

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BRONXVILLE

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

OCTOBER 2009

BULLETIN

ISSUE TWO



BRONXVILLE LWV MONTHLY COFFEE



*Tuesday, October 20
9:30 AM
Bronxville Women's Club
135 Midland Avenue*



We are honored to have as our guest speakers the police chiefs of the Town of Eastchester and the Villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe, who will give us a report on their cooperative efforts to maintain peace and harmony in their communities.

*Bronxville: Chief Christopher Satriale
Eastchester: Chief Timothy Bonci
Tuckahoe: Chief John Costanzo*

Please join us!

PRESIDENTS' LETTER

First, our thanks to Mayors Mary Marvin and John Fitzpatrick of Bronxville and Tuckahoe, and Supervisor Colavita of Eastchester for making our September "Coffee" so special. They offered information and answered questions. They were candid about the individual problems they faced and demonstrated, too, the cooperation among them that they obviously valued. It made our whole extended neighborhood seem more personal, more pleasantly "old fashioned".

It also made us think more about where we live and the people with whom we spend our time. These are the most vivid, tangible parts of our world, regardless of address. Some of us are in the above defined municipalities, others "around the edges", but we're all part of the community we helped create, bound together by our communications.

Many things go by that name: sound bites, slogans and epithets among others that add up to just a swirl of noise. According to Random House, "to communicate" actually means "to impart knowledge" or "to interchange thoughts, feelings, information". The League is pretty good at that through our web sites, pamphlets and other publications. However, it tends to be a one way street. We seem to "impart" more than we "interchange".

We would like to alter that, at least within our own Chapter, using the Bulletin as our first, most handy vehicle. There are some members we've never met, and many with whom we've yet to have a chat. Not everyone can make our "Coffees" even when they'd like to. So, as a start, we've begun a whole new section called "What Our Readers Say". It's not meant to mimic the Opinion Page of the NY Times (though your opinions are very welcome). It's more casual - a virtual kitchen bulletin board where anyone, everyone can post a thought, suggestion, question or rebuke as the spirit moves. There's also room for letters or articles with a point of view. Please use it!

Edith Szold and Pat Harriss

WHAT OUR READERS SAY.....

(Your thoughts here)

HEALTH ISSUES

Lies My Mother Never Told Me:

My mother was a truthful person, sometimes more than was helpful! She was also honest, hardworking, patriotic and loyal - an ideal target for the scare tactics used by opponents of health care reform today. I sometimes wonder how she'd react - worried, I think, and intimidated by authority, her common sense shaken by uncertainty about the facts. And that uncertainty is fed by manipulations expressly designed for the purpose.

SOCIALISM !!! Horrors!!! A takeover by the government with bureaucrats dictating your care!!!. Actually, insurance companies have done that already, with their bureaucrats deciding what to allow. By way of contrast "Socialism", of which the Veterans Administration is an example, is doing an admirable job about which no one's complaining.. Their entire staff, health care providers included, are employed by the government, which designs and runs all services directly. (No advertising and share-holder profits needed.) Medicare and Medicaid are government funded but they pay only for services privately provided, as would any Public Option so far suggested.

RATIONING!!! The grim reaper on his way - the mysterious "they" who will "pull the plug on Grandma" if "it costs too much to save her". That is exactly what private insurance companies can do today. Run out of money, run out of care and file for bankruptcy. When the outcome depends on your assets, that's rationing by income. It's safer, by far, under Medicare. It's harmful or unproven "care" that may be scrapped - which is a good thing- when we finally come to rely on evidence-based medicine. And Medicare's supposed "Death Panels" is a really nasty epithet for consultations between patients and providers on options for end of life care, like palliative vs. aggressive interventions. Medicare is mandated to pay for them, not convene them and no bureaucrat is part of the process.

Two other beauties are that we'll all be paying to cover illegals and to fund abortions, even if it goes against your conscience. President Obama, Senator Baucus, et al have said it: absolutely not - about both.

Nothing I've read adds up to real Reform. But the climate is changing, mass opinion,like a great tectonic plate, seems to be edging upward through the sludge. To find out more, please join the League and NASW on Oct. 19th. (See the announcement below).

Edith Szold, Health Issues Chair

HEALTH CARE REFORM: URGENT ISSUES, CRITICAL INFORMATION

(about legislation, passed or still proposed, to date)

October 19th, 2009

5:30 - 7:30 PM

At the NY Presbyterian Hospital, Main Bldg.

21 Bloomingdale Road, White Plains

(Directions re parking, etc. will be posted)

Speakers will be Mark Hannay, Director of Metro NY Health Care for All, on legislation on the national and the state level and Mary Beth Morrissey, Esq.,MPH of the Fordham Ravassin Center on Aging will speak on health care costs - who benefits, who pays, and how.

