

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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2009

ANNUAL MEETING!

June 4, 2009, 11:30am – 2:00pm

Locust Hill Country Club
2000 Jefferson Rd.

Loggia Room

(Enter through west side door off parking lot, go through dining room to private area.)

Please join us and celebrate our 2008-2009 Year!

Business meeting will begin
at 12:30, members only.

RSVP BY MAY 27; LUNCH IS \$25.00

Deadline is May 27. Send check to:

LWV/RMA
45 Exchange Blvd #508
Rochester, NY 14614

A quorum is required for the business meeting.

Board Actions & The 2009-2010 Budget

The Board of Directors at its March 23 and April 23 meetings discussed the Budget Committee report. The following actions were taken:

- Recommend to the members at the Annual Meeting an increase of \$5 for individual LWVRMA membership dues to help cover the increased cost of LWVUS PMP (per member payment).
- Propose to members on June 4 a fund raising activity, possibly a garage sale, to help defray the loss of income from Open World Foreign Visitors Program in 2009-2010.
- Present the budget to the members in a format that shows 2007-2008 actual budget, 2008-2009 to-date financial transactions and 2009-2010 proposed budget (see page 5). Please note two changes from budget in May Voter that reflect Board actions.

The Budget Committee Report suggests some ways to close the slight imbalance of income and expenses. The Board of Directors looks forward to the Annual Meeting's discussion and adoption of the 2009-2010 budget.

Kathy Smith, *Acting President*

More on Childhood Lead Poisoning

Although Governor Paterson vetoed the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act in December because of budget restrictions, he is working with lead advocates and the Department of Health to come up with primary prevention programs either through new legislation or working within existing regulations and programs.

In the budget there is a \$2.5 million dollar increase for lead poisoning prevention. Funding for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is increased, and this pilot program made permanent. The increased funding will allow further expansion of existing pilot projects to additional zip codes, support enhanced local activities including coordination with municipal building code departments and add one to five additional counties to the program.

The Department of Health, at the Governor's urging, will revise 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. 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.

Joan Rosenthal, *Social Policy Committee
Off-Board Specialist for Lead Poisoning*

Update on Alkaline Batteries

The Natural Resources Committee recently discussed the disposal of alkaline batteries. In previous months we had determined that rechargeable batteries could be taken to many stores for recycling. Use web site www.rbrc.org to find the closest store for this. Onondaga County does have a great system for disposing of alkaline batteries safely. Several retail stores, especially Wegmans, collect the batteries for disposal. This program costs about \$40,000/year, and we think it's unlikely that we could get the funding for it. Monroe County is not required to collect alkaline batteries as hazardous waste since the batteries no longer contain mercury – yet they are still hazardous and should not be going into local landfills. The DEC is supposed to come up with guidelines, and Monroe County will have to comply with them. Meanwhile, individuals can buy containers and then ship them to companies where alkaline batteries are recycled. There is a charge: a 12lb. container costs \$24.00. For more information go to www.batteryrecycling.com/.

Chris Pryor, *Chairperson, Natural Resources*.

Sunlight and Transparency

SunlightNY.com

On April 7, 2009, Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo unveiled Sunlight 2.0. It is a new version of his government accountability and transparency website that enhances the public's ability to access and review state and local government information.

Project Sunlight is more than just a repository of government information; it is also an educational resource. The website offers information on the basics of state government, how candidates report campaign finances, what lobbyists are required to publicly report, and member items categorized by the name of the sponsoring elected official and the county in which the money is directed. It also includes a series of videos to enhance the ease with which users can understand the educational materials. Go to SunlightNY.com for more!

Recovery.gov

LWVUS recently informed us about this amazing website regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It contains the Funds Distributed, updated on a weekly basis, along with charts on who is receiving the money, how much, how it is being spent, etc. It includes a section on Relief for Working Americans, Justice Assistance Grant Program, Indian Affairs Recovery, Transforming Federal Buildings into High Performance Green Buildings, and much, much more. CHECK IT OUT! Go to Recovery.gov for more!

