

February/March 2009

The Voter



League of Women Voters,
Rensselaer County NY

Special points of interest:

- Symposium on Long Term Care at Albany Public Library
- National Popular Vote to be topic of next Consensus Meeting
- State Conference to be in Syracuse May 15-17

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Don't Miss Your Chance to Learn About the Future of Long Term Care in New York State!

"Aging in the Community: The Future of Long Term Care

Albany Public Library, 161 Washington Ave. (parking available)

Friday, March 20, from 10 a.m. to Noon

Reserve your seat by March 16: call 221-1904

Moderator: Elisa Streeter, WTEN News Channel 10

Expert Panelists:

Courtney Burke,

Director NYS Health Policy Research Center, Rockefeller Institute of Government

Michael Burgess, Director NYS Department for the Aging

Mark Kissinger,

Deputy Commissioner for Long Term Care NYS department of Health

Sponsored by: League of Women Voters of New York State & The Capital Region Leagues of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady

Members of the Board

Co-President Gail K. DeMarco 424-2413
gdemarco@nycap.rr.com *Public Spokesperson, Receive/Distribute State and National Mailings, Mail and Phone Calls, New Member Orientation*

Co-President Diane Bell 273-5172 dianebell@nycap.rr.com *Public Spokesperson, Board meeting agendas, New Member Involvement, Calendar/Board List, Web Page, General Meeting Program Coordinator*

Secretary Margaret Story 272-1566
mrgstry@aol.com *Minutes/Correspondence*

Treasurer Irene Wynnyczuk 279-9789
iwynn@nycap.rr.com *Treasurer, Budget Committee, Co-Chair Membership/Finance Drive, Co-Chair THA Elections*

Director Anne Burton 283-3499

aburton@usoncology.com *Public Relations, Member Involvement*

Director Hazel Landa 279-3714
dryland2@aol.com *Local Voter Guides*

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Director David Wolcott 766-0242
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Letter from the Co-Presidents

Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, LWV of New York State, energized members at our recent Holiday Get-Together. Many thanks to **Irene Wynnyczuk** and **Margaret Story** for arranging the dinner! Thanks also to all those who brought delicious desserts!

LWVNYS's Legislative Priorities for 2009 have been established: Reforming State Government; Energy and Environment; and, Cost Effective and Accessible Health Care. Go to our website and link to the State website for details.

Everyone is concerned about achieving more affordable and accessible health care. We are excited to be planning another forum on the subject for March. Several experts will try to help us better understand the complexities of the issue. Two of our Board members, **Donna Packard-Mahoney** and **Anne Burton**, are on the regional committee that is planning the meeting.

This year the National League will determine its policy on the National Popular Vote. Local leagues must come to a consensus on this topic. We will hold our consensus meeting in late April.

We are looking for new people with fresh ideas to join our Board. Please submit nominees to the Nominating Committee now.

Please review the Local Program for 2008-2009 and contact a Board member about whether any item should be continued, dropped, amended, or added. The program will be discussed at the March 12 Board meeting; all League members are invited to join in this discussion. We will vote on the updated Local Program at our Annual Meeting in May.

Gail and Diane

Candidate Forums

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND A TRAINING SESSION TO PREPARE
MODERATORS, TIMERS AND QUESTION COLLECTORS
FOR CANDIDATE FORUMS?**

Daytime and evening sessions will be set during the weeks of March 16, 23 and 30 depending on the number of participants and your preferences.

If you are interested, contact Irene Wynnyczuk at 279-9789 or by e-mail at iwynn@nycap.rr.com by March 6th. For those members who have given us their e-mail addresses, Irene will send a message before the end of February to which you can respond.

Ever Consider Joining the Board???

Our Chapter's Board of Directors meets on the third Thursday of most months from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Krause Center. Participating in Board discussions and activities is a great way to connect to what is going on in Rensselaer County and the State of New York. The Nominating Committee is currently seeking out candidates for several positions: a Co-President, Secretary, and three Directors - each one to serve a term of two years. If you are interested, or even just curious, please contact committee members David Wolcott (DavidRWolcott72@cs.com) or Hazel Landa (dryland2@aol.com). We will vote on the slate of candidates at our Annual Meeting and Dinner in May.

**Voter Service is
an important part
of the League of
Women Voters of
Rensselaer
County**

WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS:

JUDY RANCOURT

313 Carrolls Grove Road

Troy, NY 12180

279-3045 (Home)

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SANDRA GULL

197 Second St.

Troy, NY 12180

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**Every year
League
chapters across
the country
meet to discuss
an issue of
importance and
attempt to
achieve
consensus on
it.**

National Popular Vote Consensus Questions: For Use at Consensus Meeting April 23, 2009

Amending the Constitution

1. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
- b. Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

2. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Congressional Consent

3. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
- b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Enforcement

4. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
- b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed Anyway c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts

into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.

- d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
- e. The group could not reach consensus.

Uniformity

5. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Popular Election of the President

6. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the electoral college.
- b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Achievability

7. Which statements reflect the views of the group?

- a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

- b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed. Agree Disagree No Consensus

Please join Rensselaer LWV members to discuss these questions on Thursday, April 23 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Krause Center (2212 Burdett Avenue, across from Samaritan Hospital). This will be a Consensus Meeting. Visit our website at www.lwvrc.org to see a League document laying out the pros and cons of the National Popular Vote proposal.

