



THE VOTER

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

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November 2007

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BIPARTISAN IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL OF 2007 THAT DIED IN THE SENATE ON JUNE 28?

To provide some background information for our LWVUS study of national immigration policy (which we will be discussing at the November 12 meeting and at the December consensus meeting), in last month's *Voter* I summarized some of the important laws that have governed U.S. immigration policies and practices. I also enumerated some of the current problems which led to the breakdown of that system and resulted in the introduction of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill of 2007, which died in the Senate on June 28.

Why Didn't the Bill Become a Law?

The LWVUS website (www.lwv.org) provides a convenient link to THOMAS.loc.gov (named for Thomas Jefferson), which is the Library of Congress legislative information site that provides the texts of Congressional bills. If you plug in S. 1348, you can read a summary or specific sections of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill of 2007. There, you see that S. 1348 is not just one bill, but a 380-page legislative package containing scores of bills dealing not only with immigration but with many other semi-related topics as well.

It is interesting to know that S. 1348 did not go through the regular "how a bill becomes a law" procedure that we all learned in school. It did not go through hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where immigration bills would normally go. Rather, it was crafted as a bipartisan bill over three months in closed sessions, among 12 senators and their staffs and members of the Bush administration.

The bill was introduced in the Senate on May 9 by Sen. Harry Reid (D) of Nevada, who served as its official sponsor and is the Senate Majority Leader. Prime members of the bipartisan coalition included Sen. Ted Kennedy (D) of Massachusetts, Sen. Jon Kyl (R) of Arizona, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D) of California, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R) of South Carolina, Sen. John McCain (R) of Arizona, and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D) of Vermont, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sometimes it is referred to as the Kennedy/Kyl bill, because each had sponsored and introduced immigration reform bills in 2005.

On June 7, the Senate voted against ending debate, and the bill seemed dead. Senator Reid pulled it off the floor, bundled numerous amendments into a package and with President Bush's urging, brought it back to the Senate on June 25-26. Then a storm of opposition arose, generated by talk radio, bloggers, and groups opposed to the bill. The opposition was so intense that

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Monday, November 12, 2007
7:00 p.m.**

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION STUDY

Guest Participant:
Dr. Richard Gambino

Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse
Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike
(just south of Scuttlehole Road
on the east side)

See page 4 for more information.

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, in both its values and practices, is committed to diversity and pluralism. This means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of the East End.

Membership

Any person who supports the mission of the League may become a member.

The Voter Newsletter

The newsletter of the Hamptons League, *The Voter*, is dedicated to bringing useful information, background, perspective and commentary on public policy issues confronting League members and other community citizens in Southampton and East Hampton, Suffolk County and the State of New York. It explores the work of the League to promote positive solutions, and it empowers people to make a difference in their communities.

The Voter is published ten times a year by the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, P. O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937.

Maura F. Lester, Editing and Production
Joy Cordery, Advertising Coordinator; Proofreading
Madison Copy & Blueprint Center, Printing and Mailing

Printed on recycled paper.

President's Message

"AND NOW A WORD ABOUT OUR SPONSORS . . ."

At the center of this *Voter*, you will find advertisements from many local businesses offering goods and services which range from real estate brokerage to beauty salon services, from interior decorating to dry cleaning, and from financial advice to tennis lessons, and dentistry to dancing. Three of them have free offers for us – the audiologist, the facial plastic surgeon, and the dance studio.

We are extremely grateful to our advertisers and wish to take this opportunity to thank them for their assistance. The fact that so many commercial establishments have chosen to contribute to us through advertisements in our *Voter* is, I believe, a testament to the general support we have in this community.

The numbers and variety of our advertisers are also a testament to the hard work of Joy Cordery who, with her "staff" of League members, goes out into the community and solicits their support. Joy's dedication and perseverance to the task of filling our coffers have resulted in more businesses each year joining the ranks of our supporters.

The monies earned through the advertisements in *The Voter* cover more than the cost of printing and distributing this newsletter. This, in turn, enables us to use our funds for other community services, such as the candidate's debates we will be hosting this month, and the voter registration drives which we ran this past summer.

