



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY

BULLETIN

APRIL 2012



Increasing Voter Participation

Monday, April 30th, 7pm

Clifton Park/Halfmoon Library

OUR MISSION

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.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity.

This means:

There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Saratoga County.

On Monday, April 30th at the Clifton Park/Halfmoon Library, the LWV of Saratoga County will present a program on Increasing Voter Participation. New York State has one of the lowest voter participation rates in the nation. We will present a program that was produced by the LWV of New York State and the LWNYS Education Foundation.

This program covers many of the reasons why we believe New York State has such a low ranking for voter participation. We then will address some of the reforms that have been enacted in other states and discuss whether these reforms would be useful to implement in NYS. We will also review how Saratoga County measures up to the rest of the state.

We will look at three major categories:

- 1. Voter registration modernization**
- 2. Early voting**
- 3. Better ballot design**

Annual Breakfast Meeting
 June 2nd, Saturday, 9am
 Courtyard Marriott , Saratoga Springs, 9am

Speaker: Tracey Brooks, Esq.

President and CEO of Family Planning Advocates

Political Influences on Women's Healthcare

- A discussion of what's in the federal *Affordable Care Act (ACA)*, and what it does and does not do for women.
- New York is in the process of designing our state health insurance exchange that in 2014 will be a marketplace where small business and individuals can purchase health insurance. Learn how this works.
- LWV has positions on Health Care and on Reproductive Choice which are available in *LWVUS Impact on Issues 2010-2012*, or at www.lwv.org.

Questions: www.lwvsaratoga.org or call 728-0237. Reserve on page 7.



**League of Women Voters
of Saratoga County (NY-639)**

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From the President—

Shortly after the attacks of September 11th, American flags appeared on the majority of cars, homes, and businesses in this country. My 87 year-old mother found this to be a curious phenomenon. She contemplated why people chose that symbol to express their reaction to the terrorist attacks, and then began to wonder about the correlation between flag waving and voting. So when she encountered people in parking lots with

flags on their cars, she would approach them and ask, “Did you vote in the last election?” To her dismay, most people replied “no.” She became deeply troubled by that answer so the next batch of people who said they didn’t vote were subject to this re-tort: “You can best preserve our American way of life by actively participating in our democratic processes. What good is a democracy if citizens don’t vote?” It’s likely that they did not appreciate her little parking lot lecture, but most were polite. After all, she had a rather non-threatening countenance. But her spunk and passion for participatory government were a force to be reckoned with all the same.

And now we know that New York State ranks 47 out of 50 states in voter turnout! The NYS League has been studying this phenomenon and has compiled effective strategies used in other states for New York State to consider. Your League will be presenting this information on Monday, April 30 at 7pm at the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library. We’re hoping you’ll join us, to be on the cutting edge of strategies for voter participation. And as we gear up for the November election, please let us know if you’d be willing to help register voters at various Saratoga County venues this summer.

At the Gideon Putnam fund-raiser on March 10th, Mother Jones told us that some women back in her day considered her anti-suffrage because she said women didn’t need the vote to change things, they needed their voice! An attendee agreed and added that as US citizens we must ALL raise our voices if we believe change is needed. Sometimes waiting for the opportunity to vote takes too long. Stay vigilant on the issues you care about. As has been said, democracy is not a spectator sport.

Onward, *Pat*

Welcome New Member

Carol Schupp Star

OBSERVER CORPS March Meeting Report

Tom Wood, Chair of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, held the first of his planned quarterly **Community Forums** this March. These opportunities for public input were called for by attendees at last year's hearing on the budget. About 10 speakers addressed the issues important to them. These issues included concerns over the state's unfunded mandates, saving the landfill, Maplewood Manor's drain on the county finances and the importance of preserving quality services. Barb Thomas complimented the Chair for opening an interactive web site and holding public forums. She reminded the supervisors that the landfill was developed without public input and that public input might have helped the county avoid some mistakes regarding the landfill. She urged the supervisors to explore all options for the nursing home, including home care alternatives for some patients.

League observers attended a number of committee meetings in March. Welcome news at the **Personnel and Insurance Committee** was a discussion of developments for an evaluation process for county employees. The League is encouraged that this committee has embarked on an effort to put an evaluation system in place for the county's supervisory employees. A few years ago, our League conducted a study of county government, and members were distressed to learn that the supervisors did not evaluate their department heads. At the **Veterans' Committee** meeting action was taken to name the 9P bridge the Saratoga County Memorial Bridge. At the **Building and Grounds Committee meeting**, on 3/12, discussion focused on the two glider clubs in the county which are seeking county and FAA approval to use a runway for their gliders when their clubs will be actively trying to glide. These ideas will need further study by the county, FAA and DEC before approval can be finalized.

