



Newsletter April 2023

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The Prez says ...



The days are getting longer and warmer, and there are so many ways you might want to get out and participate in your government!

Louise Reavis, Leslie Simons, and Ann Toner have been working alongside students in two different Orange County high schools

to register new voters.

Daisy Tyler and her crew of helpers have been representing the League at Ulster County's naturalization ceremonies and handing out "First Vote" pamphlets and other voting information. The most recent one naturalized 24 people from 16 different countries!

Other League members are planning an event on solid waste management to happen around Earth Day (April 22); a separate announcement is coming soon.

Several of us will attend a March 30 gathering of college students at Marist (but involving Vassar, Bard and other students too) that will be discussing ways to get their fellow students more involved in voting and advocacy.

You are welcome to participate in upcoming efforts like these.

Other ways to help your democracy is to be a timekeeper, moderator, or other helper at a candidate event. School board elections will be the next ones we'll be helping with and we hope to offer a moderator training session on zoom in late April or May and you can see if this might be something you'd like to do.

We will also be getting candidate information up on our national LWV candidate info site, Vote411. We need people to help us get the candidates to post their information on that site and the process of getting contact information for all the county candidates and town supervisor candidates is no small job. We also try to attend meetings of our county legislatures and really welcome others to accompany us.

If you are interested in state government and want to be hands-on, we encourage you to join us on visits with some of our

Assembly and Senate reps in their local offices. Let us know who your reps are (or we'll help you figure it out) and we'll try to include you.

I also highly recommend the bulletin that comes to your email every Friday when the legislature is in session with the subject line Your Weekly Legislative Update from LWVNYS. It will give you great insights into what these folks are doing right now at the Capitol. Several of us will be carpooling to Albany on May 2 for the state League Advocacy Day and we'll gladly fit you in.

If any of the above appeals to you, contact me or any other board member. We will be delighted to involve you.

Dare Thompson, President

darethompson@gmail.com

845-236-3074 (preferred) 845-591-3445 (cell)

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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 4th

12:30 PM

LWV Mid-Hudson Membership Committee Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

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

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

April 6th

5 PM

Ulster County Charter Reform Commission's next meeting:

6th floor, County Office Bldg, Kingston

The Commission welcomes visitors!

April 13th

5:30 PM

VOTE 411 Training Program Zoom

[Register Here](#)

April 17th

1:45 PM

LWVMHR Book Club

[Enzo's Restaurant](#)

Kingston

April 20th

7 PM

LWVMHR

Board Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?
pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3I6RUtlY1F1dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3I6RUtlY1F1dz09)

April 21st

Noon

League Southern Tier Meetup

[Silk Factory](#), Newburgh

Special guest speaker, Julie Shiroishi, "Insights into becoming better lobbyists"

RSVP Cindy Lanzetta

packback56@yahoo.com or 845-236-7288

April 22nd

Earth Day!

May 2nd

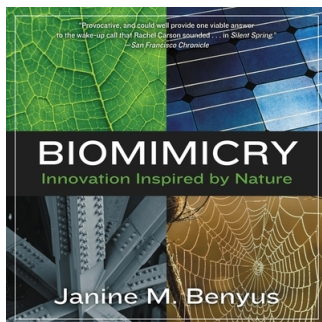
LWV Albany Lobby Day

RSVP Cindy Lanzetta

packback56@yahoo.com or

845-236-7288

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday June 15th - Annual Meeting!!!



LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

by Daisy Tyler

Our upcoming book for April 17th will be "Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired By Nature" by Janine M. Benyus. Biomimicry is a

unique book. It introduces you to the science of the future. As

one critic writes - "It's a primer that will teach you how to think like a blade of grass, a duck pond, a wheat field, a red wood forest, and thus to live within the natural order. It is not about ecological thinking; its instructions and revelations come straight from nature...."

All Book Club meetings are at [Enzo's Restaurant](#) in Kingston at 1:45PM. Any League Member is welcome. Bring a friend! Hope to see you next time!

