



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2010

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.

REDISTRICTING

Who should draw the lines?

Thursday, October 21
Potluck at 6:00; Program: 7:00PM
Community Room, SS Public Library
Speaker: Blair Horner

Voters should choose their representatives, rather than having government representatives choose their voters. When voting districts are formed for the purpose of protecting incumbent politicians and political parties the effect of your vote is significantly reduced.

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LET'S CELEBRATE!

November 12th is Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Birthday!

Join us on her birthday to celebrate

- 90 Years of Women's Suffrage
- 90 Years of the League of Women Voters!

At the Saratoga Music Hall (3rd floor of City Hall)

Watch for your Invitation to arrive in the mail.

CANDIDATE FORUMS

Hugh Farley vs. Susan Savage
B.K. Keramati vs. James Tedisco -
Roy McDonald vs. Joanne Yepsen -
Christopher Gibson vs. Scott Murphy -
Bob Reilly vs. Jennifer Whalen -
Jennifer Jensen Bergen vs. Robert Ryback

Details on page 4.



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

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www.lwvsaratoga.org

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From the President—

Our League is making it easy for you to be an **informed voter**. We have an incredible line up of **Candidate Forums** that range from Family Court Judge to Congress. See the listing on page 3 and then attend, or help out at, the ones that affect you. If you happen to miss one check our website for a digital version.

Coming on our website this October will be a Voters' Guide to this November's races. Emails have been sent to all the candidates asking them for pictures, biographical information and for their response to selected questions. We've been working with members of the surrounding Leagues, since so many of the races cross county lines, but the leaders of the project are our own Christine Alexander and Francine Rodger. Make sure the candidates you support get their information posted.

The results of the census will be coming out in 2011, and then it will be up to the legislature and the governor elected this November to **redraw the lines for our congressional and legislative districts**. That makes the elections this fall doubly important, because the unfair way we usually gerrymander districts practically guarantees the outcome of all the elections for the next ten years. We need to change the process for drawing the lines. Learn more about the problems and the solutions at our October 21st event, **Who Should Draw the Lines?**

By the time this newsletter reaches you our fall event for **new and prospective members**, the circus themed, *Hurrah for the League!* will have taken place. Look for pictures from the event on our website and Facebook pages, and in the November Bulletin. But please don't stop asking your friends and acquaintances to join us.

The more members we have the more activities we can engage in and the more clout we have as we lobby.

And, as you know, **League membership benefits members**. It provides an opportunity to interact with incredibly talented and interesting people. It develops skills and contacts that are transferable to other arenas, it gives you the power to improve your community and to know that you have made a difference.

So do your friends a favor – ASK them to join the LWV.

Barb

REDISTRICTING—Who should draw the lines?

**Thursday, October 21—
Potluck at 6:00; Program at 7
Community Room, SSPL - Speaker: Blair Horner**

Continued from page 1

In New York State, voting districts have become so convoluted that they have been compared to the spots on a Rorschach Test.

The League of Women Voters is joined by the New York State Public Interest Research Group in its active promotion of good government by non-partisan redistricting. Blair Horner, Legislative Director of NYPIRG will join us in Saratoga and explain why NYPIRG is pushing for the creation of an independent redistricting commission, ensuring that legislative districts are redrawn to best represent New Yorkers.

This is a critical issue that we are facing immediately. Currently, each house in the legislature draws its own districts once every decade. The legislators that you elect this November will either continue this corrupt practice by drawing boundaries that protect them in their office, or heed the voices of reform. Please join us, learn more about this important issue and let your voice be heard.



Blair Horner (above) is legislative director for the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), a non-partisan, research and advocacy organization. In his 30 years of work with NYPIRG, he has overseen community organizing activities and directed statewide issue campaigns. He has lobbied on a wide range of issues, including political reform, government openness and accountability, health care and financial services. He has written scores of reports examining issues including campaign financing practices, political ethics, bank fees, auto insurance, health care, tobacco and lead poisoning, and higher education funding.

