



Newsletter October 2020

## Table of Contents (When viewing the entire newsletter you can click on the title to go directly to that item)

- [The Prez says...](#)
- [Tribute to Justice Ginsburg](#)
- [Not So Fast](#)
- [Member Spotlight](#)
- [Voter Services Update](#)
- [Virtual Candidate Events for NY Senate](#)
- [On The Flip Side](#)
- [Starting Monday October 19th, Bring Your Own Bag](#)
- [Action Items for Members](#)
- [That is a Wrap!](#)

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### The Prez says...

This was a busy month. We collaborated with several different Leagues on two different candidate events. The event for the Senate 46 did happen October 13th, but the one for the Senate 51 will not, despite the herculean efforts of the committee. It seems many candidates no



longer value the opportunities afforded by forums and debates. We have a very healthy and active Voter Registration team, thanks to our Coordinators Kate and Maura. We have shown up at Farmers Markets, BLM Walks and the ReStore locations in both Ulster and Dutchess. There have been trainings and emails aplenty, many for the benefit of new members or perhaps prospective members. We've been out in the community as much as possible, but the challenges are great. Get Out The Vote (GOTV) is especially difficult, but perhaps made easier by local marketing efforts to get the word out.

[LWV.ORG](http://LWV.ORG)  
[LWVNY.ORG](http://LWVNY.ORG)

We have been speaking via Zoom, through the written word, and through [LWVUS](#) and [LWVNYS](#) resources, moving ahead as best we can.

The newsletter has been wonderful and Kathy and Gai deserve all of the thanks we can give. It's a way for all members to be involved with our League. We encourage you to contact us at [lwvmidhudson@gmail.com](mailto:lwvmidhudson@gmail.com) to tell us about the talents you'd like to share with the League. See also "Action Items for Members" below for an online "members' social" we're planning for members to get to know each other, October 20th. The loss of RBG has compounded my sense of loss of normalcy and grief in these times. It is good to be around like-minded souls and I am grateful we have each other to lean on.

Cindy Bell, President  
LWV Mid-Hudson Region

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## Tribute to Justice Ginsburg



*Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

Countless words have been written about Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Here are some that are particularly relevant to League members.

Associate Justice Ginsburg's time on the Supreme Court was a culmination of a legal life spent working on demolishing the cultural norms that steered women towards caregiving and

men towards work.

Before being appointed to the Supreme Court she was the chief architect of a campaign against sex-role stereotyping in the law at the ACLU. But she chose cases of discrimination against men to bring to the Supreme Court - then made up of nine men. As a result widowers were allowed social security survivor benefits (previously only granted to women survivors); husbands of military wives were given spousal allowance for the first time; and any man could get the primary caregiver tax deduction, previously only granted to women or divorced or widowed men. Thus she established the principle of equal treatment in the law for women as well as men, that led to the banishment of numerous laws that treated men and women differently based on archaic gender stereotypes.

As Associate Justice she championed both gender and racial equality, supporting gay rights and affirmative action. In 1996 she

wrote the majority opinion that struck down Virginia Military Institute's policy of excluding qualified women candidates only because of their sex, violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection. In 2007 her passionate dissent against the ruling that Lilly Ledbetter lost her pay discrimination suit against Goodyear



because her complaint was not filed within 180 days, led to an update of the 1963 Equal Pay Act in 2009. In other cases, Ginsburg defended affirmative action against a legal onslaught, while noting in interviews that she and many other women had benefited from the practice. And of course her famous dissent to *Shelby v Holder* which gutted the Voting Rights Act, made her a hero to a younger generation who dubbed her “the notorious RBG”. We are still waiting for the Legislative branch to repair the damage.

For those of us whose college experience was one of being always one of the few women in a class, Justice Ginsburg's Harvard experience as portrayed in the biopic “On the Basis Of Sex” rings true, though not many of had the experience of handling our own work and taking notes for our sick husband at the same time. It is difficult sometimes to remember, unless you are reminded through movies and the occasional documentary, how different life was for a woman in this leading democracy before Ruth Bader Ginsburg came along.

