



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

# BULLETIN

November 2011

## 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.

## Say No! to Hydrofracking

### A High Price to Pay:

### Organizing Against Hydrofracking

**Wednesday, November 16 at 7pm—9pm**

Saratoga Springs Public Library

*If you oppose fracking, help us lobby against it.*

*We'll have postcards for you to send to the legislature and info on how to submit your comments to DEC. by December 12th.*

League members and the community are invited to an educational session on the environmental dangers of hydrofracking, and why the League of Women Voters is opposed to this method. Attendees will be able to make their concerns known to their legislators through a postcard campaign. The timing of this session is critical as your comments on the DEC draft hydrofracking regulations need to be received by DEC by December 1. (DEC prefers to receive your comments via the electronic form on their website. We'll have a copy.)



### Let's Party!

**Tuesday, December 6th, 5:30 to 7:30pm**

**The Ripe Tomato Rt.9 & 9P, Malta**

Take the time to celebrate the season with other League members at The Ripe Tomato. \$16/pp for choice of salmon Florentine, pot roast, penne al fresco, or chicken picatta. Includes non-alcoholic beverage, cheese & crackers. Cash bar. **RSVP** with a check made out to LWV Saratoga and mailed to Diane Whitburn, 11 North Hill Drive, Ballston Lake, NY 12019, by December 1.

**See reservation coupon page 7.**

**MLK DAY Jan 16th • Volunteers Needed! • See page 4**

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**From the President –**

Our League seems like a gigantic iceberg to me. Most of us only see the top part, but the vast expanse that is unseen below the surface is amazing. There are so many programs being run by this incredible group of volunteers that it is important for me to always ask our board members, “Who else can help with this project?” Otherwise, we are at risk of burning ourselves out. That’s where your volunteering makes an immeasurable difference. Thank you to those who do, and please get involved if you don’t. There is a niche for you – from youth programs to voter registration to environmental protection.

And there is no time to waste. At one of our “book club” meetings, Terry said she remembers hearing some politician talking about building a fence on the Mexican border years ago. She remembers laughing and saying to her husband, “Are they crazy? Do they know how long that border is? That will NEVER happen – we’d never have the resources!” The rest is history, as they say. Preposterous things are happening across this country, including the obstruction of voting rights. Albert Einstein said, “The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil but by those who watch them without doing anything.” Your League cannot and will not be silent.

If you don’t know about the dangers of hydrofracking, which could be happening someday in your backyard, come to our program on November 16th. If you are concerned about the survival of Medicare and the US Postal Service, join the study of the privatization of government services. If you want to hang with some progressive, like-minded people, come to our holiday party on December 6th. If you are concerned about the growing trend to restrict voting rights, come to our program on January 19<sup>th</sup>. And if you have a knack for fundraising, please come forward!

A final note: Our award-winning Voter Services team did a spectacular job this election season, under the leadership of Ann Kril. Yet sadly, that did not stop the perpetuation of some misconceptions about our organization by some local political leaders and bloggers. As members, we are all ambassadors to the community about the League’s mission and strategies. It is important for all of us to proudly acknowledge that LWV is a POLITICAL organization – we do studies, take positions, and lobby for those positions – across party lines. Our having a political yet nonpartisan agenda can be confusing in this day of such sweeping polarized partisan activity. Yet, it would stop the gridlock in Washington if our representatives were able to evaluate the benefits and liabilities of each issue apart from their party affiliation. LWV is a model to be replicated, not feared. Don’t let others make you timid about our political agenda – stand up for it!

And VOTE on November 8<sup>th</sup>! Don’t ever take that right for granted. It is a hard-won freedom.

Onward, **Pat**

## ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Our League is one of many participating in the LWVUS study of the role of the Federal government in education. On September 27, League members discussed the funding and equity aspect of education, especially as it affects disadvantaged students. On October 27, League members discussed common core standards and assessments and what the federal role in identifying and monitoring them should be.

Our board will review the consensus report on November 15 and forward it to LWVUS. The national committee will tabulate the results, put together a position paper, and release the new position after its March board meeting.

