



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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Annual Meeting!

Please join us on Saturday, May 10, 2014
at 10:30 AM at Locust Hill Country Club.

Vote for:

New slate of candidates to our Board of Directors
and Nominating Committee

Annual budget for 2014-2015

Bylaws revisions

Honor Milestone League Members

Celebrate Carrie Chapman Catt &
Making Democracy Work Awards

Enjoy our guest speaker: **Van White**,
Rochester City School District Board President

RSVP at <http://www.lwv-rma.org>
We look forward to seeing you!

LWV-RMA Go-See Tours

May 16, 2014

**Tour of
Foodlink**

**Please
Pre-Register!**

Visit our website at <http://www.lwv-rma.org>

May 23, 2014

**Noblehurst Farms, Inc.
and
NY Experiment Station**

**Registration Deadline is May 16
You Must Pre-Register!**

Visit our website at <http://www.lwv-rma.org>

**Bus trip only (brown bag your lunch) - \$15
Bus trip + box lunch - \$25**

President's Farewell Report 2014



The General Membership Annual Meeting will be Saturday, May 10 with registration beginning at 10:30AM and the business meeting beginning at 11:00 AM. This will be the final meeting at which I will preside as your president. Like many things we have done

these past two years, this will be another change for you to keep up with.

We have been most fortunate to welcome many new members, some of whom work full time. These members would find it difficult to attend an Annual Meeting luncheon. In addition, we want our more senior members to be able to attend during the daytime. So, Voila! A Saturday Annual Meeting is planned this year.

I have enjoyed working with each of you as we have taken on new challenges. I hope to thank you personally on May 10 for your enthusiasm in providing:

- debates with Channel 8 ... with more to come this fall
- thorough investigation of the materials for our Consensus on updating the LWVUS Agriculture position, including working with our sister League from Wayne County
- lively discussions at our new League Book Club – open to all on Saturday mornings (Note: It's accessible for weekday workers and those who do not like to drive at night.)
- intensive registration drive with allied groups last summer with plans for presenting to Rochester City High School Seniors this May in their Participation In Government (PIG) classes (Note: Volunteers are always needed.)
- programs and more programs/forums on Healthcare, Great Lakes Water Quality, Agriculture Position Update, Human Trafficking, Voter Suppression, Race Relations (with film on July '64 Rochester riots) – the list goes on ...
- new committees and study groups formed with goals for the new year on Education, Poverty, Housing, Human Trafficking (Suggestion: Look for ways to help/join.)
- website expansion – This is where people not only find out who we are but learn about the information gathered in our committees such as

Healthcare and Agriculture and Human Trafficking.

- leadership development opportunities, including a 6 week workshop by MCC Toastmasters, designed just for us
- staffing the Naturalization Ceremonies with League members (Hint: We always welcome new members with this heart-warming event.)
- working with The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR) in our Fair Elections Practices Campaign (FEPC) each year
- yearly Advocacy meetings with legislators

I could go on, but it is apparent that everything listed required dedicated volunteers as well as good relationships with other groups in providing excellent programs for our community.

You did so well!!! And it was a privilege to work with you all. Thank you.

Naturalization

The Naturalization schedule for new citizens in Monroe County can be found on our League website (<http://www.lwv-rma.org>). If you'd like to attend an oath ceremony, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162004@yahoo.com or 585-223-6819.

April 10th brought the League to two different venues. A morning ceremony in Fairport at the Minerva Deland School welcomed 52 new citizens. Joan Rosenthal attended that ceremony. Sheila Abeling welcomed 45 new candidates for Naturalization at the Federal Building in the afternoon.

Sheila Abeling

Director, Naturalization and FEPC

Registering Rochester's High School Seniors to VOTE

The Voter Services Committee has been working setting up opportunities to register graduating city school seniors to vote. So far four high schools have agreed to let us meet with their seniors to register them to vote: School of the Arts, School Without Walls, Monroe and Charlotte. The events will take place in late May and early June.