We ask you to return the favor, and support our advertisers. We have cleverly placed the advertising section in a position from which it can be easily detached from *The Voter* and kept next to your telephone so that when you seek a service, the directory will be easily accessible. Please consider patronizing these businesses when you need the services that they provide. And when you do, please mention that you, too, are a supporter of the League of Women Voters.

Carol Mellor, Co-President 537-6998

Voter Services

There are three propositions on the November 6th ballot: one for the state, one for Suffolk County, and one for Southampton Town only. The League decided not to publish a proposition guide about them this year because there is virtually no opposition to the first two and the third was submitted to the Board of Elections close to the deadline, making it difficult to research the pros and cons. Further, it also had been submitted by the Southampton Town board with a unanimous vote. However, it is important that you know the general content and purposes of each.

Statewide Proposition

Form of Submission: Amendment to Article 14, section 1 of the Constitution, in relation to the use of forest preserve lands for wells for a municipal water supply in the hamlet of Raquette Lake, Hamilton County.

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VOTER SERVICES

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The proposed amendment would allow the State to convey one acre of forest preserve land to the town of Long Lake for public use as the site for drinking water wells and necessary related equipment for the municipal water supply for the hamlet of Raquette Lake. In exchange, the State would receive at least twelve acres of land that is at least equal in value to the land conveyed to Long Lake. The land the State receives would be incorporated into forest preserve. The Raquette Lake reservoir would be abandoned as a source of drinking water. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

Abstract and Explanation: The purpose of the proposal is to allow the State to convey land to Long Lake to use for supplying the hamlet of Raquette Lake with drinking water that meets quality standards. This will make constitutional an action that has, in fact, already taken place. The Legislature had determined that there was no reasonable alternative means of providing drinking water to that hamlet. Because the hamlet is surrounded by forest preserve lands, it could not, without a constitutional amendment, drill wells for ground water on that land. Hence, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) granted extraordinary permission for the drilling, in anticipation of necessary legislation to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot. Since the amendment is specific to this solution, it does not give broader constitutional permission to other such solutions; each would require another amendment.

Suffolk County Proposition

***Form of Proposition:* Shall resolution No.770-2007, Adopting a Charter Law to Extend the Existing Suffolk County ¼% Sales Tax Drinking Water Protection Program For Environmental Protection, Sewer District Tax Rate Stabilization and County-wide Property Tax Protection from December 31, 2013 to November 30, 2030; To Accelerate the Land Acquisition Component of the Program by Permitting Borrowing of Up to \$322 Million Over the Next Four (4) Years Only, with the Cost of This Borrowing to be Repaid from the ¼% Sales Tax Revenue Stream; To Add a Land Stewardship Component Thereto; and To Allow the Transfer of Development Rights, Be Approved?**

Abstract and Explanation: Enactment of this Charter Law would extend an already existing program. In addition, it would accelerate the land acquisition component of the program by permitting borrowing of additional monies

over the next four years. Also it would increase the percentages of revenues allocated for land acquisition from 13.55% to 31.10%; increase the revenues allocated in the program for water quality protection from 11.25% to 11.75%; decrease the revenues allocated for sewer tax stabilization from 35.70% to 25%; establish a nine-member review committee to solicit and review all proposed projects submitted under water quality protection and restoration program and land stewardship initiative component of the program.

It would also authorize the County to purchase farmland development rights, open space, wetlands, woodlands, pine barrens, and other lands which are suitable only for passive recreational use, and land for use as hamlet greens, hamlet parks, pocket parks, active parkland, active recreation, historic and cultural park uses.

The Charter Law would further allow the County to reserve the right to dedicate and transfer development rights from land acquired under this law to use for the sole purpose of providing workforce housing.

The program would be run by the Department of Environment and Energy, and the Budget Office would maintain the official records of money expended under this program.

