



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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VOTE!

“There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers.”
Susan B. Anthony

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Polls will be open from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Voters will be selecting candidates for the following:

- Monroe County Legislature
- City of Rochester Council
- Sheriff, Monroe County
- Mayor, City of Rochester
- Town Supervisors
- Town Board Members

And in some towns: Superintendent of Highways, Town Justice, Town Clerk

Two NYS Constitutional Amendments:

+To convey Adirondack Park Lands to National Grid for power lines

+Allow Inmates to perform work for non-profit organizations (see enclosed brochure for details)

VOTING MACHINES

What voting machines will Monroe County use this year? The lever machine will be available at each polling place this year. Also at each site will be a paper ballot-ballot marker scanner machine (known as a BMD).

The exceptions to this are the Wheatland polling place and Charlotte District (#6). At these two polling places, there will be no lever machines present. The paper ballot-ballot marker scanner will be the only machine available. These two polling places will be pilot districts for this year.

Remember to cast your ballot on Nov. 3rd!!

Sheila Abeling, VP Voter Services



Since Last Month

A correction to the last issue of the VOTER: Barb Hendry also opened absentee ballots on Sept. 15th with Sheila Abeling, Bertha Simpkins and Jane Schmitt. Sorry about the omission!

Sept. 17th, there was a naturalization at Brockport College. Barb Hendry and Phyllis Masters participated in that ceremony. The college was hosting a Diversity Conference.

Sept. 22nd, Chris Fredette, Jane Schmitt and Elizabeth Rabjohns (friend of the League) demonstrated the wetlands model at a Conservation Field Day. 438 students were bused to Ellison Park and participated in the activities. According to the presenters, it is very gratifying to see how quickly the students understand the principles being demonstrated and how enthused they get about saving wetlands.

Sept. 22nd, Sept. 29th, and Oct. 6th, the League conducted voter registrations in the new part of the Rundel Library. People were very receptive and in turn, the League was able to help several citizens with registrations and provide information. We hope to participate again in the future.

Saturday, Oct. 3rd, Lauren Frank and Annette Miller conducted a voter registration at the "Gates Chili Healthy Family Festival". The Gates Police Department, the Gates Chili Central School District and the Towns of Gates and Chili hosted the event. This is our second year at the festival.

Tuesday, Oct. 6th, the League conducted a voter registration at St. John Fisher College. The Student Government allowed us to use their Campus Union. It's always wonderful being on a college campus and a pleasure to meet so many interested students.

The League is participating in two naturalization ceremonies in November. Sheila Abeling will be at the Federal Building on Nov. 10th at 1:00 pm and Marcia Eisenberg will be at the Monroe County Office Building on Nov. 19th at 10:00 am.

Be sure to vote on Nov. 3rd!!

The League will be opening absentee ballots on Nov. 3rd. If you can help, call me at 223-6819.

Sheila Abeling, *VP Voters Service*

Notify Us About Changes

If your address, phone number and/or e-mail changes, please be sure to notify the LWV/RMA. We find our records are often outdated. LWV/RMA has many activities that need numerous volunteers. When our Directors call asking for help with voter registration or a public forum, they need correct numbers in order to reach members and recruit them for once a year activities. If you see an event listed in the Voter you are interested in, please call us if you can help. Please don't wait for one of the Directors to call you. The more members involved with our events the better.

Our local office number is 262-3730. I'm in the office Monday and Wednesday, 10:00am- 2:00pm; or leave a message. Thank you!

Rae Bernacki, *League Office Secretary*

League Urges Reform in Albany

As we move into the fall, the League of Women Voters NYS, along with our other good government colleagues, urge the senators to stick with their promises of reform. We call on the Senate to pass ethics, campaign finance and election reform areas where urgently needed.

Ethics Reform

Recent events have underscored the flaws in the current oversight system. New York's reliance on self regulation conducted in secrecy fails to adequately ensure the highest ethical standards. New York needs a new, independent ethics oversight agency and tougher enforcement.

Campaign Finance Reform

New York's indefensibly high contribution "limits," coupled with disgracefully inadequate disclosure requirements and nonexistent enforcement, create a system that cries out for change. In particular, New York needs stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement through a separate body in the Board of Elections armed with increased civil and criminal penalties for violations.

Election Reform

The Senate has not yet taken up legislation to expand absentee voting by removing unnecessary documentation requirements on the application for an absentee ballot. They should adopt this legislation as well as pending legislation to require all polling places be accessible to physically disabled voters and permit election inspectors to work half-day shifts.

