



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. Non-citizens and those under 18 can be associate members.

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Announcing



Our New 2016-2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Mary Hussong-Kallen (2016-2018)
1st Vice-President	Sheila Abeling (2016-2018)
Treasurer	Ida Holloran (2015-2017)
Secretary	Judy Sternberg (2016-2018)
Director	Gin Busack (2015-2017)
Director	Sarah Liebschutz (2016-2018)
Director	Judy Weinstein (2015-2017)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (2016-17)

Barbara Kay, Chair

Gloria S. Read

Brian Valenti

(and 2 members to be appointed from the Board of Directors)

Presidents' Corner

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

As we come to the end of another program year, we're keenly aware that that means we're already gearing up for the next year. So let's take a moment to say thanks to those who have made this such a productive and fun year – not without its challenges (opportunities for growth, as a good friend calls them), but leaving us all with a well-earned sense of accomplishment and pride.

To the outgoing board – what a joy it's been working together! Gloria Read, Katherine Smith and Brian Valenti, to say that we'll miss you is such an understatement! We know that your contribution to the League will continue, however, and we look forward to new working relationships with you.

To those members of the League who have worked so hard this year, we offer heartfelt thanks. At the Annual Meeting, we honored Katherine with the "*Carrie Chapman Catt Award*" – a recognition of her service not only to the League but to the entire community. We also recognized five members with "You Make Us Proud" Awards: Barbara Grosh, Elaine Schmidt, Brian Valenti, Gail Wilder and Lois Winterkorn. How fortunate we all are that you commit your considerable talents to the League! And we acknowledged the wonderful collaboration with LWV of Wayne County, led by Ellie Drake. But it takes every member to accomplish our ambitious goals. Whether you simply pay your dues on time, volunteer occasionally, serve on a committee or chair a committee or study group – you Make Democracy Work in the Rochester Metro Area!

As we look forward, we welcome the incoming board members, Sarah Liebschutz and Judy Sternberg. We're so grateful to Lois Winterkorn and the Nominating Committee (Barbara Kay, Phyllis Walker, Gin Busack and Ernest DuBois) for inviting you to join the board, and we look forward to your insights and energy! And we're grateful for our continuing board members: Sheila Abeling (now 1st Vice-President), Gin Busack, Ida Holloran and Judy Weinstein.

And so another end becomes an exciting new beginning...

In League,

Gloria S. Read gloell@rochester.rr.com

Mary Hussong-Kallen mmhk@rochester.rr.com

2016 Annual Report: Advocacy Committee

KATHERINE SMITH, CHAIR

The LWV-RMA lobbies the Monroe County delegation to the state legislature regarding the LWVNYS legislative agenda. Three NY Senators and six Assembly members were seen in their Rochester offices. In 2015 and the beginning of 2016 our focus was Paid Family Leave. LWV-RMA held a forum on the issue, participated in three news conferences, collected 100 postcards, called elected officials and took part in weekly planning sessions for six months. The PFL campaign was a huge success with passage of the program in April of 2016.

LWV-RMA continues to build on its strong presence in the Rochester community with media coverage. Thanks to our PR Director, Brian Valenti, we did a dozen media interviews. WXXI "*Connections*" had guests from all of our 2015-2016 forums. Channels 8, 9 and 10 hosted Katherine Smith covering elections in 2015 and 2016, term limits for NYS officials, ethics reform, campaign financing, our focus was Paid Family Leave. Katherine Smith also participated in WXXI election night coverage as an analyst for local races.

Articles written for The Voter were on Money in Politics, Paid Family Leave, Why Don't We Vote?, Voting Rights Act 50th Anniversary, and the LWVNYS 2016 Legislative Agenda.

Speaking engagements about LWVNYS and LWV-RMA were held at Valley Manor and Asbury First Methodist Church.

Board Activities included:

- Moderated LWV-RMA forums
- Attended candidates' forums where LWV-RMA held voter registration
- Served on revision committee for Board of Directors Handbook
- Attended all "First Fridays"
- Met with CGR's representative to discuss Bee Bibby Endowment
- Represented LWV-RMA at Senator Funke's roundtable discussion about election day
- Helped with Naturalization ceremonies and voter service events
- Aided with Channel 8 congressional debate
- Conducted consensus session on LWVUS "Money in Politics"
- Attended all Board of Directors meetings
- Represented LWV-RMA at public forums on Anti-Poverty Initiative and Great School for All.

