

Inside the New York City League

League of Women Voters of the City of New York

45 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016 - Tel. (212) 725-3541 - Fax (212) 725-3443

Spring 2002

Voter Participation

by Barbara Barr, LWVNYC Secretary/Treasurer

Over the past year we have joined with the New York Public Interest Research Group, Common Cause and many other good-government groups to form a Citywide Coalition for Voter Participation. This coalition was formed to work with the NYC Board of Elections after the many problems we saw arise in the elections of 2000.

Basically, we wanted to make sure that the city elections of 2001 would be conducted in the best possible way and made accessible to the most possible voters. To this end, we worked successfully to see that inspectors were both better trained and paid; more mechanics were available to fix broken machines; foreign language interpreters were available. We also ran an Election Day survey that covered one-third of all election districts. This was the first survey of its kind and yielded a good deal of valuable information. A report has just been issued and is available at the League office.

One major problem that still needs to be addressed is new voting machines.

The city and state have started looking at new machines that could be used in the future. As we all know, the current machines are no longer functioning well enough to meet our needs. To this end, on Thursday, March 14,

2001, an exhibit of New Age machines was held at Grand Central Station. The coalition was fortunate to have a private tour of these machines. We checked them against various criteria:

- accessibility and usability for people with disabilities
- capability to clearly present multiple languages
- ability to handle a wide range of elections
- ability to furnish instant run-off voting
- technology that alerts voters at the polls to undervotes or any problems with their ballot

We will be reviewing the survey made at that inspection and will work with all of the appropriate agencies to see that the best available machine comes to New York City as soon as possible. My personal opinion is that none of the machines met all of our needs. However, when we work with the manufacturers I am certain that a good, reliable, easy-to-use machine can be successfully manufactured and used by all our voters.

The League will continue to work to see that the voting process in our city is the most successful in the country and that our voters do so in the most convenient manner.

**League of Women Voters
of the City of New York**

Officers

Chair	Robin
Bahr	
Vice-Chair	Fannie
Conner	
Secretary/Treasurer	Barbara
Barr	

Advisory Board

Miriam Adelman	Pamela Roderick
Laura Altschuler	Lillian Seidman
Marian Bott	Elma
Smolen	
Katherine Flaherty	Arlene
Solomon	
Adrienne Kivelson	Valerie
Warner	
Donna Landav	Shelly

Tribute Fund

In Honor of

Lee Abramowitz
by Joan Jakubowitz

Robin Bahr
by Elma Smolen
by Rose Yalan

Lillian Raynor's birthday
by Jane Gallagher
by Rose Yalan

Lillian Seidman
by Elma Smolen

Mike Smolen's 90th birthday
by Ann Reiss

Selma Toback
by Mara Levine

Upper West Manhattan Branch
by Pauline Helpern
on behalf of the Rayburn Fndn

**We're Off and Running
to the City Council**

by Nicky Heller

Three months of Council Watch and we now have a committee made up of 12 League watchers who are enthusiastic, committed, and learning more every day. Overall, our first impressions have shown us a new City Council working diligently to become a legislative body that offers a counter-balance to the power of the Office of the Mayor. The New York City Council—the product of term limits—has 51 members, 13 of them incumbents and 38 who are newly elected.

During this first quarter the council has organized itself into 27 committees, 8 subcommittees and 3 select committees. All of the incumbents have become chairs of committees or subcommittees or part of the leadership of the council. Nine of the new members out of the 38 new members do not have leadership positions but all members are assigned to a committee. Early on, the rules governing the council were changed which seemed to offer greater possibility for participation in the council—providing more opportunities for council members to be effective and for the public to be informed. We will be watching to see whether this happens.

We at the LWV Council Watch Committee are finding our way as the council members explore their strengths.

The preliminary budget hearings offer the council the first major assignment. The committees are holding hearings for two weeks and we are seeing the council members grappling with the needs of the departments, the overwhelming budget deficit, and new sources of revenue.

The members of the City Council know we are there watching and we will be ready to comment when it is needed.

