

Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



Spring 2023



Maureen Murray moderating the Cooperstown Central School Board Candidates Debate in 2022.

Give Us One Morning & Come Home with a New Skill

Why not spend a spring Saturday morning with some League friends from around the region learning or refreshing skills to be a successful League moderator?

Is your heart beating faster just reading the word “moderator”?

No worries. Attending this event is NOT a commitment to become a League Moderator. It will prepare or refresh League members on how to conduct effective, fair, and interesting candidate events. Participants will learn practical information, League rules and policies, the use of a flexible script, as well as how to maintain the gold standard of a fair and non-partisan approach, how to support audience engagement, how to assure equal time for all candidates’ voices, and what strategies are needed for success. In fact, you will learn about listening, flexibility and fairness – skills that are useful in other circumstances like leading a meeting at work or heading up a League committee. There will be refreshments and opportunities for informal role play.

Do come to this fun, fast-moving, and interactive moderator training session. The event is Saturday, May 6, from 9-noon at the Family Engagement Center at Springbrook, 105 Campus Drive, Oneonta, N.Y. Pre-registration is recommended, though not required; contact Stephanie Bauer(stephanie.bauer93@gmail.com) or Maureen Murray at 607- 267-2431 for more information.

Call To Annual Meeting 2023

Mark your calendar and join the LWV of the Cooperstown Area for our 2023 Annual Meeting and Potluck on Thursday, April 27 at 6 pm at the Clark Sports Center. Join your fellow League members as we recap our year and celebrate all we have accomplished since April 2022.

Members will also elect new board members, vote on bylaws changes, pass a budget, and review our programs for the upcoming year. The meeting is a potluck, so please bring your place setting and a dish to pass. Members with last names beginning A-I should bring a dessert J-P, bring a main dish; Q-Z, bring a salad. We will have various beverages to share, but you are welcome to bring your favorite beverage.

Business Meeting

Inside this issue you will find all the materials you will need to prepare for the meeting: Nominating Committee Report, Financial Report, and Bylaws changes, as well as reports from various committees. The materials are also available on our website; access to the internet is available at the Clark Sports Center. We ask that you pay particular attention to the Bylaws changes. Some of the changes relate to language inconsistencies. They are noted, but will not be voted on. We have added a statement in Article IV, Section 5 regarding removal from the board. This change did not come as the result of a particular situation on the LWVCA board. Rather, the change was made after learning from another League in the state about a difficulty in removing a member. The board thought we should have a statement that addresses the situation.

The other change of note is the moving of our fiscal year so that it matches the fiscal year of LWVNY and LWVUS. The budget that is prepared for the 2024-2025 year will reflect this change if it is approved. The detailed budget for 2023-2024 is available on our website.

Finally, we are happy to present two candidates as board members: Christina Bourgeois as head of Natural Resources and Hudi Poldolsky who will lead Voters Service. Notice that we have no candidate for co-president in the slate of directors and officers, but we do allow nominations from the floor.

Coming Up

April 17: Nominating petitions due for local school board elections.

April 27: LWV of the Cooperstown Area Annual meeting. Clark Sports Center, 6 p.m.

April 29: Drive-Thru, Drop-Off Recycling at Brewery Ommegang, noon-3 pm.

May 2: LWVNYS Advocacy Day, 9:30-4. Read more on page 2.

May 6: Moderator Training. 9-noon, Springbrook. See story above.

May 16: 2023 School Board Elections & Budget votes.

June 2-4: LWV New York Convention, Albany. Story on page 2.

June 12: Last day to postmark voter registration by mail; last day for BOE to receive absentee ballot application by mail for June Primary.

June 17: Last day to register in person.

June 17-25: Early Voting for the June Primary.

June 27: Primary Election Polls open 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Aug. 25-26: Hazardous Waste Collection Day. For more information on times and types of waste visit Otsego County Department of Solid Waste or email solidwaste@otsegocounty.com.

Step Up—You Can Do It! Yes, You Can!

