



Newsletter March 2024

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### The Prez says ...



While we are always registering voters and performing other election-related services, our focus in the spring, when the NY legislature is in session, is on **ISSUES**.

Please notice elsewhere an article about our **visits with legislators** and the creation of a committee to look at the **2023 (now 2024!) Farm Bill**.

We welcome your participation in these and anything else you read about in our newsletters (naturalization ceremonies, helping

our jails register those who are legally able to vote, book or SCOTUS discussions, and much more).

I remind you that Erica Smitka's reports with the subject line "**Your Weekly Legislative Update from LWVNYS**" are enormously helpful and interesting. They come every Friday when the state legislature is in session. If you want it and can't find it in your in-box, contact [erica@lwvny.org](mailto:erica@lwvny.org).

In the article about visiting legislators, we give you the topics that we are currently lobbying about during this pre-April 1st budget deadline period.

I also really encourage you to attend the **LWVNYS Regional Meeting at our office in Albany on March 23, 10 - 4**. Join our carpool! Besides getting to meet members from around the region, we'll learn about the following topics:

- The Wild Ride: Get Ready for the 2024 Election Season!
- The Story of Us: Evaluating and Tracking League Programs
- Bridge to Excellence – Strengthening Local Leagues Through DEI Mastery
- How and Why Not to Do it All: Leading a Local League
- Making your Voice Heard: Citizens and Local Leagues
- Engaging College Students in Their Communities and Beyond
- Fact vs. Fiction: Training the Public on Determining Mis and Dis-Information

Interested? You need to register by March 15, so please go to [lwvny.org](http://lwvny.org) and look under Local League Resources to sign up. The \$25 registration covers lunch and materials.

Have you or a friend had **a yen to be a candidate for your local school board**? We are planning a Zoom meeting with a state school board association person and a local school district clerk who will explain what you need to do to get on the ballot and what's required by way of training during your first year if you win. We'll include at least two former school board members (one a

former board president) who can explain what it's like to serve. We'll be publicizing this separately once the date is set. Watch your in-box.

Finally, **we are always looking for help** with the routine and/or occasional League work from writing reports to setting up meetings to managing internal systems like the roster managed by LWVUS or social media. If you have a special work skill like bookkeeping or website management, that would be especially welcome.

There's always something new to do or enjoy in the League. I hope to see you!

Dare Thompson, President  
[darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com)

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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-**

### **March**

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

#### **March 6th**

12:00 PM

LWV Mid-Hudson Membership Committee Meeting

Zoom link:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82525444407?  
pwd=K7bTXgUbH6mKNaDLiXar4kbTOMckg.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82525444407?pwd=K7bTXgUbH6mKNaDLiXar4kbTOMckg.1)

#### **March 9th**

10:30 AM

ERA Discussion

Greenburg Library, Elmsford or ZOOM

Register [HERE](#)

#### **March 15th**

12:00 PM

Southern Tier Meeting

[The Silk Factory](#)

Newburgh

#### **March 19th**

12 PM

Dobbs Decision Discussion

Zoom link:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84724454377?  
pwd=GloFBaytoond1IsSSKJzZ84ATbCgl1.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84724454377?pwd=GloFBaytoond1IsSSKJzZ84ATbCgl1.1)

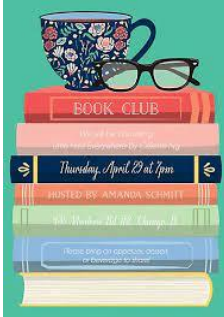
#### **March 19th**

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)



## LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

Watch this space for more information about Book Club in April.

Meetings are usually each month at 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](mailto:daisytyler68@hotmail.com)

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## MEET YOUR ASSEMBLY and SENATE MEMBERS UP CLOSE

League members are currently scheduling visits with their state Assembly and Senate representatives between now and March 22 and other members are welcome to join them. You may just listen or participate fully – your choice.