2016 Annual Report: Board of Directors

At our board meeting in July, 2015, we adopted 3 goals for the current year:

1. **Advocacy** – To increase and enhance our efforts to advocate for positions supported by LWV-RMA, LWVNYS and LWVUS, by incorporating an advocacy component to League activities wherever possible.
2. **Voter Registration** – To increase and enhance our efforts to register new voters, especially in low-enrollment areas, and to encourage all registered voters to vote in all elections through the use of creative reminders and continued contact.
3. **Visibility** – To continue the League's commitment to increasing our visibility in the community, especially through our community collaborations, committee activities, forums and individual initiatives (including "Making the Ask") – and to promoting all these.

We're proud to report that we've made great progress in each of these areas.

In addition, we've found success in several other areas:

- We're continuing to record our excellent monthly forums and post them on our own YouTube Channel, thanks to Elaine Schmidt's artistry.
- Our online presence is growing. We have established wide-reaching notice via our very informative and attractive member-maintained (by Barbara Grosh and Judy Weinstein) website, as well as Facebook and Twitter presence.
- We've updated our Board handbook as well as our policies, thanks to Judy Weinstein, Ida Holloran, Katherine Smith and Mary Hussong-Kallen's dedicated work.
- We're encouraging every committee and study group to keep the board informed by submitting monthly reports or committee meeting minutes. The board is very interested in every group's activity and is very grateful to have first-hand, current information on the great work being done in so many areas of interest to us all.
- As always, the 6 monthly forums were informative and well-attended. We continue to tap the experts in our community to share their knowledge on important and timely topics, using accessible and convenient venues. Thank you, Carole Hoffman.
- Our most recent Fair Election Practices Campaign was especially active – in Fall 2015 many complaints were lodged during a contentious election cycle; in Fall 2014 NO complaints had been received. Sheila Abeling coordinated an excellent team and oversaw systemic changes which proved to be most effective. Judgments were posted in the newspapers as well as online.

- We're continually strengthening our relationship with WXXI 1370AM. Panelists from each of our monthly forums have been guests on "Connections with Evan Dawson" on WXXI 1370AM.
In addition, 1st VP and Advocacy Director Katherine Smith has become something of a regular on "Connections" and several news programs on WXXI radio and TV, including election night coverage.
- Our 4th annual candidate debate co-sponsored with WROC-TV Channel 8 was another great success and we're planning to continue with another in 2016.
- We network regularly with regional League presidents by conference calls, sharing ideas and information on various activities.
- First Fridays – an informal gathering on the first Friday of each month during the program year, between 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. – continues to be a favorite League activity. Members and prospective members gather for coffee or lunch, and discuss League business – or more likely, their stories. We're getting to know one another better, and finding that we not only work well together, we like each other!
- We continue to seek opportunities to network with the Wayne County League, as well as community groups such as Susan B. Anthony Museum and House, Susan B. Anthony Center at the University of Rochester, The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester, the American Association of University Women, the many member groups in the Voter Alliance, and a growing list of partners (especially as seen in Gin Busack's impressive report).
- Once again, we arranged for two high school students to attend the Students Inside Albany program (thanks in large part to the generosity of Jean Shafer).
- We have expanded our popular Who Represents You brochure to include complete information on town offices and judicial officeholders.
- Teamwork has been a hallmark of this board. From Sheila Abeling and Gloria Read generously taking over parts of the Secretary's duties (before Judy Sternberg, of course!) to the collaborative approach toward forums and voter registration events – to making sure by regular attendance that we always had a quorum at meetings, the work has been challenging but rewarding, and much of the time fun!

In summary, on behalf of the board, please accept our thanks – for your help, for your enthusiasm, and for this opportunity to serve the League and the community!

Co-Presidents:

Gloria S. Read gloell@rochester.rr.com

Mary Hussong-Kallen mmhk@rochester.rr.com

2016 Annual Report: Government Committee

JUDY WEINSTEIN, CHAIR

The Government Committee met monthly to discuss ongoing concerns, such as Local Development Corporations, and possible new issues.

This was another busy year for us!

We:

- Prepared the questions asked of candidates for Vote411;
- Coordinated the Observer Corps;
- Planned an October forum "Nuts, bolts and monkey wrenches of a NYS Constitutional Convention" with our partners at TIAR, the Interfaith Alliance of Rochester. The panelists were Peter J. Galie, Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Canisius College, and Assemblyman Brian M. Kolb, of the 131st District and the Assembly Minority Leader;
- Prepared for the consensus meeting held in December to update the LWVUS Campaign Finance Position. In addition to presenting information on Money in Politics at the consensus meeting, we summarized the background material provided by LWVUS and posted it on our website so that members could become informed prior to the meeting;
- Presented the LWVUS activities in the areas of Voting Rights, Reapportionment, and Campaign Financing at the January Program Planning meeting;
- Are participating in the study committee for LWVNYS's upcoming consensus on Legislative Procedures;
- Anticipate holding future forums prior to the November 2017 vote on the NYS Constitutional Convention.

