

TheVOTER

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF ROCHESTER METRO AREA

Educating the Public
Every Way We Can



A key League mission – providing relevant information is especially important now due to :

- ✓ Less focus on civics in schools
- ✓ Prevalence of disinformation

LWV-RMA educates via printed materials, voter registration, **VOTE 411**, and public educational forums.

(We have strong committees working on these projects but they can always use more help!)

Can you help us
expand this vital
service?

We need to expand some familiar channels (educational forums) and develop some new ones.

Those might include short videos aimed at particular types of voters, either containing information they need or messages on the power of voting and other forms of civic engagement.

What ideas do you have?? Interested in helping us develop an educational plan? Possibly committing to making a piece of it happen?

Join an initial Zoom meeting on Wednesday January 7 at 3pm. [Register here](#). If you cannot attend but want to join the effort, email Engagement@LWV-RMA.org and we will put you on the team.

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President's Letter

Post-Election Thoughts

Our League managed to organize five debates for local elections in October -- for City, Town or Village Board candidates in East Rochester, Pittsford, Penfield, Rush, and Rochester. I learned a lot from them. For example, I learned from a candidate in Penfield (where I live) that towns can declare themselves pro-housing and qualify for state assistance to help them achieve more housing. Having learned about it at the Penfield debate, we asked the candidates in Rush if Rush should declare itself pro-housing. They seemed leery of it initially ("we all moved to Rush to live in a rural area") but then talked their way around to it ("there's no housing suitable for elders who need to downsize"). It made me happy to hear that we can have open-hearted civil discussions about what our towns want and need, that we can problem-solve and that things can improve. I might start listening to my own town board's meetings, so I can see how it develops. By the way, the LWVNYS is offering training for those who'd like to attend public meetings on the League's behalf. It's a great way to become informed.

I served as a poll worker. Democracy is a fascinating process! I was at a polling place near Clinton Avenue. During the 15 hours that the polls were open, we had fewer than 50 voters come in. Eight full time workers were on hand to make voting smooth. Democracy is expensive! Everyone seemed happy with the new voting machines. How many times do you hear that everyone is happy with change?! Those who voted were eager to do something to make our country better. It gave me hope for turnout in the midterms. I was delighted to see so many towns who had a lot of choices on the ballot. Despite (or maybe because of) the very disagreeable moment we find ourselves in politically, citizens are waking up and getting involved.

Now that my hair isn't on fire trying to orchestrate debates among the 180+ candidates, my thoughts are turning to civic education. I think we can do a lot this year to help people use this moment to learn new things. There are so many ways we could go about this. The Cortland League has contracted with their local paper to provide a 1,200 word article twice a month about some aspect of democracy. The national League has made available multi-page social media posts about different topics. I'm leaning toward short films and animations. I'd love to hear what you think would be helpful. What topics should we start with? What audiences should we target? People who have never voted? People who don't know that non-citizens living among us still have rights? People learning about legal arcana, or people thinking new thoughts about the politics of resisting dictators?

To help us develop an Educational Plan please join the January 7th Zoom meeting described on page 1, or contact engagement@lwv-rma.org.

Barbara Grosh, President LWV-RMA



Membership Information: Dues and Donations

In February 2025, the League of Women Voters switched to a new unified membership model where all members join at the national League level and revenue is shared with the state and local Leagues.

Members are encouraged to join and renew online using the LWV Member Portal and to pay by credit card or a transfer from your bank. Here is a link to the [LWV Portal](#). Your email is your user name. They will email you a verification code so you do not need a password. You can access the [LWV Membership Portal User Guide](#) here which provides the written instructions.

If you wish to *join* LWV-RMA for the first time, but do not want to pay online, email membership@lww-rma.org and we will assist you. If you do not wish to pay your *renewal* online, you may mail a check payable to the League of Women Voters and mail to LWV-RMA, PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610. We will update your record and send the payment to LWVUS.

Dues

The recommended individual dues amount is \$75, but a member can choose to pay any amount with a minimum of \$20. Dues are shared, with 20% remitted to LWV-RMA, 47% to LWVNYS, and 33% to LWVUS.

