

# LWW of Albany County

Educate

Participate

Advocate

November 2006

Audrey Kibrick and Marggie Skinner, Co-Presidents

## November 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

### STORMWATER POLLUTION

The Problem

The Regulations

Municipal Accomplishments in Albany County

Public Participation Opportunities

**Speakers:** Nancy Heinzen Albany County Stormwater Program Coordinator  
Representatives from the Town of Colonie, Green Island,  
and Other Municipalities.

**When:** Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m to 9:00 p.m

**Where:** Green Island Municipal Center, 19 George Street.

**Directions:** From I-787, take the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Exit 8 toward Watervliet/Green Island. Turn a slight right onto 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street becomes Lower Hudson Ave and Lower Hudson Ave becomes George Street.

Polluted stormwater has a proven impact on our streams, reservoirs, and wetlands. To address this serious environmental problem, changes to the Clean Water Act have set in motion pollution prevention measures that influence how land is developed, expand the environmental responsibilities of urbanized municipalities, and engage citizens in this complex effort.

Clean Water legislation has been supported by the League for years. At this meeting we will learn how implementation of this legislation affects our city, town or village and especially what we can and cannot do on our own property.

Nancy Heinzen, Stormwater Program Coordinator for Albany County, will describe these new regulations, highlight water quality issues within the County, and describe the work of the Albany County Intermunicipal Stormwater Committee, recently organized to address these regulatory requirements. Representatives from several Albany County municipalities will discuss their own efforts at the local level. Join us for a visual and informative presentation. Find out how you can get involved! Questions? Call Nancy Heinzen at 447-5645.

## FROM THE PRESIDENTS

In 1621 near Plymouth, Massachusetts, the Pilgrims and their invited guests including about 90 Wampanoag Indians (later to be called Native Americans), gathered outdoors (no room inside was large enough for the crowd) for a 3-day feast to celebrate the bountiful harvest. This harvest feast evolved into our Thanksgiving Day.

Thankfully our feast doesn't last for 3 days and, hopefully, we have fewer guests around our table! But the idea that we give thanks to our higher power for the richness of our lives continues.

Let us take a moment in the midst of celebration to remember those who have so much less than we have that we would find it impossible to comprehend their lives – genocide in Darfur has killed so many people; the women of Afghanistan whose lives are definitely not improved; human trafficking around the world (attend the United

Nations briefing on November 15 in New York City); the Iraqi families whose members are murdered in the streets of that war torn country and the homeless on the streets of our cities. Can we envision living their lives?

So when we enjoy our fabulous Thanksgiving dinners – great food, great company – let's reflect on our good fortune a being born or coming to live here where we and our children grew up to expect a certain standard of living. And let's give thanks for our ability to help those whose lives are less than they should be - which brings us, of course, to our participation in the League. We don't ask everyone to take on a huge burden but you should know that whatever you can do in the League strengthens our democracy and, ultimately, helps those people here and around the world who have so little.

*Audrey and Marggie*

### SAVE THIS DATE!

**What:** League of Women Voters of Albany County Holiday Luncheon

**When:** Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon

**Where:** SUNYA Alumni House

**Topic:** Report of the NYS Commission on Healthcare Facilities for the 21st Century

**Speaker:** Mark Ustin, Deputy Director and Counsel for the Commission

Watch the December bulletin for reservation information

#### League of Women Voters of Albany County Board

Co-Presidents	VP Administration	VP Program	Treasurer	Secretary
Marggie Skinner	Gael Vecchio	Wendy Dury-Samson	Mary Berry	Judy Jarnefeld
489-5311	459-9958	439-1113	439-5679	869-3228
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Aimee Allaud	Margaret Sawyer	Jacqui C. Williams	Raymond Blanchard	Betsey Swan
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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.

