

Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

September 2024



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF THE COOPERSTOWN AREA

From Your Co-Presidents

There's Much to Share: Elections, Giving, Conventions

Fall is almost here and longtime League members know that means that Election Season is here, too. Election time is always a busy time for the League but it's especially so in a presidential election year. Hudi Podolsky and the Voters Service team have hit the ground running. (Read more on page 2). If you haven't been involved yet, be in touch with Hudi. She's looking for volunteers for various public events and some behind the scenes activities.

September also means Mohawk Valley Gives Day. The Giving Day is really a one-stop shop for donating to local organizations, including our League. Please take a minute and mark September 20 on your calendar. Visit the site and make a donation to the League. Donations are deposited into the LWWNY Education Foundation. This year's donations will go a long way to support our voter education projects, candidates' forums, and registration efforts. If what you read in *Update* about the League seems worthwhile, then make sure you help make the League's voice heard. Read more about Mohawk Valley Give on this page.



Co-presidents Christina Bourgeois and Kristin Pullyblank

Finally, there was lots of good debate on the motions at the LWV National Convention in June (which Kristin was able to attend virtually). The delegates voted to re-adopt the "Make Democracy Work" campaign. Although an amendment to include reproductive rights explicitly to the campaign failed, delegates did approve the recommended resolution, Motion 2024-166 that "the League of Women Voters reaffirms its commitment to fight for reproductive rights and justice, including bodily autonomy, privacy, reproductive health, and access to contraception and abortion, and against disinformation on this issue."

Delegates did pass the motion to concur with the LWV of Washington's position on "The Decline of Local News and its Impact on Democracy." The other two motions that LWWNYS supported—Vermont's concurrence on privatization of healthcare and the Climate Interest groups motion to add climate as a program item did not pass. The Delegates also approved a LWWUS study on the judiciary. National is going to try to speed up the study process (to one year), and this study will be a "test case" of sorts. In light of this new study process, delegates attempted to amend the motion and focus the study on the Supreme Court.

We also elected Dianne Wynn as the new President of the LWWUS Board and were introduced to Celina Stewart, the League's new CEO. Read more about them on page 4.

Remember: Mohawk Valley Gives Day on September 20!

The logo for Mohawk Valley Gives, featuring a heart shape with a checkmark inside, and the text "MOHAWK VALLEY GIVES" in large, colorful letters. Below it, it says "POWERED BY THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION" and "9.20".

**Help Keep Your League Vital!
Be Part of Mohawk Valley Gives**

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area is proud to be part of the Otsego County's annual day of giving on September 20, 2024. Through the efforts of the Community Foundation of Otsego County, non-profits in Otsego County, including our League, will once again have the opportunity to participate in this 24-hour community-wide day of giving. Gifts will benefit nonprofit organizations serving our region. The public (that's you!) is encouraged to visit the Mohawk Valley Gives website (www.givemv.org) and choose which local non-profits to support. The donations you make on this giving day remain here in our county to support area organizations.

It's easy to participate: go to www.givemv.org and put League of Women Voters in the "search" then make your donation to our League. While you are there, take a minute to explore the other outstanding organizations that raise funds through Mohawk Valley Gives. If you are eager to get started, early giving begins on September 16.

You know how important the League is to our community especially in a presidential election year when our community turns to the League to carry out our work like candidates' debates, voter registration drives, and VOTE411. We hope you will take this opportunity to give.

Election Day 2024 is Almost Here! Are You Part of the Action?

In case you haven't heard, there's an election on November 5, 2024! Hudi Poldolsky and her Voter Service team have been hard at work planning and preparing our members to do voter **service** as we approach Election Day.

There are several new rules about voting for this election. Probably first and foremost is that voter registration is open until ten days before elections day. (This year that will be October 26.) That extends the former registration day by 20 days!

Also new this year is early voting by mail. Until now, voters could vote absentee, but a new law allows voters to apply to vote by mail whether or not they will be absent from the state on election day.

Hudi has held several training sessions for the fall registration period where volunteers learned the nuances of registering voters and the new regulations like voting by mail. There will be a final training session on September 9, at 5:30. Contact Hudi.

This team is ready to go.

Tuesday, September 17, is National Voter Registration Day. Celebrated each September, National Voter Registration Day rings together volunteers from all over the country a single day of coordinated field action focused on growing our shared democracy. We hope you will join in our local efforts!

Our League will have tables for registering voters at Price Chopper in Richfield Springs, Grand Union in Hartwick Seminary, The Clark Sports Center, and SUNY Oneonta.

On Saturday, September 28 we will have tables at the Cherry Valley Kite Festival. The League will be registering voters at Welcome Home Cooperstown at the Cooperstown Village Library on September 3 and October 1.

We need volunteers to staff all these tables. Even if

you haven't been able to attend our training sessions you can volunteer to help out, and you'll be paired with someone who has experience. Please contact Hudi to volunteer.

