



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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Join Us For League Day

THE NEW VOTING MACHINES

Speakers:

Peter Quinn, *Election Commissioner, R*

Thomas Ferrarese, *Election Commissioner, D*

January 8, 2009

12- 1:30 PM

1570 East Ave.

Enter from either East Ave or University Ave.

Please Note Location Change!

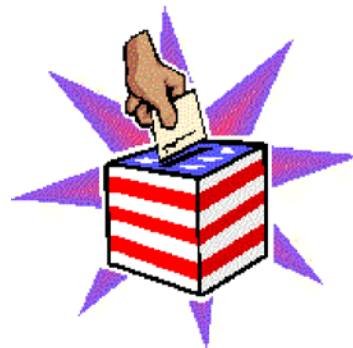
Were you confident your vote was really counted?

Were you offered the option of using a new/old machine?

Were election inspectors adequately trained?

Did the new machine(s) work?

To find the answers to these and other questions, attend our January League Day!



From Your President

by Nancy Kleintop



Annually, the state League sponsors a briefing at the United Nations. As an NGO (non-governmental organization) at the UN, the League has a full time observer and can request UN research on various topics. On December 1st the briefing was, *“The Impact of Global Warming on Women and Children Around the World”*. These briefings are always humbling and reinforce the need for League and for compassionate support of the issues. Attending were Pat Thompson, Sheila Abeling, Georgia DeGregorio and myself.

The presenters at the briefing, Rachel T. Harris, Maaïke Teunissen-Jansen and Michelle Ferenz, are all experts in this field. Their work attempts to organize a reverse in the cycle of illness and poverty created by climate changes. These changes have resulted in an increase in hurricanes, droughts and floods. They have caused 3.5 million more deaths from hunger, 1.8 million more deaths from diarrheal diseases, and 1 million more deaths from malaria. Women make up 85% of these statistics. The causes are water related and their impact is most dramatic in Africa, parts of Brazil, Mexico

and South Asia. Additional problems manifested by these conditions included an increase in stunted growth in children, decrease in the number of women being educated and an increase in local wars. As a result, the Millenium Development Goals of the UN are not being met.

The project for the UN staff is to write gender protocols into the framework of the Convention on Climate Change when it meets. This is vital because woman have no recognition as stake holders in the present situation. They also want to work to have gender protocols written into the Kyoto Conventions. By building a Global Gender and Climate Alliance, the UN hopes to educate women at the community level to use practices which can reverse the impact of climate change on their villages and cities. They also want to bring the voice of women and children to the table and insure that a human rights component will be brought into the climate change debate.

This briefing was thought provoking and well researched, and I was reminded of how hard it is to bring change about. I felt so fortunate to be with a group that can cope with these changes more humanely. It reminded me of how focused and hard we need to work on the impact of climate change. Most of all, I reflected on how this experience is so symbolic of this time of year. It is a time for reflection, thankfulness, giving and hope!

Have a fulfilling Holiday, Nancy Kleintop

Call to Action!

Mary Wilson also attended the UN Briefing, and she reminds us that the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have not been ratified by the Senate. She encourages us all to write or contact our Senators to encourage the USA to do this. With the upcoming change in leadership in Washington, this is a good time to let our senators know how important this is.

In case you have misplaced your WHO REPRESENTS YOU, the address is below. Or email Schumer.senate.gov. Also refer to “Presidents Report” and “Kyoto & the Convention on Climate Control” in this VOTER.

Schumer Contact Info:

Charles E. Schumer
3040 Federal Bldg.
100 State Street
Rochester, NY 14614

or

313 Hart Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510



New Members

Beverly Neatrou
3337 Clover St.
Pittsford, NY 14534
585-381-0501
bnrn@rochester.rr.com

New National Members:

Pamela Cooper Vince
455 Kilbourn Rd.
Rochester, NY 14618
Karlene Gunther
472 French Rd.
Rochester, NY 14618
585-473-0234



League members attending UN Briefing: Pat Thompson, Nancy Kleintop, Mary G. Wilson (President LWVUS), Sheila Abeling, and Martha Kennedy (President LWVNY).

A Big Thank You!