## Voter Services

We're winding up this year's Voter Service activities by distributing over 8000 copies of the LWVNYS Voters Guide. As you know, ye olde "Facts for Voters" pamphlet was replaced with two more comprehensive guides – a pamphlet with basic information and dates in the late summer, and a newspaper format comprehensive Voters Guide, including questions and answers from both state-wide and local candidates. These guides will go to public, college and hospital libraries, and, with the agreement of Stewarts Shops, to the 40 stores in Albany County. Thanks to all of you who help with the distribution!

Our voter registration drives this summer and fall were...instructive, if not particularly productive. For all of you who volunteered to "person" the tables at the Altamont Fair, the Plum Fest in Feura Bush and the Albany Opportunity event, a big fat THANK YOU, and a promise to rethink how and where we do voter registration drives in the future. Learning from Barbara Bartoletti's and Mary Berry's success with "hawking the midway" at the Fair, one idea that we will pursue is the concept of the "Roving, One-Woman Voter Registration Drive", a portable concept that will free us from dependence on 1) being able to get (or allowed to have) a table at an event, and 2) where that table is. Think "sandwich board", patriotic accessories, all LWV logoed of course, with carrying facilities for forms, etc. More on that (maybe a picture is worth a thousand words here) later.

Last summer, we collaborated with LWVNYS and WMHT to air a debate between the Democratic primary candidates for Attorney General, minus Andrew Cuomo who did not agree to participate. We also tried to capitalize on the generosity and public mindedness of WMHT to air a forum between the Democratic candidates for governor, but were unable to get the candidates to agree to a date when the studio was available. We are very grateful to WMHT for their continued support of League activities.

We will wind up the voter service schedule for this fall with a candidates' forum for the Albany School Board, sponsored by the Albany City Council Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the League. The Forum will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2006 in the North Cafeteria at Albany High School, 200 Washington Avenue. The event will be from 7:00 until 9:00 pm. The three candidates are Edward Brown (the current school board president), Wayne Morris, and Mark Barth. Our Ruth Dinowitz is moderating.

Thanks to all for your support this year!

*Maggie Moehringer*

## Make every vote count

Optical scan machines are preferable to expensive touch-screen systems

First published: Sunday, October 15, 2006

New York was the last state in the nation to comply with the federal law requiring states to upgrade their voting systems. But there was a silver lining nonetheless: New York could learn from the mistakes of other states that had rushed to acquire new systems. Or not. More and more it appears that New York might make a big mistake by purchasing expensive touch screen machines over simpler, less costly and more reliable optical scanning systems. Much of the blame can be placed on the Legislature, which left it to the counties to decide which systems to buy. But the counties can only purchase machines that have been certified by the state Board of Elections, and that process has been troubling. For one thing, manufacturers of the more expensive touch screen machines have been lobbying heavily to have their systems certified, while giving optical scanners short shrift. The Sierra Club wants manufacturers of both systems to be required to submit an optical scanning system for certification along with their touch screen product. Optical scanners work the way Lotto ticket outlets do. That is, voters mark their choices on a paper ballot that is scanned into the system and saved if a recount is needed. By contrast, touch-screen machines perform much as ATMs do. But there are more risks associated with these machines than optical scanners. For example, in 2002, Miami's Dade County touch-screen system was riddled with coding errors and voting records in the gubernatorial primary that year were destroyed by computer crashes. Granted, New York learned something from that experience by requiring a verifiable paper trail, but the potential for coding glitches, or sabotage, remains. The League of Women Voters is concerned about the secrecy surrounding the verification process, largely because manufacturers are withholding so much information on the grounds of proprietary interests. And the prospect of having counties turn to manufacturers to fix glitches, or revise or replace codes, is far from reassuring. Any changes should be subject to an independent review by a panel of computer experts.

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## Albany County Legislature Endorses Purchase of Optical Scan Voting Machines for the County

At their October 11 meeting, the Albany County Legislature endorsed a non-binding Resolution which urges the Albany County Election Commissioners to purchase optical scan voting machines for the county. By a vote of 31-8 (five against, one abstention, two absent) the Legislature has indicated that they have heard the message we have been sending during this past year about the advantages of optical scan voting over DREs.

