

# **57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region May 24, 2017**

## **Agenda**

**Opening and Welcome**

**Dinner**

**Speaker, Dr. Susan Lewis "In Search of Carrie Chapman Catt"**

**Adoption of 2017-2018 Budget**

**Election of Officers and Nominating Committee**

**Studies and Advocacy (Local Program)**

**President's Remarks**

**Review and Discussion of Annual Reports**

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## Our Speaker, Dr. Susan I. Lewis

Susan Ingalls Lewis is Associate Professor, Deputy Chair, and Graduate Advisor in the Department of History at SUNY New Paltz, as well as an affiliate faculty member in the Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies Program. Dr. Lewis received her B.A. from Wellesley College in 1970, and her Ph.D. from Binghamton University in 2002. She teaches courses on American history, American women's history, and New York State history. Her monograph, Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York, 1830-1885 (Ohio State University Press, 2009) was awarded the Hagley Prize in Business History for the best book published the field (2011). Professor Lewis has also been named Liberal Arts & Sciences Teacher of the Year (2007-08), won the LA & S Excellence in and was recently awarded a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2017). Dr. Lewis is a Fellow of the New York Academy of History, and author of the blog, *New York Rediscovered*.

## President's Report

We have entered the year of the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote in New York State. The motion "Shall the proposed amendment to section one of article two of the Constitution, conferring equal suffrage upon women, be approved?" appeared on the New York State ballot in 1917. After being defeated in 1915, the motion passed in 1917. The campaign from the first women's right convention in Seneca Falls, July 1848 had taken 69 years. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan Brownell Anthony, two of the founding mothers, did not live to see the day, they died in 1902 and 1906 respectively.

On April 21 and 22 I was privileged to attend the "Women in Politics: A conference Commemorating the Centennial of Women's Suffrage in New York State." One of the hosts was The League of Women Voters of New York State, and many League members were present at the event. Susan Lewis, Associate Professor of History and SUNY New Paltz, who will be speaking at this Annual Meeting, was one of the main organizers, and brought together current politicians as well as recent research on the campaign tactics of the women who gave us success in 1917, and those at the forefront of current issues.

What I learned was that things are never simple. That there was an organization of women who opposed suffrage. That getting the vote did not result in women being elected to State and Federal office in large numbers, or result in policies that make the lives of women more equal. That in the process of obtaining our goal on an important issue, we ignored other issues, like race and class.

What I love about the current wave of political activity by women, including the Women's March on Washington, and the local activities we have added to our slate, is that we simply call upon the positions that the League of Women Voters has already studied and adopted, and proudly march forward, calling for them to become reality.

The Suffrage movement which started in 1848 became the League of Women Voters when we won the vote in 1917 and we persist. We will learn from our past, we will bravely confront the present, and we will forge the future for our daughters and granddaughters. --- Jolanda G. Jansen, President, and recently given my most treasured title, grandmother.

## **Voting Business**

### **Slate for Officers and Directors**

Continuing President (2017-2018):	Jolanda Jansen
Vice-President (2017-2019):	Cindy Bell
Continuing Director (2017-2018):	Margaret Sellers
Director (2017-2018):	Nora Scherer
Director (2017-2019):	Jennifer Clark
Director (2017-2019):	Jean McGarry
Director (2017-2019):	Jacki Moriarty
Director (2017-2019):	Doug Thompson
Director (2017-2019):	Daisy Tyler
Director (2017-2019):	Dorothy Winrow

There is no candidate for treasurer for 2017-2018.

### **Nominating Committee 2017-2018**

Lee Cane      Christine Henning      Vic Melville

## **Studies and Advocacy**

1. Guardians of the Charter - monitor the Ulster County Legislature to ensure that any proposed changes to County Governance are in compliance with the spirit of the current charter.
2. Dutchess county Justice and Transition Center - monitor the planning and construction of the new County jail and inform and remind constituents of the League of Women Voters' position on Criminal Justice Reform and share lessons learned in the recent Ulster County new Jail construction.
3. Materials Management Committee to become the Environmental Protection Committee - study and try to influence local action and legislation on local environment issues such as materials management, fossil fuel transportation, greenhouse gas emission reduction, climate change, rising waters etc.
4. Action Committee - respond in a timely manner to political issues as they arise including joining other organizations with similar principles and positions in demonstrating and marching, making signs that identify the League of Women Voters and our support of various issues.
5. Electoral Reform - study Ulster County voting patterns and use this information to influence a change in NYS voting laws that would increase voter turnout.

