

TheVOTER

Annual LWV-RMA Program Planning & General Membership Meeting A Local Focus on Democracy: Ideas and Actions for 2020

What key initiatives should be our focus in 2020?

Be sure we discuss YOUR interests.

Come share your LWV passions.

**Saturday, January 18, 2020
10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
AAUW Perkins Mansion
494 East Avenue**

**All members are cordially invited
to share information, discussion,
planning, food and fun!**

Please register
by visiting our website at:
<http://www.lwv-rma.org>
or calling 262-3730 by
Monday, January 11.

Let us know any dietary
restrictions when
you register.

We look forward to
seeing you and
hearing your input!

MORE ON PAGE 2.



Enter driveway off East Avenue here; park behind building.

Leadership Corner

When you talk to your friends and family regarding the Rochester League of Women Voters, do words of inspiration and excitement pour forth? Does your passion show on your face and through your words?

We are proud of what we have accomplished....but is there more that YOU think we should or could be doing?

What does it mean to you when we put forth our goal to "Make Democracy Work for All"? Do you think about things like:

- ✓ The People Powered Fair Map Program?
- ✓ The court simplification initiative?
- ✓ Election security?
- ✓ Access to the polls for our local citizens?

Do you wish you knew more about:

- ✓ Ways to ward off negativity and take positive action in your community?
- ✓ Opportunities to brainstorm ideas with other League members?
- ✓ Ways to influence League programs?

The theme of our LWV-RMA annual member meeting this year will be:

A Local Focus on Democracy: Ideas and Actions for 2020

Come to this dialogue where we will be talking about all of this as we develop our local program for 2020. The agenda will include:

- ✓ Making Democracy Work for All: Programs to expand or initiate
- ✓ Making Our League Work for Its Members: How can we better meet member expectations
- ✓ Voter Services 2020: Actions for a presidential election year

Are you a new member? This is a great way to engage and meet a broader section of the local League. You joined with a purpose in mind; bring those ideas to this discussion and help formulate our plans for 2020.

Are you a veteran member? You have helped develop the high-quality programs that have been recognized throughout the Rochester community. You have seen the League in action in prior presidential election years. Your experience is invaluable to our future.

We look forward to seeing you....AND hearing your ideas for the future of the LWV-RMA. Let's set up our program so that passion for our work shows on your face and in your words!

In League, your Co-Presidents

Kimberly Byers

lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com

585 247 4958

Judy Sternberg

jsternberg3b@gmail.com

585 683 7690.

Inside this issue:

LWV-RMA Annual Meeting	1
Leadership Corner	2
Mark Your Calendar	2
LWV-RMA Forum: Crisis at the Border	3
Save the Date	3
Rochester's Climate is Changing	3
LWV-RMA Gala Social	4
Informed Voter: LWV-RMA Actions Supporting November 2019 General Election.	5
Get Involved	5
Voter Services	6
Dues Reminder	6
Early Voting from the View of an Election Inspector	7
LWVNYS Centennial Celebration	8
Naturalization Ceremonies	8
New York's Court System is a Relic from the 19th Century	9
Evening at the RPO with LWV-RMA	10
2020 Quilt Project	11
Remembering Anna Bundschuh	11
Sunshine Corner	12
Calendar	13
First Fridays	13
Leadership	14

Mark your Calendar:
January 18, 2020
10:00 to 1:00
Light Lunch Served
Perkins Mansion

LWV-RMA Forum: Crisis at the Border

LWV-RMA members and others met on December 2 to learn more about how the separation of immigrant families affects children, how the new immigration rules are affecting immigrants, and how our community is helping immigrants – from an expert panel that included: Hannah Hough, Esq., Immigration Program Director for the Legal Aid Society of Rochester; Cary Jensen, Esq., Senior Counsel and Director of International Services at the University of Rochester, Sandra Mitzner, MD, Former Medical Director of the Villa of Hope.