In most cases we'll be meeting with Participation in Government classes or Economics classes. Two or three League members will attend. We need members who are comfortable with public speaking and making a "pitch" to high school students explaining why it's so important to vote. If you'd like to help, please contact Barbara Grosh at 264-1691 or barbara@grosh.net

Barbara Grosh

Director, Voter Services

Let's Go See!!!

You heard about them in our March and April Forums: Foodlink, Noblehurst Farms and the New York State Agriculture Experimental Station now let's GO SEE them!

First up, on Friday, May 16th is a tour of the Foodlink warehouse located at 1999 Mount Read Boulevard. Tracing its origins to the 1978 "rescue" of Thomas English Muffins by Tom Ferraro, Foodlink today is the Feeding America regional food bank for a network of 450 member agencies serving the 10-county area of Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates. We will learn that HUNGER is multi-cultural and multi-generational, impacting a diverse population; 82% of Foodlink clients live below the poverty level including 36% children and 4% elderly.

We will follow the Foodlink tour a week later on Friday, May 23rd with a bus trip that will start with a visit to Noblehurst Farms, Inc. in Linwood and finish with a tour of the New York State Agriculture Experimental Station in Geneva. Noblehurst Farms is a seven-generation, multi-family corporation which cultivates land in three counties (Genesee, Livingston and Wyoming), milking 1500 cows three times a day and cropping 2400 acres. Noblehurst is committed to resource conservation and environmental stewardship. It is one of the first farms in the state to build a methane digester and soon, along with a partnership of seven other local dairies, will be processing its own milk.

Established in 1880, the New York State Agriculture Experimental Station (NYSAES) has been an integral part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University since 1923. The Station's 700-plus acres of land, orchards and vineyards and its research staff of over 300 help support New York State production of fruits and vegetables, developing new crops, enhancing food safety and promoting economically viable farming solutions. Recent innovations include a fingertip-sized sensor for accurate moisture readings essential for our grape growers (and even concrete makers). This new sensor is 100 times more sensitive than current devices and is expected to be in production for as little as \$5 per unit. Other recent achievements have been the establishment of a one-acre hop yard as a research planting to bolster the state's hops revival, the introduction of two new apple varieties (SnapDragon and Ruby Frost) and two new wine grapes (Arandell and Aromella), and the soon-to-be-introduced, maple water drink called "Vertical Water."

LET'S GO SEE IN MAY!!

Sunshine Corner

HENRIETTA TOWN BOARD 3/5/14

Observed by Jane and John Schmitt



According to our observer, many residents attended this meeting; all who spoke were against the building of a casino in the area.

(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.henrietta.org>)

HENRIETTA TOWN BOARD 4/2/14

No LWV issues.

(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.henrietta.org>)

IRONDEQUOIT TOWN BOARD 3/20/14

Observed by Gin Busack

The board authorized a civil action against the Medley Center reserving the right of the town to compel the property owner to fix code violations relating to the combustibles/fire suppression system.

No LWV issues noted.

(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.irondequoit.org/>)

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD 3/6/14

Observed by Linda Howland

No LWV issues.

(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.ci.webster.ny.us>)

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD 3/20/14

Observed by Lois Winterkorn

A Webster business asked for a tax assistance waiver as a result of a COMIDA directive. Our observer notes that COMIDA appears to not coordinate or plan with the towns. This lack of planning with the town results in a negative impact on town revenue.

(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.ci.webster.ny.us>)

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD 4/3/14

Observed by Lois Winterkorn

No LWV issues.

(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: <http://www.ci.webster.ny.us>)

Being a Shur Fellow

I just returned from North Carolina (It's spring down there, and it is coming north, I promise!). I was invited to do a training session on the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program for local Leagues at their State Council. It occurred to me that many of you do not know what this program is about and how it affects you.

Remember the early 2000s when the League membership numbers across the country were declining about 3-5% each year? LWVUS faced this problem by developing a program called MLD. Key components included:

- using your "elevator speech" (why you are a member) at every occasion and becoming comfortable in "making the ask" for people to join;
- being visible with outreach to other groups and the media so people know you exist and that you are a vibrant organization;
- developing a continuous relationship among the three League levels through training State coaches to talk monthly with local Leagues and with their National coaches (that's me).

