The Proposed Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act: Impact on the Farmer, the Worker, and the Consumer

Co-sponsored by the LWVs of Wayne County and Rochester Metro Area

Our distinguished panel includes:

Lewis Papenfuse, Executive Director of Worker Justice Center of New York
Dean Norton, President, New York Farm Bureau

Our moderator:
The Honorable Sandra Frankel

Monday, September 22, 2014
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Asbury First United Methodist Church
1050 East Avenue, Rochester NY
Handicapped Accessible/Parking in Rear

Pre-registration is appreciated:
585-262-3730 or www.lwv-rma.org
Presidents’ Corner

Welcome to fall! Are you ready? We hope you had a restful summer, because we’re starting our new program year with a very full calendar!

On Wednesday, September 3, join us at noon in the Atrium of the County Office Building for the Fair Election Practices Campaign Pledge Signing Ceremony. Let’s publicly congratulate those candidates who have agreed to run fair, issue-oriented campaigns.

Then on Friday, September 5, we’ll be waiting for you between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM at the 1872 Café at 431 West Main Street. There’s free parking across the street and a nice lunch menu (or just have coffee – as fancy or plain as you like). If you feel you only know the folks on your committee(s) when there’s an entire League full of interesting people, here’s the remedy. (And the café was built on the very place where Susan B. Anthony first registered to vote in 1872 – it’s the perfect spot for us Leaguers to gather on the First Friday of every month!)

Primaries will be held on Tuesday, September 9 – whatever else you do, get out and vote!

On Wednesday, September 17, we urge you to help support the Rochester Area Community Foundation (which provides grant funding for our excellent “Who Represents You” brochure) by attending the RACF Philanthropy Awards and Annual Report to the Community Luncheon – your invitation is on page 6. Join us at the LWV-RMA table.

We begin our new year of interesting and very informative monthly forums on Monday, September 22, with another collaboration with LWV of Wayne County. Our focus is Farm Labor – an issue that’s as complex as it is crucial to our area. For more information, see the front page and the article on this page.

Tuesday, September 23, is National Voter Registration Day. Do you know someone who doesn’t vote? Here’s the perfect opportunity to invite him or her to register – and make a date to vote together on November 4!

How many of these events will you attend? We hope to see you often through September – and then continue the momentum into October!

In League,
Gloria gloell@rochester.rr.com
Mary mmhk@rochester.rr.com

September Forum

There is such truth to the bumper sticker “No Farms – No Food!”

Aside from air and water, food is the most essential commodity. Because of its importance, the LWVs from Rochester Metro Area and Wayne County will be collaborating once again to host a forum on Agriculture, focusing this time on labor issues.

Specifically, the panelists will address the proposed Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act, rejected in the NYS legislature in various forms over the past 25 years. Whom does it help or hurt? It’s premised on basic worker protections as outlined in the 1938 (federal) Fair Labor Standards Act, in which farmworkers are not entitled to the many benefits and rights enjoyed by most workers in New York State. But what factors prevent the NYS Senate from passing it? How does it impact the farm owner? What are the myths and facts that surround this Act?

Panelists will be Lew Papenfuse, Executive Director of the Workers Justice Center (Rochester), and Dean Norton, President of the NYS Farm Bureau. A brief introduction to the Act will be offered prior to the panel discussion. An open Q&A session will follow the presentation.

Please join us at the Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue, Rochester, on Monday, Sept 22nd, at 7:00 PM for this important discussion.

Voter Services News

The LWV-RMA is in discussion with local hospitals to ensure that hospitalized patients can vote on Election Day. The hospitals are working on developing the best process.

We will need a few volunteers on the day before Election Day to collect applications for absentee ballots and deliver them to the Board of Elections. We’ll also need volunteers on Election Day to distribute absentee ballots to voters and return them to the BOE.

