

The Leaguer

Volume 12, Issue 1
January 2008

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

www.lwvchautauqua.org 672-4275



Record Keeping:

Taming the Paper Dragon

Wednesday, February 6th at Noon

Friendly's Restaurant in Jamestown

Resolutions for the new year often include goals to simplify life and eliminate clutter. Job changes, buying a house, caring for a loved one, a death in the family or planning for retirement can create a paper overload or send you into a lost document tail-spin!

Learn a system and tips to help organize the key aspects of your financial and "paper" life. This is one of the most important gifts you can give yourself and your family.

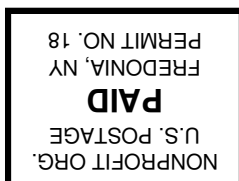
*Know **WHAT** to keep and **WHY**, **HOW** to keep it, **WHERE** to store it, **WHEN** to purge it and last but not least, **WHO** who needs to know about it!*

Presented by League Member Cindy Peterson

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



LWV Chautauqua County
42 Rosalyn Court
Fredonia, NY 14063



www.sunlightny.com

Project Sunlight is an effort by the state attorney general's office to promote our right to know and to monitor governmental decision-making. This website - the first of its kind in New York - allows easy access to statewide government information that until now has been scattered and difficult to retrieve.

This is the first phase of this project: collecting and standardizing different data and making it available on a comprehensive, easy-to-search website. During this initial phase, we have the ability to search the Project Sunlight website to examine information related to campaign finance, legislation, lobbying activity, and recipients of state government contracts.

The goal is to promote disclosure as well as increase government's transparency and accountability. As James Madison, the Founding Father of the Bill of Rights observed, "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

Please check it over and give comments or suggestions, and any requests for additional information you would like to see made publicly available. The website team will incorporate your ideas into a more robust version in 2008.

Record Keeping: Taming the Paper Dragon

February 6 at Noon at Friendly's Restaurant

10 S. Main Street in Jamestown

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CONTACT INFO: PHONE _____ **EMAIL** _____

Turkey Club Supermelt _____ **Chicken Caesar Wrap** _____ **Oriental Chicken Salad** _____

Soup & Salad Combo _____ **Turkey Burger** _____ **Chicken Caesar** _____

\$12 / person includes beverage, tax, and tip.

Return reservation by February 3 please.

Send to Marcia Merrins, 42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia, NY 14063 672-4275

Need to carpool, call Marcia at 672-4275



Marcia's Memos Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda...

The words of people unwilling to risk. "I coulda been a contender, I coulda had class and been somebody." Marlon Brando, in his role as Terry Mallon in *On The Waterfront* - 1954.

pipedreams. You will never win the lottery.

Opportunity. Recognizing it. Seizing it. And taking advantage of it. Meet someone. Ask them to join!

Risk tolerance determines outcomes. If you perceive asking will risk the friendship, you'll pass. If you wanna achieve, you gotta risk.

Intention. Intentions PRECEDE actions. If you don't intend to, you won't achieve, even if you want to. What are your intentions?

Persistence. The sister of dedication, it's the stick-to-itiveness that pushes you to achievement. Ask her to join again!

Serendipity. Serendipity is that moment when chance and opportunity collide. And it's at that moment when you are challenged to grasp it.

This is the time of year we set goals. When I have my League hat on, I dream of what the League could accomplish in one year with more members and active members.

We are a membership organization. To remain viable and strong we need to grow. This is my goal and I hope you will help me. How can we do it together?

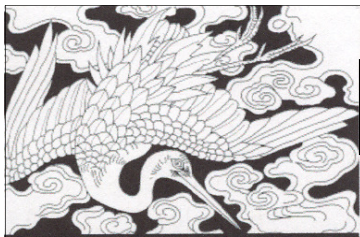
Love what you do. Love breeds passion. Passion breeds action. Action breeds achievement. Be passionate about the League. It is the most respected organization in America!

Here are the elements that I believe define and comprise the dream, goal, and achievement process:

Dreaming and daydreaming. Thoughts make (let) your mind wander to desire, possibility, and "what if." I love to daydream. Don't confuse daydreams with

Let 2008 be the year we break our membership record! I know we can do it!

Have a healthy, peaceful New Year!



