



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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Picnic in the Park

Join us at our Annual Membership Meeting

On January 11, 2014

At Buckland Park Lodge

1341 Westfall Rd, Rochester, NY 14618

The purpose of this meeting is to set our advocacy agenda for the 2014 – 2015 program year

Schedule:

New Members Orientation – 11:00am to 11:30am

Lunch and Registration – 11:30am to Noon

Short Video and Welcome /

Discussion of Advocacy Positions – Noon to 2pm



President's Corner



Another holiday season is upon us - a good time to appreciate what the League means to you as well as to the community. We show that appreciation in many ways:

- **by making** that extra financial donation that supports our program. (Please note that this year we will not be

sending a letter but will instead participate in the **United Way's ROC The Day**. For additional information, see page 5.)

- **by sharing** with friends what the League is about and inviting them to programs they may find interesting.
- **by volunteering** to be part of our Observer Corps: keeping citizens informed about local government and letting the elected officials know we care about what they do.
- **by adding** your ideas and inspiration to committees on agriculture, education, government and voter services.
- **by participating** in our Annual General Membership Meeting/Winter Picnic on January 11 and helping to recommend to National which League programs should be studied for the June 2014 convention.

I had the pleasure of addressing the American Association of University Women (AAUW) about what the League would like to see in the way of change in our Rochester community. I felt it was important to note that Rochester is a city located within Monroe County - what happens in the city affects the suburbs and what happens in the suburbs affects the city.

I reminded the audience that last year we showed the film on the July '64 riots and acknowledged that not much has changed. We are looking to our newly-elected leaders to help bring us into a better future. As the film's director Carvin Eisen asked us: "Why keep repeating the past when we can carve out a better future?"

You and I want to be part of that "better future" - and the League is one good way to get there!

Happy Holidays,

Georgia DeGregorio
President

Have YOU found your niche in the League?

There's a committee, group or activity in need of your talent! May we suggest:

Action, Advocacy Committee
Affordable Housing Study Group
Agriculture Study Group
Archive Management (digital)
Board of Directors (various positions)
Book Club
Education Committee
Environment
Fair Election Practices Campaign
Go-See Tours
Government Committee
Health Care Study Group
Hospitality at League Events/Forums
Immigration Group
Membership Committee
Monthly Newsletter
Naturalization Committee
Observer Corps
Program Committee (monthly forums)
Social Policy Committee
Students in Albany Program
Voter Services Committee
Website Development/Maintenance

If you have questions, please contact us at 585.262.3730 or info@lwv-rma.org. Do it today!



Limited Number of DEC Inspectors Means WE are Needed

On October 30th Georgia and I found our way to 144 Exchange Street, a beautifully renovated building and the Rochester office of N.Y. Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

Lemuel Srolovic, Bureau Chief from the Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection, welcomed the community representatives of several local organizations who were invited because of their sincere interest in promoting a healthy environment. He spoke briefly about the action his office is taking to enforce environmental regulations and then introduced moderator Jennifer Nalbene from the Environmental Protection Bureau office in Buffalo.

From the others at the presenters' table, Georgia and I heard about the well water contamination in Webster, mercury imbedded in toys, current debate regarding water levels in Lake Ontario and the limited number of DEC inspectors to monitor potential polluters. This last item prompted the Assistant Attorney General to urge citizens to be the eyes & ears for them and report any evidence of a problem.

Referring to our recent LWVNY Concurrence with Lake Michigan's position, Georgia asked how NYS is working with the states and Canadian provinces surrounding the Great Lakes to address the pollution problems. The Assistant AG stated that there is an association of Attorneys General around the Great Lakes who react as a group to problems on an ad hoc basis.

I wanted to know if our Finger Lakes region has any "B corporations." A "B corporation" is one that evaluates its efforts to be a good neighbor and conscientious steward of the natural environment, besides being a successful business.

George Thomas from the Center for Environmental Initiatives provided a website <http://www.bcorporation.net> where you can type in "New York" to see the listings of "B corporations" statewide.

When asked how the western NY counties could have hearings in their area on hydrofracking and other concerns, he said they should not hesitate to ask the responsible agency for them and expect they will be granted. He also acknowledged the success rate of removing lead from housing in Monroe County and the urgent need to share this program with other NYS counties.

Our host will take our concerns and priorities back to the Attorney General. He felt, as did most of us in attendance, that the collaboration and networking offered at the gathering was useful and should be repeated on a regular basis.

Pat Tobin
Member

Georgia DeGregorio
President

LWV-RMA: Ahead of the LDC Curve

Did you know that LWV-RMA has been following the growth of LDC's for years? Thanks to a gift from Beatrice Bibby, the League was able to fund a study on LDCs by the Center for Governmental Research, issued in 2007 and then updated in 2011. The League then presented forums on this issue for its members and the public and expressed our concerns to the State Controller and legislators.

