

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

<http://www.lwvnyc.org> ♦ lwvnyc@hotmail.com

Winter 2008

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT - - -

The New York City League of Women Voters must relocate its office!! Members, Friends, Supporters and fellow Non-Profits are being asked to help us find new quarters. The commercial real estate market in our city is tight and expensive despite changing economic conditions. We seek about 400 "usable" square feet of space in a safe and accessible building. Having been situated in Manhattan since women won the right to vote and the suffragettes created the LWV, we would like to continue that tradition.

We have been looking at spaces and can use your help. Suggestions are most welcome by Email, by phone or in person. Meanwhile we have planned program for February, March and April so please try to attend.

And are you asking WHY we must leave 45 East 33rd Street? Here's the answer. Workmen's Circle, the owner of the building, has sold it. The purchaser expects to raze the building and connect it to a property on 34th Street and together they will become a hotel. Some of you may have seen Channel 13's production called "The Jewish Americans". If you did, I suspect you smiled at the references to Workmen's Circle and the role it played providing basic sickness and death benefits to immigrant workers and their families. Also mentioned were the many newspapers that sprung up on the Lower East Side, one of which was the Forward which is a third floor neighbor here.

To: League Members and Friends
From: Adrienne Kivelson

Jan. 25, 2008

GOOD NEWS - GOOD NEWS

We have finally had a **VICTORY** in our long battle to bring optical scanners and accessible ballot markers to New York. The following messages from Aimee Allaud, the State League's Election Specialist and Bo Lipari, the League's representative on the Citizens Election Modernization Advisory Committee and Chair of New Yorkers for Verified Voting provide blow-by-blow descriptions of how we got this momentous decision.

Friends and colleagues in this five year struggle to obtain secure, accurate, recountable and accessible ("SARA") voting for all New Yorkers,

We all share in this momentous victory for a paper-based system which can assure voters that their original intention, expressed on their ballot, will be recorded and preserved for recounts and mandatory audits!

This week at the NYS Election Commissioners Association mtg. in Saratoga Springs, the three appointed commissioners of the NYS Board of Elections exercised their legal authority and responsibility by approving three paper ballot scanner systems and rejecting DREs for use in 2008. They had to agree that each system submitted for the 2008 accessible poll site requirement of the Federal Court met the legal requirements of the federal HAVA and NYS requirements for a full face ballot presentation and independent verification of the ballot by persons with disabilities. On these criteria, only three systems were able to muster the majority votes necessary for approval. Two other systems, DREs, were rejected because they failed on the same criteria. Multiple votes were taken over the course of the two days in a number of sessions until agreement could be reached. Finally, on the fourth try, in a Thursday morning session, three paper ballot scanner systems were approved. Commissioner Douglas Kellner (D) was key in the success. We applaud his determination to evaluate the machines solely on their ability to meet the legal requirements.

The machines will begin a certification process by an independent testing authority, SysTest, next week and county election commissioners will choose one for deployment this fall. More than likely, that choice will be the same system they will choose for the rollout of lever replacement in 2009. You all have been wonderful, strong advocates sharing the message in your local communities with voters, elected and appointed officials. We will need to continue to monitor the certification process for the voting machines to be sure that our stringent NYS statute and regulations are upheld -- so enjoy our victory but work lies ahead as the League develops our role of educating voters on a new way to vote.

Our 2008 legislative priority in elections is reform of the application for the absentee ballot (see information on the LWVNYS website) -- we will need your help!

I am forwarding Bo Lipari's detailed and insightful Blog on the scene at the Wed. and Thursday meetings for your reading pleasure. *Aimee*

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." Mohandas Gandhi

I'm pleased to announce that after five years of hard work on the part of voting integrity advocates, New York State has rejected DREs and approved only the Automark and the Sequoia ImageCast scanner/marker for use in 2008 polling places. This momentous decision by the State Board of Elections guarantees that New York State will vote on paper ballots and ballot scanners when it finally replaces lever machines in 2009. Those of you who were with us at the beginning five years ago know what an enormous victory this is. When I first started traveling, presenting and advocating in New York, election officials, political parties, and the media assumed that New York State was going to be a DRE state. Precinct scanners were not under discussion, and only DREs were offered by vendors. Our experience over these five years reflects the truth of Gandhi's statement - indeed we were ignored, then laughed at, then fought bitterly by the voting machine vendors and their supporters in the election establishment. But finally, truth has prevailed, and what seemed like an impossible dream in 2003 has been made real by our hard work - New York State will be a paper ballot state. *Bo Lipari*

CALENDAR of EVENTS

February

- **Wednesday the 13th, 5:00 p.m.**
General Meeting: Blair Horner will speak on "Shining New Light on Government." Mr. Horner, recently appointed Special Advisor on Policy and Public Integrity by NY State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, has created **Project Sunlight**, an on-line tool that combines multiple databases into a single, easy to use Internet resource. He will demonstrate how New Yorkers will now be able to examine data such as elected officials' voting records, contributions to campaigns, and entities that may have benefited. Do come to congratulate him and learn more about his new responsibilities.
- **Thursday the 14th, 10:30 a.m.**
City Affairs Committee: Shula Warren, Chief of Staff for Council Member Gale Brewer, will speak on the City Council and the Budget Process.
- **Thursday the 28th, 11:00 a.m.**
Legislative Action Committee

