



**The LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

January 2008

Syracuse Metro LWV
PO Box 11866
Syracuse NY 13218
(507 Plum St -2nd Fl. Syr. 13204)
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Web Sites:

Local: www.lwvsyr.org
State: www.lwvny.org
National: www.lwv.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 17h
Program Planning Meeting
February 5th
Presidential Primary
March 7th
LWV Legislative Breakfast

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**PRESIDENTIAL
PRIMARY
TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 5TH**



CORRECTION

In the November *Local Voter* we failed to recognize the **International Center of Syracuse** for inviting us to participate in the program with the visitors from Iraq. Our apologies to **C.G. Varno**, executive director of the International Center.

2007-2008 - PROGRAM PLANNING LUNCHEON

Please join us on January 17, 2008 at Noon for our annual Program Planning Meeting. This is the time of year we look back at what we have done and look ahead on what the future will bring. It gives our membership the opportunity to tell us (your Board of Directors) what issues you would like to see addressed by the League.

This year we prepare for the LWVUS National Convention in June by reviewing the National Program. To review the National Program online go to www.lwvus.org. Search Impact on Issues.

We also have the opportunity to review existing positions or recommend a new study/program item. Please see Page 5 regarding a new study that has been proposed by LWVNYYS.

Our own Local Program will be reviewed. Is there a new study or program you would like to recommend for action or a program you would like to see dropped or changes made?



Thursday, January 17, 2008
Noon - 1:30 PM

LWVSYR League Office, Unity Mutual Conference Room, 2nd Floor, 507 Plum St

A sandwich tray, drinks etc will be provided.
Donations to defray the cost are welcome.

Yes, I will attend

No, I cannot attend but would like to see the League hold programs on:

I would like to recommend to LWVUS : *A Study on the Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact Among the States as a Method for Electing the President.*

**RESERVATIONS BY MONDAY, JANUARY 14TH - 448-7199
PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO:
SYRACUSE METRO LWV, PO BOX 11866, SYRACUSE NY 13218**

BOARD NOTES

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please Welcome New Members:

Ann Jamison and Jill Sargent

Returning Member: Lora McCooey

The end of January marks the time we report changes to our membership to the National League. If you have not renewed your membership, please consider doing it now. Also, please complete the form on page 7 so that we can update our records and better meet member needs.

Thank you,

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

The LWV is seeking to identify at least 3 outstanding, outgoing members who represent the best of the LWV and the best of our community. We will be asking these people to assist us in our outreach and other public relations programs.

1. The general requirements for these three are:
 - a. A young person who spent an early part of their life here and who has returned to Syracuse to work and/or live,
 - b. A person who lived/grew up someplace else but who moved to Syracuse to work and/or live.
 - c. A person who has "always lived" in Syracuse who may be retired or plans to retire here.
2. These people must have a willingness to share some personal information such as where they have lived, why they moved to Syracuse, why they chose to stay in Syracuse.
3. These people must also agree to tell why they joined the LWV and what they gain from membership in the LWV.
4. A willingness to be available for media interviews.

Please forward nominations - - including self nomination - -(name, phone, email or other contact information) directly to me. Gwen Grant PRlwvsyr@aol.com or by snail mail to PO Box 11866, Syracuse NY 13218.

Naturalization Ceremonies

Volunteers are needed to register new citizens. The new citizen ceremonies are held at the Federal and State Court Houses. You will find the ceremony inspiring as new citizens from around the world are grateful to call the United States their new home. For details contact **Susan Bush** at the YWCA - 424-0040.

Officers

President....	Joan Johnson
1st Vice-President	Janet Mallan
2nd Vice-President/Membership...	Mary Lou Green
3rd Vice-President/Public Relations...	Gwen Grant
Treasurer....	J. Arthur Johnson
Secretary....	Vacant

Directors

Advocacy& Issues....	Lenore Rapalski
Fund-Raising...	Elizabeth Nicoletti
Program....	Rae Rohfeld
Voter Service...	Susan Bush

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director....	Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee.....	Roberta Millert, Chair
	Eleanor Feitler
	Barbara Olum
Lake Partnership....	Reginald Durant
Optical Scan Liaison....	Lenore Rapalski
Publications....	Vacant

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information please call the League office at (315) 448-7199 or e-mail to info@lwvsyr.org

Diversity Statement

The Syracuse Metropolitan League of Women Voters is committed to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, or national origin.

We look forward to reader participation and invite your questions regarding issues and columns. Kindly mail your queries to the office or e-mail to info@lwvsyr.org

Please let us know your email address.