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## Not So Fast



This year of COVID-19 will long be etched in our mind and memories. We can't just wish for this situation to evaporate; we have to cooperate with sound advice based on verifiable data.

And we have to be patient.

Our National League President, Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, advises us that we have to patient in two regards. One: it is almost inevitable that the results of the election will not be known the night of November 3rd. Fears surrounding the virus have prompted an astronomical number of citizens to vote by mail. We have to let the process of counting the ballots play out fairly over time. May the force be with democracy.

Second: Dr. Turner tells us further that "The American people deserve a Supreme Court confirmation process that builds trust in our democracy and ensures an independent judiciary without compromising any more lives." She encourages League members throughout the country to contact their Senators and tell them that this process cannot be rushed in such a difficult time.

Patience. A hard commodity to come by when we're all striving to cope with the extensive difficulties imposed by this dastardly virus. Patience.

(Information for this article came from the LWVUS Update, dated 10/08/20.)

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## Member Spotlight



*Pat Lamanna*

This month, we'd like to shine the spotlight on a relatively new member of the LWV Mid-Hudson, Pat Lamanna. Pat brings to the table a long history of social activism and community involvement. She is a singer/songwriter, and her talents have been put to good use spreading messages of importance, as well as delighting our musical

sensibilities.

For more than 20 years, Pat has been affiliated with the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle. [CLICK HERE](#) to see what that organization is about. For an even greater period of time, Pat has been an active member of the Universalist Unitarian Fellowship in Poughkeepsie, specifically involved with their Social Justice Committee. She also is a member of the Hudson Valley Folk Guild.



*Pat and Sharleen*

Pat and her friend Sharleen Leahey (also a singer/songwriter) have formed the musical duo "The Herstorians." They recently entertained and informed at the "WE RISE Poughkeepsie" celebration of the centennial of women's achieving the right to vote. A recording of their

presentation can be seen [HERE](#).

Asked what prompted her interest in the League of Women Voters, Pat responded that she's always been interested in what we do, and had attended several League events before joining. It was representatives from the League who came to a meeting of the Social Justice Committee of the UU Fellowship that sealed the deal for her.

Since joining, Pat has been active tabling for the League at community events, where she educates people on voting procedures, and has registered a number of new voters. She finds the camaraderie of working with fellow League volunteers both gratifying and enjoyable.



*Pat registering voters*

Pat also hosted a viewing of the film "Suppressed" online. It was well-attended, and the Dutchess County Republican Board of Elections Commissioner, Erik Haight, graciously fielded questions after the presentation.

Pat has wasted no time making a significant contribution to our League. We thank her for her participation, and heartily invite all of you to get to know her better.

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## [Voter Services Update](#)

Voter registration closed on

October 9th. Thanks all those wonderful volunteers who have been registering voters throughout this year, especially facing the difficulties of registering during the Covid19 scare. In the last few days available to register voters, our League had volunteers at both the Hyde Park and the Beacon



*Rashida Tyler and Christine Hunter at the AME Zion Church in Kingston*

Farmers Market, the Kingston/Ulster YMCA, Ollies Pizza in High Falls, the AME Zion Church in Kingston, and numerous other sites on both sides of the river.



Our Voter Services team did several online informational sessions with schools and other groups, pertaining to the importance of making a plan to vote, and the ramifications of

each option.

Students at The Millbrook School in Dutchess County were very helpful in gathering information on Dutchess County Candidates for our Voters' Rally October 10th. We thank them.

If you'd like to pitch in on the final stages of this election season, contact [lwvmidhudson@gmail.com](mailto:lwvmidhudson@gmail.com), and we'll put you in touch with our Voter Services Coordinators.

