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Newsletter May 2024

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Action Items



Get the most out of a Membership and Be Involved with Your Local League!

This section offers reports from ongoing groups and a Calendar to keep us connected:

MEETING DATES & ZOOM LINKS-

April - May

* All members and interested non-members are welcome at all League meetings unless otherwise indicated.

April 30th

6 PM

Training for VAN to Get Out The Vote

Zoom Meeting

[Register Here](#)

May 1st

12:00 PM

LWV Mid-Hudson Membership Committee Meeting

Zoom link:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82525444407?
pwd=K7bTXgUbH6mKNaDLCiXar4kbTOMckg.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82525444407?pwd=K7bTXgUbH6mKNaDLCiXar4kbTOMckg.1)

May 6th

1:45 PM
Book Club
[Enzo's](#)
Kingston

May 7th

League Advocacy Day
9:30 AM- 4 PM
Albany
Register [HERE](#)

May 10th

Dutchess County Meetup
Watch email for more information

May 16th

4:30-6:30 PM
"Power to the People"
NYers for ERA
Cunneen-Hackett Center
Poughkeepsie
(See article below)

May 18th

2 PM
NY ERA Rally
(hosted by HV Strong-Indivisible)
4 Corners in Rhinebeck (Rt 9W and Market St.)

May 21st

8:00 PM
LWVMHR Board Meeting
Join Zoom Meeting
[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87841231146?
pwd=dFp5bDdtZFNvWjNMRTkyTVBCRmg3dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87841231146?pwd=dFp5bDdtZFNvWjNMRTkyTVBCRmg3dz09)

SAVE THE DATE

June 20th

The Prez Says



The Hudson Valley is never more beautiful than in these few weeks, so I hope you are taking time to enjoy it. But we also have lots for you to do with the League, so please check out all that is described elsewhere in this newsletter.

I particularly recommend that you join any of the in-person gatherings available in your region. Zoom calls don't allow for the smaller interactions that are possible in person and really allow us to get to know one another. And they are usually as informative and constructive as the ones we've been doing on Zoom

The in-person May 16th event in Poughkeepsie about the NY ERA is also a great opportunity to meet Erica Smitka, the deputy director of the state League. Our state office plays such an important role in the work we do, the more we hear from our dedicated staff there, the stronger we all are.

It is also important that we all fully understand this constitutional amendment that will be on the fall ballot so we can spread the word about its value to everyone in NY, not just women, and learn how to respond to any questions we get. Let's become as ready as possible to empower our fellow voters.

I really look forward to seeing you there, especially if you are new to us!

Dare Thompson darethompson@gmail.com, 845-236-3074



“Power to the People!”

NYer's Equal Rights for All

May 16th, 4:30-6:30 PM

Cunneen-Hackett Center

Poughkeepsie

Education & Networking Event

sponsored by the League of Women Voters Mid-Hudson Region

Parking Available

Learn how we can spread the word about the
**New York Constitutional Amendment Ballot
Initiative** to ensure **Equal Rights for All!**

We need to get folks out to **VOTE** in November!



More Info:

<https://lwvmidhudson.org/events/new-yorkers-for-equal-rights/>

FROM THE AUTHOR OF SAPIENS

Yuval Noah
Harari



21 Lessons
for the
21st Century

LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

May 6th

1:45 PM

[Enzo's Ristorante](#) in Kingston.

The Book Club met on Monday, April 22nd, at Enzo's restaurant. The discussion centered on Yuval Harari's "21 Lessons for the 21st Century". The book club previously discussed Sapiens by the same author. Harari's books have received numerous accolades from the most prominent literary reviewers around the world.

The Sunday Times stated " Erudite, illuminating, vivid...[Harari's] lessons suggest new ways of thinking about current problems..."

We are planning to continuing discussing the same book next month on May 6th.

Bring a friend and discover a new experience with League Members.

As always, we encourage members to borrow the book from the library or purchase from local booksellers.

Daisy Tyler

daisytyler68@hotmail.com



Put May 16th on the Calendar For NYers for the ERA Kick-Off Event

The New York State League of Women Voters is an active partner in the effort to pass a State Constitutional Amendment adding to existing enumerated protections against discrimination based on race and religion.

