



The Leaguer

Volume 13, Issue 3
October, 2008

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

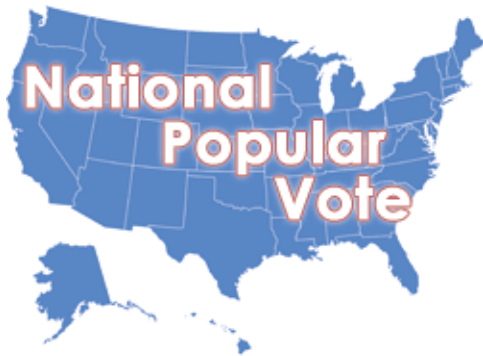
www.lwvchautauqua.org 672-4275

'The National Popular Vote Compact Among States and the Electoral College'

November 18 at Noon

at the Fireside Manor

Reservations Marti Burdick 672-5546



SUNY Fredonia Prof. David Rankin will be our speaker.

How the Electoral College Works:

The Electoral College is a process established by the founding fathers as a compromise between election of the president by Congress and election by popular vote. The people of the United States vote for the electors who vote for the President.

Each State is allocated a number of electors equal to the number of its U.S. Senators (always 2) plus the number of its U.S. Representatives based, in turn upon the number of people in the state, which is determined by the Federal census.

The process for selecting electors varies throughout the United States. Generally, the political parties nominate electors at their State party conventions or by a vote of the party's central committee in each State. Electors are often selected to recognize their service and dedication to their political party. The voters in each State choose the electors on the day of the general election. The electors' names may or may not appear on the ballot below the name of the candidates running for President, depending on the procedure in each State.

Continued on page 2

Inside This Issue

NPV Compact	2
Com. Presidential Debates	2
-An Eye Opener!	
Marcia's Memo	3
Welcome to New Members	3
Tire Burning	4
Luncheon Reservation Form	5
Community Voting	5
Plastic Bags	6
News from Your State League	6
Debate watching	6
Calendar	7
Membership Renewal Form	8



LWV Chautauqua County
42 Rosalyn Court
Fredonia, NY 14063

Continued from page 1

There is no Constitutional provision or Federal law that requires electors to vote according to the results of the popular vote in their States nor does the Constitution require that electors be completely free to act as they choose. Some States, although New York is not one of them, require electors to cast their votes according to the popular vote. Some State laws provide that so-called "faithless electors" may be subject to fines or may be disqualified for casting an invalid vote and be replaced by a substitute elector. It is rare for electors to disregard the popular vote by casting their electoral vote for someone other than their party's candidate. Historically, more than 99 percent of electors have voted as pledged.

48 out of the 50 States award electoral votes on a winner-takes-all basis (as does DC). For example, all 55 of California's electoral votes go to the winner of that State election, even if the margin of victory is only 50.1 percent to 49.9 percent. As a result, the winner of the nation-wide popular vote is not necessarily the winner of the election.

If no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, there is a complicated process by which Congress selects the President and Vice President.

The Effect of the Electoral College

There are three areas in which the practical effect of the Electoral College has been found to be objectionable. First, a person who has not received the majority of votes of the citizens of this country can be elected President and, this indeed happened in 2000. Secondly, it is thought that the Electoral College system can discourage voter turnout if a voter feels that his choice will not win the popular vote in his state. Thirdly, there is a great deal of evidence that the Electoral College system has created an election process in which the candidates only campaign in the "battleground" states which are not traditionally associated with one party or another. A recent analysis concluded that 31 of the fifty states have already been "written off", leaving 19 states as

"battleground" states Under the "winner take all" plan, candidates have no reason to poll, visit, advertise, organize campaign or worry about the concerns of voters of states that they cannot possibly win or lose. This means that voters in two thirds of the states are effectively disenfranchised. For example, neither party is likely to send its candidate to campaign in either New York or California because those states will likely vote for Democrats in the 2008 election. Thus, voters in two of the most populous states are, for all intents and purposes, irrelevant in the Presidential election. (Of course, the candidates will make many trips to these states to raise money, but not to campaign).