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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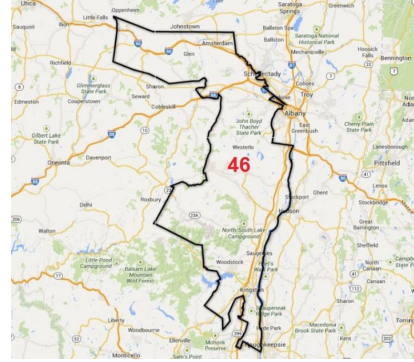
**Virtual Candidate Events for NY Senate**



--- by Cindy Bell



46th District Forum: (from top left) Lorrie Smith and Dare Thompson (LWV), Rich Amadure R, Michelle Hinchey D, Robert Alft, Green

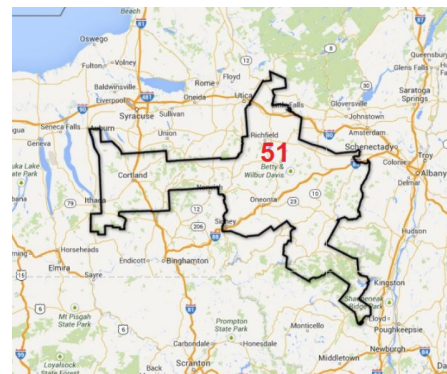


41st NY Senate District

Our League joined with the LWV Albany County to create an online event for the 46th District. Weekly organizational meetings were held with the committees of both Leagues. All three candidates accepted our invitation to participate. It was a sincere pleasure for me and Dare Thompson to work with this committee and the end result was an excellent event streamed on the LWVAC YouTube site. There were 100 viewers and it was a nearly flawless video. All three candidates put their best selves forward and gave the audience a real choice. [CLICK HERE](#) to see the Forum.

The experience putting together an event for the 51st was unfortunately not as positive as the 46th. This was a collaboration with the five Leagues within the district and the committee was outstanding, as was the organization of the event.

Spectrum was to co-sponsor and Dare had secured Susan Arbetter as moderator. Both candidates agreed to participate, but sadly, Mr. Oberacker backed out and became unresponsive to emails, calls



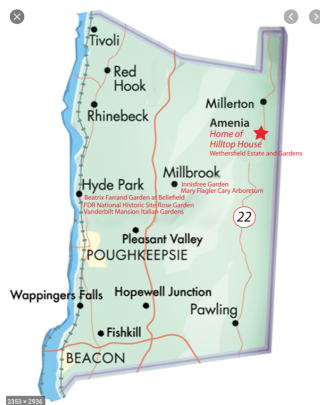
51st NY Senate District

and Facebook messages. The deadline passed and the event had to be cancelled. Much time and effort was wasted, though new relationships were forged and new processes were learned. Not a bad result for us, but a very poor one for the voting public.

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## On The Flip Side



If you're a resident of Dutchess County, be sure to turn your ballot over and vote "YES" on Proposition #1. This reads:  
"Shall Dutchess County adopt a local law establishing an Independent Reappointment Commission for the purpose of drawing Dutchess County legislative districts following every decennial census?"

The League stands behind the position that legislative districts should not be drawn by legislators -- rather by a group composed entirely of no elected officials. This system has worked effectively in Ulster County, and we support Dutchess County moving in this direction.

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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**Starting Monday October 19th, Bring Your Own Bag**

Because of a lawsuit filed by PolyPak Industries and others, the original date of New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation's ban on single use plastic bags (March 1st 2020) was delayed. The judge in the case ruled on August 20th against the plaintiffs, and the NYS DEC declared the ban on single use plastic bags will go into effect throughout the state on October 19th.



