

### Since June 2025, we have...

Made our voice heard through a guest editorial in the *Freeman's Journal* on primary elections; sent letters to the editor on the Cooperstown School Board Budget Vote and congratulating Schoharie County residents on their voter participation rate, and signed a letter along with other New York Leagues to Governor Hochul in support of ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center).

#### Held a "Meet & Greet" for newly elected town officials in Middlefield.

Engaged other community groups and businesses as co-sponsors and supporters including: Cooperstown Natural Foods, Cooperstown Food Pantry, Connections at the Clark Sports Center, The Race, Equity and Justice Series of the First Baptist Church of Cooperstown, the LWVUS, Community Foundation of Otsego County, DeNicola Design, Cooperstown Graduate Program, NAACP, Green Toad Bookstore, Elm Inn in Milford, and the Village Library of Cooperstown.

Introduced more than 100 people to the many ways to protect our environment through programs on plastics in our environment and how to compost.

Welcomed 29 new members to our League!

Worked with youth in our area through various events and programs: Crayon Carnival, Earth Day, Poster Contest, Students Inside Albany, Voter Registration.

Connected citizens to candidates through forums in Milford and Hartwick for the 2025 elections.

Made contact with 150+ citizens registering voters and distributing Make a Plan to Vote brochures.

Hosted a program introducing "Unite & Rise 8.5" featuring our County Board of Elections Commissioners Michael Henrici and Lori Lehenbauer to discuss the voting process and ballot security.

Advocated in Albany on issues important to our area.

Through our Observer Corps, attended meetings of 5 different government entities and filed more than 60 reports.

### And so much more. Read on!

## Co-Presidents Report

The past year has been an exceptionally productive one for the League, thanks to the dedication and talent of our members. With enthusiasm they have donated their time and energies to the cause of defending our democracy, voter rights, and preservation of our precious natural resources.

Last year, we set a goal to offer at least four all-member programs. We met and surpassed that goal! In addition to holding our annual Program Planning meeting, the Winter Doldrums Party, and our 2025 Annual meeting with guest speaker J.J. Green, the League widened its reach into the community with several programs and initiatives. In this report, you will find individual committee reports with all the details.

In brief, our programs included the following:

- Kicked off Unite and Rise Kickoff 8.5, with a presentation featuring Otsego County Board of Elections Commissioners Michael Henrici and Lori Lehenbauer to discuss the voting process and ballot security.
- Sponsorship of the series, "Beyond Plastics" hosted by Judith Enck, nationally recognized environmentalist.
- A program to reduce the use of plastics during the holidays.
- Heard from Lindsey Cormack, author of *How to Raise a*

#### Christina Bourgeois and Hudi Podolsky

*Citizen: And Why it Matters to You.*

- Held our first-ever, post-election "Meet and Greet" with the Middlefield Town Board and other officials representing the town.
- Spoke at Constitution Day at SUNY Delhi.
- Had a booth at the Cooperstown PTA's Crayon Carnival.

We look forward to another dynamic year of "Making Democracy Work" with our Voter Services activities, engagement with local government through our Observer Corps, and by participating with our Natural Resources Committee in activities to reduce plastics in our homes and communities.

The League will host several upcoming events; read about them in the enclosed abbreviated issue of our early summer *Update*.

[Note: full copies of all the annual reports are posted on our website.]



Christina Bourgeois and Hudi Podolsky

**PROPOSED BUDGET July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027**

Assets (as of April 10, 2026)	
Checking Account	\$2,489.19
LWVNY Education Foundation	\$1,786.40
CD Balance (Wayne Bank)	\$2,500.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6,775.59</b>

Income/Revenue	Proposed
Memberships	\$1,500.00
Donations to LWVCA	\$2,600.00
Fundraising	\$5,000.00
Grants	\$562.50
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$9,662.50</b>

Expenses	Proposed
Operating Costs	\$725.00
Board and Administrative Committees	\$1,160.00
Delegates (meetings, conventions etc)	\$1,200.00
Communications (postage, printing)	\$1,475.00
Educational Activities (add'l Educational activities from EF)	\$450.00
Program Support	\$2,612.50
Transfer to Education Fund	\$2,040.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$9,662.50</b>

Total Revenue	Total Expenditures	Net
\$9,662.50	\$9,662.50	\$0.00

Total Budget Transfers 0.00



*Hudi Podolsky and Sheri Eurich at the Cooperstown PTA's 2026 Crayon Carnival*

8.5 kick-off event. Sixty league and community members attended.

- Held events on National Voter Registration Day at Grand Union, the Green Toad Book Store in Oneonta, and The Elm Inn in Milford, meeting with approximately 150 community contacts, and gave out a dozen voter registration forms, along with multiple early voting forms. The NAACP joined us at the Green Toad event.

