

President's Letter

Dear LWVSC Friends,

There is always a kind of rush as the fall season begins...new books, music, and films are released, organizations schedule fall events, schools and universities welcome their students back, and as we check our calendars, we see the approach of holidays. It's an exciting time and we want to be involved in it.

One easy way to become more involved in your League is to sit in on a LWVSC board meeting. Our meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of every month, unless otherwise noted. Right now, we're meeting via Zoom at 3:00 pm. The next board meeting will be October 13. Please let me know if you'd like to attend, and I'll make sure you receive the agenda and the zoom link for the meeting. Another way is to contribute to your Bulletin. Helen MacDonald is always on the lookout for interesting articles for the monthly Bulletin. Your entries would make a nice addition. Also, do you have a great idea for a public forum or information session? Run it by the board and we'll see if we can make it happen.

Judie Gorenstein, the new president of LWVNYS, has a few suggestions for how to become more active in our League, too.

1. Do you have a friend that might be interested in joining LWVSC? Ask them! (A membership form can be found in every issue of the Bulletin).
2. Do you have contact with other nonpartisan groups who can network with our League? Ask our board if that would be possible.
3. Do you have any special interests or talents? Ask our board how those might benefit the League.

Whether you want to be more active, less active, or just stay in touch, we're glad you're a member of the Schenectady County League of Women Voters – thank you!

In League,

Ann Hatke

Candidates Running in Local Elections

The League typically runs candidate forums for people running for office in local elections. Or at least, that's what we used to do, pre-COVID. This year, we decided that in-person candidate forums would not be practical and instead, we submitted a list of questions, developed by forum coordinators, to the candidates running for office in Glenville, Niskayuna, Rotterdam and Schenectady plus candidates for County offices.

Thanks to the forum coordinators: Glenville- Connie Young; Niskayuna- Ellen Daviero and Heide Westergard; Rotterdam- Sandra McGarraugh and Maxine Brisport; Schenectady- Cheryl Nechamen and Julia Holcomb for their hard work in contacting the candidates.

Most of the candidates took the time to answer our questions and their responses have been posted on our website. To find out more about the people running for office in your town, go to <https://my.lwv.org/new-york/schenectady-county/voting>.

Cheryl Nechamen

LWVSC VOTER REGISTRATION WORK



Our League undertook a voter registration drive at the Schenectady Green Market from 10am until 2pm each Sunday from August 15 until October 3. Many thanks to MaryJane Shave for not only arranging for us to have a table (and chairs!) at the market, but also for setting up our volunteer sign up sheet!

In addition to our six week Sunday program, we conducted drives on National Voter Registration Day (Tuesday 9/28) from 10am until 2pm at the Karen Johnson Library and the Bornt Library, and from 2pm-6pm at the Eastern Parkway Market 32.

As a result of our work, we were able to distribute 18 Voter Registration Forms, and collect another 21 VR Forms, which we delivered to the Schenectady County Board of Elections for processing. While these numbers, by themselves, may not seem very significant, every vote really does count(!), and

we're proud to have been able to play a part in not only getting voters registered, but in encouraging voter participation with our presence at busy venues and with the conversations and information sharing which took place.

In addition to the VR forms distributed and collected, we provided absentee ballot request forms, ballot proposal information, and other materials to people who stopped by. It was a great way to engage with the Schenectady community!

I would like to recognize and thank the many volunteers who participated in our drive: In no particular order, they are: Nicole Salamone, Suzanne Hodgkins, Joan Elliottt, Johanna Petersen, Sandra McGarraugh, Nancy Tudor, Connie Young, Ann Hatke, Sally Knutson, Anita Sanchez, Zoe Oxley, Judy Stein, Maxine Brisport, and Roberta Steiner. If I've overlooked anyone, please accept my sincere apologies! And a special word of thanks goes out to Ann Hatke and Cheryl Nechamen, whose leadership has been invaluable. Thank you to everyone who helped with this effort!

Now that the deadline for registering to vote is upon us, we need to turn our attention to getting registered voters to actually get out and vote. There are very significant constitutional proposals on the ballot, together with the many local government elections taking place in our County. (The County Board of Elections website has detailed information about the ballot proposals and the candidates for office.). If you're willing to distribute and/or put up lawn signs reminding people to vote, please contact me as soon as possible at lwvschenectady@gmail.com and we will get as many signs to you as you are able to use. We will also be enlisting the help of the City of Schenectady neighborhood associations in this effort. Remember, early voting begins on 10/23, so it's not too soon to begin our GOTV work!

As always, thank you for helping to make a difference by encouraging participation in our democracy!

Pauline Kinsella

Citizenship Mentoring Group

The Citizenship Mentoring Group has gained several new students over the last month, and our tutors are busy helping them learn what they need to know to pass the citizenship interview. Recently one student needed daily tutoring to prepare for a rapidly approaching interview, and we put together a five-member team to work with her. Thank you, Christine Barton, Maxine Brisport, Johanna Petersen, and Stephen Schechter!

Good news comes twice occasionally – we had two students who passed their interview and have become new citizens. Always a cause for celebration!

Interested in learning more about the Citizenship Mentoring Group? Please contact Ann Hatke at ash.lwvsc@gmail.com

NEW MEMBERS

Megan Haessig

Megan has been a school teacher in the Ballston Spa school system for 21 years. She has been teaching first grade for the past four years. Prior to that, Megan was an Instructional Technologist for students and teachers in grads K-6. She is a GOOGLE certified instructor.

