

# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BRONXVILLE

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

SEPTEMBER 2008

BULLETIN

ISSUE ONE

**Members and the Public are invited**

**to our**

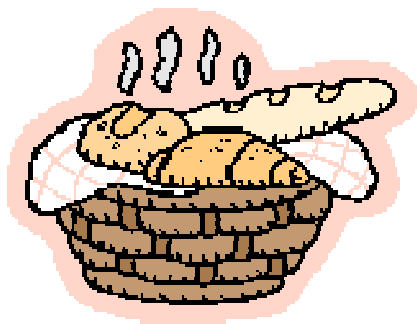
**September Coffee Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>  
9:30 AM**

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



**Our speaker will be Jeanne Zaino, PhD, Chair and Assistant Professor of Political Science at Iona College. She will give us some thought-provoking insights into the upcoming election.**



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

How do I begin? So much has happened since our last coffee in June - the coffee was a brainstorming session at the Bronxville Women's Club on June 17<sup>th</sup>. I was attending the LWVUS convention in Oregon and returned late that eve. Good news – the study on the advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method for electing the President was voted for by a vote of 643 yes to 273 no. As part of the NY State delegation of 35 Leaguers, it was heartening to see this study come to fruition. We'll be getting a LWV Bronxville Group together to take part in that study. Join in! Also adopted was a multilevel education and advocacy campaign promoting solutions to climate change and a health care program to educate members and communities to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed. The presentations by the learned Convention speakers on these subjects are posted on the LWVUS website. Check them out!

Back home, we've conducted voter registration initiatives at Concordia College on 8/22 and 8/27<sup>th</sup>. On 8/28, a primary candidates meeting was held at Eastchester Town Hall; Republican candidates for Town Council, Fred Salanitro and Tony Sayegh were the participants. The Sarah Lawrence College registration drive was held on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. On 9/10, a voter registration drive will be conducted at WestHelp, 240 Franklin Avenue, Mount Vernon. And then, on 10/20 a candidates meeting at Sarah Lawrence College's Reisinger Auditorium from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., candidates for NYS Senate, NYS Assembly, and U.S. House of Representatives will be featured.

During the summer, the County Board of Legislators Special Committee on Internal Controls and Procedures was observed by League members (including me). These meetings continued until August 11<sup>th</sup>, when their report was issued to the full Board of Legislators. Some worthwhile recommendations were made, and soon we should be seeing some results.

Our next third Tuesday informational coffee on September 16<sup>th</sup> will feature Jeanne S. Zaino, Chair of Iona College's Political Science Department. Following the two party conventions, she'll have much to talk about. That same week, on the evening of Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, at 8 p.m., The League of Women Voters® of Westchester and the Jacob Burns Film Center will host a provocative look at the impact of the internet on the presidential campaign this year entitled, "**The New Selling of the President 2008**". (See page 3 for more information). I hope to see many of you there.

I'm sure we are all looking forward to this exciting fall election season!

Regards,  
Adelaide

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## AN ILLNESS IN OUR LEAGUE FAMILY

**NANCY BASSETT**, a former Bronxville League president, came down with a sudden and serious illness in July. She is now back at home and recuperating in Madison, Connecticut. We wish our dear friend a speedy recovery – and surely so does the Connecticut League where she is a very active member of the board.

## IN MEMORIAM

In June, Bronxville lost a great civil servant, **KATHY STUDWELL**, the driving force for Bronxville Senior Citizens and an inspiration to everyone who knew her and worked with her. Kathy felt that getting older did not mean one ceased to grow and learn and be interested in intellectual pursuits. She invited speakers to her group to talk about a variety of subjects, from art, music and literature to politics and history. She arranged for concerts and tours to interesting places near and far. She earned a master's degree in gerontology and was very involved in the health care issues of the elderly. On July 31<sup>st</sup>, a group of admirers came to the Bronxville Library to dedicate two new benches in her honor, one from the Bronxville Senior Citizens and one from the Senior Citizens Council. In the fall, a tree will be planted between the benches with a plaque honoring her achievements. We will miss her.

