

# TheVOTER

**LWV**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF ROCHESTER METRO AREA

22 New Members  
Including  
4  
Students

Souls  
to the Polls  
at 2  
Churches

Voter  
Registration  
Information  
for 860  
New Citizens

**Celebrating Our 2023 Wins!**  
Thanks to LWV-RMA Members

8 Educational  
Forums

High School  
& College Visits  
Providing Election  
Information  
& Engaging  
Young Voters

Voter  
Registration  
& Information  
at 30+  
events

Candidate Forums  
for Rochester  
and 4 Towns

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**Mark Your Calendar and Join us on February 10th**  
**Members and prospective members are invited to a LWV-RMA Mini-Retreat**  
**See page 3 for details**

## President's Corner

### Making Political Donations is about to Get More Rewarding

The elections in 2024 will see the rollout of NY's new Public Campaign Finance Program. It will really change the political landscape in New York. Here are some of the details:

**Candidates for state offices will be eligible for matching public funds.** To participate, candidates must file paperwork and comply with some regulations regarding disclosure. So far, local Senators Jeremy Cooney and Samra Brouk have applied for matching funds, as have Assembly Members Josh Jenson and Demond Weeks.

To qualify for matching funds, candidates must demonstrate their viability by securing a minimum number of donations from prospective constituents.

- Candidates for governor must have at least 5,000 donors totaling at least \$500,000.
- Other statewide candidates must have at least 1,000 donors totaling at least \$100,000.
- Candidates for Senate must have at least 150 donations from constituents, totaling at least \$12K.
- Candidates for the Assembly must have at least 75 donations from constituents, totaling at least \$6K.

**Donations from donors who give less than \$250 will be matched 12-fold.** If you were to hold a house party for a candidate and invite ten friends from your district and you each donated \$10, the net revenue for the candidate would be \$100 plus a matching amount of twelve times that, for a total of \$1,300. Suddenly constituents with little money but an ability to mobilize some friends will be able to command attention from elected officials on a scale that previously only a few rich people could have commanded. Donations from non-constituents will not be matched, so politicians will be more encouraged than before to build a political base in their own constituency.

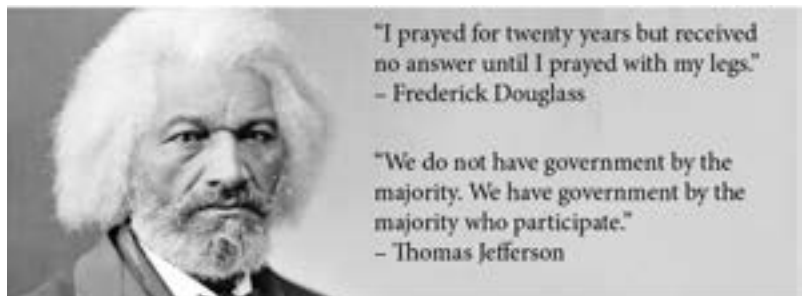
**Donations from donors who give over \$250 will not be matched.** That includes people who write one check or multiple checks. The Public Campaign Finance Board will assist candidates in keeping track of donors who may exceed that ceiling and allow the candidate to refund the difference to avoid costing the candidate the matching funds they may have collected from earlier donations. Only candidates who face an opponent on the ballot will be eligible for matching funds.

The LWVNYS has supported public finance of state elections for over a decade and is eager to see how it will change politics in NY. We hope that most candidates will participate. We hope that many voters of modest means will understand their increased power and get involved, both by donating money and by making their views known to the candidates, who should be more willing to listen than ever. We also anticipate that more people will run for office, since it will become so much easier to raise enough money to mount a campaign.

One final high point: In order to qualify for matching funds, candidates must agree to debate their opponents! Huzzah! Next year should be interesting.

#### Barbara Grosh

President LWV-RMA



### Election Disinformation

In September 2023, the New York State Attorney General's office issued a "Cease and Desist Notification" to the NY Citizens Audit Civic Fund. The group had been cited for confronting voters at their homes and accusing them of felony election fraud. In some cases the group members implied they were Board of Election Officials. The LWVNY has requested that they be informed if members learn of voters being approached and having their voting records questioned. If you learn of this occurring, please contact Barbara Grosh at [president@lww-rma.org](mailto:president@lww-rma.org)

## Mark Your Calendar: A Mini Retreat in February

We'll be having a multi-faceted meeting on Feb. 10, so get ready for some fun.

