



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW CASTLE

The Voter May 2007

from Jackie Rider

Presidents' Message

When did your family come to this country? It's a safe bet that unless you trace your ancestry back to the Iroquois, Oneida, Onondaga, or other Native American tribe, you, like me, are descended from immigrants. My ancestors were welcomed ashore by the Wampanoags with life-saving food, education and more than a little curiosity about the odd folk who wore heavy dark clothes in the heat of summer. The Puritans' response to that hospitality is not the brightest chapter in U.S. history. In fact, our reception of immigrants has been mixed ever since, from "No Irish Need Apply," to Japanese internment camps, to the anti-immigration hysteria of today.

Immigration is an inspiring and challenging topic, and our national League has launched a two-year study of the issues, many of which touch us locally. According to the website for Neighbors Link in Mt. Kisco:

- * The foreign born population in Westchester County is 205,429 or 22% of the total population.
- * Most Latinos in Mt. Kisco are Guatemalan refugees who came here to escape persecution and death during the recent wars in their country.
- * Most have daily jobs providing low cost labor for businesses and homeowners throughout the area and live below national poverty guidelines.
- * Day workers make up less than 5% of the total immigrant population in Mt. Kisco.
- * A typical day laborer may get 2.5 days of work a week. If monthly rent is \$350, he will divide \$15 per day between food, necessities, and income for his family.
- * Many day workers pay Social Security and income taxes.
- * Day workers have little to no income between November and March.
- * The average immigrant will pay an estimated \$80K more in taxes over his or her lifetime than he or she will receive in state, local and federal benefits.

It's a complicated subject and one we'll begin to explore with our guest speaker at our annual spring luncheon this month. Please join us. We are all immigrants!

Jackie

League of Women Voters of New Castle

Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon Wednesday, May 23, 2007

with guest speaker **Chung-Wha Hong**
Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition

"The Current State of the Immigration Debate"

Crabtree's Kittle House, Chappaqua
Arrival at 10:15am, Meeting at 10:30am
Luncheon and Speaker at 12noon

Send check payable to LWV of New Castle for \$40pp to
Evelyn Bloom, 5 Woodmill Road, Chappaqua 10514

Chung-Wha Hong Headlines Spring Luncheon

"The demand for reform is coming from all quarters — immigrant families want a chance to fully contribute to this country, responsible businesses want a legal workforce, American workers want a level playing field, and the public wants a solution once and for all."

—Chung-Wha Hong



Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director of The New York Immigration Coalition, will be our guest speaker at the annual spring luncheon on May 23rd. In her talk, "The Current State of the Immigration Debate," Ms. Hong will discuss pending legislation on immigration reform, what it would mean for New York's immigrant communities, and other issues that affect immigrants in New York on the state and local levels.

The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization that is a leading voice for immigrant communities at the local, state and national levels. The NYIC's membership includes more than 200 groups in New York State that work with immigrants and refugees, serving one of the largest and most diverse newcomer

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Spring Luncheon

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populations in the United States. To address the concerns and needs of its multi-faceted base, the NYIC provides:

- * Policy Analysis and Advocacy - focusing on laws, policies, and practices that affect immigrants and the communities in which they live;

- * Civic Participation and Voter Education - conducting extensive outreach in voter registration, education and mobilization;

- * Community Education - disseminating materials in numerous languages on key issues such as immigration law, the citizenship process, health care access, school registration, and voting rights; and

- * Training and Leadership Development - offering workshops and community education on immigration and social services law and other issues affecting immigrant communities.

Reserve your seat today!

For Info about Candidates Go to SmartVoter.org

School District Election information will be available on smartvoter.org for the first time this spring. All the candidates in those elections will be invited to directly enter information about themselves as well. SmartVoter has unlimited capacity for candidate information. Candidates can link to other websites and are able to make changes and additions until 24 hours before the election. Your Local and County Leagues work together to bring you this information on www.SmartVoter.org, a League of Women Voters Education Fund website.

Observers Needed!

School, Town, and Library boards are working on interesting issues from hamlet plan to foreign language curriculum. Please consider observing even if you can't do it regularly. Contact Coordinator Cory Ethridge at coral.ethridge@verizon.net.

Show Some League Spirit!

Some of us plan to march as a group in New Castle's May 28 Memorial Day parade through downtown Chappaqua. If you've ever seen or marched in it, you know it's a fun and festive kick-off to the summer season with residents of all ages, local dignitaries, school marching bands and lots of flag waving. Come dressed as your favorite suffragist, don a LWV t-shirt or cap and help spread the word about our league and our important work. If you can come, contact Jackie Rider, 238-5951; or Sheila Crespi, 238-8994.

You Did It!

Our program year is ending, but the incoming LWV board is already gearing up for another exciting one ahead. Outgoing copresidents Maud Bailey and Jackie Rider and the rest of the board thank everyone who helped make this past year successful, fun and rewarding. From our news-packed Voter, to our enlightening members and friends coffees, to Naturalization Court, to member recruitment and renewal mailings, to our School Board Voters Guide and Candidates Night, so many of you contributed your time and ideas to a wonderful year. Thank You!



