



Utica/Rome Voter

Issue 36; March 2011

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

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



WHEN: **Saturday, March 19th, 2011**
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: **Health Care – Impact of Federal Legislation**

SPEAKER: **Panel TBD**

COST: **\$12.00 per member/\$15 per guest**
Call or email Reservations to Trudy
(trewck@roadrunner.com, 733-6244) by **Tues., Mar. 16th**

Bring a guest!

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ANNOUNCEMENT – DUES CHANGE PROPOSED

The Board of Directors is interested in changing the current schedule for dues payment, such that all dues will be collected annually on the same date for all members. Currently, the dues are collected variably for each member, dependent upon the month they joined the League. This schedule affects funds available to pay our National and State league dues, which are due at a single point each year. The proposal is to have all members paying dues by June 30th of each year. For the first year, individual dues would be prorated for members who pay dues in November through February.

Annually, our local league pays individually for each member to the National and State Leagues. This year, for example, LWV Utica Rome owed \$1529 to the National LWV and \$927 to the State LWV. This accounts for the bulk of the payments collected in local dues.

The Board is also considering a small increase in the Household dues, raising the cost from \$85 to \$90 annually. This is in accordance with the National LWV and State LWV rates, in which the Household dues are 1.5 times that of Individual Dues.

Both of these proposals will be discussed and voted upon by members at our annual meeting scheduled in May, 2011.

Longtime member of **LWV Utica/Rome Metro** area, **Verna V. Carncross**, was one of the founders of Planned Parenthood of the Mohawk Valley

The Pence Amendment meant to defund Planned Parenthood and centers like it across the country passed the House of Representatives. If it passes the Senate, low income and uninsured women will lose access to ALL gender specific health care. This is an all out attack on low-income and uninsured women who use Planned Parenthood and health care centers across the country like them for cancer screenings (*pap smears, mammography*), tests for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, sex education, etc...

REDISTRICTING REFORM: Report on Breakfast meeting, January 22, 2011



Co-presidents Donna Gillette and Carol Huxtable with NY Senator David Valesky and Assemblywoman Claudia Tenney Senator David Valesky, D-49th district, our speaker on redistricting reform, began by giving some background information on redistricting; every decennial census triggers a redrawing of lines for congressional seats, as well as Senate and Assembly districts (New York State will lose two congressional seats due to population trends.)

The current partisan method of redistricting was discussed, with LATFOR, the Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment, and its ties to the Assembly and Senate leaders. A slide of Valesky's 49th district, along with other "gerrymandered" districts, was shown. (In the past, some districts have even been drawn to "carve-out" an opponent's residence, to ensure the re-election bid of incumbents.)

The redistricting reform bill, sponsored by Valesky, creates a model for New York State, with a citizen's commission to independently draw districts. New districts would be equal in population; not

drawn to favor one party or official; and would be compact and contiguous. Senator Valesky stressed that the legislature must act now--not wait until the 2020 census. Citizen support is crucial--last session found the previous bill, S.1614B, still stuck in committee.



Independent caucusing Democrat NY State Senator David Valesky outlines his redistricting plan.

After the presentation, there was a question and answer period where guests asked about Valesky's decision to join three other Democratic senators in forming an independent coalition in protest against the leadership of the Democratic conference. Valesky stressed that the "hyper-partisan" nature of the Senate is not good for New York State's citizens, and that he wanted to change the dynamic in Albany.

On February 12, 2011, we held a follow-up meeting to view a LWVNY created PowerPoint session titled: "The Case for Redistricting Reform in New York State." We learned that the redistricting reform bills have been re-introduced in the 2011-12 session as A.3432 (sponsor: Jeffries) and S.2543 (sponsor: Gianaris). These bills have been referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations (Assembly) and the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations (Senate). League members attending this meeting then discussed ways we could lobby our legislators on these issues. Please see lwnvny.org for links to the current legislation and for background material on redistricting.

--Elizabeth Pattengill

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY – JANUARY 8, 2011

Meeting called to order at 10:17 a.m. by co-President Donna Gillette. Those present: Karen McBride, Lori Wasielewski, Nancy Agen, Trudy Kennedy, Sharen Barboza, Shirley Van Marter, Donna Gillette, Audrey Sotendahl, Carole Torok-Huxtable, Barbara Brookes
 Absent: Lisa Ostrander, Lucille Argenzia. Excused: Johanna Albrecht, Meg Pfeiffer, Liz Pattengill
 Carole announced that she has visited Johanna at the Presbyterian Home and she is making a slow but steady recovery.

