



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!



January 12, 2013

Noon to 2:00

in the Lodge in Buckland Park

1341 Westfall Road

Brighton, NY

for a

Picnic!

Lunch, Discussion & Fun!

To register for this event, please visit our website at:

www.lwv-rma.org/signup.php

See page 2 for details & map!



Great Lakes Ecosystem
Understanding Local Development Corporations
Exploring the New Health Care Laws
Campaign Finance Reform
Electoral College Viability

President's Corner



As the year comes to an end, it's time for looking back over the past few months and looking to the future.

Our goal for the year has been to increase our visibility, and we have definitely done that. In the following pages your committee chairs will tell you about all they have done in the community and the rewards of work well

done.

First, thank you to our November presenter, Prof. Joseph Makarewicz of The College at Brockport, for a most informative program on the Lake Ontario ecosystem. And thank you also to Jane Schmitt and Chris Fredette for their delightful school presentation on protecting our wetlands.

We have done regular voter registration, supported the Fair Election Practices Campaign, spoken to church and community groups, and provided helpful information regarding the voting process through our digital voters' guide, Vote411.org.

And how many of you saw the debate between Maggie Brooks and Louise Slaughter which we co-sponsored with WROC Channel 8? We can't thank each of you enough for your participation and support, especially our chairs Barb Grosh, Sheila Abeling, Elaine Schmidt and Kathy Smith. As a wonderful footnote, one caller who thanked us for sponsoring the debate commented, "It helped me make up my mind."

Now to the future: the visibility has paid great dividends. We have the potential for two new committees to be permanently established, if we have your support.

Thank you one and all for an exciting and productive 2012! Here's to an even better new year!

Georgia DeGregorio
President

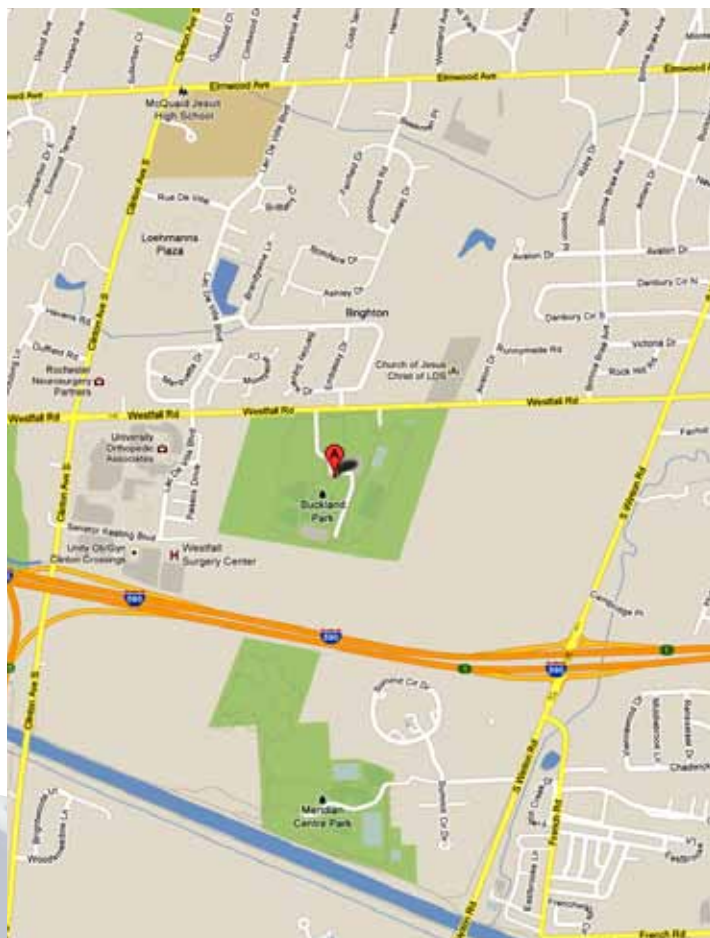
January 12 Program: This is For You

Ever wonder what the League is all about? What are our community positions? What positions are we going to focus on this upcoming year? How do I fit into our grass roots efforts? I want to support the League activities, but how can I help within the time and resources I have available?

It is time for a NEW type of January planning meeting based on fellowship, light-hearted fun, and planning our community actions. There is something here for everyone: those who recently joined, those who are thinking about joining and those who have supported us for so long and can share their wisdom with us all.