Members and prospective members are welcome to attend any part of the day.

So, mark your calendars and invite friends and family members to join you to find out how to become engaged with the League.

### MORNING OPEN HOUSE

Starting at 10AM, you'll be able to stroll among tables and learn about all the things we're up to and need help with.

- Voter registration (at high schools, colleges, neighborhood groups, festivals, etc)
- Souls to the Polls for Get Out the Vote
- New "Meet Your Ballot" program
- Putting together Vote411
- Putting together candidate forums
- Planning educational forums
- Lobbying our representatives in Albany
- Working to increase voting among those who are and/or were incarcerated
- Promoting voting in creative ways
- Building connections between the League and neighborhood groups
- Working toward a proposal for nonpartisan redistricting in Monroe County

This will be a great opportunity for members to catch up on all the League's doings, for new members and prospective members to learn about us and find their best niche(s). Plan on coming and plan on bringing a friend or inviting someone you know who would make a great League member.

### LUNCH WITH A PURPOSE

Over lunch we'll introduce League in Action, a phone app that LWVUS provides to us. The deadline for voters to choose a party and be able to vote in primaries in 2024 will be a few days away (Feb. 14). There will be lots of primaries this year: presidential, congressional, assembly and senate! We'll use the League in Action app to send texts from our phones to people in our own contact lists to remind them to pick (or change) a party and give them info on what that means and how to do it. In a few moments, you can reach a lot of people.

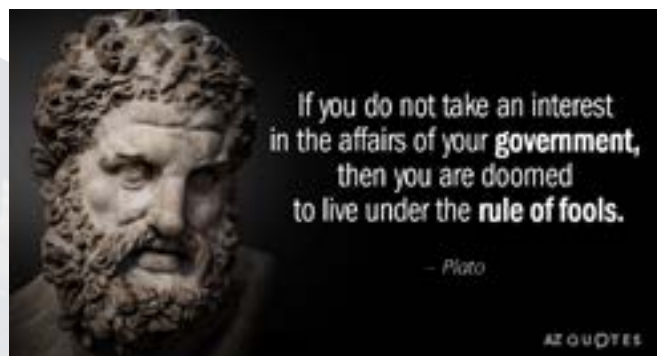
### PROGRAM PLANNING

In League terms, choosing our priorities for lobbying work is called program planning. Since 2021 we've been doing it on Zoom, but in the old days we met in person and we're returning to that this year. We'll have materials from LWVNYS and LWVUS on which they want input from us to coordinate the advocacy work of the League. It's our chance to give our input on state and local issues. What issues are close to your heart?

Further details on this event will be sent via Email, the February Voter, and posted on our Facebook page during January. But for now, mark your calendar and invite friends to join you.

### Barbara Grosh

*President LWV-RMA*





## Judy Weinstein, the 2022 Carrie Chapman Catt Award winner, is relocating from the Rochester area.

Judy joined LWV-RMA in 2001 and has been an active and engaged member since.

She has focused many of her efforts on the Government Committee including being Coordinator for VOTE411.org; Coordinator of Candidate Forums; Coordinator of advocacy teams that meet with lawmakers; and facilitator of discussion around LWVNY's Legislative Priorities at LWV-RMA Membership meetings. She has served as Webmaster, Zoom Manager and "Voter" proofreader. She started and continues to assist in running our Book Club. She had a long history with the League before coming to Rochester, and she often advised LWV-RMA presidents about how the League works.

Judy's engagement and dedication will be missed by all involved in the LWV-RMA.

Her departure from the area requires the following roles to be filled:

- Co Chairs for Vote 411
- Coordinator of Candidate Forums
- Database and Reporting Manager
- Coordinator for State Lobbying Efforts
- Zoom Coordinator for Educational and Candidate Forums
- Proofreader for The Voter

To learn more about these opportunities for engagement please contact Barbara Grosh at [president@lww-rma.org](mailto:president@lww-rma.org)

Editor's Note: I personally want to thank Judy for all the help and education about LWV-RMA she provided me when I took on the editor role. I know all members of LWV-RMA join me in wishing her many years of happiness and good health in her new home.

## Voter Services

Our members and volunteers should be proud of all that we accomplished in 2023 to register voters in low turnout neighborhoods. We tabled at 31 fairs, community meals and food cupboards in the city of Rochester, registering 94 voters.