Only one other county legislature has passed such a Resolution (Tompkins County). So congratulations are in order for our legislators (be sure to thank them) and especially for the legislators who introduced the Resolution: Tim Nichols, John Frederick, and Ray Joyce.

The League has spoken on this issue four times during the past year and provided the members with copious amounts of information, and most recently, every legislator received a copy of the DVD, "Bought and Sold, Electronic Voting in NY," which provides convincing evidence of our claims.

During the public comment period preceding the meeting I spoke and reminded the members that they

had a unique opportunity before them – to demonstrate to the voters of this county and to the voters of other counties in the state that they believed that choosing the right type of voting machines was a decision that all the residents of Albany County should have a role in. Other organizations speaking were ARISE, Working Families Party, and NYVV representatives.

Marggie Skinner presented copies of the Accountability Campaign petitions with 188 signatures to the Legislature as added proof that citizens want to be involved in the decision. The original petitions were delivered to Albany County Election Commissioners Graziano and Clancy the next day. The petition asks that the election commissioners should publicly state the reasons why they have selected a particular type of voting machine in an open meeting where they can be questioned by voters. This should be done before they have formally placed the order for the new voting machines for this county. Thanks to all of you who signed and who carried the petitions since we began the campaign in August.

*Aimee Allaud*

Resolution 93 – before the Albany County Legislature, October 11, 2006

**URGING ALBANY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS TO PURCHASE OPTICAL SCAN VOTING MACHINES FOR ALBANY COUNTY**

By: NICHOLS, FREDERICK, JOYCE, DAWSON, DOMALEWICZ, GORDON, MONJEAU, RIDDICK, STECK, AYLWARD, REILLY, CLAY

WHEREAS, New York State will soon begin a new process for conducting elections that will significantly increase the responsibility of counties for implementation of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and

WHEREAS, county officials will be required to educate and inform voters about these new requirements that include appropriate identification for voting, selection and use of new voting machines, and implementation of new procedures for paper ballots, and

WHEREAS, Albany County, like all New York State Counties, must choose a voting machine and then purchase enough machines to be ready for use by September 2006, and

WHEREAS, optical scan voting machines are easy to use, easy to maintain, more accurate and are less likely to be tampered with or to break down than other kinds of voting machines, easier to verify in cases of recounts, and

WHEREAS, Optical-Scan machines cost less per machine and cost less to repair and to store, which could save Albany County taxpayers \$1.2 million according to New Yorkers for Verified Voting, and

WHEREAS, Optical-Scan voting machines allow all voters to use the exact same and identical ballot face for paper ballots, absentee ballots and military ballots, and

WHEREAS, Optical-Scan voting machines are a reliable, mature technology that has been used for 20 years and which are currently being used in 46 percent of all United States counties today, according to Election Data Services, Inc., and

WHEREAS, nonpartisan voting rights groups such as Common Cause, New Yorkers for Verified Voting, and the League of Women Voters have strongly endorsed the use of Optical Scan voting machines because of the reasons stated above and to maintain integrity and trust in the electoral process, and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the county legislature to enact a balanced county budget that will be mandated to take into consideration any decisions made by the county board of elections, and

WHEREAS, the legislature has a vested interest in playing an active oversight role of the county's implementation of the Help America Vote Act requirements, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Albany County Legislature hereby endorses the use of Optical Scan voting machines and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Albany County Legislature hereby urges the Commissioners of the Albany County Board of Elections to purchase approved Optical-Scan voting machines for the voters of Albany County, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be provided to James M. Clancy, Democratic Commissioner of the Albany County Board of Elections, and John A. Graziano, Republican Commissioner of the Albany County Board of Elections.