Would you set aside just two hours on Saturday, January 12th to join us? We will be holding our meeting from noon to 2 pm at Brighton's Buckland Lodge. It is heated and has a working fireplace which will provide us a warm place to be on a cold day. The lodge is located in Buckland Park, 1341 Westfall Rd. (west of Winton Rd.) in the back of the playgrounds.

Please pre-register at www.lwv-rma.org/signup.php or phone us at 585-262-3730 so we can prepare enough food for all.



Thanks to Everyone Who Voted!

Campaign Finance Reform

After a fall of watching and listening to hundreds of negative and inaccurate election campaign ads, New Yorkers are ready for a change in the running of our elections.

Toward that end, LWVNY and LWV/RMA have established, as their 2013 legislative priority, campaign finance reform in this state. An important aspect in facilitating this reform is funding campaigns in a more transparent manner through more citizens' donations in smaller amounts.

This reform is needed in New York state because our contribution limits are too high. Yet, even these high limits can easily be circumvented by organized groups, and enforcement of present limits is lax. In addition, there are expenditures not covered by these limits, disclosure regulations are insufficient, and lobbyists and state contractors are able to contribute freely.

The results have been a public not trusting the integrity of elections, legislators spending inordinate amounts of time fundraising, and fewer citizens seeking office because they lack the large amounts of money needed to campaign. In Monroe County this past election, we were faced with several races in which voters had no choice of candidates.

LWVNY and LWV/RMA will be lobbying this spring with our newly elected officials to limit contributed donations, to improve timely reporting of contributors' names and amounts of donations, to require immediate reporting of violations and to create an independent enforcement body separate from the NY State Board of Elections.

Our goals are: to have elected officials able to have time to do their job, to have government responsive to all the citizens' needs, to have more voters participate in elections, to minimize effects of big money, to minimize corruption and to have more diversity of candidates running for office.

LWV/RMA encourages you to write your NY state Senator and Assembly Member to support a change in the way we New Yorkers conduct our 2013 elections. We do not want to witness another 2012-style campaign season.

Katherine Smith
Chair, Advocacy

When the LWV/RMA phone rings...

A presidential election is always a very busy time for the League, and this year was no exception. We provide many behind the scenes services within the community. One of the ways people access our services is by calling the League's telephone number listed in the Frontier directory. I thought you might be interested in knowing what these calls were about.

Beginning September 1 and ending November 9, we received 131 calls. As you might guess, most of them were requesting information regarding the election. Most common comments included:

- How do I get an absentee ballot?
- Where do I vote?
- Where can I find general voting information about candidates?
- We would like a speaker from the League.
- And last – but certainly not least – I really want to go the debate!!

Some of these brought a smile to my face, some a sigh, and once in a while an "Oh no". I returned some of the calls and redirected some to others, including Georgia DeGregorio, Barbara Grosh, Sheila Abeling, Kathy Smith and Tom Ferrarese.

I am sure that I can safely say that all calls were returned politely. Now we can all take a deep breath and get back to normal – knowing that we did our best to help at least 131 people cast well-informed ballots!

Lois Winterkorn,
Chair, Nominating Committee

Welcome, New Members!

Michael Barbato

Alice McCormick-Ennis

Dallas Nelson

Joyce Underberg

Phyllis Walker

Sarah Yaworsky

WELCOME BACK TO:

Priscilla (Peela) Hooke

We're eager to get to know you as we work together!



Natural Resources: Lake Ontario and Agricultural Update

We hope the November presentation can start a study committee on not only the challenges of the Great Lakes but also how some of its problems are intertwined with agricultural policy.

The LWVUS convention agreed to update our 1988 position on Agriculture Policy whose broad statement reads: "Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market" (pg. 3 & 54 of Impact on Issues: A Guide to Public Policy Positions, LWVUS *Impact on Issues*).

Now 25 years later, new circumstances have arisen that were not contemplated before. From the November 15, 2013 Leaders' Update:

"The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on:

- 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms [GMO's], herbicides, pesticides, sustainable farming, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and
- 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process."

Lest you be daunted by this description, please know that there will be a select committee at the national level to review materials and forward them to us to use as a basis for discussion and eventual presentation to our members.

This study impacts us all. We hope you will be able to share your time and expertise when we are ready to tackle this project in the spring. Meanwhile, as mentioned on page 6, there are local challenges to our Lake Ontario that could use your help in exploring now.

Interested? Contact Georgia at 585-262-3730 or georgiatd1@gmail.com.

