

TheVOTER



Inside This Issue

President's Corner.....	2	Postcard Writing Opportunity.....	9
Lifetime Members Recognized.....	3	On-line Calendar Information.....	9
Annual Meeting Thank You.....	3	First Friday.....	9
Board of Directors	4	Committee Reports:	
New Board Member Introductions.....	5	Membership and Naturalizations.....	10
Annual Meeting Business.....	5	Voter Services.....	11
Making Democracy Work Award.....	6	Youth Services, Forums.	12
You Make Us Proud Award.....	6	Candidate Forums, Advocacy.....	13
Students Inside Albany Report.....	7	Criminal Justice, The Voter.....	14
Christine Burleigh Obituary	8	Leadership.....	15
Book Club Report.....	8		

President's Corner

Celebrating a 100 year anniversary inevitably leads you to think about what the League has done and how the League has changed over 100 years. The early years of the League were spent convincing women to vote and learning how to be informed voters. It was feminism 102, women deciding one by one to stand up and be counted. Now a higher percentage of women vote than men at each income and educational level and in every racial and ethnic category. The League was a major part of engaging women in the political process.

It took many members across the country to make that happen. The limiting factors for meeting our current goals of "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy" are the number of members we have and the amount of time they can devote to League activities.

At one of the first League events I attended in 2010, an elderly member told me it was so nice to see a young person. She bemoaned how few younger women joined since the advent of the "back to work movement". The women like me, flooding into the workforce, didn't join the League and membership shrank. Members aged and local Leagues shut down all over the country.

We need to find out how the League can function when members are in the workplace and/or involved in multiple activities. Recently, we've had a number of young women join, and a few have even agreed to serve on the board. But it hasn't worked well for any of them *so far*. Some combination of how life feels when you're a worker and maybe a parent, and possibly active in other community groups, as well as how the League works (which is a history of depending on people for whom League work is a passion,) has proved difficult. The same thing is true of various other dimensions in which we're experimenting with expanding our profile. We've had some success at attracting Black women to join the League, but less at keeping them.

I invite us all to ponder what the next hundred years of the League can look like, locally, in NY state and nationally. I think the keys to League survival and that will let us keep working toward our mission are the following:

- Find ways for members with only a little time to feel useful and productive.
- Keep finding ways to minimize the overhead work of running a League, so that members' time can be mostly spent on mission-driven work.
- Use technology to multiply our power and connect our Leagues. Many of our programs are on Zoom and could be shared more broadly.
- Connect members to small, meaningful action. If you can do a small, meaningful task, like hanging a poster about early voting sites in a library or laundromat, you're on the right side of history.

If you have ideas to help us sustain our organization and meet our goals, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Barbara Grosh
(585) 415-8251

Lifetime Members Recognized with Carrie Chapman Catt Award

The Carrie Chapman Catt Award is given each year to a member of the League for meritorious service. This year is special, however, in that our local League is now 100 years old. The recipients of the award this year are our lifetime (50+ year members) in acknowledgment of their long term support of the League of Women Voters. There are sixteen members who have been with the LWV since 1974 or before. Five of them were able to attend the Annual Meeting and accept the award (see picture on page 1), but all sixteen have earned this recognition.

On behalf of all the Board of Directors and all the members, THANK YOU for your steadfast loyalty to LWV-RMA. We can only do the work because of your work.

Dayle Bird	Sandra Frankel	Sara Liebschutz	Terry Schwartz
Georgia DeGregorio	June Glaser	Gail Mott	Jean Weaver
Shirley Eberly	Joyce Herman	Jane Romal	Elizabeth Webb
Mary L Finger	Phyllis Korn	Susan Schwardt	Ann Weintraub

2024 Annual Meeting: A Mix of Business and Fun

The Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, June 6, at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word. Thank You to the following who made the event a success for everyone:

Planning Committee: Kim Byers, Pamela Watson-Breedlove, Pamela Schenk, Margaret Supinski

