

President's Letter

Hello, LWVSC Friends,

I'm writing to you on a beautiful sunny day that is reminding me that summer is not that far away. Many of us have received the vaccine by now and are cautiously beginning to see old friends, visiting family in person, and making plans for outings that had to be cancelled last year. We are entering this new stage with hope, and I wish you many healthy days ahead.

Last year at this time, we were taking great precautions in Schenectady. COVID-19 was just emerging in New York State, and there were many unknowns and much to fear. One of the forums that we wanted to hold as soon as we were able was a look back at how Schenectady managed this past year. With that in mind, we invited four different professionals to speak to us about what happened here during the pandemic and what Schenectady did about it.

Martin Strosberg, along with his brother, Dr. James Strosberg, has written a book about pandemics in Schenectady, *Schenectady's Battle Against Contagious Disease: From Small Pox to COVID-19*; he'll tell us how Schenectady handled other serious pandemics in the past and what we learned from them. Jaclyn Falotico, our Deputy County Manager, has been managing the COVID-19 response for the past year and is now overseeing the vaccination efforts, especially in our disadvantaged communities. Keith Brown, MPH, our Interim Public Health Director, will provide us with the big picture of the COVID pandemic in our city. Finally, Dr. David Holtgrave, Dean of the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, will speak about the virus as it affected the nation as well as the Capital Region.

I believe you will find this an interesting and enlightening program, so please mark your calendars for **Thursday, April 29 at 7:00 pm** on Zoom. Look for more information to come and a link to join this conversation. In the meantime, stay well!

In League,
Ann Hatke

Citizenship Mentoring Group

After more than a year, the Citizenship Mentoring Group is beginning to put itself back together. We are currently (virtually) tutoring five students as they prepare for their citizenship interview. Tutoring by Zoom or phone is not ideal, but we hope to be able to meet our students face-to-face soon. We are anxiously waiting to begin classes again, and especially getting together with all our tutors – both new and past. Most of all, we’re looking forward to welcoming back our hard-working students as they prepare to become US citizens.

OBSERVER CORPS

The League Board invites the membership to participate in the civic life of our area by observing one or more of the following. Please email comments from these observations to Mariellen Boomhower at lwvschenectady@gmail.com. Future Bulletins will contain information about additional observation opportunities.

Schenectady City Council

Council meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 5:30. **Committee meetings** are held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 5:30.

View the meetings on Open Stage Media on You Tube or Public Access broadcasts live on Spectrum channels 1303 or Verizon channel 38.

Schenectady County Legislature

County Legislature Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00. **Committee Meetings** 1st Monday of the month at 7:00. Exceptions in 2021: June, July, September Committee meetings are the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:30.

Meetings are streamed live on the Schenectady County Facebook page. Recorded meetings are found also on the Schenectady County website.

Town of Glenville

Town Board Meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 7:00

Meetings are recorded and accessible on the Town of Glenville website. Register on line to get a link to the website to attend the meeting on line. You can sign up for privilege of the floor if you would like to speak at the meeting.

Town of Niskayuna

Town Board Meeting dates are not listed but are available on the Town calendar.

Meetings are live streamed on the Town of Niskayuna website. Instructions are on the website. Recorded Meetings are also available on the website.

Town of Rotterdam Town board Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:00

Recorded meetings are available on the Town of Rotterdam website. Instructions for dialing in to the meetings are on the website. Meeting calendar is on website



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

I am pleased to announce that 14 leagues across NYS, through the efforts of their Board of Directors or local DEI Committees, and inclusive of the State Board, have completed a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Assessment Survey. Although, ideally, the LWVNYS DEI Task Force would desire more submissions in the face of the 40+ NYS leagues available, this was by no means an insignificant undertaking.

Who had I asked to complete the survey? I had only asked the leagues with a representative on the State Task Force because those Task Force members had an immediate outlet to address any concerns or issues arising, through our meetings or via Slack. I could assure them directly that their league's journey toward a routine practice of inclusion and equity had been enriched by the conversations that produced their survey responses. It may not feel like that while the survey was being administered.

There were some hard conversations out there, and some may have walked away feeling defeated in an effort they have not yet even begun to engage in fully.

Nevertheless, your State DEI Task Force representatives have acknowledged that the changes toward implementation of DEI must be considered "a journey". And the journey starts with an awareness that one needs to move systematically from point A to point B. With our collective "eyes on the prize", we are also preparing tools to help you gain an awareness that will lend itself to sustaining progress. We plan to provide information that will help you to shore up your knowledge as to why we are "in this place" of so much hatred in our country. Then, we will make recommendations as to what will make the journey smoother for you, personally and as a league chapter. Discomfort will be a part of the path we tread.

But, as Leaguers, we can and will persevere to make our country a place where true democracy is practiced by the generations to come.

In the meantime, the results of the DEI Assessment Survey which was conducted over the past several months, will be reviewed by the Task Force and then shared in order to:

- Create a state-wide Equity Plan and insert relevant language into the state's Strategic Plan;
- Share with potential guest speakers/DEI educators to assist them in developing presentations that meet our needs;
- Share with all local leagues in aid of them starting to create their own local DEI Strategic/Action plans.

Please be sure to join us at the LWVNYS Conference in June for our very first of many workshops to come that are designed for our NYS leagues. And when our DEI web page goes up shortly, please do let us know which of the featured content pieces work well for your journey. Until then, check out the Learning Guides which have been established by LWVUS to assist in your growth and development in DEI, as well as the application of DEI to all of your league work: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/dei-guide/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-guide-intro>.

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”

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

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. Membership makes working on our goals possible.

MEMBERSHIP FOR JANUARY 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2021

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 HS 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 questions about dues or payments. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.

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

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

Judicial _____ **Health** _____ **Observer Corps** _____ **Fund Raising** _____

Citizenship Mentoring Group _____ **Environment** _____ **Education** _____

Voter Services: Register Voters _____ Candidate Forums _____ Voter Information _____

Computer Skills: Graphics/Layout _____ Data Bases _____ Website Work _____

Facebook _____ Electronic Publicity _____ Other Technical Skill(Describe) _____

Other areas of interest _____