



## The League of Women Voters of The Rivertowns

Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson and Irvington  
[www.watpa.org/lwv/rivertowns](http://www.watpa.org/lwv/rivertowns)

### BULLETIN – MAY 2010

#### *President's Letter*

*Dear Fellow Members and Friends of the League,*

*The Coffee & Conversation meeting, with our New York State Assemblyman, Richard Brodsky, on April 23 at the Embassy Club in Dobbs Ferry was highly informative and enjoyable. Assemblyman Brodsky shared fascinating insights into the situation in Albany and the fiscal crisis facing the state.*

*We will be hosting two candidates nights on May 12, for the school board elections in Dobbs Ferry and Irvington (see details inside). Jean Howell will make the introductions and Corinne Calesso will act as timekeeper in Irvington. Karen Schatzel will make the introductions and Emma Lou Louis will be the timekeeper in Dobbs Ferry.*

*One of our long-term board members, Ruth Neuwirth, is moving to the Boston area, to be closer to her family. She has served as our primary organizer of Irvington events, with great energy and dedication for over a decade. Claire Lee is stepping down as treasurer, but has agreed to remain on our Board. We have nominated Corinne Calesso as our new treasurer. Our sincere and heartfelt thanks go to Ruth and Claire for their generous service and pleasant company.*

*Our annual meeting will be held on Saturday, June 5 at the lovely home of Ernie and Jean Howell in Dobbs Ferry. Our guest speaker will be Ann-Marie Mitroff, or Groundwork Hudson Valley, a local expert on environmental and water quality issues. I look forward to seeing many of you there.*

*Lindsay Nicely Feinberg*

#### **Board Briefs**

**April:** Plans were finalized for the April Coffee, our last of the season, and also for a Membership Party at Lindsay's. Consensus questions and discussion guide from the State League were passed out and briefly explained, so we could review them at home to prepare for the next meeting. We began looking at local school board elections, and will plan candidates' forums as needed

**.May:** Plans were finalized for candidates' nights for Dobbs Ferry and Irvington. We were unable to organize one for Hastings, due to lack of volunteers, and time. We completed our consensus questions and will mail our answers to LWVNY. The Annual Meeting was planned, along with short discussions on nominations for the board, and local program

## **NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2010-2011**

President:	Lindsay Feinberg	
Vice President:	Emma Lou Louis	Nominating Committee (2010-2011)
Secretary:	Pat Rodriguez	to be chosen at the meeting
Treasurer:	Corinne Calesso	
Directors:	Claire Lee	
	Chris Verber	

***Nominations from the floor are accepted provided you have the consent of the nominee.***

**Continuing in office:** Vice President Jean Howell; Directors Mary Kaufman and Kathy Sundaram

## **PROPOSED LOCAL PROGRAM 2010 – 2011**

1. Develop an outreach plan for new residents to introduce them to league and government programs and facilities.
2. Review Master Plans and advocate adoption by each of the villages.
3. Support village manager form of government, village financing and services. Support citizen participation in village planning.
4. Land use: Support village planning for affordable housing, open space, and waterfront planning.
5. Support services of village libraries and provide educational and informational forums related to community needs.
6. Support local fair housing initiatives and measures to increase local affordable housing.
7. School issues: Continue outreach to students. When financially feasible, provide scholarships to graduating seniors from each high school.
8. Continue to monitor and support riverfront planning in each of the villages. Determine ways in which the league can promote riverfront planning that balances local land use, environmental, and revenue generating concerns.
9. Promote awareness of the League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns' positions and activities through periodic statements to village boards; letters to the editors of local newspapers; an active observer corps; and contacts with other civic organizations.

