



League of Women Voters of Smithtown Township

# VOTER

*The LWV is a non-partisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy*

August 2007

website: <http://www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org/smithtown.htm>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Lisa Scott- 265-2198  
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## VACANCIES:

- Director
- Government Action
- Program
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## Upcoming Events for September:

Join LWV Smithtown and STAC for a fun-filled evening at the Mills Pond House on Friday, September 14 at 7:30pm. North Shore Antiques will give verbal appraisals of your item, while you enjoy coffee and dessert, all for the benefit of LWV and STAC.

(see flyer in this issue of the Voter for more details)

LWV Smithtown has planned a Candidates Meeting to allow voters to meet and hear the candidates for County Legislature and Smithtown Town Council in the Republican Primary. This forum is scheduled for Monday evening, September 10 from 7-9pm. Planned location is Nesaquake School auditorium, but at press time we are still awaiting confirmation of the venue.



*Past President Sondra Irvine passes the gavel to LWV Smithtown's new President, Joyce Rosenthal. See page 2 for Joyce's first President's Message.*

## President's Message

First and most important we all owe Lisa Scott our heartfelt thanks for organizing and making LeaderSpark possible. A number of league members have assisted her, each giving a few days of service. Lisa is the one who has taken the responsibility to ran all of the sessions.

For our first event of the year we have partnered with the Smithtown Township Arts Council to hold an evening of antique and collectable appraisals.



The LWV of Huntington and The LWV of Smithtown in cooperation with each other had a table at Unity Day. Unity Day was sponsored by the Suffolk County Community Relations Unit. It was a celebration of ethnic diversity within the county. Children from many of the school districts in the county attended. More than fifty organizations provided information about important programs, available services and cultural diversity. It has been estimated that over one thousand people attended. Our volunteers included Mary Zopf, Carol McNally, Lisa Scott, Carol Benjamin Samples, Trudy Gaus, Judy Scheinfeld and I. Carol McNally donated two raffle prizes.

Our programs through December include speakers from Stony Brook University. They will deal with Health Care and Global Warming. Other topics include the updating of the Town Master Plan.

Voter Service has scheduled a candidates' forum for Republican Primary candidates in the 12th SC Legislative district and the Smithtown Town Board. LWV of Huntington has agreed to supply a moderator and time keeper. LWV of Smithtown has agreed to supply a moderator and time keeper for their general election candidates' forum.

*Joyce Rosenthal*

	<p><b>September 7, 2007</b> Come and stroll through the luxurious gardens and properties of some of the most prestigious and interesting homes in Nissequogue and Head of the Harbor!</p> <p><b>For more info: 631-265-9699</b> Proceeds to benefit the Smithtown Township Arts Council, the Smithtown Historical Society, the Smithtown Garden Club &amp; the St. James Chamber of Commerce</p>
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<p><b>STAC</b> Smithtown Township Arts Council</p>  <p>Mills Pond House 660 Route 25A, St. James, NY 11780 631-862-6575 fax 631-862-8730</p>	<p>The League of Women Voters of Smithtown thanks Allison J. Cruz, Executive Director and the staff of the Smithtown Township Arts Council/ Mills Pond House Gallery for its support of the League.</p> <p><i>We encourage all Town Residents to support the Arts Council, participate in its cultural programs, and visit the historic Mills Pond House in St. James.</i> For info: <a href="http://www.stacarts.org">www.stacarts.org</a>.</p>	
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# Ready, set, register

Learn what you need to know to cast your vote in November

By SARAH HARTMANN

The Long Island Advance August 2, 2007

This November 6 marks another election day where voters will be asked to cast their ballots in local races. Brookhaven voters will be presented with candidates for Suffolk County executive and county legislators, town supervisor, town highway superintendent, town receiver of taxes, and councilpeople for the town's six districts.

Voters must be registered, ideally informed about parties, candidates and issues as well as be engaged enough to participate in a process that is both right and duty. Unfortunately, at the local level, voter turnout on Election Day is only 32 percent, a trend that party leaders say they would like to change.

"It must be about more than increasing enrollment for a specific party. There are large groups of people who don't vote. People have wish lists concerning the quality of their immediate lives, and these are decisions that politicians make. But for some reason, there is a message to voters that their votes don't matter, or the day simply slips off their radar screen," said Marsha Laufer, chair of the Brookhaven Town Democratic Party. Nancy Marr, president of the Brookhaven League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political membership organization that encourages informed, active participation of citizens in government, said her organization too questions the lack of voter participation. Some of the reason, said Marr, appears to be because people get too busy to pay attention.

