

# TheVOTER



*President Barbara Grosh accepts the Building Bridges to the Future and the Inspiring Citizens Into Action Awards at the 60th LWWNYS Convention. See page 7 for more information.*

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## President's Corner

### Transforming the League

The LWVUS has some visionary leadership, which is working hard to turn the ocean liner around to avoid the demographic waterfall ahead of us. I think they are doing a lot of right things, and I believe the mission of the League is still so salient that with good change-oriented leadership, we will remain a vibrant organization for another hundred years. I'll highlight two aspects of the transformation roadmap.

- First, by moving to a **pay-what-you-can-afford model**, League membership becomes accessible to everyone, and local Leagues have the incentive to recruit low-income members, for the first time ever. Most nonvoters are low-income, but our structure made recruiting low-income members very hard. Now it becomes an ask we can make.
- The other important point is the **emphasis on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**. The League's DEI policy is wordy, but I love a couple of things about it. It makes it clear that diversity is central to our continued existence and relevance, not an afterthought. Without embracing DEI, we're back to the slow death scenario of the late 20th century League.

I love the breathtaking vision of diversity. Look at all those under-represented and overlooked kinds of people we've never thought of reaching out to! This is a great opportunity to find new members and new energy.

Here's an example of what can happen. For as long as I've been in our League, we've been attending naturalization ceremonies to register all those New Americans to vote. Admirable. But that was usually our last connection with them and most of them never went on to vote. We needed to do so much more to help them become voters. Today that effort is well underway. We're working with a refugee organization, **The House of Refuge**, to create a **New American Leadership Academy**, an 8-session program to help a cohort of new citizens get their feet wet and learn their way around our local political system.

I'm very proud of all that we do. The work of registering voters is hard, retail work, and each registration form we turn in is hard-won. And once that voter is registered, we provide so much support to help them be informed voters. We help them learn about their candidates via candidate forums and Vote411. We remind them of upcoming deadlines via text and door hangers that help them get to the polls, especially for early voting. We provide educational forums to learn about important issues. We do a lot.

*And yet, we don't do enough.* A lot of candidates refuse to participate in Vote411 or in our candidate forums. **If** we had more people working on those teams, we could chase them down. **If** we had a team with members from all the towns and districts, we could have constituents encouraging candidates to participate. **If** we had more members who enjoy public speaking, we could be present in more places, including neighborhood associations, block clubs, churches and at every low-income housing project in the city.

Here's another reminder that we're not doing enough. It is a crude measure, but it shows in a nutshell that voting, and hence power, is still very unequally distributed. **Every Legislative District (LD) has the same population but the number of registered voters in the districts varies from just over 20,000 to just over 10,000.** The highest rates of registration are in the suburbs. Affluent white people embrace their power. Registration rates there are in the high nineties. However, in the formerly redlined neighborhoods in the city, the number of registered voters is about half of that.

*And the number of actual voters differs even more, because turnout rates resemble registration rates.* In a presidential year, turnout in the suburbs will be 80-90% of the 90% who registered. In the city, it will be 50-60% of the 50% who registered. In years with local elections, it's far lower, falling below 10% in some neighborhoods. For all our work, a huge number of our neighbors in Rochester believe that they don't matter in our civic life."

Why do so many people take themselves out of political engagement? If you've registered voters, you know the responses we get in these neighborhoods.

- **"I can't vote."** This is simple misinformation about voting rights for felons, but we need to work harder to counter it. We're making plans to get into the Monroe County Jail and possibly into prisons to counter this at the source. We need to feed this information everywhere. We need to build bridges to nonprofits that help with post incarceration re-entry.

## President's Corner (cont'd from page 2)

- **“My vote doesn’t count.”** This is often true. To change it requires some election reforms. I’m excited that LWWNYS has followed our suggestion and committed to a study to explore electoral reforms such as all-party primaries as used in California, Washington and Alaska, as well as ranked choice voting. These have the potential to ensure that voting actually counts, even in city elections in November, where currently there are often no contested elections.
- **“It doesn’t matter who wins, they’re all the same. They show up here every 4 years to ask for our votes, but they don’t do anything for us in office.”** This is where the League can and should do more. I think we need to build civic engagement beyond voting to counter this. We may need to become community organizers and to work with other community organizations to make sure that people understand who is responsible for what and that they can track their problems to the right elected officials. We may need to be working in block clubs or starting coffee klatches of people who think and inquire about their neighborhood’s problems. There are a lot of great groups to work with in this space. But we need League members who can do this work, and the League needs to go beyond well-educated older white women to accomplish this.