Expiration Dates

When a member joins, their expiration date is one year from joining. If a member renews before their expiration date, the current expiration date is increased by one year. If a member renews after their expiration date, their new expiration date will be one year from the date of their payment.

Donations

If you make a more generous dues payment, LWV-RMA will receive 20% of it.

- If paying dues online, you will have an opportunity to make a contribution to your local League after entering your dues amount. LWV-RMA will receive 100% of that amount.
- If you wish to donate by check, you may mail a check payable to LWV-RMA to LWV-RMA, PO Box 10573, Rochester, NY 14610. This should be a separate check from any dues payment.

If you have questions related to the LWV Member Portal, joining LWV-RMA, renewals or donations, please contact membership@lww-rma.org.

Thank you!

Advocacy Committee

Our Advocacy Committee wrapped up its meetings with our Metro Rochester legislators in late March. We also met with Senator Helming in her Canandaigua office July 23, 2025.

Since then, we have been keeping up-to-date on happenings in Albany, but we have had no formal meetings. The committee co-chairs are Barb Murphy and Scott Forsyth. Our current members are: Julie Burns, Elaine Schmidt, Katherine Smith, Judy Wadsworth, and Pamela Watson-Breedlove. Most meetings with the legislators must occur during business hours, and are generally via Zoom. Our busiest times are during budget discussions and shortly after the budget approval, usually early March-May. We always welcome new members. If you are interested in joining the group, please email Advocacy@LWV-RMA.org

Submitted by Barb Murphy, co-chair with Scott Forsyth

Voter Services

As we reflect on the year, the Voter Services team can take pride in the work that was done. Voter Registration drives were held at venues such as community meals and food pantries, festivals and run/walk events, back-to-school giveaways, and the Public Market. Our focus also included Voter Education with the distribution of hundreds of Voter Guides, VOTE411.org palm cards, Who Represents You QR codes, posters, and election information cards. A new addition to our tabling materials was a card informing immigrants of their rights.

Voter Registration and GOTV

Twice yearly, the LWVNYS office asks Voter Services in each chapter to complete a survey about our work. The following table summarizes some of those activities for 2025:

Summary of Voter Registration Activities for 2025	
In-person voter registration drives conducted	32
Voters registered	106
Registration forms distributed	156
Volunteers participating in voter registration drives	54
Drives in and/or targeted to under-resourced communities	15
College voter registration drives	2
Naturalization ceremony registration drives	21
Voters registered at Naturalization ceremonies	276
Races posted to VOTE411.org	81
New volunteers or members recruited	22

Cathy Kane and I want to express our appreciation to all our volunteers whose commitment to our purpose made this work possible.

Generally, we spend the first couple of months in the new year discussing changes and additions to our processes and services. Among the areas we will be discussing are: how to increase the audience for our social media posts; possible partnerships with other entities; creating content to stress the importance of voting; voter education; and a review of tabling materials.

Although the first few months of the new year are typically not busy times for registration events, we will be participating in the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration being held in the Rochester Museum and Science Center. We will be tabling on Sunday, January 18th from 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. and will hand out MLK- and voting-related coloring sheets to the children. An invitation to volunteer will be coming.

The Voter Services team is a welcoming group of supportive members. We welcome anyone who might be interested in learning more about us to contact us at voterservices@lww-rma.org.

Do you have experience in areas that could be applied to our work? Do you have suggestions to communicate, collaborate, or organize? Perhaps you think additional voter education would be beneficial to our communities. Come join us at our monthly meetings that are held via zoom on the fourth Thursday of the month from 5:00 – 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Deb Gordon

Book Recommendations

Together We March: 25 Protest Moments that Marched into History

Written by Leah Henderson, illustrated by Tyler Feder



While a picture book in size and format, this is not for the youngest among us. Two-page spreads dense with words as well as illustrations start with the March of the Mill Children in 1903 and progress to the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020. International in scope, it includes Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and others. Careful to include failures as well as successes and point out the work that needs to be done, it is a call to group action.

ISBN-13: 9781534442702

Your Voice, Your Vote

Written by Leah Henderson, illustrated by Keisha Morris.