This meeting was arranged by NASW (National Assoc. of Social Workers) and co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Westchester.

UPDATE PAGE

SEPTEMBER'S COFFEE MEETING

On Tuesday September 15th, the League of Women Voters of Bronxville hosted Mayor Mary Marvin of Bronxville, Supervisor Anthony Colavita of Eastchester, and Mayor John Fitzpatrick of Tuckahoe at their monthly coffee meeting.. Each of the 3 officials spoke about particular issues in their communities and how they are being resolved. They all concurred on their great level of co operation and the support they give each other – they even shop supplies and equipment for group discounts and, most importantly, exchange info on important matters. Their biggest issue is '*how to do the same thing for less*', in other words, trying to keep the services we have come to expect without raising taxes. Revenues are down, so it's a matter of trimming expenditures and not filling positions when vacancies occur. Many budget cuts are made incrementally, a few thousand dollars at a time. The Q & A period brought up concerns about the libraries, noise pollution, zoning, trees and roads..

Connie Partridge

CASTING A WIDE NET

The League of Women Voters is a bit of a misnomer. Strictly speaking we are "The League" . We count several men among our members, and we really treasure them and their participation.

I joined as an associate member when I was a "resident alien", which sounds like something out of a science fiction movie. Resident aliens are not voters, but I felt very much welcome to the League of Women Voters and found the programs an excellent education for a citizen to be. My introduction to the league was an invitation to be a guest speaker on the Swedish Health Care System. This was ca 1988. The local league studied health care in various parts of the world to see if anything could be applicable in the U.S. Over 20 years ago we were into health care. Is that déjà vu all over or what?

So, when you encourage your friends to become members of the League of Women Voters, don't forget the men and/or the foreigners! They may be just as eager to learn more about how government on all levels works and what the political issues are. If you need information about membership, just call me at 961-4024, or (718)755-3503 (cell phone) or send an e-mail to birgittaelsa@yahoo.com

Birgitta Sherman, Membership Chair

WHY A FUND DRIVE?

.....because dues alone don't cover all our costs. Here's why. Most of our current dues, \$60 per person, go to other levels of the League: \$29.20 to National, \$18.00 to State and \$2.00 to County, leaving \$10.80 per member for our own chapter. We have about 120 members, which gives us a total of \$1296.00 for operating expenses.

Our annual fixed costs include: \$250 for the annual audit, \$235 for the PO mailbox rental and bulk mailing permit, \$300 for rent of the Womens' Club for Tuesday "Coffees" and a state use tax of \$100. Above and beyond that, the Bulletin costs \$2200 to print and mail, and the Voters' Guide costs \$2000 for printing alone. That adds up to \$5085 - the obvious reason we're in the red without help from our members and friends. We rely on the generosity of members and other supporters to donate funds during our annual fund drive in October.

You have been very generous in the past, for which we thank you, and we hope you will continue to support us. Acknowledgement is due to the following members who added a contribution with their annual dues:

Donna Benichasa
Dorothy Brennan
Emily and John Corry
Christina Eldridge
Elisabeth Harding and Thomas Hutton
Juli Jackson
Irma Moore
Julia and Bill Pomeroy
Rosalyn Witter

Patricia and Anthony Block
Margaret Cady
Patricia Dohrenwend
Courtney Eudaly
Elizabeth and Gordon Harriss
Lisa Kunstader
Mary Nicolis
Wendy and Robert Riggs



On September 2nd, our Voter Service Chair, Irma Moore, along with Connie Partridge, Alice Clapp and Janet Jaidi, spent a pleasant time registering students at Sarah Lawrence College to vote in the upcoming elections. Many of them were already registered in their home states and chose to continue voting there. They are a politically savvy group of young people and a pleasure to talk with. We provided them with information concerning how to register in New York and obtaining absentee ballots if they chose to vote at home. The week before, we had done the same at Concordia College.

Candidates Forum
for
County Executive
County Clerk
County District Attorney
Yonkers City Council President

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

7:00 PM

Reisinger Hall
Sarah Lawrence College
1 Mead Way

Co-sponsored by East Yonkers
Neighborhoods and the
League of Women Voters of Bronxville

WESTCHESTER COUNTY
CANDIDATES FORUM

FOR

COUNTY EXECUTIVE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY CLERK

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

5 PM to 10 PM

PACE GRADUATE CENTER
Room 206, Graduate Auditorium
1 Martine Avenue
White Plains

Co-sponsored by Pace University and
The League of Women Voters of
Westchester

EASTCHESTER CANDIDATES
FORUM
for

Democrats
Christine Doody-Doherty
Joseph Villanueva

TOWN COUNCIL
Sunday, October 18, 2009
5 to 7 PM
Eastchester Town Hall
40 Mill Road