She became interested in LWV because of a "Get Out the Vote" program done by the Saratoga LWV at her school.

Megan has several hobbies. She enjoys Travel (She has a National Parks Passport), baking, reading and football. She has served on the boards of the Schenectady YMCA, Family and Child Care Services and the Junior League. She also participated in the "Women's March in Seattle Washington following the 2016 election.

Megan is interested in helping with Voter Services.

Carolyn Knych

Carolyn worked as a secretary for the New York State Department of Labor and for the Office of Substance Abuse Services. After retiring 21 years ago, she has volunteered for the Diabetes Association.

Carolyn has joined the LWV because she is dissatisfied with the current political environment. She is interested in helping with Voter Services.

Karen Hartwig

Karen is a recently retired Special Education Social Studies Teacher from from the Schenectady school system. For the past three years she has taught Global History, US History and Participation in Government to that student group.

Her LWV interests include education, the environment and voter services.

Karen has been an avid horse woman, although she no longer rides, and she is an avid reader.

LWVNYS DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) Task Force

Regina Tillman, rmt371@live.com and Crystal Joseph, campus@lwnyc.org, Co-Chair

The DEI Task Force met with a LWVUS Board member and representative of the National LWV DEI Committee, at her request on September 9, 2021. Ms. Lali Watt wanted to gain a better insight into what was transpiring at our State's local chapters relative to DEI. We were thoroughly complimented after the meeting. A written report of the information provided by the five of the Task Force Members will be shared with all local Leagues soon. We hope to annualize the "Stories of DEI Success" reporting from thus forth.

Several new members will join the Task Force, and most having served in 2020-2021 will continue. We lost a few... to becoming their local league's president! An updated listing of members will be made available in October.

Our potential project list, in addition to planning and providing more educational opportunities, includes:

- Research and Develop a "Diversifying Membership" Tip Sheet
- Research and Develop an "Acknowledgement of Indigenous Land and People" Tip Sheet
- Website Page Development
- Analysis of Survey inputs from membership (total from 2 workshops = 184) and align with 2020 NYS DEI Assessment Survey Results (to be repeated in 2023)
- Research and Development of a set of Metrics for DEI
- Consideration of a LWVNYS Award Name and Criteria for local leagues to submit their DEI planning and accomplishments for recognition and acknowledgement (Biennial Conference)
- Fundraising via Grants and Sponsorships
- Develop a DEI 21-Day Challenge (or some configuration like 5 x 5 = five days x 5 weeks) for, and by, LWV
- Initiate "JEEDI for Change" (Collective or Individual League Member Action in the name of Justice, Empathy, Equity, Diversity anInclusion)

Legislative Update

Jennifer Wilson, Jennifer@lwvny.org

Redistricting Commission Update

At the Independent Redistricting Commission's September meeting they announced that they had hired two Redistricting mapping consultants - Redistricting Insights and Redistricting Partners. They also stated at this meeting they would release their maps and their hearing schedule at their next meeting. On September 15th the Commission released their draft maps. Two sets of maps were put forward there was no specific discussion on the maps although it was obvious one was a Republican drafted map and one was a Democratic drafted map. At this meeting the Commission also released their planned hearing schedule. See their website for the locations, dates and how you can present at the hearings: <https://www.nyirc.gov/meetings>.

The maps that were released were not in a format that was easily viewable by New Yorkers. The maps were compiled into individual Zip file that included images of maps that did not display street names or anything recognizable to the average New Yorker. The other files were in formats only understandable by map making experts.

The League worked to transfer these maps into a more user-friendly format and created a Google map that included all six map drafts as well as the current maps for NYS Congressional, Senate, and Assembly districts. These maps are available [here](#).

In late August, the League had sent a [letter](#) urging the Commission to hold public meetings on their mapping negotiations and to post publicly submitted testimonies and transcripts of their listening session and to make those materials available in multiple languages. We did not receive a response to that letter but the IRC did tweet at us that they intended to make those materials available.

On Sept 15 the Commission did post their received public testimonies but they have yet to post transcripts or make any materials available in other languages. We sent a follow up letter to the Commission urging them once again to publicize their meetings and to ensure greater transparency in future negotiations. We further urged the Commission to make their maps available in an easier to use format for New Yorkers and to release relevant mapping demographic data to voters could understand how these maps were drawn.

Election Reform

The League was invited to testify at a hearing on board of elections reform in September. We [presented testimony](#) urging the legislature to prioritize standardization of election processes and ensuring greater transparency and accountability of county board of elections. The League specifically named the following four reforms:

1. Implementing uniform standards and practices
2. Standardizing staffing and salaries
3. Increasing transparency and accountability
4. And restricting the statutory requirement for bipartisanship in election administration to the minimum constitutional requirement

The League submitted our [testimony](#) and also testified in person alongside other advocate groups.

Ballot Questions Campaign

On September 21 the League announced our campaign on 4 statewide ballot proposals. The League will be opposing Proposal 1, supporting Proposals 2, 3, and 4, and taking no position on Proposal 5. You can watch the archive of our campaign kick off at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Fg3ccZcZH4&feature=youtu.be>.

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, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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.

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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. **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 _____