

LWVNEW JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gulp. The final newsletter.

This league was founded in 1966; before that, women in our area who were interested in joining a local League of Women Voters chapter had to join the one in Pound Ridge. (And, yes, back then it was still an organization for women only. That didn't change until 1974.)

In 1966, women in Bedford formed their own chapter. The League of Women Voters of Bedford's first President was Mimi Mendelson.

The Bedford League became the Bedford-Lewisboro League, which became the Bedford-Lewisboro-North Salem League (quite a mouthful!). In 2016, the group added Pound Ridge and Mount Kisco to its territory and opted for the shorter, all-encompassing moniker it's currently known by: the League of Women Voters of Northeast Westchester. This also provided the group with the catchy acronym of LWVNEW, an added bonus.

I happen to have a League of Women Voters of Bedford newsletter from September 1967. It was typed on a typewriter and the paper has

yellowed considerably. This new league, in its second year and still provisional, held meetings two and three times a month in St. Matthew's Fellowship Hall. Meetings began promptly at 9:30 a.m. and on-site babysitting was provided. It cost four cents to mail the newsletter.

While a lot has changed, I am struck by the similarities. The 1967 newsletter references a busy few months ahead due to local elections. There is a call for volunteers. Members are asked to pencil things in on their calendars. These are all things that I have typed many times in newsletters over the last seventeen years, albeit on a computer instead of a typewriter.

I hope that everyone who has belonged to this organization takes pride in knowing that they have made a difference in our communities. Voters were educated, informed, and registered. Residents got to know their candidates and elected officials and learn about issues. Local students were given the opportunity to see firsthand how state government works. And beyond our immediate area, formerly incarcerated people were registered

to vote and brand-new citizens were warmly welcomed to their new home.

I am going to stay away from thanking individuals by name, on the unfortunate but likely chance that I leave someone out. So many of you have contributed to this league in ways large and small. Please know that you were, and are, seen and appreciated.

Wishing you a wonderful summer and all the best,
Lisa P

VOTER SERVICE

SCHOOL BOARD FORUM SOMERS

The Somers School Board Candidate Forum was held May 12. Many thanks to Susan Polos, who helped with the final planning stages and was the face of the League that night – and to Maura Rosenthal, who acted as our timekeeper.

MODERATORS

LWVNEW members Susan Polos and Susan Ferris Rights served as moderators at school board candidate forums in other parts of Westchester County. This is such an important job – and a great skill to have.

The League is always looking to add to its stable of moderators. If you are

interested in learning more about League moderator training, let us know and we'll pass your information on to LWVW. LWVNEW@gmail.com

MEMBERS & MEMBERSHIP

ANOTHER MEMBER HONORED

Later this month, LWVNEW Nominating Committee Chair Nzingha Milanes will be receiving a Women of Distinction Award from Assemblymember Chris Burdick. *Congratulations, Nzingha.*

MEMBERSHIP GUIDANCE

After the State League board meeting on June 20, LWVNYS will send letters to our members, informing them of their membership options.

Between now and the LWVNYS guidance: If your membership renewal date passes -- or has already passed -- you can either let your membership expire or you can renew as a member-at-large of the New York State League. You may also join another local league. This can all be done at [LWV Member Portal](#) · [LWV Member Portal](#).

There are more details below but, to summarize, our closest league neighbors are LWV New Castle (LWVNC) and LWV Northwest Westchester (LWVNWW). As of right now, it looks like LWVNWW

will try to cover Somers in our absence and LWVNC will try to cover the rest of our current territory. So, as a general rule of thumb, if you want to get involved in Somers voter service, you should contact Northwest; if you live anywhere else and want to help with voter service activities, you should contact New Castle.

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LWV New Castle: We have some overlap with New Castle in the Bedford school district and share a U.S. congressional district (CD17) and state assembly district (AD93) with them. Additionally, most of us in LWVNEW share a state senate district (SD40) with New Castle. We have partnered with them before in putting on state level candidate forums.

