



# HEADLINES

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WHITE PLAINS

January 2018

President, Stephen Cohen

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



Editor & Designer,

Libby Hollahan

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### Page

- 2. Board list; Call for Volunteers for Vote 18; State League Response on Ethics and Voting Reform Proposals
- 3. President's Message
- 4. "Give us the Vote" Exhibit Recap
- 5. Our Honoree, Beth Smayda
- 6. Feature Article: New York Health Act Faces Challenges in Albany
- 7. Health Care Committee Meeting Schedule; Upcoming League Events Calendar



**Save the date for our**

# Annual Winter Party

**Sunday, March 11**

**3-5 p.m.**

at the home of

**Janice Abbott & Richard Bernstein**

**177 Soundview Ave.**

**Presenting the Civic Engagement Award to**

**Former White Plains Common Council Member**

# Beth Smayda

*Invitations to Follow*

*Please see Page 5 for the Bio of our*

*Outstanding Honoree!*

**President Stephen Cohen**  
stephen435@optonline.net

**Vice President Janice Abbott**  
ja42056@optonline.net

**Treasurer Irene Kohn**  
irene.kohn@gmail.com

**Recording Secretary**  
Rotating responsibilities

**Membership Doris Dingott**  
dldingott@gmail.com

**Voter Service Janice Abbott**  
ja42056@optonline.net

**Forums Beth Kava**  
bethkava@gmail.com

**Publicity Madeline Zevon**  
madeline.zevon@gmail.com

**Social Media Laura Kerenyi**  
Laura.Kerenyi@yahoo.com

**Youth Programs Ruth Goldberg**  
henruhen@gmail.com

**Corresponding Secretary Carol Heller**  
cjheller39@aol.com

**At Large Directors**  
**Susan Altman**  
susanaltman@verizon.net

**Barbara Cooper**  
cooper.wp@verizon.net

**Mark Laloo**  
mjlectrovelo@yahoo.com

**Harriet Slivka**  
hslivka@gmail.com

**Off-Board Volunteers**  
**Headlines Editor Libby Hollahan**  
lhollahan@aol.com

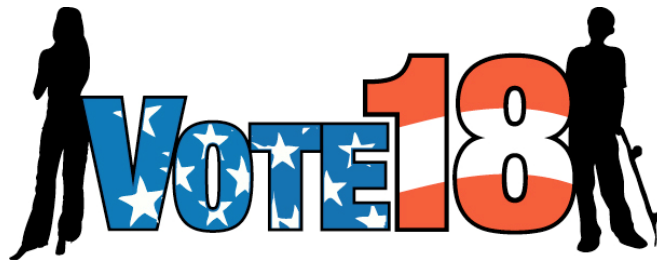
**Membership Development**  
**Barbara Noach**  
bnoachmail@gmail.com

**Naturalization Court Dorothy Schere**  
scheredoro@aol.com

## Vote 18

Have you heard about **Vote 18**? That's our program where League members visit senior social studies classes at area high schools to talk about the importance of voting and to register eligible seniors.

Right now we're getting organized – reaching out to the schools to schedule our visits. We need a few people to be the liaisons with each of the schools and coordinate volunteers. It doesn't take much time and it's all done via email. If you can help us get set up please contact Beth Kava ([bethkava@gmail.com](mailto:bethkava@gmail.com)). When that's done we'll put together schedules and ask for volunteers to visit the schools. But right now let us know if you can help us get **Vote 18** set up.



## State of the State Ethics and Voting Reform Proposals Miss the Mark

*(LWVNY Response)*

For the last two years, Governor Cuomo has included ethics, campaign finance, and voting reform proposals in his State of the State address. Once again the Governor has laid out these reforms, but this year he didn't spend nearly as much time or effort touting the proposals. Instead, his ethics proposal was limited to a single proposal, banning outside income for state legislators.