We’re right where the LWVUS is: DEI is our future. We’ll only be able to accomplish our mission if we make a much bigger tent and draw on all the social capital of all of our members, new and old.

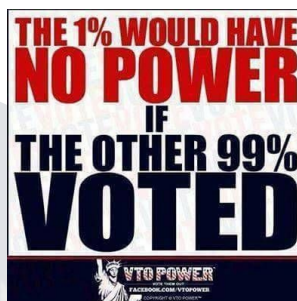
**Barbara Grosh**

*President LWV-RMA*

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy of LWVUS

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.





## Our 2023-2024 LWV-RMA Leadership Team



TOP ROW: OFFICERS President Barbara Grosh, Secretary Constance Flahive, Treasurer Linda Saalman, Nominating Committee Chair Mary Hussong-Kallen.  
BOTTOM ROW: DIRECTORS Amy Hahn, Cathy Kane, Tess McFarland-Porter, Mary Micket, Elmira Washington.



If you wish to share news or recognize the activities of other members please send the information to [micketeditor@gmail.com](mailto:micketeditor@gmail.com)



## 2023 LWV-RMA Annual Meeting

LWV-RMA friends registering, enjoying one another's company and tasty food, and writing postcards as coordinated by Tiffany Moore-Corteville (seen passing out materials at the lower left).



During the business meeting:  
TOP ROW: President Barbara Grosh leading the meeting; Director Tiffany Moore-Corteville and Vice President Myra Pelz being recognized for their service as they leave our Board; League member Bijaya Khadka describing the newly formed New American Leadership Academy project of our local League.  
BOTTOM ROW: Treasurer Linda Saalman presenting the 2023-2024 dues and budget information; some of those attending the meeting.

### AWARDS PRESENTED

At the upper left and right is 2023-2024 LWV-RMA Making Democracy Work Award recipient Reenah Golden, founder and director of the Avenue Black Box Theatre, which works with the LWV-RMA in voter registration and Get-Out-The-Vote efforts.

At the top center is Judy Wadsworth who received this year's Carrie Chapman Catt Award.

At the bottom left is Judy Sternberg receiving a You Make Us Proud Award from President Barbara Grosh. (Also receiving a You Make Us Proud Award was Isobel Gillen who was unable to attend the meeting.)



Submitted by Judy Wadsworth



## May Legislator Meetings

Members of LWV-RMA met with Legislators or their representatives during May to discuss the following LWVNY priorities:

Statewide poll worker training curriculum

Expansion of absentee ballot access

Plain language use for ballot propositions

Implementation of the 10-day registration rule

Bigger Better Bottle bill

Packaging reduction and recycling

Reproductive telehealth

Clean slate for former prisoners

Elder parole

Fair and timely parole



The group met with Assemblymember Josh Jensen (on the left) on a date when the Legislature was not in session. The other meetings were held while the Legislature was in session so we met with legislative staff members. Pictured in the order in which the Committee met with them are - Meghan Geils, Legislative Director for Senate Minority Leader Robert Ort; Vivica Smith, Legislative Assistant for Assemblymember Demond Meeks; Heather Neu, Esq., Legislative Director for Assemblymember Jennifer Lunsford; Teale Fox, Director of External Affairs for Senator Jeremy Cooney; Stephanie Hann, Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Marjorie Byrnes; Nicholas Haas, Legislative Director for Senator Pamela Helming; Eric Stevens, Legislative Director for Assemblymember Sarah Clark; Eileen Banker, Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Stephen Hawley; Mateo Colón, Legislative Staff Member for Senator Samra Brouk.

Also pictured are members of the LWV-RMA Government Committee who met with those pictured above: Judy Weinstein, Scott Forsyth, Barbara Murphy, Chris Pryor, Elaine Schmidt, Katherine Smith, Judy Sternberg, and Judy Wadsworth.