This year the focus will be on these budget-related issues:

- funding for county boards of elections

- election reforms
- funding for the public campaign finance board
- an expansion of the bottle bill
- education financing
- fair pay for home care

Though we are continuing to work on our other priority issues related to good government, criminal justice reform, rural issues, healthcare, women's issues, and other environmental issues, we are not acting on these with relation to the state budget. Should these issues "move" before the April 1st budget deadline, we will issue action alerts to all members through our social media channels and email.

Members should always feel free to mention any advocacy issue in the League's 2024 Legislative Agenda (available [HERE](#)) during their advocacy visits, but we do ask that you focus your conversations on the issues above. You can also find the state League's budget testimony at [lwny.org/legislative-actions](http://lwny.org/legislative-actions).

**Contact Dare Thompson at [darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com) to get more information or find out how to be part of a visit.**

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### **WHY IS THE FARM BILL IS SO IMPORTANT TO OUR AREA?**

The federal 2023 FARM BILL should have been passed and in place by now,

but there's been some disfunction in Congress in case you hadn't noticed (!) and the passage deadline was extended into 2024.



The only good news aspect to this is that we now have time to weigh in on what we want in or out of it. Since it will be in place for five years and has an enormous impact on farmers, people who get food stamps, researchers, and so many other people in our country, we should really look at it.

A committee, including local farmers, is being formed to study the impact-on-farmers aspect of this so we can speak to our federal legislators about it. We have to be sure we are honoring the position on Agriculture that we hold as a national organization so that we “speak with one voice.”

We will be looking at the whole position, too long to print here, but it is summarized this way:

**LWVUS believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally sound, and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices.**

Please join this committee. It will work quickly so this is not a big commitment, and it will share information with our whole local League. You don't need be an expert – just concerned with the issue.

For more information, you might check out these sources:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-bill/index>

<https://www.farmaid.org/our-work/>

Contact Dare Thompson, [darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com), for more information.

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## **Supreme Court Case Watch: Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization**

Removing the constitutional right to have an abortion, Dobbs has been one of the most consequential cases from the Supreme Court in decades.

It has been covered extensively in the media and will play a significant role in the upcoming election.

Don't rely on others' interpretation, read it for yourself and **join us in a discussion on March 19 at noon.**

The discussion will be akin to a book club meeting where all are allowed to comment, pose questions, and consider the true implications of the case. The discussion will be led by Attorney Jennifer Clark, who will explain some of the legal background and technicalities of the decision.

You don't have to read anything in advance, but if you choose to, you'll enjoy the discussion more. Jennifer recommends the first 7 pages - the syllabus - which is the court's summary and not actually the decision, and the next section - the court's opinion - which restarts on page 1 and goes through page 79. She adds that everything after that is the individual justices' decisions (concurrences and dissents), which you can read, but have no precedential value since they are not the opinion of the court.

Here is the link for the Dobbs decision:

[https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392\\_6j37.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf)

Topic: **What does the "Dobbs Decision" actually say?**

Time: Mar 19, 2024, NOON

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84724454377?  
pwd=GloFBaytoond1IsSSKJzZ84ATbCgl1.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84724454377?pwd=GloFBaytoond1IsSSKJzZ84ATbCgl1.1)



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## Ulster County Jail Visits

Our scheduled visit to the jail has been rescheduled for early March due to a Covid outbreak that put two of the six units on lockdown, so it was decided to allow sufficient time to complete the outbreak cycle before committing to another date.



Incarcerated individuals will be registered in time for the Presidential Primary on April 2nd. Two LWVMHR members and two Board of Elections staff members (one Republican and one Democrat) will offer forms and assistance to properly fill out registration and absentee ballot requests. The BOE staff takes all forms directly to the office for processing and provides us with the numbers of each form filled out at the visit.

While Ulster County has trained LWVMHR volunteers for this activity, more are needed. There are a total of three opportunities this year and we will be there for all. Please consider joining us. If interested, please email me at [cindylwv@gmail.com](mailto:cindylwv@gmail.com) and I will provide you with the contact information I have for Ulster County. That's all it takes to get started.

Our contact person at the jail let us know that at least one person has expressed interest in registering to vote. Our past participation and the result was well worth the effort to make it happen.

