



## Letter from the President

July/August 2023

Dear LWVSC Friends,

The summer is rushing by in its usual way, and suddenly we're hurtling towards August. This swift passage of time reminds me how very quickly our climate continues to worsen. This morning, I was struck by two articles in the *New York Times*. The first reported on the serious drought situation in Iran. Due to mismanaged government policies in certain areas, the water consumption has outstripped the supply to such an extent that there is now no way to reverse the depletion. The lack of water has caused the temperatures to rise as high as 135 F degrees. It is now predicted that some of the southern provinces will lose their entire water supply by this Fall.

On the opposite page, I read about the evacuation of 19,000 people from the Greek island of Rhodes as wildfires continue to rage there. At the same time, heat waves have caused temperatures elsewhere in Greece to rise 110 F degrees and higher. Closer to home, fires continue to burn in Canada, while dangerous floods have caused "unimaginable" damage in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, these reports are not anomalies or coincidences but clear evidence that climate change is moving at a faster pace with increasing devastation.

Climate change is not affecting any one country or area, it's happening everywhere. I'm certainly not a scientist, but I feel that whether due to lack of water or too much water, heat waves or drought, we will begin to see climate migrations, complicating an already steady stream of refugees and migrants across the world.

But I'm still hopeful..... and I'm proud of the League of Women Voters, State Leagues, and local Leagues like our own for supporting a scientific approach to our climate:

"Since the 1960s, (the League) we have been at the forefront of efforts to protect air, land, and water resources. Our approach to environmental protection and pollution control is one of problem-solving. The League's environmental goals aim to prevent ecological degradation and to reduce and control pollutants before they go down the sewer, up the chimney or into the landfill. We support vigorous enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions for states and localities that do not comply with federal standards as well as substantial fines for noncompliance." *(excerpt from LWVUS Policy on the Environment)*

Let's re-commit ourselves to support, educate, and vote for sound, science-based strategies to slow and hopefully mitigate our rapidly changing climate.

In League,  
Ann Hatke

## **SICM Summer Lunch Program**

Seven LWVSC volunteers signed up to serve lunch to children during the week of July 10. We chose the C.O.C.O.A House as our site. Located in Hamilton Hill, this organization provides after-school tutoring and enrichment to promote academic success and opportunities for under-served children. This Fall they will open their new addition for job training for teens. Their executive director is Will Rivas, whom many of you heard as our speaker several years ago at a holiday luncheon.

Although we served nine children on the first day, we didn't serve any on the second or third days, and sadly, our site was shut down so that food wouldn't be wasted because of lack of attendance. However, the summer lunch program is a worthy effort, and we'll look forward to participating again next summer. Thank you's to Nancy Tudor, Joan Fucillo, Pauline Kinsella, Connie O'Brien, Anita Sanchez, Sandra McGarraugh, Nicole Salamone and Ann Hatke for volunteering!

### **Voter Services**

#### **Voter Registration**

The League is well-known for running voter registration drives. Connie Young, MaryJane Shave, and Pauline Kinsella have organized a number of voter registration events for the coming months at SCAP, YMCA, Niskayuna Co-op, SiCM Food Pantry, Salvation Army, SUNY Schenectady and Price Chopper (Eastern Pkwy and Balltown Rd) in August and September. If you'd like to volunteer, visit the signup sheet at [AT THIS LINK](#) or contact Cheryl Nechamen at [lwvschenectady@gmail.com](mailto:lwvschenectady@gmail.com). Don't forget to enter your name and email address or phone number on the signup sheet.

#### **Candidate Forums**

See elsewhere in this bulletin for information about the candidate forums that we'll be holding in September and October.

#### **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)**

These are the lazy days of summer, but the September bulletin will have a lot to say about our GOTV efforts. Stay tuned!

*Cheryl Nechamen, Voter Services Chair*

Thank you to the generous donors who attended the June Annual Dinner and donated \$275 to sponsor an Immigrant family’s “First Grocery Trip”. The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) in Albany is working diligently to provide food and housing to our newest US residents. Following is a thank you from USCRI for the \$275 from the League members.

*The \$125 in the form of checks was used to buy welcome groceries for an Afghan family of 6 who are now residing in Schenectady! They have 4 boys who we are currently enrolling in school, and they are excited to get started next month! This sponsorship saved them money and stress in their initial days here.*

*The \$150 Walmart gift card is being used to help a single mother of 2 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They had a rough start to their journey here in the United States as the recent flooding affected their transportation to Albany, and many of their possessions and documents were soaked. After such a difficult time, it became clear that this food sponsorship would help them immensely and ease their stress.*

*On behalf of everyone here at USCRI, thank you so much for supporting our clients at the very start of their time here in the U.S. Your support means everything!*

Kelly Gourley USCRI  
[kgourley@uscrimail.org](mailto:kgourley@uscrimail.org)

The week of July 16th USCRI is welcoming a Congolese family of 3 and a Burmese family of 3. The following week two Afghan families are arriving as well as a family from Moldova. Volunteers donate housing items and clean and set up apartments for the new arrivals. USCRI is always looking for donations and volunteers.

