

# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BRONXVILLE

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

**NOVEMBER 2008**

**BULLETIN**

**ISSUE THREE**

**YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO A SPECIAL EVENING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12**

**7:00 p.m.**

**YAEGER ROOM**

**Bronxville Public Library**

**Pondfield Rd. and Midland Ave**



## **REHABILITATION *THROUGH THE ARTS***

**A UNIQUE VOLUNTEER-RUN  
THEATRICAL PROGRAM**

**IN SING SING AND OTHER MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISONS**

**WITH DIRECTOR KATHERINE VOCKINS**

**AND SPECIAL INVITED GUESTS**

**(SEE ARTICLE INSIDE BULLETIN FOR DETAILS!)**

*for additional information or a ride, please email: [sweisfeld@juno.com](mailto:sweisfeld@juno.com) or call 914/779-8354*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

October was a busy month in League – our Voter Service chair Irma Moore completed her committee's hard work by rounding out our Voter registration efforts before the October 10<sup>th</sup> cutoff. On 10/1 she registered and spoke to residents at the Sunrise Assisted Living Residence in Mount Vernon. On 10/2 she registered and spoke to staff at Richmond Community Services, an Assisted Living Facility in Yonkers. That evening, she furnished Voter Registration forms and literature at the Longfellow School PTA in Mount Vernon. Irma then put the finishing touches on the 10/20 Yonkers Candidates meeting at Sarah Lawrence as well as doing all the necessary work for the October 26<sup>th</sup> Eastchester Candidates meeting. In her spare time, she contacted candidates for input to our County Voters Guide and for SmartVoter.org. She also mailed out Voter Guides to our membership. Way to go, Irma! Her small group of active committee members include Janet Jaidi, Alice Clapp, Connie Partridge and Connie Vance. A special thanks goes to Sue Weisfeld for rounding up the candidates and reserving the site at Sarah Lawrence for the candidates meeting there on 10/20. Kudos to all you ladies!

In the meantime, Health chair Edith Szold invited County Legislator Lois Bronz to address us at our third Tuesday informational coffee on 10/21. Our thanks to Legislator Bronz for a very informative meeting. Our November coffee will feature Diggitt McLaughlin, a town Trustee from Hastings (and LWVRivertowns member) who will update us on the election results – Diggitt has been following the nationwide information on registration and voting machine results. So, do join us for some non-partisan postmortems on the election. We've witnessed some of the most intense election campaigning seen in our time. I believe the League's non-partisan efforts to inform and educate voters has been of help to all in this election year.

**AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS!** We need a volunteer to chair the committee being formed to study the advisability of using the Compact for the National Popular Vote (NPV) as a way to elect a president. Under the Compact each participating state would award all electoral votes to the presidential candidate who has received the most votes nationally. The League supports the selection of a president by the direct popular vote method. This is a way to insure that every person's vote counts. The League also supports abolishing the Electoral College. The NPV would take effect only when the plan has been enacted by a sufficient number of states whose collective electoral votes is 270, the number needed to win. Information on the NPV is available at LWVUS.org and the NPV website, NationalPopularVote.com. Anyone wanting to join in this study, please contact me at [Adigiorgi@optonline.net](mailto:Adigiorgi@optonline.net).

Last but not least, thanks to Ms. Pat Harriss, our "Development Chair" (AKA fund-raising) for getting out the request for much needed funds to continue our work. As many of you know, our membership fee of \$50.00 per individual covers a \$28.00 per member payment to the National League, \$18.00 to the State League, and \$2.00 to the County League. This year that leaves us \$2.00 for LWVBronxville, and when the National per member payment again increases an additional \$1.20 in 2009 we'll have 80 cents! If you can donate, please do.

**V O T E ! 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on November 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Adelaide**



**Members and the Public are invited  
to our  
November Coffee Meeting**

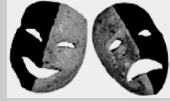
**Tuesday, November 18  
9:30 AM**

**Bronxville Women's Club  
135 Midland Avenue**



**Our speaker will be Diggitt McLaughlin of the Rivertowns League who will discuss with us the efforts made around the country to make sure that everyone who registered to vote was able to do so. Many states have a poor record when it comes to voters' rights. The League has been working hard to register voters and provide the assistance necessary to get out the vote.**

**Our November program:**



## **REHABILITATION THROUGH THE ARTS**

There are many types of rehabilitation, but what you will hear about on November 12 will really impress you! A volunteer-run organization, Rehabilitation Through The Arts, spends months working with inmates in Sing Sing and other maximum security prisons to stage first-rate productions which have received consistent rave reviews by the *New York Times* and other media.

