



# HEADLINES

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WHITE PLAINS

February 2017

President, Stephen Cohen

[www.lwvwp.org](http://www.lwvwp.org)



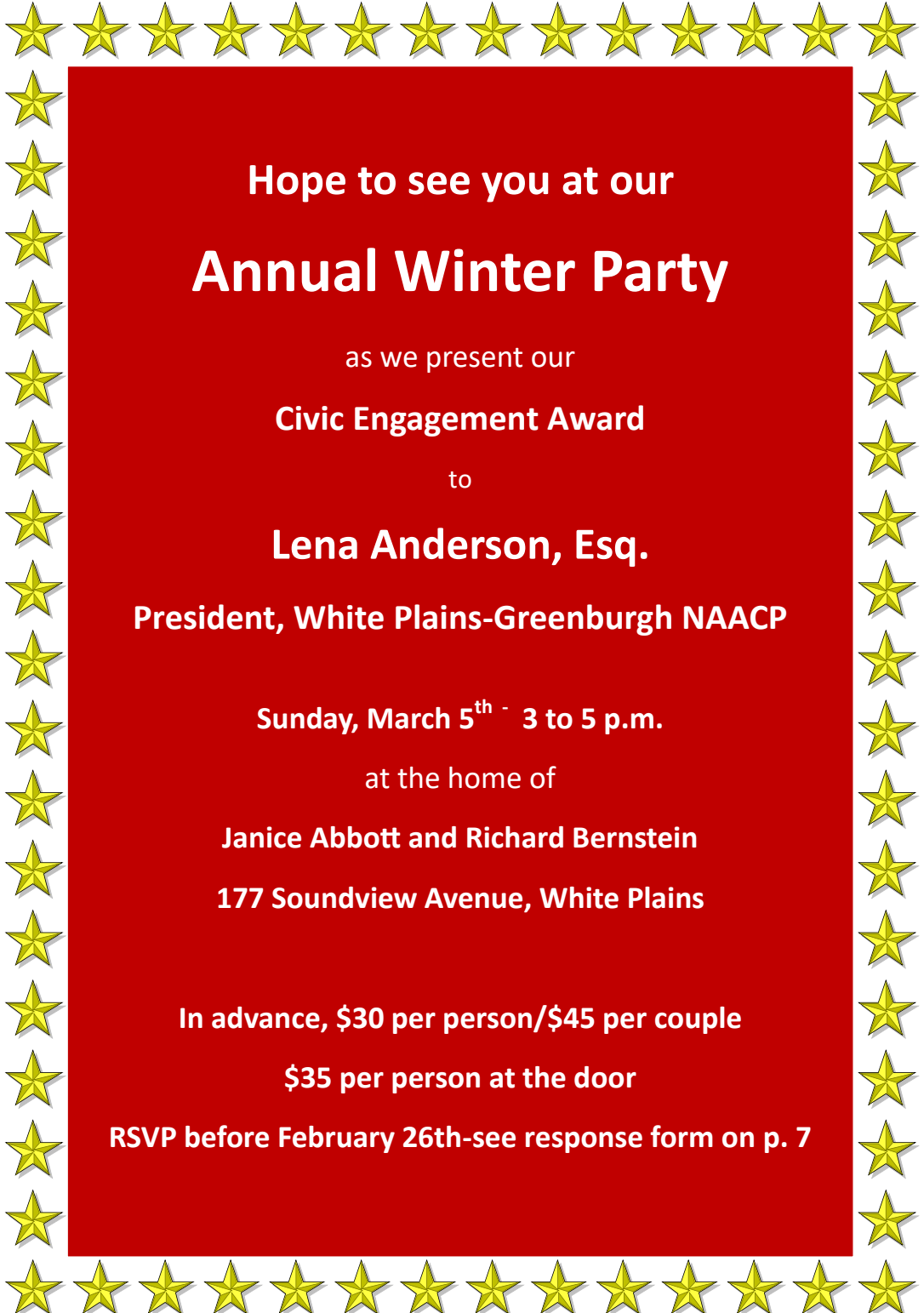
Editor & Designer,

Libby Hollahan

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Hope to see you at our  
**Annual Winter Party**