From 2007 to early 2008, Horner was a Special Advisor on Policy and Public Integrity to the New York State Attorney General. Among his responsibilities was the creation of the "Project Sunlight" website (www.sunlightny.com),
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APPORTIONMENT—Statement of Position

As announced by the State Board, January 1965

The League of Women Voters of New York State support the following standards for Establishing legislative districts that conform to federal constitutional requirements for Equality:

- 1) Districts should follow existing political subdivisional boundaries, especially County lines, as far as practicable. Counties are recognizable political units that define some communities of interest. As a unit of party organization, they also affect representation through their function in nominating candidates.
- 2) Districts should be of contiguous territory with the smallest perimeter possible. Compactness limits opportunities for gerrymandering within political subdivisions, particularly cities.
- 3) The constitution should prescribe the limits within which the size of the Legislature can vary at each redistricting. The size should be flexible enough to allow the other standards to be used in conjunction with population equity.
- 4) Each Senate and Assembly district should be represented by one legislator with a single vote. Single member districts improve the quality of representation by fixing responsibility. Weighted voting is opposed because it distorts representation..
- 5) Districts should be based on census statistics.
- 6) Districting standards should be established in the state constitution.

As announced by the State Board, 1966

The constitution should provide for an alternative districting procedure if the responsible agency fails to draw the lines within the limits specified.

Whoever is responsible for districting should utilize an impartial commission for Drawing the lines.

CANDIDATE FORUMS—

**44th NYS Senate District -
Hugh Farley vs. Susan Savage
110th NYS Assembly District -
B.K. Keramati vs. James Tedisco**

October 12th, Tuesday, 7 pm, Maple Avenue Middle School Auditorium, 515 Maple Ave, Saratoga Springs, (Rt 9 north of town)

**43rd NYS Senate-
Roy McDonald vs. Joanne Yepsen
Candidates for the County Family Court
Judges**

Jennifer Jensen Bergan vs. Robert Rybak
October 13th, Wednesday, 7 pm, Malta Community Center, 1 Bayberry Drive, Malta

**20th US Congressional District-
Christopher Gibson vs. Scott Murphy**
October 19th, Tuesday, 7 pm, Queensbury High School Auditorium, (Aviation Road west of Northway Exit 19). Co-sponsored with LWV Warren County and American Association of University Women.

**109th NYS Assembly District -
Bob Reilly vs. Jennifer Whalen**
October 21st, Thursday, 7:30 am breakfast (\$15), Century House, 997 New Loudon Road (Rte. 9), Latham, Co-sponsored with Colonie and Southern Saratoga Chambers of Commerce and LWV Albany
*Pre register @ www.coloniechamber.org
or call 518-785-6995*

**109th NYS Assembly District -
Bob Reilly vs. Jennifer Whalen**
**Candidates for the County Family Court Judges
Jennifer Jensen Bergan vs. Robert Rybak**
October 25th, Monday, 6:45pm, Clifton Park - Half-moon Library, 475 Moe Road, Clifton Park, Co-sponsored with Colonie and Southern Saratoga Chambers of Commerce and LWV Albany

Watch our website www.lwvsaratoga.org for updates and last minute changes

Thanks to our contributors

To LWVSC

Betty Gallagher
Dee Sarno
Pattie Garrett

To LWVNYEF

Susan Burton
Helen Tomb



Welcome New Members!

Andrea & Joseph Kulin

Julia Stokes

I was a first-time Election Inspector!

By Barb Thomas

The primary was the first time that the State Board of Elections has officially allowed election inspectors to work half days. This was something that the LWV has lobbied for for years. So when the law finally changed I signed up.

Note: The Saratoga County Board is not anxious to do this because it creates more paperwork for them. But they will do it if they need inspectors, particularly if you find someone to split the shift with. The advantage is that you are not asked to work a 15+ hour day, so you are not too tired to be pleasant, helpful and accurate.

