

September 2008

# The Voter



League of Women Voters,  
Rensselaer County NY

### Special points of interest:

- We mourn the loss of Mary Stierer
- Voter information resources
- Oct. 23 date for Health Care Reform program
- Sept. 20 National Popular Vote program

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## September Membership Meeting

For League Members and the General Public

Saturday, September 20, 2008, 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m

East Greenbush Community Library  
10 Community Way, East Greenbush, N. Y.

### NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

Co-sponsored by: Albany County League,  
Schenectady County League, Saratoga County League,  
Rensselaer County League

**Speakers: Lori Dawson and Barbara Thomas from Saratoga County League**

Come and learn the facts to prepare for consensus questions!

Bring a friend!

Go to [lwvrc.org](http://lwvrc.org) for more info

Directions to East Greenbush Community Library: I-90 east to exit 9, Right on Route 4, left on Route 151, Right on Community Way. Free parking!

## 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** Mary Muller 274-0846  
mullers@mac.com *"Voter" editor and mailing.*

**Director** George W. O'Connor 272-6512  
GandT54@nycap/rr.com *Membership Records/Prospective Member Mailings, Member Directory/Mailing Labels, Co-Chair THA Elections, Troy Charter*

**Director** Donna Packard-Mahoney 283-6423  
dmahoney@nycap.rr.com *Action/Issues/Advocacy*

**Director** Fred Stein 663-5230  
fstein@nycap.rr.com *Natural Resources/Rensselaer Co. Government, Education*

**Director** David Wolcott 766-0242  
DavidRWolcott72@cs.com

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

## Letter from the Co-Presidents

Long-time League member Mary Steirer passed away recently. She will be sorely missed! She would have been avidly following this year's exciting election events.

Rensselaer League members have been registering new voters. We'd like to thank all those who have been helping out, especially Margaret Story who is coordinating our efforts!! IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO HAS NOT YET REGISTERED, URGE THEM TO DO SO. The deadline is October 10. (WMHT and the Times Union are co-sponsoring candidate debates for the 20th and 21st Congressional Districts. The debates will be aired sometime in mid-October.

The national League is taking on the issue of the National Popular Vote (NPV). All local leagues are expected to present a consensus on the issue by May, 2009. Rensselaer LWV member Anne Burton has organized a meeting about the NPV for Saturday, September 20. For more information on the NPV, go to our website, click on NY League, then look for "National Popular Vote".

A commission in the City of Troy is revising the city charter. A proposition to approve the revised charter will be on the ballot in Troy this November. Our George O'Connor has been reviewing the revisions. Look for his comments soon. Each year at the annual meeting we adopt our annual program of issues to pursue. The Troy City Charter is one such issue. Another is the subject of solid waste management. We are pleased to note that this fall several hazardous waste and electronics recycling events are being held in the county. With the general election drawing near, keep informed, talk with your acquaintances. And urge them to participate.

## Volunteer for Election Night Reporting

Once again this year the Rensselaer county chapter of the League of Women voters has been contracted to provide unbiased poll reporting on election night. Many League members find that observing the counting and results announcement at local precincts and then phoning in the results to the official media reporting service is a satisfying and useful way to support the

voting process and to ensure fair elections. This activity also earns some money for our chapter.

Anyone interested in participating in Election Night Reporting this year should contact Jane Ducatt if you wish to monitor a voting precinct in the City of Troy. (Call her at 272-1195 or send her an email at [jducatt@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jducatt@nycap.rr.com).)

If you wish to monitor voting in either North Greenbush, Brunswick, or the City of Rensselaer call David Wolcott (766-0242 or [DavidRWolcott72@cs.com](mailto:DavidRWolcott72@cs.com)) Every year we have more polling places to cover than we have volunteers.



## COMMENTS NEEDED ON LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

What issue(s) would you like to have your League recommend to the State Committee in determining LWVNY's Legislative Priorities for 2009.

By Oct. 6, CLIP AND MAIL YOUR ISSUE TO Gail DeMarco,

18 Empire Circle,

Rensselaer, NY 12144  
OR EMAIL IT TO [gdemarco@nycap.rr.com](mailto:gdemarco@nycap.rr.com)

For your information, the Legislative Priorities for 2008 were: Good Government (Campaign Finance Reform, Redistricting, Voting Technology, Election Law, Court Restructuring/Judicial

Selection, Legislative Procedures); Cost-Effective and Accessible Health Care (Single-Payer System, Basic Level of quality physical and mental health care for all, Containment of Costs without compromising access or quality, Budgetary appropriate for health promotion and disease prevention); Energy and the Environment (Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Encourage renewable energy, Protect water quality, Promote waste management and hazardous waste programs, Promote smart growth, Support effective public transit); and, Others (Abolition of the death

penalty, Equity in School Financing, Women's Right to Privacy, and Pay Equity).

For more information, go to our website, [www.lwvrc.org](http://www.lwvrc.org), click on NY LEAGUE, highlight Local League Resources and click on SBR (State Board Reports), Go to Table of Contents (Issues and Advocacy) to determine what you might like to review in more detail (content is on pp. 36-58).