Encouraged in its beginnings by then warden (now NYS Commissioner of Corrections) Brian Fischer, the program utilizes the skills involved in the theatre arts to develop leadership, responsibility, cooperation and respect for others.

The goals of the program culminate in total change in behavior and thinking on the part of prisoners who have experienced the worst kinds of violence in their lives. Recidivism by those who have been part of these plays is minimal. It's a life-changing experience, but it is very hard work!

Our November program will be wonderful – unique, inspirational and completely fascinating: Executive Director **Katherine Vockins** will both speak and show a brief video presentation. There will also be some very special guests.

Katherine has invited some prior cast members to talk about their experience and how it impacted their life since release; also, Commissioner Fischer has asked Sing Sing Deputy Superintendent for Program Services, Sabina Kaplan, to speak on his behalf (he originally planned to come to our program).

The plays include one or two nights when the public can attend. Many of you may have read the reviews of past performances. The next open performance will be November 21: ***In The Silence of the Heart***. If you would like to attend you must pre-register on the website: [www.p-c-i.org/rta\\_register.php](http://www.p-c-i.org/rta_register.php) or by calling 914/232-7566.

**Note:** to hear an **audio preview** about the program with Scott Simon of NPR, log onto: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4661515>  
The RTA website is [www.p-c-i.org](http://www.p-c-i.org) and has links to photos and theatre reviews.

We hope to see you at the **Bronxville Public Library, Yaeger Room**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, November 12**

Excellent refreshments will be served and you are very welcome to bring guests to this very special evening program. No RSVP is necessary.

As always, for more information or if you need a ride, please let me know” 914/779-8354 or [sweisfeld@juno.com](mailto:sweisfeld@juno.com).

Best regards,

**Sue**

Susan Weisfeld, Program Chair

## HEALTH ISSUES

I'm writing this ten days before Election Day. Who wins will certainly make a difference in how our regulatory agencies, social programs and security operations are run. However, that won't actually happen until next year and, in the meantime, it's the economy that's having the greatest impact. Here are a few things that are very apparent now, with respect to health care, along with some interesting facts and speculations about what they will mean in the future.

Hospitals, for instance. Richard L. Clarke, chief executive of Healthcare Financial Management Association - a professional group for hospital finance executives - notes that like any other business, they depend on credit for building projects and maintaining over-all liquidity (NY Times, Oct'08) Nationwide, they are postponing such things as enlarging emergency rooms, updating computer systems and the purchase of state of the art diagnostic and treatment machines. This could cool down the over- heated race to the top that's been going on - which could be a good thing. On the other hand, with more people unable to pay the rising out-of- pocket share of their medical bills, hospitals will tighten their belts and patient care will doubtless be affected. This, especially, if proposed cuts in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements actually take place.

Individuals are feeling the pinch as well. IMS Healthcare, a firm that tracks the drug industry, reported a decline in dispensed prescriptions - the first time that's happened in twelve years of collecting data (NYTimes, 10/22/08). People are reducing the number of pills they take and some are doing without them altogether.

That's a way for controllable conditions to become major medical problems, causing much personal suffering and national expense.

But there may be some bright spots - at least for patients. As all the 401 k's falter, many older, experienced doctors may delay retirement making their expertise available a little longer. And curiously, despite the difficulties in getting student loans, the number of first year med students at US allopathic medical schools reached a record high. There's been a striking increase in Latino students and some in Native Americans while the number of African Americans and women held steady (MedPage Today, 10/21/08).. The bottleneck is in residency slots, which have not increased, as they must if we are to have more practicing physicians.

Some pessimists have said that most young doctors will head for the specialties in order to make real money, decimating the ranks of primary practitioners even further. But maybe their values have changed instead. 63% of the enrollees described above had done some sort of non-medical community service, 77% had some sort of medicine-related service, and two thirds had some sort of research experience. Medicine was a rather noble calling in my youth stressing service, knowledge and compassion. Could it possibly be getting there again?.

