

LWV of Albany County

Educate

Participate

Advocate

April 2005

Courtney Burke, President

President

Courtney Burke
432-9752

VP Program

Wendy Dury-Samson
439-1113

VP Action

Jessica McMullan
482-2545

VP Administration

Katie Henrikson
439-4308

Secretary

Meredith Ray
438-6003

Treasurer

Mary Berry
439-5679

Voter Service

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475-0969

Membership

Linda McKenna
463-1805

Development

Lori Keegan-Brady
475-0396

Public Relations

Audrey Kibrick
489-9931

State and local

Government

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National Government

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Social Policy

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"Creating Communities We Want To Live In" Inside the planning trenches...

Town Supervisors from Albany County will share their experience creating, adopting, and/or implementing a town-wide or special area plan.

Guest panelists:

- **Kevin Crosier**, Supervisor, Town of Berne
- **Theresa Egan**, Supervisor, Town of Bethlehem
- **Mary Brizzell**, Supervisor, Town of Colonie
- **Ken Runion**, Supervisor, Town of Guilderland
- **Ed Clark**, Supervisor, Town of New Scotland

Date: Tuesday, April 12th

Time: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Location: The Crossings of Colonie

The Crossings is accessible to vehicles from 580 Albany-Shaker Road (across from Emerick Lane) & Metro Park Dr. (off of Wolf Road and Maria Drive).



"SMART Growth", "Suburban Sprawl", "Property Rights", "Commercial Development", "Hamlets", "Open Space Protection", "Town Moratoriums"...

These are terms familiar to many concerned about how the Capital District is growing. In fact, several towns are actively trying to think about and plan for future growth. Home Rule law gives them this responsibility, with Town Supervisors assuming a leadership role in creating and implementing a vision for the town. They are at the front line when it comes to understanding the needs and aspirations of a municipality.

On April 12th, five Albany County Town Supervisors will describe and discuss their own efforts to develop either a Comprehensive Plan or a smaller plan focusing on a portion of their town. This is a rare opportunity to talk with Town Supervisors about the various ways planning occurs at the municipal level. Developing a plan can be challenging, contentious and rewarding. Learn more about it and come with your questions!

For more information, contact Nancy Heinzen, Natural Resources portfolio, 478-9407 or nhheinzen@nycap.rr.com.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

March was a busy month for the League. We hosted a candidate forum for town supervisor candidates in Altamont and had a fabulous program featuring Helen Desfosses, President of the Albany Common Council to speak about Women's History.

This month we are focusing on an issue that impacts everyone in our region - growth. Although the Capital Region hasn't grown as fast as some areas of the state, it has been growing at a steady pace and more so than several other areas of upstate New York. Some towns in Albany County have seen a boom in housing construction and housing prices. The League of Women Voters of Albany County (LWVAC) has been following this growth and the implications for our region for several years now. We've held programs on topics like "Smart Growth" and containing "Urban Sprawl" - terms that are now familiar to most people in our region. The issue has implications not just for the environment but also for our schools, affordable housing, economic development, and other areas. In order to focus the discussion about "Growth," the League is bringing together five town supervisors in an effort to think and plan

for smarter growth - by discussing the topic of "Regional Land Use Planning." I encourage you to come to the program with these town supervisors on April 12th, organized by our Natural Resources Chair, Nancy Heinzen, with help from Katie Henrickson and others.

Also in this month's bulletin is the proposed LWVAC 2005-2006 budget (which begins July 1st of this year) and list of nominees for positions in the LWVAC for the upcoming year. I am thrilled that several new people have agreed to be nominated for board positions! If you are interested in joining the board or being more involved - we welcome your help at any time. Please call Melanie Trimble at 439-8475. Also, please remember that if you have feedback about League activities or other things you would like to discuss, feel free to call me at home in the evening at 432-9752. Hope to see you on the 12th!

