

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!

Join Us for Our July 20 Annual Planning Meeting and Retreat

All members are invited to this mini-retreat

Saturday July 20

9:30 AM to Noon

Brighton Brookside School Recreation Center
220 Idlewood Road



What Does the League's Future Look Like?

It's up to each one of us, as we

- Look over the past year: its successes and challenges
- Plan for the new year: its programs and advocacy.

Join us for lunch by bringing your own, or ordering from DiBella's when you arrive. Soda and dessert provided.



President's Corner



Thank you to the League members who made these last two months a success. Gin Busack and her Program Committee presented the excellent Immigration program at the end of April, which was co-sponsored by the Greater Rochester Immigration Coalition for Justice.

This was followed by an informative Go-See tour of the Golisano Institute for Sustainability on RIT campus, organized by Jane Schmitt and Chris Fredette.

Our Annual Meeting on May 30 featured an excellent speaker, James Sheppard, Chief of the Rochester Police Department. In addition, the **Make Democracy Work** award was presented to Sr. Gratia L'Esperance, and the **Carrie Chapman Catt** award to Lois Winterkorn. Our new Secretary, Barbara Kay, was elected to the board, along with the slate of returning members. The open position for Treasurer was filled by Ellen DeGregorio. If you were unable to attend and wish to have a copy of the Annual Meeting program/booklet, there are a few left which can be sent to you if you contact me. Thank you to the Membership Committee for planning and hosting the meeting.

At the board meeting immediately following, we again appointed Katherine Smith as Off-Board Director for Advocacy and Sheila Abeling as Off-Board Director for Naturalization and FEPC. We appreciate their work this year in promoting the League's positions, as well as supporting the very moving program that welcomes new citizens every month.

On June 10 your board held an open member meeting to discuss a concurrence with Ohio's Consensus on Human Trafficking. After a good discussion the board approved the concurrence and sent this on to LWVNYS.

Your board of directors will be hosting our annual planning meeting and retreat on July 20 from 9:30 AM to noon at Brookside School in Brighton. All members are WISE (Warmly Invited and Strongly Encouraged) to join us.

With sincere appreciation for all of you who worked diligently this year and produced good programs and solid leadership,

Georgia DeGregorio
President, LWV-RMA

Update on the Fair Election Act

The 2013 Fair Election Act was passed by the NYS Assembly in May 2013, by a vote of 88 to 50. LWVNY was supporting this bill as a first step in changing the way we fund political campaigns in our state.

The act allows for public funding in elections with conditions on private fund raising of \$250 or less of at least 200 people in a senate district and 100 people in an assembly district. The Monroe County delegation voted along party lines with Morelle, Gantt and Bronson voting "yes" and Johns, Nojay and Reilich voting "no." The Governor supports the provisions of the bill which take full affect in the 2016 races. The NY Senate has not voted to date. Please call your Senator stating your strong support for the Stewart bill for matching public funds for campaigns.

This system of raising money and having it matched with tax dollars should provide opportunities for more people to run for office in NYS. Candidates for Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, NY Senator and Assembly will be covered. The League looks forward to more competitive races with a diverse group of citizens being elected.

This summer when your NY Senators are in their districts attending events and raising money is the best time to be very vocal about our concerns regarding money in politics. Keep telling your senator we support the Fair Election Act:

Robach	225-3650
O'Brien	223-1800
Ranzenhofer	716-631-8695
Nozzolio	315-568-9816
Maziarz	637-5800
Gallivan	716-656-8544

Katherine Smith
Director, Advocacy



Supreme Court

Dear League Members:

The following statement was sent to each of you from LWVUS with a request to make a donation to National in order to meet the expensive fight for strong Voting Rights legislation to correct the Supreme Court decision. We encourage you to consider helping in any way you can.

Georgia DeGregorio
President, LWV-RMA

Today the Supreme Court gutted Section 4 of the landmark Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965. This decision erases fundamental protections against racial discrimination in voting that have been effective for more than 40 years.

Until Congress acts to restore the critical protections provided by this crucial legislation, the rights of some of the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups of voters are at stake. All states, including those that have a history of blatant voter discrimination are now free to wreak havoc on the rights of voters whose voices are often the least heard.

During the 2012 Presidential election, partisan politicians and special interests waged a war against voters — working to overturn voting rights laws, limiting voter registration by groups like the League and using tactics that blocked access to the polls.

The League fought back then and we are fighting back now.

