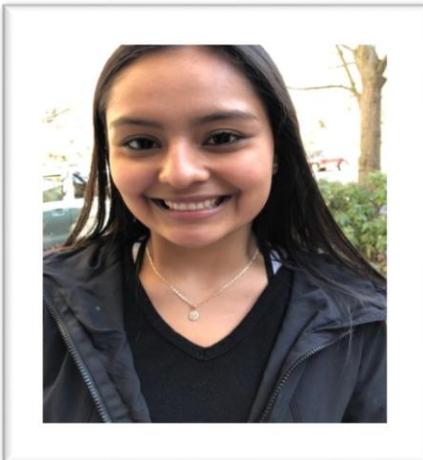


LWVNEW MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER

YOUTH OUTREACH

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY

Meet our selections for *Students Inside Albany*: Emely Garcia Aguilar from Mt. Kisco and Alex Goodman from Bedford. Unfortunately, the May conference has been cancelled due to the coronavirus – but they are both juniors, so maybe next year?



(Photo credit: Barbara Dodds)

UPCOMING EVENT

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION: POSTPONED

LWVNEW was planning to commemorate the passage of the 19th Amendment with a splashy event on Saturday, May 9. In light of the current coronavirus outbreak and social distancing recommendations, the event has been postponed. Watch this space for more information.

VOTER SERVICE

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

As of now, New York's 2020 Presidential Primary is still on for Tuesday, April 28. Here are some pertinent dates and deadlines.

- >Early Voting period: April 18 - April 26
- >Deadline for Voter Registration: April 3 in person and postmarked
- >Applications for Absentee Ballot: April 21 postmarked; April 27 in person

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS 2020

In order to vote in your school district election on Tuesday, May 19, you must be a registered voter. The last day for registration is Thursday, May 14.

If you are interested in running for a seat on the school board in your district, the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association is offering a workshop on Thursday, April 16.

More info here:

<https://www.bcsdny.org/cms/lib/NY02216273/Centricity/Domain/8/2020%20Prospective%20flyer.pdf>

Bedford Central Schools

Nominating petitions are due Monday, April 20, by 5 pm. Each set of petitions must be directed to the Clerk of the School District; must be signed by two percent of the voters (55) who voted in the previous election (55 which represents 2% of 2782); must state the residence of each signer; must be filed in the Office of the District Clerk in the Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm.

The School Board election is for at-large seats. There are two open Board seats; the top two vote-getters will be elected to the Board of Education. All candidates will be asked to participate in the League of Women Voters Candidates Forum on a date to be determined. The forum is usually held in the Fox Lane Middle School Little Theater and will be televised live and rebroadcast.

Forms and more information available at: <https://www.bcsdny.org/domain/34>

Katonah-Lewisboro Schools

There are two Board of Education seats whose terms expire on June 30, 2020. Prospective Board of Education Candidate Packets are available for community members interested in running for a vacant seat on the School Board; they can be obtained from District Clerk Kimberly Monzon at the District Office, 60 North Salem Road, Cross River, Monday through Friday from 8 am until 4 pm.

You may register to vote weekdays 8am-4pm. There will be a special weekend voter registration at the District Office on Saturday, May 9, 9am-3pm.

For more information: https://www.klschools.org/groups/4651/board_of_education/budget_information

North Salem Schools

There are two Board of Education seats whose terms expire on June 30, 2020. Packets for community members interested in running for a vacant seat on the North Salem Board of Education may be obtained from the District Clerk at 230 June Rd, North Salem, during normal business hours. You may register to vote with the District Clerk, North Salem Central School District, 230 June Road, North Salem, NY 10560, during normal business hours, up to 5 days before the vote.

***In light of the coronavirus school closures, we recommend that you call your district office before driving over:*

Bedford: 914-241-6011

Katonah-Lewisboro: 914-763-7020

North Salem: 914-669-5414

FYI**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Some of us use Facebook and even fewer use Twitter...BUT in an effort to stay relevant, LWVNEW continues to have a presence on both platforms.

If you are indeed on Facebook, please consider checking out our page and even "liking" some of our content. We can be found by entering 'League of Women Voters of North East Westchester' in the search bar at Facebook.com. We continue to slowly grow our Facebook following. Once we hit the 100 "like" threshold, Facebook will allow us to use an additional, catchier name of our choosing: LWVNEW. As for Twitter.com, we have about 50 other Twitter accounts "following" us as of the writing of this newsletter. We also "follow" roughly 50 accounts, including LWVUS, LWVNY, local media outlets that are on Twitter, and any of our elected government

officials who are on Twitter. If you are a Twitter user, please “follow” us at ‘LWVNEW.’

With both Facebook and Twitter, we keep users up-to-date with events and deadlines, as well as disseminate information from LWVUS & LWVNY. On Facebook, this is done by “sharing” information from other Facebook pages to our page; on Twitter, we “retweet” posts from others. Sometimes, we are retweeted by others. LWVNY recently retweeted our Feb 14 post about contacting state reps regarding the funding of Early Voting.

When we share and retweet – or when *our* posts are shared and retweeted – we incrementally raise our profile in the world of social media.

Many of us are stuck inside these days. Consider checking out LWVNEW on Facebook and Twitter during this time.

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY LEAGUE (LWVW)

FREE WEBINAR!

INFODEMIC: INOCULATING AGAINST CORONAVIRUS MISINFORMATION

Join former journalist, communications veteran, and news literacy trainer, Andy Katell, for an informative, non-partisan webinar to help you recognize misinformation and give you tools to combat its spread.

Tuesday, March 24 at 2pm. Please share with people you know!

To register:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/upMlde-vpzlrBle-fCIJLwhCuWxCOJ_zQ

For more information, email leaguevote411@gmail.com.

