



The LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

APRIL 2011

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

APRIL EVENTS

Friday, April 11th
 Fracking Day of Action, Albany
Wednesday, April 13th, 7:00 PM
 Public Hearing: Reapportioning the
 County Legislature
Wednesday, April 27th, 7:30 PM
 Redistricting Forum
Saturday, April 30th, 1:00 PM
 Gage House Tour

To receive your *Local Voter* by
 email, please contact us at
league@lwvsyr.org. You will help
 the environment as well as save
 us printing and postage costs.
 Thank You!

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**STAYING INFORMED ON THE
 ISSUES AND EVENTS**

Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org



**"The Case for Redistricting Reform,"
 A Power Point Presentation and
 Discussion**

**Laura Ladd Bierman , Executive Director
 Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director
 League of Women Voters of New York State**

**Wednesday, April 27, 2011—7:30 PM
 University United Methodist Church
 1085 East Genesee Street
 Syracuse NY 13210**

**The event is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the
 Syracuse Metropolitan Area and the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra
 Club. It is free and open to the public. More info on page 6**

**A Tour of the Recently Renovated Matilda Joslyn Gage Home
 210 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville NY
 Saturday, April 30, 2011—1:00 PM**

**League Members are invited to tour the historic home of Matilda
 Joslyn Gage, an early advocate for women's rights, abolition,
 religious freedom and other democratic values. A docent will guide
 the tour and refreshments will be served.**

**Tickets \$12.00
 Reservations are suggested by April 20th
 315-448-7199 or - league@lwvsyr.org**

More information on page 6



BOARD NOTES

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

JOAN KESEL

2011 Naturalization Ceremonies

Volunteers are still needed to fulfill our obligation to assist new citizens in registering to vote on the following dates:

Thurs, May 19 11AM - Federal Bldg, Court Rm 5, 12th Fl
Thurs, June 16 2PM - County Court House
Thurs, Aug 18 11AM - Federal Bldg, Ceremonial Court 1
Thurs, Sept 15 2PM - County Court House
Thurs, Sept 22 11AM - Federal Bldg, Ceremonial Court 1
Thurs, Oct 20 11AM - Federal Bldg, Court Rm 5 12th Fl
Thurs, Nov 17 11AM - Federal Bldg, Ceremonial Court 1
Thurs, Dec 15 2PM - County Court House

Please contact Voter Service Director Joan Durant at 424-0040 or email jdurantywca@cnyemail.com for more information and to volunteer.



The Nominating Committee is still looking for a few good women or men to fill our slate for next year. We are in particular need of a public relations director. If you know of someone with experience in this field who would like to serve in this capacity, please let us know. They do not have to be a League member. We also need two members to serve on our Nominating Committee next year.

“Who’s Who, A Guide to Your Elected Officials”

Please add the following newly appointed officials to your directory:

Onondaga County Legislator 12th District
Robert B Cox
614 James Street
Syracuse NY 13203
472-4481
rcox@apclegal.com

Syracuse Councilor At Large
Pamela Hunter
806 Demong Drive
Syracuse NY 13214
251-2250

Officers

President... Susan Bush
Vice-President... Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello
Secretary... Karen Smith
Treasurer.... Donald MacLaughlin

Directors

Advocacy... Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello
Fund-Raising... Open
Membership... Mary Lou Green
Program.... Rae Rohfeld
Publications/PR... Joan Johnson
Voter Service... Joan Durant

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director.... Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee..... Minna Buck
Barbara Olum
Mary Lou Green
Joan Johnson
Gwen Grant
Election Law Specialist.... Lenore Rapalski
Technical Support... Roberta Millert

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

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.

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanks to all league members and friends who attended the “Gerrymandering” screening on March 27th at the Palace Theatre. The movie provided insight on the process of apportioning congressional seats as well as redistricting state legislative seats across the country. Often witty and maybe a little scary the movie demonstrated why reform of the process won’t come easily. After the movie, Syracuse University Professor Grant Reeher led conversation that we all found enlightening and challenging at the same time.

We have a very busy spring ahead of us beginning with another redistricting program. Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director and Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, of the New York State League of Women Voters will discuss “The Case for Redistricting Reform” on April 27th.

On April 30th, League members will visit the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home where a tour and tea has been arranged recreating a women’s rights meeting in the parlor where Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony and Gage planned their revolution.

