

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] .S[®] OF SCHENECTADY COUNTY BULLETIN

Citizenship Mentoring Group Report

The Fall session of our citizenship classes will wrap up on Saturday, November 22. We had a big class, with students from Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Guyana, and the Dominican Republic, but thanks to our classroom volunteers, Johanna Petersen and Don Rabig, everything went smoothly. We've all been disappointed by some of the latest immigration regulations, including much longer processing times and fewer chances to qualify for financial assistance for the \$725.00 application fee. However, there is still much excitement about the prospect of becoming US citizens. Our next session begins January 11, 2020!

Our final report for the 2019 New Citizens Voter Registration Grant that we received from LWVUS has been completed and sent. Although two naturalization ceremonies were cancelled this year, we were still able to register 194 new citizens. Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers!

Holiday Luncheon-

December 11, 2019
at the Van Curler Room
of the Schenectady County
Community College
Time: 11:45-2pm.



Dr. Patrick Jean-Pierre, Assistant Director of Diversity , Recruitment, and Retention at Schenectady City School District will speak.

BUILDING DIVERSITY IN SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOLS

Dr. Jean-Pierre will speak about the Schenectady City School District's efforts to increase staff diversity and to cultivate a culture of inclusion that strives to ensure that the life experiences, perspectives and values of all students and staff are embraced.

The Luncheon includes :

soup, entree, dessert and coffee for \$25.

Entree choices include:

Chicken Breast Roulade

Broiled Filet of Salmon with tomato-ginger salsa

Butternut Squash and Asparagus Risotto

(Please indicate if gluten free is needed.)

Please call with reservations by December 4th to Carol Furman, 518 346-2746 or by e-mail cfurm13@gmail.com.

Reservations will be commitments to pay after December 4th. As we are responsible to pay for this number. A number of additions are possible after December 4th.

Letter from the President

Whenever a year draws to a close, I often find myself looking back over all the events that have taken place over the past year. This year I'm looking back to our League and all it has accomplished.

- We invited three excellent speakers to our luncheons and dinner: Eric Clifford, Chief of the Schenectady Police, Aneesa Waheed, restaurant owner and entrepreneur, and we're looking forward to seeing Dr. Patrick Jean-Pierre, Assistant Director of Diversity for the Schenectady City School District.
- Voter Services held 17 voter registration events, 4 candidate forums, and Vote411 was up and running, and registered 73 new voters. A very busy Fall!
- LWVSC hosted three public forums to large audiences: a panel discussion on "Immigration in America – How Do We Decide"; a forum on Single-Payer Health Care, and a panel on "Path to Success for Ex-Offenders".
- Our League helped serve free lunches to Schenectady school children through the SCM summer lunch program.
- Joan Johnson, a representative from the Municipal Housing Authority, received the Susan B. Anthony Award for her service to the community.
- Five members attended the New York State League Convention in June.
- The Citizenship Mentoring Group had 31 students this past year, and 6 became new Americans. We also attended 8 naturalization ceremonies, registering 194 new citizens.

Yet on a sadder note, our League lost two long-time members, Helga A. Schroeter and Karen B. Johnson, both civic leaders in our community who will long be remembered fondly and with gratitude. We've learned so much from each of them.

My very best wishes to you and your families for peaceful and happy holidays and a most joyous New Year!

Ann Hatke
President

HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Health Committee will meet on January 8th at 10:30am, location to be announced. We will be having a discussion of how to improve the public's information about Palliative Care, Hospice, and a new model for Serious Illness so that when faced with a situation a person will have some familiarity with options available. Contact Carol Furman if you do not already receive an email announcement of time and location of meetings by emailing her at lwvschenectady@gmail.com.

Voter Services Report

Voter Registration- Peg Foley and Connie Young

The League was very active this year registering people to vote. We held 17 voter registration events, including 7 naturalization ceremonies. We registered 200 people at the naturalization ceremonies, with the remainder at the Kids Arts Festival, Sch'dy Greenmarket, Municipal Housing Authority, Union College, YWCA, SICM food pantry, Price Chopper, SCCC, YMCA, Parsons Child Care and Salvation Army for a grand total of 267 registrations. It's been a great volunteer effort with 33 League members involved. I would list everyone's name, but I'm afraid of leaving someone out! Thank you to all of our volunteers!

Vote411.org- Mary Jane Shave and Barbara Vivier

Mary Jane and Barbara worked hard, inviting 65 candidates to participate in our online voting guide, Vote411.org. About half of the candidates entered replies to our questions. The guide was published on October 19th, in time for early voting.