The members of the Government committee are Ann Carmody, Elaine Schmidt, and Judy Weinstein. We welcome you to join the Observer Corps or the Government committee.

2016 Annual Report: Membership Committee Forums for Members

GEORGIA DEGREGORIO, CHAIR

Our League of Women Voters' forums on important civic and political issues have been completed for this 2015-2016 year.

We appreciate your attendance at those that interested you and look forward to seeing you again in September. In the meantime, keep in touch through our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

For those who would like to be a supporter of the League as well as a participant in our many committees, we invite you to go to our website and learn about the many opportunities we have to offer.

We also encourage all League members to spread the word to friends and associates that League membership is open to ALL citizens 18 and older---in other words, it is "Not For Women Only." Or indeed not for only one political persuasion. We need all perspectives to make our democracy work.

2016 Annual Report: Agriculture/Farm Labor/ Immigration Study Group

BARBARA DEMING, CHAIR

The Committee has not met in over a year due to life, primarily in the form of travel and health issues, resulting in none of the programs designed to familiarize League members with various aspects of farm labor reality being actualized.

A development of interest to the League would be the New York Civil Liberties Union complaint filed recently in the State Supreme Court. The complaint stated that preventing farmworkers from organizing was a violation of the State Constitution. The state and governor, named as the defendants, will not be fighting the lawsuit as Governor Cuomo said he agrees with the complaint's position. Attorney General Eric Schneiderman concurs with the Governor's position. The civil liberties organization awaits a court-ordered settlement to establish protections allowing farmworkers to organize.

2016 Annual Report: Naturalization, Election Services, FEPC Committees

SHEILA ABELING, 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT, NATURALIZATION CHAIR, ELECTION SERVICES CHAIR, FAIR ELECTIONS PRACTICES CAMPAIGN CHAIR

NATURALIZATION:

The League was represented in at least two Naturalization Ceremonies per month in Monroe County during the 2015-2016 League year. Our volunteers explain to new citizens what registering to vote means and we assist them in filling out voter registration forms. The League worked with approximately 1,500 new citizens this year. Our dedicated volunteers are: Sheila Abeling, Marcia Eisenberg, Kathy Farrar, Beth Feldman, Kay Saunders, Mimi Wilson, Lois Winterkorn.

July 4th brings the League to the Genesee Country Museum to welcome 30 candidates for Naturalization. On that day Kay Saunders will witness the newest citizens.

A special thank you goes out to Mimi Wilson, Lois Winterkorn, Kay Saunders, Joan Rosenthal, Beth Feldman, Kathy Farrar and Marcia Eisenberg for all they do for our newest American citizens—welcoming them, answering their many questions, and helping them to register to vote.

ELECTIONS SERVICES:

The League has a contract with the Monroe County Board of Elections (MCBOE) to open absentee ballots on Primary and General Election Days. Our League members volunteer to provide this service each day that we are called. This project is a fundraiser for the League, earning the League \$100.00 for each member who volunteers. During 2015-2016 League program year, we raised \$2,600.00.

Our next Primary Election will be on September 13th. Please be sure to vote!

FAIR ELECTION PRACTICES CAMPAIGN 2015:

The League and TIAR (The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester) sponsor a yearly Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC) during election season. This campaign encourages all candidates for public office to run positive, issue-oriented campaigns. The Committee/Hearing Panel hears complaints regarding candidates who do not follow the Pledge of the FEPC.

Members of the Hearing Panel for 2015 were Jim Morris (Chairperson), Ralph Esposito, Tom Frey, Lois Giess, and Channing Philbrick. Alternate Members were Rob Brown, Lynda Garner Goldstein, Peter Knapp, Jim Peters, Sue Roberts, Mary Ann Thorpe.

2016 Annual Report: Poverty Study Group

GEORGIA DEGREGORIO, CHAIR

Your Poverty Committee has spent much of the year reviewing significant reports issued by United Way and RMAPI [Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative]. We interviewed people regarding their roles in the community goal of reducing poverty by 50% in 15 years. We are examining the process by which several large dollar commitments from the state are being used. Finally, we are questioning what laws and/or regulations need to be addressed to implement the plans being proposed. Committee members include Hasana Martin, Chris Pryor, Sandra Frankel, and Larry Burnette.

