



Newsletter April 2021

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Action Items

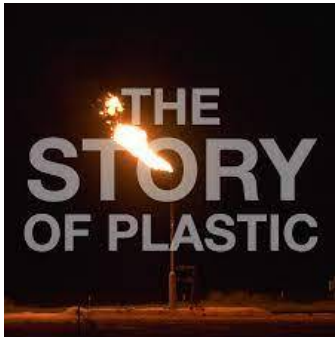


Thursday, April 22nd Earth Day

Yes, we know that Earth Day was yesterday, but really: Every day is earth day. There's so much that needs attending to, so much that needs protecting, so much action that needs to happen to ensure the viability of our planet. Please do your part.

**Tuesday, April 27th LWVMHR
Board Meeting 6-8 PM.**

LWV Mid-Hudson Board Meeting.
Everyone invited to attend. [CLICK
HERE](#) for the link.



Wednesday, April 27th The Story of Plastic at 7 PM.

The LWV of Huntington is sponsoring a panel discussion on the film THE STORY OF PLASTIC. The 90-minute documentary film is the battle cry for the current movement to reduce plastic pollution and a reality check for the narrative around plastics. [Register here](#) to receive a link to view the film any day through April 28th.

Thursday, April 29th Dutchess County Independent Reapportionment Commission. 5 PM.



During this meeting, Ulster County's redistricting actions of 2011 will be reviewed. Microsoft Teams meeting link: [CLICK HERE](#) to join the meeting



Thursday, April 29th LWV Mid-Hudson on Local Redistricting. 7 PM.

People Powered Fair Maps. The LWV Mid-Hudson kicks off the first

of a series of Civics 101 courses offered a consortium of grassroots community based non-profits. [CLICK HERE](#) to join the meeting by Zoom.

Friday, April 30th Indian Point nuclear power plant shuts down. 6 PM.



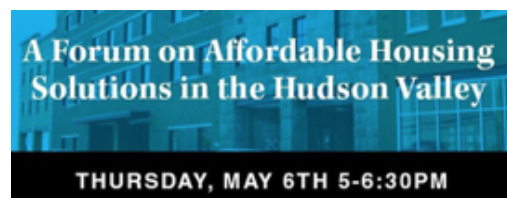
Join Riverkeeper, who fought for decades to make this happen, for a panel discussion of the implications on this action. [CLICK HERE](#) to register ahead of time.



Saturday May 1st Deadline for Early Bird Special to attend LWV New York State Convention.

Pay \$50 up to May 1st to attend Convention June 7th through June 12th, or pay \$75 from May 2nd to June 1st. For information on workshops and other activities, [CLICK HERE](#)

Thursday, May 6th Forum on Affordable Housing Solutions in the Hudson Valley. 5-6:30 PM.



This conversation will cover legislative and policy fixes, solutions from the nonprofit sector, progressive economic development initiatives, and more. Panelists from The River (a project of Chronogram) will present what they're working on, and there will be room for a lengthy audience Q&A at the end. [CLICK HERE](#) to register. See article

below on the Housing Crisis, with links to more information.



Saturday, May 15th Deadline to apply to join UN Observer Corps.

The League is actively accepting applications for the LWVUS United Nations Observer Corps! If you're interested in being part of the League's historic international work, please complete the questionnaire application to introduce yourself to the selection committee. This application is only open to LWV members. Individuals who are selected for interviews will be contacted directly. All applicants will be informed of the status of their application by June 30. [CLICK HERE](#) to find the application.

Upcoming local and national League events:



Tuesday, May 25th LWV Mid-Hudson Board Mtg. 6-8 PM. Everyone invited to attend. Zoom link in May newsletter.

Monday June 6- Saturday June 12 New York State LWV Biennial Convention

To be held virtually. Opportunity to learn more about League activities and to network with other Leagues throughout the state. Go to lwvny.org for information.

Wednesday, June 16th LWV Mid-Hudson Region Annual Meeting. 5:30 - 9 PM.

Tentatively scheduled at the Highland Public Library. Election of officers, a speaker, pot luck food (or bring for just yourself), meet fellow League members, Zoom attendees welcome as well.

[CLICK HERE](#) for zoom link.

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The Prez says...

It is Earth Day as I write this note and I see random flakes of snow out the window—the last tired hurrah of winter weather. Even as much of our environmental news is challenging, there is a glimmer of hope. There are so many smart, motivated, and enthusiastic people out there working on behalf of our natural resources, I do feel optimistic. The job is enormous, and we must all play a part, but should not be fooled by the 'greenwashing' of corporate communications. Know what you can do. Recycling, composting and responsible purchases go a long way, but consumer demand for less packaging and more responsibility in manufacturing and marketing will truly make a difference. Write a letter, make a phone call, write an online review, send an email, or boycott products - we can make a difference.



With all of what is happening in our country and around the world, I see positive, but painful changes. Social and environmental justice are at the forefront of our news, people are waking up to the reality of climate change and young people are energized for action.

Our job is to support and enhance these efforts as only we can

do. Activists are only as effective as their votes, and we will continue to get the message out, while doing what we do best—supporting good government, making registration and voter education accessible to all, and making sure the public is aware of the important local issues of today. We are now collaborating as never before to amplify the voices of community.