THE CGR REPORT STATES:

Local Development Corporations (LDCs) are a little-known creation of local government enabling counties, cities, towns and villages to play a new role in economic development. LDCs allow local governments to assist businesses with specific types of loans and grants, play a more flexible role in public-private partnerships, and even structure arrangements to purchase and develop real estate.

Because the state law codifying LDCs includes broad language about their purposes, LDCs have also been used to manage and upgrade government assets, promote tourism and recreation, address unique fiscal problems, and more.

The report goes on to examine specific powers of LDCs and warns of the significant danger of abuse. It offers specific information on many of the LDCs operating in the Rochester metropolitan area.

The entire report is available online, and makes for some fascinating reading. Please visit CGR's website for further information: http://www.cgr.org/reports/07_1527_LDCreport2007plus2011Update.pdf.

LWV-RMA will continue to follow LDCs and to advocate for greater oversight and accountability.

Elaine Schmidt
Director, Government

It's Time to Act!

The Women's Equality Agenda (WEA) would help the 10 million women of New York and their families by simply updating our laws to reflect the reality of women's lives in the year 2013 and beyond. The WEA will help the women and families of New York by preserving our access to reproductive health care, ensuring fair treatment at work, and helping survivors of violence.

WEAction for 2014 in NYS has the same ten issues needing legislative attention as the 2013 WEA Agenda. They are:

- achieve pay equity
- stop sexual harassment in all workplaces
- allow for attorney's fees in lending and credit discrimination cases
- end family status discrimination
- strengthen human trafficking laws
- stop source of income discrimination
- stop housing discrimination for victims of domestic violence
- protect reproductive health and choice
- stop pregnancy discrimination once and for all
- protect victims of domestic violence by strengthening court orders

Be sure to check <http://lwvny.org> for further details on each issue.

It's time for an upgrade. We need laws as strong as New York women. Not one of the measures of WEA has become law, but there is still time to act! We cannot let politics stand in the way. Join us on Twitter and #UpgradeNY laws. #WEAreStrong.

Sign the petition <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-legislature-we-need-laws-as-strong-as-new-york-women> - we DO need laws as strong as New York women.

Share what's happening <http://nywomensequality.org> - Visit us online and share our tweets, posts and pictures with your friends.

Call or email your legislators. A voice message or direct email goes a long way! Our legislators represent us, and they need to find a way to make the Women's Equality Agenda a reality. If our elected leaders don't act this year, it is the women of New York who will lose. Get sample messages of what you can say.

Find Your New York State Assembly Member:

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?sh=search>

Find Your New York State Senate Member

<http://www.nysenate.gov/senators>

Thank you for your continued support!

LWV-RMA



A Call to Action on WEA

IF YOU HAVE 1 MINUTE:

Like NY Women's Equality page on Facebook.

Follow 2NY4Women on Twitter.

Sign the petition for Women's equality at <http://www.lwvny.org>.

IF YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES:

Share news about WEA on Facebook and Twitter.

Call your Assembly member and NYS Senator today.

IF YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES:

Spread the word! Send emails to friends and family about why WEA is needed!

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES:

Write letter to the editor signed by you, not LWVRMA.

Respond to letter to editor that expresses opposite view of LWVNY.

Please keep Georgia and Katherine informed of your lobbying efforts on this issue!

Katherine Smith

Director, Action and Advocacy

Naturalization Quiz

Here's a sample of questions which naturalized citizens must answer. (Check your answers on page 9.)

1. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
2. What is one right of freedom from the First Amendment?
3. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
4. What did the Declaration of Independence do?

ROC THE DAY: DECEMBER 11 - ALL DAY

Our League has much to be grateful for this holiday season!

We were recently able to provide forums on important community concerns such as:

- health care delivery
- sexually exploited children
- the impact of the Supreme Court decision on our voting process and access to it

This summer and fall our Voter Services work included:

- an intensive voter registration campaign coordinated with other local organizations
- another very effective Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC) Committee
- ongoing monthly naturalization ceremonies

Two-thirds of your dues money is sent to our State and National Leagues who provide services for us at the level that we cannot efficiently do here. One example is our Education Fund (administered at the state level) for which we request additional donations each year.

In the past we sent letters to contributors for this yearly fund raiser, but this year we have made it easier for you to send your contributions through this new process.

Simply go to www.ROCTHE DAY.ORG to make this and all your tax-deductible contributions at one site!


