

Spring 2008
Issue #6

Special Interest
Articles:

- Panel on health care issues draws a crowd.
- Obituary of Irving A. Landa
- Blair Horner at LWV Albany April 30 meeting - Bethlehem Public Library.

Individual Highlights:

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The Voter



League of Women Voters, Rensselaer County Ny

PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR 69TH ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2008 6:00-9:00 PM

KELLAS MEETING ROOM, THE EMMA WILLARD SCHOOL

285 PAWLING AVENUE (RT. 66), TROY, NY 12180

Visitor parking - Enter via the Elmgrove Gate and follow the circle around to the parking lot behind the gymnasium; you may also enter through the main Pawling Avenue Gate, turn to the right and park in the lot at the end of the road. Guests may also be dropped off at the entrance at the circle inside the Elmgrove Gate.

Signs will direct you to Kellas

6:00 PM SOCIAL TIME 6:15 PM DINNER

7:15 PM GUEST SPEAKER NANCY IANNUCCI, Emma Willard Archivist and Librarian

“Eunice Burton Armstrong: A life devoted to social and political activism” The LWV - Emma Willard Connection

8:00 PM ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND ELECTIONS

DINNER WILL INCLUDE SALAD, ROLLS AND BUTTER, ENTREE AND SIDE DISHES, DESSERT COFFEE/TEA/ BOTTLED WATER

COST: \$20 (all inclusive)

RESERVATIONS ARE DUE BY FRIDAY, MAY 16

Members of the Board

Co-President Marcia P. Easterling 273-5412 measterling@nycap.rr.com *Bpard Meeting Agenda/Mail, Maintain Calendar, Board List, New Member Orientation*

Co-President Gail K. DeMarco 434-2413 gdemarco@nycap.rr.com *Public Spokesperson, Receive/Distribute State and National Mailings, Arts Center Mail and Phone Calls, New Member Orientation*

Vice President Mary Muller 274-0846 mullers@mac.com *"Voter" editor*

Secretary Margaret Story 272-1566 Mrgstry@aol.com *Minutes/Correspondence*

Treasurer Irene Wynnyczuk 279-9789 iwynn@nycap.rr.com *Treasurer, Budget Committee, Co-Chair Membership/Finance Drive, Co-Chair THA Elections*

Director Diane Bell 273-5172 dbell1@nycap.rr.com *Web site, Voter Services, Local Voter Guides and Local Section NYS Voter Guide, General Meeting Program Coordinator*

Director Anne E. Burton 283-3499 aburton@usoncology.com *Member Interest Data Base, Member Involvement, Public Relations*

Director George W. O'Connor 272-6512 gandt54@verizon.net *Membership records Management, Prospective Member Mailings, Member Directory/Mailing Labels, Chair: Troy Charter Review, Co-Chair THA Elections*

Director Donna Packard-Mahoney 283-6423 dmahoney@nycap.rr.com *Action, Issues/Advocacy*

Director Fred D. Stein 663-5230 fstein@nycap.rr.com *Natural Resources, Rensselaer Co. government, Financing Education*

Letter from the Co-Presidents

Kudos are in order for Donna Packard-Mahoney, Anne Burton and Margaret Story for their hard work in planning and organizing the very successful Health Forum on March 8. We are also grateful to Dave Mahoney for his expertise in providing AV support.

Irene Wynnyczuk, Diane Bell and Gail DeMarco have met with the Troy Housing Authority, and the League will moderate its August election. The League will also be moderating several school board election candidate forums. (For details, see the LWVRC calendar in this issue.)

A most interesting development is the endorsement of the New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty initiative by current and former members of New York's law enforcement community. and former prosecutors, police, correctional officers, and other law enforcement personnel. They agreed that New York is better off without the death penalty. Anne Burton is set to speak to DA Richard McNally this month about the petition which is probably to be addressed by the State once the budget process is completed.

A good piece of news is that Jamie Felitte, Promotions Manager of the Troy Farmers Market, has invited the League to register voters at the Market on a regular basis. He has offered us a table on a monthly basis.

Finally, planning for the May annual meeting, is underway. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 21. Our speaker will be Nancy Iannucci, archivist at Emma Willard School. She will be talking about the Emma Willard alumna who was one of the co-founders of the League of Women Voters. You will also see the beautifully renovated dining facilities at the school. Thanks to Jack Easterling for making it possible for us to hold our annual meeting at the school.

Candidate Forums

May 12 East Greenbush Community Library for candidates for East Greenbush School Board. 7 pm. Moderator: Lorrie Smith,
Timer: David Wolcott, Coordinator and question taker: Anne Burton, 283-3499

May 12 Troy School Board Candidates Forum, 7 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium between the Middle School, 1976 Burdett Ave. and High School, 1952 Burdett Ave Moderator: Judy Armstrong,
Timer: George O'Connor, Question taker: Margaret Story,
Coordinator: Anne Burton 283-3499

HELP!!

