

LWW of Albany County

Educate

Participate

Advocate

October 2006

Audrey Kibrick and Marggie Skinner, Co-Presidents

October Meetings – Part II

THE CHARTER SCHOOL DEBATE

Consensus Meetings

When: Tuesday, October 24th
7:00 – 9:00 a.m. – First Presbyterian Church
State and Willett Streets, Albany (on Washington Park)
Light Breakfast provided

5:30 – 9:00 p.m.—Bethlehem Public Library
Delaware Avenue, Delmar
Soup Supper

RSVP to Gael Casey Vecchio at 459-9958 if you are coming so there will be adequate food. If you can bring soup or salad for the evening meeting, please let Gael know.

We will be addressing the consensus questions on pages 5-9 of this bulletin, and building upon the information provided in the September bulletin and the panel discussion (see president's letter for overview) at the Pot Luck Dinner. We'll have food for thought at the meetings as well as real food!

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

I, Marggie, am writing this after the pot luck supper at the beautiful Women's Club Building where I met several new and prospective members and heard a very interesting discussion about charter schools. If you missed it, I will try to capture the highlights and I urge you to read the charter school information in both this bulletin and the September bulletin before you come to a consensus meeting this month.

Our Financing Education Chair, Betsey Swan assembled a formidable panel of local people who have been most directly involved in Charter Schools: Chris Bender (a league member), President of the Brighter Choice Foundation that supports all but one of the charter schools in the City of Albany; Jim Merriman, Executive Director of the Charter School Institute of the State University of New York, that is charged with evaluating initial applications for the opening of charter schools, ongoing monitoring of student academic performance and overall school operations, and for presenting findings and recommendations regarding the renewal of a school's charter to the State University Trustees; Diane Ward from the New York State School Boards Association; Eva Joseph, Superintendent of the Albany City School District and Pat Fahy (also a League member), former president of the Albany Board of Education.

The discussion addressed the following charter school issues:

Do we know anything about what leads to success or failure of a charter school?

Are charter schools held to a sufficiently precise academic standard to enable children to meet Regent's standards?

Are there ways in which the Charter School Act could be amended so that the education of all children could be improved?

Has the charter movement had a detrimental impact on traditional public schools, and are there changes in the Charter School Act that could lessen this impact?

From my seat, I heard general agreement that charter schools have a distinct advantage in a number of ways- they have more flexibility in scheduling their school day and year, in accepting and rejecting

students, and their boards of directors do not have to answer to the public by standing for election. In most instances the charter schools that are successful have been able to supplement the per pupil payments they get from the school district by grant funds from public and private sources. I heard disagreement in the responses to the other questions and these are the ones that we must grapple with as we try to develop our league position on the issue.

I promised some of you that I would tell you what I knew about the Women's Club building, but I got distracted by other more pressing matters before I introduced Betsey at the meeting. The club was incorporated in 1913 to maintain an organized center of cooperation among women in the City of Albany for civic, literary social work. That center was established at 725 Madison Ave. in about 1916 and has been there ever since. A few years ago it had dwindled to a membership of 3 women in their 80's and 90's and was in danger of disappearing, but some younger, energetic sorts got involved and are bringing it back to life. You have another chance to visit the building and meet these women on October 26. There is a notice in the bulletin with details.

And finally, we are committed to collect election results for the general election. If you have done this in the past, I am counting on you to do this again, but I will either call or e-mail or have someone call you to confirm your availability. (Thanks to everyone who confirmed at the pot luck supper.) If you do not hear from me by October 15 and you are available, please call me at 489-5311, or e-mail me at marggies@earthlink.net.

Do something this month to make the world a better place- either through the LWV or some other way.