I do hope to see you at our **Day of Action** redistricting education event on Thursday (April 29th) called **People Powered Fair Maps**. We are presenting this important topic as a kickoff to Civics 101, as part of a consortium of grassroots community organizations whose goal is to educate the public on important issues that they know exist, but may not fully understand. With every topic, an avenue will become available for anyone who wishes to participate in the process of creating a more representative government.

I am truly grateful for all of you and whatever part you are playing with our League in these challenging times. Better days are coming, and we are going to be ready to tackle our work with energy and organization through the light we now see at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

In League,
Cindy Bell

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News Items

The Chauvin Verdict.



courtesy of the New York Times

The LWVUS issued a joint statement with the Leagues of Minnesota and Minneapolis regarding the verdict that was rendered regarding the role Officer Derek Chauvin played in the death of George Floyd. We have posted that statement on our website. [CLICK HERE](#)

to read the League's position on this matter.

DC Statehood.

For the second time in just over a year, on April 22nd the House passed HR 51, the "Washington, DC Admission Act," which would make DC the nation's 51st state. This bill needs 60 votes to pass in the Senate. The LWVUS supports this bill, as does the LWV Mid-Hudson. [CLICK HERE](#) for the League's recent statement on HR 51.



image courtesy of Princeton University

Divesting from the use of fossil fuels.

On Earth Day, President Biden announced a goal for the US to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 50% (from the year 2005) by the year 2030. Ambitious, but hopefully doable. The League's position is that we should impose a price on carbon, but has not endorsed a specific legislation that identifies how that price/fee should be distributed.

SUNY New Paltz removes endowment

funds from fossil fuel companies and urges faculty pension fund manager TIAA to do the same.



As reported in the Daily Freeman, "divestment from fossil fuels is the right thing to do," said college President Donald Christian. He elaborated, "This important action by the foundation points toward a future that recognizes the college's sustainability goals while balancing its fiscal responsibility to donors." A SUNY New Paltz Senate Resolution passed in December urging the SUNY pension fund manager, TIAA, to divest its portfolio of all fossil fuels. In February SUNY Cortland passed a similar resolution and urged the SUNY Board of Trustees to demand the same. TIAA holds over \$8 billion in industries promoting fossil fuels. For more information on the TIAA Divest campaign [CLICK HERE](#)

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Day of Action, Thursday, April 29th

Across the country, League of Women Voters are engaging in a Day of Action, centered upon the topic of "People Powered Fair Maps" - what we've all been talking about as Redistricting. It is so important that district maps reflect the concerns of the people, rather than political parties that wish to ensure that their incumbents are re-elected.



Our local League has taken this opportunity to kick off a series of

events called "Civics 101," initiated by Radio Kingston's Community Engagement and Outreach program. Other participants include Harambee, Rise Up Kingston, the Kingston Area Library, the Good Work Institute and several more local organizations.

These groups will rotate, addressing a number of Civics topics of interest. After our LWV presentation on Redistricting, you will hear about Human Rights, Voting Education, Advocacy groups, County and Municipal offices' responsibilities, and more.

While of interest to all, the Civics 101 program is particularly addressed to people of color, LGBTQ, youth and other underrepresented groups.

To join the League's event at 7 PM April 29th, [CLICK HERE](#) for the Zoom link. The opportunity to get involved and make sure your interests are represented in fair district maps, comes around only once every ten years. Be part of the solution. See you the 29th.

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Housing Crisis in the Hudson Valley

Everyone living in this region knows that housing prices have been, and continue to be a major concern. The huge influx of new arrivals since the pan-demic has only



exacerbated the problem that affects both rural and urban populations. Ulster County particularly is a low wage area facing an influx of high wage earners.

Recent figures from Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan's [Housing Action Plan](#) released last month, show that although incomes have fallen for 80% of the population over the past 5-10 years, housing costs have risen over 20% in less than one. Across the county, someone earning the median income (\$63,000) could afford only 8% of the houses on the market, and in some municipalities they could not afford to buy any of the available houses. Even those earning considerably above the median income may not be able to find a house. Renters fare even worse; over 30% are paying more than 50% of their income on housing. Given the average hourly wage is \$13.33/hr, a renter will need to work 67 hours a week to be able to afford the market rate for a two bedroom apartment (\$1155).

The Housing Advisory Committee that drafted the report made several suggestions, but say the most important factor is getting the idea out that the county faces a crisis. Employers, including hospitals and schools, say they cannot get even well paid staff because there is nowhere affordable to live. NIMBY groups need to realize this problem is broader than the prospect of having affordable housing projects in their backyard and is more about growing a sustainable economy. The county will be working with municipalities to help them identify and solve their different needs through policy changes and zoning. The City of Kingston is already initiating a new and more equitable zoning system that requires considerable input from the residents.

To learn more about the crisis from the local online publication The River Newsroom: “**Urban Removal: Kingston’s Housing Crisis**” [CLICK HERE](#). And [CLICK HERE](#) to read an interview with some startling statistics: “**Fighting Upstream Against Capitalism**” with Evelyn Wright, Deputy County Executive and Co-ordinator of the Advisory Committee.

Consider attending the forum **Affordable Housing Solutions in the Hudson Valley** on May 6th 5-6:30 PM. (See Action Items above) [CLICK HERE](#) to register for this event.

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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 lwvmidhudson@gmail.com. Thanks.

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

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