Among their comments were the following:

- The policy of separating families has been applied since the attack of September 2001, but rarely. Those deemed to be entering our country without permission are processed through our justice system, where adults accused of a crime are separated from their families. Therefore, children are removed from their guardians. However, until the current administration, far fewer people were detained and families were generally kept together. Now, a zero-tolerance policy leads to arresting all adults who seek asylum as criminals. Children who are separated from their caregivers when already separated from all other community members suffer trauma with lifelong effects.
- Federal law governing immigration is determined by Congress and allows for limited access for those seeking asylum. Since any administration must base its policies and regulations on law, any real change regarding who is eligible for asylum must be legislated.
- Data do not support claims of criminals seeking asylum through our border with Mexico. The vast majority are fleeing untenable situations in their home countries.



A list of local agencies making an impact on the refugee situation is accessible from www.lwvrma.org/. In addition, a draft letter to your Congressperson is available stating your support for humane treatment of those seeking asylum in the U.S.

Seen at the (left) are Ann Carmody, Program Committee Chair, introducing the panel which included Sandra Mitzner, MD; Hannah Hough, Esq.; and Cary Jensen, Esq.

SAVE THE DATE

Come learn how three groups in our community are dealing with issues of affordable housing.

Saturday, February 22, 2020

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Trillium Health

Monroe Square, 259 Monroe Avenue, Rochester

Between South Union and Alexander Streets
(old Sears Building)



Rochester's climate is changing, and with it are concerns and opportunities.

Do you have ideas or concerns about this important issue? What should we as citizens know about it? Preliminary planning is underway for our March forum. If you have ideas please share with program chair, Ann Carmody at: ann.carmody2012@gmail.com

LWV-RMA Gala Social

We hope you were one of the approximately 40 members who gathered on December 9 at the Hervey Ely House for an elegant tea and wine social sponsored by the LWV-RMA Membership Committee and a donation from a generous member. Members enjoyed delicious finger sandwiches, fruit, and homemade cookies accompanied by tea, coffee, and wine.

The mix of new and veteran members provided an opportunity to renew acquaintances and make new friends. There was time to discuss personal topics and to talk about League activities. The weather cooperated to allow easy access for all. Feedback from those who attended has been very positive and we hope the social event has invigorated members for a busy 2020 season! The planning committee included Kim Byers, Mary Garfield, Barbara Kay, and Jane Romal.



LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK! 

We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofrma



The Informed Voter: LWV-RMA Actions Supporting the November 2019 General Election

We continued our tradition of sponsoring candidate education events in partnership with WROC-TV8 prior to the general election in November. Due to scheduling challenges, the education event for District Attorney took the form of a "Town Hall". Each Monroe County District Attorney candidate participated in a 30-minute segment addressing questions posed by the community. WROC-TV8 honored our request to air the individual "town halls" back-to-back. This was an LWV-RMA requirement to ensure the public witnessed the League as a non-partisan sponsor of this race.

The "town hall" format enabled each candidate to spend more time on individual questions but made it more difficult to compare the responses on a single question across the two candidates. Overall, we felt this approach was an effective means to present the candidate positions to the community and we are grateful to WROC-TV8 for partnering with LWV-RMA and supporting our need to maintain our non-partisan position. We hope you had a chance to view this important information forum and that it assisted you in making your decision on how to place your vote.

No debate was possible with the County Executive candidates for this election cycle. However, we hope that you visited VOTE411.org, our candidate education site. Both of the County Executive candidates provided responses to our questions and included biographies on their qualifications and positions.

During this election cycle, VOTE411.org received its best historical participation response rate with 131, or 57%, of Monroe County candidates posting their campaign positions. Candidates running for town and village offices are the most delinquent in responding to requests for information. Yet, these are the positions with the least information for voters to assess (acknowledgement that many of these offices were single candidate races). All citizens are encouraged to ask the candidates running for town offices to respond to information requests for VOTE411.org. A key goal of LWV-RMA is to promote "informed voters" – VOTE411.org is a key tool to enable achieving this goal. Your voice can help to improve the participation rate in this tool. We thank our many diligent members who helped to contact candidates and support the information gathering for [VOTE411](http://VOTE411.org).

Get Involved — Find Your Passion

Based on member feedback, we will be trialing a new communication with members with the intention to provide opportunities for you get involved with various committee actions. Look for e-blasts on scheduled committee meetings along with the topical agenda. Please feel free to join meetings either to become a permanent committee member or to participate in a particular topic that strikes your passion!