The International Center of the Capital Region, Inc.  
Welcoming the World



to the Capital Region  
cordially invites you to our

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Silent Auction**  
Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup> from 6pm to 8pm at 272 Broadway in Menands

**Honoring Local-Global Community Leaders**  
*Manoj J. Ajmera; Anneke Bull; Thuy Nguyen; Zwelonke Ushe; Anshel O. Weis, Ph.D.*

**Featuring a Keynote Address: “50 Years Back, 50 Years Forward”**  
*by Assemblymember John J. McEneny, former Albany County Historian*

**Silent Auction and Crafts Sale:** *global photographs by Diane Reiner; holiday gifts*

**Donations Welcome — Attendance Free — Space Limited!**  
**Please reply by November 22 to Reserve your Space at this Event!**  
**Thank you for your support!**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all boxes that apply:

- Please reserve \_\_\_ spaces for the person(s) listed above.
- In addition to attending the celebration, please accept our donation of \$ \_\_\_\_.
- I/We cannot attend, but wish to make a contribution to the ICCR of \$ \_\_\_\_.
- I/We would like to become part of the **“Friends of the ICCR”** to support and participate in ICCR programs welcoming international visitors, and promoting understanding of world affairs:
  - Citizen Diplomat** (\$30 – 100): access to listserv, programs, volunteering
  - Consular Official** (\$101-\$250): above, plus publications, receptions, etc.
  - Ambassador** (\$250 and above): above, plus hosting international visitors, etc.

Mail to: International Center of the Capital Region, Inc. 272 Broadway, Box 8, Albany, NY 12204

Additional info available at: [www.iccralbany.org](http://www.iccralbany.org); contact us: [info@iccralbany.org](mailto:info@iccralbany.org)

*All donations to the ICCR, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, are tax deductible*



**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
*of New York State*

The League of Women Voters of New York State  
35 Maiden Lane, Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: 518-466-1162 Fax: 518-466-0812

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE GUIDELINES  
FOR CANDIDATE PARTICIPATION  
IN FORUMS AND DEBATES**

1. Constitutional eligibility: The candidates must meet the requirements of the NYS Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.
2. Ballot Access: The candidates must meet all requirements to be on the ballot according to NYS Election laws.
3. Financial Compliance: The candidate must show that all financial reports required by the NYS Board of Elections have been filed and verified.
4. Demonstration of significant voter interest and support. The LWVNYS will exercise its good faith judgment in assessing a number of factors, including:
  - a. Evidence that a formal statewide campaign is being waged; e.g., presence of headquarters, campaign staff, issuance of position papers, campaign appearances, fundraising activities, etc;
  - b. Other factors providing substantive evidence of voter interest, such as serious media attention and receipt of 10% of support in one or more nonpartisan public opinion polls conducted at least 14 days, but not more than forty days before the debate.

Based on the above criteria, a final determination of eligibility for participation will be made by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of New York State.



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
*of New York State*

The League of Women Voters of New York State  
35 Maiden Lane, Albany, New York 12207  
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## ***LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE WITHDRAWS SPONSORSHIP FROM CANDIDATE DEBATES***

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 13, 2006

Contact: Betsey Swan, Legislative Analyst  
(518) 426-3711 before 10/16/2006  
(508) 693-2879 after 10/16/2006

“The voters of New York State deserve better,” stated Marcia Merrins, President of the League of Women Voters of New York State (League), in announcing the League’s withdrawal of sponsorship from a debate between candidates for the office of Attorney General to be hosted and broadcast by WXXI in Rochester on October 17, 2006. Similarly, the League withdrew sponsorship from two debates to be hosted by WABC in New York City. The first is an Attorney General debate scheduled for October 15. The second is a debate between candidates for the United States Senate scheduled for October 22. All withdrawals were necessitated by League policy, which requires an invitation be extended to each candidate whom the League has determined to be a *bona fide* contestant. In the case of the US Senate race, the League Board of Directors determined incumbent Senator Hillary Clinton, Republican nominee John Spencer, and Green Party nominee Howie Hawkins to be *bona fide* contestants. Similarly, the League determined Democratic nominee Andrew Cuomo, Republican nominee Jeanine Pirro, and Green Party nominee Rachael Treichler to be *bona fide* contestants in the Attorney General’s race.

Merrins explained that the League adopted its policy for candidate inclusion in League-sponsored debates prior to commencement of the electoral season to keep debates free from the vagaries of the political process.