**“Thursday, October 23 is the date set for our next program on Health Care Reform.”**





League members should be ready to answer questions from voters this election year.



## DEBATE PARTY KIT AVAILABLE FROM NATIONAL LWV

Voting is serious business, but this year the national League is offering a debate party hosting kit to bring a bit of levity to the process. You can check it out on the USLWV website at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). The kit is designed to bring friends, colleagues

and family members together for some productive fun. Included in the kit is a discussion guide and notebook that will help you start a dialogue about: what issues are most important to you and how the candidates propose to address those issues. It's a

great way to get people excited and prepared to vote. If you decide to use it, contact Diane Bell (518-273-5172) to let her know how you liked the materials.

## RECYCLING EVENTS AROUND THE COUNTY IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

### 1. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event

(Sponsored by the Eastern Rensselaer County Solid Waste Management Authority - ERCSWMA and the Town of Nassau with assistance from the NYS DEC and the Village of Nassau)  
Saturday, September 20  
ERCSWMA communities\*\*: 8 AM to 10:30 AM  
Town of Nassau: 11:30AM to 2:00 PM.  
at Nassau Village Hall  
Must Register!! Call: 518-686-7540 (ERCSWMA community residents) or

518-766-2343 (Town of Nassau residents).  
\*\*Nassau, Pittstown, Schaghitcoke, Stephentown  
Villages of Castleton, Hoosick Falls, Nassau, and Valley Falls.

### 2. Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day

Saturday, September 27  
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Town of Schodack  
at Schodack Highway Garage

Must Register!! Call: 518-277-7918.

### 3. Electronics Recycling Day

(Event sponsored by

the county in cooperation with eLot, an electronics recycling firm.)  
October 4, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
For all county residents  
In the upper parking lot of the Rensselaer County office building at 1600 Seventh Avenue.  
For more information, call the county Environmental Management Council office at: 518-270-2888.

### Correct Your Member Directory

[pittsf@aplususa.com](mailto:pittsf@aplususa.com)

Frank Pitts email

## LWVNYS Welcomes New Executive Director

A member of the League for over 25 years, Laura Ladd Bierman will become

executive director of the LWVNYS with experience from four different local Leagues in three states. She has served in a number of positions in local Leagues, including study chair, newsletter editor, board member, Vice President, and President. Laura holds a masters degree in public administration and has career experience in the areas of health care planning and providing financial and consulting services to a national membership organization.

Welcome, Laura! We look forward to working with you!

## National Popular Vote Study

At the LWVUS Convention in Portland, OR, in June, the delegates voted to adopt a national study titled "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact Among the States as a Method for Electing the President".

Lori Dawson, study chair for LWVNYS, encourages NYS Leaguers to get a jump start on preparing for this national study by reading the NPV study materials assembled last year by our state League study

committee. These materials are available for download at the state League website. The actual study and consensus questions will be put together by the national study committee.

## Access to Information Improves

Three new websites provide the taxpayer with information about where their tax dollars go. Some of this information was previously available only by filing an F.O.I.L. request.

[www.SeeThroughNY.net](http://www.SeeThroughNY.net)

Features searchable databases of NYS governmental employees, including job titles and salaries. It also includes teachers' union and superintendent-contracts for nearly every school district in the State, the Legislature's pork-barrel "community projects" spending for 2008-2009, and internal operations expenditures for both the Assembly and the NYS Senate.

Open Book New York, from the office of the NYS Comptroller

([www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/)), gives

taxpayers unprecedented access to financial information of our State government. This includes spending by 113 State agencies and public au-

thorities and display of more than 60,000 state-contracts. You can even search State contracts to see who is doing business with the State.

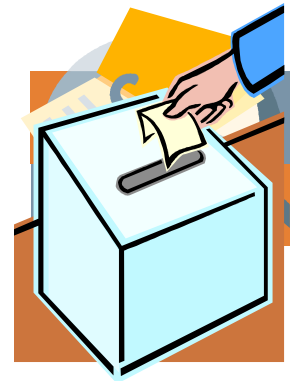
Project Sunlight provides a prototype for how government should make information available to citizens in the digital age ([www.SunlightNY.com](http://www.SunlightNY.com)).

It includes information about individual elected officials, campaign finance activities, legislation, lobbyists, state contracts, and registered corporations and charities. This website also offers educational videos and materials about the basic laws governing official conduct.

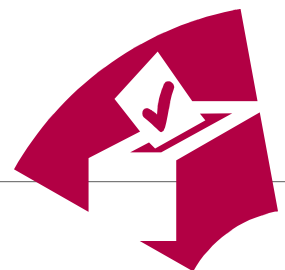
Links to these websites can be found on the LWVNYS website.