MINUTES: Minutes of Dec. 4, 2010 accepted.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Audrey distributed Monthly Financial Reports for July – December. Treasurer’s Reports filed for audit.

MEMBERSHIP: No meeting since last board meeting. Proposed change in dues payment schedule: single date instead of staggered dues dates. Proposal will go into March newsletter and will be voted on at Annual Meeting. Donna supports recommendation in Membership Report for name tags to introduce new members at meetings. She will conduct a board orientation for new members.

Trudy suggested pairing a new member with an experienced board member and encouraging new members to join a committee.

VOTER SERVICES: Karen reviewed recommendations in the 2010 Election Survey Report of December 13, 2010. This report on the online voter survey conducted by the State LWV is available on the State LWV website (lwnvny.org) as well as on our local League website (lwnvuticarome.org). Karen urged all board members to read this report to learn what the State LWV’s recommendations are for improving the voting process with the new optical scan voting machines. **FIRST VOTE:** Revision has been completed and will be coming out soon. **Naturalization Ceremonies:** Dates of federal and county ceremonies are listed in newsletter. Karen will call Brenda Breen about a date for hosting one of these events. (Since this meeting, we have selected Fri., April 15 as the date for hosting.) A sign-up sheet for refreshments will be distributed at the January 22nd General Membership meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Redistricting Plans: (Liz, Lori, Carole) February hot topic meeting: Liz will choose date in early February and Carole will follow-up with Liz. Meeting will be a power point presentation on LWVNY proposals for redistricting reform. Donna offered to make copies of Speaker's Notes.

NEW BUSINESS: Program Planning: State Senator David Valesky will be our speaker on Redistricting at the General Membership meeting on January 22, 2011. For background information, find the link to the Brennan Report on our local League website.

***New Committees:** 1) By-Laws: Meg, Shirley, Karen, Mary Anthony, Audrey, Carole. By-laws need to be changed to reflect new dues payment schedule. By-laws committee will meet on Monday, January 17th at 10:00 a.m. at the New Hartford Public Library. 2) Budget: Lucille, Liz Pattengill and Audrey were suggested as members. A proposed budget for next year needs to be presented at the Annual Meeting.

***Students Inside Albany:** April 10 - 13, 2011. Donna would welcome any help with this project. She will contact new member Dawn LaGuerre and Lisa Ostrander. Packets have been sent to area high schools. Trudy will send Donna a list of guidance counselors in 8 area high schools. Youth survey has been submitted.

***Establishing 501©3 tax exempt status:** Audrey will enquire about tax exempt certification when she contacts the State LWV.

***State Board Report Items:** Goal: Increase membership by 5%. Notify State LWV of any presentations on Redistricting. Review non-partisan policy. Albany Lobby Corps: workshop on Tues., February 8th - work with Barbara Bartoletti. Donna interested in attending. 2010 Legislative Agenda: check State LWV website (lwny.org) or lwny.org/advocacy.

***National LWV Update:** Refer to Leader's Update e-mailed to board members. Health Care Reform—topic for March General Membership meeting.

OTHER CONCERNS: *Carole attended informative meeting on hydrofracking in West Winfield on January 4th. *Sharen completed and sent to State LWV a questionnaire about technology used locally. *Trudy received telephone request from the Refugee Center for classes on voting. She will find out more details. Donna volunteered to help Trudy with classes during the week. *Carole will contact Maggie Moehringer about training for "VOTE 18."

Since there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

--Barbara Brookes, Secretary

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 5, 2011

Meeting called to order at 10:10 a.m. Those present: Lori Wasielewski, Donna Gillette, Iby Chiquoine, Nancy Agen, Liz Pattengill, Sharen Barboza, Trudy Kennedy, Barbara Shuck, Shirley Van Marter, Karen McBride, Audrey Sotendahl, Carole Torok-Huxtable, Barbara Brookes. Excused: Johanna Albrecht, Lisa Ostrander, Lucille Argenzia

MINUTES: Minutes of January 8, 2011 meeting accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Audrey distributed copies of the January 2011 Financial Report. The Treasurer's Report was placed on file for audit.

BUDGET COMMITTEE: (Iby, Chair; Liz, Nancy, Audrey) will meet on Friday, Feb. 11 at 4:00 p.m. at the New Hartford Public Library. Audrey will provide records of last year's expenditures.