## Finance Report

A review of all of the records of the year-end assets since June 30, 2011 shows that our bottom line year-end assets have varied by less than 1% overall over a six year period, indicating that we are responsible stewards of our funds. All these assets are held in MHVFCU Savings and Checking accounts, the LWVNYS Education Foundation, and the reserve CD held by MHVFCU.

On March 16, 2017 an audit committee of three members met and reviewed the financial records of the fiscal year 2015-2016 and found them to be accurate.

The current year's budget reflects that all member dues collected are used to pay for our obligations to the National and State Leagues. The balance of our income is used for ordinary operating expenses which include the Commentator, the telephone, web site, postage, rental of meeting space, etc. A large portion of our spending is used for printed educational material and flyers. Our membership has increased by about 25% this year, which, along with supporters and generous sponsors has made it possible to keep educating the public and operating our organization. The current year shows that we are getting close to expectations as shown in the approved budget for the current year, 2016-2017.

The Elizabeth Askue Fellowship Fund remains active and was used this year to aid two student members. This fund is available for any current member, or new member, who would find the present dues a financial difficulty.

We keep a balance in a CD earmarked for important projects. Our proposed budget includes using some funding for equipment and materials to enhance our educational and public projects. As always, we invite new ideas that can be funded with this reserve.

In recent years both the National and State Leagues have increased our obligations for per member payments and in accordance with the member vote in May 2016 our dues have been increased this year for the first time in over a decade.

We are in a sound financial state overall and prepared to support our programs and endeavors for the coming year. ---Dorothy Winrow, Treasurer

**The financial records and books of the LWVMHR were reviewed by a committee of three members on 3/16/17 and were found to be an accurate reflection of the financial condition of the LWVMHR as of May 31, 2016, and are the results of operation and cash flows for the fiscal year then ended.**

	<b>Actual Totals 6/1/2015 to 5/31/2016</b>	<b>Actual Totals 6/1/2016 5/23/2017</b>	<b>Adopted Budget 6/1/2016 to 5/31/2017</b>	<b>PROPOSED BUDGET 6/1/2017 to 5/31/2018</b>
<b><i>Income</i></b>				
Individual & Student Dues	3000	3175.00	2575	4630
Household Dues	1200	1155.00	1200	1350
Interest	34.93	22.67	40	30
Contributions: Gen Fund	1882.08	1604.89	1200	1200
Contributions: Ed Fund	1068.5	625.00	1600	1200
Fundraising	0	200.00	700	500
Ads/Sponsorships	200	500.00	700	500
Voter Service	430	270.00	300	300
From Reserves, CD	0	0.00	0	1000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7815.51</b>	<b>7552.56</b>	<b>8315</b>	<b>10710</b>
<b><i>Expenses</i></b>				
Operations, phone,web	661.92	1150.87	800	1400
Organizational Activities	152.67	918.42	500	900
Educational Activities	1785.78	875.39	1200	1400
Public Programs	321.35	591.77	300	1500
Delegates	1000	500.00	500	700
Comm Printing	165.34	135.02	280	220
Comm. Mailing	91.48	48.05	190	140
LWVNYS	1560	1500.00	1555	1610
LWVUS	2544	2448.00	2490	2640
Fundraising	0	0.00	500	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8282.54</b>	<b>8167.52</b>	<b>8315</b>	<b>10710</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>467.03</b>	<b>614.96</b>		
<b><u>Assets as of May 31</u></b>				
	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>5/23/2017</u></b>		
MHVFCU Primary Savings	\$2,675.55	\$2,678.02		
MHVFCU Checking	\$3,843.27	\$3,689.64		
MHVFCU 3 Monthe CD	\$15,572.81	\$15,602.89		
LWVNYS Education Foundation	\$1,874.98	\$480.98		
Total May 31, Current year	\$22,966.61	\$22,451.53		
Total May 31, Last Year	\$24,333.41			
E. Askue Reserve Fund	\$1,025.00			

## Committee and Project Reports

### Action Committee

This is the first time that there has been an Action report at an Annual Meeting. The formalization of an Action group had its roots on November 19 at a league event at Deisings Bakery that was billed as a Harvest Breakfast Brunch. The turnout was phenomenal. What was most obvious was the need for individuals to have a venue to express their concerns and fears after the recent Presidential election. This administration had promised to turn back a progressive Obama agenda that the League of Women Voters has supported and promoted to better serve and protect individuals. We considered them core values and these core values were now in very real danger of being decimated. And so, it began...and now it continues.