This year's topic concerns the role and value of the Electoral College, and whether it should be retained.

LWV RENSSELAER COUNTY LOCAL PROGRAM POLICY POSITIONS - 2008-09 APPROVED AT ANNUAL MEETING – 5/21/08

1. **WE WILL SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT - COUNTY, CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE - OPERATIONS, AND COUNTY AND CITY CHARTERS THAT CONFORM TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:**
 - A. Government, policies, programs and performance should provide for:
 - Competent personnel with clear lines of responsibility,
 - Coordination among various agencies and levels of government,
 - Adequate financing,
 - Effective enforcement, and
 - Well-defined channels for citizen input.
 - B. Charter amendments should provide for:
 - Independent Charter Revision Commissions that are representative of the community and do not include any elected or political party official at the local level.
 - A Districting Plan following each decennial census, after meaningful community participation.
 - The Districting Plan shall be guided by criteria in NYS Election Law which requires that districts be as compact, contiguous and convenient as possible. Also the plan as far as practical shall follow the principle of equal representation both numerically and by number of legislators from each district.
 - Such a plan to be approved by the appropriate legislative body in accordance with the Iowa Plan which provides for up to three times for Legislative approval/disapproval before mandatory acceptance of the Commission's recommended plan.

Assessment of the functions, organizational structure and staffing procedures of Troy's City Government:

 - To assure their conformity with the requirements of the current Troy City Charter. Where there are disparities, the need for changes in practices and/or in the Charter would be indicated.
 - Monitor and evaluate the work of the newly appointed Troy Charter Revision Commissions.

WE WILL ADVOCATE FOR CHANGING THE PRESENT METHOD OF RE-DISTRICTING THE RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO A PLAN THAT SHALL:

Provide for equal representation for citizens both numerically and by number of elected representatives from each district, with preference for single-member districts as the system most prevalent and familiar to citizens and most likely to represent constituencies of similar interests and concerns.

 - Such a plan to be prepared by an Independent Districting Commission with meaningful public participation that is representative of the community and does not include any elected County / political party official.
 - Approval of the plan by the County Legislature shall follow the Iowa plan which provides for Legislative approval/disapproval for up to three times before mandatory acceptance of the Districting Commission plan proposed.
3. **WE WILL SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE LEAGUE'S CAPITAL REGION SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT CONSENSUS THAT INCLUDES:**
 - Waste and toxicity reduction, and
 - Environmentally sound methods of recycling and reuse as primary forms of solid waste management.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT – Please review the current local program on page 6, to your left.. The Board welcomes your input as to whether we should: **RETAIN -- UPDATE -- DROP** any of these items. The Board will consider any new program items proposed by any member. If you have a recommendation, contact any Board Member or come to the Board Meeting on Thursday, March 12, 7 pm at the Krause Center.

LWV State Convention

The State Convention will be held this May 15 through 17 in Syracuse. Several Rensselaer chapter are planning to drive over for a day and would be happy to car pool. Contact any Board member for info.

20th Congressional District Candidates' Debate Scheduled

There will be a Special Election held on March 31 to elect a new individual to represent the 20th District in Congress (this is Kirsten Gillibrand's former seat). LWV Chapters from Rensselaer, Columbia, and Saratoga counties are co-sponsoring a Candidates' Debate along with radio station WROW, 590 AM. The debate will be held in Latham at the Holiday Inn Express on March 24 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Watch for news reports closer to the actual date in case of time last minute time changes. Republican Jim Tedisco, Democrat Scott Murphy, and Libertarian Eric Sundwall have all agreed to participate in the town hall style debate. The hotel is not in the 20th district but it is centrally located.

Post Holiday Get Together with Laura Ladd Bierman

Our Chapter's gathering last January 14 at the Krause Center was a success in every way: a big turnout of members that resulted in lots of talk, plenty of good food, and a chance to hear from the new Executive Director of LWVNY, Laura Ladd Bierman. Her speech was very interesting and wide-ranging. You may read it in its entirety on our website at www.lwvrc.org.



“The League has always been perceived as a credible voice for fair, balanced election information”

Laura Ladd
Bierman



League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County Calendar

March 2009

- 4– Rensselaer County Legislature Open Forum, Wed., 6 pm
- 5 – Troy City Council, Thurs., 7 pm
- 10 – Rensselaer County Legislature Monthly Meeting, Tues., 7 pm

12—LWV Board meeting, Krause Center, 7 pm

20—LWV joint symposium “Aging in the Community: Future of Long Term Care”, 10 am APL

24—Candidates’ Debate 20th District, Holiday Inn Express Latham, 7 pm

31—Special Election 20th Congressional District

April 2009

- 8 – Rensselaer County Legislature Open Forum, Wed., 6 pm
- 9 – Troy City Council, Thurs., 7 pm
- 9 – **LWV of Rensselaer County Monthly Meeting, Thurs., 7 pm (Krause Center, Troy)**
- 14 – Rensselaer County Legislature Monthly Meeting, Tues., 7 pm
- 23—LWV Consensus Meeting on National Popular Vote, 7 pm Krause Center**



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