This amendment would explicitly prohibit discrimination based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex—including their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, reproductive healthcare and autonomy.

Check out this website:

<https://nyequalrights.org/>

On May 16th, 4:30-6:30 PM, The LWV Mid-Hudson will host a kick-off event at the [Cunneen-Hackett Arts](#) Center in Poughkeepsie.

Invitations have gone out and we are depending on our members **-YOU-** to share the invitation, with people from all backgrounds, to come and learn how we can ALL WORK TOGETHER to spread the word about this important ballot initiative! Our LWVNYS Deputy Director, Erica Smitka, will join us to explain the proposed amendment and answer questions!

Are you interested in joining our LWVMHR ERA task force? If so, contact Cindy Lanzetta at packback56@yahoo.com or Louise Reavis at louise.reavis@gmail.com



Observer Corps

An important part of a local League organization is an "Observer Corps" made up of volunteers who attend County Legislative Meetings. LWVMHR Member Jane Simkin Smith attended (virtually) the Dutchess County Legislative Meeting that took place on April 8th, 2024.

Her report begins:

"Two issues commanded the most attention at this session: (1) Resolution 75 (authorizing the set aside of \$100,000 to fund a potential lawsuit by the County against the State to challenge recent legislation that moves most local elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years); and (2) public opposition to plans to develop homeless shelters in Poughkeepsie."

Read more in the interesting summary of her observations! You can find them [HERE](#).

The League still need to find members who can pop into the County Legislative Meetings in Orange & Ulster, as well!



Regional Meetup Groups

Southern Tier:

This group is made up of members from Orange County, southern Dutchess County, and southern Ulster County.

We had a good meeting on April 19th, at the Silk Factory in Newburgh. Lively conversation and a lot of discussion about the upcoming ERA event on May

16th. Since most of our group is active in setting up for the event we decided to postpone our regular meeting date in May.

We are working on a trip to see "Suffs" on Broadway in June! Stay tuned!

Dutchess Members & Friends

On April 11, a group of Dutchess County members of the League met for lunch at Mahoney's in Poughkeepsie. We had a wonderful, energetic discussion about current events, upcoming League activities, and our plans for registering and informing voters for this year's election. We brainstormed a list of places to hold voter's voter registration events and concluded that our immediate focus will be schools, closely followed by naturalization events and community centers.

We discussed some of the objections that people raise to registering to vote - it was suggested that we come up with a list of talking points to address those objections and that document is in the works.

We decided to start meeting monthly; our next meeting will be on **Friday May 10**. The location is not yet determined but will be communicated to all Dutchess County members in the near future.

Ulster County

Realizing the need for members of the Kingston area to come together in a single block, a planning committee was instituted. The first meeting was on Tuesday April 16th. at 11:00 am.

Five League members participated: Jean, McGarrys, Nora Sharer, Jacky Moriarty, Dare Thompson and Daisy Tyler.

Jean volunteered to become Chair of the committee. It was agreed on the need to have an event where members of the Kingston area would be invited, several venues were discussed but none was agreed on yet.

It was decided to meet once a month.

Next meeting will be at Daisy's house at a date not yet confirmed.

More details of the group will be coming in the future.

Submitted by Daisy Tyler

Watch your emails for pop-up get-togethers!

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Environmental Impact

LWV/AAUW's Sustainable Hudson Valley Environmental (SHV) Roadmap Series Wrap-up

by Cindy Bell

Our League and the American Association of University Women, with local president Lynn Gore, co-sponsored this enjoyable and informative series of programs, reprising our Earth Month collaborations in 2022. While the sessions were packed with useful information for community leaders and others with Melissa Everett of SHV, there was plenty of time for interactions and conversation among participants. I've included some of the highlights here:

Decarbonizing Power, Buildings and Transportation

After hearing some interesting facts and figures on the topic, architect Thomas Wright spoke about electrifying buildings and discussed some of the 'green' projects happening with residential and industrial buildings. He outlined a number of other promising community projects now happening here, including tree planting that cools buildings and provides an improved quality of life for residents. He stated that we are like "a frog in slowly boiling water" because the effects of climate change are not obvious on a day-to-day basis, so people tend to ignore them.

