



# League of Women Voters of Albany County

November 2009

Educate

Participate

Advocate



## The Future of Waste Management in the Capital Region



Willard A. Bruce, Chair of the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) Planning Committee  
Formerly Commissioner, City of Albany Dept. of General Services

Is your household trash going to the Albany landfill? Probably. Mr. Bruce will discuss the status of the landfill, and options for solid waste management in the future. See inside for further information.

**Saturday, November 14, 9:30-11:30 am**

**Pine Bush Preserve Discovery Center, 195 New Karner Rd. (Rt. 155), Albany  
(Between Central Ave. and Washington Ave. Ext.)**

**9:30 am Coffee and ??**

**10:00-11:30 am Program**

Information: Lois Griffin, 765-4733 or Julie Elson, 482-0981

Come for the program and stay to tour the Discovery Center and take a walk through the Pine Bush!



## National & State Voters Go Electronic

Flash! If you want to get the National Voter or NYS Voter, the national league needs your email address. Due to financial constraints these newsletters will be coming via email. If you don't have email or still want to get a hard copy, there will be a small fee.

National assures us that they don't sell these addresses to anyone. Our database manager, Don Kennedy, has put your email on the national database if you gave it to us. If you never provided an email address, log on to national ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by entering your email address and setting a password. National would then have an email address for you. If you need to update it, go to [www.lwv.webmembership.org](http://www.lwv.webmembership.org) and click "Manage Your Account." If this is too confusing, send your updated info to Don ([dkennedy2@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dkennedy2@nycap.rr.com)).

**League of Women Voters of Albany County**

**Website: [www.lwvalbany.org](http://www.lwvalbany.org) Email: [lwvac@lwvalbany.org](mailto:lwvac@lwvalbany.org)**

**Ann Brandon, President**

**Carol Webster (439-1491) and Martha Kissinger (439-6833), Membership Co-Chairs**

**Laura Ladd Bierman, Newsletter Editor**



## From the President

Election day is coming up fast. We're almost at the finish line for candidate debates, voter registration, Voters Guide distribution, etc. We have two more jobs that many of you will be helping with - poll reporting on election night, and the postponed Albany Housing Authority Election on November 10th. Kudos to each of you who are helping with these projects. We could not do them without you!

We are varying the times and locations for our monthly meetings this year, and hope you enjoy going to the Pine Bush Discovery Center for our November 14th meeting. The topic is pertinent to all of us - we all have to deal with our trash - and the Discovery Center is a neat place. If you haven't been there, you will enjoy looking at the exhibits they have. If it is a nice day, I hope you might take a little walk in the pine bush after our meeting.

Be sure to put our holiday luncheon on your calendar - December 15th at Normanside Country Club, Delmar. John DeRosier, Times Union Editorial Cartoonist, will be our speaker. This should be an entertaining program - look for details in our December bulletin.

Some election districts will be using the new voting scanners and paper ballots on election day. If you have any comments about their use, contact Aimee Allaud (85Aimee@nycap.rr.com). She wants to know your reactions.

Yours in League,  
Ann (ambrandon2@verizon.net)

## New Member Coffee

Carol Webster hosted a coffee for new and prospective members at her home on October 3rd. Attendees included prospective members Bob Knightly, Shirley Anderson, Sondra Sprinkling, Barbara Klemz, and Corey Ellis; new members Michael Rice and Tim Truscott; and board members Ann Brandon, Peg Sawyer, and Betsey Swan. After Ann and Betsey discussed League procedures and policies, a lively discussion of various issues followed. We hope all of these folks will find their niche in league activities.

## New Members

Irene Huaman, Delmar

Janet O'Brien Aram, Menands

James P Aram, Menands

Carol Coultry, Slingerlands

## Welcome!



## In Memoriam

Ursula Poland, beloved friend of many of us and longtime League member, passed away on October 5th. Ursula was a unique person, always working to make a better world for all. She was born in Germany and was taken to England as a young teen during World War II. She eventually made her way to the U.S., earned a degree in library science, and worked for many years as a librarian at Albany Medical College. She was active in many organizations, but I knew her best as a member of the Unitarian Society of Albany where she was a very committed member. Ursula will be missed by all who knew her. A memorial service will be held November 20th at 4:00 at the First Unitarian Universalist Society, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany.