Check in and Greeters: Susan Touhsaent, Judie Fay

Set Up: Rich Byers, Margret Roberts

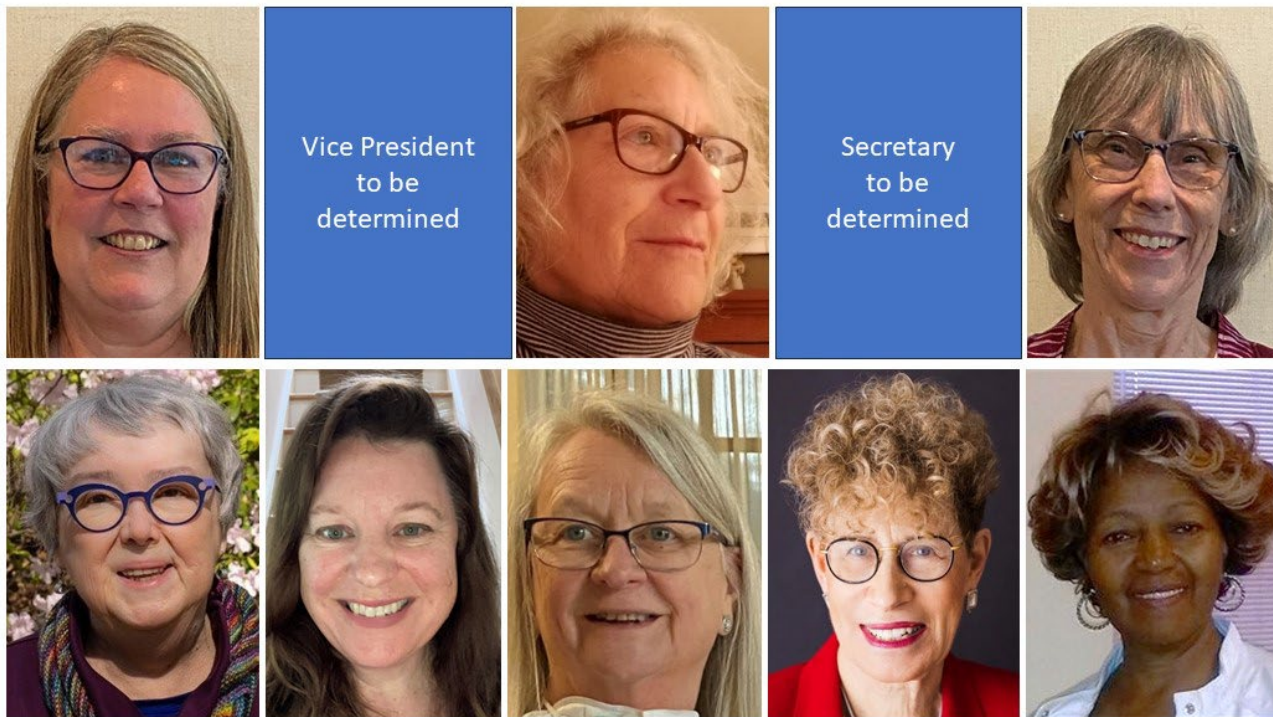
Clean Up: Cathy Kane, Deb Gordon

T-Shirts: Judy Sternberg **Catering:** Coffee Connections; **Flowers:** Wisteria Florists



There was plenty of time for everyone to mingle with old and new friends

2024-2025 Board of Directors



Top Row: Barbara Grosh, President; Constance Flahive, Treasurer; Cathy Kane, Director

Bottom Row: Directors: Deb Leary; Tess McFarland-Porter; Mary Micket; Karen Morris; Carolyn O'Neil

Board Openings

Three new Board Members were elected at the Annual Meeting, Deb Leary, Karen Morris and Carolyn O'Neil. The board generally meets monthly in the evening for about ninety minutes, via Zoom. It is a dedicated and fun team. Listed below are three roles that are still available for the 2024-2026 term.

If you are interested in learning more about these roles and potentially joining the Board, please contact Mary Hussong-Kallen mmhkallen@gmail.com or Barbara Grosh

Vice President: Respond to requests when the President is unavailable; other responsibilities to be defined by candidate's interests; position does not imply succession to the President's role.

Secretary: Take minutes at Board and Annual meetings; collect and issue committee reports as required; issue Thank-you letters for donations; respond to phone messages.

Communication Director: Establish and lead committee to ensure consistent messaging; coordinate communication efforts on social media including updates to various sites

Meet the New Board Members

Deb Leary is a retired Librarian who spent her career with the Rochester Public Library. She is a proud resident of the 19th Ward in the City. She has two grown children and 5 nearly-grown grandkids. She is a member of the Genesee Yacht Club's book club, the 19th Ward Women's Investment Club, and Friends of the Arnett Library, as well as LWV. And she is now Chair of the LWV-RMA Membership Committee. She plans to gather a small committee to work on at least two fun annual membership recruitment events each year. Let her know if you would like to join the team!

