

# Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



October 2024

From Your Co-Presidents

## How Do You Spell Success? With Lots of H-E-L-P!

We are both proud to be leading this wonderful organization in our community. There is nothing that motivates us more than seeing how our friends and members respond when we ask for help. We have been especially impressed this year by the extent of support the League received for our election-related events and our fundraising. This support from our community of time, talent and treasure makes the work we do for the League a real pleasure. It may sound trite, but it really does take a village (and the surrounding towns!) to keep our League vital. And our League for more than fifty years has succeeded through good times and hard time because of the support of our members and our community.



Co-presidents Christina Bourgeois and Kristin Pullyblank

You help us empower voters and defend democracy! Thank you.

With the support of the Otsego County Community Foundation, the LWV of the Cooperstown Area participated in the Mohawk Valley Gives Day in September. We raised \$1,085 for our League. Thank you to our members who supported us on Giving Day:

Susan & Chuck Newman  
Deb & Jim Dalton  
Sandra Derosa

Melinda Hardin & Lou  
Allstadt  
Nancy Herman

Patty & Bruce MacLeish  
Shelby & Padraic MacLeish  
Maureen Murray

Kristin Pullyblank  
Paul & September Schecter  
Laura Tansy Wetzel

Thank you as well to these members of our community who donated to the League on Giving Day.  
Community Foundation of Otsego County    Jeff & Karen Katz    Carol Krause-Nealis

Our "Get out the Vote" events wouldn't happen without cooperation from these businesses, institutions, and community organization. Please let them know how much we appreciate their support and what it means for our democracy.

Bassett Medical Center  
Cherry Valley Kite Festival  
Clark Sports Center  
Cooperstown Graduate  
Program  
Grand Union, Hartwick

Hunger & Homelessness  
Coalition  
LWV Oneonta Area  
Oneonta Area NAACP  
Otsego County Board of  
Elections

Otsego County Community  
Foundation  
Otsego County Jail  
Price Chopper,  
Richfield Springs

SUNY Delhi  
SUNY Oneonta  
The Farmers' Museum  
Welcome Home Cooperstown

As of October 13, volunteers on the Voters Service Committee have had contact with more than 2,000 voters (including 17 inmates at the County jail, including 5 first-time voters) this election season. Thank you to all these members as well as supporters and friends of the League who helped make our National Voter Registration Day events a success. We will be keeping up this work until election day. Thank you to:

Stephanie Bauer\*  
Hannah Brigham  
Carol Cooper\*  
Roe DiBona\*  
Maryann Dietz\*  
Mary Farmer\*  
Kristen French  
Anna Gaeta\*  
Nicholas Gilbert  
Pat Hanft\*  
Bill Harclerod,  
Bonnie McGuire Jones\*

Nancy Kelly\*  
Fran King\*  
Kamila Magana  
Emma Maro  
Stephanie McClintick  
Bertine McKenna\*  
Martha Membrino\*  
Daniela Mendez  
Katherine Muir\*  
Maureen Murray\*  
Susan Newman\*  
Brandie Conner

Hudi Podolsky\*  
Chris Rossi  
Sydney Scalici\*  
Aviva Schneider\*  
September Schecter\*  
Jaye Shelby\*  
Erica Sialinski  
Marilyn Simurro  
Kate Siracusa  
Gretchen Sorin\*  
Ellen Spencer\*  
Janet Sutta

Mary Tedesco\*  
Robb Thibault  
Rosalind Thomas\*  
Justice Tinker  
Danielle Tonner  
Anthony Tohill  
Alyssa VanPelt  
Ellie Vogl  
Sydney Waller\*  
Laura Tansy Wetzel\*

\*Indicates a member of  
the LWVCA

# Just the Facts! LWVNY has the *FACTS* on Voter Fraud

PATTY MACLEISH

Misinformation and disinformation are most insidious when they spread falsehoods about our election system. The LWVNY recently compiled a list of **facts** intended to dispel falsehoods about elections.

