



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

BULLETIN

October 2011

Part 2 of Education Study Background page 3

OUR MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity.

This means:

There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of Saratoga County.

What is the Role of the Federal Government in Education?

Part 2 of Education study
Common Core Standards?

Tuesday, October 27—7 to 9pm
Saratoga Springs Public Library

It's consensus time! Share your ideas on this important issue!



CANDIDATE EVENTS see page 7



Malta Candidate Event:
Wednesday, Oct. 12th
7 pm
Hyatt Place at Malta,
20 State Farm Place,
Malta, NY 12020



Saratoga Springs City
Council Event:
Wednesday, Oct. 19
7 pm
Saratoga Springs High
School Auditorium
1 Blue Streak Blvd, Sa-
ratoga Springs, 12866

Clifton Park/Halfmoon
Candidate Event:
Wednesday, Oct 26,
7 pm
Halfmoon Town Hall
2 Halfmoon Plaza
Halfmoon, NY 12065



STAND WITH US—RECRUIT MEMBERS!

We are kicking off our 2011-12 member recruitment drive on
Thursday, October 6 from 6-8pm

at the Malta Community Center.

1 Bayberry Rd. (off Rt. 9, just north of Exit 12)

We encourage our current members to drop by to check it out AND to bring a friend who might be interested in joining. The health of our organization depends on our members, and we need you to help recruit other activists. If you believe that what the League stands for is important, invite your friends to **STAND WITH US** and join!



Gift memberships are also available. For more information, contact Pattie Garrett, Membership Chair, at pattiegarrett@aol.com.



**League of Women Voters
of Saratoga County (NY-639)**

Official address: LWV of Saratoga County
PO Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
www.lwvsaratoga.org Phone: 728-0237

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All phone numbers in 518 area code, unless noted

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Director

Mary Lou Classen, 4 Blue Spruce Lane, Ballston Lake, NY
12019 877-8874

In keeping with LWV Non-partisan Policy,
Meg Stevens has resigned her position as a Director
on the Board of LWV Saratoga,
in order to run for political office.
The League never supports or opposes
any candidate for political office.

**League of Women Voters of New York State or
League of Women Voters of New York State
Education Foundation**

62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
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Executive Director: **Laura Bierman**, laura@lwvny.org
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1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-4508
202-429-1965 www.lwv.org
President: **Elizabeth MacNamara**



From the President –

Vocal and Visible

This organization is even more amazing than I thought! Although I've only scratched the surface in my short tenure as president, I am astonished at how much work goes on behind the scenes (much of it after a very full day, as revealed by midnight emails!) THANK YOU ALL for what you make happen – it is complex and challenging, and VERY well done.

This is an incredibly busy fall for our Voter Services Committee. From voter registration to candidate forums, they're doing it all, including an online voter guide to best ensure an informed electorate. Check it out at www.lwvsaratoga.org.

I've been focusing primarily on Membership/Outreach as we know that's where the future of our organization lies. Please read about our *STAND WITH US* membership drive and recruit a new member this year. The polarized political climate is ripe for our appeal to those who care about the issues but are turned off by the way partisan politics is dealing (or not) with the issues. And while you're at it, commit to getting more involved yourself. There are many ways for you to contribute, as featured each month in this *Bulletin*.

We're ramping up our Issues and Advocacy function this year, under the leadership of Pat Reed. In this way, we intend to be more vocal and visible on the issues affecting our members, and we hope this attracts a feisty activist crowd to our events. There's so much to do on the local, state, and national level. Do you care about voting rights? Medicare? Women's access to affordable health care? Public education? Safe energy? It's all in jeopardy. Can we afford to just sit there? And if the League doesn't STAND UP, who will?

As we wrap up our Education Study, with much appreciation to Terry Lowenthal and Francine Rodger, we will be embarking on yet another national League study. Under Cliff Ammon's leadership this winter, we'll research the impact of privatizing government services, such as social security, defense, schools, and the postal service.

In her book, *Revolution from Within*, Gloria Steinem wrote that we cannot harden our hearts selectively. If we care, we care. I know League members care; let's show everyone else what we care about. STAND AND BE COUNTED!

