



The LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

MARCH 2011

Syracuse Metro LWV
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 Web Sites:
 Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org

UPCOMING EVENTS
Friday, March 4th, 8:15 –9:30 AM
 Annual Legislative Breakfast
Sunday, March 27th, 4:00 PM
 Gerrymandering (Movie)
Wednesday, April 27th, 7:30 PM
 Redistricting Forum
Saturday, April 30th, 1:00 PM
 Gage House Tour
May 20-22
 LWWNY Convention

To receive your *Local Voter* by email, please contact us at league@lwvsyr.org. You will help the environment as well as save us printing and postage costs.
 Thank You!

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STAYING INFORMED ON THE ISSUES AND EVENTS
 Local: www.lwvsyr.org
 State: www.lwvny.org
 National: www.lwv.org



"AN EXCEPTIONALLY ENTERTAINING FILM."
 - Bilge Ebiri, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

"EVERY AMERICAN VOTER SHOULD SEE THIS."
 - Paul Constant, THE STRANGER

NOTHING WILL PRODUCE BAD HISTORY MORE DIRECTLY NOR BRUTALLY, THAN DRAWING A LINE.
 Thomas Pynchon - *Mason & Dixon*

OFFICIAL SELECTION

TREBUCA SEATTLE MAINE WOODSTOCK PHILADELPHIA HAWAII

GERRYMANDERING
 FROM THE PRODUCERS OF *FREAKONOMICS*

GREEN FILM COMPANY PRESENTS A JEFF REICHERT FILM "GERRYMANDERING" EDITOR SAM POLLARD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GARY GRIFFIN VISUAL EFFECTS BRIAN DAKES
 COMPOSER DAVID WINGO CO-PRODUCER SHARON JIMENEZ ASSOCIATE PRODUCER SUSAN BRYANT EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LARRY ABRAMSON D.J. MARTIN MITSUHIRO OIKAWA
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY BILL MUNDELL PRODUCED BY DAN O'MEARA CHRIS ROMANO WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY JEFF REICHERT

WWW.GERRYMANDERINGMOVIE.COM
 WWW.ENDGERRYMANDERING.COM

SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2011—4:00 PM
PALACE THEATRE—2348 JAMES STREET—SYRACUSE 13206
TICKETS: \$5.00 ADULTS- \$2.00 STUDENTS
A BRIEF QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD WILL FOLLOW
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—MORE INFORMATION PAGE 6

BOARD NOTES

THE LOCAL LEAGUE BOARD

Now is the time when we begin planning for our next League year. An important part of this process is the work of your Nominating Committee. The committee is looking for new and not so new members to serve on the Board.

Serving on the Board is a great opportunity to learn more about the League. As a Board member you define what the goals of the organization are to our members as well as the community at large.

Please give us a call at 448-7199 or email us at league@lwvsyr.org and learn what you can do to gain personally from the experience of serving on the Board.

WELCOME TO THE SYRACUSE LWV

Linda Alexander
Minch Lewis
Bill Magnarelli
Phyllis Rohrlich
Jill Sargent
C Beth Hansen*

Annamaria & Giancarlo Moneti*

* Former National League Members

PREPARING FOR OUR 92ND YEAR

In addition to electing new officers and directors for the coming year locally we need to review our Local Program (page 5), and our bylaws. Our Budget Committee has begun working on new numbers for 2011-2012. Any members interested in reviewing these areas are welcome to contact us at 448-7199.

2011

Naturalization Ceremonies

Volunteers are needed to fulfill our obligation to assist new citizens in registering to vote. Please contact Voter Service Director Joan Durant at 424-0040 or email at jduranty-wca@cnymail.com for more information and to volunteer.



Officers

President...	Susan Bush
Vice-President...	Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello
Secretary...	Karen Smith
Treasurer....	Donald MacLaughlin

Directors

Advocacy...	Mary Clare Hatch-Pennello
Fund-Raising...	Open
Membership...	Mary Lou Green
Program....	Rae Rohfeld
Publications/PR...	Joan Johnson
Voter Service...	Joan Durant

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director....	Rhonda Hungerford
Nominating Committee.....	Minna Buck
	Barbara Olum
	Mary Lou Green
	Joan Johnson
	Gwen Grant
Election Law Specialist....	Lenore Rapalski
Technical Support...	Roberta Millert

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 league@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.

