



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.

April League Day: Understanding Universal Health Care Be an Educated Voter

Join Us
Thursday, April 24, 2008
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Brighton Library Learning Center
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

Presented by:

- Tim Engstrom, Ph.D Professor of Philosophy, RIT
- Sally Trafton, J.D. Associate Executive Director for Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency

Sponsored by:

League of Women Voters Rochester Metro Area
Interfaith Health Care Coalition of GRCC
Downtown Community Forum

Inside this issue:

April League Day	1
From the President	2
Happy Birthday LWV!	2
Membership Event	3
Nominating Committee	3
Costs of Health Care	3
Fair Elections	3
In the News	3
New Member	3
Coming Events	3
Saga of Voting Machines Continues	4
Invasive Species	5
THIRST-The Ending	5
Calendars	6
Rochester Voters Alliance	7
Sunshine Week 2008	7
Officers	8

Dr. Engstrom teaches Philosophy at RIT and is recipient of the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching. He has written *Health Care Reform: Ethics and Politics in 2006*. He is well-versed in the variety of Health Care proposals and can give us a briefing on what is currently part of the national dialogue, including the Single Payer system we heard about on March 6.

Ms. Trafton has over 25 years of health policy experience in long-term and chronic care, disabilities, local health systems, and not-for-profit regulation and governance. She is concerned about the question of paying for Universal Health Care and is looking forward to presenting an objective analysis of payment alternatives.

The term Universal Health Care refers to a number of health care plans that would deliver health care to all citizens of the United States. The Single Payer System, which was presented at the March League Day, is one of them. On April 24th we will learn more about various plans for universal health care and the various ways that have been suggested to pay for them. We need to understand more about these plans and their financial implications so we can make a more educated vote this November.

Because of the interest in this topic, we hope to have plenty of time for discussion and questions.

From Your President

by Dorothy Borgus



Our President is currently recuperating from total hip replacement and will be back with us next month.

We wish her a speedy recovery.



March League Day - Speaker: Dr. Emily Queenan - Topic: Addressing Single Payer System for Health Care



Audience at march League Day



Dr. Queenan and Chairperson Georgia D. DeGregorio

Happy Birthday to Us!!

The League of Women Voters celebrated its 88th birthday on February 14, 2008. In a press release Mary Wilson, President of the National League of Women Voters stated:

"Today we stand on the shoulders of generations of incredible volunteers who have proudly served the League and made a measurable impact in their communities. I am bursting with pride as I wish our nearly 150,000 members and supporters a Happy Birthday!

We take seriously our legacy of providing trustworthy and balanced resources to citizens and lawmakers. The League of Women Voters truly has left its footprint on American history, and I believe our democracy is stronger because of it.

As I speak, our incredible members are living out that legacy in every state in our union, making sure voters are registered, educated, and confident in the political process. 2008 will be a pivotal year, and we encourage all Americans to contact their

local League or visit our election web site www.VOTE411.org to get involved in this historic election".

Birthday wishes were received from many different sources and included:

"88 keys on a piano. 88 years of League. Let the music continue"

"You are the most underappreciated national treasure."

"Happy birthday to a group that still believes in the 'high road' and making things transparent, honest, and positive."

Please Note: Change in Time and Place for April League Day!

Membership Event

The membership committee has been busy planning a reception/welcome event in late April or early May. We plan to invite all the members who have joined the League in the last 2 years along with our board and a newly selected group we call our "LWV Mentors".

One of the most important things we've learned from the state, national and other Leagues is that members get involved and stay involved if someone gives them individual attention. Martha Kennedy, our state LWV President, formerly the VP for Membership, and she stressed the following items as important for recruitment and retention:

- Welcome Packet: a kit with full information about the LWV and League practices.
- Orientation: combine information with fun to impart LWV process and successes.
- Mentoring Program: pair up the new with long-time members.
- Introductions: introduce new members at all LWV functions.
- Member Ambassador: make sure at least one individual does membership outreach.

Our Membership Committee is working on all of these items, and we hope that one or all of them combine to bring in and retain new members. We also plan to cash in on the excitement engendered by the presidential election and work to bring in new members through our work registering voters and other Voter Service programs.

So don't forget to ask that friend or neighbor this fall to help you with registering voters and opening absentee ballots or participating in a naturalization ceremony. These are the initial activities that can help make life-long members!

Sally Brown, *VP Membership*

Nominating Committee

The time has come again to propose a slate of officers for the coming year. The following positions are to be filled:

President	Social Policy
Treasurer	Natural Resources
Secretary	Local Government
VP Membership	Public Relations
VP Voter Service	

If you have any suggestions for these board positions, are interested yourself, or would like a copy of the job description, please contact me at 235-2217, or Bettie@rochester.rr.com. The slate is scheduled to be complete by early April.