Southampton Town Proposition

***Form of Proposition:* Shall the Police Commissioner of the Town of Southampton, who is, pursuant to the Town Code, responsible for the management of the Police Department and supervision of all Police personnel, be the appointing authority for the Department including the right to make employment decisions concerning Police personnel?**

Abstract and Explanation: The intent of this local law is to transfer appointing authority from the Town Board to the Police Commissioner. This includes the authority to hire and fire all Police Department personnel. This local law is subject to a mandatory referendum since it seeks to abolish, transfer, or curtail a power of an elective officer(s).

This resolution to change this authority from the Town Board was adopted unanimously by that Board.

Anne K. Marshall, Chair

537-3257

Do you have an e-mail address? We need everyone's e-mail address to update our files. Please do not assume we have it. Your address is never shared and is treated as a private matter. Take a moment now and send your e-mail address to Arlene.Makl@gmail.com.

General Membership Meeting

**NOVEMBER 12
7:00 p.m.**

Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse
Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike
(just south of Scuttlehole Road on the east side)

**League of Women Voters of the United States
NATIONAL IMMIGRATION STUDY**

Learn about and discuss the issues contained in the study.

Reports will be given by members of the League's Immigration Study Committee and by local resident, author, and professor, **Dr. Richard Gambino**, who taught immigration history at Queens College and SUNY Stony Brook. His topic: "How the History of Immigration Illuminates the Problems of Today."

Be more prepared to participate in our planned December consensus meeting.

Members will receive the national League's consensus questions in the mail in early November prior to this meeting. Please bring them with you.

IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

continued from page 1

the Senate Internet, phone, and fax systems crashed. There was no equivalent barrage by supporters.

On June 28 the bill died, because the Senate could not get the required 60 votes to end debate and thus move toward passage. The Senate thus never had a chance to actually vote on the bill itself, and many feel doubtful it will come to the floor again in the last year of the Bush presidency.

What Were the Major Provisions of the Bill?

At the November 12 meeting, members of the LWVH immigration study committee will be providing background and explaining five of the major provisions of S.1348, which are the issues expected to appear in any immigration bill introduced in the future. They are also the issues that are tied to many of the LWVUS consensus questions. These five issues are:

1. Border Security. The bill stipulated that new visa programs could not take effect until the border security provisions were implemented. It called for \$4.4 billion in funding to provide a total of 20,000 border agents; 370 miles of added fencing; 300 miles of vehicle barriers; increased border technology; and enhanced travel documents and document fraud identification.

2. Proposed Path to Citizenship for Unauthorized Immigrants Already in U.S. The bill proposed temporary legal status and a new non-immigrant "Z" visa to the approximately 12 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. as of January 1, 2007, if they paid a fine of \$1,000 and back taxes, and passed a background check. They could eventually get on a path to citizenship (behind the backlog of others who have already applied legally for permanent resident visas/green cards) after paying more fines (\$4,000), holding jobs, and learning English. Heads of households would have to return to their home countries within eight years and apply there legally for green cards. Five years after getting their green cards, immigrants could

start the procedure to become citizens, if they wished.

3. New Point System for New Legal Immigrants to Earn Permanent Residency. The bill created a new "merit-based" point system, based on education and skills, with a top score of 100, to immigrate legally. Points are given for employment (max. of 47), education (max. 28), English-language proficiency and civics test (max. 15), and family ties (max. 10). This new point system would not apply to the spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, who come in at the head of the line. It would apply to siblings and adult children of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents.

4. Guest Worker Program. The bill created a new "Y" visa and a temporary worker program to allow up to 200,000 (down from 400,000 in the original bill) guest workers per year to enter on a two-year (down from three-year, indefinitely renewable, in original bill) visa. The visa can be renewed once, if the worker returns to his home country for one year in between—hence a five-year (2-1-2) non-immigrant visa.

5. Employer Accountability. The bill required employers to check the status of every new hire and eventually all workers, through the Employment Eligibility Verification System database, run by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and based on Social Security data. It would fine employers for hiring undocumented workers.

We on the Immigration Study Committee (Afton DiSunno, Arlene Hinkemeyer, Joy Lupoletti, Ann Sandford, and Susan Wilson) encourage you to attend the November 12 meeting to discuss these issues in preparation for the December consensus discussion. We urge you again to read some of the excellent background articles on the League website (www.lwv.org). In preparing for the meeting, we have certainly deepened our understanding of this national issue and hope you will also. Educating ourselves and other voters is the League way.