The Proposed Solution-The National Popular Vote

The National Popular Vote (NPV) legislation provides that the electors of each state which has enacted the law will be voted for the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidate who wins the majority of votes nationally.

How it Would Work The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee that the presidential candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states wins the Presidency. The presidential electors would exercise their votes in a manner that reflects the voters' nationwide choice.

The manner of conducting presidential elections is covered in Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution.

"Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors...." (emphasis added).

The constitutional wording "as the Legislature thereof may direct" contains no restrictions. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly characterized the authority of the states over the manner of awarding their electoral votes as "plenary" and "exclusive." In short, there is nothing in the U.S. Constitution that needs to be changed in order to implement nationwide popular vote of the President. This change can be accomplished in the same manner as the current system was origi-

nally adopted—namely the states using their exclusive and plenary power to decide the manner of awarding their electoral votes.

Under the state legislation proposed by National Popular Vote, the popular vote counts from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together to obtain a national grand total for each presidential candidate. Then, state election officials in all states participating in the plan would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Commission on Presidential Debates

Much of the money that finances the presidential debates that are hosted by the Commission on Presidential Debates comes from private corporations that have regulatory interests before Congress. Anheuser-Busch has spent the most money of any company in the United States on presidential debates, which is partly why every four years we get a debate in St. Louis, and we don't have a debate this year in New Orleans. A consequence of corporate sponsorship is that the corporations are able to give a contribution this way to both parties. Corporations can't give direct contributions to the candidates. Well, the Commission provides an end-run around. When a corporation gives money to the Commission on Presidential Debates, it knows it is giving money to both the Republican and Democratic parties, supporting their duopoly over our political process and excluding third party voices that may be hostile to corporate power. And all four third party candidates that are on ballots this year are sharply critical of growing corporate power.

Who are the co-chairs of the Commission? Frankahrenkopf and Paul Kirk. They have run this presidential debate process for twenty years. They first incorporated in 1988. At the time, they were the heads of the Republican and Democratic parties. And they still run our presidential debates.

continued on page 3



Dear League Members,

Congratulations to Maggie Irwin, B. Delores Thompson and many other members and friends of the League and AAUW who registered 103 voters and 2 Pa. voters! A great job, well done! We also have been contacted by Headstart to reach out to Headstart parents to register and impress upon them the value of voting. Carol and I registered 10 new voters on October 8th at Holy Trinity Headstart.

Be sure to read the letter sent to our elected officials about the environmental threat from the construction of a tire burning plant in Erie, PA. Wonder what you can do to help the environment? Learn more about the ubiquitous plastic bag. See page 6.

The state League is sponsoring a briefing at the United Nations on December 2, 2008. The topic will be the **Effect of Global Warming on Women and Children Around the World**. The schedule for the day will include a Tour of the UN and lunch at the Delegates Dining Room in addition to the presentation. Basic fee for briefing is \$55. Package with lunch and tour: \$100.. What a great way to learn about this topic as well get in some early Christmas shopping and see the tree lighting at Rockefeller Center on December 3rd! Judy Reynolds and I had a great time last year!

When candidates forums comes together, the finished event looks like it was easy. But there is a lot involved in scheduling events. First you work hard to locate a suitable venue, then you send the invitations, then you hear that the candidates can't (or won't) attend on that particular date or worse yet, accept and then cancel as Cathy Young did for October 29th. Then you see if you can find a different date that will be acceptable to either party, and see if you can get the same or another venue for the new date. Then finally you may have to cancel all the advance publicity that you put out there if you cannot pull it off. Thanks to all the Voters' Service committee members and chairs for the events we've done and those still to come (see the page7). Be sure to attend. There is nothing like comparing the candidates when they are on the same platform with their opponent(s).

You need to thank all the board members for giving up their right to be active and visible political campaigners. In order to preserve the nonpartisan reputation of the League, board members promise not to do things that would make it look like they (and by extension, the League) were supporting one candidate or party over another – **while they are on the board**. This is a big sacrifice for most of us. We tend to be political junkies, and would ordinarily speak out on the candidates. However, I want to point out that the **League encourages non-board members to be politically active and as partisan as they desire**.

Save the Date!

December 11 at 7 p.m. Pencil it in.



