



Newsletter September 2020

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It is with great sadness we learn, while going to press with this newsletter, of the passing of Supreme Court Associate Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsberg**.

You may be interested to know that there will be a **Candlelight Vigil at the Ulster County Courthouse on Sunday September 20, at 7 p.m.** Masks and social distancing required. Bring a candle, bring a friend.

The Prez says...

Get ready- It's getting to crunch time in this election season. I'm happy to report that 2020 NYS election reforms are still rolling in.



Most recently, Governor Cuomo has enacted an Executive Order not just permitting drop boxes for absentee ballot receipt but mandating their use everywhere in the state. They may be placed at the Boards of Elections (BoE) offices, early voting locations or regular polling places, depending on how much local Boards can afford and where they choose to place them for maximum benefit. This 2020 only policy is for those not wanting to send their absentee ballot through the postal service.

A new law for this year allows early absentee ballot requests (more than 30 days before the election) and will allow the BoE to process them now, so they don't become overwhelmed in October. Anyone expecting to vote by absentee is encouraged to send their application online as soon as possible, a very simple process. [CLICK HERE](#) to download a NYS absentee ballot application. Ballots will arrive in October.

Once Election Day passes, all absentee ballots will be counted using new technology in Ulster County, rather than the traditional time-consuming hand count. The scanner is much more efficient and BoE staff is looking forward to a speedier, more accurate count this year. Simple ballot errors can be caught and corrected by the voter before election day this year, due to passage of another excellent law. We are hoping many of

these policies become permanent after the pandemic passes.

Our League is collaborating more than ever this year with other Leagues and like-minded organizations. We are very careful to keep our nonpartisan stance and do not work with any organization that does not meet our criteria. In my research of local League history, I saw a quote from 1963 by a LWVUS official that struck a chord with me. “We’re used to being called Democratic or Republican by members of the opposite party who don’t happen to agree with us on a League position.” At the time, the Democrats dismissed the LWV as an insiders club. That said, we work with issues only, not parties or candidates.

Our League is co-sponsoring several virtual State Senate candidate events and working on others, though some may not go forward because incumbent candidates seem loath to participate. This trend is becoming more prevalent and makes it difficult for the public to learn about all candidates. LWV rules state that at least two candidates must accept the invitation for an event to go forward.

The LWV has an excellent interactive website, Vote411.org, where voters can find out what’s on their ballot, their polling places and candidates’ answers to three questions (chosen by LWVNYS) in their own words so people can decide which one is the best fit for their interests and values.

Census follow-up is in full swing and in order to support an accurate count, you might want to reach out to friends, family and acquaintances to make sure they have completed their form. Funding for governmental representation, education and right down to the local fire companies and highway departments depend on accurate counts. [CLICK HERE](#) to download a census form or call 844-330-2020 to complete the form by phone.

Finally, I would like to warmly welcome recent new members Karyn Bevet, Amy Fradon, Paul Daniels, Mary Herms, Jessica Vezuli, Cecily Frazier, Eileen Fوسفeld, Margo Sivin, Carol Silinger, Gretchen Jones, and Andrew Lutz. Andy has been a frequent and most effective voter registration volunteer at the BLM bi-weekly walks. Karyn and Amy are part of an informal group of activists called Women of Woodstock where I met them and are active with the Neighbor-to-Neighbor community initiative in that area. I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone someday soon!

Cindy Bell, President
LWV Mid-Hudson Region

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Member Spotlight

The first member spotlight shines on **Daisy Tyler**, LWVMHR board member and tireless worker on voter registration and more. An immigrant herself, she enjoys attending naturalization ceremonies where she can offer new citizens the opportunity to register to vote the same day they become Americans. "It is priceless," she says, "to see the pure joy in the face of someone who has just become a citizen." In her ten years as a member and three on the board, she has taken on many tasks, including the book club - and is sorry it has to be on hiatus until the Covid crisis settles.



Daisy with Veteran at a Naturalization Ceremony

Daisy would like to see more young, more diverse and pro-actively involved members in the League, and would like to have a recruiting drive in Dutchess County once the pandemic is over. Being on the board she says has given her an understanding of how the organization works, but says some of the officers' responsibilities, including those of the President and Vice President, are onerous and she feels they could use more help. Right now, although she complains she does not have too much to do for the League, her days are pretty full, helping three of her grandchildren with distance learning. "I really admire what the teachers have managed to do" she says, "this has not been easy."

The full story on Daisy and her thoughts on the League is available on our website. [CLICK HERE](#) to read.

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Census Update

As this Newsletter posts, you have just over a week to complete your form for you and your household to be counted by the Census. Members of your household need not be related, nor do they need to be U.S. citizens.



If your residence in the Hudson Valley is your second home, and you were primarily domiciled in this area April 1st, during the pandemic, do complete a survey for this location. It would only be appropriate that Dutchess and Ulster have the funds needed to providing important infrastructure for you in this area. Roads

can get quite bumpy here.

Dutchess is doing better at this time with their responses. Let's have a healthy competition to see which County is better at garnering resources for their residents.