Arlene Hinkemeyer, Chair 324-6713

November 2007

Note: Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please confirm with committee chairperson.

The following committees will not meet in November: Education, Fundraising, Health.

No Housing Committee meetings until further notice.

Immigration Study Committee meeting to be scheduled by email.

November 6	Tuesday	Election Day. Polls open 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Call Suffolk County Board of Elections (852-4500) with questions about eligibility or registration status.
November 6	Tuesday	Natural Resources Committee meeting. Bridgehampton Library. 11:00 a.m. Contact Sue Avedon at 329-1830 or Cile Downs at 324-2435.
November 7	Wednesday	LWVH Board meeting. Bridgehampton National Bank. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Members and guests welcome.
November 12	Monday	General Membership Meeting. Topic: National Immigration Policy. Presented by LWVH Immigration Study Committee with guest participant, Dr. Richard Gambino. Topic: "How the History of Immigration Illuminates the Problems of Today." Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Bridgehampton. 7:00 p.m. See details on page 4.
November 14	Wednesday	LWVSC Board meeting. Riverhead Library. 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon.
November 14	Wednesday	Voter Services and Membership Committees combined meeting. Bridgehampton Library. 11:00 a.m. Contact Anne Marshall at 537-3257 or Arlene Makl at 324-8662 (or Arlene.Makl@gmail.com).
November 15	Thursday	Deadline for December issue of <i>The Voter</i> .
November 22	Thursday	Happy Thanksgiving!

LOOKING AHEAD

December 5	Wednesday	LWVH Board meeting. Bridgehampton National Bank. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Members and guests welcome.
December 10	Monday	General Membership Meeting. Consensus meeting on LWVUS Immigration Study. Details to come.
December 12	Wednesday	Holiday Party. Details to come.

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

November 11	Sunday	2007 Post-Election Brunch. Sponsored by LWV Suffolk County. See page 18 for more information.
November 28	Wednesday	LWVNYS and U.N. Dept. of Public Information. "Briefings on the Effects of War on Women Around the World." For full details and registration form, go to www.lwvny.org . Special Notices, U.N. Dept. of Public Information. Registration deadline is November 10.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN YOUR TOWN GOVERNMENT?

Go to www.townclerk.com and type in your ZIP code. You will find a lot of information about your town, including a calendar for town board meetings, minutes of the meetings, dates and topics of public hearings, and much more.



Suffolk County Voter

www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org

November 2007

Box 1440, Stony Brook, NY 11790-1440 Phone 631-862-6860



Sun. Nov. 11
Wed. Nov. 14
Wed. Nov. 28

LWVSC Post-Election Brunch, Bellport Country Club 10:30am-1:30pm
LWVSC Board Meeting—Riverhead Library 9:30am-11:30am
Briefings on the Effects of War on Women Around the World— UN NYC

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LWVSC Supports Ballot Proposition Extending 1/4% Tax for Drinking Water and Environmental Protection

The LWVNY supports a proactive role for the state in conserving natural resources and containing sprawl. We support legislation that will provide regional land use planning, enhance urban neighborhoods, and protect agricultural land, open space, watersheds and other sensitive areas. Therefore, the LWV of Suffolk County supports this current proposition which extends an existing law accelerating the Suffolk County 1/4% drinking water protection for environmental protection from Dec. 31, 2013 to Nov. 31, 2030.

LWVSC Speaks Out For ATI, Housing for the Mentally Ill

Several League members attended County Executive Levy's Public Budget meeting on August 25th at the H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge to present him with our strong concern that he more fully put financial support behind Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs. We stressed the efficacy of these programs and the fact that they save the County financially because they enable people with mental illness and substance abuse difficulties, especially, to lead constructive lives free of the criminal justice system, frequent visits to emergency rooms and other like facilities.

We also emphasized the ongoing crisis in our County for supportive housing for people with mental illness. We learned that there is \$700,000 in the Discretionary Section of the Omnibus Resolution (DO67) which could be applied to providing this housing. It was placed there by the Legislature, and it awaits Mr. Levy's approval. Should the County approve this funding, it would increase the likelihood of State support for it, as well.