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 league@lwvsyr.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Everyone,

We are busy getting things lined up for the spring, starting with our Annual Legislative Breakfast, March 4th. This is a great opportunity for people to meet and ask questions of their state legislators face to face. Find a friend and bring them to meet their representatives and get answers to their questions. The League was originally founded to help women become better informed voters. We expanded to include all voters and this occasion is one way we can accomplish this goal.

Please check out our calendar below and our website for movies, forums, tours and more. Again, you will get out what you put into it when you become an active member of the League. Hope to see you at breakfast on March 4th.

SUSAN BUSH



CALENDAR

Friday, March 4, 2011
NYS United Teachers Headquarters (NYSUT)
4983 Brittonfield Parkway, East Syracuse

Annual Legislative Breakfast

Sunday, March 27, 2011, 4:00 PM
Palace Theatre
2348 James St, Syracuse 13206

Gerrymandering Movie

Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 7:30 PM
University United Methodist Church
1085 E. Genesee St. Syracuse 13210



Redistricting Forum with the Sierra Club

Saturday, April 30, 2011 1:00 PM
Tour of the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home
210 East Genesee St, Fayetteville

May 20 –22, 2011
Desmond Inn—Albany

LWVNYS Convention

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

COMING IN JUNE OUR ANNUAL MEETING

LWVNY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORMING ETHICS LAWS

The League has long felt that the laws of New York State inadequately define, monitor or discipline unethical behavior in the public sector, both on the part of public officials and lobbyists. In reviewing various ethics and lobbying proposals, the League looked at three areas:

- 1). What activity is prohibited and what disclosures are required?
- 2). Are the penalties for violation sufficient to compel required disclosure and dissuade prohibited behavior?
- 3). Is the enforcement body sufficiently empowered and nonpartisan to punish violators efficiently and effectively?

It has been the League's position that a meaningful system of ethics and lobbying regulation must contain all three elements, for if any element is omitted the system will not function to achieve desired results.

Recommendation for additional prohibitions includes:

- Ban **pay to play** (the process by which lobbyists and individuals with governmental business gain influence with legislators through campaign contributions and offers of outside employment to legislators and/or their family members)
- Strengthen the ban on the personal use of campaign contributions in accordance with federal standards

Recommended disclosures include:

- Public on-line disclosure by legislators of all outside business interests, including disclosure of clients by lawyers and consultants
- Public on-line disclosures of the financial backgrounds of public officers, with redaction only of information that is clearly private or confidential

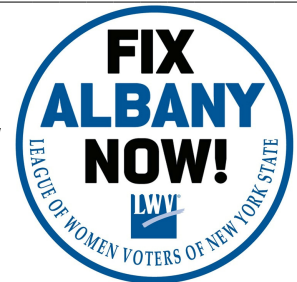
The League believes serious lobbying and ethics violations should be felonies.

The League believes the enforcement agency should have the following characteristics:

- At a minimum, jurisdiction over both the executive and legislative branches, unlike the split jurisdiction that currently exists
- Nonpartisan, chosen by a designating commission for appointing members. No one elected official would make a majority of appointments to the commission
- Independent and stable funding source, as opposed to relying on the legislature for support
- Power to conduct random compliance audits and investigate complaints through administrative action
- Power to levy increased civil penalties and to collect such penalties through administrative action
- Power to share information with other oversight and enforcement groups, including agencies that initiate criminal proceedings.

For more information on the League's efforts on reforming ethics laws visit www.lwvny.org.

