



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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January League Day: Consensus on Immigration

Join Us

Thursday, January 10, 2008

10:00 am to Noon

1600 East Avenue

Discussion Leader:

Shirley Eberly

A Discussion of Current Immigration Policy and Proposals for Change.

All members are encouraged to come to this Consensus Meeting. We need to inform the National League what we feel is important regarding this issue.

Along with consensus of local leagues across the country, our consensus will be incorporated into the final consensus position adopted by the National League. For background information read articles in December and January LWV-RMA VOTERS, June and October National VOTERS, and at www.lwv.org.

Please Note: Since a local League's consensus on a national issue does not constitute the final LWVUS position, it should not be publicized.

*"It ain't what folks don't know that's the problem,
it's what they know that ain't so."*

Will Rogers



From Your President

by Dorothy Borgus



Snow has finally arrived in Rochester. One of the great advantages of living here is the change of seasons and the revitalization each brings. So, despite having to make adjustments in our driving habits, we have to admit the snow is beautiful.

Speaking of snow brings up the subject of holidays.

Still looking for a special and unique gift this holiday season? Want to give something that provides benefits all year long? How about giving friends and family a gift membership in the League of Woman Voters? A gift of membership is an excellent way to introduce them to issues that matter to everyone living in Monroe County and beyond. Share the value of being part of one of our nation's most trusted organizations with the special people on your gift list. Call the office (262-3730) or e-mail (lwvrma@frontiernet.net) and make arrangements. We'll send a welcome letter and certificate to the new member(s).

In conjunction with membership, I'd like to briefly address dues. All League members are enrolled

Save the Date: February 7, 2008

BE PREPARED for a discussion of **Thirst**, a movie to be shown at the February 7th League Day. **Thirst** discusses the global fresh, clean water crises. Before viewing, one should think about these questions:

Should water be treated as a natural resource, essential to all life forms to be shared and conserved by all?

OR should water be treated as a commodity to be bought and sold for profit and, regardless of irreplaceability, to those who can afford it?

Come with an open mind and listen to all sides.

We will meet from 10:00 until 11:30 AM at WXXI's building on State Street, opposite Frontier Field and near the Kodak Office building. A ramp parking lot is next door. An optional tour of the WXXI facility will be offered after the program.

Ann Jones, *Chairperson, Natural Resources*

automatically as national, state and local members. Many of our members are unaware that a sizeable portion of local dues are shared with the state and national leagues as Per Member Payments (PMP) to cover the activities and benefits of those offices. From the \$70.00 individual dues paid annually in Rochester, \$26.80 is sent to the National League and \$18.00 is sent to the NYS League, leaving \$25.20 to fund the Rochester league.

With the remaining dues we staff a rented office, buy supplies, fund a newsletter, pay postage, telephone, printing and copy costs, and conduct nine educational League Days per year. One has only to read this newsletter to realize how far we make \$25.20 go.

Our annual fund appeal is underway. You probably have received your letter already. These donated funds all go directly to our Educational Foundation and make a huge difference in the way your Rochester league is able to impact local, state and national issues. As you choose your end-of-year donations, please choose the League and please be generous.

I send Season's Greetings to all. Wishing you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

Dorothy

Wonderful News!

The League of Women Voters - Rochester Metropolitan Area has been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation. This will pay the cost of printing "*Who Represents You*" for the next five years.

This is fantastic because it will allow the League to continue fulfilling one of its major functions and make it easier for Monroe County residents to contact their elected officials. Thanks to Barbara Hendry, Vice President for Voter Services who prepared the grant application.

A First for the League!!!

Watch and listen to our first video recording of a League Day!

At our December 6 League Day, member Chris Burleigh taped the presentation given by Dr. Kent Gardner about the newly released report, *LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: Risks & Benefits, Case Studies in the Rochester Area*. You can watch and listen to the presentation on our website: www.lwv-rma.org.

CGR Report on Local Development Corporations Released

Last year, our local League of Women Voters commissioned the Center for Governmental Research to conduct an analysis of Local Development Corporations. Our interest in LDCs grew out of the Local Government Committee's research into public authorities. Local Development Corporations are somewhat similar to public authorities. They are both formed to serve a public purpose and are independent of the governmental body that created them. LDCs, however, are organized as private, not-for-profit corporations. The committee couldn't even find a list of the LDCs in Monroe County.

CGR undertook the study of LDCs for the League. The report, *Local Development Corporations: Risks & Benefits; Case Studies in the Rochester Area*, was completed and released just in time for our December 6 League Day where Kent Gardner presented highlights of the report.