MEMBERSHIP: No updates.

VOTER SERVICES: Lori and Barbara plan to attend the Naturalization Ceremony on Fri., Feb. 18th at the Oneida County Office Bldg. (10th Fl.). Carole and Mona Perrotti are also interested in helping new citizens register to vote. Karen reported that First Vote revisions have been completed; the last memo from Maggie Moehringer was sent in November.

OLD BUSINESS: Redistricting Plans: (Lori, Liz and Carole) A special meeting is planned for Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011 from 11:00 to 1:00 at RCIL on Genesee St. A power point presentation from LWVNY will be viewed. Donna will take care of handouts and equipment. All attending will bring refreshments to share. Call Liz Pattengill with any questions.

NEW BUSINESS: Program Planning: General Membership Meeting on Saturday, March 19, 2011. Topic: Health Care. Possible speakers were discussed.

***Students Inside Albany:** April 10 - 12 (all expenses paid) Donna has recruited new member Dawn LaGuerre to help with this project. Students' names are due Feb. 14th. Give names of prospective high school students to Donna. Trudy has sent a list of high school guidance counselors to Donna.

***Nominating Committee:** (Barbara Shuck, Chair; Nancy Agen, JoAnn Jacobson) Carole and Barbara will join the committee as board representatives. Offices to fill: President, co-President, 1st Vice-President, Secretary and 3 or 4 Directors.

By-Laws Committee - Shirley Van Marter reported that the Committee is going to propose that annual dues shall be payable by June 30th of each year, and that all renewals taking place from now until June 30th will be \$60.00 and cover memberships through June 30, 2012. The main reason is to get everyone on the same yearly cycle. Discussion followed concerning the grace period and whether the people paying dues by June 30th whose membership does not expire until later in 2011 would get a pro-rated dues amount. It was decided to keep the dues amount at \$60.00 for all renewals. Audrey discussed the impact of annual dues to the National and State Leagues. She stated she believes the household dues should be raised to \$90.00 from the current \$85.00. Reason being that the household (HH) dues are usually one-half again more than the individual dues.

State Board Report (SBR) - Carole noted the pertinent sections of the January SBR were e-mailed to members. **LWVNY Convention** - Carole announced the convention will take place May 20-22, 2011 at The Desmond in Albany, and asked for our suggestions for workshops, etc. The Friday pre-convention workshops will again be free to members and are very worthwhile. Donna already has a regional-theme basket assembled (the one

from last year) to donate for the Silent Auction – which will be on line.
National LWV Update – Please to Trudy’s e-mails for the Leader’s Updates e-mailed to all Board Members.
Lobbying Training – Carole reminded us of the lobbying training taking place Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 7th and 8th in Albany. [We just learned that the lobbying part takes place on Monday with legislative chamber tours on Tuesday.] Some Board Members will attend.

Complimentary Gift Item – Carole showed us a sample pocket calendar with “League of Women Voters” stamped on the cover she received as a possible gift we could give to speakers, new members, etc. [We will review this perhaps for next year.]
Adjournment – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

--Barbara Brookes, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP MINUTES

Over the winter several women have become new members of our League. We are so pleased to have them join us.

Dawn LaGuerre has come from New York City where she worked in community affairs within the Bloomberg and Giuliani administrations. She has also served as an environmental advocate with Ralph Nader. Dawn is especially interested in transparency in government, redistricting and candidates nights.

Marilyn Hughes is very interested in ancestry and genealogy. At one time she was quite active in Whitestown politics. She thinks that participating in the League would be a good was to learn more about issues and local politics.

--Meg Pfeiffer, Membership Chair

SPECIAL SECTION – SPEECH TO NEW CITIZENS

GIVEN BY BOARD OF ELECTIONS REPUBLICAN COMMISSIONER, PAMELA MANDRYCK

Good morning and congratulations to each and every one of you. It is a great pleasure for us to participate in the Naturalization Ceremony here for all you this morning who have become new American citizens. We welcome you and wish you the best of peace, prosperity and good fortune.

You are now American citizens and that privilege provides you many opportunities. You can travel more freely with an American passport, you can vote, and you can even run for office. Each and every one of you has a great deal to contribute, and you have the ability to make America even better that it is currently.