Courtney Burke

This year's Students Inside Albany Essay contest netted a total of 63 entries from 4 area schools, North Colonie, Albany High, Bethlehem HS and Christian Brothers' Academy. It was a difficult job to narrow all the entries down to the top 20. Those 20 were then forwarded to our judges. This year our judges were Michael Spain, Assistant Editor of the Times Union, Melissa Mangino from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and Janice Marra from the Communications Department of CSEA. The judges rated the essays on a scale from one to ten in the following areas: adherence to topic, organization and logic, feasibility of proposals, and overall writing quality with the top score being a perfect 50. Our winner is Stephen Allinger (his essay can be found on pages 6-7), a senior from Albany High School in Chris Martel's Participation in Government class. He will receive a \$100.00 cash prize, and attend the Students Inside Albany Conference from April 3-6th at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Albany. Our second and third place winners are both from North Colonie HS: Laura Bloch and James Ortolano. They will also receive cash prizes of \$50.00 and \$25.00 respectively. The winners and their teachers will be invited to attend our annual dinner meeting in May. All three essays will be included in the annual report.

Wendy Samson, Coordinator, Students Inside Albany Essay Contest.

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.

LWVAC NOMINATIONS SLATE 2005-6

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents	Marggie Skinner, Audrey Kibrick	2005-6
VP Action	Jessica McMullen	2005-6
VP Administration	Gael Vecchio	2005-7
VP Program	Wendy Dury-Samson	2005-7
Treasurer	Mary Berry	2005-6
Secretary	Judy Jarnefeld	2005-7

DIRECTORS (On Board)

Voter Service	Maggie Moehringer	2005-7
Membership	Linda McKenna & Meredith Ray	2005-6
Development	Lori Keegan-Brady	2005-6
Local & State Government	Marggie Skinner & Pat McGowan-Webb	2005-6
Public Relations	Margaret Sawyer	2005-7
Poll Reporting	Melanie Trimble	2005-7
At Large	Raymond Blanchard	2005-7
At Large	Betsey Swan	2005-6

DIRECTORS (Off Board)

National Government	Edith Allen	2005-7
Natural Resources	Nancy Heinzen	2005-6
Information Specialist	Don Kennedy	2005-6
Bulletin Distribution	Peg Tucker	2005-6
Speaker's Bureau	Barbara Bartoletti	2005-7
International Relations	I	2005-6
Bulletin Editor	Aimee Allaud	2005-7
Bulletin Layout	Guy Allaud	2005-7
Nominations	Courtney Burke	2005-6
Social Policy	Courtney Burke	2005-6
Budget Director		2005-6

EXPENDITURES	ACTUAL 03-04	BUDGET 04-05	ACTUAL 01/31/05	ROPOSED 05-06
A. OPERATING COSTS				
1. General Supplies	218.45	100.00		100.00
2. Postage	225.16	175.00	150.00	175.00
3. Misc. Expenses/Grants	26.58	-	24.00	24.00
Subtotal	470.19	275.00	174.00	299.00
B. BOARD & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES				
1. President	71.12	50.00		50.00
2. Board Tools				
3. Administrative Committees				
a. Publicity	100.00	100.00		360.00website
b. Finance Drive/Developme	86.60	175.00	145.53	175.00
c. Membership	286.88	275.00	132.67	275.00
d. Meetings		100.00	12.03	
Subtotal	544.60	700.00	290.23	860.00
C. DELEGATES, TRAVEL & AFFILIATIONS				
1. State Convention		1,500.00		not til spring
2. National Convention	1,976.70			2,000.00
3. Annual Meeting	2,099.89	1,200.00		1,800.00match w/income
4a. Potluck	185.44	700.00	621.68	300.00
4b. Luncheon	642.30		1,005.91	1,000.00match w/income
5. Affiliations	300.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Subtotal	5,204.33	3,500.00	721.68	5,200.00
D. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE LEAGUE				
1. State PMP	3,528.00	3,357.00	1,678.50	3,294.00
2. National PMP	4,994.50	4,289.50	2,169.35	4,641.00
3. Local fundraising		1,500.00	506.55	1,500.00match w/income
Subtotal	8,522.50	9,146.50	4,354.40	9,435.00
E. BULLETIN				
1. Supplies	1,264.66	1,300.00	726.89	1,300.00
2. Postage	354.43	400.00	212.38	400.00
Subtotal	1,619.09	1,700.00	939.27	1,700.00
F. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES				
1. Publications	227.75	100.00		lwv election book for s.s. tchrs
2. Program Study		100.00		100.00
3. Voters Service				
a. Facts for Voters		350.00	593.30	350.00ffv + brochure
b. Candidate Meetings	48.16	150.00	150.00	300.00
c. Voters Guide	-	150.00	-	150.00
4. Student Sponsor	298.98	300.00	34.78	300.00
5. Special Projects		200.00		100.00
Subtotal	574.89	1,350.00	778.08	1,300.00