Merrins noted that the League is committed to maximization of public debate by all candidates for public office. Once a candidate has complied with the League’s criteria for inclusion in a debate, the League cannot sponsor a debate from which that candidate is excluded. To act otherwise would violate the League’s fundamental belief in the public’s right to know.

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The LWV does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Membership is open to all and provides the opportunity to be active and involved in local, state and national.*

**Membership 2005–2006**

Join & Make a Difference

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

Mail to : League of Women Voters of Albany County  
P.O. Box 611 Slingerlands, NY 12159

Or contact: Susan Coleman Tel: 433–9446

**Letters**.....

**we get letters (we hope!)**

Express yourself! We are starting a new column for the bulletin. Let me know your ideas and opinions...keep it short and to the point, and primarily on League issues. Mail your letter to Aimee Allaud, Editor, LWVAC bulletin, 85 Melrose Avenue, Albany, NY, 12203, or 85aimee@nycap.rr.com. Bulletin deadlines are the board meeting each month, generally the first Tuesday of each month.

**Kudos to our Voter Service and local leaguers....**

(following is a message from Barb Bartoletti to NYSLWV board)  
October, 2006

All,  
Just returned from Rochester after a speaking engagement but I was at the Cornell debate in Ithaca. I was in the "spin room" with the press and they all knew the League co-sponsored the debate. Reporters aren't concerned with who sponsored the debate, they want to report what the candidates say, that's why sponsors get in the last paragraph or sentence. Spitzer did thank the League and Cornell had our banner (thank you Marcia) in the Lobby of Bailey Hall so people saw it when they entered the hall. Cornell did a very professional job, and it made us look good too. Things went very smoothly. The hall was about 3/4 or a little more full so we really didn't need to worry about tickets as much as we did. Thanks to Kris for all her hard work, I think we came out of the first head-to-head debate in more that 20 years looking fine especially with the candidates.

*Barb*

**Welcome our new members**

Jacqueline Paredes	Albany
Natalie Tinkelman	Albany
Margaret Snowden	Voorheesville
Bonnie Spanier	Albany
Linda Weismantel	Delmar
Mary Ann Lettau	Albany
Judith Campbell	Delmar
Shirley Brand	Albany
Marion Tischler	Loudonville

## UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

**Tues., November 7, 5:30 p.m.**

Board Meeting  
Albany Public Library  
111 Washington Avenue  
Large Auditorium  
Members welcome

**Tues., November 7**

**6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**ELECTION DAY — VOTE**

**Mon., November 6, 6:30 p.m.**

**Albany County Legislature**

(public comment period)  
7:00 — Meeting convenes  
County Courthouse  
Eagle & Elk Streets,  
Albany

**Book Discussion**

Mon. Nov. 13  
“Pathologies of Power”  
at Carol Webster’s home  
call Katie Henrikson for  
info. 439-4308

**Wed. Nov. 15, 9-3 p.m.**

UN Briefing  
NYC  
Status of Human Trafficking

**Tues. Nov. 16, 7 p.m.**

LWVAC Meeting  
Stormwater Pollution  
Green Island Municipal Center  
Green Island

**Sunday, Nov. 26, 2-4 p.m.**

“Bought and Sold,  
Electronic Voting in NY”  
DVD and discussion  
Bethlehem Public Library  
Delaware Avenue, Delmar

**Mon., Dec. 4, 7-9 p.m.**

“Bought and Sold,” Electronic  
Voting in NY,” DVD & discussion  
Colonie Town Library  
Maxwell Road, Colonie  
Call Aimee Allaud, 482-2617  
For info.

**Tues. Dec. 5, 5:30 p.m.**

Board Meeting  
Call Margie Skinner, 489-5311  
For location

**Friday, Dec. 8, 12-2 p.m.**

Holiday Luncheon  
SUNYA Alumni House  
Washington Avenue  
Report of the NYS Commission on  
Healthcare Facilities for the 21<sup>st</sup>  
century

The League of Women Voters of Albany County  
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