

**Special
points of
interest:**

- Annual Dinner May 22, details inside
- Proposed Local Program—review before the Annual Meeting
- Nominating Committee report lists Board Candidates.

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SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL DINNER AND MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 22

6 to 9 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER

SUSAN ARBETTER

**OF WMHT TV, FORMERLY OF WAMC RADIO
WILL SPEAK ON “REINVENTING YOURSELF”**

EMMA WILLARD SCHOOL, SAGE LIVING ROOM

285 PAWLING AVENUE, TROY

TICKETS ARE \$20.00

RESERVATION FORM WILL BE MAILED SEPARATELY



Members of the Board 2006-07

Co-President **Margaret Story**
272-1566 mrgstry@aol.com *Public Spokesperson; Receive/Distribute State and National Mailings; Arts Center Mail and Phone Calls; New Member Orientation*

Co-President **Gail K. DeMarco**
434-2413 gdemarco@nycap.rr.com *Board Meetings Agendas/Mail; Maintain Calendar; Board List; New Member Orientation*

Vice President **Mary Muller**
274-0846 mullers@mac.com *"Voter" editor; Public Relations; Web Site Transition*

Secretary **Marcia P. Easterling** 273-5416 measterling7@nycap.rr.com *Minutes/ Correspondence*

Treasurer **Irene S. Wynnyczuk** 2799789 iwynn@nycap.rr.com *Treasurer; Budget Committee; Co-Chair: Membership/Finance Drive; Co-Chair: THA Election*

Director **Diane Bell** 2735172 dbell1@nycap.rr.com *Web Site; Voter Services: Local Voter Guides and Local Section NYS Voter Guide; General Meeting Program Coordinator*

Director **Anne E. Burton** 283-3499 aburton@usoncology.com *Member Interest Data Base; Member Involvement—All Areas*

Director **George W. O'Connor**
2726512 gandt54@verison.net *Membership Records Management; Prospective Member Mailings; Member Directory/Mailing Labels; Chair: Troy Charter Review; Co-Chair: THA Elections*

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

Director **Fred D. Stein** 663-5230 Fredd@nycap.rr.com *Chair: Natural Resources; Rensselaer County government; State Prog.: Financing Education*

From the Co-Presidents

March 31, we had eighteen hearty souls who shared a wonderful spring day with us at the East Greenbush Library to learn what we can do to help with recycling of waste. Thank you, **Anne Burton, Diane Bell** and **Fred Stein**, for this great program. It was so well received, we are considering repeating it in the fall so that more community members can come.

Anne Burton led our delegation in the Troy Step-It-Up Rally on April 14 to speak out and walk for Global Climate Change. We have stayed in close contact with RPI Prof. Lupita Montoya since our mid-winter membership meeting. We are pleased to demonstrate that our League is acting on this effort at the local level as well as statewide and nationally.

Once again, we have the pleasure of inviting you to attend our Annual Meeting and Dinner. It will be on May 22 at the Emma Willard School. There is much material for you to review in this Voter prior to that meeting: the Proposed Budget, which includes a Dues Increase; The Nominating Committee's Report; the LWV Local Program-Proposed; and, a By-Laws change.

League members discussed with your co-presidents the May 9 Troy Record article regarding the Board of Education decision to use the services of non-certified voting machines in the May 15 election. We met with representatives of the Board to follow through with this and discuss our concerns. They are addressed in the Voter.

May 15 is School Board voting for budgets and candidates so we will be facilitating Voter Registrations and Candidate Forums. **Anne Burton** will be calling for help with those forums.

The LWVNY Convention will be held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains, May 18-22.

Many thanks to **Irene Wynnyczuk** and her committee for updating They Represent You. You will receive a copy soon.