G. POSITION SUPPORT

1. Publications	-	100.00	-	-
2. Program Action		100.00		
Subtotal	-	200.00	-	-

GRAND TOTAL	16,935.60	16,871.50	7,257.66	18,794.00
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INCOME

AA. MEMBERSHIP DUES	6,952.50	7,500.00	1,305.00	7,500.00
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BB. CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Member	938.55	1,000.00	38.55	1,000.00
2. Fund Drive	3,974.62	3,000.00	4,457.00	4,000.00
3. Friends of the League				
Subtotal	4,913.17	4,000.00	4,495.55	5,000.00

CC. PUBLICATIONS

1. Facts for Voters	-	-	-	-
2. Other Publications	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-

DD. OTHER FUNDRAISING

1. Annual Meeting	1,866.50	1,100.00		1,700.00
2a Potluck	60.00	100.00	150.00	150.00
2b Luncheon	662.00	500.00	895.00	1,000.00
3. Events	348.00	2,000.00	1,005.00	2,000.00
Subtotal	2,936.50	3,700.00	2,050.00	4,850.00

EE. OTHER INCOME

1. Bulletin Ads	-	-	-	-
2. Poll Reporting	1,013.00	1,500.00	2,182.00	1,500.00
3. Speakers Bureau		-	656.00	100.00
4. Misc. Income/Grants				
Subtotal	1,013.00	1,500.00	2,838.00	1,600.00

FF. BANK INTEREST

	132.89	120.00	49.65	80.00
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Subtotal	15,948.06	16,820.00	10,738.20	19,030.00
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(TO) FROM RESERVES	987.54	51.50	-3,480.54	-236.00
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GRAND TOTAL	16,935.60	16,871.50	7,257.66	18,794.00
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BALANCE 6/30/03

PREPAID POSTAGE	\$143.59
ED FUND	65.00
MEM FUND	2,290.23
GEN FUND	13,506.13
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TOTAL	\$16,004.95
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BALANCE 6/30/04

PREPAID POSTAGE	\$128.76
ED FUND	345.75
MEMBERSHIP FUND	2,182.84
GENERAL FUND	12,360.06
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TOTAL	\$15,017.41
	\$987.54



The winner of this year's Students Inside Albany Essay contest is Stephen Allinger

(The essay was slightly reformatted in order to fit the page layout)

Being a citizen in a representative democracy comes with great responsibility as well as great benefits. As members of the most powerful democracy in the world, each American citizen has the ability to affect not only the world around them, but also the global community. In a time when Presidential elections can be decided by a few thousand votes there has never been so much importance placed on individual citizens. That is why it is imperative that future voters be taught the responsibilities associated with the privilege of a democratic government. These responsibilities include expressing opinions, being aware of the issues, and most importantly, voting. All governments past and present have been created (in theory) to help their citizens. By taking these responsibilities seriously, democracy will continue to aid the people who drive it.

In many countries around the world, expressing your personal views is a death wish. This occurs when the people forfeit power to one individual, or group of individuals, who then cease to act on behalf of their constituents. A representative democracy on the other hand not only tolerates political expression, but also relies on it. Every citizen has their own unique set of issues they want to see addressed. So without open political support in the way of monetary contributions, leafletting, or rallies, it would be impossible for one representative to gain enough support. Also, competition between parties keeps the politicians mind (ideally) on the people. Each pin sporting the head of a politician, each sign on a lawn is perpetuating the democratic system. Therefore, expression

of personal views is one of the most important responsibilities for democratic citizens.

Another important responsibility of democratic citizens is to know the issues. What are "the issues" you ask? The issues are anything that affects a voter in any way. The issues can exist on a local or global scale. The economy, a war, city schools, or even gay marriage are all types of issues voters involve themselves in. Today America is one of the most diverse countries in the world, so the issues American citizens face are incredibly complex. Constant and reliable news sources have therefore become necessary and readily available. Why is it a responsibility to know the issues? Because it's the only way to ensure that your vote truly represents your opinion. To not learn about important issues, or become involved in one is to throw away a precious vote. A well informed voter is the most valuable asset to a representative democracy.