The League notes that over the past few years, the claims about election fraud have multiplied with very little reference to the facts. According to the Brennan Center, over the last 50 plus years, there has been no evidence of voter fraud in the United States on a scale even close enough to rig an election. The *Washington Post* noted that a review of the 2016 election produced only four documented cases of voter fraud out of 136 million votes counted votes.

- The main reason that voter fraud is so low is because our elections are, in fact, secure. First of all, New York's election laws require that voting machines may be electronic but they cannot be capable of externally transmitting or receiving data via the internet, radio waves, or other wireless means.
- Machines must also have a counting mechanism to keep track of how many votes have been recorded in an election. This count is compared to the number of ballots issued.
- The local Boards of Elections (BOE) across the state run two types of audits for each election. The first audit is

before the election when the Board tests one of every type of voting machine and every ballot counting machine. Post-election audit, the BOE audits the voter verifiable audit records on 3% of the voting machines and invites election watchers to come observe the audit. Audit tallies recorded by each voting machine are compared with tallies recorded by the machines. If they do not match, the Board uses the verifiable audit records to determine votes cast.

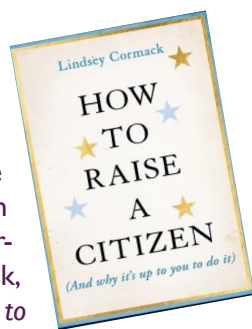
- Ballots are counted by vote-counting machines, which are more accurate and faster than counting by hand. Hand counts can have error rates up to 50 times higher than vote-counting machines. But, election officials do verify electronic totals by reviewing some ballots by hand and then comparing the two counts.
- In New York, election officials recount if they identify vote total discrepancies or when there is a mandated post-election audit of voting machines.
- There are also many measures in place to ensure the security of mail-in ballots. The NY BOE compares signatures from mail-in ballots with signatures on record from voter registration documents. Absentee and early-mail ballots are only sent to registered voters and are mailed in nested envelopes with serial numbers specific to each ballot/envelope. Serial numbers of envelopes that come back are matched to serial numbers of envelopes sent to voters, making it impossible for someone to just print a pile of ballots and submit them. The ballots are also counted by poll clerks equally divided between representatives of the two major political parties. If a voter sends in multiple absentee ballots, or votes in person and vote absentee, the ballot of the later date or that voted in person will be counted.

There's more information on our website about ballot security. Check it out and spread information you can trust!

To read the full article from LWVNY, go to [LWVCooperstownArea.org](http://LWVCooperstownArea.org).

## A Critical How-To: Raising Citizens

On Sunday, October 20, Friends of the Village Library, joined by the Cooperstown PTA and the League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area, will present author Lindsey Cormack, who will talk about her new book, *How to Raise a Citizen (And why it's up to you to do it)*. Cormack is associate professor of Political Science and Director of the Diplomacy Lab at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey.



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The numbers don't lie. Studies continue to reveal how little Americans know about their government. Civics instruction receives the lowest number of K-12 classroom hours out of any subject. Lindsey Cormack's new book provides parents, grandparents, caregivers, and educators with an engaging and practical guide to becoming better civic role models by showing how to have conversations about the important functions of government, citizen participation, and political issues with children of all ages—even in these polarizing times.

The book talk is the first program of FoVL's 2024-2025 Sunday Speaker Series and will be held in the Cooperstown High School auditorium at 3 p.m. The talk is free and open to the public. The Green Toad Bookstore will have copies of Dr. Cormack's book available for purchase at the talk.



Roe Di Bona and Aviva Schneider spreading the word about voting at the Cooperstown Graduate Program.

## Time to Renew Your Membership. Do it Today!

As the countdown to elections continues, League members are working hard to assure fair elections, register voters, and promote and distribute accurate and reliable voter information. We can only accomplish these goals with the support of our members. Can we count on your continued support?

