



Rochester/Metro League of Women Voters

Mission Statement

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

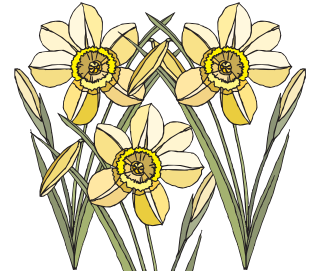
Voter education is one of the League's most important functions, and the League encourages all citizens to register and to cast an informed vote.

The League does not support political parties or candidates, but does take stands on important issues after careful study and research.

Membership in the League is open to all citizens of voting age.

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New York State Court System: The Need for Reform

League EVENING – April 12, 2007

Program begins at 5:30 pm with our Speaker
Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Evelyn Frazee

Join Us at Hawthorne's Restaurant
3500 East Avenue

Program at 5:30 pm with Buffet Dinner at 6:30 pm

Buffet Dinner: \$25.00

includes dessert, beverage, gratuity and tax

Reservations required by April 10

Call 262-3730 or 889-4763

Public Always Invited - Program Free of Charge

Join the E-Unit!

Stay in touch with the League between newsletters. Join our e-unit and be part of the notices and conversations that go on in cyberspace. About 40 of us on the e-unit are able to send messages to each other - giving notices of events, bringing items to our attention, announcing last minute meeting.

Anyone in the e-unit may send messages to the whole group. No forwarding is allowed, no attachments, just a very simple message center. Interested? Send your request to join the unit to Suzanne McNamara at shawmcm@aol.com. You will be asked to join, answer "yes" and you are in.

From Your President

by Dorothy Borgus



Spring is on the horizon. I'm happy to report that the Rochester League is "blooming" right along with the spring flowers. We have two more excellent League events coming up: April 12's League Evening on Court Reform and the final League Day in our series on May 3 dealing with

the restraints placed on business and the economy that are driving workers, college graduates and businesses from New York State. Spring also means it is time to prepare for our Annual Meeting to be held at Locust Hill on June 5. Requests for demonstrations with our wetland model are keeping the Natural Resources Committee hopping, and the Social Policy Committee has started a local study on immigration. Personal visits with area legislators are being scheduled for April when we present the League's position on legislative agenda items, and we record and report the responses from local assembly members and senators.

We are already thinking about the coming LWV-NYS Convention in Westchester from May 18-20. We would like the Rochester League to be well represented. Would you like to attend? Call the office (232-3730) for further details. Speaking of the convention, did you receive gifts for a recent

League Welcomes New Members

Welcome to our new members in 2007:

John and Julie Bernacki
Lonna Cosmano
Janice Fitzpatrick
Lauren Frank
Roxanne Kuliner
Arthur Kutz
June Lacelle
Annette Miller
Mary Sterling
Courtney Totter
Mary Wilson
Joanne VanZandt



holiday or birthday that you cannot possibly use? Do you have a favorite restaurant, store or business that would be willing to donate a gift certificate for a good cause? Why? Because these are great items for the Silent Auction to be held at the convention to benefit the LWVNYS Education Fund. Jewelry, art work, gift certificates for a weekend at a vacation house, bed & breakfast, or a hotel have been very popular donations in the past. Call the office, and we can arrange to pick up your donation...or better yet, plan to go along with us to Westchester and hand carry it!

As always, please feel free to let me know your ideas on how to continue to make the League and its impact "bloom" (*dorothyborgus@aol.com* or 889-4763).

Dorothy

Contact Your Federal Legislators

Anyone who wishes to may speak to his/her federal legislator between 8-5pm! Call 1-800-828-0498. The Capital Operator will answer your call. All you need to do is ask for any legislator's office and you will be connected.

Use the methods for speaking with your legislator we reported on in last month's VOTER! It works!

Cleaning Up Lake Ontario

Here's an easy way to help. Just **DON'T PUT LEFT-OVER PRESCRIPTION DRUGS DOWN ANY DRAIN!**

Medications usually contain hormone disrupters which harm water dwelling creatures just as they can harm us. Governmental agencies are struggling mightily to regulate this hazardous waste. However, the number of chemicals is not only huge but is also constantly changing. So, your best course of action is to put your extra drugs in their original (labelled) containers at the back of a closet, on a high shelf and wait for the regulations to appear. Ann Jones, *Natural Resources Chair*

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 5 at the Locust Hill Country Club. Great food, beautiful surroundings, good company what more could you ask? More details in May VOTER.

Report on League Day: Local Development Corporations: What are They and Why Should We Care?