League members also addressed the Legislature at its General Meeting in Riverhead on September 20th with these same concerns. We acknowledged the Legislature's support for the Probation Department which runs the ATI programs, and its provision of \$700,000 in the Omnibus Resolution which could be applied to housing. We again asked for County Executive Levy's financial approval for both.

Katherine Hoak

League and Shelter Island Lose a Leader Betsy Jacobson 1954-2007

The Shelter Island Town Board acknowledged "with great sadness the death of Betsy Jacobson, President of the League of Women Voters. Betsy's interest in town government was never negative or self-aggrandizing, but rather, at all times, thoughtful, helpful and insightful... although the chair she occupied may now be empty, her quiet and gracious presence will remain."

On Shelter Island, "It's so hard not to be on one side or another" of a political issue, her husband Bill Friedman said. "Betsy was on all sides" and had friends on every side of the argument.

Betsy carried credentials from the world of high finance (in her work as a vice president for JP Morgan, she handled a \$6 billion bond portfolio), accomplishments she did not publicize in her work to bring information to voters and to organize candidates forums. Betsy reinstated the Observer Corps with volunteers from the League. She reviewed every detail of the town budget and prepared a synopsis for the Town Board and the public. Membership and participation in LWV Shelter Island has grown noticeably under her administration.

Betsy received a Certificate of Appreciation from the LWVSC at the May annual meeting for her many efforts on behalf of the Shelter Island League

Our condolences go out to her husband, family and many friends. She will be missed.

(excerpted from the Shelter Island Reporter 9-5-07)

LEAGUE SUBMITS TESTIMONY ON REAL PROPERTY TAX REFORM

At the invitation of NYS Assemblyman Fred Thiele, the Hamptons League submitted testimony on September 28 at a Republican Task Force meeting on Real Property Tax Reform in Hauppauge. Co-presidents Carol Mellor and Anne Marshall attended the forum, one of several planned for strategic areas around the state. A number of elected officials were on the agenda. Scheduled as a two-hour session, the session went well over time because of the obvious desire on the part of the committee to listen to and question in depth those who gave testimony. Those participating in providing testimony consisted of a number of elected Suffolk County legislators, including Jay Schneiderman, Edward Romaine, and Kate Browning; Nassau and Suffolk County assessors and tax specialists; and town assessors and board members.

There was obvious concern on the part of the committee members, including Fred Thiele, that there is an urgent need to address this problem statewide.

The League submitted suggestions both from relevant property tax recommendations contained in the New York State League's 2007 adopted Legislative Agenda, under the heading Equity in School Financing, and from LWVNYS testimony on February 27, 2007 before

the Joint Committees on Education and Finance, presented by Betsy Swan. The submitted recommendations were:

- Take education out of the political arena by adoption of a foundation approach to education finance.
- Reduce current local property taxes so all districts tax at the same rate, with any shortfalls in education expenses provided by the state.
- Improve methods of property tax assessment and collection systems—especially, the League says, in some specific counties, Suffolk being one of them.
- Raise additional funds required for education by means of the personal income tax—a much better measure of ability to pay than real property—and all would be asked to contribute, not just property owners.
- Replace local residential property tax relief programs with programs in which tax relief is limited to those with a limited ability to pay and available on a sliding scale according to need. Adjust this relief automatically to reflect cost of living adjustments to the income limits and maximum property values of eligibility.

Written by Anne Marshall

SUMMARY OF LWVH BOARD MEETING, October 3, 2007

Information Items

- It was announced that the League's National Convention will be June 13-16 in Oregon and Reform Day in Albany will be in April.
- It was announced that we got very good exposure at the East End Picnic which was attended by at least 450 people. It is felt that we should participate again next year.

