



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.

Inside this issue:

February League Day	1
From the President	2
Our League Day Presenter.	2
Since Last Month.	2
Lobbying in League Program?	3
Movement Against Electoral College	3
December Open House	4
Save the Date! March League Day. .	4
Buy Local: GROW MONROE	4
Consensus on Nat'l. Popular Vote . .	5
Got Pills?	5
Quality Day Care	5
2008 Open World Award	5
Calendars	6
Electoral College-A Review	7
Officers	8

Join Us for Our February League Day Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness

Thursday, February 5, 2009
12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Brighton Town Hall, Community Meeting Room
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

Presenter: Brighton Supervisor, Sandra Frankel
Supervisor Frankel, a member of the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, will present background information on the Commission's study including: representation, the process used and sources of information. She will share her personal input and information gathered from Monroe County.

The report's recommendations focus on potential administrative achievements, recommendations which would require statutory changes and the involvement of the state Legislature in moving this initiative forward. This leads to questions regarding cost savings, state staff support, the budget, turf issues and state incentives for local governments and what role the League of Women Voters could possibly play.

Come join us for an informative and interesting meeting! Bring a brown bag lunch; coffeetea will be available. Park behind the Town Hall off Elmwood Avenue and enter through the back door and down the hall to the left. Encourage friends to attend. This topic is important to all residents of Monroe County.

Executive Summary of the Commission's report is available at: www.nyslocalgov.org

From Your President

by Nancy Kleintop



A Call to Service.

As we kick off this New Year, I invite you to schedule time to volunteer for League activities.

A review of volunteer activities to date reveals that our members select short term volunteer opportunities: enrolling voters, opening absentee ballots, conducting forums, naturalization ceremonies, representing

the League at UN Day, attending League Days and the Open World Program. Many of you were recruited by Shiela Abeling, VP Voter Service, this past fall. There is always a need for more volunteers.

Historically, the League has functioned through study committees. Our League, like many others across the state and nation, has seen participation fall off. We have not been able to replace the Health Care Study Committee in over four years.

All of our committees need new members. That means these committees cannot conduct new studies without volunteers to help with research.

Last year Local Government did launch a study of Local Development Corporations due to a specially funded research program in conjunction with the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). Certainly this was innovative and comprehensive, although not done conventionally.

The Social Policy Committee is producing materials on Domestic Violence and Lead Paint. They are also keeping updated on Child Care and Health Care, areas to which the League has been committed for years. This committee would welcome more volunteers to help keep up with and expand their activities.

Natural Resources maintains a small group, that has worked together for a long time. They are always looking for volunteers to demonstrate the wetlands model to school-aged children. Currently they are exploring some ideas to encourage and expand recycling.

If you are interested in volunteering in any of these activities, please phone the League office at 585-262-3730. Indicate what you are interested in and someone will get back to you.

Please plan to volunteer in 2009.

Nancy Kleintop, *President*

Our League Day Presenter

Sandra Frankel is serving her ninth term as Supervisor of the Town of Brighton; she is also a former member of the Brighton Board of Education.

She was appointed, along with other local leaders and experts from across the state, to the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, by former New York Governor Eliot Spitzer. They examine options for reducing redundancy and the cost of municipal government, in order to increase New York's competitiveness nationally and in the global market place.



Since Last Month...

The Natural Resources Committee took their wetlands model to Family Days at the Rochester Museum & Science Center on December 28 and 29. League Members Chris Pryor, Ann Jones, Jane Schmitt, Dorothy Borgus, Cynthia Drozd and volunteer Kate Leonard spent the two days demonstrating the benefits of wetlands. It is a display that children, along with parents/adults, enjoy and learn from. Many thanks to those who donated their time to this endeavor.

On January 6th, Sheila Abeling hosted "a coffee and" at her home and welcomed Barb Hendry, Phyllis Masters, Ellie Newell and Mimi Wilson. They met to discuss the naturalization ceremonies for 2009. These dedicated people help with the ceremonies in Rochester. Although Marcia Eisenberg couldn't attend, everyone volunteered to cover the ceremony dates. WE THANK YOU!