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed. Renewing early will help our League as we transition to the new League dues system. (Read the article below to learn why.) We've included a renewal form in this issue of *Update*. 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 by making an additional donation to support our work. These donations help 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](http://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.

### Framing our Future: LWV Membership Changes—What They Will Mean for You

In 2025, LWVUS will implement significant changes to League membership and dues' structure. One of the primary goals of the change is to strengthen the state and local Leagues by making two important changes in the dues system. The result will mean that more money will stay in our state and local Leagues and that the cost of joining will no longer be a major barrier. Your board is working hard to make sure this transition to the new system is easy and seamless. Members do not need to do anything at the moment—except pay your 2025 dues, which are now due!

#### What we have today.

- League members join the local League of their choice, and each local League has its own mechanism for joining, renewing and setting the dues and how the dues are collected.
- The dues are divided among the three levels. Our League sent Per-Member-Payments (PMPs) to LWVUS (\$33 per member), LWVNY (\$23) and \$5 remained with our League

**What is the New Structure?** One of the best things about the new system will be the ease of joining the League. All members will now join and renew through one national platform. ChapterSpot, a company that works with other national membership organizations that also have local chapters, will handle the mechanics of joining and directing new members to their local League. In the new system, there will no longer be student memberships or the payment category “Additional Member in Household.” In addition, dues will now be “pay-what-you-can.” The hope is that “pay-what-you-can” will broaden League membership by making it more affordable for a wider range of people.

#### How Will “Pay-What-You-Can” Work?

- Members will be encouraged to pay a suggested rate of \$75. The minimum dues amount is \$20.
- The suggested \$75 dues may not be what members can afford. For our League, it is a bit of jump from our current dues of \$60, so remember—“pay-what-you-can.”
- There will no longer be “household members”; each member who had been part of a household membership, will now join as a single member. Two people could each pay \$45 for a total of \$90, the current household membership rate.
- Over the years, our members have been incredibly gen-

erous and would often add additional funds to their dues amount. For these members “pay-what-you-can” may be higher than \$75. We have always appreciated this support and hope it will continue.

**The Really Good News.** Local Leagues will no longer make PMPs to the national and state Leagues. Instead, shortly after someone joins online, a percentage of the collected amount will be sent to each level of the League—20% to our local League, 47% to LWV New York, and 33% to LWVUS.

- The best news is that most of the money—67%, in fact (20% for the local League and 47% for LWVNY)—collected in our community will now stay in New York. That's good news not only for our League and New York state but for Leagues across the country. We are all aware at the threats to our democracy as laws regarding access to the ballot are changing. These laws are state laws, and many state Leagues do not have the funds to be a presence in their state houses. With the new dues split, more money will stay in our community and our state.
- With pay what you can, more people can afford to be League members.
- Members often make donations to the League at the time they join or renew; it's a significant source of income for our League. Those donations will continue to be sent directly to our League. The member will have to take an additional step to do so, but donations will remain with the local League.

**What's Next?** As a member, the first steps are easy:

- Renew your current membership as soon as you can!
- Make sure membership chair Deb Dalton has your current email—or two emails if you have a household membership.
- Beginning in early January, you will receive an email from the League through ChapterSpot asking you to sign into your new membership account. Sign up as soon as you receive it.
- Finally, the LWV Cooperstown dues will change from being due on January 31 to a renewal that is based on when you join or renew.

Taken together, these new procedures are key to making our voices heard!