Report on League Day: Local Development Corporations: What are they and why should we care?

On a cold March Day, an intrepid group of League members attended League Day for a presentation on "Local Development Corporations: What are they and why should we care?" by Kent Gardner, President of the Center for Governmental Research, and Paul Haney, Monroe County legislator.

Mr. Gardner led off with information about the New York State Law under which Local Development Corporations operate. He then discussed the current CGR study, "Local Development Corporations: Boon or Bane for Rochester?" that is being underwritten by the Bee Bibby Endowment at CGR for the League of Women Voters. The questions that the study will try to answer include:

- How many LDCs operate in the Rochester area and what do they do?
- To what extent do the LDCs conform to their original mission?
- What happens to LDCs when their purpose has been served?
- What are the pros and cons of using LDCs to carry out governmental functions?

Mr. Gardner indicated that it may be difficult to gather this information since, as private corporations, LDCs do not report to any governmental agency. Mr. Gardner promised to return to us with the final report, but does not expect that to occur in the near future.

Paul Haney spoke about some of the specific LDCs in Monroe County. He confirmed that it will be difficult for CGR to develop a list of the LDCs in the area by saying that when he asked former County attorney Chuck Turner who was appointed to oversee local public authorities by County Executive Maggie Brooks for a list of the LDCs, Mr. Haney was not surprised that there were LDCs on the list that he did not have on his own list; however, he was

surprised that he knew of LDCs that were not on Mr. Turner's list!

Mr. Haney discussed proposed county legislation for LDC reform. Mr. Gardner felt that reform on the state level would be required to be effective.



Paul Haney, Monroe County Legislator

The Local Government committee will continue to monitor the issues involving public authorities and Local Development Corporations. Please join us at our committee meetings. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 19. Contact Judy Weinstein at 442-9815 or j-weinstein@rocketmail.com for time and location. You can also contact me if you would like a more detailed report on the League Day presentations.

Judy Weinstein
Local Government Chair



OBSERVER CORPS IS GROWING

Ernest DuBois has signed on as our eyes and ears at the Rochester City School Board meetings. Thanks, Ernest. We look forward to your feedback.

Are YOU interested in monitoring a particular government body or board? We are looking for additional observers to rejuvenate what in the past has been a vital LWV function. Call the office (262-3730) to volunteer for this important job that requires minimal time and no League meetings to attend.

Join the Immigration Study Committee:

A group of local League members are forming a committee to study the Immigration Policy of the U.S. We hope to reach consensus by January 2008. We predict this will be a topic of intense interest during the 2008 Presidential Elections. We need to understand all points of view.

Call Georgia DeGregorio 585-787-9692 or email her at:

georgiatd@frontiernet.net for meeting schedule.

More on Medicaid Reform:

The Social Policy Committee met with Bill Carpenter, Monroe County Budget Director, to review the conclusions the Federal Medicaid Commission submitted to HHS in December 2006.

The Executive Summary states: "Fundamental reform is needed in order to ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Medicaid program ... Key principles that must be part of this transformation include the following:"

- Encourage individual responsibility and planning for long-term care. Changes include:
- Federal and State Tax incentives to encourage individuals to purchase long-term care insurance,
- Address what most seniors and persons with disabilities say they want: to stay at home in their communities,
- Counsel individuals in planning budgets to foster control of one's care.
- Increase state flexibility to foster continued innovation and improved program efficiency such as:
- States given authority to establish separate eligibility criteria for acute and preventive medical care services and for long-term care services with offer of premium assistance to buy-in to job-based coverage or to purchase other private insurance.
- Promote partnerships between states and beneficiaries that emphasize beneficiary rights and responsibilities and reward beneficiaries who make prudent purchasing, resource-utilization and lifestyle decisions.
- Replicate demonstrations successful for at least two years in other states, using an abbreviated waiver application process.

- Simplify Medicaid eligibility by consolidating and/or redefining eligibility categories without a waiver, provided it is cost-neutral to the federal government.
- Promote health information technology
- Use the budget scoring process by the Congress to amortize the cost of investments in technology over a period of five years.
- All Medicaid beneficiaries should have an electronic health record by 2012.
- Promote better care coordination and a "medical home" for all beneficiaries.

Georgia DiGregorio
Social Policy Chair

April League Evening: Court Restructuring



Justice should be sure and swift. In New York State it is neither.

New York State's "Unified Court System" is anything but unified. It is backward and inefficient. The League of Women Voters of New York State has long supported court re-structuring. It's back on the front burner again as a Legislative Priority for 2007 and is the subject of our League Evening on April 12 when we are pleased to have the Honorable Evelyn Frazee, Justice, New York State Supreme Court, Seventh Judicial District and a Rochester League member, speak to us about our current system, the most backward and archaic court structure in the nation.