Laura Mitchell-Woolson, L.Ac.
Classical Five Element
Acupuncturist



One Park Place, Suite 207
Fredonia, NY 14063
(716) 672-9674
www.5blessings.com
fiveblessings@mac.com

LWV IMMIGRATION STUDY INFORMATION AND CONSENSUS

We will be discussing this issue at our **January 19th** Meeting at Judy Reynolds' home. Please look at background material on the immigration study at <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Template=/Search/SearchDisplay.cfm> I will be supplying the questions and background material at this meeting as well. We will be submitting our responses after this meeting.

June 13 – 17, 2008
LWVUS
National Convention
Portland, Oregon
Are you interested?

In Memoriam....

We mourn the passing of Christine M. Strada, an active League leader for many years on December 19, 2007.
We will miss her.

A New Task for Voter Service (Si, como no!)

The Chautauqua County Board of Elections has turned to the League’s Voter Service Committee for help with a serious problem of cross-cultural miscommunication. It seems that in the November elections in Dunkirk, a number of Hispanic voters, who had been urged by their ministers and others to vote, and who thought they were registered, were told at their polling places that they were not on the rolls. The voters didn’t understand how that could be, and the election inspectors didn’t understand how to speak with the voters: everyone was upset. The Hispanic voters felt they had been treated rudely and the inspectors felt they had been threatened.

As it turns out, many of those voters were indeed registered, and ended up voting by affidavit (paper) ballot, but only after they had spoken with outside people who could explain their rights. Probably some of the voters had moved without notifying the Board of Elections, so they were in the wrong polling place. Then again, the inspectors may not have caught the names of some voters correctly (or have known how to spell them). In any case, this is a situation the Board is eager to avoid in future, so it has asked the League, as a neutral party, to develop a segment of the inspector-training program to address these problems. Since every inspector must attend a training program every year in order to serve, every inspector will at least be alerted to communication difficulties and ways of overcoming them.

At the same time, the Voter Service Committee will be working through Hispanic churches and ministries in Dunkirk and with the NAACP to develop programs to explain the voting process in detail for Hispanic and first-time voters. A big meeting is tentatively planned for October, at which time Voter Service hopes to be able to demonstrate the new voting machine, if any, and to walk people through the procedures from the time one enters a polling place until one leaves. The Committee will also develop a set of explanations in Spanish to be posted in every polling place (the Board of Elections has promised to print and distribute them), and possibly a set of questions in English and Spanish for the inspectors. The League has been working for years to promote the participation of minority citizens--of all citizens--in government, so this initiative is only a new chapter in an old story, and one the Committee is eager to write.

“US Department of Justice Enters Motion To Enforce NYS Compliance with the Help America Vote Act in the Federal District Court for the Northern District of NY”

On November 5, the DOJ filed a Motion with the Court to require that New York must replace all lever voting machines by September 2008 (first federal election) and must expand ballot marking devices (BMDs) for the presidential primary in February 2008. The crux of their argument is that New York must comply with the federal law, has already received one extension of the 2006 deadline and further, that while New York may impose higher standards for state elections, it has no right to impose higher standards for voting machines than are called for under the HAVA statute. The state cannot continue to operate federal elections utilizing voting systems which do not meet the requirements of the federal statute (accessibility, auditability). The Court set a date of December 6 for the arguments but on application of the defendants, agreed to one postponement to December 20. All responses to the Motion had to be filed by December 14.

Advocates (NYVV, NYPIRG, LWVNYS) issued a press release deploring the position of the Justice Department on the grounds that the

HAVA Update

safeguards written in the NYS HAVA implementation statute would be endangered by the imposition of a 2008 deadline and would risk electoral chaos in a presidential election year. The NYS Attorney General will present the position of the state in the Court and the NYS Board of Elections will represent its various positions since each co-executive director is named as a defendant.

The DOJ motion stated that the county election commissioners would be granted *Amicus* (“friend of the court”) status to respond also.

The League, New Yorkers for Verified Voting, and NYPIRG decided to seek pro bono counsel to present our case as *Amici Curiae* (“friends of the court”) before the Judge also. We were successful in obtaining Geri Krauss, esq., of Westchester County and NYC, who developed the arguments of our case in a very succinct and understandable brief (see the LWVNYS website) premised on 1) DREs are a failed technology which do not meet statutory or constitutional requirements ensuring that each vote will be properly counted and should not (therefore) be part of any remedial plan, and 2) to require HAVA compliance by the 2008 presidential election would impair the

very rights HAVA is trying to protect: compliance should phased in and continued use of lever machines permitted until 2009. The Court accepted the application of several *Amicus* briefs on behalf of other organizations and affected parties. The League was also joined in the *Amicus* by Citizen Action.