Last but not least our Annual Dinner and Business Meeting will take place on June 9th. Our guest speaker will be Tina Nabatchi, Assistant Professor of Public Administration at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School. Nabatchi is also Co-Director of CNYSpeaks. She is engaged in research in deliberative democracy, specifically the role that citizens play in the work of government.

We hope to see you at these events.

Susan Bush

CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 8, 2011, 4:00 PM
Gifford Auditorium, Crouse Hall
Syracuse University Campus

NYPIRG Redistricting Event with Blair Horner,
Executive Director, NYPIRG
Sponsored by SU’s NYPIRG Chapter

Friday, April 11, 2011
Albany NY

Fracking Day of Action

Wednesday, April 13, 2011. 7:00 PM
County Legislature Chambers

Public Hearing on Reapportioning the County Legislature

Friday, April 22, 2011

Earth Day

Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 7:30 PM
University United Methodist Church
1085 E. Genesee St. Syracuse 13210

Redistricting Forum with the Sierra Club
Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, LWVNY
Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, LWVNY

Saturday, April 30, 2011 1:00 PM
210 East Genesee St, Fayetteville

Tour and Tea at the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home

May 20 –22, 2011
Desmond Inn—Albany

LWVNYS Convention

Thursday, June 9, 2011
Rosamond Gifford Zoo

LWVSYR Annual Meeting and Dinner

APRIL 11TH FRACKING DAY OF ACTION



On April 11, 2011 environmental groups, advocates and concerned New Yorkers will travel to Albany for a day of action urging the Governor and the legislature to protect New York State drinking water.

The day begins at 10:30 am with a rally on the Capitol lawn. Following lunch on

your own, legislative visits to educate our lawmakers about the dangers of dirty drilling will be arranged. Legislative visits and briefing materials are being prepared for the lobby day.

Buses will be available to carry activists to Albany from Syracuse on a first-come, first-served basis. The event is sponsored by Common Cause, NY. To learn more about the lobby day or to sign up call Deanna Bitetti at (212)691-6421 or go to citizencampaign.org.

The DEC has announced it will have its decision by July 1st. With only a few months until the moratorium on horizontal hydraulic fracturing is lifted, we need to seize current momentum and widespread public concern to advocate loud and clear for a ban on shale gas drilling.

With Earth Day just days away, it is time to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and turn to more environmentally safe means of producing energy. This will decrease the need for natural gas drilling and hydrofracking could become a moot point.

Take Action Now—To Support Clean Air

The House of Representatives is expected to consider legislation that would permanently block the EPA from regulating harmful carbon pollutants. For decades the Clean Air Act has protected children, seniors and all the rest of us from carbon monoxide. In just the last twenty years these pollutants have been cut by 70%. Now special interests and their congressional allies are pushing to undo the Clean Air Act. Tell Representative Ann Marie Burkle to oppose legislation that would block or prevent action to clean up our air and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

AN ON-TIME BUDGET

For the first time in five years New York State lawmakers have passed a \$135.2 billion budget beating the target date of April 1st, and this is not an April Fool's joke.

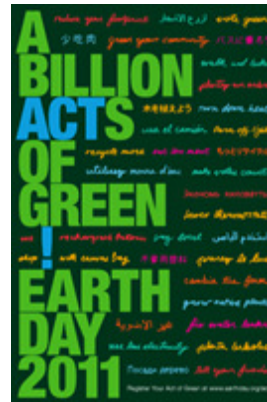
The lawmakers and protesters have all gone home but there is still much work to be done.

To learn more about the last minute budget activities and what lies ahead check out LWVNY's Capitol Beat with Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti by going to www.lwvny.org. The blog can be found by clicking the box on the upper right hand corner of the home page.



AND THE BEAT GOES ON.....

EARTH DAY 2011



In recognition of the power of millions of individual actions, Earth Day 2011 will be organized around "A Billion Acts of Green," personal, organizational and corporate pledges to live and act sustainably. At over 45 million actions to date, "A Billion Acts of Green," - the largest environmental service campaign in the world— is steadily building commitments by individuals, corporations and governments in honor of Earth Day. "A Billion Act of Green" inspires and rewards both simple individual acts and larger organizational initiatives that further the goal of measurably reducing carbon emissions and supporting sustainability. The goal is to register one billion actions in advance of the Earth Summit in Rio in 2012. "A Billion Acts of Green" website quantifies acts of green through an easy-to use online registration tool. "A Billion Acts of Green" demonstrates the kind of environmental impact that can be made when millions of people, corporations and organizations make commitments, both small and large, to better the environment.