However, if you miss this opportunity, we will at any time gladly receive your yearly, tax-deductible contribution made out to "LWVNY-Education Fund."

We have many more community education projects planned for the winter and spring. We thank you for helping your League volunteers to make it all happen!

Brian Valenti
PR Director

Georgia DeGregorio
President





ROC
THE DAY
12.11.13

Choose
the charities you want to support.

Give
with a simple, one-time online donation.

Matter
in the lives of people in the local area.

On 12-11-13, the Rochester community will come together to ROC the Day, and we need YOU to join us because The League will be participating this year!

It's 24 hours of unprecedented giving. And it's your chance to make a real difference right here in our community and to HELP continue OUR mission.

Take a quick look at our dedicated page and be ready to **ROC the Day** with all of us on 12-11-13:
<http://www.roctheday.org/LeagueofWomenVotersoftheRochesterMetropolitanArea>

Sunshine Corner

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

11/12/13

OBSERVER: ELAINE SCHMIDT

Legislator Paul Haney proposed reforms to LDCs in a resolution during the Legislature meeting, but it was voted down along party lines.

The Legislature has offered a revised resolution governing pawnbrokers, antique dealers, etc. The effort was bipartisan. A public hearing has been set for the next Legislature meeting on 12/10/13 at 6:00 PM.

As a rule, the County Legislature meetings are well run and open. At the last meeting, however, Mr. Haney was not recognized by Legislature President Adair when he attempted to bring up unfinished business at the end of the meeting. Mr. Adair closed the meeting quickly with a rap of the gavel.

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

Following Up On...

OUR NOVEMBER FORUM: SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN - RIGHT HERE IN MONROE COUNTY! WHO ARE THEY?

About 60 attendees listened to our panel discuss what the problem of trafficking is, how it is being addressed and what services are offered in the area for those who are affected. After the presentation the attendees had the opportunity to ask questions.

Brian Valenti welcomed everyone, and Judy Weinstein moderated the panel. Following is a list of the panel members and brief summaries of their presentations:

Nolica Murray-Fields (Senior Caseworker, Safe Harbor Coordinator) and **Robert Way**, LMS (Senior Caseworker, Child Protective Services, Monroe County) presented detailed information about who was vulnerable to being exploited, indicators that a young person is involved, why they do not leave and what their needs are if they can get away from that life.

People traffic others out of greed. A trafficker can earn \$2,000,000 a year doing this. The lack of being connected to a community, a family or a support system makes young people easy prey for traffickers. They feel no one cares for them or about them.

Sgt. Mark Freese (Major Crimes Section, Rochester Police Department) addressed the fact that this is an issue in the city, in every suburb and in the towns of the county. The FBI is involved because trafficking involves the use of the Internet to advertise, and it is part of interstate commerce. Setting up "stings" to arrest "johns" and "tricks" and building a case in these crimes is complicated and time-consuming. One percent of the cases actually lead to convictions.

Ramona Scott (People First Director at Faith Temple) spoke briefly about a program called "Stewards of Children" which trains adults to have conversations with children about sexual exploitation in age-appropriate ways.

The Safe Harbor Law of 2008 decriminalized victims of trafficking in New York State. Until then, children as young as 12 years could be – and were – arrested as prostitutes and had criminal records. The law now protects children and young people 16 and younger as victims in trafficked situations, and they do not have criminal records. This law needs to be extended to include victims up to the age of 18. LWV support for the passage of the Women's Equality Act in New York state will also help.

Why did the League present this program? This video clip is worth watching again: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKh78vXlfs&feature=player_embedded

Mary Myers
LWV-RMA Member



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Our Book Club Report ...

In October we met to discuss Jonathan Haidt's **The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion**. The book club enjoyed the topic and found it very enlightening.

A central metaphor is that the conscious mind is the rider on the unconscious mind (the elephant). Many of us, as riders, spend too much effort in justifying what the elephant thinks rather than challenging these unconscious/gut level beliefs.

The author then outlined the moral matrix of social conservatives vs that of American liberals.

A quote from the book illustrates how valuing one groups' motivation more highly can bring conflict with another group whose values tend to be focused on other concerns. The liberals of today "looked to government as the only force capable of protecting the public and rescuing the many victims of the brutal practices of early industrial capitalism." (p. 350) "Conservatives are the 'party of order and stability'. They generally resist the changes implemented by the 'party of progress or reform' ... A more positive way to describe conservatives is to say their broader moral matrix allows them to detect threats to moral capital that liberals cannot perceive... they fight back ... when they believe that change will damage the institutions and traditions that provide our moral exoskeletons [such as family]. Preserving those institutions and traditions is their most sacred value." (p. 357-358)

You can imagine our discussion regarding these expositions of the author!!