Members from other counties are encouraged to contact their county sheriff's office to find out how to become a volunteer. In Ulster County, extensive personal information is required, as well as a training session that lasts two hours. We are fortunate to

have Sheriff Juan Figueroa support our efforts, as well as facility staff to work with us.

All sheriff's offices throughout the state have been contacted regarding informing individuals about their rights as established by NYS Election Law and effective in 2023.



### **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/>

The League of Women Voters NYS Rural Caucus held a special presentation the New York State Equal Rights Amendment on Feb. 5, 2024 to educate members. Special guest Nia Alvarez-Mapp, Organizer for New Yorkers for Equal Rights (<https://nyequalrights.org/#about-us>) went over the Coalition's

timeline for the campaign to secure passage of the NYS ERA. She also updated us on the kinds of materials we can expect to be able to access to help us educate voters about what the amendment might mean to them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ETP5TANOJ0>

Our local ERA Committee is hoping to plan a kick-off event for mid-April. More info on that will be forthcoming.

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

Our Committee's next meeting will take place on March 15th, during the second half of the Southern Tier Meeting at the [Silk Factory](#) in Newburgh (regular mtg at noon, ERA discussion 12:45)

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## 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 February 13th, 2024.



This meeting was a business meeting with important discussions. Ms. Smith attended virtually and wrote up an interesting summary of her observations and you can find them [HERE](#)

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!

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**And Mid-Hudson Region League members are perfect for the job!**

Benefits:

- Learning the nuts and bolts of your county's election system
- An opportunity to be part of an important service to your community
- Making friends and meeting new people
- Poll workers are paid, including mileage if working outside your election district.

Requirements:

- at least 18 years of age
- registered to vote in the county you're working in

Training is provided in person or online, depending on your county's policies. Contact your local Board of Elections for more information.

- [elections.ulstercounty.gov](http://elections.ulstercounty.gov)

- [elections.dutchessny.gov](https://elections.dutchessny.gov)
- [orangecountygov.com/783/Board-of-Elections](https://orangecountygov.com/783/Board-of-Elections)

2024 Election dates:

- Presidential Primary April 2nd
- General Primary June 25th
- General Election November 5th

There are nine days of early voting before each election with fewer polling sites and shorter hours leading up to each Election Day.



### **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 March 15th, noon, at the [Silk Factory](#) in Newburgh.

**We will have a special discussion about the latest ERA developments during the second half of the meeting!**

All League members & friends are welcome to attend!

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## Environmental Impact

For another perspective on the most recent meeting in Dubai to discuss Climate Change, check out this email to our representative Cindy Bell from Kimberly Camron, Ph.D. on her experience -



"Hi Cindy,

I'm back! I'm changed :) Wow! It was an amazing experience! Thank you, thank you, thank you for providing me with the initial information about your experience with COP26 and introducing me to the role the League plays in the UN. I feel very energized with sooooo much to do! But, none of this would have occurred if it was not for you!

Here's a link to my blog: [https://substack.com/@kimlwvcortland?utm\\_source=profile-page](https://substack.com/@kimlwvcortland?utm_source=profile-page)"

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## News Items

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**MidHudson League Loves Voters on Valentines Day**





OCCC Middletown

The MidHudson League of Women Voters rallied to make Valentine's Day a Voter Registration Day! Events took place at Community College Centers throughout the tri-County area. Below are accounts of the events:

From Louise Reavis:  
The LWV, Mid Hudson Region was represented by a Voter Registration table at the SUNY Orange campus in Middletown on

Valentine's Day. Members Anne Sandor and Louise Reavis registered five students to vote, passed out literature and answered questions about voting. The VR table was part of a Valentine's Day student appreciation event sponsored by the school and included live music and a variety of free goodies for yourself or your Valentine that was appreciated by a steady stream of students! The LWV was grateful for the opportunity to give new voters a chance to register.

Meanwhile - Mary Missere, Rachel Zollner and Leslie Simons hosted a table at OCCC Newburgh and got 21 new registrations!