- Staffed a Get Out The Vote and Voter Registration table at Welcome Home Cooperstown.
- Organized and hosted two candidate debates for the Milford Town Council (with 4 of the 5 candidates engaged) and Hartwick. Hartwick Supervisor candidates did not debate since the Republican candidate would not participate. The League does not hold “empty chair” where only one candidate agrees to participate. Ten days before the Hartwick debate the town’s interim Supervisor, disallowed it noting that a debate on town property is perceived as political. The Voter Services Committee switched venues and held the event with 20 community members attending. We are committed to pursuing this issue for clarity about the bylaws’ definition of “political” and the civic benefit to citizens of our LWV debate models.
- Provided a seasoned moderator to the Town of New Lisbon for a town-organized Candidates Debate.
- At the request of the Town of Middlefield, hosted a Meet and Greet, after the election for all of Middlefield’s town and county elected officials.
- In our first step to utilizing Voter Activation Network (VAN) provided by LWVNY, we sent a text message reminding 1,600 unaffiliated voters in Otsego County about the deadline for establishing a party in order to vote in the June Primary. We selected only voters with a confirmed cell phone number from the database.
- Finally, we campaigned through press releases, posters, and a guest editorial to encourage voters to sign up for a party to be eligible to vote in the June primary. We plan to develop a procedure manual so that new leaders can jump in and follow informative and detailed guidelines.

## Nominating Committee Report

Co-President Laura Tanzel Wetzel 2026-2028

Board of Directors Term:  
George Fasanelli 2026-2028  
Deb Dalton 2026-2028  
Aviva Schnieder 2026-2028

## Voter Services Report

**Maureen Murray**

Voter Services leadership had three major transitions this past year. First, after Hudi Podolsky became co-president, she handed leadership to Anna Gaeta, who did a wonderful job. In the spring, Anna moved with her family to Albany, and I assumed leadership. Even with those changes, we are able to submit a robust report. Since last May, the committee:

- Hosted two sessions for LWVCA members for training and refreshers on successful tabling for the League.
- Continued our collaborative relationship with the Otsego County Board of Elections Commissioners and staff. In addition to this year’s usual meeting, the two Commissioners presented on their role and the work of the Board of Elections at our Unite and Rise

## Membership Report

**Deb Dalton**

This past year has been noteworthy in both the number of new members, and the zeal and energy old and new members have brought to our League in participation and input. We gained 29 new members in 2025 and

now stand at 112. Our reach is wide with members from Cobleskill, Sharon Springs, Burlington Flats, Roseboom, Richfield Springs and Oneonta.

Thirty-seven people attended the 2026 Winter Dol-drums party, which is always a celebratory and delicious event. Our silent auction, a mainstay of the event, garnered \$1,000. Thanks to all who donated and placed bids!

The League’s new dues process has been fairly seam-less. The new system makes economic sense (more funds directed to our local League than previously), and since credit cards and other payments can now be used, join-ing is more accessible to the general public. For those who had difficulty using the new online renewal system but persevered, we are grateful! And we can still accept personal checks made out to LWVUS and mailed to our local address at PO Box 406, Cooperstown, NY 13326.

Welcome to Our New Members*		
Joan Bennett	Karen Katz	Lisa Roberts
Craig Bouck Jr.	Patricia Kennedy	Michael Stein
Marian Burke	Joseph Membrino	Richard Sternberg
Eric Camier	Annika Murray	Joanne Tobey
Mary Lou D’Avino	Anna Niedzielski	Lucy Townsend
Marjie Dennin	Kate O’Handley	Franklin Todd
Paula DiPerna	Ciaran O’Sullivan	Wetzel
Barbara Fischer	Phyllis Orłowski	Sarah Wilcox
Emma Haring	Corinne Plummer	Steve Zerby
Jacob Johnson	Emily Rawitch	

Since May 2025

## Youth Services: Students Inside Albany

Maria Kaltenbach

Although we notified all the schools in our area, the only applications we received this year were from Cooperstown High School. There were five applicants and the winners were Jacob Johnson, a senior, and Cairn O’Sullivan, a sophomore. We were pleased this year that we could again offer the program to two students. We thank our members and donors for their generosity in supporting this program.