This past year was especially satisfying for us as we once again could meet in person. We were so happy to be at a table with board members who for the past few years had only been pictures on a screen. We don't have sufficient words to describe how blessed we were with our Board. They were a great team, and almost all of them will be continuing on the Board. More important, there are several members who have stepped forward and are willing to take on new leadership roles. But more are needed.

Eight years ago, this League was failing, and now we have 104 members and healthy support from our community. In the late 2010s, we were in crisis, but there was a group of committed members who stepped up to fill leadership roles. Some of those members still serve on the board, and they should all feel great satisfaction in knowing that their work has brought our League back to life as a viable institution in our community.

Our League has tried to put together a plan that keeps our future bright. We know our members care deeply about the League, but we also know that many of you feel that a leadership role is a step too far. We have both served as board members, committee chairs, and presidents in the League and want to assure you all that serving in leadership is doable—especially now. This past year, both of us held dual roles on the board—we were co-presidents as well as committee chairs (Patty as Communications Director and Maureen in Voter Service and Natural Resources). One of our goals as presidents was to build leadership so our successors would have a strong board to support them. However, we must report that as of this moment, after next year's annual meeting we will not have a president. We each agreed to serve a two-year term and that is what we plan to do. We say this not as a complaint about the work we have done but to make sure that the model of co-presidents

serving defined terms continues as it has since 2018 and to let you know what the future holds.

We do understand that there may be a feeling that leadership, as a board member or president, is a step you are not willing to take. As much as you like the League, you may feel that being president is just too much to undertake.

You are wrong.

You are denying yourself an opportunity to grow and learn new skills. You are denying yourself an opportunity to work with other organizations in our community. You are denying yourself the wonderful sense of satisfaction you will have when as a leader of the League, you will accept compliments on behalf of the League for a job well done. You are denying yourself an opportunity to lead an organization that makes a difference in your community.

We know we may sound like scolds. How can we talk like this to our loyal members? Both of us care about our organization, and we know you do, too. We also know that unless people come forward to lead either on the board or as president, our League will not continue to exist.

We are confident that our board will support the president in the upcoming year, but by this time next year, the LWVCA will not have a president. We know there are leaders in our League. You may be shy about setting yourself forward. Don't be. Contact us and we will be frank and straightforward about the duties and time commitment. And more than that, we will be happy to mentor you and step in to help if needed. That's a guarantee.

Patty MacLeish and Maureen Murray
Co-Presidents



Patty MacLeish (left) and
Maureen Murray (right),

News from LWVNY: Advocacy Day & Call to Convention 2023

LWVNY Advocacy Day will be held Tuesday, May 2, 9:30a.m. - 4 p.m. Consider joining League members from across the state to learn about important legislative issues and how to advocate for them. Members will meet at the new League office at The Blake, One Steuben Place, Albany. After learning about the issues facing the League in this session, members will make appointments with legislators (and schedule them for 1:30 pm at the earliest.) After the morning's activities and lunch, everyone will walk up to the Capitol. Those without appointments may try to visit their legislators or join the state League staff in the galleries watching session. If you would like to attend, you should register in advance (https://secure.lgiforms.com/form_engine/s/W5MBY4XcTvNtVZRc2KKTow). Please let us know (president@LWVCooperstownArea.org) if you plan to attend. Our League will cover the cost of registration and other fees (parking, etc.). We don't expect members to necessarily meet with legislators (although you may want to), but if you would like to be more hands-on and take action, we will help you coordinate with the Leagues we share districts with.

State Convention: The League of Women Voters of New York State will hold its biannual convention on June 3-4 in Albany at the Desmond Crown Plaza Hotel. The theme is "Empowering Voters, De-

fending Democracy." Our League is eligible to send four delegates to convention and the LWVCA has added this item to our budget to cover registration and hotel costs. Please consider attending. You will return invigorated.