We need your help in programming our League meetings that are open to the general membership and/or the public for the upcoming year, 2008-2009. Let us know of your preferences for the time of day, day of the week, any guest speakers and topics that you'd like to hear (see local program) and locations that are good for you. Contact us via our website: lwvrc.org, or call Anne Burton at 283-3499 and leave a message. We hope to see you soon!

WE NEED MONITORS FOR: TROY HOUSING AUTHORITY TENANT COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2008

Every two years the League conducts and monitors the election of two tenants as commissioners to the Troy Housing Authority. Their Bylaws set the date of the election, and the nominating petition process. Petitions are due back by June 16 at which time we will know if there are more than two candidates required for a contested election. At this time we understand that there are more than two tenants circulating petitions. The Board of Elections supplies the machines, and League monitors supervise the election.

We need to be at almost all the various housing locations – about nine. We operate on two shifts — **11:30 am – 4:00 pm** and **3:45 – 8:00 pm** -- with one or two monitors at each shift.

It is important for us to have all our volunteers in place before June. So if you are on our e-mail list, we will send out a message in May that you can reply to. If you do not have e-mail, you can sign up at our Annual Meeting on May 21st, or call Irene Wynnyczuk at 279-9789.

This is a source of some income for us, so we appreciate and thank you for your participation.

Hello Members!

As you know, one of the core efforts of League is Voter Registration and the Rensselaer County League has a proud history in providing this valuable and important community service. Currently, the Rensselaer County League is seeking some volunteers who can give a couple of hours of their time to work the Voter Registration table at the Farmer's Market on Saturday April 26th from 12-2pm and on Saturday May 31 (time yet to be determined). If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either Marcia Easterling at 273-5416 or Gail DeMarco (until mid-May) at 434-2413.

Donna Packard-Mahoney
LWVRC Action Chair

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR JULY 1, 2008 – JUNE 30, 2009

Budget Committee:

Mary Ann Cleaves, Steve Muller, Margaret Story, Irene Wynnyczuk

The Budget Committee continues to see membership retention and training as goals to be incorporated into the proposed budget.

BUDGET NOTES

INCOME

- We are projecting dues for the number of members we had as of 2/1/08. That is -- 56 Individual memberships at \$45. and 16 Household memberships at \$70. – a total of 88 members. We also have 11 Nationally Recruited members who pay dues to the LWV US and one Honorary member for a total of 100.
- We propose keeping our dues at the current levels this year despite the fact that we expect that there may be an increase in the National **per member payment (PMP)** to be voted on at the Convention in June. This would bring our combined State and National annual PMP to \$46. for Individual members and \$69. for Household members.
- **Member Contributions:** We will still count on the support of members who are able to add an additional contribution with their dues to support our other programs. We will make a fall solicitation for tax deductible contributions to the NYS Education Foundation.
- **Non-Member Contributions:** We again ask our members to forward names of friends or acquaintances who might be interested in supporting our activities with a contribution or by becoming a member. We give the option of tax deductible contributions – (these funds are deposited with the NYS Education Foundation for use by the LWV of Rensselaer County for our educational projects).
- **Election Night Reporting:** This has been a steady source of income for us for many years, and we hope this doesn't change any time soon. We were not asked to cover the Presidential Primary in February, however, we expect to be covering the Presidential election in November 2008. Still we can only make a somewhat educated guess as to what the income will be.
- **Troy Housing Authority (THA) Elections:** Every other year we are asked to conduct and monitor the election of two Tenant Commissioners to the THA. We will do this in August 2008 provided that there is a contested election. In order to be conservative, we have only budgeted \$300. income which is the amount we will receive if there is not a contested election which has been the case in the last two elections.

EXPENDITURES

- **Board Tools / Supplies / Training:** We have provided some funds in this account for any supplies or technical training that might be necessary.
- **General Meetings:** We have budgeted for fees for the use of meeting locations, and some funds for subsidizing food costs for membership meetings.
- **PMP – National:** Assuming the increase, we will be paying \$28. for 56 Individual members and \$42. for 16 Household memberships.
- **PMP – NYS:** We will be paying \$18. for 56 Individual members and \$27. for 16 Household memberships.

LWVRC invited to LWV Albany County April Meeting

What in the World is Happening in Albany? Whither “Project Sunlight”?

With Blair Horner NYPIRG Policy and Legislative Director,

and Barbara Bartoletti LWVNYS Legislative Director,

both 30 year veterans of Albany politics.