FOR LEAGUE MEMBERS ONLY

2002 ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 8, 9:30 AM
45 East 33rd Street, 1st Floor

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JONATHAN LANDAY

National Security Journalist in the Washington, D.C. Bureau of Knight Ridder Newspapers
...Recently returned from assignment in Afghanistan...

Agenda in Brief

9:30 a.m.: Registration, Refreshments, Meet & Greet

10:00 a.m.: Business Meeting:

Call to Order

Introduction of Current Board Members

Treasurer's Report

Proposed Budget

Chairs' Reports

Proposed Program

12:00 p.m.: LUNCH

12:45 p.m.: KEYNOTE SPEAKER

1:15 p.m.: Nominations and Elections

1:30 p.m.: Acceptance Speech of Chair

1:45 p.m.: Introduction of New Board

2:00 p.m.: Direction to the New Board; New Business

2:15 p.m.: Adjournment

Reservation Form: Annual Meeting, Saturday, June 8, 2002

\$15.00 per person for registration and lunch — \$5.00 door prize entry
(\$20.00 includes registration, lunch, and automatic entry in door prize)

Mail check to LWVNYC, 45 E. 33rd St., NY, NY 10016

\$15 per person: Enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Nominating Committee Report — 2002 Slate of Officers

The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented to the Annual Meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member immediately after such presentation, provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained.

Officers—Two-Year Terms

Chair: (vacant)

Vice Chair—Communications: Pamela Roderick

A self-employed writer and editor specializing in finance and business. After many years in financial journalism, she now works primarily in public relations, marketing and corporate communications. Pamela joined the League last year in response to the *New York Times* report that the NYC League was on the verge of going out of business. She has written membership and corporate fundraising brochures, worked on public relations projects and is helping to organize a fundraising luncheon for next year.

Vice Chair—Development: Arlene Solomon

Has extensive experience in consulting for a wide range of businesses. In addition to general consulting in organization and training issues, Arlene's company (Arlene Solomon Associates Inc.) designs and develops training and general communications programs. Arlene is co-author of a book on managing a consumer lending business, which will be published in the spring of 2002. Arlene is on the advisory board of the Ossining Farmer's Market and was vice president of her co-op board for two years.

Vice Chair—Membership: Fannie Conner

Graduate of Hunter College; retired from NYC Child Welfare Administration. Served as LWVNYC Voter Service Chair, Metropolitan Branch of LWVNYC; Membership Chair, and Second Vice President; currently Vice Chair.

Vice Chair—Program: Elma Smolen

B.A., Brooklyn College; M.L.S., Queens College. Joined the League in 1973. Branch Chair for 20 years.

Vice Chair—Telephone Information Service: Donna Landay

Raised three wonderful children. Moved 12 times, acquiring friends everywhere. Dined at the White House, garden-partied at Buckingham Palace. Employment covers a multitude...retail and wholesale sales, attorney's secretary, junior model, showroom manager for furniture designer, interior designer (New York School of Design). Have been T.I.S. coordinator for a number of years.

Secretary: Barbara Barr

Attended Brooklyn College, worked for 22 years in municipal government—City Purchasing; Board of Education Purchasing Department, manager; Metropolitan Transit Authority; member of Jackson Heights branch; a “born New Yorker”; currently Secretary/Treasurer.

Treasurer: Shelly Warwick

Serves on LWV Advisory Board and Council Watch Committee. Shelly is an Assistant Professor at Queens College in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies; serves as Chair of the Legislative Action Committee of the Library Association of the City University of New York, and as a member of the American Library Association's Intellectual Property Subcommittee. She earned her Ph.D. degree from Rutgers, an M.L.S. from Queens College and a B.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Connecticut. Her research interests are in the areas where information technologies intersect with societal issues; she is currently focusing on intellectual property and copyright in particular. She is working on a book for Scarecrow Press on the landmark Supreme Court decision in Feist and its impact on database protection.