"One out of every 11 legislators that have left office over the past 12 years (17 out of 185 since 1999) have left because of ethical misconduct or criminal charges" Dick Dadey, Executive Director, Citizens Union



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA 2010-2011 LOCAL ISSUES/POSITIONS

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 individuals to exercise their right to vote especially among under represented populations

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 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 Onondaga County
- Support efforts to contain sprawl with planned growth throughout Onondaga

SOCIAL POLICY

- Monitor the state school aid formula and its implications for upstate school districts and the Big 5 city 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

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Support efforts of the Onondaga Partnership to facilitate improvement projects for Onondaga Lake and its watershed

LOCAL SUPPORT FOR STATEWIDE ISSUES/STUDIES

- Promote improved reforms for HAVA: including improved training for poll workers, adequate staffing at polling places, the use of split shifts for election workers and citizen education and training for replacement machines
- Promote improved election processes which extend and encourage voting, including no-excuse absentee balloting and Election Day registration
- 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
- Promote and encourage meaningful property tax reform.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND ANY CHANGES TO THE LOCAL PROGRAM, PLEASE LET US KNOW— SEND YOUR SUGGESTIONS IN WRITING TO SYRACUSE METRO LWV, PO BOX 11186, SYRACUSE NY 13218 OR EMAIL league@lwvsyr.org

UPDATE REDISTRICTING

Legislation to reform the redistricting process in New York State has been reintroduced in both the Senate and Assembly. S2543 (Michael Granaris, Queens) and A03432 (Hakeem Jeffries, Brooklyn) are the sponsors. We need to keep the pressure on Assembly Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Skelos to move the bills forward. Governor Cuomo has also gone on record in support of redistricting reform.

Former New York City Mayor Ed Koch's organization, "New York Uprising," continues to advocate for redistricting reform. Last fall he presented incumbent legislators as well as individuals running to replace them with a pledge to support a nonpartisan commission to redraw the lines in New York State. The pledge was signed by 138 state legislators. On Mayor Koch's "heroes" list are area legislators—Senators Valesky, and DeFrancisco along with Assembly members Kolb, Miller and Roberts. On his "enemies" list are Assembly members Barclay and Magnarelli.

Mayor Koch recently told reporters ***"I believe most will remain heroes and stay true to their word, a few won't, for them I said I'd visit their districts crying 'liar, liar pants on fire' and hope they don't think I'm not up to the task."***

Please note our Power Point Presentation is available to any organization who would like to learn more about Redistricting in New York State. Call us at 448-7199 for more information.

Have you checked out Capitol Beat?

The League of Women Voters of NYS is pleased to announce the return of "Capitol Beat." This informative and entertaining column, written by the LWVNY Legislative Director Barbara Bartoletti, will contain legislative updates about League issues, as well as political gossip. We will also outline the budget and of course, will chronicle the always-lively end of session. We have created a blog page for "Capitol Beat" on our League website, www.lwvny.org and we welcome your comments posted on this blog page.



AND THE BEAT GOES ON.....

GERRYMANDERING—THE MOVIE

Right now, across the country, our two major political parties are gearing up for a once-a-decade war whose winner will control Congress for the next ten years and possibly more. There will be battles in every state, and each will be kept carefully hidden from the prying eyes of average voters who only become more disenchanted with their government with each meaningless election.

Democrats and Republicans collude to keep these skirmishes private so that they can maintain total control over the ultimate political weapon: the ability to directly determine the outcome of elections. Why bother stuffing ballots when they can just draw districts? For the first time, ***Gerrymandering*** exposes the most effective form of manipulating elections short of outright fraud. Now that the 2010 Census is finished, will you know where your district went?

The movie stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gray Davis, Howard Dean, Ed Rollins and other politicians.

It is an interesting documentary that explains not only what gerrymandering is, but why it is a problem. It gives great examples and shows why people need to be more aware.

The movie has been screened across the country. The Syracuse League of Women Voters is pleased to sponsor the first showing locally.



We hope you will join us on Sunday, March 27th at the Palace Theatre to view the movie.

THE CASE FOR REDISTRICTING REFORM IN NEW YORK STATE WHO DECIDES?

