



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 at Our Annual Meeting!

June 2, 2011 • 11:00 - 2:00 pm

Locust Hill Country Club, 2000 Jefferson Road

Lunch 11:30 - 12:15 pm

For the luncheon, please send check for \$30 to LWV/RMA, PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610 or call Gaynelle Wethers at 389-2008 to make a reservation.

Deadline for reservations is May 27, 2011.

Agenda:

Presentation of Carrie Chapman Catt Award

Business Meeting:

- Election of Board Members
- Program
- Budget for 2011-12

A quorum of members is required to conduct the business meeting.

Please plan to attend!

Since Last Month

Many thanks to those League members who have welcomed new citizens in the following ceremonies:

- April 14th at Minerva Deland School in Fairport - Sheila Abeling
- April 14th at the Federal Building - Marcia Eisenberg
- May 6th at RIT - Marcia Eisenberg
- May 12th at the Monroe County Office Building - Mimi Wilson and Sue Dambrowski

Upcoming Naturalizations:

- June 9th at the Monroe County Office Building - Mimi Wilson and Sue Dambrowski
- June 9th at the Federal Building - Marcia Eisenberg and Sue Dambrowski
- July 4th at the Genesee Country Museum
- July 14th at the Monroe County Office Building
- August 11 at the Monroe County Office Building and the Federal Building

Submitted by Sheila Abeling, *VP Voter Services*

Secretive Ethics Reform

To the Editor of the New York Times:

As you noted in an April 9 editorial, “three men in a room” is no way to negotiate ethics reform. Since Albany’s similarly secretive effort at ethics reform in 2007, which resulted in a deeply flawed bill, 11 legislators have been indicted or convicted of crimes committed while in office.

The League of Women Voters of New York State has spent decades working for ethics reform in this state. We believe that all New Yorkers deserve to see whether the terms of any proposed new ethics reform accomplish full disclosure, independent enforcement and meaningful penalties for misbehavior.

It is time for legislators, regardless of party affiliation, to vote for meaningful reform. Public officials are elected to uphold the public trust. New Yorkers should insist on transparent ethics regulation through an independent ethics commission.

BETSEY B. SWAN

President, League of Women Voters of New York State

April 11, 2011

From LWVNY.org.

President’s Report

The LWV/RMA Board of Directors is looking forward to our Annual Meeting, June 2 at Locust Hill Country Club. In addition to our business meeting where we elect new directors and report on our finances for the local League, this event provides the opportunity for all members to enjoy a wonderful luncheon and each other’s company, to celebrate the year’s achievements, to plan for 2011 – 2012, and to honor our 50 year life members, our Carrie Chapman Catt winner and our former directors. We hope to see many of you there!

This year’s Annual Meeting will have an extensive time period for reviewing and adopting our LWV/RMA Program for 2011 - 2012. The Board of Directors has carefully studied the local program and is most interested in all members having a discussion about what to delete, what to add and which ones we should concentrate on for 2011 - 2012. We hope everyone comes ready to share their views, commit to achieving our goals, and volunteering for a project or event, if able.

At the Annual Meeting, we always thank the many volunteers who make it possible for LWV/RMA to carry out its voter service and voter education events. This is a long list of our members. We’d like to particularly thank past directors who have remained active and been a tremendous help during this transition time: Dorothy Borgus, Ann Weintraub, Judy Weinstein, Sula Baxter, Georgia DeGregorio, and a special thank you to Barb Hendry for her help and encouragement.

Kathy Smith, *President LWV/RMA*

Out of Touch, Climate Change

Press Release, Washington, DC:

“Today the U.S. House of Representatives voted to stop the Clean Air Act from going forward. If the House gets its way, EPA would be permanently blocked from regulating harmful carbon pollution. The House of Representatives is out-of-touch with reality – the climate change tsunami is coming.”

The above is a statement by Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the LWVUS, April 7, 2011.

Capitol Beat Blog

For the latest happenings in Albany, check out the blog by Barbara Bartoletti, Board Director of LWVNY.

Go to www.LWVNY.org, scroll down and click on Capitol Beat Blog. Barbara tells it like it is.

Lessons in Redistricting: Mapping Monroe County Legislative Districts

April, 2011

Prepared by the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) in partnership with the League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro Area.

Below are the summary, two maps developed by CGR and the conclusion of the study.

