



Newsletter January 2024

Table of Contents (When viewing the entire newsletter you can click on the title to go directly to that item)

- [The Prez says...](#)
- [Action Items](#)
- [Environmental Impact](#)
- [News Items](#)
- [Editor's Note](#)

The Prez says ...



Happy New Year, all!

May we end 2024 with a vibrant, reinvigorated democracy! Thank you for all you are doing to help make it so.

For months we have mostly been talking about elections and voters but we will be focusing more, for the next

six months, on what those folks who won those elections are doing in Albany and in our local governmental bodies.

Look elsewhere in this newsletter for a list of all the state Assembly and Senate members who represent you and how to find out more about them. Look too for the link to your county's website so you can see who represents you there and when that legislative body meets.

There are too many towns in our three counties to list all their websites, but I also encourage you to look for the website of your town and of your local school board and consider attending at least one meeting of each in 2024. The meeting might not rival the engagement level of an action movie, but I'll bet you learn a few things you are glad you now know about what's happening locally. And look around – you may be the only “concerned citizen” present! Way too little attention is paid to this important work and when someone like you shows up, the officials notice and are grateful!

One of my greatest resolutions for LWVMHR is that we are more present in our local and state governments and that this is noticed! Before the pandemic we had been building that presence, but as with too many things, it faded in 2020-22 and needs rebuilding.

See also in this newsletter what a new member learned recently by attending a meeting of the Dutchess legislature. We hope to share many more such reports about this and other legislative bodies.

Let us know about ANY meeting you attend and consider sharing (even in a sentence or two) your experience with the rest of us.

Tangentially related to this is a meeting we will be holding later in January about running for school board. Some political parties see school boards as places to find and perhaps train candidates for higher office but some individuals also see school boards as a way to serve their local young people and build our future. Either way, candidates need to know what running involves, and it's a lot.

We'll tell you more about this, so stay tuned. A separate email will be sent out when the details are set.

Again, happy new year to all – and to all a good government!

Dare Thompson, President, LWVMHR darethompson@gmail.com,
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[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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-

January

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

January 3rd

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)

January 16th

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)

January 22nd

1:45 PM

LWVMHR Book Club

[Enzo's Restaurant](#)

Kingston

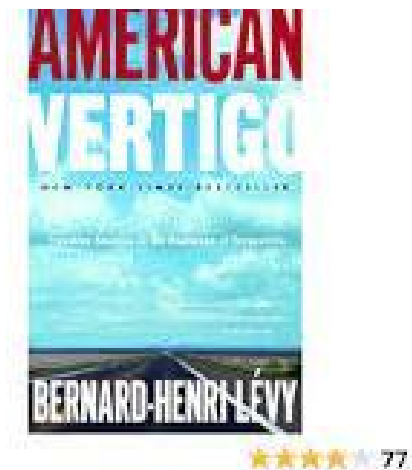
January 26th

12:00 PM

Southern Tier Meeting

[The Silk Factory](#)

Newburgh



LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

January 22nd

1:45pm

Our new book club date will be on January 22 at Enzo's Ristorante. We will be reading "American Vertigo" by the

French philosopher and writer, Bernard Henry Levy.

BHL, (as he's commonly known), reports on the daily life of regular American citizens. He writes about his experience traveling through different places in America in the same vein as another famous Frenchman - Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote one of the

most famous books about life in America.

Meeting will be 1:45 PM, at [Enzo's Ristorante](#) in Kingston.

All members are welcome to join. 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

Voter Information

In January and February we will be making appointments to visit with our elected representatives in the NY Assembly and Senate to press for legislation on a variety of issues the League is concerned about. We are particularly likely to focus on election reform/good government work, environmental issues, and equality of opportunity issues, but details will not be available until the 2024 legislative session is underway.



If you would like to join us, let us know! You do not have to be a speaker – you can simply listen, take notes, and help us share what we heard with other League members. Appointments may be in person or virtual. Some may not happen until March or later in the spring but efforts to get appointments have to start early.

Find your Assembly member and Senator below. Check the maps on their websites if you need further clarification about who represents you. Let them know how you feel about issues YOU care about too!

ASSEMBLY Members

Western Orange:

District 98, Karl Brabenec, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Karl-Brabenec>

Eastern Orange:

District 99, Chris Eachus, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Aileen-M-Gunther>

Middletown in Orange: County and much of Sullivan County:

District 100, Aileen Gunther, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Aileen-M-Gunther>

Western Ulster, central Orange and parts of many other counties farther north:

District 101, Brian Maher, <https://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Brian-Maher>

Phoenicia area in NW Ulster and areas north of Ulster:

District 102, Chris Tague, <https://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Chris-Tague>

Northeast Ulster plus Red Hook/Rhinebeck area in Dutchess:

District 103, Sarahana Shrestha, <https://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Sarahana-Shrestha>

Lloyd, Plattekill, Marlborough in Ulster, City of POK and Beacon in Dutchess, Newburgh in Orange: District 104, Jonathan Jacobson, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Jonathan-G-Jacobson>

Amenia and southern Dutchess towns except City and Town of Poughkeepsie and Beacon:

District 105, Anil Beephan, Jr., <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Anil-Beephan-Jr>

Northern Dutchess (plus most of Columbia Co.) except City of Poughkeepsie, Amenia, and Red Hook/Rhinebeck:

District 106, Didi Barrett, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Didi-Barrett>

SENATE Members

Southern Dutchess (except SE corner) plus part of Newburgh:

District 39, Rob Rolison, <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/rob-rolison>

Ulster County plus northern Dutchess Co.:

District 41, Michelle Hinchey,
<https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/michelle-hinchey>

Orange County except for part of Newburgh:

District 42, James Skoufis,
<https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/james-skoufis>

To find out who represents you in your county and when their legislatures meet, go to one of these:

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/>

<https://www.orangecountygov.com/>

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/>

2024 Promises Broad Protection for All New Yorkers' Equal Rights

The New York State League of Women Voters is an active partner in the effort to pass a 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/>

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

Our Committee's first meeting will take place on Zoom, Wednesday, January 24th, 7pm. The link will be sent to those who have expressed an interest in being a part of the group.

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 Meetings that took place in December.



These meetings were conducted in anticipation of the adoption of the 2024 Budget for Dutchess County. Ms. Smith attended virtually and wrote up an interesting summary of her observations and you can find them [HERE on our website](#).

We look forward to her future reports and hope we can find some 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.

Our next regular meeting will be January 26th, noon, at the [Silk Factory](#) in Newburgh. All League members & friends are welcome to attend!

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Environmental Impact

Cynthia Bell is our LWVMHR Environmental expert. This is the third year she has covered the [UN Climate Change Conference - COP28](#). This conference she attended via virtual meetings.



She has been busy putting together her voluminous notes for the New York State League, as well as for our membership. We will be putting that information up on the website in Mid-January. Please read about this important event that will affect our future! We hope to have a summary for the next newsletter. Watch this space!

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

News Items

LWVMHR PRESENT AT NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

On Friday, December 22nd, Ulster County welcomed 24 candidates who received their certificates to become citizens of the United States. The ceremony took place at Ulster County Community College, at the Stone Ridge Campus at 11:00 am. Representing the League were Cindy Bell, Deborah Marr and Daisy Tyler.



Cindy Bell, new citizen and Daisy Tyler- UC Naturalization



League Members Deborah Marr & Daisy Tyler talk with Naturalization Candidate



Daisy Tyler and her State Trooper escorts

**NEW YORK STATE
ENACTS BILL THAT
ALIGNS LOCAL
ELECTIONS WITH
STATEWIDE RACES**

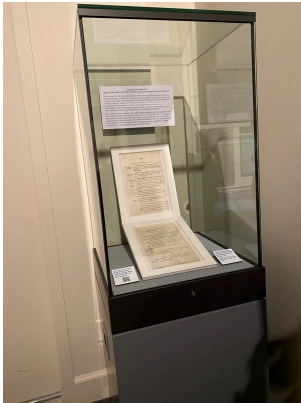


from the AP article:

<https://apnews.com/article/elections-voting-legislation-new-york->

"Voting rights groups said the new law, which takes effect in 2025, will help save taxpayer dollars and prevent voter fatigue by avoiding the need for holding elections every year. It will also lead to increased voter turnout among communities of color, they said.

"This bill will bring more voters into the political process, including young voters and voters of color, and avoid extremely low turnout and unrepresentative results in local elections," Sam Olikier-Friedland, executive director of the Institute for Responsive Government, said in a statement."



Field Trip for Southern Tier Members

Members of the LWVMHR took a road trip to the [FDR Presidential Library & Museum](#) in Hyde Park. They went to view Eleanor Roosevelt's personal marked up copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that she helped develop for the United Nation's adoption 75 years ago! Eleanor Roosevelt (or ER as she is referred to at the National Site) was a member of the League of Women Voters!



Governor Kathy Hochul has signed into law Legislation S.1856-A/A.7640, known as the Birds and Bees Protection Act.



This nation-leading legislation protects New Yorkers from potentially harmful toxins by prohibiting the use of certain neonicotinoid pesticide (neonics) treated corn, soybean, or wheat seeds and neonicotinoid pesticides for outdoor ornamental plants and turfs, creating important protections for New York’s pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

“By signing the Birds and Bees Protection Act, New York is taking a significant stride in protecting our kids, environment and essential pollinators,” Governor Hochul said. “This law underscores our commitment to fostering a thriving ecosystem while we prioritize sustainable farming and agricultural practices.”

Legislation S.1856-A/A.7640 is a proactive measure to protect pollinators by restricting the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on certain seeds, outdoor ornamental plants, and turf. It allows sufficient time for innovative research on alternatives and the development of more cost-effective products that are less harmful

to the environment. After this period, the use of neonicotinoids will be subject to science-based evaluations and waiver provisions to assist farm and agriculture operations in the transition to this new program.



We also have an archive of videos done by our local LWV Mid-Hudson on YouTube! You can access them [here](#).

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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@lwvmidhudson.org. Thanks. Next Newsletter deadline is January 24th.

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

info@lwvmidhudson.org

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