**Johanna Petersen**

<i>President</i>	<i>Ann Hatke</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>OPEN</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Heide Westergaard</i>
<i>Bulletin Editor</i>	<i>Nicole Salamone</i>

### **LWV-NYS 2023 Convention**

We represented our League at the biennial LWV-NYS Convention in June – a two-day whirlwind of workshops, speakers and connecting with members from across the state. Highlights included Keynote speaker Carolyn Maloney’s talk about the renewed push in Congress to pass the federal ERA and student-led efforts to make that happen; and “Moments in the Sun,” where League members shared ideas for voter and community outreach, and their partnership initiatives with local non-profits. It also introduced the Rural Caucus, which brings to the League the unique perspective of rural communities.

### **Takeaways and news from Convention workshops:**

Communications is Key. To make sure your audience gets the message, it has to be clear and simple, express the values you are trying to convey and, most important, make an emotional connection with the listener. Presenting a laundry list of goals and ideas – no matter how worthy – causes people to tune out.

**Election Law:** Voter information is public record, but victims of domestic violence can now apply to keep their records confidential. Soon, driver’s license applicants will automatically be registered to vote, unless they opt out.

**The Voting and Jail Project:** Many citizens detained in jail while awaiting trial or serving misdemeanor sentences do not have consistent access to their right to vote. This is a missed opportunity to encourage behaviors that have been linked to better reintegration back into society and decreased recidivism. Our League is looking into establishing a program in Schenectady County.

All workshop power points and materials are at: <https://lwvny.org/state-conventions-council/>.

**Ellen Daviero and Joan Fucillo**

## **Volunteers Needed for Candidate Forums September and October 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Schenectady County will sponsor four candidate forums before the general election on November 7. These forums, or “meet the candidate” sessions are designed to stimulate voter interest and knowledge of the issues and to encourage voter participation in elections. All candidates for office who meet New York State election law requirements and are certified by the Schenectady County Board of Elections are invited to take part in a forum. We have an excellent track record of hosting informative and relevant discussions that engage candidates and voters in a nonpartisan manner.

The League has always depended on member volunteers to staff the forums and these volunteers are central to our success. The candidate forums are scheduled for the following dates:

Niskayuna: Thursday 9/21, 6:30 - 8:30  
Glenville: Wednesday 9/27, 7:00 - 9:00  
Rotterdam: Thursday 10/5, 6:00 - 7:30  
Schenectady: Wednesday 10/11, 6:00 - 7:45

We are seeking volunteers for these positions:

**Time Keepers:** The Time Keeper will use a stopwatch and warning cards to maintain control of the time during the forum. They will be required to politely but firmly stop a candidate who is attempting to speak beyond the allotted time.

**Ushers:** The Ushers will ensure that the room is ready by checking the placement of tables and chairs, placing nameplates and water bottles for candidates, and ensuring all necessary items are in place. Additionally, the Ushers will distribute programs and index cards for questions from the audience, as well as welcoming the candidates and community members.

**Question Reviewers:** The Question Reviewers will review the index cards submitted by audience members to avoid duplication of questions and remove inappropriate questions or comments.

You can sign up to volunteer at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/candidateforums>

**Maxine Brisport and Sandra McGarraugh**

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”**

**Time to renew**

**If you haven't already done so, don't forget to renew your League membership – we need YOU. If you don't have a chance to renew at the June dinner, please mail your check and renewal form to:**

**LWV Schenectady County  
PO Box 9135  
Schenectady, NY 12309**

**Thank You!**

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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 July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024**

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ No Fee 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 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.

**Register Voters** \_\_\_\_\_ **Candidate Forums** \_\_\_\_\_ **Get Out the Vote** \_\_\_\_\_

**Citizenship Mentoring Group** \_\_\_\_\_ **Environment** \_\_\_\_\_ **Students Inside Albany** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer Corps** \_\_\_\_\_ **Judicial** \_\_\_\_\_ **Health** \_\_\_\_\_ **Membership** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facebook** \_\_\_\_\_ **Website Work** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other Technical Skills (Describe)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other areas of interest** \_\_\_\_\_