I worked at a polling site with many districts, and found that the new voting system worked very well. We had a few people who let their privacy sleeve jam the machine, but this was easily remedied, by just pulling it out and resubmitting. We did have some people who commented that they preferred the lever machine because “it made them feel more powerful to throw the big red lever.” They liked the more physical way of voting, but they also liked the fact that the **PAPER BALLOTS ARE RECOUNT-ABLE.**



CONSOLIDATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Remember that study of Government Consolidation we spent so much time and energy on last year? And the year before? Well, even though our local committee – ably chaired by Francine Rodger and Margie Van Meter- would have liked it if the questions had been clearer, statewide we learned a lot and we did reach consensus. Here it is:

LWVNY POSITION ON CONSOLIDATION OF GOVERNMENTAL UNITS AND SHARING OF MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

Adopted July 15, 2010

The League of Women Voters of New York State (League) supports the efficient and effective operation of government. Consolidation¹ of governmental units and the sharing of major governmental services may be a way of promoting the efficient and effective operation of government. In achieving this goal, the League supports a cooperative and transparent process, in which citizens have sufficient and timely information with which to make informed decisions about proposed actions, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review. Administrative and fiscal efficiency should be included in the criteria by which local governments consider whether to consolidate or share major services.

The League supports a system of state-funded grants to local governments to study the feasibility of the consolidation of governmental units or sharing of governmental services. In determining whether to

support a consolidation/shared services proposal at the local level, as a way of making government more efficient and effective, local Leagues must consider both the adequacy of the process and the likely effects of the proposal's implementation.

In determining whether to support a consolidation/ shared services proposal as a way of making government more efficient and effective, local Leagues should apply the following criteria. While it is not necessary that each standard be met, the League recognizes that these standards represent potential benefits of consolidation, leading to more efficient and effective government:

- Will the proposal result in projected cost savings and a positive effect on taxes over the long term;
- Will the proposal either result in an increased quality and/or efficiency of services or, at a minimum, maintain services at existing levels;
- Will the proposal fairly address disparities in employee contracts;
- Will the proposal result in increased social and economic justice;
- Will the proposal result in a reduction in the number of governmental entities?

¹ As used in this position, consolidation refers to both the process of consolidation and the process of dissolution.

State Board Report—State League News July 2010

Blair Horner—continued from page 3

which allows New Yorkers to simultaneously search governmental databases – campaign contributions, lobbying, contracts, legislation, among others.

Horner's comments are widely reported by the media. He has been interviewed on the Today show, World News Tonight, on A&E's Investigative Reports, and profiled in the New York Times. His opinion pieces have been published in the Buffalo News, New York Daily News, Newsday and other New York dailies. He is a regularly commentator on WAMC public radio and its affiliates.

Horner's numerous awards, include those from AARP, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters and the New York City Asthma Partnership. In Fall of 1999, Empire State Reports magazine named Horner as one of the 25 most influential New Yorkers in the last 25 years.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE YOUR BULLETIN?

Your League is exploring the many options available through technology. The Bulletin is posted on our website, (lwvsaratoga.org) we can send it by E-mail to your computer, or we will continue to send it by snail mail. All are available—your preference. Let us know by sending an e-mail, or mailing the Bulletin:

E-mail: cammon2@nycap.rr.com

Mail to: PO Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

COMMUNICATION—WHAT WE LEARNED NEW CHOICES

Saratoga LWV members received a crash course in the need for modern methods to reach a new generation potential members as well as ways to more efficiently and effectively communicate League research and action to current members at the program, *Communications: New Choices*, Sept. 23rd at the Saratoga Springs Library.

Patricia Nugent, 2nd Vice-President for Public Relations, set the stage for the program's presenters, League members Christine Alexander and Beth Della Rocco, both of whom have experience in computer generated communications.

Nugent cited the work of Robert D. Putnam, author of "Bowling Alone: The collapse and Revival of American Community" Putnam used the LWV as one of a host of well-established, well-respected organizations whose membership has not kept pace with the population growth during the last half of the 20th Century. A variety of social, economic and technological changes, according to Putnam, including such diverse items as television, two-career families, suburban sprawl and changes in values has meant that fewer of us find it a priority in our lives to participate in civic groups like the LWV or even a picnic with friends. Putnam points out that this is not the first time in our country's history that such a dramatic shift has occurred. That is the late 19th Century and early 20th century technological, economic and social changes produced results not unlike being experienced today.

