



Newsletter January 2023

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The Prez says ...



by Dare Thompson

I still remember my delight as a kid to learn the stories behind the names of our months, and I always liked January best. It was named for the Roman god Janus. His job was to guard doorways and other passageways and he had

two faces, one looking forward, one looking back. This captures well what most of us are doing at this time of year.

As I look back, I am flooded with a sense of relief that the November 8th election did not live up to our worst fears. Not only did voters turn out in large numbers, so many were clearly paying attention to whom - and what - they were voting for. I am also flooded with pride that, right here in our Valley, we stood up against voter suppression – namely, one election commissioner's refusal to give the Vassar campus the polling site it was legally required to have - and we won handily. How hopeful is that?! I am also flooded with gratitude for all our members, in all three counties, who sat at voter registration booths, helped with candidate events, distributed voter information and organized informational Zoom programs, and did so many other tasks to make voting better and easier for our fellow citizens. It was great to have the help this year of the Ramapo-Catskill Library System, as well as the Mid-Hudson one. Finally (with my backward-looking face) I am smiling with delight as I remember a lot of small in-person “meet-ups” where so many lively conversations happened and where we got to know one another better. And I am remembering board meetings too, with gratitude for the good and cheerful leadership it provides. What a great bunch League members are!

Looking forward, I know we will be doing more of the above to help voters and enjoy one another's company. See elsewhere in this newsletter information about the book group that resumes again and about the concurrence that we will hold on Ranked Choice Voting as we look ahead to the state LWV convention in early June. See too, that the Nominating Committee will be beginning its work to find a few more good women and men to serve in mid-July and beyond. I think most board members would say that we get more out of our LWV membership than anyone –

we learn so much. So welcome to 2023! We will still be a divided country, so it will continue to be a bit of a bumpy ride, but the League provides us all with an invaluable seat-belt and a front row seat. Here we go!

Dare Thompson, President

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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-

January

January 3rd

12:30 PM

LWVMHR Membership Committee Meeting (All are welcome!)

[Join Zoom Meeting https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86309152442?pwd=eGlxQU1WRG53NE9SWUNZS1I1eWExZz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86309152442?pwd=eGlxQU1WRG53NE9SWUNZS1I1eWExZz09)

January 9th

1:45 PM

LWVMHR Book Club

[Enzo's Restaurant](#)

Kingston

January 19th

7PM

LWVMHR

Board Meeting

(Members are welcome to join)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?
pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3l6RUtlY1F1dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3l6RUtlY1F1dz09)

January 20th

Noon

League Southern Tier Meetup

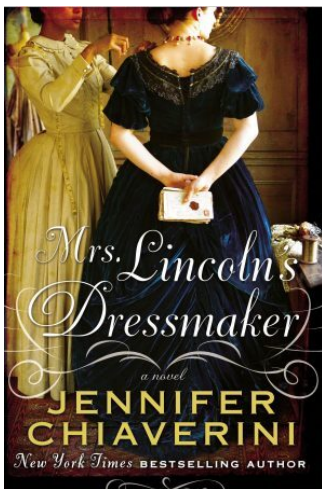
[Silk Factory](#), Newburgh

February 7th

7PM- 8:30PM

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?
pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCODFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCODFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09)



LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

The next meeting of the Book Club will be on January 9th, 2023, at [Enzo's Restaurant](#) in Kingston. Meeting will be at 1:45 PM.

We will start the new year with the book, "[Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker](#)," by Jennifer Chiaverini.

As always, we encourage members to borrow the book from the

library or purchase from local booksellers.



Dear Members,

We are looking for volunteers for our **Programing Committee**. This committee will be tasked with arranging this year's events. We are looking for committee members interested in helping with finding speakers, creating event fliers, location scouting, as well as the other event logistics. Currently, we are hoping to plan events on How to Run For Office; Healthcare; Election Security; and trainings for the observer core. Members of the programming committee will also provide input into what other programs to hold. We welcome both event specific and year-round volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jennifer Clark at jenclark3@gmail.com



**Mid Hudson Ranked
Choice Voting (RCV)
Concurrence**

on Tuesday, February 7,

7:00- 8:30 PM

After the Mid Hudson League Ranked Choice Voting Committee reviewed the pros and cons of rank choice voting as well as the efforts of sister leagues in New York City, Syracuse, and Long Island, they decided to move with a concurrence session. The concurrence would be with the original New York City Statement

(below). If you are interested in Ranked Choice Voting, regardless of your level of familiarity, please consider attending the Zoom meeting.