The simplest but most important responsibility of a democratic citizen is to vote. Although it appears to be a simple task, every year millions of Americans fail to vote. By not voting, these people are surrendering a right that took hundreds of years and in some cases, millions of lives to achieve. A representative democracy relies not on one person or institution, but on its citizens. It is therefore a serious responsibility as well as a right for every citizen to play their part in the democratic process. It is incredible to think that one vote can affect the course of the world but in the age of democracy each vote is that important.

Those are the responsibilities that make an effective member of a representative democracy. Since this system of government requires the involvement of its citizens, the education of the next generation in the ways of democracy is vital. The best way to do so is to start young and instill a sense of what democracy means: a government for the people, by the people. The best people to teach them this are the ones who have the most influence over them; parents and teachers.

Most people are products of their environment. If you grew up in a liberal family, you will most likely be a liberal, if you grew up in a conservative family, most likely you voted for Bush. What parents can do to help their children express their own personal views is to teach them not only about the political affiliation of their choice, but about all others as well, while allowing them to make their own decisions without fear of criticism. During elections encourage them to get involved with what ever they can do, handing out leaflets, making phone calls, etc. in school there are many ways in which kids can learn to express their views. Holding interesting class elections is an excellent way to show the democratic process on a small scale. Also, allowing students to hold peaceful demonstrations can teach them the power of organization.

Staying in touch with current issues is a habit best developed while young. Parents and school are very important in this department.

Parents should encourage kids to read the newspaper or specially edited kids' papers like Time For Kids. Schools can be especially influential in this department. Classroom discussions or reports on current events can spark an early interest in important issues. Student run clubs like Student Government can organize drives to address local problems. Elections should also be monitored in classrooms so kids can begin to understand the process. These activities should be done with a regular teacher so that the information is coming from a familiar and trusted person. A child who grows up with a good understanding of the issues will become a well informed voter in the future.

Voting is the most important responsibility we can teach the next generation, it is also the hardest. MTV couldn't do it, Leonardo DiCaprio couldn't either; motivating the young to vote has been historically hard to do. Because of it they have suffered. Since young people vote in low numbers, politicians are ignoring their issues. Now more than ever it is vital for younger generation to get out and vote. Parents should take their children to their polling places and let them cast a ballot making it something to look forward to. In school, active voter registration drives should be conducted by the administration to give every student a chance to vote.

These are the responsibilities carried out by effective citizens of a representative democracy. Not only to follow them, but to teach them to the next generation.

On March 9, 2005, the New York State League of Women Voters Board voted to support the use of optical scan voting systems to replace lever voting machines in order to implement the requirements of the Help American Vote Act.

Precinct Based Optical Scan Voting Systems for New York Voters

In order to implement the Help America Vote Act in New York State, lever voting machines must be replaced as follows:

Section 301(a)(3) of HAVA requires that each polling place provide at least one voting method that allows individuals with disabilities to vote in privacy.

- (3) Accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The voting system shall –
- (A) be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters;
 - (B) satisfy the requirement of subparagraph (A) through the use of at least one direct recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities at each polling place.

The accessibility requirements of HAVA can be met in several ways, singly or by a combination of systems through

- Direct Recording Electronic voting machines (DREs)
- Paper ballots and precinct based optical scan voting systems with the addition of ballot marking devices

Why Does the League Support Precinct Based Optical Scan Systems Over DREs?

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports the use of paper ballot precinct based optical scan systems because they best meet the League's criteria of secure, accurate, recountable and accessible:

- A paper based system separates vote recording and vote counting. No votes are stored electronically in the equipment. Votes are marked by hand or with an accessible ballot marking device and then inserted into an optical scanner to be counted at the polling place at the end of the voting period.
- Precinct based optical scan systems are a proven, reliable and accurate technology and have been used in elections for twenty years and are currently being used in 25% of all precincts in the U.S. According to a MIT/CalTech Voting Study (2001) precinct based optical scan systems provided lower rate of invalid or "residual" ballots. Optical scan systems give voters the opportunity to correct their ballot in the case of overvoting, undervoting or mistakes.
- Paper ballots produce a permanent paper record for the voting system that can be manually audited and are available as an official record for recounts. If there is an interruption in the voting process due to loss of power or equipment failure, voting can continue throughout the day. Ballots can be securely stored and tabulating can take place later.
- A paper based precinct based optical scan system can be made accessible by the addition of a ballot marking device to the polling place which will give the same opportunity to all voters to record and verify their vote.

