



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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Membership Meeting!

January 13, 2011
11:00 AM

Brighton Town Hall

A Review of The League of Women Voters New York State (LWVNYS) Program (A time to review and speak up!)

The first step toward adopting the 2011-2013 LWVNYS Program is for local leagues to review and recommend retaining, dropping or updating the present program. The LWVNYS will adopt the program at its convention in May 2011.

At this meeting, we will be reviewing the current program which includes 8 topics: Election Law, Government, Health Care, Judicial, Natural Resources, Social Policy, State Finances and Women's Issues. There are a total of 37 program issues under these 8 topics. For more information about the issues, which are the basis for our action, go to LWVNY.ORG. You will be surprised at the scope and depth of our program.

Local leagues may propose new studies, or additions/modifications to existing categories and issues. This is a very important meeting as it gives membership an opportunity to voice their concerns. I hope to see all of our members.

Katherine Smith, *President LWW/RMA*

Since Last Month

On Nov. 10th and Nov. 18th, Pamela Smith, a student in the Nazareth/Brockport Masters of Social Work Program assisted in the Naturalization Ceremonies. Much luck to you, Pamela, in your future endeavors!

Danielle Burke Robinson, a student in the Nazareth/Brockport Masters of Social Work Program, conducted a voter registration in the Maplewood area of Rochester. The League assisted through supplying the materials needed for the registration. Thank you, Rae Bernacki, for your help in assisting Danielle.

The Naturalization Committee finished up ceremonies for 2010 on Dec. 9th. Sheila Abeling participated in the 10 am ceremony at the Monroe County Office Building. Sue Dambrowski assisted at that ceremony. Also, at 1:00 pm in the Federal Building, Sheila Abeling welcomed the new citizens.

A special thanks to all committee members, Marcia Eisenberg, Barb Hendry, Mimi Wilson and Sheila Abeling, for all of your efforts with the new citizens during 2010!!

On Oct. 26th, in response to an invitation from the students at Nazareth College, Katherine Smith, Kathryn Saunders and Sheila Abeling welcomed and informed guests about voting/voting machines at the Zeller/Reed Debate for the 29th Congressional District. Ed Mooney from WHAM was the moderator of the debate. Professor Tom Nielson worked with his students in preparing for this debate. Ben Pate, a student representative, welcomed the League to Nazareth College. It was a wonderful effort on the part of the students in putting the evening together. Thank you for including us!

In November, the League assisted the Board of Elections in the opening of absentee ballots. We want to especially thank those people who helped: Barb Hendry, Joan Rosenthal, Gin Busack, Katherine Smith, Don Wilder, Alison Wilder, Marilyn Hare and Sheila Abeling.

From Sheila Abeling, *VP Voter Services*

Also: Dorothy Borgus conducted a Town Board Candidates Forum at Penfield Town Hall on October 19th; Kathy Smith also attended.

New Directory

The LWV/RMA is preparing a new membership directory to be mailed in early January. Please let us know if there has been any change of address or phone number in the last two years so that it can be incorporated into the directory. We want to be as accurate as possible.

To notify, send email to annettemiller923@gmail.com or call the office 585-262-3730.

In Memoriam



Long time members, Sybil Craig and Muriel Katz, recently passed away.

New Members

Kathryn Saunders
555 Countess Drive
W. Henrietta, NY 14586
585-334-2155
saudrobe@netzero.net

Ellen T. DeGregorio
25 Pickford Drive
Rochester, NY 14618
585-473-3502
etdegregorio@hotmail.com

Elaine Schmidt
7 Scenic View Dr.
Rochester, NY 14622
585-530-7414
eschmidt@rochester.rr.com

The Times — They are a'Changin

More and more business is being carried out electronically through the use of the internet and the expansion of the virtual world. The economy is hurting us all and has made difficult decisions necessary. As such, after much deliberation and study, the LWV/RMA has decided to close our office in the Times Square Building, effective April 1, 2011. We are joining the modern world and going to the internet to handle our daily business. Our intent is to maximize usage of the support you provide by investing as much as possible in our most basic tenet -- the education of the voter.