If anyone is interested in attending a naturalization ceremony and helping, please contact Sheila Abeling at 223-6819. We need volunteers! It's a wonderful opportunity to be with these new citizens. We always feel good after attending a ceremony!

Sheila Abeling, *V.P. Voter Service*

Does Lobbying for Domestic Violence Legislation Belong in the League Program?

Looking at our history, one can only say: absolutely. From its foundation the League of Women Voters was more than a Voter Service organization, as important as that is. For almost 90 years, the League has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. And it has tackled a diverse range of public policy issues....child welfare, education, the home and high prices, women in gainful occupations, public health and morals and independent citizenship for married women. And that was just in the 1920's!! Essentially, one can say what good is the vote if one does not know about the issues that a candidate stands for?

In the early 1990's concern about violence in our country became the focus of study. In 1994, the following national position was adopted: The League of Women Voters of the US supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support:

- Public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence,
- The active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior,
- The allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.

Subsequently, the League endorsed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which was passed in 1994 as part of a comprehensive crime bill. It has been renewed two more times, the last being 2005.

The State League has endorsed this national position under its Women's Issues/Social Policy category:

- Support of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence,
- Opposition to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of children.

Domestic Violence is the willful intimidation, assault, battery, sexual assault or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. It is an epidemic affecting Americans in all communities, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background. Stronger anti-violence laws and training for police and court personnel strengthen the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence and benefits us all...

(Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.publicpolicy@ncadv.org)

Further articles in the next Voters will elaborate on how each of us is affected by domestic violence. IT IS A COMMUNITY ISSUE!! The League belongs here.

Georgia DeGregorio, Chairwoman of Social Policy and LWVNY's Grassroots Lobbying Coordinator

The Movement Against the Electoral College

The most compelling argument against the Electoral College is that it prevents the direct election of the President by popular vote and is, therefore, contrary to modern principles of representative government. Studies show that more than 70 percent of American citizens favor the election of the President by popular vote. Beyond this basic theoretical objection is the very practical objection that the Electoral College system enables candidates who have not received the most votes cast by American voters to become President.

We have seen such an outcome four times in our history. The first time was the 1824 election which was won by John Q. Adams even though he received fewer electoral votes and fewer popular votes than Andrew Jackson.

In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes beat Samuel J. Tilden by one electoral vote, becoming President despite trailing in the popular vote by a count of 4,288,546 to 4,034,311. In 1888, Benjamin Harrison beat Grover Cleveland with an electoral vote of 233 to 168, despite Cleveland's popular vote margin of 5,534,488 to 5,443,892. Most recently, in the 2000 presidential election, George W. Bush received fewer popular votes than Albert Gore, Jr., but received a majority of electoral votes.

These circumstances have prompted much discussion on the advisability and feasibility of reforming our election process to eliminate the Electoral College and to elect the President by direct election. This conversation is not new. Over the past 200 years, according to the National Archives, more than 700 proposals have been introduced in Congress to reform or eliminate the Electoral College. Indeed, several joint resolutions were introduced in the current Congress on this issue. The proposals, all introduced in the House of Representatives, were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, where no action has been taken.

From LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Background Paper. Also see "The Electoral College - A Review" on page 7.

The "National Popular Vote Compact Proposal" (NPV) will be printed next issue in preparation for the consensus on NPV.



December Open House

The annual Holiday Open House, held December 11th at the AAUW House and hosted by the LWVRMA Board of Directors, brought the warmth of traditional foods, lively conversation about events of the day, and sharing of the beauty of the House. The evening's program was a discussion about consolidation of services and governmental entities in NYS by Scott Sittig, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Governmental Research, who has studied shared services and consolidation strategies in local government. Our thanks to Mr. Sittig for his presentation and to Pat Thompson, LWVRMA Director of Development, for the planning of this event.

Kathy Smith, *VP Action*.



