



LWV of Albany County

September 2007

Educate

Participate

Advocate

Potluck Dinner

Immigration Reform Implications: A Panel of Experts



Tuesday, September 25

5:30 pm Wine & Hors D'Oeuvres

6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Program

First Congregational Church
405 Quail Street (right off New Scotland)

Three experts will provide us with insights into the immigration issue that has become bogged down in Congress:

Dina Refki, Deputy Director, Immigrant Women, Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, Rockefeller College.

Professor Alethia Jones, Ph.D., Department of Public Administration and Policy, University at Albany, SUNY. Professor Jones teaches courses in policy analysis, bureaucratic politics and immigrant policy.

David Meyers, Esq. Mr. Meyers is In-House Counsel for the Immigration Services Program of Catholic Charities, and has immigrant clients in private practice.

Their experience with immigration law, as well as dealing with personal issues of immigrants, will help us navigate this complex topic. This is a national League study with a consensus meeting scheduled for November 13th. Check the latest articles in the newspaper and bring your questions (along with your friends) to the meeting.

RSVP by Sept 21 to Gael Vecchio (459-9958)

Tell her what you are bringing:

**Hors D'Oeuvres (5:15 pm), Salad, Main Dish, Dessert or
\$10 Donation**

Also, we need help to set up (4:30-5:30 pm) or clean up after Program.

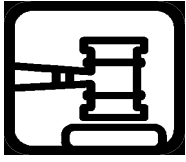
League of Women Voters of Albany County

Website: www.lwvalbany.org Email: lwvac@crisny.org

Lori Keegan-Brady and Maggie Moehringer, Co-Presidents

Susan Coleman (330-2992) and Audrey Kibrick (489-9931), Membership Co-Chairs

Laura Ladd Bierman, Newsletter Editor



From the Co-Presidents

Hello all!

We have an exciting and active fall schedule ahead of us. It will give you lots of opportunities to get involved in League activities. We have several educational, advocacy/action and social events scheduled for this fall!

At the **September 25th Pot Luck Supper**, we have a distinguished panel lined up to speak about the issues surrounding immigration. As you know, this is a hot topic and always in the news. This discussion is in preparation for our **November 13th consensus meeting**. If you are interested in participating on that study committee, please contact Ann Brandon (439-4332). We hope to see you and a friend there for lots of food, interesting discussions and great camaraderie!

We need your help to staff the **Albany Housing Authority Board Member election on Tuesday, October 9th** from 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm at 9 sites throughout the city of Albany. Dinner will be supplied. If you can help out all or part of the time, please contact: Nell Stokes-Holmes (nstokes1@nycap.rr.com), Mary Ann Lettau (mlettau1@yahoo.com) or Maggie Moehringer (mmoehrin@nycap.rr.com, 475-0969).

Some fun things on the horizon include a **Tour of the State Capital** and lunch afterwards. This is scheduled for **October 13th**. The tour will begin at 11:00 am from the Empire State Plaza Visitors Center in the North Concourse. The tour is approximately one hour long with a maximum of 35 people. Anyone who wishes, can join us for lunch. Please contact Lori Keegan-Brady, if you are interested (475-0396 or Lkeegan-Brady@nycapp.rr.com).

Mark your calendars for **“Lunch with the League” on November 9th** in downtown Albany at Pump Station. Parking is available. We will meet at noon and share lunch and some laughs, so plan on being there and bring a friend.

As always, everyone is encouraged and welcomed to attend the **board meetings** on the **first Tuesday of month** at the Albany Public Library at 5:45 pm. It's a great way to learn more about the League.

Maggie Moehringer (475-0969)
Lori Keegan-Brady (475-0396)

New Member
Sarah Cavanaugh
Albany
Welcome!

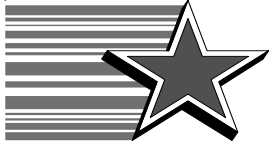
Monday Morning Great Issues Group

The group will start the Fall semester with its first meeting on **Monday, September 10 from 9:30 to 11:30**. The Battle for God, by Karen Armstrong will be discussed, two chapters at a time, in meetings on alternate Mondays in September and October. The book describes the history of fundamentalism in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions. It shows how each religion has gone through the same cycles of religious fanaticism in the last 1000 years.

