

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The other day, my 7th grade son looked at me with an (almost) awe-struck expression. While studying for a U.S. History test, he had found a description of the League's founding in his textbook. He was very impressed by what he had read about the League's history, and, for him, this textbook mention legitimized the time that I spend on League activities.

Whenever I work on a League-related project, whether it is a new initiative or a continuing tradition, I try to be mindful of the principles, actions and motivations of my predecessors in the League. I also try to keep current with the issues and concerns that affect us today. It's a tricky, but critical balance, given the challenges that the League as a volunteer organization faces. My goal is to be as fresh and forward-thinking as possible within the framework of the League's traditional values.

One of the major focuses of the Westchester League this year has been to monitor the meetings, communications and events of County Government that pertain to the program that was adopted at our 2007 convention. League representatives have also attended the meetings of the Compensation Advisory Board which will make recommendations about compensation packages for the County Board of Legislators (BOL). Recently, the Westchester League wrote an open letter to the BOL expressing our opposition to the proposed purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road as the new headquarters for the Board of Elections. At its regular meeting on March 12, the BOL decided to refer the issue back to committee, and the County is seeking a legal opinion from the NYS Attorney General on the proposed location.

The Westchester League has also been busy planning three exciting events that are coming up: First, we're sponsoring an information forum, entitled: *Tappan Zee Bridge – A Regional Approach*. This event will be held at Kendal-on-Hudson in Sleepy Hollow on Thursday, March 27, from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Second, on Friday, April 4, at 9:30 am, we will be hosting a breakfast and roundtable discussion with our county legislators.

This breakfast will be held in the Auditorium of the White Plains Public Library. Although this is a new event, it is the third in a series of breakfast discussions that we have hosted this year. The first was with Westchester's state legislators, and the second was with County Executive Andy Spano. These events are free and open to the public, and more information is available elsewhere in the newsletter and on our website, www.LWVWestchester.org. Finally, please save Thursday, May 8, 9:30 am to 2 pm on your calendar for our annual convention which will be held at New York Life in Sleepy Hollow.

Wishing you all the best,
Mary Beth

LWVW LIST OF OFFICERS – 2007-08

President	Mary Beth Gose
First VP	Adelaide DiGiorgi
2 nd VP	Open
3 rd VP	Kitt Rosenthal
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	Rinku Bhattacharya
	Renee Baylor
	Mary Beth Evans
	Laura Fratt
	Janet Jaidi
	Kristina McCarthy
	Laura Porter
	Claire Prohl
	Karen Schatzel
	Barbara Strauss
	Selma Thackeray
Nom. Comm. Chair	Susan Schwarz

The Tappan Zee Bridge: A Regional Approach Hosted by LWVW and LWVR

The League of Women Voters® of Westchester and the League of Women Voters® of Rockland will host an informational presentation on the future of the Tappan Zee Bridge and Route 287 corridor, entitled “The Tappan Zee Bridge: A Regional Approach,” on **Thursday, March 27, 2008, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.**, in the **Gathering Room at Kendal-on-Hudson, Routes 9 and 117 in Sleepy Hollow**. Panelists will include Cheryl Lewy, Chair, Westchester County Planning Board; Harriet Cornell, Chairwoman, Rockland County Legislature; Michael Anderson, Team Leader, New York State Department of Transportation; and Marsha Gordon, Westchester County Co-Chair, Tappan Zee Futures Task Force.

The panelists will discuss current and projected regional conditions which will shape this project, e.g., demographics, employment trends and transit needs; proposals for the future of the Bridge and the I-287 Corridor; and the stakeholders perspective thus far. A question-and-answer period will follow the presentation.