Redistricting Reform

Redistricting decisions have played a critical role in maintaining Albany's legislative status quo for decades. Creating an independent redistricting commission to draft the state legislative and Congressional political boundaries for the 2012 elections should be a top priority for those who say they are reformers.

The process should allow for citizen input, adequate public disclosure and ensure legislative districts that give all voters a fair and equal voice in our representative democracy.

From State Board Report September '09. For more information go to LWVNY.com and search SBR

Census 2010 Update

What is the Census Bureau doing to encourage participation in Census 2010, which will take place on April 1, 2010? One approach is to get the census into the classroom through the Census in Schools program, "2010 Census – It's About Us." The program will provide educators with resources to teach the nation's students about the importance of the census, so children can help deliver this message to their families.

To promote participation, Census in Schools program kits are being mailed to all principals and superintendents this fall. These kits provide school administrators, teachers and educational organizations with the resources needed to deliver supplemental educational activities about the decennial census. The K-8 principal kits and grades 9-12 social studies kits will include maps, brochures and mini-teaching guides to help educators integrate census activities into existing lesson plans. There are detailed lesson plans available at the census website, interesting facts to stimulate the students (for example, the Halloween release indicates that there were 111.4 million occupied housing units across the nation in 2008 — all potential stops for trick-or-treaters!)

You can explore the information that's being provided to teachers and school children at www.census.gov/schools.

Judy Weinstein, *League Census Coordinator*

Positive Campaigns

The "Fair Election Campaign" ceremony which took place at the Monroe County Office Atrium on September 9th was covered by Channel 10. LWV/RMA Co-President, Katherine Smith, was interviewed on the importance of local campaigns being issue oriented. 150 candidates signed the Fair Election Campaign Pledge this year.

Literature and ads covering important local matters about budget priorities, policies on education, community safety, road maintenance, parks, etc. are what brings citizens out to vote.

Each year the LWV/RMA and The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester, encourage all voters to go the polls. All elections are important. Negative campaigns discourage citizens from voting. Positive campaigns educate people about choices among candidates and makes all of us feel empowered with our vote.

The Fair Election Campaign pledge now has 152 signers! Unfortunately, the committee has been busy with complaints. Decisions have been rendered on four complaints so far. We are hoping that the candidates will finish the election season with positive campaigns, and focus on the issues.

Katherine Smith, *Co-President LWV/RMA*

Constitution Day

Constitution Day 2009 was held at Nazareth College on Sept. 17th. There were a variety of activities that day. Among them was New York State Assemblyman, Joseph Morelle, who presented a workshop entitled, "Be An Effective Advocate."

The League also had a voter registration table with Annette Miller and Lauren Frank. They registered several students. The deadline for voter registration was Oct. 9th.

A reception, hosted by the League, followed. New York State Supreme Court Justice, Judge Evelyn Frazee presented the Keynote Lecture. In her 17 years on the New York State Supreme Court bench, she has been actively involved in numerous initiatives to improve the judicial system. Judge Frazee's lecture was entitled "In Celebration of a Living Document." Our thanks to her and all who helped develop and participated in our Constitution Day celebration.

Sheila Abeling, *VP Voter Services*



Lauren Frank & Annette Miller registering voters



Student registering to vote



Professor Olena Prokopovych, Daan Braverman, President of Nazareth College, Judge Evelyn Frazee, and Gaynelle Wethers



Positive Campaign participants



Pledge Signing Ceremony

Help America Vote

The League of Women Voters of New York State works “in coalition with many other like-minded organizations to educate voters and to advocate for laws which will secure the integrity of the vote while expanding opportunities for using it. One of our partners in the process to implement the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) has been New Yorkers for Verified Voting (NYVV).”

“Both NYVV and the League endorsed a voting system based on voter-marked paper ballots. This goal was achieved when the paper ballot-scanner voting system was chosen by New York counties in 2008. We advocated for the paper ballot-ballot marker-scanner system because with rigorous procedures and citizen oversight it is effective in ensuring both access and accuracy.”

“While there continues to be disagreement whether HAVA requires replacement of lever machines, NYVV, LWVNY, and other organizations representing many constituencies, believe that newer technology can provide better verifiability and a voter verifiable paper record that is the official record of the voter’s intent.”

“The familiar lever voting machine, though it has performed fairly well for over 100 years, does not meet current standards for voting systems. The League and other election integrity organizations recognized that our efforts should be directed toward selecting a voting system based on voter marked paper ballots and establishing through legislation the highest standards for certification of the new voting equipment. The Election Reform and Modernization Act of 2005, implements the Federal law and, indeed goes beyond that law, to set higher standards for accessibility, certification of voting equipment, and post-election auditing by local boards of elections. The lever machines cannot meet these standards. They cannot truly be audited since they provide no record of individual votes.