as we present our

**Civic Engagement Award**

to

**Lena Anderson, Esq.**

**President, White Plains-Greenburgh NAACP**

**Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> - 3 to 5 p.m.**

at the home of

**Janice Abbott and Richard Bernstein**

**177 Soundview Avenue, White Plains**

**In advance, \$30 per person/\$45 per couple**

**\$35 per person at the door**

**RSVP before February 26th-see response form on p. 7**

**President Stephen Cohen**  
263-6453  
stephen435@optonline.net

**Vice President Janice Abbott**  
683-1019  
ja42056@optonline.net

**Treasurer Irene Kohn**  
837-5679  
irene.kohn@gmail.com

**Membership Doris Dingott**  
289-0869  
dldingott@gmail.com

**Secretary Barbara Cooper**  
948-0628  
cooper.wp@verizon.net

**Forums Beth Kava**  
428-9632  
bethkava@gmail.com

**Health Care Harriet Slivka**  
946-4998  
hslivka@gmail.com

**Publicity Madeline Zevon**  
761-4382  
madeline.zevon@gmail.com

**Voter Service** vacant

**Youth Programs Ruth Goldberg**  
949-6542  
henruhen@gmail.com

**Youth Programs Ellen Blauner\***  
948-4793  
eblauner@verizon.net

**Bulletin Libby Hollahan\***  
761-6259  
lhollahan@aol.com

**Naturalization Court Dorothy Schere\***  
682-8188  
scheredoro@aol.com

**At Large Directors**  
**Denise D'Ambrosio** 683-6447  
denisedambrosiolaw@gmail.com

**Carol Heller** 428-0255  
cjheller39@aol.com

**Mark Laloo** 946-8816  
mjlelectrovelo@yahoo.com

**Barbara Noach** 993-0974  
bnoachmail@gmail.com

**Valerie Weinstein** 946-4078  
vmw56@aol.com

\*Off board

# President's Message

February 2017

## Make Voting a Habit

A recent opinion piece in the *Economist* ("[Vote Early, Vote Often](#)", 4 February 2017\*) cites statistics that show turnout among younger voters is declining. In America, voting in presidential elections among voters under 25 was 50% in 1972 and 38% in 2012; the turnout is even lower in congressional races (17% in 2014). The article suggests that one way to reverse this trend is to lower the voting age to 16 and thereby make it a lifelong habit. Too low you say?

Perhaps not. There is evidence that where 16 and 17 year olds can vote, they do so in greater numbers than 18 – 24 year olds. Personally, my son always accompanied me in the voting booth and today he is an involved citizen who takes voting very seriously.

So while a lower voting age may not come to pass anytime soon here in America, we in the League believe in doing everything we can to encourage young people to pay attention to the issues on all levels and to understand that voting is the way to influence those that matter to them. One way we do this is through our Vote 18 program. LWVWP volunteers visit area high schools and engage seniors in discussion about why voting is important and registering them to vote. This year Beth Kava ([bethkava@gmail.com](mailto:bethkava@gmail.com)) is coordinating the Vote 18 program so please contact her if you wish to get involved.

Earlier this month, LWVWP sponsored an informative program about the November 2017 ballot question to decide if there will be a convention to revise and amend the New York State constitution. It's a complicated issue and one that affects us all. If you missed the meeting, a video of the proceeding will be available shortly on the [White Plains Community Media](#) website. And for more information visit the [LWVNY website](#).

I look forward to speaking with many of you at our annual Winter party on Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup>.

In League,

Stephen Cohen, President

\*If link doesn't work, Google: *Economist lowering voting age*.



# Lena Anderson, Esq., President of White Plains/Greenburgh NAACP, to be honored at League's Winter Party

The League of Women Voters of White Plains will present our Civic Engagement Award to Lena Anderson, Esq. President of the White Plains/ Greenburgh NAACP. The award will be presented at the League's Annual Winter Party on Sunday, March 5th from 3 to 5 PM at the home of Janice Abbott and Richard Bernstein, 177 Soundview Avenue in White Plains.