Wednesday, April 30th SOUPER SUPPER

Bethlehem Public Library 451 Delaware Ave., Delmar

5:30 Supper, 6:00 Speakers and “Project Sunlight” Demo (eg. how to get information out of government thru freedom of information law; how to trace the money and lobbyists who worked on legislative bills) Please call Gail DeMarco at 434-2413 by 4/26 if you can come so they will have a count of people. Rensselaer League members do not need to bring soup, but will need to bring our own bowl and utensils (there will be extras if you forget)!

IN MEMORIAM

In March the League lost a good friend and member **Irving A. Landa**.

He served as a navigator in the Army Air Corps in World War II, flying on missions out of Italy and North Africa for which he was awarded an Air Medal.

Irv worked in a number of social agencies, and he worked all his life for peace, social justice, civil rights and union rights. He belonged to various unions, the Gray Panthers, and the NAACP.

Our condolences go to his wife and our member Hazel and his family.

Nominating Committee Report

April 10, 2008

Office to be Filled :	Current Office Holder:	New Nomination:
Two year terms:		
Co-President	Gail DeMarco	Gail DeMarco
Vice President	Mary Muller	Mary Muller
Treasurer	Irene Wynnyczuk	Irene Wynnyczuk
Director	Diane Bell	David Wolcott
Director	Anne Burton	Anne Burton
Director	George O'Connor	George O'Connor
One year terms:		
Co-President	Marcia Easterling	Diane Bell
Director	Open	
Continuing in Office for Second Year of their terms:		
Secretary	Margaret Story	
Director	Donna Packard-Mahoney	
Director	Fred Stein	
2008 Nominating Committee off-board:		
Lorrie Smith, Geraldine (Dennie) Shanley, Marcia Hopple. Two board members to be appointed.		

PROPOSED LWV RENSSELAER COUNTY LOCAL PROGRAM - 2008-09

{Items taken out are in brackets (); additions are underlined in italics.}

WE WILL SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

(I) 1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT - COUNTY, CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE - OPERATIONS, AND COUNTY AND CITY CHARTERS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH LWV PRINCIPLES ADOPTED AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVELS – WHICH ARE:

A. Government, policies, programs and performance should provide for:

- Competent personnel with clear lines of responsibility,
- Coordination among various agencies and levels of government,
- Adequate financing,
- Effective enforcement, and
- Well-defined channels for citizen input.

B. Charter amendments (that) should provide for:

- (An) Independent (Districting) Charter Revision Commissions that (is) are representative of the community and do(es) not include any elected or political party official at the local level. (The Commission shall provide,) A Districting Plan following each decennial census, after meaningful community participation.
- The Districting Plan (It) shall be guided by criteria in NYS Election Law which requires that districts be as compact, contiguous and convenient as possible. Also the plan as far as practical shall follow the principle of equal representation both numerically and by number of legislators from each district.
- Such a plan to be approved by the appropriate legislative body in accordance with the Iowa Plan which provides for up to three times for Legislative approval/disapproval before mandatory acceptance of the Commission's recommended plan.

C. Assessment of the functions, organizational structure and staffing procedures of Troy's City Government:

- To assure their conformity with the requirements of the current Troy City Charter. Where there are disparities, the need for changes in practices and/or in the Charter would be indicated.
- Monitor and evaluate the work of the newly appointed Troy Charter Revision Commissions.

(II) 2. CHANGING THE PRESENT METHOD OF RE-DISTRICTING THE RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO A PLAN THAT SHALL:

- Provide for equal representation for citizens both numerically and by number of elected representatives from each district, with preference for single-member districts as the system most prevalent and familiar to citizens and most likely to represent constituencies of similar interests and concerns.
- Such a plan to be prepared by an Independent Districting Commission with meaningful public participation that is representative of the community and does not include any elected County / political party official.
- Approval of the plan by the County Legislature shall follow the Iowa plan which provides for up to three times for Legislative approval/disapproval before mandatory acceptance of the Districting Commission plan proposed.

(III) 3. THE LEAGUE'S CAPITAL REGION SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT CONSENSUS THAT INCLUDES:

- Waste and toxicity reduction, and Environmentally sound methods of recycling and reuse as primary forms of solid waste management.
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IV *LOCAL ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION (ATI) BASED ON THE LWV NYS CONSENSUS ON ATI (such as Youth Court, Drug Courts, Forensic Task Force, Prisoner Education Programs, and Troy Community Police Programs), and Encourage Community Study and Action Toward Development of a Local Restorative Justice Program.

V *OPPOSE GLOBAL WARMING: We will support and advocate for policies and programs that address global warming and are consistent with LWV principles adopted at the National and State levels. *Drop from Local Program as we can use State and National program to address these issues.

WE COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT!