And the FDA has slowed the approval process out of safety concerns.

### Edith Szold, Health Issues Chair



Eastchester Council Candidates Fred Salanitro (R) and Christine Doody-Doherty (D). LWV Moderator: Karen Schatzel, Rivertowns League



US Congressional Candidates, Hon. Nita Lowey (D) and Jim Russell (R). LWV Moderator: Roberta Wiernik, New Castle League

**INFORMATIONAL MEETING AND CONSENSUS**

**2009 COUNTY BUDGET**

**A ONE-OF-A-KIND OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND QUESTION**

**with featured speakers**

**Anne Reasoner**

**Westchester County Budget Director**

**Arthur Vietro**

**Deputy Budget Director**

**John Delaney**

**First Deputy Budget Director**

**Thursday, November 20, 2008**

**1:00 PM**

**WHITE PLAINS LIBRARY**

**100 Martine Avenue, White Plains**



**What are the duties and responsibilities of the County  
as it prepares the 2009 budget in light of this economy?**

**How will fiscal decisions affect social services, environmental programs,  
housing needs, transportation issues, infrastructure problems, flooding plans,  
and, of course, your TAXES?**

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**sponsored by**

**The League of Women Voters of Westchester**

**For more information, call 949-0507**

## **MESSAGES FROM THE COUNTY LEAGUE**

### **The League of Women Voters wants You**

Are you a political junkie? Can't get enough of the MSNBC politicians, or of Channel 12 on the ups and downs of local government? The place to go to understand the issues facing our communities – whether it be relocation plans for the County Board of Elections, pollution of our water, development of our land, or the need for public input and disclosure in the governing process – is the League of Women Voters. Not just for women, the League has changed with the times and boasts a diverse membership. And, while it is certainly political, it is strictly and carefully non-partisan.

The League boasts eleven local chapters within Westchester County – in Bedford/Lewisboro, Bronxville, Harrison, Larchmont/Mamaroneck, New Castle, New Rochelle, Rye, the Rivertowns, Scarsdale, Somers and White Plains – and is a bottom-up organization. Local Leagues run candidates' forums, study local as well as state and national issues, and inform their communities on issues of importance. The Westchester League serves the local Leagues and focuses on county issues. Along with the local Leagues, it publishes its well-regarded Voters Guide, runs candidates forums, and offers voter information on the website [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org). An autonomous offshoot of the League is the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee, a board of “fair minded non-partisan” citizens who accept complaints from candidates in local elections.

The League's lifeblood is its volunteers. Whether as a board or committee member, or as a supportive member cheering on the others, Leaguers have the satisfaction of making a real difference in our own communities. Consider joining the League. Find your local League at [www.lwvwestchester.org](http://www.lwvwestchester.org) or contact the League of Women Voters of Westchester, 200 Hamilton Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601. Give us a call at 949-0507 to see how you can get involved.

### **TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE – Kristina McCarthy**

The Tappan Zee Bridge study committee was pleased to have the long expected report released by the department of transportation pertaining to their recommendations for the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor. As per the DOT press release “The proposal calls for a complete replacement of the existing bridge and the construction of a bus rapid transit system along the 30-mile highway corridor across Rockland and Westchester counties in the lower Hudson Valley. Bus rapid transit will be operational when the new bridge opens. The proposal also recommends a commuter rail transit system across Rockland County and the new Tappan Zee Bridge to provide New York City commuters access to Grand Central Terminal.”

There will be 3 separate open houses – throughout Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties during the month of October – conducted by the DOT to lay out the details of the proposed plan as well as receive feedback from the public. The TZB study committee members will also be attending a stakehold committee meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup> to delve into the specifics of this new proposal, as well as the future timeline for this project. The DOT will be conducting additional environmental studies, as well as a comprehensive financing plan for the project.

# News From *Your* State League

Update from LWNYS

November 2008

## **Resources for Local League Leaders**

Are you hesitating to take on a leadership role in your local League because you don't know how to do the job? In fact, League work is easy to learn with the many resources available. National and NYS Leagues provide how-to manuals with general information for leaders as well as specifics for most jobs. The state League website is continually updated with background material as well as the latest information about ongoing projects. It also contains the complete text of State Board Reports, including the latest issue. The SBR contains issue updates as well as such organizational data as the bulletin exchange and contact information for the LWNYS Board and portfolio chairs. In addition, listserves and contact with regional directors, state board members, fellow Leaguers you meet at Convention and fall leadership workshops, and LWNYS office staff can help direct you to the information you need. When a report is due, the necessary form is included in the SBR early enough to give you plenty of time to complete it. The State League recognizes the challenges involved in being an active League leader and wants to help. Take them up on their offer and accept the challenge of League leadership.