Ulster County, as well as some other regions in NYS, including New York City, already had a ban on single use plastic bags, initiated in Ulster County in July 2019. Because of the coronavirus, the ban was not enforced, but will be throughout the state from Monday October 19th. NYS law says that any establishment charging sales tax may not give a customer a single use carry out plastic bag. Plastic bags used for bulk fruit and vegetable produce and those used by restaurants for food and pharmacies are exempt. Paper bags will be available at a cost of 5 cents per bag (the money goes to the retailer to offset the cost of the paper bags which are more expensive than plastic ones). Customers on supplemental programs such as SNAP and WIC are exempt from the 5 cent fee. All consumers are encouraged to bring their own re-usable bags when shopping.



The state's DEC says New Yorkers currently use an estimated 23 billion plastic bags annually—each for about 12 minutes—and approximately 85 percent of this total ends up in landfills, recycling machines, waterways, and streets. According to reports, the reaction to Ulster County's

Bring Your Own Bag legislation went pretty smoothly last summer, once people got used to the idea. Now the whole state will have to get used to the idea. For more information about BringYourOwnBagNew York [CLICK HERE](#)

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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## Action Items for Members

### Social Orientation for new Members, Tuesday October 20th at 7pm

An opportunity to get to know current League leadership as well as all the very varied opportunities there are to take part in League activities, ranging from thing that can be done at home, online, as well as in the community. Whatever your preferences, talents or time restraints, you can find something that will fit your interest and personality. We are delighted so many people are interested in what the League stands for and does, we want to welcome you and help you find your particular place in our community. [CLICK HERE](#) for the link to join the zoom on Tuesday.



### Election Protection Volunteers

LWV is one of the partners in the national non-partisan Election Protection coalition, also called [866ourvote.org](http://866ourvote.org). You can volunteer to ensure all voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Volunteers can monitor local voting issues online by watching Facebook and Twitter posts or

they can be physically present at polling stations. They are supported by a host of hotlines available in various languages and representatives from various organizations able to intervene and solve problems at the local level. Common Cause is managing Election Protection in NYS. They offer training for volunteers and will organize shifts and materials as well as backup information resources. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information

### **“Nations United - Urgent Solutions for Urgent Times”**



In the midst of a pandemic radically transforming our world, this 34-minute film tells the story of the world as it is, as it was, and as it could be. It focuses on the action we need to tackle poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change. Shared by the LWV United Nations Observers, this is a special, first of its kind film, created by the United Nations on its 75th Anniversary, and to mark five years since the adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. You can watch it by [CLICKING HERE](#).

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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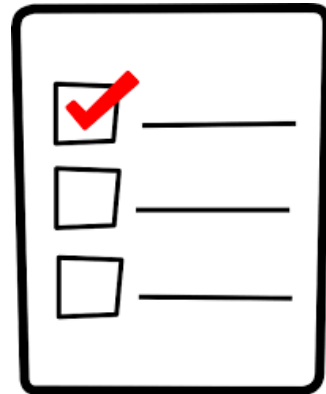
### **That is a Wrap!**

Riding around the City of Kingston and beyond in Ulster County, you may have noticed a wrap on the back of passing buses. Our LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region wanted to share with everyone the League's "one stop shopping" site for



voter information [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org).  
Check your voter registration status on  
[VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org). See what's on your  
ballot. Find your polling place, and  
much more.

For additional, and very thorough  
information on State and Local candidates,  
[CLICK HERE](#) for the ULSTER COUNTY races.  
And [CLICK HERE](#) for the DUTCHESS COUNTY  
races. [CLICK HERE](#) for the powerpoint  
presentation on the Ulster County races and  
district maps, and [CLICK HERE](#) for the  
Dutchess County races and district maps  
that were presented at our virtual Voters' Rally October 10th.  
(Thank you, Jen Clark, for masterminding and executing this  
event.)



We leave you with this  
message. **VOTE**. Encourage  
all your eligible family  
members and friends to  
**VOTE**. Speak to as many

members of your community about **VOTING**. This may be the  
most critical election we'll experience in our lifetime. Do your  
part. **VOTE**.

**With sincere gratitude,  
The LWVMHR**

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

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