CGR identified 16 LDCs operating in the Rochester area. Given that there are no comprehensive public reporting requirements for LDCs, there are likely more than the 16; CGR has no way of determining whether it has identified all of them.

The report discusses the benefits of LDCs and the potential risks. LDCs can be a useful vehicle in charting and developing a community's future. However there are significant risks due to lack of requirements for public disclosure; LDCs are not subject to the state's Freedom of Information or Open Meetings Laws. They are not tracked or studied by any governmental oversight bodies.

Recommendations –

LDCs should be required to:

- File IRS Form 990 tax returns as most nonprofits do. They should also be required to make their 990 forms and annual reports available to the public.
- Comply with open meetings and open records laws.
- Pay fair market value for property, and to dispose of property at fair market value, subject to special cases when it is in the public interest to exchange property for less than market value.

- Solicit bids for work and make them public once a vendor has been chosen. LDCs should be required to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid, with the usual exception for professional service contracts.
- The NYS Legislature should amend the Public Authorities Accountability Act to clarify its applicability to Local Development Corporations, a change which would cover several of the recommendations above.
- In the absence of action by the state, all local governments should declare that they are going to voluntarily comply with these reforms.
- This compliance should be monitored by the media and groups like the League of Women Voters.

This research project was funded by the B. Bibby Endowment.

The entire report is available on the League website www.lwv-rma.org.

The Local Government Committee will continue to follow this issue and work towards reform of LDCs.

Judy Weinstein, *Chairperson*
Local Government Committee

A Date to Keep in Mind: February 5, 2008

The NYS primaries are coming! Please mark the date on your calendar. The League has been asked to provide at least 20 people to help sort ballots on primary day. This is not only a fund raiser for the League, but also a chance to participate in the process. We will need your help.



Immigration Questions & Answers

The following are members' written questions from our November 1 League Day on Immigration with brief answers:

Q. If amnesty was OK in 1986, why not today?

A. Globalization, NAFTA, 9/11, US Agricultural subsidies...These are some of the things that our immigration policies have not adjusted to. Also employer compliance requirements were not vigorously enforced. Labor—an important leg in the economic equation—was specifically left out of the NAFTA agreement. Although there is the same rate of illegal entry, security measures at the border increased the number of people staying in the US (original return of 40-45% vs 25% return now). The rate for those detained trying to enter the US has decreased from 30% to 10% because there are now more entry points to process applicants.

Q. Did Gov. Spitzer's driver's license proposal serve the immigration proposal, or not?

A. There are two aspects to immigration: (a) federal policy and process related to who should be admitted; (b) internal policy of state, local governments addressing treatment of aliens and what is in the best interest of the community. In the past, many states and communities allowed driver's licenses, home mortgages, etc to be used. The undocumented were able to get these items by using a Tax I.D. number, not a Social Security number.

Q. What about "illegals" brought here as children, or born here of illegals?

A. Children brought here are "illegal" and are deported. Children born here are automatically US citizens based on our Constitution. Immigration, Customs & Enforcement (ICE) claims they make sure no child is unattended, either through relatives, friends or Child Protective Services, when an arrest or deportation occurs.

Q. What procedures do other countries use worldwide? Particularly Western Europe?

A. Until recently European powers had a zero-immigration policy. Now with birth rates below replacement levels, countries either allow migrants from former colonies or, if they have no colonies, encourage guest workers. The biggest difference between US and Europe is that people

who come into the US must work and receive little or no benefits and those in Europe receive welfare benefits. The unemployment rate among foreign-born in the US is less than for native born Americans; however rates for foreign born in Europe can approach 40%.

Travel Documents to Enter the Country

Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR's) Most Green Cards are obtained through 4 paths:

Family Sponsored Immigration: Immediate relatives (spouses, unmarried minor children and parents) and/or extended family members (adult children and brothers and sisters).

Employment-Based Immigration: A U.S. employer can sponsor an individual for a specific position. Most of these cases require the U.S. employer to prove no qualified U.S. workers are available.

Diversity Visa Lottery: Immigrant wins one of a limited number of visas available that are open to immigrants from certain countries. (This happens one time a year from October 2 to December 2)

Asylees and refugees are eligible to apply for permanent residence after living in the U.S. for one year.

Non-Immigrant Legal Residents Visas: Also known as Guest worker visas are issued to fill U.S. positions on a temporary basis. The H non-immigrant visa category is subject to a cap. Some caps are used up the first day they become available. The list below includes only those most discussed.

E-1/E-2 Treaty trader/investor: Authorizes work by foreign nationals for foreign-owned companies where both have the same nationality. The worker must be an owner, have the essential skills or work at a managerial level.

