



The League of Women Voters of New York State

STATE BOARD REPORT

January 2008, Issue #3

Presidents Report

~Attention: League Presidents

Advocacy & Issues

~Attention: League Presidents and Vice Presidents of Action

Membership

~Attention: League Presidents and Membership Chairs

Voter Service

~Attention: League Presidents and Voter Service Directors

Finance and Development

~Attention: League Presidents

Program and Education

~Attention: League President and Issues/Action Chairs

Additional Materials

~Attention: League Presidents

**STATE BOARD REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE—
www.lwvny.org**

(Click on *Local League Resources* to get to the link for State Board Reports)

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MARTHA'S MEMOS

TO: Local League Presidents
FROM: Martha Kennedy, President
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While it is still officially 2007 as I write this, my thoughts are leaping ahead to the new year and all that will be accomplished during 2008. It does appear that there is still quite a bit to be done, but I am more confident than ever that the voice of the league will continue to be a critical one during the upcoming year.

As we begin this new calendar and legislative year, we have some changes in our board/off-board composition. I am sorry to report the resignations of two of our off-board specialists this fall: Heather Baker-Sullivan who has been our water quality specialist and Jane Chase who has represented the League in addressing lead poisoning. We will miss both of these most qualified specialists and we are certainly grateful to them for all their work in these areas

Jane's dedication to this league role over the past four years and commitment to serving to educate the public on the issue of lead poisoning are reflected in her final report included in this State Board Report (SBR) along with the first submission by her highly recommended and capable replacement, Joan Rosenthal.

In her letter of resignation Heather stated: "The League is an under funded citizen think tank that helps develop and support the best leadership in the political world, and often and not coincidentally, that leadership is women. I am happy always to promote all that the League offers to women and men interested in public policy, and will continue to speak up for it whenever I can". I certainly thank Heather for her remarks and share her feelings. We are fortunate to have appointed as her replacement, Nancy Heinzen, who brings her diverse experience related to watershed research, non-point source education and land use law to this position.

In addition to welcoming our new off-board specialists, we are also most pleased to welcome back Marian Bott who has agreed to resume her off-board position as our specialist on Education Finance. As those of you who have worked in this area know, Marian is truly a dedicated expert on this topic and we are happy to have her representing the league again.

In addition to these modifications among our off-board specialists, we have expanded our state board with the addition of Deb Winslow as a new at-large director. Deb recently retired from the state Division of Budget and will utilize her special skills as she focuses on research and training in support of our lobbying efforts.

Welcome to all. I know each of these individuals will bring special talents and support to their particular area and I know they look forward to the opportunity to work with all of you.

The United Nations briefings day was a great success and afforded many league members not only the opportunity to experience this inspiring facility and learn from UN representatives about the work of the UN regarding the impact of war on women, but also provided some great networking opportunities. Thank you to all who support this wonderful annual event.

The Ida Trager Regional Training Workshops have been completed. The state board members as well as the members of local Leagues (LL) that participated in these six regional workshops throughout NYS endorsed the value of these sessions to enhance the strength of our statewide organization. Not only did they provide a much-needed opportunity to discuss various aspects of the state/local League programs and activities but they also generated discussion of ways to best utilize the resources of our state and local grassroots foundation. We will now continue to build upon that foundation. .

The other significant issue over the past two months has been related to our state study on whether NYS should join the Compact for a National Popular vote. As I have communicated to our local League presidents over the course of several communications since October, LWVUS has advised us that we would not be able to take action on any position resulting from that study since LWVUS has determined that this is a national issue. While we are continuing to update background material on this topic, the effort by LWVNY is being channeled toward lobbying LLs as well as other state Leagues to recommend this through the program planning process as a national study to be adopted at the next National Convention in Portland, Oregon June 13-17. In addition to supporting this effort, I hope there will be significant representation from NYS delegates to that convention. It is always a very exciting event and a wonderful opportunity to network and enjoy nationwide camaraderie.

As you will see as you read this State Board Report, there is much in the pipeline for the upcoming year. I know it will be an exciting and productive one. As always, I urge you to visit the state league website www.lwvny.org often and to communicate directly with other LL presidents throughout the state via our listserve: localleaguepresidents@yahoogroups.com

I've heard it said that the past is gone and the future is not yet here, so all we have is the present. However, the lessons of the past and the hope for the future certainly impact today, so I know we are truly prepared to embrace the challenges of 2008 and continue to make an impact with our collective League voice.

With that, I thank you all for all you do for League, wish you a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR and remind you to KEEP IN TOUCH!!

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- May 2007/May 2009

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NEW YORK STATE LOCAL LEAGUE DELEGATES
TO LWVUS 48th NATIONAL CONVENTION
JUNE 13-17, 2008
HILTON PORTLAND & EXECUTIVE TOWER
PORTLAND, OREGAN

Local League: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of delegates expected to attend: _____

Number of members planning to attend as visitors and would be willing to serve as a delegate for another League: _____

We will not be sending delegates to convention and are willing to have members of other NYS Leagues serve as our delegate(s): Yes _____ No _____

Please complete and return by April 1, 2008 to
LWVNYS, 62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207 or
FAX to (518) 465-0812 or E-MAIL to: lwny@lwny.org

Local League Check-up

Please answer the questions and requests below and return by February 15, 2008 to our Albany office. Attn: Martha Kennedy. Additional comments to any of the below questions may be attached and will be welcomed.

Local League _____

Submitted by _____

Title _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Method of completing:

Board _____ Executive Committee _____ President _____ Other _____

1. Does your League hold an annual business meeting? Yes _____ No _____

2. How often does your board meet? Monthly _____ Bimonthly _____
Other (please specify) _____

3. Does your League have a plan for membership growth? Yes _____ No _____

4. Has your Local League studied and developed a position(s) on local issue(s)? Yes _____ No _____
If your answer is yes, please attach a list of these positions.

5. How many voter service activities, including candidate debates/forums does your League conduct per year? 1-3 _____ 3-6 _____ 6-10 _____

6. How many public information meetings, e.g. urban sprawl, ballot issues, local issues will your League hold during the current League year?

7. How does your League communicate with members?

8. How much is your PMP? _____

- 9. Do you consider your League to be financially stable? Yes ____ No ____
- 10. How many members, including nationally recruited members, do you have at the present time? _____
- 11. Does your League have the technology to disseminate information electronically? Yes ____ No ____
- 12. Any additional comments

13. Attach to this survey a copy of your bylaws and your nonpartisan policy.

THANK YOU!