Our support of key initiatives will remain unchanged. Our Voter Services will continue its all important voter registration efforts while our study groups will follow such issues as redistricting, local development authorities, consolidation and transparency in government. Your membership will also continue to support the efforts provided by our State and National Leagues. The VOTER will bring all the news to you. Our effort to keep you up to date regarding changes as they happen will continue both via the VOTER and our e-mail notifications of events and volunteer opportunities. In January, you will be receiving an updated membership list, complete with new contact information.

Over the next few months, you will be seeing some changes and you will be kept informed as they occur. These changes will include such things as a post office box address and an improved and interactive LWV/RMA website (lwv-rma.org). Our phone number, however, will remain the same, 585-262-3730. You will soon have the option to renew your membership online with your credit card or to continue using the return envelope that is supplied with your membership reminder letter.

We are grateful to Rae Bernacki, our sole staff member, for her service during the past 16 years. Rae willingly took on many tasks beyond her office duties. On behalf of the entire league, we express our deep appreciation for her flexible and cooperative nature.

We hope that our transition will supply you with easy and comfortable access to everything in which the League is engaged.

As always, we thank you for your continued support as we maneuver into the 21st century.

Gin Busack, *Membership Chair*

Open World Program

Will anyone who was involved in the Open World Program this year ever forget our four visitors from Tajikistan? Kholiknazar Dzhumayev, Bakhtovar Safarov, Umedzhon Soliev, and Gulru Azamova, the facilitator, were a delight. They took the program seriously - always on time, attentive to presentations, asking specific questions to get the information that they needed - but were also a lot of fun and were eager to share their culture with us.

Kay Wallace and Peter Oddleifson graciously hosted the potluck Welcome Dinner which gave us all an opportunity to get acquainted. The program began with the traditional trip to Niagara Falls, but with a stop in Buffalo for a Sunday morning meeting at the home of Professor Isabel Marcus of the SUNY at Buffalo Law School. Bakhtovar Safarov is a human rights professor in Tajikistan and we wanted him to meet with a peer. The group was delighted with the hospitality of Professor Marcus and her offer to come to Tajikistan to meet with Bakhtovar's colleagues and possibly teach. The Maid of the Mist was a hit with the visitors.

On Monday, our guests, after an introduction to the program by Judy Weinstein, met with Randall Stone, Professor of Political Science, Director of the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies, Director of the Peter D. Watson Center for Conflict and Cooperation at the University of Rochester, and Olesya Tkacheva, Postdoctoral Fellow. What was intended as a session on federalism, became a question and answer session with Professor Stone answering a wide range of questions about the U.S. political system. The group spent the afternoon at the Center for Youth and Hillside Family of Agencies to learn about programs for children at risk.

Tuesday morning was spent at a City Hall meeting with James Sheppard, then Inspector General for Rochester and now acting Police Chief, followed by representatives of Pathways to Peace, and Luis Burgos, Commissioner for Youth Services. In the afternoon, they met with Patti Larke, District Director for Representative Louise Slaughter, and then took a tour of George Eastman House. The evening was spent in an important part of the program - shopping!

On Wednesday, the delegation observed Family Court proceedings in the courtroom of the Honorable Dandrea Lynn Ruhlmann and also had discussions with Judge Ruhlmann and Timothy Lexvold, head of the division within the county Law Department that prosecutes juvenile delinquents. The group contrasted the treatment of juvenile offenders in the U.S. with that in Tajikistan where they are treated the same as adults. During the afternoon meeting with investigative reporters at the Democrat and Chronicle, there was a conversation-stopper when Kholiknazar Dzhumayev, a journalist, casually mentioned being jailed and then deported from Russia as a result of articles that he had written. Perhaps the highlight of the program occurred that evening when the delegation prepared plov, the traditional

Tajikistani dish, as part of a birthday dinner for host Pierce Webb. The celebration was enjoyed by all who attended.

On Thursday, LWV President Kathy Smith and Vice-President Sheila Abeling told the visitors about activities of our local League. Later, the group had an opportunity to "vote" using the new paper ballots and entering them into the scanner during a meeting with the Election Commissioners. They proudly wore their "I voted today" stickers. Judy and Bill Dresnack hosted a sumptuous Farewell Dinner that evening. The relaxed meal was followed by the exchange of many gifts.