At the March **Public Safety** meeting a privatization issue arose concerning Empire EMS, which has a contract with Greenfield Township starting April 1. A profit-making company cannot link into the county dispatch service (at the Sheriff's Dept.) without paying for that link as well as radios, airwaves, insurance, and other services normally paid for by taxpayers. Acting chair Wormuth said care in developing a policy was needed and a subcommittee would be set up to develop protocol for use of county airwaves.

Several League members attended the **Public Health Committee**. The League had not been allowed

to attend any of the subcommittee meetings. The subcommittee had met with a number of people as it reviewed what should be asked of a consultant to be hired to look at the operations and options for Maplewood Manor, the county's nursing home. Although the subcommittee was declared an advisory group (and therefore not subject to the Open Meetings Law), the subcommittee issued a RFP (Request For Proposal), reviewed the responses and recommended to the Public Health Committee that the county hire Harris Beach as consultants, for no more than \$50,000, to conduct a study of options regarding Maplewood Manor. The Public Health Committee passed a resolution to do this.

A second issue of interest to the League members attending was the need for the county to find new housing for its Office of Mental Health. Saratoga Hospital expects to use Cramer House, a current Mental Health site, for its own programs and the county Mental Health programs will need to relocate. Currently county mental health services are provided at 3 sites and a single site for the department may be desirable. The issue was referred by the Public Health Committee to the Building and Grounds Committee.

The **Law and Finance Committee** acted on the recommendations of the other committees. There was discussion at this meeting of an InterGovernmental Transfer (IGT) of funds which had given the county adequate funds to pay for the costs of Maplewood Manor without the losses that had been predicted for 2011. Law & Finance Committee Chair Grattidge announced that following the April Board meeting, there would be a **Quarterly Budget Report so that the supervisors and the public can learn how the county is faring in its efforts to save money in 2012.**

Contributors to this report were Margie Van Meter, Margot Ammon, Helen Crawshaw, Peter Neenan, Pat Reed

Observers are always needed. Call Margie VanMeter at 587-1545 to sign up to learn more about County Government and shedding light on the people's business. We'll find a time convenient to you for just a few hours a month.

MOTHER JONES TELLS US WHAT'S WHAT!

What a Saturday morning! Good food, beautiful setting, great company and a superb performance by Claire Nolan as Mother Jones! It was wonderful to see so many of our new members, as well as our friends from surrounding Leagues. Claire Nolan's Mother Jones was the feisty agitator for children's and workers' rights that made her "the most dangerous woman in America". Words of the actual Mother Jones that still ring true today: "Injustice boils in men's hearts as does steel in the cauldron, ready to pour forth, white hot, in the fullness of time;" "Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living;" "Whatever your fight, don't be ladylike;" "Who is responsible for this appalling child slavery? Everyone!"



Mother Jones makes the point, **SPEAK UP FOR JUSTICE!**



Above: Willis White presented Mother Jones with a Birthday Book he made.



Joining us from Amsterdam, 3 teen Suffrage video producers. L to R: Courtney Rosser, Claire Martuscello, Victoria Vogel. See story next page.



President Patricia Nugent welcomed the assembled audience and introduced Mother Jones and the CSPAN honorees. (left)



Right: Janice Burns shows her winning raffle basket to Mother Jones.



LWVSC Board, a group of "Dangerous Women"!



More than 70 people joined the festivities.

C-SPAN VIDEO WINNERS

Local Suffrage Video Wins Honorable Mention

Thanks to the generosity of some LWV supporters, three students were able to attend our Famous Person Fundraiser, featuring the indomitable Mother Jones. Claire Martuscello, Courtney Rosser, and Victoria Vogel from Amsterdam High School joined us as the girls who conceptualized and created an eight-minute video about the 19th amendment in response to a C-SPAN Student Cam Contest. They interviewed several people, including our League president Patricia Nugent (since there is no League yet in Montgomery County) about the impact of women's suffrage and related issues today.

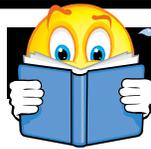
There were over 1200 entries nationwide, and theirs was one of only 75 in the nation to receive an Honorable Mention. This winning video is now posted on the C-SPAN website (as well as our League's website) and was publicly announced on national television during C-SPAN's *Washington Journal* call-in program. It's also posted on YouTube. Check it out!

We're hoping that they will start a League of their own someday. Congratulations to the students, and thank you to their sponsors. We must continue to mentor the next generation of activists!

REDISTRICTING PROGRESS?