Committee Reports

All committee chairs reported on the workings of their committees. The Pub Quiz held on September 27 by the Fundraising Committee netted \$650, and so far the League has made \$208 on bulb orders. The Membership Committee reported that we have 207 members with only 28 yet unpaid and that we have 20 new members since April. The Natural Resources Committee will be meeting with two motel/ hotel managers to discuss energy-saving ideas for use in their businesses. The Voter Services Committee announced all the many dates in October for voter registration and debates, which will already have taken place by the time you get this *Voter*. The Health Committee is considering writing up the health

policy positions of all the primary candidates so they can be compared to each other and perhaps including this in a *Voter* mailing. The members of the committee also attended a meeting of the Dept. of Human Services Committee of East Hampton to discuss ways of dealing with adolescent behavior problems.

Discussion Items

- The upcoming Holiday Party was discussed although no date was firmly decided. It will once again be at Carol Mellor's house with food supplied by Board members. The charitable contribution for the holidays will be decided at the next Board meeting.
- The Immigration Committee announced that it will hold an informational meeting on Monday, November 12 (our regular meeting date) with each committee member reporting on a major national immigration issue. Dr. Richard Gambino, a noted immigration specialist, will speak as well. This will be followed by an immigration consensus meeting on December 10, run by Jacqui Lofaro.
- The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, November 7, at 7:00 p.m. at the Bridgehampton National Bank. All LWVH members are welcome to attend.

Submitted by Joy Lupoletti

GETTING INVOLVED IN LOCAL ELECTIONS: A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

Almost two years ago I received a call from a dear friend – a fifty-year Sag Harbor resident who is now a widow living on a fixed income. She was shocked to see that the latest assessment of her house mysteriously increased 300 percent! She needed help and did not know whom to turn to.

Why did she ask me? In my “day job” as a real estate agent, I am familiar with the value of many of the village houses that had sold in the last year. I endeavored to assist my friend through the assessor’s grievance process and, during that process, met a group of like-minded citizens who had similar stories. Together, we were able to achieve a decrease in assessments.

We realized, however, that the assessment was really a symptom of the problem – not the cause. Higher assessments were used to justify higher property taxes. Now our group asked: Why were property taxes so high?

We discovered that the majority of the property taxes – 65 to 83 percent – went to the local school budget and concluded that participation in the local school board election was essential to our ability to influence property taxes. We found a candidate who, we believed, had the skills to fairly balance the needs of educating students with the needs of the community and who, we thought, would be an effective member of the school board.

Our next goal was to encourage our citizens to vote. We made a lot of calls; we made presentations to groups

WISHES FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Our best wishes to Sue Avedon and Norman Remler, who are both recovering from knee surgery.

HOUSEKEEPING

We have been running into a costly problem having *The Voter* returned to the LWVH due to **incorrect addresses**. If you wish to continue receiving *The Voter* while you are away for any period of time, it is important that you inform Arlene Makl (Arlene.Makl@gmail.com) of the dates you plan to leave and return and both your winter and summer addresses. Or, if you wish, we could simply discontinue your *Voter* while you are away. This will save our League double postage for **all** the returned mail.

like the local AARP chapter, civic groups, and the PTA; we entered debates; we wrote letters to the editor; we advertised on the radio; we talked to people outside the post office.

I found that many second-home owners did not realize the huge impact the school’s budget has on their property taxes. In addition, nearly half of the eligible voters were second-home owners who did not consider the East End to be their primary residence, and therefore they could not register to vote in the school election. Thus, by default, the voters who did not participate in our school election had no voice in school board budget decisions, which were such a large component of property taxes.

The election showed our results. Voter turnout increased by 20 percent — in an election that most voters in our town didn’t even know about more than two months before. Our candidate won with 25 percent more votes than the favored candidate, who had been endorsed by the PTA and local newspaper.