For further information, contact Katie Henrikson: 439-4308 or khenriks@nycap.rr.com.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan citizen organization that promotes the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

This newsletter is published by the League of Women Voters of Albany County, 12 Coventry Road, Glenmont, New York 12077 and mailed to League members. The frequency of publication is as follows: one mid-summer issue followed by nine monthly issues from September to May.



League in Profile

Agnes R. Allen

(By Daughter, Edith Allen, LWV Albany Member)

My Mother joined the League of Women Voters in about 1947 when an active League was formed in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The kick-off was an afternoon tea with Anna Lord Strauss, the President of League of Women Voters of United States, as the guest of honor. I, an elementary student, shook her hand and felt as if I had entered a big stage.

Agnes Allen was active, and one of her issues was pasteurizing milk. The milk sold in eastern Tennessee at that time was not generally pasteurized, and most people who grew up locally saw no reason to do so. I do not know her exact position, but Agnes Allen worked on this issue at the level of the State Board of League of Women Voters of Tennessee. By the end of 1949 pasteurizing milk was enacted.

My family moved to Long Island and Agnes Allen joined the League of Women Voters of Northern Brookhaven. At various times she was active on various issues, and I think she served as local League President for a year or two. The local group members grew older, and in the 1970s did work on ground water recharge. On Long Island, if a lot of water is pumped from the water table, salt water intrudes and the well can no longer supply fresh water. Having rain water recharge the areas where there are water wells is quite important to maintaining the water supply, but pavement and buildings impede that process. On the Island it has been almost as hard down to reduce and channel development as in the Albany Pine Bush. Agnes Allen was active on that issue, and the League has had some success in setting aside acreage for ground water recharge.

I understand that the Leagues in Brookhaven Town on Long Island both faced dwindling membership, as Agnes Allen and others faded out. One of her last League activities was to report from the polls on election night in the late 1980s. Now there is a single Brookhaven Town League of Women Voters, though the Town is one of New York State's largest, at least 20 miles by 20 miles.

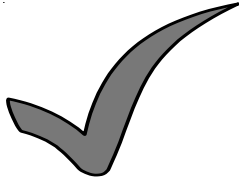
City Beat: A Gun Violence Task Force

In July, the Albany Common Council established a Gun Violence Task Force to research and develop strategies to reduce gun violence in the City of Albany. The Task Force will be comprised of 13 members, 7 appointed by the Common Council, and 6 appointed by the Mayor. Applications for those interested in being appointed to the one-year, uncompensated positions were due August 17th. A majority will need to be city residents and knowledgeable about the related issues.

The Task Force will: prepare a report on the number and types of gun related offenses in the City from 2000 to the present; compare those statistics to at least 5 other municipalities of similar size; research and report on programs that have been successful in other municipalities; and research and report on other relevant issues related to gun violence and illegal ownership of guns.

Councilman Dominick Calsolaro championed the recommendation, and the LWVAC, the Albany Council of Churches, city residents, and the Capital District Chapter of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence all publicly supported it. The NYS Rifle & Pistol Association spoke in opposition to guns, and not general violence, being the focus. Police Chief James Tuffey has been cool to the proposal, saying that a task force is unnecessary and duplicative effort, and the Mayor has been unhappy with the focus that a task force will bring to problems that he considers typical of a city this size.

In light of the recent violence and shootings in the city, this Task Force is overdue and of great importance to all who live and raise their children there. The LWVAC will continue to support and report on the activities of the Task Force, and hopes to have some of our members represented on it. Stay tuned!



Electing Your Albany County Legislator

We will go to the polls in Albany County in 2007 to elect the county legislature members. All of the districts elect a legislator every 4 years. Your legislator must reside in your district, must have done so for one year prior to taking office, and must continue to do so for the duration of the term.

What characteristics should you look for in a legislator?

