



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of SCHENECTADY COUNTY, NEW YORK

October 2009

BULLETIN

Meet the Candidates Forums

Sponsored by the LWV and the AAUW

Glenville.....Monday, October 19, at 7 to 9pm
Glenville Town Hall on Glenridge Rd.

Rotterdam Tuesday, October 20, 6:30 to 8:30pm
Rotterdam Library on N. Westcott Rd.

Niskayuna Thursday, October 22 at 7 to 9pm
Niskayuna Town Hall on Nott St. East.

Schenectady Tuesday, October 27th at 7 to 9pm
McChesney Rm of the Central Library.

**** Sheriff candidates will participate in the forum. The City races are uncontested. The candidates will be present have been invited for a 'meet and greet'.*

Volunteers are needed for these events. If you can volunteer on one of these dates, please send an email. We will need moderators, timekeepers, question reviewers and greeters.

There will be a meeting of those who can assist on October 8 at 7pm, place TBA.

Questions? Call Karen Bradley at 372-9135 or cell at 928-2858 or email: DBradley99@aol.com.

Check our website for updates.

Friendly Lunch !st Reformed Church

Tuesday, October 27, Noon to 1pm
Bring your own lunch

Ann Petersen, Home Ownership Coordinator for Schenectady will speak to us about the role of energy efficiency in the construction of new housing for low/middle income families.

Read more about Ann on page 6.

SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 7 TO 9.
NEW & PROSPECTIVE MEMBER MEETING
INTRODUCE a FRIEND TO the LWV.

President's column

Greetings,

October is our 'Meet the Candidates' month, with opportunities to hear from candidates for offices in the City/County, Glenville, Niskayuna and Rotterdam. As these local races heat up, bring a friend and come to hear the candidates express their priorities and perspectives. Karen Bradley, our Voter Service/Candidate Forum Chair has been working hard to line up the forums and looks forward to working with League and AAUW volunteers in conducting these programs. (See dates in this bulletin.)

Our members are active not only in the League but as representatives of the League on community boards. We are most appreciative to **Joan Elliott**, who has served for six and a half years as League representative on the Schenectady Civilian Police Review Board. She brings an intelligent, thoughtful and balanced approach to issues in whatever role she plays in the community. Presently she is one of the Coordinators and League representatives on the Fair Campaign Practices Committee of the Capital District and has recently accepted the role of one of two Community Representatives on the Policy Committee for the Schenectady City School District's Board of Education.

Thanks also go to League member **Chet Harvey** for his several years of service on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). We appreciate Chet's time and technical background in understanding and representing the League on this community-based board.

Additional kudos go to **Judy Middelkoop** who, as a trained auditor, has once again completed a professional audit of our finances, providing us with positive feedback and recommendations for ongoing support of our financial systems. We are most appreciative for her expertise, communication skills, and generosity to the League.

Congratulations go to our member **Julia Helfman**, who in September was awarded our 2009 Susan B. Anthony Award for her decades of warm-hearted, generous and dedicated community service. See this bulletin for a description of her community leadership roles.

Happy October! Joanne



Barbara Bartoletti to Address Cooperstown LWV

The LWV of the Cooperstown Area, other League members and guests are invited to a luncheon on October 17 at the Otesaga in Cooperstown, NY at noon. The animated and inspiring Barbara Bartoletti will be the featured speaker.

Enjoy the fall foliage on route to Cooperstown and see the current exhibit entitled "America's Rome" at the Fenimore Art Museum. Make your reservation now. Send your check to LWVCA, Vicky Gates, Treasurer, PO Box 426, Cooperstown, NY, 13326 or phone 607-547-1943. The cost for the luncheon is \$19 which includes a great buffet, beverage, fabulous desserts, tax & tip.

It's Not Too Late To Save Your Place and Save Your Girls From Bullying

The Women's Fund of the Capital Region presents Rachel Simmons, New York Times best-selling author of Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls and the new The Curse of the Good Girl.

Offering inspiring and humorous presentations, she has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, Today, Dateline NBC and NPR, and will be featured on PBS.