Summary

CGR embarked upon an experiment to draw new Monroe County legislative districts based upon the Census 2010 population counts in collaboration with the League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro Area. To do the project, CGR put itself in the role of a nonpartisan, independent commission tasked with drawing the lines. Many advocates locally and statewide have argued that such a commission should be adopted to make the process more fair and transparent.

CGR used census data and mapping software, creating two versions of a map to illustrate potential alternatives. For both maps, we tried to respect “communities of interest” by avoiding splitting villages, towns and city neighborhoods any more than was necessary in order to create districts of equal size as much as possible. Given the county’s 2010 total population of 744,344, the target size of each of the legislature’s 29 districts was 25,677, and we stayed well within the accepted plus or minus 5% range for each district.

Our process was blind to incumbent residences and party enrollment; that is to say, we did not know at the time of creating the maps where current county legislators reside, nor did we consider the party enrollment and location of registered voters. After each map was completed, we analyzed party enrollment in each district using the county’s database of registered voters, and we plotted incumbent addresses on the maps.

In Monroe County, enrolled Democrats make up 39% of registered voters, compared to 31% for Republicans. Adding in third-party voters leaning to one side of the political spectrum, the margin is 40% likely to lean toward the Democrats and 33% likely to lean toward the Republicans.

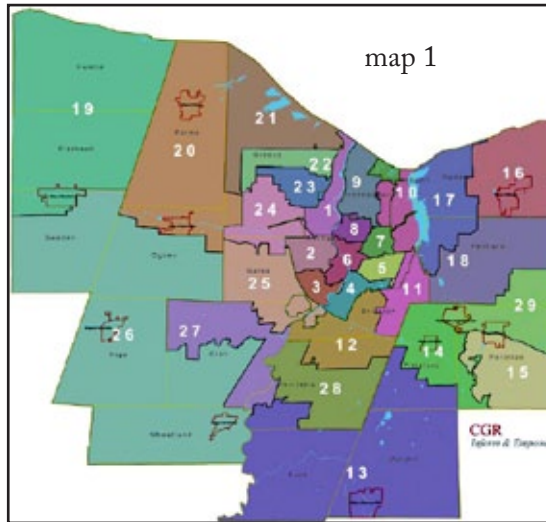
Yet the legislature is made up of 16 elected Republicans and 13 Democrats. Why? One explanation is that this is the outcome of partisan gerrymandering dating back to 2001, when the current legislative map was drawn by the legislature’s Republican majority. The Republicans drew

themselves as many favorable districts as possible and held on to the majority despite the enrollment advantage for Democrats.

Yet in our two politically blind maps, we created exactly the same margin for the Republicans (16-13), in terms of districts with a majority of voters leaning toward the Republican Party. For this analysis, we considered voters enrolled in the Green, Working Families, Socialist or Democratic parties to lean toward the Democrats and those in the Conservative, Libertarian and Republican parties to lean toward the Republicans. We did not include voters enrolled in no party (“blanks”) or the Independence Party in the calculation. The “blanks” are 22% of registered voters; the Independence Party claims an additional 4%.

Blind to incumbent addresses, both of our maps created a number of districts that include the residences of 2 or 3 incumbents. Our District 26, for example, contains the residences of incumbent legislators Robert Colby, Jeff Adair and Michael Rockow.

We conclude that:



- The Republicans’ ability to control the county legislature, despite the Democratic enrollment advantage countywide, can be attributed to the practice of electing county legislators by geographic districts, not at-large, and the fact that Democrat-leaning voters are concentrated geographically, particularly in the City of Rochester.

Democrat-leaning voters are more dominant in the parts of the county where they are the majority (chiefly the City of Rochester) than are Republican-leaning voters in the regions they dominate. As a result, the Republican Party is rarely competitive in city elections while the Democratic

Party is routinely competitive in some suburban communities. Particularly with a strong candidate able to mobilize the community’s many unaligned voters, Democrats can be competitive in Republican-leaning communities.

- GOP gerrymandering in 2001 was perhaps not as pernicious as some have assumed.
- A process blind to where incumbents reside, as ours was, is likely to place two or more incumbents in single districts.
- There are many definitions of a “good map” and countless possible maps could be drawn.
- An independent process does not necessarily lead to more competitive districts.

Lessons in Redistricting

(continued from p.3)

Lessons and Observations:

What became clear very quickly in doing this process was that there was no single “correct” map to make. While there are some generally accepted principles for creating a good map, they can be in conflict, and there are other standards against which one might want to judge a legislative map.

