



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOMERS



VOLUME XXVII, NUMBER 2

August, 2015

SOMERS PARTNERS IN PREVENTION



On Monday, August 10, at 10:30 am, our monthly program speaker will be Kathy Cucchiarella, Chair of Somers Partners in Prevention, a community alliance whose mission is to build a safer community. There is an increased use of narcotics, opiates, and prescription medications among adolescents and young adults, according to educators. Somers Partners in Prevention brings together members of town government, school organizations, and law enforcement for the common goal of helping Somers youth stay alcohol and drug free. The Board Meeting starts at 10:00am.

In her first year as Chair, Kathy Cucchiarella brings a wealth of community involvement to Somers Partners in Prevention. She is an active member of Somers Substance Abuse Council and has served as president of Primrose Elementary School, Somers Intermediate School, and Somers PTA Council. Originally from Somers, Kathy and her husband moved back to Somers in 1991 to raise their three children here. Her management and organizational skills were honed as a benefits analyst for PepsiCo, here in Somers.

Our August 10 membership meeting starts promptly at 10 am in the Somers Library, with Kathy's presentation to follow at 10:30 am. Please be sure to join us for this timely and important discussion, which is sure to resonate with Somers community members of all ages.

SOMERS LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Co-Presidents

Francoise Bennett

franbenn@comcast.net

Loretta Nelson

linelson49@comcast.net



1st Vice Presidents

Joyce Liebman

jmlieb2@comcast.net

2nd Vice President

Lucille Kennedy

lucille.kennedy09@yahoo.com

3rd Vice President

Ann Harper

imbevtoo@aol.com

Treasurer

Anne Stafford

anneford818@comcast.net

Recording Secretary

Lucille Williams

luwilldo1@comcast.net

Corresponding Secretary

Myra Linker

MLi328@aol.com

CO-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

VOTE 411 - ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED



Vote411 is the LWV's online voters guide, which is used by the national, state and local Leagues throughout the country. Candidates are able to enter their own information, including their picture, directly into Vote411. The Westchester League extracts the information and formats it for use in the *Voters Guides*. In

July, we send invitation letters to the election candidates assigned to the Somers League. Those candidates are determined by the Westchester League and are not necessarily in the Somers election district. Last year, we were asked to enter data for 9 candidates of different parties and districts.

In August we start gathering information from the candidates to be placed in *Vote411* and in the *Voter Guides*. After the information is complete, the LWV will print the information in the *Voter Guides* (100 were distributed in Somers last year). The State League cover the statewide races such as Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller and the Congressional races. The local Leagues, such as Somers, will be responsible for State and Assembly races in our area, District 40: State Senate candidates, district 94, State Assembly candidates and for County Legislative Districts 2 and 4.

The 2014 General Election involved 52 races with 91 candidates, 80% of whom provided their information using *Vote411*. In 2014, 50,000 printed *Voters Guides* were distributed throughout Westchester County. The Westchester League mailed 17,400 *Voters Guides* to approximately 100 other locations throughout the County, such as community centers in towns and villages; in city halls, post offices and hospitals. The printed *Voters Guides* were also available through the County League office, at candidate forums and on the LWV website. In Somers, you will find the *Voters Guides* in the Post Office, City Hall, Somers Library, and a few are left in Heritage Hills. We will mail to those who do not have internet access or those who request it.

Francoise Bennett,

Co=President

PUBLICATIONS: Carol Sturtz, editor.....Harriet Leib, Mac Sturtz

MAILINGS: Lucille Williams

THE BUTLER & MRS. ASTOR: A CASE OF ELDER ABUSE



At the July meeting of the Somers League of Women Voters, Chris Ely, former butler to Brooke Astor, discussed his experience with the family. He came to work for Mrs. Astor in 1997 and described her as very independent, well read and social woman who enjoyed entertaining.

Three years later, in 2000, when Chris noticed that lapses in her functioning were developing, he spoke to her son, Anthony (Tony) Marshall about medical treatment. Unfortunately, Tony was very disturbed about money his mother was “giving away” with her many charitable contributions. He and his wife spoke to her attorney, concluding that she could not take care of her money. Subsequently a campaign of intimidation, neglect and insidious abuse by her son and daughter-in-law convinced her that she could not spend money while her son went after assets not left to him in the will, transferring millions of dollars.

During this time, Chris was very concerned about her increasing lack of care and spoke to her grandson, Philip Marshall, who moved to become her guardian in 1906. Her son, Tony, and the attorney were prosecuted for grand larceny Chris Ely spoke in defense of Brooke Astor at the trial and continued to serve her until her death in 2007.