## LWV-RMA joins ROC Freedom Riders to Get Out the Vote



Tess McFarland-Porter joined the ROC Freedom Riders' Juneteenth bike ride on June 17th. There were approximately 65 riders and Tess was able to help many of them decorate their bikes with Early Voting door hangers. Great idea, Tess!

## NYS League Recognizes LWV-RMA at 60th Biennial Convention

The Building Bridges to the Future (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and the Inspiring Citizens Into Action awards were presented to the LWV-RMA at the LWNYS convention. The League also received Honorable Mention for the Mobilizing Democracy in Action Award (Get Out the Vote) and Lighting the Way Award (Membership and Leadership).

The Building Bridges to the Future award was recognition for sponsoring the statewide two-part series "What Do NY Kids Learn About Our Racist History?" and "What Do You Know?" This is part of the Anti-Racism Curriculum Project that started in Rochester but is spreading state-wide.

The award was presented by Regina Tillman, LWNYS 3rd Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, who said:

"I have wanted to have the story told of New York State's role in the enslavement of Africans and the Indigenous populations - that slavery was NOT just a "southern problem". And then here comes the LWV Rochester - having built a relationship with two brilliant local educators who were researching and placing this yet untold history into one of the most valuable spaces at this time - into the school curriculum!

Thus, I had the pleasure of partnering with the Rochester League President Barbara Grosh to get a state-wide League audience for a two-part webinar where the curriculum was explained... and demonstrated!

This happened due to relationship building and having a nose for what is IMPORTANT for DEI... and UNIQUE... and VALUABLE!"

The Inspiring Citizens Into Action Award was shared with the Albany League and recognized both groups efforts on Redistricting. The award states: "In Rochester, the League held webinars to educate the public, collaborated with neighborhood organizations, used social media, and even held private Zooms with individuals trying to understand the maps. Over 100 people participated in the public hearings to provide comments."

Congratulations to all RMA League members who helped in these activities!

**Submitted by Mary Micket**

We want The Voter to be informative and interesting to our readers. If you have ideas for articles or comments on the newsletter, please share them with [micketeditor@gmail.com](mailto:micketeditor@gmail.com). And please remember to take pictures (including selfies) at events and send them in!

## News From the LWNYS Biennial Convention

Barbara Grosh, Deb Gordon, Carolyn Massey and I represented the LWV-RMA at the State Convention.

For me, a continual highlight of gathering for conventions is the opportunity to connect with the good folks doing good work beyond Rochester. An exciting focus for many LWV folks is the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), both at the national and state level. I especially appreciated learning and sharing ideas about how to mobilize young voters by uplifting the 2024 vote to add the ERA to the NYS Constitution.

In the collaborative opportunities the convention offered, I must say it is fun to represent Rochester. LWV-RMA has a reputation for doing creative, important work, and we are respected. Of the eight awards LWNYS gave to local leagues, Rochester won two and received honorable mention for two more.

Our state convention drives home NY's important role in defending our country's democracy. In New York, we currently have enough security in our democratic processes so that we can devote our energies to expansive progressive advocacy in healthcare, criminal justice, broadband access, environmental justice and more. We can be very proud of this work.

At the same time, other states are on the front lines of defending democracy, and waging that defense drains their resources. Ayo Atterberry, LWVUS Chief of Culture, warned us of anti-democracy forces who are actively working to undermine and destroy pro-democracy organizations like the LWV.

**Submitted by Tess McFarland-Porter**



## Vote411

There were 60 candidates on primary ballots in Monroe County with races in the Democratic, Republican and Working Families parties. Of the 60 candidates, 35 candidates posted responses to the League questions; 25 did not. The candidates who did respond provided thoughtful answers to the questions which provided voters with a better basis to compare candidates than the mailings sent on behalf of candidates. We applaud the candidates who show their respect for voters by taking the time to answer our questions during this hectic period of walking their districts and attending community meetings.

Importantly, every candidate for the County Legislature who responded said that they would support amending the County Charter to create an independent redistricting process.