Ann Brandon

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

### Lois Griffin

Dwight D. Eisenhower was running for re-election against Adlai Stevenson. It would be my first opportunity to vote. I had just gotten married, received my BA, moved to Denver from Indianapolis, and started teaching junior high English. I thought it was very important to know what the issues were and to make intelligent decisions in voting. Was it “I like Ike” or “Madly over Adlai?” And the issues on the ballot, how could I know how to vote on them? Then in the Denver Post, I saw “Facts for Voters.” Wow! A rational discussion, the candidate positions, the pros and cons on the issues. I was really impressed and felt oh so much better on entering that voting booth for the first time.

After three and a half years of financial strain with my husband in graduate school, he received his Ph. D. and I got pregnant. He got a job with IBM in Broome Co. N.Y. where we moved. I gave birth to my first daughter and a year and a half later to a second one. Diapers (cloth, of course), sleepless nights, and so on. Then one lucky day I ran into someone who said she was a League member. I went to a meeting and my life was changed. All my life, I had heard negative things about women; “they were jealous, petty, irrational, you certainly wouldn’t want to work for one.” How the women of the Broome Co. LWV belied all those myths. They were welcoming, embracing, empowering, logical, unbiased. They took me in, brought me along. I became membership chair and eventually president. My experience in the League gave me the courage to run for the school board in Vestal. I was elected, the first woman on the Vestal School Board, became vice-president and then president.

I went back into teaching H.S. English full time, divorced, became a VISTA volunteer where I was assigned to Albany as a Youth Advocate. I decided to remain in Albany, got back into teaching and remarried. Although I remained a League member, I was an inactive one. Besides teaching there was the care for my aging parents, their deaths, followed by the illness and death of my second husband. Two years ago I returned to the League and found the same kind of wonderful women (and men) that I found years ago.

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## Nov. 3rd BALLOT PROPOSALS

### What will this amendment do if approved by the voters?

The NYS Constitution currently prohibits labor performed by prisoners in state or local correctional facilities to be “be farmed out, contracted, given or sold to any person, firm, association or corporation”, except the state or any political division of the state and its public institutions. This means that prisoners cannot perform work, even voluntarily, for nonprofit organizations, such as churches, charities, social service agencies or educational institutions. If passed by the voters, this amendment will remove this constitutional impediment, and will authorize the Legislature to allow these inmates to voluntarily perform work for nonprofit organizations.

### What is the background on this proposal?

The sponsors for the legislation proposing this constitutional amendment argue that prohibiting prisoners from voluntarily performing work for nonprofit organizations denies these often under-funded organizations access to a willing labor force for tasks such as grounds-keeping. They say that many localities have requested that the prohibition be removed. They also say that allowing inmate work crews to provide labor to these organizations will help fill the gaps in funding them, and will give the inmates a sense of “giving back” to the community. The sponsors also make the point that passing this amendment would only give the Legislature authority to pass a law allowing inmates to do such work. This “enacting legislation” could include restrictions, in the interest of public safety, on which inmates would be eligible to perform this work. Two separately elected Legislatures passed this constitutional amendment with near unanimous votes in favor.

The League of Women Voters could not identify any organizations or opinions in opposition to this amendment.

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## *Preparing for our November 14th Program: Future of Waste Management in the Capital District*

The League position on solid waste, though adopted 18 years ago, still remains pertinent. (See below.) How does this position relate to the expansion of the Albany landfill and the direction we would like to go for the future of waste management in the capital district?

There has been discussion of a burn plant to solve the trash dilemma when space is used up. Is the technology better today than when we had the ANSWERS plant in Arbor Hill? Is more recycling the answer? Please think about these and other issues as our speaker describes future plans.