Membership Summary, LWV/RMA

Description	Total
Local Ind	191
1st Household	31
2nd Household	30
National	31
Honorary	5
Student	1
Total	289

New member names have been printed in the VOTER. Georgia DeGregorio and Sula Baxter have made “welcome” phone calls and even taken some new members to lunch to introduce them to the local League and our activities. We would like to expand on this endeavor next year.

New Members for the period 2008-2009 are:

Gloria Bailey	Dr. Joan Parry
Ged and Sandra Brady	Mary Pizzente Morich
Julie Behlok	Ruth Lawrence
Theresa Bronte	Beverly Neatrou
Salena Boyd	Pamela Cooper Vince
Arlys Buckingham	Virginia Busack
Cynthia Drozd	Mrs. William Feldman
Linda Henehan Hanna	Deborah Hughes
Eileen Hartman	Joanne VanZandt

Some of these names are not in the directory either because they joined nationally, and we were notified after the printing of the 2008-2009 Membership Directory, or they joined after the printing of the directory. Welcome to all new members. A special thank you to Chris Burleigh, Sheila Abeling, and Rae Bernacki for their work compiling and publishing the 2008-2009 membership directory.

Sula Baxter, *VP Program*

Coming in September

- September 9, 2009 - Fair Election Practice Signing Ceremony, Noon, Monroe County Office Building
- September 12, 2009 GARAGE SALE to benefit LWV/RMA, 22 Indian Springs Lane (off Clover, just south of Elmwood), 9:00am-3:00pm.

Clean out your basement, attic, garage and storage areas and donate those no longer needed treasures to our super duper garage sale. Call the office at 262-3730 if you have items to donate and find out when and where to take them. Also, if you have a couple of hours to donate the day of the sale or the day before, call 262-3730. Who knows – you may find a treasure for yourself! Hope to see you Saturday, September 12!

- September 17, 2009 - US Constitution Day and League Day, Nazareth College, 3:00 Reception, 4:00 NYS Supreme Court Justice, Evelyn Frazee.

Help with Voter Registration

Anyone interested in helping with voter registrations, please contact Sheila Abeling at 585-223-6819. We will be starting our efforts in June, and we need your help!



Mailing Label Change

If you noticed the change in your address label, it is due to the MOVE UPDATE program initiated by the US Post Office. In order to opt out of the new postal program for continuous automatic updating of our mailing list by an independent agency - and the expense entailed with doing this - we are required to add “or current resident” to our mailing addresses. We hope you understand and will notify us immediately if you have a change in address.

Jane Schmitt, *VOTER Editor*

New Members:

Julie Behlok
18 Hanson Circle
Henrietta, NY 14467
585-321-977
jbehlok@gmail.com

NYSLWV

Linda Breed
150 Washington St.
Palmyra, NY 14522
LBREED@rochester.rr.com

National LWUS

Dr. Joan Parry
PO Box 1118
Penfield, NY 14526
585-657-9220



Sara Liebshutz
discussing NPV



April Consensus on NPV

Over the Summer: Naturalization Ceremonies

May 8th, am, RIT

Phyllis Masters and Mimi Wilson will be attending.

May 14th, 10 am

Monroe County Office Building
Marcia Eisenberg will be attending.

June 11, 10 am

Monroe County Office Building
Phyllis Masters will be attending.

June 11, 00 pm

Federal Building
Mimi Wilson will be attending.

July 4, am

Genesee Country Museum
Barb Hendry and Phyllis Masters will be attending.

July 9, 10 am

Monroe County Office Building
Ellie Newell will be attending.

August 13, pm

Federal Building

August 13, am

Monroe County Office Building

August 13 am

Seneca Falls

If you wish to attend any of these ceremonies, please call Sheila Abeling at 585-223-6819 or sheiler162007@gmail.com to confirm the time and place.