Building a Low Carbon Circular Economy

The speaker was Lisa Sciannella of HELPSY, a textile reuse, resale and recycling company that collects clothing, repairs or resells to thrift stores, online retailers and others. They also repair what they can and finally, the remainder goes to a Hudson Valley textile recycling facility. This process supports women-owned businesses and, as she noted, none of this ends up in a pile in a third-world country. Anyone who knows of a bin placement spot can contact HELPSY online to make a suggestion. Some ideas were college campuses, "refillery" shops, town halls, transfer stations, gyms and shopping centers. Lisa stated, "If we can't do this, just take us out and shoot us." In other words, it's a no-brainer.

Other topics in this module included the Extended Producer Responsibility bill currently being discussed in NYS government, barriers to reducing waste, bio-economies and more. It was a lively event, with participants adding many ideas and much enthusiasm to the conversation.

Farms, Forests, Land and Water

This session focused on the need for collective action in the Hudson Valley and the links between people, resources and goals set by NYS government.

Farmers must be supported in their ability to make a living because soil health is critical to the future and the cost of remediation can squeeze the uncertain and tight budgets of those relying on the land for a living. Agrivoltaics are one such solution, where solar panels are placed over grape vines and other crops or livestock grazing. The solar company pays the farmer for placement of the panels. This can make a successful partnership.

There are a number of new environmental measures available, such as heat maps and solar mapping as tools that towns may utilize for local land management. There is a network of experts and organizations ready to assist any town in the process. Citizen, civic or youth groups and libraries are an important source of support for education, leadership and activities on a local level. It is thought that grassroots action will create the most meaningful change, as that is where needs are most accurately identified and prioritized.

Community and Economic Benefits

In this session, the conversations turned to Environmental Justice. “Nothing about us without us.”

The US Department of Labor has created a Just Energy Transition Office to work with disadvantaged communities to make updated energy systems available and track health outcomes in places where polluting businesses have chosen to site their industrial facilities. NYS will get it done- the question is who will own the assets? Many in the communities would love to be a part of solutions. More attention is being paid to the human resources already in existence in order to lift the economy, improve public health, and neighborhood planning to integrate a better quality of life among those historically left behind. The DOL will prioritize funding more minority-owned businesses to improve communities they call home. A number of such enterprises were discussed, mostly in cities around the Hudson Valley and NYC.



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News



Manna Jo Greene - Ulster County Environmental Hero

by Emilie Hauser, Secretary of LWVMHR

Manna Jo Greene was honored in April for her lifetime achievements. Manna Jo and I, along with others, joined the League in the 1980s because of our passion for recycling and our concern in preventing a waste incinerator in Ulster County.

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater recognized her with Lifetime Contribution Award at the annual gala on April 7. The Ulster County Legislature presented her with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her decades of environmental stewardship on April 16. The County Legislature mentioned her environmental advocacy through her role in the campaign to close the Indian Point nuclear power plant, advocacy work around the remediation of the Hudson River from General Electric's PCB contamination, dedication to shaping and advancing Clearwater's mission, and tireless efforts in the Ulster County Legislature.

Manna began her advocacy as a teenager in the Civil Rights movement working with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others. She encountered Clearwater as a teenager at a Pete Seeger concert, and years later became Clearwater's Environmental Action Director for over 20 years. Besides her activities with closing Indian Point nuclear power plant and remediation of the PCBs in the upper Hudson River, she has been involved in watershed organizations including the Hudson River, Rondout, and Fallkill, among many other achievements. She was the Ulster County's Recycling Coordinator/Educator for a decade, after a career as a registered critical care nurse. She was a Rosendale Town Council member from 2006-2013 and has been a member of the Ulster County Legislature since 2014.

Manna's next project is working with Ulster County municipalities to create an implementation plan to achieve the NYS Climate Act goal of 70% Renewable Energy Generation by 2030. Read more about her achievements at <https://e.givesmart.com/events/Ap9/page/honorees/>

Manna Jo Greene embodies the spirit of community and sustainability. We congratulate her for the awards and thank her for her advocacy and dedication to the environment and Hudson River.



Manna Jo Greene with family members, receiving honors from Ulster County Legislators for her work as a Legislator and Environmentalist



Pine Bush High School

Be More Effective in GOTV

From Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director,
League of Women Voters of NYS

We have finally scheduled training on using VAN data for GOTV efforts.

