



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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Save the Date for Our September Forum!

Creating a Civil Conversation in Uncivil Times

A conversation on access to health care

September 6, 2012, 7-9 pm

Brighton Town Hall • Auditorium

Public discourse has become more polarized than ever. The volume is high, but few are *listening* to each other. Shouting, name-calling and demonizing of those who disagree are commonplace. This is not a good environment for making public policy or encouraging new voters to become involved.

This program will help us learn to engage constructively, to listen to others and share our views in respectful ways that have a chance of informing while building empathy and consensus. The goal is to acquire skills of engagement that can shift the conversation to a space where all voices can be heard.

Facilitators from the National Coalition Building Institute will teach us to notice our own reactions while we talk and while we listen. Participants will develop skills to become aware of trigger points, develop the capacity to take better care of one's self in the heat of the moment, and learn tools to effectively engage others. We will practice our new skills in small group discussions on the subject of access to healthcare.

Participants are encouraged to bring a friend, family member or co-worker who thinks differently so that we can practice engaging constructively on this important issue. The event is free, but seating is limited and registration is required. Registration is online at www.LWV-RMA.org/CivilConversation.

The League of Women Voters has been working since 1920 to create a well-informed electorate, expand participation and give a voice to all Americans. The National Coalition Building Institute is a nonprofit leadership development organization whose mission is to eliminate racism and all forms of discrimination throughout the world.

Please join us on September 6th for some civil discourse about this important issue!

President's Corner

It has been a whirlwind of activity since our Annual Meeting in May. League members have swung into action on all fronts, and you will hear from them in these pages. What a group of dedicated people they are!

At the end of June your elected board, along with the off-board chairs, met for a day of orientation and planning. We spent the morning asking ourselves: "What will be our priorities for the coming year?" All suggestions revolved around VISIBILITY!! with the underlying theme of teamwork in which we support each other. And all our voter registration efforts, events, and the superb effort of our membership and program committees are bearing fruit. Thank you to board member Ernest DuBois in starting us off with a presentation on communication.

We had to accept Rita Garretson's resignation as secretary since she is very active in working with a political campaign this year. This reflects our non-partisan policy whereby the board does not support candidates or political parties. We do, however, encourage all our members to be as active politically as they wish in any party or for any candidate of their choosing. Our democracy thrives when we are doing so.

In the coming months there will be opportunities to serve on our new Environmental and Social Policy committees. Be on the lookout for those invitations to work with some dynamic leaders.

As we begin a new year we want to remind each member that they are welcome to attend all board meetings, in addition to all of the events and activities planned for the year. It is a good place to get to know each other better, as well as an opportunity to share your ideas for a better League.

Georgia DeGregorio
LWV/RMA President



Proposal for New York State Great Lakes Ecosystem Concurrence

A CALL FOR HELP! TO ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF OUR GREAT LAKES.

The Lake Michigan League of Women Voters, initially organized in 1966 to focus on environmental issues impacting Lake Michigan, has voted to expand its efforts to include all of the Great Lakes. The League's intent is to work in coalition with other groups to educate the public and legislators on the urgent needs of the Lakes. To support this effort, the Michigan League has asked all of the Leagues surrounding the Great Lakes to pass by concurrence its Great Lakes Ecosystem position. Our LWVNY Board has proposed that its program be amended to undertake a concurrence with the Great Lakes Ecosystem position <http://www.lwvmi.org/positions/naturalResources/NatResources-GreatLakes.pdf>.

Briefly, the Michigan position sets forth protective measures it believes would be beneficial, regarding the role of government and research priorities.

LWV/RMA expects to receive our information packet in September. We would then begin an analysis of the original adoption of the position, allowing us to concur or not concur with the position as stated. We anticipate that our concurrence meeting would be held in November and would include an update on the ecologic status of Lake Ontario.

Those interested in joining this effort may contact Program Chairperson Gin Busack at info@lwv-rma.org or 585-467-6131.