Also, as you may know, many successful organizations use skills surveys to identify their volunteers' talents and help them find their niche – or their passion. You'll be receiving an email soon with a link to our own Skills and Talent Survey. Please let us know your special talent, and if you'd like to be our next president, or simply support the League's work with your dues – or something in-between.

Thank you!

Voter Services

Facilitation of absentee ballot voting at Rochester General Hospital was our last GOTV activity of this year's election cycle. Major thanks for the initiative go to our RGH partner Doug Della Pietra, LWV-RMA organizers Gin Busack and Barbara Grosh, and League volunteers Julie Damerell, Debbie Gordon, Deb Leary, Mary Olinger, Elaine Schmidt, Judy Sternberg, Margaret Supinski and Gail Wilder. After that, November became a month of gathering, reporting, and interpreting numbers. LWNYS conducted two surveys during the month. The first was a survey of voters' Early Voting experiences. With limited lead time, LWV-RMA responded to the call by promoting the on-line survey through email, social media and our website, and by conducting on-site exit surveys. Out of 54 responding counties, Monroe County was a leader with 179 submitted surveys, fully 10 percent of the total 1,791 collected. Thanks go to Julie Damerell and Barbara Grosh for their quick communications work, and to Deb Gordon, Myra Pelz, Elaine Schmidt and Judy Sternberg for their exit survey efforts.

LWNYS has already compiled a written report from the survey. Its findings, data and recommendations will be an important resource in the advocacy and lobbying for improvements in the coming years. Its first roll out has been before the NYS Joint Committee on Elections (Senate and Assembly). This will be followed by sharing with state and county Boards of Elections and with elected representatives. Find the full report on the LWNYS website, my.lwv.org/new-york-state. Unofficial results for Early Voting turnout are approximately 14,000 in Monroe County and 256,000 statewide.

Next came the LWNYS 2019 Voter Services Survey that collected information from local Leagues on a range of Voter Services activities in the 2019 Election cycle. LWV-RMA was proud to report that from January through October we had conducted 62 voter registration events with a total of 1,343 submitted registrations. Naturalization Ceremonies accounted for 28 of those events and 683 of the registrations.

Questions on that survey also asked about our GOTV activities and our assessment of their impact. While this was a year of impressive voter turnout, with unofficial numbers of 27% in the City, 38% in the towns, and 35% countywide (7% increase from the comparable election year of 2015), it is almost impossible to quantify the impact of the League's activities. This year there were many competitive town races, high profile County Executive and District Attorney races, the City referendum on the Police Accountability Board, Early Voting, and the charged atmosphere of the national political scene all motivating voter turnout. When more information becomes available from the Board of Elections, we are expecting to be able to evaluate the impact of our targeted postcard initiative in the 25th county legislative district, and we will see how many of our 1,343 voter registrants turned out to vote. Quantifiable or not, all of us who engage in these wide-ranging activities know from our interactions our work matters.

Next up is 2020. Everyone is invited to join our Voter Services efforts. Contact **Judy Sternberg**, jssternberg3b@gmail.com for information on various ways to contribute.

Reminder! Dues are due!

The second dues notices will be sent to members who joined prior to February 2019 (Life members excluded). Please check your email. The email will be sent from communications@lwv-rma.org.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual Membership, \$75.00

Household Membership, \$105.00

Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass Membership, \$150.00

Carrie Chapman Catt Membership, \$200.00

Student Memberships are now FREE!

Limited Income (call 585.262.3730)

Thank you for your support!

Mary Garfield Membership@lwv-rma.org

Early Voting from the View of an Election Inspector

By: Kimberly Byers – election inspector, 3 years

Did you give Early Voting a try for the November election? From October 26 through November 3rd, all registered voters had a chance to participate in the newly passed legislation that instituted early voting in New York State. If you wanted to be one of the first to vote in this new process, you likely ran into some delays as the new electronic poll pads and the print-on-demand ballots experienced some communication challenges. BUT, don't let this be a deterrent from taking advantage of early voting for future elections. And if you voted on any day starting with October 27th, you likely would have experienced a smooth process.