**Please complete and return by February 15, 2008 to
LWVNYS, 62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207 or
FAX to (518) 465-0812 or E-MAIL to: lwny@lwny.org**

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
FROM: Edna Vincent, Vice-President, Advocacy & Issues
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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2008

The Advocacy and Issues Committee (V.P. Advocacy & Issues, Legislative Director, Grassroots Lobby Director and 11 Off-Board Specialists) met on November 12, 2007 in Albany.

Appointments: Off-Board Specialists (OBS)

The following members were nominated: Joan Rosenthal, OBS Lead Poisoning; Nancy Heizen, OBS Water Quality and Marion Bott OBS Equity in Financing Education. Marion Bott has returned from Paris and will continue her work in Equity in Financing Education. (The nominations were presented to the Board of Directors appointed Joan, Nancy, and Marion).

We thank Jane Chase and Heather Baker Sullivan for their excellent service to the League

Legislative Priorities 2008

We thank all Local Leagues who sent in their recommendations. The members of the committee reviewed their reports and their votes were tallied. The following were the leading issues:

1. Good Government

- Campaign Finance Reform
- Redistricting
- Voting Technology
- Election Law & Procedures
- Court Restructuring / Judicial
- Legislative Procedures

2. Cost Effective & Accessible Health Care

3. Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy
- Water Quality / Protection of Ground Water
- Smart Growth
- Transportation

The Board of Directors approved the Legislative Priorities. The Legislative Priorities 2008 Brochure will be available in January. It is an invaluable tool when lobbying your representatives during the legislative session. It is also valuable when talking to prospective new members. An order form is included in this State Board Report.

2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Emphasis will be place on:

GOOD GOVERNMENT

- Redistricting*
- Campaign Finance Reform*
- Legislative Procedures*
- Election Law & Procedures*
- Voting Technology*
- Court Restructuring / Judicial*

COST EFFECTIVE & ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE

NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions*
- Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy*
- Water Quality / Protection of Ground Water*
- Smart Growth*
- Transportation*

Take Action!!!
Order the 2008 Legislative Agenda today!!!

Local League Order Form

2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Name _____

The LWV of _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone: _____

Quantity: _____

Please note that the brochures are free, but you will be billed for shipping and handling

LWVNYS
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
Telephone: 518-465-4162
Fax: 518-465-0812
E-Mail: lwny@lwny.org

ORDERS DUE BY FEBRUARY 4, 2008

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
FROM: Debra Merryweather, Off-Board Specialist, Alternatives to Incarceration
327 Wilmore Place, Syracuse, NY 13208
E-Mail: dapearlie@earthlink.net

ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION UPDATE

The League of Woman Voters has maintained a position against mandatory minimum sentencing for non-violent drug offenders. Currently NYS has a wide variety of programs which divert such offenders into treatment programs as an alternative to incarceration.

On the federal front, the Supreme Court has just ruled that the disparity in sentencing between drug offenders sentenced for crack as opposed to powdered cocaine is unconstitutional. Many federal prisoners are now eligible for immediate sentencing relief.

It is good news whenever inequity is remedied.

The League continues to support drug law reform and the elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing for non-violent drug offenses.

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
FROM: Georgia T. DeGregorio, Off-Board Specialist, Domestic Violence
337 Reef Point Circle, Webster, NY 14580
E-Mail: georgiatd@frontiernet.net

**THE ANATOMY OF SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING FOR A
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUE**

For those of you who wonder what one person can accomplish in the struggle for legislation needed for victims of Domestic Violence, this is Carly's story:

A local Democratic Monroe County Legislator, whose term limits were about to expire in December, wanted one last thing to be remembered by. She introduced a bill outlawing discrimination in housing for victims of Domestic Violence in Monroe County. Normally the Republican majority would have buried the bill. And that is where Carly W. comes in.

Carly W. began her campaign. First, she prepared a letter for all supporters to sign. Then she contacted Republican and Democratic legislators on the state level. These people had been contacted for several years on issues of DV so they knew Carly and her expertise on the subject. She was able to get the State legislators to write letters of support for this bill to be sent to the local legislators. She then spoke at every open meeting from September to December and explained the necessity for the bill from a variety of viewpoints. She met every argument with one of her own.

In addition, everyone she met...or her boyfriend met in his office...were given a copy of the letter and were asked to sign it and give it back to Carly. She brought these letters to the legislative meetings.

Our local League is a member of the coalition here in Monroe County. She contacted me and we submitted our own letter [see below]. She told me that every time she met with the legislators, she would mention the League to show the broad support this bill had.

On December 11, 2007, in the wee hours of the morning after all the budget votes were passed, the Monroe County Legislature passed this anti-discrimination bill. Hooray for the power of one passionate woman and all her friends who helped.

WHAT CAN **WE** DO AS A LEAGUE TO PUSH FOR THE EXPANDED ACCESS BILL AT THE STATE LEVEL? E-MAIL ME/CALL ME

Our Letter:

*LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/ROCHESTER METROPOLITAN AREA
45 Exchange Blvd., Suite 508
Rochester, NY 14614*

October 3, 2007

To: Monroe County Legislature

Re: *Protecting the Right to Shelter for Victims of Domestic or Dating Violence,
Residing in Monroe County*

The League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area supports the legislation introduced by Ms. Palumbo prohibiting discrimination in housing for all Monroe County victims of dating and domestic violence. We have had a position for many years that states we are against housing discrimination as well as in support of measures that reduce the incidence and effects of Domestic Violence. We feel this legislation addresses one of these effects.

We have reviewed and agree with the reasons that SAFER has presented regarding the history of why this legislation is necessary. Through our own research and experience, we have observed the harmful effects these discriminatory acts have had on victims and their families.

*Georgia DeGregorio, Chair of Social Policy Committee
Dorothy Borgus, President*

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
 FROM: Marian Bott, Off-Board Specialist, Education Finance
 1148 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10128
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CARRY OVER ITEMS FROM LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION

1. The Court of Appeals allowed both sides, the State and the plaintiffs, to declare victory in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case. By increasing funding for schools statewide by about \$2 billion, the legislature and the newly elected governor hoped to put the CFE issue behind, finally, after dealing with State-level litigation since 1993. Our position of wanting to reduce the spending gap between the poorest and the wealthiest districts was compromised, in the end, by a Long Island give-back, but I was assured by staff this Fall that the amounts were relatively small. This harkens back to the age-old push-pull between property tax relief for Long Island and the student need issues in high poverty urban school districts. We are reminded that the Levittown case, brought in 1982, did not succeed on equity grounds because our State constitution does not require it; CFE was fought on “adequacy” grounds. For a further view of how New York State compares to other states, consult the publication Education Week for its annual issue, Quality Counts. It measures equity with quantitative tools, ranks the States, and at least tries to provide a basis of argument for those organizations, such as ours, that still hold out for equity. Look for the “McCloone Index” and the spending range among districts. While it’s great that our wealthiest districts have wonderful schools, we are still far from addressing the needs of our poorest students.
2. On the School Tax Relief issue (STAR), Barbara Bartoletti, Betsey Swan, and I met, prior to the election of Governor Spitzer, with soon-to-be-named budget director Paul Francis in the summer of 2006, during which we discussed our concerns with STAR. We were pleased that at least a cap was placed on the income that taxpayers could have while still receiving STAR benefits; this was part of our 18-month study’s findings and consensus. However, we did not persuade the Governor’s staff that the program was regressive; in fact, the Governor expanded the program, calling it “Middle Class Star”. My mailbox, and yours too I am sure, was filled with explanatory literature about how to apply for this benefit; deadlines were extended, checks were sent to people directly. If anyone would like a refresher course on why we concluded that this was inefficient tax relief, please contact me for the STAR materials as I do not believe that they were kept up on our website. **We will need to refer to these materials when we lobby this issue this year, so for those of you who kept your study files, don’t toss those that pertain to STAR!**

THANKS AND SOME FOUNDATION-RELATED NEWS

For those of you who have noticed my absence during this past year, I was “on sabbatical” with my family, and want to thank **Betsey Swan, Lee Tetkowski and Nikki Heller**, in particular, for stepping in so energetically to finish our study at both the State (Charter school) and City (NYC Ed Committee) level. And thanks to **Edna Vincenti**, who, during our entire study, put in an extra effort to persuade Long Island leagues to participate in the study, and who has now taken

on the job of Advocacy & Issues Vice President; she and I will work together to put together our lobbying effort in pre-K-12 education, together with continued input from **Betsey Swan** and **Barbara Bartoletti**. If anyone is interested in pursuing Higher Education, please let us know.

Speaking of higher education, I am still pursuing my doctoral degree in educational leadership/organization leadership at Teachers College Columbia University. I am at dissertation proposal writing stage, and have become increasingly interested in the role that private foundations have played, historically, in the school finance reform efforts throughout the United States. Did you know that the League of Women Voters was part of a broad policy network that assisted the Ford Foundation in the formative years of school finance litigation? The League is cited in academic publications such as Policy Studies Journal, noting that four State Leagues were chosen by the National League to participate in school finance reform efforts in the 1980's. I would love to hear from any of you who had anything to do with these efforts. Progress on reform is perhaps best appreciated in such perspective.

In the current world of school reform initiatives, did you know that the Broad Foundation and the Gates Foundation have formed "ED in '08", a national initiative to encourage, in a bipartisan way, national presidential candidates to consider public education as an important issue? Or that NY State has just received \$6 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wallace Foundation to "fund initiatives described in the Regents' P-16 Action Plan? For further information on this latter news item from December 14, see http://www.crainsnewyork.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200771214004&category=FREE&no_cache=1.

With new leadership in the Governor's office and, undoubtedly the usual turnover in staff in our legislators' offices, we will need to remind our local League representatives of our position statements in public education. After working hard to update them during our 18-month statewide study, let's use them effectively during this coming year. Please contact me if you need help or further information.

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HAVA UPDATE

“US Department of Justice Enters Motion To Enforce NYS Compliance with the Help America Vote Act in the Federal District Court for the Northern District of NY”

On November 5, the DOJ filed a Motion with the Court to require that New York must replace all lever voting machines by September 2008 (first federal election) and must expand ballot marking devices (BMDs) for the presidential primary in February 2008. The crux of their argument is that New York must comply with the federal law, has already received one extension of the 2006 deadline and further, that while New York may impose higher standards for state elections, it has no right to impose higher standards for voting machines than are called for under the HAVA statute. The state cannot continue to operate federal elections utilizing voting systems which do not meet the requirements of the federal statute (accessibility, auditability). The Court set a date of December 6 for the arguments but on application of the defendants, agreed to one postponement to December 20. All responses to the Motion had to be filed by December 14.

Advocates (NYVV, NYPIRG, LWVNYS) issued a press release deploring the position of the Justice Department on the grounds that the safeguards written in the NYS HAVA implementation statute would be endangered by the imposition of a 2008 deadline and would risk electoral chaos in a presidential election year. The NYS Attorney General will present the position of the state in the Court and the NYS Board of Elections will represent its various positions since each co-executive director is named as a defendant.

The DOJ motion stated that the county election commissioners would be granted *Amicus* (“friend of the court”) status to respond also.

The League, New Yorkers for Verified Voting, and NYPIRG decided to seek pro bono counsel to present our case as *Amici Curiae* (“friends of the court”) before the Judge also. We were successful in obtaining Geri Krauss, esq., of Westchester County and NYC, who developed the arguments of our case in a very succinct and understandable brief (see the LWVNYS website) premised on 1) DREs are a failed technology which do not meet statutory or constitutional requirements ensuring that each vote will be properly counted and should not (therefore) be part of any remedial plan, and 2) to require HAVA compliance by the 2008 presidential election would impair the very rights HAVA is trying to protect: compliance should be phased in and continued use of lever machines permitted until 2009. The Court accepted the application of several *Amicus* briefs on behalf of other organizations and affected parties. The League was also joined in the *Amicus* by Citizen Action.

It is expected that the Court will act expeditiously, but the Judge has the option of appointing a Special Master to oversee the remedial action he proposes. Such a solution could prolong the resolution.

The NYS Board of Elections will be re-starting the interrupted certification process in January with a new independent testing authority, *Systest*. They were awarded the state contract in late November and will start simultaneous testing of both DREs and optical scanners with ballot markers. Under the best case scenario, testing will be completed in early spring. Sequoia has acquired the rights to market a new scanner which has been used in Canada and is determined to be more accessible. It is a single unit which produces its own paper ballot, as opposed to the Automark device which is a separate unit to be used with an optical scanner.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year – and no new voting machines in 2008!

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
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THE ISSUE OF LEAD POISONING HAS ESCALATED
(From the Outgoing Off-Board Specialist on Lead Poisoning)

Since I started working on the issue of preventing the lead poisoning of our children here in Rochester in 2001, there have been many achievements thanks to the diligence of many dedicated individuals and organizations. In December 2005 the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning achieved with others the passage of code legislation by Rochester's City Council. It provided a mechanism to inspect City properties and enforce correction of lead concerns. I am proud to be a member that participated in the drafting of that legislation.