## **Citizen Court Monitoring**

This program began in 1975, when non-lawyer volunteers were recruited to observe court proceedings and report on their findings and recommendations. The program has been influential in solving many of the problems that ordinary citizens face when dealing with the courts. It has been highly successful at achieving numerous public-interest objectives. Modern Courts wants to expand its monitoring program of local town and village justice courts into additional counties throughout the state. They hope to partner with local Leagues in identifying volunteers for this program. If you're interested, ask your local League president to contact the state League office and find out about

## **Convention 2009**

The next LWNYS Biennial Convention will be May 15-17 at the Doubletree Inn in Syracuse, NY. The Convention theme will be "Fair, Vibrant and Strong". In addition to the usual outstanding speakers, presentations, and entertainment, this Convention will introduce a pre-convention training workshop on Friday afternoon, May 15. This Training will provide more extensive opportunities for training and sharing of experiences in areas most often identified as challenging. While aimed at the new Leader, there will be modules geared specifically to the seasoned Leader. Consider coming to Syracuse early to participate in this new Training.

## **League Day at the UN**

This year's annual UN Day will be on Tuesday, December 2, 2008. The topic will be the *Impact of Global Warming on Women and Children Around the World*. In addition to the main presentation, the day's schedule will include an optional tour of the UN and an optional buffet lunch in the Delegates Dining Room. Be sure to register early – space is limited and seating is on a first come-first serve basis. You can find the registration form on the LWNYS website at: <http://lwvny.org/un/UNregistrationForm2008.pdf>.

## **Membership: 'Tis the Season**

An Election year is an especially good time to talk to your friends about joining the League. People turn to the League for information so they can cast an informed vote. They look to League-sponsored debates and forums for their non-partisan fairness. They also consult our "Facts for Voters" for reliable information on where state-wide and national candidates stand on the issues they care about. And at a time when the entire nation seems even more partisan than usual, the League's non-partisan approach is a refreshing change.

## **National Popular Vote Study**

At the LWVUS Convention in Portland, OR, in June, the delegates voted to adopt a national study titled "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact Among the States as a Method for Electing the President". To keep informed of the progress of the study, join the email discussion list. Just go to the "For Members" section of the LWVUS website ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)), click on "Programs and Projects", then "National Popular Vote Compact", and finally "NPV Study Discussion List". There you can give the email address at which you want to receive list mailings. You will need to reply to an email confirming your desire to sign on to the list. That's it – you're on! Or watch the state League website for updates.

## **Victory: Great Lakes Compact**

The Great Lakes are a unique and precious resource, providing fresh water for the 40 million people who live within the basin. Each year, rainfall and snowmelt replenish only about one percent of the water in the basin; the remaining 99 percent is finite and nonrenewable. The Great Lakes Compact, for the first time ever, treats groundwater and surface water as one system subject to the same standard; considers the Great Lakes and their tributaries to be one ecosystem; establishes protection of Great Lakes ecosystems and economies as priorities everywhere in the basin; and ensures that every Great Lake state will have the same fair set of rational protections, while allowing each state flexibility. The U.S. Senate and House have approved the Compact and the President has signed it into law.

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# BULLETIN

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## IMPORTANT DATES

NOV 4	6 AM to 9 PM	<b>ELECTION DAY!!!</b>	Usual polling places
NOV 11	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Open Board Meeting	Bvl Women's Club 135 Midland Avenue
NOV 12	7 PM	Special Program: REHABILITATION THROUGH THE ARTS (See cover)	Bronxville Library 201 Pondfield Road
NOV 18	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee Meeting	Bvl Women's Club 135 Midland Avenue
NOV 20	1:00 PM	County Budget Meeting & Consensus	Michaelian Office Bldg Martine Ave, Wh Plns

### SAVE THE DATE!!

DEC 18	7:00 PM	BRONXVILLE LWV HOLIDAY PARTY	Christ Church
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