Since those who did experience early voting only saw it for a discrete voting experience, I offer my perspective, an individual who worked as an election inspector for each day of the early voting period.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEW SYSTEM: Within the first 3 hours of the first day of early voting, contingency plans were working to address the communication issues with the ballot printers. During this time, voters did experience delays with receiving their ballots for 15 minutes or so (at least at the site where I was stationed). Overnight, the issues were solved and the printers worked without issue. For anyone who has participated in a new system implementation, no 'stress' test is robust enough to mimic "going live". In the grand scheme of this implementation, I give the start-up process an "A minus".

VOTER ACCEPTANCE: Many voters expressed their support for early voting. Those who had travel plans were able to vote early and did not need to work through the paperwork of absentee ballot applications. Those who came to the town hall for one purpose (e.g., to get a hunting license) were also able to vote at the same time...two tasks completed with one trip. Many expressed their perspective that this process was long overdue in New York. In my 9 days at the early voting polls, I heard only one negative comment. One individual felt this was a way to introduce voter fraud into the system. I didn't have the opportunity to question this line of thinking further...although, the individual did vote early!

ELECTION INSPECTOR ACCEPTANCE: It should be noted that there were at least two members of the Board of Elections at the sites at all times. The election inspectors were trained on the use of the poll pads but management of any trouble shooting fell on the shoulders of the employees of the Board of Elections. The process of sign-in on the poll pads was easy for both election inspectors and voters. Quite frankly, the hardest thing about the election was the layout of the ballot...not really an early voting issue. Voters are often challenged to read the small print in the column headings and to select ONLY the number of candidates noted.

ELECTION DAY – BACK TO THE PAST: If you voted on election day (November 5), you likely saw no change in the voting process. You walked into your polling location, the election inspector looked your name up in the paper poll book, and asked you to sign the book. You then filled out your ballot and fed it into the scanner. If you voted early and tried to vote again on election day, you would have been stopped when the election inspector looked up your name and founded a large green "VOTED" stamp in the signature box associate with your name.

The Board of Elections was undecided on whether they would use the new process in two test legislative districts for election day. It was "back to the past" in my legislative district.

THE FUTURE: I found myself leaving the early voting process thinking of the potential for the new system. I left with thoughts and questions like:

1. Could we decrease the number of poll sites for election day and let any Monroe County voter go to any poll site? Could we operate on election day the same as we operate on early voting days? There are over 300 polling sites in Monroe County on election day.
2. The poll pads will help solve some problem on election day. For every election, there is at least one person who comes to vote at the wrong poll site. When we use the poll pads for election day, they will automatically tell the election inspectors the poll site for a citizen.
3. The new system would contribute to environmental consciousness. Since the ballots are print-on-demand, you only use paper equal to the number of citizens that vote. In the current system, unused pre-printed ballots create paper waste!

EDUCATION: Approximately 14,000 Monroe County citizens participated in early voting (or around 2% of the registered voters). In speaking with individuals at events I attended just prior to the start of early voting, I still found many people who were not aware of early voting. During early voting, I often spoke with people walking through the voting site who were not aware they could vote at any site. This is a call to action for LWV. Do not presume that the educational work around early voting is over. I urge you to introduce the subject to your friends and acquaintances. You too may be surprised to learn that there is more work to be done to spread the word: **EARLY VOTING IS HERE!**

LWVNYS Centennial Celebration

The LWVNYS Centennial Celebration, held in Buffalo on November 16, was a lovely event with approximately 150 attendees including LWV-RMA members Georgia DeGregorio, Barbara Grosh, Sarah Liebschutz, Kris Rogers, Judy Sternberg, Margaret Supinski, and Kay Wallace. The celebration, with libations, food and music, was held in the special exhibit area of the Buffalo History Museum, which was featuring an exhibit on the decades-long fight for women's suffrage and the role of Western NY women in that battle. Attendees then moved into an auditorium where Dare Thompson, LWVNYS past president, spoke on the history of our state League, and Suzanne Stassevitch, current president, gave introductions to the several remarkable award recipients. The celebration then resumed in the exhibit area with the addition of cake and the continuation of conversations and good cheer.



TOP ROW: Judy Sternberg, Georgia DeGregorio, and Kris Rogers; Kay Wallace and Sarah Liebschutz.

BOTTOM ROW: LWVNYS Current President Suzanne Stassevitch, NYS Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, and LWVNYS Past President Dare Thompson; Kris Rogers, Margaret Supinski, and Barbara Grosh.