"People feel overwhelmed. They don't know the issues so instead of voting the wrong way, they don't vote at all," she said. This is where the league can be of assistance. Marr suggested that people join the organization because it focuses on issues and actively avoids politicking and supporting specific candidates.

Marr and others also note how the political dialogue has changed over the past decade. Calling it the "talking head syndrome," she said that personalities who yell, berate, smear, and taunt now dominate the discussion and their aggression has had a chilling effect for most people to engage. "We seem to have lost the ability to have a political dialogue without fear of saying the wrong thing or being viewed as impolite or un-American. The talking heads have done a great disservice to fact, issues, and the ability to come to consensus," she said.

So how to lift the dialogue too often mired in mud and encourage people to vote? The answer, say those who work in the political world, is to start early with education.

Schools, which already address voting at the high school level, need to educate youngsters even earlier about the voting process, why it is more than sound bites, and why

it matters. "It must be taught from time to time when children are young. They could be inspired by teachers and their parents," said Laufer. she added that changing Election Day to a weekend or a national day off could also help turnout. "Voting is difficult for many because they are working people with family obligations," she said.

Marr said that people become apathetic voters also because it is easy or because they get discouraged. "It is a responsibility one can always leave up to someone else. Or people read that their elected officials are corrupt and have been doing the wrong thing and that puts them off," she said. She noted, however, that the very act of voting could be the

motivating factor for many people to look beyond party and politics and follow the issues.

The League of Women Voters, which works with youth to involve them in the process, has summer programs geared to teens now being carried out by the Smithtown and the Hamptons leagues. The Brookhaven League, which has a membership of 96, will launch its own teen summer program in the future. Currently Brookhaven League members travel to libraries, colleges, the Brookhaven Town fair, and some businesses to carry out voter registration. The League of Women Voters publishes a yearly directory of public officials, works on issues like housing and health care (the league supports a single-payer health plan), is opposed to the death penalty, and is working on the immigration issue. Marr said they have yet to define their stance on the issue.

As Election Day nears, people can direct their questions concerning voter registration, voting locations, and issues to 631-862-6860. All calls are returned.

About voter registration

Before you can vote in any political election, you must register to vote. In order to register to vote, you must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be 18 years old by the date of the general, primary or other election in which you want to vote.
- Live at your present address at least 30 days before an election.
- Not be in jail or on parole for a felony conviction.
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

How and where to register

You can register directly at your county board of elections (the Suffolk County BOE is located in Yaphank) or at your department of motor vehicles along with vehicle registration). Otherwise, registration forms are available

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## The Long Island Advance...continued

at libraries, post offices, and elected officials' offices. The forms must be turned into the board of elections.

You can also register at any New York State agency-based voter registration center such as departments of health, labor, social services; military recruiting centers; State Universities of New York (SUNY). For a complete list, visit the New York State Board of Elections online.

You can download a registration form online at the state web site or call the hotline to request a registration form by mail. The site provides directions.

Voter registration facts

- If you move to a new county, you will have to re-register to vote in that county.
- If you want to change your enrollment (party affiliation), send a voter registration form with your new enrollment to your county board of elections.
- If you have changed your name (say through marriage), you will need to re-register.
- If you are a newly naturalized citizen, you will need to register.

• The drop-dead date for anyone to register in person is Oct. 12. Mail-in registration must be postmarked Oct. 12.

Where and when to vote

• Depending on where you live, you will be assigned a specific polling location. Contact the BOE for your specific polling location.

• The next primary election is September 18, 2007.

• The next general election is November 6, 2007.

• Polls open at 6 a.m. and close at 9 p.m.

About voter enrollment

When you register, you must choose one of the following affiliations:

Democratic Party, Republican Party, Independence Party, Conservative Party, Working Families Party, Other (write in), or choose not to enroll in a party, referred to as being a "blank." Note that another word for being a blank is being an independent, which is not to be confused with the Independence Party.

Only those registered in a party, that is Democratic, Republican, Independence, Conservative, or Working Families, can vote in a primary election. If you are a blank/independent, you may not vote in a primary election.

A primary election occurs when there is more than one person who has filed petitions to run for an office, for instance if two Republicans choose to run against each other for a town council seat. The primary is the vehicle for deciding which of the two Republican candidates will ultimately run in the general election against the other party's candidate.