***Patricia Nugent: our LWV president, opened the first meeting with these words***

“I only have a few minutes but wanted to share part of a paper I delivered at a conference a few years back on the role of public education in a democracy. This short excerpt helps contextualize why the League should be raising this question.

“Since public education was not mentioned in the United States Constitution, it fell to individual states to institute. However, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 cited the imperative of public purpose, stating, ‘...Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.’ According to David Mathews, a former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, public education was considered central to maintaining a democratic form of government in America. A strong new republic was dependent on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that would lead to effective civic engagement. The populace had to be converted from royal subjects to participating citizens, from the governed to the self-governing.

“Mathews makes a compelling case that public education not only has the capacity to instill democratic principles, it has the potential to level the economic playing field and to advance social justice. Yet there is substantial evidence that ideological, political and financial support for public schools is diminishing on the national, state and local levels. At the same time, demands on our public schools are increasing dramatically. Expensive mandates are added each year, standardized testing is more rigorous, and students’ readiness and ability to learn is deeply compromised by personal, home and social issues.”

## STUDY OF PRIVATIZATION OF GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

***By Clifford Ammon, Chair***

From its earliest birth pangs, an inherent necessity for a flourishing democracy has always been a free flowing exchange of information between the governed and their government. Of course, attempts to thwart knowledge of their actions by various governmental entities have arisen. The League of Women Voters and others continuously advocate for more open government. In recent years, Congress has responded by passing “Sunshine Laws” and Freedom of Information Laws to better address openness in federal activities.

Such laws do not cover state and local governments. However, many states have passed laws to try to keep up with that national thrust toward openness.

In the current world-wide movement toward privatization, the question of openness can become an issue. Unless compelled by precise state laws and specific contract provisions, private corporations, engaged to execute public functions and paid by public, taxpayer dollars, can, and often do, claim proprietary rights to their actions, costs, methods, and results. Lack of accountability can result.

Are you comfortable with a private, for-profit prison system? Do you want a French international corporation supplying your water? Can private corporations do a better job of building roads and bridges? Are you looking forward to Wall Street managing your Social Security? Do companies making a profit fighting our wars make sense to you?

If this subject interests you, join us for the LWVUS Privatization of Governmental Services Study Committee. We’ll look at the history and background, legal issues, current regulations, and case studies of privatization efforts. Is there a link between corporate hegemony, governmental malfunction, privatization, climate change, energy, water, food, and environment?

Our meeting will be November 11, at 1pm, at 238 Nelson in Saratoga Springs. Consensus is due next May. Contact Cliff Ammon at 587-4204 or [cammon2@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cammon2@nycap.rr.com).

## Compare Where Candidates Stand on the Issues

Submitted by Chris Alexander & Francine Rodger

Starting in October, our league has for the second year released an electronic voter guide to help voters learn about the candidates who will be on their ballots in November. The 2011 Saratoga County Voter Guide is available online through our website at [www.lwvsaratoga.org](http://www.lwvsaratoga.org) and through the League's Vote 411 website at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org).

The candidates for the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Saratoga Springs and Mechanicville were each asked in mid-August to provide background information and to respond online to five questions. Information collected from candidates has been made available on Vote 411, together with basic information about judicial candidates for the Saratoga County Surrogate Court and the New York State Supreme Court for the 4th Judicial District.

Vote 411 allows voters to see a side-by-side comparison of candidates and their positions on the issues. Voters can "build a ballot" of their choices for each race, and print or email these choices to help them remember which candidates they would like to vote for on November 8th. A printable (PDF) version of the voter guide also is available on our [lwvsaratoga.org](http://lwvsaratoga.org) website.

For the first time this year, the League has partnered with The Spotlight Newspapers to produce a printed voter guide that was distributed as a special supplement in the Spotlight. The Spotlight provided hundreds of additional copies of the voter guide supplement to us for distribution to libraries and public places in Saratoga County.

We thank Ann Kril and all of the members of the Voter Services' Committee for their help in producing this important resource for voters.