Bettie Lindley, *Chairperson Nominating Committee*

The Costs of Health Care

D&C 11-4-07: "Employees share the health care load: The average U.S. worker's share of health care costs has risen by 173% since 2001, while the cost to provide each worker with health insurance has risen 100%." In 2001...the average employee share of the premium was \$659 a year. Hewitt Associates study shows that by 2008 premium share plus deductibles, co-payments, co-insurance and other out-of-pocket expenses will rise to \$3,597 a year. "

In researching Universal Health Care proposals including the Single Payer Plan, our committee found that very few discussed in any detail how we would pay for them. A few suggestions are: income tax? subsidize private premiums? national sales tax?

What are the implications of each of these choices? Attend April League Day and learn more about the issues of funding.

Georgia de Gregorio, *VP Social Policy*

Fair Elections

The Fair Election Campaign Practices report is now on our website at www.lwv-rma.org under Positive Campaigning. It lists the 10 decisions rendered by the Committee in the 2007 fall elections and provides a link to the actual decision. The report includes the Fair Campaign Pledge and a brief description of how the committee works.

In the News:

Esther Denaro Maltese, member and former president of The League of Women Voters has been elected president of the Rochester Women's Network Board of Directors.

New Member

Judith Defosses
96 Lynwood Dr.
Brockport, NY 14420

Coming Events:

April 26 Earth Day Clean Up; call 234-1726 to help.
May League Day about Pollution in the Great Lakes; details in May VOTER

The Saga of the Voting Machines Continues

Those of you following New York's voting machine selection process know that the unpredictable keeps happening! March's Voter detailed the events in January 2008 along with the court actions in early February.

A key date was February 8th when only one county in the state chose DREs (direct recording electronic machines); all the rest chose (BMDs) ballot marking devices compatible with paper ballots and optical scanners. This was great day for the League and other good government groups that were advocating the use of optical scanners! Most, including Monroe and surrounding counties, chose the Sequoia ImageCast. This system will make it easier to train voters on the new machines; TV ads can be utilized for the whole area. Submitted by Barb Hendry, VP Voters Service

According to Barb, the best way to stay up-to-date with this ever changing situation is to go to the website for New Yorkers for Verified Voting, www.nyvv.org, and read Bo Lipari's blog. Below is his entry on February 18th.

"Counties Choose Paper Ballots Despite Court Ruling 'It ain't over till it's over.'— Yogi Berra

Just 3 weeks ago, we thought the ruling by the State Board of Elections had finally eliminated DREs from New York State after a long hard five year campaign... But the DRE vendors weren't done fighting, and voters were dealt a setback when the State Supreme Court ruled that DREs must be allowed to be purchased by counties.

Earlier this month, Judge O'Connor overruled the decision of the State Board and allowed DREs to be selected by New York counties. But when the county choices were released on February 8 and reaffirmed on February 14, it showed the depth of support for paper ballots created by citizens in our long struggle. As it turned out, only Hamilton County—the smallest county, ordered 11 LibertyVote DREs out of all Ballot Marking Devices compatible with paper ballots and scanners.

This is very, very good news. For even though counties had the option, ordered by the Court, to choose DREs, they did not! This is a demonstration of the success of the work voting integrity advocates did educating the public, election commissioners and the media. In the end, the commissioners chose paper not because they had to, but because they wanted to. That's pretty huge and says a lot about how deep our success has been.

But, just like Yogi said, it ain't over till it's over, and friends, it ain't over yet. First of all, Judge O'Connor has required the State Board of Elections to extend the county machine selection deadline yet another four days, until Tuesday, February 19, giving the

counties more time to change their selection to the Avante or LibertyVote DREs. But since they reaffirmed their choices last week, I don't think any counties really want to change anything - they just want to move forward and get the new systems in place. More ominously however, don't think for a minute that LibertyVote and Avante are done trying to stop this in any way they can.

But if every county in the state has unequivocally stated that they do not want DREs, can DRE vendors force them to do so through the Courts? Indeed they might, for this is the way hardball is played in rough and tumble New York. DRE vendors have put in way too much money to stop now. As you read this, LibertyVote's lawyers are being paid \$300 an hour to come up with something, anything, to salvage their hopes of dipping into New York State's HAVA pot of gold.

The State Board does not formally authorize the use of the Ballot Markers until February 27, after testing is complete. Purchase Orders will be issued the following day by OGS. LibertyVote has successfully challenged the Boards' authority to rule on acceptable systems once before, and with the right judge, who is to say they can't do it again?

New York citizens should be proud of what we've accomplished! After five years of our labor every election commissioner in New York State but two have been convinced that paper ballots, ballot marking devices and scanners are a better choice than DREs. This is a tremendous achievement against impossible odds, and a testament to the power of citizen advocacy.