Of course, as any of our volunteers know, the most common response from the public is "I am already registered". We took every one of those opportunities to remind voters of the upcoming local election and encourage them to check Vote 411 for candidate information.

We dressed for Halloween and distributed hundreds of door hangers at the Cathedral Community Trunk or Treat and at Halloween at the Market. Delta Sigma Theta alumni cosponsored printing our door hangers and distributed them in the 22nd Legislative District, around Hudson Avenue. Sister Marsha Allen and the residents of the Vineyard distributed thousands of door hangers in the areas of the 22nd LD that the Deltas did not reach.

Tess McFarland-Porter continues to do great work connecting with young voters.

We were invited by RIT's Center for Civic Engagement to offer training for student activists who want to help their classmates vote.

Her interactive presentation uplifted how heroic this kind of activism is and addressed voter suppression tactics aimed at young people. Tess's efforts have brought us new student members! We plan to return to RIT on January 26 for their spring semester Community Service Fair.

We have other big plans for 2024. Among the planned projects are two new collaborations (so far):

- Rochester Hope has invited us to register voters at their food pantry on the fourth Saturday of the month at St. Michael's church. This is a lively event with 250 to 300 people attending.
- To date, we have not found a Spanish speaking friend to help us communicate. We would love to work with this community as there is a particular need to correct misinformation about voting rights. Many residents who were born in Puerto Rico do not know that they may vote here in Monroe County. If you are bilingual or know someone who is, we'd appreciate connecting with you.
- We have also been invited to help Cameron Community Ministries with a voting rights unit at their summer school.

Let us know if you'd like to help and watch your emails for other events in 2024. June primaries will be here before you know it!

Submitted by Cathy Kane



*Cathy Kane, Jo Ann Kane-Demott and friends at the Cathedral Community Trunk or Treat.*

## Naturalizations

November brought the League to three Naturalization Ceremonies. On November 8, JoAnn Kane DeMott and Anita Hawkins attended an 11:00 am oath ceremony at the George Eastman House Museum. There were 77 candidates for citizenship. Thirty- four countries were represented.

Tamara Minter and Margret Roberts represented the League at the Nov. 14, 11:00 am ceremony. Thirty-nine candidates for citizenship were at the Monroe County Office Building. Twenty- three countries were represented.

On Nov. 14 at 2:00 pm, 23 candidates were naturalized at the Federal Building. Mark Pedersen officiated. Margaret Supinski represented the League. Fifteen countries were represented.

The League has been pleased to be invited to attend Naturalization Ceremonies in Monroe County for many years by USCIS. Our volunteers at the ceremonies talk about the League and the importance of voting. They also distribute voter registration forms to candidates and help them register to vote. About 860 forms were distributed from February-Nov. 2023 with 450 returned forms at the ceremonies. Many candidates choose to mail their own forms.

Our main goal in 2024 is to register more voters. Anyone interested in volunteering to help register the candidates for citizenship, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com.

Many thanks to all our volunteers: Sheila Abeling, JoAnn Kane DeMott, Marcia Eisenberg, Beth Feldman, Anita Hawkins, Mary Menz, Tamara Minter, Margret Roberts, Marilyn Rosen, Katherine Smith, Margaret Supinski, Lois Winterkorn

### Submitted by Sheila Abeling



November 11 Ceremonies  
-Top Row Morning; Bottom  
Row Afternoon

## Update on January Book Club Readings

The book club is taking a different route for its next meeting, scheduled for January: we will read a few articles rather than a whole book. The articles are about Anne Braden and her involvement in the racial justice movement in the American South.

There are two articles about Anne Braden:

*THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART ONE: FINDING HER WAY TO THE MOVEMENT*

*THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART TWO: A LIFE IN THE MOVEMENT;*

as well as an article about SCEF, an organization in which she was active:

<https://crossculturalsolidarity.com/the-southern-conference-educational-fund-scef/>.

More on the Southern Conference Educational Fund can be found at Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF)

If this topic interests you, please join us on Thursday, January 18 at 4:30 PM via zoom. The zoom link will be sent prior to that date.



## Souls to the Polls

The LWV-RMA and RocACTS began a “Souls to the Polls” initiative this year. First Genesis Baptist Church and Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, both of which are in low voter turnout areas, participated. The turnout at First Genesis was not what was hoped for, but the team took the opportunity to publicize early voting to those passing through the area.