Naturalization Ceremonies

On October 29, Margaret Supinski met 51 new citizens at Rochester City Hall as Judge Marian Payson held court. On November 8 at the George Eastman House, Margaret Supinski and JoAnn Kane DeMott welcomed 91 new citizens who were naturalized during ceremonies led by Judge Paul Warren. On November 14 at the Monroe County Office, Judge William Taylor led naturalization ceremonies attended by Joan Rosenthal. Judge Elizabeth Wolford conducted the oath of citizenship at the Federal Building on November 21 and Margaret Supinski helped new citizens to register to vote.

The 2019 calendar year is coming to an end soon. Thank you to all of our loyal volunteers who have helped new citizens register to vote and learn about the right to vote: Sheila Abeling, Jane Beck, Julie Damerell, JoAnn Kane DeMott, Marcia Eisenberg, Kathy Farrar, Beth Feldman, Joan Rosenthal, Margaret Supinski, Mimi Wilson, and Lois Winterkorn. In 2020, we will be looking for additional volunteers for naturalizations. If you are at all interested to learn more about these oath ceremonies, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com or 585-223-6819.



TOP: October 29 ceremony led by the Honorable Marian Payson – At left a young vocalist sings 'God Bless America'; at the right Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren presents naturalization certificate to new citizen.

MIDDLE: November 8 ceremony led by the Honorable Paul Warren – seen second from left a new citizen proposes to his girlfriend after receiving his citizenship certificate.

BOTTOM: November 14 ceremony led by the Honorable William Taylor – Gap Mangione, seen next to Judge Taylor in center and right photos, was guest speaker.

New York's Court System is a Relic From the 19th Century.

To provide justice today, we must modernize the New York State court system.

The Fund for Modern Courts is spearheading a campaign for court simplification, with over 106 organizations joining the coalition thus far.

The Rochester Metro Area League of Women Voters has signed on as one of the coalition members. The Program Planning Committee has invited Denise Kronstadt, Executive Director of Advocacy and Policy at the Fund for Modern Courts, to speak at a community forum in Rochester in Spring 2020.

New York is alone in maintaining such a complex court structure made up of so many overlapping trial courts with limited jurisdiction. Other States have embraced reform, including California, which in 1998 adopted a single trial court throughout the state. A study of California's current judicial model, conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), found that court simplification resulted in:

- Improved use of resources: judges have greater flexibility in being assigned to cases through the removal of jurisdictional constraints and greater flexibility in case type;
- Greater efficiency of court staff: in organizing staff by function rather than jurisdiction, courts are better able to reassign excess staff and reduce overlap;
- Greater efficiency of court operations: improved case management practices reduce backlogs and improve time to disposition, standardization of rules, and case processing;
- Enhanced quality of service: increased accessibility of courts and more cost-effective use of staff allow for expansion of programs to serve juveniles and domestic violence survivors.

Other benefits included greater cooperation between the judiciary and other branches of government, enhanced opportunities for innovation, and greater accessibility and accountability of the courts. New York can learn from California's recent experience.

The NYS Chief Judge's proposal benefits all New Yorkers, but this reform would benefit low-income and unrepresented litigants most immediately and substantially. The convenience and importance of pursuing multiple claims in a single forum before a single judge, abiding by a uniform set of rules, while maintaining the same counsel (to the extent one is appointed) cannot be understated. Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of reform is the Family Court, which does not have jurisdiction to hear divorce proceedings, thereby forcing many individuals of limited means to maintain parallel actions in the Supreme and Family Courts. Compounding matters, while a litigant may be appointed counsel in Family Court for certain matters, that same litigant may go unrepresented in the Supreme Court. There is no reasonable argument in favor of maintaining an antiquated system of justice – a system which unfortunately perpetuates hardship for those in greatest need.

