

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

BEDFORD LEWISBORO NORTH SALEM

April 2011 Newsletter

SAVE THE DATE!

Our Annual Meeting is Tuesday, June 14th

at LaCamelia, Route 117, Mt. Kisco

10:30am -- Business Meeting; 12 Noon -- Luncheon

Guests Welcome and Encouraged

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Tues April 26: Bedford 2020 presents Indian Point: A Panel Discussion and Community Dialogue, 6pm, Fox Lane High School

Sun May 1: Hydrofracking in NYS: Myths & Realities. Sponsored by the LWV of New Castle. 2:30-4:30, Chappaqua Library.

Tues May 17: School Board Elections

Fri May 20-Sun May 22: LWWNYS Convention at Desmond Hotel in Albany. Final Call! See www.lwvny.org for more info.

Thurs June 2: LWV of Westchester Convention at Scarsdale Women's Club. Guest of Honor & Speaker: The Honorable Richard Ravitch, former Lt. Governor of New York. See www.lwwestchester.org for more info.

Tues June 14: The aforementioned LWV of Bedford-Lewisboro-North Salem Annual Meeting & Luncheon. Speaker to be announced soon. Guests are welcome—so bring a friend, neighbor, or family member!

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

At the request of the LWV of NYS, Del Bashkow, Katherine Dering and I visited State Assemblyman Robert Castelli to lobby for Ethics Reform, Campaign Finance Reform and Redistricting. We told him that the League would like to see a new ethics law that includes independent oversight that bars lobbyists, former officials and other interested parties from serving on ethics bodies; transparent financial disclosures of all business relationships; and significant enforcement powers. As New York State has the highest contribution limits in the nation at over \$100,000 for political party donations to candidates, reforms are needed. The League is also in favor of an independent citizen's redistricting commission that would take the place of the current Joint Task Force which gives too much control to legislators and the two-party system which draw district lines to suit their political purposes.

Two weeks later, the LWV of Westchester, in conjunction with local leagues, presented a forum on Redistricting at the Chappaqua Library. The speakers were Keesha Gaskins, Senior Counsel, Democracy Program, Brennan Center for Justice of New York University School of Law and Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Issues Specialist, LWV of New York State. They were assisted by Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director of LWVNY. Ms. Gaskins explained how redistricting has been done in the past, and Ms. Bartoletti spoke on how redistricting can be reformed to create a process that is fair by creating an independent, non-partisan commission. The forum was attended by representatives of ten Westchester leagues and was open to the public. An excellent article on the forum was written by Don Heppner of the Record-Review. Copies are available by contacting me at 232-5735 or rosem55@verizon.net.

-- Rosemary MacLaughlin

One of the things I have appreciated most as a League member is the opportunity to attend Naturalization Court in White Plains and welcome brand new citizens to our country. Each Westchester League has two dates assigned to them, and I would like to invite any of you who might be interested to join me. Our dates this year are May 18th and October 5th. In these times, when immigration is on every politician's mind, it can be very uplifting to share in the wonderful moment when someone becomes a citizen, after a lot of hard work studying. Please come with me and experience it for yourself!

A word of welcome to our newest Member, Jeanetta Bryant, who is a teacher at John Jay High School. We hope to see her at some of our evening events.

The members of the League of Women Voters of Bedford-Lewisboro-North Salem were deeply sorry to learn of the death of Michelle Boffa, who was an active Board member until her illness began to take its toll. Dr. Boffa was a clinical psychologist/psychotherapist who taught at Hunter College, and in private practice, both here in NY and in California. I spent an afternoon with Michelle at the League table at the South Salem Library fair, at a time when I was deeply troubled and anxious about my husband's dementia. She was so warm and so understanding, and even chased down a couple of books that she thought would be helpful to me. And a couple of times she'd call and say she couldn't use some tickets to a concert or a ballet, and wanted to pass them along to me. So though I didn't know her very well, I will miss her kindness and generosity, and the opportunity to know her better--and the League will miss her interest and dedication.

