

Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

July 2024



From Your Co-Presidents

How Will You Make a Difference This Election Season?

Welcome to our first column as co-presidents. We both look forward to leading the League during what will be a very busy election season and active year. But first, we want to look back just a bit. We had a very successful annual meeting. We started off this election season in May with a candidates forum for the Cooperstown Central School Board. Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen: Roe DiBona, Nancy Potter, Aviva Schneider, Bruce MacLeish, Hudi Podolosky and our wonderful moderator, Maureen Murray. The debate was recorded and later posted on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBHNk82KyWtTmc12sWQaw>) and a full article on the election was reported in *The Freeman's Journal* (May 14, 2024). Early in June, we co-sponsored with the LWV of Albany County a debate for the Democratic Party candidates for the June primary for the 102nd Assembly District. Thanks to Hudi Podolosky and Maureen Murray for putting that event together.

LWVNY hosted its annual statewide council virtually on June 11th (In years that there is a National Convention, there is no State Convention). In addition to passing the budget, LWVNY's President Nancy Rosenthal mentioned that our very own Patty MacLeish was nominated to the LWVNY Board. Congratulations Patty! She will be particularly involved with implementing LWVUS' Transformation Plan at the local level, which involves a new dues structure for all local Leagues. In addition, Caren Short and Chelsey Cartwright presented on "Bad Actors" and how to combat mis- and dis-information in our local communities. The Council meeting and presentations can be found here: <https://youtu.be/8K-8WVwaTjo>

Finally, LWVNY is bidding farewell to Laura Bierman who is retiring after 15 years as LWVNY's Executive Director. We are indebted to her leadership over these many years and her unflagging support of all the local leagues as they carry out the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy. Erica Smitka, Legislative Director, will serve as interim director.

Looking forward, our League will once again be part of the Mohawk Valley Gives campaign on September 20. It is more important than ever to consider contributing because of the change in dues structure. Dues will now be collected directly by the National League via an online platform and 20% of your membership will be directed to the local League. That's the good news. However, when you renew your membership if you make an additional contribution to our League, only 20% will go to our local League. Mohawk Valley Gives is a great way to make sure your donation stays here in Otsego County.

Finally, in an effort to keep our membership informed of important upcoming events (like program planning, committee meetings and outreach events that you could help volunteer with), we have a new monthly calendar available on the website. Make sure you check it out periodically so you can stay up to date! Your boots-on-the-ground work is essential for our work and the calendar is one way to help you stay informed about our work and make a difference this election season.

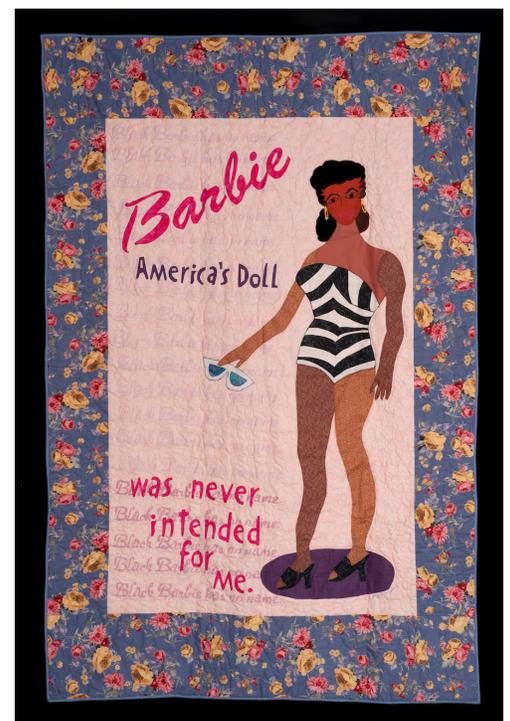
Hope to see you at the Fenimore Art Museum Tour on July 11.

Women Artists: Then & Now is Focus of Fenimore Art Museum Tour

Join other League members on Thursday, July 11 at 10:30 as guests of the Fenimore Art Museum for a tour of two exhibits "As They Saw It: Women Artists Then & Now" and selections from "American Masterworks." The tours will be led by League members Tom Pullyblank and Laura Wetzal. Tom and Laura are both docents and museum teachers at the museum. After the tour, everyone will gather on the Fenimore Terrace overlooking the lake for lunch from the Fenimore Cafe.



Co-presidents Christina Bourgeois and Kristin Pullyblank



Black Barbie, 1996, Kyra Hicks, cotton, linen and paint, H: 76 x W: 48 in., Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Museum Purchase. N0001.2010. Photograph by Richard Walker.

During the luncheon, there will be a chance to continue discussion with Tom and Laura and to learn about upcoming League programs.

“As They Saw It: Women Artists Then & Now” celebrates the vision and creativity of American women artists working across three centuries. The exhibition emphasizes varied experiences and approaches to artmaking, while pushing back against the underrepresentation of women in the arts. The more than 60 works on view showcase how women—despite social, economic, and cultural barriers—express their identities and shape their “herstories” through artistic expression.