Marggie and Audrey

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
Audrey Kibrick	Voter Service	Membership	Development	International Relations
489-9931	Maggie Moehringer	Susan Coleman	Lori Keegan-Brady	Kay Wilkie
	475-0969	433-9446	475-0396	768-2901
Bulletin Editor	Public Relations	At Large	Local Program	Financing Education
Aimee Allaud	Margaret Sawyer	Jacqui C. Williams	Raymond Blanchard	Betsey Swan
482-2617	783-9424	433-0277	438-0550	426-3711

E-Mail Address: lwwac@crisny.org. Web Site: www.lwvalbany.org

LWV of New York State: 35 Maiden Lane, Albany 12207, Phone: 465-4162, Fax: 465-0812, E-mail: lwwny@lwwny.org, Web Site: lwwny.org

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.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR OFFICE IN NOVEMBER 2006

(developed by the New York State League of Women Voters)

Congressional Candidates – Senate and the House of Representatives

- Do you support a universal health care plan, comprised of government, employers, and individuals that would provide health care coverage for all Americans?
- Global warming is a concern for many in and out of the scientific community. Should the federal government be concerned and, if so, what should be done?
- Would you work to develop an energy policy for the United States that would include mass transit, alternative energy resources, increased mileage for vehicles, and a national passenger rail system?
- Are you satisfied with the rollout of the Medicare Prescription Drug program? If not, what changes would you propose?
- The American occupation in Iraq continues to be enormously costly in dollars and in lives. What is your position on how we should proceed to end the conflict?
- The national deficit, now approaching a trillion, is considered unsustainable. How do you propose to reduce it, and hopefully end it?
- How do you expect to serve the public honestly in an era where money talks louder than morality?
- Where do you stand on the current balance between security and civil rights?

Governor

- In spite of school tax rebates, income tax credits for school age children and increased STAR rebates, property taxes continue to rise for most New York homeowners. What do you propose to curb this rate of escalation that is fair and equitable to property owners?
- Will you provide increased oversight and accountability for all state authorities such as the Thruway Authority?
- Will you support the establishment of an independent commission on redistricting?
- What role do you see wind power and ethane playing in alleviating the high cost of energy in New York State?

Attorney General

- The New York State Attorney General is the chief prosecutor for the state and the defender of the people. Which aspect of the job do you think you are most qualified for/which aspect would you personally focus on?
- Would you target or investigate public authorities, and how would you slow down (stop) their loophole borrowing?
- Does the Attorney General have a role in ending gerrymandering in New York State?
- Do you support a woman's right to choose and how would you better enforce the Clinic access and Anti-stalking Act?

Comptroller

- As state comptroller, your duties include overseeing the fiscal affairs of the state. This year's \$114.7 billion budget calls for the largest state spending increase in 30 years with spending growing faster than revenues. Is this fiscal responsibility on the part of the governor and legislators? Why or why not? Explain.
- Skyrocketing public employee pension expenses have inflated the budgets of every level of government in NYS. What reforms would you propose to ease the burden for taxpayers?
- What do you propose to end the excessive Medicaid fraud in NYS?

State Legislators

- Amid the recent reports that more and more young people are leaving upstate cities for better opportunities, what would you propose to reverse this trend?
- The NYS Legislature did not address the pending CFE law suit during the 2006 session. What would you propose to expedite the resolution of the CFE case?
- The Court of Appeals has ruled that under the NYS Constitution same sex marriages are not legal and that any movement to change this must come from the Legislature. Would you support legislation to do this?
- How do you see charter schools working in your legislative district? How would you estimate the administrative and other costs associated with raising the cap on charter schools?
- "007" accounts, better known as member items, account for \$200 million in taxpayer dollars doled out to individual legislators. These "pork barrel" funds are not covered under NYS's Freedom of Information Laws. Do you support efforts to make the distribution of these funds public record?
- Legislative district boundary lines are drawn by the legislators themselves and are tied directly to the advantages of party politics. Would you support the establishment of an independent commission as a more open and ethical way to create districts?
- Do you support legislation to amend the Family Court Act and the Criminal Procedure Law to provide equal access and equal civil and criminal protections to nonmarried, non-parent victims of domestic violence?

Senators only

- The Assembly has passed legislation that would allow NYS to buy drugs in bulk from drug companies and pass on the savings to low income and uninsured citizens in the form of an Rx discount card. Do you support this legislation? Why or why not?

