

## LWVNEW NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

### FROM YOUR CO-PRESIDENTS

*Another busy election season is in the books. We want to thank everyone who helped out with voter registration, Vote411, and the candidate forums. While the League never supports or opposes candidates, it does take positions on issues and the NYS League put its support behind several ballot questions, two of which were voted down – numbers three and four, which dealt with election & voting reform. We are very disappointed that these reforms did not pass; while they appear to have had the support of Westchester voters, they were defeated statewide.*

*Now that the election is in the rearview mirror, we turn our personal attention to the holiday season and our League attention to the important topic of membership. **We need both new members and more active ones.** We ask that you do two things: think about **ONE** person you know who might be interested in joining LWVNEW and think of a way that **YOU** might get more involved in the new year. Our late-winter and spring calendars will include the school board elections & school budget votes, Students Inside Albany (we are planning to send two students), and student voter registration. We will circle back regarding membership but please give it some thought.*

*-Katherine & Lisa*

### VOTER SERVICE

#### CANDIDATE FORUMS

Our virtual forums in Bedford and Lewisboro went very well. We had 125 attendees on the Bedford Zoom and 145 for Lewisboro. Both Zoom webinars were posted on our website for viewing on-demand. We publicized the events via local media and our social media accounts and hope that many of you were able to watch. Many thanks to our timekeepers, Kay Tyler (Bedford) and Barbara Kravitz (Lewisboro) for keeping everyone on track. We were fortunate to have two solid moderators for our events: Alice Tenney from the Mamaroneck League moderated Bedford and our very own Susan Polos moderated Lewisboro, one of two candidate forums she moderated this fall. Lisa Pizzurro handled the welcome and opening remarks on the Bedford Zoom and Nancy Gould Ralphs was the welcoming LWVNEW host for Lewisboro.

Bob Boffa, Katherine Dering, and Nancy Gould Ralphs handled candidate communications and Katherine handled all of the technical aspects for us, which included learning the Zoom Webinar format required for a forum (different from a “regular” Zoom call). Katherine conducted several practice sessions before each forum and Del Bashkow, Barbara Dodds, and Jean Farber participated in some of those run-throughs. Ultimately, the effort seems to have been worth it; far more people “attended” the Zoom forums than have showed up at past in-person forums.

**EMPTY CHAIR POLICY**

The League of Women Voters' Empty Chair Policy forbids leagues from allowing one candidate running for office to participate in a debate or forum when his or her opponent declines the invitation. The League put this policy in place in an effort to shore up its appearance of nonpartisanship.

This League rule frustrates local leagues because it gives an "out" to a candidate who does not wish to debate. A candidate knows that, by declining our invitation, they keep their opponent from participating as well. It is sometimes deployed as a strategy. This is unfair to the willing candidates and to area voters.

While the chances of getting this League policy changed are slim, we feel we need to speak up to the county, state, and national Leagues. We hope to add some weight to our complaint by including a recent *Record-Review* editorial that referenced the flaws of the policy.

**BALLOT QUESTIONS****Statewide**

One – Amending the Apportionment and Redistricting Process **NO**

Two – Right to Clean Air, Clean Water, and a Healthful Environment **YES**

Three – Eliminating Ten-Day-Advance Voter Registration Requirement **NO**

Four – Authorizing No-Excuse Absentee Ballot Voting **NO**

Five – Increasing the Jurisdiction of the New York City Civil Court **YES**

*The League of Women Voters of NY State had endorsed 2, 3 & 4, opposed #1, and taken no position on #5.*

**Westchester County**

Updating the Code of Ethics **YES**

*The LWV of Westchester endorsed the county proposal.*

**Lewisboro**

Make Highway Superintendent an appointed instead of elected position **NO**

**Mt Kisco**

Dissolve the police department and replace with contracted services **YES**

**ELECTION RESULTS****LOCAL**Bedford:

Supervisor: Ellen Calves

Town Board: Andres Castillo, Stephanie McCaine

Town Justice: Jodi Kimmel

Town Clerk (unopposed): Boo Fumagalli

Lewisboro:

Supervisor: Tony Goncalves

Town Board: Andrea Rendo, Mary Shah

Receiver of Taxes (unopposed): Deirdre Casper

Mount Kisco (all races uncontested)

