

# INSIDE the New York City League

League of Women Voters of the City of New York

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Spring 2008

## 2008 ANNUAL MEETING

**DATE CHANGED TO Saturday, MAY 31st:**  
**PLACE will be WORKMEN'S CIRCLE, ROOM 103-4**

Come and join us for a fond farewell to 45 East 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, the Workmen's Circle Building which has been our home since the late 1990s. Our guest speaker will be **Jonathan Landay**, outstanding journalist (see below) and son of **Donna Landay**, leader of our Telephone Information Service group.

The meeting will begin at 10:00 am and end by 3 pm. Lunch will feature traditional specialties of the Second Avenue Deli as well as some "healthy diet" treats and some reminiscences of our years in this building. If you have a short story you'd like to tell, let us know.

9:30 am	Registration/refreshments
10:00 am	Business Meeting – Call to Order
3:00pm	Meeting ends

**Jonathan Landay** is an award-winning journalist whose particular interests are national security and intelligence. In recent years he has been singled out as one of the very few reporters who "got it right" in their reporting on Iraq. He has been featured on "Frontline" and the "Bill Moyers Journal" and he has received awards from the Senate Press Gallery and the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. Currently a national correspondent for McClatchy Newspapers, he will speak on "**The Future of Journalism and Democracy in America.**"

### Annual Meeting Registration Form

*(Only current, paid up Members may participate and vote in this annual meeting)*

***RSVP by May 15<sup>th</sup>!***

\$20.00 per person advance (for registration and lunch) / \$25 at the door

Please return with payment to:

LWVNYC, 150 Broadway, New York, NY 10038

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ # Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**48<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
**June 14 - 17, 2008 in PORTLAND, OREGON**

The convention's theme is "Reaching New Heights Together." Members who have attended National Conventions call it a great learning experience and lots of fun as well. Meeting League members from across the nation lifts one's spirits and hopes for the future. Delegate slots are available and there is budget to assist members financially. Large membership organizations are becoming hard to sustain, but most of us feel that being one helped form the character and devotion to excellence that has been the hallmark of the League of Women Voters. There will be workshops every day, briefings, caucuses, plenary sessions, exhibits, receptions, elections of national officers, and entertainment. Portland has much to offer and you might consider building this experience into a vacation out west. Be in touch with us for more info and to sign up to be a delegate. We can mail you program information.

Airfare Discounts: Northwest Airlines is pleased to offer discounted airfares for the LWVUS Convention. Go to <http://www.nwa.com> or call 1-800-328-1111 to purchase tickets.

**Proposed Program for 2008-2010** -Based on Program Planning responses, the LWVUS Board recommends retaining all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. The LWVUS Board recommends a Health Care program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed. The Board also recommends the following proposed concurrence to amend the LWVUS Principles: 'The LWVUS believes that all powers of the U.S. Government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial.'

**BRANCH MEETINGS**

*(Members are welcome to attend any branch meeting;  
please call the League office at 212-725-3541 to confirm  
time and location.)*

North Shore (Queens)

Contact: Wednesdays at 12 noon. Call for dates.

Bronx

Contact: Call for dates and times.

Riverdale

Contact: Call for dates and times.

Southeast Queens

Contact: Saturdays. Call for dates and times.

Upper West Manhattan

Contact: Call for dates and times.

**TRIBUTES**

**WISHES FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY**

**TO GLADYS HYMAN**

FROM

THE UPPER WEST MANHATTAN BRANCH

**IN MEMORY OF:**

**LENORE CHESTER**

FROM

PHYLLIS WELLS

**DAY PIERCY'S FATHER**

FROM

GLADYS KRASNER AND ALISON ALPERT

**BARBARA HEISING**

FROM

SUSANNE ELLIS

## **LETTER FROM CO-PRESIDENT TONI COFFEE**

The numbers are in and it is clear that our 2008 Annual Award Luncheon on April 10 was one of the biggest, and certainly the most profitable, we have ever held. More than 200 members of the educational, legal, business, and cultural communities of our great city joined with more than thirty League members to honor four distinguished women and at the same time they enjoyed an excellent meal and stimulating conversation in a full-to-capacity room at the Hotel Roosevelt.

It was more than just a gala fundraiser, however. It was an opportunity for us to remind old friends and inform new supporters about the work of the League and why it is important, and our four honorees contributed to that objective by paying warm tribute to the League in their acceptance remarks. It was also an opportunity for us to look at our core beliefs, the principles that underlie all the work of the League, in a new light, through the work of the women whom we chose as our honorees. Our belief in "the individual liberties established in the Constitution" has been given life by Eve Burton, general counsel at Hearst Corporation, with her long history of defense of the First Amendment. The achievements of Gail Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College, reflect our view that "every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all." In her service as New York City Commissioner of Transportation and Vice Chancellor of CUNY, Iris Weinshall embodies our belief that "efficient and economical government requires competent personnel." And basic to all of these principles is the existence of a free and open marketplace for ideas, as represented by Charlotte St. Martin, Executive Director of The Broadway League, a mainstay of theatre all around the country. It is a powerful combination and it makes everything else we do worthwhile.