## NY VOTER EDUCATION—SPREAD THE WORD

Learn how to vote on the Sequoia Image Cast voting machines before you go into the voting booth on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Go to <http://www.vote-ny.com>. For a video, click on the picture of Rensselaer County's Sequoia Image Cast voting machine. On this site, you can also look up your voter registration status, check your poll site and learn how to become a poll worker



**New voter registrations are up in Rensselaer County—those voters will need to understand how voting works.**





Mary Stierer LWV Annual dinner May, 2005

**“On  
September 2<sup>nd</sup>  
we all lost a  
role model, a  
mentor and a  
dear friend.”**



Mary Stierer receives a Sustainer's Plaque at the LWV Annual Meeting, May 2006

## Mary C. Stierer

1921 - 2008

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> we all lost a role model, a mentor and a dear friend. Mary was a League member for over 60 years, and for those of us who had the privilege of working with her on the many projects she initiated, she was a wonderful teacher and a compassionate taskmaster. At our May 2006 Annual Meeting our League honored Mary with a Sustainers' Plaque from the LWV of NYS. It is only fitting that we give Mary the last word and reprint her letter to the Board on that occasion.

*"I was surprised and pleased by the honor you gave me at the Annual Meeting last week. Thank you very much. Although I was not quite speechless, I was certainly not prepared with the kind of response such an event deserved. So allow me to give it now - and then some!*

*Everyone knows that what is accomplished in League is rarely done by one person alone. Not only does the League benefit from the efforts of multiple minds and hands, but Leaguers themselves have the pleasure and satisfaction of working with great people who share many similar opinions and goals. So I am forever grateful for the friends I have made in the League and for the important causes for which we worked.*

*As for my "life long commitment" to League principles, please indulge my fancy as I remember that when I joined the League in Chicago in 1947 I gave talks and led discussions about U.S. support for the United Nations and The Marshall Plan. When we moved to Springfield, IL in 1950 I chaired a LWV committee studying that city's Commission form of government. Back in Chicago a few years later, I served on the Board of the city's League that coordinated activities of the various neighborhood branches.*

*I took a few years off to study when we moved to Pontiac, MI in the late 50's, and also battled a life-threatening staph infection during those years. When we came to Troy in 1964 the League here was enjoying its success in helping to bring Council-Manager government to the city - an effort I soon became part of with its many ups and downs. Just as absorbing was our LWV study of the War on Poverty programs through the 60's and 70's - Head Start and Day Care, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, Title I of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act - we looked at them all and did a book about our findings, "Up The Ladder", that became a resource for local social agencies.*

*There were more Charter studies, both City of Troy and Rensselaer County; always Voters Service, the "raison d'etre" of the League; a 5-yr term on the Troy School Board where our study of Title I-ESEA proved invaluable and I tried to give moral support to our LWV's School Lunch campaign. Oh yes, I was local President in the 70's and a Board member for years and years. When "Making Democracy Work" became an official LWV program item it seemed like a continuation of what we had been doing, only more so! It is really what the League is all about, and why I have stayed active for so many years. Thank you again for noticing.*

Mary Stierer"

In keeping with Mary's passion for Troy government, she has requested that her family set up a Scholarship for a Troy High School student to study local government. When the details are finalized, we will ask for donations to be made to add to the scholarship fund.



*"I am forever grateful for the friends I have made in the League and for the important causes for which we worked."*



## League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County Calendar for 2008-2009

### September

- 1 - Labor Day
- 2 - Absentee Ballots - last day to postmark application for ballot
- 3 - Rensselaer County Legislature Open Forum, Wed., 6 pm
- 4 - Troy City Council, Thurs., 7 pm
- 8 - Absentee Ballots -- last day to apply in person for ballot
- 8 - Absentee Ballots - last day to postmark ballot
- 9 - Primary Elections, Tues., noon to 9 pm
- 10 - Rensselaer County Legislature Monthly Meeting, Wed., 7 pm
- 11 - LWV of Rensselaer County, Monthly Board meeting, Thurs., 7 pm (Krause Center, Troy)**
- 20 - National Popular Vote Presentation, E. Greenbush Public Library, Sat., 10 am-noon**

### OCTOBER 2008

- 2 - Troy School District Open House, School 12. Call 328-5070 for times.
- 8 - Rensselaer County Legislature Open Forum, Wed., 6 pm
- 9 - LWV of Rensselaer County, Monthly Board meeting, Thurs., 7 pm (Krause Center, Troy)
- 10 - Voter Registration forms - last day to postmark forms
- 14 - Rensselaer County Legislature Monthly Meeting, Tues., 7 pm
- 14 - Public meeting on Troy Library Special Taxing District Proposition, Tues., 6:30-8:00 pm (Main Branch Library)
- 15 - Public meeting on Troy Library Special Taxing District Proposition, Tues., 6:30-8:00 pm (Lansingburgh Branch)
- 25 - Health Care Forum, Rockefeller Institute, Albany, Sat. 10 am—noon
  
- 28 - Absentee Ballots—last day to postmark application for ballot



League of Women Voters,  
Rensselaer County

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Troy, NY 12180

[www.lwvrc.org](http://www.lwvrc.org)