A large format picture book written for ages 4 – 8, *Your Voice* emphasizes the importance of voting, even if you have to take 2 buses and stand in line to do it. Mother and grandmother explain how restrictions on women's suffrage and poll taxes were used to suppress the vote and keep people down. A timeline and author's note add information for adults.

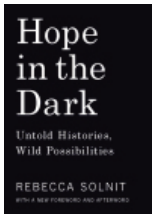
ISBN-13: 9780062986115



Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities

Written by Rebecca Solnit

The forward to the 2015 edition starts: "Your opponents would love you to believe that it's hopeless, that you have no power, that there's no reason to act. [On the contrary,] progressive, populist and grassroots constituencies have had many victories."



While not ignoring the massive problems facing the world, from autocrats to income inequality, wars to climate change, Solnit provides example after example of protest movements that have succeeded. She demonstrates that the slow two-steps-forward-one-step-back, or even two-steps-back, has had positive results allowing us to hope. Initially written in 2004, the examples are old but by reminding us of what we have lived through we can see progress, which provides hope.

ISBN: 9781608465767

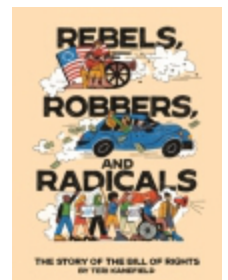
Rebels, Robbers, and Radicals: The Story of the Bill of Rights

Written by Teri Kanefield

This short (181 pages) illustrated book provides a compelling history of the creation of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It follows the arguments for and against the passage of the first 10 amendments (approval was not unanimous) before delving into each one in depth. The evolution of our understanding of the essential legal doctrines embodied in these 10 precepts is explored using case law, explaining the arguments on both sides. Most feature the individuals involved in the cases that came before the US Supreme Court; people like Dred Scott, Bonnie and Clyde, and Ernesto Miranda are profiled along with James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Clarence Thomas. While written for a young-adult audience, it is presented in a clear and entertaining style that will enlighten us all.

ISBN 978-14197-6826-2.

Submitted by David Newman



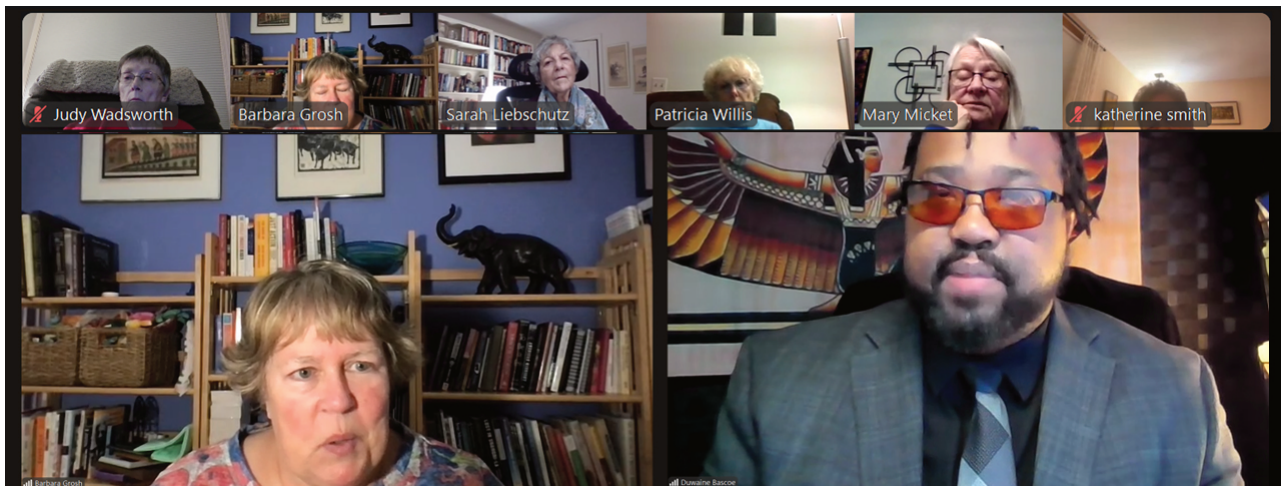
Outreach to New Americans

Since Election Day 2025 the Outreach to New Americans Committee has focused on ways to deepen our connections to new Americans through organizations that work with immigrants.