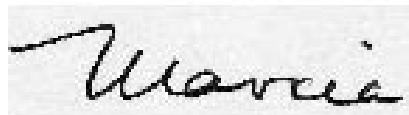
Cookie Exchange



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



Please Welcome Our Newest Members!

Kathy Reed

155 Point Drive North
Dunkirk, NY 14048
366-3933
kareed@verizon.net

Judith Singer

22 Maple Avenue
Fredonia, NY 14063
judysinger22@gmail.com

Rose Marie & Martin Sanden

4550 West Lake Road
Dunkirk, NY 14048
366-9242
rosiesan@yahoo.com

Continued from page 2

It shouldn't be surprising that they are willing to sacrifice the integrity of the political process to serve partisan or private interest, because they're registered lobbyists. Paul Kirk has lobbied on behalf of the pharmaceutical industry. And Frank Fahrenkopf is the nation's leading gambling lobbyist; he is the president of the American Gaming Association. They are deciding who gets to participate in the most important political forums in the United States of America.

http://www.democracynow.org/2008/10/2/no_debate_how_the_republican_and

TIRE BURNING

LETTER SENT TO OUR ELECTED STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS:

The Chautauqua County Board of Health would like to call your attention to a serious matter that may threaten the health of our county residents and will negatively affect Lake Erie and its watershed. Erie Renewable Energy, LLC is proposing to construct and operate a tire-to-energy plant approximately 13 miles from the New York State/Chautauqua County border in Erie, Pennsylvania. The facility will shred and burn about 900 tons of waste tires per day to produce electrical power. This process will emit an estimated 1500 tons of air pollutants per year. Due to the prevailing west to east wind pattern, these pollutants would travel directly through Chautauqua County.



The major pollutants emitted from this plant include particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, volatile compounds, carbon monoxide, and lead. All of these pollutants are on the EPA's list of criteria air pollutants as known to cause adverse health and environmental effects.

This plant will directly emit an estimated 230 tons of particulate matter per year which includes fine solids and liquid droplets. Many of the other pollutants emitted will also cause countless fine particles and liquid droplets to be formed in the atmosphere. These solid and liquid particles pose significant health risks for all but are especially dangerous for the elderly, individuals with preexisting heart or lung disease, children and those with asthma.

The nitrogen oxides and volatile compounds in the plant's emissions will also combine in the presence of sunlight and oxygen to form ground level ozone. Up to 1,000 pounds per day of ground level ozone could be produced per day from the estimated 354 tons of nitrogen oxides the plant is estimated to produce per year.

These pollutants and ozone cause significant adverse health effects and consequently, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) issues air quality and ozone warnings. Currently, the air quality index for Chautauqua County is frequently rated as moderate to unhealthy due to particulate matter in the air and this triggers many air quality and ozone warnings. These warnings would most certainly increase in frequency and severity if this plant was operational.

Erie Renewable Energy's application to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection does not address potential impacts on Lake Erie and its watershed. Critical aspects such as type of effluent that will be pumped into the lake, amount of water that will be taken from the lake, and the effects of thermal pollution are not discussed.

The company estimates that the plant's cooling towers will lose about 1 million gallons per day of water due to evaporation; this is a loss of a critical resource for Chautauqua County. Lake Erie provides drinking water and water for irrigation as well as recreation.

The ozone created from the tire to energy plant's emissions could also cause considerable environmental and economic concerns for Chautauqua County considering the potential detrimental effects on the grape and tourism industries.

The Chautauqua County Board of Health is concerned that the construction and operation of this plant in Erie, Pennsylvania will have significant negative repercussions for Chautauqua County. These include exposing our citizens to pollutants that have been linked to significant health risks, decreasing the yield of crops-notably grapes, contaminating the Lake Erie water supply, and limiting the quantity of Lake Erie water which is available to treat for drinking water.

As a representative of the residents of Chautauqua County, we implore you to ensure that Erie Renewable Energy, LLC complies with all Federal and State regulations and communicates with the Chautauqua County Board of Health. Also, please help voice our concern for the health of the residents of this county at the state level.

