

*THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
SCHENECTADY COUNTY
BULLETIN*



THERE'S SOMETHING
FUNNY ABOUT
VOTING IN AMERICA

Electoral Dysfunction-
the movie

According to the movie trailer, "Electoral Dysfunction" is a feature-length documentary created by a team of award-winning filmmakers.

In this film comedian Mo Rocca takes us on a road trip to see how voting works ... and doesn't work... in America.

Humor and wit are used to take an irreverent—but nonpartisan—look at voting in America.

For starters, where is the Electoral College—and does it have a winning football team?"

Progressive Schenectady,

In collaboration with the **League of Women Voters** will be screening "Electoral Dysfunction" on **May 25th** in the McChesney Room of the Schenectady County Library, 99 Clinton St.

Please join us for a meet-and-greet starting at 6 PM.



**UPCOMING
EVENT**

Annual Meeting

**June 13th at 5:30pm
at the Turf Tavern,
40 Mohawk Avenue, Scotia**

Join us for dinner, the annual meeting and a talk by
Professor of Political Science &
Director of American Studies, Union College
Zoe M. Oxley

Professor Oxley will talk about
"What The Election in 2016 Tells Us About America; a
Look at Racial and Gender Equality in the USA.
& What it Means to Be Part of a Post Truth Society"

Dinner entrée choices:

- Chicken Florentine
- Baked Scrod
- Vegetarian Saute over pasta or quinoa

Dinner will also include fresh fruit medley, house salad, entrée, carrot cake and coffee or tea.

The charge for dinner is \$30. Reservations to be made by June 6th to Carol Furman by phone 346-2746 or e-mail cfurman@earthlink.net.

We are unable to cancel reservations after June 6th.

President's Letter

The State League of Women Voters has been urging local Leagues to come up with one or more events to celebrate the big centennial anniversaries coming up: women's suffrage in NYS in 1917, formation of the NYS League of Women Voters in 1919, passage of the 19th amendment ratifying women's right to vote in 1920 and formation of the national League of Women Voters in 1920.

At the March LWV Board meeting, Ann Hatke, who volunteers at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), mentioned that there's a real need in Schenectady for a mentoring program for legal residents who wish to become U.S. citizens. The Board agreed that this was the perfect project for the League- helping people become U.S. citizens and of course, encouraging them to vote. We also felt that the Citizenship Mentoring Project would be an appropriate way to celebrate the big four anniversaries with an enduring legacy of creating new voters. And to complete the trifecta, it will be a great opportunity to introduce potential members to the League of Women Voters.

We're very excited about this project and have begun the planning process. See the article on the LWV Citizenship Mentoring Project in this bulletin for more details.

Cheryl Nechamen

LWV Citizenship Mentoring Project

Martha Butler, Director of the Office for New Americans (ONA) in Albany, recently met with the Schenectady LWV Board about a possible mentoring and citizenship preparation program to be conducted in Schenectady by the League with the assistance and supervision of the ONA. The Office for New Americans is a NYS program that works with USCRI (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants) to assist those who are applying for US citizenship.

Preparation for the application process can be arduous for some depending on their age, language and writing skills, self-confidence, knowledge of US civics and history, and access to free citizenship preparation classes. We're still working out the parameters, but a citizenship preparation program could include one-on-one tutoring, citizenship preparation classes, language and writing assistance, and civics and history workshops. Materials for the program are readily available on the US Immigration website, www.uscis.gov.

The program would be offered at no cost and would be held in an accessible public space such as a local library or college classroom. If you'd like to be involved in this exciting project, contact Ann Hatke at hatkeann@gmail.com.

submitted by Ann Hatke

**Sample citizenship questions can be found
on page 5 for interested persons**

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Registration Planning Time

Connie Young and Peg Foley are currently setting the schedule of voter registration events for this election season. We have already made a commitment to register voters at the annual *Kids Arts Festival* on June 3 and need volunteers for that day 12 N – 4 PM. There will be additional events throughout the summer and fall which will be announced soon with an on-line opportunity to sign up for a time convenient for you. If you have never registered voters we will be sure to partner you with an experienced volunteer. Ordinarily the commitment is for a 2 or 3 hour shift. Please contact Connie (518 393-7061; cyoung50@nycap.rr.com) or Peg (518 346-3923; pegfoley1921@gmail.com) if you have not been contacted in previous years for voter registration.