We will be meeting with the executive director of Refugees Helping Refugees in mid-December. We gave another presentation to an intermediate ESOL class on the vocabulary of voting and had a conversation about voting practices in the US and in other countries.

Our biggest effort was submitting a grant application to LWVUS requesting funds to make our materials more welcoming and inclusive through translation and a pilot project to create short videos in the Nepali language on the importance and process of voting. If these videos are effective in helping more new Americans vote, we think the model could be employed with other communities in Rochester and beyond.

Submitted by Evelyn Jennings



The President and the Courts

During a LWV-RMA webinar on November 20, Duwayne Bascoe, Esq., local attorney, reviewed the plethora of court cases brought by President Trump as well as executive orders that overturn Congressionally-approved legislation. He also mentioned groups challenging the president's actions through the courts, such as state attorneys general, universities, the LWV, and other nonprofits. He noted that the Constitution does not allow the President to eliminate executive offices that were established by Congress, nor does he have the power to eliminate federal jobs established by Congress.

Submitted by Judy Wadsworth

Naturalizations

The news on our end is bleak. All 3 ceremonies scheduled for November were canceled by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). As of December 3rd, there is a Naturalization Ceremony scheduled on December 16th at the Federal Building at 1:00 P.M. The Board of Elections may attend to conduct the registrations, but we will try to be present and distribute educational material. Thank you to Beth Feldman and David Newman for volunteering for the October ceremonies.

Submitted by Margaret Roberts

Criminal Justice Reform

GET INVOLVED!!

The Criminal Justice Reform Committee needs your help.

Join a Committee that focuses on disenfranchised individuals' voting rights.

Now more than ever, those who are detained in county jails and those who are previously convicted felons need to know about their right to vote.

Committee Involvement:

1. Participate in the Criminal Justice Reform Committee by meeting to strategize outreach to organizations that support those released from prison and county jails.
2. Research criminal justice legislation in New York State
3. Conduct outreach to local politicians to support the LWV Democracy in Detention Bill which is currently in the State Assembly and addresses voting in county jails.
4. Provide and act on any other ideas to increase voting by formerly incarcerated individuals

The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) supports and builds power with people across New York State who have been affected by mass incarceration, criminalization, and community disinvestment. CCA invited the League to their Town Hall about "Communities Not Cages", a grass roots campaign led by people and their families across the state who have been harmed by mass incarceration.

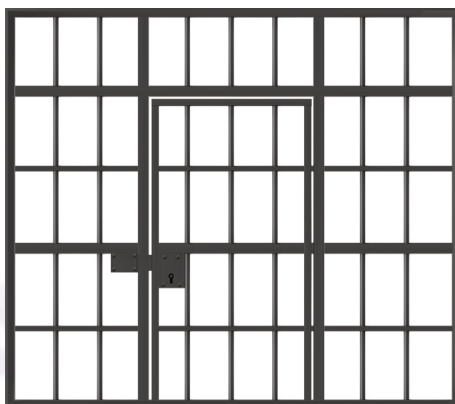
CCA conducted a Town Hall in October to address those affected by mass incarceration. The panel discussion included individuals who voiced their experiences with unlawful prosecutions and unlawful experiences in prison, as well as what family members experienced.

