

Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



Early Fall 2022

Make a Difference This Election

The 2022 mid-term elections are almost here and our League is front and center in the work to get voters registered, provide information about candidates through VOTE411, explain the ballot issues, and assure that all voters understand the who, what, where, why and when about the election. Our job is to make sure voters have the tools they need to make democracy work.

First up: What's on the ballot? In Otsego County voters will elect a U.S. senator, member of the House of Representatives, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, state assembly person and state senator, as well as county sheriff and some local town officers. Also on the ballot is the Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (read more inside), a \$3 billion environmental bond issue.

How can you make a difference this election? Join us as we work to register voters and distribute information at three events (and more may be coming). The tasks are simple—help people register,



Members Julie Sorensen and T'nette Kuzminski (foreground) engage voters at the 2021 Rotary Fall Fling. The League is still looking for volunteers for this year's activities.

distribute materials about the issues, and answer questions. There will also be some engaging activities for people who visit our tent at the events. The training is easy and the work is fun!

If your fall is busy, here is the easiest to be part of this effort: pick up a VOTE 411 lawn sign for your front lawn. To get yours, contact president@lwvcooperstownarea.org.

We will be at the Cooperstown Farmers Market on September 17, the Cherry Valley Kite Festival on September 24, and the Cooperstown Rotary Fall Fling on October 8. To help with these events, contact president@LWVCooperstownArea.org.

Please Renew Today!

Members: The Heart of Our League

Our members have been incredibly supportive of the League in the past few years. You were there as we did our best to carry out the work for a presidential election during a pandemic. You stuck with us as we got the hang of Zoom meetings. Looking back, it was amazing how much of our regular work—candidates' debates, voter registration, program planning, League development, activism—we managed to do during that trying period.

As we return to normal, or near normal, the board and I have reflected that it was our members that really kept us going. The support and understanding that members gave to the League leadership team helped us believe "Yes, we can" as we faced each new challenge.

Let's keep it going!

I am counting on your continued support as we enter the 2023 membership renewal period. As you know, our membership term runs from January to December. I must report an accurate count of our membership by

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Coming Up

- 09/13:** Reducing Polarization Project, 6 p.m., A conversation based on Ezra Klein's *Why We're Polarized*. See story on page 3.
- 09/17:** **Get Out the Vote (GOTV) event**, Cooperstown Farmers Market, 9am-2 pm. We'll be distributing voter information and registering voters. Help us make democracy work.
- 09/20:** National Voter Registration Day.
- 09/24:** **GOTV event**, Cherry Valley Kite Festival 10 am-5 pm. Help us register voters and distribute voting information. Another opportunity for you to help us make democracy work.
- 10/05:** LWVCA Board Meeting, 6 p.m.
- 10/08:** **GOTV Rotary Fall Fling**, Clark Sports Center, 10-5. Help us register voters and distribute, voting information. Here's your last chance to help make democracy work this election season. **See story above.**
- 10/14:** Last day to register for November election.
- 10/24:** Last day to return or absentee ballot application by mail
- 10/29:** Early Voting begins.
- 11/01:** **Deadline for renewing your League membership for 2023.**
- 11/01:** Youth Committee Director September Schecter describes her experiences at the Harvard Case Management Institute. **Story on page 2.**
- 11/02:** LWVCA Board Meeting. 6 p.m.
- 11/06:** Early Voting Ends.
- 11/08:** **ELECTION DAY. Polls open 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.**
- 11/15:** Reducing Polarization Project, 6 p.m., Conversation no. 2 on Ezra Klein's *Why We're Polarized*.

Election Season is Here & We Need You!

We are writing this message on New York's August Primary Day as we are getting ready to move into high gear for the November elections. First, The League is planning to hold Get Out The Vote (GOTV) events at three different locations. One of the venues will be at the Cooperstown Rotary's Fall Fling on October 8. Fall Fling was one of the first large, post-pandemic public events held in Cooperstown. What we remember most about that day last fall was being so happy to be out among people and telling them about the upcoming election and the issues that were on the ballot. We will also have some engaging activities for all ages on voting and the environment.

Most people, even those who vote regularly, don't start thinking about elections until the last minute and then it's a mad last-minute scramble to find out what's up: How do I register? Who's running for office? What's on the ballot? At our GOTV events we let people know about VOTE411 and how it can help voters learn about candidates and issues. VOTE411 along with our League's Make a Plan to Vote flyers provide a handy list of the what, when, where, and how of the elections.

If you haven't participated in one of these GOTV events, please give it a try. People are so grateful for the information. You'll come away feeling that you really did something that helped make democracy work.