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



Ms Magazine

LWVNYS/ Mid-Hudson ERA Advocacy Taskforce News

by Cindy Lanzetta

The next meeting of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) task force will be Tuesday, April 4th, at 6:30. If you are interested in joining the LWVMHR's ERA Education Committee and would like to attend this meeting, please contact Cindy

Lanzetta (packback56@yahoo.com) or Louise Reavis (louise.reavis@gmail.com) for the link to the meeting.

In preparation for the education program the State League has put together a great flyer that we can include with Voter Registration League Info: [Check it out!](#)

The ERA Amendment will be on the ballot for New York state in November of 2024. Currently our state constitution only protects against racial and religious discrimination. The proposed ERA would protect discrimination by the government based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. It would also protect against any government actions that might affect a person's access to reproductive health care. Please join us in supporting this important amendment to the New York state constitution!

PRE-BUDGET LEGISLATIVE VISITS 2023

Report from Louise Reavis:

The League of Women Voters of New York, each year, chooses legislative items that its

membership wants to advocate for and then asks its members to arrange meetings with their respective Assembly members and Senators to discuss the issues, as these bodies are developing their budget proposals. This year the League has chosen to advocate for spending in the areas of Campaign Finance Reform, environmental issues, digital equity and support for new voting legislation designed to increase voter turnout.

In keeping with that tradition, Monroe residents, and LWV Mid-Hudson Region members, Louise Reavis and Anne Sandor met with Karl Brabenec, Republican Assemblyman for New York's 98th District on Friday, March 10th at his district office in Florida, NY, to discuss the specific pre-budget issues that the LWVNYS is currently advocating for. Brabenec, who is a member of the



Election Law Committee, agreed that recent changes to election law, such as requiring the Boards of Elections (BOE's) to provide polling places on college campuses with a qualified number of eligible voters, is a cost that needs to be covered in the new budget and, therefore, supports increases to the BOE budget.

Regarding campaign finance reform, he said that he doesn't like the idea of using taxpayer money to finance campaigns and was concerned that the district maps being redrawn will create confusion in the administration of this initiative. However, he did support the idea of getting more people out to vote and said he'd be open to possible amendments to the current bill.

Mr. Brabenec was very positive in his response to funding of the "Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act," requiring companies that sell products using single-use packaging to help fund reuse and refill programs and recycling services and meet packaging reduction requirements. Similarly, he supports the "Bigger Better Bottle Bill," requiring more extensive recycling of plastic bottles and that 80% of unclaimed deposits be submitted to the state. He said that he is also interested in ways that recycled plastic can be used in asphalt production and road maintenance.

Finally, he agreed that funds should be provided to ensure digital equity throughout the state.

The one hour meeting concluded with an assurance to keep the League's priorities in mind as the budget process goes forward.

Report from Leslie Simons:

Session with State Senator James Skoufis conducted on March 10th, with LWVMHR Members Leslie Simons and Mary Missere.

1. Campaign Finance Reform: Given the budget deficits due to Covid in the past few years and other shortfalls, \$75

million is a very large amount. The majority is split in terms of supporting this. The \$5,000 individual maximum still is in place with the proposed legislation so he feels that it will not serve to get large donors out of the system. He mentioned that he was instrumental in reducing the individual donor amount from \$11,000 to \$5,000.

2. Bigger Bottle Bill: The bill is still under consideration but the Senate has heard from small business liquor store owners who have limited space and do not have the capacity to accept recycled bottles.

- Where did you see eye to eye?

In the other areas, the Senator was in agreement and in fact the budget proposals have been submitted with the League's recommended dollars or more.

- Did they ask for additional information?

They would like to have League membership application pamphlets available at their office.

Ulster County Charter Revisions

by Dare Thompson

Like most counties, Ulster takes an occasional hard look at its charter to update it and make it more effective. A charter revision commission has been at work on this for many months and will finish later this spring. League member Tom Kadgen is serving on the commission and he, I and our vice president, Jen Clark (an attorney) have some general concerns we hope the commission will consider. Jen summarizes them here. If you live in another county, you may want to see how well your county's charter handles these issues.