Pat Lamanna and Fay Casatuta took the first shift at the table in Hudson Hall, Dutchess Community College, on Valentine's Day. Cindy and Al Lanzetta took over until 2 PM, after which members of the faculty of the History, Government and Economics Department closed out the afternoon at 3:00.

We picked up 10 voter registration forms; two people took forms

with them. We gave away chocolate and lollipops and had some good conversations.

And Daisy Tyler reported: Deborah Marr, Cindy Bell and I went to Ulster County Community College at the Stoneridge Campus for a voters registration during the day. College personnel were very helpful and we registered around 20 students.

Since it was Valentine's Day, Deborah brought candy and flowers to encourage students to our table. We spent a pleasant day together and did our civic duty.



OCCC Newburgh



UCCC Stone Ridge



DCCC Poughkeepsie



UCCC Stone Ridge

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## Breaking News - Governor Hochul signs new Congressional District Maps

<https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-new-congressional-map-approved/>





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## Equal Rights



## AAUW invites NYS LWV Deputy Director to speak about the NYERA

Saturday, March 9 at 10:30AM

Greenburgh Public Library,  
300 Tarrytown Rd, Elmsford and via Zoom

Visit <https://greenburghlibrary.libcal.com/event/10921598> for in-person or virtual registration.

Come learn about the NYERA Amendment that will be on your ballot this November. SPEAKER Erica Smitka, Deputy Director at the League of Women Voters of New York State, will speak about what this amendment to the NY State Constitution means and how important it is for every New Yorker.

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## LWV Mid-Hudson Visits Tri-Valley High School Class

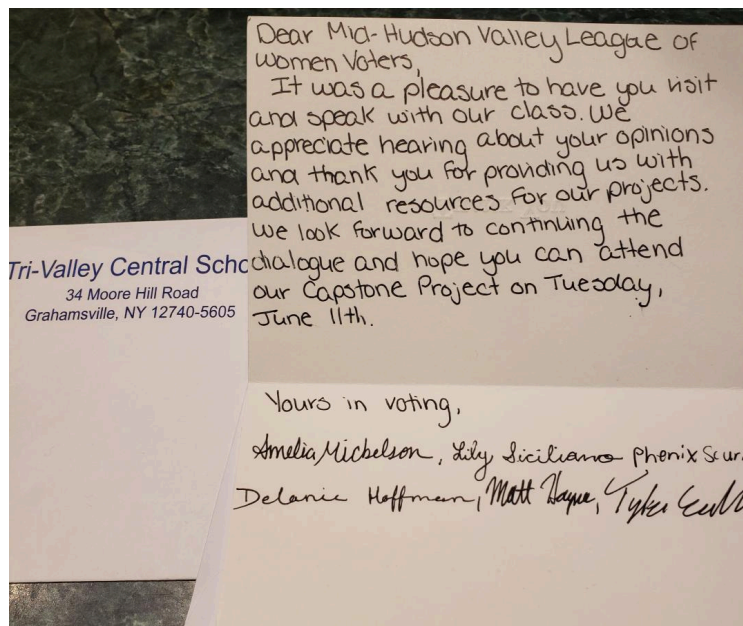
LWV Mid-Hudson members Dare Thompson, Cindy Lanzetta, Sheba Abraham, Gaivoora Abraham and Marilyn Jones visited Tri-Valley Central School's Civics and Social Justice Class in Grahamsville on February 9th.



Tri-Valley High School

A brief introduction of League of Women Voters history and initiatives was shared, followed by each student introducing their evolving Capstone Project. For the class project, students identify an injustice taking place in the community, research the identified issue, form an action plan, and then follow through on their action plan. There was opportunity for lively discussion and League member feedback within the constraints of the class period, culminating in a positive experience for all.

LWVMHR members are invited to a showcase of the completed projects in June.





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@lwvmidhudson.org](mailto:info@lwvmidhudson.org). Thanks. Next Newsletter deadline is March 25th.**

Also note: this and previous issues of our newsletter are available for viewing on our website [lwvmidhudson.org](http://lwvmidhudson.org).

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[info@lwvmidhudson.org](mailto:info@lwvmidhudson.org)

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