“To provide accessibility, counties have to deploy another machine with completely different technology. A local elections commissioner commented, ‘with the optical scanner system, we now have two records to compare to verify the vote: a machine count and the paper ballots. With the levers we have had no backup to recount the vote; all we can do is recheck the numbers on the machine to make sure the inspectors recorded them.’”

This article excerpted from the text of Aimee Allaud’s (LWVNY Elections Specialist) presentation at the New York State Association of Counties Conference.

“Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”.

Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*, 1863

League Business

Katherine Smith was interviewed by YNN, the local 24-hour newscast, September 18th, on how voter registration drives are conducted by LWV/RMA in Monroe County. The news anchor was interested in how we do drives with trained volunteers as opposed to groups like ACORN that come into a community for a short time using paid staff.

The LWV/RMA Development Committee met with an ad hoc group of former LWV/RMA leaders to discuss fund raising and reorganizing for 2010-2014. Our goal is for the local League to enter the 21st century world of technology in order to communicate not only among our members but also with the community at large. We need to increase our membership among younger people.

We hope the celebration of our 85th anniversary in 2010 will be a time of renewal and reinvestment of our time and money.

The Board of Directors has authorized the Co-Presidents to form an ad hoc committee to investigate putting the Voter on line in order to save the cost of mailing hard copies to all members. The report is due to the Board November 19th.

The US Post Office has another set of new rules that will cost LWV/RMA more to bulk mail 300+ copies of the Voter ten times a year.

Kathy Smith, *Co-President LWV/RMA*

Bulk Mail Changes

First it was the Move Update program and we added “or current occupant” to the mailing label in order to avoid the costs for notification of address changes. Now the VOTER has been classified as a “booklet”, due to the staples. We must start using clear tabs; scotch tape is also acceptable. Otherwise we must use round non-perforated clear tab closures; two if we don’t staple and 3 if we use staples. The clear round tabs are costly. Our previous method of using one white square tab cost less than 1 cent per VOTER. Three tabs were used this month to ensure the enclosure would not fall out.

This month is an experiment: no staples with scotch tape. We are still searching for cheaper tabs. The Post Office has indicated that more changes are coming. As a result, a committee has been designated to investigate the possibility of electronic mailings.

Jane Schmitt, *VOTER Editor*



League Positions – The Basis for Action

The League is unique among organizations in that it arrives at its grassroots positions after study and consensus among members. At the local level members study issues that can be implemented at all three levels – national, state, and local. League action can occur only in support of one or more League positions. If there is not a position to support the proposed action, the League cannot act.

Interrelationship of State and Federal Action

In its advocacy function the League replicates the relationship of our national and state governments in many respects. Some matters are solely within the purview of the LWVUS. This was the case with the LWVNY's proposed study on whether the State should enter the Compact for a National Popular Vote.

LWVUS advised LWVNY that, although it could study the issue, it could not formulate a state position on this matter because how we elect the President is a matter for a national position only. Similarly, some areas are solely within the purview of state Leagues. In most cases, however, the LWVNY may take action at a state level under both national and state positions.

National positions and the history of action under those positions are contained in LWVUS Impact on Issues, located on-line at www.lwv.org (to find, type, Impact On Issues in search). At the state level, these are found in LWVNY Impact on Issues, located on-line at www.lwvny.org (under Advocacy and Issues).

Excerpted from the September '09 State Board Report.

Note: Local issues can also be studied by local Leagues and consensus reached. Action based on the position can then be taken by the local league.

Preventing On-Line Exploitation of Youth

Attention: Parents, Teens, Educators and Community Members!

October 27, 2009 from 6:30-8:30 pm

RSVP on or before Wednesday, October 21 to
RSVP@uwrochester.org

Medaille Residence Hall, Nazareth College
go to: www.naz.edu/campusmap

This event is free and open to the public.

Hosted by The Rose and Joseph Denaro Interfaith Center
for the Study of Genocide and Violence Prevention

Ester Denaro Maltese, *former League President.*

The League of Women Voters Through the Decades

This article is the fourth in a series of articles on the League compiled by Kay Maxwell. The series is continuing in anticipation of the 90th birthday of the LWVUS in 2010.

The 1944 convention made major changes in the basic structure of the League, proclaiming it an association of members, rather than a federation of state leagues, and abolishing the department system of managing the various facets of the League program. At the 1946 convention the name was changed [from National League of Women Voters] to the League of Women Voters of the United States and the national program was considerably shortened.