You ought to be in pictures!

And you can be! Send us a photo of your League activity!

Email or message your photos to: LWVRMA-VOTER@rochester.rr.com

Photos from November 8 Forum



*Georgia DeGregorio,
League President*



*Prof. Joseph Makarewicz of
The College at Brockport*



Photos from Naturalization Ceremonies



Health Care Exchanges: What Are They?

Your Health Care Committee is collecting answers to your questions from the September 6th forum on Civil Discourse which focused on the Affordable Care Act.

One area currently being discussed nationally is the "exchanges" that states are being asked to set up. The questions we explored are listed below. Click on the link, and it will take you to our website with detailed explanations and also sources you can use to follow up further.

1. What are "exchanges" and how are they established?
2. Does NY State have an exchange?
3. What flexibility does NYS have in establishing an exchange?
4. Why has NYS chosen the Oxford Plan as its Essential Health Benefits (EHB) benchmark?
5. Can there be adjustments to subsidies for areas where cost-of-living is higher?

For answers to these questions, please visit our website: www.lwv-rma.org/healthcare.php

If you have questions on this specific topic, please email us at info@lwv-rma.org or phone us at (585) 262-3730.

Lisa Slater

Member, Health Care Committee

Thanks!

Voter Registration efforts were very successful this year – and with good reason. We had the help of so many dedicated volunteers! These amazing, energized folks not only registered new voters, they raised awareness about the importance of exploring the issues and making your voice heard, locally as well as nationally - making democracy work! We are grateful for their hard work.

Thomas Banister
Rachel Brill
Allia Calkins
Sally Chamberlin
Bishop Willie Davis
Liz Doucette
Rev. Fanny Etheridge-Reeves
Ella Gourdine
Fran Grillo
Mary Hussong-Kallen
Larry Knox

Sr. Gratia L'Esperance
Dolly Malik
Hasana Martin
John Pellito
Anne Peterson
Beth Phelps
Elaine Schmidt
Judy Schwartz
Annette Stanford
Carly Wise-Levick

Thanks!

Many thanks to our steady and reliable Observers:

- Gin Busack and Julie Johnson (Observers of Irondequoit Town Board and Irondequoit Workshops)
- Jane and Jon Schmitt (Henrietta Town Board)
- Lois Winterkorn (Webster Town Board)

They give of their time to be the ears and eyes of the LWV-RMA!

Thank you to the members of the Local Government Committee:

- Gin Busack, a staunch supporter of the goals of LWV,
- Judy Weinstein for her invaluable knowledge and advice,
- Julie Johnson, our helpful greeter and outreaching member at the mall table events, Sarah Yaworsky, our articulate and determined new member on our committee.

We also welcome our very newest enthusiastic member of the LGC, Alice McCormick-Ennis.

You go, girls!

Elaine Schmidt,

Chair, Local Government and Observer Corps

Did you know...

- that LWVUS maintains a blog on its website? For info on many topical issues, read (and then comment) at www.lwv.org/blog.
- that previous copies of The Voter are available on our website? Check out www.lwv-rma.org.
- that when any of our activities is mentioned in the media, you can find the link on our website? Check out www.lwv-rma.org.

Thanks!

Whether you registered voters, discussed issues with friends, encouraged people to vote, supported a candidate or a cause, or explored issues and cast an informed ballot yourself, thank you for helping to make democracy work.

But don't stop now – the election is just the beginning!

UPDATE: Member Meeting to Discuss Great Lakes Concurrence NOVEMBER 8, 2012

Members and guests of the Rochester LWV met on November 8 to hear a presentation given by Prof. Joseph Makarewicz of The College at Brockport on the status of Lake Ontario as a natural resource. After his presentation we discussed whether to concur with the LWV Michigan position regarding the Great Lakes ecosystem.

He reminded us of past problems that were successfully addressed through legislation: invasive alewife species, Mirex (Love Canal-Hooker Chemical) pollution, and phosphorus which principally affected the lake five or more miles offshore.

Asked about current issues that could be addressed by local Leagues, he pointed to several possibilities for research and education of citizens and their legislative representatives:

- implementing stricter regulations on ships which bring invasive species into the Lakes through discharging of their salt water ballast
- implementing new regulations on small farms that have increased the number of dairy cows per acre thereby increasing the amount of manure which leads to toxic runoff into streams without mitigation
- examining ways to improve the 25 upstream water treatment plants in the area to remove toxic materials from developments and farms before they are discharged into our lakes.