At 12:45 p.m. League members and panelists were still in animated conversation, finding it difficult to leave, even though our time was up! We were talking about our Health Care Forum: Who is sick, the patient or the system? Should there be a national health plan? Who should pay? How should it be administered? These topics were addressed at our meeting on March 8 at 10 a.m. at the Arts Center in Troy, where nearly 40 were in attendance for a panel presentation and “lively” post-panel discussion. The panelists were Paul Sorum, M.D., chair, Capital District Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Plan, Richard Kirsch, Executive Director of Citizen Action of New York, James Sinkoff, Whitney M. Young Health Clinic, and joining the panel for the informal discussion segment was Christine Moore, R.N., Associate Director for Government Affairs, New York State Nurses’ Association. We were delighted to see Martha Kennedy, President of League of Women Voters of New York State in the audience.

Anne Burton, who served as substitute moderator for Donna Packard-Mahoney, began by stating the positions on health care reform of the League of Women Voters of New York State. Basically, she said that the League supports legislation which meets the following criteria: “To assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care for all state residents; to provide planning and regulations to assure New Yorkers, including the medically indigent, access to a basic level of quality care; to provide a single-payer system as an acceptable way to contain cost and provide equitable access; to contain cost without compromising accessibility or quality care, and to devote more resources to help promotion of disease prevention.”

As director of the Whitney Young Health Center, Sinkoff explained the structure of the center; a comprehensive set of services under a medical director and includes a substance abuse program and an oral health care program. The Whitney Young Center in Albany is one of 1800 community health centers in the country. He explained that there were three issues that he saw that were vital to health care reform: Quality, Accessibility to the patient, and Affordability.

Paul Sorum, of PNHP, our second panelist, is an advocate of a single payer and a single public insurer, with public financing and private delivery, which he feels is the best way to remove barriers for comprehensive health care. Financing that now goes to private programs could be diverted to health care and not to administrative costs and profits of private programs. He explained that programs other than single payer led to co-payments, state mandates to purchase insurance, ever-increasing deductibles, and a two-tiered system with an eventual “death spiral”. He ended by stating that it would be disruptive to change the system but it could work if there would be retraining for private “shareholders” and that we could elect leaders that are bold and progressive. We should educate the American people to correct their misconceptions!

Richard Kirch supported affordable health coverage for all, but supported the other private alternate plans as well, as the way to attain universal health coverage. He espoused the position that individuals are reluctant to change what they already know, and that fear plays a part in this. Again, a need to educate the public!

AND STILL HAVE BEGGED FOR MORE !!

It is planned to continue the League’s local involvement in healthcare reform by hosting another program in the future and perhaps the focus might be on quality vs cost.

Resources for League members (and others!) “The National Voter” Feb 2008, pp. 4-6 by Diane Rowland and Adele Shartzer “Healthcare Now”, a group advocating a single-payer healthcare system: www.healthcare-now.org. and info@healthcarenow.org Physicians for National Health Care Program, www.PNHP.org

A big thank-you goes to Donna Packard-Mahoney, off-board specialist, LWWNYS, for organizing this most wonderful forum for us!

By Anne Burton

Rededication of the LWW State Headquarters Building in Albany May 15, 4 to 6 pm. See the website at

www.lwvny.org for full details

Calendar - Spring 2008

APRIL 2008

- 26 - Earth Day Activities, City of Troy
Voter Registration - Troy Farmers Market (tentative) 10am - 2 pm
- 29 - REFORM LOBBYING DAY IN ALBANY - 10:30 - 4 pm Sign of the Tree,
Empire Plaza (Register at www.commoncause.org/NY/Reform Day**
- 30 - Voter Registration, Tamarac High School, 4:30 pm
- 30 - Soup-Supper Meeting with Albany and other area LWVs

MAY 2008

- 1 - Troy City Council, Thursday, 7 pm
- 7 - Rensselaer County Legislature, Open Forum, Wednesday, 6 pm
- 8 - **LWVRC Board Meeting, 7 pm, Krause Center, Troy**
- 12 - School Board Candidate Forum, Troy School District, Monday, 7 pm - Veterans Memorial Auditorium between Middle School and High School
- 12 - School Board Candidate Forum, East Greenbush School District, Monday, 7 pm - East Greenbush Community Library
- 13 - Rensselaer County Legislature, Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, 6 pm
- 15 - LWWNYS rededication of the 62 Grand St. building reception 4-6 pm , Albany
(Respond by May 9 to lwwny@lwwny.org or 518-465-4162.)
- 17-19 LWWNY State Convention, Syracuse
- 20 - School District Voting, Tuesday, Budget/ Board Candidates**
- 21 - LWVRC Annual Meeting, 6 pm, Emma Willard School, Kellas
Meeting Room (special mailing to come; deadline for reservations 5/15/08)**
- 31 - Voter Registration, Troy Farmers Market 9 am - 1 pm (tentative)



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, RENSSELAER COUNTY NY

265 River Street
Troy, NY 12180