

TheVOTER

Annual General Membership Meeting

Thursday, June 6, 2024
5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word
597 East Avenue, Rochester

[Register Here by June 3rd](#)



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President's Corner

Meet the NY Equal Rights Amendment

Most people in NY don't seem to know it yet, but on our ballots in November, we'll have the chance to vote on a very important amendment to our state constitution.

WHO WILL GAIN PROTECTIONS?

Currently, the NY Constitution protects people from discrimination on the basis of race and religion. The amendment "Provides that no person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof; provides no person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed, religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, reproductive healthcare and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state." ([bill summary](#))

The amended section applies to all government actions taken "pursuant to law," meaning that this amendment is intended to apply to any action with force of law, including action by the executive or legislative branch, local governments, or any subdivision thereof.

I am especially delighted by this section of the bill summary:

"It is not possible to achieve sex equality while prosecutors and state agencies single out pregnant people for punishment because of their pregnancies, the outcomes of their pregnancies and their reproductive healthcare decisions. And because the right to abortion is central to a pregnant person's equality, this amendment clarifies that any action that discriminates against a person based on their pregnancy, pregnancy outcome, reproductive healthcare, or reproductive autonomy is sex-based discrimination in their civil rights that would be explicitly prohibited by the State Constitution."

DO WE NEED A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT?

We have some good legislation in NY State, which currently establishes most or all of the rights enumerated in this amendment. But we've seen in states all over the country that legislation can change quickly, to say nothing of judicial interpretations of it. We need to protect those rights by making them a part of the constitution, where future changes in laws can't undo them. We shouldn't think NY is immune to the political swings happening elsewhere: remember that in 2022 the GOP candidate for Governor endorsed abortion bans, and he lost by only 5%.

We're planning a webinar to introduce the ERA in more detail. Keep your eyes open for our webinar announcement which will be sometime in May. And start thinking about all the ways we can promote it.

Barbara Grosh
President, LWV-RMA
president@lww-rma.org
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ERA: An Amendment to Protect Our Rights and Reproductive Freedoms



It's Time for Our Annual Meeting

Thursday June 6th

Members will gather and:

- Honor Rochester Institute of Technology's "ROAR the Vote" Team with the **Making Democracy Work Award**
- Honor our Lifetime Members with the **Carrie Chapman Catt Award**
- Recognize members with the **"You Make Us Proud" Award**
- Elect Board Members, Officers, and the Nominating Committee for next year
- Discuss and approve our budget for the next year
- Vote on converting our local League from a 501(c)(4) organization to a 501(c)(3) organization and the related changes to the Incorporation Document and Bylaws
- Receive reports from all of our committees on the past year's work
- Hear from President Barbara Grosh on where we are and where we're going
- Enjoy delicious appetizers and drinks while we meet up with old friends and make new ones

Materials for the meeting (proposed slate of Board of Directors, Officers and Nominating Committee, proposed budget, proposed positions and proposed Bylaw changes) will be available for download in the members-only section of the website by May 6. An email will be sent when they are available. You will need to be logged in to access them.

The meeting will be held at the Lutheran Incarnate Word Church, 597 East Avenue, Rochester, NY on Thursday June 6 from 5:00 P.M.- 7:00 P.M. There is a \$10 fee for this event. A registration link will be sent by email along with the link to the materials.

Webinar on Conversion to 501(c)(3)

The board of LWV-RMA has recommended that we convert from our current 501(c)(4) status (under IRS regulations) to become a 501(c)(3). To change this status, the membership must approve revisions to our NY Incorporation Certificate and our Bylaws. Members will be asked to vote on these changes at the Annual Meeting on June 6.

In order to give members ample time to become informed of the consequences of the conversion, we've scheduled a webinar on May 15 at 7:00 P.M. where the issue will be explained and there will be plenty of time to ask questions. [Register Here.](#)

The webinar will be recorded and placed on our YouTube channel. Any members who still have questions and concerns will be welcome to schedule time with the President or any other board member to discuss the details.