Here is the Zoom link for the RCV concurrence meeting on Tuesday, Feb 7, 7- 8:30 pm:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCODFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09>

The study material will be posted on the website.

What is concurrence?

Concurrence is the process through which Leagues can adopt a new position without doing their own study because another (trusted) League has done that study.

If a League adopts a position, it means it supports that position. In this case NYC has studied the issue of Ranked Choice Voting and we could ask LWV MHV members to adopt the NYC position. If the consensus of the LWV MHV members is to concur, our League will be adopting the NYC position
LWV of the City of New York Position on Ranked Choice Voting position:

"We support ranked-choice voting (sometimes called "instant runoff voting") in all local elections, including primaries, specials, and general elections.

Voters should have the option to rank at least three and at most six candidates for a given office.

The counting should cease to reallocate votes once a candidate receives over 50% of the current round's vote.

RCV/IRV should happen instead of any head-to-head runoffs that

might otherwise have occurred.

Adequate funding should be provided for training, equipment, staff, and voter education."

Please address any questions to Gerda Maissel at

grdmaissel@gmail.com or Dave Heller at mrplutocrat@aol.com

Equal Rights



Needed: ERA Advocate for our League!

Currently 26 states have a state level ERA, including sex as a protected class in the state constitution—New York

State does not. The good news is that we worked on the passage of a state-wide ERA constitutional amendment in last legislative session and it passed! In the wake of the overturning of *Roe v Wade*, a special session was held in June and the Legislature passed the New York State's Equal Rights Amendment. However, in order for it to be codified in our constitution it must be passed a second time by a separately elected legislature and then voted on by the public. We will need to work to pass it again this session and then ensure that voters are educated and prepared to vote yes when it goes on the ballot in 2024.

The NYS ERA is unique! In addition to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, or sex, it will also include pregnancy outcomes, reproductive health care and autonomy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This would ensure that access to reproductive rights and LGBTQIA+ rights would also be protected in the state constitution.

The League has been advocating for the ERA for decades and will now fight for a state ERA. While we hope that second passage of this bill will happen early in the 2023 legislative session we will need to be prepared if it doesn't. We will also need to be prepared to launch a voter education campaign.

We are creating a LWVNYS ERA Advocacy Taskforce, which will include one representative from each League who will join monthly meetings and be kept in the loop on all things ERA. This appointee will be responsible for relaying important updates to their League, coordinating lobbying efforts and being the point person for their League. If you want to work on this, please contact Cindy Lanzetta at 845-236-7288 or packback56@yahoo.com.

Regional Meetup Groups

A report on the
"Southern Tier
Group" from
Cindy Lanzetta

Circle your
calendar for
January 20th,
noon, at the [Silk](#)



Silk Factory, Newburgh

[Factory](#). We will have a special guest - Daisy Tyler! Daisy is a LWVMHR Board member and she will come to talk about the League's involvement in attending Naturalization Ceremonies. She is also our "go to" literature person, so we can talk with her about our group's interest in community voter education and

what our literature needs might be. I'm sure she'll make a pitch for the Book Club, which meets in Kingston, as she is the organizer. Come and join us - the coffee is good, the conversation is great!

The League needs YOU !

Alert! The Nominating Committee is looking for thoughtful and helpful folks to add their insights and talents to our board for the 2023-24 year and beyond.

The Committee consists of three members that the Annual Meeting elected last June - Pat Lamanna, Jean McGarry, Kathy OConnor - plus Sheba Abrahaim and Cindy Bell who were appointed by the board as our bylaws require. These five will be interviewing potential candidates over the next few months and presenting a slate at the June 2023 Annual Meeting.