Bylaws Amended

On June 21 members approved an amendment to our local bylaws changing the timing for sending renewal notices for membership dues. On October 1st all members will receive a renewal notice. For this first year only, your renewal will be prorated in order to take into account whether you will owe for more or less of the 12 months due (depending on the date of your last dues payment). If you have any question after receiving your renewal notice, please call Membership Chairperson Ellen DeGregorio at 473-3502.

Action

DISCLOSE ACT 2012

In July all LWVUS members were asked to call US Senators from their states to urge them to support the Disclose Act of 2012. LWV/RMA members received an action alert to call Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand.

The US Senate did not debate this bill introduced by Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Jeanne Sheehan (D-NH), which would have required (by federal law) that campaign contributions of more than \$10,000 be reported by the donor's name. Forty-three Republican senators voted on a procedural matter to prevent debate.

Some twenty-plus Democratic senators gave 10-minute speeches, each in favor of the bill. Sens. Schumer and Gillibrand both spoke in strong support. The League was credited by Sen. Whitehouse as being a strong supporter in the need for transparency when it comes to campaign giving.

LWVUS President Elizabeth MacNamara's press release stated, among other things, that "secret campaign money undermines the role of the voter and corrupts the election process." LWV/RMA will continue to lobby for a debate on this very important piece of legislation.

EDUCATE NEW YORK NOW

LWVNY has joined a new coalition for state school funding called "Educate NY NOW."

According to the coalition's website, "EDUCATE NY NOW! unifies parents, students, educators, administrators, unions, school board members, community organizations, civil rights groups, education advocates and others statewide around a broad-based campaign to demand that our state government fulfills New York's constitutional obligation to provide all students with a quality education."

LWVNY's official position on school funding is in opposition to the property tax cap. Members who are interested in the issues addressed by the coalition are encouraged to visit its website: <http://educate-nynow.org/>

Katherine Smith
Chairperson, Action

Vote 411.org Flyer

This year our digital Voters Guide will be found at the website www.vote411.org. The guide will cover all races from the New York State Assembly and Senate up to the Presidency of the United States. We encourage every member to let friends, neighbors and colleagues know about this guide. Information for the September 13 primary will be available by August 25. A special thank you goes to Chris Burleigh who designed this for us and for all New York state local Leagues.

Below is the flyer we developed to spread the word to voters about this service.

VOTE411.org
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

**Your One-Stop Shop for
Nonpartisan Election Information!**

Find out:

How to register

Where to vote

What candidates are on the ballot in your district

What some of their positions are

**If any candidate is not providing information,
ask why not!**

**For Voters Guide information specific to New York,
go to www.lwvny.org and click on
Vote411.org**

For more information, contact:

League of Women Voters of New York State

62 Grand Street

Albany, New York 12207

Email: lwvny@lwvny.org

Tel: (518)465-4162

Fax: (518)465-0812

www.vote411.org



FEPC and Naturalization

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

On June 26th Gloria Read and Sheila Abeling opened absentee ballots for the Primary Election. Thank you both so much for your help!

The League hopes to help the Monroe County Board of Elections in opening absentee ballots for the Primary Election on September 13th. If you think that you can help, please contact Sheila at sheiler162007@gmail.com or 585-223-6819.

The General Election is on November 6th. We will need a lot of help in opening absentee ballots on that day. I already have some volunteers but need more. Please contact Sheila if you are interested at sheiler162007@gmail.com or 585-223-6819.

Thank you!

NATURALIZATION

On July 4th at the Genesee Country Museum, the League welcomed over forty new citizens for naturalization to the USA. Thank you to Kay and Bob Saunders, as well as Katherine Smith, for celebrating our nation's birthday in such a special way. See the photos on our picture page.

Mimi Wilson welcomed fifty candidates for naturalization on July 12th at the Monroe County Office Building. Thank you, Mimi, for representing the League.