Our emcee is Benita Zahn of NewsChannel 13 and Health Link on WMHT-TV.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Middle and high school parents and girls

DATE & TIME: Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

*LOCATION: The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall
32 Second Street, Troy, NY*

ADMISSION: \$20 for adults; \$10 for girls under 19

*Order your tickets today at www.womensfundcr.org/RachelSimmons.html
or call 518-273-0038*

Environment Committee News

Submitted by Carol Furman

The Environment Committee will meet on October 5th at 12 noon at the Moon and River Cafe in downtown Schenectady. After a short committee meeting, an orientation for new members will be held. We hope to give background information about the Great Flats Aquifer, the environmental oversight committees for Schenectady towns/city as well as in the County, the goals of the Environment Committee, and a discussion of how we work within the State and National League positions. Those who are possibly interested in joining this committee are welcome to come. Lunch is available to purchase should you like to eat during the meeting. The meeting will last until 2:30pm. Contact Carol Furman if you will be attending for the first time at 346-2746.

Observer Corps News

Submitted by Mary Maitino, Chair

I want to thank everyone who signed up to be a part of the Observer Corps. We now have a number of people who will be observing City Council Meetings, SCSB Board of Ed meetings, and Metroplex Meetings. One person will try to attend the Rotterdam Town meetings. We could probably use another person or two to attend the Schenectady County Board Meetings. If you would like to observe any other town or school district meetings, please let me know.

I will be sending those who volunteered a packet with some guidelines, and forms for recording your observations. If you have any questions, or suggestions concerning the recording page, please let me know. Ph: 377-3248; email: marimay67@gmail.com

2009 Susan B. Anthony Award

Presented to JULIA HELFMAN by Helga Schroeter on September 9, 2009

Julia Helfman, our 2009 recipient of the Susan B. Anthony Award, likes to call herself a “Liberal Activist.” She will tell you that her life has been dedicated to “building bridges and tearing down walls.”

Julia grew up in the Bronx, having a very activist father as an example. She married Joel Helfman in 1949 and moved to Chicago where the Helfmans had two children. The family made many moves, to Kansas City, Missouri, Omaha, Pittsburg, Binghamton, California, etc. Each move meant an advancement for Joel in his professional career. Julia and Joel also added three more children to the family along the way. Finally, in 1984, the Helfmans landed in Niskayuna, NY, and this has become the home of their choice.

The Capital District community benefited from their decision!



Julia likes to point out several people who influenced her life and made her into the person she is today: her activist father, two teachers, an English teacher and a Social Studies teacher, a medical doctor for whom she worked as a teenager, and, last but not least, her husband Joel.

Julia first joined the League when they lived in Pittsburgh. She remembers a program at the University there, ‘Returning Women’ which focused on getting women back into college and into careers. Julia also became active in her Synagogue and in the Anti-Vietnam War movement. Eventually, while living in

Binghamton, Julia went back to college and earned her master’s degree and worked on a doctoral degree.

In 1984, the Helfmans moved to Schenectady, where Julia got very involved with the Capital District Gay and Lesbian community; her daughter Sarah is a lesbian. Julia became a hot-line person for PFLAG. She still runs monthly support group meetings at the Unitarian Church in Schenectady. Julia was also instrumental in starting Gay/Straight Alliances in schools, has taught classes at SUNY Albany, participated in marches in Albany and Washington and has authored a book, “Juveniles in Jeopardy.” She has served on the PPMH board, and is a very skillful fund-raiser.

In recent years, the Schenectady League of Women Voters has benefited from Julia’s expertise through her very active participation in the Working Group on Girls. She has worked on funding applications for the upcoming “Girls Day out” for city middle school girls in November.

Her energy is very inspiring and contagious! Congratulations, Julia!

****Pictured above are Susan B. Anthony Award Recipient Julia Helfman and LWV President Joanne Tobiessen at the League Luncheon on September 9, 2009.

Welcome New Member

Michelle Ostrelich

Submitted by Betsy Chase

Michelle is a retired lawyer and mother of two young children. She heard about the League from Sonya Rubinstein and decided to join us. She is Co-President of the Jewish Community Center PTO as well as a Board Member there. She is also Co-President of the Sisterhood of the Temple Gates of Heaven.