The program was completed on Friday when the delegates met with Steve Weisbeck, Esq, Legal Aid Society, whom they had observed in Family Court on Wednesday, Julia Day, Regional Director of the State Division of Human Rights, and Kent Gardner, at the Center for Governmental Research. That evening, several League members joined the group at the Islamic Center of Rochester for prayers, followed by dinner and conversation.

All too soon, it was time to meet at the airport again, this time for the departure of our visitors. In one week, we learned much about a part of the world that we knew little of before, and our visitors learned much of professional use and, more importantly, got an understanding of U.S. culture.

A welcome addition to our program this year was the visit by Manuela Campbell of LWVUS. Manuela has provided support during the past few programs and it was a delight to get to meet her and have her see our League in action.

Once again, thanks to Judy Weinstein, Sula Baxter and Ann Weintraub for planning the week; hosts Liz and Pierce Webb, Ann and John Bundschuh, Georgia deGregorio, Kim Schaff and Roger Young; driver and all-around girl Friday Gin Busack; Kay Wallace and Peter Oddleifson for hosting the Welcome Dinner; Judy and Bill Dresnack for the Farewell Dinner; the Islamic Center for hosting a dinner for guests and League members; all who accompanied, drove or helped make the week happen; and the professional resources who shared their expertise with the visitors.

The next time we host an Open World delegation, why not consider becoming involved?

Judy Weinstein, *Open World Coordinator*

Wanted - New Members!

Did you know that our most recent twelve new members were recruited through personal contact? We have found networking to be our greatest development tool. It's easy - bring a friend to our next event, share a copy of the VOTER, extend an invitation to try out one of our study groups or voter services activities. Just call or e-mail Sheila Abeling (585-223-6819/sheiler162007@gmail.com) or Gin Busack (585-467-6131/ginb348@aol.com) or leave a message at the office (585-262-3730).

Join the new LWVNYS Lobby Corps

Interested in NYS politics? Want to participate directly in the legislative process and development of policies?

The League of Women Voters of NYS is developing a Lobby Corps, similar to that of LWVUS. The purpose is to train a group of volunteers who will then communicate the League's position on proposed legislation in person directly to the members of the state Senate and Assembly. The volunteer lobbyists will receive background information, talking points and individual assignments of legislators. A meeting will be held prior to the start of the legislative session in Albany to train and brief the Corps.

These volunteers are not to replace the Issue Specialists on whom the League currently depends for specific information, testimony and memos on particular issues as they are considered by the legislature. Instead, the Lobby Corps will be generalists who will provide the direct contact with the legislators on the key talking points. The Corps will also attend legislative committee meetings to report to the state League on important discussions and votes. It would be expected that the Lobby Corps volunteers would agree to lobby on a regular basis as assigned in Albany, for example, at least 2 days a month.

The Corps will work very closely with the state League's Vice President for Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, and our Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti. The volunteers will "shadow" Barbara to meet the legislators, become familiar with legislative procedures, and learn the aspects of good lobbying techniques, especially during the volunteers' first year.

Come make a difference - and try something new in the League!

For more information contact,
Laura Ladd Bierman
LWVNYS Executive Director
Laura@lwvny.org



Invasive Species Forum



*Speakers, G. Sargis, P. Debes,
S. Daniels, C. Knauf*

Observer Corps Brings New Dimension to League Work

The Observer Corps is a structured way for individuals to exercise their right to know. It provides a valuable service to our members and the community by making them aware of legislative decisions that impact their lives as well as promoting government transparency and accountability.

With this in mind, several LWV/RMA members have formed an observer corps as a subcommittee of the Local Government Committee. We are attending the county legislative meetings as well as Henrietta and Irondequoit town meetings. As we become accustomed to the process, we will be submitting summaries to our members in the Voter. In addition, our reports will be given to the local League Board so they can respond to items in which they have an interest.

It is important to know that observers do not "act" on issues in these meetings. We monitor both the issues being discussed and the manner in which they are being processed. Since we are non-partisan in that we do not support any candidates or political parties, we advocate only on issues that have been studied and agreed upon by the members.

We have many towns in Monroe County and we encourage anyone who might like to know how they could participate to call the convener, Gin Busack, at 467-6131. We all agree that this is an interesting way to serve the LWV/RMA that takes a very limited amount of time. And because many of our group are newcomers to the League, it is a fun way to get to know each other.