The program looks great. Libby Post, the author of *Beyond Plastics* will speak at a pre-convention event on "The Power of Communication: Turning Values into Action" on Friday, June 2. Carolyn Maloney will be the featured speaker at lunch on June 3. She will discuss the current status of the federal ERA, the work she has done in Congress to move the ERA forward. On Sunday, June 4, Ayo Atterberry, Chief of Culture at LWVUS will speak on the "Future of the League: Evaluating Our Impact."

There are a series of workshops on Saturday including one on being a moderator led by our co-president, Maureen Murray. Other topics including changes in the election laws in New York and how we can engage more students on campuses. The pre-registration kit is available on the League website (<https://lwvny.org/state-conventions-council/>).

If you would like to know more about either event please contact president@LWVCooperstownArea.org.

How Do You Fit in the League Transformation?

by Patty MacLeish

The League of Women Voters of the United States has been concerned for some time about the future of the organization. Even as the League's work has become more essential to the preservation of voting rights, membership overall has been diminishing. The LWVUS is also concerned that it was not doing enough to assure that its membership was diverse and welcoming to all. Several years ago, the League undertook a Structure Transformation Plan.

I am one of the members representing local Leagues in the current phase, focusing on one aspect of the plan—setting uniform dues structure. Under the current system, the LWVCA passes on \$32 to the LWVUS and \$23 to the LWVNY for each \$60 individual membership paid by our members in a system known as per member payments (PMPs). Under consideration are sliding-scale dues (where individuals are asked to pay a specific rate based on income levels) and pay-what-you-can (where members pay what they decide they can afford beginning with \$0) with local Leagues receiving about 25% of the dues.

Many details are still to be resolved by the LWVUS. Questions such as who will send the renewal notices? Who will follow up on those slow to renew? (Our super membership chair, Deb Dalton, does that now.) Will the new system really be a time-saver for local Leagues?

Under the new system, state Leagues will be given greater monetary support which will be especially important in states where funding for programs to “Make Democracy Work” is not as available as it is here in New York.

I'll report later on how the work progresses. Meanwhile, make sure your voice is heard. The LWVUS is conducting a survey of all members. We hope all of you have received the survey from the LWVUS. If not see the box below and take the survey today:

News from the LWVUS CHECK THIS OUT TODAY!

Transforming the League

Help frame the future of the League of Women Voters! Fill out the LWVUS survey about your unique experiences with the League. It only takes a few minutes. Your response will guide the next steps of our Transformation Journey.

Here's the link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LWVmembersurvey>.

Want to learn more about the Transformation Journey? Check out <https://www.lwv.org/FramingTheFuture>.

Yes, Virginia, Our Recyclables Really DO Get Recycled

By Deb Taylor

A group of Otsego County residents toured Sierra Processing in Albany to find out exactly what happens to all the items we place in our local recycling bins. Where does it go? Does it really get recycled? How do they sort it?

When Otsego County's official hauler – Casella Waste – empties our recycling bins at the Northern and Southern Transfer Stations, as well as the towns of Hartwick and Cherry Valley, the drivers haul it, unsorted, to Sierra Processing. Located across from the Port of Albany, Sierra processes – sorts and readies for sale – mixed recyclables for around 13 counties in the Capital District, as well as three in Massachusetts.

Huge haulers dump loads of unsorted recyclables on the floor at two ends of the 30,000-square-foot-building, and the sorting begins. Bulldozers shove it onto giant conveyor belts, where a shaking process evens the piles out so quick-working humans can pluck un-recyclable items – car batteries, lawn hoses – from the fast-moving, never-ending flow. The conveyor belts continue up, down, all around, sorting plastics, cardboard, aluminum, glass into separate streams. The plant also uses robots who pick, pull, sort. And make a lot of noise.

Finally, the separated recyclables are strapped into bales, loaded onto

trucks for their final destinations to be re-processed into new goods. Georgia-Pacific was buying paper and cardboard, for example.