Margaret and Gail

League sponsors a public information meeting -- "It's Not All Garbage: Managing Solid Waste in Beautiful Rensselaer County" report by Diane Bell

After 25 years of effort to improve how we handle solid waste, it's clear we've had some success. Yet, we continue to hear that our current landfills are approaching capacity, our roadsides are littered, and irreplaceable resources are being depleted. And, many people still don't know for sure what to do with the solid waste they generate, especially hazardous wastes. To increase understanding of solid waste issues and how solid waste is being managed in Rensselaer County and across New York State, the Rensselaer League held a public information meeting on March 31 at the East Greenbush Public Library. The League invited four experts in the field to speak and encouraged all the cities, towns, and villages in the county, as well as the County Legislature, to send representatives.

Joanna Decker, Director of the **Eastern Rensselaer County Solid Waste Management Authority** (better known as ERCSWMA), explained that ERCSWMA was formed in 1989 as a public benefits corporation to provide its members with environmentally sound, comprehensive and cost-effective solid waste management services. Members include: the villages of Castleton, Hoosick Falls, Nassau, Pittstown and Valley Falls and the towns of Schaghticoke and Stephenstown.

The authority provides residents and businesses of member communities with a variety of services. It engages in long term waste disposal and transportation contracts and conducts two household hazardous waste collection days each year, among other things. In response to questions, Ms. Decker explained that other communities would be able to join the corporation if they so desired.

The authority is affiliated with the **Eastern Rensselaer County Community Warehouse** in Hoosick Falls. The warehouse collects large items, such as household furniture and appliances, which are then offered for re-sale at a low cost. This diverts bulky items from landfills and provides shoppers with quality products. All members of the public, regardless of where they live, are welcome to shop at the warehouse. For more information, go to: <http://www.hoosickfalls.com/community/ERC.htm>

Meg Morris is a Board Member of the **Go Green Initiative** which is a comprehensive program designed to create a culture of environmental responsibility on school campuses across the nation. Founded in 2002, the initiative unites parents, students, teachers and school administrators in an effort to make real and lasting changes in their campus communities that will protect children and the environment for years to come.

The Go Green Initiative is premised on the fact that some of the greatest threats to future resources come from things we throw away everyday. The program aims to involve children in school-based recycling activities that not only help to instill a sense of stewardship but also promote a culture of cooperation among the children. Schools in Rensselaer County have yet to take up the initiative, but some upstate schools have joined the program. For more information, go to: www.gogreeninitiative.org.

Laura Haight, Environmental Associate at the NY Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), spoke about the proposed **Bigger Better Bottle Bill**. The original bottle bill was passed 25 years ago with support from many, including NYPIRG and the League of Women Voters. The bill has been one of the most successful environmental programs in the state. It has resulted in less litter on our streets, less waste going to our landfills and incinerators, and more jobs. In addition, the program has reduced the cost to local governments by spreading the burden of recycling among retailers, consumers and producers. Although Governor Spitzer supports the bill, it fell victim to this year's budget negotiations and was removed from consideration during this legislative session. Ms. Haight expressed optimism that the bill will eventually be passed. For more information on the new bottle bill, go to www.NYPIRG.org and look for their Bigger Better Bottle Bill pages.

Peter Pettit, Chief of the Waste Reduction and Outreach Section in DEC's Division of Solid and Hazardous Materials, recalled that in the late 80's a barge floated helplessly off the coast of New York City looking for a place to dispose of its load of garbage. This led to passage of the **New York State Solid Waste Management Act** (SWMA). This act, among many things, spells out municipal responsibilities for managing solid waste. The DEC, under provisions of the act, offers grants to municipalities to support solid waste management activities.

Even though we have made progress in recycling during the years that the SWMA has been in effect, Mr. Pettit said we have much more to do. He proclaimed that: "Solid waste is a failure". While, in truth, it may be impossible to totally eliminate waste, we need to be looking to eliminate more of it upfront, for instance, by reducing the amount of product packaging. After this, we need to look for more opportunities to recycle our waste materials. Converting waste to energy is also a possibility but this is expensive and poses potential environmental problems. Our last resort should be the landfill. Thanks to Diane Bell, Anne Burton, and Fred Stein for organizing the meeting. Thanks also to the East Greenbush Library for hosting the event.