1) Enforcement: There is a lack of enforcement power. We have noticed over the years that not all of the Charter's provisions are being followed; at times sections are ignored. It would be helpful to include something to address situations where officials fail to take actions required by the Charter or take actions that are contrary to their power/duties as set forth in the Charter. Citizens should not have to file a lawsuit (as occurred most recently with the Redistricting Commission) to ensure that county officials are doing their job.

2) Workability: To be fair, at times provisions in the Charter are not followed because circumstances that its drafters did not contemplate render compliance impossible. This does not mean, however, that such provisions should be simply ignored. Rather, it would be helpful for the Charter to include something specifying what should be done in the event a section is unworkable? (i.e. must the official make disclosure and if so, to whom? Must the official take all reasonable steps to stick as close to the requirement as possible?)

3) Accountability: The Charter should ensure not only that its officials are following the Charter, but also that they are following the relevant state statutes (e.g. Municipal Home Rule Law, General Municipal Law, County Law, and the Alternative County Government Law). It would be helpful to include a provision addressing what should happen in the event a county action or law is found to violate state law.

4) Transparency: The Charter should dictate that certain information be shared both between different branches of the county and with the members of public, regardless of exceptions to the Freedom of Information Law.

The next commission meeting is at 5 pm in the County Office

Building, 244 Fair Street, Kingston on Thursday, April 6. They welcome visitors.



RURAL CAUCUS MEETING REPORT

by Cindy Bell

On 3/9/2023, I attended the Online
League of Women Voters Texas

(LWVTX) Central Rural Caucus Meeting.

First of all, I want to express my thanks for the opportunity to attend this meeting provided by Kathy Stein of the LWNYS Rural Caucus. I was curious about how our issues here in the Hudson Valley compare with what is going on elsewhere.

After introductions and expressions of our own rural concerns and challenges, Kathy and I heard how difficult it is for women in Texas to access healthcare, institute common sense gun laws and the efforts to criminalize women who wish to control their own reproductive health. There is a bill currently in the Texas state legislature to require investigation of every stillbirth and miscarriage as a possible homicide. It is important for this group that the LWV speaks with one voice at every level so they feel fully supported by League positions.

It was also pointed out that Texas schools are 49th of 50 states in public education funding. School allotments are based on school attendance, leading many students to attend even when sick. Vouchers are also a hot topic with the legislature. Due to the increase in population, there is grave concern about the explosion of school population as well as water insecurity for all residents.

It was noted that many 'bad' bills, in Texas, were passed in the last two years because no one was watching (including LWV Observers).

The most valuable portion of the meeting for me was when Heather Farmer shared information on her experience with civics education and youth voter registration efforts in high schools.

There were a number of excellent tips including:

- Speak to the school secretary she/he can provide a valuable 'in' to help. Get contact info for Government teachers.
- Use information from schools that previously used LWV help/organization
- Lunchtime registrations don't work as well because students don't wish to be observed registering to vote (this has not been our League's local experience)
- Engage student leadership and organizations to help promote
- Bring sample ballots, voter registration postcards
- Point out facts pertaining to youth vote (26th Amendment lowering voting age to 18 in 1985- because of the Vietnam War draft- old enough to fight & old enough to vote). Keep the focus on youth interest.
- Obama quote "You wouldn't let your grandparents choose your playlist. Why would you let them pick your representative who's going to determine your future?"
- Your vote is your voice. Use it! Discuss making an impact.
- Hold the event close to the deadline to register for the next election so they will put their status into action.
- Give goody bags to each student who registers (list of contents below)
- Have sign – 'If you were born before 20.., you can register to vote.'

Heather shared the template of the letter they send to schools and the list of goody bag items, which include:

- A biodegradable clear bag with League logo (from 4Imprint) and QR code for Local League website
- League pen to use when filling out registration form
- List of representatives, local, state and federal for school location as well as instructions on how to contact
- Buttons/stickers (I Registered to Vote, etc.- available on Amazon)
- QR code sheet with links to all political party information
- QR codes for Ballotpedia, Ballot Ready, Vote411 and other youth-focused voter information sites as well as QR code for local BOE. Add reminder to check candidate information before they go to vote.
- List of Early Voting sites (from local BOE)
- 100 questions on Naturalization test
- Local League information

What a worthwhile hour this was! There was little less information about medical care, childcare and broadband access in rural areas, because members of the Rural Caucus are already well informed. These Leagues were very active on those issues at their recent Lobby Day. One member felt heard by the representative and another felt ‘talked at’ during the same meeting. They felt that meetings with local representatives and the local BOE before Lobby Day were very helpful.