The League of Women Voters hosted five delegates who came to Rochester from Ukraine for 8 days in October as part of the Open World Program. Several of the delegates are members of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, an organization with goals similar to those of the League of Women Voters. Nataliya Vasylivna Lynnyk said that there had been an unsuccessful attempt to establish a women's organization in Ukraine. The LWV has provided her with inspiration to try again to form a women's group. We will ask LWVUS if it can provide support to the Ukraine organization.

The last two VOTERS featured articles on the Ukrainians' arrival and activities. Due to space constraints last month, we were unable to adequately thank all those who participated in making this a memorable week for our guests and the League. Many volunteers and a lot of planning were required in order to host our Ukrainian visitors for 8 days. The League wishes to thank the following for all their efforts and participation in the Open World Program:

- Dinner host for the entire group: Judy and Bill Dresnack
- Welcome Event - Dorothy Borgus and Kathy Smith
- Niagara Falls escorts: Art and Judy Weinstein, Tamara and Walter Denysenko and Galyna Lisova.
- League Presenters: Sheila Abeling, Dorothy Borgus, Georgia DiGregorio, Barbara Hendry, Joan Rosenthal and Judy Weinstein
- Shopping expeditions: Barbara Hendry, Nancy Kleintop and Chris Pryor
- Drivers: Dayle Bird, Dorothy Borgus, Sally Brown, Georgia DiGregorio, Judy Dresnack, Barbara Hendry, Nancy Kleintop, Chris Pryor and Judy Weinstein.
- Restaurant and concert escorts: The Bundschuhs and Schmitts
- Arranging political meetings: Kathy Smith
- Assistance with the program, by donating lunch and dinner and helping arrange for meetings, the Ukrainian Federal Credit Union and the Irondequoit-Poltova Sister Cities Committee
- Hosts: Anna and John Bundschuh, Georgia DiGregorio, Ann Jones, Galyna Lisova and John & Jane Schmitt. Special thanks to League friend Galyna Lisova who hosted four of the Ukrainian visitors for several nights.

Thanks to the following professionals who met with the delegates:

Jon Greenbaum, MetroJustice; Professor Richard G. Niemi, Adjunct Associate Professor Ewa Hauser and Curt Smith from the University of Rochester; Rick Hannon, Bill Ansbro, Andrea Guzzetta and Bill Sulli-

van from the City of Rochester; Supervisor Mary Ellen Heyman; Town Board members John Bovenzi, Barb Genier, Tony Favro from the Town of Irondequoit; Bill Garvin, Carrie Andrews, Patrick Domaratz, Tom Gillett and Margaret Bartolotti of NYSUT; Supervisor Sandra Frankel, Town of Brighton; Erika Rosenberg and Scott Sittig from the Center for Governmental Research; and Peter M. Quinn and Thomas F. Ferrarese, Monroe County Election Commissioners.

And a big thank you to Judy Weinstein for planning and organizing the 8 days.



The Irondequoit-Poltova Sister Cities Committee sponsored a meeting with 20 members of the Ukrainian community who were interested in hearing first-hand about current events in Ukraine. There were spirited discussions about religion and what languages should be used in Ukraine.

Kyoto & the Convention on Climate Control

The Kyoto Protocol is a protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an international environmental treaty produced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3–14 June 1992.

The major distinction between the Protocol and the Convention is that while the Convention encouraged industrialized countries to stabilize Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, the Protocol commits them to do so.

Recognizing that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity, the Protocol places a heavier burden on developed nations under the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities."

The latest UN Climate Change Conference opened Monday, December 1 in Poland. The US Senate has ratified neither the Kyoto Protocol nor the United Nations Framework for Climate Change.

For more information, google Kyoto Protocol; this information and other articles are available.

Integrity Reform Agenda for the 111th Congress

The following statement was issued November 6th by the Brennan Center for Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen and U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG).

Our organizations worked hard to pass the landmark ethics and lobbying reforms that were enacted in the 110th Congress. At the time, we said that our next major battle would be to reform the way federal campaigns are financed.

A central theme of the 2008 presidential race was the need to fix Washington. President-elect Obama, for example, said during the campaign, “to fix health care we have to fix Washington.”

