We’re searching for the answer to this question:

WHY DON’T WE VOTE?

Our distinguished moderator:

Timothy Kneeland, Ph.D:

Professor & Chairperson, History & Political Science Departments and Director, Center for Public History at Nazareth College

Our Expert Panel:

Andrea Cain, Ph.D: VP & Interim CEO, Community Place of Greater Rochester, Inc.

George H. Moses: Executive Director, Northeast Area Development, Inc.

Monday, September 21, 2015, at 7:00 PM

Asbury First United Methodist Church
1050 East Avenue, Rochester NY
Handicapped Accessible/Parking in Rear

In November, 2014, according to the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, “statewide, 3.6 million people cast a ballot on Election Day” or just 32.5 percent of the 10.9 million active registered voters … and turnout is way down from the past three gubernatorial elections, in which about 4.7 million ballots were cast each time.”

Preregister at http://www.lwv-rma.org or 262-3730

We look forward to seeing you!
President’s Corner

We hope you’re enjoying this wonderful summer weather – as we move quickly into the busy-ness of fall. And this fall is certainly shaping up to be a very busy one!

On Friday, September 4, please plan to gather at the Corner Bakery & Café at 1367 Mt. Hope Avenue in College Town – First Fridays are back!

On Tuesday, September 8, we’ll meet at noon at the County Office Building on Main Street for the Fair Election Practices Campaign Signing Ceremony. Local politicians and media will be present, along with our partners from The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR), to sign and promote the pledge to run fair and issue-oriented campaigns. From now until Election Day (November 3), a review board will hear complaints against any candidate who does not adhere to the pledge. It’s an important part of Making Democracy Work!

We’re co-sponsoring a candidate forum with Rochester People’s Climate Coalition at the Harley School on Wednesday, September 16, at 7:00 PM. Bring all your questions on “green” issues!

Constitution Day is Thursday, September 17 – we’ll celebrate with a Naturalization Ceremony at The College at Brockport, followed by Voter Registration activities there and at MCC and RIT. Volunteers are always needed.

Our first fall forum is “Why Don’t We Vote?” – offering a timely discussion on this timeless American conundrum on Monday, September 21 at Asbury 1st United Methodist Church. (Tune in to “Connections with Evan Dawson” on WXXI 1370 AM at noon for a preview!)

Come to the Susan B. Anthony House on Tuesday, September 22, from noon to 4:00 to celebrate National Voter Registration Day – tour the house and help register voters!

And join us for lunch on Thursday, September 24, at the Convention Center as the Rochester Area Community Foundation honors philanthropy in our community – contact us for more info.

And there’s more! Book Club and Naturalization Ceremonies and so many interesting committees – the League has a niche for you!

We hope to see you often in September – and beyond!

Gloria S. Read gloell@rochester.rr.com
Mary Hussong-Kallen mmhk@rochester.rr.com

Why Don’t We Vote?

Good question, right?

A century ago, with the passage of the 19th Amendment almost assured, Susan B. Anthony told her followers that the right to vote was not the endgame – that the goal was to educate and to encourage the use of that vote. What would she think of the results of her efforts today?

According to the Monroe County Board of Elections Report for 2014, only 46.9% of the registered voters in Monroe County cast a ballot in what was a gubernatorial election year. While not great, this actually bested the 10 year average of 43.55%. If we discount the two presidential elections (turnout average 78%), our average for the period was 40.5%. Why is this? Is it a cultural thing or a reflection of our dissatisfaction – or simply fatigue?

A principal goal of our League since its inception has been, as Susan B. Anthony said, to promote and encourage voter engagement. Registration is not enough. How do we encourage our citizens to exercise their right to vote?

Please join us on Monday, September 21st, at 7:00 PM at Asbury First United Methodist Church for a discussion on that subject. First, what are the barriers to voting, and then, how do we move past them? Our moderator for the evening will be Timothy Knee-land, PhD, Professor and Chairperson of the History & Political Science Department and the Director of the Center of Public History at Nazareth College. Our distinguished panelists will be Andrea Cain, PhD, Vice President and Interim CEO at the Community Place of Greater Rochester, Inc. and George Moses, Executive Director of Northeast Area Development Inc.