The League of Women Voters® encourages public officials and residents to attend, as this is an excellent opportunity to learn about the broader implications of the Tappan Zee project on the lower Hudson Valley. **For directions and additional information, please call (914) 332-1301 or e-mail sdschwarz@aol.com.**

Westchester League to Host County Legislators’ Roundtable

The League of Women Voters® of Westchester has invited the county legislators to a “**Coffee and Conversation**” to be held on **Friday, April 4, 2008, starting at 9:30 am** in the Auditorium of the White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Avenue. The format will be an informal, roundtable discussion that is open to the public. All 17 members of the Board of Legislators have been asked to attend in order to discuss issues that are of interest to Westchester residents. There will be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions of the county legislators.

This roundtable discussion is the latest of three hosted by the League. In December 2007, the LWVW hosted a public breakfast meeting with the members of Westchester’s state legislative delegation. In February 2008, the LWVW hosted County Executive Andy Spano at our annual “Breakfast with the County Executive.” According to League President Mary Beth Gose, “Our goal is to have an informal dialogue with our elected representatives about topics that are of interest to Westchester residents. With these events, we are continuing our strong grassroots tradition of direct, in person communications.”

LOCAL LEAGUE EVENTS**Bronxville LWV**

Annual luncheon, 12 noon, **Thursday, April 24, 2008** at Lake Isle Country Club, 660 White Plains Road, Eastchester. Speaker: **Phil Reisman** of the *Journal News* with “**A Columnist’s Cock-eyed View of Westchester and the World Beyond**”. Luncheon: \$30. For reservations and information, call Pat Parker, 793-9339 or email pep18@verizon.net.

Larchmont/Mamaroneck LWV

Community Education Forum: Thursday, March 27, 2008 at 7 PM - The Emelin Theatre in Mamaroneck. Protecting the Value of Your Home and Our Long Island Sound Watershed Communities: A Regional Perspective on Water Quality

Management and Flood Control

INTRODUCTION -- WATER KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES IN A STATE WITH HOME RULE: UNDERSTANDING WATER POLLUTION AND FLOOD CONTROL FROM A WATERSHED COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE -- ELISABETH N. RADOW, ESQ., Special Counsel, Cuddy & Feder LLP; Chairwoman, League of Women Voters of Larchmont-Mamaroneck Environmental Committee (eradow@cuddyfeder.com <<mailto:eradow@cuddyfeder.com>>)

OVERVIEW OF THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY-- WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? THOMAS J. LAURO, P.E., Commissioner, Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities (tjll@westchestergov.com <<mailto:tjll@westchestergov.com>>)

OVERVIEW OF THE STORMWATER SYSTEM IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? LEONARD S. MEYERSON, P.E., Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health (lsm3@westchestergov.com <<mailto:lsm3@westchestergov.com>>)

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A REGIONAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (RSMD) TO ADDRESS WATER QUALITY AND FLOOD ISSUES RICHARD FRANZETTI, P.E., BCEE; Senior Project Engineer, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. (rfranzetti@pirnie.com <<mailto:rfranzetti@pirnie.com>>)

SCENIC SOLUTIONS TO WATERSHED MANAGEMENT: ADAPTING STATEN ISLAND’S BLUEBELT PROGRAM -- LEONARD S. MEYERSON

CLOSING REMARKS --ELISABETH N. RADOW

Q & A --AUDIENCE AND PANEL (Forum will be Broadcast Live on LMC-TV Ch. 75)

Larchmont/Mamaroneck LWV

Public is invited to view a film: **ADDICTED TO OIL**, with Thomas Friedman narrating. A discussion will follow with Edna Sussman, President of Action for Tomorrow’s Environment, serves on steering committee of the Westchester County Global Warming Task Force and a frequent writer and lecturer on energy and environmental issues. Monday, April 14, 2008 at 7 PM at Mamaroneck High School, Boston Post Road.

Scarsdale LWV

Annual luncheon, 12 noon, **Thursday, May 15, 2008**, at the Scarsdale Golf Club. **Speaker: Margie McHugh, Co-Dir. of the Migration Policy Institute National Center** will address the issue of **Immigrant Integration Policy**. Luncheon: \$40 (\$45 for rsvp after May 10). For more information, visit website: www.lwvs.org

HEALTH CARE – THE FUTURE?