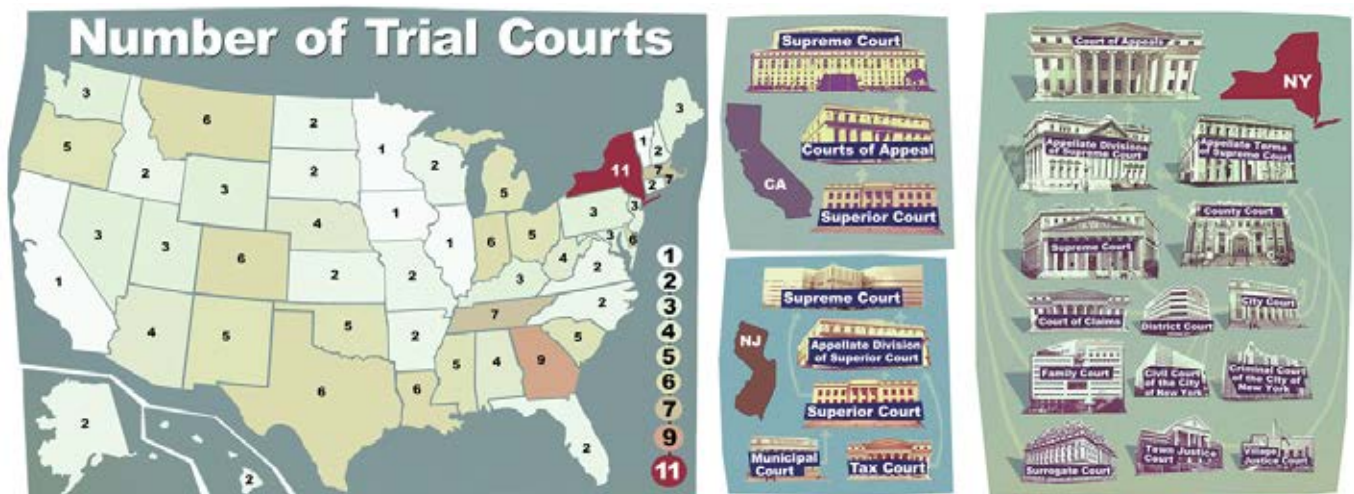
The first hearing on court simplification took place on November 13, 2019 in New York City. A second hearing occurred in Albany on November 21, 2019.

The graphics below compare the court structures of New York compared to the whole country, and specifically to California and New Jersey. Note that our state has the most complex court structure by far making it far more difficult to navigate. Go to www.simplifynycourts.org to learn more and look for opportunities to lend your voice to support this effort.

SOURCES:

www.simplifynycourts.org, www.moderncourts.org, William C. Silverman, Alexander Volpicello, and Lillian Anderson. "NY State Legislature to Hold Hearings on Court Simplification." Court Reform. October 24, 2019.

Kim Byers lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com



EVENING AT THE RPO WITH LWV-RMA



WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE: PAST + PRESENT

*January 30, 2020
7:30 PM
Kodak Hall
Eastman Theater*

Ward Stare conducts the world premiere of a new work
by an emerging female composer.

Plus, playwright Mark Mobley is creating a new theatrical work
setting stories of Rochester women, past and present, to music.

Please join us for an evening of fellowship, music, theater and tribute.

A block of twenty, Zone 2 seats has been set aside for LWV-RMA
at a discounted price of \$49 per ticket.

Reservation and payment must be made through LWV-RMA (not RPO).
Contact Judy Sternberg, jsternberg3b@gmail.com, for details

2020 Quilt Project

The National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House is sponsoring the 2020 Quilt Project to celebrate the Centennial Anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, passed in 1920, that granted women the right to vote. The goal is to create a collaborative quilt honoring women's history—particularly the history of the woman's suffrage movement and the people, places, events, and issues that are related to it.

The 2020 Quilt is designed so that each new block may be attached to the growing quilt with ribbons. It is anticipated that the Quilt will be displayed in public places on request. Each quilt block will be able to stand out on its own AND mesh with the other quilt squares. Any person, group, or organization may create a block for the 2020 Quilt.

LWV-RMA has contributed two quilt blocks thanks to the talents of Elaine Schmidt. To learn more about how to create a quilt block and/or to get involved in this project, visit the Susan B. Anthony website at <http://www.susanbathonyhouse.org/2020quiltproject/index.php/about>.



Pictured is a portion of the quilt as well as two quilt squares created by LWV-RMA member Elaine Schmidt which are seen in the bottom row.

Remembering Anna Bundschuh

Longtime LWV-RMA member Anna Bundschuh died on November 25, 2019. Anna was devoted to the League. Always, she was quiet-spoken, dependable, and smart – plus she had the skills of leadership. Anna trusted the League's principles and goals.