Stay tuned for developments on this exciting new initiative!
Meet J. Ernest DuBois

BACKGROUND

This month the spotlight is on J. Ernest DuBois, a Rochester resident and an active member of the Board of Directors of the LWV-RMA. Growing up in a family with a great respect for education, he attended the Rochester Public Schools and holds two degrees from the University of Rochester. As the first African-American teacher in the secondary schools of Rochester, Ernest taught Social Studies and English at Benjamin Franklin High School and retired from School Without Walls a quarter of a century ago. He also was an employee of Lincoln Rochester Trust of Rochester which is now part of J. P. Morgan Chase Bank.

WHY HE JOINED LWV-RMA

Because his principal knew of Ernest’s interest in civic matters, anything that arrived in the mail related to government and/or social issues was placed in Ernest’s mailbox. One such envelope announced the LWV-RMA Voter Services project in which young people who will be 18 years of age on or before Election Day are registered to vote. Ernest thought it was an excellent program and joined the local League in support of it.

LEAGUE ROLE/ACTIVITY

Three years ago, Ernest was asked to be a candidate for the Board of Directors, at a time when he had just decided that he needed to be more involved again in the community. On the Board his contribution had been based on his interests in bylaws, parliamentary procedures, education, diversity, and leadership development.

QUOTE

Ernest says a quote from an unknown source is a good guideline for anyone:

“Aspire to inspire before you expire”

Education Study Group Update

The LWV-RMA Education Study Group would like to invite you to our next meetings on September 5th and September 19th—both at 2:00 PM at the Winton Road Library. Our group is inviting members of the Rochester City School District (RCSD) Board of Education for interviews. It is this committee’s belief that in order to properly advocate for free, appropriate, quality educational opportunities for Rochester City School District students, it is our duty as citizens to more fully understand the views, decision-making processes, goals, and objectives of current board members. We believe that our locally elected officials are the foundation of good government.

On Friday, August 8th, we met with RCSD Board of Education President Van White. His goals to make the RCSB an active and involved administrative group were very enlightening. He believes that the school board must be held accountable for the performance of the city schools. It is the one administrative body that remains constant, since most urban school superintendents last about 3 years before they move on to other districts. With each Superintendent, there have been new programs that only survive that person’s tenure. As President of the Board, he has set agendas that include holding the Superintendent accountable for board approved policies, setting up ad hoc committees which led to the formation of a Parent Advocacy Group, restoration of the Alternative to Suspension program, and increasing the number of school social workers. East High School’s threatened closing by the State has created the opportunity for RCSD to partner with the University of Rochester (U of R). This is the first Educational Partnership Organization in the state. The U of R will be acting as East High School’s Superintendent. And the board now has a new role, along with an opportunity to evaluate all city schools so that future closures can be avoided. Mr. White has initiated weekly meetings with administrators of city schools to address their problems, but to also highlight their achievements. For example, School # 4 and Wilson High School are now off the State’s list of non-performing schools.

Join our work group and make a difference in the educational opportunities available for children in the Rochester City School District! For information, please contact me at cphelpsedu@yahoo.com.

Cathy Phelps
Education Study Group Convener
Redistricting Amendment

On November 4, Election Day, citizens of New York State will be voting for state officials (including members of the Assembly and NY Senate), Congress and some local offices. We will also be voting on three proposed amendments to the State Constitution.

Proposition #1 is an amendment that will establish a new process and a commission to redraw our election district lines after the 2020 census. LWVNYS supports a “YES” vote on Proposition #1.

LWVNYS believes the new commission will be politically balanced and independent of incumbent elected officials at the state level. It will be a ten-member group. Each of the four legislative leaders (Speaker and Minority Leader of the Assembly, Majority and Minority Leaders of the State Senate) appoints two non-legislative members of the commission. Those eight appoint two additional members who must not have been enrolled in either of the two major political parties in the preceding five years. No members of the state legislature, lobbyists or specified other political figures can serve.

LWVNYS further believes this commission and the redistricting process determined in this amendment will create impartiality when the lines are drawn, and will protect communities of interest, race, language and minority groups by codifying national Voting Rights Act language.

The Amendment requires the commission to hold public hearings and to release data so the public can submit alternative plans.