Onward! Pat

Welcome New Members

DEIRDRE LELAND & FRANK RHYNER

RENEE MOORE

Common Core Standards? . Part 2 of Ed. study

Students who move from one part of the United States to another during their K-12 school careers are likely to encounter substantial variations in requirements for graduation. The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI, 2010) stated: "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students."

Currently, standards for student performance vary widely by state. The roots of current state-to-state inconsistencies lie in the fact that public education in the United States has traditionally been a local responsibility. However, textbook publishers have created something of a "de facto" national curriculum, based on market needs. Consequently, many textbooks from major publishers have reflected the curricular choices that were made by educational groups in the largest states. Some publishers do create textbooks and other curricula for smaller markets.

Rothman (2009) summarized the efforts of various groups to create common standards across the United States. Initial efforts to foster development of national standards and a related system of assessments in the core subject areas began in the early 1990's through awarding grants to a dozen national organizations.

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched the Common Core State Standards initiative in March 2009 after the nation's governors agreed in concept to adopt a uniform set of standards. The final report was issued on June 2, 2010 (NGA, 2010), and, by early 2011, 40 states have adopted the Standards. The adopting states are currently aligning them to their own state standards.

The Fordham Institute (Carmichael, et al. 2010) reported that the Common Core standards received high marks when compared to state standards across the country. The Institute suggests that Common Core Standards represent an opportunity for creating consistency and raising standards in all states.

Assessments

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has created a 50-state and 50-test environment in public education. As a result state-to-state expectations and performances vary greatly. States publish annual reports of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which are required by federal law, but the meaning of "proficient" in those reports can vary widely from one state to another (Cronin, et al. 2007).

Larger testing companies market a variety of norm-referenced standardized tests. However, they are designed to rank students, rather than to determine how well students have mastered curricular objectives as criterion-referenced tests would do. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) publishes results that are technically adequate for state-to-state (and international) comparisons, but that assessment is not designed to produce individual student scores. NAEP requires a large sample of students to produce results. Most school systems are too small to qualify for testing that would produce local NAEP results. The tradition of local governance has led to inconsistent requirements and standards for student performance across the country. Thus, in 2010, the United States does not have a consistent set of academic assessments for grades K-12.

Two coalitions, together representing 44 states and the District of Columbia, won a U.S. Department of Education competition for \$330 million dollars federal aid to design "comprehensive assessment systems" aligned to the Common Core and designed to measure whether students are on track for college and career success. The awards, announced in September 2010, were divided between the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), comprised of 26 states receiving \$170 million, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium that comprises 31 states and received \$160 million. At least 12 states participated in both coalitions and are waiting to decide which assessment system will best meet their needs. An advantage of having assessments that are used in more than one state is that results from all participating states could be compared.

Continued next page

Why not national standards or assessments?

The most common arguments against adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center on two issues: 1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments and (2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control. Governor Rick Perry of Texas stated that the Race to the Top funding would only generate a one-time amount of \$75 per student, yet cost Texas taxpayers an additional \$3 million. A third argument is that the individual state standards might be more rigorous. However, states that adopt the Common Core are permitted to add 15 percent more in content.

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans, an idea that has popular appeal. (*TIME*, 2010). In August 2010, ten of the nation's premier educational researchers (Baker, Barton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, Ladd, Linn, Ravtich, Rothstein, Shavelson & Shepard, 2010) co-authored a report that cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing the technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

Does the US need a national curriculum?

The U.S. Department of Education presents the view that, since the developers of the Common Core Standards and the proposed assessments have been groups with state representation rather than the federal government, neither program is a federal initiative. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, March 13). In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines (Albert Shanker Institute, 2011; Gewertz, C. 2011, March). This document voices the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: "Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America" (2011), discussed by Gewertz, C. (2011, May). The article also cites the prohibition against a federal curriculum contained in the 1965 ESEA.

Produced by the LWVUS The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

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LWV Book Club



The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month to study League positions. In October, we will meet at Francine Rodger's home, 34 Hemlock Drive, Clifton Park at **1pm**. We will continue our examination of the League's Social Policy Issues: Health Care, Immigration, Equal Rights, and Education, Employment and Housing.