Anna attended the University of Rochester where she graduated with honors in history and philosophy in 1948. She was passionate about supporting her community, especially the League of Women Voters. She was on the Board of Directors in the 1960s and was President of the LWV-RMA in 1972-74.

Anna also served terms as Supervisor, Town Board Member, and Planning Board Member for the Town of Penfield. She was a member of the Penfield Local History Room Advisory Committee for 30 years. She also served in leadership positions for the Penfield Symphony Orchestra, the Friends of the Penfield Public Library, the Penfield Heritage Association, and the Penfield Friday Club. In 1986, she was the coordinator of a book entitled "Monroe County - Guide to Local Government." She received the Rochester Chamber of Commerce government award that year.

Anna became active in the LWV-RMA again six years ago, leading the ad hoc committee focusing on agriculture issues, including migrant concerns. The LWV-RMA presented Anna with its first Lifetime of Service Award in 2015.

Sources: Barbara Kay and Rochester Democrat and Chronicle (December 1, 2019)



Sunshine Corner

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE 11/12/19 OBSERVED BY ELAINE SCHMIDT

CORRECTION from report on October 8, 2019 session as reported in the November 2019 Voter: Dale R. Rehkopf II of Pittsford, NY was appointed to the Monroe Community College Board of Trustees at the October 8 meeting of the Legislature. Dr. Joe Carbone was not appointed to the MCC Board as previously reported.



PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION ENTITLED “PROHIBITED HARASSMENT OF A POLICE OFFICER, PEACE OFFICER OR FIRST RESPONDER IN MONROE COUNTY”:

Two citizens spoke against the bill. One, a criminal attorney, said the bill was too vague and therefore unconstitutional and cited other laws that already protect officers. The second citizen expressed concern that family members and others who were stressed at the time of police involvement could be easily charged, adding to the stress on families.

PUBLIC FORUM ISSUES:

- Six students from Rochester area schools once again urged the Legislature to address climate change in Monroe County. Several other citizens also spoke about the need to address climate change here. Rob Levine pointed out that “very soon” communities will be assessed for financial risk depending on the impact of climate change to the area. Mr. Levine stated that climate change is an economic issue for Monroe County.
- Kristen Smith of Ibero’s Project Clean asked the Legislature for support in collecting needles discarded by drug users in the North Clinton Avenue area. She said citizens in this neighborhood feel endangered by the possibility of getting pricked by the discarded syringes.
- Brigit Hurley of The Children’s Agenda noted increases in funding in the 2020 budget for child care and service providers and reminded the Legislature that prevention was the most effective use of funds in dealing with many issues.
- Preacher Donald Adams and Sister Grace once again reminded the Legislature of the needs of the homeless and poor in our community.

LEGISLATURE BUSINESS MEETING

Several members of the Legislature expressed strong doubts about the vagueness of the proposed law, “Prohibited Harassment of a Police Officer, Peace officer or First Responder”

- Section 1 of the bill reads as follows: “A person is guilty of harassing a police officer, peace officer or first responder when he or she intentionally engages in conduct against a police officer, peace officer or first responder, that intends to annoy, alarm or threaten the personal safety of the police officer, peace officer or first responder”
- Section 2 reads as follows: “The action must occur when such police officer, peace officer or first responder is in the course of performing his or her official duties and the person committing such act knows or reasonably should know that such person is a police officer, peace officer or first responder.”
- Section 3 reads as follows: “Violation of this law shall constitute an unclassified misdemeanor punishable by up to 1 year and/or a fine of up to \$5000.00 dollars.”

When asked by Legislator Wilcox to cite a specific conduct the law prohibits, the Administration could not. Legislator Felder said many things can be annoying, and that there is no objective criteria or definition in the bill. Legislator Flagler-Mitchell said it was a racist law and that a law such as this has not been seen since the Jim Crow laws. The sponsors of the bill, Karla Boyce and Kara Halstead, defended the bill saying they had spoken to the Law Enforcement Council and members of the police departments and Sandra Doorley and said that they supported the bill. Defenders of the bill said it showed zero tolerance for harassment, etc., of law enforcement officers and first responders. The bill passed with legislators voting along party lines.