The NYS Constitution* states that NYS Senate and Assembly districts “shall contain as nearly as may be an equal number of inhabitants, excluding aliens, and be in as compact form as practicable.” Even this short list of values can be in conflict with one another. Keeping the variation in population low and the shape compact might mean creating a district with a strange-looking jut into a different municipality.

* See <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/info/constitution.htm>

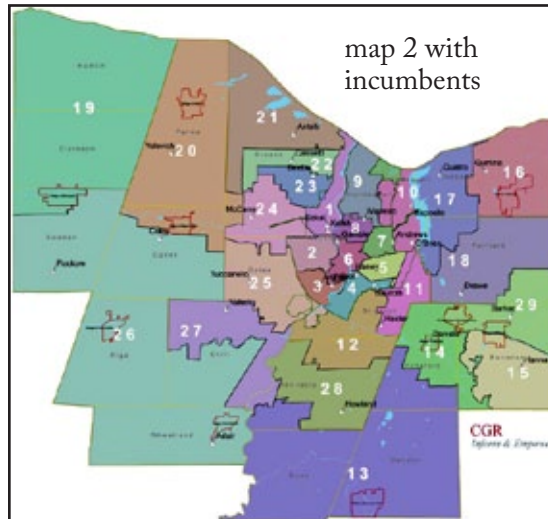
We faced a number of choices in making the maps, choices that were not always easy to resolve:

- Our effort to respect city neighborhoods and observe the “compactness” mandate had the effect of concentrating Democratic-leaning voters and leaving suburban districts with a higher relative share of Republican-leaning voters. The legislature thus would have more districts clearly representing city interests, yet would be more likely to be controlled by the Republican Party.
- This decision also concentrates minority voters. At what point does this reduce the political power of minorities? Would blended city-suburban districts be a more inclusive option?
- Might increasing the number of politically competitive districts be a goal? If so, then ignoring political affiliation of voters would be an error—district lines might be drawn to achieve as many districts as possible that are politically balanced.
- More populous towns must be split into two or more districts. Irondequoit thinks in east/west terms, partly because of the school district boundaries. Should district lines attempt to conform to these informal communities of interest, just as we attempted to respect sector/neighborhood boundaries in the City of Rochester?
- Beyond following municipal boundaries and respecting major waterways like the Genesee River, the Erie Canal and Irondequoit Bay to the extent possible, how do we decide what defines communities of interest? Are

they communities with the same school district, those clustered in certain subdivisions or between specific major roads, or areas sharing some other characteristics or concerns?

- Finally, what is the right approach to adopt with respect to incumbent legislators? Gerald Benjamin, architect of the Ulster County independent redistricting process, argues that district lines should be blind to incumbency precisely because it will “shake up” the legislative membership and prevent incumbents from remaining in office for decades. In this way independent redistricting can help ensure fresh political representation as a sort of quasi-term limits measure. In a county with legislative term limits (like Monroe), this argument is less persuasive. An argument could be made that the service of incumbent legislators should be respected.

The proposed district map for Monroe County was recently released by the Republican majority of the County



Redistricting Commission. This effort explicitly set out to leave incumbents undisturbed. Our initial review suggests that most of the more peculiar district shapes can be explained by the decision to create districts that contain the residence of only a single incumbent. Might this be viewed as a kind of gerrymandering conducted by a “Party of Incumbency?”

Conclusion

The problem of gerrymandering is often listed with loose campaign finance rules and excessive lobbying by special interests as one of the evils corrupting our political process. Independent, nonpartisan redistricting is presented

as a solution. CGR’s experiment drawing politically blind maps for the Monroe County Legislature found that aggressive gerrymandering did not seem necessary to create districts favoring Republicans, 16 to 13, despite an overall Democratic enrollment advantage in the county. Instead, the geographic distribution of voters across the county – with Democrat-leaning voters concentrated in the City of Rochester and Republican-leaning voters dispersed over a larger area – worked together to facilitate the creation of Republican-leaning districts.

Given these findings, additional questions could be raised about whether geographically based districts are the best way to select representatives, and whether the addition of at-large seats to the county legislature or some other change might produce a result more in line with the political leanings of county residents.

Even if gerrymandering wasn’t apparent in the creation of a legislature with a Republican-leaning majority, the “Party of Incumbency” did explicitly create district lines that protect its members. While many could argue that this was justified,

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Our Student Inside Albany

On April 10, 2011 approximately thirty-four other high school students from different cities in New York State and I made our way to Albany for a four day program, Students Inside Albany. It was sponsored and carried out by the League of Women Voters.