- It is the most efficient way to communicate
 - You will be notified of upcoming local events
 - LWV National & State Action Alerts
- Your e-mail address will not be shared or sold. Please respond to info@lwvsyr.org

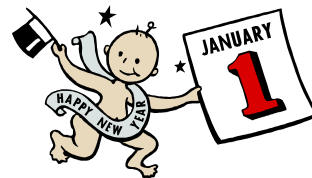
Message from the President

Greetings to all for a happy, healthy and productive 2008 and the hope that by this time next year New York State will be well on its way to a new secure, accurate and transparent voting system. New York now has its back against the wall with the Department of Justice saying we must be HAVA compliant by September 2008. As I write this article, the Court has given NYS until January 4th to come up with a plan. More on this later in this Local Voter.

I would like to personally thank all our members who participated in our election activities, our advocacy workshop, Syracuse Housing elections and our member/elected officials get-together in late November. We begin our new year with our annual Program Planning meeting on January 17th. Join us for lunch and a planning session on what issues and activities we should pursue in the coming year. We will also review the LWVUS Program in preparation for the National Convention in June. An important part of the discussion will be whether we will recommend that the National League take on a study of the National Popular Vote concept (see page 5).

Again my best to all for the New Year.

Joan Johnson



WHAT DO DUES DO?

Where do the \$50 from annual individual membership dues go? Our local League uses \$5.20 to register and provide new voters with information on when, where, and how to vote; work with the Onondaga Citizens League to revive the local Fair Campaign Practices Committee and develop the Fact-Checkers Project; monitor our County Legislature, provide its members and the Board of Elections with information on the competing types of new voting machines, and advocate for paper ballot/ optical scan with a ballot marking device for special needs voters technology; publish the *Local Voter*, annual *Who's Who: a Guide to Elected Officials*, and election guides on candidates and constitutional amendments; sponsor our annual breakfast with legislators and general meetings. These and other local efforts depend on our dues, much volunteer time and donations.

The national League receives \$26.80 to provide a small Washington DC staff who report, advocate, and call to action on national issues such as voter registration verification; promote secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible voting machines; develop national publications; and work with international groups studying democratic elections and institutions; and publish the national *Voter*.

The state League uses \$18.00 to provide a small Albany staff to support similar state level efforts; assist local units such as ours through resourcing and training local League officers; and publish the *State Voter*. State League positions, actions, and efforts with other citizen groups appear in the media and help encourage reforms in state government.

Our current household membership of \$65 actually costs us money (\$67.20 to national and state). This leaves nothing to use locally. We try hard to make you \$50 or \$65 go as far as possible and greatly need and appreciate donations to support and increase our local efforts. **You can donate to the Syracuse Metro Area LWV by sending your check to: Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11866, Syracuse NY 13218.**

LOCAL PROGRAM – 2007 -2008

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK.

- Promote greater citizen participation in the political process by encouraging citizens to become knowledgeable about the issues and to actively lobby elected officials.
- Encourage participation in campaigns and running for office.
- Encourage individuals to exercise their right to vote.
- Continue the project to increase voter participation in low-turnout neighborhoods within the city of Syracuse.
- Continue the project to increase voter participation among youth.
- Establish action projects for members to accompany monthly themes at meetings.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT. Program item:

- Study and support, where appropriate, legislation which promotes proposals to modernize local government by sharing services among villages, towns, public schools, the city of Syracuse and County of Onondaga County.
- Support efforts to contain sprawl with planned growth throughout Onondaga County

SOCIAL POLICY. Program items:

- Monitor the settlement of the CFE lawsuit and its implications for upstate school districts and the Big 5 Districts.
- Promote educational efforts dealing with domestic violence and the Integrated Domestic Violence Court in Onondaga County.
- Promote opposition to the Death Penalty in support of the new LWVNY position.
- Promote measures to meet housing needs for citizens of all income levels, with incentives to localities as necessary.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Support efforts of the Onondaga Partnership to facilitate improvement projects for the lake and its watershed including the development of the inner harbor.

