



League of Women Voters of Albany County Bulletin September 2011

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Remember
**Primary Day is
September 13.**
The polls are open
from noon until
9:00PM. You
must be enrolled
in a party to vote
in that party's
primary.

New Members

**Frances Tarlton,
Albany**

**Maia
Boswell-Penc,
Slingerlands**

Welcome!



President's Message

This marks our league's inaugural all electronic bulletin. For some of you it may seem like a dramatic overnight change but we have been building slowly to achieve this. We have been working on making sure all member's email addresses have been collected and are current. We have contracted with Constant Contact to be our email server. Barbara Traynor has worked diligently to upload all our email addresses correctly. Laura Bierman and Aimee Allaud are the editor/writing team. We will save time, money and trees! We hope you like it. We recognize that not all our members have computers or email addresses. We will be able to print and mail a few copies of our bulletin to them. However, we encourage even those members to make use of your local library to read our bulletin on line. We also welcome volunteers to write articles for future editions.

August 26 marks a special date in our history, that was the day we celebrated the 91st anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. Which is a terrific segue for me to introduce the speaker for our annual September Potluck. Women fought long and hard to be able to exercise their right to vote but it seems today voter turnout is shockingly low. Dr. Stephen Schechter, a professor at Russell Sage College, will be speaking on civic responsibility and civic participation. Please read his bio and consider how you would fill out the survey he sent as a method to start us thinking about what it means to be a good citizen. Come on September 19 to share a meal and be reinvigorated for our fall activities.

Our Observer Corp is starting up, candidate forums are being scheduled, we still staff tables at farmers' markets into the Fall. Please consider joining one or more of the league's activities either as a volunteer or in the audience. Notices and information will be sent electronically allowing for speedier delivery of our news.

I hope to see you at our events.

Yours in League,
Mary Berry

Annual Fall Potluck Dinner
Monday, Sept. 19
St. Sophia's Church
440 Whitehall Rd, Albany, NY

Speaker Topic:

"Why the League needs to draw on the courage of its convictions now more than ever."

**5:30 meet and greet friends,
enjoy appetizers and buy raffle tickets**

6:00 dinner

6:30 announcements and raffle drawing

7:00 speaker

Please join us on Monday, September 19, at 5:30 for our annual potluck to kick off our fall programing. Bring your delicious pots of food to share, maintain old friendships and meet new friends, listen to our speaker and become recharged to take an active role in our League's coming year as we exercise our civic responsibility.

Speaker: Dr. Stephen L. Schechter, professor of political science in the Department of History, Law and Government at Russell Sage College in Troy. He also serves as the Director of the Council for Citizenship Education. He will be speaking on "**Why the League needs to draw on the courage of its convictions now more than ever.**"

Much of today's political news might as well run under the headline "Partisan extremism makes governing impossible." While many in the middle are wringing their hands, Leaguers and other sensible citizens need to redouble their efforts to plan now for 2012. Why? It's partly about the elections. Partisan bickering between parties and ideological bickering within parties have become an earlier and earlier prelude to the primaries. As a result, this is precisely the time when League projects like Voter Education and the Observation Corps must work hand in glove. Elected officials need to know that they are being watched, and voters need to know not only when something's amiss but when government officials defy the headlines and work together across party lines. As important, citizens need reminding of what roles they can play in shaping the alternatives of their civic and political future. Bring your thoughts, questions, recommendations, and convictions. Dr. Schechter will bring his.

Please contact Margaret Danes either by phone 438-7218 or email mdanes@nycap.rr.com with your reservation by no later than Wednesday, September 14. Let her know what you are bringing: appetizer, main dish, or dessert or that you plan on contributing \$10.00 instead. Also, please bring the recipe for the dish you are bringing; they will be collected in hopes that in the future we will put together a cookbook of easy traveling dishes.

We will also be distributing a survey at the dinner about your opinion

on being a good citizen. The survey is linked [here](#), but we will have paper copies at the dinner for you to complete.

New this year we will be having a raffle to raise money for special projects aimed at involving youth in civic activities. Tickets will be three for \$5.00. You drop the tickets in the container in front of the item you are hoping for and after dinner it could be yours!

Dr. Schechter's Bio:

Dr. Stephen Schechter is currently Professor of Political Science in the Department of History, Law, and Government, at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York where he also serves as Professor and former Director of the M.A.T. Social Studies Program, and Director of the Council for Citizenship Education. He received his doctorate in 1972, and has taught at various universities before joining the Sage faculty in 1978.

Professor Schechter is the author or editor of more than 20 books on constitutional history and federalism. His books include *Well Begun: Chronicles of the Early National Period*, *Roots of the Republic*, and *Contexts of the Bill of Rights* which he co-edited with Pulitzer prize nominee Richard B. Bernstein. His latest book, *Exploring Political Ideas: Concepts That Shape Our World*, written with Thomas Vontz with contributions by Margaret Branson was published in 2010 by CQ Press, a subsidiary of Congressional Quarterly, Inc.