A final note—Texas requires that all people assisting others to register to vote be trained and certified as a ‘Volunteer Deputy Registrar’. There is little support for this activity except in the schools, where a recent law requires every principal be responsible for offering voter education and registration at each school.

All materials have been shared with me and I am more than happy to pass them along to anyone interested. As always, if you

wish to join a meeting of the LWVNYs Rural Caucus, you may contact Kathy Stein at kstein1@twcny.rr.com for a link to the next meeting. They take place every other month via Zoom and the next meeting is in April.

Regional Meetup Groups

A report on the
"Southern Tier
Group"

Thanks to many of
our Orange
County members,
we did voter
registration in the
Minisink High
School and Pine Bush, as well as Legislative Visits.



Minisink High School Voter Registration

Ann Toner said, "Hi, we finished up at Minisink this afternoon - between Wednesday and today, we registered 82 students. Today I was joined by Leslie Simons and Mary Missere. The young ladies for whom this was a senior project did a great job getting out the word- they notified all the junior and senior teachers before hand, put the info about the registration time, place and required info (last four of Social Security numbers or driver's license or driver's permit numbers) on morning announcements 2 days before and during the drive, and put up flyers with the same information.

We were very pleased. "

Next meeting for the Southern Tier is Friday, April 21st, noon. We have a private VIP meeting room now, at the [Silk Factory](#)! We will have a special guest speaker, Julie Shiroishi, talk about ways to improve lobbying our legislators. RSVP's are appreciated. If you are interested in joining us, please **RSVP** and call Cindy Lanzetta for more information on logistics! 845-236-7288 or packback56@yahoo.com.

LWVNYS Advocacy Day

May 2, 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

LWVNYS will host an advocacy day on May 2 in Albany, NY. Join us!



Learn about important legislative issues and how to advocate for them

Meet new League members from across the state

Lobby your state legislators at the Capitol

Enjoy lunch provided by LWVNYS

League members are asked to make their own appointments with legislators and schedule them for 1:30 pm at the earliest. We will walk up to the Capitol after lunch. Those without appointments may try to visit their legislators or join the state League staff in the gallery's watching section.

The LWVMHR (local) members are hoping to car pool and go up together. If you are interested in doing so - PLEASE contact Cindy Lanzetta at packback56@yahoo.com or 845-



Technology: Friend or Foe of Free,

Fair & Accessible Elections?

**LWV/UN Virtual Program Presentation
Report by Cindy Bell**

Before the program started, a poll was taken among participants about whether technology is a good thing in the election process. The result was Friend (73%) and Foe (27%). The post-presentation poll resulted in a significant move on opinions to Friend (88%) and Foe (12%).

The panel of four discussed Best Practices, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, HAVA (Help America Vote Act) of 2002, the challenges of mis- and disinformation, data protection and new technologies affecting changes to election law and procedures because of the pandemic.

The presentations also considered youth inclusion and the role of women in local Boards of Elections and staff.

There was a tremendous amount of useful information imparted in this 90-minute program. A link to the recording can be found on YouTube at [Technology: Friend or Foe of Free, Fair and Accessible Elections?](#)

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Environmental Impact

LWVUS CLIMATE INTEREST GROUP

This is a group of interested League members who have made it easy to research, inform and get



involved in the issues around climate change.

- Food, Soils & Agriculture
- Water
- Renewable Energy
- Climate Action Plans
- Electrification
- Forests & Wildfires
- Health
- Climate Justice
- Oceans
- Climate Communications

Since most climate legislation is happening at the state level, a link to a map is available on the home page to show what is happening in your state or to compare with what's happening elsewhere in the country. A further breakdown is available according to the specific issues stated above.

