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INSIDE THE LEAGUE

From the Co-Presidents Local Communities Matter: Partnerships make us stronger

We have spent a lot of time this year reflecting on what matters to us as co-presidents of LWWNYC. We aspire to expand our membership to represent the diversity of our city. We hope to close the enormous gap between those who register and those who actually vote, and we understand that voter education is a key to civic engagement. This work cannot be done in isolation. We need each other to provide expertise and fellowship as we move forward to achieve these goals.

Every New Yorker has their own reason why they do or do not vote. Maybe they are passionate about an issue, or maybe they feel frustrated by a system that doesn't represent them. We are creating an adult civics package that addresses voting, lobbying, advocacy, and community involvement, to explore how voting can be a positive force for change. We have already partnered with many civic organizations to share this information.

We receive many anecdotal complaints every election season of "soft" voter suppression. But how do we quantitatively prove that there

are obstacles to voting in New York City? We are partnering with a team of students and their professor on a Capstone Project through the NYU Wagner School, to investigate if and where obstacles exist in the voting process in NYC.

Also, we have partnered with local colleges such as Hunter, Guttman, NYIT, and York to welcome interns to LWWNYC. These interns have expanded our reach into their home communities throughout the city by amplifying our messaging about our events, programs, and information through social media, conducting voter education programs at their alma maters, and participating as Telephone Information Services (TIS) volunteers. These students are our future, and we have granted all of them student membership in LWWNYC.

All this has been achieved through partnerships with civic organizations, schools, faith organizations, libraries, and corporations. Humbly, we understand that our voices must be added to all the diverse voices in New York to really achieve our goals.

Diane Burrows
president@lwwnyc.org

Lesley Sigall
co-president@lwwnyc.org

Help the League Make its Move in 2022

The Development Committee

You are the reason and the driving force behind the League's impact. Without you, the League's role as a trusted source of nonpartisan information is weakened, and our committee work is not as robust. With you, New Yorker's voices are raised, as is the League's.

The League brings together some of the sharpest minds in the city. And, with our pivot to widely accessible online meetings and webinars, we engage even more members and volunteers like you.

Next spring, we are hoping to find a new home for the League. As we learned this year, we need to expand our technology to reach even more people across the city. Our current office is not set up to address this need. Moving is always difficult and costly, but we believe it is necessary to reach all New Yorkers and to ensure our future. Please consider giving generously at this year-end.



Engage with Our League

Less is More Act Becomes Law with the Help of the LWNYC and Allies

By Vivione Marshall, Akyla Tomlinson, and Michele Figueroa, LWNYC CCJR Co-Chairs

This year our Committee for Criminal Justice Reform (CCJR) partnered with the Katal Center and other statewide organizations to work on the “Less Is More” campaign. “Less Is More” addresses the injustice of immediate incarceration of people on parole for accusations of technical violations: such as being late for hearings, missing a probation appointment, or having a positive alcohol urine screening. In September, Governor



New NY State Governor Kathy Hochul signs Less is More Act into law

Hochul signed this important legislation into law as a major step forward in parole reform. Donna Hylton, a LWNYC member who co-authored the bill and was at the Governor’s signing, said, “It’s a watershed moment when it comes to parole, and will stop the re-incarceration of people who have not committed a new crime.”



Committee Member Tiffany Kahn (far left), and CCJR Co-Chair, Akyla Tomlinson (2nd from left), pictured with members of Freedom Agenda at the Close Rikers Rally

This September, Jennifer Wilson, the Deputy Director of LWNYC, asked our committee to work with her to form a New York State Committee for Criminal Justice Reform based on a policy position adopted at this year’s State Convention. We look forward to working with the various League of Women Voters Chapters in New York State.

We, the Committee for Criminal Justice Reform, have learned so much about the power of collective advocacy while working on the Less Is More campaign. For our next project, we are working with Freedom Agenda and Women’s Community Justice Association (WCJA) in the **Beyond Rosie’s** campaign.

