supports the single payer concept as an acceptable approach to implementing League positions on equitable access and cost containment. (from material provided by Rebecca Elgie)

~ Raney Colvill

State News

The League of Women Voters of New York State



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**Men and women of voting age
are welcome to join.**

Be Part of the Action – Join Today!

Membership Application

- Individual membership \$50/yr.
 Household membership \$75/yr. (2 people)
 Student membership \$20/yr.
 Send me information about the League.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

***Make checks payable to LWVBTC and mail with
this coupon to LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY
13851-0944.***

 I would like to support the League with a tax-
deductible contribution to the LWVNYS Education
Foundation \$ _____

***Make checks payable to “LWVNYS Education
Foundation” and mail with this coupon to
LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY 13851-0944.***

Membership Recruitment Initiative

Are you concerned about declining League membership? Do you find yourselves recycling board members due to a dearth of new leadership? Does it sometimes seem like you are preaching to the choir? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then the Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) is for you! The MRI is an exciting program developed by the LWVUS to increase League membership, leadership, and visibility. See State Board Report on website for more details.

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. Come make a difference – and try something new in the League! Contact the state office if you are interested.

Observer Corps

Review of local government action has long been a strength of the League. By serving as a local watchdog, the League informs the public, attracts new members, and generally bur-nishes its reputation as a nonpartisan good government group. The LWV Hamptons has recently reinstated its Observer Corps. If you’re interested in joining or forming an Observer Corps in your area, contact your local League President.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NYS

62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207-1403

(518) 465-4162; Fax (518) 465-0812

Web Address: www.lwvny.org

E-mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

The Broome-Tioga Voter

The League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties
P.O. Box 944
Vestal, NY 13851-0944
(607)772-4936

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID BINGHAMTON, NY PERMIT # 2

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
A program sponsored by the Status of Women Council
"Eleanor Roosevelt in the 1950's and 1960's"
Monday, March 21st, at 6:00 p.m.
Social Room at 5 Riverside Drive, Binghamton
ALL ARE INVITED!

Calendar		Contents	
March 21	Status of Women Council, Program for Women's History Month.	President's Message	2-3
March 22	Program Meeting "What's Happening in Albany"	Voter Service Report	3
April 26	Program Meeting "Health Care Panel Discussion"	Civics.Org	3
May 10	Annual Meeting	Broome Reapportionment Plan	3
		Save These Dates	4
		LWVNYS Convention - Silent Auction	4
		League Health Care Position	4
		State News	5
		Women's History Month	6