The “American Masterworks” exhibit spotlights newly acquired paintings that highlight the museum’s effort to expand its collection of American art. The new works include major pieces created from the 1870s to about 1930. With these new paintings, the museum can tell the story of American art and culture as it evolved after the Civil War.

Fenimore Art Museum is offering this special tour free to League members. Lunch choices and costs will be available when you register. Space is limited, so RSVP soon to Tom Pullyblank (tompullyblank@gmail.com). He will contact you with information on luncheon options and costs.

You can learn more about the exhibit at <https://fenimoreartmuseum.org/future-exhibitions>.

We Need You to Help Defend Democracy in Our Community

BY HUDI PODOLSKY

Do you want to make a difference this year? Join us in our efforts to register voters and encourage them to vote in November.

Our greatest need is for people to help us register voters at events—we call it “tabling.” One of the primary purposes of tabling events is registering voters, but we also disseminate information about voting times and places, early voting hours, absentee voting, and making specific plans to vote. We adhere to our strictly non-partisan role, providing information about the voting process, but staying out of the political fray. If you are interested in helping with tabling, we provide training. We will also make sure that there is an experienced Leaguer with you at the table if you are new to this work.

We just had our first training and the 13 members in attendance left feeling ready to get started. As one attendee put it, “This training was great— it left me feeling well prepared.”

One exciting aspect of this presidential election season is that the voter registration period in New York is now extended. Voters have until 10 days before the election to register, not 30 days as it was in 2020. With this change there will still be time for people to register just as interest in the election is really starting to peak, which we hope will help us reach more potential voters as they make their plans for vote.

We have other opportunities for volunteer work, too. Should we have candidates debates, we will be needing greeters and other helpers. We will have Voters Guides and our Make a Plan to Vote handouts and we will need volunteers to distribute them to local libraries and other locations. Some jobs require just an hour or two.

We’re hoping to up our registration numbers and increase voter turnout and we are counting on our members to help. Whatever task you take on, whatever time you can give, by helping with our Voters Service work, you will make a difference.

Please let me know if you’re interested in this vital work so that I can include you in emails about future training, planning meetings, and volunteer opportunities. I’m also happy to answer any questions you may have about this vital non-partisan work. Contact me today (hudi.podolsky@gmail.com 650.521.1165).

Your Work Made a Difference!

BY PATTY MACLEISH

The *Daily Star*’s June 7 front-page headline read: “OLT get farmland protection grants from state.” OLT—the Otsego Land Trust—received more than \$2 million to protect approximately 700 acres of Otsego County farmland through conservation easements.

And our League members helped make it possible!

In the 2022 election cycle, many of our members worked to support passage of the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. League members spread the word about the importance of the Act using all our resources. We delivered LWVNY’s “Fact for Voters” and our own “Make a Plan to Vote” handouts to every library in the county. League members spoke to community groups, handed out information, and—most important—encouraged people to go to the polls and vote! The result: even though the vote was close in our county (11,477 yes; 9,358 no), the Environmental Bond Act passed statewide. Two years later, the funds from the Act are finally making their way down to the local level.

The Otsego Land Trust strives to conserve the natural heritage of woodlands, farmlands, and waters that sustain rural communities, promote public health, support wildlife diversity and inspire the human spirit.

OLT’s Executive Director Greg Farmer notes, “The NYS Environmental Bond Act is a bold generational commitment

to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. We are grateful to the League for facilitating public discussion and mobilizing voters to take action. Bond Act funding is already making a difference, strengthening the local economy and helping communities become more resilient.”

How important is this funding for our area? The American Farmland Trust notes on its website: “Since the inception of the New York State Farmland Protection Program in 1992, New York has permanently protected over 100,000 acres of farmland. ... AFT also applauds Gov. Hochul and the legislature for amending legislation to ensure that Bond Act funding can be used for conservation easements.”

Thank you to all our members who helped in the 2022 election cycle. We were everywhere: the Cherry Valley Kite Fest, the Rotary Fall Fling, and the Cooperstown Farmers’ Market. We explained the importance of the legislation at Rotary and at the Connections Senior Center. We put together fact sheets and wrote news releases. We got those Facts for Voters out to the public. We helped get that Bond Act passed and now our county is reaping some of the benefits. To all of you who helped—you made a difference! Thank you!

We need you to help make a difference this year, too. Read Hudi Podolsky’s story about how you can help in 2024.

Mohawk Valley Gives: September 20, 2024



On September 20, 2024, thanks to the efforts of the Community Foundation of Otsego County, non-profits in the county, including the LWV of the Cooperstown Area, will be participating in Mohawk Valley Gives 2024. This 24-hour community-wide giving day will benefit non-profit organizations serving the region. The Day of Giving will be promoted throughout the area; the public (that’s you!) will be encouraged to visit the Mohawk Valley Gives website (www.givemv.org) and choose which local non-profits to support. Your donation to Mohawk Valley Gives keeps your League gift in Otsego County.

The New York State ERA is Back on the Ballot in November!