**COME ONE! COME ALL!**  
**ANNUAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON**

Saturday, June 5, 2010

Meeting at 10:30 AM; Luncheon at 12:30 PM

Home of Jean Howell, 189 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry

Updates from our Waterfront Study Group

Election of new officers and directors

Our luncheon speaker is

Ann-Marie Mitroff

River Programs Director, Groundwork Hudson Valley

**ALL ARE WELCOME !!!**

**Bring a Friend**

Please return the form with your check for \$10.00 per person (\$15.00 at the door) or call Jean (693-6755) by **JUNE 2** to reserve your place.

**YES. I WILL ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed (\$10.00 per person) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: LWV the Rivertowns  
Mail to: LWV the Rivertowns, 189 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522  
*RETURN BY JUNE 3, 2009*

## HEALTH INSURANCE - WHAT'S NEW? - observations

Beginning this year, health insurance companies will have to report - for the first time ever - how much they spend on clinical services vs. other non-medical costs. If the amount spent on medical services is less than 85% for large group plans and 80% for small group and individual plans, the companies as of 2011, will have to send beneficiaries an annual rebate (Washington Week, MedPage 4/20/10). Dept. of Health and Human Services to monitor.

The law also calls for the creation of a new process to review increases in health insurance premiums which insurance companies are immediately required to justify. Why is this so important? According to a report by the advocacy group Health Care for Americans Now, quoted in PedPage Today on 2/13/10, the nation's five largest for-profit insurers closed 2009 with a combined profit of \$12.2 billion (!) in part by offloading their most expensive patients and drastically raising premiums. Now, neither practice will be possible: no more offloading under any circumstances, and no more raising of premiums at will.

Another core provision of the bill is that insurance companies must offer comprehensive coverage to anyone who applies, regardless of pre-existing conditions. (With respect to children, this takes effect in September, earlier than most other provisions of the bill (NY Times 3/31/10). New Yorkers have been lucky in this regard. Our state was one of the first to require it, moved by the suffering of AIDS patients in 1993 (NY Times 4/18/10). It also became one of the few states to require companies to charge the same rates for the same benefits regardless of age, sex or levels of risk. And it also has regulations about insurance company profit margins, making us a working laboratory for the federal law. As in all such pilot projects, benefits and consequences, planned and unplanned, reveal themselves in time. . . .

One follow-up: on the Family Health Care Decisions Act in NYS - a law empowering family members, and others close to the patient, to make health care decisions on his/her behalf, including the use of life-sustaining treatment for patients who can no longer decide for themselves. It was just passed by the Senate and awaits the Governor's signature. This bill has been kicked around Albany since 1993. . . .

Edith Szold, Health Issues Chair, Bronxville LWV

**Note:** Other Health Care Reform provisions were included in the March bulletin. The **LWV Westchester Health Committee plans a public forum Thursday, October 21 at White Plains Hospital (auditorium)** to further clarify "**Health Care Horizons - What is new for you and your family?**" Invited speakers will discuss: how hospitals have been affected by the new health care bill, effects on the general population, and the role of community health centers. Co-sponsoring organizations, so far, include the Nat. Assoc. of Social Workers, Westchester/Putnam Access to Health Care Coalition, The Westchester Health Care Reform Task Force.

## **COFFEE & CONVERSATION with ASSEMBLYMAN BRODSKY**

Richard Brodsky, at the Dobbs Ferry Community Center on April 24th, addressed current political climate, and specific community concerns. Budget woes, high taxes, resentment of banks/big business, costly wars, and threats to service have resulted in frustration with government. Simple slogans cannot heal “this mess”; each community must develop its own response. Locally, although effective, “Small is costly”; shared services may help.

Assemblyman Brodsky co-sponsored an Authority Reform bill which went into effect 3-1-10. Some major provisions include: creation of an independent Authority Budget (oversight) Office, reduction of no-bid contracts, comptroller oversight of no-bid and state funded contracts, Whistle Blower protection, required participation in state Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise provisions. Mr. Brodsky emphasized that answers to current problems are available. One example, development of alternative energy is “easier than people think”; our tax system subsidizes carbon-based fuel (such as coal plants).