Sheila Crespi hosted the "mailing party" to prepare Voters Guides for school and library board election. Above, Joanne Knight, Evelyn Bloom, and Katherine Rothschild. At right, Patricia Farren.



Observer Notes

Joint Town Board/Planning Board Meeting and Town Board Work Session April 17, 2007

Town Board Members present: Janet Wells, Supervisor; Barbara Gerrard, Deputy Supervisor; John Buckley, Elise Kessler Mottel, Robin Stout

Planning Board Members present: Robert Anesi, Chair; June Blanc, Susan Carpenter, Laurie Droughton Matthews. Absent: Robert Brownell

Note: A joint meeting with the Planning Board was scheduled for 6:30 and posted as such on the Town website, but the announcement board at Town Hall showed a Town Board meeting at 7:30. As a result other members of the public only arrived at the later time and missed most of the session with the Planning Board.

Planning Board

A joint meeting with the Planning Board began with introductions. Susan Carpenter, a newly appointed member of the Planning Board, attended for the first time, replacing Tom Curley.

The proposed Law on Residential Building Floor Area was the first item on the agenda. A new draft has moved away from using the word, or concept, of ratio and just expressed the Maximum Permitted Floor Area for each lot area in terms of square feet based on a mathematical formula. It was felt to be more specific and thus easier to understand and interpret. Attics have been taken out of the calculation, but garages and basements are left in.

Barbara Gerrard commented that they "need to get something on the books" that is concrete and specific. It can always be tweaked and amended if practice shows a need for that. Robert Anesi said that the rules were needed but should not be too strict in order to allow the Planning Board to use discretion

when needed. This led to a question that was raised but not resolved at this meeting: Should all site plans be subject to Planning Board approval, or perhaps only certain properties?

The Town Planner discussion began with Elise Kessler Mottel providing background in describing the needs revealed by the Reader's Digest property proposals, to have someone coordinate all aspects of the process and guide the Town Board on the whole picture. Other towns with planners have been interviewed and each has done it differently. Some are still left to be interviewed.

Mr. Anesi spoke of the need to have someone help in leading the future planning aspects since the Planning Board feels more like a "Reacting Board" than a Planning Board. Ms. Gerrard noted the need for better connections among the Town Board, Planning Board, the Zoning Board of

Appeals, and other town boards. A coordinator is needed to see the whole picture on issues like parking, affordable housing, etc.

Planning Board members were concerned about the role of Frederick P. Clark Associates [long-time planning consultants to the Planning Board]. There was a feeling that those services should not be replaced right now. The point was also made that applications should undergo more review before applicants came before the Planning Board in order to save time and money for all. However, it would not be possible for one person to do everything. Town Administrator Jerry Faiella suggested a working group be set up to look at the details and develop a plan.

The Joint Planning Board/Town Board session was then concluded, and the Town Board Work Session was convened.



LWV Environment Chair Joanne Knight shares resources with students and faculty at Horace Greeley High School's Earth Day Fair held recently on campus.

Town Board Work Session

Residents of Taylor Road came to discuss the tree removal and replacement program prompted by the need to remove 21 of the extensive alley of trees because of safety hazards. A report by Cornell Cooperative Extension reviewed the situation and offered a number of options. Con Edison has been conducting a major trimming and removal operation throughout the county in order to protect their power lines. Residents offered a number of pleas and suggestions to preserve the look of their area, but there are also some difficult factors and expenses involved in any solution acceptable to them. There are limits to what the taxpayers can finance to preserve this neighborhood. The Town Board will have to resolve these questions.

Chair Joyce Kerulo and Ed Habermann of the Recreation & Parks Commission were present to discuss with the Town Board the proposal to change from a Commission to an Advisory Board. Reasons mentioned by Supervisor Wells for suggesting the change were that the seven-year term in the experience of the Town Board seemed to be an obstacle to attracting members; that seven members required seven-year terms; and that there were issues with respect to town property and staff reporting relationships.

Commissioner Habermann reiterated his belief that an Advisory Board or Committee by definition had only the ability to advise the Town Board and leave the decisions to them. Chair Kerulo raised the question of whether there was some middle ground which would allow the Town Board to get what they

wanted short of making the change to an Advisory Board.

The overlap of functions between the Recreation & Parks Commission and the Environmental Advisory Boards was cited as another reason for integrating them under Town aegis. It was noted, for example, that trail maintenance on town properties is not under the jurisdiction of Parks Department. It was suggested that perhaps members of the Environmental Boards should have representation on the Commission to help that integration.

Issues with respect to the Recreation Commission's Master Plan project were discussed. Supervisor Wells pointed out that a survey was sent out without checking the content with the Town Board (it contained errors); and that only the Supervisor was interviewed by the consultants

and her replies were not kept confidential. The consultants had included in a May 2006 Memo some pros and cons of making the change from a Commission to an Advisory Board. Therefore the Commission should have been aware that this was on the table. The Town Board thought that the Commission had been kept up to date by the consultants, while the Commissioners responded that the consultants they had hired met for the first time with them "a week ago."