### *Project History (<http://capitalregionlandfill.org/history>)*

Since 1981, the Capital Region Solid Waste Management Partnership (the “Partnership”), formerly known as ANSWERS, has operated a regional solid waste system serving communities in the ANSWERS Wasteshed. Currently, with a combined population of approximately 206,000 people, these communities include:

- Cities of Albany, Cohoes, Rensselaer, and Watervliet
- Towns of Berne, Bethlehem, Guilderland, Knox, New Scotland (including the Village of Voorheesville) and Westerlo
- Villages of Green Island and Altamont

In addition to the above, the landfill also provides capacity for commercial, institutional and governmentally-generated waste from a multi-county area.

### *Existing Four League Position on Solid Waste*

*Approved: October, 1991*

Members of the League of Women Voters in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties agree that the wise management of natural resources respects the interrelationship of land use, water resources, air quality, energy use and waste management. We support waste and toxicity reduction and environmentally sound methods of recycling and reuse as the primary forms of solid waste management Programs supporting reduction, recycling and reuse should be given policy and funding priority. Waste management policies and funding priorities should recognize that many materials which are usually discarded as solid waste are in actuality resources having value; should promote the conservation of primary resources and the extensive reuse, recycling and recovery of manufactured and processed materials; should reduce the toxicity of materials entering the waste stream; and should assure the safe containment of unusable or toxic residues that may remain. Therefore, the four Leagues support solid waste policies that:

- protect human health and safety;
- promote the wise management of natural resources, including land, wildlife and habitat, water, · air and atmosphere, energy and materials;
- promote the conservation of primary materials such as timber, minerals, ores and energy;
- promote the extensive reuse and recycling of secondary materials;
- minimize the effects of hazardous materials in the waste stream;
- make it as easy as possible for people to use legal and responsible waste disposal methods; and
- encourage communities to take responsibility for recycling and waste disposal by locating needed facilities within their boundaries and by cooperating with other communities in the management of solid waste.

***For entire position, go to [www.lwvalbany.org](http://www.lwvalbany.org). Click on Monthly Bulletins, February '09.***

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# November 3rd BALLOT PROPOSALS

from *Voter's Guide Part II* (Part I was included with your October bulletin)

## PROPOSAL NUMBER ONE: AN AMENDMENT

*FORM OF SUBMISSION* (how the proposal will be presented to you on the ballot):

*Amendment to section 1 of article 14 of the Constitution, in relation to the use of certain forest preserve lands by National Grid to construct a 46 kV power line along State Route 56 in St. Lawrence County. The proposed amendment would authorize the Legislature to convey up to six acres of forest preserve land along State Route 56 in St. Lawrence County to National Grid for construction of a power line. In exchange, National Grid would convey to the State at least 10 acres of forest land in St. Lawrence County, to be incorporated into the forest preserve. The land to be conveyed by National Grid to the State must be at least equal in value to the land conveyed to National Grid by the State. Should the amendment be approved?*

### **What will this amendment do if approved by the voters?**

The "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution prohibits any development in the Adirondack Forest Preserve, including the building of power lines, unless the constitution is specifically amended to allow it. A constitutional amendment requires passage by two separately elected state Legislatures and then approval by the voters. This amendment has been passed unanimously by the Legislatures that took office in 2007 and 2009, and is now being presented to the voters on the November, 2009 ballot. This amendment will make constitutional an action that has, in fact, already taken place. The NYS Power Authority, with the involvement and agreement of the interested environmental and municipal groups, approved the building of a back-up power line through forest preserve land to protect the health and safety of the residents of the village of Tupper Lake. The line was built and activated in May of 2009.