Professor Schechter also has worked for all levels of American government. At the state level, he worked for the Chief Judge of New York State as Executive Director of the New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution which initiated many programs and events for schools and communities throughout the state. He also is the primary author of New York State Education Department's Core Curriculum for the 12th grade civics course, *Participation in Government*.

Thank You to our Volunteers - We Can't Do It Without You

Thank you to our volunteers who have donated their time to staff our League table at various Farmers Markets this summer: Monica Sharp, Mary Ann Lettau, Wendy Dury-Samson, Jane and George Allen, Lois Griffin and Mary Berry. Remember, it is not too late. The markets go into the Fall. Please contact Monica Sharp if you can give a Saturday morning at 475-9736.

Thank you to our volunteers who have given their time to assist at our candidate events: Mary Ann Lettau, Loretta Simon, Lois Griffin, Monica and Bill Sharp, Barbara Traynor, Alice Schrade and Mary Berry. There will be more opportunities to help this Fall. Please contact Mary Ann Lettau if you can volunteer at 489-0212.

A BIG thank you to Don Kennedy for his many years of keeping track of our league's membership information. I believe he has served as

our Information Specialist for more than seven years. He has earned the title "Data Don!" But, he has now passed the spreadsheets on to Barbara Traynor, who is our league's new data maven. Thank you to Barbara for taking on this role. We couldn't go 'electronic' without her. Please send an email to Barbara if you change your address - either street or email so that she may keep our records up-to-date and we can keep in touch.

Thank you to Jessica McMullan for maintaining our website. She has decided to pass the responsibility on to others. Although we do not have a new webmaster to take over, our website may become a project this Fall for a computer class at SUNYA in the Department of informatics. More to come as the project unfolds. All volunteers welcome to become part of the web design team.



The Future of our Healthcare: Medicare for All versus a Private Insurance Based System

Presented by the Capital District Alliance for Universal Healthcare

Sunday, September 25, 2011

2:00- 4:30 pm

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

405 Washington Avenue, Albany

Speaker: David Ansell, MD, MPH

Chicago-based physician and health activist, and author of "COUNTY: Life, Death and Politics at Chicago's Public Hospital"

A panel discussion will follow to address the current status of healthcare in Massachusetts, Vermont and New York State.

Co-sponsored by: Single Payer New York, Physicians for a National Health Program Capital District Chapter, Troy Area Labor Council, Capital District Area Labor Federation, League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, Social Responsibilities Council of FUUSA, NY StateWide Senior Action Council, and New York State Nurses Association

For additional information call 518 482-0420.

Vote 411

This is the first year that the LWVAC is participating in VOTE411, an on line Voters Guide. This is in furtherance of the League's goal of "making democracy work." It allows the viewer access to non-partisan information on candidates, an easy way to compare candidate positions, and a polling place locator among others. You just type in your address and see the races on your ballot. It is truly one stop shopping for election related information.

Watch your emails for more information on this great election tool!

LWV of Albany County Annual Meeting

LWV of Albany County held its annual meeting on June 15, 2011. Amendments to the bylaws, as well as officers and board members, passed unanimously. Click on the links below.

- [Bylaw Amendments](#)
- [2011-2012 Officers and Board Members](#)

LWVNYS State Convention

LWVNYS held its State Convention on May 20-22, 2011. Two members from Albany County LWV share their experiences. Click to read their comments.

- [Peggy Sawyer](#)
- [Paula Hemmings](#)

Observer Corps is Starting Again!

Your help is needed to restart the Observer Corps! This committee is responsible for bringing League presence to public meetings of all kinds throughout the County relevant to League issues. There are many governmental meetings we need to attend, and if you can go to an occasional meeting of your choice, wear a League button or other identifying information, take some notes and send them in, PLEASE VOLUNTEER!!! Jan Messina and Judi Campbell will assemble the list of all County, City, Town and other public meetings, send out timely reminder notices to the members and receive reports from you to present to the Board and membership. This is a basic activity of the League which we need to reinvigorate, given the current political and economic climate, and we need your help! Most meetings are in the evenings, last an hour or two, and are either once or twice each month. Some can be accessed on public television or via computer. Please consider giving some of your time to this effort! Call or email Jan Messina (janmessina@verizon.net, 439-0346), or Judi Campbell (jcamp37@verizon.net, 478-0016).

Wine Tasting Fundraiser for LWVNYS

Come join League friends, sample some new wines and help raise funds for the state League. The event will be held on October 15, from 5-7 pm, at the home of Deborah Reisner in Rye, NY. It's just \$75 for an individual or \$250 for a sponsor (includes 2 attendees and recognition). Call the state League office at 465-4162 to make a reservation or for more information.



Come join League friends for an enjoyable evening!

Membership 2011-2012 - Join & Make a Difference

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address, City, Zip:

Email: _____

- Individual Membership \$50/year
- Household Membership \$75/year
- Student Membership \$15/year
- Contribution in support of my local League
- Please send me more information

For financial aid information, contact Monica Sharp, 475-9736
Mail to: League of Women Voters of Albany County PO Box 611,
Slingerlands, NY 12159