The Governor has proposed closing the LLC loophole, instituting public financing for state legislators, early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, same day registration, and automatic voter registration. The League is supportive of all these reforms but we fear that the Governor's quick, one-minute coverage of the proposals may be a sign that he is reluctant to use his political muscle to pass these initiatives.

We continue to push for funding in the state budget for early voting and automatic voter registration and we hope that the Governor will finally recognize the importance of this funding. We believe that this year the public is demanding ethics and voting reforms and we hope that, even with the brief mention of these proposals today, Governor Cuomo is truly committed to securing passage of these proposals.

# President's Message

January 2018

Here it is mid-January and we're already hearing rumblings about the 2018 mid-term elections. Before 2017 fades in the rearview mirror it's worth taking note of how things went during the most recent election season. Turnout was off by 50% from 2016 when New York State ranked a poor 41st in the nation. **In 2017 a mere 35% of registered voters went to the polls to vote for Westchester County Executive, White Plains Mayor and three seats on the Common Council.** In other words, 65% of White Plains voters were content to leave the choice of who will determine *their* future quality of life in our town to a relatively small group of other people.

Those of you who attended the League's Candidate Forums for the Democratic Primary and General Election know that there were important local issues being discussed. **And as much as we are all concerned about foreign affairs and national domestic issues, when it comes right down to it the choice of who will lead White Plains in this time of great change is very important and must not be left to others to decide.**

The League's Candidate Forums were opportunities to hear what each candidate felt about many of the important challenges facing White Plains. And it was thanks to the efforts of LWVWP Board Member Beth Kava that these events were models of decorum and respect. Beth worked hard to ensure that the Forums were fair and impartial, and we are grateful that the candidates (for the most part) supported the League's mission to encourage and facilitate civil discourse among the residents of White Plains.

**As the 2017 election season progressed and the worst aspects of the presidential campaign cropped up in local elections, we became increasingly convinced of the importance and necessity of the League's mission to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government.** And we thank those of you who show your support for that mission through your membership and

active participation in the League's work.

**So it's on to 2018. We kick things off with the LWVWP annual winter gathering.** Details about the event are elsewhere in this issue. We are excited about this year's recipient of the Civic Engagement Award to be presented during the gathering. **Next we will visit area high schools to register seniors to vote as part of our Vote 18 program.**

Watch your email for information about locations and times and how to sign up to help out. **In the works is a game night at the White Plains Public Library facilitated by librarian and gamesman extraordinaire, Josh Carlson.**



This year we will devote our efforts to getting the vote out. We aim to do this both by raising awareness of the importance of voting among the citizens of White Plains and by working with the New York State League of Women Voters on efforts to get Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to implement voting reforms such as early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, same day registration, and automatic voter registration. From the looks of things the Governor may only be paying lip service to these important reforms.

**Finally, I want to encourage all of you to become ACTIVE members of the League of Woman Voters of White Plains. The work of your League is done by a very few dedicated members. We can't clone them but we can ask that you consider giving a little bit of your time** to help out with any of the things we do such as participating in organizing a League event or forum, helping to launch our new web site, supporting our social media presence, and so many other important activities. So if you'd like to get involved send me a note at [stephen435@optonline.net](mailto:stephen435@optonline.net) and let's talk. Stay warm and take heart that the days are getting longer!