### **What is the background on this proposal?**

Before this new power line was built, the village of Tupper Lake had frequent power outages caused by damage to its single electrical supply line, principally from falling tree limbs in forested land along its route. There was no back-up line in the event of power failure, and during the winter alternative shelter had to be provided to village residents. This was considered an urgent situation that could not wait for the completion of the constitutional amendment process for relief, since it affected the health and safety of the villagers. The most environmentally friendly route for the new line traverses about two miles of Adirondack Forest Preserve land, affecting a small number of physical acres. While the new line could have been detoured to avoid forest preserve land, the detour would have involved a six mile cut through old-growth undeveloped forest and wetlands, endangering the habitat of wildlife. The chosen route along an existing road through previously cleared preserve land was judged to be more ecologically friendly. National Grid, the builder of the line, will compensate for the loss of existing preserve land by conveying new forest preserve land to the State. This new land must be of equal or greater value than the land that was lost. Environmental and civic organizations are supportive of this remedy to what was a serious and persistent public health and safety issue. Since the amendment is specific to this situation, it does not give broader constitutional permission to other such solutions; each would require another constitutional amendment.

The League of Women Voters could not identify any organizations or opinions in opposition to this amendment.

## PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO: AN AMENDMENT

*FORM OF SUBMISSION* (how the proposal will be presented to you on the ballot):

*Amendment to article 3 of the Constitution, in relation to authorizing the Legislature to allow prisoners to voluntarily perform work for nonprofit organizations. The proposed amendment would authorize the Legislature to pass legislation to permit inmates in state and local correctional facilities to perform work for nonprofit organizations. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?*

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## News from Voter Service

'Tis the season—for trick or treat. The “trick” is keeping up with so many election activities! The “treat” happens when a wonderful Leaguer or two steps up to help and when an event goes well.

Upcoming debates:

**October 22:** New Scotland Town Supervisor and Town Council, 7 pm, Performing Arts Center at Voorheesville High School. Co-sponsored by the League and Spotlight Newspapers.

**October 28:** Colonie Town Supervisor, 7 pm. Holiday Inn on Wolf Rd. Co-sponsored by the Colonie Chamber of Commerce and the League.

**October 29:** Bethlehem Town Council, Town Supervisor, and Town Clerk, 7:30 pm, Bethlehem Town Hall. Co-sponsored by the League and Spotlight Newspapers.

**October 29,** 6:30 pm, Albany City Council 11th Ward, three candidates.

The Albany Housing Authority election has been postponed to November 10th, due to circumstances for which we have no responsibility!!! The debate among the four candidates for two positions will take place on November 5, 6:30 pm, 260 N. Pearl St., Albany.

On October 7, the League and CANA again collaborated on a candidate night. Five city-wide candidates were invited and four participated at the Albany Public Library, with about 40 people attending. Kathy Sheehan (Dem) and MaryAnn McGinn(Rep), opponents for the Treasurer position, spoke for 10 minutes each, then took audience questions. Leif Engstrom, who appears alone on the ballot for the new Auditor position, explained his vision of what this responsibility will entail. Carolyn McLaughlin shared her thoughts on how she can benefit Albany's citizens as President of the Common Council.

Our League was at the SEFCU Fall Festival, sharing a booth with Laura Bierman of the State League. Voter Guides Part 2 were a popular item, as well as several giveaways Laura offered. Mildred Elley School celebrated Constitution Day with an invitation to the League. When students registered to vote, they were eligible to take part in a nice drawing. Nine new voters were added to the rolls. Thanks to Lee & Jim Cameron for their help and good company.

Voter Guides Part 2 are now in print. See info in Newsletter. Pass the word to your neighbors about those propositions. The Guides are available at our events, through libraries, and on the state league web site ([www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)).

DING DONG. I am standing at your door, hoping to get the “treat” of your assistance. Please call if you can help. 489-0212. Special thanks to Marian Schwager and Carol Webster for their fabulous ideas and hard work on the Housing Authority Elections; and to Ann Brandon—she's a good listener! Mary Ann Lettau

## The Census is Coming! The Census is Coming!

Article I, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution mandates a headcount of everyone residing in the United States. The first Census was conducted in 1790 and has been carried out every 10 years since then.

The 2010 Census will be mailed to all households in early March, consisting of a short-form, with 10 questions that will take 10 minutes to complete. The census will count all residents living in the United States as well as ask for name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and housing tenure – taking just minutes to complete.

Census data is important because it:

- impacts how more than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and more.
- determines how data is also used to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and to redistrict state legislatures and;
- determines how Census data are used to define legislature districts, school district assignment areas and other important functional areas of government.