**Consensus Questions for 2006 League of Women Voters of New York State
Financing Education Study – Charter Schools**

Circle your response in the right column for all questions.

Introduction

What are charter schools? How are they financed? How have they functioned in New York State? Are they fulfilling their promise of innovation in education and increased student achievement? What is their effect on financing education throughout the state?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the New York State Charter School Act, its impact on traditional schools, and proposals for fiscal relief for affected communities.

When the charter school legislation was proposed in 1998, the League opposed the original bill, believing that public funds should be used to support public schools, and because of our fear that charter schools would drain money away from traditional public schools, while continuing to require them to function as educators of last resort. The PTA, AAUW, and the School Boards Association joined us in our opposition to this legislation. In response to League's efforts some of its objections were resolved by the CHARTER SCHOOL ACT of 1998. Although the Act did not address the League's concerns about funding, its explicit characterization of charter schools as public schools co-opted the League's ability to object to the funding mechanism under its current funding education policy.

It is likely that the state will consider lifting the cap on charter schools within the next year. Even though charters in New York State are primarily an urban phenomenon, they have the potential to affect education finance and educational outcomes on a statewide basis. For that reason, we strongly encourage all Leagues to undertake Phase II of our financing education study.

**I. Amendment of the New York State
Charter School Act**

Should the New York State Charter
Schools Act be amended?

Since familiarity of the Act and of its
current effects will develop during
your discussion we suggest returning
to answer this question last.

NO - PROBABLY NOT - UNSURE - PROBABLY - YES

Comments:

II. State Grant and Oversight of Charters	
A. Should authority of agencies (other than the home school district) to grant, to oversee, to renew and to revoke charters be limited to a single entity? (Currently both the Regents and SUNY can do this.)	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:
B. Should the League advocate for more stringent oversight of charter compliance in the renewal/revocation of charters?	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:
C. Should the League support greater emphasis on positive educational outcomes in the renewal of charters?	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:
D. Should the League support educational achievement equal to or better than those of comparable district schools as a precondition for charter renewal?	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:

III. Financial Impact of Charter Schools (You may support or oppose multiple measures in III.A – G)	
A. Should the League support limiting the financial impact of charter schools on their home districts?	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:
B. Should the League support a dedicated statewide funding stream?	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:
C. Should the League support a	NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES

<p>dedicated statewide funding stream for students attending charter schools who previously attended private or parochial schools, or were home-schooled?</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>D. Should the League support transition assistance to district schools?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:</p>
<p>E. Should the League support home district payment to charters based on the same standard used to pay operating aid to school districts? (Districts receive State operating aid based on average daily attendance, while charter schools receive payment from home districts based on enrollment.)</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:</p>
<p>F. Should charter schools be eligible for capital construction and renovation services and reimbursement of capital expenditures? (A yes vote would mean we support public finance for charter school buildings)</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:</p>
<p>G. Should the League support separate levels of reimbursement for elementary and secondary education to charter schools based on what the home district spend for the level of schooling provided?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:</p>
<p>H. Should the League support measures that would limit the percentage of a district’s school budget that could be paid to charter schools?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES Comments:</p>
<p>IV. Limit on Number of Charter Schools and of Students Attending Charters (You may support or oppose multiple measures in IV. A – D)</p>	

<p>A. Should the League support an amendment to the Charter School Act so that a new charter could be reissued to another chartering entity upon closure of a charter school? (Currently, when a charter school closes, the closed school is still counted toward the total number of charters. If this amendment passes, the charter could be reissued so that the closed charter schools would no longer be counted toward the maximum number of charters that could be issued.)</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>B. Should the League support a limitation of the number of charters issued in New York State?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>C. Should any increase in the cap be tied to increased accountability for educational quality?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>D. Should any increase in the cap be tied to transition assistance to district schools?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>E. Should any increase in the cap be tied to creation of a dedicated statewide funding stream?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>V. Selection and Retention of Students</p>	
<p>A. Should the League support measures that would limit the percentage of children in a district that could attend charters?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>B. Should the League support measures to prevent mid-year departures?</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>

