



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Of THE RIVERTOWNS

P.O. Box 142, Hastings on

Hudson, NY 10706 www.lwv-rivertowns.org

OCTOBER 2015

President's Message

Not for Women Only!

Dear Members and Friends:

From time to time we hear the comment "I didn't know that men could join the League". In fact, men have been valued members for more than 40 years. Men hold positions of leadership in many leagues: right here in Westchester, Paul Schwartz coordinates the moderators for our debates and offers training for new moderators. In the Rye League, men chair voter services and membership. Here in Rivertowns we are happy to report that we count 19 men among our members, which amounts to 23 per cent. Our youngest (non-voting) member is our very own Student inside Albany, who will be interning with us this coming year. We salute our men, and invite you to get involved in our activities. We have opportunities in voter services, membership, advocacy, just to name a few. Please contact me at rtownsleague@gmail.com if you can help.

Best wishes, Susan

BOARD BRIEFS

September 2015: We began with a business meeting, during which we made plans for National Voter Registration Day; discussed restructuring of our committees to include "interest groups"; received updates on our new website and on using drobox; and brainstormed on future programs and events. After the business meeting we enjoyed lunch, and a great program, featuring Dare Thompson and Kate Jankowski, which was informative and very interactive.

October 2015: We have joined the effort to encourage organ donation along with voter registration. We planned for the breakfast meeting on Nov. 12 and for our December Board meeting which will include a speaker discussion on concurrence with the LWVNYS position on rising the age for arraignment as adults from 16 to 18, as well as a holiday party. Emma Lou distributed letters to editors about the loss of a full time curator at the Lenoir preserve and Betty Gilmore reported on collaboration with Mercy College to collect data for the poverty study.

WHAT'S NEW? LWVRIVERTOWNS 2015-16

LEAGUE'S MISSION - EMPOWERING VOTERS

Many thanks to all who helped! It's been a busy start for League's voter service year. Prior to the October 9th deadline for registration to vote in the November 3rd election, LWVR participated in national's September 22nd Voter Registration Day; venues included the Hastings and Dobbs Ferry train stations, Ardsley High School, Mercy College, the Hastings library and A & P. Then, **Corinne Calesso** organized a colorful voter registration table at the September 26 Dobbs Ferry Festa; (there was no Ardsley Day this year due to street reconstruction.) Voter registration forms distributed: 121 by six volunteers.

Croton Debate:

Candidates for mayor and village trustee expressed their views on a number of issues before an overflow crowd in the Ottinger Room at the Croton Free Library on October 13. The candidates, from the Croton Democrats and the Croton United parties, articulated divergent views, particularly on capital projects and debt management. Our own Karen Schatzel served as moderator; she posed two questions from the League, and then read as many audience questions as time would allow. Despite a spirited discussion, decorum was maintained throughout the debate, both among the candidates and audience. One exception was the arrival of two uninvited guests: a skunk complete with spray, and a black cat. A special thanks to **Lisa Cohen** for her initiative, diplomacy, and countless hours of hard work in making all the arrangements for this debate! As Lisa put it, "This was a giant step in bringing back civility back into Croton Village politics."

Yonkers Debate

Sue Weisfeld has organized a debate for Yonkers Mayor and County Legislators on October 26 in the Reisinger Auditorium at Sarah Laurence College.

LEAGUE DAY AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The state League offers its annual League Day at the United Nations on Thursday, December 3, 2015. This year's briefings will cover two topics: **Global Healthcare Issues and Educating the Youth of the World**. The briefings this year will be held in the morning, from 10:00-12 noon, followed by lunch in the Delegates' Dining Room and optional tours of the UN in the afternoon.

For further information or to register by phone call 518-465-4162 or email lwwny@lwwny.org.

This is a very special event – don't miss it!!

LWVR RIVERFRONT/ENVIRONMENT

Join us Monday, November 16, 1:30 PM, home of Emma Lou Louis; 125 Bellair Dr., Dobbs Ferry; 693-1726, elsailors@mail.com, for discussion of local, regional and national issues., Plus whatever you suggest!

MONEY IN POLITICS

WHO

Brent Ferguson

Counsel to Brennan Center for Justice Democracy Program

Mr. Ferguson will speak on a lawsuit to close the LLC loophole created by the New York State Board of Elections in 1996

WHEN

Thurs, Nov 12 at 8:45 am

WHERE

El Dorado Diner

El Dorado West Diner, 480 South Broadway, Tarrytown (across from the Doubletree Hotel)
Breakfast can be ordered individually

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WWW.LWV-RIVERTOWNS.ORG

LENOIR AGAIN NEEDS OUR HELP

Last year advocacy (including ours) helped provide a full time curator at Westchester County's Lenoir Nature Preserve in North Yonkers (and at Cranberry Lake). However, the Lenoir curator has been transferred to fill a retirement vacancy at Pound Ridge. To fill the gap, a part time professional (without benefits) has been appointed. We must again address this quality-of-life issue for a large Yonkers and lower Hudson Valley population.