I am a National coach or "Shur Fellow" (named after a League member whose husband, upon her death, gave a substantial donation to support the initial process). I talk once a month with the coaches of the State Leagues I am assigned to (NC and NH). The State coaches talk once a month to individual local Leagues who agree to be MLD Leagues.

The conversation focuses on the successes and challenges of the individual Leagues. The coach does not impose solutions but asks questions to draw out the strengths the local League has, encouraging the members to come to their own solutions that fit their programs and situations. We have developed a whole "Toolkit of Best Practices" and various programs from which the local League can choose. Ultimately the local League begins to "institutionalize" the MLD program by having the contact person on the board make sure the good work done continues.

It soon became obvious this is not "rocket science", and in fact includes many best practices shared for years. The difference is that now a League commits to using the tools that apply and sharing the results on a monthly basis.

The MLD has been in place for four years now and has been "in the black" in recruiting members for the last two.

If you are interested in becoming a State coach, please give me a call (585-787-9692), and I will answer any questions you may have. Our own State coach coordinator, Dare Thompson, has many more

NY leagues who want to be in the program but are waiting for coaches. If you love the League and want to see it prosper without long meetings and committee work, this is an opportunity for you!

Georgia DeGregorio
President

Advocacy: Childcare Programs Study

For decades the LWVNY has supported public subsidies for accredited childcare programs. LWV-RMA has been a very active partner within a local coalition, Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), speaking frequently and advocating for taxpayer dollars for these programs.

We are pleased to announce that this spring we have signed an agreement with the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) using the B. Bibby Endowment Fund to produce a study showing how much money is needed for this assistance in our county.

Since 2003 the number of children supported by subsidies in Monroe County has declined 38%. This LWV-RMA study will help policymakers, citizens and advocates better understand the level of unmet need here. The analysis will estimate the number of children below 13 years of age and children under 6 in families earning less than 200% of the poverty level with both parents in the workforce. The analysis will estimate the cost to serve all children in the City of Rochester and all towns in Monroe County, using data on present HeadStart and Pre-K programs and the number of child centers and family/group care sites from 2007-2013.

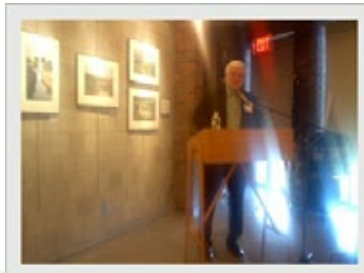
The study will be ready by the fall of 2014. The narrative, charts and tables will be formatted for easy distribution to LWV-RMA study groups, our coalition partners and local policymakers, if the Board so determines.

The League, as always, is grateful that the B. Bibby Endowment allows us to back up our advocacy with in-depth research and updated facts when lobbying on important issues.

Katherine Smith
Director, Advocacy



Forum Photos



New Education Study Group

A well-educated society is essential for democracy to thrive. With that in mind, the education study group was charged with the task of navigating the quagmire of education in Rochester. This is a daunting task with many avenues to follow. Essentially, we can be advocates or mentors.

To start our investigation into education, some of our members attended Grad Nation Community Summits. Topics addressed at the summit included: *Read to Succeed*, *Metro Solutions*, *Building Community Within the School Community*, *New Models for Education Success*, *Tackling the Lack of College & Career Knowledge*, *Youth Shine When Partners Align*, *Ready to Learn ... Ready for School ... Ready for Success*, *Parent Engagement in School*, *By the Numbers ... Data Can Be Your Friend*, and *Unengaged and Disconnected in the 21st Century: Rebuilding Pathways to Academic and Life Success*.

With so many avenues to explore we decided to do some background work. We had reports on several topics including charter schools, Dianne Ravitch's **Reign of Error** and Amanda Ripley's **The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got To Be That Way**.