Another bill that evoked strong feelings was a proposal entitled “Checks and Balances for Legislative Equality”. The bill would have limited the appointments that could be made by the County Executive, made more items subject to the approval of the legislature, and required the budget to be ready by October 15 instead of November 15. The bill has since been recalled by its sponsors due to negative backlash.

During a discussion of Resolutions and Local Laws, Members of the Democratic minority said they received a copy of this resolution at 5:15 pm the day of the Legislature meeting. Some members of the Legislature think that for changes of this sort a referendum is required.

A contract with Securus Technologies, Inc. authorizes it to provide collect telephone calls and tablet services to the inmates of the Monroe County Jail and Monroe Correctional Facility. The rate will be cheaper for the users. It was revealed that the money charged is put into a off-the-books fund. The fund currently holds about \$3.4 million, according to some legislators. The superintendent of the jail, when asked by Legislator Boyce, said \$1.8 million dollars will be used to re-purpose the Brighton building to provide rehab services for inmates and that the money provides for other programs as well.

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



Coming Events!



January

- 3 First Friday (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 8 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (Noon – 2:00 P.M., Asbury First UMC)
- 16 Book Club – The Women’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote (10:00 A.M – Noon, Greenhouse Café, East Main Street, Rochester)
- 16 Naturalization Ceremony (Monroe County Office Building, 10:00 A.M.)
- 18 LWV-RMA Program Planning & General Membersip meeting (10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M., Perkins Mansion)
- 30 Naturalization Ceremony (Federal Building, 1:00 P.M.)

February

- 7 First Friday (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 8 LWVUS Program Planning (9:30 A.M. -11:30 A.M., Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word)
- 12 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (Noon – 2:00 P.M., Asbury First UMC)
- 13 Naturalization Ceremony (Monroe County Office Building, 10:00 A.M.)
- 15 Susan B. Anthony’s 100th Birthday
- 20 Book Club – The Color of Law ((10:00 A.M – Noon, Greenhouse Café, East Main Street, Rochester)
- 22 Forum: Housing Issues (10 A.M. – Noon, Trillium, Monroe Avenue)
- 27 Naturalization Ceremony (Federal Building, 1:00 P.M.)

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



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

Don’t Miss First Fridays with LWV-RMA

Join League colleagues for lunch or a mid-day coffee break each First Friday of the month, 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. at I-Square, 400 Bakers Park, at Titus Avenue, Irondequoit, NY 14617.

No need to RSVP. Pencil us in on your calendar and join when you can!

There’s a place at the table for you!

January 3
February 7
March 6

April 3
May 1
June 5



Board of Directors meetings are held at Asbury First UMC. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times.

Advocacy/Government Committee meets monthly. For details, call Ann Carmody at (585) 748-5848.

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

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

FEBRUARY VOTER DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15!

League of Women Voters-Rochester Metro Area 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 persons who are at least 16 years of age.

Those under 16 can be associate members.

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

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents Kim Byers (2019-2020) Judy Sternberg (2019-2021)

Treasurer Judy Weinstein (2019-2021)

Secretary Julie Damerell (2019-2020)

Director Ann Carmody (2018-2020)

Director Myra Pelz (2019-2021)

Director Kris Rogers (2018-2020)

Director Gail Wilder (2018-2020)

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Looking for info on a League committee or activity? Look no further!

Advocacy/Government, Ann Carmody

Advocacy@lwv-rma.org

government@lwv-rma.org

Communication/PR, Julie Damerell

communications@lwv-rma.org

Election Services/Naturalization, Sheila Abeling

Sheiler162007@gmail.com

Fair Election Practices Campaign, Kris Rogers

fepc@lwv-rma.org

Membership, Mary Garfield

membership@lwv-rma.org

Nominating, Mary Hussong-Kallen

nominations@lwv-rma.org

Programs, Ann Carmody

ann.carmody2012@gmail.com

VOTE411, Judy Weinstein

vote411@lwv-rma.org

Voter Services, Judy Sternberg

jssternberg3b@gmail.com

*The Voter is a
monthly publication
of the LWV-RMA*

*Editor,
Judy Wadsworth*

*Layout/Design,
Chris Burleigh*

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate	\$75
Household	\$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200
Student	FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730	Sliding Scale
or send an email to: info@lwv-rma.org	