The New Castle League is even older than our league. It currently serves a relatively small geographic area; the town of New Castle includes the hamlets of Chappaqua and Millwood. **For more information:** [New Castle | MyLO](#)

LWV Northwest Westchester:

LWVNEW members living in Somers share a state assembly district (AD94) with some of the towns in Northwest. Most of us share a state senate district (SD40) with some of the towns in Northwest and we share

a U.S. congressional district with them (CD17). We have never partnered with Northwest because it is a relatively new league. It is made up of many towns/municipalities, including Briarcliff Manor, Buchanan, Croton, Cortlandt, Montrose, Ossining, Peekskill, and Yorktown.

For more information:

[League of Women Voters -Northwest Westchester](#)

Both leagues have graciously expressed a willingness to help with voter service in our area, so long, of course, as there are volunteers to do the work.

We know there are at least a few of you who would like to continue local voter service activities, whether that's student voter registration or a local candidate forum.

Voter Registration: LWVNC plans to facilitate any of our current members who wish to join them and organize student voter registration at Fox Lane or John Jay; these registration drives would be done under the auspices of the New Castle League.

LWVNEW is willing to cover Somers High School; LWVNEW members may join Northwest and conduct student registrations in Somers.

Candidate Forums, Fall: LWVNC has expressed a willingness to conduct candidate forums in our

area, so long as there are volunteers willing to organize and carry out the events. This is the league to get in touch with if you are interested in putting on a League forum in your town. *For our Somers members: We have only handled *school-related* voter service in your town; if you are interested in putting on a fall forum, contact LWVNWW or LWV Westchester.

Candidate Forums, Spring: Since LWVNC territory includes a small part of the Bedford Central School District, leaders there see a BCSD school board candidate forum as a natural fit. We will let the BCSD district clerk know that she should contact LWVNC going forward. LWVNC is also willing to be the contact point for the North Salem Central School District, the other district we've worked with on school board forums. We will notify the clerk there as well. (Katonah-Lewisboro conducts its own candidate forums.) LWVNWW will handle the Somers school district.

Students Inside Albany: The County League often sends a student from a school not covered by a local league; if you are interested in working on that, contact the County League (LWVW) here:

[Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.](#)

LWVW will be a part of the local equation, as it continues to try to cover areas not serviced by a local league. There was some talk that our members might also be able to join the Westchester County League as members-at-large, but it turns out that is not an option, as the County League is an ILO or Inter-League Organization.

OTHER

DIRECTORY OF OFFICIALS

While we're talking about the County League...This year's Directory of Officials for Westchester County will soon be available as an interactive, searchable, user-friendly flipbook to open in your preferred browser. It contains updated email and phone contact information for elected and appointed officials along with their party affiliations and term end dates, as well as municipality URLs and social media handles, links for streaming of public governmental meetings, organizational charts, legislative district and municipality maps, and legislative district tables by municipality and by local league coverage, and more.

It's \$10 per hard copy for the black & white printed version *plus* unlimited flipbook access through March 2026; the cost is \$5 per user for unlimited

flipbook access through March 2026. LWVNEW member Kimberly Morella assisted the County League in putting this together.

To order, go to [Directory of Officials \(2025\) Sales](#)

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY

Fox Lane junior Caitlin O'Connor attended Students Inside Albany 2025 and, by all accounts, had a great time. One last thank-you to SIA Chair Tracy Fulop for shepherding Caitlin through this process. Tracy even sent Caitlin off to Albany with a bag of snacks for the trip!

Here are a few words from Caitlin: *Students Inside Albany was an amazing experience!*

We were taught about NYS government and how we can make an impact locally. Like many other young people, I didn't know how much of a difference our state government and local government made. Many people tend to focus on the big elections for presidents or laws passed by the federal government, but this program made me realize that what really changes things in our towns and communities is voting for our local leaders. We were taught about lobbying.

Anyone is able to lobby and talk to their leaders about things that they want to enact change for in their county/district.

I had the opportunity to shadow my assemblyman, Chris Burdick. We walked on the floor of the assembly and sat in on committee meetings on topics such as veterans' affairs, housing, and banks. I was able to observe how the majority and the minority interacted with each other. While they had opposing views, it was refreshing to see that the assemblymen still respected and listened to each other.