<p>VI. Research on Charter Schools (See notes in Study Guide)</p>	
<p>A. Should the League support public funding of academic research about the possible correlation between charter school characteristics and student academic success?</p> <p>Variables for investigation might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Length of school day, week, year; 2. Per student expenditures (look at public and private revenue sources); 3. Education Management Organizations: for profit vs. not-for-profit Education Management Organizations (EMOs); EMOs vs. non EMOs; district conversion vs. new schools; 4. Rates of teacher and administrator certification and retention 5. Class size; 6. School size; 7. Student selection mechanism and retention; 8. Demographics of student body; 9. Size of district and location within State; 10. Stand-alone facilities vs. shared facilities; 11. Other 	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>B. Should the League support public funding to measure educational growth in individual students as they progress from grade to grade in charter schools? (The NY State Education Department is requiring traditional districts to adopt data systems that will enable them to measure value added to an individual student’s achievement over time.)</p>	<p>NO - PROBABLY NOT –UNSURE - PROBABLY -YES</p> <p>Comments:</p>



**The League of Women Voters
of New York State
in association with
The United Nations Department
of Public Information**



*AAUW-NYS (American Association of University Women...),
Center for Women in Government and Civil Society
GFWC (NYS Federation of Women's Clubs)
NCJW (National Council of Jewish Women)
WBASNY (Women's Bar Association of the State of New York)
*additional Co-Sponsors to be announced at a later date**

Invites You to Attend

***BRIEFINGS ON THE STATUS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AROUND THE WORLD***

on

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

****9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.***

****Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., program will start promptly at 10:00 a.m.****

at the United Nations Headquarters in NYC

First Avenue at 46th Street

"Briefings" Agenda

9:00 a.m.	Registration (Please be prompt for UN Security Procedure)
10:00 a.m.	"Briefings on the Status of Human Trafficking Around the World" Speakers to be Announced
	Questions & Answers
12:45 p.m.	Lunch Buffet (<i>optional</i>)
2:30 p.m.	Tour of the United Nations (<i>optional</i>)

Seating is limited so please return your registration and payment as soon as possible!!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 6, 2006

For more information on this event, please contact the League of Women Voters of NYS
518-465-4162 or lwwny@lwwny.org



The League of Women Voters of NYS
in association with
The UN Department of Public Information
 AAUW-NYS (*American Association of University Women*)
Center for Women in Government and Civil Society
 GFWC (*NYS Federation of Women's Clubs*)
 NCJW (*National Council of Jewish Women*)
 WBASNY (*Women's Bar Association of the State of New York*)
 additional Co-Sponsors to be announced at a later date



BRIEFINGS ON THE STATUS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AROUND THE WORLD
ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006 @ 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

registration begins at 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

at the United Nations Headquarters in NYC – First Avenue at 46th Street

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ E-Mail _____

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | LWV of _____ | <input type="radio"/> | AAUW---NYS |
| <input type="radio"/> | HS/College/University | <input type="radio"/> | BRIA |
| <input type="radio"/> | Center for Women in Government... | <input type="radio"/> | GFWC |
| <input type="radio"/> | NCJW | <input type="radio"/> | WBASNY |
| <input type="radio"/> | Other Co-Sponsoring Organization _____ | | |

COST/PAYMENT INFORMATION

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|----------|
| <input type="radio"/> | Briefings Registration begins at 9 a.m., program will begin promptly at 10 a.m. | | |
| <input type="radio"/> | \$75 Non-Member \$55 Members of Sponsoring Organizations \$25 Students | \$ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> | Lunch Buffet in the Delegates Dining Room (Optional @ 12:45 p.m.)
<i>Includes International Buffet, Dessert Bar and Coffee/Tea only</i> | \$33.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> | Tour of United Nations (Optional @ 2:30 p.m.) | \$12.00 | \$ _____ |
| | TOTAL ENCLOSED | \$ | _____ |

My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed (make payable to LWVNYS)

Please charge my: _____ MasterCard _____ VISA _____ American Express
_____ Discover

Card Holder's Name: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

REGISTRATION DEADLINE NOVEMBER 6, 2006

PLEASE RETURN FORM TO:

United Nations Briefings/LWVNYS
 35 Maiden Lane * Albany, New York 12207
 Fax: 518-465-0812 (Credit Card Registrations ONLY)
 FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 518-465-4162

IF THE WORLD WERE A VILLAGE OF 100 PEOPLE

In the world today, more than 6 billion people live. If this world were shrunk to the size of a village of 100 people, what would it look like?