This is an effort to end the physical abuse and emotional trauma of women detained at the Rose M. Singer Center in Rikers Prison by housing them at new borough-based facilities. CCJR Chairs attended a **Freedom Agenda** rally in October at City Hall that also highlighted the inhumane conditions at Rikers. Our committee actively continues to collaborate with community organizations and to advocate for legislation that helps reform our current judicial system.

Men and the League of Women Voters

By Suzanne Surbeck

The League of Women Voters isn’t just an organization for women! As the national League of Women Voters website states, “There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender.”

Men have long been supportive of women’s fight for voting rights. Thirty-two men signed a document “in favor of the movement” at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, the first women’s rights meeting ever. In the early 20th century, some of New York’s most influential men formed the Men’s League for Women Suffrage which grew into thousands of members across thirty-five states between 1909 and 1917.

Despite their support of women’s issues, men were not granted full membership in the League until the 1974 Convention in San Francisco. The vote, by a better than 2 to 1 margin, followed a long and often spirited debate among the members about the nature and future of the League, with some wanting it to remain as an all-female organization. Once the vote was over, the President of the League, Lucy Wilson Benson said

ecstatically, “Welcome, ladies and gentlemen of the League.” Today there are staff members and volunteers of all genders working around the United States.



Members of the Men’s League for Women Suffrage march in a 1915 suffrage parade (Carrie Chapman Catt Albums, Bryn Mawr College Library)

Long-Time Member Profile

Gladys Krasner: The League's Ultimate Fighter and Fan

By Adrienne Kivelson

For most people, retirement offers a slower, more mellow lifestyle with fewer commitments and less stressful activities. But that's not the lifestyle Gladys Krasner chose. At 93, Gladys is just as passionate and committed to the League's principles and programs as she was when she joined the Forest Hills Branch in 1969.

Gladys began her political activism in the New York City reform movement in the 1960s but became disillusioned with local politics, particularly when candidates she had worked for supported the Vietnam War.

"I have always believed that people should be encouraged to actively participate in government, but participation has to be based on knowledge and understanding. That's what drew me to the League. I know of no other organization which better connects education to participation than the League."



Gladys Krasner presents at a League event in 2016

Louise Mirrin, Joseph Papp, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and Kathryn Wylde. The League became more active in city and state election debates and offered a series of highly regarded seminars on understanding city budgets.

"I believe in the founding principles of the League. I think the League has survived because we don't take positions until we have studied the issues and get the consensus of the membership. This gives the League its clout. As the Leagues in Texas, Georgia, Arizona, and too many other states battle voter suppression, they know they have the support of the national membership behind them," explains Gladys. Gladys is very proud of how our New York City League led the way in support of gay marriage because it was consistent with our national positions on human and civil rights.

It was in her after-retirement life that Gladys, working with our then Office Manager, Alison Alpert, created the "How to Run for Public Office" course, funded by the New York City

Community Trust and offered to the public and to students at community colleges in all five boroughs. And it was in her second life with the League that Gladys, working with the late Robin Barr, developed the highly popular *Lunch with the League*. She still serves on both the Program and Development Committees.

With the exceptions of her son, George, and the New York Yankees, Gladys says there is nothing she loves more than the League of Women Voters.



Gladys Krasner signs NYSE's 200-year-old guest book

"When I joined the League, we were still addressed as, 'Mrs.-our-husband's-name' and poured tea at meetings. But times have certainly changed – thank goodness!"

Gladys moved on from pouring tea to Forest Hills Branch Chair, Voter Service Chair – directing a study of the Board of Elections, and finally to President of the New York City League from 1979 to 1983. It was during Gladys' presidency that the City League's Annual Luncheons were initiated, honoring such famous New Yorkers as Felix Rohatyn, David Rockefeller,



Gladys Krasner and past LWWNYS President, Suzanne Stassevich

New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women: Moving Forward

By Barbara Kairson, PhD, President of NY Coalition of One Hundred Black Women, Inc.