2016 Annual Report: Public Relations

Under the able direction of Brian Valenti for the past six years, the PR Committee has implemented innovative and creative ways to help make the League visible and to promote the many outstanding activities and events sponsored by LWV-RMA.

Use of technology has grown exponentially, from using MailChimp (to efficiently distribute The Voter, send press releases and notify members and the public of important news) to managing continually growing contact lists, all categorized and updated regularly. No message ever goes out without a clever note or visually appealing graphic, all trademarks of Brian's creativity and vision.

Besides the obvious PR role, archives of newspaper mentions are saved, links to online citations are posted and shared, and everything is always completed in a timely manner.

Regarding incoming telephone communications, Sheila Abeling has directed that operation for the past two years. Using online tools, phone messages are promptly directed to the best person to address the caller's question or issue.

Our website is managed by Barbara Grosh and Judy Weinstein – providing us with a first-rate and user-friendly web presence at substantial savings.

The number of Facebook "friends" and views/shares grows every month – thanks to the updates posted frequently by Brian Valenti, Barbara Grosh and Mary Hussong-Kallen. And our new Twitter account is managed by Mary Hussong-Kallen.

It takes teamwork to accomplish all this – and new volunteers as well as suggestions are ALWAYS welcome!

2016 Annual Report: Voter Services Committee

GIN BUSACK, CHAIR

As it always has been, the primary goal for Voter Services this year has been to encourage voter registration and, possibly more important, participation. In keeping with our belief that when we work together as a community we have more impact, we have endeavored this year to extend our reach by building partnerships with other community groups that share our philosophy. At the same time, we have focused our attention on the largely underrepresented center city population and our youth.

We are only as good as our volunteers and they have excelled this year. With their efforts, we have:

- Distributed 5,000 "Who Represents You" brochures to various community organizations in 2015 and are currently distributing the 2016 brochures;
- Sponsored a forum entitled "Why Don't We Vote?";
- Co-sponsored with our partners three candidate forums: FR=EE (School Board candidates), FR=EE/ Faith Community Alliance/ House of Mercy (Structural Racism), Rochester People's Climate Coalition and the Center for Disability Rights;
- Accepted speaking engagements with WXXI, Sisters of Penelope, Hillside, Nazareth College, Valley Manor, Rochester Institute of Technology/ Gray Matters and the Maplewood Library;
- Expanded our activity on local college campuses led by Gail Wilder, by conducting voter registration drives and working with the students at Monroe Community College, The College at Brockport, the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology.
- Expanded our civics education/voter registration initiative with the help of our Education Study Group, guided by Beth Feldman and enhanced by our Wayne County sisters. Aimed at city high school seniors, presentations were made at The School Without Walls, School of the Arts, Edison Tech, East High, The World of Inquiry and Vanguard. A registration drive was held at Nazareth Academy.
- Conducted registration drives at Project Homeless Connect, Susan B. Anthony Museum and House (National Voter Registration Day activities), and Rochester Monroe Recovery Network;


- Initiated partnerships with the American Red Cross combining voter registration with area blood drives, as well as the Rochester Victory Alliance where we will be offering voter registration services at the PRIDE Festival and the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Group.

The work of our voter registration volunteers is never complete. It will be a busy summer season continuing our co-sponsorship of the Rochester Voter Alliance initiative with The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR). This effort, which brings together many community and faith based organizations, focuses on inner city residents, providing registration services and encouraging voter participation. In addition, we have been invited to bring our services to the orientation weeks at Monroe Community College, The College at Brockport and the University of Rochester. We will also be working with the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House at their events celebrating the "Juneteenth" (the anniversary of the end of slavery) in August and National Voter Registration Day in September.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

Gregory Brumfield
Rebecca Courtright
Martha Fried
Rima Segal



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www.facebook.com/lwvofrma

Commentary: WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT 43% VOTER TURNOUT?

GIN BUSACK, CHAIR

Is this really the best that we could do for a hotly contested Presidential Primary?

Our State League tells us that conducting voter registration drives and educating voters on issues is really only about two-thirds of the job. The rest of our job needs to focus on voter turnout not just for the Presidential elections, but for our very important mid-terms.

Nobody can be forced to vote on Election Day. Our job is to encourage the informed use of that right. State reminds us that while voting is a serious matter, a "positive, light-hearted approach is often the more powerful".