A **full time manager** is needed to supervise a unique butterfly/hummingbird garden, work with grounds people to assure ecology-friendly management, provide free public programs, promote outreach, host school groups, expand exhibits, and increase rental income. Lenoir serves as a base for Lower Hudson Valley Audubon Society.

If you agree, communication should be addressed to Kathleen O'Connor, Commissioner; Westchester County Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Conservation; 450 Sawmill River Road; Ardsley, NY; copies to County Executive Robert Astorino and Legislator MaryJane Shimsky.

A FAVOR PLEASE!

Incredibly (to me) the LWVR Waterfront **consensus** (developed after study and discussion) is ten years old. It's time for review; please take a few minutes, read the following statement carefully, then submit suggested revisions to **elsailors@mail.com** (Emma Lou Louis). Changes will be considered by the Riverfront/Environment Group and LWVR Board, with consensus by membership at the annual meeting in June.

The League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns supports measures to preserve and enhance Hudson Rivertowns identity, scenic views, historic and natural resources; improve links between villages and between waterfront and downtowns; foster development which is safe, sustainable and compatible with established historic Rivertowns identity.

- (A) The Rivertowns LWV should monitor and take action to support development and implementation of Master/Comprehensive Plans.
- (B) The Rivertowns LWV supports zoning that provides physical and visual access to the River and protects Rivertowns character; zoning regulations should cover use, bulk and parking.
- (C) The Rivertowns LWV supports improved links between Waterfront and Business Districts and between the Communities, such as a Hudson River Walk.
- (D) Open space preservation is important.
- (E) LWV supports sustainable development (which pays for itself).
- (F) Development should conform to rigorous criteria regarding environmental protection, safety, traffic, bulk and "green" (energy efficient) construction.
- (G) Residential development should include affordable housing.

Note: "Criteria for Evaluating Waterfront Proposals" is also up for review.

AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Christine Verber, who has been active with UN NGOs for many years, reminds us it is twenty years since Beijing 1995, The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. The Declaration and Platform for Action is now (2015) revised to include updated Sustainable Development Goals. The founding UN Charter (1945) included a provision for equality between men and women.

UN Women has been an equal division of NGO leadership for the last four years; Chris has noticed that all this is making a visible/internationally-talked-about change in the whole issue of Women's Equal Rights. She is a volunteer member of the NGO "Working Group on Girls" which requires every country every year to report on their efforts to carry out UN recommended changes regarding the legal status of women.

The UN recently observed International Day of the Girl.

RIVER AND ENVIRONMENT

Waterkeeper, an environmental organization monitoring the Hudson, plans to also monitor the Saw Mill River, to further identify pollution sources.

Hastings waterfront cleanup continues, prelude to re-development.

Ardasley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, and Irvington received a grant to fund **LED street lights** (energy savings, harsher light).

17 Westchester municipalities (Yonkers to Lewisburg) have formed a **Municipal Solar Buyers Group** and identified 75 sites where solar panels could be installed.

A NYS grant plus private contributions funded a replica **Fresnel lens for** (130 year old) **Tarrytown Light** (original lost when the lighthouse was decommissioned).

Transport of volatile hydrocarbons by tank car and barge is a major concern in the Hudson valley (aging equipment, mass transport regulations and enforcement, emergency response) with 2012 approval for the Port of Albany to ship a greatly increased volume of crude, and 44 trains per week now transporting volatile ND Bakken crude on the _____ railroad through Rockland.

“Land That Matters” - Scenic Hudson purchased 590 acres in Columbia County, and NYS bought the 200 MacIntyre estates (now owns 12 miles of Hudson and Opalescent River shore).

The Adirondack Explorer writes that climate change may be a **hazard to songbirds** (such as the Magnolia Warbler) breeding in the Adirondacks. Birds may arrive too early or too late to feast on caterpillars that rely on specific fresh leaves.

OUTREACH - Linda Levine

Editor's note: Linda Levine is a new member of Rivertowns League who recently initiated a visit to Ossining High School; she is a librarian at the Ossining Library and we hope that her work will inspire members in other villages to do the same.

On Friday, October 9, I visited several government classrooms at Ossining HS to lead a discussion about the history of voting rights and the importance of registering to vote. The students were seniors and predominantly from minority and low-income households. I used an exercise in the classrooms to engage the students featured in a League publication, “Empowering Voters of Tomorrow”. This exercise provoked a good discussion in each classroom.

I handed out voter registration forms to those students who would turn 18 by the end of the year, for voting in the 2016 elections, and thank school officials for letting me address their students. *(Note: the principal later sent a thank you note to Linda.)*

As a League of Women Voters member, I am charged with preparing these high school students to engage in the political process on a local, state and national level. I hope that the students I spoke to will exercise their right to show up at the polls November, 2016 and I plan to repeat this visit next year.

The Assistant Principal at Ossining HS sent Linda a letter thanking her for her prostration

WHAT'S NEW IN HEALTH CARE - by Edith Tsold

In September we reviewed some striking changes in health care which added variety and flexibility to the ways it is delivered. What has not changed is the power of insurance and pharmaceutical companies - the political price we paid for getting ACA passed.

