

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BRONXVILLE**

(Serving Bronxville, Eastchester, Tuckahoe, Mt. Vernon and Yonkers)

**DECEMBER 2007**

**BULLETIN**

**ISSUE THREE**

*You are cordially invited to our*

***\*\*HOLIDAY PARTY\*\****

*Wednesday, December 12, 2007*

*7 PM*

*The Edwards Room  
Bronxville Reformed Church  
180 Pondfield Road*

***PANEL DISCUSSION***

*Portraits of American-Muslim Women:  
Contemporary Women Living in Westchester  
(See inside for details)*

*Come eat, drink and be merrily informed!*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As the holiday season approaches, we have been active in many local and county activities. Now, it's time for our annual holiday gathering! Our program will take place on Wednesday evening, December 12<sup>th</sup> at a new location – the Edwards Room of the Reformed Church (Pondfield Road & Midland Avenue), beginning with food and refreshments at 7 PM, followed by a panel program at 7:30 PM. The program will focus on several American Muslim women who live close to Bronxville, moderated by Fozia Arshad, a long-time member of the Scarsdale-Hartsdale Women's Interfaith Council, and will be followed by questions and discussion from the audience. As always, there will be no charge for the gathering. Our Program chair Sue Weisfeld has organized the program, and we must thank board member Alice Clapp for arranging for the space. So, mark your calendars and join us on December 12<sup>th</sup>!

The Town Hall meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup> in the Library's Jaeger Room brought the subject of a nonpartisan selection of the Mayor and Village Board to the community. The committee that has been studying the matter was available to discuss their position. The next meeting on the subject will take place some time in February, I am told.

Our three recent third Tuesday informational coffees were well attended. The November program featured Assemblyman Mike Spano, who was very open about his positions on many issues. We thank the Assemblyman for joining us, and look forward to seeing him again On December 14<sup>th</sup>, at a "Coffee & Conversation with Westchester's State Legislators" at The White Plains Library - Friday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be open to all Westchester residents.

Our December third Tuesday coffee (December 18<sup>th</sup> at the Bronxville Women's Club at 9:30 AM) will feature Molly Roffman, a new League member and committed community activist who proved one individual can make a difference. Come hear her story.

Adelaide

### **P.S. This just in from our New York State League President Martha Kennedy:**

The state study entitled "Should New York State Join the Compact for a National Popular Vote" adopted at our LWVNYS Convention in May 2007 has been discontinued. The LWVUS has advised us that LWVNYS could not take action on any position we might have adopted as a result of that study since the election of the president is a national issue. After communicating this decision from LWVUS to local leagues (LLs) throughout New York State, I received substantial numbers of responses from those leagues reflecting their displeasure not only with the decision itself, but the process and delay in notification by LWVUS, and the realization that while the LWVUS has a position in opposition to the Electoral College, there exists no avenue for leagues to take action on this position. Having begun a review of the Compact for a National Popular Vote (NPV) and held programs addressing this concept, a number of LLs further noted a substantial interest among both members and non-members in this topic, and thus expressed a desire to continue this study in fulfillment of the League's commitment to educating the electorate.

The recourse presented by LWVUS was to make an argument to "add to or subtract from" the LWVUS position regarding the selection of the President. In response to this, the LWVNYS board adopted the following motion: **LWVNYS Board has been directed by its membership to pursue the National Popular Vote study. Therefore, the board agrees to direct Lori Dawson and Carol Mellor to lobby across the country to recommend the adoption at the national convention in 2008 of a national study entitled "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President"**.

Lori Dawson, the State Study Committee Chair for the original LWVNYS study and committee member, Carol Mellor, will continue, under the guidance of LWVNYS Board Citizen Action Director, JoAnn Ross, to post objective reference material to the LWVNYS website ([www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)) and serve as coordinators of this effort to gain support for the adoption of this study throughout the country.

Just as the original adoption of the state study was the result of an organized and thorough grassroots lobbying effort by local league members in New York State, the success of a national lobbying effort will depend upon the grassroots participation by local and state leagues throughout the country. You are encouraged to assist with this by continuing to educate your local community on the pros and cons of the National Popular Vote Compact and by recommending the adoption of this study on the LWVUS Program Planning Report Form."

Stay tuned for more information!

Adelaide

## PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN-MUSLIM WOMEN: A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH CONTEMPORARY WOMEN LIVING IN WESTCHESTER

Of the world's more than one billion Muslims, it is estimated that between three and six million live in the U.S. Although the common perception in the greater US population is that those who practice Islam are primarily from the Middle East, American Muslim families have cultural traditions from over 60 nations including Pakistan, Croatia, Phillipines, the former Soviet republics, the Far East and Africa. In addition, many American Muslims are converts who retain strong ties to the cultures in which they were raised.

American Muslim women in Westchester face unique challenges: finding a balance between their Muslim tenets and the pressure to be part of the mainstream culture, raising a family, and their individual participation in their local Westchester communities. Young American Muslim women have their own niche, their own special identities, yet they are very much a part of our mainstream society.



Our **December 12<sup>th</sup>** holiday program will focus on several American Muslim women who live close to Bronxville. The format will be a panel discussion, moderated by Fozia Khan, a long-time member of the Scarsdale-Hartsdale Womens Interfaith Council, and will be followed by questions and discussion from the audience.



It will be a wonderful evening! As always, the food will be delicious and the warmth of the evening will be a lovely beginning to the holiday season. As always, the program will be free and open to the public. You are very welcome to bring guests!