The evening promises to be thought-provoking – and hopefully will inspire action in time for the upcoming elections.

Gloria S. Read gloell@rochester.rr.com
Mary Hussong-Kallen mmhk@rochester.rr.com
**First Fridays**

Are you free for lunch or a mid-day coffee break? If so, we’d like to spend it with you – and note our new location: the Corner Bakery Café in College Town!

When:  First Friday of the month between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM
Where:  1367 Mt. Hope Avenue (free parking behind)
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 4
Friday, October 2
Friday, November 6
Friday, December 4
Friday, January 8
(Friday, January 8 moves us to the 2nd Friday)

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**50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act**

August 6, 2015 was the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. “A Journey of Justice,” a week long walk with hundreds of people from Salem to Montgomery, Alabama, marked this most important federal legislation by celebrating the signing of the original legislation by President Lyndon Johnson 50 years ago, as well as the work that needs to be done by our country’s citizens today in order to revitalize the Act.

When the Voting Rights Act was reauthorized in 1981 President Reagan said, “For this nation to remain true to its principles, we cannot allow any Americans’ vote to be denied, deleted or defiled.” After three years during which eleven states established election regulations that block people from voting, this statement is more true than ever.

The 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby vs Holder removed Section 5 of the Act, and the Voting Rights Amendment (VRA) has now been introduced in Congress (S1659 and HR 2867). LWVUS strongly supports these bills, as shown by the testimony of LWVUS President McNamara. All League members are urged to contact their representatives to urge them to vote in favor of updating the Voting Rights Act.

House of Representative Member Slaughter and both NY Senators Gillibrand and Schumer are co-sponsors. Please call and thank them for their support, asking that the bills be brought to the floors for a vote this fall.

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**Absentee Ballots**

September 10th is the Primary Election and November 3rd is the GENERAL ELECTION. On those days, the League volunteers to open absentee ballots for the Monroe County Board of Elections. We will need the volunteers at the Board of Elections Service Center on Brighton Henrietta Townline Road by 3:30 PM. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com or 585-223-6819. Thank you!

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**Annual RACF Luncheon**

Every fall, Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF) announces the recipients of its Philanthropy Awards and presents its Annual Report to the community. As you may know, RACF funds our own popular **Who Represents You** publication, so we are particularly grateful for its role in philanthropy in our community.

This year, the luncheon will be held on Thursday, September 24, at 11:30 AM at the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Tickets are $55 – please phone 262.3730 or email info@lwv-rma.org to let us know if you’ll be joining us to support RACF and celebrate philanthropy in Rochester!
The Future is Soon, or The NYS Constitutional Convention Ballot Question

What will you be doing on Tuesday, November 7, 2017? You will be looking at your election ballot with this question: “Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?” Yes, the every 20 years New York State Constitutional Convention question which not that long ago seemed way off in the future, will soon be here.

The last time the question appeared on the ballot was 1997 and the last time there was a Constitutional Convention was 1967. If the voters approve holding a Constitutional Convention, what is the process for convening a Constitutional Convention? How would delegates be chosen? What issues are likely to be discussed at the Convention? Can the Convention be limited in what it can propose? How are the proposed changes presented to the voters? What’s the timetable? Of immediate concern, what changes in the process can be made prior to the November 7, 2017 vote?

LWV-RMA and TIAR (The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester) are co-sponsoring a forum “Nuts, Bolts and Monkey Wrenches of a NY State Constitutional Convention” to be held on October 19. More information will be in the October Voter.

*That one is easy – the Convention cannot be limited and delegates can propose changes to any part of the Constitution (including discarding the entire Constitution and adopting a brand-new Constitution).

Judy Weinstein
Government Committee Member

Membership Corner

As I write this, your annual dues letter is being mailed on September 1st to remind members of our standard renewal date, October 1st. This is a special time to remember all the excellent programs presented last year, as well as the inspiring committee work that supported them. “Making Democracy Work” for our community is a year round effort. For the coming year, programs are already in the works, with the first one to be held September 21.

For those who are not currently members, we invite you to take this opportunity to join us. Please use this link to do so: http://www.lwv-rma.org.

And we ask you, our members, to take a membership brochure and share with a friend. Invite them to join in our stimulating and informative work with you!