### ATTENTION ABSENTEE VOTERS

**The Saratoga County Board of Elections has extended hours to facilitate absentee voters on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9am to 7pm; and on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> from 9am to noon.**

## NOVEMBER FORUMS

**November 1, Tuesday**, Town of Wilton Forum. Town/County Supervisor, Town Clerk, Town justice, town Councilman, Highway Supt. Trinity United Methodist Church, 155 Ballard Rd, Gansevoort, 7pm.

**November 2, Wednesday**, Town of Charlton Forum, Town/County Supervisor, Town Clerk, Town Councilman, Highway Supt. Charlton Community Center, 784 Charlton Rd., 7pm.

### ONLINE CANDIDATE GUIDE

Go to your website

[www.lwvsaratoga.org](http://www.lwvsaratoga.org)

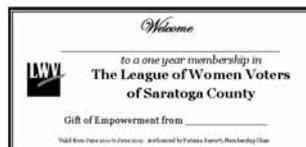
## MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

The Martin Luther King Day planning committee has asked the LWV to serve lunch to the volunteers at this year's MLK Day of Service. Call Denny Finneran at 583-1478 if you can help. (The lunches will be donated by local restaurants). This year's theme will be Human Dignity, and Patricia Nugent will be one of the speakers on this topic. Program at 2pm.

## A GIFT OF EMPOWERMENT

This holiday season give a gift that matters—a membership to the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County. With the membership recipients will receive a *Bulletin* a minimum of 6 times a year with updates of League activities and notification of educational meetings and social events. They will also be eligible to participate in our studies.

There aren't many gifts you can get for \$50 that would have such a significant impact – on the recipient and on the issues. There is a sense of pride that accompanies League membership and... this gift will multiply our voices about the issues we all care about.



The recipient will get a certificate and information about the League. S/he must be a resident of Saratoga County to qualify. To give the

*Gift of Empowerment*, please complete the form on page 8. It's worth every penny.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

## THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

By Helen Crawshaw

The Capital District Alliance for Universal Healthcare sponsored, with the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County as one of several cosponsors, a forum on "The Future of Our Healthcare: Medicare for All versus a Private Insurance Based System" on September 25, at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

The keynote speaker was David Ansell, MD, MPH, currently the Chief Medical Officer at Rush University Medical Center. At the start of his medical practice, he trained at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. What he saw there reinforced his social ideals framed by the '60s and made him an advocate for change. He recently wrote about his experiences at Cook County Hospital in "COUNTY: Life, Death and Politics at Chicago's Public Hospital." Dr. Ansell outlined the measures taken, strikes of the physicians included, to improve care at the Cook County Hospital. He encouraged us to keep up the good fight for healthcare for all through a single-payer system. We must believe that a new healthcare system is possible.

Panelists -- Michael Kaplan, MD, from Massachusetts; Betty Keller, MD, from Vermont, and Mark Dunlea, JD, from New York State -- followed, discussing the current healthcare situation in each of those states. Dr. Betty Keller spoke about Vermont's steps toward universal health care. Every community, even the very small ones, was visited by advocates. Dr. Michael Kaplan, from Lee, MA, talked about his state with the highest percentage of insured people and with the highest medical costs. The largest group of those with health insurance are the underinsured. Insurance will pay for 60 - 70% of their medical expense, but the remainder, co-pays, etc., is unaffordable for most people. So the effect is the same as having no insurance, and bankruptcy can occur even among the insured. Mark Dunlea has many connections in New York State government, and he sounds optimistic.

After a young woman talked about her medical needs and how she was trying to cope without insurance, Andy Coates, MD, moderator of the event, said this was just the kind of story the public needs to hear. The doctors there had good advice for her.

Betty Gallagher and Helen Crawshaw, members of the county LWV and Single Payer New York, were

inspired by what they heard. Ideas worth exploring: a program in our area with Andrew Coates, MD, sponsored by our League with Single Payer; a questionnaire for candidates that includes asking for their stand on health care; divestment of investments in healthcare insurance; visiting our state senators and representative to ask for their support of single-payer healthcare; a Power Point presentation that members of the single-payer committee could use with groups.



## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE CONTINUES

Our Recruitment Fair on October 6th at the Malta Community Center was full of enthusiasm. We look forward to seeing those who visited at a future event. But our recruitment efforts don't stop here. They continue with you. *Simply ask!* Ask someone who believes in the mission of the organization to join the League. Under Pattie Garrett's leadership, we also are committed to more outreach at community events - setting up our booth where potential members are. So, please let Pattie know of any events in your community where we might be able to get our message out and bring more members in. Also, please consider giving a membership in our League as a holiday or other gift. There is power in numbers. Help your League grow. Stand with us!

## LEADERSPARK

**Know a High School Sophomore or Junior? Want to be a Co-Leader?**

**LeaderSpark** is a project of the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, based on a national model developed by League members in Ohio. **LeaderSpark** is based on **Awareness, Practice and Application**. Its curriculum is designed to enhance the leadership skills of youth through high quality, interactive skill building workshops to produce strong emerging leaders. It utilizes a practical, proven leadership curriculum, specially designed sequenced topics, youth-driven discussions, and hands-on interactive activities. Student applications will be on the website in December.

**Kristin Overholt is looking for someone to be her co-leader** in this great program. Call her at 257-0647 if you want to discuss the possibility.

## LWV Gives Peace A Chance



*Excerpt from  
Lori Dawson's Address at  
the Opening of Peace Week  
in Saratoga Springs*

“The League of Women Voters has a long history of advocating for issues of peace, nonviolence and equality. We encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase under-

standing of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. Much of what follows is taken directly from Impact on Issues – which is our guide to public policy positions. You can find it on the LWVUS web site. It contains our positions as well as the history behind those positions.

“A commitment to international cooperation as an essential path to world peace is deeply rooted in League history. Founded just after WWI, the League rejected a policy of isolationism as “neither wise nor possible for this nation.” As WWII drew to a close, the League helped to educate people about the agreements setting up the United Nations and we are proud to be one of the nongovernmental organizations first affiliated with the UN, a relationship that continues to this day.

“The LWV believes that arms control measures are essential to reduce the risk for war and increase global stability. We believe that the US government should seek to protect its interests at home and abroad through the use of nonmilitary measures, including diplomacy, mediation and multilateral cooperation. The League believes that military force should be used as a tool of last resort.

“We believe that the United States should vigorously pursue arms-control negotiations in order to ensure that all nations reduce and eventually eliminate their stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons. And lastly, the League believes that defense spending should be examined in the same way as spending for other national needs. Now, more than ever, our political leaders should assess the impact of US military spending on the nation's economy and on the government's ability to meet social and environmental needs.

“From its inception, the League has worked for equal rights and social reforms. In the 1960's with the nation's unrest over civil rights, the League began to build a foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing. In the 1990's, a concern for violence prevention spurred a new League position in favor of strong support for common-sense measures to control gun violence.

“ And in June 2010, delegates at the the League of Women Voters national convention in Atlanta, GA expanded our equality of opportunity position to include support for marriage equality. Our local league took the lead on marriage equality by taking the proposal to the delegates at Convention. And once the position passed, we joined League members across NY to lobby our representatives in favor of the marriage equality bill approved in New York State this year. We are proud to have been part of this historic law.”

We hope that you will join us all in our vital work. Thank you.



## LWV BOOK CLUB

**On November 1<sup>st</sup>**, we will meet at the Saratoga Springs Public Library and continue the Social Policy Issues by looking at policies on Violence Prevention, Gun Control, Death Penalty and Urban Policy. Please note a time change: We will meet at **2 PM**.

**On Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**, we will meet at 4 pm at the The Ripe Tomato, corner of Rt.9 & 9P, just prior to the the Holiday Party. Our topics will conclude with the remaining positions under Social Policy: Income Assistance, Support Services, Housing Supply, Child Care and Early Intervention for Children at Risk.