If you get a request from the Census, in person, by phone or by a note left at your door - please respond even if you know you filled in the form. Usually it is a check up on something, clarification that will allow your record to go through. Tell your friends not to ignore a Census message even if they think they have done all they need to do.

Fill out your survey NOW at [MY2020CENSUS.GOV](https://my2020census.gov).

You won't get another chance to be counted for 10 more years!

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November Election - dates to note



Voter Registration Deadlines

October 9th - last postmark date accepted for a mailed in registration, registrations must be received by county Board of Elections by October 14th.

October 9th - last date to register in person at the BOE. Those discharged from the military or naturalized citizens after this date have until October 24th to register.

October 14th - last date BOE can accept change of address. A change of address is accomplished by filing an updated voter

registration form.

[Click here](#) for more information and voter registration form for Dutchess County.

[Click here](#) for more information and voter registration form for Ulster County

Absentee Ballot Applications

October 27th - last postmark date for a mailed in application for an absentee ballot (although the USPS recommends posting by October 19th.

November 2nd - last day for in person application for an absentee ballot

Note: anyone may apply for an absentee ballot for this upcoming General Election, even if they are not going to be out of town on November 3rd. They can use "temporary illness" due to Covid 19 as a reason.

If you requested an absentee ballot before August 20th (when Gov Cuomo allowed fear of Covid 19 to be a temporary illness) you will need to re-apply. Ballots will not be mailed until late September or October.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a NYS Absentee Ballot application, which you can complete online, and mail in to your County Board of Elections.

Deadlines for Absentee Ballots:

Tuesday November 3rd (Election Day) last day to deliver ballot or postmark ballot (must be received by November 10th, military ballot by November 16th)

For more details on absentee ballots [CLICK HERE](#)

Remember: you can vote in person if you have already voted by absentee ballot, the absentee ballot vote will be set aside and the in person vote counted.

Stop Press:

GREAT NEWS FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTERS!

The New York State League has successfully settled their lawsuit to allow voters to address and correct issues with their absentee ballots. New York voters will now be protected from having their ballots thrown out for small technical issues.

For this election, voters will have 5-7 days (depending on the date of receipt of the ballot) to verify their identity and fix any problems with their ballot, after first being notified by the Board of Elections.

This is a huge step in voter protection. We strongly urge you to make a donation to the LWNYS Education Fund, so they can continue to petition on your behalf. [CLICK HERE](#) to donate.

ABSENTEE BALLOT BOXES

Governor Cuomo issued an Executive Order mandating that all Boards of Elections must put absentee ballot collection boxes at all polling places, including early polling sites, where voters can place absentee ballots if they do not wish to use the Post Office.

Early Voting

Early Voting in Dutchess and Ulster counties runs from Saturday October 24th through Sunday November 1st.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Ulster County early voting locations and times.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Dutchess County early voting locations and times.

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Presidential/Vice Presidential Debates

All debates are expected to begin at 9pm Eastern time and run for 90 minutes without commercial breaks.

September 29th, Tuesday, is the first debate between the Republican and Democratic **Presidential** candidates in Cleveland, OH.

October 7th, Wednesday, the Republican and Democratic **Vice Presidential** candidates will debate in Salt Lake City, Utah.

October 15th, Thursday the second **Presidential** debate will take place in Miami, FL

October 22nd, Thursday, the third **Presidential** debate will take place in Nashville, TN.

Early Voting will begin on October 24th.

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LWVMHR Debates

NYS 51st Senate District

As of time of publishing this newsletter the debate for the 51st Senate District, sponsored by five local Leagues and Spectrum News is scheduled to be held on October 1st. The district includes parts of nine counties, including part of Ulster County. **Senator James L. Seward (R)** is not seeking re-election. Seeking

to assume Seward's place in the Senate are:

Jim Barber (D)

Peter Oberacker (R)

Susan Arbetter of Capital Tonight on Spectrum TV has agreed to moderate. The presentation will be livestreamed on Spectrum, and all have agreed that clips following the live event will be selected in accordance with the League's nonpartisan position. Only Spectrum and the League have permission to air portions of the debate.

NYS 46th Senate District

LWV Mid-Hudson is co-sponsoring with the LWV's of Albany and Schenectady Counties this debate for the 46th Senate District, being vacated by **George Amedore(R)**. This will take place on October 8th at 7pm. There are three certified candidates:

Richard Amadure (R) Rensselaer

Michelle Hinchey (D) Saugerties

Robert Alft (Green) Voorheesville

The debate will be broadcast and recorded on the Zoom platform operated by Open Stage Medium and shared on Spectrum, Fios, YouTube and FaceBook.

Check your emails or lwvmidhudson.org for details closer to the date.

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Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce Events

UCRCC is holding two "Meet the Candidates" online events September 30th and October 20th. The LWVMHR will not be

assisting, as not **all** the candidates on the ballot for each office were invited to participate.



Don't forget VOTE411.org is the place to get election questions answered - now available in [Spanish](#)

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Voter Services



M. O'Meara and J. Vezuli share info with potential voters

We have been pleased with the number of people who have volunteered to participate in Voter Registration activities. Besides tabling at various community events, we have joined in marches (clipboards in hand), identifying ourselves as Leaguers.