It is expected that the Court will act expeditiously, but the Judge has the option of appointing a Special Master to oversee the remedial action he proposes. Such a solution could prolong the resolution.

The NYS Board of Elections will be re-starting the interrupted certification process in January with a new independent testing authority, *Systest*. They were awarded the state contract in late November and will start simultaneous testing of both DREs and optical scanners with ballot markers. Under the best case scenario, testing will be completed in early spring. Sequoia has acquired the rights to market a new scanner which has been used in Canada and is determined to be more accessible. It is a single unit which produces its own paper ballot, as opposed to the Automark device which is a separate unit to be used with an optical scanner.

-Aimee Allaud LWVNYS Election Specialist

TAKE ACTION

We Must Restore Civil Liberties

Earlier this year, Congress gave sweeping new surveillance powers to the Executive Branch, including widespread warrantless wiretapping of American citizens, in the so-called Protect America Act.

Now, the Senate is poised to reconsider the Protect America Act. We must make sure that this legislation reinstates protections for civil liberties and reestablishes checks and balances in government. We need you to contact your Senators to insist that they vote to repeal the Protect America Act and to limit the ability of government agencies to obtain information about American citizens without the appropriate judicial constraints.

Take action today to protect Americans against government spying programs!

The Protect America Act was rushed through Congress earlier this year with little public debate. It is critical that the Senate pass legislation that reinstates needed checks and balances. This legislation must ensure that government agencies obtain individual warrants before wiretapping the communications of American citizens and not provide retroactive immunity to telecommunications companies that have provided government agencies with information on their customer's records.

Send a message to your Senators to urge them to vote to repeal the Protect America Act.

TAKE ACTION

1. Contact your Senators now, by phone or by email, and tell them to repeal the Protect America Act. Tell them that widespread warrantless wiretapping of Americans is unacceptable in a democracy and any legislation to reform the Protect America Act must clearly state that the government must obtain an individual warrant when it wiretaps the communications of American citizens. Tell your Senators that Congress must also guard against providing retroactive immunity to

telecommunications companies that have provided government agencies with information on their customer's records.

2. Send this alert to other concerned citizens in your state - your grassroots network, your friends and coworkers. Encourage them to contact their Senators today!

Sign up to receive Action Alerts directly by email. Don't miss an opportunity to take action! It's easy to sign up and the League will never share your email with others: <http://takeaction.lwv.org/lwv/mlm/signup/>.

PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING BILL



The League of Women Voters praised the introduction of the bipartisan Presidential Funding Act of 2007 by Senators Russ Feingold (D WI) and Susan Collins (R ME) and Representatives Chris Shays (R CT) and David Pryce (D NC). The legislation would revive the federal election process and level the playing field for all candidates.

All signs point to the 2008 election being the first billion-dollar presidential election in our nation's history. That is a new record that many of us will not be celebrating. This is a make-or-break year for the presidential public financing system in this country. This legislation is an essential step toward leveling the playing field and revitalizing our elections. For the past thirty years, every president has been elected based on a publicly-financed general election. The next president should come into office on the strength of public funds, not private donations primarily from wealthy donors and special interest bundlers.

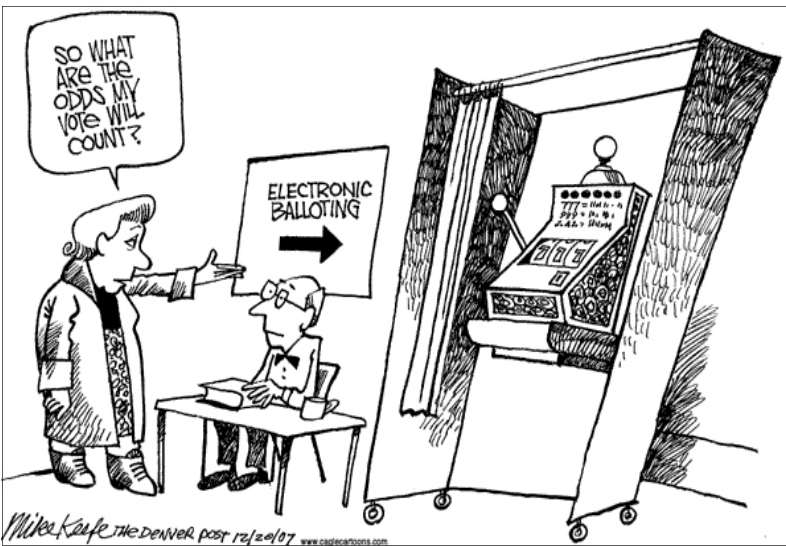
Americans deserve a fair and healthy election system – one in which candidates are more concerned with the issues than their daily fundraising reports.