STATE SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING:

- Joining forces with other respected organizations:
To this end, our Local League has been building collaborations – co-sponsoring the Rochester Voter Alliance with The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester to register and encourage participation in the inner city. We have initiated relationships with several of our local colleges and City high schools to reach out to our younger voters. In addition, we are working with The Susan B. Anthony House, Finger Lakes Donor Recovery, American Red Cross, Rochester Monroe Recovery Network, Rochester Peoples Climate Coalition, and the Rochester Victory Alliance to reach a wider market.
- Use of editorials, letters to the editor, ads, posters, call-in shows and, probably most important, person-to-person contact:
This is a job that all of us should consider. Think about talking to your neighbor or helping to register, offering a ride, helping with an absentee ballot, writing a letter to the editor. Consider helping with our registration drives over the summer months – perhaps joining in on the Rochester Voter Alliance campaign, or working at one of the upcoming events, or even speaking about us to other groups to which you belong.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO MOVE THAT PERCENTAGE UPWARD!

CONSIDER SIGNING UP FOR:

Rochester Voter Alliance: Voter registration events scheduled from June 1 - September 30;

Rochester Victory Alliance: PRIDE Festival 7/16 & 7/17 at Cobbs Hill Park;

Red Cross blood drives;

Orientation sessions at Monroe Community College and SUNY Brockport;

Susan B. Anthony Museum and House events celebrating the "JUNETEENTH" (the anniversary of the end of slavery) in August and National Voter Registration Day in September;

Volunteer at the Naturalization ceremonies encouraging our new citizens to use their vote.

Remember, encouraging registration and participation is an interactive activity.

It's Fun!! Try It!!

Please contact Gin Busack at ginbusack@aol.com

**Democracy is not a
spectator sport.
Tag! You're It!**

Annual Meeting Photos



Evan Dawson, host of WXXI's "Connections with Evan Dawson" on 1370 AM radio, upon receiving the "Making Democracy Work" Award



Gin Busack and Sarah Liebschutz.



Co-President Gloria Read with Lois Winterkorn at the podium.



Judy Weinstein, Gin Busack and Elizabeth Welch.



Gloria Read and Joan Rosenthal.



Beth Feldman.



Barbara Grosh and Mary Myers.



Sheila Abeling, Rita Garretson, and Katherine Smith.



Georgia DeGregorio and Ellie Drake of LWV Wayne County.



Sheila Abeling, Mary Hussong-Kallen and Gloria Read.



Gloria Read with Bertha Simpkins



Co-President Mary Hussong-Kallen at the podium.

Photos by Judy Weinstein & Hasana Martin

Naturalization Photos



fifth grader addressing the new citizens



fifth graders singing patriotic US songs



taking the oath of citizenship



1st Friday: Gloria Reed and Mary Hussong-Kallen

First Friday Photos



1st Friday: Elaine Schmidt, Judy Weinstein, Judy Sternberg and Marion O'Connor



Coming Events!



June

- 2** Annual Meeting (4:00 P.M. at Locust Hill Country Club)
- 3** First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. at I-Square)
- 9** Naturalization Ceremony (10:00 A.M. at Monroe County Office Building)
- 9** Naturalization Ceremony (1:00 P.M. at Federal Building)

16-19 LWV National Convention (Washington DC)



July

- 4** Independence Day
- 4** Naturalization Ceremony (TBA at Genesee County Museum)
- 7** Board Meeting (4:00 P.M. at Asbury First United Methodist Church)
- 14** Naturalization Ceremony (10:00 A.M. at Monroe County Office Building)

August

- 11** Naturalization Ceremony (10:00 A.M. at Monroe County Office Building)
- 11** Naturalization Ceremony (1:00 P.M. at Federal Building)

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

**Voter Registration
events are scheduled
throughout the summer.
Volunteers are needed!
Please contact
Gin Busack at
ginbusack@aol.com**



Board of Directors meets monthly. Board meetings are open to all members.

Government Committee meets monthly. For details, call Elaine Schmidt at 530-7414.

Membership Committee meets monthly. For details, call Georgia DeGregorio at 787-9692.

10:00 A.M. Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building at 39 W. Main Street.

1:00 P.M. 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
585-262-3730

www.LWV-RMA.org

Rochester VOTER

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

Officers:

Mary Hussong-Kallen
President

Sheila Abeling
First Vice-President

Ida Holloran
Treasurer

Judith Sternberg
Secretary

Board of Directors:

Gin Busack
Director

Sarah Liebschutz
Director

Judy Weinstein
Director

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER VOTER
DEADLINE IS AUGUST 15!**



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

Join the League Today!

Goals of the League of Women Voters:

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

The Voter is a monthly publication of the LWV-RMA

Editor, Judy Wadsworth

Layout/Design, Chris Burleigh

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League of Women Voters/RMA to:

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PO Box 10573

Rochester, NY 14610

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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