After watching a video on college readiness produced by The Teaching & Learning Institute (TLI), we invited the lead teacher, Laura Delehanty, to speak to our committee. TLI is one of the successful programs in the Rochester City School District with 98% of its graduates attending college. The video highlighted the obstacles faced by many district students in their pursuit of an education. It also stressed that the Regents tests were not helpful in preparing students for college. What students needed were skills such as: time management, taking initiative, critical thinking, open mindedness, resilience and responsibility. The committee decided to develop a video of follow-up questions to ask the students. If you would like to learn more about the Teaching & Learning Institute, there was an article in the Thursday, April 10, 2014 edition of the Democrat & Chronicle. You can also visit the TLI web site (<http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/3711>). In addition, our study group has also sent representatives to The Rochester Education Foundation and observers to the School Board meetings.

Once our background information was collected we decided on a mission statement:

In order to properly advocate for free, appropriate, quality educational opportunities in the Rochester City School District, we will need to investigate and understand the responsibilities of the District School Board.

We have developed questions for each of the board members. The answers we receive will then steer our committee to future endeavors in our advocacy for quality education in the Rochester City School District.

Please consider joining our committee and sharing your expertise. Contact Gin Busack at ginbusack@aol.com. We welcome new members who are interested in making a positive difference.

Cathy Phelps

Member, Education Study Group

Spring 2014 Reality Tour

On March 31, 2014 a group of LVW-RMA members, local college students and other members of the community participated in the Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA) "Spring 2014 Reality Tour."

The tour was led by volunteer social workers, community activists and, for the first time, a Rochester City School District educator. The sites visited were the subway area that often houses Rochester's homeless, St. John's Neighborhood Center, the Monroe County Department of Social Services, The House of Mercy, and two very different Rochester area neighborhoods.

Thought-provoking information and questions arose throughout the day. The discussion topics on the tour were homelessness, medical care for the working poor, policies and procedures that affect or impede access to public assistance, and the income disparity between certain segments of Rochester and nearby communities.

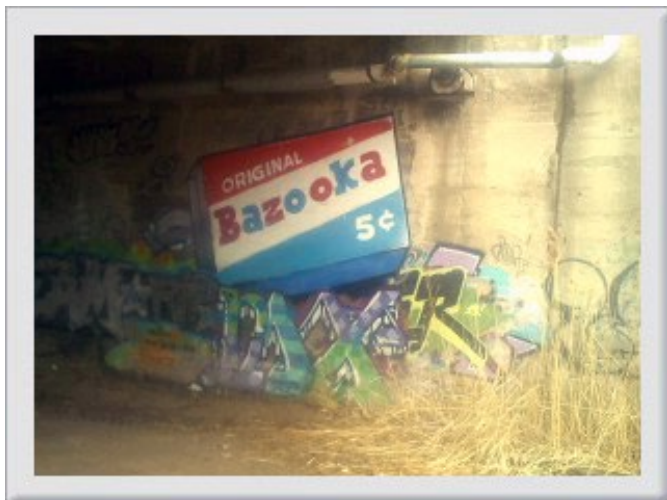
The sights, sounds, and personal testimonies had a strong impact on the youngest member of our tour, League President Georgia DeGregorio's ninth-grade grandson. I heard him say as we were headed home, "It makes me thankful for what I have." The tour left a lasting impact on me as well. The one bright spot was when one social worker explained how improved access to medical insurance was benefitting those who utilized St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center's services.

Many thanks to Ricardo Adams, Paul Jacoby, Bob Ingram, Diane Watkins, and all the other volunteers for sharing their time and thoughts with us. If you are interested in participating in a tour, contact the Social Welfare Action Alliance at www.swaarochester.org.

Hasana Martin

Member, Education Study Group

Reality Tour Photos



In the old subway



Our League on the tour



Sister Grace Miller



Ricardo Adams, Paul Jacoby and social worker, Melissa.