Thanks to lead prevention funds secured by the City of Rochester and the constant oversight provided by the Coalition, houses are being inspected and measures taken to eliminate the problems associated with lead contamination. Houses are being made lead safe and much to the surprise of some, landlords have not been as negatively impacted as anticipated.

When I joined the "Coalition to End Lead Poisoning" (CELP), four years ago, I had hoped to bring the experiences from Rochester to Albany and have been pleased to represent LWNYS on that state coalition. Work is continuing to pass legislation that will assure that housing statewide is lead safe.

Many of us are currently struggling with the announcement that our children are subject to a new lead risk. Parents and grandparents alike have to now read labels on toys and other children's products to see if they are made in the USA and presumably safe or in China, where safety standards have come under fire.

According to an article in Newsday by AP Business writer, Jeff Karoub, on December 5th. "Tests on more than 1200 children's products, most of them still on the store shelves, found that 35 percent contain lead- many with levels far above the federal recall standard used for lead paint". He further states, "The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a level of 40 ppm of lead as the maximum that should be allowed in children's products". Some of the products tested levels above 600ppm.

Since lead poisoning can cause problems in children ranging from irreversible learning disabilities and behavioral problems to seizures, coma and possibly death, action needs to be taken to eliminate the risk this new find presents. According to an article in Newsday, December 3rd by Kekiko Morris, "State senators heard testimony Monday from consumer advocates and a representative of the toy manufacturers in the hopes of crafting legislation to address the problem of contaminated toys and other children's products".

This acknowledgment that this is a serious problem is the first step. Advocates need to monitor the progress to make sure our children are safe from this newest lead poisoning threat. It is with sadness that I have withdrawn from the forefront of the fight against lead poisoning to work on issues related to work. However, I am turning over the baton to a very knowledgeable and dedicated League colleague, Joan Rosenthal, who is the new Board, approved Off-Board Specialist on Lead Poisoning.

**COMMENTS FROM INCOMING OFF-BOARD
SPECIALIST ON LEAD POISONING**

I am very excited about taking Jane's place as Lead Specialist Off-Board. Jane has contributed significantly to the efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning in Rochester and the rest of New York State. She has set some very high standards and I will try hard to continue her excellent work. Fortunately Jane has offered me her "ear" should I need it.

I have been a member of the Rochester Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and the Government Relations Committee for several years, participating in the push to have City Council pass strong lead legislation. I have also compiled and edited a brochure "Guide to Careers in Lead Hazard Control in Rochester and Monroe County" which can be accessed on the Coalition's web site and soon will be on a lead net listserv. This Guide can serve as a prototype for other communities to tailor to their own communities.

Currently the State Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (CELP) is working to urge the NYS Senate to pass S6350, which enacts the childhood lead poisoning primary prevention and safe housing act. The Assembly has already passed the same bill. Our efforts are now geared to garnering additional Senatorial sponsorship and urging New York State citizens to urge passage of this bill. I will keep you posted in future bulletins.

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
FROM: Gladys Gifford, Off Board-Specialist, Transportation
174 Capen Boulevard, Buffalo, NY 14226
E-Mail: schuford@earthlink.net

RESCISSION ORDER ON THE WAY!

The USA has consistently viewed transportation as a necessity supported by appropriations, not an area of public policy. Nowhere is this more evident than in the current practice of “rescission” by the Federal government. A rescission order may be done by the Federal government, to raid the highway trust funds established to assure that multi-year projects will be completed as planned. In recent years, states have been given flexibility in how they use the monies from these trust funds for all modes of transportation.

I was first alerted to the rescission order this past spring, and the LWVNYS Board agreed to act by sending a letter in April to Gov. Spitzer, to urge him protect transit funding as he apportioned the pain among various transportation projects/programs already planned. As a result, no transit projects were affected, but \$40 million was cut from Interstate maintenance, \$47 million from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality projects, and \$76 million from various other state highway projects.

At a recent meeting of our local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I learned that another round of rescission orders will be sent to states shortly. Congress has authorized \$3 billion to be cut in 2008; the transportation bill allows \$8.3 billion to be cut in 2009. This action will mean that Gov. Spitzer will again be forced to prioritize transportation projects throughout NYS. Local leagues need to contact their MPO and/or the NYSDOT to learn just how much and when these cuts will be made--and to write Gov. Spitzer to urge his continued care to make these decisions based on the need to maintain existing highway and transit infrastructure in good repair.

Rolling on to the LWVUS Convention!

Many delegates to the LWVNYS Convention this past May were able to stop by the transportation display: “Transportation Impacts Every Issue.” Let’s carry that message to the national convention, June 13-17, 2008, in Portland, Oregon. The people of Oregon, especially in Portland, are leaders in promoting and building a wonderful transportation system--and the benefits of their transportation policy will be on display for all Leaguers to see. The location and timing of the convention are especially fortunate, for the Federal transportation act is up for renewal in 2009; we need to energize Leaguers to craft and support an effective and environmentally-sustainable transportation policy for all Americans.

I’d like to work with the Oregon leagues, to put on an educational display for the convention--and I need help! Please contact me directly, at schuford@earthlink.net, with your ideas and suggestions.

TO: Local League Presidents, Advocacy and Issues Directors
FROM: Off-Board Specialists for Urban Sprawl
Ruth Bonn, 47 Spruce Drive, Alplaus, NY 12008
E-Mail: rooty@nycap.rr.com

Anne Huberman, 303 Highland Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222
E-Mail: anne.huberman@gmail.com

REPORT ON SPRAWL AND LAND USE ISSUES

A reminder: Our state position on land use and sprawl is

In order to conserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for its residents, New York State should take a proactive role in regional land use planning, enhancing urban neighborhoods, containing urban sprawl, and protecting agricultural land, open space, watersheds and other sensitive areas.

Governor Spitzer Acts

Here are excerpts from an announcement from the Governor's office:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 10, 2007

GOVERNOR SPITZER CREATES SMART GROWTH CABINET Multi-Agency Working Group Will Promote Smart Growth as an Economic and Environmental Tool

Governor Eliot Spitzer today signed an Executive Order creating a Smart Growth Cabinet. The Cabinet will review state agency spending and policies to determine how best to discourage sprawl and promote smart land use practices. It will coordinate cross-agency activities and develop "smart growth" policies that cater to New York's unique regional needs.

The Cabinet will consist of high-level policy-makers from various state agencies that have an impact on growth and development patterns, including representatives from the Empire State Development Corporation, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Transportation, Department of State, and Department of Housing and Community Renewal, among others.

"New York's economy and environment are inextricably linked," said Governor Spitzer. "Quite simply, smart growth is smart business. As our economy and population grow, it is vital that we ensure the development of vibrant, livable communities."

