

League of Women Voters of Chemung County, Inc. Newsletter

September, 2009

Newsletter Start-up - from the editor

*It's been several years since this League had a newsletter. Members and friends of the League, this is **your** newsletter. Send in items, that you would like to see in the newsletter by the last Friday of the month, 6pm. These announcements, articles, etc. will be included as space permits. Email your items to:*

<maryohungerford@gmail.com> or snail mail to
Mary Hungerford
1727 Genesee Rd., Elmira NY 14905
Phone: 737-6182

Announcements of September League Events -

1. **Project Sunlight Presentation** by the Assistant Attorney General, Dennis C. McCabe. Come hear a discussion on how the NYS Attorney General's Office is restoring transparency and accountability to government.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Date/Time: Sept. 24, 2009, 7pm

Where: Steele Memorial Library Auditorium, Elmira

Light refreshments will be served

Bring an interested friend. They may want to join the League!

2. **LWV Octagon Fair: Date/Time: Sept. 26, 2009, 10am-4pm**

It's that time of year again! Elmira College is holding their annual Octagon Fair on **Saturday, Sept 26**, and we will once again be conducting our **STRAW POLL**.

For those not familiar with this, we:

- Collect questions about current issues, on each of 3 levels: Local
State & National
- Consolidate suggested questions and select what seems to be most pressing issue on *each* level.
- Hone suggestions for each topic into simple one or two sentence questions with *yes/no answers* for polling. Ideally, these questions should inspire those participating in the poll to seek additional information regarding these topics.
- Results are announced on local radio and TV stations and covered in the Sunday *Star Gazette*.

We need your help! Please forward your suggestions for possible questions/topics to mapugliese@netzero.net OR call Maureen Pugliese as 239-0516. Ideally, questions should be one sentence, requiring a yes/no response and should inspire participants to seek additional information about the topic. We want to make people wake up and ask questions about topics that affect them, their families and their communities.

Announcement of Other Events of Interest -

Optical Scan Voting Training Demonstrations -

The Town of Elmira will be the only location in Chemung County that will use the "Plan A." optical scan voting system this fall, for the September 14th primary election.

Training demonstrations for how to use these machines will take place at:

Elmira Town Hall, 1255 W. Water St. and the Elmira Highway Dept.

Garage on Jerusalem Hill:

When: Sept. 3rd, 4pm to 8pm

Sept. 10 at 9am-12pm and 4pm-8pm

Sept. 12 at 10am to 2pm

For more information contact the Chemung Board of Elections at 737-5475.

The Chemung County Council of Women's Annual Election Tea -

will be held this year on SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1st, 2-4 PM at the CHEMUNG COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS.

The LWV Chemung County is a member of CCCW and has often sponsored its activities. One of our most popular events is As in the past, we will be honoring all women in Chemung County who have put themselves on the line by running for public office in the previous year AND provide an educational component regarding the upcoming election. This year, for the third year in a row, the LWVCC is sponsoring the education portion of this event by inviting all candidates running for City Court Judge and for Town Justice to speak about what makes each uniquely qualified for the job he is seeking. Prior to this event we hope to have an article published in the Star Gazette which will pique the interest of the public to attend and meet these candidates.

By having this event at the Board of Elections, we will also be able to have the new voting machines available for demonstration. **Please put this event on your calendar now and let your friends know that we are looking forward to their joining us, too. Thank you.**

Public Hearing of the Chemung County Legislature on Sept. 8, 6:45pm -

The public is invited to discuss and comment on a proposed application by Chemung County for a Small cities 2009 Block Grant on behalf of Horseheads for up to \$750,000 for road and sewer improvements to support the Schlumberger Technology Corps. gas drilling project at the Center for Horseheads Distribution/Industrial Park. The Block Grant comes from Federal funds distributed by New York State. According to the public notice of this meeting in the Star Gazette, 8/28/09, "...the application ...is for an economic development activity." Such Block Grants must meet three national objectives: (1) Benefit low to moderate income people, (2) elimination of slums and blight, or (3) "...urgent needs affecting the health and safety of the community." Further, Grantees must use 70% of Grant Block funds for benefiting low and moderate income people.

It will be interesting to hear an explanation by the County on how building a road for a Schlumberger branch office in Horseheads related to gas drilling will meet the three national objectives for getting this block grant.

Environment Health and Safety Issues in the Forefront:

The following is a letter published in Star Gazette by Steuben LWV President Susan Multer. This is an issue in our area because Schlumberger, a major international gas and oil field service corporation intends to set up a \$30 million outpost in Horseheads to develop natural gas wells in our region. Much has been in the news about the pros and cons of doing this. The controversy centers on environmental pollution and public safety and health issues. Many Land owners are eager to make money from gas drilling on their land, while those with environmental concerns seek information and caution.