Another concern that the scientific community is aware of but does not yet see an answer to is the volume of antibiotics entering the water system and their long-term effects.

The League members then discussed the LWV Michigan position for the Great Lakes and its application to our own area. It was unanimously agreed to concur with the position since it would apply to all these concerns and give us a basis from which to educate and advocate for legislative or regulatory action. Support for this position enables us to act in coordination with all the Leagues which border the Great Lakes.

Three people who attended expressed interest in working on a committee to explore ways to educate our neighbors and representatives about these concerns and find ways to mitigate or resolve them. Prof. Makarewicz will also suggest possible venues for our traditional "Go See" tours in May.

Want to join us? Please contact Georgia DeGregorio at georgiatd1@gmail.com

Milestones

Mary Lucile (Mary Lu) Davidson died on August 5, 2012 at the age of 92. She was an active member and volunteer for several area organizations including the League of Women Voters.

Ursula W. Reiners died on October 18, 2012. She was a past President of the League of Women Voters, and her family has suggested donations to the League in her memory.

LWV/RMA is grateful for Mary Lu and Ursula's contributions and for their friendship during their many years of membership and service in the League.

If you have League-related news about our members to share (recognitions, obituaries, etc.), please send info to LWVRMA-VOTER@rochester.rr.com.



News from Membership

Many of you have by now received the electronic or hard copy membership renewal invoices. The invoices to those who have renewed recently or are due extend their renewal from their anniversary date to our *New League annual renewal date* of October 1, 2013. If you already paid your dues, thank you so much! If you haven't yet, remember that you can pay via Paypal from our League website, or mail a check to our local League address (PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610).

The renewal dues are as follows:

Anniversary Month	Dues Amount Owed	New Renewal Date
August	\$87.50	October 1, 2013
September	\$81.25	October 1, 2013
October	\$75.00	October 1, 2013
November	\$68.75	October 1, 2013
December	\$62.50	October 1, 2013
January	\$56.25	October 1, 2013

Please look at your letter and note that I have identified your anniversary month and explained the calculation of the amount needed to move you from an anniversary month to an annual renewal date.

After this year, all members will have the same due date, October 1st. This confusion is temporary.

If you have any questions, please contact me through the League website www.lwv-rma.org or phone number (585.262.3730), or my email etdegorgio@hotmail.com.

Ellen De Gregorio,
Chair, Membership

Sunshine Corner

CITY OF ROCHESTER COUNCIL

Do you attend, or would you like to attend, City Council meetings? We are in need of an Observer at these meetings. If you are interested please contact Elaine at eschmidt8@rochester.rr.com.

HENRIETTA TOWN BOARD 10/17/12

Observer J. Schmitt

No LWV issues noted. 6-12 citizens in attendance; meeting lasted 10 minutes; 6 resolutions were passed. Record time?

(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: www.henrietta.org/boards/townboard.html)

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE 10/9/12

Observer E. Schmidt

The Legislature heard from many public speakers on the issue of hydrofracking. The speakers from R-CAUSE, a Rochester interfaith group, and the Sierra Club spoke about the cancer-causing chemicals and radioactivity of the millions of gallons of brine from fracking. It appears that the water cannot be made safe again once it is contaminated. Storage of wastewater would be required. Speaker after speaker pointed out the possibility of spills on the roadways and in storage facilities. The public forum was extended until almost 8 pm.

After years of hard-fought negotiations, the CSEA contract was passed by the Legislature. The original contract had expired in 2008.

Business was conducted as usual after the public forum section; however, at the end of the session when President Adair asked for any closing comments he missed the raised hands of Legislators Aldersley and Lightfoot, and closed the session before they were allowed to speak.

(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: <http://www2.monroecounty.gov/legislature-agendasandminutes.php>)

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD

Observer L. Winterkorn

No LWV issues noted. 13-20 citizens attended; several proposals passed.

(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: www.ci.webster.ny.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=41)

If you attend your local town board meetings, please contact me by email at eschmidt8@rochester.rr.com with information on the meeting!