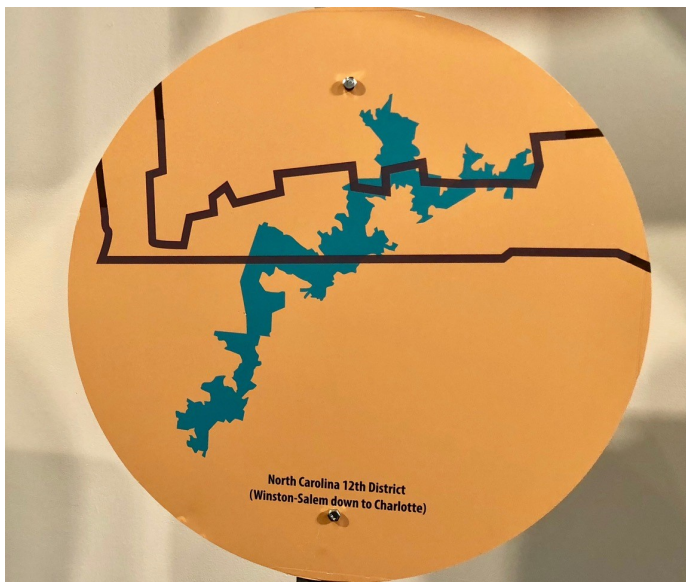
**In League,**

**Stephen Cohen, President**

The LWVWP partnered with Arts Westchester on **Give Us The Vote**, an exhibit celebrating 100 years of Women's Suffrage in New York State, as interpreted by contemporary artists, at the ArtsW Gallery. Arts Westchester held a special evening for the League on November 6, with tours of the exhibit and a talk by historian Louise Bernikow. The exhibit, which opened in October, has been extended through February 10. **DON'T MISS THIS EXCITING AND MEANINGFUL SHOW!**



LWVWP Board Members Ruth Goldberg and Irene Kohn at the Gallery reception.



## Beth N. Smayda



A public finance professional for over twenty-five years, Beth was elected to the White Plains Common Council in 2009 and began serving as a Councilwoman in January 2010. She was Chair of the City's Budget and Management Advisory Committee throughout her eight years on the Council and was chosen by her Council colleagues to be Council President in 2012 and 2013.

Beth has a long history of involvement in the White Plains community, having served as a past President of the White Plains League of Women Voters, Chair of the League's City Budget Committee for twenty years and Chair of the City Government Committee. She also served on the White Plains PTA Council, chairing the School Budget and Legislation Committees, work for which she received the PTA Jenkins Award.

Beth's public finance career began at Moody's Investors Service after working as a researcher on intergovernmental and local government financial issues for the New York State Legislative Commission on State-Local Relations. At Moody's she was an Assistant Vice President in the Northeast Group.

She then went to MBIA where she worked for eighteen years analyzing, marketing, executing, monitoring, and remediating municipal bond transactions. At MBIA she managed the Public Finance Enterprise Insured Portfolio Management Group, headed up the Armonk office of the Public Finance Western New Business Group, and was Managing Director and Head of the Healthcare New Business Group. Beth then went to The BondFactor Company as Managing Director and is now a Director at the ACA Financial Guaranty Corporation.

In 2006 Beth co-founded the Northeast Women in Public Finance (NEWPF), a network of 1,000+ women from all fields in the public finance industry. She served as Co-President through 2012 and was named in December 2013 as a Trailblazing Woman in Public Finance by the *Bond Buyer*. She has been a long-time member of the Municipal Analysts Group of New York.

Beth received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Public Administration from Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

*Please join us for our annual Winter Party, Sunday, March 11, where we will present Beth Smayda with the LWVWP's Civic Engagement Award. Invitations will be mailed in early February.*

# The New York Health Act Faces Challenges in Albany

*By Madeline Zevon, Member of the County League Health care Committee*

In the last legislative session, the New York Health Act, a single-payer bill that would bring universal, comprehensive, cost-effective healthcare to every New Yorker, passed the NY State Assembly 94 to 46 and had 31 co-sponsors in the New York State Senate — just one vote shy of a majority.

## **New York Health has had far too little public conversation.**

Our current multi-payer healthcare system is financially unsustainable, and leaves millions of New Yorkers uninsured and under-insured. NY Health would cover every New Yorker with comprehensive benefits, and a recent economic study by Gerald Friedman of the University of Massachusetts concluded that NYHA would save us \$45 billion per year over what we pay now. How is that possible?