Lena's work with the NAACP has been her calling as she follows the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. focusing on voter registration and voter education. In this work, she has partnered with the League of Women Voters of White Plains.

Under her leadership, the Branch has forged a national agenda under the seven "Game Changers: Education, Health, Civic Engagement, Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Youth Empowerment and Environmental Justice". In addition, Fair Housing Information workshops, Health and Welfare initiatives, and Police Accountability initiatives are done in collaboration with other community organizations.



Lena has made issues of inequality and mistreatment a major focus of the branch as mandated by National leadership. The branch is proud of more than 80 years service since its founding in 1935. Born in White Plains, Lena's goal is activism and civic engagement to keep White Plains on the radar of the "Most desirable City in NY State" in which to live.

All are welcome to the League's Annual Winter Party, a fundraiser that supports the League's programs. A dinner buffet will be served. Tickets are \$30 per person/\$45 per couple in

advance and \$35 per person at the door.

Want to RSVP? Clip the form on page 7, and mail with your check to the indicated address.

For more information contact Libby Hollahan at 914-761-6259.

## Call for Volunteers, Vote 18:

Voter education and registration remain key missions of our League. We are in the process of scheduling our 2017 Vote 18 program. We will be visiting local high schools to discuss voting with high school seniors and then registering them to vote. League members will visit classes in pairs and will have an orientation before the visits. It's fun and very gratifying and we urge you to volunteer. You can come for one forty minute class or stay for more. As of now we will be at White Plains HS the mornings of March 24 and 28 and Stepinac HS on April 25 for four classes in the morning. We're waiting to hear from other schools.

Please email Beth Kava at [bethkava@gmail.com](mailto:bethkava@gmail.com) if you're interested in being part of this initiative.

*Beth Kava*

## Former LWVWP President Madeline Zevon honored at the White Plains/ Greenburgh NAACP Image Awards in November



The White Plains/Greenburgh branch of the NAACP celebrated its 80th anniversary with its annual Image Awards event on Nov. 5, 2016, at the Mt. Hope AME Zion Church in White Plains. Our past president, Madeline Zevon, received the Game Changer Award for Civic Engagement, recognizing her collaboration with the NAACP and other community groups to expand the League's work in voter services, health care, local community issues and many other League efforts.



*Madeline and co-honorees celebrating at the Image Awards gala*

**We salute our donors!** *As of January 31, 2017, the following have made contributions to the LWVWP or to the LWVWP Educational Foundation during this fiscal year (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Your contributions support program and meeting expenses, Students inside Albany, our annual High School award, Headlines, and more. Thank you!*

Abbott, Janice & Richard Bernstein	Heller, Carol	Mendelsohn, Leah
Alpert, Frank & Jeanne	Hollahan, Libby & Tom	Miles, C
Auerbach, Susan	Kava, Beth	Noach, Barbara
Blauner, Ellen	Kenney, Brian	Oliva, Pauline
Blumenfeld, Nina	Kirkpatrick, Susan & John	Pollak Fund
Braut, Joan	Klein, Evelyne & David	Postlewaite, Margaret
Brumberg, Heather	Klein, Roseanne & Paul	Scheurich, Elizabeth
Buchwald, David	Kohn, Irene & Hal Silverman	Sinsheimer, Warren & Florence
Carran, Ron & Julie	Kraver, Lauren	Smayda, Beth
Cesca, Valerie	Kurnit, Jeffrey & Abby	Sorenson, E. Helen
Cohen, Stephen & Barbara Lange	Kurth, Eliz & Birks, Evan	Terhune, Guy
Cooper, Barbara	Laloo, Mark	Tighe, Betty Jean
Davies, Marjorie	Lipit, Muriel	Watts, Jennifer & Ralph
Dean, S	Maccera, Jose	Weber, Bernard
Dingott, Doris	Malmud, Rita & Tom	Zevon, Madeline & Sandy
Dougherty, Ann Marie	Mardirossian, J	

## On the ballot in November 2017:

### Shall there be a convention to revise the New York State constitution?



The League of Women Voters of White Plains recently held an information program on whether to convene a New York State Constitutional Convention.