It takes a super vote (7 out of 10 members of the commission) to present a redistricting plan for the 2022 elections. LWVNYS believes it will remove power from the Legislature to determine district lines for the Assembly, State Senate and Congress.

LWV-RMA will host a forum with The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR) on October 20 to present LWVNYS’s position on Proposition #1, and to present opposing arguments. Save the date, and check www.voteyesforprogress.org and our own www.lwv-rma.org for more informational material on this issue.

Katherine Smith
1st Vice-President, Advocacy Director

Book Club Report

The survey has been taken and everyone agreed that early afternoon during the week would be the best time to meet. Therefore, our next meeting date is set for Tuesday, October 21, at 1:00 PM at the Greenhouse Café, 2271 East Main Street (near Winton Road) in Rochester. Our first book will be Toni Morrison’s A Mercy. The list of the other books chosen for this year is available on our website (www.lwv-rma.org).

We Leaguers spend a lot of time working hard to “save the world” – or at least our small part of it. However, we invite you to think about this hour and a half when we meet as a time to kick back and enjoy each other’s company and ideas and conversation. The café offers food and coffee or tea for those who care to imbibe. Think about joining our group. All are welcome!

For more information, call Georgia DeGregorio, 585-787-9692

The Book Club

First Fridays

Are you free for lunch or a mid-day coffee break? If so, we’d like to spend it with you!

When: First Friday of each month between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM
Where: 1872 Café at 431 West Main Street (free parking across the street)
What: Chatting with other League members – topics are up to you

If you’ve wanted to get to know more members, here’s an opportunity – because we think the work we love to do is more fun when we get to know one another better.

See you on Friday, September 5!
Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC)

The Fair Election Practices Campaign 2014 (FEPC) began on August 11th and runs through the General Election Day on November 4th. The League co-sponsors the campaign with The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR). We encourage all candidates for public office to run positive, issues-oriented campaigns. Those candidates who agree to participate in our campaign sign The Pledge. This Pledge defines how they can run a fair, positive campaign.

On September 3rd at the Atrium in the Monroe County Office Building at noon, there is a Signing Ceremony/Press Conference. It is the last opportunity for candidates to sign The Pledge. At that time all signers of The Pledge will have their names read.

During the campaign, candidates who feel The Pledge has been violated may file a complaint to the FEPC Hearing Panel (Committee). The Committee will then hear the complaint and render a decision. The decision is immediately sent to the media. Also, all decisions will be posted on the League website (www.lwv-rma.org), along with all the documents and other info. Please check out our website for additional information.

Our FEPC 2014 Committee members are: Jim Morris (Chairperson), Ralph Esposito, Peter Knapp, Channing Philbrick, Kay Wallace.

Alternates are: Tom Frey, Lois Giess, Jean Keplinger, David Koon, Jim Peters, Sue Roberts, Carol Saum and Mary Ann Thorpe.

We are very grateful to all of these volunteers.

Sheila Abeling
2nd Vice-President, FEPC Chair

Vote 411

Our website www.Vote411.org is the League of Women Voters’ increasingly popular tool to encourage informed and active participation in government. www.Vote411.org is an interactive website which provides comprehensive information for voters including districts, ballot questions, and candidate information, all specific to the user's address.

The League of Women Voters of New York State has developed questions for the candidates for statewide offices and the State Senate and the State Assembly. Our Government committee has prepared questions for all local (Monroe County, City of Rochester, towns and villages within the county) offices and additional questions for our state Senate and Assembly districts. We have contacted candidates for these offices to invite them to participate in www.Vote411.org.

We will be making primary races visible to the public on Monday, September 1, and races in the general election visible on Friday, September 19. Go to www.Vote411.org to get election information and candidates’ replies to our LWV questions. If you find a candidate who has not answered the questions, please contact the campaign office to express your interest in learning the candidate’s opinions on the issues.

www.Vote411.org makes it easy for you to get the information you want on the candidates for election and ballot questions!