*The LWVV and the Jacob Burns Film Center*

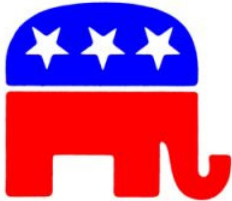
*will present*

**“THE NEW SELLING OF THE PRESIDENT 2008”**

**Thursday, September 18, 2008**

**8:00 PM**

**Jacob Burns Film Center  
364 Manville Road  
Pleasantville**



Join us for a panel discussion on navigating the Brave New World of Electioneering, circa 2008 – a provocative look at the impact of the internet on the presidential campaign. A Q&A panel including **David Schwartz** (chief curator, Museum of the Moving Image where he curated the exhibit *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2004* [www.livingroomcandidate.org](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org)), **Allison Fine** (author of *Rebooting America* and CEO of E-Volve Foundation), **Micah Sifry** (author, activist, teacher, and the co-founder and executive editor of Personal Democracy Forum, which explores the way the new networked world intersects with politics) and **Steve Apkon** (executive director, Jacob Burns Film Center), will discuss the impact of blogging, YouTube, email and internet viral campaigns which now have joined TV commercials as essential influences in the process of electing an American president. The evening will include a look at commercials and internet clips from both the Obama and McCain campaigns interspersed with conversation, speculations and interpretations as thought-provoking questions are posed such as; “Does the proliferation of unfettered media represent an expansion of the democratic process – a boon for “everyman” participation – or has it created a new Wild West where anything goes – or both? As voters, are we more educated...or more manipulated?”

The League of Women Voters® of Westchester and the Jacob Burns Film Center encourage the public to attend what promises to be an entertaining, provocative guide to this moment in American political history. For additional information on the event or to purchase tickets online, visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org). Tickets can also be purchased in advance at the JBFC box office which opens 4:00 pm on weekdays and 11:00 am on weekends. Tickets are \$9 (JBFC members), \$13 (nonmembers). The Film Center is at 364 Manville Road in Pleasantville (Saw Mill Parkway N. Exit 30 - S. Exit 29).

## HEALTH ISSUES

Given the state of the world today, this was not quite a kick-up-your-heels and relax type summer - though hopefully we all had some personal version of same. Now, as we take a deep breath and plunge into fall, let's see where the public stands on health care.

According to a recent survey of 1000 geographically representative adults, done by Harris Interactive for the Commonwealth Fund, nine out of ten respondents supported major changes in the health care system (MedPage Today, 8/07/08). The goals: to improve the quality of care, ensure affordable care and affordable insurance, and decrease the number of uninsured. Irrespective of income, 32% of respondents wanted the system completely rebuilt and 50% thought it needed basic alterations. That's a ringing endorsement for change!

The major frustrations, cited by 73% of respondents, were difficulties in getting regular medical appointments and in reaching a clinician during non-office hours. Organization related problems bothered about half, such as having to call repeatedly for test results, having too much medical paper-work, duplicate tests and what they deemed as unnecessary treatment. Most people supported health information technology, in stark contrast to actual practice, in which only 23% of primary care physicians use electronic medical records. And (most important of all, to my mind) most people (91%) wanted one place or one person responsible for managing their care. In short, from our perspective as patients, the system is fragmented, dysfunctional and poorly coordinated, just as its critics have said for years.

The majority of adults, across all income levels, regions,

and political affiliations, are looking to the next president to propose the desired reforms. That's an absolutely reasonable expectation. Leadership ranks first in the job description. A president can inspire, campaign and persuade. Through others, behind the scenes, he can manipulate, instigate and deal. What he cannot do is translate those wishes into legislative bills, or authorize the funds to execute them and give them teeth. Only Congress can do those things - with or without, by the way, the President's blessing. What he is left with is the power to sign them into law, or veto them - frequently, out of existence.

The upshot is that it's not enough to vote for the candidate who best expresses your views. The folks you have to reach are in Congress - your senators and representatives - because, in the last analysis, they are our constitutional voice. Looking first to the President strengthens the notion of executive primacy, and distorts the separation of powers that is fundamental to our system of government. Health care reform does not, for the most part, involve civil rights. However, the way we go about trying to achieve it expresses our view of the seats of power. It is one of the many, many avenues through which we (often unconsciously) strengthen or weaken the principles on which our government is based - or very consciously, re-affirm them.