Monday, April 7, 2008

7:00 PM

**Embassy Community Center
60 Palisade Street, Dobbs Ferry**

A forum presented by the LWV Rivertowns and co-sponsored by the Westchester LWV, the Bronxville LWV and the Westchester Health Action Coalition.

Speakers: U.S. Representatives, the Hon. Nita Lowey and the Hon. Eliot Engel
Lindsay Farrell, Director, Ossining Open Door
Jim Foy, St. John’s Riverside

For more information, call Christine Verber – 693-9054

Press release of March 9, 2008**League Opposes County Purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road**

The League of Women Voters® of Westchester today sent a message to the entire Westchester County Board of Legislators and County Executive Andrew Spano opposing the proposed purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road for the Board of Elections. Below is the letter outlining the reasons for the League's opposition that was sent today to county officials by League President Mary Beth Gose and Chair of the League's County Budget Committee, Barbara Strauss.

For further information, please contact LWVW President Mary Beth Gose at 722-2403.

The Honorable José I. Alvarado
Chair, Budget and Appropriations Committee
Westchester County Board of Legislators
800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

RE: Purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road for Board of Elections

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

After observing the Budget and Appropriations Committee (B&A) meeting that you chaired on Thursday, March 6, 2008, the League of Women Voters® of Westchester strongly objects to the B&A's bundled approval of the seven resolutions related to the purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road for the Board of Elections. There were many due diligence questions that the B&A did not address related to the financial implications of the proposed purchase, and, as such, the League believes that you and the members of the B&A did not carry out your fiduciary duty in representing the taxpayers of Westchester County.

Financial Issues

Given the current declining economic conditions, the League questions why the County would agree to buy at a price (\$5.4 million) that is slightly greater than the amount (\$5.2 million) that was negotiated more than one year ago. The commercial real estate market is softer than it was a year ago, and, on behalf of the taxpayers, one would expect that the County would have been able to negotiate a lower price for this property which has been on the market for several years. The B&A did not raise this question.

The summary analysis of the responses to the Request for Information (RFI), issued by the County on July 13, 2007, provided cursory rental information about six properties that were available at July 30, 2007, including 450 Saw Mill River Road. Each of the responders provided information about the costs associated with leasing their properties as required by the RFI, and it was noted that "...the rental deal [for 450 Saw Mill River Road] was withdrawn December 2007." As Mr. Rogowsky observed during the discussion, the RFI did not request the responders to provide information about the sales prices of their properties. Despite this oversight, additional analysis was provided by the County which compared the lease/purchase of one of the properties, 10 County Center Road, with the purchase of 450 Saw Mill River Road. The assumptions underlying this comparison were more favorable toward the 450 Saw Mill River Road property, and these assumptions should be questioned. For example, the County's analysis for 450 Saw Mill River Road assumes a 20-year interest rate of 4%, despite the fact that the current 20-year yield on bonds for triple A-

rated municipalities is higher at 5.02% (see www.Bloomberg.com), thereby understating the estimated financing costs for this property.

Operational Issues

The County's list of pros and cons for the two sites does not provide any cons for 450 Saw Mill River Road. The League respectfully disagrees with this analysis and is concerned about the property's limited accessibility. 450 Saw Mill River Road is located off of a winding, narrow, hilly road with limited access to public transportation. There is only one local Bee-Line bus route (#5 – Yonkers-White Plains-Harrison) that passes by the property. It is anticipated that thousands of people will be trained at this site each year, and they will be expected to drive there. Those who rely on public transportation will have to walk up a steep hill from the bus stop to reach the building. The League is concerned that this difficult physical access will function as a barrier, particularly against seniors and people with physical disabilities.