NEWS FROM THE STATE LEAGUE (LWVNYS)

COVID-19 AND NY STATE PRIMARIES

On Monday, the League issued the following statement urging Governor Cuomo to consolidate the April 28th presidential primary and special election with the June 23rd state and federal primary.

"As New York faces a major health crisis, we commend Governor Cuomo for taking swift action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

The Governor has made the difficult but necessary decision to begin temporarily closing large gathering spaces to slow the spread of the virus. The CDC has

recommended that for the next 8 weeks groups postpone in-person events that

consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States. Within this time frame, New York State is scheduled to hold a

presidential primary and special election on April 28th. We urge agencies and elected

officials to consolidate the presidential primary and special election with the June state and federal primaries. Postponing the

presidential primary election to June will give county boards of elections time to

prepare for an increase in absentee ballot requests from high-risk voters, ensure voters

do not have to return to poll sites more than is necessary, and save the cost of holding

two separate primary elections."

The League also joined Let NY Vote in calling for comprehensive reforms to ensure voters can access the ballot if the primaries are not consolidated. These recommendations include:

* Expanding the availability of vote by mail including streamlining the process for requesting an absentee ballot, allowing any at risk voter to apply for an absentee ballot,

and mandating county boards of elections to provide postage prepaid return envelopes;

* Encouraging expansion of early voting locations and operating hours to minimize polling place crowding and waiting times to vote on Election Day;

* Instituting cleaning and preventive measures in line with the CDC Guidance for preventing transmission of COVID-19 at polling places;

* And providing immediate funding to county boards of elections for implementation of emergency measures, including cost of: postage prepaid return envelopes; expanded use and processing of absentee ballots; and, incidentals related to poll site cleanliness and preventative hygiene.

The League is continuing to advocate for the consolidation of primaries. Although absentee voting should be an option, there are many challenges to operating a mostly vote by mail system. Currently, county boards of elections are not prepared to send out, collect, and count absentee ballots for large numbers of voters. The process of applying for an absentee ballot in New York State is cumbersome, costly, and yields a high rate of error. LWVNYS believes that in-person voting should continue to be an option.

SIMPLIFY THE COURT

Representatives from the NYS League took part in the *Coalition to Simplify the Court's* lobby day in Albany. The League supports a policy to consolidate New York's 11 different trial courts into a simple three-level structure consisting of a Supreme Court, a Municipal Court, and Justice Courts serving New York's towns and villages.

Legislators were open to hearing about the policy but several raised concerns about the roll out and implementation of the new system. The coalition is open to collaborating with the legislature to perfect the policy and/or support additional bills that would address concerns raised by these members.

The League believes court simplification would remove the barriers that impact litigants, families, victims, local government, small business, lawyers, nonprofit organizations, judges, court personnel, and anyone who uses the courts. Court simplification would permit more resources to go to the courts that need them most.

To learn more, visit <https://simplifycourts.org/>

ANTI-CORRUPTION LOBBYING

The NYS League also took part in an Anti-Corruption Amendment lobby day. The Anti-Corruption Amendment (A.1282A/S.594A) would create a strong, independent commission to replace New York's current ethics enforcement offices. This constitutional amendment would establish a thirteen-member commission that would replace both the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) and the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC) to oversee the legislative and executive branches.

This website highlights the need for the bill: <https://www.jcopemustgo.org/>
Albany Times-Union editorial board supports the proposal:
<https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Bad-ethics-watchdog-Bad-15090808.php?t=45bf1caeb8>.

NEWS FROM
THE NATIONAL LEAGUE (LWVUS)
COVID-19 AND ELECTIONS

The League of Women Voters of the United States issued a statement calling for a nationwide expansion of no-excuse absentee voting and mail-in ballots due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak:

“The League of Women

Voters officially calls on all states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia to expand no-excuse absentee voting and mail-in ballots for the duration of the 2020 election cycle. In light of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, it is imperative for state officials to address voters’ and poll workers’ fears by limiting the need to cast an in-person ballot. The time to act is now.

“We call on all states to take the necessary measures to ensure voters have increased time and opportunities to request and return mail-in ballots and to make ballots available for pickup and drop-off at any polling location, especially for voters in vulnerable communities. Secretaries of State should work directly with local election officials to educate voters on these more flexible expanded methods for casting ballots.

“This added flexibility will, of course, add to the time it takes for election results to be counted. Under these circumstances, it is critical that all citizens have the ability to vote safely, and appropriate time is allotted to ensure all votes are fully counted.

“We call on the Democratic and Republican National Committees to encourage all states to provide more accessible options for all voters at this critical time. The national party leaders should follow the lead of Indiana party leaders and find ways

for election officials to provide greater flexibility for voters by suspending rules around who can request absentee ballots and allow for no-excuse absentee options with reasonable adjustments to the deadlines associated with these options. “We have seen elected officials in many states step up on behalf of voters, taking precautions for poll workers, partnering across the aisle, and calling for more flexibility in voting. These actions demonstrate our ability to come together as a country. Our top priority must be the health and safety of the American people while simultaneously upholding the rights of all voters.

“Just as generations before us have met the challenges of their time, so shall we, and the League of Women Voters is committed to ensuring our elections remain safe and accessible for all.”

Voting in a time of Coronavirus:

<https://www.lwv.org/blog/voting-time-coronavirus>

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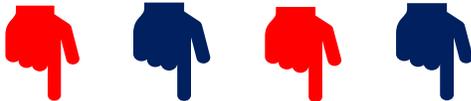
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MEMBERSHIP DUES

PAYPAL OPTION at the LWVNEW website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/leagueofwomenvotersnew/home>

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.