In 2012, we will continue with Representative Government, International Relations, and the Natural Resources positions.

Anyone is welcome, and you can email Francine at [aerodger@aol.com](mailto:aerodger@aol.com) or call her at 371-8032 for more information.

**When you see our LWV in the news**, please clip the article and mail it (with the paper's name and date) to Marian Potter, 173 Saratoga Blvd, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.



**Candidates for Saratoga Springs City Council**

**L to R: Finance: Michele Madigan vs. Kenneth Ivins; Public Safety: Richard Wirth vs. Chris Mathiesen; Mayor: Scott Johnson vs. Brent Wilkes.**

The Saratoga Springs forum held October 19th at Saratoga Springs High School, found passion and contention surrounding the issues of budgeting, over-time, leadership, and the charter.

Our candidate event at Malta on 10/12/11 was successful, with about 40 people in attendance. All

candidates for Town/County Supervisor and for Town Council participated. Our new moderator, Donna Dardaris, did a super job, as did A.C. Riley at the Halfmoon/Clifton Park Forum, where over 125 people attended.

**TAKE ME TO VOTE! is Underway**

*By Barbara Thomas*

Mary Ratzer, chair of our TAKE ME TO VOTE! project, reports that she is still contacting and following up with teachers to encourage them to participate. Once again, Mary has drawn on her network of school librarians (through BOCES) to get information and materials to the county's fifth grade teachers. Despite the cutbacks in aides available to teachers and librarians, and the fact that it is a local election year, there is interest in the program.

So far teachers at Corinth, Dorothy Nolan (Saratoga Springs); Orenda (Shenendehowa); Schuylerville; and Woods Road (Ballston Spa) have indicated that they will participate. To date, Mary has distributed about 2,000 student packets.

The goals of TAKE ME TO VOTE! are two-fold. The first is to encourage voter turnout on Election Day. The second is to prepare children for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Fifth Grade Students ask an adult to take them to the polls on Election Day. Adults are encouraged to vote, and to interest their children in their rights as citizens. Fifth graders have participated in this program in Saratoga County since 2004.

Every student who goes to the polls with a parent/adult and shows his/her certificate to a poll worker earns a sticker. Teachers provide each fifth grader who participates with a button that says, "Take me to Vote!...Again!"

Watch for articles and pictures about TMTV! in your local papers right around Election Day.

**VOTE NOVEMBER 8TH**

**THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS**

- Adirondack Trust
- Chamber of Southern Saratoga County
- State Farm
- The Spotlight News
- The Saratogian
- Citizens for Wilton
- Charlton Seniors

**JOIN US on Dec. 6! LET'S PARTY**

**YES!** I Would like to join the party  
\$16. each for \_\_\_\_Attendees =\$\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Make your check to: LWV of Saratoga  
Mail by Dec. 1st to: Diane Whitburn  
11 North Hill Drive, Ballston Lake,  
NY 12019** **See page 1**

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1, Tuesday, Town of Wilton Forum. Trinity United Methodist Church, 155 Ballard Rd, Gansevoort, 7pm.

November 1, Tuesday, Book Club 2pm, See page 6

November 2, Wednesday, Town of Charlton Forum, Charlton Community Center, 784 Charlton Rd., 7pm.

November 16, Wednesday, Say No to Fracking!, SSPL, 7pm

December 6, Book Club, Page 6

December 6, Wednesday, HOLIDAY PARTY!, The Ripe Tomato, Malta, 5:30 to 7:30, \$16. See pages 1 & 7

Monday, January 16, MLK Day See page 4



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY

P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2011

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IF LWV DOESN'T SPEAK UP, WHO WILL?

GET INVOLVED ! GIVE 2 HOURS A MONTH TO THE OBSERVER CORP Contact Margie VanMeter, 587-1545

VOTE NOVEMBER 8TH

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THE BULLETIN IS FREE WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- YES! I Would like to join the League.
2011 -2012 dues enclosed. \$50. Individual \$75 Family \$20 Student
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 Gift Membership given by

Mail to: Membership, League of Women Voters P.O. Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866