Today's decision will only embolden those who seek to create barriers to voters' rights. Without a strong VRA, our ability to fight off anti-voter legislation and keep our elections free, fair and accessible is significantly weakened.

The League has been tirelessly working for over 90 years to protect the rights of all eligible voters. We won't sit on the sidelines while the voting rights of millions of Americans are threatened.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth MacNamara
President, LWVUS

PS: American democracy is built on free, fair, and accessible elections. That's what's at stake right now.

Please support the League today and help us defend everyone's right to vote.

Contact your Congressmembers now and tell them you support a new Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act to be passed immediately:

Thomas Reed 315-759-5229
www.reed.house.gov

Dan Maffei 315-423-5657
www.maffei.house.gov

Louise Slaughter 585-232-4850
www.louise.house.gov

Chris Collins 716-634-2324
www.chriscollins.house.gov

Women's Equality Agenda

For the past six months LWVRMA has been promoting the ten points of the Women's Equality Agenda which the state Assembly passed 92 to 47 on June 21.

The New York Senate voted 63 to 0 in favor of a less comprehensive bill which covered only 9 out of the 10 items of the WEA including housing, employment and human trafficking.

The bills now need to go to a conference committee of the State Assembly and Senate. The new compromise bill must be voted on in both houses, or the Assembly must hold a special session and vote on the nine individual bills passed by the Senate.

Whether this happens in 2013 depends on us and our coalition partners keeping the agenda in public view with continual demand that our Albany delegation meet to finish this work as soon as possible.

We've gathered hundreds of signatures, held press conferences, met with the D&C editorial board, sent emails and made phone calls.

Keep sending the message every day this month. (Information on WEA is in the February Voter on our website). This campaign is nearing a positive conclusion. Don't let it fade during the hot, lazy days of summer!

Katherine Smith
Director, Advocacy



Report from the State Convention June 1-2, 2013

WE WON!!!

We were awarded the Membership and Leadership Development Award for the programs that we planned, the visibility we achieved, and the new members that joined us because of this plan.

Barbara Grosh, Phyllis Walker, Elaine Schmidt and I were pleased to accept the award for all of you at the 55th LWV-New York State Biennial Convention. It is truly an investment in our League as we mentor and educate League members!! Thank you for your support.

State program approved by the delegates:

1. Term limits for state representatives study was approved after three people volunteered to lead the study.
2. Our position on Constitutional Convention (with focus on delegate selection criteria) was updated.
3. The concurrence proposal was referred to local Leagues to decide on the Human Trafficking position studied by Ohio State League. (*Members and your local board affirmed this at the June 10 meeting.*)
4. The various forms of primaries that could be offered to increase voter turnout will be studied.

Think about which item interests you and be ready to join the study group via internet, conference calls and occasional meetings.

Former Congressman Mickey Edwards from Oklahoma was our dinner speaker. His topic was based on his book: ***The Parties Versus The People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans***. Is this possibly a book for discussion by our Book Club?

COMMENTS FROM OTHER LOCAL LEAGUE ATTENDEES:

Barbara Grosh (Voter Service)

We learned from other leagues to ask new voters to sign a pledge promising to vote in the next election and ask them to give their email address if they'd like a reminder and a link to Vote411.

We learned that when planning candidate forums, sending out press releases inviting candidates to participate on specific dates can help establish a record of even-handedness and encourage candidates to participate.

We heard about some great programs for kids, such as **Take Me to Vote**, which we will consider doing in future.

Elaine Schmidt (Government)

We learned about "fun" fundraising; heard about many things we can try here in Rochester.

We met so many women and men (well, a few) who want to make democracy work! We are not alone!

"Just right" State convention. Had time to schmooze, learn and enjoy good meals! Hilton was just right too!

Phyllis Walker (Membership)

We learned to start asking active members to take on small tasks and get involved with the League more and more, little by little.

We learned that to survive and strive, we must begin systematically preparing individuals to lead the League.

We learned that the victims of human trafficking should be provided with services on an as-needed basis. Minors who have been sexually exploited commercially or forced into slavery should be legally considered victims and given special physical and mental health care.

I enjoyed meeting other members of the League. The workshops, featured speaker and networking were excellent!

For more convention coverage, please check out LWVNY's State Voter:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs102/1102704766323/archive/1113788053156.html>

Georgia DeGregorio

President, LWV-RMA

Milestones

We are sad to report that long-time League member Lisl Thaler has died. We are so grateful for her many contributions to the League. She was a member of many committees: Unit Group, Bulletin, Finance, Voter Service, Publicity and CR Committee.