Submitted by the Nominating Committee: Miriam R. Adelman, Chair, Lillian Seidman and Donna Landay

FOR LEAGUE MEMBERS ONLY

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Article IX, Section III, Quorum: One hundred voting members, or 10% of the total members entitled to vote, whichever shall be less, shall constitute a quorum at the Annual Meeting. The record in the office of the LWVNYC of paid-up members as of 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting shall determine the voting membership count for this purpose. Any member entitled to vote may designate by written proxy another member to be present to vote in her/his stead. Mailed proxies must be received at the League office no later than three (3) business days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Please sign and date the proxy where indicated, print your name next to your signature, and return to the League office by June 5, 2002: LWVNYC, 45 East 33rd Street, Room 309, New York, NY 10016.

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***PROXY FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
to be held on June 8, 2002***

*KNOW ALL MEN AND WOMEN BY THESE PRESENT that the undersigned member of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York hereby constitutes and appoints *Robin Bahr (Chair) or _____ (member may select agent) or either of them by true and lawful attorney and agent in my name, place, and stead, to vote as my proxy at the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York to be held on June 8, 2002 or at any adjournment thereof, for the election of Officers, and for the transaction of any business which may legally come before the said meeting, and to act as fully as I would do if personally present; and I hereby revoke any other proxy heretofore given by me.*

The undersigned hereby authorizes the above-named proxy to vote for the following nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee:

Officers for Two-Year Terms

Chair: (vacant)

Vice Chairs: Pamela Broderick — Communications
Fannie Conner — Membership
Donna Landay — Telephone Information

Service

Elma Smolen — Program
Arlene Solomon — Development

Secretary: Barbara Barr

Treasurer: Shelly Warwick

To withhold authority of your proxy to vote for any one or more of the nominees, strike out the name of such nominee and initial your deletion(s).

Witness my hand this day of _____ 2002.

Signature

Print Name

**If no name is filled in, the named designees will be deemed the appointed agent(s) to exercise the Proxy. If you fill in a name, only your named agent will be authorized to vote as your agent at the Annual Meeting.*

A Tribute to Women's History

by Robin Bahr, LWVNYC Chair

March was designated Women's History Month by Congress in 1987. There is indeed much to celebrate. Lest we forget, it was not always so. It was not until 1920 that the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified and women were granted the right to vote.

This seems like ancient history, far removed from today's perspective, with women in the forefront of so much of American life, including political office. Women have always had influence in this country, to be sure, even in colonial times, but it took a monumental battle for American women to achieve equal rights under federal law.

There were stirrings for women's right to vote in the early 1800s but, it was only in 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton held a convention in Seneca Falls, New York, that enfranchisement of women was embraced as a national goal. The Suffrage Movement was born. For the next 72 years hundreds of thousands of Americans, predominantly women, argued, petitioned, lectured, marched, protested, and lobbied on behalf of the cause. The torch was passed from one generation to the next. The crusade withstood condemnation, division, defeat, deception, derision, and contempt.

In 1872 Susan B. Anthony tested the waters. She attempted to vote and was arrested and indicted for "knowingly, wrongfully and unlawfully voting for a representative to the Congress of the United States." The issue was finally heard by the Supreme Court in 1875. The Court ruled unanimously that citizenship did not automatically confer the right to vote and that female enfranchisement should be decided within the states. The battle resumed in state after state, year after year.

By 1917 New York had become one of 15 states in the union to grant women full voting rights.

Acceptance, however, was not axiomatic. One year later Mrs. Norma Wurzberger, an active member of the New York City Woman Suffrage Party, was asked at a polling site in upper Manhattan, "Yes, Madame, and what is your problem?" She replied, "I have no problem. I'm here to vote." The poll worker said, "Where is your husband?" She answered, "In Europe, on business." The poll worker asked, "Do you have his permission to vote?" There was no recorded answer. Mrs. Wurzberger voted.

In 1919, with ratification in sight, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, formed the League of Women Voters. The League's mission was to carry on the work of the movement in educating and stimulating voter participation in the political process. This remains the cause of the League today and it is good to reflect upon the long and proud history from whence we came. We cannot be reminded often enough that our forebears fought for equality with unrelenting courage and perseverance. The suffragists overcame prejudice, ignorance, apathy, enmity and organized resistance to achieve their dream. And it was their achievement, the right to vote, that has enabled women of today to serve in the forefront of American life.