Republicans
Sheila Marcotte
Frederick Salanitro

Westchester County Legislators Approve Landmark Fair Housing Settlement Agreement

9/23/2009 1:26:01 AM

(White Plains, NY) ~ The Westchester County Board of Legislators has approved a landmark fair housing settlement agreement and Bond act. The proposed measure was in response to a lawsuit brought against Westchester County by the Anti-Discrimination Center (ADC). The settlement agreement was subject to and conditional upon approval of the county's Board of Legislators. The Board had to vote on the agreement no later than this week. If the Board failed to provide its approval, the agreement would have been null and void, and all parties would have proceeded to trial. "This has been a defining action for this Legislature. Tonight, the Board took an important step toward expanding access to fair housing in our county," said Board Chairman William J. Ryan (D, WFP-White Plains). "Over the past month, we have heard from the Spano Administration, our Counsel, state agency heads and our own residents on both sides of this contentious issue. After much review, amendment, negotiation and our own internal process of due diligence, we have approved an agreement that truly encompasses all of the viewpoints and concerns expressed by the Westchester legislators. This action represents a consensus on an agreement that will improve access to fair housing for all Westchester residents."

The lawsuit, which was originally brought by the Anti-Discrimination Center (ADC), accused the county of making false statements on federal applications about its efforts to integrate housing. The approved settlement would require Westchester to spend \$50 million over seven years to build 750 homes, in areas that are overwhelmingly white and affluent. During tonight's special meeting, the following actions were approved:

0. An Act authorizing the settlement of the lawsuit entitled United States of America, ex rel, Anti Discrimination Center of Metro New York, Inc. v. Westchester County, New York.
0. A (Bond) Act authorizing the County of Westchester to issue up to Thirty-Six Million (\$36,000,000) Dollars in bonds to fund costs related to the settlement of United States of America, ex rel, Anti Discrimination Center of Metro New York, Inc. v. Westchester County, New York.
0. An additional Act, which will set forth policies and procedures which must be utilized by Westchester County in furtherance of the commitments established by the Stipulation and Order which settled the federal litigation commenced by the Anti Discrimination Center of Metro New York, Inc. ("ADC").

Over the past few weeks, the Board of Legislators had conducted several public meetings thoroughly reviewing the agreement, involving its outside counsel from Epstein Becker & Green, P.C. and County Attorney Charlene Indelicato, representatives of the Spano Administration, our bond counsel, and State agency heads. Legislators, also, met with the proposed federally-appointed monitor, James Johnson, and with officials from the U.S. Department of Justice. "Throughout this process of review, I pledged to the members of the Legislature that we would meet with all relevant parties to get all the information we deem necessary for the full Board to make the correct decision on this matter," said Chairman Ryan.

Throughout the review of this agreement, the legislators made specific inquiries into the history of the litigation, the Relator, and what is authorized by the federal False Claims Act; the federal court decision on the parties' respective motions for summary judgment; changes in HUD policy and expectations; certifications to "affirmatively further fair housing;" HUD acceptance of County submissions; federal government intervention in the lawsuit and the right to settle; fines and fees; the monetary element of the proposed settlement; a monetary cap; rejecting the settlement and proceeding to trial; the risk of an adverse verdict and the damages that could be charged to the County (our internal analysis showing a range of \$180 million to \$200 million dollars on the low end, and up to \$540 million dollars on the high end); possible disqualification from participation in HUD programs and the loss of community development block grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Emergency Shelter Grants and other federal funding; roles of the Monitor and the consultant; assessing the County's "best efforts" and adjusting the obligations concerning the number of affordable AFFH units to be built. "This may well have been the most complex matter to ever come before the Board of Legislators and our decision here was one of the most important decisions any legislative body has had to make in the history of this county. It has been our primary focus ensuring that the members of the Legislature and our residents were fully informed and prepared to make the correct decision for all of the people and taxpayers of Westchester County," said Chairman Ryan.



State News

The League of Women Voters of New York State

September 2009

President's Message

It is with sadness we note the deaths of Marion Sinek, LWVNYS President from 1985 to 1989, and Ruth Shur, LWVNYS board member from 1977 to 1989. Marion knew that all politics was local, and said, upon becoming New Castle Town Supervisor, "I like to think that I worked my up to local government." Ruth's husband Walt says she frequently told people that, although she left college to marry, she earned a Ph.D. in government from the League. These amazing women served as inspirations to so many of us in the League and we will greatly miss their contributions and friendships.