Thank you,

Daniel Glotzer, MD, President Chautauqua County Board of Health

The Community Prepares to Vote

“Why isn’t my name in the book? I want to vote on the machine!” insisted “voter” Janice Slaton as election inspectors checked their lists in a skit that had its audience of over fifty people laughing out loud on Thursday evening, September 18, at the Clarion Hotel. The skit was part of an election preview, hosted by the League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County, the Dunkirk/Fredonia NAACP, and COPC, the SUNY Fredonia/Dunkirk community outreach project.

The proceedings were opened by Loretta Slaton Torrain, President of the Dunkirk/Fredonia NAACP, after members of various communities in Dunkirk gathered for conversation and refreshments. There followed a lively question-and-answer session about voting, after which the skit illustrated some of the issues that had just been discussed. Information on voting procedures and on candidates whose names will be on the ballot in Dunkirk was available in English and Spanish, and a number of people were registered to vote. Quite a few took the opportunity to practice on the voting machine that will be used on November 4, and others gathered to inspect the optical scanner that will be put in general use in 2009. The evening concluded with a door-prize raffle and a few remarks by Minda Rae Amiran of the Chautauqua County LWV, who urged citizens to vote in November.

The following people were important in arranging the event and in making it successful. Election Commissioners Norman Green and Terry Niebel supplied the voting machines. Indoallona Quinones of COPC translated informational materials into Spanish and produced flyers in both languages. Election Inspectors Carmen Cortes, Margaret Larson, Genevieve Ludemann, and Idalia Torres variously helped register voters and answer questions, and also acted in the skit, as did Judy Parks. Lillian Divine volunteered to answer questions about the new voting machine. Members of all three sponsoring organizations worked tirelessly to prepare the evening’s activities, which were designed to complement the League’s segment of the Dunkirk inspector training program aimed at improving communication between voters and inspectors in the polling place.

 <p>VOTE411.ORG ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED</p>	<p>ARE YOU REGISTERED? VOTERLOOKUP.ELECTIONS.STATE.NY.US</p>
 <p>FACTCHECK.ORG ANNENBERG POLITICAL FACT CHECK http://www.FactCheck.org</p>	

RESERVATION FORM

NOVEMBER 18TH LUNCHEON MEETING

“The National Popular Vote Compact Among States and the Electoral College” Noon at the Fireside Manor

Reservations Marti Burdick, 5206 West Lake Road, Dunkirk, NY 14048 672-5546

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

\$11 INCLUDES BEVERAGE, TAX AND TIP

Roast beef on Weck (with French Fries) _____ Tuna Salad Croissant (with Fresh Fruit) _____

Chicken Caesar Salad _____

The Danger of Plastic Bags

Data released by the United States Environmental Protection

Agency shows that somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. Less than 1% of bags are recycled. It costs more to recycle a bag than to produce a new one.

"There's harsh economics behind bag recycling: It costs \$4,000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastic bags, which can then be sold on the commodities market for \$32"

Then... Where Do They Go?

A study in 1975, showed oceangoing vessels together dumped 8 million pounds of plastic annually. The real reason that the world's landfills weren't overflowing with plastic was because most of it ended up in an ocean-fill.

Bags get blown around...

- ...to different parts of our lands
- ...and to our seas, lakes and rivers.

Bags find their way into the sea via drains and sewage pipes.

Plastic bags have been found floating north of the Arctic Circle near Spitzbergen, and as far south as the Falkland Islands.

Plastic bags account for over 10 percent of the debris washed up on the U.S. coastline.

Plastic bags photodegrade: Over time they break down into smaller, more toxic petro-polymers which eventually contaminate soils and waterways. As a consequence microscopic parti-



cles can enter the food chain

The effect on wildlife can be catastrophic

*** Birds become terminally entangled

*** Nearly 200 different species of sea life including whales, dolphins, seals and turtles die due to plastic bags

They die after ingesting plastic bags which they mistake for food
So... What do we do?

If we use a cloth bag, we can save 6 bags a week.
That's 24 bags a month!

