

Exchanging Ideas. Exploring Issues.

A Community Service
of St. Mary's Church,
at St. Mary's Place



Wednesday,
September 24, 2003
5:30 – 7:00 PM

There is no charge for this program.

The Dugan Center

15 St. Mary's Place
Rochester, NY 14607-1798
(585) 232-7168
www.dcfrochester.org

Parking: There is free parking in front of St. Mary's Church.



Since 1985, the Downtown Community Forum (DCF) has offered an open exchange of ideas along with opportunities to explore important issues in gathering that are ecumenical, nonpartisan, democratic and value-centered. DCF encourages a better-informed citizenry by showcasing the diversity of the Rochester community. Support for these programs comes from the people of St. Mary's Church as well as individuals, corporations and the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

Campaign Reform in Monroe County — The Time is Now

Panelists:

Rome Celli: Coordinator, The Demonstrate Democracy Project, Alliance for Democracy-Rochester

Jennifer Leonard: President and Executive Director, Rochester Area Community Foundation

Sally Brown: Vice President of Voter Service, League of Women Voters

“With local government nearly broke and campaign spending at all time highs, priorities seem to be upside down,” says Rome Celli. “Local campaign reform is urgently needed to get back on track and focus on the real task at hand — healing our community.”

The Demonstrate Democracy Project is a newly launched initiative of the Alliance for Democracy-Rochester (AFD-R). The project is based on three main principles: campaign spending is out of control; big, organized money and democracy are ill-suited to each other; and, to fulfill our Founders' dream of a democratically elected government, all elements of society must work together.

Rome believes the Demonstrate Democracy Project strategies for campaign finance reform must be put in place and local candidates, political parties, governments and media need to voluntarily adhere to those guidelines. Citizens have a role too, by rewarding candidates who participate with their votes.

Join us as Rome Celli presents the rationale for local campaign reform along with AFD-R's campaign reform agenda for 2003 and the elements of the Demonstrate Democracy Project initiative and why each of those elements are important to our community.

Jennifer Leonard will add to the discussion by making a case for civic engagement and sharing local strategies that show promise. “Far too many young people aren't voting, and worse, many don't know they should,” says Jennifer. “Since 1970, Americans have abandoned the voting booth in record numbers, especially young people. We need

to work toward engaging citizens with each other and with government.”

In addition, Sally Brown will present a history of the League of Women Voters campaign reform, including Project Positive Campaign — an initiative in which candidates promise to conduct an honest, open and fair campaign. She will also discuss the importance of proper redistricting and HAVA (Help America Vote Act).

About Rome Celli

Rome Celli has been a real estate broker since 1979, first with his own company, Empire Realty, and currently as an affiliate with RE/MAX First. He serves as Coordinator of Alliance for Democracy-Rochester and is actively involved with the Center for Youth Services, the Green Party of Monroe County and the Lead Coalition representing Greater Rochester Association for Realtors.

About Jennifer Leonard

Since 1993, when Jennifer assumed her position as President and Executive Director at Rochester Area Community Foundation, the organization has more than quadrupled in size and last year distributed \$16 million in grants for community purposes. Jennifer is involved in leadership roles with numerous community organizations.

About Sally Brown

As Vice President of Voter Service for the League of Women Voters, Sally Brown designed the Fair Election Campaign Practices Committee and organized the Fair Campaign Pledge. She is also the Action Vice President to the local Coalition to End Lead Poisoning.