The weakness of the book was that there was little advice on how to actually talk to people with different beliefs. One member of the book club suggested listening to people with all different kinds of perspectives. By being open and listening there will usually be some areas of agreement upon which to base the goals we have in common. There will be other areas where people will never agree, but focusing on those areas of agreement is a good place to start.

Amy Roll
Member, Book Club



Naturalization & FEPC

On Election Day, November 5th, the League opened absentee ballots with the Board of Elections. As you may know, the League receives funding for working on that day. We are very grateful to the following League members for helping us out with this project: Sheila Abeling, Chris Burleigh, Gin Busack, Shirley Eberly, Chris Pryor, Kay Saunders, Jane Schmitt, John Schmitt, Katherine Smith and Rod Vane. Thank you! Thank you!

NATURALIZATION:

November 14th brought Mimi Wilson to the Monroe County Office Building for a Naturalization Ceremony. Kathy Farrar went to the Federal Building that day, too, and welcomed candidates at a ceremony.

On December 12th, Beth Feldman will greet new citizens at the Monroe County Office Building. Sheila Abeling will meet candidates at an oath ceremony that day at the Federal Building.

Sheila Abeling will cover the January oath ceremonies at the Monroe County Office Building and the Federal Building.

Our schedule for 2013 ends in December. In January, the Naturalization Committee (Sheila Abeling, Marcia Eisenberg, Kathy Farrar, Beth Feldman, Joan Rosenthal, Kay Saunders, Mimi Wilson and Lois Winterkorn) will meet and plan the 2014 schedule of oath ceremonies. Thank you to those League members for volunteering!! Please see our League website for further info on Naturalization: <http://lwv-rma.org>.

FAIR ELECTION PRACTICES CAMPAIGN (FEPC):

Another FEPC has come to an end! This successful Fair Elections Practices Campaign brought us nine complaints for the Hearing Panel to determine. Special thanks go to our Committee Members: Jim Morris (Chairperson), Ralph Esposito, Lois Giess, Channing Philbrick and Kay Wallace; thanks too to our Alternates: Jim Peters, Sue Roberts, Jean Keplinger, Carol Saum, Peter Knapp, Tom Frey, Michael Miller, John Curran. Additional thanks go to Brian Valenti and Judy Weinstein for all of their assistance during this campaign season.

Please visit our League website at <http://lwv-rma.org> to view information on FEPC 2013.

Sheila Abeling
Director, Naturalization and FEPC

LWV-RMA in the Community



Forum on Casino Ballot Amendment



Sheila Abeling with Rep. Louise Slaughter and Rep. Nancy Pelosi at the National Women's Hall of Fame Induction ceremony



City Council forum, moderated by Barbara Grosh



League members assisting with absentee ballot count on Election Day



Georgia DeGregorio, Brian Valenti, Lois Winterkorn, Rebecca Scott (Generation Capital Management), Alexis Zimmerman (American Heart Association) at Planned Parenthood luncheon.



Coming Events!



December

Happy Holidays!



Be sure to check your email for other events as they are scheduled!

January

- 1** New Year's day
- 11** Picnic in the Park General Membership Meeting
- 20** Board Meeting, 6:00 PM

Help Needed for Wetlands Model!

On September 19th the League participated in Conservation Days sponsored by the Monroe County Soil & Conservation District at Ellison Park. In our presentation the children act as rain makers; they really enjoy participating and very quickly realize that wetlands are important - and why. It begins to change their relationship to nature and introduces them to a world they have noticed but not really seen. Unfortunately, we were only able to participate in 1 day of the 3 day event due to the lack of members trained to do the presentations.

Our League began doing these presentations in 1989 when the Environmental Committee of LWVRMA applied for and received a grant from the national League to purchase the wetlands model. Over the years we have given presentations at the Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Tinker Nature Park in Henrietta, Boy Scout groups and numerous other events. Currently we have only 2 League members and an enthusiastic non-League member to do the presentations. We simply cannot respond to all opportunities we get for our presentations.

We need your help! If you would like more information on this important (and fun) work, please call the League at 262-3730 or Jane Schmitt at 334-0588.



LWV-RMA member Chris Fredette, demonstrating the value of wetlands

Answers to Naturalization Quiz questions:

1. The Bill of Rights.
2. Speech, Religion, Assembly, Press, Petition the government.
3. Twenty-seven (27).
4. Declared our independence from Great Britain and said that our country is free.

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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**FEBRUARY VOTER
DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15!**



Goals of the League of Women Voters:

- To encourage informed citizen participation in government and politics
- To influence public policy through education and advocacy

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We know you'll "like" us!

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Join the League Today!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

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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