Preparing for these events is easy. We'll get information to you in advance about how to register voters, what's on the ballot, and how to engage people in our activities. Please read the story on page one with the details on how you can make someone's day.

As you know, making democracy work doesn't stop at the ballot box. After careful study and member discussion and agreement, the League also develops positions on a variety of issue. (You can see the breadth of our areas of interest in the League's Impact on Issues publications—NY state and LWVUS.) This year, the LWVNY is supporting the Environmental Bond Act, and we will be distributing information about that initiative as well. Inside this issue you will learn about an important issue that the League will be promoting: the Environmental Bond issue. Check it out.

Finally, inside this issue you will find your annual dues renewal form. Our board is happy to announce that beginning this year, we are offering a "pay-what-you-can" option. Student memberships are free, but the League board felt that we should go further and extend an invitation to everyone in our community who wishes to be part of our work to join us. We don't want the cost of membership to be a deterrent to being "In League." Hence, this new option. Please pass the word along that cost will not be a barrier to joining the League, and if you can, make an additional donation to our League to help support this initiative.

Keep reading! This issue of Update is full of exciting news about the many League initiatives.

Patty MacLeish and Maureen Murray
Co-Presidents



Patty MacLeish (left) and Maureen Murray (right),

Membership continued from page 1

January 31, 2023, and it's much easier to do so if we receive your renewal by November 1.

Each year, many of you contribute to the League by making an additional donation to the League. I am amazed by your generosity especially in these past years when we were unable to hold any fund-raising events. I am excited to let all of you know that the membership committee requested, and the board approved, adding a "pay-what-you-can" op-

tion to our membership categories. We don't want cost to be a deterrent to joining the League. Any additional donation you make to the League, will go toward funding this initiative.

You'll find the renewal form in this newsletter. Please fill it out and return it along with your check to PO Box 426, Cooperstown, NY 13326 before November 1, 2022. Please note: if your mailing label is highlighted in yellow, it means you joined the League recently and are not required to renew until September 2023. However, you may use the membership form to make a donation in support of the League including the "pay-what-you-can" option.

Thank you for your continued support of the League. Our success begins with you.

Deb Dalton
Membership Chair

Youth Committee Invites Teachers to November Event

LWV Cooperstown's Youth Director September Schecter attended the Harvard Case Method Institutes Program for Civics Education this summer. Participants in the program and Leagues who nominated the teachers agree to organize one community case discussion for the public in their communities. September's presentation will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1, at the upper level of the Village of Cooperstown Hall (above the library), 22 Main St., Cooperstown.

The event will be the kickoff of our League's Youth Committee's initiative to

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Welcome to our New Members

- Anna Gaeta, Cherry Valley
- Elva Manee, Oneonta
- Anne Walker, Schenevus
- Ann Webster, Cherry Valley
- Madeleine Zenir, Cherry Valley

LWV Oneonta Receives Grant and Takes GOTV Plans to Campus

The League of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area recently received a mini grant from the New York State League of Women Voters for a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) project on the campus of Hartwick College. The League hopes to provide voter registration information and voter registration applications to as many Hartwick College students as possible.

Additionally, Oneonta League member Zach McKenney will be working with his Qualitative Analysis class in the Fall semester to conduct a qualitative mixed method research study to ascertain the barriers and bridges to college student participation in the electoral process. Zach and his students are distributing a qualitative survey designed to ascertain Hartwick students' cur-

rent level of engagement in the electoral process, their current level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the electoral process, and identify the barriers and bridges that would lead to increased civic participation. They will also conduct a series of focus groups on campus to supplement the findings from the qualitative survey and provide a more holistic picture of paths to increasing civic engagement among college students.

Membership in the LWV Oneonta Area is free for students. This GOTV project should help the League not only increase membership in the Oneonta area, but also provide a path to long-lasting political engagement among college students.

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bring the League's expertise in civic involvement to our schools. The League is inviting all Social Studies teachers in Otsego County to the program so they can learn more about the Case Method Institute and ways that they can partner with the League. This event will also showcase our Students Inside Albany Program and other state-wide Youth initiatives.

Join us on Nov. 1, for the program and stay for light refreshments and conversation.

Natural Resources Team Meets

Ten League members, including several new members, met in early August to formulate plans for the upcoming year. Top of the agenda was to ascertain which items the committee could begin immediately and have some early success.

New York's Environmental Bond act was an obvious choice (see following story) and the committee plans to create a

list of the salient points to help voters understand the issue. The Bond Act vote will be a focal point of the League's booth at the Rotary Fall Fling.