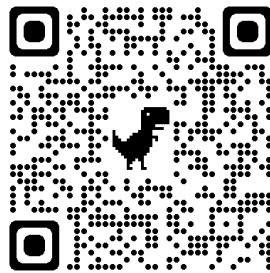
The League works alongside a number of other organizations in order to be as effective as possible. However, many think that the LWVUS may not be placing enough attention on the emerging

circumstances existing on the earth today.

The group (of which I am a very small part) is working to promote these issues and your involvement will surely make a difference! There is an entire ready-made program to present to local Leagues or at a State Convention Caucus.

Please add your voice to ours by expressing interest in one or more topics by scanning the QR code below or going to the [website](#). You can receive occasional emails with news about what the groups are doing-- or you can jump right in and get involved!

Cynthia (Cindy) Bell



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News Items



New Election Financing Options

The 2024 election cycle, already underway, marks a

historic first for New York State. It will be the first election where candidates running for the senate and assembly can opt into the state's new small donor public financing program. The voluntary program offers a match of public money for small contributions from constituents to eligible participating candidates.

We are lobbying our elected officials to get them to put as much "match" money as they can into this program so it can really make a difference.

Here's the official statement about what the law is supposed to do: "The legislature finds that the voluntary public funding program will enlarge the public debate and increase participation in the democratic process." (Legislative findings and intent, N.Y. Elec. Law §14-200)

But go to our website, lvvmidhudson.org, to read a summary of how this law will actually work and why this will make elections better. It's from one of our good-government partners, the Brennan Center.



The League was well represented at the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce Breakfast to celebrate the "Honorary Irish Person of the Year" - Ulster County Clerk and LWVMHR Member Nina Postupak! Also present were members Cindy Bell and newbie Melanie Hammond. A good time was had by all!



Health Care Is A Human Right
Invites You!

Free Community Healthcare Clinic

When:
Thursday
April 13th
4-7pm

YWCA Ulster Co.
209 Clinton Ave.
Kingston NY

Sign in Starts @ 3:30

**Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Reiki
Massage, Physical therapy
Aromacology/Chair Massage
Qi Gong Healing Class 4-5pm
Max 8 students - First come basis**

**eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Ulster County, NY**

PHARMACIA SERVING KINGSTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS 20 YEARS

Health Care is a Human Right

HEALTH CARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT, INC.
PO BOX 162
BEARSVILLE, NY 12409

Donations Gratefully Accepted!
No amount is too small.
Thank you!

Volunteers Needed!
If you are interested in volunteering, please contact
ida@hchrny.org

Spring Well

EARTH DAY!

SATURDAY APRIL 22 12 - 3 pm

YWCA 209 Clinton Ave Kingston
**NOTE: This event is at the "YWCA Ulster County" on Clinton Avenue, NOT the "YMCA of Kingston" on Broadway.*

Join us on Earth Day for Spring Well, a free Spring Wellness event held at the YWCA Ulster County*
 Co-hosted by the Holistic Health Community (HHC) and sponsored by Live Well Kingston.

HHC will be providing free 45 minute holistic healthcare sessions. Sessions are to be booked in advance online: hcnj.simplybook.me

Walk in workshops:
 - 12:15 Gentle Yoga
 - 1:15 Global Dance Fusion
 - 2:15 Herbal Seed Starting Workshop

Healthy food for purchase.

Holistic Health Community is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, charitable corporation.
 Holistic Health Community, Inc. | PO Box 725, Stone Ridge, NY 12484 | holistichealthcommunity.org | 845.867.9068



News Flash - Just In!

by Ann Toner

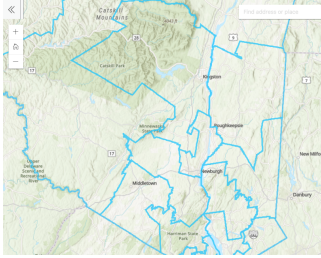
Pine Bush High School -

Once again we registered during lunch periods. On 3/21 we registered 44 students, and on 3/23 we registered 50 students - total 94 registered.

A good friend of mine from Pine Bush helped register on 3/21, and today Anne Sandor, Leslie Simons,

Mary Missere, and my Pine Bush fellow retiree, Judy Peterson,

were all there to register.



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 April 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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