We waste almost 30% of our healthcare dollars on activities and people who do not promote health. Approximately 20% of every dollar spent for private health insurance pays for marketing, profit and administration. Because it is a single-payer system, Traditional

Medicare's overhead is about 2%. Our multi-payer system also causes hospitals and doctors to spend significant sums on insurance paperwork.

Additionally, New York Health, when passed, will negotiate substantial price discounts on



drugs and medical devices: our Veterans Administration saves about 40% — as do many peer countries who purchase from the same companies.

We pay almost **twice** as much as peer countries for healthcare and get **worse** health outcomes: we're the only developed country with a rising maternal death rate and we're 35<sup>th</sup> in life expectancy.

Today, our current regressive system costs the same whether you're a CEO or a secretary. NY

Health would be funded by a progressive payroll tax based on ability to pay, with 98% of New Yorkers paying less per year than they do now, and no longer "job locked."

Because there would be no premiums, no deductibles, no co-pays or out-of-network charges — no charges for teeth cleaning or getting dentures, for eye exams or hearing aids, no charges for prescriptions or medical devices — no New Yorker would have to worry about IRS medical deductions or medical bankruptcy, as 5% of us do each year.

What does universal, comprehensive, cost-effective healthcare mean for New York? It means all of us, rich and poor alike, would be covered for all medically necessary services — more comprehensive than commercial health plans, and better than Medicare. Better individual coverage, better public health outcomes, AND our total cost goes down.

The League of Women Voters of New York has long supported universal access to essential healthcare. For 25 years (after

conclusive analyses by the Congressional Budget Office and General Accounting Office) we've supported single-payer as the most cost-effective approach to achieve this.

We ask voters of every political persuasion to recognize that our democracy requires elected representatives to listen to voters, and that paying for healthcare has become unsustainable for individuals AND for local and state budgets.

We believe healthcare is a human right, that taxpayers deserve the fiscal economy of NY Health, and that lawmakers should listen to voters.

Join us in grassroots advocacy. Talk to your neighbors. Call your representatives. New York needs campaign finance reform and the New York Health Act. To learn more, go to [www.nyhcampaign.org](http://www.nyhcampaign.org).

## Westchester County League of Women Voters: Health Care Committee Meetings. All are Welcome

1) Forum: *The Good Cents of Medicare For All: The New York Health Act* White Plains Library, 7 - 9 pm, March 1, 2018

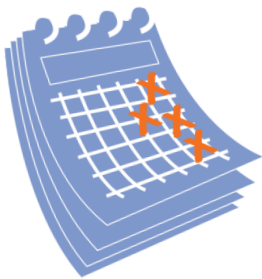
We will show a 30 minute film entitled *Now is the Time: Health Care for Everybody*.

Our speakers will be Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, Assembly Health Chair and sponsor of the New York Health Act and Leonard Rodberg, PHD., who will discuss the economics of the New York Health Act

2) Lobby Day Training, May 5, 2018 White Plains Library, 10am - 1pm. Training for the Single-Payer Lobby Day in Albany on May 30th

3) Single-Payer Lobby Day in Albany for the New York Health Act. Transportation available

Questions: Contact Madeline Zevon (914)584-9968 [madelinezevon@gmail.com](mailto:madelinezevon@gmail.com)



### Important Dates (mark your calendar!)

**ArtsW Exhibition Give Us the Vote.** Extended through February 10th.

**Concurrence on LWVNYS Death with Dignity position;** Open to all members; Saturday February 10, 10:30 a.m., home of Doris Dingott; 4 Macy Avenue

**Naturalization Court,** Thursday February 22; Thursday August 9; Thursday October 4

**Annual Winter Party;** Sunday March 11, 2018, 3:00 – 5:00 PM; Home of Janice Abbott and Richard Bernstein

**Vote 18;** dates and locations TBA

**WPCSD School Board Candidates Forum,** Wednesday May 2

**Annual Membership Meeting,** Thursday May 17

**Annual Picnic;** late June, date TBA

**LWV National Convention,** June 28 – July 1 in Chicago



**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.**