Laura Ladd Bierman, LWVNY Executive Director
Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNY, Legislative Director

Wednesday, April 27, 2011—7:30 PM
University United Methodist Church
1085 East Genesee Street, Syracuse 13210

Sponsored by the Syracuse Metropolitan LWV
And
The Sierra Club

NEWS AND NOTES FROM LWVNY

TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES IN NYS

These uncertain times demand the unwavering commitment of Leaguers to insist on government that serves the common good. This commitment is especially imperative when faced with the NYS budget. In a climate of spending cuts and tax caps, will the essential services of public transit be preserved? Will crumbling highways and bridges be fixed? Will the funds raised by gasoline tax be insulated from raids for the general fund?

Governor Cuomo, in his State of the State message, did mention transportation as part of the "NY Cleaner, Greener Communities Program." Competitive grants would encourage communities across the state to develop regional sustainable growth strategies. Grants will be awarded to the best and most innovative comprehensive regional plans that coordinate sustainability efforts in housing, transportation, emissions control, energy efficiency and create jobs, while taking into account the cumulative impact of prior development.

There may not be a lot of "wiggle room" in Cuomo's proposal, but there is encouragement here to sustain the League's efforts to address transportation as a key element in community planning. Local Leagues can ask elected officials, local transportation authorities, and NYS Department of Transportation planners: Will you help our community develop plans that can compete for Governor Cuomo's sustainability grants?

Let's take every opportunity to comment on the NYS budget, and speak clearly and loudly to preserve NYS commitment to maintain and improve our transportation infrastructure and operations.

High Speed Rail in NYS ? – Federal Outlook Uncertain -

Action in the House of Representatives on January 5th changed the rules by which Federal transportation funds are distributed. No longer are state assured that the funding levels required by the Transportation Act will be distributed for transportation. Under previous rules, the House is prevented from taking up any legislation that would result in lower funding levels for transportation than those guaranteed in the authorization law. The new rules package for the 112th Congress eliminated that firewall, thereby putting transportation projects at risk of losing funding as part of budget-cutting.

Gladys Gifford
LWVNY Issue Specialist for Transportation

UPDATE ON SMART GROWTH

In 2009, under our position on sprawl and regional planning, The League of Women Voters of New York State joined the coalition called Empire State Future, "a coming together of many civic improvement organizations, planning groups, and individuals interested in advancing the principle of 'smart growth' and turning them into reality in cities, towns and villages all across the Empire State." As part of Empire State Future, the League has been effective in lobbying for state legislation to address the costs of sprawl.

For many years smart growth legislation has come before the state legislature, only to be ignored or watered down and vetoed by the governor. Finally in 2010, with strong lobbying support from Empire State Future, the legislature passed the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act. It guides the State in making more sustainable and strategic infrastructure investments. This legislation requires State agencies to create Smart Growth Advisory Committees that would evaluate public infrastructure investments based on the Smart Growth criteria and will require such investment to meet the criteria to the extent practicable. Governor Patterson signed the bill at the end of August. We are proud of the role the League has played in the passage of this bill.

There is more good news for smart growth in 2011. Governor Cuomo has continued the 2007 executive order that established the Smart Growth Cabinet. That cabinet can play an important role in the implementation of the Smart Growth public Infrastructure Policy Act. It appears Governor Cuomo recognizes the important role that smart growth can play in our quality of life and in our efforts to mitigate climate change.

Ruth Bonn
Anne Huberman
LWVNY Issue Specialists for Urban Sprawl

Sunshine Week March 13th—19th

For information on Transparency in Government visit:

www.openbooknewyork.com
www.sunlightny.com
www.seethroughny.net

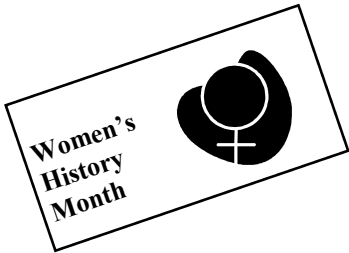




Syracuse Metropolitan
 League of Women Voters
 PO Box 11866
 Syracuse NY 13218

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March 2011



**League of Women Voters
 Membership Application**
*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....\$55*

___ *Household Level*....\$80*

___ *Student Level **....\$25*

*Please make check payable to:
 Syracuse Metro Area League of Women Voters
 P O Box 11866
 Syracuse, NY 13218*

* *Two members in the same household*

** *Full time student under 25*

___ *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