In order to fix Washington, the fundamental problems caused by the undue influence of contributions over government decisions must be effectively addressed. While other issues on our reform agenda are important, the way Washington works is not going to change until we fundamentally change the nation’s campaign finance laws.

In order to accomplish this goal, the overriding priority on our reform agenda for the 111th Congress is to repair the presidential public financing system and to create a new public financing system for congressional races.

The key roles that influence & money played in creating the national financial crisis provides just one more example of the enormous costs to citizens and taxpayers that come from federal candidates being dependent on special interest groups, lobbyists, bundlers and large contributions for their campaign funds.

It is widely acknowledged that the absence of effective regulation and oversight played a major role in the massive financial crisis that has occurred. Campaign contributions to federal officeholders from the financial sector played a major role in thwarting effective regulation and oversight.

It is no coincidence that during the past decade, the financial sector contributed \$1.5 billion to federal candidates and their parties, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, with 56 percent of the funds going to Republicans and 44 of the funds going to Democrats, a bipartisan approach to influence-seeking.

Our organizations call on President-elect Obama and members of Congress to take action to fundamentally reform the nation’s campaign finance laws.

Naturalization Ceremonies

On December 11th at 10:00 am in the Monroe County Office Building, Phyllis Masters welcomed new citizens at a Naturalization ceremony. Mimi Wilson met with more new citizens at 1:00 pm in the Federal Building on the same day.

Thank you to Ellie Newell, Barb Hendry, Phyllis Masters, Marcia Eisenberg, Mimi Wilson, and Sheila Abelling for celebrating with so many new citizens during 2008!

The first Naturalization ceremony of 2009 will be held on Jan. 8th. What a great way to start the New Year!

Update on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Governor Paterson vetoed the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act in December because of budget concerns, although he considered it a “very worthy initiative.” Lead advocates are working with the Governor’s staff and the Department of Health to come up with primary prevention programs either through new legislation or working within existing regulations and programs.

There is some good news, though. The Department of Health, at the Governor’s urging, is “revising regulations so that comprehensive follow-up interventions for children will be triggered when a child has a blood lead level of 15 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dl) instead of the current level of 20 mcg/dl.” And the Department will conduct research to determine if they should lower the blood lead level threshold to 10 mcg/dl. Even though this is not a primary prevention measure, it will enable more environmental assessments and house inspections to be made because more children will come to the attention of health providers.

Also, there is a legislative proposal (S8179-A) that would link the statewide immunization registry and the statewide registry of children with elevated blood lead levels, enabling pediatricians to determine whether a child has been tested for lead. It will also improve the Department of Health’s ability to survey screening rates.

It is possible that Governor Paterson could introduce a new primary prevention legislation as a “Governor’s Bill”. This means that the Governor can find a sponsor in the Legislature who will introduce the bill and greatly facilitate its passage through the Legislature.

We will continue monitoring the situation and provide you with updates.

Joan Rosenthal, *Social Policy Committee*



Local League Prioritizes Issues

LWV/RMA's Board of Directors selected three legislative priorities for action in the NYS Legislative 2009 session and sent its recommendations to LWVNYS in November. The state's legislative agenda, based on submissions from local leagues, will be published in the spring.

One of our main concerns is the establishment of an independent Redistricting Commission to draw new Congressional, Assembly and State Senate lines after the 2010 census. We believe it's important to do this during the 2009 legislative session so the membership of the Commission and its publicly established procedures will be known before the 2010 state-wide election season begins.

Citizens need to know the background of the Commission members. With 26 of the 29 congressional seats now held by one party and all branches of the state government controlled by this same political party, now more than ever, all voters must be assured that elections of our representatives are conducted to reflect the viewpoint of all.

Transparency in the drawing of district lines is necessary in order that citizens know that the purpose of the process is always to establish districts that represent the will of the people, not keeping political parties in power. We want to keep track of each step of this process. Then we can have confidence when we vote that indeed, each ballot will have the weight of one person, one vote.

Campaign financing is our second priority and court reform is LWV/RMA's third choice. Future VOTERS will report on these issues.