The League has carried on the battle for reform. The causes are less personal but as urgent—equal access to the polls, equal and quality education in our public schools, campaign finance reform, and equal justice in the courts, among others. These will be hard and long fought battles, but we have learned from the suffragists that one must never forsake the battle for justice and equality. This is the American dream. Women across the country must continue working to make that dream come true for all Americans.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ENTERS THE COMPUTER AGE

1. Break out the champagne! The New York City League of Women Voters has launched its new website - www.lwvnyc.org.

New Yorkers can now find a wealth of information in one, easy-to-navigate internet location. Features include information on voting and registration and the opportunity to print out a voter registration form; an easy way to identify and contact elected officials by simply typing in an address; all the listings from our *They Represent You* publication, information about the League of Women Voters and much, much more.

A special event is in the works to publicize the new site—with the help of a high school civics class from a public school. Students

will go online to tour the site, which was underwritten by Verizon.

We are grateful to Beatrix Dinitz, who, with the able assistance of Gemma Fastiggi, worked tirelessly with the designer to make it all happen.

2. Our computerization upgrade of the office is complete. With the help of a donation of four "previously owned" computers, and a Technology grant from Verizon, we now have a modern system of computers networked together, all connected to the internet, and available for members who want to do League work here at the office. We are still looking for a donation to buy a good printer.

Running: the Campaign for City Council Outreach

A series of community forums will be hosted by Channel 13 in connection with its special program. Each forum will feature a screening of *Running*; a panel including a candidate from the borough who used the city's matching funds program (whether successful or not), a representative from a nonpartisan "good government" group, and a member of the Campaign Finance Board. An editor or reporter from a local community newspaper will moderate.

LWVNYC's Adrienne Kivelson has been selected as a panelist for the Queens Public Library community forum and Barbara Friesner for the Jefferson Market Library community forum.

Sat., April 27, 2:30 p.m.

Thurs., May 2, 6:00 p.m.
Plaza)

Mon., May 6, 6:30 p.m.

Sat., May 11, 2:00 p.m.

Wed., May 15, 6:00 p.m.

NYPL—Baychester (Co-op City) Branch, Bronx

Brooklyn Public Library—Central Branch (Grand Army

Queens Public Library—Main Branch, Jamaica

St. George Public Library—Staten Island

Jefferson Market Library—Manhattan

LWVNYC Branch Meetings

For more information call the League office (212) 725-3541

Bronx Branch

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 28; 1:30-3:00 pm
Topic: From Arrest to Sentencing

Midwood Branch

Date/Time: Friday, May 17; 1:00 pm

Date/Time: Friday, June 14; 1:00 pm

North Shore Branch

Date/Time: Wednesday, May 15; 12:30 pm

Place: Home of Marjorie Ferrigno

Topic: New World Trade Position

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 12; 12:30 pm

Luncheon: Place to be determined

Members of other branches: Please contact your branch chair for information about upcoming meetings.

Forbes Magazine Gallery

60 Fifth Avenue (W. 12th—W. 13th St.)

Thursday, July 18, 2002

Guided Tour to see their fabulous collections|

Group meets at the Gallery at 10 a.m.

Cost: \$10 per person, tax-deductible; non-refundable. Payment due by June 19, 2002.

Questions? Call (212) 725-3541. Ask for Dorothy or Gemma.

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Make check payable to League of Women Voters Education Fund. Mark check memo: 7/18 Tour

Mail to: League of Women Voters, 45 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016

Name: _____ Number of Attendees: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Remittance enclosed: _____

SAVE THE DATES

June 8 — LWVNYC Annual Meeting – (see pages 3-8)

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE, NON-REFUNDABLE EVENTS

- May 9 Guided Tour by Native American of National Museum of the
American Indian. Enjoy fantastic exhibit of Iroquois beadwork.
Meet at 1:30 p.m. (\$10)
- July 18 Guided Tour: Forbes Magazine Gallery's fabulous collection (\$10)
See page 9
- Aug. 14. *Oklahoma:* \$85 front mezzanine, \$70 rear mezzanine
2 p.m. Deadline to reserve: May 1