Mayor: Gina Picinich

Village Trustee: Ann Bianchi, Karine Patino

Town Justice: Anthony Markus

North Salem (all races uncontested)

Supervisor: Warren Lucas

Town Council:

Martin Aronchick, Peter Kamenstein

Receiver of Taxes: Karen Roach

Highway Superintendent: Ward Hanaburgh

Pound Ridge (all races uncontested)

Supervisor: Kevin Hansan

Town Council: Diane Briggs, Dan Paschkes

Town Justice: Renee Motola

Receiver of Taxes: Drifa Segal

**COUNTY**

County Legislator, District 2: Erika Pierce

County Executive: George Latimer

County Clerk: Tim Iodini

**NYS SUPREME COURT  
9<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

Robert Berliner  
Thomas Davis  
Christie D'Alessio  
Thomas Quiones  
James Hyer

**OUR WEBSITE**

We made every conceivable link and bit of information available on the *Elections & Voting* page of our website. We made a point of directing our election-related social media posts to the website and promoted it in the opening remarks of our candidate forums and in our press releases.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

We used our Facebook page to 1) impart important information to voters and 2) drive voters to our website's *Elections & Voting* page. We had a sharp increase in Facebook post views and engagement during election season.

**PRINTED VOTERS GUIDE**

Apparently, not all LWVNEW members received the printed Voters Guide – and some of us who did get it received it late, after the start of early voting or very close to Election Day. Certainly not ideal! *We apologize to those of you whose guide showed up late or not at all. Please know that we placed our order on time.* The Westchester County League did mail them out but did not account for the postal service delays that are commonplace these days. We did make a PDF of the printed Guide available on our website. Voters Guides were dropped off at area town halls, post offices, and libraries.

**OTHER  
REDISTRICTING**

The County League asked local leagues to submit testimony to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) and we obliged, submitting written testimony in advance of a November 8 hearing. As you might be aware, the bipartisan committee could not come to an agreement on how districts should be drawn and, as a result, two sets of maps have been made instead of one. The two-map solution is confusing and flies in the face of bipartisanship. Our letter to the committee addressed the need for ONE MAP. We also took the opportunity to use our own state senate districts (SD 37 & SD 40) to highlight the importance of grouping communities of interest when drawing district maps. We cited the case of Bedford, perched at the top of a district and grouped with cities and towns in central and lower Westchester. **You can read our testimony here:** [www.LWVNEW.org/events-1](http://www.LWVNEW.org/events-1).

**MEMBERSHIP**

With our fall voter service activities wrapped up, our focus turns to membership: how to engage current members and attract new ones. Please put those thinking caps on! For instance, how best could we engage YOU? **Please send ideas or comments to our email address, [LWVNEW@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNEW@gmail.com).**

**FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION**

LWVNEW was invited to participate in the *Festival for Our Future*, which was held on a Saturday afternoon in late October at the Lewisboro Town Park. Katherine Dering, Barbara Kravitz, and Nancy Gould Ralphs staffed our table, which was relegated to the gazebo due to rain. (Thank you to Leah

Pizer, who had also volunteered.) We made ballot proposal brochures and other election information available and received positive feedback from our participants and from voters.

### FUNDRAISING LETTER

Many thanks to Barbara Kravitz for spearheading this year's fundraising mailing and hosting the envelope stuffing at her home. Del Bashkow and Lisa Pizzurro helped out. In all, LWVNEW sent out **almost 350 letters** – and this year, we included a ballot proposal pamphlet in each envelope.

### COUNTY BUDGET

Want to learn more about the proposed 2022 Westchester County Operating Budget? On Wednesday, November 17, County Budget Director Larry Soule will present the proposed budget and answer questions. This is part of the Westchester League's process in formulating the statement it will read at a future public hearing. The presentation is open to the public; League members will be able to convene afterwards if they would like to be involved in formulating the consensus statement. The Zoom begins at 6:30 pm.

**Register here:**

[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

**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.**

### LWVNEW

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### The LWVNEW Board 2021-2022

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### LWVUS

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Facebook: League of Women Voters of the U.S.

### LWVNY

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*Happy  
Thanksgiving*