After the Board of Elections provides the list of candidates for the General Election, we will invite candidates to post their responses on Vote411.

**Submitted by Judy Weinstein**

## May and June Naturalization Ceremonies

Two naturalization ceremonies were held on May 9. The first had 43 candidates from 27 countries. Judge Stephen Miller officiated and Tamara Minter represented the League. The second had 44 candidates from 29 countries. Margaret Supinski, representing the League, helped the candidates register to vote and Judge Frank Geraci officiated.

Another ceremony was held on June 13. Marcia Eisenberg, Beth Feldman and Anita Hawkins helped candidates fill out voter registration forms. Forty-four voter registration forms were sent to the Monroe County Board of Elections.

Thank you to all volunteers!!

**Submitted by Sheila Abeling**



*Top Row: May Naturalization Event; Bottom Row: June Naturalization*

## Help Spread the Word: Pregnant Workers Fairness Act is Effective June 27th, 2023

Under the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) (<https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/pregnant-workers-fairness-act-explainer/>), most workers nationally will have a right to reasonable accommodations, or temporary changes at work, that are medically necessary during or after pregnancy.

PWFA and the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act can help protect the health of those working and pregnant, recovering from childbirth, pumping breast milk, or who have a related medical condition.

However, the PWFA will only help pregnant and postpartum workers if they are aware of their new rights and empowered to request the accommodations that they need.

A Better Balance (ABB), a national nonprofit advocacy organization, launched a new PWFA Know-Your-Rights guide (<https://www.abetterbalance.org/pregnant-postpartum-workers-know-your-rights>), in English and Spanish, with an explainer about the law for workers, sample letters they can send to their boss, and links to resources for additional support.

Please consider sharing this resource via your social platforms, email lists, and more.

**Submitted by Mary Micket**

**be a voter!**



## Welcome to the Following New Members:

Tonya Brooks  
Daren Chentow  
Adine Demond  
Erica Gentile  
H. Robert Herman  
Bijaya Khadka

Nancy Korvin  
Carolyn Massey  
Patricia Partridge  
Stephanie Watson  
Pamela Watson-Breedlove

## Students Inside Albany

Migna Xu, a Brighton High School student and a member of the League since 2020, attended the LWVNYS 2023 Students in Albany program, representing the LWV-RMA. She summarized her experience this way:

"I had a great experience learning about our NYS government. I really had very little information on how our state government was run as it is not covered in school and my government classes, as we focused on our national government instead. I had the opportunity to meet some really cool people all over the state who were as interested in government and making a difference as I was. Besides having a great learning experience and meeting cool people, there was also really good food and great chaperones! I would highly recommend this program to anyone that has even a small inkling for politics and government, and even if they don't, it's still such a great program to introduce and expose politics to youth. I want to see more Rochester representation next year! I think the League should try to spread this to local high schools and get in touch with high school government teachers to advocate for this conference."



LWV-RMA Students in Albany Coordinator Tanya L. Davis and Participant Migna Xu

**Submitted by Migna Xu**

If you know of a local high school student who would be interested in participating in SIA in 2024, please contact Tanya at [tanyadavis07@yahoo.com](mailto:tanyadavis07@yahoo.com).