Early in the morning of March 15, the State Legislature passed a constitutional amendment and accompanying statute reforming the redistricting process in New York. A joint statement issued by the League and Citizens Union made it clear that the process for achieving this reform left much to be desired. It would have also been the easier path for the organizations to reject a less than perfect reform and lines that can still be justifiably criticized as overtly partisan. However, we believe that this constitutional amendment is a substantial improvement over the status quo and that this is a unique opportunity to reform a process at the center of political power in Albany.

Have we escaped the "spilled coffee" districts of yesteryear?



LWV BOOK CLUB

On Tuesday, April 3rd we will begin to examine our last group of issues: Natural Resources. In May we will review our three local positions, so that they are fresh in our minds when we consider readopting them at the Annual Meeting. We will continue with Natural Resources in June.

At the March Book Club the following people presented LWVUS International Relations positions: Barb Thomas - United Nations; Louise Golub - Trade; Mary Lou Classen- US Relations with Developing Countries; Janice Burns - Arms Control; Donna Dardaris - Military Policy and Defense Spending. Very briefly, we believe in international cooperation, free trade, aid to developing countries, arms control and reduction, the use of diplomacy and only as a very last resort, military action.

On April 3rd we will meet at the Saratoga Springs Library. On May 1st we will meet at the home of Terry Lowenthal, 12 Mystic Lane, Saratoga Springs. Join us. We continue to have great discussions and you will learn more about your League. Meeting times are 1:00 pm.

Everyone is welcome, and you can email Francine at aerodger@aol.com or call her at 371-8032 for more information.

Fun, Learning and More at This Year's LWVUS CONVENTION!

For laughter, we have the Capitol Steps. For silver palates, we have a dine-around in one of the greatest cities in the world. For your intellectual spa treatment, we have Eleanor Clift, political reporter, television pundit and author, who also is a contributing editor for Newsweek magazine. She is a regular panelist on the nationally syndicated show The McLaughlin Group, which she has compared to "a televised food fight." This is going to be the best Convention ever!

You don't have to be an official delegate to attend. For more information, visit www.lwv.org.

In Memoriam

LWV supporter, Willis White, passed away suddenly on Thursday, March 15th, 2012. Our condolences to his family and friends. He will be missed.

NO BUGS ON US!

On March 14, LWV Saratoga conducted the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority's election for a tenant representative on the SSHA's board. The LWV tweaked SSHA's procedures to establish a clear chain of custody for the voted ballots.

Janice Burns and Ann Kril met at Stonequist Apartments before the start of voting, inspected the ballot boxes to be sure they were empty, locked them, then brought one of the locked boxes to Karen Klotz and Lee Nelson at the Ford Center at Jefferson Terrace. Janice and Ann conducted the voting at Stonequist. At both sites tenants signed in next to their names on a list of tenants. At the close of voting Lee and Karen brought their ballot box back to Stonequist, where boxes were unlocked and counted by all four LWV members. There were absentee votes that we also counted at Stonequist after we determined that residents had not voted in person. The number of ballots matched the number of signatures on the lists. Some tenants stayed to observe the counting for a race that was won by only one vote!

INTERAGENCY DAY

By Terry Lowenthal

Every year the Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council organizes an Interagency Awareness Day. Originally, it was conceived as a vehicle for local agencies to come together and learn about each other's missions and how they could interact most effectively. It has morphed into an extensive meeting of, what seems to be, a very comprehensive list of "help" agencies primarily, but not solely, from Saratoga County. When Barb Thomas asked me to help her staff a table for the League on that day, I agreed---out of friendship and willingness to help the League. What I found was a large number of organizations that could interact in a very supportive way with each other, but also be of benefit to individuals who might not even know the questions they need to ask to find the right resources for themselves. And, all of it was presented this year in The Dance Center at Skidmore.

And, this is of importance to you, why?

Because, sooner or later, everyone out there needs different kinds of help. And.....here it all is in one convenient place presented by a group of people

Continued on page 7

VOTER SERVICES

Candidate Forum on May 10, 2012 in S.S.H.S. Library.

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County will be holding a School Board Candidates' Event for Saratoga Springs on Thursday, **May 10, 2012, 7:00 to 9:00 PM. All candidates for School Board** in Saratoga Springs are invited. The event will be held in the **Saratoga Springs High School Library**, 1 Blue Streak Boulevard, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, and will be open to all members of the public and the media.

This event will feature a round table discussion with each candidate speaking to the voters and answering their questions directly.

Online Voter Guide for Saratoga Springs School Board:

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County will be producing an online Voter Guide for the 2012 Board of Education elections for the Saratoga Springs City School District. We will be posting questions and answers online so voters can get to know the candidates. This should be up and running by the end of the first week in May.