As we approach the voter registration deadline (Oct 9th), our strategy is shifting gears to a broader perspective: having a voter plan in place. We want people to know about their options of

early voting, absentee voting, and in-person voting, and the requirements of each option.

We want the homeless population, incarcerated individuals, and other often overlooked populations, to know how they can participate in the political process.

To that effect, our coordinators Maura and Kate have developed a virtual training program to educate volunteers, and are working on a powerpoint presentation on voter engagement strategy. If you would like to be involved with us in these efforts, contact Maura/Kate at lwvmidhudson@gmail.com.

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Sojourner Truth and The NYS Women's Suffrage Commission

The seven-foot bronze statue of one of the nation's leading voices for abolition and universal suffrage in the nineteenth century was unveiled at the Walkway Over the Hudson entrance in Highland on August 25th. The Sojourner Truth statue, created by Yonkers sculptor Vinnie Bagwell, includes text, braille and symbols to encourage viewers to walk around it and study its surface. The folds of her skirt act as a canvas to depict Sojourner's life experiences, including images of a young enslaved mother comforting her child.

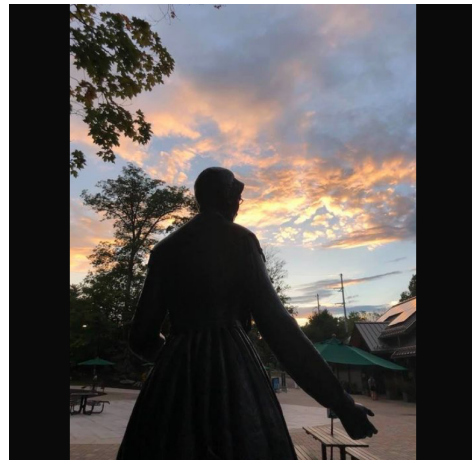


Photo credit: Jolanda Jansen

This was one of the many celebrations of the 19th Amendment co-ordinated by the Suffragist Commission. Upcoming events can be seen on the LWNYS website by [CLICKING HERE](#)

The NYS Women's Suffrage Commission

Seen at the Sojourner Truth statue unveiling is Dare Thompson and other members of the Suffrage Commission. The Commission was established in 2016 “to plan and execute programs to honor the centennial of women's suffrage”. As it winds up Dare talks about its achievements and some of the revelations highlighted by this focus on the movement that started in the New York Finger Lakes over 150 years ago.



NY Park Service Rep., with Commissioners Dare Thompson, Lt. Gov Kathy Hokul, Eve Walter and Damali Wynter



Sticker produced for the 2018 mid-terms

Despite the challenges of Covid 19, says Dare, the Commission did create a celebration, both of the 19th Amendment which passed 100 years ago this year, but also, in 2017, a celebration of 100 years of New York women having the vote. It was achieved, she says, largely through grass roots efforts and the dedication of a few Commissioners and local partners, In the process Dare herself learned of some personal connections to those pioneers and got to celebrate 100 years of the League, and edit a history of those 100 years in New York.

You can read more about her thoughts and the Commission's successes on our website. [CLICK HERE](#)

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Action Items for Members

Volunteer to observe vote counting

after the election. Local Boards of Elections are looking for observers as they are expecting large number of absentee votes in November. If you are interested please contact Cindy at lwvmidhudson@gmail.com.



Ulster Board of Election are no longer looking for poll workers, they are over subscribed by representatives of both parties.

Dutchess Board of Elections is looking for Dutchess residents to help mail absentee ballots. Hours are 9-5, Monday through Friday, for upcoming two weeks at the Board of Elections office, 47 Cannon St, Poughkeepsie. Masks are required; plastic shields are around each desk. Pay is \$14.50/hour plus time and a half for overtime. If interested, call Beth Soto, BoE Commissioner, at 845 486-2480, as soon as possible.

Help Wanted

The LWV Mid-Hudson is in need of a publicity person, who can write press



releases for us. It also would be wonderful if we could have an assistant to that person who would post our events in various print and other media calendars. These are volunteer positions. Pay includes our eternal gratitude, good experience for you, and satisfaction that you have made a significant contribution to our democracy. Contact Kathy at lwvmidhudson@gmail.com.

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Upcoming Events

National Voter Registration Day Movie

September 22nd at 7pm: Suppressed 2020: The Fight to Vote a short powerful documentary about the growing threat of voter suppression. Presented by the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie. We are trying to get multi-party perspectives in the Q&A that will follow the film.

To join the Zoom screening, click on this link: <https://zoom.us/j/92835775102?pwd=WFp1Z2tRR056ZXhSdDUzc0JCZkQjQQT09>



Voter Rally for Dutchess and Ulster,



Sunday October 11th

LWVMHR will host an online Voter Rally with information on all candidates standing for election in both counties. The Ulster County session will be from 10:00am to 11:30am and the Dutchess County session from 12:00 noon to

1:15pm. Please check your emails or [our website](#) closer to the date for information on how to join.

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