On August 9th, Sheila Abeling and Beth Feldman participated in an oath ceremony at the Monroe County Office Building. Thank you both for welcoming the new candidates for naturalization.

September 13th will bring the League to the Monroe County Office Building when the candidates for naturalization will be welcomed by Marcia Eisenberg. On September 17th the League will be on the SUNY Brockport campus. Beth Feldman and Kay Saunders will participate in the naturalization ceremony.

FEPC

The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR) and the League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro Area (LWV/RMA) are encouraging all candidates for public office to run positive, issues-oriented campaigns. Some candidates feel that negative ads are effective. We believe that positive campaigns that address important issues are winning campaigns.

August 27th begins the Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC). It continues until the general election on November 6th. All candidates receive a copy of the FEPC Pledge and documents. Candidates who believe in a fair campaign may sign a pledge say-

ing so. Everyone is invited to attend a Signing Ceremony/Press Conference on September 5th at noon in the Atrium of the Monroe County Office Building. Names of candidates who have signed the Pledge will be read, and candidates who choose to attend and sign will be welcomed. A complete list with all candidates who signed will be found on the League website www.lwv-rma.org after September 5th.

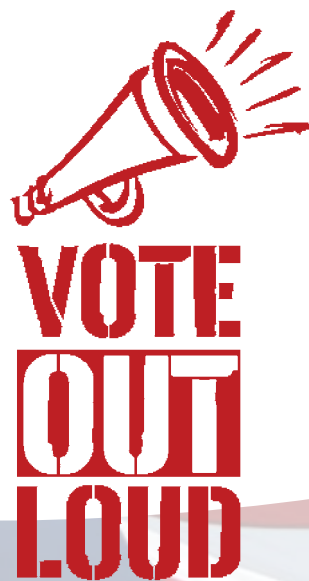
The members of the Fair Campaign Election Committee will hear complaints from candidates who feel that someone running for public office is not running a positive, issues-oriented campaign. After the hearing, the decision is given to the person filing the complaint and will be announced to the media.

Members of the committee of 2012 are: Jim Morris (Chairperson), Ralph Esposito, Tracy Logel, Channing Philbrick and Kay Wallace. The alternates on the committee are: John Curran, Tom Frey, Lois Giess, Jim Peters, Sue Roberts and Jim Turner. Thank you to all participants on the committee for being a part of the FEPC 2012.

Sheila Abeling
Chairperson, FEPC and Naturalization

Thank You

LWV/RMA gratefully acknowledges the generous donations made by these members in memory of Gretchen Schafer: Beth Teall, Eleanor Newell, Jane Tuttle, Shirley Eberly, Annabelle Martin, Nancy Koch, Anna Bundschuh, Cynthia Flynn, June Rugoff and Patricia Tobin.



Sunshine Corner

Question: When is a workshop more than a workshop?

ANSWER: WHENEVER THERE IS A SCHEDULED MEETING WITH A QUORUM PRESENT.

At its scheduled workshops this spring, the Irondequoit Town Board voted on two issues: one authorizing the Sea Breeze Fire District to elect its own Commissioners and, more recently, one amending the Town's boating laws. The purpose of the workshops, as stated on the Town Board website, is to "...discuss particular topics." They are described as "...open to the public, although there is no public input."

While the workshops are open, the Observer Corps' concern is that these workshop meetings are rarely attended and seldom covered by the press. Given this concern, we requested a clarification of the issue from Robert J. Freeman, the Executive Director of the State of New York Committee on Open Government.

Excerpts from Mr. Freeman's response, dated May 4, 2012:

"...Commonly used terms 'workshop' and 'work session' are not found in the Open Meetings Law; they are terms... that, in his opinion, '...have no legal meaning."