The New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women (NYCOBW), the founding chapter of the Coalition of One Hundred Black Women, established in 1970, advocates for Black women, their families, and their communities by working in partnership with individuals and organizations sharing mutual goals. The Coalition’s mission to empower Black women and girls to become leaders remains as constant today as it was more than 50 years ago.

The Coalition focuses on initiatives that identify and develop the leadership potential of Black women, aid women with entry and advancement in the corporate sector, provide scholarships to students pursuing higher education, and educate women about global issues impacting women and girls. Recognizing that political power begins at the local level, the Coalition also works to empower women who live in marginalized communities throughout New York City through outreach and voter education.



Former LWVNYC Co-President Ruth S. Altman and newly elected Dr. Kairson in 2020

Although not always welcomed into the rooms where decisions were made, today there is no area where the influence and voices of Black women are not seen and heard. We have advanced from the back of the Suffrage March in 1913 to become Vice President of the United States in 2021. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done. As we continue to work to fulfill the mission established by our founders, I am proud to serve as President of the New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women during this important time and look forward to working with The League of Women Voters of the City of New York in the future to educate, empower, and activate our constituencies around areas of mutual concern.

Color of Justice and the LWVNYC

By Tania Padgett

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York recently partnered with Color of Justice (COJ) to host voter registrations in front of Hollis and Cambria Heights libraries during the last weekend in September. COJ is a Forest Hills-based advocacy group dedicated to advancing Black political participation and civic engagement. “Apathy and cynicism towards voting and civic engagement are a huge problem overall,” observed COJ president Titi Yasukawa. “But in the Black community, it is particularly pronounced. COJ strives to reverse that.” On Saturday, September 25 and Sunday, September 26, COJ members and League volunteers drove to that mission by registering, educating, and interacting with more than 100 individuals about the importance of voting. As a result, Queens residents who were registered became eligible to vote on Election Day, November 2. In addition to voter registration forms, COJ offered voter pamphlets and brochures, wrapped candies, and colorful balloons and crayons for kids. All volunteers were masked, and COVID-19 restrictions were observed.

“This event was a wonderful learning experience for all involved,” said COJ member Rosa Hall, who organized the registration. “Voting gives people power over their lives. So, if we can give power to the people, then we are one step closer to creating a fair and just democracy.” Laura Quigg and Gerry Russo, Co-Chairs of the League’s Voter Services Committee, provided extensive training to COJ members prior to the event; the League also sent volunteers to help on registration days. Because of the great response, COJ and the League are planning to collaborate on future projects.



LWVNYC’s Gerry Russo (3rd from left) registers voters with volunteers from Color of Justice

Two Unique Get Out The Vote Events

By Barb Ettington, LWVNYC Board Member

The LWVNYC embarked on two new approaches for our Get Out the Vote efforts this past fall. Both events introduced us to audiences with histories of low voter turnout.

Constitution Day

On September 17th, about 30 League volunteers took to the streets to hand out 2,500 U.S. Constitution books. Volunteers were positioned in six of NYC’s neighborhoods across four boroughs, selected because of low voter turnout rates.

This lively outreach not only brought attention to the U.S. Constitution, it allowed for hundreds of conversations about the ballot proposals that would impact the State Constitution’s voting laws. Handouts providing ballot information were developed in English, Spanish, and Chinese, and QR codes offered links to the Constitution in several other languages. Volunteers also registered voters, and one person in particular was finally able to register thanks to the change in NY State law regarding parolees. He and Susie Gomes, our League volunteer, were both thrilled to see that registration happen.

Our thanks to the local libraries for hosting our volunteers, to BronxNet and WABC-TV for promoting the day, and to our social media partners for reaching out to more than 3.5 million of their followers to highlight our efforts.

Oktoberfest/Voter Fest

Over 200 New Yorkers attended a special Trivia Night on October 19th in four bars across the city. Partnering with NYC Trivia League and their vast network, the League of Women Voters was introduced to a young and often less activated group of voters.