Michelle's law practice focused on employment laws and her clients were hospitals and health care systems. She is interested in health care issues, but for now she will attend as many of our programs as her schedule permits.



Membership News

Submitted by Lynda Nichols, Membership Chair

The Membership Committee has begun planning for the November 11 “New and Potential Member Orientation.” We have this meeting every November. All who have joined since last November are invited. But we need all of you to give us names of people who might potentially join our League. Please send names to Lynda Nichols. We really need your help on this. During the last year about 20 people have joined us, and many of those new members were suggested by you. We send out invitations about the third week of October. So “sooner is better” to send names to me by email or telephone.

One of our exciting plans from the Membership Committee is to begin providing the opportunity for you to purchase gift memberships during the upcoming holiday season. Can you think of a family member, a friend, someone who has helped you, etc. who might enjoy participating in League activities? If so, a perfect gift might be a membership in the Schenectady County League. There will be more details in the November Bulletin.

Our renewal percentage is creeping up. We now have about 46% of our membership who have sent in their dues for July 2009 through June 2010. Thank you to that 46%. There is no membership form in this Bulletin because all of you who have not rejoined have received another one in a separate mailing. We look forward to that other 54% of you joining us in the upcoming year's active calendar of activities. The League is investigating so many currently important issues in this country.

I'm reminding everyone again to be sure to give us email addresses and any changes in emails so we can easily communicate with everyone. The cost of postage these days makes extra paper mailings difficult. Email really helps.

Send suggestions for invitations to the November 11 potential member meeting to Lynda Nichols 374-1643 or email: nicholsL@nycap.rr.com

Ann Petersen, Speaker for Friendly Lunch

Ann Petersen, who is the Home Ownership Coordinator for the City of Schenectady, will be speaking to the Schenectady LWV Friendly lunch at noon on Oct 29th at the McChesney Room of the downtown public library in Schenectady . Attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch.

Ann will be giving us an overview of affordable housing initiatives in Schenectady, but is most anxious to speak to us about the “Universal/Green Affordable Housing Project” undertaken by the city, in partnership with non-profit affordable housing developers, Better Neighborhoods and Community Land Trust of Schenectady.

Four single-family homes have been built on vacant lots where abandoned, blighted properties were demolished. All have been sold to first-time homebuyers making less than 80% of our area median income. The homes feature energy-efficient appliances, renewable building materials such as bamboo floors, and building materials which come from within a 500-mile radius to cut down on carbon emissions from vehicle use.

The project currently has 10 more homes under construction. The homes are LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified by the United States Green Building Council at the Platinum and Gold levels. The first home constructed was also the very first home (in the entire residential building industry in NYS) to receive a “Platinum” certification, the highest level of energy efficient design and green construction. The homes are 1650 sq ft, 4 bedrooms and 2 baths with a basement. Total utility costs are less than \$160.00 per month. Carpeting is made from recycled milk cartons; dual flush toilets save 3500 gallons of water a year, solar renewable energy sources generate electricity and hot water. The homes are also “universally designed” to allow a family to “age in place,” are fully handicapped accessible and have 1/3 the carbon footprint of a conventionally built home.



League Statement to the Schenectady City Council

Delivered on September 21, 2009 by Sonia Rubenstein and co-signed by Joanne Tobiessen, president

My name is Sonia Rubenstein. I live at 841 Londonderry Road in the City of Schenectady. I am addressing you tonight on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Schenectady County.

The League of Women Voters of Schenectady County wishes to express its full support of the resolution to apply for a grant of up to \$50,000 from the NYS Department of State Local Government Efficiency Grant Program, for funding of the City of Schenectady Police Department Cost Reduction and Management Improvement Plan. The city is clearly eligible for the program with a per capita cost in the 25% range with comparable municipalities, and is prepared to provide the 10% cash match required by the grant.

It is very desirable for the city to explore any and all means to enhance financial and operational efficiencies which may result in cost savings to the tax payers and create a more streamlined public safety system for the larger Schenectady community. A comprehensive study of streamlining police services in Schenectady may provide some excellent guidelines for better fiscal and managerial oversight for the benefit of us all!

Please vote in favor of this resolution.