"...Assuming the presence of a quorum that has convened to conduct or discuss public business, there is no distinction between a workshop or work session and a meeting; they are equally subject to the Open Meetings Law, and the same obligations apply with respect to notice and openness, as well as the same capacity to conduct an executive session when appropriate in consideration of the subject of a discussion..."

"...there is nothing in the Open Meetings Law that precludes a public body from voting or taking action during a workshop. If, however, the public has been led to believe that workshops are held only for discussion, and that no action will be taken, it is likely that some might consider that the public was misled. Nevertheless, in the absence of its own rule or policy to the contrary, a public body may take action during a workshop, or any meeting."

"...section 104 of the Open Meetings Law concerning notice of meetings requires only that notice include the time and place of a meeting; there is no obligation to include an indication of the subject or subjects to be considered in the notice."

"...The notice requirements are now, in most cases,

threefold. Notice must be given to the news media, posted in one or more designated, conspicuous publications, and when feasible to do so, notice must also be posted on the website associated with a public body..."

A .pdf copy of Mr. Freeman's full response is available upon request. Please direct such requests to info@lww-rma.org

Gin Busack
Observer Corps

In Memory of Gretchen Shafer

Dear League Friends,

Our dear friend and long-time League member Gretchen Shafer died on May 5. She was active in the League for many, many years, graciously opening her home for both elegant receptions and garage sales. She loved to talk about politics and worked hard to promote more positive election campaign advertising.

Gretchen was a retired social studies teacher from Brighton High School and continued her interest in school affairs throughout her life, serving on the Brighton Board of Education and the board of the Brighton Education Fund.

After considering how to honor Gretchen's memory, we decided on supporting the State League's program, "Students Inside Albany." This annual conference attracts high school students from across New York State. They spend several days in Albany learning how state government operates, talking with government officials, touring government buildings, and "shadowing" state legislators to get a firsthand look at New York's legislative process. This seems an ideal way to recognize Gretchen's interests in the League, in government and in students.

In recent years our League has sent one student to "Students Inside Albany," and we are proposing to send additional students. If you are interested in helping with the funding for this, do let us know.

Contributions should be sent to the LWV of the Rochester Metropolitan Area, PO Box 10573, Rochester NY 14610. If you would like your contribution to be **tax deductible**, it should be made **payable to** the LWV-NYS Education Foundation and sent to the Rochester PO Box. Please note on the memo line that it is in memory of Gretchen.

We will truly miss Gretchen. We hope she would be pleased with this remembrance.

Shirley Eberly and Nancy Koch

Observer Corps

HENRIETTA TOWN BOARD

Minutes for the town board may be found on Town of Henrietta's web site. LWV observer report is not available.

IRONDEQUOIT WORKSHOP 4/11/12

Topic: Proposed repayment of loan to Sea Breeze Water Authority (SBW) over 2 years.

It was noted that SBW currently uses town employees to perform repairs etc., and this has generated significant overtime costs to the town; these costs should be charged to SBW.

SBW pays water authority commissioners \$450.00 monthly to attend 2 meetings per month.

IRONDEQUOIT TOWN BOARD 4/17/02

LWV issue: Proposed resolutions need to be put on website for the town.

Members of board need enough time to research agenda items.

Consideration will be given to deadlines for agenda items.

IRONDEQUOIT WORKSHOP 5/9/12

As of 4/30/12 Sea Breeze Water cash flow is positive.

A special workshop was scheduled for 5/21/12 to discuss town boating regulations.

IRONDEQUOIT TOWN BOARD 5/15/12

A request was made for members to be present at special workshop meeting on 5/21/12 to vote on an amendment to the boating law before Memorial Day holiday.

IRONDEQUOIT WORKSHOP 5/21/12

Agenda: a well-publicized vote to amend town boating code whereby boats must anchor at least 300 feet from shore. (Media were in attendance for this controversial vote.)