Besides programs, your League has many opportunities for you to work with committees in studying issues of current interest, as noted in this Voter. Don’t be shy, give the chair a call and join in the fun.

This summer your Membership Committee has worked with Monroe Community College (MCC) to provide voter registration opportunities for incoming freshmen during their orientations. Gail Wilder and Ann Carmody invited more than 14 people to fill the July and August dates. They will work with the MCC Standing Committee on “Rock the Vote” on a September 17 Constitution Day program, and they will continue to partner with this enthusiastic group in the months to come.

Georgia DeGregorio
Membership Committee Chair

Book Club

Our Book Club meets at The Greenhouse Café at 1:00PM and all are welcome to read the selections and attend the meetings to chat. Please mark these books on your To Read list and the dates on your calendar!

October 6, 2015 All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr
November 17, 2015 The Grass is Singing by Doris Lessing
January 19, 2016 The Secret History of Wonder Woman by Jill Lepore
February 16, 2016 The Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China by Evan Osnos
March 15, 2016 Waiting for Snow in Havana by Carlos Eire
April 19, 2016 Between the World and Me by Ta Nehisi Coates
Naturalization

Have you ever attended a Naturalization ceremony? If not, you would find it a very rewarding experience. Observing the candidates receiving American citizenship will give you so much pride as an American. The emotion, excitement and all the red, white and blue in one area is a sight to see. Many of the candidates come in their native country’s garb. The League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro Area volunteers twelve months a year which covers a minimum of 24 ceremonies and about 1,500 new citizens. Anyone who is interested in volunteering for our Naturalization Committee, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com or call 585-223-6819.

On July 4th, at Genesee Country Museum at 10 am, Kay Saunders and Katherine Smith welcomed thirty candidates for citizenship. July 9th brought the League to the Monroe County Office Building with Marcia Eisenberg meeting fifty new citizens. In August, on the 13th, Mimi Wilson participated in the 10 am Naturalization at the Monroe County Office Building. Beth Feldman met candidates at the Federal Building at 1:00 pm. Thank you to all League members who volunteered in all the Naturalizations!

Sheila Abeling
2nd Vice-President, Naturalization Committee Chair

Candidate Forums

On Wednesday, September 16th, the Rochester People’s Climate Coalition (RPCC) and League of Women Voters (LWV-RMA) will host a candidate forum on the topic of Green Jobs and a Sustainable Economy. At the forum, those running for local office within Monroe County will present their vision on a greening economy. This event presents a unique opportunity for voters to learn how their candidates’ platforms relate to climate change solutions. The forum will be held at The Harley School from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

The Rochester Peoples’ Climate Coalition is an umbrella organization with 45 local groups that represent over a hundred thousand people. While each member has its own focus, including agriculture, faith, labor, civic, and business, the coalition is united by the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare for the impacts of global warming.

We will also be co-sponsoring a candidate forum with the Center for Disability Rights (CDR) on Thursday, October 15, at the Strong Museum from 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

The Center for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR) is a not-for-profit, community-based advocacy and service organization for people with all types of disabilities. CDR has been recognized as an Independent Living Center by the National Council on Independent Living.

Fair Election Practices Campaign

The Fair Election Practices Campaign 2015 (FEPC) began on August 12th. The League of Women Voters/Rochester Metro Area and The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester encourage all candidates for public office to run positive, issues oriented campaigns. Some candidates feel that negative ads are effective. We believe positive campaigns that address important issues are winning campaigns and we urge all candidates to run a positive, issue oriented campaign by signing the Pledge and abiding by its rules. The Signing Ceremony/Press Conference will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 8th, 2015, at noon in the Atrium of the Monroe County Office Building. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

Sheila Abeling
2nd Vice-President, FEPC Chair
LWVNYS Convention Report

Eight members of our local League attended that LWVNYS Convention in June. We learned so much, voiced our opinions, felt heard, voted, and met wonderful people. Even the food was very good! And while we cannot recapture the entire experience to share, here are some of the highlights – along with our thanks for this amazing opportunity to grow in the League. We will work hard to make sure that LWV-RMA benefits from all that we learned!

FROM JUDY WEINSTEIN:

• It was energizing being in an auditorium with women (and some men!) from across the state, all dedicated to making democracy work.