Karen Morris recently retired from 29 years as Brighton Town Judge. She strongly believes in equal application of the law. She continues as a full time faculty member at Monroe Community College where she teaches Business Law, Hospitality Law, and Legal Environment of Law. She is the author of textbooks, a treatise for lawyers on New York Criminal Law, and a column titled *Legally Speaking* in Hotel Management Magazine. Her favorite authoring project is *Law Made Fun through Harry Potter's Adventures*. Her two favorite volunteer activities are performing children's magic at not-for-profit agencies, and serving free food at Salem Nutrition Center. She has won numerous awards, most recently Outstanding Jurist from the Monroe County Bar Association.

Rev. Dr. Carolyn L. O'Neil is an ordained minister in the Baptist church. She received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in 2010. She also worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse in various health institutions in Youngstown, Ohio. After retirement in 2016 Carolyn moved to the Rochester, NY area to be nearer to family. She has enjoyed working in the church and community since coming to this area. She has worked in various ministries at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, has been an ombudsman for New York State, has been a volunteer tutor at Literacy Rochester and, most recently, has begun to work with the League of Women Voters. Carolyn gets the most joy out of trying new things and helping others to reach their goals.

Annual Meeting Business

Members at the Annual Meeting unanimously approved the following:

- The slate of Board of Directors.
- The Nominating Committee Chair and non-Board Member (Mary Hussong-Kallen and Sheila Abeling). The Board will appoint two additional members.
- Conversion of the League from a 501(c)(4) organization to a 501(c)(3) and the related Incorporation and Bylaw changes.
- The proposed 2024-2025 budget.

Making Democracy Work Award

Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) ROAR the Vote team was presented with the Making Democracy Work Award. Kathryn Cilano, Director, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, accepted the award on behalf of the group. Kathryn was joined at the meeting by Elizabeth Schwartz, Assistant Director, Women & Gender Programs and Outreach, Center for Campus Life and Igor Polotai, an RIT student. Grace Carlic, Assistant Director, Civic Engagement, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, who works closely with LWV-RMA Youth Services chair Tess McFarland-Porter, was unable to attend.

After the inception of ROAR the Vote in 2016, RIT's voting rates increased from 32% to 53% in 2020. While RIT still falls below the national average's 66% voting rate – this increase outpaced peer institutions. In the same time period, 70.2% of RIT students were registered to vote; however, only 75.6% of those who registered, voted on election day. The work in the upcoming 2024 elections will be to not only increase voter registration, but also to help students craft voting strategies.

Kathryn stated, "LWV-RMA ensures that our coalition is up to date on local and state ballot issues, policy, and best practices. Over the past two years, Grace Carlic has been instrumental in working with the LWV-RMA to fold your invaluable resources into our campus-wide coalition through trainings for our committee members and tabling sessions while strengthening ties between our two organizations."



Top Row: Kathryn Cilano;
Kathryn, Elizabeth Schwartz
and Igor Polotai

Bottom Row: Barb Murphy,
Carolyn O'Neil and Patricia
Partridge

You Make Us Proud Award

Barbara Murphy; Scott Forsyth; Carolyn O'Neil; Margaret Supiniski and Patricia Partridge were recognized at the Annual Meeting with the "You Make Us Proud" Award for their contributions to the success of the LWV-RMA during the past year. Congratulations and *THANK YOU*.

Students Inside Albany (SIA)

Hannah Loughner, who is a student member, represented LWV-RMA at this year's League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation's immersive Students Inside Albany program.

In her report Hannah stated, "This was overall such a rewarding experience and it opened my eyes to new perspectives and helped me understand the ins and outs of the New York state government. I think this is an opportunity that should be available to all students. Education about government is crucial for the young adults of today. We are the future of democracy and have the responsibility to shape the world we want to live in."

At the Annual Meeting, Heather told attendees that while she will be pursuing a Biology degree at Geneseo in September, the SIA experience has her considering a minor in Political Science.

If you know of a high school who may wish to participate in next year's SIA program, please contact Tonya Davis at tanyadavis07@yahoo.com.



Top Row: Hannah and Tonya Davis; Bottom Row: Hannah with Assemblyman Brian Manktelow and State Senator Samra Brouk

Christina Burleigh Obituary



After a long illness, Christina Burleigh passed away on May 16, 2024 at home surrounded by her family.

