

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BRONXVILLE

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

FEBRUARY 2009

BULLETIN

ISSUE FIVE

You are cordially invited to our
MONTHLY COFFEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

9:30 AM

*Bronxville Women's Club
135 Midland Avenue*



SPEAKER: CATHY ELSER
Coordinator of 55 Plus Yonkers Connections

*This is a community program with outreach to other communities.
It empowers older adults to remain active and engaged in the greater
community, promoting and demonstrating opportunities for:*

*Life Long Learning
Social & Civic Engagement
Employment and Volunteering
Advocacy*

Ms. Elser will be joined by Shannon Cobb from the Volunteer Center/RSVP

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The holidays and year end celebrations in 2008 are over and here we are in 2009 with an historic Presidential inauguration that had the largest attendance ever. We all hope for better times ahead.

Our January coffee consisted of watching an interesting "man on the street" interview video produced by Larchmont/Mamaroneck League Member Alice Bloom. It recorded comments of New Yorkers at Union Square and Grand Central Station bidding farewell to our outgoing President with hopeful welcoming comments to the new one. Following a brief discussion on the piece, a small group of us continued discussing the Compact for a National Popular Vote. We ended the session to watch the inauguration festivities.

Our next coffee will take place on Tuesday, February 17th at 9:30 a.m. Sue Weisfeld has arranged for **Cathy Elser**, Coordinator of **55 Plus Yonkers Connections**, a community program with outreach to other communities (including Bronxville). The organization empowers older adults to remain active and engaged in the larger community, giving them options and opportunities to remain involved. It should prove to be an excellent presentation.

So, mark your calendars for that, as well as a March 13th Breakfast with County Executive Spano at the White Plains Library's auditorium.

On an organization issue – We need candidates for the LWV Bronxville Board and Presidency for the coming years. Although our membership has remained fairly stable in numbers, we must have some "worker bees" to replace those who have gone on to their heavenly rewards or to different parts of the country. If you've been thinking of becoming more involved with the League, please raise your voice now. I would hate to see our League disappear or be merged with another more active LWV group. Think grass roots.

Last but certainly not least, we have asked Janine Rose, News Director with News12 Westchester to be our annual Luncheon Speaker on April 30th. Every weekday she anchors the "Yonkers" and "Evening Editions" shows on the local Cablevision channel. She also hosts "Newsmakers", a weekend program which focuses on the people and events making headlines in Westchester County. Like its sister stations throughout the metropolitan New York area, News 12 Westchester has steadily raised its journalistic ambitions. We look forward to hearing her views. Ms. Rose is a Yonkers native who began her career with Cablevision in 1979 as a customer-service representative. When the company decided in the early 1980s that it wanted to start recording Yonkers City Council meetings, Ms. Rose, who has a master's degree in television and radio from Brooklyn College, was tapped to operate the camera. As those efforts evolved into a round-the-clock news operation, Ms. Rose evolved too.

I wish the best to all of you in 2009.

Adelaide

HEALTH ISSUES

Living in Westchester, looking for info, needing some help. Isn't that all of us, at one time or another? And given the myriad agencies, facilities and organizations - non-profit, for profit, private and governmental, how do we know which ones to call? Well, often we don't but as a health issues committee, we can offer a few pointers.

For starters, there are websites to check, like www.westchester.gov or googled sites like the Westchester County Dept. of Health to see what they offer. Last month we listed Community Health Centers still extant. There are other services, of course, including a hot line for public health complaints (like lack of heat): 914-813-5000. You can see ratings for the best and worst nursing homes in the area: LOHUD.COM. For the performance of a specific hospital in treating certain illnesses? Check out www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov.

As for complaints, the state runs its own complaint hot lines:

Re: Home Health Care - 1-800-628-5972

Re: Hospitals - 1-800-804-5447

Re: Nursing Homes - 1-888-201-4563

There are the Westchester County Senior Programs & Services, Information & Assistance. 914-813-6300. Every municipality has its own Dept. of Senior Services. (Check your local phone book.) Volunteers may be available to help with shopping, for instance.

There are also many non-governmental groups, such as the Medicare Rights Center, a non-profit group that helps individuals (I think that's most of us!) make their way through Medicare's many regulations. Call 1-800-333-4114 to find out how to get help. And some subscriber groups, like Gramatan Village here in Bronxville, maintain lists of resources for their members.

However, it would take an army of dedicated volunteers to organize and catalogue every source of help in our county. The League can't do it, but the United Way apparently has. You can call 211, 24/7 and get free, confidential information and a referral for just about any health or human service you might need. (Keep it in mind, for instance, should a visitor from some hotel come bearing bed bugs. No kidding - it's a rising problem in NYC!)

And one last helpful tip for those of us trying to decide which charities to support. Contact the Attorney General's Charities Bureau, at 120 Broadway, NY, NY 10271 and ask for the free one page financial report summary. If the administration and fund-raising expenses exceed what is spent on the program, beware!