On November 1st at **2pm**, we will meet at the Saratoga Springs Public Library and continue the Social Policy Issues by looking at Violence Prevention, Gun Control, Death Penalty and Urban Policy. Please note a time change.

On Dec 6th at **12:30pm**, we will meet at the Malta Diner for lunch AND a discussion. Our topics will conclude with the remaining positions under Social Policy: Income Assistance, Support Services, Housing Supply, Child Care and Early Intervention for Children at Risk.

In 2012, we will continue with Representative Government, International Relations, and the Natural Resources positions.

Anyone is welcome, and you can email Francine at aerodger@aol.com or call her at 371-8032 for more information.



**NOT JUST FOR WOMEN ANYMORE!
LWV WELCOMES MEN TOO!**

We hope you will consider bringing your favorite guy to the membership program on October 6th. Encourage them to look over our agenda, let them know there is plenty to do on the issues that interest them. Also bring your soon-to-vote teenager. There's room for all. We are a non-partisan political organization, dedicated to informed and active participation in government. (See our mission on page 1.)

**COME STAND WITH US
Recruit another member!**



**Thursday, October 6 from 6-8pm
at the Malta Community Center.**

PRIVATIZATION STUDY

LWVUS Embarks on a Study of

Privatization of Governmental Services

Should private companies fight our wars? Provide our health care? Our retirement? Run our prisons? Our schools? Maintain our highways?.....

Scope of the Privatization Study:

The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

Timeline:

November 2011—April 30 Leagues are encouraged to participate in the study on Privatization of Government services, assets and functions, and the impact on local communities by eduling meetings to educate members and communities about the issue and come to consensus. Consensus meeting: March 27th.

Organization:

The committee will provide a history and background of privatization, a glossary of terms, legal issues to be considered when privatizing at different levels of government, current state regulations on privatizing and case studies on successful and unsuccessful privatizing efforts. Finally, the committee will provide suggested policies and parameters to be considered when privatizing.

Want to study this issue?

Contact: Cliff Ammon at: cammon2@nycap.rr.com
or call 587-4204.

Words to Remember

Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences.

Susan B. Anthony, 1860

CORPORATE VOTING RIGHTS??

LWVUS cares about campaign finance reform! We have a longstanding position in favor of public financing of elections, and of campaign finance reform requiring limits on spending, and disclosure of contributors.

A Chronology of Corporate Financing of Elections Leading to Citizens United v. FEC (and Beyond)

Compiled by Barbara Murphy, from Skidmore Professor Ron Seyb's talk at our Annual Meeting

- 1907 Tillman Act prevented corporations from using their assets to contribute directly to federal campaigns.
- 1946 Taft-Hartley Act prohibited corporations and unions from making "independent" or "uncoordinated expenditures", i.e. those on "a political campaign communication which expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate that is not made in cooperation, consultation, or concert with or at the request of a candidate, a candidate's authorized committee, or a political party."
- 1976 Buckley v. Valeo Supreme Court decision that Congress cannot cap such independent expenditures without violating the 1st Amendment speech rights of the source of the expenditure. Buckley did uphold the provision of the Taft-Hartley Act that prohibited corporations and unions from tapping general treasury funds for independent expenditures.
- 1976 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act required corporations and unions to establish Political Action Committees (PAC), funded by "voluntary" contributions from supporters of the corporation's or union's political interests.
- 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, primary purpose: to close soft money loopholes.
- January 2010, Citizens United v. FEC declared corporations and unions have the constitutional authority to use general treasury funds or union dues to spend unlimited amounts of money, including profits, rather than voluntary contributions to their PACs, to support the campaigns of federal candidates.

Continued next page

Continued from page 5

- March, 2010 D.C. Circuit Court's ruling in SpeechNOW.org v. FEC, based on Citizens United, allows an organization to raise and spend unlimited amounts of money from corporations, unions, associations, and individuals expressly advocating the election or defeat of particular federal candidates, provided that those expenditures are "uncoordinated."

Post- 'Citizens United' efforts to offset its dampening effects on democracy:

- (1) "Move to Amend" groups have formed in an effort toward a Constitutional amendment to overturn the 'personhood of corporations' concept.
- (2) Congressional members have proposed legislation to provide legitimate candidates with public funds, rekindling interest in campaign finance reform.