Sign making is happening and we are gearing up to be more visible in expressing our concerns to protect our progressive agenda. We believe we need to partner with other organizations who share our angst with the direction of the new administration in Washington. Education, Environment, Health Care, Equality for all, Transparency in Government, are all areas that need to be addressed so none are eroded or compromised. We welcome supporting and working with organizations who share our ideals. To a limited extent, we have started doing this but the league definitely needs to up the ante. Lest some members feel our local league may be going down the wrong path (what? action, not studies?), Dare Thompson, president of our State league, summarized some comments of Wylecia Wings Harris, CEO LWVUS. Wylecia recently spoke to 50 league members at the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill.

*But while we end the first century of LWV history strong, she challenged us to start our next century even stronger. We have always been evolving, but **as change picks up speed, we need to move beyond evolution to transformation.** Many new members are younger and more action-oriented than current ones. We want to retain them and to prepare for the next generation of members. We also need to be sure that our relevance is evident to those outside the League. We need greater diversity in age, ethnicity, perspective.*

We are a non-partisan organization that promotes policies that are consistent with our legislative agenda, not individuals. We welcome all members and organizations to join us in action. ---Jean McGarry



## Book Club

The third Tuesday of every month there is a Book Club sponsored by League members and anyone who would like to join in. You don't need to be a member in order to participate in the discussions. Most readings are geared toward issues pertinent to the League's interests: that is to say, books dealing in social and political issues being discussed at the moment in our system of government

The presidential elections gave us the opportunity to deal with the influence of money in our political system. We also have read books on psychological influences on mass behavior, how the masses can be manipulated into choices detrimental to society and many more. All books are chosen to add to our knowledge of how our government works.

Presently we are exploring how democracy works. We have gone back to the rudiments of what is a democracy; for this, we are reading the classic: *Democracy in America* by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville.

Our next meeting will be on May 23rd at 1:45 pm at Enzo's Restaurant in Kingston, all are welcome to participate.

## Communication

The Commentator has been our main vehicle to communicate to our members for as long as memory serves. Up until 10 years ago, it was professionally printed and a group of league members would get together each month and spend several hours addressing and stamping the copies. Higher printing and postage costs forced us to make the decision to switch to an electronic version of the Commentator. There was much trepidation about this "radical" move and at first it was not particularly well received. Change is difficult. But in the end, we realized it was the right thing to do and it allowed our league to get on better financial footing.

We are at a crossroads again. In this very technical and fast paced world, does it serve our members to wait a month to receive league news when there are so many other ways to disseminate information in a more timely fashion? For this reason, the board and our very able and dedicated editor who guided us into the digital age, Jim McGarry, have agreed that the last publication of the Commentator will be the July/August edition. Over the summer, new methods of communication will be explored and put in place. As has been our practice, members will receive e-mail notices or phone calls concerning special events or committee updates. The league calendar, board minutes, and useful links will continue to be found on our league website at <http://lwvmidhudson.org/> Stay tuned!---Jean McGarry

## **Guardians of the Charter**

We are happy to report that any attempts this past fall to compromise the integrity of the Charter have not occurred. Currently of interest, according to member Tom Kadgen, is Resolution No. 141. This requests the New York State Legislature to introduce Home Rule Legislation, amending General Municipal Law to authorize a permissive referendum for the County of Ulster's Independent redistricting Plan. According to Tom, the county legislature has to get it through the NYS Legislature. As yet it has not been requested, although the legislators have been aware that this must be done for five years. If they can't get it done in time, a revision commission will have to be appointed to go over reapportionment again and then it will have to go to a voter referendum for approval. ---Tom Kadgen and Jean McGarry

## **Membership Committee**

This year we have gained new members (see the list below), and we wish to welcome them all to our ranks. If you spot them in a meeting (including this one) please welcome them and invite them to participate fully in our activities.