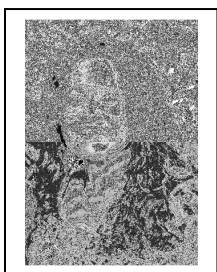
This year we change our location, and will have our program in the **Edwards Room** of the **Reformed Church** on Pondfield Road and Midland Avenue (entrance on Midland Avenue, across from the firehouse). We will begin at **7:00 p.m.** and the panel program will start at **7:30 p.m.** If you need further information, or a ride, please contact me (914/779-8354 or [sweisfeld@juno.com](mailto:sweisfeld@juno.com)).

We hope you can join us for this very special event!



Ingrid Mattson is the first woman to head ISNA

In Peace and Friendship,  
Susan Weisfeld, Program Chair





**THE BEST KIND OF HOLIDAY GREEN TO BE  
HIGHLIGHTED AT OUR DECEMBER COFFEE**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18  
9:30 am  
BRONXVILLE WOMEN'S CLUB**

Community quality-of-life issues make a great deal of difference in the health and security of local residents. One major quality-of-life issue concerns having a clean and beautiful natural environment. How can citizens get involved and truly make a difference?

Yonkers – yes, Yonkers! -- has formed a Green Policy Task Force comprised of seven residents from different areas of the city. The mandates of the GPTF are to develop and lobby for passage of environmental and health legislative policy on behalf of all city residents.

At our next League coffee, December 18 at 9:30 a.m., you will be amazed to learn how just a few active and concerned citizens have already made a difference! Molly Roffman, member of the GPTF will describe how the group met with the Yonkers Board of Education Transportation Department of the Yonkers Board of Education, and convinced that department to work with the Task Force to help educate bus drivers and students about restrictions on bus and car idling.

The seasonal leaf blower ban, now passed unanimously by the City Council, also was influenced by grass roots citizens' efforts as well as the joint efforts of Task Force members. The environmental and health benefits of both issues will help improve Yonkers air quality near homes and schools, where the lungs of Yonkers' youngest citizens are most vulnerable!

Much more is being done, and much more is planned by the GPTF. Please come and join us for this wonderful coffee hour. Holiday refreshments will be served and you will come away with inspiration and pride at the difference just a few concerned citizens have made (*remember the famous quote by Margaret Mead? Here it is in action!!*)

**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed  
citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever  
has!**

**LWW COFFEE AND CONVERSATION  
with  
OUR WESTCHESTER STATE LEGISLATORS**

**Friday, December 14, 2007  
9:30 AM  
White Plains Library**

**LWWW FUND RAISER  
THE MOISEYEV DANCE COMPANY  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2008  
5 PM**

**SUNY Purchase Theater  
Orchestra Tickets: \$55  
RSVP ASAP: Kitt Rosenthal, 723-5126, [kittr@optonline.net](mailto:kittr@optonline.net)**

## HEALTH ISSUES - December, 2007

At this point, most people agree that our health care system, such as it is, is in dire need of reform. To begin with, we're the only industrialized nation in the world that doesn't provide universal coverage - which is distressing in itself. Moreover, what we do have is so complicated that it's hard to understand, much less know where, or how to change it. However, the bottom line is that 47 million people have no medical insurance whatsoever, and another 70 million have it only episodically, three months or so at a time. And that is unacceptable.

To help us out, the Rivertowns League, with our co-sponsorship, explored the topic at a meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, in Hastings-on-Hudson. The speaker was Mark Hannay, Director, Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign (a coalition of unions and other organizations in NYC and its environs.) He made the following points.

Any type of health - or medical - care system must ensure:

- ~ Universality - *everyone* gets coverage (somehow)
- ~ Comprehensiveness - basic care (however defined) and preventive care for physical/ mental illness, and substance abuse
- ~ Affordability - for every payer: individual, employer, union, and/or government
- ~ Accessibility - physically, and in terms of language and cultural issues
- ~ Quality - in primary care and public health (away from the current focus on acute tertiary care)
- ~ Accountability - via regulation, monitoring and enforcement

Many proposals/options have been put forth to help achieve this but there are two basic models:

"Progressive", publically oriented ones like:

- National Health Insurance, a Medicare-for-all, the government is the sole payer (Canada)
- National Health Service (UK) Government pays the bill *and* organizes delivery
- "Incremental" expansion of Medicaid, SCHIP, Federal Employee Health Benefits
- Regulation of private coverage to prevent cherry-picking and limit denials of coverage.

"Conservative", market oriented proposals that would

- Subsidize private coverage with tax credits and/or reinsurance for high cost claims
- Deregulate the private market
- Mandate the otherwise uninsured to buy private coverage (as in Mass.)
- Privatize Medicare and Medicaid

We must determine which proposals best meet the six criteria noted above, and individually and collectively work towards them. As first goals for next year, Mr. Hannay suggested support for Medicare Part D "fixes" (negotiate drug prices, fill in the donut hole, allow Medicare to offer it directly, rather than only privately as it does now), and for some specific, desirable bills now en route in Congress ( the mental health parity law up for renewal and "federal-state partnership" bills). I hope to provide some particulars later on. He also urged us to build coalitions with other like-minded groups, and to join them, individually, to strengthen our impact through increased numbers. And, of course, to maintain contact with our state and federal representatives. We are seriously out-classed by moneyed interests; our strength lies in our votes and in our numbers.

Edith Szold, Health Issues Chair

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# BULLETIN

**League of Women Voters of Bronxville**  
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## IMPORTANT DATES

### Dec

11	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Board Meeting	Bvl Women's Club
12	7:00 PM	Bronxville LWV Holiday Party Panel: American-Muslim Women	Bvl Reformed Church 180 Pondfield Road
14	9:30 AM	LWWW Coffee and Conversation with State Legislators	White Plains Library Martine Avenue
18	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee Molly Roffman (See inside for info)	Bvl Women's Club