Susan Multer's Letter:

8 August 2009

To the Editor:

An August 6th letter from Lee Fuller at "Energy in Depth" in Washington, D.C. says hydraulic fracturing does not have an exemption under current law. He should read the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58) where in Title III, Subtitle C, Sec. 322, it amends the 1974 Safe Drinking Water Act by saying "The term underground injection (a) means the subsurface emplacement of fluids by well injection; and (b) excludes...the underground injection of fluids or propping agents (other than diesel fuels) pursuant to hydraulic fracturing operations related to oil, gas or geothermal production."

In other words, after 31 years of the Safe Drinking Water Act being law of the land, in 2005 an exemption was granted to the oil and gas industry. Fortunately, bills have been introduced in the U.S. Senate (S 1215) and House of Representatives (HR 2766) to repeal that exemption. Let's thank Senator Schumer and Representative Massa for co-sponsoring the respective bills and urge Senator Gillibrand to do so. Follow them at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

Lobbyists argue that repealing the exemption would cost the industry much money, and federal regulation is unnecessary. It's time that We, the People, say the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed for our health and safety. Everyone should obey it. Period.

Susan Multer
Horseheads

News&Notes from LWV - National

1. HEALTH CARE:

The League urges Congress and President to continue to support the Public Option for Health Care Reform. Town Hall meetings regarding health care (such as the ones Rep. Massa has conducted in our area) have been going on throughout the country recently. You need to know that the League has been working hard to urge Congress to pass the comprehensive health care legislation. The LWVUS lobby corps is lobbying Congress to support the "America's Affordable Health Choices act of 2009."

According to the LWVUS: "The League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care...acute care, long-term care and mental health care."

Take Action: Let your representative and Senators know you support health care reform, the 'public option' NOW. (Aug. 11, 2009 - League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work website page)

Contacting your elected officials:

Senators: Kirsten Gillibrand - <gillibrand.senate.gov> or call NY office: 212-688-6262

Charles Schumer - <schumer.senate.gov> or call NY office 716-8464111

Congressman: Eric Massa - <massa.house.gov> or call Corning Office: 654-7566

2. Support CEDAW(Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women) by contacting your Senators to support this effort.

CEDAW is the most comprehensive international treaty **promoting** the advancement of women worldwide which establishes a legal basis which all governments must adhere to ensure equality of women in politics, law, employment, education, health care, business and domestic relations. The U.S. remains the only democracy in the world that has not ratified the CEDAW Treaty - putting us in the company of Iran, Somalia and Sudan.

Take Action: Call Sens. Gillibrand and Schumer at 202-224-3121 and ask for the Senator's office. Urge them to support ratification of CEDAW.

3. **Happy Birthday LWV!** In February, it will be the **90th Anniversary of the LWV!** In the future, National LWV is asking us for personal and League stories related to this milestone - Submit your story via <storybank@lww.org>

4. Remember "**Women's Equality Day**" was on August 26th - It was 89 years ago that women got the right to vote across the United States.

5. Sen. Edward Kennedy died on August 25th. He was a staunch advocate for many of the issues and positions taken by the League cared in his 47 years in the Senate.

"For five decades, virtually every major piece of legislation to advance civil rights, healthcare and the economic well-being of Americans bore his name and resulted from his tenacious, passionate and effective efforts. His commitment to public service was driven by an exuberant engagement with politics, a deep sense of compassion and a belief that every American is entitled to dignity as well as equal justice under the law."

(The Nation, Sept. 14th, 20009, pg. 4)

Carrie Chapman Catt (founder of the LWV) pointed out that the LWV is nonpartisan, but appreciates politicians who support League positions and concerns.

Newly Appointed LWV-Chemung Board Member:

Welcome **Maureen Pugliese** as a newly appointed **Board Member** in the position of Director of Voter Service! On August our Board voted to appoint her in this position - following our By-Laws. Thank you Maureen for accepting the Board Position.

Our Board now consists of the following members:

President - Mary Hungerford (See top of first page for address/phone)

Co-Vice Presidents - Marty Oldfield - <aoldfied@stny.rr.com> 739-9577

Barb Luther - <bluther@stny.rr.com> 734-1321

Treasurer/Membership Chair - Robin Stroman - <stromanhome@earthlink.net 529-3510

Secretary - Leslie Potter- <lesliepotter@hotmail.com> 739-9624

Voter Service Director - Maureen Pugliese - <mapugliese@netzero.com> 734-4173

A Final Note: Board Minutes and Treasurer's Reports will be sent to members starting with the July, 2009 reports via email, or as needed, snail mail.

LWV Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy: The LWV, in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitments to diversity and pluralism, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWV on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.