Judy Weinstein
Vote411 Local Coordinator

Naturalization Report

August brought the League to the Monroe County Office Building at 10:00 AM on the 14th. Mimi Wilson greeted new candidates. Also on that day at the Federal Building, Lois Winterkorn welcomed 47 new citizens at 1:00 pm.

Over the past few years, the Geneva League has been sharing with us the oath ceremony at Seneca Falls. It was held this year on August 21st and their representatives met 20 of the newest citizens. We appreciate their helping us with this project.

Anyone interested in observing a Naturalization Ceremony and/or willing to volunteer to participate in a future ceremony, please contact Sheila Abeling at 585-223-6819 or sheiler162004@yahoo.com.

Sheila Abeling
2nd Vice-President, Naturalization Chair
Sunshine Corner

HENRIETTA TOWN BOARD  7/16/14
OBSERVED BY JANE & JOHN SCHMITT

No LWV issues were noted. Meeting was attended by 6-12 members of the public.
(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: http://www.henrietta.org)

IRONDEQUOIT TOWN BOARD  8/21/14
(Notes taken from the online agenda)
The town is in the process of hiring contractors needed to complete the new library, and is continuing discussion on the matter of approving the Comprehensive Master Plan for Irondequoit.
(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: http://www.irondequoit.org/)

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE  8/12/14
OBSERVED BY ELAINE SCHMIDT

No LWV issues were noted. The Legislature took a moment to acknowledge the passing of Jerry Helfer, former Assistant County Executive, and of the passing of Anthony Delehanty, father of Legislator Sean Delehanty.
The Legislature passed agenda items 1-15 in one unanimous vote early in a short meeting. A public hearing regarding the establishment of a County of Monroe Wireless Surcharge is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, at 6:15 PM.
(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: http://www2.monroecounty.gov)

WEBSTER TOWN BOARD  8/21/14
(Notes taken from the online agenda)
The board considered financial items for approval, recommended a Special Use Permit for 570 Klem Road, and disposed of two town surplus items.
(To view the full minutes from these and other meetings, please click here: http://www.ci.webster.ny.us)

Elaine Schmidt
Observer Corps Chair

Welcome to our new members!

Dr. Beverly Pringle
Stephanie Kutzke
Rev. Linda Shevlin

MEMBER TO MEMBER — September 2014

We are all saying it: Is it September already???
While some of you have been enjoying the summer sun (and rain?), other League members have been squeezing in meetings between vacations. You can see from this Voter how much has been prepared for a great fall season with the League.

Of particular interest to our Membership Committee is the beginning of a new way to meet and greet each other informally that Gloria and Mary have initiated. I hope to see you on the First Friday gathering, September 5th, at 1872 Café, 431 West Main Street.

We’ve already begun planning for our annual Membership Meeting on January 10, where we discuss our current programs and what we want to accomplish for the rest of the year, as well as what we want to recommend to our State board for consideration at Convention. If you have ideas for what you wish the League to study in the future, now is the time to be sharing that with your board. This is the very essence of being a “grassroots” organization.

Finally, all our good programs and activities need members at the tables to sign in guests as well as to serve as ambassadors who can share their enthusiasm for our organization with guests. In other words, we hope you will be free to help us when we call you for a specific job.

Oh, yes – one more thing: the dues letters have been sent. Thank you to each of you who will continue to support our League. I am available if there are any questions for the Membership Committee. Better yet, come and join us at our next meeting on Monday, September 8th, and share your ideas on how we can spread the word about our mission.

Georgia DeGregorio
Membership Committee Chair
gregiadt1@gmail.com

United Nations Day

The annual League Day at the United Nations will be held on Thursday, November 13. All members, family and friends are invited to join us for a fun and educational day. The day includes a tour of the UN building, lunch in the Delegates Dining Room and a briefing by key UN experts. The topic this year is “Water for Life,” part of the UN International Decade for Action 2005-2015.