## Youth Services: “Make your Mark” Poster Contest

Gretchen Sorin

The Youth Services Committee took on an ambitious project this year to pilot a poster contest, “Make Your Mark: Get Out the Vote,” for high school students. This first year, we will target Cooperstown, Springfield-Cherry Valley, Richfield Springs, and Milford School Districts. The goal of the project is to encourage voting among young people. Two grant proposals were submitted to fund the poster contest to the Community Foundation of Otsego County and the League of Women Voters US. Both grants were successful and the project was fully funded. Graphic designer, Doreen DeNicola donated her expertise and time to develop a poster for the contest and the Co-

operstown Graduate Program is also a partner and will be the drop off point for the posters and assist with the judging. The contest will offer \$500 for the first place; \$300 for second place, \$100 for third as well as four honorable mentions of \$50 each.

## Observer Corps

Deb Dalton

The Observer Corps monitors local government meetings—such as town and village councils, school boards, and commission meetings—to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with open meeting laws. They act as the “eyes and ears” of the League by reporting on proceedings, which helps inform advocacy efforts. The Cooperstown Observer Corps, are a hearty group who venture out—mostly in the evenings—to various meetings and report back to the League board on issues and topics of particular concern.

Lucy Townsend joined Observers this spring and is now observing the Town of Springfield, a new addition to local municipalities. Thank you to her and our other Observers: Mary Farmer, Sydney Scalici, and Karen Streck (Cooperstown School Board); Susan Newman (Otsego County Board); Mary Farmer (Town of Hartwick); Maureen Murray and Christina Bourgeois (Town of Middlefield); Cindy Levene and Mary Lou D’Avino (Town of Otsego); Patty MacLeish (Cooperstown); and Bruce MacLeish (Watershed Supervisory Committee). Before she moved, Anna Gaeta observed the Town of Cherry Valley

The presence of Observers has affected changes in several areas – spelling out of acronyms, posting agenda and minutes in a timely manner, explanation of need for executive sessions and more. We heartily thank our Observers for this important effort to keep municipalities open and accountable.

## Natural Resources Committee

Tracy Roberts

The League’s Natural Resources Committee (NRC) had a robust season of public programs and outreach, focusing on the environmental- and human-health damage wrought by plastics.

In the fall, the NRC offered an 8-week online course taught by Judith Enck, a former regional EPA administrator under President Obama and founder of the grassroots organization Beyond Plastics. The course was presented free to community members, who gathered weekly at the Clark Sports Center community room for an in-depth course on the plastic pollution crisis. Response and attendance was overwhelming, with requests for repeated course offerings in the future.

In time for the holiday season, the NRC presented “Healthy Homes, Healthy Holidays” in December, an introduction to common household, personal-care and gift items free of plastic packaging.

Finally, the NRC rounded out the year's public programs with "The Dirt on Composting" in March. Featuring Worms Waste Not, a food-scrap pickup service based in Oneonta, the presentation offered a primer on the value of composting and reducing food waste.

Behind the scenes, the NRC is also working with local institutions to reduce or eliminate plastic beverage containers, cutlery, takeout containers and the like, wherever possible.

## Program Planning

**Christina Bourgeois and Hudi Podolsky**

Our well attended Annual Program Planning meeting in February generated much thoughtful and constructive discussion.

The focus this year was national program and the LWVUS recommended that Leagues continue the program "Women Defend Democracy: Democracy under Siege." Our members agreed with this six-prong approach to addressing issues facing the USA: Voting Right, Election Protection, Redistricting; Individual Liberties, Immigration, and The Presidency.

Locally the League agreed to continue its support of the following priorities:

- Making Democracy Work with a focus on Voter Services and Voter Education.
- Increase participation in government , especially local government via our Observer Corp.

- Natural Resources with a focus on reducing plastics.
- Continue support of SIA and youth services.

## Communications

**Patty MacLeish**

All the work of our various League committees meant a busy year for the communications team. We published four issues of *Update*, our printed newsletter, and had almost-monthly issues of "Just Three Things," our e-mailed news update of events. From press releases to website postings to printed posters, members Martha Membriño and Jenni Gallaway helped make it all happen.

In particular, the communications team supported our League's effort to inform voters of the "No Party? No Primary!" campaign (at left) with posters (designed by Jenni Gallaway) and a guest editorial in the *Freeman's Journal*.



## League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area Officers and Members of the Board 2025-2026

Co-presidents: Christina Bourgeois and Hudi Podolsky  
 Treasurer: Kristin Pullyblank Secretary: Laura Wetzel

### Board Members

Communications: Patty MacLeish  
 Membership: Deb Dalton  
 Natural Resources: Tracy Roberts  
 Nominating Committee: Laura Wetzel

Youth Engagement: Gretchen Sorin, Roe DiBona  
 At Large: Aviva Schneider, Susan Newman, George Fasanelli  
 Off-Board:  
 Students Inside Albany: Maria Kaltenbach



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