League member Chris is best known to LWV-RMA members as the layout director/designer for our newsletter, *The Voter*, a position she held for many years.

In that role she shared her expertise and creativity that she developed in her business, Write Type Publishing. She helped to prepare LWV-RMA newsletters until just a month before she died.

Condolences can be shared with Chris's husband Rodney Burleigh at 447 Grand Avenue, Rochester, NY 14609.

The family suggested that donations in her memory be made to LWV-RMA, PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610.

Book Club discusses: *American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis*

On May 16, the LWV-RMA book club met via Zoom to discuss Adam Hochschild's *American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis*. This book chronicles instances from 1917-1921 of government-supported paranoia, xenophobia, and vigilantism that involved organized attacks on 'enemies' at home—immigrants, unionists, socialists, Blacks, and others.

The group will meet next on July 18 via Zoom to discuss historian Heather Cox Richardson's *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America*.

If you would like to participate in the discussion or join the Book Club, email bookclub@lww-rma.org. Meetings will resume in September.



GET OUT THE VOTE

Third Church AntiRacism Team

POSTCARD-WRITING MONDAYS

- Mondays in June and July Noon-1:30 pm
- [Equal Grounds Coffee House](#) 750 South Ave
- Drop in anytime -- materials provided
- Write with us or pick up cards to take home

Writing postcards
to
voters of color
in voter
suppression states



Calendar of LWV-RMA Upcoming Activities

- Check the calendar on our website to learn about League events
- You do not need to be a member, or sign in to access the calendar.
- The online calendar is updated frequently and is more up to date than the newsletter can provide.
- By accessing the calendar, you can click on an event and obtain information and register
- You can see future (or past) months activities by easily using the < > buttons

Access the Calendar [here](#).



First Fridays

- Held monthly
- At I-Square in Irondequoit
- 11:30 to ? Come and go as you can
- No agenda but lots gets done
- Great way to make new contacts

Whenever you attend a League event, take pictures & email them to the Voter editor micketeditor@gmail.com so we can share all the good works of the LWV-RMA.

Annual Committee Reports

Membership

Our League has 148 members, up slightly from 142 last year. Members can access the membership directory by logging into the website. If you would like a hard copy of the membership directory, you may request one and we will mail it to you.

Members who joining in 2023-2024 are:

Barbara Brody	Susan Miller	Kim Schmidt
Maggie Brown	Grace Monahan	Barbara Staropoli
Alan Dozoretz	Kathleen Murphy	Amy Stockwell
Judie Fay	Carolyn O'Neil	Patricia Willis
Cindy Fleischer	Penelope Pankow	
Kathleen Garrant	Erin Park	
Marianne Gocker	Susan Porter	
Anna Jarvis	Nicole Reisig	
Hannah Loughner	Carrie Remis	
Lisa Maynard	Cheryl Robinson	
Alexandra Meyer	Ellie Rosenbloom	

Barbara Grosh

Naturalization

The United States Citizens Immigration Services (USCIS) invited the League to attend 19 ceremonies from September 2023 thru April 2024. There was a noticeable reduction in the number of applicants compared to previous years. Our volunteers met 782 candidates at the ceremonies.

Our volunteers helped the new citizens to fill out the voter registration forms and discussed the importance of voting. 369 voter registration forms were completed and delivered to the Monroe County Board of Elections (MCBOE) on the day of the ceremonies. The other new citizens were encouraged to complete the forms promptly and mail or deliver them to the MCBOE.

Our volunteers for those ceremonies were: Sheila Abeling, JoAnn Kane-DeMott, Marcia Eisenberg, Beth Feldman, Anita Hawkins, Mary Menz, Tamara Minter, Margret Roberts, Marilyn Rosen, Katherine Smith, and Margaret Supinski. All League members are invited to attend Naturalization Ceremonies as observers. The schedule can be found on our website.

Sheila Abeling

Voter Services

The Voter Services team is a group of dedicated volunteers. Their contributions over the last year made our registration and GOTV events successful.

The focus of voter services activities this year has been on election districts with low registration and voter turnout rates such as Legislative Districts 22, 25, 28 and 29. In addition, we have also responded to requests for voter registration outside of those districts.