59 would be Asian
14 would be American (North, Central and South)
14 would be African
12 would be European
1 would be from the South Pacific

50 would be women, 50 would be men
30 would be children, 70 would be adults.
70 would be nonwhite, 30 would be white
90 would be heterosexual, 10 would be homosexual

33 would be Christians
21 would be Moslems
15 would be Hindus
6 would be Buddhists
5 would be Animists
6 would believe in other religions
14 would be without any religion or atheist.

15 would speak Chinese, Mandarin
7 English
6 Hindi
6 Spanish
5 Russian
4 Arabic
3 Bengali
3 Portuguese
The other would speak Indonesian, Japanese, German, French, or some other language.

Of the 100 people in this village:

20 are undernourished
1 is dying of starvation, while 15 are overweight.
Of the wealth in this village, 6 people own 59% (all of them from the United States), 74 people own 39%, and 20 people share the remaining 2%.

Of the energy of this village, 20 people consume 80%, and 80 people share the remaining 20%.
20 have no clean, safe water to drink.
56 have access to sanitation
15 adults are illiterate.
1 has an university degree.
7 have computers.

In one year, 1 person in the village will die, but in the same year, 2 babies will be born, so that at the year's end the number of villagers will be 101.

20 live in fear of death by bombardment, armed attack, landmines, or of rape or kidnapping by armed groups.

48 can not speak and act according to their faith and conscience without harassment, imprisonment, torture or death.

8 have money in the bank, money in your wallet and spare change somewhere around the house - 92 do not.

submitted by Bonnie Beard from the Global Issues committee as food for thought.

(The statistics were derived from Donella Meadows "State of the Village Report" first published in 1990

<http://www.odt.org/popvillagesources.htm>)

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.

CAPITAL AREA UNA ANNUAL DINNER 2006

On Friday, October 20th 2006, we are hosting our annual dinner! This year it will be held at Siena College.

Dinner details:

West Room of Serra Hall (Dining Hall)

5:00 - 6:00 Social hour (cash bar and hor d'oervres) 6:00 - 7:30 International dinner is served

Followed by Speaker

Guest speaker is Carol Bellamy, currently the President and CEO of World Learning, and previous Executive Director of UNICEF.

Topic: The State of the World's Children.

The cost of the Dinner is \$ 25 per person, and the deadline for reservations is 10/11/06

Checks should be made payable to Capital Area UNA and can be sent to

Christine Kowalski, 10 Quincy Street, Albany, NY 12205.

Please include name, address and telephone # or e-mail address.

Questions? Call 458–8315 or send an e-mail to: ckonline@verizon.net

Please consider sponsoring a student !

COME JOIN US !

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

Tues., October 3, 5:30 p.m.

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

Tues, October 10, 6:30 p.m.

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

Monday, Oct. 16, 9:30 a.m.

Continuing book discussion
“Pathologies of Power,”
chapters 2,3,4
Marsha Kayser’s home
call Katie Henrikson, 439-4308
for location

Tues. Oct. 24 – 7:00 a.m.

First Pres. Church
LWVAC breakfast Mtg.
**Financing Education/Charter
Schools Consensus**

Tues. Oct. 24 – 5:30 p.m.

Bethlehem Public Library
LWVAC Soup Supper Mtg.
**Financing Education/Charter
Schools Consensus**

Monday, Oct. 30, 9:30 a.m.

Continuing book discussion
“Pathologies of Power”
Chapters 5,6,7
At Katie Henrikson’s home
Call Katie at 439-4308
For directions

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

UN Briefing
NYC
Status of Human Trafficking

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

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 247
Albany, NY