The following day I shadowed my senator, Pete Harckham. We saw the senate in action and got to speak to the staff and senator about Harckham's current bills and work. The program additionally helped us to practice meeting new people, both peers and adults. It was interesting to hear from other students across New York, who have a different perspective and life experience from mine.

I truly appreciate the League of Women Voters for providing me with the opportunity to explore the NYS government in Albany. The program was very well-run and benefited many students!

NATURALIZATION COURT

One of our “last hurrahs” will be our participation this week in the Naturalization Ceremony in White Plains, where LWVNEW members Del Bashkow and Lisa Pizzurro will welcome our newest citizens. We are especially thrilled that Del will be at LWVNEW’s final Naturalization Court appearance; for many years, she served as our Naturalization Court Chair (and has co-chaired with Kimberly Morella in recent years). Most importantly, Del is herself a naturalized citizen and has a special place in her heart for the ceremony and its participants.

LWV OF WESTCHESTER ANNUAL MEETING/CONVENTION

Our league was allotted three voting delegates and was represented by Kimberly Morella, Nzingha Milanese, and Lisa Pizzurro. LWVW’s proposed budget and programs were voted on and approved; after a spirited discussion and several votes, a slate of candidates for the next Board was also approved. The 2025-26 LWVW Board will be a Leadership Team, with a less traditional structure. Several LWVNEW members will be playing a role at the County League level. Susan Polos will share the role of Secretary and Mary Pat

Campbell, Nzingha Milanese & Gail Pantezzi will serve on LWVW committees.

FINANCES

Unfortunately, we are prohibited from issuing any prorated membership refunds to our members.

The Board has made donations to the seven local libraries in our five towns: Bedford, Bedford Hills, Katonah, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, Ruth Keeler (North Salem), and Pound Ridge. Over the years, we have held meetings, candidate forums, and programs at these places, often at no cost to us. Our longest relationships are with the Bedford and Katonah libraries, which makes sense since we started as the Bedford League. For decades, monthly Board meetings were held at the Bedford Library and events were often held at the Katonah Library, in the Garden Room.

We thought the donations were a nice way to honor our relationships with the libraries. Each donation was accompanied by a letter acknowledging our past activities at that specific library -- and all letters acknowledged the importance of libraries as places of knowledge and information, especially in a time rampant with misinformation and disinformation.

In New York State, disbanded local league funds go to LWNYS. We've written a letter requesting that our remaining money be allocated to LWW, LWN, and LWNW since, as mentioned earlier in this newsletter, these entities will try to cover some of the voter service gaps created by the absence of our league.

RESOURCES GOING FORWARD

Websites to visit as a primary or general election approaches:

>www.Vote411.org: The League's elections & voting website. There is so much information available in the lead up to elections! Find your polling place, early voting info, who & what is on your ballot, etc. Remember, Vote411 has taken the place of the League's printed Voters Guide. Enter your address to get specific information about who & what is on your ballot. (Don't worry, the League does not save or sell your contact information!)

> [Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.](#) League of Women Voters of Westchester

>[Board of Elections](#): Westchester County Board of Elections

>[New York State Board of Elections | New York State Board of Elections](#)

Websites to visit as spring school board elections & budget votes approach (held in May):

>Bedford School District: [Bedford](#)

[Central School District: Home](#)

>Katonah-Lewisboro Schools:

[Katonah-Lewisboro School District | Home](#)

>North Salem Schools: [Home - North Salem Central School District](#)

>Somers School District: [Home - Somers Central School District](#)

Area Leagues:

>League of Women Voters of New Castle LWN: [New Castle | MyLO](#)

>League of Women Voters of Northwest Westchester: [League of Women Voters -Northwest Westchester](#)

>League of Women Voters of Westchester County: [Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.](#)

We are committed to assisting our members with the transition to other leagues. If you are confused or unsure about anything, please don't hesitate to reach out. Lisa P will continue to check the LWVNEW inbox and will be available to point people in the right direction:

LWVNEW@gmail.com

