**Democracy in Action – Election Day Reporters’ Tip Sheet**

* Do NOT wear any political badges, pins, T-shirts, stickers. Be NEUTRAL and professional.
* Do NOT wear BLUE / RED / GREEN.
* Stay outside the polling place’s boundary – that’s 100 feet – unless the polling place manager allows you to come inside.
* Approach voters POLITELY and with charm – no one has to talk to us.
* Identify yourself something like this: Big smile: “I’m a student journalist at Syracuse University and I’m covering the election today for a special project. We’re hoping to capture Democracy in Action – talking to voters about why they vote, what the election and democracy means to them. Would you mind talking to me a little about why you’re at the polls today?” Big Smile.
* Tell them the name of the project is Democracy in Action, with the website <http://dia-cny.syr.edu/>
* Give them a card with the URL on it, if you have some.
* We also have Twitter at *#nhdia*.
* In your interviews, you should:
* Be sure to get the polling place where you interview each voter. You’ll include that with anything you file.
* Get the usual identification info on each person you interview: Name / Age/ Occupation/ Place where Work/ a phone number and/or e-mail address. Be specific on occupation – *cashier* at Dunkin’ Donuts, not just employee at Dunkin’ Donuts.
* If someone won’t give the contact info, be sure to get the other info so that we can track them down for verification later if we have to.
* Try to get the person to tell his/her *STORY* about voting – Always voted? Voted for the first time when? How did it feel to cast that first ballot? Why is voting important to you? What did you do today to get ready to come vote? (try to get them to tell you the story of coming to the polls).
* Save for last the question about candidates. Remember that the ballot is PRIVATE so people do NOT have to tell us whom they voted for. Some may not tell us. When you ask, be extremely polite, charming and respectful. Say something like: (Big smile): “Would you mind telling me whom you plan to vote for? What attracted you to that candidate?”
* Remember that we have MANY candidates and offices – try to get a sampling of them.
* Look for voters who’ve brought their children. They’re usually delighted to talk and to have their children get attention. We even have a special “Kids at the Polls” section on our Web site – you can use that to persuade parents to talk. Talk to the kids too!
* Be sure to say THANK YOU.
* File your pieces/photos/video/audio quickly.