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We work to increase the understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

President:
Joanne Tobiessen 393-0477

Vice-President:
Connie Young 393-7061

Newsletter Editor:
Helen MacDonald 346-7006

Ellis Hospital's Community Information Sessions

In keeping with their commitment to keep the community informed, Ellis Hospital is holding the first in a series of four sessions. League members are invited to attend.

Each session begins at 7 pm:

- * Thursday, October 1, Proctor's (Fennimore Gallery, upstairs)
- * Wednesday, October 14, SCCC Stockade Room 102
- * Monday, October 19, Shenendehowa Methodist Church, Rt 146 across from the Shen. campus

At each session their President and CEO, Jim Connolly, will update the public on the hospital's progress and talk more about their recently announced future plans, which include:

- * significant expansion of the emergency department at Ellis Hospital, Nott Street
- * keeping women's and infant's services at Bellevue, expanding the facility and enhancing services at Bellevue, including new private rooms and a new Imaging Center.
- * continued development of the "Medical Home" at the campus on McClellan Street (formerly St Clare's Hospital)
- * building a satellite emergency department in Clifton Park/Halfmoon

They are looking forward to updating the public and answering their questions.

Questions? Contact Donna Evans, Mgr, Public Relations, Ellis Medicine, 243-4407



Pathways to Civic Engagement

Pathways to Civic Engagement, is a new curriculum for students that is currently being developed. The program, in the form of curricular modules, consists of leadership skills, personal finance training and the traditional League components of civic engagement. The module form of training was chosen in order to meet the divergent needs of students and their communities. Local Leagues can elect to present the training modules in whole or separately, as determined by individual League interest, the needs of the students and the needs of your local community. Check the SBR's in the next few months for additional information on this new and exciting curriculum. You may also contact JoAnn Ross, Citizen Education/Youth Program Director at jross18@roadrunner.com or Stephanie Lopez, Program Coordinator at stephanie@lwvny.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please send this membership form with your dues to Lynda Nichols, 1038 Maryland Ave. Schenectady, 12308

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ email _____

Membership choices: Student \$20 Individual \$55 Family \$75 (Needs Adjustments can be made.)

These yearly dues are not tax deductible

CALENDAR of October Events

Mon, Oct 5 ...Environmental Committee, 12 noon, Moon and River Cafe
Mon, Oct 5....Working Group on Girls, YWCA, 3:30.
Tues, Oct 6....Board Meeting, 1400 Keyes, 4-6.
Tues, Oct 6....Rachel Simmon's Talk on Bullying, Troy Music Hall, 7pm.
Sat, Oct 17....Barbara Bartoletti, Cooperstown LWV, Otesaga, Noon.
Mon, Oct 19 Glenville Candidate Forum, Glenville Town Hall, 7-9.
Tues, Oct 20....Rotterdam Candidate Forum, Rotterdam Library, 6:30-8:15pm.
Thurs, Oct 22 Niskayuna Candidate Forum, Niskayuna Town Hall, 7-9.
Tues, Oct 27.... Schenectady Candidate's Forum, Library McChesney Room, 7-9.
Tues, Oct 27...Friendly Lunch, 1st Reformed Church, Noon, Ann Petersen.

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 11—14, 2010

It's time for local Leagues to begin preparations for the 10th Annual Students Inside Albany Conference. Our goal this year is to have a student representative from every local League in New York State.

Leagues choose their own criteria for sending a student to the conference. Some Leagues have used an application form; others have coordinated the selection with the High School Principals and/or Social Studies/Government teachers, while others have continued the tradition of an essay contest. Examples of materials you can use for recruitment purposes are attached.

Put a notice in your League bulletin. one of your members may know of an interested high school student.

Contact the Youth Coordinator at your local YMCA or YWCA

Call the High School Principals, Guidance Offices or Social Studies Supervisors and set up a meeting,

Ask the school to announce it on the morning or afternoon announcements at school

Post a brightly colored notice on the bulletin board at the local library, school library, guidance office, grocery store, etc...

Put an advertisement in the local weekly or free newspaper

Contact the youth group at local churches or synagogues

For more information on the Students Inside Albany Conference or to order color brochures for a minimal fee, customized with your League's own contact information, please contact Stephanie Lopez:

stephanie@lwvny.org.