Voter Registration

Events took place at a variety of venues such as:

- Several community meals and food pantries including Mustard Seed Meals at The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, St. Theodore's Church, House of Mercy and Cameron Ministries among others.
- Health fairs at Jordan Health Center and Montgomery Neighborhood Center.
- National Voter Registration Day at Mendon Public and Central Public Libraries
- Southeast Area Coalition Ladybug Festival
- Hispanic Heritage Celebration at MAG
- Hall of Justice Career and College Fair
- Monroe Community College, RIT and SUNY Brockport

Get Out the Vote

- 600 Vote411 cards were distributed to the thirty-two libraries in Monroe County.
- 10,000 door hangers were distributed prior to the general election last year, with the help of staff and volunteers at The Vineyard Farm.
- Trunk or Treat* at the Public Market and Sacred Heart Cathedral
- ROC Freedom Riders
- The League once again joined postcard writing campaigns organized by The Center for Common Ground to get out the vote in other states.
- Barbara Grosh received a grant to encourage new citizens to vote. She developed a program entitled Meet Your Ballot and is presenting it on a monthly basis at Public Libraries.

Support for RocACTS and Souls to the Polls

In collaboration with RocACTS and 1199 SEIU, Souls to the Polls events were offered at First Genesis Baptist Church and Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. A meal and transportation to the polls were provided. Based on our experience, we are considering a different format for these events for the coming general election.



Voter Services Report (continued from prior page)

Additional Projects:

- Larry Burnette, a digital marketing specialist, volunteered to help create communication strategies for us. The first project involved election security in New York State.
- We made a few new additions to our tabling materials including Spanish language Vote411 sheets, coloring pages for children to use while their parents are registering, and QR code handouts for Vote411, Rockthevote.org and Vote.org.
- Management tools were created including a spreadsheet to track events, contacts and outcomes.
- Tips for Volunteers and training materials were added to the Voter Services information of the Get Involved section of our website.

Cathy Kane and Deb Gordon

Youth Services

At LWV-RMA, we touch the future by energizing young voters by:

- Setting up our voter registration tables at area high schools and colleges
- Teaching interactive classroom lessons showing how ordinary people have fought for the vote
- Recruiting enthusiastic student members,
- We've collaborated with college civic engagement clubs.
- We've collaborated with Girl Scout troops.
- We've trained students to conduct their own voter registration drives.

Since 2020 when New York began allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote, our work with young voters has become more fun than ever. Now, when those who pre-register in Monroe County turn 18, they get a birthday card from us! In the spirit of defending democracy, the card reminds them they are officially on the voter rolls and offers non-partisan links to help them become educated voters.

Theresa McFarland-Porter

Educational Forums

- The following forums were offered:
 - Going Upstate: What does living with so many prison nearby mean to us?
 - Is it time for rent stabilization in Rochester?
 - What do NY kids learn about our racist history? And what do you know? 2-part series
- *Barbara Grosh*

Students Inside Albany

Hannah Loughner, a new member recruited by our Youth Services committee represented LWV-RMA at the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation's immersive Students Inside Albany program.

Tanya Davis

Candidate Forums

In the fall of 2023, we invited candidates from all contested elections to participate in online candidate forums. We hosted forums in four towns (East Rochester, Penfield, Pittsford, and Irondequoit) all of which were new towns for us to organize forums.

In Spring 2023 we organized candidate forums for the primaries for the Brighton Town Council, the 21st and 29th County Legislative districts, and the East and Northwest City Council districts. We cosponsored a forum for school board candidates.

Several of the elections where we'd held forums were very close, flipping repeatedly as the votes were counted. It felt good to have held forums, and though the live audience was sometimes small, to watch the post-forum viewing surge grow beyond anything we've seen in the old days of in-person forums.

Barbara Grosh

Advocacy

The main task of the Advocacy Committee is to meet with New York State legislators and/or their aides in the Rochester Metro region both, pre-budget and post-budget. This year we met via zoom with six assembly members in March. As of this writing, the committee has met in May with six of the eight Assembly members and three of the four senators (fourth is scheduled for June 5).

The topics of our conversations are determined by the 2024 New York State LWV Legislative Agenda. We are further directed by Erica Smitka, Deputy Director (Erica@lwvny.org). Erica communicates the issues to be discussed and holds Zoom meetings for chairs to explain the budget process and further discuss LWV issues. Scott Forsyth and Barb Murphy are this year's Rochester Metro co-chairs.