The LWVNYS is thrilled to report that the Appellate Division overturned the decision by the lower court and the NYS ERA is now back on the ballot in November! The League released the following statement on June 19:

“The League of Women Voters of NYS strongly supports the recent decision by the Appellate Division to reinstate the NYS ERA on the ballot in November. The voters have a right to make their voices heard on this critical measure to provide state constitutional protections for so many populations. These rights, including abortion access, should be enshrined in our state constitution. This decision allows the voters to decide. The League encourages all to make their voices heard on November 5th.”

Now, the League can begin to educate the voters on this important constitutional amendment and ballot proposal and encourage all to vote in November! Check out upcoming issues of Update for more information on ERA.

Annual Meeting 2024



Co-President Maureen Murray making a presentation at annual meeting.

More than forty members and soon-to-be members attended our annual meeting on May 1. All of our agenda items were approved including a provision to change our fiscal year to July-June. The annual report is available on the website. Members elected Christina Bourgeois as our new co-president and welcomed Aviva Schneider as a new At-Large member of the board. Also elected to two-year terms were Deb Dalton and Patty MacLeish. Our League also bade farewell to co-president Maureen Murray whose term ended. She has been in leadership roles in our League almost from the time she joined the League in the 1980s. She served during the difficult times when our membership number were less than half of what they are now. She organized a leadership group (calling it a “cabinet” to make it sound less onerous for potential volunteers), and with others helped ensure that we continued some of our most important events—our candidates forums, Students Inside Albany, and the Winter Doldrums Party. With help and guidance from the cabinet, she assisted in instituting our current co-presidency system: co-presidents serve two overlapping years, but never for more than one term. It spreads the work of the position and helps any new members feel that the job is manageable and limited. Maureen will continue with League work especially in Voters Service and her legacy will endure.



Aviva Schneider (middle) and Deb Dalton (right) signing in new member Mary Farmer at annual meeting.

Your League To-Do List

- ❑ **Make a Plan to Make a Difference This Election Season.** How? Read Hudi Podolsky's story on page 2 and learn about the opportunities to register voters and distribute voting information.
- ❑ **Sign Up For The League's Members Only Page.** It's easy! All you need to do is go to our website (www.LWVCooperstownArea.org) and click "Register" on the upper right side. Your email address is your entry. Follow the prompts, and you'll be all set to access members only information, like our membership list and monthly calendar.
- ❑ **Mark Your Calendar For September 20, Mohawk Valley Gives Day.** Your contribution to the League on that day comes back to Otsego County to help with our local programs.
- ❑ **Plan To Join Us July 11 For A Very Special Tour And Luncheon At The Fenimore Art Museum.** The focus will be on the exhibit, "As They Saw It: Women Artists Then & Now." Learn more on page 1.

Help Wanted

We need you! Whether you want to become actively involved in the League or only have a few hours to spare once a month or twice a year, there's a job for you in the League. Here are some of our needs:

Register Voters

- National Voter Registration Day is September 17, and we are hoping to have members registering voters on local campuses.
- We're planning other Get Out the Vote events all through the fall and need your help. The training is easy (see Hudi's story on Page 2) Contact Hudi Podolsky (hudi.podolsky@gmail.com), if you want to sign up for a training session. The commitment can be for as little as one event! Whatever you can do.

Want to learn a new skill or share a skill?

- Help maintain our website. Some computer skills are necessary, but it's easy to learn. Contact Patty MacLeish, pmacleish@verizon.net.
- Do you like photography? Are you an expert in environmental issues? Can you design flyers and pamphlets? If you have a talent you would like to share, let us know. Contact membership chair Deb Dalton (ddalton@stny.rr.com), and she will put you in touch with the right person to get you started.

Officers & Board of Directors 2024-2025

Co-presidents: Kristin Pullyblank, 607-437-7526; kpullyblank@gmail.com and Christina Bourgeois: 607-544-4072; retiredcb2019@gmail.com;

Board Members

Treasurer: Susan Newman, suchasshn@gmail.com; 607-435-6460
Secretary: Laura Wetzel, ltanswetz@gmail.com, 847-650-9235
Voters Service: Hudi Podolsky, hudi.podolsky@gmail.com
Membership: Deb Dalton, ddalton@stny.rr.com, 607-437-5761
Environment/Natural Resources: Open
Newsletter/Communications: Patty MacLeish, pmacleish@verizon.net; 401-835-0162
Youth Programs: September Schecter, sann8042@gmail.com; 443-974-2403
At Large: Aviva Schneider, aviva330@gmail.com

Off-Board:

Students Inside Albany: Maria Kaltenbach: margirlic@yahoo.com; 315-525-5410

Reducing Polarization Project:

Tom Pullyblank: tompullyblank@gmail.com; 607-282-2183

LWV Oneonta Team Leader: Stephanie Bauer: stephanie.bauer93@gmail.com; 607-376-1822

Contact: Newsletter@LWVCooperstownArea.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/LWVoftheCooperstownArea
www.LWVCooperstownArea.org