Candidate Forums

We held candidate forums in Schenectady (Oct. 2- Cheryl Nechamen), Glenville (Oct. 3- Vicki Hoshko), Niskayuna (Oct. 15- Connie Young/Carol Furman) and Rotterdam (Oct. 16- Cindy Weissend). Each forum was staffed by a diligent group of volunteers- thank you!

The forums went smoothly as we worked around the county legislature budget meetings some of which seemed to be held the on the same nights as our forums. New this year was the unwillingness of some of the audience to turn off their cell phones for the duration of the gathering. We had to maintain a constant patrol to make sure no one was making recordings which could potentially be manipulated to disparage an opponent under the auspices of the League. The videotapes were edited by Open Stage Media and shown on public access cable. They were also available on our website at lwvschenectady.org and on our Facebook page.

TAKE ME TO VOTE

The 2019 Take Me to Vote education project is completed. All 24 Schenectady County elementary schools received polling maps from the Board of Elections and tickets provided by Price Chopper. Each of the wonderful volunteers delivered the material in time for the teachers to explain the voting process. The children returned tickets to the polling places where their parents voted.

This local election like all local elections should be important but always has a poor turn out. In all, 690 slips were collected from the Board of Elections. We will hopefully do better next time.

Connie Young

New Members

Cindy Engel

Cindy is a recently retired Woman's Health Nurse practitioner. She worked most of her career at Planned Parenthood and also has worked in private practice. She currently volunteers at the Regional Food Bank and also plans to volunteer as a Nurse Practitioner at the Albany City Mission. Cindy enjoys traveling, theater and movies. She plans to participate in LWV activities as her time and interests permit

Rena Bell

Rena is a retired elementary school teacher. Her hobbies include quilting, playing mahjong, drawing and painting. She would like to learn more about the LWV and will take part in activities and meetings that interest her.

Joan Bent

Joan was a LWV member in New Jersey prior to her retirement. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Columbia University and an MBA from Wharton School of Business. Joan had an extensive career in Environmental and Process Engineering with Mobil and Sunoco Oil Companies and was also Environmental Manager for International Flavor and Fragrance (IFF) North America. She plans to attend LWV functions as her time permits.

Shop2gether at the Open Door Bookstore

Janet Hutchison, the owner of the Open Door Bookstore and a long time LWVSC member, has once again offered our League a special pre-holiday shopping opportunity. We can shop

on Wednesday, December 4, 5 to 7:30 pm.

and either personally receive a 15% discount OR use that 15% as a contribution to our League.

Let's support the League and the Open Door by shopping together.

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We work to increase the understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

“Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy”

Trump administration wants to raise costs to become a U.S. citizen by 83 percent

Nov. 14, 2019, 3:05 PM EST

By Nicole Acevedo

Becoming a U.S. citizen may get a lot more expensive, and groups are urging legal permanent residents to apply as soon as possible.

The Trump administration wants to increase the cost of citizenship applications by 83 percent for roughly 9 million immigrants eligible to become U.S. citizens.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the [Department of Homeland Security officially announced the proposed price hike](#) Thursday, saying that "current fees do not recover the full costs of providing adjudication and naturalization services."

The citizenship application fee would go from \$640 to \$1,170 and fees associated with legal permanent residency will go up 79 percent — from \$1,220 to \$2,195.

Advocates like Angelica Salas, executive director of the [Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, or CHIRLA](#), see the administration's proposal as "a targeted and brazen attack especially on those who are poor and vulnerable" because it seeks to price out immigrants "of their rightful place in our communities and in America."

[The proposed rule also outlines a series of other kinds of fee increases](#) that impact immigration-related applications for asylum-seekers, Temporary Protected Status beneficiaries, DACA recipients and legal permanent residents.

DACA renewals would increase from \$495 to \$765, possibly giving Trump officials a tool to limit the program in case the Supreme Court allows the program to continue despite the administration's efforts to end it.

The administration is also seeking to transfer \$207.6 million of USCIS funding and divert it to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

*Nicole Acevedo is a staff reporter at NBC News Digital where she reports, writes and produces content for NBC Latino and NBCNews.com

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, DHS.

Proposed rule.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) proposes to adjust certain immigration and naturalization benefit request fees charged by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). USCIS conducted a comprehensive biennial fee review and determined that current fees do not recover the full costs of providing adjudication and naturalization services. DHS proposes to adjust USCIS fees by a weighted average increase of 21 percent, add new fees for certain benefit requests, establish multiple fees for petitions for nonimmigrant workers, and limit the number of beneficiaries on certain forms to ensure that USCIS has the resources it needs to provide adequate service to applicants and petitioners. Adjustments to the fee schedule are necessary to recover the full operating costs associated with administering the nation's immigration benefits system, safeguarding its integrity, and efficiently and fairly adjudicating immigration benefit requests, while protecting Americans, securing the homeland, and honoring our country's values. USCIS also is proposing changes to certain other immigration benefit request requirements.