That's 288 bags a year

That's 22,176 bags in an average life time

If just 1 out of 5 people in our country did this we would save

1,330,560,000,000 bags over our life time. Bangladesh has banned plastic bags

China has banned free plastic bags

Ireland took the lead in Europe, taxing plastic bags in 2002 and has now reduced plastic bag consumption by 90%

In 2005 Rwanda banned plastic bags.

Israel, Canada, western India, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Taiwan, and Singapore have also banned or are moving toward banning the plastic bag.

On March 27th 2007, San Francisco becomes the first U.S. city to ban plastic bags.

Oakland and Boston are considering a ban.

Plastic shopping bags are made from polyethylene: a thermoplastic made from oil.

Reducing plastic bags will decrease foreign oil dependency

China will save 37 million barrels of oil each year due to their ban of free plastic bags.

News From Your State League.....

Voting Rights pamphlet series-The LWVNY has five new pamphlets related to the voting rights of five different special populations. These are: *college students, individuals incarcerated and with criminal convictions, homeless individuals, those with mental health disabilities, and individuals with other disabilities, primarily physical*. The pamphlets are available on the LWVNY.org website.

Access to information - Three new websites provide taxpayers with information about where their tax dollars go.

www.SeeThroughNY.net, www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook, www.SunlightNY.com. Links to these websites can be found on the LWVNYS website: www.lwvny.org.

Domestic Violence update- Governor Patterson signed into law a bill that expands access to civil orders of protection for all victims of domestic violence, regardless of marital, parental, or blood relative status.

Tips for Debate Watchers

Think Ahead – about which issues are important to you.

Pay Attention – to how the candidates answer the questions. Are they specific? Knowledgeable? Sincere?

Keep Track of Topics – Are the questions fair and pertinent? Are they your priority issues?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Dates to Remember

OCTOBER 25	BOARD MEETING-9:30 a.m. Judy Parks' 6 Andrew Court, Fredonia 679-9613
OCTOBER 27	MEET THE CANDIDATES-Jackson Center, Jamestown 7 p.m.
OCTOBER 29	MEET THE CANDIDATES-1891 Fredonia Opera House, Fredonia 7 p.m
NOVEMBER 15	BOARD MEETING -9:30 A.M., Nancy Bleck's, 38 Elm Street, Fredonia
NOVEMBER 18	LUNCHEON MEETING-'The National Popular Vote Compact Among States and the Electoral College' Noon at the Fireside Manor Reservations Marti Burdick 672-5546
DECEMBER 6	BOARD MEETING -9:30 A.M Marcia Merrins', 42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia, 672-4275
DECEMBER 11	COOKIE EXCHANGE -BRING A FRIEND! -7 p.m. Marcia Merrins', 42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia, 672-4275
JANUARY 10	BOARD MEETING -9:30 A.M Minda Rae Amiran's, 12 Lowell Place, Fredonia, 679-4636

THANK YOU TO OUR ADVERTISERS


RANDY'S ANTIQUES
 41 East Main Street
 Fredonia, NY 14063
 (716) 679-9587
 Buy and Sell
 Estate Sales Conducted

Box Office 716.679.1891 www.fredopera.org


The 1891
Fredonia Opera House

DFT Communications Spotlight Series *Special Rental Events*
Finley/Star Great Performers Series FREDONIA STORYTELLING FESTIVAL
 Folk in Fredonia Music Series Bach & Beyond Baroque Music Festival
Carousel Family Series D.R. BARKER LIBRARY COMMUNITY SERIES
 OPERA HOUSE CINEMA SERIES *Children's Cinema Series*

Chautauqua County Association for the Education of
 Young Children



VILLAGE ELDERS YOGA
 Carolyn Kieber Grady, RYT
 Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 p.m.
 Fredonia-Pomfret Senior Center
 Cushing Street, Fredonia
 Call to register: 672-2891
 Donation: \$4.00 *****For ages 50+



DARWIN'S
 HEALTH CLUB, INC.

Open
 Mon. - Fri.
 4:30 am-10 pm
 Sat. 7 am-6 pm
 Sun. 7 am-5 pm

679-1591
 47-53 Water St.
 Fredonia, NY 14063

Snowshoe Documentary Films
 FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE
www.snowshoefilms.com

PO BOX 1035
 CHAUTAUQUA, NY 14722

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