Scott Sittig, *Senior Research Associate at the Center for Governmental Research*

Save the Date-March League Day Evening Meeting

Although International Women's Day is March 8, 2009 we are asking you to *mark your calendar* for the evening of THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2009 for a stimulating League evening and buffet dinner. Nora Bredes, Director of the University of Rochester's Anthony Center For Women's Leadership, will facilitate a discussion of the challenges facing women who seek public office. A distinguished panel of women officials, past and present, will share their experiences running and serving while contrasting these with contemporary opportunities for elected leadership. Join us and bring a guest. Price: \$30.00. Place to be determined – you will be hearing from us.

Please send reservations to: LWV/RMA, 45 Exchange Blvd., Rochester, NY 14614. Reservation deadline is February 23, 2009.

Buy Local: GROW MONROE

On September 29, 2008, the GROW Monroe program was officially announced to the public with 16 retail and two wholesale facilities participating. The program is the culmination of a partnership between Monroe County, the Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute at MCC, the Monroe County Farm Bureau and the Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. It is the first initiative of its kind locally.

This new initiative was created to encourage consumers to buy locally grown and produced agricultural products. The marketing program helps further strengthen agribusinesses and our economy by educating local consumers about products that are made or produced in the region and encouraging them to buy local whenever possible. The marketing program also provides participants a marketing manual which includes point of sale and branding materials.

This article is from MCC December 2008 publication, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE, with permission from R. King. For more information go to your computer: growmonroe.org, top right corner of page and click on GROW Monroe.

NOTE: This article and statements of position (below) were included in this VOTER as part of an ongoing effort to keep members informed of existing League positions and how we may help support them.

Jane Schmitt, *Editor*

LWVNYS statement of position under Urban Sprawl announced May 2000.

In order to conserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for its residents, New York State should take a proactive role in regional land use planning, enhancing urban neighborhoods, containing urban sprawl, and protecting agricultural land, open space, watersheds and other sensitive areas.

LWVUS Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policy, announced October 1988:

Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and protect the country's human and natural agricultural resources.

New Member

Mary Medley
46 Culver Pkwy.
Rochester, NY 14609
(585) 546-2456

COMING: Consensus on National Popular Vote

LWVRMA is participating in LWVUS Consensus sessions on the National Popular Vote Compact. We need to reach a position on what electoral reforms the League will be supporting for the US Presidential election in 2012.

Under the current system a candidate can win the Presidency without winning the most popular votes nationwide. The US Constitution gives the states exclusive and plenary control over the manner of awarding of their electoral votes. The winner-take-all rule is not in the Constitution. The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states (and D.C.).

LWVRMA is very fortunate to have Sarah Liebschutz, emeritus professor of history U of R, leading our discussions on March 12 and April 16. We'll meet at 1570 East Avenue from 12-1:30 for these consensus sessions. Information can be found at www.NationalPopularVote.com.

Katherine Smith, VP Action

Got Pills?

Unwanted Pharmaceutical Collection
(Collecting outdated, unwanted, unusable medicines)

Save the Date: March 7, 2009, 8 AM – 1 PM
Monroe County Rochester Operations Center
 444 East Henrietta Rd (follow signs on site)

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

SPONSORS: Monroe County Dept. of Environmental Services, Monroe County Sheriff's Dept, Wegmans Food Markets, Covanta Niagara, and Center for Environmental Information.

The purpose of this event is to collect pharmaceutical wastes. This may include controlled substances, outdated medicines, unwanted medications, over-the-counter medications or any pharmaceutical waste that is no longer needed, wanted or has passed its expiration date. This collection event is a residential collection only. Pharmacies, veterinarians or any other pharmaceutical business wastes will not be accepted.

For more information call 585-753-7600, option #3

From Charles Knauf, Environmental Health Analyst with Monroe County Health Department's Division of Environmental Health.



Quality Day Care

Following is the statement presented to the Monroe County Legislature hearing on the 2009 Budget, 12/9/08, by Katherine Smith, LWV/RMA Vice-President, Action.

The League of Women Voters, New York State, has had a strong policy position on public support for quality day care programs since the mid-1990's. Over the past dozen years or so we have lobbied for monies which support not only the children in our communities but their parent(s) who in many cases are trying to be responsible members of our work force as well as raising their children. In hard economic times like we expect for this coming year we (you in particular) are faced with the dilemma of not having the revenues of past years, yet needing to give more support to many in this community. Determining priorities and looking long term while dealing with very immediate, very trying circumstances is not a job we envy you.