This training is for anyone working on GOTV and voter service activities during this election season.

NYCET Training

Tuesday, April 30, 6:00 pm

[REGISTER HERE](#)

The State League has initiated a partnership with the NY Civic Engagement Table (NYCET). With this partnership, the state and local Leagues will join other organizations in working toward a stronger and more inclusive democracy. We will also all have access to new tools and tactics to educate and engage voters more in elections and strengthen our get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts.

With this partnership, we will have access to data through VAN (Voter Activation Network) providing us with contacts and information from the voting rolls. Leagues will be able to determine the areas with low voter turnout and focus activities and efforts on those populations to increase participation.

For more info on NYCET, go to their website at: <https://www.nycet.org/>



LWVMHR Members attend Dutchess County Naturalization Ceremony

On Friday, April 5, Pat Lamanna and Jackie Wildau handed out LWV information on voting to 41 new citizens at a -- literally -- earthshaking ceremony. Lollipops pacified some of the younger participants, and the adults were enthusiastic about the thought of voting in the U.S. for the first time.

Gloria Waslyn was able to take this photo of Helen Chase, Rosemarie LaTourette, and Cindy Bell when they did their "meetup" at the Saugerties

Village Diner. These traveling get-togethers are always a good time to meet fellow League members!



President Dare Thompson (not pictured) met with Daisy Tyler, Jean McGarry, Nora Scherer, Jacki Moriarty to organize some meetups in the Kingston/New Paltz area of our League.

League of Women Voters Mid-Hudson Region Member

Kate Hymes named Ulster County Poet Laureate

ULSTER COUNTY

**POET LAUREATE
KATE HYMES**

"I love poetry because it is accessible to everyone. A poem doesn't require the time commitment of other art forms or writing genres. A five or ten-minute commitment can give the reader an experience so significant that the feeling of reading that poem, specific lines, or images will stay with the reader for a lifetime."

Learn more at
www.artsmidhudson.org/uc-poetlaureate

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Kate Hymes is Ulster County's first Poet Laureate and a distinguished writer and poet currently living in New Paltz. She has led workshops with the Wallkill Valley Writers Group for over twenty years. The Ulster County Poet Laureate was first instituted in 2023 by the County Executive, with Arts Mid-Hudson managing the public call for nominations. We share this poem by Kate in honor of National Poetry Month:

APRIL 1968

*Red azaleas blazed. Dogwoods bloomed white
four-petal crosses passed the Greyhound bus windows
as Mama and I rode, New Orleans to Atlanta,
that April. Mama said, "They crucified Jesus*

*on a dogwood." How could they have –
so frail, so delicate to bear all that weight.
Mama said, "God stunted the once mighty tree,
then redeems it each spring with remembrance."*

*The night before on TV we saw cities _
burn. Mama and I wore black
arm bands. As we rode, we watched
azaleas and dogwoods in riotous_*

*celebration bear witness:
stones still roll away.*



Politics, Power & Promoting Women

This webinar sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the United States and the Global NGO Executive Committee was presented on the margins of the 68th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in NYC.

A powerful route to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women is engaging them in governmental institutions to initiate and support policy decisions affecting their environmental, economic, social and cultural lives and livelihood. Strong democratic institutions are built on gender equity inclusive of equal representation and participation by women and girls.

To watch this panel of experts discuss strengthening institutions by promoting gender equity in parliamentary bodies at a global level, encouraging women to run for elected office at a national level, and passing the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) at the state and local level, just click [HERE](#)



Running For School Board

This presentation was such a informative session that we recorded it and you can view it to learn more about this important subject -[HERE!](#)

We also have an archive of videos done by our local LWV Mid-Hudson on YouTube!

You can access them [here](#).

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Editor's Note:

We want you to know that we welcome your feedback with regard to anything you read in this newsletter, or items that you would like to see.

We're here for you and would like to hear from you. Contact info@lwwmidhudson.org. Thanks.

Next Newsletter deadline is May 26th.

Also note: this and previous issues of our newsletter are available for viewing on our website lwwmidhudson.org

info@lwwmidhudson.org

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