Among others, the legislature has the following powers and duties:

- determines policy for the County and exercises legislative oversight of County programs and Administrative Units
- makes appropriations, levies taxes, borrows money, and adopts the budget
- determines how the county is to be administered, sets the compensation level for county employees, and confirms appointments made by the executive
- approves contracts entered into by the County
- enacts, amends, and rescinds local legislation subject to the veto of the County Executive.

Fiscal, legal, governmental and managerial experience are all applicable to County legislative positions. Since the legislature has oversight of county programs, knowledge and experience with government programs in the social services - health and mental health, senior and youth services, corrections, etc. - and with economic planning and development are also applicable.

What primaries are there on September 18th for Albany County Legislators?

Here's a quick guide for you about the parties and offices that have primaries in the upcoming local elections, based on initial information from the Board of Elections. A warning: this information is tentative pending final certification of the ballot awaiting the resolution of court actions in the *'ed districts. Some races where multiple candidates are elected for multiple vacancies may not be listed.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY:

County Legislator

District 2: Lester Freeman, Lucille McKnight

District 3: Ronald Bailey, Wanda Willingham

District 4: Virginia Tobler, Jacqueline Jones, Clifton Dixon

District 5: Norma Chapman, Kory Hogan

District 6: Christopher Higgins, Christopher Burke

District 7: Brian Scavo, Thomas Monjeau

District 8: Douglas Bullock, Jennifer Muthig, Kenneth Barnes

District 18*: Bill Ricard, Shawn Morse

District 27: Richard Jacobson, Michael Aidala

District 36*: Howard Shafer, Leo Dorsey

District 39: Alexander Gordon, Kevin Crosier

CONSERVATIVE PARTY:

County Legislator

District 29: Lee Carman, Dennis Feeney

INDEPENDENCE PARTY:

County Legislator

District 4: Clifton Dixon, Jose Lopez

District 6: R.A. DePrima, Christopher Higgins

LWVAC will hold a candidates' forum for the candidates who are being primaried at 7:00 on September 13th at the Albany Public Library. Please contact Wendy Dury-Samson for information (439-1113, or midjill@nycap.rr.com).

Election 2007 - Important Dates

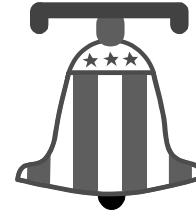
PRIMARY ELECTION: SEPTEMBER 18TH

September 11th Last date to postmark application for absentee ballot

September 17th Last date to apply in person for absentee ballot

September 17th Last date to postmark absentee ballot

September 18th Last date to submit absentee ballot in person



GENERAL ELECTION: NOVEMBER 6TH

Registration by mail: application form must be postmarked by October 12th, received by Board of Elections by October 17th.

Registration in person: application form must be submitted by October 12th.

Changes of address must be received by October 17th.

October 30th Last date to postmark application for absentee ballot

November 5th Last date to apply in person for absentee ballot

November 5th Last date to postmark absentee ballot

November 6th Last date to submit absentee ballot in person



Albany County Offices To Be Filled 2007

STATE

Justice of the Supreme Court (3)

COUNTY

County Executive

County Comptroller

Coroner (3)

County Legislators (39)

CITIES

Albany

Member, Board of Education (1)

Cohoes

Mayor

Council Member (6)

Watervliet

Mayor

Councilman

TOWNS

Berne

Councilman (2)

Assessor (2)

Bethlehem

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk

Town Justice

Superintendent of Highways

Receiver of Taxes

Coeymans

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Justice

Colonie

Supervisor

Councilman (3)

Town Clerk

Town Justice

Green Island

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk

Town Justice

Tax Collector

Village of Green Island

Village Mayor

Village Trustee (3)

Guilderland

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk

Town Justice

Superintendent of Highways

Knox

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk

Town Justice

Superintendent of Highways

Tax Collector

New Scotland

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk

Town Justice (2)

Superintendent of Highways

Rensselaerville

Councilman (2)

Town Justice

Assessor

Westerlo

Supervisor

Councilman (2)

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Town Justice

Superintendent of Highways

Testimony Before Albany Common Council

The following testimony was presented by Aimee Allaud during the public comment period of the Albany Common Council meeting on August 6th. The Council approved the recommendations and report of their Ad Hoc Committee on Cable Access that night. Next steps will be that the recommendations will be among discussion issues raised by the Corporation Counsel with Time-Warner, the current cable provider, during contract negotiations.