Coming soon are our annual "Make a Plan to Vote" fliers. Hudi is hoping that League members will share copies of the flier with friends and neighbors. Our theme this year is "Be a Voter!" The Make a Plan flier has all the information citizens need to be a voter. If you would like copies of the handout, contact Hudi.

Starting in mid-September we'll also need volunteers who can help distribute Vote411 lawn signs and posters, and deliver forms to libraries and post offices—no training required! And don't forget to be an advocate for voting on your own! Think about people you know who might need encouragement to become voters and help them get ready to cast that first crucial vote.

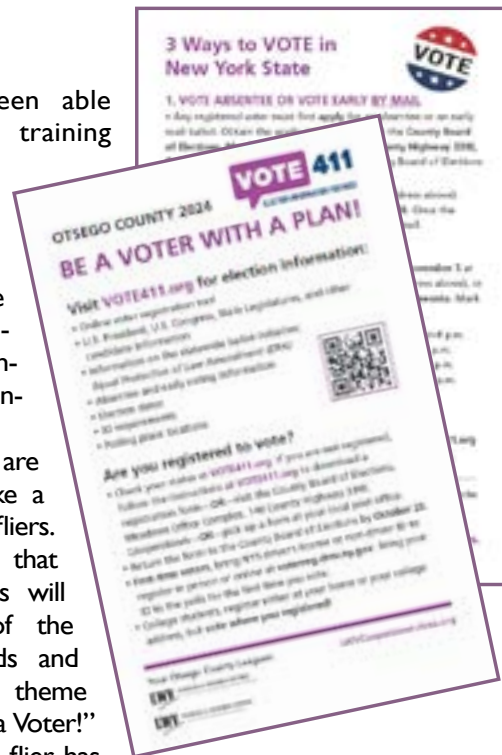
We've also listed all these dates on our calendar on page 4 as well. More events may be coming. Our goal this year is to get more people registered and to the polls. It's your chance to make a real difference. We need your help.

Contact Hudi at: hudi.podolsky@gmail.com

A VOTING BY MAIL FOOTNOTE

Just in time for elections, the New York State Supreme Court upheld the new early vote by mail legislation passed in December 2023. The new law would allow voters to choose to vote by mail. Unlike absentee voting, early mail voting does not require an excuse. The legislation was passed in December 2023 but was challenged in court. In late August the law was upheld.

You can read more in *The Hill* (<https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/4837403-new-york-high-court-mail-voting-stefanik/>)



Coming soon: the 2024 edition of Make a Plan to Vote. The Voter Service team needs volunteers to distribute these fliers to libraries and other places in the area as well as friends and neighbors. Can you help? Contact Hudi at: hudi.podolsky@gmail.com

A Sign of the Times! Every Yard Needs One

Do you have a VOTE411 sign? We're hoping all our members will find a place in their garden or yard for one of our VOTE411 lawn signs.

If you would like to get the VOTE message out and spread the word about VOTE411, the League's electronic voters guide, contact Aviva Schnieder (aviva330@gmail.com) and she will arrange to have your sign ready to pickup in Cooperstown after September 30.



Time to Renew. Do it Today!

An exciting Fall season coming up! The League will continue its efforts to assure fair elections, register voters, and promote and distribute accurate and reliable voter information. We can only do all these important things because of the support of our members. We are counting on your continued support as we enter the 2025 membership renewal period.

Our membership term runs from January to December. The League report an accurate count of our membership by January 31, 2025, and it's much easier to do so if we receive your renewal in the Fall. Enclosed in this issue of Update is a renewal form. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to us.

Our League continues to offer a “pay-what-you-can” option to our members. We don't want the cost of membership to be a deterrent to joining the League. Please take

advantage of this membership opportunity.

Each year during our membership renewal period, many of you contribute to the League by making an additional donation to support our work. Any additional donation you make to the LWVCA helps us carry out our programs, including our “pay-what-you-can” memberships and our voter service activities. Dues and contributions cover the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter, maintaining our website, carrying out our Voter Service work, and sending an additional delegate to Students Inside Albany. If you do not find a copy of the membership renewal form in this newsletter, you may download it from our website (www.LWVCooperstownArea.org).

Please fill it out and return it along with your check to PO Box 426, Cooperstown, NY 13326 as soon as possible.

On the Ballot: NY State's Equal Rights Amendment

An Amendment to Guarantee Protections for All New Yorkers —the Equal Rights Amendment —will be on the ballot on November 5. Currently, New York's State Constitution does not protect all New Yorkers including, for example, pregnant New Yorkers, women, LGBTQIA+ people, those with disabilities, older adults, and people from other countries and cultures.

The New York ERA would:

- explicitly prohibit discrimination by the government based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex — including their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression — in addition to pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive health.
- add to existing protections against discrimination based on race and religion.
- ensure New York's Constitution includes the strongest legal protections for all New Yorkers.