What lessons have we learned? The irony is that we all complain about property taxes but rarely do anything about them. We identified several reasons for the apparent lack of impetus to vote in school board elections. First is the timing of school elections in the spring not the fall, with the voter numbers falling due to less election coverage by the press. Secondly, there is lower voter turnout in areas with large second-home populations. For example, in Bridgehampton, there are 1,318 registered voters and the budget passed by 1 vote (133 for the budget, 132 against). Why did only 265 citizens come out to vote in this tiny district? It was suggested in *Newsday* that, “because the [Bridgehampton] district includes many expensive beachfront summer homes to help carry the costs of education, the actual tax bill on a house worth \$500,000 would go only from the current \$477 to \$648.” Due to the current voting situation with absentee voters, the effect of the school budget is diluted in the individual tax bill. Thirdly, whatever advertising is done, is usually paid for by the New York State teacher’s union which “spends more than \$1 million each year to promote the local budgets with advertising and leafleting” (see “School Taxes Soar, Despite State Aid Hike,” *New York Sun*, May 17, 2007).

If any LWVH members are interested in joining an email group on how to intelligently manage school budgets and property taxes, please contact me at stacy.pennebaker@gmail.com.

Written by Stacy Pennebaker

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Mary Blake

10 Sheepfold Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937
631-907-4499

Mary has always been interested in politics, but her demanding position as headmistress at one of Manhattan's elite girls' schools, left little free time. Now retired and spending most of her time at her East Hampton home, LWVH is one of the many activities in which she's becoming involved. Having agreed to work at the polls on Election Day, she'll have first-hand experience to share with new voters when she helps, as she plans to do, with voter registration.

Other interests include music and art, and Mary has volunteered for the Hamptons Film Festival and at Long House. At Long House, she met Arlene Makl, Membership Committee Chair, who invited her to join us. "Right now, I'm just savoring life and enjoying time with my family," Mary says. She's also traveled around the U.S. and Europe, and plans to continue doing so.

Muriel Cunningham

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631-725-1910

MCunni4275@aol.com

She's new to LWVH, but Muriel is no stranger to the League and one of its most important functions: voter registration. As a League member living in Florida some years ago, she helped register voters at a time when voting in the South was even more difficult than it is today. She intends to help with voter registration in this area.

Muriel is a former teacher and school principal in Queens (earlier, in St. Louis, MO, where she was born). She's had her Sag Harbor home since 1961, living there from April to December, when she leaves for a few months in Florida. Friends who are LWVH members include Pat Arceri, with whom she plays bridge, and Anne Kellett.

Yolanda Gross

34 Hildreth Place, East Hampton, NY 11937
631-324-3108

Yolanda's long-time friend, Terri Levin Davkin, urged her to join LWVH — for the talent and energy Yolanda brings as well as the benefits she can gain. Yolanda is retired as a full-time teacher, but is busy as a substitute in the Springs school on a frequent basis. A former Guild Hall employee and volunteer, she is active in her Springs church as well as volunteering to help with the Hamptons Film Festival. "I looked up the LWVH on the Internet. I found the organization interesting, and plan to join one of the committees as I learn more about them," Yolanda noted.

Laurie Kaplan

56 Middle Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937
631-329-0985

Lakjet@aol.com

"I'm looking forward to meeting more members at meetings and events even though at present I'm here only on weekends and in summer," said Laurie. Meeting people who share an interest in the political process as well as myriad other interesting pursuits is ample reason to join the League!

Laurie became a full-time member of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons after years of dual membership with the Hamptons and a Nassau County chapter of LWV. While active in the Nassau County LWV, Laurie's contributions centered on the Education Committee.

A librarian by profession, she commutes to a part-time position with Baruch College in Manhattan from her home in Rockville Centre. She's also very interested in preserving farmlands and is currently working with the Peconic Land Trust to acquire development rights to the Pike Farm in Sagaponack. Laurie might enjoy working on the Natural Resources or Education Committees.

Eileen McCabe

9 Sammy's Beach Road, East Hampton, NY 11937
631-324-4665

ecmccabe@optonline.net

"The 2008 elections are important," says Eileen. Becoming more knowledgeable about local candidates is one reason she joined the League of Women Voters. She was born and raised in Queens, but was also a sometime-East Hampton resident since the age of 12, when her parents bought the house she now lives in. For much of her adult life, she lived in the Midwest, returning to East Hampton often. After postgraduate work at the University of Minnesota, she enjoyed a career in teaching and administration there.

Wellness, balance and spirituality are important to Eileen, as is the environment. Since moving to East Hampton four years ago, she and her husband, Tom Murphy, have been active in the Trails Preservation Society (a primary source of new LWV members!), LVIS, and the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bridgehampton.