PROPOSED REVISION

BYLAWS

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

(For member action at Annual Meeting, May 22, 2007)

As requested by the LWV US based on actions at 2006 Convention, the following Mission Statement is to be used in our publications and our bylaws are to be revised to reflect the updated wording.

NEW 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."

NEW ARTICLE II

Purposes and Policy

Sec. 1. Purposes – *The purposes of the LWV RC are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.*

Sec. 2 Political Policy – *The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.*

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

"The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan volunteer organization working to promote political responsibility through informed and active citizen participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate for office. It does support or oppose legislation after study and substantial agreement among its members. Membership is open to women and men."

CURRENT:

ARTICLE 11

Purpose and Policy

Sec. 1. Purpose. The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens on government.

Sec. 2. Policy. The League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County may take action on local government measures and policies in the public interest in conformity with the Principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States. It shall

New Member

Welcome to **David Wolcott**, husband of LWV member Caroline Leising. David joins as a household member.

David Wolcott and Caroline Leising

256 New Road, Nassau, NY 12123

LWV RENSSELAER COUNTY LOCAL PROGRAM - 2006-07 - PROPOSED

WE WILL SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNTY, CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE) OPERATIONS, AND COUNTY AND CITY CHARTERS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH LWV PRINCIPLES ADOPTED AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVELS.**
- 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 amendment/s that provide for:
- An Independent Districting Commission that is representative of the community and does not include any elected or political party official at the local level. The Commission shall provide, after meaningful community participation, a Districting Plan following each decennial census. It 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.
- C. Assess the functions, organizational structure and staffing procedures of Troy's City Government to assure their conformity with the requirements of the Troy City Charter. Where there are disparities, the need for changes in practices and/or in the Charter would be indicated.
- II 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.
- III 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 (See I B. above).
- IV LOCAL ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION (ATI) BASED ON THE LWV NYS CONSENSUS ON ATI (such as Youth Court, Drug Courts, Forensic Task Force, Prisoner Education Programs, and Troy Community Police Programs), AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY STUDY AND ACTION TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM.**
- V OPPOSE GLOBAL WARMING WE WILL SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE FOLLOWING: POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING AND ARE CONSISTENT WITH LWV PRINCIPLES ADOPTED AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVELS.**

TROY BOARD OF EDUCATION TO USE NON-CERTIFIED VOTING MACHINES IN MAY 15 ELECTION

On March 7, The Board of Education of the Enlarged City School District of Troy sought the assistance of Rensselaer County Board of Election commissioners Larry Bugbee and Edward McDonough in the prevention of a repeat questionable return that occurred in 2006 relating to a "malfunctioning" lever voting machine. Bob Witco, President, Liberty Election Systems, was at the meeting with the commissioners to describe the machines, which were offered free to the district. The Board voted immediately to use the services of the Albany-based Liberty Election Systems.

The League's concern here is that the voting machines are not certified and, for a school board that is looking for an election to be particularly above reproach, it seems that they would want to use certified machines. No voting machines have been certified for the general election in New York state. The process has been interrupted and this is not likely to be turned around by May 15.

The Liberty voting machine will be on display at the Candidate's Forum on May 7 at Doyle Middle School. This is the public's opportunity to see it before they have to vote on it in the Troy School Board Election.

Nominating committee report

For 2007 – 2008 the nominees for office on the Rensselaer County League of Women Voters Board of Directors are:

Nominating committee (Off-Board members):

Marcie Easterling - co-President

Jill Nagy

Fred Stein - Director

Millie Estes

Donna Packard-Mahoney - Director

Jane Ducatt

Margaret Story - Director

Secretary - no nominee as of now

Louise Pearce

We are sorry to hear of the death of our fellow chapter member Louise Pearce on February 23, 2007 at Samaritan Hospital. Louise taught in the East Greenbush school system and served as a Schodack Town Councilman. She was an effective and valued member of the Rensselaer County League of Women Voters for many years. Memorial donations may be made in Louise's name to the First United Methodist Church, One Gilligan road, East Greenbush, NY, 12061