IRONDEQUOIT WORKSHOP 6/13/12

Discussion: a persistent problem with microphone placement and seating arrangements resulting in difficulty in hearing input from town staff

LWV environmental issue: town adopted resolution to oppose International Joint Commission's plan for lake levels amid concern that the plan was unbalanced and there was no mitigation for home owners.

IRONDEQUOIT TOWN BOARD 6/19/12

No LWV issues.

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE 6/12/12

Public Forum:

Several members of SCOPE (Shooters Committee on Political Education) once urged the repeal of the county law that prohibits the carrying of concealed weapons in county parks.

Many speakers spoke against the criminalizing of cyber-bullying.

The Legislature passed the bill on prohibition of cyber-bullying of minors in Monroe County. Democrats proposed that the bill be expanded to include adults but this was voted down.

Several speakers spoke again about the burial policies that require cremation of people who ask for financial assistance from the county to bury deceased members of their family.

As usual, the meeting was orderly and respectful to all parties, but there was little discussion of issues and laws which were passed along party lines.

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE 7/10/12

Public Forum:

SCOPE (Shooters Committee on Political Education) was once again well represented and continued its education of the legislature as it attempts to bring about repeal of the law against carrying concealed weapons in county parks.

One man spoke asking why Paragon Environmental Construction was awarded the contract for the Green Fueling Stations project. He said that they were not the lowest bidder and that they did not have an apprenticeship training program as required by NYS. The legislature went into executive session to discuss the matter. They later tabled the resolution.

The Democrats proposed some amendments to the county burial policy but their amendments were voted down by the majority.

During the regular session, Democrats proposed a WiFi zone in the 25th District. The proposal was voted down by the majority. They asked why the proposal had not been brought to the county planning board so that they would have more time to look at the proposal.

Resolutions for this Legislature meeting were not available on the Monroe County website. NYS law requires that the resolutions be available for public review before the meeting.

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD 5/3/12

This marks the first observation of Webster. We found the meeting well run and cordial. Speakers were treated respectfully and could be heard. Webster sets aside time near the end of the meeting when residents may call the supervisor with any concerns they may have. The entire meeting is broadcast on town cable TV station.

CITY OF ROCHESTER

Observations are not currently available.

Elaine Schmidt

Chairperson, Local Government



Coming Events!



September

- 5** Launch of the Fair Elections Campaign
- 6** Civil Discourse in Uncivil Times, 7-9 pm, Brighton Town Hall
- 13** Primary Election Day for State Offices
- 25** National Voter Registration Day
- 27** Board Meeting, 5:30 pm

October

- 11** Campaign Finance Reform/Vote 411.org, 7-9 pm, Brighton Town Hall
- 25** Board Meeting, 5:30 pm
- 30** Debate between the 25th Congressional candidate s: Incumbent Louise Slaughter vs. Challenger Maggie Brooks at Nazareth College

Membership

Welcome to the new LWV/RMA Board of Directors!

I am so excited to be the new Membership Chair. Many thanks to my predecessor, Gin Busack, for all that she has done during her term as chairperson. She and her team have already laid the groundwork for our league to grow.

The Membership team will continue to reach out to each new member and make sure that they feel welcome and are quickly linked up with the League activity they are most enthusiastic about. It is so gratifying to be able to say that all new members are actively bringing their strengths to our mission.

For our longtime members: you know well that there are so many fun and interesting things to do – with different levels of commitment. If you have been thinking about becoming more active, please let me know, and we will find something that meets your availability.

To keep our foundation strong and to be able to maintain our forward momentum, 3 League members are planning to attend the August Membership and Leadership Development Program (MLD) training session in Syracuse. We will have the chance to meet with other leagues from around the state, to talk strategy and to discuss what has worked and

what needs to be “tweaked.” Look for more details in the next Voter.

Each month I’d like to leave you with a question so that I, as a newer member, can better explain what the League means to its members. This month’s question is: What is your favorite League memory?