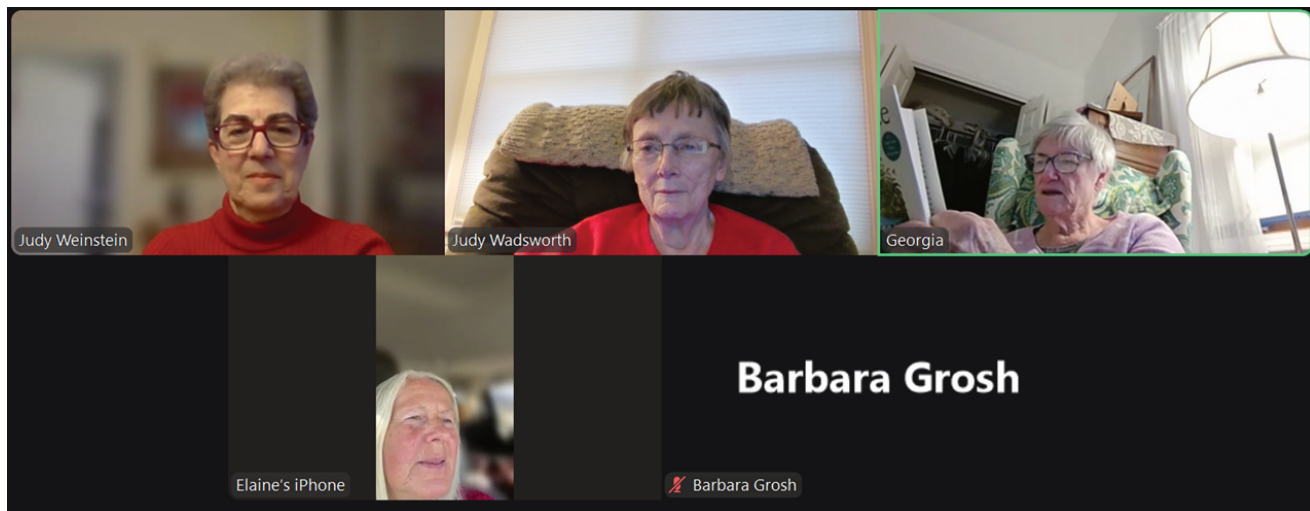
In addition, a panel including Demond Meeks, NYS of the 137th Assembly District; Senator Jeremy Cooney of the 56th District; and a lawyer from the Public Defender's Office discussed county jail, prison reform and criminal justice reform bills in the State Assembly.

The LWVNYS supports the "Democracy During Detention Act". This bill addresses voter registration in county jails and is currently being considered by both NYS legislative houses. Outreach to organizations such as CCA has increased the focus on voter registration for those previously convicted of a felony, estimated to be 16,000 in New York State.

For more information about the committee, contact Chairperson Laurene Jennings

Justice@LWV-RMA.org





Book Club Discusses *Abundance*

A rather small group of book club members met via Zoom on November 20 to discuss *Abundance* by Ezra Klein and Derek Johnson.

The book club meets on the third Thursday of odd-numbered months at 4:30 P.M. via Zoom. The books being discussed for the remainder of the program year include: January 15: *Agent Josephine* by Damien Lewis; March 19: *How We Learn to be Brave* by Mariann Edgar Budde; and May 21: *Children of the Land* by Marcelo Hernandez Castillo.

If you are interested in attending any of these discussions, contact Judy Weinstein at bookclub@lwv-rma.org to be part of the email distribution list.

Calendar

The best way to be informed about various League events is to use the online calendar. You do not need to sign in to access the calendar. The calendar is updated frequently; it is more current than a monthly newsletter can be.

On the calendar, you can click on an event to obtain information, you can add it to your personal calendar, and you can register for an event. You can see future (or past) months' activities easily by using the < > buttons.

Access the Calendar [here](#).

First Friday

Join First Friday for social time at I Square - 400 Bakers Park, Rochester, NY 14617 at 11:30 A.M. on the first Friday of each month.

We gather in the space behind the partition (look for our sign) for lunch and discussion. Come when you can, leave when you must.

We share ideas for how the League can make democracy work and discuss the news to parse what it all means. It's always comforting to be surrounded by League friends who are committed to empowering voters and protecting democracy. Join the fun!

NOTE: JANUARY FIRST FRIDAY WILL BE HELD ON THE SECOND FRIDAY - JANUARY 9, 2026

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If you have comments, article suggestions or pictures to share please send them to micketeditor@gmail.com

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, justice 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.

Join the League Today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Check Amount: _____

Please send this form and your check payable to the LWVUS to:

LWV-RMA,
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

[Or join the LWV online by clicking here.](#)

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

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MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Dues are payable to LWVUS. The link on LWV-RMA will direct you to the LWVUS site. A portion of your dues will be distributed to LWV-RMA and LWVNYS.

Suggested dues are \$75, but you may choose any amount of \$20 or more.

Choosing more than \$75 allows LWV-RMA to fund programs while subsidizing membership for those who cannot afford the full \$75.