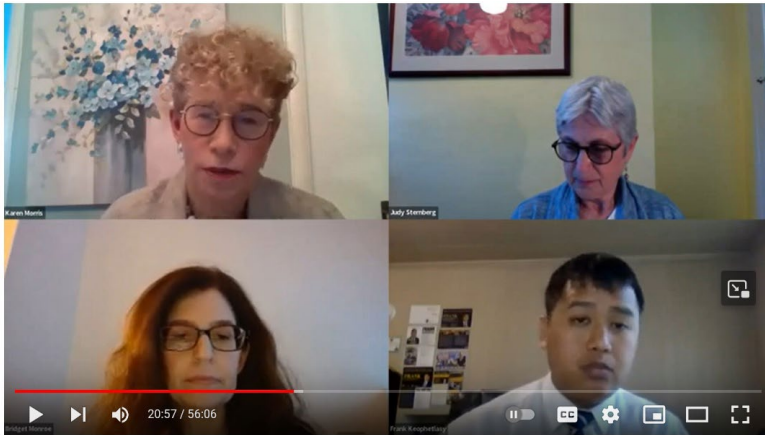
## Candidate Forums

We planned a full schedule of candidate forums for every non-judicial primary race. Candidate forums were held for five Democratic Party primaries: Monroe County Legislature Districts 21 and 29; Rochester City Council East District; Rochester City Council Northwest District; and Brighton Town Council. In addition, we co-sponsored a forum for the Democratic Party primary for RCSD Commissioners with the Children's Agenda and several parent organizations. Although forums were planned for all races (including the Republican and Working Families parties primaries), there were not at least two candidates in the remaining races who accepted our invitation. In some cases, a candidate had a conflict; in others, a candidate did not respond despite repeated outreach. League policy prohibits having a candidate forum with only one candidate for an office participating.

We will schedule another round of forums before the general election, including at least one which will be broadcast on WROC-TV8.

**Submitted by Judy Weinstein**

# Candidate Forums:



City Council NW - Moderator Karen Morris; timekeeper Judy Sternberg; candidate Bridget Monroe; candidate Frank Keophetlasy



City Council East - Moderator Karen Morris; candidate Paul Conrow; candidate Mary Lupien; timekeeper Constance Flahive



LDs 21 & 29 - Timekeeper Judy Sternberg; 21st LD candidate Santos Cruz; moderator Tyrese Bryant; LD29 candidate Candice Lucas; LD21 candidate Oscar Brewer, Jr.; LD29 candidate William Burgess



Brighton Town Council - Moderator Dr. Donna Harris; timekeeper Isobel Gillen; candidate Jesus Sowell; candidate Nate Salzman; candidate Rachel Rosner; candidate Christopher Werner.



# Calendar

Events sponsored by LWV-RMA are bolded below. The sponsors and other information on all events can be found by viewing the event on the LWV-RMA calendar. See link below.


## July

- 7 LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**
- 29 LWV-RMA Seneca Falls Day Trip #1**
- 30 LWV-RMA Seneca Falls Day Trip #2**

## Aug

- 4 LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**

Whenever you attend a League event, take pictures & email them to The Voter editor at [micketeditor@gmail.com](mailto:micketeditor@gmail.com).



**Note:** For links to Zoom meetings, please visit our website: [www.lwv-rma.org](http://www.lwv-rma.org)

For events scheduled after publication, event information, Zoom links, and registration (if required) see: [https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/calendar4\\_responsive.php?org\\_id=LWVR](https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/calendar4_responsive.php?org_id=LWVR)

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

## Come to First Friday for Some Social Time at I-Square in Irondequoit!

Join First Friday In Person Join us for social time at **I-Square in Irondequoit**. There's no agenda but we talk about everything League and lots of political discussions. A lot of great ideas originate at First Fridays and a lot of work gets done. And we have a lot of fun. Come when you can, leave when you must. No need to register, just come!



- July 7
- Aug 4
- Sept 1

First Friday happens every month.

Board of Directors meetings are currently via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times and contact Barbara Grosh for link.

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

For more complete information, consult our website at [www.LWV-RMA.org](http://www.LWV-RMA.org), call 262-3730 or e-mail us at [info@lwv-rma.org](mailto:info@lwv-rma.org)

PO Box 10573  
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[www.LWV-RMA.org](http://www.LWV-RMA.org)

A Monthly Publication of the  
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**AUGUST VOTER  
DEADLINE IS JULY 15!**

**League of Women Voters**  
The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.  
The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principal and in practice.  
League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the League’s purposes and policies.  
**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

**COMMITTEE CONTACTS**

Looking for info on a League committee or activity? Look no further!

- President** Barbara Grosh  
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- Book Club** Judy Weinstein  
[vote411@lww-rma.org](mailto:vote411@lww-rma.org)
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**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:**

Individual/Associate	.....	\$75
Household	.....	\$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	.....	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	.....	\$200
Student (full or part time at an accredited institution)	.....	FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730	.....	\$sliding \$scale
or send an email to: <a href="mailto:info@lww-rma.org">info@lww-rma.org</a>		