She graciously requested that donations in her memory be directed to several local organizations including the League. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to her family and many friends.

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

Farmworker Rights Remain On Hold

Recently carloads and busloads of farmworkers and their advocates descended on the New York State Legislature demanding equal labor protections as other workers in this state. They knew their task would not be an easy one, as they have done this year after year, including walking all the way from Western NY to Albany three times in summer heat, rain, and even snow. Although they previously won the right to water and bathroom facilities in their workplace, as you would expect anywhere in New York but which is rarely provided and even more rarely regulated by NYS Department of Labor staff, they still have not won the right to such basic labor rights as a day of rest, overtime pay, or the right to organize.

And again their friends in the Assembly validated farmworkers as human beings, needing rest and deserving equal labor protections. The bill passed by a vote of 82-53. Local representatives voted as follows:

Yes – Gantt, Bronson and Morelle

No – Johns, Reilich, Oaks and Nojay

And once again the New York State Senate refused to treat them as residents of this great state. By yet again failing to even bring the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (S1743-2013, A.1867) to a floor vote, they acknowledged their belief that farmworkers do not need fair pay, a day to worship or to spend time with their families, or the right to complain about conditions in their workplace.

And this year Senator Dean Skelos, temporary President of the fractured New York Senate, refused to allow the vote on farmworker rights at the same time the Senate passed protections for animals, requiring a psychiatric evaluation for animal abusers and a ban from them ever owning a pet again.

We can protect a dog named Buster but not a farmworker named Pedro?

The legislation was opposed by Republican Senators Mike Nozzolio, Patrick Gallivan, Michael Ranzenhofer, George Maziarz and most of their Republican colleagues, and also by Democratic Senators Carlucci, Gipson, Felder and Tkaczyk — and Ted O'Brien, who in the end refused to even meet with many of us and still will not support this bill.

So what can we all do now? First, thank those senators who have spoken out in support of farmworker rights (among them Senator Joe Robach). Second, every single time you bite into an apple, remember my dear friends Soledad and Francisco who have worked in the summer heat picking apples 12-14

hours a day, seven days a week, and who trim those trees in February's freezing snow and wind so the harvest would be bountiful.

And lastly, tell your State Senators in no uncertain terms that this is no longer acceptable to the citizens of this great State of New York.

John L. Ghertner, MD
Immigration Committee Member



LWV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to run elections for AFSCME

AFSCME Local 1635, representing city employees, has asked us to run their election of officers on September 20. From 6 AM until 6 PM, we will need 4 League members to check the membership rolls as each person comes to vote, give them a ballot, and safeguard the ballots until the end of the election. We will then count the ballots.

The union will pay an honorarium to the League for providing this service. It's an honor that they asked us, showing that the League has a reputation for being both fair and organized! If you like the idea of being an election inspector, this is an excellent opportunity to represent the League and bring democracy to action at a local level.

Please mark your calendar for Sept. 20 and contact Barbara Grosh (barbara@grosh.net, 264-1691) to let her know what hours you would like to work. Recruit a friend to work with you and it will be even more fun!

Barbara Grosh
Director, Voter Service

Health Care Committee Puts Answers on League Website

Since last year's September forum on health care, your new Health Care Committee has been researching information and conducting interviews to answer the questions that came out of that event. Now you will find the answers to these questions on our website www.lwv-rma.org.

The broad topics include:

- US and NYS League Positions
- Cost Containment and Quality of Care
- Consumer Access to Care/Delivery of Care
- Comparative Health Care Systems

We hope that you will find what you need to understand this major change in our health care delivery system. We invite you to bring your questions or comments to our FACEBOOK page at www.facebook.com/lwvofrma.

From this on-line discussion, we are sure there will be other areas that you will want us to cover, as we plan a public forum on this topic.

LWV-RMA Health Care Committee:

Georgia DeGregorio, Chair
Lisa Slater
Lillian Zhu
David Newman, MD
Sarah Liebschutz, PhD
Linda Lowenstein
Dallas Nelson, MD
Donna Daniel

Voter Registration Blitz Planned for August

The League is attempting to capitalize on the interest in mayoral and City Council elections in the City of Rochester in order to spur voter registrations this summer. We will respond to requests to attend events all summer, as we always do, but we plan a particularly ambitious spurt of activity in early August, preceding the deadline for registration to vote in the September primaries.