We will hold this event and produce the online guide whether the three seats available are contested or not, so that the community can hear and understand each candidate's views on issues.

School Budget and Board Member Election is May 15 in all school districts.

Thanks To Our Contributors

Thanks to the Marchers, Organizers and Hell Raisers who contributed above the ticket price for our Mother Jones fundraising event:

**Aimee Allaud
Julia Bauwin
Janice Burns
Mary Disanto-Rose
Mary Jane Ellis
Millie Green
Dennis Finneran
Sherryl Moore**

**Barbara Murphy
Linda Neenan
Pat Nugent
Bob & Josie Pascuillo
Barbara Stamas
Barb Thomas
Diane Whitburn**

**Contribution to LWVSC:
Mary Lou Classen**

Impediments to Voting

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

We saw two big wins in our war against voter suppression laws. One, in a case brought by the LWVWI, the Dane County, Wisconsin, 9th Circuit Court announced a permanent injunction against implementation of the nation's most restrictive voter photo ID law. The state will appeal this decision.

Two, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) denied Texas preclearance of its voter photo ID law. The state has officially appealed this decision, including a challenge of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, in the U.S. District Court in DC. The LWVTX is planning to intervene in this case.

The step back came after a hard fought battle by LWVPA and coalition members. The Pennsylvania legislature passed a voter photo ID bill in March. The Governor signed it into law immediately. We expect lawsuits to be filed in the near future.

Interagency Day Continued

who are knowledgeable, friendly and only too willing to discuss their services with anybody who wanders by and asks questions. Although primarily geared to inter-agency communications, it is open to the public.....and it's free. You just need to watch for the, admittedly scarce, public announcements for the time and place. *Continued on top of next column*

What kinds of help/services are represented?

- In home care agencies offering help from a few hours for a temporary need to long term care for the aged and the disabled.
- Youth services and child-centered organizations of a wide variety.
- Health services ranging from Alzheimer's disease to AIDS to cancer to Planned Parenthood to services for the hearing impaired and the blind.
- Senior services of a wide reaching assortment.
- Educational services.

Saratoga County agencies of diverse sorts were represented.

And, lest you think it's all health related: Saratoga Spring's Public library had a table as did the National Park Service, the Wilton Preserve, the Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach and the Legal Aid Society and, of course, the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County.

The day was interesting, informative and truly rewarding....we recruited five potential members. In the manner of conferences of all kinds, they were giving away "goodies" of many different kinds. So, next year when Barb asks you to help her staff the table, be sure to say yes! You'll help spread the word about the League, you may see a lot of your old friends, and you'll help yourself by collecting a lot of important resources that will surely be of benefit to you down the line! Didn't get the call for help? Attend anyway. The information you gain will surely be worth it.

Check out Lady Gaga's tribute to Alice Paul on You Tube called *Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage*.

ANNUAL MEETING RESERVATION Please Return by MAY 24

Name _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

How many members _____ x \$20=\$ _____

How many non-members _____ x \$25=\$ _____

Enclosed \$ _____

Questions: www.lwvsaratoga.org or 518-728-0237

*Please make check payable to LWVSC
Mail your check to: Patricia Reed,
12 Clubhouse Drive, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 3, Tues., Book Club, SSPL, 1pm

April 12, Tues., Library Budget and Trustee Vote, SSPL, 9am-9pm

April 24, Tues., Republican Presidential Primary

April 30, Monday, Increasing Voter Turnout, CP/HM Library, 7pm

May 1, Tues., Book Club, home of Terry Lowenthal, 12 Mystic Lane, SS, 1pm

May 10, Thursday, SS School Board Forum, SSSS Library, 7pm

May 15, Tues., School Bd. & Budget vote, 6am-9pm All NYS School Districts

June 2, Saturday, Breakfast Buffet and Annual Meeting, Courtyard Marriott, SS, 9am, \$20

June 5, Tuesday, Book Club and luncheon, at the home of Francine Rodger, 34 Hemlock Drive, C P.

June 8-12, LWVUS Convention, Washington, DC



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY

P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

APRIL 2012

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\$25 Graduation Gift Idea! - LWV Saratoga has a gift membership package for HS and College students. It includes a gift card from you, a one year membership, voter registration, absentee ballot application, helpful brochures, access to voter information. Contact Pattie Garrett at pattiegarrett@aol.com.

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THE BULLETIN IS FREE WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP

YES! I Would like to join the League. 2012 dues enclosed. \$50. Individual \$75 Family \$25 Student How did you hear of the League?

Please send more information. Non-members may subscribe to the BULLETIN for \$15., enclosed. In addition, I would like to contribute \$ Send a gift membership to:

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE ZIP PHONE (home) (work)
E-MAIL