Elva Adams	Colline Geraghty	Nora Licht	Nora Scherer
Liz Bonita	Karen Goertzel*	Kathy McDonald	Adrienne Schorr
Jennifer Clark	Dr. Stanley Goldstein	Kristin Muller	Linda Still
Elizabeth Doty	Laura Hartmann	Dr. Nadine Reveim	Kate Van Baren
Dr. Carole Ford	Kate Hymes	Bonnie Roll	Sarah Womer
Gai Galitzine	Mary (Mike) Kelley	Doug Scheer	

\*a former member who moved away and has now returned to the area

Like many organizations concerned about the current policies and objectives of the administration in Washington, our league has had a surge in membership starting after our Harvest Breakfast on November 19.. Nationally, league membership has soared and there have been requests to start local chapters. We have begun work to form a satellite chapter in Orange County. Despite its large population, it lacks a League presence. To welcome new members to our league and to offer an opportunity to better understand our organization and how they may become involved, we scheduled a league orientation on March 11. Fifteen new and prospective members attended. Since this orientation, we have had some "prospectives" sign up for membership and some new members have taken on various leadership roles in the league. Most gratifying as a result of this workshop was the opportunity to connect with other individuals who are active in other organizations who have similar agendas as the league. Partnerships have been formed and this is advantageous to all our organizations as we work together to protect, preserve and promote our similar values.

All members of the league should take opportunities to inform others about the league and its work. We have brochures about the league that you can give to friends, and we will send information to anyone about whom you tell us.

---Shirley Kobran and Jean McGarry

## **Materials Management**

The Materials Management Committee has continued its focus on

- A) paring down on the stuff we acquire (i.e., REFUSE and REDUCE),
- B) reusing items as frequently as possible (REUSE), and avoid use of disposable items,
- C) recycling materials for further use, that can no longer be used in their current state (RECYCLE), and
- D) RETHINK our individual and collective attitudes towards materials, so that we can manage such materials in a more responsible way — for ourselves and for future generations.

## **Food Waste**

Food Waste is a subject that one of our members (Kimiko Link) has reinforced in our attention. So much unneeded waste goes in to the landfill, when it could be used to feed others, or be returned to soil by means of composting. Several other Committee members share Kimiko's zeal. The Committee has taken a pledge to support the

Environmental Protection Agency's Food Recovery Challenge, whereby we make a concerted activity at least three times a year in this regard.

On April 21st, we helped Kimiko conduct a Food Waste Audit at the Lenape Elementary School in New Paltz. Kimiko had the support of teachers and administrators, as she set up stations for students to sort and dispense of used or unwanted items after they finished eating. These liquid, solid food, recyclable items and trash, were then quantified and showed to the students in an afternoon assembly. The children's enthusiasm for taking steps to reduce those items sent off to the landfill was clearly evident.

### **Trash Fest Ulster**

Over the summer, committee member Margot Becker conducted a month-long, multi-faceted event called "Trash Fest Ulster" — which married a celebration of the arts with a celebration of the environment. She had sculptors install inspiring sculptures (one musical) at the High Falls transfer station. On opening day of Trash Fest, there was a variety of musicians performing on instruments made out of recycled materials. Our Materials Management Committee set up a tent to share the message, and offer arts-related materials' recycle activities.

### **Other**

We have benefited immensely from membership in the New York State Association of the three "R's" over the year. Information from them inspires our attention, and it has been so helpful to have them as a resource.

Jolanda Jansen has continued assisting Dutchess County as it works with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, in analyzing options for increased reuse of organics (be it food scraps or leaves or pruned branches, garden stalks, whatever). By the time of our Annual Meeting, we may have more to say on this study.

Jolanda and Kathy O'Connor went up to Troy on March 28th to attend a statewide Organics Summit, where we heard various presenters tell us about their experience in making the best reuse of organic materials. One of the presenters was our own Sarah Womer, who gave a great talk about how her company Zero-to-Go came to be, and how it continues to operate successfully.

And last, several of our League members have been more than generous

with their time and expertise, in participating in the Ulster County legislative appointed Commission, to try to come up with a recommendation to the legislature, as to how the County might best deal with the disposition of its solid waste in the coming years. Their study has been extensive, and we look forward to viewing/hearing the fruit of their labor in the next month or two. Special thanks go out to committee members Kathie Beinkafner and Jolanda Jansen, as well as Manna Jo Greene, Tracey Bartels and Laura Petit.