Alexander and DellaRocco concentrated on the impact that such modern electronic innovations such as E-mailing, blogs, the internet, text messaging, and the facebook have had in the ways individuals and organizations communicate within their circle of friends and members, but also outwardly to other in promoting projects, fund-raising, and building membership.

They noted that the Pew Research Center for People and the Press has reported high percentages of adults use the internet to research information to make their political choices and report that 54% of the teens use text messaging as a way to communicate with friends.

Alexander and DellaRocco recommend that the LWV assess the ways members interact with today's technology and that we use this knowledge to



Denny Finneran and Lori Dawson of our League, encourage attendees to join the LWV and learn how the League lobbys for peace and disarmament.

PEACE FAIR Our League was one of over 50 participants, with a booth, at the 2010 Peace Fair at the Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church, on Sept 19th. Other sponsors were the Quakers, Saratoga Peace Alliance, and the Unitarian Universalists.

The vision of the fair was toward an increased personal and societal commitment to use peaceful means to resolve conflict and increased effort to prevent conflicts through justice, environmental stewardship, fair trade and decreased militarization. A better understanding and tolerance between individuals, communities and societies will help build and sustain a culture of peace. There was peaceful conversation, a gong bath, fun and games, a meditation labyrinth, singing, and good food.

shape the way we deliver our message. The technology is readily available and the benefits would include ways to better reach potential members, inform our members and the general public with our studies and programs in a more timely manner. There is a possible cost savings compared to the present ways in which we communicate.

The LWV Board will continue to discuss the ways in which we communicate and have the responsibility to make needed changes.

Right now The Bulletin may be read on-line and you can get a more detailed account of the program: *Communication: New Choices* by going to the website: www.LWVSaratoga.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

REGISTRATION FORM (also available online)

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE
in association with United Nations Department of Public Information
(additional co-sponsors to be named at a later date)

INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A BRIEFING ON...

MICROFINANCE:

From Struggle for Survival to Planning for the Future

Tuesday, November 9, 2010 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
at the Church Center of the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, NYC
(across the street from the UN Headquarters)

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Day Phone: () _____ E-Mail: _____

COST/PAYMENT INFORMATION

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<i>Optional</i> Tour of the UN	\$ 16	\$ _____
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	<i>Briefing Program</i>		
	<i>\$55 League Members or Members of Sponsoring Organizations</i>		
	<i>\$70 Non-Member</i>	<i>\$45 Students</i>	\$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Optional Lunch Reservations will be made (at your own expense on that day) for 12:00 noon
____ Etho’s Restaurant (Greek), 905 1st Ave (at 51st), entrees \$15-30
OR ____ Cibo Restaurant (Italian), 767 2nd Ave (at 41st), entrees \$15-30

____ I would like to become an individual sponsor for \$100 (FREE BRIEFING AND TOUR INCLUDED) \$ _____
____ I cannot attend but would like to provide a donation in the amount of \$ _____

____ I would consider joining the bus (from Saratoga and Albany only) at cost of \$30-50; we will contact you with exact amount depending on number who sign up and reservation and payment can be made at that time.

My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed (make payable to LWVNY) OR
Please charge my: MasterCard VISA American Express Discover
Card Holder’s Name: _____ Signature: _____
Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

SPACE IS LIMITED, SO RESERVE EARLY
REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS October 22, 2010

PLEASE RETURN TO: United Nations Briefings/LWVNY
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Fax: 518-465-0812 (Credit Card Registrations ONLY)
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 518-465-4162 or E-MAIL: Stephanie@lwvny.org
www.lwvny.org

COMING EVENTS

See page 4 for details on Forum Events with Candidates in your voting districts.

Oct 21, Thursday, SSPL 7pm
Redistricting: Who should draw the lines?

October 22, Deadline for UN Day Registration. See page 7

November 2, Tuesday, 6am—9pm
ELECTION DAY—VOTE



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY
P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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GET INVOLVED! GIVE 2 HOURS A MONTH TO THE OBSERVER CORP
Contact Denny Finneran at 583-1478

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- YES!** I Would like to join the League. 2010 – 2011 dues enclosed.
 \$50 Individual \$75 Household \$25 Student

Please send more information

In addition, I would like to contribute \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (home) _____ (other) _____

E-MAIL _____

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