Katherine Smith, VP Action



Since Last Month

On November 19 Georgia DeGregorio, Off Board Specialist on Domestic Violence for the New York State League, addressed the General Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara Falls on Domestic Violence.

Nancy Kleintop, President of LWV/RMA spoke at an Election Night Program at Seymour Library in Brockport.

Katherine Smith, our VP of Action, addressed the Monroe County Legislature the evening of Dec. 9th in support of subsidized day care.

Susan B. Anthony Luncheon

This year's luncheon will be held Wednesday, February 11, at noon at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Noted journalist and author, Lynn Sherr, will be the speaker. Shirley Eberly will be organizing a League table for the event. For those planning to attend, please contact Shirley at SEberly@infionline.net

Phosphorus is Back

Many of us remember back in the 60's when phosphorus was a big problem in our lakes and ponds. A massive effort was made by citizens, organizations (such as the LWV) and legislators to eliminate phosphorus from laundry detergents, to reduce it in fertilizers, to remove it from our waste water and to improve farm management practices. And it helped! Now the problem is back. Those dishwashers, on which we all rely, were not prevalent in the 60's; therefore, dish detergents were not targeted. The article below is from a brochure entitled, "Phosphorus Free Dishwasher Detergent", published by the Sierra Club. Excerpts are printed below with permission from them.

"Phosphorus is a nutrient essential for plant growth. It is found in lawn fertilizers, some detergents and human and other animal waste. Too much phosphorus in water causes algal plant growth. These plants blanket the water surface during the summer making it difficult and unpleasant to boat or fish in these areas. When these plants die, they smell and can harm fish and other creatures by changing the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water."

"To reduce these problems we must dramatically reduce the amount of phosphorus we put into the water. A significant proportion of the phosphorus load going to wastewater treatment plants from domestic sewage comes from automatic dishwashing detergent."

"Washington state has banned the sale of household detergents with more than 0.05 % phosphorus; the law went into effect in some areas in July 1, 2008, and statewide (will go into effect) two years later. Five other states have introduced similar legislation."

"Phosphorus free dish detergents work great! The key ingredient that cleans dishes, the enzymes, are now available and cheap. Please help keep phosphorus out of Lake Ontario and other lakes by using phosphorus-free products."

For information about phosphorus-free dish detergents, consult Consumer Reports, August 2007 and current articles in the newspapers and magazines on green products; for information on how phosphorus gets into and impacts our water, go to www.water-research.net/phosphate.htm.

JANUARY 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Happy New Year!	2	3
4	5 February VOTER Deadline	6	7	8 Executive Committee League Day 12-1:30pm	9	10
11	12	13	14 Natural Resources 2:00pm	15 Local Government	16 Social Policy 10:00am	17
18	19	20	21	22 Board Meeting	23	24
25	26 Social Policy	27	28	29	30	31

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	13 Local Gov't 10AM	14 Happy Valentine's Day!
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Social Policy	24	25	26 Board Mtg	27	28

*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.

Selection of the President

The League's History

A League study of the presidential electoral process culminated in its 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as an essential element of representative government. The League also has supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

At the 2002 Convention, the League voted to expand and update its position. The League came to concurrence on a new position in June 2004. The new position takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

At the 2008 Convention, the delegates voted to adopt a new study, "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President."

The League's Position

Statement of Position on Selection of the President, as Announced by the National Board, January 1970, Revised March 1982 and Updated June 2004:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the

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presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

Explanation of the Position

The League strongly believes that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely "reformed." One "reform" which the League specifically rejects is the voting by electors based on proportional representation in lieu of the present "winner-takes-all" method. Such a system would apportion the electoral votes of a state based on the popular vote in that state. Instead of making the Electoral College more representative, such proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the President to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the President by the House further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Background Paper, by Carol Mellor

League Days/Consensus Sessions for National Popular Vote will be held

March 12th & April 16th, 12:00-1:30 pm.



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**



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**February VOTER
Deadline is January 5!**

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

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

Ring out the old, ring in the new
Ring, happy bells across the snow:
The year is going, let him go
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, In Memoriam