A Little Bit of History: The League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. From the beginning, the League was an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy.

The local League was established in 1924. That means that this year is our 100th anniversary. Plans to celebrate this anniversary are in the works. Look for announcements soon.

New Members

We have two new members to welcome this month: Kathleen Murphy and Erin Park.

Voter Services Update

Spring is usually a time for planning the upcoming election season, but we have registered voters at two recent events. Brockport's Graduate Assistant for Civic Engagement invited us to the Brockport campus on April 15. She also uses our Vote 411 cards when registering students. They are a quick way to empower students who are already registered and usually too busy for an extended conversation.

We also had a table at Walking in God's Grace and Pastor Nate McFarland's Spring Health Fair. The fair was well attended with a steady stream of attendees. We registered five people. Thank you to our new volunteers, including Barbara Brody, Sally Coombs, Vic Folsom and Deborah McLean for coming out.

We are meeting monthly to make plans. Watch your emails for opportunities!

Submitted by Cathy Kane and Deb Gordon



Sally Coombs and Cathy Kane at Spring Health Fair



Election Integrity in Monroe County: Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are sometimes brought up as a potential source of voter fraud. This article details the process and controls used by New York State and Monroe County to ensure the integrity of absentee ballots.

Absentee voting is available only if a registered voter meets one of the following criteria:

- They are unavoidably absent from their county on Election Day
- They are unable to appear at the polls due to illness or disability (or a primary caregiver of individuals who are ill or physically disabled)
- They are a patient in a Veterans Administration Hospital
- They are detained in jail awaiting grand jury action or confined in prison after conviction for an offense other than a felony.

To obtain an absentee ballot a registered voter must request the ballot at least 10 days before the election, unless they make the request in person at the Board of Election (BOE). In-person requests are processed up to the day prior to the election. Before a ballot is provided, a BOE team consisting of both a Republican and a Democrat verifies the voter's eligibility and signature.

If the registered voter cannot receive the ballot through the mail to the address on record, or in person, they may designate someone else to pick up their ballot. Only the person designated by the voter on their application may pick up and deliver the ballot.

When the voter is given or mailed a ballot, the voter rolls are updated to reflect that a ballot has been sent. The voter completes the ballot as normal and places it in the provided security envelope, which they must seal, sign and date. They then place the security envelope in the return mail envelope, which is preaddressed with the County's BOE address, labeled "Official Election Mail", and does not require postage.

They may return the ballot in any of the following ways:

- Put it in the mail, ensuring it receives a postmark no later than Election Day
- Bring it to their County Board of Elections Office no later than Election Day by 9pm
- Bring it to an early voting poll site in their county
- Bring it to a poll site in their county on Election Day by 9pm

Any ballots dropped off at a poll site are removed from the box and the return envelopes counted by a bipartisan team and delivered unopened to the BOE, where the count of ballots delivered is verified. Voters can track their ballots at <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>.

When ballots are received by the BOE, they are verified within four days by a bipartisan team. The verification is to ensure that the ballot has been postmarked by Election Day and that the security envelope is signed by the voter and dated appropriately. Beginning one hour before polls close on Election Day, ballots are counted using standard voting machines. The results are not announced until the polls close.

If a voter goes to a polling place to vote after being sent an absentee ballot, when they sign in their record will show that an absentee ballot was sent. They will not be allowed to vote using a machine ballot, but will be provided an affidavit (manual) ballot. The affidavit ballot will be sealed in an envelope by the voter and delivered securely to the BOE when the polls close.

Election officials will verify whether the voter's absentee ballot has been received. If the voter's absentee ballot has been received, the affidavit ballot will not be counted. If the voter's absentee ballot has not been received, a valid affidavit ballot will be counted.

Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization ceremonies occur at least twice a month in Monroe County. If you are interested in attending one, and possibly volunteering to represent the League at ceremonies, contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com. League representatives help the candidates to register to vote as well as talk to them about the privilege of voting. If you go to lww-rma.org, you will find the naturalization schedule. Just let Sheila know if you are planning to attend.