But let's not get complacent and count the DRE vendors out yet, since as Yogi taught us, it could be "Deja vu all over again".

And what did happen on February 27th?

The Citizens Election Modernization Advisory Committee approved the following devices for use and purchase by the counties – ER&S/Automark, Premier/Automark, Sequoia ImageCast and Liberty Vote (all optical scanners except for the Liberty Vote DRE.).

The only county this affects this year is Hamilton which chose DREs but next year, counties will be choosing their lever machine replacements and could possibly choose the Liberty Vote DRE since it has been approved.

As Aimee Allaud, League Elections Specialist has stated, "Therefore, we will continue our advocacy for optical scan voting machines in NYS and we hope you will continue to monitor the work of your local boards of elections as actively as in the past.

Thanks to each and every one of you for your hard work, but...there's always more to be done!"

Bo Lipari, NYVV

Invasive Species in the Great Lakes

An invasive species is an alien species whose introduction is likely to or will do harm to the native ecosystem, the local economy, commerce and/or human health. Invasive species pose the greatest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem today. The most significant harms currently are from Sea Lamprey, Round Goby, Zebra Mussels, Quagga Mussel and Eurasian Ruffe. Most experts attribute the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway as the major contributor to invasive species in the Great Lakes. An invasive species that has the potential to greatly harm and is threatening to enter the Great Lakes (via the Chicago River) is the Asian Carp.

An example of what can happen when an invasive species completely takes over can be illustrated by taking a look at a phenomenon in Lake Erie. Recently scientists have found "dead zones" in Lake Erie where nothing survives. These areas are growing each year.

The entire food web of the Great Lakes is being damaged by invasive species. As more and more of these invaders arrive, the entire commercial fishing industry is at risk to collapse entirely.

Since the 1800's there have been 160 new exotic species introduced to the Great Lakes, irreversibly altering the region's ecosystem. About 139 of these species come from South Eastern Europe and about 70% have been introduced by the release of ballast water from ships traversing the lakes.

Scientists have estimated that about 10% of the exotics introduced have caused significant ecological and economic damage. They have also determined that invasive species...impact the food chain, alter the ecology to allow more invasive species to rapidly take hold; increase the pressures on sport and commercial fishing; and change the overall distribution of fish in the Great Lakes. This article is from Great Lakes Invasive Species. Great Lakes Wiki at www.greatlakeswiki.org.

The above article was printed in anticipation of the May League Day program on the Great Lakes. However, invasive species are not limited to water born species. Invasives can include: plants such as milfoil, purple loosestrife, and kudzu; exotic pets smuggled into the country or purchased, then released to the environment; plant diseases transported on fruit and vegetables, trees, firewood, etc. Some invasives arrived accidentally; some through careless actions, and others were introduced to solve a problem, then became a problem. Kudzu is a good example of a solution gone awry. Because invasive species are alien to our environment, they have no natural enemies to curb their growth. They can multiply to the extent that they rob the habitat

of food, sunshine, nutrients or water necessary to sustain the native species. Invasive species have become one of our greatest environmental threats.

Jane Schmitt, *Natural Resources Committee*

THIRST – The Ending

Those of you who attended the February League Day and viewed the film **THIRST** may still be wondering what finally happened in the California city of Stockton. The movie ended with the failure of the Concerned Citizen's Coalition to force a referendum in an attempt to overturn the city's decision to privatize the water supply. The city had signed a \$600 million, 20-year agreement that gave OMI-Thames full control over the city's water, sewage, and storm water systems. The Coalition, Sierra Club and League of Women Voters of Joaquin County joined in a suit against the city of Stockton arguing that the city had not required an environmental review. In 2006 the courts agreed with the plaintiffs that an environmental review should have been done because projects allowed under the contract could harm the environment. The city of Stockton appealed the ruling but in July 2007 agreed to drop the appeal. In the interim 4 years under privatization, many problems occurred including sewage overflows resulting in polluted streams and price increases.

This action is a great example of perseverance on the part of concerned citizens; they kept on fighting even when it looked as if they had lost. Fortunately, OMI-Thames was ordered to pay the legal bill of nearly 2 million dollars for the plaintiffs.