Some interesting facts about naturalized citizens from the Department of Homeland Security- Office of Immigration Statistics:

- People naturalized as U.S. Citizens in 2008 - 1,046,539
- Number who were men (there are also 345 listed as unknown) - 456,767
- Number of those who were women - 589, 427
- Naturalized in New York state - 90, 572



April League Day at Sunning



Mary Wilson,
President of LWVUS

What is PAVP?

Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) is a new project initiated by the LWVUS. You may have thought that the 2008 election was relatively smooth, but a newly released study conducted by Cooperative Congressional Election Survey found that four to five million voters did not vote in the 2008 election because of either registration issues or they never received an absentee ballot; an additional two to four million registered voters were discouraged from voting because of long lines and voter identification requirements. Leagues continue to battle these barriers to voting. Through the PAVP project, we are tracking 34 specific pieces of legislation that would add to the discouraging numbers mentioned above if they became law, and we are taking action. Some of the “highlights” include fighting against voter identification in Missouri, South Carolina and Texas, against proof of citizenship requirements in Georgia, and against third party voter registration restrictions in New Mexico and Florida. The struggle to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible voters continues.

Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project (PAVP) has been created to help to bolster its capacity for continuing and expanding its critical state-based advocacy to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations.

Background: In 2002, in the wake of the tumultuous 2000 election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to modernize the nation’s election processes and to help ensure that eligible voters are no longer deprived of the franchise due to administrative errors.

Unfortunately, in many states, politicians have seized on this opportunity as a means of disenfranchising targeted voters through changes in election laws. These new measures have the potential of disenfranchising more Americans than any Election Day problems we have seen in the past.

The League is working to:

1. Oppose ID and Documentary Proof of Citizenship
2. Improve Administration of Statewide Voter Database Systems
3. Guard Against Undue Restrictions on Voter Registration
4. Improve Polling Place Management
5. Improve Poll Worker Training and Strengthening.

To learn more about PAVP visit www.lwv.org.

LWVUS March 19, 2009. To learn more about PAVP visit www.lwv.pavp.

Budget Process

In 2007 a three-way agreement with legislative leaders was reached to change NYS's budget process. This legislation encompassed many of the budget items the LWVNY has been advocating for years. The new law called for:

- Quick start budget discussions will be required each November and quarterly meetings will be held thereafter between executive and legislature;
- The consensus revenue process will be expedited;
- The State Comptroller will be authorized to resolve disputes over revenue;
- Plain language impact statements will be prepared on a range of program areas, including local governments;
- The legislature will resolve budget bill disagreements by prompt referral to joint conference committee;
- The legislature will be statutorily required to enact a balanced budget;
- The legislature will be required to explain fiscal impacts of changes it makes to the governor's budget bills;
- There will be a new rainy day fund setting aside three percent of the General Fund in reserve;
- Discretionary funds often called members items will be itemized and must be specific. There must be an individual vote taken on every item;
- Messages of Necessity must be real necessity, such as a state emergency.

The LWVNY gave the new Governor a pass last session though we were critical of lack of transparency in last year's budget process. Very few meetings were held in public and fewer conference committees met. As the budget was prepared in the fall of 2008, the Division of Budget did hold public hearings across the state on agency budgets.

The Governor released his 2009-2010 Budget on December 16th in an attempt to move the budget process forward more quickly in light of the very difficult deficit budget. The fiscal committees in the legislature began budget hearings slightly earlier this year. However the final budget was completed in private with the Governor, the Speaker and Majority Leader.

LWVNY will continue to make it a priority for the Budget process to follow the guidelines listed above. Next year is an election year for statewide offices and our positions on this most important state function will be widely reported and discussed.

Campaign Finance Reform

Recent US Supreme Court cases have reaffirmed that money is speech and cannot be restricted. Therefore, New York must develop a voluntary public finance system for election campaigns. Below are items that must be included in any comprehensive finance legislation:

- Eliminate soft money of unlimited size to house-keeping accounts.
- Decrease campaign contributions
- Eliminate transfers from one political committee to another.
- Increase disclosure.
- Sharply increased enforcement.
- Ban campaign fundraising during the legislative session.
- Limit reliance on special interests for elections fund.