New York State has eleven separate trial courts; by contrast, California, a state that has twice our population, has only one. Why? Antiquated provisions in our state Constitution create a confusing amalgam of trial courts: an inefficient and wasteful system that causes harm and heartache to all manner of litigants, and costs businesses, municipalities and taxpayers *in excess of half a billion dollars per year*.

Consider the testimonial of Orchid C., an immigrant from Egypt who moved to New York City with her husband in 1994. Within a few months of their arrival, Orchid's husband began to abuse her, both verbally and physically. Following a particularly brutal episode which sent her to the hospital, Orchid moved to a domestic violence shelter and sought help through the New York State court system. Her testimony that follows presents a

Court Restructuring *cont'd. from page 4*

sorry tale of all that is wrong with the present court structure.

"I had seven separate cases in three different courts before four different judges. I had custody, visitation, and cross order of protection cases in the Family Court before one judge; I had a child support case in the Family Court before a hearing examiner; I had a case against my husband in Criminal Court; and he had a case against me in Criminal Court before a different judge.

"Over the next four years, there were even more cases before even more judges. I went to Supreme Court for a divorce. I went to Civil Court in a case that my husband's brother brought against me to harass me. After I got child support, my husband refused to pay, so I had to bring three more cases against him before the hearing examiner in Family Court. Then, when the judge in Family Court finally denied my husband unsupervised visitation, his mother brought a case against me.

"In five years I had fourteen separate cases in seven different courtrooms before seven different judges. Each time I appeared before a different judge I had to tell my story over again. I can't tell you how painful it was to tell my story over and over. It made it impossible to recover from the traumatic events I had survived.

"It also made it impossible for me to get on with my life—to continue my education and find a job. In the child support case alone, I have been in court 45 times, each time for an entire day. For the custody, visitation, and order of protection cases, I've made more than 100 court appearances, usually for an entire day. Many times I tried to take courses in a community college, but each time I had to drop out because the court cases made me miss so many classes. I was fired from three different jobs because of the time I had to take off to go to court and prepare for trial."

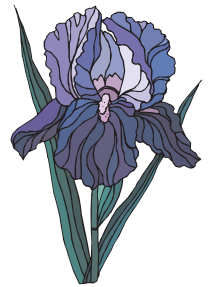
Are you shaking your head in disbelief that we consider this justice in New York State? How did this archaic system evolve, and why does it continue? Action on this issue is long overdue and has been consistently supported by Chief Judge Judith Kaye, who recently appointed the Commission on the Future of the New York State Courts. Judge Frazee has served on the 30-member Blue Ribbon Commission. Join the League on Thursday, April 12 and hear Judge Frazee report on the Commission's recommendations for re-designing New York's convoluted court system. The public is welcome. Details are on the front cover of this VOTER.

Program Planning for 2007-08

Well, program planning for next year is just getting underway. This is the time to make your wishes known. What cries out for discussion or study? What are the topics that you feel are overlooked? We have had great success with this year's six-part series on state government reform.

"Why doesn't the League DO something about that?"

What's next? It's up to you. E-mail your president at dorothyborgus@aol.com, call the office at 262-3730, or contact any Board member with your ideas and suggestions. The program will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on June 5, but it helps the Board immensely if we have your proposals to put forth for consensus vote. Please give this some serious thought and let us know.



Nominating Committee Gathers Names

The Nominating Committee is meeting to put together a slate of officers and board members for next year. Committee members are: Sula Baxter, Kera Neylan, June Glaser, and Ann Weintraub. Candidates will be elected at our Annual Meeting on June 5 and will include positions of Treasurer, Health Care Chair, Program Chair, Budget Chair, VOTER Editor, and Nominating Committee (2).

Have you been "missing in action" for a while and have the talents that we count on to lead the League and engage the community? Do you know someone who would be a perfect fit for one of these positions on the Board? When the committee comes calling, please say "YES", and join an exciting time in the Rochester League's growth.