USCIS has an open period in which to make comments on the Federal Register, the national journal of the US government, regarding this proposed fee hike. To do so, please click on the link below.

Written comments must be submitted on or before December 16, 2019.

You may submit comments, identified by DHS Docket No. USCIS-2019-0010, by one of the following methods:

Email: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/11/14/2019-24366/us-citizenship-and-immigration-services-fee-schedule-and-changes-to-certain-other-immigration>

This link takes you directly to the specific citizenship section on fee hikes on the Federal Register.

Mail: Samantha Deshommes,
Chief, Regulatory Coordination Division,
Office of Policy and Strategy,
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Mailstop #2140, Washington, DC 20529-2140.

CAPITAL REGION SEES HOPE FOR A ZERO WASTE FUTURE

The Zero Waste Capital District Coalition, including the League of Women Voters of Albany County that sponsored Neil Seldman's presentations on October 14 and 15 at the Albany Public Library is very pleased that local and regional officials, organizations and lay people came out and expressed interest and enthusiasm for the ideas and solutions to our waste problems that Dr. Seldman suggested. Zero Waste can be implemented without continuing to increase costs to taxpayers. There may be ways to create local economic benefits to individuals and governments by creating business around materials that would otherwise be treated as waste. Many expressed willingness to participate in ongoing efforts to create local and regional zero waste strategies.

NEXT STEPS FOR ZERO WASTE CAPITAL DISTRICT

Dr. Seldman has connected us with companies and consultants to help us solve our waste problems. The week after his visit, he organized a conference call with a number of people from the Capital District on "Pay to Throw" (PAYT) as a way to reduce landfill waste by about 40% and increase recycling and composting. We have learned that over 10,000 U.S. municipalities already have PAYT programs in place.

COMING EVENTS

Monday, December 9 (Day 1 Training) Time and location TBD

Saturday, December 14 (Day 2 Training) Time and location TBD

Webinars: Monday, January 20 (MLK day) and/or Saturday, February 1 and/or Sunday, February 9 (Time and location TBD Monday Dec. 9 - (Day 1 Training) (Time and location TBD)

Saturday Dec. 14 - (Day 2 Training) (Time and location TBD)

Webinars: Monday Jan 20 (MLK day) and/or Sat Feb 1 and/or Sun Feb 9 (Time and location TBD)

Resources

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm5qw4sCvPZnrol1T2T92Lg/?fbclid=IwAR3CA3MSDFeNA2Kb-VDFDZxhMgRte5iYfzS27VbqpfXTuUsKhK2bpn6ITF8>

Article by Times Union staff-writer Rick Karlin about issues raised during the Neil Seldman workshop. <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Recycling-expert-sees-mix-of-success-and-inertia-14537153.php>

President	Ann Hatke
Vice-President	Jude Rabig
Secretary	Heide Westergaard
Bulletin Editor	Helen MacDonald

MEMBERSHIP

Our League goals are to educate citizens about government and public policy, encourage citizen participation in elections, and influence public policy relating to issues we've studied. Dues money makes working on our goals possible. **DUES for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020** (Contact Connie Young at 393-7061)

Return to: LWV of Schenectady County, P.O. Box 9135, Schenectady, NY 12309

New or Renewing Members Please Confirm this Contact Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

_____ \$60 Individual _____ \$85 Household _____ \$20 Full-time student
_____ Additional support for the League, dues plus \$10 contribution (\$70 or \$95 – circle one)
(Confidential arrangements for special payment or partial assistance can be made. Contact
Connie Young at 393-7061 with any questions. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.)

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_____ *I am sending my membership dues payment, but please consider me an **INACTIVE member**.*

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ACTIVE MEMBERS: The League depends upon the work of its members, even for a short task. Please check any activities that interest you. We appreciate your help.

Judicial _____ Health _____ Membership _____ Fundraising _____ Environment _____ Observer
Corps _____ Education _____ Voter Services: Register Voters _____ Candidate Forums _____ Voter
Information _____ Computer Skills Graphics/Layout _____ Databases _____ Citizenship
Mentoring _____ Website Work _____ Facebook _____ Electronic Publicity _____ Other
Technical Skill? (Describe) _____ Other areas of
interest _____

*****NOTICE*****

It has come to our attention that some members who requested paper Bulletins may not have received them due to a glitch at the post office. If you wanted a paper Bulletin, but did not receive the October or November issues, please contact Ann Hatke at lwvschenectady@gmail.com. Replacement Bulletins will be sent to you.