Recognizing both the environmental and economic benefits of smart growth, the Cabinet will be chaired jointly by the Governor's Deputy Secretary for the Environment Judith Enck and the Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Infrastructure Timothy Gilchrist. The Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet will hold its first meeting in January 2008.

Governor Spitzer has appointed several agency leaders with first-hand experience in smart growth: DOT Commissioner Astrid Glynn implemented Massachusetts's smart growth program; Upstate Economic Development Chair Dan Gundersen worked on smart growth initiatives in Pennsylvania and Maryland; Deputy Secretary of State for Local Governments Robert Elliott, who advanced smart growth initiatives in the Hudson Valley as Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson and President of the New York Planning Federation; and DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis, who advocated smart growth and sustainable development as a lawmaker for three decades.

TO: Local League Presidents, Membership Chairs
FROM: Marcia A. Merrins, Vice-President Membership
42 Rosalyn Court, Fredonia, NY 14063
E-Mail: mmerrins@netsync.net



League of Women Voters meeting, 1920. In front from left to right are Mrs. Henry R. Hayes, Miss Martha Van Rensselaer, Mrs. Casper Whitney, general regional director of the League of Women Voters, Mrs. Samuel Bins, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach.

“It’s better to have bounced and bumped than never to have bounced at all” I can’t remember the source of this quote. (I think it’s from a children’s book.) There is such wisdom in this simple message. Our foremothers certainly worked hard at engaging members. This should still be the priority. We work hard at voter service advocacy and education. But don’t forget to your members both old and new. Recognize them. Orient them. Mentor them.

Your January Membership Count Is Used To Determine Your Convention 2008 Delegate Count. On January 31, the LWVUS will pull your League’s report (“summary sheet”) from the online member database to determine your League’s member count for 2008-2009. The report will determine your League’s per member payments and set your League’s delegate count for the LWVUS Convention in June 2008. Remember you must change the “A” (active) to “I” (inactive) to inactivate a member. If you have any questions about this process, contact Betty Taira at 202-263-1345 or btaira@lwv.org, Mon-Wed, for assistance.

Liaison Program

Our liaison program has been a powerful tool in assessing how the state League can better serve you as well as alerting us to “hot spots”. It takes quite a bit of time for our board members to reach each League and I am truly grateful for their dedication. If you have not received a call from a state board member, please contact me!

NYS Membership Recruitment Challenge

Several local Leagues will be getting TLC as part of our **NYS Membership Recruitment Challenge** in the new year! The application process encouraged leadership in those Leagues to look inward to assess what opportunities to move their League forward exist within their communities. Participants are **LWV Rochester Metro, LWV Chautauqua County, LWV Geneva, LWV Utica-Rome Metro, LWV NYC and LWV Albany County.** Thank you!

These Leagues will be “coached” by a membership team that will be comprised of Ruth Bonn, myself and two other “seasoned” League members. We will work to develop skills to gain visibility in media, marketing, and public speaking when necessary. But the main feature will be **accountability** with monthly phone calls, conference calls and a lot of cheerleading! But the main thrust will focus on making membership a part of everything a League does with serious **intention**. The state’s role will be training, coaching, accountability, and modeling (The state League also has to do more of the things we preach...so stay tuned!).

Ida Trager Regional Training Workshops

The success of the Ida Trager workshops is due to your participation. We have learned so much! I want to highlight suggestions that I believe are the keys to kicking your Leagues up a notch.

Local Leagues get members from many sources. Friends asking friends, a new study, a local issue, luncheons, balanced presentations, debates, registration drives and cookie exchanges (okay, I just wanted to see if you are paying attention.) Many Leagues have gained new members this fall and I am thrilled and you should be too!

However, it is clear from the Ida Trager workshops and our liaison calls that one of the major problems with local Leagues is not having members step up to a leadership role. Many local Leagues are so involved with voter service activities and programs that they forget that just a couple of simple things you could do would nurture new members and engage them. This would relieve the heavy burden so many presidents and boards carry.

You cannot remedy this situation unless to get some of those new members to feel a part of the organization. How do you do it? Here are a few suggestions:

Welcome New Members

The first step is making new members feel welcome and a part of their League. We all know first impressions mean a lot, so make new members’ initial experiences with League great ones.

Welcome Packet - Every new member of your League should receive a Welcome Packet! (Are you are doing this? It is so important!)

1. A welcome letter from the president
2. A calendar of activities planned
3. A member contact list
4. A small League item (i.e. pin, lanyard, button, or bumper sticker).
5. A ‘Welcome to the League’ booklet (available from LWVNYS)

CAUTION! Overwhelming a new member is not a good strategy either.

Orientation - Many Leagues have had success hosting new member orientations at the beginning of a new League year or twice a year (in the fall and spring).

1. Should be a fun and casual
2. Make sure there is time for them to ask their questions
3. Provide concrete examples of the League’s work/successes, and share individual, personal stories about the League.

Mentoring Program - Start a mentoring program by pairing new members with seasoned members of the League.

1. Consider pairing people based on similar backgrounds or interests. The bond between new members and their mentors is irreplaceable

Introduction - It is always intimidating to be the new person in the group.

1. New members should be introduced at their first meetings and recognized at annual meetings to the whole membership.
2. Wear nametags.

President Outreach - The local League president should make a point to:

1. Reach out to new members by calling them when they join and thanking them for becoming a member.
2. Ask new members what their interests are
3. Inform them about upcoming events. The personal welcome, interest, and invitation will mean a lot.

TRY THIS!

New Member Ambassador/Committee – Designate one member as the new member ambassador. Create an entire committee. The ambassador(s) should be responsible for:

1. Welcoming new members
2. Sending them their packet of information
3. Setting them up with their mentor
4. Answering any questions they have
5. Keeping track of their interests.

Don't Give Up on Members

It's always discouraging when members drop from League rosters. However, your League doesn't have to be passive when members decide not to renew. Reach out.

1. Make sure that someone is assigned to reach out to them. First, send out an email reminding them that they have not renewed (some people just need a reminder).
2. If they don't renew, call the member and ask why they are not renewing. Listen to their concerns and make note of them to take to the Board, but also be sure to ask them to reconsider.
3. Have your local League president send a note or call the lapsed member and ask them to reconsider again and address their concerns.
4. The personal ask always has tremendous power in recruitment and retention.
5. **Follow Up** - Whether a member does or does not rejoin after asking, make sure someone is responsible for following up with either a "Thank you" or a "We'll miss you" note or email.
6. **Reconnect** - Revisit your old member lists and reconnect with members who have dropped in the past five years. Send them "We miss you" post cards or emails, an invitation to an event, or a discounted membership rate if they reestablish their membership.