For more information go to www.act.earthday.org.

REDISTRICTING NEWS

NYS SENATE REJECTS INDEPENDENT COMMISSION IN FAVOR OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Despite united opposition from good government groups (including the League of Women Voters) who are working to have a truly independent redistricting commission in place in time for drawing the lines in 2012, the New York State Senate passed legislation (S3331) that would propose a constitutional amendment creating a redistricting commission of non-legislators which could not be effective before 2022. The specific problems with the legislation include:

- Reforming the redistricting process through a constitutional amendment, rather than legislation, must be passed by two successively elected legislatures and then approved by the people. Therefore, it cannot be effective until the lines are drawn following the 2020 Census. The earliest the measure would appear on the ballot would be 2013.
- S3331 does not create an apportionment commission sufficiently independent of the drawing of fair and objective lines. It prohibits past or present office holders or party officials from serving as commission members but the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and Assembly directly choose four of the five members. These appointees would probably lack sufficient independence and would be beholden to their appointers.
- The criteria for drawing district lines in the Senate legislation allows for the continued drawing of unfair districts and may also result in districts that do not adequately ensure minority voting rights.
- The legislation does not provide for clear standards to foster compact districts.
- S3331 does not ensure adequate public understanding and participation in the redistricting process.

Both Governor Cuomo and the State Assembly have gone on record supporting reforming the process through an independent commission. The League of Women Voters had hoped the State Senate would do the same. We will continue our fight for an independent redistricting commission through legislative action.

To read the complete Memorandum of Opposition to the Senate Action go to www.lwvny.org.

REDISTRICTING THE ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Last November county voters approved a referendum to decrease the county legislature from 19 to 17 members. Now that the official numbers are in, the process of reapportioning the legislature will begin. Following the county charter, the commission will include the chair of the County Legislature; the two county election commissioners; an appointment by the county executive and two appointments made by the floor leaders of the Legislature. Any plan proposed by the commission must meet the approval of the full county legislature.

Although the process is a far cry from an independent process, citizens do have a chance to voice their opinion on the proposed changes on **Wednesday, April 13 at 7:00 pm at the County Court House**. Please try to attend and let your voice be heard.

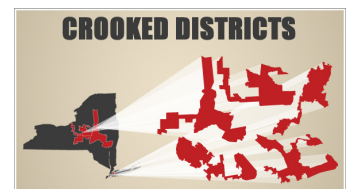
On another note, local officials were pleasantly surprised to learn that Central New York Census figures show a 1.4% increase in growth since the last decennial count in 1990.

ReShape NY

ReShapeNY, a campaign to achieve redistricting reform organized by Citizens Union, with the League and NYPIRG on the Leadership Team, was launched recently in a simultaneous announcement in Albany and New York City by its distinguished co-chairs and diverse coalition of thirty member organizations.

The campaign seeks to end partisan gerrymandering in NYS and create a fair and independent process to draw state legislative and congressional district lines in time for the 2012 elections. It is a broad-based campaign made up of 9 distinguished New Yorkers serving as co-chairs, and 30 civic issue, advocacy, business and labor organizations. The campaign will lobby legislators and engage in public education across the state to ensure redistricting reform is realized.

You can learn more at www.reshapeny.org.



NEWS AND NOTES FROM LWVNYS

Electronic Voter Guide Available to All Leagues

The State league is committed to developing a statewide electronic voter guide—and it will be offered free to all local leagues this summer. This program will enable your League to publish an in-depth customized, electronic voters guide in a number of easy steps. Training will be provided at the State Convention in May and after for those not attending Convention.

Lobby Training Day

Over 20 people attended our first Advocacy Training day on February 7th. We invited all Issue Specialists, Lobby Committee Members and Lobby Corps members to come to Albany for the day. Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, and Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy, provided training on our advocacy agenda and process and answered lots of questions about our issues, local advocacy etc. The group toured the Capitol and then attended committee meetings and watched the legislative session from the gallery.