Members joined the League of Women Voters of the United States by enrolling in local Leagues in their communities. The local League became the basis of organization and representation in the League; power was vested in the members. At the same time, a continuing role for state Leagues was delineated. They were given responsibility for organizing and developing local Leagues.

Later structural changes included the establishment of several Leagues at colleges, between 1948 and 1956, and of the unit system in 1948, which encouraged the development of small neighborhood-based discussion groups to further the opportunity for member input and participation.

During the post World War II period, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. The League was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non governmental organization (NGO); it still maintains official observer status today and has special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The League also supported the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as NATO, economic aid to less developed countries and the Marshall Plan.

The Overseas Educational Fund was established in 1947 [by the League of Women Voters US].



In Memoriam

Harriet Grimlich, League member recently passed away.

NOVEMBER 2009

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|---|---|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 Election Day Assist Counting Absentee Ballots | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 10pm, Naturalization Ceremony | 11 Social Policy, Bagel Bin 1PM Natural Resources 9:30AM | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 Board Meeting 3pm Naturalization Ceremony 1pm | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

DECEMBER 2009

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|--|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | 1 January VOTER deadline | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | <p style="font-size: 1.2em; color: red; margin: 0;">Please take the time to read the enclosure. Make an informed decision and Vote!</p> | | | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | | | | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | | | | 31 | | |
| | | | | | | |

Board meets at 3:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month at Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room, unless otherwise noted.

Natural Resources meets at the home of Ann Jones, 244-9337. For Natural Resources details, call Chris Pryor 392-4918

For Social Policy details, call Judy Dresnak 637-4753

For Local Government details, call Beth Keigher 271-6694

10:00 AM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building, 39 W. Main St;

1:00 PM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Federal Court House at 100 State Street.

Forums 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

Future of St. Lawrence Seaway

“The opening of the seaway took a devastating toll on the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem...If the shipping industry wants to be truly sustainable it needs to rethink how it operates on the Great Lakes”, according to Jennifer Nalbone, Director of Navigation and Invasive Species at Great Lakes United (GLU) in a recent press release.

Since the Seaway opened on June 26, 1959, the environment and economic damage brought on by opening the Great Lakes to international ships has been significant. Construction of the seaway itself resulted in irreversible environmental loss as new channels were dug in the riverbed, shallow sections were flooded, islands blasted away, six villages displaced, and a series of locks constructed. International ships have become the primary source of new, non-native, aquatic invasive species such as the zebra and quagga mussels. The University of Notre Dame estimates that the species that gained access to the region through the Seaway cost citizens, businesses, and cities in the eight Great Lakes states alone at least \$200 million per year in damage to commercial and recreational fishing, wildlife watching and water infrastructure.

“The damage invasive species have caused to the Great Lakes is astounding. But what is most frustrating is that we still haven’t closed this door”, said Dennis Schomack, former U.S. Chair of the International Joint Commission.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Great Lakes Seaway, 50 public interest groups and GLU have joined together and developed 7 principles which address not only international but also domestic issues. The principles to a guide a better Seaway are:

1. Ships must not introduce or spread aquatic invasive species.

2. Climate change is a real threat, and proactive steps must be taken to meet this challenge head on.

3. Unnecessary and costly system expansion proposals must be abandoned.

4. Air emissions should be cleaned up for shipping to truly be the cleanest mode of transportation in regards to air pollution.

5. Work towards the elimination of all pollutants into the Great Lakes.

6. Minimize ice-breaking, especially in sensitive areas.

7. Citizen engagement and industry transparency should become the norm in Seaway governance.

The above was excerpted from a press release this past summer by Great Lakes United. For more information go to www.abetterseaway.com.

League Garage Sale

Thanks to all who donated, sorted, marked and sold items at the League’s garage sale held on September 11 and 12. A special thank you to Gretchen Shafer who graciously offered her garage for the event. The net profit was \$440.00, in spite of some rainy weather on the second day.

Dorothy Borgus, *Chairperson*

League Members Honored

Adrienne Simpkins and daughter, Bertha Simpkins, were recently honored by the Rochester Area Foundation. They created a fund to honor the memory of Adrienne’s husband and Bertha’s father and his ministry. They want their fund to support a college scholarship for a Rochester-area student and to benefit two of his church’s programs, the “Right on School” and the “Oregon Leopold Day Care Center”.

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 | \$75 |
| Household | \$105 |
| 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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Rochester **VOTER**

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**January VOTER
Deadline is December 1!**

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

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

“One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes...and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.”
Eleanor Roosevelt