We hope to have volunteers registering voters at the Tops Market and Save-a-Lot grocery stores in the city, at the various city branches of the library, and at other gathering points, such as open swim times, the bike give-away times at Rochester Community Bikes, and at city health clinics. If you would like to work some shifts registering voters, or know of a good place to do so during August 3-11, please contact Barbara Grosh (barbara@grosh.net or 264-1691). Feel free to recruit a friend to make it more fun. This is often a great way to bring people into the League!

Naturalization and Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC)

NATURALIZATION:

On May 6th Joan Rosenthal, Kay Saunders and Katherine Smith welcomed new candidates for citizenship at RIT.

July 4th will bring Beth Feldman and Katherine Smith to the Genesee Country Museum for the naturalization ceremony at 10:00 AM.

The July 11th ceremony will be held at the Monroe County Office Building. Marcia Eisenberg will represent the League at the oath ceremony.

August 8th will bring Beth Feldman to the Monroe County Office Building to greet new candidates for citizenship. Also on August 8th in Seneca Falls at the Women's Rights Museum, there will be a naturalization ceremony. The Geneva League of Women Voters will be present for that ceremony.

All members of the League are welcome to attend naturalization ceremonies. If you are interested, please contact Sheila at 585-223-6819 or sheiler162004@yahoo.com

FEPC:

The Fair Election Practices Campaign 2013 officially opens on August 13th. Complaints will be heard by the committee any time after that date until the general election in November. On Tuesday, September 3rd, there will be a Signing Ceremony/Press Conference at the Atrium in the Monroe County Office Building at noon. We are hoping for a fair, issue-focused campaign this year.

Please check the League website (lwv-rma.org) for further information on naturalization ceremonies and the Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC).

Sheila Abeling

Director, Naturalization and FEPC Chair



Membership – Leadership – Development

There has been a lot of activity this year and many high points for our education forums. Communicating our mission has resonated with many participants and has led to our 2012-2013 class of new members.

Please provide a warm League welcome to all:

Michael Barbato	Mary Meyers
Kenneth Buckle, MD	Kathleen Mock
Roberta Buckle	Dallas Nelson
Jo Cone	Joanne Panzarella
Judith Engerman	Lisa Slater
John Ghertner	Elizabeth Ver Steeg
Linda Howland	Phyllis Walker
Majorie Humphrey	Sarah Yaworsky
Alice McCormick-Ennis	

We are grateful to those who over the years have built the organization we have today. My sincere wish and commitment is to honor our mission and continue that work.

In the words of Carrie Chapman Catt,

*To the wrongs that need resistance,
To the right that needs assistance,
To the future in the distance,
Give yourselves.*

I look forward to our next program year. Stop by and say Hi when you see me – I love to put a face to every name.

Respectfully yours,

Ellen De Gregorio
Director, Membership

Notice to All Members:

You are cordially invited to our
Annual Planning Meeting and Retreat.

Join in the discussion, which will evaluate the successes and challenges of the past year and focus on our vision for the new League year.

SATURDAY, JULY 20

9:30 AM UNTIL NOON

**BROOKSIDE SCHOOL,
220 IDLEWOOD RD, BRIGHTON 14618**

Bring your own lunch or order from DiBella's.

For more information and/or to tell us you will be attending, email info@lwv-rma.org or call 262-3730.

Photos from the Go-See Tour

GOLISANO INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABILITY (GIS) HALL ON THE RIT CAMPUS



Green roof



Green wall



Lunch

Annual Meeting Photos



Annual Meeting Photos



Women’s Equality Rally Photos



Georgia DeGregorio,
President LWV-RMA





Coming Events!



July

- 4** Freedom of Information Act Anniversary
- 19** Seneca Falls Convention Anniversary
- 20** Annual Planning Mtg. & Retreat
All members welcome
- 27** League Book Club Picnic

August

- 3** Rochester Community Bikes (Voter Registration)
- 3** Puerto Rican Parade (Voter Registration)
- 4-10** Week-long City Voter Registration
- 9-11** Puerto Rican Festival (Voter Registration)
- 26** Women's Equality Day/Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment

Naturalization Photos



Board meets monthly. Call Georgia DeGregorio at 787-9692 for details. 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



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
ROCHESTER METROPOLITAN AREA

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www.LWV-RMA.org

Rochester VOTER

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Sheila Abeling
Director, FEPC & Naturalization

Katherine Smith
Director, Advocacy

**AUGUST VOTER
DEADLINE IS JULY 15!**

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK! 

We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofrma

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