Redistricting Reform

On November 29, the Campaign Legal Center, the LWVUS and the Council for Excellence in Government named Pam Pryor project director for Americans for Redistricting Reform. Pryor has more than 25 years of experience in government affairs, public relations and communications. The project is scheduled to launch officially in early 2008 and has been guided by a broad coalition of organizations. With initial funding provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the new initiative's goal is to build public support and be a resource for state-level redistricting reform efforts throughout the country.

Redistricting reform is an issue that goes to the heart of our democratic system of government. Representative democracy depends on the voters freely choosing their elected officials. When, instead, officials choose their voters, our system cannot work for long.

The problems with unfair and partisan gerrymandering are as old as the Republic. But today, with the advent of modern computers and intensifying partisanship, it is possible to create legislative districts where the results of an election will be known before any votes are cast or tabulated. This is just what is happening across the nation. And it threatens our democracy.



LWVNYS

Legislative Priorities for 2008

Promoting Good Government and Accountability

- Redistricting
- Campaign finance reform
- Legislative reforms
- Election laws and procedures
- Voting technology
- Judicial Reform

Cost Effective and Accessible Health Care

Energy and the Environment

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Faster energy efficiency
- Encourage renewable energy
- Protection of ground water
- Smart growth and transportation

Gloria Steinem to Visit Albany

NYS Pay Equity Coalition, of which LWVNYS is a primary member, is planning a series of exciting events - a legislative event, a luncheon fundraiser, a press event, and a town hall meeting - on **April 2, 2008**

when Gloria Steinem comes to Albany to bring attention to pay equity.

- legislative event
- a luncheon fundraiser
- a press event
- and a town hall meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Dates to Remember

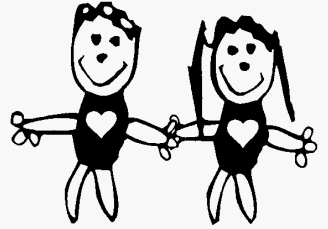
JANUARY 19	Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m. Judy Reynolds, 305 Chestnut St., Fredonia, 672-4283
FEBRUARY 6	“What to Keep? What to Get Rid Of?”, Cindy Peterson, Speaker at Noon Friendly’s Restaurant in Jamestown. Reservations, Marcia Merrins, 42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia 14063 672-4275 Deadline February 31.
FEBRUARY 23	Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m. Nancy Bleck 38 Elm Street, Fredonia 672-7363
MARCH 8	“The Erosion of Women’s Rights” –Joint Meeting with AAUW-Dunkirk-Fredonia 10 a.m. JCC North, Continental Breakfast. Honorable Judge Judith Claire, Speaker. Call Marti Burdick for more info. 672-5546 or martiburdick@netsync.net
MARCH 15	Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m. Trudy Wojcik 346 Temple 673-1723
APRIL 9	“Ethanol Biofuel: Pros and Cons”
APRIL 26	Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m. Gen Ludemann 129 Lambert Avenue Fredonia, 672-4771

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Chautauqua County Association for the Education of Young Children



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Carolyn Kieber Grady, RYT
Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 p.m.
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Donation: \$4.00 *****For ages 50+

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Karen & Roy Harvey
The most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed – Steven Biko

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY



The League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

**Make Your Voice Heard
Join Us Today!**

League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County
Officers
President: Marcia A. Marrins
1st Vice President: Minda Rae Amiran
2nd Vice President: Nancy Bleck
3rd Vice President: Tillie Solomonson
Secretary: Claudia Ansell
Treasurer: Priscilla Bernatz
Directors: Gloria Garretson, Gen Lude- mann, Judy Parks, Judy Reynolds, Grace Perez de la Garza, Trudy Wojcik
Newsletter Editor: Carol Daniels

**2008-2009 Membership
LWV Chautauqua**

Nancy Bleck, 38 Elm Street, Fredonia, NY 14063

Membership Dues: to December 31, 2008
Individual: \$60; Family: \$90; Student: \$25
(Check payable to LWV Chautauqua County)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

I would like to work on:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Voter Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State/National Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call me to discuss what I can do | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I cannot be active at this time, but I want to support LWV goals with my membership. | |

Be Sure Renew By January 20th!