March

- **Thursday the 13th 10:30 a.m.**
City Affairs Committee: The topic is Congestion Pricing in the context of the transportation and environmental needs of the city. Speakers will be **Jeffrey M. Zupan, Senior Fellow, Transportation, Regional Plan** and another to be determined.
- **Wednesday the 19th, 6:00 p.m.**
WOMEN'S HISTORY CELEBRATION: at the National Council of Jewish Women, New York Section, 820 2nd Ave. (2nd Floor) between 43rd and 44th Street. Our guest speaker will be **Barbara Winslow, Ph.D.**, Brooklyn College Faculty, speaking on "**Daughters and Granddaughters of Women's Suffrage.**"
(See page 4)

April

- **Thursday, April 10th, noon to 2:00**
AWARD LUNCHEON at the Roosevelt Hotel
(see page 4)

BRANCH MEETINGS

(Members are welcome to attend any branch meeting; please call the League office (212)725-3541 to confirm time and location)

Midwood (Brooklyn)

Contact: Judith Rosenblatt
Date/Time: No Winter Meetings Scheduled

North Shore (Queens)

Contact: Marjorie Ferrigno
Date/Time: Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.
February 20th, March 19th

Bronx

Contact: Fannie Conner:
Date/Time: Tuesdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m.
March 11th, April 8th
Place: 4101 White Plains Rd. (East 229th St)

Riverdale

Contact: LWVNYC office (212) 725-3541
February 11th, March 10th, April 14
8:00 pm

Southeast Queens

Contact: Mary Cox
Date/Time: Saturday March 15th

Upper West Manhattan

Contact: Sylvia Berman
Date/Time: Spring meetings to be determined

2007 ANNUAL MEETING

Save the Date

Saturday, June 7th, 2008

9:30 a. m. - 2:30 p. m.

Location To be Determined

Only current, paid-up members may participate and vote in the Annual Meeting.

In order to assist you in determining your membership status, the address label on this mailing includes the date on which your current membership expires. If no date is given, your membership has expired and this is your last *INSIDE*.

Women's History Event

Daughters and Granddaughters of Women's Suffrage

Barbara Winslow, Ph.D., who teaches history at Brooklyn College, will talk about women's participation in the political process following earning the right to vote. Some organizations came under attack, not all women were able to exercise the right to vote (women of color in some southern states, for example). Over time young women felt a disconnect between their generation and those who fought so hard and long to achieve suffrage for women, especially in the "revolution" of the 60's. Do join us--at the National Council of Jewish Women, New York Section, 820 2nd Ave. (2nd Fl.) between 43rd and 44th Sts.--for what promises to be a true learning experience.



THURSDAY, APRIL 10TH, 2008

AWARD LUNCHEON

Honors Women of Distinction

Honorees

Eve Burton, Vice President & General Counsel, Hearst Corporation

Gail Mellow, President, LaGuardia Community College

Charlotte St. Martin, Executive Director, The Broadway League

Iris Weinshall, Vice Chancellor, City University of New York

Chairman

Richard Basini, Publisher, *Toast of New York*

TERRACE ROOM, THE ROOSEVELT
12 NOON - 2 PM

THE ROOSEVELT HOTEL
MADISON AVENUE & 45TH STREET

✂ ----- Print and send to: LWVNYC 45 E 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016 -----

Tickets: \$150.00/member \$300.00/non-member

Please make check payable to: LWVNYC Education Fund

Any amount over \$90.00 per ticket is tax-deductible

NAMES(s): _____

ADDRESS: _____ STATE _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE:: _____ EMAIL: _____ # ATTENDING: _____

For more information call the League office: 212-725-3541

The History of the League of Women Voters and Presidential Debates

Control of the presidential debates has been an issue for many years.

In 1976, 1980, and 1984 the League of Women Voters, accepted by all presidential candidates as nonpartisan, sponsored the debates.

In 1987, the League withdrew from debate sponsorship in protest of the major parties attempting to govern how the debates were conducted.

On [October 2, 1988](#), the League's 14 trustees voted unanimously to pull out of the debates, and on [October 3](#) they issued a dramatic press release:

The League of Women Voters is withdrawing sponsorship of the presidential debates ... because the demands of the two campaign organizations would perpetrate a fraud on the American voter. It has become clear to us that the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity and answers to tough questions. The League has no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public.

Most objectionable to the League...(are) conditions in the agreement that (give) the campaigns unprecedented control over the proceedings. (League President Nancy) Neuman calls "outrageous" the campaigns' demands that they control the selection of questioners, the composition of the audience, hall access for the press and other issues.



*In the 1928 Presidential campaign the League of Women voters took to the radio. In the ten months preceding the November election the League put on a half hour program each week over the National Broadcasting Company. One of the programs, picture above, was called **The Undergraduate Looks at the Campaign**. Participants were students from Yale, Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, and Harvard.*

INTRODUCING: THE LEAGUE INSTITUTE

Readers of this newsletter know that last year, with funding from the New York Community Trust, we were able to teach our course HOW TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE IN NEW YORK CITY at City University campuses in all five boroughs. Over 125 students attended the course and we welcome many of the students as new members.

In 2008 we are developing our HOW TO RUN FOR OFFICE course into a wider range of seminars that we are calling THE LEAGUE INSTITUTE FOR INFORMED CITIZENSHIP. The League Institute is to be based at LaGuardia Community College, though courses will also be held on other CUNY campuses.

In addition to our course on running for public office, we will be offering forums on HOW TO WATCH A DEBATE - to be held in conjunction with the presidential and vice presidential debates this coming September and October. An online course HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE is also planned.

Please call or email the League office (Tel: 212-725-3541; email: office@lwvny.org) if you would like to be added to the mailing list to get updates on League Institute programs.