The New York State Constitution mandates that every 20 years voters be presented with the ballot question:

“Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?” This question will appear on the ballot in Nov. 2017.

At the program, Sally Robinson, LWVNY Vice President of Issues and Advocacy, discussed *The Who*,

*What, Where, When, Why and How of New York State’s Constitutional Convention Question*, and answered audience questions. It is a complex issue, and voters can learn more at [LWVNY.org](http://LWVNY.org), and view this program, taped by White Plains Community Media, at their [website](#).

The LWVNY has not taken a position on whether to support, oppose or remain neutral on the question of holding a constitutional convention, so the goal of the program was to educate members of the public about important aspects of the question and to assist the League in its decision on what, if any, position the League will take.

This program was jointly sponsored by the local Leagues of Harrison, Larchmont/Mamaroneck, New Castle, New Rochelle, Northeast, Scarsdale and the Westchester County League.

## *In Memoriam, Marjorie Davies*

Our long-time leader Marge Davies passed away on Weds., Jan. 11, at age 92. Marge was a dedicated board member, serving multiple terms as President and in other officer positions for LWVWP.

Many of you will remember her from the many League candidate forums, programs, and parties over the years. She set a wonderful example of civic involvement and was a beloved mentor and friend of League members.

At our February Board Meeting, the Board of LWVWP voted to rename the \$500 award, given annually to a senior at White Plains High School, as “The League of Women Voters of White Plains Marjorie Davies Memorial Award.”



A memorial service was held on February 4 at the Church of St James the Less, Scarsdale, NY. Donations may be made to the League of Women Voters of Westchester Education Foundation in her memory.

## Fall Program Summary:

# WHITE PLAINS DOWNTOWN: CURRENT CONDITIONS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

On September 15, LWVWP and co-sponsor White Plains Rotary Club hosted a moderated panel discussion about the present state and future of the White Plains Downtown. League members Michael Kraver and Denise D'Ambrosio served as moderators.

The evening began with an introduction, citing some statistics and showing some pictures of downtown White Plains, to set a factual context for the panelists' presentations. The overview showed that White Plains's population has been consistently growing at a faster rate than its neighboring communities for at least 10 years (culminating in recently being identified as the fastest-growing city in New York State by Business Insider). Yet, when we look at sales tax revenues, we see that White Plains has been essentially flat over the last 4 years, while Westchester County overall, and other nearby municipalities, have shown increases over the same time period.

The panelists then spoke. Land use attorney **Geraldine Tortorella** spoke first, with a legal overview of how municipalities control the way land is used. She spoke about comprehensive plans and zoning codes. She also spoke about the process by which zoning can be changed, encouraging those in attendance to participate in the public discussion when zoning changes are being considered, as the best way for them to influence the character of their community.

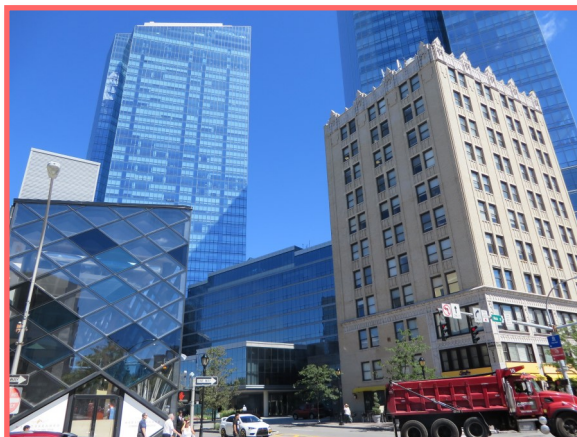
**David Schiff**, an urban planner, was the next speaker. He discussed historical changes in downtown White Plains dating back decades, and spoke of some challenges downtown areas across the country are wrestling with in the modern era.

