



**Letter from the President**

**March 2023**

Dear LWWSC Friends,

At this time of year, we can't help but think about the slow but sure approach of Spring. Unfortunately, I'm writing this letter under a forecast of snow, more snow, and freezing cold temperatures. Time is on our side, though, and the days are getting longer, the sun feels warmer – let's just go ahead and plan on Spring's arrival in the usual upstate way.

March is Women's History Month, and this year's theme is "women who tell us stories". It's not hard to find good books by women authors these days, but I wanted to mention three very prolific writers in particular who may already be familiar to you. I recently finished reading *Demon Copperhead* by **Barbara Kingsolver**, a re-fashioning of Dicken's *David Copperfield*. Kingsolver's characters live in a neglected corner of southern Appalachia, and are contending with poverty, hopelessness, and opioid addiction. Kingsolver has also written about ecology, and contrasts mega farming, chemical additives, and long-distance food shipping with a more local approach to growing, shopping for, and eating food (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*).

**Yaa Gyasi** is Ghanaian-American whose very first book, *Homegoing*, won a number of prestigious awards. This book begins with two African half-sisters, one living in slavery and the other married to a white British colonial governor. The following chapters each introduce a new character, all whom are descendants of the two sisters. Gyasi decided to become a writer after reading Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*.

Native American themes are the subject of writer and poet, **Louise Erdrich**. Her first book, *Love Medicine*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award, a rarity for a first novel. Since then, she has written many other novels that describe the clashes between traditional Native ways and contemporary life in America. Erdrich herself is a Chippewa on her mother's side, and often uses her own background in her work.

They say everyone has a story to tell, and we can look forward to celebrating those stories this month.

In League,

Ann Hatke

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Events Calendar**

June 2-4, 2023 The LWVNYS Biennial Convention will be held on **June 2-4, 2023** at the Crowne Plaza Albany – Desmond Hotel (yes, it’ll be an in-person Convention).

**Candidate Forum Training Offered by LWV Cooperstown & Oneonta**

Why not spend a spring Saturday morning with some League friends from around the region and learning - or refreshing – skills to be a successful League Moderator. Is your heart beating faster just reading the word “moderator”?

No worries. Attending this event is NOT a commitment to become a League Moderator. In fact, you will learn about listening skills and flexibility and fairness – all useful in other circumstances.

Do come to this fun, fast-moving, and interactive moderator training session. It will prepare – or refresh – League members on how to conduct effective, fair, and interesting candidate events. Participants will learn practical information, League rules and policies, the use of a flexible script, how to maintain the gold standard of a fair and non-partisan approach, how to support audience engagement, equal time for candidates’ voices, and strategies for success. There will be refreshments and opportunities for informal role play.

The event is Saturday, May 6, from 9:00 until noon, at the Family Engagement Center at Springbrook, 105 Campus Drive, Oneonta, NY.

<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>



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”**

**Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, VP for Voter Services****10 Day Registration Signed by Governor**

A huge win for voters in NY State as Governor Hochul just signed the 10-day Voter Registration bill (S2951A/A8858A) which will reduce the voter registration deadline to the constitutional minimum of ten days! This bill went into effect January 1, 2023 but requires implementing legislation and more – look below at Advocacy report for more information!

Meeting with Schenectady County Board of Elections. 1/30/23

Ann Hatke, Cheryl Nechamen, Sandra McGarraugh, Ellen Daviero and Pauline Kinsella attended a meeting on January 30, 2023 with SCBOE Commissioners Amy Hild and Darlene Harris to discuss our League's voter registration and GOTV efforts, and to seek advice about how we can improve our work. The Commissioners were very gracious with their time, sharing information about the BOE's work to increase voter turnout, and providing us with helpful suggestions.

Below is a summary of our meeting and discussion:

1. We received an overview of the activities that the BOE engages in to help increase voter registration and turnout, including civics presentations at area high schools, arranging for CDTA bus transportation to voting sites, and visits to jails and nursing homes. This information was very helpful as we attempt to avoid duplication and expand our own efforts.
2. We asked for and received information about how voting sites are selected (relying primarily on accessible public building sites, and focusing on low voter turnout neighborhoods where feasible).
3. We shared information about the scope of our current efforts to register voters (at high density locations such as SCCC, Market 32 and Stewart's stores, and events like the Schenectady Green Market), and lawn signs primarily in the City of Schenectady and election information handouts at all SC library locations.
4. We discussed the difficulties that both we and the BOE have in actively registering new citizens at naturalization ceremonies, and will explore improving our access.
5. We discussed the challenges relating to accessing communications information needed to invite candidates to participate in candidate forums, which are important as a means to provide contact with candidates and information about candidates' positions on issues.
6. We asked for and received many good suggestions about how we might help improve voter registrations and turnout, including regional initiatives, post card reminders, press releases, radio/TV spots, and walk about lists in low turnout areas.

We very much appreciated the time spent with us to discuss and share information and ideas about voter registration and turnout!



League members met recently at president Ann Hatke's home for a pot luck dinner and discussion of program initiatives for the 2023 year. Many good ideas were shared along with a terrific meal!