Mr. Ely had a very interesting history. His first employment was at age 18 as a footman at Buckingham Palace. He was present for many major events including Prince Charles wedding. Since the Astor case, he has become very involved in combating elder abuse and supporting Philip Marshall’s website: [philipmarshall-beyond brooke.org](http://philipmarshall-beyond-brooke.org).

Chris was a last minute replacement for our scheduled speaker and skillfully highlighted the tragedy of elder abuse with an understanding of the issue and a great deal of anecdotal material. It was an interesting and entertaining discussion.



HAVE YOU SENT YOUR DUES?
Individual - \$60.00 Family - \$85.00
Please mail your check to Somers LWV
Box 371, Somers, NY 10589
WE NEED YOU!



AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS APPROVED BY SOMERS TOWN BOARD



At their one July meeting, the Somers Town Board voted approval to zoning for the Hidden Meadows development on Route #6. Town Planner Syrette Dyms had explained the extensive steps taken to validate granting the overlay district called a “floating zone”. There had been Findings, that the acreage, the frontage, the square footage of units, the setbacks, the traffic access, the recreation and open space provided and storm water management all met or exceeded Town and State regulations. As the public hearing opened, three Board Members voiced their pleasure with the project. Mr. Garrity liked the proposed units for local workers, Mr. Ciriocco liked the diversity of incomes and types of housing (ownership and rental, market rate and affordable), and Mr Morrissey spoke of his confidence in the builder, Ken Kearney, with his successful Mews I and II. Two owners of local businesses spoke of their approval of the plan, citing their desire to have workers able to live nearby.

Hidden Meadows will have 53 market rate townhouses , of which 8 will be affordable. Those will each include a rental apartment, also kept affordable for 50 years.

The League observers, this time Myra Linker and Polly Kuhn, who with others had spoken of the need for affordable housing for working families in Somers at earlier meetings, were pleased to silently witness the approval. Mr. Clinchy brought out that an added advantage from the project is that it provides access to previously land-locked Town property, which might now be used by the Recreation Department.

The vote marked the near achievement of a ten year effort of the Somers League to win approval of affordable housing for families as well as seniors. The housing was promised to Westchester County in the Angle Fly agreement, in exchange for \$4 million which helped buy some 660 acres of land, now preserved forever wild.

by Polly Kuhn

WESTCHESTER AND THE FAIR HOUSING AGREEMENT

According to the 2009 federal fair housing agreement, Westchester was required to have 450 units of affordable housing by the end of 2014 but has not met the requirement due to the failure to implement the Chappaqua Station development. The County had conditionally approved the plan but it has been opposed by the Town. According to the Monitor, the County is required to pursue fair housing even if it means legal action against local municipalities. This is a key element of the agreement, opposition to which can result in costly fines and a requirement to place \$1.65 million in escrow.

The county’s ongoing resistance to the terms of the agreement has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars of federal money.

FROM THE COUNTY

View: Westchester election bosses won't listen

Marylou Green and Janet Zagoria



Because the Westchester County Board of Elections commissioners have acted as department heads while serving as their respective party bosses, they have been effectively insulated against criticism. No one in either the county administration or the county legislature has wanted to take them on. And whereas previously, when Carolee Sunderland was the GOP commissioner, the board was very open; now it tends to be closed and unresponsive to suggestions from outside.

Our efforts to get the board to adopt split shifts for poll workers, officially called election inspectors, is a case in point. The commissioners claim they are chronically short of election inspectors, while acknowledging that senior citizens are their most responsible workers. Meanwhile, as these workers find it harder to manage the 16-hour-plus day as they age, they retire.

Accordingly, in 2013, under the auspices of its foundation, the League of Women Voters of Westchester's county government committee moved to survey the election inspectors about split shifts. First, we asked the Board of Elections for a list of these workers. We received no response, so we applied to the state under the Freedom of Information Act. Advised that we should try going through the county attorney, we did so; within a day we received the list of 4,440 names.

Randomly selecting 40 percent of them (1,776), we hoped for a statistically significant response of 20 percent (355). We heard from more than 34 percent (605 election inspectors), nearly 64 percent of whom favored introducing the split-shift option, whether or not they wanted to pick it up for themselves. We followed up this result with a recommendation to the board that it offer such a possibility, as many local municipalities did when they controlled elections, as some New York counties do now and as the state has made legal.

We never heard from the Board. Last November, when one of our member election inspectors asked for a shorter shift, she was turned down. Meanwhile, responders to our survey have asked what is being done on the issue, in the mistaken assumption that we can effect a change.

We cannot. The League is an independent, non-partisan, grassroots organization whose purpose is to promote informed citizens' participation in government.