### **Conclusion**

A busy year. More to come. We meet at The Main Course Restaurant in New Paltz on the first Tuesday of the month, 5:30 p.m. Call Kathy O'Connor if you'd like more information (845-757-2247). All are welcome. Bring a friend and your reusable takeout container. ---Kathy O'Connor

### **Naturalization Support**

Our league is involved in welcoming new citizens and helping them register as new voters at the Naturalization Ceremony at the Court House in the City of Kingston. This particular function occurs every three months.

We are present at the swearing in of new nationalized citizens. Instructions are given as to how to register to vote in elections in the State of New York and national elections. These new citizens come from all over the world, in average, there are between 15 and 20 new citizens in each ceremony. The next Naturalization Ceremony will be on June 9th at 11:00 am.

Taking in account the mistrusting atmosphere that we presently live, it's refreshing to see how newcomers to this country are grateful for the opportunity to become part of this democratic society.

If you would like to participate give a call to Daisy Tyler anytime.  
---Daisy Tyler

## Observer Corps

Lee Cane and Vic Melville have been observing the Ulster County Legislature, the Board of Health and the Board of Supervisors, and we thank them for their contributions. Vic has now indicated that he is retiring from that position, and Lee has some health problems that make her part time. Cindy Bell has stepped up to observe Laws and Rules in Ulster County. She also joins other League members who attend various meetings with topics important to our local LWV Thank you, Cindy!

Tom Kadgen is, as ever, our legislative watchdog. Though he doesn't write reports, he is invaluable to Cindy Bell as an interpreter of the 'between the lines' meanings, unspoken communications and occasional hidden agendas.

Whenever important topics are on the agenda, League members rally and attend through our email alerts. Anyone interested in these alerts should let Jean McGarry know, so she can include them on the Action Committee email list.

There is real value for members to be acquainted with the workings of our local government. We hope that some new members will be able to join in this effort. All politics is local! Be Involved. We need to show our faces more than ever. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work"!

---Margaret Sellers and Cindy Bell

## Opportunity for Electoral Reform

On March 28, we sponsored a presentation of the feature-length film, *Electoral Dysfunction*, at the Rosendale Theatre. There were two showings, one in the late afternoon and one at 7:15 which included a lively Q & A with SUNY New Paltz associate professor, Joel Lefkowitz.

The film features the witty Mo Rocca and was premiered at the 2012 Republican and Democratic National Conventions and then broadcast nationally on PBS. It highlights in a totally entertaining and effective way why all our elections - whatever state we live in - do a poor job of giving citizens adequate control over their own government.

The film really energized the audience, and we are following it up with continuing work by our Electoral Reform Committee. If you missed our showings, you can view it in streaming format on iTunes, Google Play, and Amazon Prime. We think you'll then want to get in touch with Gai Galitzine or Jean McGarry about joining the committee! --- Dare Thompson

## **Voter Service**

The league started off the year by attempting to sponsor debates for Congressional and State candidates. Despite our best effort and much time and energy expended, these events did not come to fruition. Politics and personalities seemed to trump the need for transparency in our location. We did successfully distribute 3,000 voter guides throughout Ulster and Dutchess Counties. Along with many smaller voter registration drives this past year, our annual participation in National Voter Registration Day on September 27 was very successful. We again focused on registering college students. It is always refreshing and encouraging to meet with these young people who are engaged and excited about the political process.

Our concern with New York State's abysmal voter turnout rates has resulted in the formation of a committee to study New York State voting restrictions and their impact in Ulster County. This new Electoral Reform Committee is being led by Gai Galitzine. We continue to lobby in Albany to allow early voting eight days before the general election, to remove the requirement to complete voter registration 10 days before an election, to consolidate state and congressional primaries to create a single June primary, and to create a ballot layout that is easy for voters to read and use. As evidenced by the number of phone calls and conversations Voter Service had with voters and would-be voters, this election season was particularly confusing and frustrating.

We wind up this league year by moderating local school board "Meet the Candidates" events. Still "hanging out there" or on the list of "needs to be done" is the creation of a standing Voter Education Committee to serve community groups; especially youth groups, Immigrants and any population that may feel underserved or disenfranchised. Education is the key to getting individuals engage in the voting process. Education is power. Please join us in our effort to meet our ambitious voter service agenda. ---Jean McGarry