LOCAL ASPECTS OF STATEWIDE ISSUES/STUDIES

- Promote HAVA reforms; including elimination of the full face ballot; improved training for poll workers; advocacy for optical scan machines; and citizen education and training for replacement machines.
- Promote meaningful lobby reform.
- Promote and encourage further NYS budget process reform.
- Promote and encourage meaningful campaign finance reform.
- Promote the creation of an independent redistricting commission
- Promote the creation of an independent ethics commission.
- Promote meaningful reform of public authorities.
- Promote additional legislative rules reform

UPDATE - COMPACT FOR A NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE (NPV)

After lobbying and caucusing, delegates attending the NY State Convention in May 2007 enthusiastically adopted the non-recommended study: *Should NYS Join the Compact for a National Popular Vote?* By the time of the final vote at the Sunday morning plenary session there was only one “no” vote. The motion to adopt the study more than met the requirement of support from 3/5 of the voting delegates.

In June, the NPV State Study Committee began its research. The timetable approved by LWNYS board required that all study materials including consensus questions would be out to local Leagues by the end of January 2008. In fact, the NPV study guide is near completion.

While conducting their research, the NPV Study Committee heard from Leagues across the country that they had been told that they could/should not do the NPV study for a variety of reasons. This concerned the NPV study committee and on September 17th requested clarification and assurances from LWVUS. On October 25th, after four months of work, LWNYS was notified by our LWVUS liaison that LWNYS could not adopt a position on the NPV because a State cannot adopt a position on a National issue.

Many are distraught that LWVUS allowed us to spend precious resources on this endeavor. For four months, local Leagues have been holding education sessions, publishing articles, and educating themselves about the NPV compact. Leagues reported that the study was generating a lot of interest from current, as well as potential new members.

Background on NPV:

Under the U.S. Constitution, the states have exclusive and complete power to allocate their electoral votes, and may change their state laws concerning the awarding of their electoral votes at any time. Under the National Popular Vote bill, all of the state’s electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President – meaning 270 of 538. As of November 11th the bill has 366 legislative sponsors in 47 states. 43 bills have been introduced in all but 8 States and 10 Legislative Chambers Have Now Passed the Bill: Maryland became the first state to enact the National Popular Vote bill on April 10, 2007. The bill has also passed the Hawaii House (35-12) and the Hawaii Senate (19-4). The bill has passed the Colorado Senate and the Arkansas House. On May 2, 2007 The Illinois House of Representatives passed the National Popular Vote bill. On May 14th the California & the North Carolina Senates passed the National Popular Vote bill.

Clearly, the time is ripe to study this issue so that we know whether we support using a compact as a method for electing the President by National Popular Vote.

Action by the LWNYS State Board:

At the November 14, 2007 LWNYS State Board Meeting, the following motion was passed:

The League of Women Voters of New York State respectfully requests Leagues across the country to recommend the adoption (at the National Convention in 2008) of a National Study entitled:

“The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”

So that the LWVUS can build on the foundation of our work, we ask local Leagues to support the LWNYS recommendation that LWVUS should adopt this study at its 2008 National Convention in June.

In order to see why this idea merits further consideration go to: <http://www.lwvny.org/npv.html> or go to <http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/index.php>. For more information contact: Lori Dawson, LWV Saratoga, lddawson@skidmore.edu, 518-580-0547 or Carol Mellor LWV Hamptons, camellor@aol.com

PROJECT SUNLIGHT

The unveiling presentation given on Project Sunlight at a news conference on December 5th by Blair Horner of the Attorney General's office (formerly Executive Director of NYPIRG) was an exciting beginning to more transparency in state Government.

Browse the website at www.sunlightny.com and be sure to submit any questions or comments you may have to the AG's office by clicking on the Contact Us button in the top right hand corner of the page. The Attorney General is especially interested in League input as we are a prime target audience for this website.

This website will be extremely useful to high school Participation in Government Programs, your local Community Colleges or SUNY systems, your coalition members in other advocacy issues and anyone else interested in open Government. This website is for the novice and the expert alike.

Once again, the website is designed to receive your thoughts and comments. It is the plan of the AG's office to incorporate your ideas to further strengthen the website by the end of the calendar year.

The League was there at the inception of this idea and it was exciting to see the culmination of the hard work done by our colleague Blair Horner.

**Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS,
Legislative Director**



Court Intervenes to Enforce HAVA

On November 5, the DOJ filed a Motion with the Court to require that New York must replace all lever voting machines by September 2008 (first federal election) and must expand ballot marking devices (BMDs) for the presidential primary in February 2008. The crux of their argument is that New York must comply with the federal law, has already received one extension of the 2006 deadline and further, that while New York may impose higher standards for state elections, it has no right to impose higher standards for voting machines than are called for under the HAVA statute. The state cannot continue to operate federal elections utilizing voting systems which do not meet the requirements of the federal statute (accessibility, auditability). The Court set a date of December 6 for the arguments but on application of the

defendants, agreed to one postponement to December 20. All responses to the Motion had to be filed by December 14.