F-1: Student visas for foreign nationals studying in the U.S.

H-1B: High skilled/educated individuals for a renewable period of three years or graduates of U.S. universities. Only 5% of foreign graduates of American universities have earned a Masters Degree or higher. Minimal American labor test is

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Travel Documents

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required. For H-1B the cap is 65,000. On the first day of 4/1/07 there were 123,000 applications

H-2A: Temporary or seasonal agricultural workers issued to employer. Currently no caps are applied but a minimal American labor test is required as noted under H-2B.

H-2B: Temporary or seasonal workers other than agriculture (hospitality, construction, health care, landscaping, etc.). The cap is 66,000 per year. [Employers are required to advertise in local newspapers for 2-3 days so that employment should not displace American workers or adversely affect American employees' wages.]

L-1A/L-1B: Authorizes work for multinational organizations where work required specialized knowledge or work is at a managerial level.

O-1: Authorizes work where foreign national possesses "extraordinary" ability in his or her field.

TN: Authorizes work by Mexicans and Canadians in a range of professional occupations.

There are 24 temporary visa categories in the basic law; however, over the years more than 70 sub-categories have been created.

Thanks to Bagel Bin

Kudos to Bagel Bin Cafe Manager, Randy L. Thompson, and his able staff for providing the League a private room for its monthly Board meetings at its Brighton eatery. The space is generous and well maintained; the food and drink tasty and the environment conducive to the work.

The League of Women Voters is most appreciative of Bagel Bin's community spirit in providing meeting room space for non-profits such as ours.

Thanks, Randy for your service to us as we seek to serve the community.

Ann Weintraub, *Secretary LWV*



Sunlight in State Government

The unveiling presentation given on Project Sunlight on December 5th by Blair Horner of the Attorney General's office was an exciting beginning to more transparency in state Government.

This webpage: <http://www.sunlightny.com/> will be active as of Wednesday, December 5th. Please browse the website, be sure to submit any questions or comments you may have to the AG's office by clicking on the Contact Us button in the top right hand corner of the page. The Attorney General is especially interested in League input as we are a prime target audience for this website. This website will be extremely useful to high school Participation in Government (PIG) Programs, your local Community Colleges or SUNY systems, coalition members in other advocacy issues and anyone else interested in open government. This website is for the novice and the expert alike.

The website is designed to receive your thoughts and comments. It is the plan of the AG's office to incorporate your ideas to further strengthen the website by the end of the calendar year.

The League was there at the inception of this idea and it was exciting to see the culmination of the hard work done by our colleague Blair Horner.

Barbara Bartoletti, *Legislative Director*
LWVNYS



New Members:

Priscille Cromer
122 Drexmore Rd.
Rochester, NY 14610
585-506-9211

Orthelle Pranger
50 Butternut Dr.
Pittsford, NY 14534
585-586-9652
opranger@rochester.rr.com

JANUARY 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 New Year's Day	2 VOTER Deadline	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Membership Committee SPOT 2:00 pm	10 League Day Consensus 10:00 am	11	12
13	14	15	16 Natural Resources Committee 9:30	17	18 Local Govt. 10:00am	19
20	21	22	23	24 Board Meeting 1:45 PM	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

FEBRUARY 2008

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

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 and Immigration Committees,
call Georgia DeGregorio at 585-787-9692 and Local Government Committee call Judy Weinstein at 585-442-9815

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

Happy Holidays!

The annual League Holiday Open House was held Thursday, December 6, 2007 at the AAUW House. A large crowd was on hand for holiday cheer and the presentation of the League's research project on Local Development Corporations created by the Center for Governmental Research.

A Special Thank You! to our board members who underwrote the costs for the open house: Sula Baxter, Rae Bernacki, Dorothy Borgus, Sally Brown, Georgia DeGregorio, Barbara Hendry, Nancy Kleintop, Kathy Smith, Ann Weintraub and Rosemary Zaffron.

Hope to see you all in the new year at a League Program!

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year

Remember the League in this Year's Giving

It's that time of year again when the League holds it's annual fund drive. Invitations to participate will be in the mail.

Donations to the annual appeal go to the direct support of League education activities. All contributions are made through the League's Education Fund. They are all tax deductible and valid for the 2007 tax year if made prior to January 1, 2008.

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



Dr. Kent Gardner presenting the report on LDCs at the December 6th Open House.



League members socializing at the December 6th Open House.

Please join the League's efforts to continue it's leadership in providing quality educational experiences to the Rochester community.

Give the Gift of Knowledge.

Nancy Kleintop, *VP Development*

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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**February VOTER Deadline is
January 2nd!**

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

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.
*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.,
The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*