Keep Members Engaged

League members who are engaged, are having fun, and fulfilled by the time they spend with the League will be the ones who stick with the League for the long haul.

1. **Have an Agenda** - Nothing frustrates people more than not knowing what is going on. People don't want to waste their time.
2. **Create a Calendar** - At the beginning of the year send all members a tentative calendar. Nothing is set in stone, but giving members an idea of what will be happening in the coming year will allow them to plan accordingly and set aside dates when appropriate. It will also help your Board and committees organizing your League events maximize the media, community visibility, and recruitment opportunities in advance.
3. **Remind Members** - Send out email reminders the week of an event (in addition to listing events in your newsletter). Very simply, people are busy and may forget about events that were announced weeks or months before.
4. **Create Small Opportunities** - Not everyone has a lot of time to contribute to the League. **Many people want to help but are afraid that will get assigned to be a chair of a committee if they speak up.** Whether it is sending out the reminders or delivering voters guides to the library, small tasks make people feel like they are contributing without being overwhelmed.
5. **Make Members Feel Special** - Always, always, always make members aware that they are special and appreciated. Send thank you emails or notes to the committee or members that helped put together an event.
6. **Survey Member Interests** - Try surveying member interests at the beginning of the year after you create your calendar. This will give event leaders a better feel for who may want to assist with their event. Interest surveys also provide you with an opportunity to ask what sort of tasks members would be willing to undertake throughout the year.
7. **Have Fun – (I do!)** Above all else, make sure your members enjoy the League and are having fun. Just because we take on the important issues facing our communities does not mean we have to be serious all the time.

January

- If winter is getting long, encourage the planning of a social event to help old and new members get better acquainted.
- Check with new members to see how they're feeling about League.
- Alert the budget committee to monetary needs of the membership committee for the coming year.
- Review progress on membership work to date; revise plans if necessary.
- Update the board.

January Membership Count Determines Convention 2008 Delegate Count

On January 31, the LWVUS will pull your League's report ("summary sheet") from the online member database to determine your League's member count for 2008-2009. The report will determine your League's per member payments and set your League's delegate count for the LWVUS Convention in June 2008. Remember you must change the "A" (active) to "I" (inactive) to inactivate a member. If you have any questions about this process, contact Betty Taira at 202-263-1345 or btaira@lwv.org, Mon-Wed, for assistance OR you may call Stephanie at the state League office.

February

- Consider whether or not you want to plan any formal spring recruitment activities.
- Share pertinent information with the nominating committee about members' interests and talents.
- Are there any proposals for bylaw changes that will aid in recruiting and/or retaining members?

USE THIS AS A TEMPLATE FOR AN OP ED
LEAGUE OP-ED/POST-ELECTION

**A NONPARTISAN PATH TO PARTICIPATION
If you want to make a difference, join the LWV**

Another election season has come and gone with the confrontational style of modern campaigns leaving most of us covering our ears and keeping our distance. While political junkies continue to analyze the results, the majority of us have moved on with our lives.

If you are like many New Yorkers, you no longer participate in the political process. For many New Yorkers even voting is no longer a part of their lives. It seems that modern campaigns have turned-off citizens. Long tedious campaigns that do not address the issues have taken their toll. Too many citizens feel it is futile to even try to make their voices heard.

I felt the same way just a few years ago. Then a friend of mine encouraged me to join the League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County and I discovered an entire network of committed, caring citizens accomplishing meaningful things.

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. When I joined the League I became directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong, safe and vibrant. As an LWV member, you can be a part of an organization where thoughtful, active leaders work to create change in their communities.

One of the best things I've done as a League of Women Voters member is participate in programs and discussions that give unbiased information about various hot topics: Windpower, the Food Industry, Water Quality in Chautauqua County, Immigration, Health Care. The League studies issues and reaches a consensus among its members. This year we are studying whether NYS should join a state compact for the national popular vote. Last year we studied Charter Schools in NYS. Before I joined the League, I didn't even know such programs existed. This information really helped me decide which policy I think our lawmakers should follow, and I was able to share this information with friends, and cast votes that are more meaningful. I've also helped to register voters and organize candidate forums in our community.

My volunteer work with the League has restored my faith in democracy. I have met great people who make me feel I CAN play a meaningful role in our political process. We may not be revolutionizing modern politics, but we ARE making a difference in this community and setting a good example for our children. Once again this year, children in the elementary schools in

Chautauqua County participated in the League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County “Take Me to Vote” contest.

I also take pride in knowing that my modest membership fee is supporting the League’s efforts at the state and national level for cleaner, more open government.

I now know there’s something I can do to make a difference. I feel much more connected to this community and enjoy the opportunity to do something positive for my country.

What I’ve learned as a member of the Chautauqua County League of Women Voters is that being a citizen is about more than voting. It’s about actively participating in our democracy and playing a meaningful role in making our system of government work. Through the League, I am able to educate others and myself about the issues facing those we elect to represent us.

That is why I encourage all citizens to join our effort. The Chautauqua County League is in its biggest membership drive to date. Your membership in the League now will help make so much possible. With more support we can reach many more neighbors with non-partisan information on candidates and ballot questions, we can organize more debates and discussion groups, and we can strengthen our fight for better government.

Let’s remember that this system of government is not about the parties, it’s about the citizens. Joining the League is a nonpartisan way for citizens to band together to work for the better government we all want and deserve. Don’t let the unfortunate aspects of partisan politics keep you from doing what you know is right, and that is to use our precious rights of citizenship to make a difference just as I have done as a member of the Chautauqua County League.

Marcia A. Merrins
President, LWV Chautauqua County
672-4275

TO: Local League President, Voter Service Directors
 FROM: Maggie Moehringer, Vice President, Voter Service
 12 Coventry Road, Glenmont, NY 12077
 E-mail: mmoehrin@nycap.rr.com

WEB-BASED SERVICES FOR LOCAL LEAGUE
VOTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

In the course of the Ida Trager workshops, we discussed the idea of the LWVNYS web site providing voter service related information on the State and National levels to relieve the local Leagues of providing duplicative web services for that information. If properly designed, Leagues would be able to just link to the information rather than each League maintaining it on their web site.

In order to make it usable for local League web sites, the information would have to be:

- Scrupulously well maintained
- Attractive
- Easy to link to without appearing to leave the local League's web site
- Formatted generically so that it doesn't conflict with the local League site's look and feel
- Broken down in such a way that Leagues can pick and choose from a menu of available information, rather than only having the option of linking to an entire list of available documents.