The League also questions the stated necessity that voting machines be warehoused at the same facility in which the Board of Elections staff is located. This requirement automatically restricts the number of venues that can be considered as economically feasible for lease or purchase, including those that might be most easily accessible to the public. The League maintains that public accessibility to the Board of Elections is paramount in a representative democracy to assure that the voting needs of the public can be met directly. Therefore, it is important for the Board of Elections public offices to be in a location that is most central to the population and most readily accessible via public transportation.

Recommendations

The League recognizes the County's need to act quickly under the circumstances. However, given the significant cost associated with this transaction (estimated at \$13.3 million), this need must be balanced against the County's obligation to protect the interests of Westchester's citizens as taxpayers and voters. Because the analysis provided to the B&A was based on information that was obtained last year, and because economic conditions have declined, the League urges the B&A to obtain information that is current and up-to-date before making your recommendation. At a minimum, the League urges the full Board of Legislators to refer these seven resolutions back to the B&A so that you can conduct a more thorough evaluation in exercising your fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Westchester County.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Gose, President, LWV of Westchester
Barbara Straus, Chair, County Budget Committee, LWVW

County Board of Legislators Honors Eileen Innes

The County Board issued a proclamation declaring April 18, 2008 **Eileen Innes Day** in Westchester County to honor her on her 90th birthday for her work and dedication to her community.

“We gather on this special occasion to celebrate and honor the 90th birthday of Eileen Innes, born on April 18, 1918 in New York City. She has lived in Scarsdale, NY for over 60 years. WHEREAS, Eileen is a proud mother of her three children and equally blessed and proud of her nine grandchildren, is a graduate of Goucher College and wrote for Greennacres Letter . Her severest critic was Dean Rusk. She is a founding member of the Village Club and was one of the Charter members of the outdoor pool. She served on the school board in Scarsdale from July 1974 to June 1980. She also served as president of the PTA for Scarsdale Junior High School and was very active in Boy Scouts. She was a den mother, active in PTA and is a life member of the League of Women Voters of Scarsdale. WHEREAS, work and dedication to the community has played an important role in the life of Eileen Innes and her involvement in her community should be recognized and acclaimed as family and friends gather to celebrate her 90th birthday, NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Westchester County Board of Legislators join their Chairman, William J. Ryan, in congratulating Eileen Innes on the occasion of her 90th birthday, wishing her health and happiness, AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that April 18, 2008 be proclaimed EILEEN INNES DAY in Westchester County. “

County League Seeks Volunteers

If you know of someone who may be interested in serving on the County Board, or if you have an interest in doing so, please contact Susan Schwarz, Nominating Committee Chair, or any of her Committee members listed below. In particular, we need a Voter Service Coordinator.

Chair: Susan Schwarz (914-332-1301 or sdschwarz@aol.com) or Ina Aronow, Susie Rush, Betsy Weiner, or Roberta Wiernik.

Environment and County Government

Open to anyone who wants to observe it, our County Legislative Environment Committee becomes opaque if no one shows up to see what's going on. Issues that affect your home, town and taxes directly are discussed and positions are recommended in these committee meetings.

That's where the LWVW can be an invaluable "fly on the wall", reporting on and publicizing the issues this committee discusses. No other non-profit group fills this niche. The fact that we are non-partisan carries extra weight in the minutes we report.

The more of us who join, the easier it will be. Just one afternoon every other month (currently Mondays at 3:00) and a few paragraphs of minutes that will be disseminated to our County Voter and web site will create a valuable resource to those interested in the workings of our local government and it will create another tangible reason to support our local LWVs with membership and donations. So give it a try. It's fun and usually very interesting. And you might just find out what the county is up to in your home town!

To sign up for the Environment Committee Observer Corps, contact Roberta Wiernik (241-7242 or RFWiernik@aol.com)

VOTER SERVICE – MODERATORS NEEDED

Can YOU run a meeting? The LWVW needs YOU to be a MODERATOR!