Meanwhile, there's a new administration in Washington and a newly energized Congress. It's a window of opportunity for passage of a single payer universal health insurance bill, like HR676. It's the time for all League members to lobby their representatives, write letters, make phone calls and make their voices heard. Good luck to us all!

Edith Szold, Health Issues Chair

**The League of Women Voters of Westchester
invites you to the
Annual Breakfast with the County Executive**



The Honorable Andrew Spano

Friday, March 13, 2009

9:30 AM

**White Plains Public Library
Auditorium, Second Floor**

Come discuss important issues facing Westchester County



News From *Your* State League

Update from LWNYS

January 2009

New Yorkers for Alternatives To the Death Penalty

Has the League won its fight to abolish the death penalty in New York State? Effectively, yes. For the time being, things are going our way, but that could change in an instant with one horrific crime. Aware of this possibility, New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty decided to expand and change its mission. Under their new name, New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, they will seek to unite victims, law enforcement, advocates for the mentally ill, restorative justice practitioners and families of the incarcerated around policies that address their real and immediate needs and reduce the likelihood of violent crime. This holistic approach can empower constituencies by bringing them together to create a stronger, united voice to advocate for their common goals.

Call to Convention 2009

The 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 planning our program, electing a new board, adopting by-laws changes and a new budget, we will have helpful workshops, interesting and informative presentations, a special presidents' meeting, great speakers and entertainment, good food, and fun.

Mark your calendars and consider being part of Convention 2009, either as a delegate of your local League or as an observer. This is your opportunity to be sure the concerns of your community and your local League are represented at the Convention. Most important, working with other League members and seeing New York State League leaders in action is something you won't want to miss.

The Local League Board

Now is the time when local League nominations committees look for new members to serve on their Boards. Serving on your League Board, or serving your local League in any other capacity, is an amazing opportunity. The Board plays a major role in defining the League, not only to its members but also to the community at large. Every member of the Board plays a part.

Yes, you'll be serving your League when you serve on its Board. But you'll also be gaining personally. You'll be learning from more experienced members how to do the many tasks that make the League work. You will develop expertise that will carry over into your work on other issues with different organizations. With the self-confidence you'll develop, you will become a force to be reckoned with!

Students Inside Albany

This year's Students Inside Albany program will be held Sunday, April 19 – Wednesday, April 22, 2009 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Albany, NY. The LWNYS Education Foundation has been able to acquire funding to cover the costs of one participant from each local League or two from local Leagues with LeaderSpark programs. Local Leagues are responsible for travel expenses for all students to and from Albany. If any of the participating Leagues desires to send an additional student — if there is room — that League's cost would be \$300 plus travel expenses. Customized SIA brochures can be obtained from the LWNYS office.

Lead Poisoning Update

The NYS Department of Health is, on Governor Paterson's urging, revising downward the child's blood level of lead that would trigger comprehensive follow-up interventions from 20 mcg/dl to 15 mcg/dl. This will enable more environmental assessments and house inspections to be made.

Legislative Agenda 2009

This year's Legislative Agenda will place emphasis on (1) reforming state government; (2) energy and the environment; (3) cost-effective and accessible health care. Additional positions will also be highlighted. Watch for copies of this Agenda at meetings of your local League or ask your local League President. You'll want to have a few extra copies to hand out during your lobbying visits to local legislators.

Economic Stimulus and Transportation

Effective and expanded public transit helps to reduce air pollution and conserve energy — one of our Legislative Priorities for 2009. Now is the time to lobby Congress to allocate some of the new Economic Stimulus funds to expand and develop public transit in New York State, especially upstate.

NYSPEC Strategizes

The New York State Pay Equity Coalition (NYSPEC) held a strategy meeting with its member organizations. One area of disagreement was whether the legislation should include "punitive damages" language. Such language makes the legislation enforceable. An alternative is the Canadian proactive model. The Canadian legislation requires the employer submit information showing that they are in compliance by a certain date. It was also noted that companies that do business in Canada have no trouble complying with the Canadian Pay Equity laws.

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GET INVOLVED!



BULLETIN

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY
PERMIT NUMBER 7724

League of Women Voters of Bronxville
P.O. Box 321, Bronxville, NY 10708
President: Adelaide DiGiorgi
Editor: Janet Jaidi

Printing and Mailing by JAWONIO
(Vocational Opportunities for
People with Disabilities)

Date Sensitive

IMPORTANT DATES

FEB 10	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Open Board Meeting	Bronxville Women's Club 135 Midland Avenue
FEB 17	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee Meeting	Bronxville Women's Club
MAR 10	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Open Board Meeting	Bronxville Women's Club
MAR 13	9:30 AM	Breakfast with County Executive Spano	White Plains Library
MAR 17	9:30 AM	Bronxville LWV Monthly Coffee Meeting	Bronxville Women's Club

SAVE THE DATE!!!

**BRONXVILLE LWV ANNUAL LUNCHEON
APRIL 30TH AT LAKE ISLE COUNTRY CLUB**