My favorite memory is, as a child, when my mom and dad were in front of this big room leading a discussion with a really large audience. They let my sister and me come with them. I was so proud, and I just knew how important they were and was so sure they were better than Batman and Robin at changing the world to make life better for us. I still think my mom is Superwoman!

Please share your memory by replying to my email address etdegregorio@hotmail.com or my home address 25 Pickford Drive, Rochester NY 14618.

Ellen T. DeGregorio
Chairperson, Membership

Board meets at 5:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month.

Local Government meets at the Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room. For details, call Elaine Schmidt 530-7414.

Membership Committee meets monthly at Brighton Town Hall - Stage Room. For details, call Ellen DeGregorio 473-3502.

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 info@lwv-rma.org

Report from LWVUS Convention June 2012

As always, the national convention was both inspirational and informative. Below is a very brief overview of the issues and topics addressed. Look for more detail in The VOTER in coming months. (For those who cannot wait, many of the major presentations were taped and can be found on the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org.)

In the **Plenary Session**, new positions on the Federal Role in Education and Privatization were approved. A study to update our 1988 position on agriculture was approved. We accepted by concurrence Washington DC's position on mandatory sentences. A resolution was passed to make campaign finance reform a high priority. Regarding the budget the League passed a PMP (per member payment) of \$31.00 for a two-year period, to be used to fund a new member database and investment in technology to promote League growth.

Speeches were given by an impressive group of leaders and experts in various fields. Kathleen Hall Jamieson of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania spoke. (Please check out a new website: www.flackcheck.org created to "flack check political sleaze." Each local league is asked to check out the website and become part of the effort to challenge inaccurate political ads by third party groups.)

Other speakers included Attorney General Eric Holder, pollster John Zogby and District of Columbia Representative Eleanor Holmes-Norton.

In addition, a panel consisting of Eleanor Clift, Mickey Edwards and Trevor Potter discussed what could be done with the gridlock in Washington with the following comments:

- Democracy depends on compromise and listening to each other.
- Problem definition is easy but solutions are hard.
- Ornstein and Manning's book *It's Worse Than You Think* is an important read.
- Many fallacies are found in the Citizens United case.

The panel also offered some solutions:

- Campaign finance reform
- Independent redistricting
- Restoring majority rule in the Senate (no more filibuster as it is now used)
- Expanding the electorate
- Reawakening the FEC (which now has 5 out of 6 commissioners serving whose terms have expired)

Finally, beginning and ending the convention were 3-hour **Workshops** on "Power the Vote" which was

the theme for the week-end. These provided some good suggestions to implement locally. (Some taped sessions are available at www.lwv.org.)

See you in Dallas - June 6, 2014!

Georgia DeGregorio
President, LWV/RMA



Did You Know?

LWVNY has available five different pamphlets which focus on five different areas of concern regarding people's eligibility to vote. You can access these at www.lwvny.org.

- "Your Right to Vote in New York State for Individuals with Disabilities"
- "Your Right to Vote in New York State for Individuals with Mental Disabilities"
- "Your Right to Vote in New York State for Homeless Individuals"
- "Your Right to Vote in New York State for College Students"
- "Your Right to Vote in New York State for Individuals with Criminal Convictions and Those Detained in Jail and Prison"

Genesee County Museum Naturalization Ceremonies Picture Page



Picture Page



*Go-See Tour at High Acres Landfill:
The group at the Falconry where a
landfill employee explains the use of
falcons to drive away sea gulls.*



Voter Registration





**Rochester/Metro
League of Women Voters**

PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610
p 585-262-3730
www.LWV-RMA.org

Rochester **VOTER**

A Monthly Publication of the
League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area.

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Chairperson, Local Government

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Ernest DuBois
At-Large

**NEXT VOTER
DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 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

Join the League Today!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Check Amount: _____

Level of Membership: _____

Please send this form and your check payable to
League of Women Voters/RMA to:

LWV/RMA
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

or join us online at: www.lwv-rma.org/join.php

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