**Kevin Nunn**, Executive Director of the White Plains Business Improvement District (BID), was the final speaker. He gave an overview of the BID's activities, and presented some current data. Our office vacancy rate is significantly higher than it had been before the recession, but reasons for optimism include a number of tenants who will be moving in soon, and investments being made in the downtown.

During the Q&A session, a few general themes emerged. Speakers expressed frustration about (i) the lack of a recent update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, (ii) a parking policy that, in the opinion of a few who asked questions, seems to discourage people from going downtown, and (iii) a perceived lack of cleanliness, up to the City's historical standards.

There were also questions about how to ensure that reasonably priced housing is available downtown, and about how to make the downtown area more enticing for people to spend significant time. From my perspective, the central theme that kept arising during the discussion was the importance of citizen participation in discussions about policy that impacts our downtown, from possible zoning changes to parking rates. The program can be viewed at the [White Plains Community Media](#) website.

—Michael Kraver



**Winter Party RSVP Form (\$30 per person/\$45 per couple in advance; \$35 per person at the door)**

Please RSVP by Feb. 26

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we will join you on March 5<sup>th</sup>

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be unable to attend.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: The LWV of White Plains

Mail your check and this form to: LWVWP, P.O Box 2032, White Plains, NY 10602

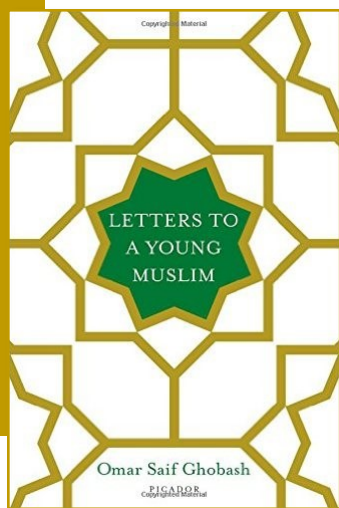
Next

LWVWP

Book Group

Selection—

*Date TBD:*



Good news for League of Women Voters! This past election year and its outcome has encouraged Americans to become engaged citizens, and many have turned to the League to get involved. The Washington Post reports that the League has seen a sudden surge in membership. [Read more here!](#)

**Mark your calendars:**

March 5 Winter Party

April 12 City Budget Review  
*(during LWVWP board mtg-all members welcome)*

April 19 Spring Program

May 9 California Pizza Kitchen  
Fundraiser  
*(watch for flyer later this spring)*

May 10 School Board  
Candidate Forum

May 16 School Board Candi-  
date & Budget Vote

May 18 Annual Meeting

June 14 Annual Picnic



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
**P.O. BOX 2032**  
**WHITE PLAINS, NY 10602-2032**  
**Address Service Requested**

Non-Profit Org.  
 PRST STD  
 WHITE PLAINS, NY  
 Permit #235



# MEMBERSHIP

**JOIN THE LEAGUE & MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**Yes! I/We would like to join the League of Women Voters of White Plains**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

*We do not share personal contact information. Since we lobby on issues, dues are not tax deductible.*

- Individual \$55       Household \$80 (payable to LWV White Plains)
- I do not wish to join the League, but please accept my contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Please send checks to: LWWWP, PO Box 2032, White Plains, NY 10602**

*\$32 of dues goes directly to LWVUS, \$18 goes to LWVNYS, \$2 goes to Westchester County LWV.*

*Only the remaining \$3 goes to fund local White Plains efforts.*

- I prefer to receive the Headlines newsletter electronically.

- My interests are:
- Voter service
  - Education
  - Environment
  - Help with Headlines
  - Health care
  - Election Reform
  - Youth
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

*For questions or to suggest someone who might be interested in League membership, please contact Membership Chair Doris Dingott, phone:914-289-0869, email: dldingott@gmail.com*

**Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters of White Plains is a non-partisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.**