Advocates (NYVV, NYPIRG, LWVNYS) issued a press release deploring the position of the Justice Department on the grounds that the safeguards written in the NYS HAVA implementation statute would be endangered by the imposition of a 2008 deadline and would risk electoral chaos in a presidential election year. The NYS Attorney General will present the position of the state in the Court and the NYS Board of Elections will represent its various positions since each co-executive director is named as a defendant. The DOJ motion stated that the county election commissioners would be granted *Amicus* ("friend of the court") status to respond also.

The League, New Yorkers for Verified Voting, and NYPIRG decided to seek pro bono counsel to present our case as *Amici Curiae* ("friends of the court") before the Judge also. We were successful in obtaining Geri Krauss, esq., of Westchester County and NYC, who developed the arguments of our case in a very succinct and understandable brief (see the LWVNYS website) premised on 1) DREs are a failed technology which do not meet statutory or constitutional requirements ensuring that each vote will be properly counted and should not (therefore) be part of any remedial plan, and 2) to require HAVA compliance by the 2008 presidential election would impair the very rights HAVA is trying to protect: compliance should be phased in and continued use of lever machines permitted until 2009. The Court accepted the application of several Amicus briefs on behalf of other organizations and affected parties. The League was also joined in the Amicus by Citizen Action.

It is expected that the Court will act expeditiously, but the Judge has the option of appointing a Special Master to oversee the remedial action he proposes. Such a solution could prolong the resolution.

The NYS Board of Elections will be re-starting the interrupted certification process in January with a new independent testing authority, *Systest*. They were awarded the state contract in late November and will start simultaneous testing of both DREs and optical scanners with ballot markers. Under the best case scenario, testing will be completed in early spring. Sequoia has acquired the rights to market a new scanner which has been used in Canada and is determined to be more accessible. It is a single unit which produces its own paper ballot, as opposed to the Automark device which is a separate unit to be used with an optical scanner.

**Aimee Allaud,
LWVNYS Election Specialist**

CALENDAR

Thursday, January 17, 2008 - 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
LWV Office 2nd Floor Unity Mutual Conference Room

Program Planning Meeting
Lunch Provided

Friday, January 11, 2008

Last Day to Register for the
Presidential Primary

Tuesday, February 5, 2008
Polls open 12 - 9 PM

NYS Presidential Primary

Friday, March 7, 2007
Time and Location TBA

Annual Legislative Breakfast

Wednesday, April 2, 2008
Albany NY

Gloria Steinem Day for Fair Pay



Syracuse Metro League of Women Voters Survey

Please complete this form so that we can update our records and better meet member needs. Please return it to PO Box 11866, Syracuse NY 13218 by Jan. 17 so that we can use it to create our 2008-2009 membership Directory.

Date _____

Name _____ Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Address _____

E-mail: _____ (for League use only)

Please check any of the following items that apply:

I/We can attend meetings at noon _____ late afternoon _____ evening _____
(If more than one, indicate 1st, 2nd, 3rd preference.)

I/We would be interested in meetings on:

<input type="checkbox"/> further reform of lobbying laws	<input type="checkbox"/> consolidation of local government services
<input type="checkbox"/> further reform of the budget process	<input type="checkbox"/> local taxes and state mandates
<input type="checkbox"/> health care coverage	<input type="checkbox"/> environment/urban sprawl
<input type="checkbox"/> judicial selection process and reform	<input type="checkbox"/> other

Please remind me/us about upcoming meetings by e-mail _____ phone _____ don't remind _____

Our local League e-mails both information and action items.

Please e-mail both local information and action items _____ action items only _____ don't e-mail these items _____

I/We have interest in helping with local League events and projects.

I/We want to support the League but don't want to participate actively in League meetings or activities.

THANK YOU

**League of Women Voters
Membership Application**

8

*Democracy is not a spectator sport
It's efficient activism
It is a way to make your voice count
It is a way to make politics a process for the people*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail _____

____ *Individual Level....\$50*

____ *Household Level*...\$65*

*Please make check payable to:
Syracuse Metro Area League of Women Voters
P O Box 11866*

____ *Student Level **....\$25*

** Two members in the same household*

*** Full time student under 25*

Syracuse, NY 13218

____ *I would like to support the League with a donation.*

For more information call us at (315) 448-7199 or visit us at www.lwvsyr.org



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SYRACUSE METRO AREA
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**Non-Profit
Organization
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January 2008