The team at Trinity Emmanuel hosted 60 people for dinner and gave 30 of them a ride to the nearest early polling site.

Thanks are due to all our LWV and RocACTS volunteers and to our sponsor churches, who opened their doors and facilities to this pilot program. In addition, we are thankful for the sponsors who supported this program with resources:

- University of Rochester: Donation of shuttle bus and driver at Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
- University of Rochester students: Volunteers to distribute flyers and door hangers in the Trinity Emmanuel neighborhood.
- 1199 SEIU Healthcare Workers East: Donation for shuttle bus at First Genesis Baptist Church
- Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority: Volunteers to distribute flyers and door hangers in the First Genesis neighborhood.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority: Volunteers to assist with meal service at Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

We received good press both through the local news channels and the Democrat and Chronicle.

This initial roll-out of Souls to the Polls demonstrated the importance of engaging with neighborhood partners in order for “Get Out the Vote” to have an impact. We look forward to incorporating our learnings into new engagements with communities that increase our outreach.

Our planning team will begin discussing options for 2024 in January. We would love to have you join us. Contact Kim Byers at [kimbyers512@gmail.com](mailto:kimbyers512@gmail.com) --- your ideas make us stronger!

**Submitted by Kim Byers**



*Volunteers and participants enjoying dinner, activities and a ride to the polls*



*Left : Pink Steppers encouraged the crowd at Souls to the Polls at First Genesis. Right: Kim Byers, Barbara Grosh, First Genesis Co-Pastor Diane Johnson, and Barbara Murphy*



## Welcome New Members!

We welcomed the following twenty two new members to LWV-RMA in 2023. Four of the new members are high school or college students (indicated with an \* by their name).

Khamaryia Bouie*	H. Robert Herman	Carolyn Massey
Rachel Brill*	Sarah Johnstone	Deborah McLean
	Bijaya Khadka	Patricia Partridge
Tonya Brooks	Nancy Korvin	Bobbie Reif
Shanique Byrd	April Laskey	Benjamin Smith*
Daren Chentow		Stephanie Watson
Sally Combs		Pamela Watson-Breedlove
Michele Coxander		
Adine Demond		
Erica Gentile*		
Amy Hahn		



## Election Workers Wanted

I joined the League of Women Voters about 4 years ago. I decided it was time to put some of my concerns and complaints into action. Working with the League has given me opportunities to help register voters, fulfilling one of my objectives.

About 18 months ago, I trained to become an election worker. This gives me the chance to ensure that the votes are counted. I worked both the primary in the spring and the general election in the fall.

In order to become an election worker, you must be registered as a Democrat or Republican to ensure bipartisan participation. The training to become an election worker in Monroe County is quite easy. It takes about 2 hours (in person or online). I was assigned at my request to be close to my house on election day. It is a long day, starting at 5 am to set up before the polls open at 6 and then close down the site after the polls close at 9pm. However, it is reassuring to work on a bipartisan team. Generally, the voters are polite and grateful for our service. We are also paid in a timely manner for the day.

It is gratifying to help a young voter cast their vote or explain the ballot to a voter. Consider being an election worker or encourage someone you know! In 2024, in New York State, there will be 3 elections (presidential primaries in April, state and local primaries in June, and the general election in November) so lots of workers will be required.

All the information and the sign up forms can be found on the Monroe County Board of Elections website at Monroe County, NY - Poll Workers.

**Submitted by Karen Funk**

## New York State Redistricting Update

After two-plus years, the State redistricting process continues to plod along. This is where things stood on December 14th.

New York's highest court, the Court of Appeals, issued a decision on the latest redistricting lawsuit in December. In a 4-3 vote, they ruled that the Independent Redistricting Commission should draw new Congressional districts – again. The new districts will take effect for the 2024 elections. IRC was directed to prepare a new map and submit it to the Legislature for consideration by February 28th.

Previously, the Commission had announced that no new hearings will be held prior to drawing a new map.



## 2023-2024 LWV-RMA Book Club Reading List

Book Club members meet on Zoom at 4:30 on the third Thursday of the months shown below. If you would like to participate in the discussion of one of our books or join the Book Club, send an email to Judy Weinstein at [vote411@lww-rma.org](mailto:vote411@lww-rma.org) to be sent the Zoom link. Participation is not limited to League members.