New Way to Buy Merchandise, Donate or Join LWVNYS

The League is pleased to announce new pages on the website to donate to the League or Education Foundation, to join the League and to view and purchase merchandise from the LWVNYS. Take a look at our t-shirts, mugs, and pins available for sale on our website. Just click on Merchandise on the left side of the homepage. You can donate or join the League from the website too!

Membership—We can do it!

As expected, membership had dropped by 50% in the past 10 years. We have only one way to go... that is UP. And it can be done. Some local Leagues will join the Membership Recruitment Initiative, a national program to assist in increasing membership. All local Leagues, however, are invited to bring their best examples of recruitment ideas and membership successes to state Convention in May to share with others. Let's learn from others and build back the strength of the League.

MAKE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

ATTEND THE PUBLIC HEARING
ON REAPPORTIONING THE
ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13TH
7:00 PM
COUNTY LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

“The Case for Redistricting Reform,” presented by LWVNY’s Laura Ladd Bierman and Barbara Bartoletti, **7:30 pm-9:00 pm, Wednesday, April 27th** at the University United Methodist Church, 1085 East Genesee Street. Enter the church from University Avenue. Parking is available on University Avenue.

The power point presentation draws on data obtained by the NY Public Interest Group (NYPIRG), the Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens Union of the City of New York and the League.

“There is a word sweeter than Mother, Home or Heaven, that word is Liberty” *

Tour & Tea at the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home, 210 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville on **Saturday, April 30th at 1:00 pm**. Parking is available on the street or at the United Church of Fayetteville. The tour is limited to 30 people. Make your reservations early. Call 448-7199 or email us- league@lwvsyr.org.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS* TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2011—6AM-9PM

To vote you must be a
U S citizen 18 years of age
and a resident of the district
for 30 days.

* *except City of Syracuse Schools*



League's Position on Funding Public Education

For those who may have missed it, the following letter was recently published in the Syracuse Post Standard:

Recently there have been a number of letters on The Readers' Page regarding Gov. Cuomo's proposed budget cuts to education (Rick Timbs of the Statewide School Finance Consortium and Susan Glisson of Parents for Public Schools among others). One of the major concerns expressed was for the inequitable distribution of state aid to school districts throughout the state. The state aid formula does not narrow the expenditure gap between wealthy and poor school districts, nor does it take into account the fact that it costs more to educate children with special needs.

In February of this year The League of Women Voters sent written testimony to the state legislature's Ways and Means Committee and to the Senate Finance Committee in response to the governor's proposed budget for elementary and primary education. In that testimony the League reminded the legislature that for the last two years it has failed to honor its commitment under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. For the first time in state history this lawsuit attempted to align state education aid with district need in a way that recognized the cost of educating students of disparate need. It acknowledged that property and income poor districts required relatively more state assistance to fund a basic level of education. The proposed budget, however, would maintain the disparity between wealthy and poor districts.

The League also proposed that the state replace the STAR program with a need-based circuit breaker program. The current program has not staunched the increase in local taxes nor has it provided meaningful property tax relief to those most in need. By folding the STAR program into a STAR circuit breaker program, relief would be provided when real property taxes comprise a certain percentage of income. This approach would have the advantage of providing help to those most in need. Money saved by targeting relief to those in need could be used to further fund education aid.

The governor's proposal of a tax cap, while politically popular, does not get at the root causes of the tax problems New York State faces. The proposal does not adequately address either the problems of high taxes or education disparities within the state because the problems differ from one taxing entity to the other. Proponents of the 2% property tax cap point to the Massachusetts cap as proof that a cap can be adopted without decimation of a state's school system. But, Massachusetts has a system of state aid for schools that is highly targeted to poorer districts. Massachusetts is recognized for being the most successful state in the nation in educating *all* its children.

The League of Women Voters has done several studies on funding education in New York State and has developed positions that promote fairness for students and taxpayers. To read the League's positions in full please go to the state's website www.lwvny.org. To find out what the Syracuse League is about go to www.lwvsyr.org.

Why does education matter? One of the League's primary missions is to promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive to citizens. This system presupposes an educated electorate that is able to participate fully and knowledgeably in the electoral and other democratic processes. Research indicates that both the fact and level of participation increases with education.

Susan Bush, President
Syracuse League of Women Voters



Syracuse Metropolitan
League of Women Voters
PO Box 11866
Syracuse NY 13218

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

April 2011

*Our League needs support -
encourage others to join*

**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