



# Suffolk County Voter

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Wed. March 16 LWVSC Board Meeting, SCCC, Main St. Riverhead 10am - 12noon

March 2011

## LWV Suffolk County and Local Leagues start 2011 with Advocacy, Action, and Voter Service

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### Board of Elections meets with LWVSC

Suffolk County BOE officials Jeanne O'Rourke and Mike Torres met with LWVSC Board members on Feb. 16 to review the LWV's post-election survey results and share the BOE's insights and plans for 2011.

- SC BOE will use the new optical scan machines at all special elections which are run by the BOE (e.g. SC 6th LD special election).
- Other special election districts (e.g. library, school, fire, etc.) are offered use of the new machines, but may choose to use the lever machines or paper ballots.
- Although NYS now permits "split shift" inspector schedules on election day, SC BOE will monitor the effectiveness of this program in other counties before making any changes here.
- SC BOE will no longer depend on telephoned results on election night-- the shortcomings of this process were evident in 2010's general election. Instead, the BOE is developing a method for receiving the machine results directly from the memory cards.

### Redistricting News

Nancy Marr has been selected as the LWV representative on the Suffolk County Redistricting Commission. Leagues continue to educate members and the public about the need for legislation to create a New York State redistricting commission which is independent and bi-partisan.

### LWVSC now an affiliate member of Touro Law Public Advocacy Center

Touro Law welcomed LWVSC to the PAC and LWVSC is now seeking law school students to help with pro-bono and volunteer projects during 2011. There is also the possibility of a work-study grant internship. Projects include research on NYS election law and cases, as well as collecting information on Suffolk County affordable housing details.

### Naturalization Ceremonies and Voter Registration

After a successful effort registering newly naturalized citizens at the Central Islip courthouse in the fall, local Leagues are coordinating efforts to continue to assist with voter registration on certain Mondays throughout 2011. Please contact your local League if you would like to participate in this needed and rewarding project.

### Housing in Suffolk County

LWVSC Board members Barbara Jordan, Nancy Marr, Judie Gorenstein and Mary Zopf are compiling information which will lead to a report on the status of accessory apartments in Suffolk County townships. If you are interested in helping the housing committee, please contact one of them directly via phone or email (see board list on the left)

### Hydro-fracking Moratorium Advocacy

The Marcellus Shale in upstate New York (including part of the watershed that provides water for more than 7 million people in New York City) is an area that has an abundance of natural gas. Permits have been secured for companies to start drilling but because of the activities of environmental groups and pressure from many citizens there is a temporary moratorium until July, 2011 on any fracking procedure in New York State.

The method employed in fracking is to drill a deep well, and once drilled, millions of gallons of water, sand and proprietary chemicals (a mixture of 596 highly toxic chemicals) are injected, under high pressure, into it. The pressure fractures the shale and props open fissures that enable natural gas to flow more freely out of the well. This injected water then becomes contaminated and has to be disposed of forever. Since the wells are typically 8,000 feet deep and water aquifers are about 1,000 feet deep there is a good chance of contamination of water that is used for drinking, cooking, bathing, and for animals and farming. LWVUS has a position against the current fracking process. We need to see to it that this becomes a permanent ban for, if the companies succeed in defeating the moratorium, we run the risk of destroying the watershed forever which would create a major water shortage. The result: the need for water for New York City will become so intense that Long Island's precious and pure aquifer supply will possibly be auctioned to the highest bidder.

Brenda Reiss (LWV Huntington) will present more information at the March 16 LWVSC board meeting in Riverhead. Local League members are invited to learn more about the important advocacy issue for 2011.

### Academy Award Nominated Documentary "Gasland" available for Showing/Discussion

Please contact Brenda Reiss ([habrenda@earthlink.net](mailto:habrenda@earthlink.net) 631 261 7093) if you are interested in showing Gasland to members of your local League and your community. Brenda will assist with the showing and a discussion of the issues and advocacy.

### Legislative Action Kit for Suffolk County

LWVSC's Legislative Committee, chaired by Katherine Hoak, has completed the revision of the Legislative Action Kit, which covers League positions on major issues of concern in our county. Local Leagues are encouraged to view it on the LWVSC website, and use it to prepare for legislative visits.