Pre-budget, we had rich conversations with all four senators and six assembly members about this year's issues: 1) funding to be kept in the budget for elections, public funding of political campaigns, and increases we wanted to see to implement the Doctor John Flateau Voting and Elections Database Act; 2) the environment, including the Bigger Better Bottle Bill; 3) education financing (we opposed Hochul's proposal to change the current formula); 4) healthcare, especially the governor's proposal to cut \$2.55 an hour from home care workers. A summary of each meeting was sent to Erica, who is then able to get a sense of the views of the entire state. Every single legislator agreed with us about the education and healthcare funding. Opinions varied about the funding for political campaigns and the environmental legislation for various reasons.

Post-budget, we have focused on: Electronic Registration Information Center or ERIC (S6173B/A7052C); Democracy During Detention (S6875/A9612); Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353); Packaging and Reduction Act (S4246B/A5322B). ERIC has passed the Senate. We also heard pro and con views on the other bills and convinced one Assembly member to co-sponsor the two environmental bills and other legislators to give those serious considerations. We were also invited by a couple of the legislators to meet in person this summer.

We also asked what issues each legislator is sponsoring. All conversations were enlightening and reveal great respect for the work of the League of Women Voters. These are important conversations. *Barbara Murphy*

Criminal Justice

Voting in Monroe County Jail

LWV-RMA and its ROC ACTS and NYCLU Genesee Valley Chapter partners made a number of attempts to establish productive dialogue, obtain information, and offer assistance to Monroe County Jail's (MCJ) "Voting in Jail Program". These attempts were unsuccessful.

We are pleased to see a recent study by Fordham University which found that across the state less than 1% of those with the right to vote in county jails actually cast ballots in the 2020 General Election, but in the MCJ over 3% of eligible voters cast ballots. The study went on to credit MCJ's robust election assistance procedures. Among the recommendations included in the study are 1)an across-the-board need for basic civic education classes in county jails and 2)advocacy for legislation to require standardized voter access procedures in all county jails.

LWVNYS Criminal Justice Reform Committee (CJRC)

The following three bills were recommended by the CJRC for LWVNYS priority status in 2024 but were not included in the Pre-Budget Packet.

No Slavery in NY Act S225C/A3412C

Fairness & Opportunity for Incarcerated Workers Act S6747/A7452

Eliminate Mandatory Minimums Act S6471/A2036

The following bills remain supported by LWVNYS but are not prioritized in 2024.

Fair and Timely Parole S.307/A.162

Elder Parole S.2423 /A.2035

Voting in NYS County Jails

Hazel Weiser, author of the LWVNYS Survey of NYS County Jails, is now in the process of producing a toolkit to be rolled out by LWVNYS to all local chapters. Members of the CJRC are assisting Hazel with input and editing.

Judy Sternberg

The Voter

Ten issues of the LWV-RMA newsletter, The Voter, are published annually. Two proofreaders—Barbara Grosh and Mary Hussong-Kallen assist with this responsibility. Mary Micket coordinates and edits the articles and publication. Judy Wadsworth provides the graphics and pictures. Unfortunately, Chris Burleigh who provided layout services for many years and through April of this year, passed away in May. Any members interested in joining the team would be welcome and should contact Mary Micket.

Mary Micket

PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610
585-262-3730
www.LWV-RMA.org

NEXT VOTER DEADLINE: 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.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Director	Tess McFarland-Porter (2023-2025)
Director	Mary Micket (2023-2025)
Director	Deb Leary (2024-2026)
Director	Carolyn O'Neil (2024-2026)
Director	Karen Morris (2024-2026)

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

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president@lwv-ram.org

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communications@lwv-rma.org

Election services/Naturalization: Sheila Abeling
Sheiler162007@gmail.com

Advocacy: Barb Murphy / Scott Forsythe
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Membership: Deb Leary
membership@lwv-rma.org

Nominating: Mary Hussong-Kallen

VOTE411:
nominations@lwv-rma.org
vote411@lwv-rma.org

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*The Rochester Voter is
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*Editor,
Mary Micket*

*Graphic Editor,
Judy Wadsworth*

Join the League Today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

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Check Amount: _____

Membership Level: _____

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League of Women Voters/RMA to:
LWV-RMA
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610
Or join us online at:

https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org_id=LWVR

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual / Associate	\$75.00
Household	\$105.00
Susan B. Anthony / Frederick Douglas	\$150.00
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200.00
Student (full or part time at accredited institution)	FREE
Low income, call office at 585-262-3730 or send email to info@lwv-rma.org	Sliding Scale