# Don't Forget To Flip Your Ballot and Vote for Prop 1

**P**roposition 1, an “Amendment to Protect Against Unequal Treatment,” also known as new York’s ERA, will be on the **BACKSIDE** of your ballot on November 5. So, don’t forget to flip the ballot. There has been much mis- and disinformation about this ballot issue, but this is how it actually reads on the ballot:

*This proposal would protect against unequal treatment based on ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy.*

*It also protects against unequal treatment based on reproductive healthcare and autonomy.*

Read the letter to the editor we recently submitted, and our story in the September issue of *Update* that describes the issue in detail is available on our website. Also Check out LWWNY’s Erica Smitka speaking on Look-TV (<https://look-mediaresource.org/look-this-week-10-14-24-erica-smitka/>)

## Coming Up



- Today! **Get your VOTE411 Lawn Sign!** Contact Aviva Schneider (aviva330@gmail.com) and she will arrange to have your sign ready to pickup in Cooperstown.
- Oct. 17 **“Democracy Is Not A Spectator Sport—Get to Know the LWV.”** Hunt Union, SUNY Oneonta 7 p.m. A program to introduce members of the college community and the Oneonta community to the League. Contact Aviva Schneider (aviva330@gmail.com).
- Oct. 20 **“How to Raise a Citizen (And why it’s up to you to do it)”** with author Lindsey Cormack, 3 p.m. at Cooperstown High School.
- Oct. 21 Last day for the Board of Elections to receive address change
- Oct. 25 Voter Registration at Bassett Hospital Lobby, 1 Atwell Road, Cooperstown. 9 a.m. -5 p.m.
- Oct. 26 Last day for BOE to receive early mail ballot or absentee ballot application online or by mail.
- Oct. 26 Last day to register to vote
- Oct. 26 Early Voting Begins. Check Board of elections for times.
- Nov. 1 Observer Corps Meeting, home of Deb Dalton, 10:30 a.m. Contact Deb (ddalton@stny.rr.com ) if you are interested in joining the Observer Corps
- Nov. 3 Early Voting ends
- Nov. 4 Last day to apply in-person for an early mail ballot or absentee ballot
- Nov. 5 Election Day Polls open 6 a.m.- 9 p.m.**
- Nov. 6 Board Meeting, LWV Cooperstown Area Board. 4:30 pm, home of Deb Dalton.

### Officers & Board of Directors 2024-2025

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#### Board Members

**Treasurer:** Susan Newman, [suchasshn@gmail.com](mailto:suchasshn@gmail.com); 607-435-6460  
**Secretary:** Laura Wetzell, [ltanswetz@gmail.com](mailto:ltanswetz@gmail.com), 847-650-9235  
**Voters Service:** Hudi Podolsky, [hudi.podolsky@gmail.com](mailto:hudi.podolsky@gmail.com)  
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**Environment/Natural Resources:** Open  
**Newsletter/Communications:** Patty MacLeish, [pmaclleish@verizon.net](mailto:pmaclleish@verizon.net); 401-835-0162  
**At Large:** Aviva Schneider: [aviva330@gmail.com](mailto:aviva330@gmail.com)  
 Anna Gaeta: [annaegaeta@gmail.com](mailto:annaegaeta@gmail.com)

#### Off-Board:

**Students Inside Albany:** Maria Kaltenbach: [margirlic@yahoo.com](mailto:margirlic@yahoo.com); 315-525-5410  
**Reducing Polarization Project:**  
 Tom Pullyblank: [tompullyblank@gmail.com](mailto:tompullyblank@gmail.com); 607-282-2183  
**LWV Oneonta Team Leader:** Stephanie Bauer: [stephanie.bauer93@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.bauer93@gmail.com); 607-376-1822  
 Newsletter—Contact: Patty MacLeish; [pmaclleish@verizon.net](mailto:pmaclleish@verizon.net)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LWVoftheCooperstownArea](https://www.facebook.com/LWVoftheCooperstownArea)  
[www.LWVCooperstownArea.org](http://www.LWVCooperstownArea.org)

**Renew Today**  
 Your 2024 renewal form is included in this issue. Please return by November 1, 2024!  
**New to the League?** Already renewed? If you recently joined or already renewed, your name is highlighted in yellow and you are all set!

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