Gin Busack, *Membership Chair*

Fair Election Practices Campaign

The Fair Election Practices Committee (FEPC) worked very hard from August through November. The FEPC encouraged candidates to focus on positive issues during campaigning.

During the Primary Election portion of the campaign, there were no complaints filed. However, during the General Election portion of the campaign, there were seven complaints filed. Two parts of the FEPC Pledge were repeatedly violated throughout the campaign:

- Conducting the campaign accurately and honestly;
- Not use or permit the use of any campaign material or advertisement, which uses quotations or images taken out of context and to misrepresent the other candidate or other candidate's message.

Special thanks to the members of the FEPC on a successful campaign: Sarah Liebschutz (Chairperson), Channing Philbrick, Margaret Freeman, Tom Frey, Kay Wallace, Jim Turner, Jim Peters, Lois Giess, John Curran.

From Sheila Abeling, *VP Voters Service*

Recap of October 7th Redistricting Forum

...“the practice of allowing the majority in each house to draw district lines every 10 years. In effect, this allows legislators to choose their voters, rather than the voters choosing their legislators.” From *The Case for Redistricting Reform* - A briefing paper examining NY State’s Redistricting (endorsed by LWVNYS, NYPIRG, Citizens Union of the City of NY, and Common Cause of NY) and used by Barbara Bartoletti in her remarks at the Forum.

The following is the first part of an address prepared for the Forum by Justice Richard Dollinger, who was subsequently unable to attend.

The Process of Reapportionment

In New York, the actual reapportionment process begins with the initial meetings of the Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment. This six member committee consists of three Democratic members – one member of the Assembly and one non-legislator appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and one member of the Senate appointed by the Senate Democratic Leader – and three Republican members – a member of the Senate and one non-legislator appointed by the Senate Majority Leader and one appointed by the Assembly Minority Leader. The task force is established by a statute, enacted by the Legislature. Thus, as a matter of law, the majority parties in the respective houses control the early phase of the reapportionment process.

The task force holds hearings throughout the state in two sequential parts. While the task force is gathering information from the public, the real work is done by the respective staff of the task force which gathers census data and overlays other important data including racial and ethnic composition, income and other population attributes available from the census. The most important ingredient added to the mix is, directly or indirectly, the voter registration and voter preference data provided by the state and local boards of election. The voter preference data includes the actual vote counts for candidates of particular parties over a lengthy period of time, usually the better part of a decade.

Using a statistical process called “regression analysis,” the staff, through extensive computer modeling, “overlays” this voter data with the census data and begins to try to determine how particular populations will vote or what a population’s voting preferences may be. This data becomes extremely important because it can be used to calculate or predict how particular patterns of voters (independents, conservatives, racial or ethnic minorities) may vote in a given election.

The staff then prepares maps, with boundaries that tend to follow the voter preference of the identified populations. The micromanaging of the voter preferences of identified populations by these statistical experts is remarkable; for

example, the regression analysis using the census and voting history data can reasonably accurately determine how voters in the Town of Brighton will vote in the upcoming gubernatorial and United States elections. If done correctly, the regression analysis can virtually guarantee how a particular area of voters will cast ballots in a given election with a given candidate.

Once the initial series of hearings are completed in the first year of the two-year cycle, then the task force announces a tentative plan, which accords with the preferences of the task force. The tentative plan has, as a practical matter, the blessing of the legislative majorities in both houses, even though there is no vote on the plan. This plan represents what the Legislature believes is the best plan for reapportionment.

A second set of hearings then follows. In 2002, the tentative plan was only slightly amended before it became the final plan. Once the task force approves the final plan, it is drafted into a bill and presented to both houses of the Legislature. If approved – as it always is – the bill goes to the governor for signature, just like any law.

Everyone should realize that the process takes substantial time and effort. It is a two-year cycle. The process should already be well underway: based on the experience of ten years ago, the computer modeling and regression analysis for all phases of the reapportionment should be in the works. In addition, I would expect that staff has been hired and computers purchased by all sides (computer experts and statisticians are hired by all sides to evaluate the census/voter data.) The cost for all sides easily reaches millions of dollars.