TO BECOME A MODERATOR you must be a current League member and be willing to run meetings in a fair and non partisan manner. We would be happy to come to a local League and provide moderator training for a group or provide individual training. If you would like to be trained, please contact Laura Fratt (fratt@verizon.net, or 723-5108).

Moderating is a great way to help insure an informed public and a hands-on way to give back to the County. You will be asked to moderate races outside of your own community. It is very interesting to learn about the issues facing neighboring communities, and we match your comfort level with the tenor of the different races.

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MODERATOR YOURSELF or ENCOURAGE ANY LEAGUE MEMBER TO ATTEND THIS WORTHWHILE TRAINING.

SMART VOTER

Just in time for the March 18th Village elections and future elections, Westchester voters are now able to access updated election information at www.SmartVoter.org. This non-partisan League of Women Voters® of Westchester website provides easy access to useful, personalized voter information on upcoming elections. Don't know your specific polling place or hours? Unsure what offices are being contested? Care to see a sample ballot or read through a local referendum *before* you arrive at the polls? Smart Voters can simply type in their address and, with the click of a mouse, find all this useful, non-partisan information and more. SmartVoter.org also connects users to other useful links that help residents determine their voter eligibility, how to obtain an absentee ballot, and more. Anyone can access www.SmartVoter.org on public computers at local libraries.

ACTION ALERT FOR BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL

Since 2004 the LWVNY has supported legislation for a Bigger Better Bottle Bill (BBBB), which has passed in the Assembly but never made it through the Senate. The LWVUS believes that **solid waste should be treated as a resource**, and has supported reuse, reclamation and recycling since 1973.

Background:

The bottle bill has been a huge success, boasting a **return rate of 70%** and proving that deposits are an incentive that increases recycling at a rate three or four times that of non-deposit containers. Expanding bottle deposits will **capture an additional 2.5 billion containers** for recycling; many of these drinks are consumed away from home where there is usually no opportunity to recycle them. Manufacturing and transporting plastic bottles **adds CO2 to the atmosphere, contributing to global warming**.

According to a NYPIRG survey, **70% of registered voters favored a BBBB, and 86% favored returning unclaimed deposits to the state for environmental programs**. The unclaimed deposits will be a continuing source of revenue for the Environmental Protection Fund that supports projects such as open space and farmland preservation, local waste management programs, parks and recreation, pollution prevention, and historic sites preservation to mention only a few.

ACT NOW! It's time to kick our campaign on the BBBB into high gear. We only have a short period of time left to have an impact on the state budget. I have an urgent request. Please --Click the following link: <http://capwiz.com/lwvny/issues/alert/?alertid=11031006&PROCESS=Take+Action>, to send a letter to your legislator asking them to support the BBBB in the 2008-2009 State Budget. **THANK YOU!**

□ *Roberta Wiernik, Natural Resources*

Specialist

You may also contact your state legislators at:

New York State Senate – 518-455-2800 www.senate.state.ny.us

New York State Assembly – 518-455-4100 www.assembly.state.ny.us

COMPOST BIN SALE DAY

Saturday, May 17

9 am to 2 pm – Rain or Shine

Saxon Woods Pool and Park, Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains

Free compost and professional advice for your garden

For more information: www.westchestergov.com/recycling or call (914) 813-5420

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

COUNTY VOTER

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White Plains, NY

Permit No. 615

League of Women Voters of Westchester
White Plains Mall, 200 Hamilton Ave., White Plains, NY 10601

IMPORTANT DATES

Mar 27	7:30 PM	Tappan Zee Bridge Meeting	Kendal on Hudson Sleepy Hollow
Apr 3	9:30 AM	LWVW Board Meeting	Com. Unitarian Church 468 Rosedale Ave, Wh.Plns
Apr 4	9:30 AM	County Legislators' Roundtable	White Plains Library
Apr 7	7:00 PM	Health Care Forum	Embassy Com. Center Dobbs Ferry
Apr 22	All Day	EARTH DAY!!! (Do something positive for your environment!)	