Jane Schmitt, *Natural Resources Committee*



Ann Jones leading a discussion of the movie *THIRST* at the February League Day

APRIL 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 VOTER Deadline	2	3	4	5
6	7 Social Policy Committee 1:00 pm *	8 Naturalization Ceremony	9	10 Exec. Com 9:00am Local Gov't. 10:00 am* Naturalization Ceremony	11	12
13	14	15	16 Natural Resources Committee* 9:30am	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 League Day Health Care (cont'd.) 6:30 pm Board Meeting 1:45 PM	25	26 Earth Day
27	28	29	30			

MAY 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5 VOTER Deadline	6	7	8 League Day Great Lakes 7:00 pm Executive Com. 9:00 am	9	10
11	12	13 Social Policy Committee 5:30 pm *	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Natural Resources Committee* 9:30 am	22 Board Meeting 1:45 pm	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Annual Meeting	30	31

*Board meets in the Bagel Bin Conference Room, 2600 Elmwood Avenue, at 1:45 PM on the fourth 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 normally held at 1600 East Avenue at 10:00 AM on the first Thursday of the month.

Parking is at the rear of the building.

**Natural Resources meets at the home of Ann Jones, 244-9337; Social Policy meets at the home of
Joan Rosenthal, 244-6255 for Social Policy details, call Georgia DiGregorio at 787-9692*

Local Government meets at the home of Bee Bibby, for Local Government details call Judy Weinstein at 442-9815.

AM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building, 39 W. Main St;

PM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Federal Court House at 100 State Street.

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 e-mail us at lwvrma@frontiernet.net

Rochester Voters Alliance

The RVA is coming back! Four years ago the LWV formed a coalition with TIAR (The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester) and other organizations to coordinate efforts to register voters in areas of the city that had low registration and voter turnout. By the end of the election season the Rochester Voters Alliance had over 24 groups working together in a variety of venues. The RVA went everywhere, from Sojourner House to Tops Markets, from the Public Market to Festivals and Strong Hospital.

Working with data supplied by the Monroe County Board of Elections, the RVA decided to concentrate on five zip codes in Rochester; 14608, 14611, 14613, 14621, and 14605. Matching election districts to the zip codes, the Board of Elections provided statistics which proved that fewer than 30% of the residents of these areas were registered to vote.

This endeavor was hugely successful. By the time Election Day came the RVA had registered over 4,000 voters. Indeed there is a plaque on the wall of the LWV office from the Monroe County Legislature thanking the League and the RVA for their efforts.

Four years later, the newly re-formed RVA is going to pick up where it left off. We still plan to go to the same venues and many of the same organizations have joined us such as: TIAR, The Center for Disability Rights, the ACLU, the AAUW, the Susan B. Anthony House, the Catholic Family Center, Women of Reformed Judaism, Let Justice Roll, the First Unitarian Church and DUPC to name a few.

Four years ago volunteers from our League were involved from the beginning of this project, putting it together, getting funding and registering voters from

Tops Markets to Strong. As a matter of fact our efforts got us some wonderful new members who worked with us from TIAR most notably Sally Chamberlain and Paul Brayer. We hope this fall you will make a note to yourselves and, when we ask for volunteers, help us with this most important work.

Sally Brown, *VP Membership*

Sunshine Week 2008

Now in its fourth year, Sunshine Week (March 16-22, 2008) is a national initiative to open dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. During this week, the League of Women Voters and other members of the Sunshine Week coalition will be encouraging citizens to play an active role in promoting open government at all levels.

Journalists, civic groups, libraries, schools and others interested in the public's right to know have banded together to help promote this nonpartisan effort to enlighten and empower individuals to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger. 2008 will be the 3rd year that LWVUS has been actively promoting Sunshine Week.

The Sunshine Week initiative originated from the work of several newspapers, and it has grown, in large part, because of the media's continued support. Journalists around the country are being encouraged to report on government transparency issues during this week. More information about the history of Sunshine Week is available at www.sunshineweek.org. From LWVUS.

Note: For more sunshine on our state government, try www.sunshineny.com.

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

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



**Rochester/Metro
League of Women Voters**

Times Square Building
45 Exchange Blvd. Ste. 508
Rochester, NY 14614
p 585-262-3730
f 585-262-4493 (V/TTY)
e lwvrma@frontiernet.net
www.lwv-rma.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1419
Rochester, NY

Rochester **VOTER**

Monthly Publication of the League of Women Voters -
Rochester Metropolitan Area.

Office Hours: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Monday and Wednesday

Officers

Dorothy Borgus
President

Ann Weintraub
Secretary

Board of Directors

Sally J. Brown
V.P. Membership

Katherine Smith
V.P. Action

Nancy Kleintop
V.P. Development

Barbara Hendry
V.P. Voter Service

Georgia DeGregorio
Social Policy

Gaynelle Wethers
Budget

Judith Weinstein
Local Government

Rose Mary Zaffrann
Public Relations

Ann Jones
Natural Resources

Sula Baxter
Program

Off-Board Director

Jane Schmitt
VOTER Editor

Chris Burleigh
VOTER Layout & Production

**May VOTER Deadline is
April 1st!**

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

"In a progressive country change is constant; change is inevitable."

Benjamin Disraeli, speech 1867