League volunteers developed trivia questions that were incorporated into the five rounds of questions. Teams competed during the evening while League volunteers provided information about the upcoming election and handed out copies of the US Constitution. While only one team won in each bar location, all teams were winners for becoming informed voters. Our special thanks to UPS for generously sponsoring this event.

For more information, or to get involved, contact: development@lwnyc.org



Volunteer Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan in Jackson Heights with a Constitution recipient



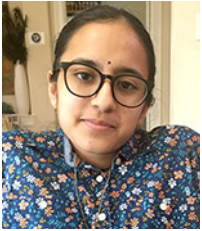
Board Member Pat Manning in the Bronx



Photos from the Oktoberfest Voter Fest locations

Introducing Our New Interns and Board

I am **Anvitha Tammisetti**, a first-semester freshman at Hunter College. I am currently an Operational Intern for the League of Women Voters of the City of New York and we are working on profiles of underrepresented suffragists. My anticipated major is in Political Science with a possible minor in Psychology.



I am **Iza Choudrey**, a junior at Hunter College studying Political Science, and one of the League's interns for Fall 2021. As an outreach intern, I am reaching out to my former high school to engage with students and illustrate the overall importance of voting. Through these presentations, paired with social media posts emphasizing the significance of the general election, I am hoping to get my message out that every vote matters!



My name is **Destiny Scott**. I attend York college and I'm majoring in Political Science and Journalism. I graduate next year, and I hope to have a career in law and broadcast news. I'm excited to intern with the LWV and learn new ways to inform people on how to vote.



New LWVNYC Advisory Board Members – October 2021

Molly John – Audit Partner, Ernst & Young

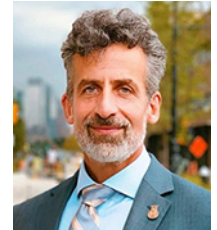


Crain's 2019 Notable Women in Accounting and Consulting: CPA Molly John works with large multinational companies in telecommunications, media, entertainment, and manufacturing; helping them develop solutions to complex problems. An elected member of the East Region Partner Advisory Council, she serves on

the EY East Black Professional Network Steering Committee and the New York City Diversity and Inclusion Council. Ms. John is a member of the U.S. Tennis Association Foundation board and the board of TakeRoot Justice, which provides legal support to grassroots and community-based groups. She is a member of the International Women's Forum and the dean's advisory council of Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting from Baruch.

Michael Max Knobbe – Executive Director, BronxNet

Michael Max Knobbe is an innovative community leader, media visionary, and exemplary social entrepreneur. Since 2002, Mr. Knobbe has served as Executive Director of BronxNet, the borough's public access television station and community media center. In that position, he is responsible for the overall success of many initiatives, including guiding the production of hundreds of television programs that serve the public interest. This includes award-winning ultra-local content focused on the Bronx, and spearheading the launch of two new channels, making BronxNet the first Public Access Organization in the nation to telecast on six channels that serve as outlets for programs produced by Bronx residents, television professionals, and students.



Mr. Knobbe continues to be a leader in the effort to enhance public access to 21st century technology and media. As a Co-Founder of the Alliance for Community Media's New York State Chapter, he works with heads of other access centers to keep leaders and organizations around the state and the nation informed about the public access needs of the people.

Douglas Muzzio – Political Science Professor, Host of CUNY-TV's City Talk, Baruch College

Douglas Muzzio has had an extensive political, governmental, and media career as a specialist in American public opinion, voting behavior, and city politics. He is founder, former director, and current chief pollster at Baruch College Survey Research Unit, and hosts *City Talk* on CUNY-TV, which was nominated for an Emmy award.



In the honors course he teaches, "New York in the Twenty-First Century", Mr. Muzzio analyzes the function of the various components of the city – the business, public health, and planning communities; cultural and artistic institutions; and governmental and social service agencies – and how they interact to shape the city.