For more on this topic go to our website and read the entire text of Ron Seyb's summary of the talk he gave at our annual meeting.

CELL PHONE USERS

WILL REVERSE 911 REACH YOU IN AN EMERGENCY?

Have you registered your cell phone number with the County Office of Emergency Services? If not, you may not get an alert notice on your cell phone when floods, tornadoes, or worse are coming your way. The county notifies folks through their telephone service. If you have a land line, you'll hear it there. But if you do not have a land line, you need to register your cell phone. To register, go to: www.saratogacountyofficeofemergency.com

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the link: *resister your cell phone and e-mail address.*

Speaking of addresses, can your house number be easily read from the road? You can speed up emergency services when you need them and when every minute counts. Your house number isn't just for mail delivery anymore.

Not sure of your status? No computer access? Call 885-2243 for Dan Miller, in the Office of Verification.

By Margot Ammon, Observer at the Public Safety Committee Meetings for LWV Saratoga's Observer Corps

SAVE THESE DATES

10-6-11	Thursday	Membership, 6 to 8pm
10-12-11	Wednesday	Malta Forum 7pm
10-19-11	Wednesday	SS Council Forum 7pm
10-26-11	Wednesday	CP/HM Forum 7pm
10-27-11	Thursday	Education Pt. 2, 7pm
11-16-11	Wednesday	Hydrofracking, 7pm
1-16-12	Monday	MLK Day
1-19-12	Thursday	Endangered Voting Rights, 7pm
3-27-12	Thursday	Privatization, 7pm

Everything Old Is New Again...

Our League's *Impact on Issues* book club began its review of League positions in September, starting with *Fiscal Policy*. Although these positions were first put forth in 1984, they sadly are still relevant positions for the League to *STAND UP FOR* today. As you listen to candidates and elected officials propose deficit reduction plans, consider how they stack up against these League positions:

Tax Policy:

Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

Federal Deficit:

Promote responsible deficit policies, relying primarily on reductions in defense spending through selective cuts and on increased revenue...and improved efficiency and management. Oppose across-the-board federal spending cuts and reduction of social security benefits.

Funding of Entitlements:

Support a federal role in providing for old-age, survivors, disability, and mandatory and universal health insurance coverage.

Help wanted at Candidate Forums!

Roles we have open

1. Runners/ushers
 2. Question sorters
 3. Welcoming committee
 4. Timers
- Call Ann Kril at 584-1436 to sign up for one or more events

VOTERS' GUIDE ON THE WEB

Compare Candidates Easily with our Online Voters' Guide!

Starting early in October we will be posting pictures and information from candidates for County Supervisor and for all candidates in the cities of Mechanicville and Saratoga Springs on our website – in a side-by-side format that makes comparison easy. Here's a sample that was posted prior to the primary election—

Comparison	
Daniel Lewza	Frank Thompson
Biographical Information	
<p>Parties: Endorsed by the Republican, Conservative, and Independence parties. Dan is also endorsed by Town of Milton Highway Superintendent Dave Forbes.</p> <p>Campaign Phone: (518) 879-6822</p> <p>Campaign Email: danlewza4milton@gmail.com</p> <p>Campaign Web Site: www.DanLewza.com</p> <p>City/Town of Residence: Ballston Spa, NY/Town of Milton</p> <p>Community Involvement: Dan and his family are parishioners of St. Mary's Catholic Church. Dan assists in coaching both of his daughters' soccer teams.</p> <p>Experience and Qualifications: For over 20 years, Dan Lewza has dedicated his career to working with both state and local officials to improve our lives. Having worked in state government as a Chief of Staff, Policy Analyst and Community Liaison, Dan Lewza has the experience to serve us well.</p>	<p>Parties: Republican</p> <p>Campaign Phone: 518-879-7648</p> <p>Campaign Email: Petersdh@nycap.rr.com</p> <p>City/Town of Residence: Ballston Spa, New York</p> <p>Community Involvement: Member of VFW, Past Little League Coach, Babe Ruth Coach, Pop Warner Football Coach.</p> <p>Current Political Office (if applicable): Supervisor Town of Milton</p> <p>Experience and Qualifications: Eight Years of Service as Milton Supervisor, Served on several County Commities, presently the Chairman of Law and Finance Committee.</p>
What are the three most critical issues facing your town and Saratoga County?	
<p>Daniel Lewza: Wise Budgeting: Milton faces an immediate funding crisis. We must rein in spending and increase efficiency to see Milton through this. I'll pursue grants and expand the tax base by attracting new business investment, so we can improve</p>	<p>Frank Thompson: 1.The economic crises the Country is facing is also affecting how we make our decisions at the Town Level. An example of this is the million dollar grant that was finally approved in 2008. The costs to the Town at that time was \$</p>