After Mr. Brodsky’s talk, Gene Robbins, Ardsley, described an “aging in place” program.

## **MARCELLUS SHALE FRACKING - developments**

The Journal News reported on April 24, “New regulations ... for natural gas drilling in the New York City and Syracuse watersheds will create a bureaucratic hurdle that effectively prevents drilling there, defusing concerns about possible drinking water contamination.”

The DEC separated these areas from drilling regulations being developed for the Marcellus Shale region in southern New York. Each gas well would require an individual environmental impact statement, a long, costly, complicated process. This decision would help protect the Catskills and Finger Lakes, and drinking water supplies for roughly half of all New Yorkers. In other areas companies could be issued a “generic” environmental impact statement covering numerous drill sites.

“Environmental advocates had a mixed reaction ...” “Alex Matthiessen, president of Riverkeeper called it a ‘partial victory’. ‘We still have a lot more work to do to make sure the DEC issues the strictest possible regulations for drilling in the rest of upstate New York.’”

**Note:** The Rivertowns LWV joined a “**concurrence proposal**”, **Safe Drilling and Mining**, submitted by the Tompkins County League for consideration at the national convention in June. **If passed** by a two-thirds majority, it would become a LWVUS position statement!

## **IN THE RIVERTOWNS**

Heartfelt thanks to **Karen Schatzel** (in Dobbs Ferry) and **Jean Howell** (in Irvington) who chaired school board candidate debates prior to recent elections; also to moderators: **Susie Rush** (Scarsdale) in Dobbs Ferry, and **Joyce Whalen** (New Rochelle) in Irvington. **Corinne Calesso** and **Emma Lou Louis** were time keepers.

The Rivertowns League has submitted its response to **Consolidation Study Consensus** questions which would set broad parameters for judging consolidation-shared service measures proposed for governmental entities and special districts throughout New York.

In general, we recommended that legislation and constitutional amendments concerning dissolution/consolidation/major shared service proposals should be cooperative and collaborative, transparent, contain channels for citizen input and review, provide affected citizens with sufficient and timely information, result in increased quality or efficiency of service. They should promote administrative efficiency and fiscal responsibility. We reacted favorably to the idea of feasibility study matching grants, but negatively to state loans.

### **Looking ahead - IMPORTANT DATES!**

**Thursday, June 3:** LWVW Convention – Scarsdale Women’s Club, 37 Drake Road – Business meeting 10:00 a.m., Lunch noon; reservations: Kitt Rosenthal: 723-5126 or Kitt@optonline.net, or mail to her at 61 Birchall Dr., Scarsdale 10583

**Saturday, June 5: Annual Meeting and Luncheon** – Home of Jean Howell, 189 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry – Business meeting 10:30 a.m., Lunch 12:30p.m.

**Tuesday, Sep 14:** Rivertowns LWV Board Meeting - Hastings Community Center – 7:00 p.m. (Board meetings are “open” and we welcome your participation.)

**Thursday, Oct 21: Health Care Horizons** - What is New for You and Your Family? - White Plains Hospital Auditorium - 7 p.m.

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**ALL MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE APRIL 1. UNLESS YOU *JOINED* SINCE OCTOBER 1, 2009, PLEASE SEND YOUR RENEWAL *NOW***  
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### **LWV The Rivertowns – MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:    Basic Member                      Single \$50                      Household \$75  
                  Friend of LWV                      Single \$75                      Household \$100

Tax Deductible Contribution to the Fund for Citizen Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My interests are: Voter Service\_\_ Water Front\_\_ Observer Corps\_\_ Youth Outreach\_\_  
Fund Raising\_\_ Membership\_\_ Bulletin/Public Relations\_\_ Health Care\_\_  
Global Warming \_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: LWV the Rivertowns  
Mail to: LWV The Rivertowns, P.O. Box 142, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

***LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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