I am an eleventh grade student at School Without Walls. I have been interested in law since I was about 10 years old. I would like to pursue a career in Family Law. I found out about Students Inside Albany from Jack Hurley, a law teacher at my school. On April 10, Ms. Sheila Abeling met me at the train station before I boarded the train to Albany. She waited with me and we talked about different things until my train arrived which I thought was nice and considerate of her.

This conference consisted of a myriad of meetings and guest speakers. Each meeting was informative. I learned things regarding our government, how to run for office, the history of voting and so much more. We spent a lot of time in the Capitol Building over the four day period: sitting in on press conferences, committee meetings, and watching a bill being presented and passed. We also were able to observe our assembly members and senators. I felt very proud to be able to shadow Assemblyman Joseph Morelle and Senator Joseph Robach and their staff. They all were extremely nice. This was a great experience to see the daily process of one of our assembly members and our senator representing Rochester for a couple of hours. I enjoyed seeing first-hand someone lobbying a cause to Senator Robach.

Along with the meetings, we also toured the Capitol Building. I really enjoyed touring the Capitol Building because it is beautiful and full of history, past, present and future. There were murals of war on a ceiling, historical figures carved into columns, walls made of gold, huge fireplaces, paintings and gorgeous staircases including the million dollar staircase.

Barbara Bartoletti, member of the League of Women Voters and a registered lobbyist, spent the four days with us and shared a lot with us. I met so many amazing people while learning information that I will retain forever. It was awesome surrounding myself with the students that attended the conference. We all bonded and interacted like we knew each other for years. On the evening of the first day in Albany, after we learned everyone's names and such, it was as if our friendship's with each other fell into place and began to grow quickly, which made it difficult to part when it was time to go back home to our cities.

This was a wonderful experience. I would like to thank Ms. Stephanie Lopez, Ms. Sheila Abeling, Ms. Betsey Swan, Ms. Laura Bierman, Ms. Barbara Bartoletti, Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, Senator Joseph Robach and their staff for all of the kindness and hard work; each and every one put in much effort to not only make this happen but to make it an outstanding experience. I appreciate everything all of

you have done. I would also like to thank Jack Hurley for bringing up this opportunity and for the things he has done to help me attend.

Submitted by Tenacious Jackson



Tenacious with Assemblyman Gantt

Students inside Albany



Lessons in Redistricting (continued from p.4)

there are many other criteria for district design that were likely ignored in service of this end.

Ultimately, we agree with the proposition that citizens who are independent of sitting legislatures should control the creation of voting district boundaries. Gerrymandering is a fact of political life when legislative majorities control the process, even if our exercise suggests that an independent process in Monroe County might yield a similar political outcome.

Acknowledgements

CGR is grateful for the assistance of Monroe County Board of Elections staff members, including Democratic Commissioner Thomas Ferrarese and Republican Commissioner Peter Quinn. GIS specialist Jon Becker provided technical assistance on mapping.

CGR Staff Team

Erika Rosenberg led the researching and writing this report. Kate Bell completed the mapping process, and Hannah Griese and Michael Silva helped with research and analysis.

Prepared by Kent Gardner, PhD., Project Director

Study funded by LWV/RMA Bee Bibby Endowment

To read complete study, go to www.CGR.org.



Coming Events!



June

- 2 Annual Meeting
- 9 Naturalization Ceremonies, am and pm
- 16 Organizational Meeting, Nazareth College

July

- 4 Naturalization Ceremony, Genesee Country Museum
- 14 Naturalization Ceremony, am Monroe County Office Building

Save the Date! Annual Meeting

June 2, 2011 • 11:00 - 2:00 pm

Locust Hill Country Club, 2000 Jefferson Road

Lunch 11:30 - 12:15 pm, \$30

If you plan to attend the luncheon, please send check to:

LWV/RMA, PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610

or call Gaynelle Wethers at 389-2008 to make a reservation.

From Susan B's Descendant, Jean Anthony Tischer

"Susan B. Anthony's father and my great-great-grandfather, Asa, were friends and third cousins, born in Massachusetts. Asa helped bring Susan's family to Rochester by recommending the farm for sale adjoining his in the (now) airport area. Susan's family later moved to Madison St. in Rochester. Asa's farm was also an important stop on the Underground Railroad many years before the Civil War.