Sierra Processing Maintenance Manager David Christie, who toured the Otsego County group, considers those bales of paper, cardboard, aluminum, glass, plastics, his “product.” When it trucks from Sierra to his customer, he wants it to be clean and well-sorted, the best that it can be

Christie said that, while it varies, around 90 percent of the items dumped on the floor at the beginning of the Big Sort, make it to a recycling destination, leaving about 10 percent to go into landfills. Those items include (but are certainly not limited to) black garbage bags that are full, but workers cannot safely open because they can't see the contents.

The plant runs 24/7, with around 35 employees per shift. Between 400 and 450 tons of recyclables are processed each day.

So when we wonder, as we lug our bags of recyclables to the bins every week, if indeed, all the “stuff” is recycled? Yes, it is, for the most part. We have to be careful on our end, too.

Participants in the tour included representatives from the League of Women Voters, the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) and Town of Hartwick recycling volunteers.

Thank you to Deb Taylor for allowing us to reprint this story which originally appeared in the Freeman's Journal



A “brick” of recycled paper for delivery to a producer—for a fee. PHOTO: M. MURRAY



2023 Voters Guide

In the mailing with this Update is the LWWNYS Voters Guide for 2023. Please keep it handy as it outlines all the important election-related dates for 2023. New this year is a change in registration deadlines. Individuals may now register to vote up to ten days (as opposed to the previous deadline of 30 days) before the elections. We will be distributing the Voters Guides throughout the area during the primaries and before the general election in November. The guide is also available on the LWWNY website.

Students Inside Albany

Students Inside Albany (SIA) is a four-day conference held each spring in Albany bringing together high school students from all corners of New York State to learn more about how state government operates. The program is funded by the LWWNYS and the LWV of the Cooperstown Area. The LWVCA has been sending students to SIA for more than 25 years. Our two delegates will travel to Albany for the 2023 SIA gathering in person on May 21-24. The delegates from the LWVCA are Olivia Loewenguth of Cooperstown High School and Maeve Robinson of Edmeston High School. You can read more about this year's winners on our web page. Thanks to Maria Kaltenbach, coordinator of SIA—and has been for the past 5 years—for organizing the SIA project.



Olivia Loewenguth (above) & Maeve Robinson (right).



Help Wanted

We need you! Whether you want to become actively involved in the League or only have a few hours to spare a month, there's a job for you in the League. Here are some of our needs:

- Sign up for our new Observer Corps! It's just a few hours work a month and you'll be helping the sun shine on local government. We have volunteers for the village of Cooperstown, the Town of Otsego, and the Otsego County Board of Representatives. We would like to include as many of the local towns, villages and school boards as possible.
- Spring elections are coming up. We need volunteers to help at candidates forums and will need greeters and timekeepers. We will be holding moderator training soon, too, if you would like to try that.
- **Want to learn a new skill?**
 - Help maintain our website. Some computer skills are necessary, but it's easy to learn.
 - Register voters. We're planning events all through the fall and we need people to sign up to learn the basic steps of registering voters.
 - Become a moderator for candidates forums and other events. Training will be held on May 6. See story on page 1.

Contact membership chair Deb Dalton if you are interested and she will put you in touch with the right person to get you started.

Officers & Board of Directors 2022-2023

Co-presidents: Patty MacLeish: 607-547-5172; pmacleish@verizon.net and Maureen Murray, 607-547-2853; coopmurray@msn.com

Board Members

Treasurer: Susan Newman, suchasshn@gmail.com
Secretary: Laura Wetzel, ltanswetz@gmail.com, 847-650-9235
Membership: Deb Dalton: ddalton@stny.rr.com, 607-437-5761;
Environment/Natural Resources: Christina Bourgeois 607-544-4072
Reducing Polarization Project:
Tom Pullyblank, 607282-2183; tompullyblank@gmail.com
Newsletter: Patty MacLeish
Youth Programs: September Schecter; sann8042@gmail.com

Off-Board: Students Inside Albany: Maria Kaltenbach: 315-525-5410; margirlic@yahoo.com

Contact:
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INSIDE: Facts for Voters 2023 & 2022-23 Annual Report