• Attending the Budget workshop reminded me what I love about League! Although there were strong feelings on either side of whether or not the PMP (the money that local leagues pay to the state league) should be increased by $2 per member, workshop attendees, the Budget Committee, and the Executive Director all worked congenially to ensure that before the vote the following morning, delegates would have the information needed to make an informed decision.

• Of course I was proud while Mary Hussong-Kallen took her “Moment in the Sun” to highlight some of our accomplishments this year, but it was stimulating to hear the wide variety of projects of other Leagues.

FROM GLORIA S. READ:

• Dare Thompson, VP Membership-LWVNYS and Co-President of LWV-Mid-Hudson, NY, was elected LWVNYS President. She is our Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Coach.

• LWV-RMA won the Membership Category of Awards for our “First Friday” gatherings which results in the sharing of ideas and issues. It also fosters new members and perspective members to join us at lunch in an informal setting. In addition, we were chosen for three (3) Honorable Mentions in other categories.

• Benefits of attending are: we learn by networking and exchanging experiences, ideas and practices; being a part of the convention buzz, we get our name out there and develop leadership ability; we share by bringing something back to encourage our members to be present and engaged during the convention.

FROM SHEILA ABELING:

• I particularly enjoyed sharing/networking with other Leagues (especially meeting the Geneva League which helps us out with a yearly Naturalization at Seneca Falls)

• I also enjoyed learning that two other local Leagues do FEPC and attending a workshop to share FEPC experiences.

FROM CAROLE HOFFMAN:

All of the Convention was so awe inspiring...it was hard choosing just two. So below is my summary:

• Convention was extremely well-organized with jam-packed workshops offering valuable legislative insights.

• I loved having each League chapter list unique programs that were held – very helpful, as we go forward with our planning schedule.

FROM MARY HUSSONG-KALLEN:

• Every activity (from meals to workshops to the hospitality suite at the end of the day) was attended by a wonderful mix of local League members and State leaders. It was a good chance to get to know the people whose names we see but whose faces we don’t. Barbara Bartoletti, Laura Bierman, Sally Robinson and Dare Thompson were everywhere! And our own Georgia DeGregorio was elected to the State Board. I think we all left feeling a new sense of partnership with State and other local Leagues.

• I loved getting to know some of our own members better – what an interesting group of intelligent, self-assured, congenial women represent the LWV-RMA! No matter what workshop or plenary session I attended, a member of our local League was actively participating.

If you have questions about the Convention, please feel free to ask! There’s more to tell, and we’d all love to share more!

Sheila Abeling, Georgia DeGregorio, Patrina Freeman, Carole Hoffman, Mary Hussong-Kallen, Hasana Martin, Gloria Read and Judy Weinstein
Fiscal Report for 2014-15

For the fiscal year ending 6/30/15 we operated well within our approved budget.

The primary source of operating revenue was just under $10,000 in dues from members, and our biggest expense was required membership payments to the NYS and the US leagues. These totaled $5,365. We also received $1,500 from the Monroe County Board of Elections for our work in the ballot process again this year. Our next largest expenses were $2,400 each for state convention participation and for production of our newsletter, The Voter. Our change in operating funds was a net reduction of $752 for the full year.

We are most grateful for a significant bequest of just under $30,000 from The Gretchen Shafer Estate, which was deposited into our savings/investments accounts. Other contributions were received locally as well as directly to the Education Fund held at LWV-NYS. We thank all contributors for these additional gifts of support.

Thanks to the generosity of Bee Bibby, we were pleased to be able to fund an excellent research project by the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) in the amount of $15,000. This analysis of child care subsidies in Monroe County has received great interest in the community, cited by the Democrat and Chronicle and several local not-for-profit groups in their advocacy work. A follow-up study was later conducted, again thanks to the Bibby Fund, in the amount of $6,000.

ENDING BALANCES:

$7,931 in operating funds
$54,441 in savings/investments
$22,075 in Education funds held at State, subject to well-defined usage rules.