Many people who have been successful and have contributed to this great nation were immigrants to this country - just like all of you in this chamber today. America has some of the best doctors, engineers, scientists and inventors who emigrated here from nations like many of those represented here this morning. Millions of new citizens work hard, start businesses, raise families, help improve their communities and lead solid and productive lives. Many have gone on to achieve great fame in a variety of careers such as former United States Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright, Max Frankel, who moved here from Germany and became the editor of the New York Times, Isaac Stern, the great violinist, who came to America from Russia or rock star Carlos Santana, who moved here from Mexico.

Being a United States citizen provides many privileges and opportunities. However, your new citizenship with its opportunity for a better life also comes with responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to exercise your right to vote. The right to vote is a fundamental right of a United States citizen. It gives you the right to participate and have a voice in our government. Voting allows you to participate in elections while also adhering to the principles of tolerance and understanding toward differing points of view; this is the philosophical basis of our system of government.

If you are a citizen who has celebrated your 18th birthday you have the right to vote in local, state, national and school elections. We don’t have to tell you that there are many places in the world where people do not have the right to vote. By voting you can ensure that your opinion is shared with community leaders, elected officials especially those individuals that represent you in all levels of government and make decisions every day on your behalf. Your One Vote increases the power of those who vote as you would.

Many times you hear people say “**why should I vote; it doesn’t really matter.**” The truth is that it does matter. One vote **can** make a big difference.

For example, in November of 2007 right here in Utica there was a tie vote in the race for an Oneida County Legislator. Another election to decide just who would ultimately have the opportunity sit in this very chamber and represent the residents of a West Utica district had to be held several months later. The people of that district did not have a county legislator to represent their interests until that special election was held the following March. ONE VOTE would have changed that outcome. Recently, a council district election in the City of Rome was tied, and the Mayor had to appoint someone to serve in that office for a year. One vote would have changed that outcome. !

One vote can also make a difference on bigger scale. For example, the 2000 Presidential election demonstrated how important one vote can be. One vote per precinct in Florida could have made a difference in the outcome. Having won the electoral votes from Florida George W. Bush won the presidency by one Electoral College vote.

Throughout history many important decisions have been made by one vote. in 1845, one vote brought Texas into the union. In 1867, one vote ratified the purchase of Alaska, and in 1876, one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency of the United States of America. In 1976 one vote in each precinct in Ohio could have elected President Gerald Ford instead of Jimmy Carter.

Voting is a way to speak your mind and let your voice be heard. Don't ever let anyone convince you that your vote isn't important. One vote can make a big difference. As we have illustrated for you, your one vote might change communities and may change lives.

When you do **not** vote you effectively cast your vote against the person or proposal you would prefer. When you do **not** vote, that vote is one less the opposition has to overcome.

Please register to vote and exercise your new right. Registering is simple and easy; we have registration forms here today that you can complete and return to us. If you need assistance or have any questions feel free to ask.

Congratulations on becoming a citizen of the United States, and welcome to America, and PLEASE, don't forget to vote!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Utica/Rome LWV Board meeting:** 10 a.m., Saturday, Mar. 5th
New Hartford Public Library, New Hartford
- General Membership Meeting:** 10 a.m., Saturday, Mar. 19th
RCIL - 1607 Genesee St., Utica
- Oneida County Board of Legislators*: Oneida Cty Off Bldg., 800 Park Ave, 10th Fl., Utica
3/16 & 4/13 @ 2:00 p.m.; 3/30 & 4/27 @ 7p.m.
- Rome Common Council: 7:00 pm, Rome City Hall; Wed. 3/9, 3/23, 4/13, & 4/27
- Utica City School District Board: 6:00p.m. Administration Building, 106 Memorial Pkwy.
Tues., 3/22 & 4/26
- Rome City School District Board**: 6:00 p.m., Wednesdays
3/16 @ Staley Upper Elem; 4/20 @ Strough MS
- Oneida County Naturalization Ceremonies: 10:30a.m., Oneida County Office Bldg, Utica
Fridays, April 15th, Sept. 23rd, & Nov. 4th
- Federal Naturalization Ceremonies: 11a.m., Alexander Pirnie Bldg, 10 Broad St. Utica
Thursdays, Mar. 24th, May 12th, June 23rd, & Dec. 1st
11a.m., Fort Stanwix, Rome - Thursday, Sept. 15th

*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.

**Congratulations to member Carol White
for her Editorial piece in the NY Times on Feb 22, 2011!**

Check it out at this web address: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/23/opinion/23wed3.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

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