Finally, the ultimate reapportionment plan is incorporated into a single bill. The Senate and Assembly plans are combined in one vote. In order for the Assembly to get its plan approved, its members must vote for the Senate plan and vice versa. Even if a law were passed mandating an independent redistricting commission early in the next session — i.e., in 2011 – it would be extraordinarily difficult for any independent commission to gear up to handle the reapportionment process by June, 2012.

Next month: part 2, *The Law of Reapportionment in New York*



Redistricting Forum:
B. Bartoletti & B. Keiger



Jill Terreri, Speaker
Redistricting Forum



Coming Events!



January

January 3	Voter Deadline
January 6	Local Government, 10 am
January 13	Membership Meeting, 11 am, Brighton Town Hall
January 14	Membership Committee 9:30 am
January 20	Board Meeting 2 pm

Check Out Our Website!

www.lwv-rma.org

Cancun Agreements

The United Nations Climate Talks in Cancun, Mexico have concluded and some progress was reported. Major powers including the United States, the European Union, China, and Japan have approved a package of measures referred to as the Cancun Agreements. They include:

- Creation of a Green fund to help poor countries adapt to climate change policies; the fund begins with \$30 billion and pledges of \$100 billion
- UN oversight of voluntary emissions cuts by more than 80 countries, including China (largest emitter) and the United States (second largest) and commits countries to develop low-carbon strategies, share technologies and report their inventories annually
- Developing countries agreed to publish progress reports every 2 years on their plans to reduce emissions.

The Agreements did not:

- Specify targets for reduction of carbon emissions or a goal of keeping temperature increases to 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F)
- Settle the dispute over the Kyoto Agreements which expire in 2012
- Develop a legal treaty that commits countries to binding emissions targets.

The next United Nations Climate Talks will be held in Durban, South Africa in 2011.

From information in D&C and other sources.

Jane Schmitt, *Voter Editor*

*Board meets at 2:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month at Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room, unless otherwise noted.
Local Government meets at the Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room. For Local Government details, call Beth Keigher 271-6694.
Membership Committee meets at Sula Baxter's house at 9:30 am, second Friday of each month.*

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 LWVRMA@frontiernet.net

Thank You Joan Rosenthal

by Mike Hanley and Mel Callan, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning Board of Directors

We would like to pay tribute to Joan Rosenthal who recently retired from her years of volunteer efforts for the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (www.lead-safe-by-2010.org) as a member of the Government Relations Committee.

As a representative of the League of Women Voters, Rochester Metropolitan Area, a nonpartisan political organization that influences public policy through education and advocacy among other activities, Joan was a stalwart advocate in the goal to eliminate the invisible monster of lead poisoning in our children.

Joan was instrumental in securing passage of the “Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 2008,” (the Gantt-Robach bill) by bringing in the critical support of the Buffalo-area members of the League of Women Voters who were able to influence their representative in the Senate to enthusiastically support the bill. That endorsement provided the additional push that was needed to convince the Senate leadership to make the legislation a priority and bring the legislation to the floor. At that point, the League, at Joan’s urging and insistence, literally brought out the vote by urging their membership statewide to call their state senators and to use the email tools on the League’s website to contact them directly.

Although Governor Paterson subsequently vetoed the bill due to the state budget crisis, the effort put forward by the League, and the availability of their website to get the message out, elevated the legislation from a situation in which the Senate leadership had asserted that it simply was not hearing any demand for the legislation in its districts to the legislation becoming a priority for the close of that session.

Remarkably, at a time when the Assembly and Senate were controlled by opposing parties, this bi-partisan legislation passed both houses nearly unanimously.

Joan also was instrumental in the creation of the Guide to Careers in Lead Hazard Control. She collaborated with many experts in the community to provide a comprehensive and easy-to-use guide (in English and Spanish) for residents to consider career opportunities in the fight against lead poisoning.

Joan spent many hours on the phone, in meetings, doing research and writing to end lead poisoning by 2010. Although we have not achieved that goal yet, we have made tremendous progress and we are honored and proud that Joan Rosenthal was a significant leader in the Coalition’s efforts. We wish her well in her retirement from at least one of her volunteer activities!

Printed with permission from the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning.



Nazareth, Zeller/Reed Debate

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 Boulevard, 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 \$cale



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**February VOTER
Deadline is January 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

“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language and next year’s words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning.”
T. S. Eliot