Mr. Muzzio co-founded the Center for Transition and Leadership in Government at Baruch College, specifically designed to provide newly elected members of the City Council with the tools and knowledge they need to carry out their critical roles governing the city. He also produced a publication titled, "Council Members Guide to New York City Government", a valuable resource that informs Council members of the many agencies that will help them respond to constituents' requests, and includes information about how to organize a staff and how to follow the intricacies of the budget-making process.

LWVNYC Committee Updates

Please feel free to email the Committees if you're interested in learning more and/or would like to get involved.

CENSUS AND REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Laura Quigg, Chair

census@lwnyc.org

The Census and Redistricting Committee continues to inform and educate both our committee members and the public-at-large about the New York Independent Redistricting Commission – evaluating the two sets of maps it submitted, participating in hearings, and navigating the process as it unfolds. We collaborated as delegates to the LWVNYC redistricting effort, and with the LWVNYC Voter Services and Voting Reform Committees in voter outreach. We contributed significantly to sections that discuss redistricting generally, and Ballot Proposal #1 specifically, used in talks to nearly 600 people at 15 different organizations, and on a palm card we created that was distributed to well over 1,000 prospective voters.

COMMITTEE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Aklya Thomlinson, Vivione Marshall, and Michele Figueroa, Co-Chairs

criminaljustice@lwnyc.org

This year our committee partnered with Katal Center and other organizations to work on the “Less Is More” campaign. In September, Governor Hochul signed this important legislation into law. Also, Jennifer Wilson at LWVNY has asked our committee to work with her to form a New York State Committee for Criminal Justice Reform, based on a policy position adopted at this year’s State Convention.

We are currently working with Freedom Agenda and Women’s Community Justice Association (WCJA) in the *Beyond Rosie’s* campaign. Co-Chairs attended their October Rally at City Hall which also highlighted the conditions at Rikers Island. Our committee actively continues to collaborate with community organizations and to advocate for legislation that helps reform the current judicial system.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

By Jane Hatterer, Chair

education@lwnyc.org

The Education Committee is continuing its partnership with *Youth Civics Initiative* (YCI), currently working on recruiting more student writers and journalist mentors. We have had tremendous interest on both fronts and are excited by the prospect of having working journalists mentoring. We now

have multiple international students writing for YCI, including one writer from Mumbai.

We continue to be active members of *DemocracyReady NY*, working on several committees, including Youth Civic Action, Media Literacy, and Controversial Topics and the Harvard Case Method National Advisory Committee for the League. We are working with the NY State League to coordinate and expand youth programming on the high school and collegiate level throughout NY State through our participation in the NY State Youth Chair Committee.

Finally, we are hoping to build upon the YCI partnership with the NYC DOE’s *Civics for All initiative*, and are exploring different possibilities, including advocacy/lobbying training workshops for Civics Week, and offering League internships as experiential learning opportunities for students.

NONCITIZEN VOTING RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Alex Yellin and Diane Drew, Co-Chairs

office@lwnyc.org

The Noncitizen Voting Rights Committee is a new committee co-chaired by Alex Yellin and Diane Drew. The committee is reviewing the position of our sister league in Boulder County, Colorado (LWVBC) on noncitizen voting rights. LWVBC supports that certain noncitizens who live in Boulder County be given the right to vote in county, municipal, school district and/or special elections. Our committee will review the LWVBC documents that support their study, as well as documents that pertain to noncitizen rights in New York City. These include the path to citizenship and the history of voting rights and citizenship. Additionally, we hope to host Zoom meetings presenting contrasting views on noncitizens’ enfranchisement to educate committee and League members on the issue. When the review of the LWVBC position is done, we will present our findings to the entire LWVNYC membership.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

By Joanna R. Leefer, Chair

programs@lwnyc.org

Voter Suppression, New York Boards of Elections, and the new Texas abortion law (SB 8) were the featured topics of this Fall 2021’s *At Home with the League*. In September League presidents from four battleground states discussed their strategies for stemming the impact of these new voter

LWVNYC Committee Updates

restrictions laws. October speakers LuLu Friesdat and Kate Doran, advocates for better operating New York State and City Boards of Elections, spoke on how to improve both. The November program covered the repercussions of the new Texas abortion ban.