To sign up, please download and complete the registration form at: http://www.lwvny.org/LLresources/SBR_StateNews/2014/August/UN-Registration-Form.pdf
Deadline for registration is October 24.
Yes, we are indeed all connected. Our Poverty in Rochester Committee has been meeting this summer to accept the challenge from ACTRochester’s Ann Johnson to explore what the League can do to support the efforts of FR=EE (Facing Race=Embracing Equity).

**A LITTLE HISTORY:**

In January, 2013, organizations in Rochester (mainly not-for-profits) were called together in a large meeting to address the report issued by ACTRochester on the subjects of racism and related poverty. The attendees were divided into five study groups and began to develop plans to address Racism and Poverty in Rochester. The groups focused on Criminal Justice, Health Care, Employment, Education and Housing.

In February, 2013, the League presented a program which included an excellent film on the subject, focusing on the impact of the riots in Rochester in July, 1964.

**CURRENT LEAGUE PARTICIPATION:**

Our League members have individually worked with some of these groups, and two League committees presently address Education and Housing issues.

Members of the Poverty in Rochester Committee have concluded the following:

The League can offer the community its expertise in education about issues and advocacy with legislators.

After hearing about a national program called “100,000 Homes for the Homeless,” we began to inquire locally if such a program was available. To date, there is one in Erie County, primarily funded by HUD, and a new one in Rochester, called “Housing First” and supported by the Sisters of Mercy and St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality.

Our immediate goal is to help distribute posters to advertise to the agencies working with the homeless through the October 21 program called Project Homeless Connect Rochester. We will develop the next steps we can take based on our discussion with these groups.

**NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN US**

Our next meeting is planned for Monday, September 8 at 2:00PM. Many more will follow. If you’d like to join us, or for further information, please contact us at 787-9692.

**Georgia De Gregorio, Convener**

**Beth Feldman, Barbara Kay, Hasana Martin and Chris Pryor, Committee Members**
Naturalization Photos
Naturalization Photos
Board meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month. Board meetings are open to all members.

Government Committee meets monthly. For details, call Elaine Schmidt at 530-7414.

Membership Committee meets monthly. For details, call Georgia DeGregorio at 787-9692.

10:00 AM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Monroe County Office Building at 39 W. Main Street.

1:00 PM Naturalization Ceremonies are held at Federal Court House at 100 State Street.

Forums are open to the public. Calendar information is subject to change.

For more complete information, consult our website at www.LWV-RMA.org, call 262-3730 or e-mail us at info@lwv-rma.org

**Coming Events!**

**September**

3  FEPC Signing Ceremony, Noon, The Atrium at the Monroe County Office Building
5  First Friday, 11:00AM - 1:00PM, 1872 Cafe 431 W Main St, Rochester, NY 14608
9  New York State & Local Primary Elections
11 Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00PM Brighton Town Hall
17 Constitution Day, The College at Brockport
17 RACF Luncheon
22 Forum: Farm Labor Issues, 7:00PM-8:30PM Asbury First United Methodist Church
23 National Voter Registration Day

**October**

3  First Friday, 11:00AM - 1:00PM, 1872 Cafe 431 W Main St, Rochester, NY 14608
9  Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00PM Brighton Town Hall
9  Naturalization Ceremony, Monroe County Office Building, 10:00AM
9  Naturalization Ceremony, Federal Court House, 1:00PM
10  Last day to register for November election!
20 Forum: Redistricting Amendment

**Immigration Update**

Did you know that the LWV has had a strong position on Immigration since 2008? It’s available at: [http://www.lwv.org/content/immigration](http://www.lwv.org/content/immigration).

As you may be aware, there has as yet been no progress in realizing the goals expressed in our position, and we encourage you to contact Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand to urge them to work with President Obama to fix our immigration laws.

Charles Schumer
263-5866
100 State St. Room 3040
Rochester, NY 14614
http://www.schumer.senate.gov

Kristen Gillibrand
263-6250
100 State St. Room 4195
Rochester, NY 14614
http://www.gillibrand.senate.gov

**John L. Ghertner**
*Immigration Committee Member*

**VOTE!**