-- Del Bashkow

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

CLIMATE CHANGE

On the heels of Earth Day, it seems appropriate to recognize and celebrate that Clean Air Act enforcement wasn't gutted in the recent budget deal. The [LWVUS Toolkit for Climate Change](#) is a wonderful resource, containing materials to support your League's work on one of our 2011 advocacy priorities – Clean Air Defense. The toolkit provides background information and suggestions of things your League can do to help safeguard the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to establish the urgently needed protections called for by the Clean Air Act.

Also, the League and coalition partners sent a letter to members of the House of Representatives earlier this month, urging them to oppose H.R. 910, introduced by Representative Upton (R-MI), which would put America's health, prosperity, and national security at risk. To view the letter:

<http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy/AdvocacyLetters/2011/caaHouse040511.pdf>

This followed a letter sent to members of the Senate at the very end of last month, urging them to oppose amendments to S. 493 that would dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to address life-threatening pollution.

<http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy/AdvocacyLetters/2011/caaSenateamendmentsMarch2011.pdf>

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IMPROVEMENTS THREATENED

League President Elisabeth MacNamara entered testimony into the official record on HR 672, which would terminate the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and transfer some of its duties to the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

<http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy/Testimony/2011/CFREACHR672LWVstatement.pdf>

STALLED ETHICS INVESTIGATION

The League and coalition partners sent a letter to the leadership of the House Committee on Ethics, asking when the inquiry into possible ethics violations by Representative Maxine Waters will be resumed and completed.

<http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy/AdvocacyLetters/2011/ethicsHouseCommitteeLetterMarch232011.pdf>

NEWS FROM THE STATE LEAGUE

HYDROFRACKING

LWVNYS President Betsey Swan joined League Presidents from NJ, Delaware, and Pennsylvania in urging the Commission to postpone development of regulations on gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin until after the EPA study is complete and available to the public; also requests that such regulations are no less stringent than the strictest rules adopted by any one of the four member states under the Commission's jurisdiction. http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/naturalResources/2011/Letter_DRBC.pdf

REDISTRICTING

Get your State Assembly member to support redistricting reform for 2012; if he or she already supports reform, send a thank you. To find your Assembly member and see if he/she already supports redistricting, go to <http://www.capwiz.com/citizensunion/issues/alert/?alertid=39070501>

The case for redistricting reform in is laid out in a briefing paper endorsed by the State League:

http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/redistricting/RedistrictingReform%20Paper_1010.pdf

and in Power Point form:

http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/redistricting/redistrictingForum_ppt%200910.pdf

ETHICS REFORM

LWVNYS President's letter to the New York Times on the subject:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/17/opinion/l17ethics.html?_r=2&emc=eta1

SILENT AUCTION

A great way to support the League and have the opportunity to win some fantastic prizes! This is a *virtual* silent auction, open not only to convention delegates but to all League members. Bids may be emailed, phoned, faxed, mailed, or submitted in person. For more information, go to <http://www.lwvny.org/auction2011/silentAuction2011.html>

STATE LEAGUE'S POLITICAL BLOG

<http://lwvny-capitolbeat.blogspot.com/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

National League:

1730 M Street NW, Suite 1000,
Washington, DC 20036-4508
Phone: 202-429-1965; fax: 202-429-0854

Website: www.lwv.org

To fill out a contact/feedback form: <https://member.lwv.org/ContactUs.asp>

State League:

Phone:(518) 465-4162; fax:(518) 465-0812

Website: www.lwvny.org

To fill out a contact/feedback form: <http://lwvny.org/contactForm.html>

County League:

200 Hamilton Avenue,White Plains Mall, White Plains, NY 10601
Phone: 914-949-0507; fax 914- 997-9354

Website: <http://watpa.org/lwv> email: LWVwestchester@verizon.net

Our Local League:

PO Box 584, Goldens Bridge, NY 10526

Del Bashkow: delkatonah@verizon.net;

Rosemary MacLaughlin: rosem55@verizon.net

MEMBERSHIP

Please send dues that are up for renewal to our Membership Chair, Kay Tyler, ASAP. Also, if your phone number, email address, or postal address has changed, please notify Kay of that as well.

**208 Harris Rd HB4, Bedford Hills NY 10507
241-8515 or kaykolman@optimum.net**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