Programs for this winter will discuss media bias, New York redistricting, police reform, and our new mayor.

TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICES

Amy Matthews, Co-Chair

secretary@lwvnyc.org

League interns, volunteers, and our office staff covered the phones whenever the polls were open, both for the Early Voting period and on Election Day, November 2. At the top of the list for call topics were two main concerns: understanding who was on the ballot and what the five ballot questions meant. The League's research on these topics helped our callers understand the issues so that they could make an informed decision when they voted. They handled voter complaints and assisted voters in finding their poll sites. Callers to the League appreciated the chance to speak to a knowledgeable volunteer about their questions and concerns.

VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Laura Quigg, Co-Chair

voter.services@lwvnyc.org

The Voter Services Committee was busy over the last quarter gearing up for the election in November. We did several voter registration events, including Suzanne Surbeck's weekly visits to Governor's Island. While most of those who spoke with our

volunteers were registered voters, they were all grateful for the handouts they received explaining the five propositions that were on the ballot.

We presented to about a dozen organizations about the upcoming elections, mostly to help them understand the five ballot proposals, and to several groups on Adult Civics – reaching over 1,500 for each event on Facebook Live! We also sent out nearly 3,000 Get Out the Vote postcards from LWVUS through the work of our volunteers and events that were organized by partner organizations such as Ethical Culture/Fieldston School and LMHQ.

Joyce Gallagher and Kate Hill have been working on connecting with libraries around the city to offer voter registration drives and presentations to their constituents. These contacts will be invaluable in our work during the mid-term elections next year. The committee continues to expand its outreach throughout the city, welcoming new members and partner organizations. We are grateful for our many relationships, including our work with Color of Justice, Ample Hills Creamery, Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA), and Downstate Adapt, as well as many active individual members throughout the city.

VOTING REFORM COMMITTEE

Bella Wang, Chair

voting.reform@lwvnyc.org

The Voting Reform Committee worked hard to get the word out about the ballot proposals that were up for a vote this November. Our members set up a partnership with borough public libraries to talk about no-excuse absentee voting and same-day voter registration. We also reached out to local newspapers to make our positions known.

Partnering with Second Stage Theater

By Diane Burrows, LWVNYC Co-President

The 2nd Stage Theater reached out to the LWVNYC to connect us with their newest play: Lynn Nottage's *Clyde's*. New LWVNYC members and committee chairs were offered the opportunity to see the final dress rehearsal of the show, which tells the story of formerly incarcerated workers at a truck stop sandwich shop as they reclaim their lives.

Our Criminal Justice Reform Committee has also been invited to participate in a Talkback panel discussion with Hour Children, following the performance on January 6, 2022. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, this play is an example of Nottage's "genius for bringing politically charged themes to life by embodying them in ordinary characters living ordinary lives."

Tickets are available for purchase at: [Second Stage Theater](#)



Upcoming Events

All trainings and meetings held over Zoom.
Please contact admin@lwnyc.org to confirm meeting dates!
For more information on Committees and Events,
please visit www.lwnyc.org

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Committee for Criminal Justice Reform: check the website calendar for upcoming meetings and subcommittee meetings
- Education Committee: 2nd Wed. of the month; 5:30–7:00pm
- Voting Reform Initiative Committee: check the website calendar for upcoming meetings
- Voter Services Committee: 3rd Wed. of the month; 6:00–7:30pm
- Gender Justice Committee: check the website calendar for upcoming meetings

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Newsletter Staff

Ruth S. Altman
Diane Burrows
Susan B. Glattstein
Crystal Joseph
Natalie Silverman
Andrea Zuckerman

*Thank you to all of our
newsletter contributors!*



4 West 43rd Street, Suite 613, New York, NY 10036
212-725-3541 admin@lwnyc.org