Now is the time for the LWVNY with our good government colleagues to take full advantage of this election year 2009-2010 cycle to press for changes. Please call your state representatives and encourage them to support these points.

Senator James Alesi	223-1800
Senator Joe Robach	225-3650
Assemblymember Joe Errigo	334-5210
Assemblymember Susan John.	244-5255
Assemblymember Joe Morelle	467-0410
Assemblymember David Gantt.	454-3670
Assemblymember Bill Reilich	225-4190
Assemblymember David Koon	223-9130



JUNE 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	4	4 ANNUAL MEETING Locust Hill CC 11:30 am	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Naturalization 11:00	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Have a Wonderful Summer!

SEPTEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
September VOTER deadline is August 3!		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Fair Election Campaign Sign- ing Ceremony	10	11	12 LWV/RMA Garage Sale
13	14	15	16	17 US Constitution Day/League Day	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Board Meeting	25	26
27	28	29	30			

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*

11:00 AM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building, 39 W. Main St;

2:00 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.

For more complete information consult our website at www.lwv-rma.org, call the office at 262-3730 or e-mail us at LWV/RMA@frontiernet.net

Since Last Month

Katherine Smith, Acting President of the League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro, was invited to attend the press conference in Rochester to roll out the new updated Sunlight website. Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director for the League of Women Voters said, "League members have used Project Sunlight with great success and welcome these and future upgrades to its data and usability. We applaud Attorney General Cuomo for his efforts to reform state government through this web site. The public has a right to know how their government functions and Project Sunlight is an important resource that makes valuable information easy to find." Also see p 2.

Katherine Smith and Georgia DeGregorio spoke to Women for Obama on April 13 about the League's lobbying efforts, voter service programs and public education forums. This group is exploring women's groups in the area that they may individually join in order to continue working on issues they began to politically support during the 2008 election.

Ann Jones read a statement before the Monroe County Legislature on April 14 regarding the proposed Ellison Park Master Plan. It proposes to allow mountain bikes (now prohibited) on hiking trails, specifically in the Tryon Park area. Such uses are considered incompatible; mountain bikes disturb the soil and lead to erosion of the trails. The LWVUS believes in stewardship of the land and conservation of natural resources.

On April 21st, Barbara Hendry and Sheila Abeling met with the East Rochester College Club. Barbara spoke about the League of Women Voters. She shared history, goals, and what we are about. The audience was very interested in our organization and had some wonderful

questions. Barbara did an outstanding job representing the League!

The Board of Directors plus League members gathered on the morning of May 29 at the home of Gretchen Shafer to meet with LWVUS President, Mary Wilson, who was visiting Leagues in NYS. She spoke about League priorities and specifically discussed the impact of global warming on the poor and on women. Many thanks to Gretchen for hosting this event.

Chris Fredette, Jane Schmitt and Elizabeth Rabjohns (friend of the League) demonstrated the wetlands model May 2 at *Our Fragile World Environmental Fair* at the Seneca Park Zoo.



Katherine Smith Honored

Katherine Smith will receive the Antoinette Brown Blackwell Society's Henrietta Woman of the Year Award on May 20, 2009.

This award is given every year to an outstanding resident of the Town of Henrietta. The ceremony will take place at 8 PM at the Henrietta Town Hall, 475 Calkins Rd., Henrietta.

Ms. Smith is described as a tireless worker for her community. She is an advocate for many causes at the local and state levels, including early childhood programs. She has also served on the Riverton Community Association, worked with the Women's Interfaith Coalition, and is currently Acting President of the League of Voters of the Rochester MetroArea.

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 \$cale



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League of Women Voters**

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Rochester **VOTER**

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

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Budget

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VOTER Editor

Chris Burleigh
VOTER Layout & Production

**September VOTER
Deadline is August 3!**

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

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

All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem.
Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*