So, write to your senators and representatives - often, and about everything that is important to you. They will take note.

Edith Szold, Health Iss

### "Access to Health Care: A Critical Issue for Westchester & Putnam Counties"

Friday, September 19, 2008

8:30 - 10:30 AM

Performing Arts Center, Purchase College  
Purchase, New York

Registration and Breakfast, with welcome and opening remarks by **Andrew Spano** and **Lillian Jones** of the Access to Health Care Coalition. **Lois Bronz** and **Vincent Tamagna**, Legislators from Westchester and Putnam Counties respectively, will report on the recent public hearings on Access to Health Care. Their report will be discussed, in turn, by a panel to include **Congresswoman Nita Lowey** and a number of state senators and assembly members. Q & A will follow.

Advance registration requested. Call 914—397-8811 or email [Lillian.Jones@cancer.org](mailto:Lillian.Jones@cancer.org)

## NEWS FROM THE COUNTY LEAGUE

### REPORT ON LWVUS CONVENTION 2008 – Susan Schwarz

It was a privilege to represent the LWVW in Portland at the 2008 National Convention. Adelaide DiGiorgi, Adie Shore and Alice Bloom completed the Westchester team. LWVNY State President Martha Kennedy led the New York State delegation of 35 Leaguers, who lobbied impressively – and successfully – for a study on the advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method for electing the President (approved by a card vote of 643 yes, 273 no). Also adopted was a multi-level education and advocacy campaign to promote solutions to global climate change and a health care program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed.

An especially outstanding presentation on health care by The Honorable John Kitzhaber, Governor of Oregon, 1994-2002 is posted on the LWVUS website. Another by V. (Ram) Ramanathan, Professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC-San Diego is expected soon. Both these powerful talks are still with me and I heartily recommend taking the time to check them out.

Surprising, to me anyway, was defeat of a motion to establish a task force on nuclear arms control and disarmament composed of experts drawn from the membership of the League to review the adequacy of League's position, to educate the membership on the issue and, if necessary to make recommendations to the 2010 LWVUS Convention.

What should be no surprise is that the PMP was raised \$1.20 for each of the next two years: \$28 for 2008-09 and \$29.20 for 2009-2010. Bottom line: If you are given the opportunity to attend a League Convention, take it.

### LIBRARY PROGRAM – Ina Aronow, League Coordinator

League members worked with the Westchester Library System this summer to help a group of at-risk teenagers learn to analyze national issues, understanding how the issues affect them locally. The teens are to write and present papers on a subject of their choice including the Presidential candidates' positions, and the ultimate goal is to help them feel empowered to influence change.

Leading the group of 12 teens was noted author and journalist Jill Nelson, recruited and assisted by Robin Osborne, Director of Community Connections for the WLS. Ina Aronow recruited League members to make presentations on selected topics during the first week of the six-week program, which took place at the White Plains Library starting July 5. .

Presentations were made by the following volunteers: LWV president Mary Beth Gose gave a general introduction; Beth Kava, Clinical Professor, School of Education, Pace University, talked about education issues; Heather Baker-Sullivan, former LWVW Environment Chair who now has her own consulting firm, outlined environmental issues; Susan Goodwin, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Public Health, NY Medical College, and Edith Szold, LWVW Chair, Health Care Issues, presented on health care; and Ruben A. Barato, Adjunct Graduate Professor of Education, Baruch College, and Associate Professor of Counseling, Westchester Community College and a League resource, spoke on immigration.

The students then selected a manageable topic, researched it through the library resources, including help from senior librarians, and by interviewing community leaders. In September they will give public presentations.

On opening day, several teens expressed skepticism about whether anything that they did would make any difference, and Mary Beth addressed that concern. Every League presenter was "great," Osborne said. Later in the sessions, Osborne said there were three teens who left the program and the remaining nine were "struggling" with the challenge but progressing well.

### LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

#### White Plains League

Fall meeting on **Wednesday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>** from 7 to 9 PM to hear NYS League Legislative Director. **Barbara Bartoletti**, speak about: **WHAT'S DOING IN ALBANY?** A League View. White Plains Library, Room B on the second floor, off the Gallery.

The LWV Larchmont/Mamaroneck was awarded the Mary Anne Sullivan Award for Communications at Larchmont Mamaroneck Community-TV's (LMC-TV) Annual Awards Night on Thursday May 29 at the Emelin Theater in the Village of Mamaroneck. Accepting the award was local LWV president, Christie Derrico, Environmental Chair, Beth Radow and Immigration Study Group Chair, Alice Bloom. Said Alice Bloom, "The League's relationship with our public access station, LMC-TV has developed into a happy marriage of mutual and community benefit."

The L/M League will be resuming its monthly breakfast meetings on **Friday, September 12** from 8:45 to 10:15 AM at the Café Mozart on Mamaroneck Avenue. \$7 payable at table. The topics to be discussed will include: News from the LWVUS Convention in Portland, Oregon in June, particularly about participation in the study of the **National Popular Vote Compact**. Also, reinvigorating a program on Health Care and Climate Change. For more info contact [larmamlwv@cloude9.net](mailto:larmamlwv@cloude9.net).

## **VOTER SERVICE – MODERATORS NEEDED**

As coordinator of moderators for candidates forums, **I NEED YOUR HELP**. Please publicize the following **MODERATOR TRAINING OPPORTUNITY** to your members via bulletin or email, and secondly please encourage any potential moderators to attend! Training to become a **LEAGUE MODERATOR** for candidates forums will be offered on request.

In fall 2005, moderators were provided free of charge for local leagues. However, since spring 2006 local leagues will be billed \$50 if they have not supplied a moderator to the moderator pool and the moderator has not consented to moderate when asked. Thanks to all Local Leagues who have supplied moderators to date ,including: Bedford, BOCC, Bronxville, Larchmont, New Castle, New Rochelle, Rivertowns, Scarsdale, Somers, and White Plains.

**PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MODERATOR YOURSELF or ENCOURAGE ANY LEAGUE MEMBER TO ATTEND THIS WORTHWHILE TRAINING.** Trained moderators will then be offered opportunities to moderate at upcoming candidate forums. Moderating is a valuable means of contributing as a League member.

Please phone **Laura Fratt at 723-5108** or email **fratt@verizon.net** for further details.



(Voter Service Chair Cheryl Feldman and her committee at work)



(Claire Prohl discussing Smart Voter)

## **WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS NEEDS POLL WORKERS**

### ***A Desperate Need for Election Inspectors and Poll Workers***

A quick survey of county Boards of Election web sites reveals a very common issue for the 2008 elections: the shortage of poll inspectors and workers. In NYS, factors contributing to the shortage include the extraordinary length of the shift and the approximately \$10/hour pay. (Westchester County pays \$225 for the 16 hour day.) Workers come from lists submitted by the major parties or by the Board commissioners themselves; so, being an enrolled Democrat or Republican is part of the criteria (but independents are also welcome) as well as being able to speak, read and write the English language. The election law states that they must be registered voters; so, anyone under 18 is also excluded.

County boards are concerned about the aging of the “regulars”, particularly since new technology (in the form of new voting machines) and data-base driven voter rolls (with an attendant need to understand the data flows, if not the technology that produce them) are not necessarily within the “regular’s” comfort zone. New York State will not get the new machines until 2009 so this year’s election will be done with the old reliable lever machines.

While it might seem unusual for the League to encourage what, in this state, is somewhat of a partisan activity, we urge you to **encourage your qualified League members to contact their political parties or Board of Elections to offer their services as election inspectors/poll workers.** They will be trained by the Board of Elections and assigned to the polling places. Call the Westchester County BOE at 995-9700 and volunteer – it is a great way to serve the voters.

For more info, the website is [www.westchestergov.com/boe](http://www.westchestergov.com/boe).