### What is COP 15?

You may have recently learned about COP 27 (Conference of Parties), the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, however, there is also a COP 15, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). They are very closely related; however, climate gets much more attention than biodiversity. Climate COPs have a clear focus to limit global temperature rises to “well below” 2C above pre-industrial levels, while aiming to limit heating to 1.5C, as settled under the Paris agreement in 2015. Currently, the UN's biodiversity process does not have an equivalent focal point. In December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, nearly 200 governments from around the world came together to agree on a new set of goals to guide global action through 2030 to halt and reverse nature loss. Nature is critical to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. Adoption of a bold global biodiversity framework that addresses the key drivers of nature loss is needed to secure our own health and well-being alongside that of the planet.

Nature is in crisis and for the past three decades governments have been meeting to ensure the survival of the species and ecosystems that undermine human civilization. Earth is experiencing the largest loss of life since the dinosaurs, and humans are to blame. The way we mine, pollute, hunt, farm, build and travel are putting at least one million species at risk of extinction, according to scientists. The sixth mass extinction in geological history has already begun, some scientists assert, with billions of individual populations being lost. The aim of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is for countries to conserve the natural world, its sustainable use, and to share the benefits of its genetic resources.

The COP 15 agreement embeds the promotion of human rights and the “rights of nature” into a plan to protect and restore biodiversity through 2030. The “rights of nature” recognizes that nature and everything it encompasses—from animal and plant species to rivers, mountains, and the soil—possess inherent rights similar to those of human beings.

The COP 15 agreement consists of four overarching global goals to protect nature and the Earth’s ecosystems.

**Agreement to conserve 30% of Earth by the end of the decade** - Protecting a third of the planet for the long-term survival of humanity, the most high-profile target at COP 15.

**Indigenous rights at the heart of conservation** - Several scientific studies have shown that Indigenous peoples are the best stewards of nature, representing 5% of humanity but protecting 80% of Earth’s biodiversity.

**Reform of environmentally harmful subsidies** - The world spends at least \$1.8tn every year on government subsidies driving the annihilation of wildlife and a rise in global heating, according to a study earlier this year.

**Nature disclosures for businesses** – this would require governments to ensure that large and transnational companies disclose “their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity.” According to the UN, biodiversity loss is rapidly shooting up the agenda of corporate risks. Other targets focus on reducing pollution from all sources, requiring businesses to disclose their environmental impacts and dependence on biodiversity, managing agriculture and fisheries sustainably and implementing legal, policy and educational measures to encourage people to make “sustainable consumption choices.”

**Conclusion:**

Every 10 years, governments agree on new targets on protecting biodiversity. The world has so far failed to meet any UN targets on halting the loss of nature, however, awareness of this crisis is greater. Also, the COP 15 Biodiversity agreement is not binding, therefore, it will ultimately be up to governments to ensure that those rights are protected as conservation projects are carried out to further the plan’s goals. Hopefully the agreement will ensure an adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the COP 15 global biodiversity framework.

Nancy Tudor  
LWVSC Representative to the 4-League Environmental Committee



## Proposed Leaders of LWV of Schenectady County 2023/2024

<b>President</b>	<b>Ann Hatke</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>open</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Judy Middelkoop</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Heide Westergard</b>	<b>2024</b>
Inside Albany	Maxine Brisport	2024
Letters to the Editor/ Press Releases	Anita Sanchez Anita Sanchez	2024 2024
Voter Services	Cheryl Nechamen	2024
Forums	Sandra McGarraugh	2024
Niskayuna	Heide Westergard/ Ellen Daviero	2024
Scotia/Glenville	Connie Young	2024
Rotterdam	Maxine Brisport /Sandra McGarraugh	2024
Schenectady	Janet Hutchison/Julia Holcomb	2024
Poll Reporting	open	
Voter Registration	Connie Young/Mary Jane Shave Vicki Hoshko	2024 2024
Get Out the Vote	Pauline Kinsella/Ellen Daviero	2024
Bulletin	Nicole Salamone	2024
Advocacy/Lobbying	Open	
Nominating Committee	Sally Knutson Johanna Petersen/Mary Pritchard Connie Young Carmel Patrick	2024 2044 2024 2024
Membership	Connie Young/Johanna Petersen Betsy Chase/Vicki Hoshko Carmel Patrick	2024 2024 2024
Community Outreach		
Fliers	Gwynneth DeLong	2024
Membership Mtngs	Connie Young / Cheryl Nechamen	2024
Mail Chimp	Judy Middelkoop	2024
Facebook	Anita Sanchez	2024

Website	Judy Middelkoop/Barbara Vivier	2024
Observer Corps	Connie Young/Membership	2024
At Large Board Members	Cathy Lewis/Joan Fucillo	2024
	Ellen Daviero/Nancy Tudor	2024
MHA Elections	Sandra McGarraugh	2024
	Vicki Hoshko/Cheryl Nechamen	2024
Citizen’s Police Review Board Representative	Victoria Cooper	2024
▣ CPRB Alternate	Megan Haessig	2024

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.

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_ \$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 518-393-7061 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.

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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