The Board members then convened an Executive Session to discuss some of the personnel aspects of the situation.

Marion Sinek



Leaguers Cory Ethridge and Kristy Rudel enjoy the festivities at Greeley High School's Earth Day Fair.

School Elections and Unapproved Voting Machines

The LWV of NY State has written the following letter to all school boards. At right is an editorial from the Troy Record. Here in New Castle, we will be using the old lever machines for our school/library voting.

May 2, 2007

Re: Use of Uncertified Electronic Voting Machines in School Board Elections

Dear

We are writing to you as the chief operating officer of your school district to inform you of a situation which has occurred in several school districts in New York State. The City School Board of Education of Troy, New York, has approved the use of uncertified electronic voting machines for their May 15 School Board elections. In 2006, Salamanca School District also used uncertified electronic voting machines for their school board elections. The decision to use LibertyVote electronic voting machines which have not yet completed New York State testing and are not approved by the New York State Board of Elections, we believe, is a serious mistake.

The use of unapproved voting machines could open the election results to legal challenges from candidates and citizens, potentially throwing the outcome of an election and a school budget into question for many months and will undermine citizen confidence that election results are correct and accurate.

New York State's certification testing process for new voting machines which will be compliant with the Help America Vote Act has been temporarily suspended (January, 2007). Therefore, no voting machines have completed the full testing required for use in this state at this time. In addition, New York State has not yet defined the legal procedures for acceptance and accuracy testing by local officials which would allow them to perform testing on site prior to use. New York State enacted high regulatory standards for voting systems to be used in this state which are designed to protect voters and ensure confidence in election results. Only systems which meet those standards should be considered for use in any municipal, school, or other official election.

Our organizations are dedicated to enfranchising citizens and providing them with the tools they need to exercise the right to vote. If we can be of assistance, please contact us.

Sincerely, Marcia A. Merrins, President, LWVNYS and Bo Lipari, Executive Director, LWVNYS NYVV

May 6, 2007

Troy education board needs to vote anew

Concerned about preventing a repeat of last year's problem, the district's school board voted to allow Liberty Election Systems to run the election, providing 10 electronic machines at seven polling places.

However, what seems to be a slam dunk on the surface has an underbelly that groups such as the League of Women Voters and New Yorkers for Verified Voting see as dangerous to the electoral process.

The problem lies in the electronic systems themselves, because not only are there no electronic voting systems in New York state that are certifiable under rigorous standards established in 2005, but, as of now, there is no way to tell whether the electronic vote is accurate.

And New Yorkers for Verified Voting points out what they term several inaccuracies in Liberty's pitch to the Enlarged City School District of Troy, including: "Liberty's machine is not a computer." It is.

"Liberty is a standalone system." It is not.

It is part of a larger system that requires memory cards written and transferred to and from standard PCs in order to run an election.

"Liberty cannot be accessed by hackers or anyone else on the Internet."

In October, a group of Dutch computer specialists successfully hacked into a machine without Internet access.

While we applaud the school board for trying to avoid last year's debacle, we encourage them - in the interest of the voting public - to re-think the way votes will be tallied on May 15.

With fewer than 1,500 voters, on average, getting paper ballots set up would be easy.

Using the current lever machines would also be a better option than using an untried and uncertifiable system that will be monitored by Dutch engineers who would not be responsible to any authority.

Voting for public officials is one of our cherished rights, and nothing should jeopardize the integrity of a vote.

Time is off the essence, but we believe the Troy school board should reconsider its plan to use the electronic machines this year.

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**School and Library
Board and Budget Vote
May 15 at HGHS
7am-9pm**

CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 9th 9:30am board meeting	LWV Board Meeting Home of Bonnie Gartner 12 Garey Dr., Chappaqua
Thursday, May 10th 7:30pm	Candidates' Night Bell School
Tuesday, May 15th 7am-9pm	School and Library election HGHS gym
Tuesday, May 15th 8:15pm	Board of Education Bell School
Tuesday, May 15th 7:30pm	Library Board Chappaqua Library
Tuesday, May 22nd 7:45pm	Town Board Town Hall
Tuesday, May 22nd 8:15pm	Board of Education Bell School
Tuesday, June 5th 8:15pm	Board of Education Bell School
Tuesday, June 12th 7:45pm	Town Board Town Hall
Tuesday, June 19th 8:15pm	Board of Education Bell School

School/Library Election

Candidates' Night
Thursday, May 10, 2007
7:30 pm, Bell Middle School

**Candidates for School Board
(vote for two):**
Harvey Kerrich
Jeffrey Mester
Jay Shapiro

**Candidates for Library Board
(vote for one):**
Evelyn Bloom
Gerry Golub

**New! Online election informa-
tion available at:**
www.smartvoter.org

**VOTE on May 15
7am-9pm at HGHS Gym**

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