The census is like a snapshot that helps define who we are as a nation. Data about changes in our community are crucial to many planning decisions, such as where to provide services for the elderly, where to build new roads and schools, or where to locate job training centers.

## Study on the Greening of Albany County – An Update

For 2008-2009 the LWV of Albany County took on a local study to determine “What are Albany County communities doing to improve energy efficiency in buildings, vehicles, reduce waste and plan for land use?”

The committee was Co-chaired by Judith Wing and Judi Campbell. The following people helped in our work: Aimee Allaud, Edith Allen, Ann Brandon, Linda Brown, Julie Elson, Thayer Heath, Katie Henrikson, Marsha Kayser, Julia Lee, Alice Schrade, Marion Schwager, Loretta Simon, Marggie Skinner, and Betsey Swan. The full report with our questionnaire is on the website ( [www.lwvalbany.org](http://www.lwvalbany.org)).

In the first of several newsletter articles we are starting with highlights of Albany County activities in the areas of energy use, vehicle costs and some major initiatives undertaken by the county:

Albany County, in partnership with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the New York Energy Smart Communities Program, hosted an Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Housing Fair in 2007 and 2008. The Fair was a free educational event for home and business owners to gain valuable information on how to reduce energy consumption and costs while protecting the environment. The event featured information on energy efficient home improvements, renewable energy systems, alternative fuels, ENERGY STAR® appliances and energy assistance programs, such as the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

Municipal Government Operations: The county has an energy plan and an energy audit plan with energy maintenance systems on six buildings. There has been solar energy implemented at the Times Union Center, and the Sewer District is in process of installing a Waste Heat Recovery system. The county has received eight NYSERDA grants, six of which are related to sewer districts.

We asked participants if they have been able to improve energy savings in space heating, cooling, lighting and water-heating and were very encouraged by the County’s reply: “Within the last five years Albany County has been able to improve energy savings in all four of the above areas. Albany County has seen a savings of approximately 20 – 30 % of total energy costs using green alternatives, including reducing the electricity uses in the Harold L. Joyce Albany County Office Building in half compared to three years ago. This reduction comes as a result of renovations being made throughout the buildings and energy saving policies implemented by the County Department of Information Services.”

Did you know that the county spends \$710,978.02 on the cost of fuel for vehicles and that does not include the Albany County Sheriff’s Department or the Albany County District Attorney’s office? The replacement plan for vehicles does include alternate energy sources.

We asked each of the communities to tell us their success stories; the county replied:

“Albany County has already taken significant steps to becoming one of the greenest counties in the State:

- Energy efficiency improvements at the Sewer District have resulted in a reduction of carbon emissions equivalent to taking nearly 1,100 cars permanently off the road. In 2008, these improvements saved over \$1.6 million.
- We will be joining The Climate Registry, which will enable us to record and track our greenhouse gas emissions with transparency and public accountability.
- Thirty-three percent of U.S. carbon emissions come from cars. To mitigate these emissions, we are implementing a Commuter Choices program to make it easier and more cost efficient for our County employees to use public transportation and carpool to work.
- Last year, County employees diverted more than 70 tons of waste from the landfill through the County’s recycling program.

Stay tuned to find out other green things that are happening in Albany County in future Bulletins..

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

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## League Calendar

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>MORE INFO</u>
Nov. 3	ELECTION DAY	POLLING PLACES	VOTE VOTE
Nov. 3, 9 pm	Poll Reporting	Polling Places	
Nov. 3, 6:30 pm	Board Meeting	Delmar Presbyterian Church	
Nov. 10, 2-8 pm	Albany Housing Authority Election		
Nov. 14, 9:30 am	Future of Waste Mngmt in Albany Co.	Pine Bush Preserve	see page 1
Dec. 8, 5:30 pm	Bd. Meeing/Potluck Dinner	Home of J. Messina	
Dec. 15, 12 noon	Holiday Luncheon	Normanside CC, Delmar	
	Speaker: John DeRosier, TU Editorial Cartoonist		