January 18	<p>Two articles about Anne Braden:</p> <p><a href="#">THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART ONE: FINDING HER WAY TO THE MOVEMENT</a></p> <p><a href="#">THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART TWO: A LIFE IN THE MOVEMENT;</a></p> <p>As well as an article about SCEF, an organization in which she was active:</p> <p><a href="https://crossculturalsolidarity.com/the-southern-conference-educational-fund-scef/">https://crossculturalsolidarity.com/the-southern-conference-educational-fund-scef/</a></p>
March 21	Poverty by America, Matthew Desmond (led by Barbara Grosh)
May 16	American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis, Adam Hochschild (led by Judy Wadsworth)
July 18	Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America, Heather Cox Richardson (led by Deb Gordon)

## The Voter

This issue marks my first anniversary as the Editor for The Voter. I have enjoyed working with the contributors, proof readers and others involved in putting each issue together. I want the newsletter to be interesting to all members, so I would appreciate any feedback or ideas you have for topics that should be covered. Please feel free to drop me a note at [micketeditor@gmail.com](mailto:micketeditor@gmail.com). And please send in pictures of events you attend!

**Mary Micket**

## Treasurer's Report

We have all found ourselves managing budgets from time to time -- our personal budget, a family budget, or part or all of a business budget. The work of the League's Treasurer is very similar: it's pretty much about being organized, ethical, and collaborating with the Board and other League teams to align the money coming in with the money going out.

There is one big difference: spending less than planned is not necessarily a good thing. We want to spend your money wisely, but we are not here to invest it or turn a profit on it or stash it away -- we're here to use it to make a difference, right now, right here.

To make sure the Rochester Metropolitan Area gets the full benefit of your dues and donations (thank you so much for those, by the way!), this year we completely redesigned our annual budget to make it clear who was accountable for each line item. Groups, such as Voter Services and Membership, are able to determine what actions they believe will bring value to our community and then determine what money they will need to accomplish those goals. From now on, it should be much easier to combine building an action plan for the next year with building our annual budget.

We've continued to streamline the Treasurer's work to make it less burdensome and easier to transition, in order to encourage people to volunteer for this role in the future. The new Treasurer may also be part of the team that will handle our transition from a 501(c) 4 to a 501(c) 3, if that occurs. She should also find her work made simpler by the shift of membership (and handling dues) from the local to the national League early in 2025.

If you are interested in the Treasurer's position please feel free to contact the Nominating Chair, Mary Hussong-Kallen [nominations@lww-rma.org](mailto:nominations@lww-rma.org) or me to discuss the role and responsibilities.

**Submitted by Linda Saalman**



# 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.


## January

- 5 (Fri) **LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**
- 10 (Wed) **LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M via Zoom)**
- 18 (Thur) **LWV-R MA Book Club: two articles about Anne Braden: THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART ONE: FINDING HER WAY TO THE MOVEMENT THE LIFE OF ANNE BRADEN, PART TWO: A LIFE IN THE MOVEMENT; As well as an article about SCEF, an organization in which she was active: <https://crossculturalsolidarity.com/the-southern-conference-educational-fund-scef/>**

## February

- 2 (Fri) **LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**
- 3 (Sat) **LWVNYS – 2024 Legislative Hot Topics (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM via Zoom)**
- 10 (Sat) **LWV-RMA Planning and Program Mini Retreat (details to follow- check website)**
- 14 (Wed) **LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M via Zoom)**

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!*

## Join First Friday 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.

### First Friday

- January 5
- February 2
- March 1
- April 5
- May 3
- June 7



**Come when you can. Leave when you must.**

Look closely to see how participants came and left during the August 4 First Friday gathering.

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)

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A Monthly Publication of the  
League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area

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**FEBRUARY VOTER  
DEADLINE IS JANUARY 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  
[president@lwv-rma.org](mailto:president@lwv-rma.org)  
**Book Club** Judy Weinstein  
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*The Voter is a  
monthly publication  
of the LWV-RMA  
Editor,  
Mary Micket  
Graphic Editor,  
Judy Wadsworth  
Layout/Design,  
Chris Burleigh*

**Join the League Today!**



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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@lwv-rma.org">info@lwv-rma.org</a>		