We did a survey of all of the local League web sites in NYS and came up with a list of information that could be maintained on the State League web site for the use of all; local Leagues could then concentrate on providing good, complete web services on local voting-related information and activities. Here's the list of commonly maintained voter service oriented documents that State League could maintain on behalf of local Leagues:

- **Frequently Asked Questions about Voting**
 - Who can vote, and the process
 - Basics
 - Voting for Offenders
 - Registering
 - Basics
 - For new citizens
 - For college students
 - Voting
 - Finding your polling place
 - Working the voting machines
 - Help: Expectations of polls and poll workers
 - Absentee voting
- **New York State and Federal Election Calendar**
 - What Federal offices in which years
 - What State offices in which years

- Yearly calendar
- **New York State Registration Form**
 - How to fill it out
 - Form itself
- **New York State Absentee Ballot form**
 - How/when to fill it out
 - Form itself
- **National and State “who represents you and how to contact them”**
- **State ballot issue discussions**
- **Fair Campaign Practices**
- **Links**
 - To State and National LWV
 - To State governmental bodies
 - To National governmental bodies
 - To non-partisan democracy organization sites
 - To “voter support” project sites

State League’s web site maintains much of this information now, but often not in a format that is user friendly, easy to find, and easy for another web site to link to transparently. The way that the content is organized should allow the local League to maintain the appearance of providing the service locally, and should be so attractive, complete, and well maintained that the local League will feel that it does not need to expend the effort locally. State League should also make it clear what services it cannot perform from the State League web site, so that local Leagues can plan and design their web services accordingly (for example, links to the local Board of Elections, local government offices, local “who represents you”, etc.).

Other ideas came out at the Ida Trager workshops:

- The State League has a wealth of information and “how tos” buried in hard-to-read documents in formats that makes it hard to re-use. Pamphlets in PDF format, or long documents that are difficult to download, for example, make it hard for local Leagues to reprint information in their bulletins or distribute it. Breaking up the documents and providing them in re-printable format is a good idea.
- While it’s important to make the wealth of League information accessible to local Leagues for re-use, it also is important to copyright it and brand it as “League” when the information is accessible to other organizations.
- Enabling other organizations to conduct activities such as voter registration drives and “get out the vote” actions should be part of our mission, and our web site could provide those how-tos. However, it’s important that the documents made available to outsiders are not readily altered by other organizations and that the League brand is obvious.
- A special area on the web site for educators and students is a good idea.
- Once the League has the best possible voter-service web site, other organizations should be encouraged to provide links to it.

We will start in the New Year to carry through on these ideas!

Voter Registration Activities for New Citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies: Survey Results

In prior SBRs, we talked about Leagues getting involved in naturalization ceremonies, some contacts, and ways for local Leagues to get started. A survey was conducted of local League activities at new citizen naturalization ceremonies. Leagues that conduct voter registration drives and other services at these ceremonies find them inspiring, fruitful in terms of new registrants, and an enjoyable, inspiring activity for members. Thanks to those Leagues that submitted a completed survey and shared their ideas. Some ideas, such as developing information for new citizens about voting that is simple, short, and easy to read, we can pursue on a State level.

Twenty-two Leagues responded; eleven of those did not participate in these ceremonies, mostly because of lack of proximity or opportunity. Eleven Leagues described their services for new citizens at these ceremonies: Albany County, Broome-Tioga, Buffalo-Niagara, Rochester Metro, Rockland, and Syracuse Metro, Tompkins County (just starting), Utica-Rome, the Westchester ILO (including Scarsdale and Bronxville). The purpose of this report is to circulate the good ideas that some Leagues have had for activities at these ceremonies. For some Leagues, being allowed to participate is an issue; sometimes courts are not cooperative or Boards of Election do not see a need for League participation. For some Leagues, their activities are limited to passing out literature and encouraging voting; the local Board of Elections handles voter registration.

Albany County: Two members have attended the ceremonies for many years. Over time, they have established a good relationship with the court and the Board of Elections and feel that is important. They set up a table before the ceremony; provide voter information (“First Vote”) and registration forms. They assist in registering those that wish to fill out the form there, and pass out forms to those who wish to fill them out later. They have recently ordered pens with the League logo and web site to pass out as gifts. They collect small toys at garage sales to amuse the children during the long ceremony. They also pass out forms and information about how to apply for a passport.

Bronxville: Participates about once a year in the Westchester ILO rotation, sending two members to the Westchester County Court House. They try to get new and different members involved, and have no trouble getting volunteers. They do not conduct membership activities.

Broome-Tioga: The League welcomes new citizens; offers voter registration forms, offers help completing them, and answers questions about voting. Usually only 1-3 members are involved. The holders of the ceremonies contact the League, as a valued participant, to tell them the schedule. They have the support of the local American Civic Association, which values voting, and which hosts a reception (many new citizens cannot attend because of work responsibilities). They suggest that literature geared to new citizens be developed that is short and has simple language appropriate for people with poor literacy and English skills, and suggest that we work with ESL tutors to develop it.

Buffalo- Niagara: The League sends two representatives to each ceremony, who make a speech congratulating the new citizens. They form a reception line handing out “First Vote”, voter registration forms, and “They Represent You”. They get the schedule of ceremonies from the

INS. They are usually held at the Federal Court House but are sometimes at another historic location. They do not have trouble-recruiting members to cover these events, have no language issues, and do not conduct membership activities.

Rochester Metropolitan Area: The League attends all the local naturalization ceremonies, usually two a month. They hand out “First Vote”, registration forms, urge new citizens to fill out the form, help them do so, and take forms to the Board of Elections. 4 or 5 members participate. They get the schedule yearly from the INS in Buffalo, and call monthly to ask for any changes to the schedule and how many new citizens are scheduled for the ceremony. The League finds this a very worthwhile activity.

Rockland County: One volunteer speaks to about 150 new citizens at ceremonies that take place every other month about the importance of voting and what the League does. The county clerk copies her in on the correspondence that goes to new citizens about the schedule. They have some difficulty with their Board of Elections not allowing them to participate (the Board sends 2-3 people), so they suggest getting the cooperation of the Board.

Scarsdale: Participates in the Westchester rotation, welcomes new citizens, hands out voting information. Usually two members attend.

Syracuse Metro Area: The League participates in ceremonies at the Federal and County level. They distribute and collect voter registration forms and take them to the Board of Elections. The effort involves 4 to 5 volunteers. Contacts at the courts give them the schedule early in the year.