This evening the legislative deputy clerk has been given copies of NYS LWV summary of our efforts to obtain public monies for subsidizing day care. As we review this, it brings to mind that if we had made these programs a top priority a decade ago we might find our community in a very different spot today. But, looking to our job tonight and to 2009, LWV/RMA encourages all of the legislators to look for monies for day care and to support our County Executive in her efforts with other public entities (e.g. City of Rochester Recreation Department and Rochester Public Schools 3 and 4 year-old programs) and private/public partnerships in restoring the dollars needed to serve all the children and their families in 2009.

Kudos: 2008 Open World Program!



Certificate of Achievement for our local League from LWVUS for our participation in the Open World Program.

FEBRUARY 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 March VOTER Deadline Social Policy 1:30pm	3	4	5 Evening League Program	6	7
8	9	10	11 Natural Resources 2:00PM	12 Executive Com Naturalization Ceremony 2:00 pm	13 Local Gov't 10AM	14
15	16	17	18	19 Naturalization Ceremony 11:00 am	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Board Mtg	27	28

MARCH 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 April VOTER Deadline	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Social Policy	10	11 Natural Resources 2:00PM	12 NPV Consensus 12:00pm Naturalization Ceremonies 11:00am & 2:00pm Executive Com.	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Local Government	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Board Meeting	27	28
29	30	31				

*Board meets at 2:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month. For a location, please call the office.
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 1570 East Avenue at 12:00 pm 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. For Natural Resources details, call Chris Pryor 392-4918
Social Policy meets at the home of Joan Rosenthal, 244-6255. For Social Policy details, call Georgia DiGregorio at 787-9692
For Local Government details, call Beth Keigher 271-6694*

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.

Board meetings of the LWV/RMA are open to membership.

The Electoral College - A Review

The following article is printed as background for the upcoming consensus on National Popular Vote.

Although the LWVUS has specifically adopted a position calling for the abolition of the Electoral College, a short review of the mechanics of that system of Selection of the President is helpful to an understanding of the National Popular Vote Compact.

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. In short, the people of the United States vote for electors who then vote for the President and Vice President.

Each state is entitled to a number of presidential electors equal to its total representation in the House and Senate. The District of Columbia is awarded a number of electors equal to that of the least populous state.

The founding fathers designed this constitutional plan to promote several principles they considered important. One goal was to ensure that smaller states had a role in the election of the President. Secondly, the emphasis on the power of the state as contrasted to the power of the individual voter fostered the principles of federalism which are the core of the governmental process. Finally, the use of electors rather than popular vote assuaged concerns that the electorate was not competent or knowledgeable enough to be entrusted with the direct election of important government officials, such as the President and Vice President.

The electors are selected, according to the Constitution, in the "manner" designated by the state's "legislature" (the Congress in the case of the District). At present,

the "manner" chosen by every state is by popular election. Most of the states (and the District of Columbia) use a winner-take-all system, in which the candidate who receives a majority of the vote, or a plurality of the popular vote (less than 50 percent but more than any other candidate) takes all of the State's electoral votes. In Maine and Nebraska, the winner of the popular vote in each congressional district wins an elector, and the remaining two electors are chosen based on the state-wide vote.

On Election Day, the voters cast their ballots for electors, even though the names of the candidates for President and Vice President are often the names shown on the ballot. Each state's electors meet forty days after Election Day, and the formal balloting for president takes place at those meetings.

Many different proposals to alter the presidential election process by amending the Constitution, including direct nation-wide election by the people, have been offered over the years. None have been passed by Congress and sent to the States for ratification. Under the most common method for amending the Constitution, an amendment must be proposed by a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress and ratified by three-fourths of the states.

From LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Background Paper.

Remember to make your reservation for the evening March League Day on March 5th honoring International Women's Day!

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



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**March VOTER
Deadline is February 2!**

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

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

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending; we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
William Wadsworth,
"The world is too much with us"