We know there are many hidden talents to be discovered in our growing membership and we are eager to reflect the diversity of the three counties we now serve. The pandemic limited our ability to discover these talents, so please help us find them! Contact info@lwvmidhudson.org to express your interest.

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Environmental Impact

On November 8th, 2022, the voters of New York, overwhelmingly, passed the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental



Bond Act. It is the largest environmental bond act in state history at \$4.2 billion and the largest on any ballot anywhere in the nation in 2022. The measure will support environmental improvements that preserve, enhance and restore New York's natural resources and create more than 84,000 local jobs.

"The Act's passage represents the work of a diverse coalition of more than three hundred environmental organizations, unions, and business groups. We thank the leadership and membership of this coalition who led campaigns to support and educate voters about the measure, and to voters who chose to say yes to environmental improvements that preserve, enhance, and restore New York's natural resources and create more than 84,000 local jobs," said Kate Boicourt, Director, Climate Resilient Coasts and Watersheds New York - New Jersey.

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News Items

MOORE v. HARPER



This case, filed by the Secretary of State of North Carolina, is a BIG deal. The State is asserting that under the Constitution, state legislatures have sole

authority over setting rules for elections and that state courts are precluded from overriding such rules. This is known as the Independent State Legislative Theory (ISLT). Right now it is before the Supreme Court, which heard an oral argument on the matter December 7th. The League of Women Voters of the United States, and league chapters from all 50 states, filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court on the matter.

According to Wikipedia, "Moore v. Harper has been described as one of the most high-profile cases the Supreme Court has taken up in recent years; former federal judge [Michael Luttig](#) called it the 'single most important case on American democracy — and for American democracy — in the nation's history.' The case is expected to have a significant impact on future federal elections in the U.S. should the court support ISL (Independent State Legislative Theory) and affect efforts to make gerrymandering illegal or remove restrictions on voting. Three of the current justices — Alito, Gorsuch, and Thomas — had stated in the dissent to the Court's March 2022 order denial that they believed the state argued correctly on employing ISL. Should the court rule in the state's favor, the ruling would likely impact the 2024 United States elections."

We direct you to the League of Women Voters of the U.S. (<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/league-women-voters-files-amicus-brief-moore-v-harper>), Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore_v._Harper), and Ballotpedia

(https://ballotpedia.org/Moore_v._Harper) for you to familiarize yourself with this matter. The LWV of the United States stands strongly against the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the plaintiff.

Thanks go to our legal advocate, LWV Mid-Hudson Vice President Jennifer Clark, for reviewing this article. Jennifer will explain more particulars in future issues of this newsletter. Stay tuned!!



*LWVMHR Vice
President Jennifer Clark*



League member, and former President, Cindy Bell, attended the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce Holiday Breakfast. Here she is pictured with the new SUNY Ulster County President - [Alison Buckley](#). Ms. Buckley is also our newest League member!

photo: Gloria Waslyn

WHO'S ON FIRST?

The November election created quite a bit of change in top leadership in our service area.

Mayor of Poughkeepsie, Rob Rolison, will be heading to the NY Senate in January and his job will be filled through 2023 by City Administrator Marc Nelson.

County Executive of Dutchess County, Marcus Molinaro, will be heading to Congress in January and his position will be filled by Deputy County Executive, Bill O'Neil.

Former County Executive of Ulster County, Pat Ryan, had already won a seat in Congress in August and former deputy county executive, Johanna Contreras, has been Acting County Executive. The voters at the November election chose Jen Metzger as the new full-term County Executive.

We wish everyone success in their new positions!



Thanks to your quick action Governor Hochul just signed the 10-day Voter Registration bill (S2951A/A8858A) which will reduce the voter registration deadline to the constitutional minimum of ten days.

This bill increases access to the ballot by allowing voters more time to register and vote ahead of an election. It will be effective on January 1, 2023.



We have an excellent video that simplifies the idea of **Ranked Choice**



Voting. Check it out:

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

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

You can see the New York State 2022 Redistricting Maps [HERE](#). Controversy continues on the NYS Assembly district maps.

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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. Thanks. Next Newsletter deadline is January 23rd.

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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