Utica-Rome: Participates with other welcoming organizations; registers about 50 voters per ceremony; 10 members are involved; host receptions with refreshments, including ethnic food, balloons; ceremonies are at variable locations – federal building, county legislative chambers, Rome parade ground. They work through the Federal District Court and NYS Supreme Court to do two ceremonies a year. Court secretaries keep them informed of the schedule and which ceremonies would be conducive to having receptions. They don’t find language issues to be difficult; often someone can help. New citizens want a passport right away [having the forms and instructions can help them]. This is great publicity for their League; an inexpensive gold pin with the League logo would help to get recognition for the League. They advise negotiating with the courts to include the League in their publicity and press coverage of the ceremonies. In return, they include the court officials in their bulletin articles and press releases and send them to the judges, so that they can see their names in print. A photo of the official, a League member, and the judge makes a great picture.

Westchester: The ILO coordinates the local Leagues in rotating responsibility for sending representatives to the ceremonies twice a month at the county clerk’s office. Members find it very worthwhile and emotionally moving to attend. They pass out a brochure entitled “New Citizen”, which is underwritten by a local corporation, and “First Vote”. They do not conduct membership activities and don’t think it would be appropriate. They direct new citizens to the Board of Elections table to register to vote.

TO: Local League Presidents, Program/Education Chairs and SIA/LeaderSpark Coordinators
FROM: JoAnn Ross, Citizen Education Director
116 Cranburne Lane, Williamsville, New York 14221
E-Mail: jross18@roadrunner.com

CITIZEN EDUCATION REPORT

Students Inside Albany

Thank you to local League's that have participated in the past with *Students Inside Albany*. It is, again, planning time for *Students Inside Albany* and we are eager to announce the details of the 2008 program.

Leagues not participating in LeaderSpark will be able to send one student to *Students Inside Albany* to fill the 16 remaining slots. Those participating in LeaderSpark will choose two students from their LeaderSpark program to send. We hope to have a good statewide mix in this group. If a league were to request an additional student attend *Students Inside Albany*, it would have to pick up the cost of that student plus travel. Below are details:

Dates: Sunday, April 27 through Wednesday, April 30.

Place: Hampton Inn & Suites in Albany

Cost: The LWVNYS Education Foundation has been able to raise funding to cover the costs of participants to the maximum indicated. If any of the participating leagues desires to send an additional student—if there is room—that league's cost would be \$225 plus travel expenses.

Selection process: As begun with SIA 2007, we are leaving the selection process up to the local leagues. Many creative ideas have arisen as League's choose their SIA candidates. Some have maintained the traditional essay contest; others have used referrals and recommendations.

If your league is interested in participating in *Students Inside Albany*, please return by February 11 yellow form following this report by e-mail, fax, or mail. Include your league's contact information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (518) 465-4162 or e-mail kris@lwnvy.org.

We look forward to another great year of *Students Inside Albany* and the excitement it engenders about the legislature and the political process. *LeaderSpark* students will facilitate a leadership session to add alumni involvement in give greater numbers of students' new tools for participation in government.

LeaderSpark Update

The League of Women Voters of New York State is about to begin another year of LeaderSpark programs. If your League is not currently participating in the LeaderSpark Program, you are

invited to follow both the developments of the original pilot programs and the new programs. All New York State leagues are encouraged to join the growing LeaderSpark team. The program offers leadership opportunities for the youth of your community and creates an opportunity for your leagues to reach out to business and the community producing relationships, which can possibly result in new members.

The first of the Facilitator Trainings by region was held in Western New York on December 5, 2007. The Buffalo/Niagara LWV LeaderSpark Program will begin in January 2008. Other regional training sessions are still in the planning process.

For further information on LeaderSpark contact:
Kris Meyers, Executive Director of the LWFVNY
518-465-4162/E-Mail: kris@lwfyny.org

OR

JoAnn Ross, Citizen Education Director, LWFVNY
716-631-9351/E-Mail: jross18@roadrunner.com

2008 Students Inside Albany Local League Participation Form

PLEASE RETURN BY FEBRUARY 11, 2008

LOCAL LEAGUE NAME _____

COORDINATOR NAME _____

DAY PHONE _____ EVENING PHONE _____

FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU HAVE DECIDED HOW YOU WILL SELECT YOUR STUDENT TO PARTICIPATE



*Students Inside Albany is
Sponsored by the
League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation*

Please return by FEBRUARY 11, 2008 to:
2008 *Students Inside Albany* Program
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
(518) 465-4162 / FAX (518) 465-0812
Or e-mail information to: kris@lwvny.org

TO: Local League Presidents, Local Study Committee Chairs,
Action and Issues Chairs
FROM: Lori Dawson, LWVNYS NPV Study Chair,
4 Marion Place, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
E-Mail: iddawson@skidmore.edu

JoAnn Ross, Citizen Education, Director
E-Mail: jross18@roadrunner.com

NPV STUDY UPDATE

1. On October 31, 2007, LWVNYS was informed by our LWVUS liaison, Xandra Kayden, that LWVNYS “would not be able to take action on any position resulting from the study” on the NPV study.

2. At the November 14, 2007 LWVNYS Board Meeting the following motion was passed:

LWV New York State board has been directed by its membership to pursue the National Popular Vote study. Therefore the Board agrees to direct Lori Dawson and Carol Mellor to lobby across the country to recommend the adoption (at the National Convention in 2008) of a National Study entitled, **“The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”**

3. On November 23, 2007, the NPV Study Committee was officially laid down and thanked for their work. Leagues in NY that desire to continue the NPV study as an educational activity are encouraged to do so, but the study committee will no longer formally function to prepare materials for LWVNYS to study.

National NPV Study Lobbying Activities

1. Document created to use to inform Leagues about the LWVNYS request for a National NPV Study.
2. Lori joined the LWVUS Program Planning list serve and posted the LWVNYS request for the study.
3. Martha sent out a notice to NY Local League leaders and to LWV state presidents.
4. Carol Mellor sent out the notice to all Local League Presidents across the country.

LWVNYS Web Site

Carol Mellor and Lori Dawson revised the materials on the LWVNYS web site in order to assist Leagues across the country in deciding whether to recommend the NPV study. The materials include portions of the LWVNYS NPV study guide along with two articles that help to explain the NPV:

- What Leagues Can Do: RECOMMEND A NEW STUDY at LWVUS Program Planning Time
- National Popular Vote Compact Explained in Brief - 4 pages
- National Popular Vote Compact Explained with Detailed Pro and Con Arguments – 10 pages
- Electoral College History

- The Electoral College and how it Works
- Process for Amending the Constitution
- Reference Material – Revised
- Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by Nationwide Popular Vote
- Complete text of NPV bill
- LWVUS Position on Selection of the President
- Complete text of history and position.