Here is how the amendment is expected to read:

A. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof. No person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed [or], religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in [his or her] their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state, pursuant to law.

B. Nothing in this section shall invalidate or prevent the adoption of any law, regulation, program, or practice that is designed to prevent or dismantle discrimination on the basis of a characteristic listed in this section, nor shall any characteristic listed in this section be interpreted to interfere with, limit, or deny the civil rights of any person based upon any other characteristic identified in this section.

Proposition 1 appears on the backside of the ballot. Don't forget to flip your ballot!

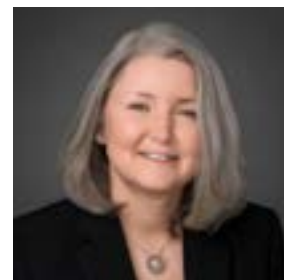
LWV Elects New President, Hires New CEO

At the LWVUS convention in June, delegates were introduced to two new leaders: Dianna Wynn, who was elected as the new LWVUS Board president, and Celina Stewart, the new CEO.

Dianna joined the League in 2013 and served as president of the LWV Wake County in Raleigh, N.C. Before joining the national Board, she focused on advocating for fair voting maps in North Carolina and ending gerrymandering in redistricting. Dianna is a communication consultant and former college professor in communication studies.

Celina has served as the LWVUS's Chief Counsel and Senior Director of Advocacy and Litigation since 2018. As the

lead lobbyist and liaison with Congress and the Administration, Stewart has increased the League's profile on the Hill and across legal communities nationwide. She replaces Virginia Kase Solomón who announced her departure earlier this year.



New LWVUS President (left) Dianna Wynn and LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart (above)

Let the Sun Shine! Be an Observer for the League

One of the programs that increases the League's visibility in the community is our Observer Corps. Observers attend the regular meetings of local civic entities—school boards, village boards, town boards and the county board. Observers do not speak for the League rather they go to the meetings to listen, learn, and make factual reports of the proceedings. The goal is to be a fair and accurate civic monitor and help assure that New York's open meeting laws are followed. Observers also alert our League board regarding issues that might be of interest to the League.

Several League members have committed to attend regular meetings, but we need of more Observers. The work requires attendance at the meeting (or if necessary atten-

dance via Zoom), listening to the proceedings, and filing a short report. Even if you can't make a monthly commitment, we can always use substitutes. Consider joining the group; you can start by attending a meeting with one of our regular observers to get an idea of the work.

Be in touch and think about joining us in what is an eye-opening experience!

We thank Christina Bourgeois, Sandy deRosa, Anna Gaeta, Mary Farmer, Cindy Levene, Elva Manee, Maureen Murray, Hudi Podolsky, Sydney Scalici, and Karen Streck for helping us in this important work. Contact me (ddalton@stny.rr.com) for more information.

Deb Dalton, Chair, Observer Corps

Coming Up

Sept. 4 LWV Cooperstown Area Board Meeting, 5:00 pm. Contact Kristin Pullyblank for more information.

Sept. 9 Final Voter Service Training, Hudi Podolsky's house 37 Averill Road, Cooperstown, 5:20.

Sept. 17 **National Voter Registration Day.** The LWVCA will have volunteers registering voters at Grand Union in Cooperstown, Price Chopper in Richfield Springs, and the Clark Sports Center.

Sept. 20. **Mohawk Valley Gives Day.** Support the League and other local not-for-profits. See page 1 for details.

Sept. 28 Voter Registration at the Cherry Valley Kite Festival

Sept. 30 Pick up your VOTE411 sign. Details on pg. 2

Oct. 2 LWV Cooperstown Area Board Meeting, 5:00 pm. Contact Kristin Pullyblank for more information.

Oct. 26 Last Day to register to vote.

Oct. 26 Early Voting begins

Officers & Board of Directors 2024-2025

Co-presidents: Kristin Pullyblank, 607-437-7526; kpullyblank@gmail.com and Christina Bourgeois: 607-544-4072; retiredcb2019@gmail.com

Board Members

Treasurer: Susan Newman, suchasshn@gmail.com; 607-435-6460

Secretary: Laura Wetzels, ltanswetz@gmail.com, 847-650-9235

Voters Service: Hudi Podolsky, hudi.podolsky@gmail.com

Membership: Deb Dalton: ddalton@stny.rr.com, 607-437-5761

Environment/Natural Resources: Open

Newsletter/Communications: Patty MacLeish, pmacleish@verizon.net; 401-835-0162

At Large: Aviva Schneider. aviva330@gmail.com

Off-Board:

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

Reducing Polarization Project:

Tom Pullyblank: tompullyblank@gmail.com; 607-282-2183

LWV Oneonta Team Leader: Stephanie Bauer:

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Contact: Newsletter@LWVCooperstownArea.org;

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