We recognize that the Board of Elections is constrained by the chain-of-custody requirement so important in contested election results and that split shifts would involve work for them in training, tracking, paying, etc. But we believe that with the will and some additional organizational effort, the commissioners could put shorter shifts into place, adding to the pool of poll workers they claim they need. At the very least, we think they have an obligation to respond to the taxpayers who underwrite their salaries. *Reprinted from the Journal News July 11, 2015.*



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 2012—2013

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents	Francoise Bennett	617-9011	fran-
benn@comcast.net			
	Loretta Nelson	277-7907	linelson49@comcast.net
1st Vice Presidents	Joyce Liebman	617-2127	jmlieb2@comcast.net
2nd Vice President	Cindy Kennedy	669-5411	lucille.kennedy09@yahoo.com
3rd Vice President	Ann Harper	617-9434	alharperone@aol.com
Treasurer	Anne Stafford	276-0152	anneford818@comcast.net
Recording Secretary	Lucille Williams	276-2416	luwilldo1@comcast.net
Corresponding Secretary	Myra Linker	669-5157	MLi328@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Bea Bartner	beastream@gmail.com	Thelma Gruber	tm4837@aol.com
Carol Fox	CFox081@aol.com	Bev Jacobson	imbevtoo@aol.com
Rita Gottfried*		Harriet Leib	fitrose@aol.com
Doris Lipman	dorwal2@aol.com	Carol Sturtz	carmac4@comcast.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Bulletin	Carol Sturtz, Editor	669-8182	carmac4@comcast.net
Development	Bea Bartner	276-4876	beastream@gmail.com
	Joyce Liebman	617-2127	jmlieb2@comcast.net
Education	Harriet Leib	276-2419	fitrose@aol.com
Family Issues	Rita Gottfried	276-4859	ritaarthur@msn.com
Legislation	Doris Lipman	277-7512	dorwal2@aol.com
Membership	Rita Gottfried	276-4849`	
Program	Cindy Kennedy	669-5411	Lucille.kennedy09@yahoo.com
Publicity	Betty Golub	617-9218	paca2519@aol.com
Town Government	Polly Kuhn	276-2634	Pollykuhn@aol.com
Voter Service	Francoise Bennett	617-9011	franbenn@comcast.net

MONDAY, AUGUST 10TH



10:00AM Monthly Meeting
10:30am Kathy Cucchiarella, Chair,
Somers Partners in Prevention
Combatting Alcohol and Drug Use
Somers Library

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19TH

(and December 16th)
Naturalization Court Ceremony
White Plains
Contact Francoise, 617-9011
Somers Library, Reis Park



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH

10:00am Monthly Meeting
10:30am Meet our County Leg
islators
Somers Library



MONDAY, OCTOBER 5TH

Fall Luncheon
Le Fontaine Ristorante
Guest Speaker - Andrew Farber
Somers Library Director



JOIN US

THE LEAGUE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

ANNUAL DUES—SEE P. 3

BECOME A BENEFACTOR

Your \$25.00+ tax deductible donation to the Education Fund is important for the League and is acknowledged with your name listed on the back page.

LWV CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The NYS League is currently gathering information on activities, events and forums to be held during the next 5 years to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in NYS (2017), the 100th anniversary of the State League (2019) and the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in the US (2020).





SUPPORTERS OF OUR LEAGUE — 2014-2015

Advanced Computer Repair*	253 Route 202, Somers
American Portfolios Louis Tagliiaferro	100 Mill Plains Road, Danbury Ct. 06811
Annie's Nails	5 Heritage 202 Center, Somers
Appliance Plus	3 Lovell St., Lincolndale, 10541
Aries Automotive of Somers	253 Route 100
Fred's Haircutting Salon*	270 Katonah Ave., Katonah
Hair by Lisa*	256 Route 100, Somers
Il Forno Trattoria*	343 Route 202, Somers
Marti Lowenfeld, Houlihan/Lawrence	Somers, NY
The Mexican Shack*	256 Route 100, Somers
Osceola Garage	44 Route 118, Baldwin Place
Rainbow Tailors & Cleaners*	7 Heritage 202 Center
Somers Diner*	115 Rte. 202, Lincolndale, 10540
Somers Smiles*	356 Route 202, Somers
Stop n' Shop*	80 Route 6, Baldwin Place

(* 2015-16)



BENEFACTORS — 2014-2015

Francoise Bennett*	Loretta Nelson
Flo Brodley	Jane Pelavin
Leslie Jay-Gould	Pat Ploss
Polly Kuhn	Willa Reichbach
Harriet & George Leib*	Barbara Rothman
Doris & Walter Lipman	Anne Stafford
Marti Lowenfeld	Carol & Mac Sturtz*
Fran McLoughlin*	Lucille Williams *



Democracy is not a spectator sport!

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization that does not support or oppose candidates or political parties.