# News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

September 2008

## LWVNYS Welcomes New Executive Director

A member of the League for over 25 years, Laura Ladd Bierman will become executive director of the LWVNYS with experience from four different local Leagues in three states. She has served in a number of positions in local Leagues, including study chair, newsletter editor, board member, Vice President, and President. Laura holds a masters degree in public administration and has career experience in the areas of health care planning and providing financial and consulting services to a national membership organization.

Welcome, Laura! We look forward to working with you!

## 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".

Lori Dawson, study chair for LWVNYS, encourages NYS Leaguers to get a jump start on preparing for this national study by reading the NPV study materials assembled last year by our state League study committee. These materials are available for download at the state League website. The actual study and consensus questions will be put together by the national study committee.

## Voting Rights Pamphlet Series

LWVNYS is preparing five new pamphlets related to the voting rights of five different special populations. These are: college students, individuals incarcerated and with criminal convictions, homeless individuals, those with mental health disabilities, and individuals with other disabilities, primarily physical.

Watch the LWVNYS website, where each pamphlet will be available in both print-ready PDF format and as HTML documents.

## State Legislative Agenda 2009

Your LWVNYS Board is asking the local League Boards to provide input on the selection of legislative priorities for 2009. Any member can have a voice in this important process. Tell your local Board what issues you'd like the LWVNYS to focus on in Albany in 2009.

## Access to Information Improves

Three new websites provide the taxpayer with information about where their tax dollars go. Some of this information was previously available only by filing an F.O.I.L. request.

[www.SeeThroughNY.net](http://www.SeeThroughNY.net) features searchable databases of NYS governmental employees, including job titles and salaries. It also includes teachers' union and superintendent contracts for nearly every school district in the State, the Legislature's pork-barrel "community projects" spending for 2008-2009, and internal operations expenditures for both the Assembly and the NYS Senate.

Open Book New York, from the office of the NYS Comptroller ([www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/)), gives taxpayers unprecedented access to financial information of our State government. This includes spending by 113 State agencies and public authorities and display of more than 60,000 state contracts. You can even search State contracts to see who is doing business with the State.

Project Sunlight provides a prototype for how government should make information available to citizens in the digital age ([www.SunlightNY.com](http://www.SunlightNY.com)). It includes information about individual elected officials, campaign finance activities, legislation, lobbyists, state contracts, and registered corporations and charities. This website also offers educational videos and materials about the basic laws governing official conduct.

Links to these websites can be found on the LWVNYS website.

## A Membership Committee of One?

Yes, anyone can recruit new members to the League. How? Mention program meetings and voter service efforts to your friends and colleagues. Write about your League for your community newspaper. Finally, speak to other community groups about your League. If you're not an experienced speaker, learn and practice in adult education classes and your local Toastmasters club, among others.

## Domestic Violence Update!

In an important step to protect victims of domestic violence, Governor Patterson signed into law bill S.6783/A6060. This bill expands access to civil orders of protection for all victims of domestic violence, regardless of marital, parental, or blood relative status. Finally, New York joins the rest of the nation in providing these important protections. This victory marks the end of a 20 year battle, won in part because of the help of a new umbrella coalition of over 100 organizations and individuals. We especially thank Assemblywoman Weinstein, Senator Winner, and Governor Patterson for their commitment and leadership.

## League Day at the UN

This year's annual UN Day will be on Tuesday December 2, 2008. The topic will be the Effect of Global Warming on Women and Children Around the World. The schedule for the day will include a Tour of the UN and lunch in the Delegates Dining Room in addition to the main presentation.

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE

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e-mail: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org)

**GET INVOLVED!**

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

# BULLETIN

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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League of Women Voters of Bronxville  
P.O. Box 321, Bronxville, NY 10708  
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Editor: Janet Jaidi

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**Date Sensitive**

## IMPORTANT DATES

<u>Sept</u>			
9	6AM/9PM	PRIMARY ELECTIONS	Usual polling places
9	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Open Board Meeting	Bvl Women's Club 135 Midland Ave
16	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee Meeting	Bvl Women's Club
18	8:00 PM	LWWW Membership Event "New Selling of the President 2008" (See Page 3 for details)	Jacob Burns Film Center Pleasantville