Members of the Common Council, Council President Morris

I am Aimee Allaud, resident of the City, and a member of the League of Women Voters of Albany County, as well as a member of the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations public access TV committee.

Members of both organizations have advocated for a public access TV facility for Albany for the past six years. Anticipating that when the City's contract with Time Warner terminated in 2004, we would have an opportunity to once again consider creating a public access television capable of providing full public, government and educational access for Albany's citizens, we began to do our homework.

We were very pleased that Mayor Jennings appointed a Council member, Dave Torncello, to head a committee to review and study the cable contract and to investigate the potential for including a comprehensive public access television facility. (Insert for oral presentation the following: We were also pleased that a new committee chaired by Councilman Rosenzweig was appointed to continue the work which had been begun by the previous committee) Our organizations have presented testimony on a number of occasions, beginning in 2003, which is part of the public record. We produced a brochure, "Public Access Albany, New Possibilities for Community Telecommunications Infrastructure," which we used to spread the message to the community about the benefits of public access. We participated in a number of meetings to share information with Mr. Torncello's committee. Meanwhile, the CANA public access TV committee, continued to borrow camera equipment from the Bethlehem public access TV studio to film the monthly meetings of the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations. Individual neighborhood associations have endorsed the concept and have submitted their own Resolutions. As the Ad Hoc Committee report indicates, "there is an overwhelming support for PEG access in our City by people from different socio-economic, ethnic, educational and geographical backgrounds."

Your committee has produced a report which, by and large, reflects the goals that our organizations have supported for a public access facility and programming for City residents. However, we have several comments on the report which we would like to be entered in the public record as follows:

- 1) Although the report establishes that the Council Chambers would be the home of the Governmental entity, it does not indicate that there would also be an I-NET to connect government buildings to facilitate communication between Albany city government and city residents. This technology should not be limited to broadcasting meetings, but can be a very effective means of disseminating important information on a timely basis to City residents,
- 2) the report does not recommend that meetings of the Albany School District Board of Education be included in the scope of the meetings to be televised. We would recommend that this body be named in your Final Report.
- 3) The report indicates that the committee rejects the idea that equipment should be loaned from the facility. We suggest that you refer a decision on permitting loans of equipment to the entity which will be the governing body for public access. Having been responsible borrowers of equipment from the Bethlehem Library for four years, we would like to think that other members of the community would also benefit from a policy which encourages the production of home-grown programming.
- 4) Regarding the financing of PACTV, the Resolutions adopted by the neighborhood associations recommends "...the city to provide ongoing support to the operation by dedicating a percentage of the annual fees collected from the franchisee to the operation of easily accessible public access broadcast facility/facilities." The report does not reflect this recommendation and seems to rely solely on the \$.35 monthly pass through fee to Time Warner subscribers. In our region, the City of Schenectady supports their PACTV station through an annual contribution to the station's budget. We would ask you to re-consider this point.

We commend your committee for the vision and plan for PACTV which this report sets forth and look forward to a new contract with a cable provider which will pave the way for public access here.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Farms-to-Restaurants Week

Many people live and work in Albany and the surrounding suburbs but few realize that just a short drive away, our county's farmers are working hard on their small family farms to provide fresh, nutritious fruits, vegetables, meats, and milk. In Albany County, farmers own and care for approximately 60,000 acres of privately owned land. These lands are not only a valuable soil resource for food production, but they also serve as wildlife habitat and buffers to water resources, and enhance the scenic landscape. By promoting local products and keeping our small farms in business, we can maintain the many benefits that farms and farmland provide.

Albany County Farms-to-Restaurants Week was organized to support the local agricultural industry by linking local farmers to area restaurants, giving residents and visitors an opportunity to enjoy fresh locally produced foods while raising awareness about the benefits of buying and eating local. During the week of September 10th-16th, participating restaurants will be featuring specials made with local foods grown and processed on nearby farms. Patrons ordering from the special menus will get a taste of the best our local farms and restaurants have to offer and will also receive a promotional wine glass.

