



The League of Women Voters of The Rivertowns

Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson and Irvington
www.watpa.org/lwv/rivertowns

BULLETIN - JANUARY 2012

President's Letter

Dear Fellow Members and Friends of the League,

As the calendar year winds down, I would like to thank the members of our board of directors for their enthusiastic and tireless service to the League this year. The Rivertowns League is enriched by the hard work and presence of Corinne Calesso, Jean Howell, Mary Kaufman, Miriam Mauzerall, Pat Rodriguez, Emma Lou Sailors, Susan Schwarz, Kathy Sundaram, and Christine Verber and I am honored consider to them my colleagues and friends.

You may have read the Letter published in the Rivertowns Enterprise stating the League's position favoring further careful study of the dangers of hydro-fracturing before New York State approves any expansion of those activities. Our position conforms with the LWV - New York State position and is the result of careful study by our environmental committee, which will continue to monitor and report on this issue of great concern to all.

With my warmest wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season.

Lindsay Nicely Feinberg

BOARD BRIEFS

October: Guided by our treasurer, Corinne we discussed our finances and how we would settle our National PMPs. Emma Lou and Chris updated us on the Health Care Committee, and gave us flyers to publicize the next forum. A letter regarding our league's concerns about hydrofracking was written by Emma Lou and signed by her and Lindsay, to be sent to the Governor and the Commissioner of the New York State DEC. Susan gave us a sample letter to be sent individually to Governor Cuomo. We planned the distribution of the Voter Guides, including taking some to several sites in Yonkers.

November: Emma Lou updated us on the Health Care Committee. New York legislators are considering establishment of a single payer for the state. We should promote it. She also updated us on the Waterfront/Environmental committee and status of hydrofracking. Jean reported that we distributed 1500 Voter Guides, extending our reach into Yonkers and Tarrytown.

December: We are finally paid up to date on our PMP to National LWV. Our Health Care and Waterfront and Environmental Committees continue writing articles and letters urging support for single payer health insurance, voicing concerns about hydrofracking, and paying close attention to the Rivertown Square development. In January we will plan and set dates for Candidates forums in Hastings, Irvington, and Tarrytown. We have sent the information about the program, Students Inside Albany, to the Youth Services Councils of Dobbs Ferry and Hastings, and are waiting to see if we have any interested students.

HYDROFRACKING

Good News - Under pressure, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation extended public comment period regarding its Draft Supplemental generic Environmental Impact Statement to January 11, 2012! **Still time to submit!**

Comments should be addressed: Attn: dSGEIS Comments; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; 625 Broadway; Albany, NY, 12233-6510. Governor Cuomo (Executive Chamber; Albany, NY 12224) is the other decision maker. Copies can also be sent to Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Health Commissioner Shah, and legislators.

Hydrofracking FYI:

Rivertowns LWV's recent submissions, to Enterprise, Journal News and DEC, emphasized: concern about hydraulic fracturing for natural gas production in New York State Marcellus and Utica shale deposits. Present technology is **inadequate to ensure safety.**

Flaws in the dGEIS draft include: it **does not prohibit the use of toxic and carcinogenic chemicals**, does not prohibit **drilling in or around all aquifers**; does not contain a **health impact assessment**, does not assess **pipeline and compressor station impacts**; does not prohibit drilling in **ground water supply areas**; does not protect **drinking water infrastructure**; does not prevent hazardous **fracking waste** from being sent to ill-equipped **sewage treatment plants and landfills**; does not prohibit spread of fracking wastes on roads; does not respect local zoning, does not include provision for **damage to local infrastructure.**

FROM ALBANY

LWVNYS has announced its **priority Issues and Advocacy** for the 2012 legislative session:

Election Reform - election day registration, better ballot design, improved polling place management and personnel training, insuring ballot integrity.

Campaign Finance Reform - lower contribution limits, increased disclosure, public campaign financing, more effective enforcement with civil and criminal penalties.

Health Care - affordable, available health care for all New Yorkers.

Natural Resources - protection and management of natural resources in the public interest.

SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE - in other words

To the Editor (The Enterprise, October 21, 2011)

All other developed countries have national health care for all their citizens. We can learn from their experience. Germany has had it the longest. England started in 1947, after World War II, mainly hospital based; they review the program every four years and make changes as circumstances change - politics, taxes, experience, needs, etc. (Britain) has changed over the years to a community-based health care philosophy.

We could learn from states in our own country - Vermont, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and California have versions of health care for all. Even young physicians are coming around to advocating for Medicare for all.

Health care does not have to be attached to employment. That started during World War II when wages were frozen and health care "benefits" were offered to attract workers in lieu of salary.

Medicare is a good program; well accepted - even rich people wouldn't give back their benefit. The U. S. has 40 years experience with it - already there are records, research, offices, etc. We can extend it to include the middle-agers, who are the workers and who need the least health care.

We could save money by not subsidizing the health care insurance industry. A third of the money this country spends on "health care" each year goes to administration. This amounts to approximately \$1 trillion that we could save.

Health care is a human right. We personally have responsibility for our own health. Health and safety of citizens is the number one government responsibility.

Christine Hindle Verber, Ed.D., R.N.

NOTE: The US and NYS League of Women Voters support single-payer health care.

What we can do: Urge **Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins** and **Assemblyman Tom Abinanti** to support a single-payer bill introduced by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (Assembly Health Committee Chair) to provide publicly accountable, universal, best available coverage. The assembly bill is **A 07860**, senate version **S 5425**.

NEXT HEALTH CARE MEETING

The LWVWestchester Health Care committee will meet Monday, January 23, 1:30 PM. at the home of Madeline Zevon, 17 Dupont Ave., White Plains. Call Chris Verber at 693-9054 for directions. (Meetings normally alternate between White Plains and Ardsley.)

POT POURRI

Student in Albany? If you know a high school student interested in experiencing the NYS legislative process at work, tell them about State League's March 25-8, 2012, expense-paid Albany conference, to include a tour of the Capitol, shadowing their legislator, workshops, meeting other students. The LWVNYS Education Fund pays lodging and conference expenses; local League pays transportation. Contact (by January 13): Emma Lou Louis, 693-1726, elsailors@mail.com.

Tappan Zee Bridge - Good news, the fed will expedite new bridge construction; **bad** news, plan does not currently include provision for mass transit.

GM PCB dredging of Hudson - Phase 2 successfully completed.

From Scenic Hudson - new parks and conservation easements: Kathryn W. Davis River Walk Center at Kingsland Pt.; Long Dock Park in Beacon, Dutchess Co.; Falling Water Preserve in Saugerties, Ulster County; plus conservation easements in the Highlands, Esopus, Columbia and Albany counties.

RIVERTOWNS SQUARE - DOBBS FERRY

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is posted on the village website for Rivertowns Square (formerly AKZO); it calls for approximately 228 residential units, 55,000 sq.ft. supermarket, 60,000 sq.ft. restaurant space, 107 room hotel and 1200 parking spaces. Many objections were voiced at the December 19th hearing. **Two more public hearings are scheduled for Monday, January 9 and January 23, 6:30 PM, in DF Village Hall.**

IN THE RIVERTOWNS

Our deepest sympathy to **Susan Schwarz**, whose husband, **Wolfgang**, passed away on December 27.

Condolences, too, to **Mildred Tackett**, a past president of the Dobbs Ferry League, whose husband, **Bill**, died on December 17. Services for Bill will be Saturday, January 7, at 2:00 PM at Edwards-Dowdie Funeral Home.

Thanks to Board members and others, notably **Monica Getz, Ernie Howell, Karen Schatzel, Selma Thackeray** and **Sue Weisfeld** whose efforts enabled us to distribute **1500** Voter Guides not only in our four villages but also in Tarrytown and Yonkers.

Chris Verber and **Lee Elmore** represented the Rivertowns LWV in welcoming new citizens at Naturalization ceremonies in November. They greeted the participants and their families and distributed information about voting procedures and about the League.

***LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE RIVERTOWNS
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PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE RIVERTOWNS LWV