### League of Women Voters of Smithtown

#### Membership Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Even if you do not have time for active participation, your membership alone will strengthen our voice.**

Individual Membership \$50.00

Household (2 at same address) 70.00

Student Membership 20.00

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to LWV of Smithtown and mail to:*

LWV of Smithtown  
c/o Mary Zopf  
21 Greene Drive  
Commack, NY 11725

*Please note:  
Additional tax-deductible donations to the League beyond the dues amount may be made by writing a separate check to "LWVNYS Education Foundation" and mail to the address above. Thank you.*

## Town Board Meetings

June 12, 2007 - Councilman Ed Wehrheim was absent. In the morning Councilwoman Joanne Gray wanted to discuss the new town public sign code but Supervisor Vecchio said since there was going to be a public hearing it would be duplication. Vecchio said that Legislator John Kennedy discussed with him 10 acres at the intersection of Town Line Road and Southern Blvd... that the County would buy with town oversight of the property.

In the afternoon (Wehrheim still absent) there were many citizens appealing for help from the board. Pam Drew, who lives at Hidden Ponds, again asked the Board for a change in the trees in the buffer zone between her property and the wetlands, since the large growth had infringed on her property. Councilman McCarthy said Ross Barnett, head of the town's environmental department, has discussed this with the DEC. Monica Ray again asked for a new traffic survey for the pro-posed Commerce Bank in Saint James.

A very contentious issue is the annual carnival at St... Philip and James Church in St. James. Kathy Caldarola, who lives opposite the church, said there were no posting of signs giving advance notice of the event and a permit should not have been granted. Lenore Cernitz was "shocked" at Vecchio's comment that Ed Lynch, the former Smithtown highway Superintendent who was convicted of a felony for campaign finance fraud, "did nothing wrong in his official duties." And finally Muriel Dietch, wearing a black veil over her face, said "justice is dead" due to a judge's ruling against Angels Gate.

July 10, 2007 All present. Supervisor Vecchio proposed adopting energy efficient standards for homes larger than 4000 square feet, similar to the one adopted by the Town of Babylon. He proposed limiting special permit events in Smithaven Mall on Sunday mornings because it impacts on Church attendance. Councilwoman Biancaniello reported on several items - a meeting was held on violence in the work place and Public Safety will talk with department heads on this topic; discussed prohibiting plant wholesalers from selling invasive species.

A house on Andover St. in the town of Smithtown is being taken for back taxes and the County the County would like to acquire it for affordable housing. The Long Island Housing Partnership would help someone with 80% of the average income for the town, (\$80,000 is 80% of the median income of the town which is \$100,000). Councilman Wehrheim raised the point that it would be a maintenance liability for the town until it was sold. Council woman Gray asked if a family with an income of \$80,000 would be able to afford it. (Ed. note: With all the talk of Smithtown's need for affordable housing it seems as if the Town is really not anxious for it.)

In the afternoon Wehrheim and Gray had words about his testimony at her trial by the Town Ethics Board where she was found guilty of sending a political mailing with town funds. Don Cantwell spoke on firms leaving Smithtown for an Empire Zone on Long Island and urged the Town to analyze the impact and for Smithtown to get its own Empire Zone.

Mary Zopf  
Observer

### **Smithtown Town Board Meeting Schedule**

*Tuesdays: **Aug. 14, Sept. 11***  
*Smithtown Town Hall*

**9:30 am** work session  
**2:00 pm** regular meeting

*Thursday: **Sept. 27***  
*Senior Citizens Center*

**7:00 pm** regular meeting

### ***Library Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule***

**Regular meetings: Tuesdays- August 21, September 18**

All meetings are held in the Main Library at 7pm



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ®  
OF SMITHTOWN**

**322 River Road  
St. James, NY 11780**

*Address Correction Requested*

**POSTMASTER:  
DATED MAIL-  
Please Rush!**

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

<u>August 2007</u>	
Mon. Aug. 13	Smithtown LWV Board Meeting, Mills Pond House, 7pm
Tues. Aug. 14	Town Board Meetings, 9:30 am-Work Session; 2 pm-Regular Meeting, Town Hall
Wed. Aug. 15	LWVSC Board Meeting, Riverhead Library 10:00am
Tues. Aug. 21	Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Main Library, 7 pm
<u>September 2007</u>	
Mon. Sept. 10	Candidates' Meeting for Primary Election for Smithtown Town Council and County Legislature, location to be announced, 7-9pm
Tues. Sept. 11	LWVSC Board Meeting, Riverhead Library 10:00am
Tues. Sept. 11	Town Board Meetings, 9:30 am-Work Session; 2 pm-Regular Meeting, Town Hall
Fri. Sept. 14	Trash or Treasure, fundraiser for LWV Smithtown and STAC
Tues. Sept. 18	Mills Pond House, St. James 7:30pm
Tues. Sept. 18	Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Main Library, 7 pm
Tues. Sept. 18	Primary Elections, Polling places open 6am-9pm
Thurs. Sept. 27	(voters must be registered members of party holding primary) Town Board Meetings, 7 pm - Regular Meeting, Senior Citizens Center