While you're out enjoying the tastes of the fall harvest season, be sure to pick up "Albany County Bounty", a map of farms and farm products in the County, so that you can visit local farms and find fresh, delicious, locally grown foods.

Albany County Farms-to-Restaurants Week was organized by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, Albany County Department of Economic Development, Conservation, and Planning and United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency with funding from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Why Eat and Buy Local?

- Local food is fresher, more nutritious, and tastes better.
- Local food is a better value as you pay for freshness and taste, not packaging, refrigeration and freight.
- Buying local offers the security of knowing where your food comes from and how it was produced. Maintaining a local food supply also ensures that local residents will have an adequate supply of fresh, nutritious food.
- Local food is more environmentally friendly. Local food travels an average of 40 miles to your plate, compared to an average of 1500 miles for most supermarket produce, reducing fuel consumption and improving air quality.
- Buying locally grown food supports the local economy by keeping your dollars in the community and providing economic opportunities for people in rural communities.
- Supporting local farms helps preserve farmland and our valued rural landscape.
- Keeping agriculture in Albany County helps us sustain our heritage, the tradition of farming in our community, and our quality of life.

FRESH



HELP! Election Workers Needed October 9th

LWVAC did such a good job with the Albany Housing Authority Board member election that we've been invited back to do it again! It's a lot of work, but it is a great fund raiser for the League, helps out the city, and really goes to the core of our mission.

The election is **Tuesday, OCTOBER 9TH**, and takes place in 9 polling places throughout the city. We will need two poll workers at each site at all times from 2:00pm to 8:00pm. The poll workers preside over the marking and collection of the ballots and make sure that the election is conducted according to regulations – simple! Dinner is provided. If you can work the whole six hours, that's wonderful and makes it easier for us, but half shifts are possible. If you'd like to work with a friend (need not be a League member), that's also fine – let us know. If you worked the last time and want to go back to the same location, let us know that also. So, bring a book, a deck of cards, bring friends, help us recruit others, and help the city and the League at the same time!

Please let us know as soon as you can if you can help out. You can notify any one of us. We'd like to have an initial idea of how many Leaguers we can count on by the end of August. Thanks in advance!!!

Nell Stokes-Holmes (nstokes1@nycap.rr.com)
Mary Ann Lettau (mlettau1@yahoo.com)
Maggie Moehringer (mmoehrin@nycap.rr.com, or 475-0969)
Co-Managers, AHA Election Poll Workers

New Citizen Registration News from Swearing-In Ceremonies

We would like all of the Leagues in the state to view the swearing-in ceremonies for new citizens as wonderful opportunities to register new voters and to get their members involved! Albany County League member Monique Roeth and Judy Grose-Johnson, who have for many years registered voters at the ceremonies, have some advice for them.

First, establish a good, trusting relationship with the people in charge. Be persistent but pleasant, reliable, and show up on time every time. Monique and Judy feel it's important to be considerate of the needs of the participants. For example, they provide small inexpensive toys for the children to play with while waiting, and bring change for bills so that people can feed parking meters. They also, as a related service, provide passport applications and a list of which local post offices accept them; new citizens will often want to apply for a US passport right away.

They come prepared to answer questions verbally about voting and the voting process; for example, many registrants are confused and have questions about the primary system and about registering for a political party. And they advise that Leaguers not get discouraged if they don't register all of the people who participate in the ceremony. A one-third rate of registrants per the total number that participate seems to be common; many will take the forms and not register at that time, but wish to do it later.

Monique and Judy were honored by LWVAC a few years ago as "League Heros" for their many years of registering new citizens at the swearing-in ceremonies. They continue their good work, and give advice to other Leagues interested in doing the same. **They will be working at the ceremonies on September 21st and 28th at the Federal Courthouse on Broadway in Albany. Please contact Monique if you are interested in helping (797-3075).**



Tour of the State Capitol October 13, 11:00 am

We have reserved the **Tour of the State Capitol for Saturday, October 13 at 11:00**. Tours are approximately one hour long and free of charge. We can have a maximum of 35 people for the tour. We will meet at the Empire State Plaza Visitors Center in the North Concourse by 10:50 am. If you are want to make a reservation to this tour, please call or e-mail Lori Keegan-Brady, 475-0396 or Lkeegan-Brady@nycapp.rr.com. If you need any special accommodations, please indicate that as well.