- On March 19 at 11:00 A.M. at the Monroe County Office Building, there was a naturalization ceremony. There were 39 candidates for naturalization with Judges Kristin Demo Vasquez and Maria Cubillos Reed officiating. Tamara Minter represented the League at the ceremony.
- Also on March 19, at 2:00 P.M., there was a naturalization ceremony with Judge Payton officiating at the Federal Building. Forty-one candidates took the oath of citizenship at the ceremony. Margret Roberts and Margaret Supinski represented the League.
- April 16 brought Margaret Supinski and Marilyn Rosen to the Federal Building at 2:00 P.M. for a ceremony. There were 31 candidates naturalized with Judge Mark Pedersen officiating.

That is 111 potential new voters! Many thanks to all the League volunteers! You are appreciated!!

Submitted by **Sheila Abeling**



LWV-RMA Book Club

Book Club members meet on Zoom at 4:30 P.M. on the third Thursday of the months shown below. If you would like to participate in the discussion of one of our books or join the Book Club, send an email to Judy Weinstein at bookclub@lww-rma.org to be sent the Zoom link. Participation is not limited to League members.

Books remaining for this program year include –

May 16 - *American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis* by Adam Hochschild; and

July 18 - *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America* by Heather Cox Richardson.

Carrie Chapman Catt Award Goes to...

Our Lifetime members. This award is given each year to a member of the League for meritorious service. This year is special, however, in that our local League is now 100 years old. We are giving the award this year to our lifetime (50+ year members) in acknowledgement of those whose shoulders we stand on.

The League doesn't tell its story often enough, or in enough detail, that those of us who are newer fully appreciate all that has gone before. This past year we became aware of what beacons of democracy our members have been when we were reminded that our League sued the Sheriff and the Commissioners of the Board of Elections all the way to the Supreme Court to restore the voting rights of citizens detained in jail awaiting trial.

Read that again: these were people who had not been convicted of anything, yet they were being unlawfully deprived of their right to vote. We will celebrate the warm feeling we get, knowing that we walk in a proud tradition.

Making Democracy Work Award: ROAR the Vote

Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) ROAR the Vote initiative supports students' involvement in electoral politics by helping to ensure that students understand the voting process — including voter registration and absentee ballots, as well as the importance of voting in local, state, and national elections.

The ROAR the Vote initiative is led by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement and the Office of Government and Community Relations. The group is a unique mix of students, staff, and faculty who are passionate about voter advocacy.

Per LWV-RMA Board Member Tess McFarland-Porter, "The team is a joy to collaborate with, and so are the individual team members who have joined LWV-RMA. They have strengthened our community partnership. Their responsiveness to ideas has made them inspirational to work with."

Thank you to all involved in RIT's ROAR the Voter for your efforts to make democracy work! At the annual meeting on June 6, we will present them with an award recognizing their good work.

At the Annual Meeting Members Will Vote on the Following:

Board of Directors:

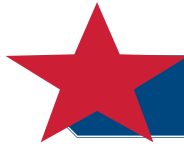
- *Treasurer – Constance Flahive (2023-2025) – NEW ROLE/SAME TERM
- Director – Cathy Kane (2024-2026)
- Director – Karen Morris (2024-2026)
- Director – Deborah Leary (2024-2026)
- Director – Carolyn O'Neal (2024-2026)

Nominating Committee:

- Chair – Mary Hussong-Kallen (2024-2025)
- Board Member – to be named by the Board of Directors
- Board Member – to be named by the Board of Directors
- Non-Board Member – Sheila Abeling (2024-2025)

The following are remaining on the Board of Directors:

- President – Barbara Grosh (2023-2025)
- Vice-President – vacant
- *Treasurer – Constance Flahive (2023-2025) – NEW ROLE/SAME TERM
- Secretary – vacant
- Director – Theresa McFarland-Porter (2023-2025)
- Director – Mary Micket (2023-2025)



COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY 2024

	PRIMARY ELECTION TUESDAY, JUNE 25	GENERAL ELECTION TUESDAY, NOV. 5
Early voting days	June 15-23	Oct. 26-Nov. 3
Register in person or online by	June 15	Oct. 26
Register by mail	Must be received by June 15	Must be received by Oct. 26
Apply for absentee or vote by early mail ballot in person by	June 24	Nov. 4
Apply for absentee or vote by early mail ballot by mail/online	Must be received by June 15	Must be received by Oct. 26
Deliver ballot in person by close of polls	June 25 to poll site or BOE	Nov. 5 to poll site or BOE
Deliver ballot by mail	Must be postmarked by June 25 Must be received by July 2	Must be postmarked by Nov. 5 Must be received by Nov. 12



If you have an idea to share or a desire to become a member of a LWV-RMA team, please reach out to one of the Committee Contacts listed on the last page of this newsletter. If in doubt on who to contact reach out to president@lww-rma.org

Calendar



Events sponsored by LWV-RMA are **bolded below**. The sponsors and other information on all events can be found by viewing the event on the LWV-RMA calendar. See link below.

May

- 3 (Fri) LWV-RMA First Friday** 11:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. in the back room at I Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit
- 11 (Sat) Meet Your Ballot** 12:00 P.M.-2:00 P.M. Arnett Branch Library, 310 Arnett Blvd. Rochester
- 15 (Wed) Webinar: Should We Convert to 501(c)3?** 7:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M. Via Zoom. [Register Here](#)
- 16 (Thur) LWV-RMA Book Club** *American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis* by Adam Hochschild 4:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M. via Zoom

June

- 1 (Sat) Meet Your Ballot** 12:00 P.M.-2:00 P.M. Lyell Avenue Branch Library, 310 Arnett Blvd. Rochester, 956 Lyell Ave. Rochester
- 6 (Thur) Annual Meeting** 5:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. Lutheran Incarnate Word Church, 597 East Avenue, Rochester, NY [Register Here](#)
- 7 (Fri) LWV-RMA First Friday** 11:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. in the back room at I Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit

Note: For links to Zoom meetings, please visit our website: www.lwv-rma.org

For events scheduled after publication, event information, Zoom links, and registration (if required) see: https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/calendar4_responsive.php?org_id=LWVR

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

Join First Friday for Social Time at I-Square in Irondequoit.

There's no agenda but we talk about everything League and lots of political discussions. A lot of great ideas originate at First Fridays and a lot of work gets done.

- May 3
- June 7
- July 5



Whenever you attend a League event, take pictures & email them to The Voter editor at micketeditor@gmail.com.



Board of Directors meetings are currently via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times and contact Barbara Grosh for link.

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

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585-262-3730
www.LWV-RMA.org

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Barbara Grosh (2023-2025)
Vice President Cathy Kane (2023-2025)
Treasurer Linda Saalman (2023-2024)
Secretary Constance Flahive (2023-2025)
Director Tess McFarland-Porter (2023-2025)
Director Mary Micket (2023-2025)
Director Elmira Washington (2022-2024)

**JUNE VOTER
DEADLINE IS MAY 15!**

League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principal and in practice.

League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the League’s purposes and policies.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

President Barbara Grosh
president@lww-rma.org

Book Club Judy Weinstein
vote411@lww-rma.org

Communication/PR Amy Hahn
communications@lww-rma.org

Election Services/Naturalization Sheila Abeling
Sheiler162007@gmail.com

Advocacy Barb Murphy and Scott Forsyth
advocacy@lww-rma.org

Membership Mira Washington
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Nominating Mary Hussong Kallen
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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:

https://members.lww-rma.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org_id=LWVR

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate \$75
Household \$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass \$150
Carrie Chapman Catt \$200
Student (full or part time at an accredited institution) FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730 \$sliding \$scale
or send an email to: info@lww-rma.org	