Fellow trails preservationist Arlene Makl and LVIS colleague Rosemarie DeSantis assured Eileen she would find that the League of Women Voters had many members who shared her interests. Eileen and Tom usually travel from January to March. Before then, Eileen looks forward to exploring the work of the Natural Resources Committee and the Health Committee with an eye to participating in one or both.

Membership

These past several months have been very successful for both the Membership Committee and the LWVH. Since April of this year we have enrolled twenty new members. I believe this was partly due to working with the Voter Services Committee in registering new voters and giving out information about the LWVH and because of the outstanding work the League is involved in this year. We have registered more new voters; we have done research on the Broadwater Energy Project; various organizations are requesting to see our "Unaffordable Housing" video; we have provided information about voting machines and other topics important to the citizens of the Hamptons.

WELCOME, MORE NEW MEMBERS

Marie Micari

81 Wooley Street, Southampton, NY 11968
631-283-0963

Year-round Southampton resident Marie says, "I always knew I'd get around to joining LWVH, found the time only after I retired." Retired, but by no means idle, Marie left in early October for a trip to Europe.

A former administrator in the health care field, she was attracted by the League's mission of providing information about current local, regional, and national issues. "The Southampton community is changing, becoming much more diverse than in the past. Residents no longer simply vote along party lines. In this atmosphere, the League provides a needed service by supplying nonpartisan information about issues affecting us."

Sheila Zaslower

19 Notre Dame Road, Sag Harbor, NY 11963
631-725-2516
szaslower@aol.com

Sheila joined the League of Women Voters to become better informed. That's such an important League objective that one supporter suggested, "Perhaps you should be called 'the League of Informed Voters'." Or as Sheila said, "The League has a way of taking complicated issues and making them simple." She knows from experience, having been a member of the League of Women Voters in Maplewood, NJ in the 1970s.

Before retiring, Sheila ran her own business and worked with the Service Corps of Retired Executives. Among her many interests are volunteering as a docent at Long House, ushering at Bay Street Theater, tennis, and sailing. She now spends May through September in Sag Harbor, then travels before wintering in Florida.

We are now involved in the consensus process on immigration, the possible presence of pesticides that may be affecting the soil and waters of our area, and informing the citizens about the movement toward electing our presidents through a national popular vote. This coming season we will attempt to have membership meetings regarding many local issues.

Isn't this the organization that you would be proud to ask family and friends to join—an organization of active and committed women and men who can accomplish so much? Just ask!

Arlene Makl, Chair

324-8662

Arlene.Makl@Gmail.com



**League of Women Voters
of Suffolk County**

2007 Post-Election Brunch

Rick Brand

Newsday's Election Analyst & Journalist

Joe Sledge

Public Affairs Officer, VA Medical Center Northport

Sunday, November 11, 2007

10:30am—1:30pm

Bellport Country Club
40 South Country Road,
Bellport, NY

Cost: League Members (paid in advance) \$30
Non-members or Pay at the Door \$35

For information contact Sue Wilson,
sswilson@hamptons.com or 283-6549.

Directions:

From LIE, Exit 64 to 112 South.
From Sunrise Hwy (Rt. 27) to Rt. 112 South.
Take Rt. 112 South to end, Montauk Hwy (Rt. 27A).
Go left (traveling east) for 1 mile.
Road forks.
Stay right onto South Country Road for 2 miles.
Bellport Country Club is on right (south side).

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues may be sent to: LWVH, P.O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937

_____ Full-time Student	\$15	_____ Supporting	\$ 85
_____ Individual	\$55	_____ Education	\$125*
_____ Household	\$85	_____ Donation	\$_____

Dues Year is June 1, 2007 through May 31, 2008.

_____ Member Renewal _____ New Member

Please make checks payable to LWVH and mail to:

LWVH, P.O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937

*For Education membership, amounts above dues level are tax deductible. In this case, please make checks payable to EDUCATION FOUNDATION—LWV/Hamptons.

The Voter

League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

P.O. Box 2253

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