## **MESSAGE FROM CO-PRESIDENT ELLIE MILLER**

1. We are moving to 150 Broadway very shortly. We expect to retain our phone numbers and hope to arrive there minus lots of papers we should not have kept in our files, drawers, boxes, etc. for so many years. At the new location we will occupy what had been the law library of a firm whose current name is Shandell, Blitz, Blitz and Ashley, LLP.
2. On page six you will find the text of National's newly adopted Consensus on Immigration. You made this possible! As I read it, national's positions are very, very close to those of the New York City LWV. Thanks to all of you who participated in this study and in the consensus process.
3. The amazing Luncheon which Toni has described gave me the pleasure of introducing League's National President, Mary G. Wilson, who was in NYC and made time to join us, as well as League's State's President, Martha Kennedy who came down from Albany area to be with us. Both enjoyed visiting with members and guests which was a positive experience for us all.
4. And please know that the Luncheon Committee whose instincts and skills are amazing and who put in enormous hours of work, deserve our our most sincere thanks. They are Robin Bahr, Gladys Krasner, Nicki Heller, Laura Altschuler, and Mary Lou Urban.

# NYC BOARD OF ELECTIONS SELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND NEW BALLOT MARKERS IN 2008

BY ADRIENNE KIVELSON

Marcus Cederqvist, the new Executive Director of the NYC Board of Elections, has had to jump right into the fray as the Board prepares to introduce at least one Automark Ballot Marking Device (BMD) into each polling place for the September Primary. BMDs enable people with physical disabilities or language difficulties to mark paper ballots at the poll site which can be counted when the polls close. Making poll sites and voting systems handicap accessible is one of the most important provisions of the the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

The new Executive Director has been very forthcoming in responding to our inquiries and meeting with the HAVA Coalition, of which we are a member, to discuss plans for introducing the BMDs, including public information, poll worker recruitment, training and placement. At our April 3rd meeting with Mr. Cederqvist, our League and other organizations made suggestions for improving the election process in this Presidential Election year.

While we had hoped that the New York City Board of Elections would be able to introduce a complete new voting system in 2009 comprised of precinct-based, paper ballot optical scanners, with ballot marking devices for those who need them, the federal court ruled that all of the State's Boards of Elections had to comply with the HAVA accessibility requirement for the 2008 Primary. To meet this requirement the State BOE expedited its long-delayed certification program and local Boards were able to select BMDs from among the State-certified equipment. The New York City Board selected the Automark ballot marker, which has been used successfully in many states and localities.

While the introduction of Ballot Marking Devices will not change the voting process for most voters, it's the first time in almost a century that any new piece of electronic equipment has arrived in a New York City polling place. Its appearance is sure to attract interest and confusion and the Board is gearing up to hire and train additional poll workers.

We are very pleased to see these ballot marking devices come to our polling places. We have long supported the right of persons with disabilities to be able to vote independently. Now we must assure that everyone else will be voting on paper ballots in 2009, all of which will be optically scanned at the poll site. As of February, when the Boards met to decide on which state-certified ballot markers to select for 2008, the only certified voting systems were optical scan systems. None of the DREs met the state requirements for certification. At that time we were confident that we would all be using paper ballots and optical scanners in 2009. However, the Election Boards limited their selections for 2008 to the ballot markers.

**The voting systems to be used in 2009 have yet to be selected. While a great deal of the allocated HAVA funds have been spent on these ballot markers which work with optical scanners, it is possible for a newly designed or redesigned DRE to emerge before the final selection process is completed. We must remain vigilant to this possibility and be ready to write letters, attend hearings and testify in favor of precinct-based, paper ballot optical scanners with ballot marking devices. We will keep you informed of what we learn on this important issue and welcome your thoughts and information.**

## **NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON IMMIGRATION**

"After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members, the LWVUS Board of Directors unanimously adopted the League's position on immigration which calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants. This 18-month study was successful thanks to the hard work of the Immigration Study Committee, led by LWVUS Board Member Carolie Mullan, and the high level of participation – 67 percent (560 Leagues). The new position provides for federal enforcement of immigration laws and full due process rights for immigrants. State and local Leagues may oppose efforts in their communities to deport, detain or harass unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity." Press release, Mary G. Wilson, April 2, 2008.

**LWVUS Immigration Position** The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S. To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations. In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

### **Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.**

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

### **Administration and Enforcement**

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

### **Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.**

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

**League of Women Voters of the City of New York**

**Co-Presidents:**

Toni Coffee Elinor Miller

<b>Officers</b>		<b>Board Members</b>	
First Vice President:	Gladys Krasner	Miriam Adelman	Adrienne Kivelson
Second Vice President:	Laura Altschuler	Robin Bahr	Donna Landay-Laden
Third Vice President:	Sheila Hosni	Barbara Barr	Mary Lou Urban
Secretary:	Jane Colvin	Beatrix Dinitz	Valerie Warner
Treasurer:	Eileen McEvoy	Helen Heller	Phyllis Wells
			Rose Yalan

**Executive Director** Alison Alpert



*Honorees and Co-Presidents at our April 2008 Luncheon*

*Left to right: Charlotte St. Martin, Toni Coffee, Eve Burton, Iris Weinshall, Elinor Miller, Gail Mellow*

*Photograph by Barbara Friesner*