Candidate Forums

This year there will be elections at every level of local government starting with School Board Elections in May. We will hold a candidate forum for most of these local government elections and the Schenectady City School District Board of Education election IF there are more candidates running than seats available.

Candidates have until April 26 to file their petitions, so, at this writing, we don't know if a school board candidates forum will be necessary. If there needs to be a candidate forum it will be held on May 8 at the downtown Schenectady County Library branch starting at 6:30 PM. If you would be available/interested in helping with the conduct of the candidate forum, contact Vicki McGowan-Horan (518) 852-0113; torymc@aol.com

The above activities are very important services that the LWV provides to residents in Schenectady County and both require many volunteers. I hope you'll find a way to include volunteering to help us

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES FOR 2017

Primary Election: September 12, 2017

General Election: November 7, 2017

Voter Registration deadline for Primary Election:

In Person: August 18, 2017

Mail in: Postmark by August 18; received by Board of Elections by August 23

Voter Registration deadlines for General Election:

In Person: October 13

Mail in: Postmarked by October 13; received by Board of Elections by Oct. 18

Absentee Voting deadlines for Primary Election:

Application for Primary Ballot

Apply in person to Board of Elections: September 11

Mail in: Postmarked by Sept. 5

Primary Ballot

Deliver in person to Board of Elections: September 12 (by 9 PM)

Mail in: Postmarked by September 11; received by Board of Elections by September 19

Absentee Voting deadlines for General Election:

Application for Ballot

Apply in person to Board of Elections: November 6

Mail in: Postmarked October 31

General Election Ballot

Deliver in person: November 7 (9 PM)

Mail in: Postmarked November 6; must be received by Board of Elections by November 14.

Kay Ackerman

Voter Services Chair

Women's History Month

Women's History Month was celebrated last month with a special recognition of several Schenectady women of note in a display at Schenectady City Hall. The display was conceived and organized by League member Marsha Mortimore, and included the following women:

- Katherine Burr Blodgett, the first female scientist hired by General Electric and the first woman to earn a PHD from Cambridge University.
- Georgetta Dix, Pastor of Refreshing Springs Church and founder of the Refreshing Springs child care center. A community activist, Pastor Dix worked tirelessly for children and human rights.
- Elizabeth Van Rensselaer Gillette was the first woman surgeon in Schenectady County and the first woman in upstate New York to be elected to the NYS Assembly.
- Rose Perkins Hale the daughter and wife of Union College professors took an active role in the women's suffrage movement. She was elected to the Schenectady School Board of Education and the Schenectady County Board of Supervisors, possibly the first woman elected to public office in NYS.
- Karen Brown Johnson, member of the City Council was elected the first woman Mayor of the City of Schenectady. Later elected to the Schenectady County Legislature where she continues to serve and is active in many civic and arts organizations including the LWV of Schenectady County.
- Janet Murray was the first female physician in the City of Schenectady practicing for over 40 years. Dr. Murray always made time to provide free care to many less fortunate Schenectadians.
- Malinda Myers, community activist, dedicated her life to the service of others. Among her many contributions, she was a founding member of the Schenectady County NAACP, and chaired the Community College Feasibility Study Committee which resulted in the founding of Schenectady County Community College.
- Katherine Scranton Rozendale, described herself as a "professional volunteer" and worked on behalf of a host of educational, civic and cultural interests including the Child Guidance Center, WMHT-TV, Proctor's Theatre, Girls Inc. and Planned Parenthood.

Marsha Mortimore would like League members to help her continue this annual tradition and asks members to nominate other women who should be recognized in future displays. Thank you Marsha for your dedication and determination to continue this project.

submitted by Kay Ackerman

Annual Harriet Tubman Concert
hosted by the
Duryee Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
307 Hulett St.
May 13, 2017 at 5 pm
Questions? Call Marsha Mortimore at
505-5750



Judicial Report

It is good to announce that two of our state advocacy issues have made substantial progress. The Raise the Age is already addressed in this year's budget and changes will be gradually implemented, keeping sixteen and seventeen year old juveniles out of the adult prison system, with non-violent crimes referred back to Family Court and more serious crimes handled by a youth component of the court.