Obviously, there is more to the above listing. The Voters Service committee developed a number of questions for each type of candidate. If you know a candidate who isn't listed yet PLEASE encourage him/her to participate. Also look for print copies of this Guide in the Spotlight Newspapers.

Go to www.lwvsaratoga.org and page down till you get to the link: Voters' Guide or the link: Vote 411.

County Candidates in Contested Races for 2011

Data as known on September 25, 2011

Malta, Oct 12, Hyatt:

Town/County Supervisor (1):

Paul Sausville vs Cynthia Young

Town Councilman (2): Ryan Gregoire, Carol Henry, Peter Klotz, Tara Thomas

Saratoga Springs, Oct 19, HS:

Mayor (1): Scott Johnson vs Brent Wilkes

Commissioner of Public Safety (1):

Christian Mathiesen vs Richard Wirth

Commissioner of Finance (1):

Kenneth Ivins Jr vs Michele Madigan

Clifton Park, Oct 26, Halfmoon Town Hall:

Town/County Supervisor (1):

Phil Barrett vs Martin O'Connor

Town Justice (1): Joseph Berger vs Robert Rybak

Town Councilman (2): Scott Hughes, Richard Kukuk, James Whalen, Wanda Zygmuntowicz

Halfmoon, Oct 26, Halfmoon Town Hall Town/County Supervisor (1): Deanna Stephenson vs Mindy Wormuth

Event not sponsored by LWVSC:

Town of Ballston, TBD by BH-BL BPA and Burnt Hills High School social studies dept

Town/County Supervisor (1):

Peter J Connors vs Patti Southworth

Town Clerk (1): Robert Ogle vs Carol Shemo

Town Councilman (2): William Goslin, Bruce Hogan, Arnold Palmer, Paul Simpson, Tim Szczepaniak

Judicial: (We are linking to their website for voter guide info)

Supreme Court Justice in 4th Judicial District (3): Robert Chauvin, Ann Crowell, John Lahtinen, John Silvestri

County Surrogate Court Judge (1): Richard Kupferman

County Coroner (2): John Demartino, Thoman Salvatore, Matthew Sousa

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 4, Tuesday, *Impact on Issues Book Club*, 34 Hemlock Drive, Clifton Park, 1pm

Oct 6, Thursday, *Activist (Member) Recruitment Drive* 6-8pm Malta Community Center. Bring a friend and sign him/her up to join the League!

October 12, Malta Candidate Forum Hyatt Place at Malta, 20 State Farm Place, Malta, 7pm

October 19, Wednesday, *SS City Council Candidate Forum*, Saratoga Springs High School Auditorium, 7pm

October 26, Wednesday, *Clifton Park/Halfmoon Candidate Forum*, Halfmoon Town Hall, 2 Halfmoon Plaza, Halfmoon, 7pm

October 27, Thursday, *Education Study and Consensus, Part II*, SSPL, 7pm



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SARATOGA COUNTY
P.O. BOX 1029 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

October 2011

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IF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DOESN'T SPEAK UP, WHO WILL?

GET INVOLVED ! GIVE 2 HOURS A MONTH TO THE OBSERVER CORP
Contact Margie VanMeter, 587-1545

STAND WITH US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THE BULLETIN IS FREE WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- YES!** I Would like to join the League. 2011 -2012 dues enclosed.
- \$50. Individual \$75 Family \$20 Student
- Please send more information Non-members may subscribe to the BULLETIN for \$15., enclosed
- In addition, I would like to contribute \$_____ **Send a gift membership to:**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (home) _____ (work) _____

E-MAIL _____ Gift from _____

Mail to: Membership, League of Women Voters P.O. Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866