Ida Holloran
Treasurer

Voter Services News

Our volunteer corps of voter registration workers had a very active summer, highlighted by the Monroe Community College initiative. Present at the ten orientation sessions between July 14th and August 26th for incoming freshman, our volunteers were responsible for over 200 new registrations! Let’s give a high five to our project coordinators, Gail Wilder and Ann Carmody and their volunteers Carole Hoffman, Kathleen Mock, Mary Olinger, Joan After, Peggy Peticone, Nancy Brush, Camille Clayton, Sandy Drummond, Barbara Gros, Larry Burnette, Stephanie Kutzke, Lois Winterkorn, Georgia DeGregorio, Judy Engerman and Jackie Smith. Two other events, St. John’s Missionary Baptist Church Book Fair on August 22nd and the FREE School Board Candidates Forum on August 26th were ably covered by Barbara Gros.

The summer pace is continuing into the Fall with registration events for September scheduled at Rochester Institute of Technology on the 10th, Project Homeless Connect on the 15th, Constitution Day at SUNY Brockport and Monroe Community College on the 17th and National Registration Day at the Susan B. Anthony House on the 22nd.

The good news is that requests for our services continue to swell, but we really could use a few more good folks to volunteer. So, if you would like to help, please consider joining in and contacting Gin Busack at 467-6131 or ginbusack@aol.com.

Gin Busack
Voter Services Chair

National Voter Registration Day

On Tuesday, September 22, LWV-RMA will join the Susan B. Anthony House from noon until 4:00 PM to register new voters in celebration of National Voter Registration Day. Tours of the SBA House will be offered free of charge, and LWV-RMA will be available to answer questions and register new voters (or voters who may have moved to a new address).

Our Education Committee will be showing the PowerPoint presentation which we use in the high schools when registering first-time voters, and we hope to canvass the neighborhood to register voters. Customers and clients of local organizations will be invited to come to the SBA House and register to vote.

Please join us – to volunteer or just to celebrate this important day!
Photos from the 19th Amendment Celebration
Susan B. Anthony House — August 16th

LWVNYS Convention Photos
Coming Events!

September

1  Board Meeting (6:00 PM at BTH)
4  First Friday (Corner Bakery and Cafe, 1367 Mt, Hope Avenue)
8  FEPC Signing Ceremony (Noon at County Office Building)
10 Naturalization Ceremony (10:00 AM at Monroe County Office Building)
10 Primary Election
16 LWV-RMA/RPCC Candidate Forum (7:00 PM at The Harley School)
17 Naturalization Ceremony 1:00 PM (SUNY Brockport – Constitution Day)
21 Forum: Why Don’t We Vote? (7:00 PM at Asbury First United Methodist Church)

22 LWV/SBA House Celebrate National Voter Registration Day (Noon to 4:00 PM at SBA House)
24 RACF Annual Luncheon

October

2  First Friday (Corner Bakery and Cafe, 1367 Mt, Hope Avenue)
6  Board Meeting (6:00 PM at Gates Library)
6  Book Club (1:00 PM at The Greenhouse Café)
8  Naturalization Ceremony (10:00 AM at Monroe County Office Building)
8 Naturalization Ceremony (1:00 PM at Federal Building)
15 LWV-RMA/CDR Candidate Forum (6:30 at The Strong Museum)

Be sure to check your email and our website for other events as they are scheduled!

July 4, 2015 Naturalization at Genesee Country Village Photos

Board meets monthly on the first Tuesday 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
Goals of the League of Women Voters:

• To encourage informed citizen participation in government and politics
• To influence public policy through education and advocacy

The Voter is a monthly publication of the LWV-RMA
Editor, Mary Hussong-Kallen
Layout/Design, Chris Burleigh

Look for us on Facebook!
We know you’ll “like” us!
www.facebook.com/lwvofrma

Join the League Today!

Name: ______________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip: __________________
Telephone: _______________________________________ E-Mail: ________________________________________________
Check Amount: _________________________________________________
Level of Membership: _____________________________________________

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate .................................................. $75
Household ........................................................................ $105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass .................................. $150
Carrie Chapman Catt .................................................. $200
Student (full-time/under 25) ........................................ $25
Low income, call office ................................................. Sliding Scale

Please send this form and your check payable to League of Women Voters/RMA to:
LWV/RMA
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

or join us online at: www.lwv-rma.org/join.php