Health spending has escalated, driven primarily by increased costs for prescription drugs (up 10.6 %) and durable medical equipment (PNHP Newsletter, summer 2015). There is some check on insurance premiums; rate increases must be approved by state agencies, but drug companies set their own prices, virtually at will. One extreme tactic is to buy a company with old, neglected drugs, skip the risky business of R & D and go straight for the buck, as Valeant Pharmaceuticals did when it raised the price of one pill 800%. Its CEO defended the practice, citing "a duty to shareholders to wring the maximum profit out of each drug". (NY Times, Oct. 5, '15).

There is inherent tension in a democracy, between our collective responsibility for the public's safety and wellbeing and the personal right to profit in a capitalist economy. Regs can help keep the balance. So can a decent sense of morality.

LWVR POVERTY STUDY - Betty Gilmore

There are exciting developments in the study of local poverty by LWVR. We reached out to Mercy College and they are interested in collaborating with us. Betty Gilmore met with Dr. Gordon Welty, Associate Professor, Behavioral Sciences, in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences; he would like to design a course around the study for the spring 2016 semester. This would ensure a cadre of well-informed and supervised undergraduate and graduate students who can conduct data collection with a broad range of sources in Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley, Irvington, Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow with whom we want to connect. In addition, we would have the expertise of a researcher who can assist in collating and analyzing information gathered.

Dr. Welty had already reviewed the LWVR proposal with administrators and the college president, all of whom were supportive. After further discussion to define the study's scope and details of collaboration, a Memorandum of Understanding would be formalized between Mercy College and LWVR.

This fall our local committee will assemble names and contact information of local organizations and government entities to be included in the study.

Raise the Age

New York is one of only two states that treat juveniles as adults beginning at age 16. The State League wishes to advocate for raising the age for juveniles arraigned in New York from 16 to 18, but needs the concurrence of local leagues to accomplish this. Specifically, State is asking local leagues for concurrence on adopting parts of the Ohio League's Juvenile Justice Position. At our December 12 meeting, the membership can learn more about this issue and to decide whether or not to endorse concurrence. There is adequate background material on the internet which can be referred to as follows:

1. Raise The Age NY is an advocacy group promoting this concept. Go to raisetheageny.com to read their material.
2. The State League has some helpful background material. Please use google and type in the following: "Proposed concurrence with LWV of Ohio's Juvenile Justice Position". This will bring up a document which describes the issue in detail.

We encourage all members to read through this material and attend our meeting. If you have questions or comments, please send an email to rtownsleague@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE!!

Harmon Community Center, 44 Main Street, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

RIVERTOWNS HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Help us decide on concurrence for Raise the Age

Business Meeting at 9:45

Speaker at 11

Lunch at noon

Special Guest Speaker: BABE HOWELL

Law Professor and former Public Defender

Professor Howell will speak on the criminal justice system

Don't miss this event! In addition to Professor Howell's

Many credentials, she is also the daughter of our

Beloved Vice President, Jean Howell

Harmon Community Center, 44 Main Street, Hastings-on-Hudson

IN THE RIVERTOWNS

Welcome to new members Lynn Levine of Hastings, Sherry Saturno of Tarrytown, and Leonard Andrew of Sleepy Hollow.

Thanks to all who volunteered for National Voter Registration Day and the Dobbs Ferry Festa. We handed out more than 120 Registration forms.

Looking ahead - IMPORTANT DATES!

Tuesday, Nov 3: General Elections - all districts – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. **VOTE**

Thursday, Nov 12: Breakfast meeting: Money in Politics – Eldorado Diner, 480 South Broadway, Tarrytown (across from Doubletree Hotel) 8:30 a.m. - **ALL WELCOME**

Saturday, Nov. 14: Rivertowns LWV Board Meeting – Hastings Community Center - 10:00 a.m. Board meetings are “open” and we welcome your participation.

Monday, Nov 16: Waterfront/Environment Group – home of Emma Lou Louis, 125 Bellair Drive, Dobbs Ferry, (693-1726) – 1:30 p.m. - **ALL WELCOME**

Thursday, Dec 3: League Day at the United Nations - briefings on **Global Healthcare Issues and Educating the Youth of the World** -10:00 a.m. to .noon, followed by lunch in the Delegates' Dining Room and optional tours of the UN. Registration form at lwvny.org; click on Bulletins and LWNYS Voter, LWNYS Voter Newsletter, August 2015.

Future **LWVR** Board meetings: Hastings Community Center - 10:00 a.m., **Dec 12, Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12, Apr 9, May 14, Annual Meeting Jun date TBD**

ARE YOU A MEMBER OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD BE

LWV the Rivertowns – MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Telephone _____

Check one: Single \$60 ___ Household \$90 ___

Tax Deductible Contribution to the Fund for Citizen Education (separate check) \$ _____

My interests are: Voter Service___ Water Front___ Observer Corps___ Youth Outreach___ Fund Raising___

Membership___ Bulletin/Public Relations___ Health Care___ Global Warming___ Poverty Study___

Other _____

Please make checks payable to: LWV the Rivertowns Mail to: LWV the Rivertowns, P.O. Box 142, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF THE RIVERTOWNSP.O. Box 142

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE RIVERTOWNS LWV