Biography of Annual Dinner Speaker Susan Arbetter

Journalist Susan Arbetter is the host & producer of New York Now, a new program about state government produced by WMHT and airing statewide starting May 11th. Until recently, Susan was host of the popular Roundtable show on WAMC Northeast Public Radio. She worked in radio for 18 years, starting in Boston at WBOS-FM. She is the recipient of many awards including a national Scripps-Howard Award for Excellence in Electronic Journalism; the National Press Club Kozik Award for Environmental Journalism; and numerous regional Murrow, New York State Broadcasters and New York State Associated Press Awards.

Susan was voted the Women's Press Club's "Media Person of the Year; "Best Voice of the Capital Region" by the Albany Times Union newspaper; "Best Local Radio Talk Personality" by the Times Union; and "Our Favorite Voice" by Berkshire Living Magazine. She lives in Altamont with her husband, teacher and naturalist Bill Danielson.

Uncle Sam Wants YOU to STEP IT UP!

Report by Anne Burton

Bill McKibben, the scholar in residence at Middlebury College and the author of "Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future", said: "what do I do once I've changed the damned light bulbs" the answer is to STEP IT UP in 2007.

As part of the climate coalition, the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County was invited to participate in the Save Uncle Sam – Step it Up rally in Troy on Saturday, April 14. A chilly wind blew in from the river as the marchers walked down from the pedestrian bridge at RPI to the statue of Uncle Sam in downtown Troy. 50 trash bags of waste...from cigarette butts to hubcaps...were collected. League members congregated in Riverfront Park, as Studmonkey (the band) played, the Rensselyrics sang, and the wind continued to blow. The sun was nowhere to be seen. Anne Burton represented the League as part of the "stage party".

Since everyone has a topic to speak on, Anne began by saying that she was there both as a League member and a grandma, gave the League's website address, and invited the spectators to join the League. Her talk was not only for her grandchildren but grandchildren everywhere!

The wind picked up and the temperature fell as Anne continued by asking the audience, Did you know? ...That passage of the bigger better bottle bill would result in an additional 2 billion cans and bottles recycled, with 600,000 barrels of crude oil saved and 20,000 tons of greenhouse gas not emitted (nypirg.org, bottle bill homepage)....

That if we reduced our solid waste by 10% we could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 10,000 lbs...

That we could compost, re-use, recycle, use fluorescent light bulbs, drive a hybrid vehicle, use energy-star appliances.....

That we could institute recycling at our schools or workplaces with the go-green initiative (www.gogreeninitiative.org).....

That we don't have to purchase items that have non-recyclable packaging and that we can re-use grocery bags.....That we can get involved with our local municipalities as to what they recycle and how they plan to help us reduce solid waste (remember, solid waste going to the landfill is a failure for us and for our municipalities).....And did you know that each one of us can make a difference. It's not too late!



**League of Women Voters
Rensselaer County**

265 River Street
Troy, NY 12180

<http://lwwrc.org>

MAY 2007

- 2 Rensselaer County Legislature, Open Forum, Wednesday, 6 pm
- 3 Troy City Council, Thurs., 7 pm
- 7 School Board Cand. Forum, Troy School Dist., Mon.
- ? School Board Cand. Forum, Hoosick Falls SD., (to be confirmed)
- 8 Rensselaer County Legislature, Monthly Meeting, Tues., 6 pm
- 15 School District Voting, Tues., Budgets / Board Candidates**
- 18-20 LWNYS Convention, Crowne Plaza, White Plains, Fri-Sun**
- 22 LWVRC ANNUAL MEETING, EMMA WILLARD SCHOOL, TUE., 6PM**

JUNE 2007

- 6 Rensselaer County Legislature, Open Forum, Wednesday, 6 pm
- 7 Troy City Council, Thurs., 7 pm
- 12 Rensselaer County Legislature, Monthly Meeting, Tues., 6 pm
- TBD BOARD/REORGANIZATION MEETING**