APRIL 2007

APRIL 2007						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 VOTER Deadline	10	11	12 League Evening-Court Reform, Executive Committee	13	14
15	16	17 Natural Resources Committee	18	19 Wetlands demo., Local Government Committee	20	21
22	23 Reform NY Bus Trip-Albany	24 Social Policy Committee (tentative)	25	26 Board Meeting	27	28 
29	30					

MAY 2007

MAY 2007						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3 League Day-Healthy Business Healthy State	4 Wetlands Demonstration	5 Wetlands Demonstration
6	7 VOTER Deadline	8	9	10 Exec. Com., Naturalization Ceremonies, Local Govt. Com.	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 LWV NYS Convention White Plains, NY	19 LWV NYS Convention White Plains, NY
20 LWV NYS Convention White Plains, NY	21	22 Social Policy Com.*	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 Board Meeting		

*Tentative

Upcoming Programs 2007



May 3, League Day, Healthy Business, Healthy State?
June 5, Annual Meeting

*Board meets in the Bagel Bin Conference Room, 2600 Elmwood Avenue, at 1:45 PM on the last Thursday of each month.
 Executive Committee meets at the Town & Country Restaurant, 3205 Chili Avenue, at 9:00 AM on the 2nd Thursday of each month.
 League Days are held at 1570 East Avenue (Valley Manor) at 11:30 AM on the first Thursday of the month.
 Parking is in the rear, entrance on the east side of the building.*

League Days are open to the public.

Calendar information subject to change. For more complete information consult our website at www.lwv-rma.org, call the office at 262-3730 or email us at lwvrma@frontiernet.net

Action Update

Legislation on ethics reform listed in the February Voter has passed both the NY Assembly and Senate and is expected to be signed by the Governor. Years of lobbying on these issues has finally paid off. Be sure to thank your local representatives for their positive vote.

Pending issues this month are equity in school finance and accessible health care. Again, action by our elected officials is expected this year. Refer to "Legislative Agenda 2007 mailed to you last month and call your Senator and Assembly Member stating the League's position. Katherine Smith, Dorothy Borgus and LWVRMA members will visit the Monroe County delegation this month. Please call Katherine at 334-3991 if you would like to join us.

Katherine Smith
V.P. Action

Help! Our Funding Has Been Taken Away!

The Rochester League has lost its grant funding for the printing of **Who Represents You**, the League's directory of elected officials. The Gannett Foundation has switched the focus of their funding to social services. We are actively seeking other sources of funds to cover the printing expense of the 5,000 copies that we distribute free each year. We would appreciate any ideas that members (or non-members) may have for alternate funding. Do you know of a

Join the League Today!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Check Amount: _____

Level of Membership: _____

Yes! I would like to get The VOTER in my E-Mail!

Please send this form and your check payable to League of Women Voters/RMA to:
LWV/RMA, Times Square Building,
45 Exchange Street, Suite 508,
Rochester, New York 14614

company, organization or grant source we might tap into? We'll follow up-just give us a lead! Please send ideas to Barbara Hendry (546-7723 or bhendry@rochester.rr.com).

The League especially appreciates Jane Tuttle arranging for a contribution from the Nurse Practitioner Association, Greater Rochester Chapter, in helping to defray our costs. Thanks to Jane and her fellow Nurse Practitioners.

Members in the News!!

Congratulations to our League Members in the news:

★ Germaine Knapp, Executive Director of Sojourner House, has been chosen to receive the Hannah G. Solomon Award by the National Council of Jewish Women.

★ Patricia Malgieri, Rochester Deputy Mayor, has been named the 2007 recipient of the Athena Award, the region's most prestigious honor for professional women.

★ Gaynelle Wethers, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Nazareth College, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of the Genesee Valley.

Our heartiest congratulations to these outstanding women who dedicate so much time and energy to community causes.



These honorees are ones we are aware of. If you personally know of other League members being honored, please advise the office so that we can acknowledge them in future VOTERS.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate.	\$70
Household.	\$100
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200
Student (full-time/under 25)	\$25
Low income, call office	Sliding Scale



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League of Women Voters**

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Monday and Wednesday

Officers

Dorothy Borgus <i>President</i>	Sula Baxter <i>Treasurer</i>	Ann Weintraub <i>Secretary</i>
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Board of Directors

Sally J. Brown <i>V.P. Membership</i>	Katherine Smith <i>V.P. Action</i>
Georgia DeGregorio <i>Social Policy</i>	Judith Weinstein <i>Local Government</i>
Barbara Hendry <i>V.P. Voter Service</i>	Gaynelle Wethers <i>Budget</i>
Ann Jones <i>Natural Resources</i>	Rose Mary Zaffrann <i>Public Relations</i>
Nancy Kleintop <i>V.P. Development</i>	

**Deadline for
MAY VOTER
is April 9th!**

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

- To encourage informed citizen’s participation in government and politics
- To influence public policy through education and advocacy

“A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.”

Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826)