What Kind of Voting Machine Will You Be Voting on This Fall?

Aimee Allaud, Elections Specialist, NYSLWV

The answer isold faithful, lever machines! Under the NYS HAVA statute of 2005, New York was required to replace our lever voting machines in September 2006. However, since we did not have any certified machines by that time, the US DOJ imposed a series of deadlines for 2006, primarily to implement the federal mandate for provision of accessible voting. This plan, called the "Plan B" solution, required counties to provide at least one ballot marking device in a location to be determined by that county for use by anyone, disabled or non-disabled. The court order was in effect only for 2006. New York still does not have certified machines for the fall elections nor will have for the foreseeable future. What to do? The obvious solution was to extend the "Plan B" solution indefinitely. When the Legislature adjourned in June they had not addressed the issue. A Message of Necessity from Governor Spitzer forced a solution when they met in July and so until machines are certified and available for purchase by the counties, we will be using lever voting machines and ballot marking devices for anyone who chooses to vote on them, without restriction. For 2007, counties will probably not expand the number they purchased in 2006 (Albany County purchased one ballot marker and placed it at the County board of elections office at Westgate Center on Central Ave. in Albany). Arguably, one ballot marker is not adequate to serve the needs of the target population who may not have reasonable transportation to the board of elections office.

At the August 15th meeting of the New York State Board of Elections, the commissioners voted to support a proposal which *requires counties to provide one ballot marker at every polling place for 2008*. If New York still has not certified machines for use, accessibility will be assured for persons in need of enhanced voting equipment.

To review: *ballot marking devices do not count votes*: they allow a voter to make his/her selection with the aid of a mechanical device on a paper ballot which is then removed from the marker and inserted into a manila envelope for counting at the end of the voting period. You, or any other qualified voter, can use the device at the county board of elections without notifying the board of your intent in advance. Simply appear at the offices during regular voting hours for the primary or general election and follow the instructions. I voted on the device last year and found it very easy – you can too!

Membership 2007-2008 Join & Make a Difference

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

- Individual Membership \$45/year
- Household Membership \$60/year
- Student Membership \$15/year
- Contribution in support of my local League
- Please send me more information

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Albany County
PO Box 611 Slingerlands, NY 12159

Or Contact: Susan Coleman Tel: 330-2992

League Calendar

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>MORE INFO</u>
Sept. 4, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Albany Public Library	
Sept. 10, 9:30 am	Great Issues Group	Contact K. Henrikson	see page 2
Sept. 13, 7:00	County Legislators Forum (Primary)	Albany Public Library	see page 4
Sept. 18	Primary Day	VOTE VOTE VOTE	
Sept. 21	Deadline for Oct. Bulletin	email: LBierman@nycap.rr.com	
Sept. 25, 5:30 pm	Pot Luck Dinner Immigration Study	First Congregational Church 405 Quail St. & New Scotland	see page 1
Oct. 2, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Albany Public Library	
Oct. 9, 2-8:00pm	Albany Housing Authority Election	Volunteers Needed	see page 8
Oct. 13, 11:00 am	Tour of Capitol	State Capitol	see page 8
Oct. 25	Candidates Forum for County Offices	Bethlehem Public Library Delaware Ave., Delmar	
Nov. 6, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Albany Public Library	
Nov. 6	Election Day	VOTE VOTE VOTE	
Nov. 9, 12 noon	Lunch with the League	Albany Pump Station	see page 2
Nov. 13	Immigration Consensus Meeting "Souper" Supper	Bethlehem Public Library Delaware Ave, Delmar	see page 1
Nov. 28	UN Day in NYC		

Date Change

Please note that there has been a date change for the Feb. 2008 meeting from what was in the last bulletin; the Souper Supper will be held on Feb. 28, not the 27th!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALBANY COUNTY
PO Box 611
Slingerlands, NY 12159

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