Plans are also underway to establish a program to improve styrofoam recycling at the Cooperstown Central Schools. (Think packaging that comes into the school in shipments of computers and other items) Rosemary Brodersen has agreed to spearhead the project.

If you weren't able to attend the first meeting, please join us for the next meeting. The date is not set, but check our website or contact Maureen Murray for details.

Food Waste Composting Pilot Held in Cooperstown

Earlier this past summer, Madeleine Zenir, a new League member, undertook a composting pilot project in the Village of Cooperstown. Twenty-five participants saved the food waste from their homes, happily depositing it in a bucket, which Madeleine would collect once a week. The buckets of all those corn cobs, watermelon rinds, chicken bones, tomato skins, peach pits, shrimp shells, and forgotten leftovers from the back of the fridge—more than 2,500 pounds—ended up in Madeliene's compost pile. That's 2,500 pounds of stuff that was diverted from the landfill. That's 2,500 pounds of food waste that at this very moment is being transformed into high-quality com-

post for use in gardens.

The summer program was just the start. Madeleine has long-term plans for her business, Cooperstown Composting.

"This pilot program," Madeleine notes, "has helped me collect data and learn more about composting on a larger scale. In the coming months, I hope to expand the program and collect from more residents as well as restaurants and small businesses."

Among the plans are organizing a free drop-off location in town for those who do not wish to have their compost picked up curbside. Stay tuned for more updates from Cooperstown Composting!

Vote Yes for the Bond Act

The League of Women Voters of New York is supporting the Environmental Bond Act of 2022, also known as "Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bill" and has joined the "Vote YES Clean Water and Jobs" coalition.

The bond, if passed, will provide funds for a variety of environmental projects:

- Restoration and flood risk reduction (\$1.1 billion)
- Open space land conservation and recreation (\$650 million).
- Climate change mitigation (\$1.5 billion).
- Water quality improvement and resilient infrastructure (\$650 million).

These funds would support projects like lessening agricultural nutrient pollution, flood mitigation, harmful algal bloom abatement, sewer line replacements for failing septic or cesspools, climate change

Does your yard have a VOTE! lawn sign? Every League yard should!



VOTE411 signs remind people about the election and provide access voting information. It's the easiest way to help make democracy work. Get yours

today. Contact Patty MacLeish, president@lwvcooperstown.org.

mitigation, farmland preservation, municipal storm-water projects, and more.

Legislation passed in April will require all new school buses in the state to have zero emissions by 2027 and by 2035 all buses must be zero emission. If passed, the bond calls for \$500 million in funding for zero-emissions school buses and includes provisions to address environmental justice.

Where to Learn More about the Bond Act Vote Yes for Clean Water:

(voteyescleanwaterandjobs.com/)

Riverkeeper: This site includes an extensive list of possible projects www.riverkeeper.org/blogs/ecology/environmental-bond-act-passes-albany/

New York Now: A short video about the act is available at WMHT.

www.pbs.org/video/environmental-bond-act-scaffold-law-reform-in-new-york-prjr/bt/

Can We Reduce Polarization?

Many members of our League think the answer is yes, and they want to give it a try. The objective of the reducing

polarization project is twofold: 1) to educate participants about the history, nature, and consequences of political polarization, and 2) to help participants engage in activities that will help reduce political polarization on local, state, and national levels.

The project began with a book discussion of Ezra Klein's *Why We're Polarized* on September 13. (The book is available at the Village Library of Cooperstown.) After reading Klein's book, the group will participate in two or three conversations based on it. Reading and conversation will continue on a monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly basis, as decided upon by the group. Based on the needs and energy of participants, we plan to continue through the 2024 presidential election.

It's not too late to join us in this endeavor. The project is open to all members of the League and their families and friends. If you are interested in participating or have a question, please email Tom. Check out our website for complete information on the readings and possible activities.

Your League To-Do List

- Help out at one of the League's GOTV events (see page 1). Email — president@lwvcooperstown.org
- Get a VOTE411 lawn sign— or maybe two, one for you and one for your neighbor. Contact Patty MacLeish, president@lwvcooperstown.org
- Sign up for VOTE YES on the Environmental Bond Act voteyescleanwaterandjobs.com/
- Register for alerts about the election. Text "VOTENY" to 474747.
- Mark your calendar for all the upcoming events (Check them out on page 1.)
- Renew your League membership for 2023 before November 1.

Your 2023 renewal form is included in this issue. Please return by November 1, 2023!

New to the League? If you recently joined, your name is highlighted in yellow and you do not need to renew until September 2023.

Renew Today

PO Box 426, Cooperstown, NY 13326