According to my great-uncle, Roy Anthony, his mother some times allowed him to sit up past his bedtime to listen to Susan speak. Meetings were often held at his house. One evening, as he crouched by his mother, Susan was introduced by a Rochester gentleman, and the audience applauded. Susan B. and sister Mary were clapping too. Mary whispered to Susan, "No, no Susan. They're clapping for you!" "For the Cause" responded Susan – still clapping. This was always a favorite family story, partly because it illustrated her selfless devotion to the cause, not because she had no sense of humor – as I thought originally.

I'd like to pay tribute to Susan's sister, Mary, who not only kept the home fires burning but also was a strong woman in her own right. She refused to accept a grade school principal's job until the committee of men agreed to pay her the salary they would have offered a man. She won and became the first female principal in Rochester.

I must have inherited some of that spirit; my first job, after graduating from the U of R during WWII, was patriotically inspired (and) in a war factory installing fire interrupters on B29 airplane gun turrets. It required strength and I was proud until I discovered that the man next to me in line earned more money, but had an easier job! I complained loudly but none of the other women joined me. The injustice didn't seem to upset them.

My husband and I lived for 22 years in Bristol, RI, a town founded in 1638 and home to the first Anthony who came to Portsmouth, RI from England in 1634. His son's house still stands in the area and serves as a home."

Written by Jean Anthony Tischer, descendant and cousin of Susan B. Anthony and a League member.

Our thanks and gratitude are extended to Ms. Tischer for this wonderful bit of history.

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 details, call Beth Keigher 271-6694.

Membership Committee meets at Brighton Town Hall - Stage Room at 1:00 pm, first Friday of each month. For details, call Gin Busack 467-6131

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 262-3730 or e-mail us at LWV/RMA@frontiernet.net

The Nominees

Barbara Grosh holds a PhD in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley. She taught for 9 years at Ohio University and Syracuse University before moving to Rochester with her family. She has enjoyed a second career as a freelance website developer as well as all-around community volunteer. In recent years she has become enamored of the concept of Wikinomics, and is pretty sure that mass collaboration can indeed change everything. Her current passion is voter registration.

Brian Valenti currently works at Generation Capital Management, as a Senior Investment Consultant where his duties include providing portfolio management, consulting and fiduciary services to individuals, charitable organizations, institutions and government entities across the United States.

He has also worked at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney as a Financial Advisor; in addition he holds Series 7, Series 66, Series 31 and New York State Life and Health Insurance Licenses. Mr. Valenti also worked at Citadel Broadcasting – WGRF, WHTT, and as Buffalo Bills Radio Account Manager. The latter was considered a franchise and he was responsible for all aspects of the business: closing the deal, writing the commercials, and executing promotions.

J. Ernest Du Bois is a graduate of the Rochester public schools and the University of Rochester with a BA in History with Honors. His work experience includes secondary teacher and substitute teacher in Social Studies, English and Math in the Rochester City School District for 26+ years. He was also Teacher of the Year (1984-5), advisor to Model United Nations, yearbook advisor, officer at Lincoln Rochester Trust Company (12 years) and assistant at the University of Rochester Library (17 years).

Mr. Du Bois has years of community service with the Emmanuel Covenant Church, the Retired Teachers Organization

of Rochester and Vicinity, local PTA (president), Genesee Valley District PTA, State PTA, Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley, United Nations Association of Rochester, Children’s Memorial Scholarship Fund and Russian-American Exchanges. He has served as director, associate director, treasurer, committee chairman (including by-laws), and secretary at various times in these organizations.

State Convention

LWVNY biannual state convention will be held May 20-22, 2011.

League member, Barbara Grosh, will represent our League at the convention. Several new studies will be proposed:

1. ELECTION LAW

- a. Study of rules by which voter signatures or candidate petitions qualified or disqualified by State Board of Elections
- b. Term limits for legislature and statewide officials, submitted by LWV/RMA
- c. Increase opportunities to submit a ballot, including vote by mail, increased/easier access to absentee ballots, and changing Election Day to a weekend day

2. GOVERNMENT

- a. Gun control laws in NYS, submitted by LWV/RMA, currently covered by LWVUS position
- b. LDC transparency, submitted by LWV/RMA

3. JUDICIAL

Study of the efficiency of the juvenile justice system concerning residential placement of juveniles

In addition, updates or rewording will possibly be proposed on charter schools and 11 other state positions. For more details go to www.LWVNY.org and look under State Convention.

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
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

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



**Rochester/Metro
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**Next VOTER
Deadline is August 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

Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire.

Virgil