Advocacy Update: Campaign Finance Reform

LWVNY announced on April 1, 2014, that the pilot for public funding of one statewide race in 2014, that of Comptroller, was extremely disappointing. Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNY Advocate, wrote, "We failed to seize upon this historic opportunity to pass comprehensive campaign finance reform."

The Governor did not push hard enough for full implementation of the Moreland Commission findings. (Bartoletti was an advisor to the Commission.) Elements of the reform in the Assembly Budget Resolution were not in the Senate Resolution and were not a priority for the Governor, as their omission in the final bill signed March 31, 2014 shows.

This signed bill has no reasonable limits on campaign contributions to individual candidates, no reform of housekeeping accounts nor limits on transfer of party funds, and no restrictions on LLC contributions.

Your help is needed!

Go to <http://lwvny.org> to read February 5, 2014 League testimony by Bartoletti and Aimee Allaud on our longstanding positions on these issues, and to review what reforms we continue to lobby for in this Legislative session.

Call your Assemblymember and NY Senator TODAY asking for their support by June 18 for campaign legislation in General Government Article VII. Assemblymembers Morelle, Gantt and Bronson have voted for these provisions. Be sure to thank them and ask for their continued support.

The Senate bill needs the language from the Assembly bill that has public financing of all state races with enforcement by a State Board of Elections body that is independent and nonpartisan, as well as an independent audit with substantial penalties to deter non-compliance, plus concurrent NY Attorney General jurisdiction.

Katherine Smith
Director, Advocacy



NYS Joins National Popular Vote Compact

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has signed legislation that adds New York to the list of states that have joined National Popular Vote compact. Under this interstate agreement, member states will award their electoral votes for president to the candidate that receives a majority of the national popular vote.

The National Popular Vote legislation adheres to the basic principles of fairness in elections. Under the current winner-take-all system, Presidential candidates are able to ignore reliably Republican and Democrat states, like New York, and focus all of their attention and resources on a select group of battleground states. Therefore, candidates have no reason to focus on the many issues that matter to millions of New Yorkers across the state. The current system artificially divides the country into red, blue, and swing states. New York is a victim of this system – despite ranking 4th in the country with over 13 million eligible voters, New York ranked dead last in Presidential campaign spending.

The bill has now been enacted by 11 jurisdictions possessing 165 electoral votes: California, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

(from a press release issued by the Governor's Office)

State League's Report on Shale Gas in New York State

The League of Women Voters of New York commissioned a study to evaluate how much recoverable Marcellus shale gas there is in New York State.

Listen to Susan Arbetter's Capitol Pressroom to hear attorney Elisabeth Radow, Chairwoman of the State League's Committee on Energy, Agriculture and the Environment, and Arthur Berman, Geological Consultant at Labyrinth Consulting Services, Inc. explain the results of the study and why it was commissioned.

Listen to this archive and others at:

<http://www.wcny.org/radio/capitolpressroom/>

Naturalization Photos

Naturalization Ceremony was held at the Minerva Deland School in Fairport. The fifth graders sang for the new citizens and the school provided cake and drinks after the ceremony. Honorable Evelyn Frazee and County Clerk Cheryl DiNolfo officiated.





Coming Events!



May

- 10** Annual Meeting 10:30 AM @ Locust Hill Country Club
- 10** LWV-RMA Board Meeting 2:00 PM (immediately following Annual Meeting)
- 16** Go See Tour: Foodlink
- 23** Go See Tour: Nobelhurst Farms/NYS Agriculture Experimental Station

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

AmazonSmile

The State League has just joined a new program to help raise funds.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the State League every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as you find at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the State League's Education Foundation.

To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com instead of just amazon.com and search for the League of Women Voters of NYS as your selected charitable organization.

Board meets monthly on the second 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



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
ROCHESTER METROPOLITAN AREA

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

**JUNE VOTER
DEADLINE IS MAY 15!**

SPEAK UP, BE HEARD,
IF YOU DON'T SAY A WORD, EVERYTHING WILL STAY THE SAME WAY

Rochester VOTER

A Monthly Publication of the
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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

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!



We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofrma

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