Elaine Schmidt,
Chair, Local Government and Observer Corps

FEPC/Naturalization/ Absentee Ballots

NATURALIZATIONS:

On November 8th, Barb Hendry welcomed new citizens at the Monroe County Office Building. Sheila Abeling celebrated the Marine Corps Birthday on November 9th at the Federal Building. December 6th, at the Federal building, Kathy Farrar will be welcoming new citizens at the oath ceremony. On December 13th, Beth Feldman will meet new citizens at the Monroe County Office Building. We have come to the end of the 2012 Naturalization Ceremonies. Thank you to all our League members who have welcomed hundreds of new citizens to the USA this year: Lois Winterkorn, Mimi Wilson, Joan Rosenthal, Barb Hendry, Beth Feldman, Kathy Farrar, Marcia Eisenberg and Sheila Abeling.

FAIR ELECTION PRACTICES CAMPAIGN:

The Committee has heard several complaints during this campaign season. The League appreciates all of the efforts of the Committee in trying to make this 2012 campaign a fair issue based one. It certainly was a challenge! Again many thanks to all Committee members: Jim Morris-Chairperson, Ralph Esposito, Tracy Logel, Channing Philbrick, Kay Wallace, John Curran, Tom Frey, Lois Giess, Jim Peters, Sue Roberts, Jim Turner, Rob Brown, Peter Knapp, Michael Miller and Richard Rosenbloom.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS:

Thank you to all League volunteers who helped open absentee ballots on November 6th, Election Day! Sheila Abeling, Chris Burleigh, Gin Busack, Georgia DeGregorio, Shirley Eberly, Barb Hendry, Mary Hussong-Kallen, Beth Keigher, Gloria Read, Elaine Schmidt, Jane Schmitt, John Schmitt, Bertha Simpkins, Katherine Smith, Brian Valenti, Rod Vane, Judy Weinstein, Alison Wilder, Don Wilder and Lois Winterkorn each spent several hours opening ballots on that day. The League and the Board of Elections (BOE) appreciate your efforts. The League also benefits financially in this endeavor because of our contract agreement with the BOE.

Hopefully, everyone reading this VOTER edition voted on Election Day!

Sheila Abeling
Chair, FEPC/Naturalization





Coming Events!



December

Happy Holidays!

January

- 12** Saturday Member Meeting at Buckland Park, 1341 Westfall Road in Brighton
- 24** Board of Directors meeting at Brighton Town Hall

We Need You!

NATURAL RESOURCES : We need 4-5 more members to explore the challenges that were presented at our November forum on Lake Ontario Ecosystem. See separate article on page 4 regarding updating our current agriculture position that will coordinate with the goals of this committee. Jane Schmitt has agreed to mentor your efforts.

SOCIAL POLICY-FOCUS ON HEALTH CARE: An ad hoc committee was formed this fall following our September forum. You are already seeing the fruits of their research in this (see p. 5) and future Voters. We need 2-3 more members to help with the long-term commitment to follow up on The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and explain to readers of the Voter the latest developments. Georgia DeGregorio will mentor this group.

SIA (STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY): This is an opportunity with a light footprint. SIA is an excellent, popular 3-4 day seminar in Albany explaining how government works including meeting state representatives. You will contact principals at two schools, request recommendations for students to participate, and arrange for their transportation by train. Mentoring is available.

We are conscious of the many demands on your time, and we try to plan meetings and activities accordingly. No job is so small that does not receive our heartfelt thanks. Give us a call at 585-262-3730 and find out more.

Thanks!

I would like to thank Sheila Abeling for her continued hard work with FEPC. This year was particularly challenging, and she handled it professionally and effectively. She continues to lead this very important League position year after year and, although it seems to get more challenging each year, she takes the bull by the horns (or should I say politicians by the horns?) and makes it a success every time.

Brian Valenti,
Director, Public Relations

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!



We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofrma



Board meets at 5:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month. Board meetings are open to all members.
Local Government Committee meets monthly at the Brighton Town Hall, Stage Room. For details, call Elaine Schmidt at 530-7414.
Membership Committee meets monthly at Brighton Town Hall, Stage Room. For details, call Ellen DeGregorio at 473-3502.
10:00 am Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building at 39 W. Main Street.
1:00 pm Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Federal Court House at 100 State Street.
Forums are open to the public. Calendar information is subject to change.
For more complete information, consult our website at www.LWV-RMA.org, call 262-3730 or e-mail us at info@lwv-rma.org



**Rochester/Metro
League of Women Voters**

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



**FEBRUARY VOTER
DEADLINE IS JANUARY 7!**

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Rochester VOTER

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League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area*

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Sheila Abeling
Chair, FEPC & Naturalization

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Katherine Smith
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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