Does New York State Have Experience with Optical Scan Systems?

New York State currently uses optical scan central count systems to count absentee, emergency and affidavit ballots in the counties within the City of New York and in at least seven other counties (Broome, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Orange, Putnam, Rockland) according to the Governor's Task Force on Election Modernization (2002). Approximately six percent of the votes cast in New York or about 500,000 paper ballots (2000 general election) are

counted this way. Regardless of what voting system is selected, New York will continue to use central count optical scan systems to count absentee ballots.

What Must New York State Do In Order to Comply With HAVA?

New York State obtained a waiver for the replacement of lever voting machines until the first federal election in 2006. To meet this deadline the New York State Legislature will need to take action immediately to set standards for voting machine acquisition and determine what the process for acquisition will be. Because of delays at the federal level in establishing and funding the Election Assistance Commission, states must proceed with purchasing voting equipment without the benefit of having national standards for disability compliance or for security standards.

What Can You Do?

A joint conference committee on HAVA is meeting during March to reconcile differences between the Senate and Assembly bills on implementing the various provisions of HAVA. Legislators need to hear from members and the public that precinct based optical scan represents a better solution for replacing lever voting machines.

CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATOR, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER JOSEPH BRUNO, AND ASSEMBLY SPEAKER SHELDON SILVER AND TELL THEM THAT YOU SUPPORT PRECINCT BASED OPTICAL SCAN SYSTEMS WITH ACCESSIBLE BALLOT MARKING DEVICES FOR NEW YORK STATE.

Aimee Allaud, Elections/Govt. specialist

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! The following folks have joined the Albany County League of Women Voters since our membership booklet was prepared last fall. Welcome to each and every one of you. We look forward to a long and productive relationship.

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Therese Archer, Delmar | Sylvia Barnard, Albany |
| Andria Bentley, Albany | Ray Blanchard, Albany |
| Connie Chin, Albany | Jean Clothier, Clifton Park |
| Jim Cornell, Delmar | Daphne Cotter, Knox |
| Margaret Craven, Voorheesville | Helen Desfosses, Albany |
| Barbara Defries, Loudonville | Louise Frazier, Albany |
| Emily Gallagher, Colonie | James Garry, Delmar |
| Nancy Handwerker, Delmar | Aldene Hoghe, Albany |
| Pam Howell, Albany | Susan Iwanowicz, Delmar |
| Charles Kite, Menands | Sarah Knapp, Guilderland |
| Nancy Kuivila, Glenmont | Tara Lindsley, Menands |
| Carol Mayer, Albany | Lucy McKnight, Albany |
| Margaret Negus, Voorheesville | Carol O'Dwyer, Chestertown |
| Mary Ontkush, Clifton Park | Sarah Pellman, Albany |
| Robert Pettie, Glenmont | Adele Polan, Delmar |
| Wendy Quinn, Albany | Leslie Robbins, Guilderland |
| Brooke Schewe, Albany | Mary Sciancalepore, Clifton Park |
| Diana Segovia, Menands | Sandra Shapard, Delmar |
| Margaret Slocum, Albany | Barbara Weber, Slingerlands |
| Alice Wehr, Albany | Degra & Joanna Wolff, Guilderland |

2005 Membership Form

I want to get involved !

Name

Address

Telephone

e-mail

Individual membership \$45/year

Household membership \$60/year

Student membership \$15/year

Contribution in support of my local league

Please send me more information
about the League of Women Voters

Mail to :

League of Women Voters
of Albany County

P.O. Box 611
Slingerlands, NY 12159

Linda McKenna
Tel: 463-1805

Or contact:

The League of Women Voters of Albany County
P.O. Box 611
Slingerlands, NY 12159

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