The issue of more adequate funding and consistency between counties for indigents defense will also be addressed, with more specific plans presented by the Office of Indigent Defense Services by the end of the year. It still leaves out funding for Family and Surrogate Court proceedings, but it is a significant step forward in addressing the issue.

At the local level, the committee continues to follow up on improvements in the Civilian Police Review Board and implementation of the state-wide reforms at the local level.

Helga A. Schroeter, Judicial Chairperson

Civilian Police Review Board

Dick Shave, Schenectady League representative to the Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) announced that the brochure for the Board has now been distributed in Schenectady. Dick reports that he has gained a new respect for those people who train the police officers as well as for the Internal Affairs Office that investigates police infractions. There is interest in the Community about the CPRB which will, going forward, provide opportunities for more discussion and education. Dick looks forward to discussing these matters with anyone who has an interest.

A Few Civics Questions on the Naturalization Test

As mentioned above prospective citizens must pass a Naturalization Test. There are 100 civics (history and government) questions that may be asked for the naturalization test taken by prospective citizens. The civics test is an oral test and the USCIS Officer will ask the applicant up to 10 of the 100 civics questions.

An applicant must answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test. Below are a few of the questions that could be asked.

1. What is the supreme law of the land?
2. What does the Constitution do?
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
4. What is an amendment?
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

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**League of Women Voters of NY State
 PRESS STATEMENT
 2017 Budget Deal**

The League of Women Voters of New York State is outraged that the budget deal touted by the Governor and the legislature once again failed to implement any reforms to make voting easier and more accessible. The League has fought for voting reform as well as anti-corruption measures for more than three decades. Our state continues to rank near the bottom in terms of voter turnout and participation. In 2016, lines at the polls left New Yorkers waiting for hours to cast their ballot and the names of voters in New York City were wrongly purged from voter rolls. How long must the people wait until the legislature acts on common sense voting reforms?

Governor Cuomo proposed two reforms that would have made voting more accessible. Automatic voter registration and early voting would have reduced lines on Election Day and empowered voters to cast their ballot when it is most convenient. But these proposed reforms were once again left behind while the legislature adopted the budget. The legislature needs to act and pass comprehensive voting reforms during this legislative session. In this 100th anniversary year of women getting the right to vote in New York, it is time to bring our state into the twenty-first century and pass early voting and automatic voter registration.

Women On Wheels:

*How Gilded Age Women Found Freedom through Bicycling,
 Fought Against People Who Tried to Stop Them,
 and Why It Matters Today.*

Presented by Ellen Gruber Garvey

Admission is Free!

Saturday, May 13 at 2 pm

Schenectady County Historical Society

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We work to increase the understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.



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www.ywca-northeasternny.org

MEMBERSHIP

Our League goals are to educate citizens about government and public policy, encourage citizen participation in elections, and influence public policy relating to issues we’ve studied. Dues money makes working on our goals possible. **DUES for July 1, 2017– June 30, 2018** (half-year dues reduction available- contact Connie Young at 393-706.

Return to: LWV of Schenectady County, P.O. Box 9135, Schenectady, NY 12309.

New or Renewing Members Please Confirm this Contact Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____ \$60

Individual _____ \$85 Household _____ \$20 Full-time student _____ Additional support for the League, dues plus \$10 contribution (\$70 or \$95 – circle one) (Confidential arrangements for special payment or partial assistance can be made. Contact Connie Young at 393-7061 with any questions. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.) _____ I am sending my membership dues payment, but please consider me an **INACTIVE member**.

.....

• **ACTIVE MEMBERS:** The League depends upon the work of its members, even for a short task. Please check any activities that interest you. We appreciate your help. Committees
Judicial _____ Health _____ Membership _____ Fundraising _____ Environment _____ Observer
Corps _____ Education _____ Voter Services Voter Registration _____ Candidate Forums _____
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**League of Women Voters
of Schenectady County**

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