Board Travels & Training

LWVNYS President **Betsey Swan** is speaking at the LWV of Tompkins County fall kickoff and then visiting with other area Leagues, including LWV Broome/Tioga, Cortland, Chemung, Steuben and Cooperstown. She is also meeting with the Management Team of the LWV NYC. **League Legislative Director Barbara Bartoletti** will speak at the Cooperstown Area League's October 17, 2009 luncheon at the Otesaga in Cooperstown, NY. Members of other Leagues are invited to her talk. See p. 19 of the September SBR, available at the League's website, for details. **Voter Services Director Maggie Moehring** will train members of local Leagues in moderating candidate forums. **Membership Director Georgia DeGregorio** and her regional membership coordinators are available to do board training and training for growth in membership. Contact the state office to arrange a training session.

Voter Services and Guides

The 2009 Voter's Guide Part I has been distributed and Part II is being shipped to local leagues this week; additional copies are available from the state office. The five voter's guides for special populations printed by the New York State Bar Association and the newest version of *Welcome to the League*, printed by CSEA, both at no cost to the League are available for distribution from the state office.

Reform New York

2010 Legislative Priorities Update

Given widespread dissatisfaction of league members with this summer's stalemate in the New York Senate, the **State Issues Committee** and the Issues Specialists decided to focus the 2010 Legislative Agenda on making the State Legislature cleaner and more competitive through emphasizing campaign finance, redistricting and other good government legislative and election reforms. The legislative packet will be given to local leagues in January 2010 as usual but will be re-formatted and focused on these issues. The other areas in which the League has positions will continue to be listed on the Legislative Agenda, and we will continue to take action on issues covered by these positions as they arise.

Youth Programs

It's time for local Leagues to begin preparations for the 10th Annual *Students Inside Albany* Conference to be held April 11-14, 2010. Our goal this year is to have a student representative from every local League in New York State. Look in the SBR for more information on how to find and select students.

We have been notified that the League did not receive the federal \$75,000 mock election grant from the Election Assistance Commission for development of the new youth curriculum. We will continue to develop the curriculum, entitled *Pathways to Civic Engagement*, and will reapply to the EAC, or to other funders, at a later date.

Amicus Brief Filed

This month the League joined a broad coalition of 30 public interest organizations and private law firms in filing an amicus brief, prepared by the Brennan Center for Justice and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. This matter involves interpretation of the federal civil rights fee-shifting statute, which permits successful plaintiffs in federal civil rights litigation to recover their attorney's fees, in the belief that, without such fee shifting, many potential litigants could not afford to redress violations of their civil rights in court.

State Study Gears Up

With the advent of fall, we are gearing up for the governmental consolidation/shared services study. Local League presidents should call the state office with the names and contact information of their study chairs.

The initial study schedule is as follows:

- Sept: Preliminary bibliography to local Leagues described below;
- Nov: Full bibliography and written materials for local Leagues;
- Dec: Consensus questions developed by committee;
- Jan: Consensus questions go out after approval by State Board;
- Jan to Apr: Local Leagues have meetings and prepare answers to consensus questions;
- Apr/May: Committee reviews input from local Leagues and prepares a draft position for State Board approval at May board meeting.

The following websites contain valuable information about government consolidation/shared services: www.nyslocalgov.com (a good overall explanation of the State initiatives); <http://www.nytowns.org/core/contentmanager/uploads/GovernmentEfficiencyTheCaseForLocalControl.pdf> (a publication of the Association of Towns); and www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/publications.htm#SharedServices (a good site with several additional reports).

Take a look. A more detailed bibliography will follow in November. For more information, contact study chair Noreen Fisher at NQFisher@gmail.com or see the September SBR.

Emails Wanted

Currently the state League has e-mail addresses for less than one-third of its members. Given the state League's decision to dispense with the printed Voter, it is essential that members send us their e-mail addresses, so that we may distribute the reconfigured Voter to them electronically. We use e-mail addresses for League purposes and do not share them with outside organizations. Don't miss the electronic boat. Send us your e-mail address today.



BULLETIN

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IMPORTANT DATES

<u>Oct</u>			
13	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Board Meeting	Bvl Women's Club
18	5 to 7 pm	Eastchester Candidates Forum (See inside for details)	East. Town Hall 40 Mill Road
20	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee	Bvl Women's Club
20	7:00 PM	Candidates' Forum (See inside for details)	Reisinger Hall Sarah Lawrence College
21	5 to 10 PM	Candidates' Forum (See inside for details)	Pace University White Plains
<u>Nov</u>			
3	AM/9PM	ELECTION DAY!!!	Your local polling place
10	9::30 AM	Bronxville LWV Board Meeting	Bvl Women's Club
17	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee	Bvl Women's Club