



League of Women Voters of NYS **STATE VOTER**

July 2018

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.



From the State President

So much for those lazy, hazy days of summer we used to know! If your local League is like mine, you are having a surge of interest in the critical work we do that you haven't seen for years, maybe ever. Voter registration, candidate events, forums on immigration and other hot topics, and more are keeping us scrambling to keep up. Suddenly the new LWVUS mission statement - Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy - seems to have been written just for today.

I was at Seneca Falls this past weekend for the annual celebration of the event that happened SEVENTEEN decades ago and kicked off the women's suffrage movement. The reading of the Declaration of Sentiments that dared to say that "all men AND WOMEN were created equal" was almost dismissed by the crowd had not Frederick Douglass - a newly-free 30-year-old black man with a best-selling autobiography to his name - stood up in support of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's bold statement. It also would not have happened if Lucretia Coffin Mott, the very prominent Quaker from Nantucket and Philadelphia, were not among those who helped Stanton write and present it.

To see and hear 'Elizabeth' (Melinda Grube), "Frederick" (Nathan Richardson) and "Lucretia" (Renee Noelle Felice) converse in such detail about that day and the complicated years to follow, in the exact spot where the Declaration was read, made me think how badly we need such people of courage and persistence now. How different they were - a woman who was remarkably privileged except for her gender, a man who was only recently a slave, and a woman who'd spent her early years primarily among Quakers and Native Americans. People of such different life paths and strong wills were bound to have their conflicts. But they were totally united in their commitment to human rights and to the hard work that achieving these would entail. Through the long struggle there was considerable pain and despair, but they pushed and pulled one another forward.



Many other people pushing and pulling have not made it into the history books but they are no less a vital part of history. These years are particularly historic as well, with so much at stake. We need to look into ourselves and all around us and find the courage and persistence that our times require and remember that our mentors didn't find it easy. They did it anyway because

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September Primary is THURSDAY, Sept 13

The state primary in September was moved to **Thursday, Sept 13** this year. This primary will include races for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, many State Assembly and Senate districts, and some local (county and town) races. Be sure to check out if you have races!

National Voter Registration Day Sept 25

National Voter Registration Day is September 25, 2018. Make sure your League is registered - and start planning events and registration drives for that day! Contact your local League to help!

New LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase



The League of Women Voters of the US announced that the Board of Directors has hired Virginia Kase as the next Chief Executive

Officer. Since 2011 she has been a leader at CASA, an organization at the forefront of the immigrant-rights movement representing nearly 100,000 members.

[Read more about Virginia here.](#)

they absolutely knew how right they were and how badly their work was needed. And we know that too. Good luck to all of us as we move forward into history empowering voters and defending democracy!

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Travel with the League



Click [here](#) for trips and itineraries.

State Fair - Aug. 22 - Sept. 3



The state League has once again secured an exhibit space at the New York State Fair to register voters and provide voting information! In 2016 we registered nearly 1,000 voters and assisted thousands more by distributing voter education materials and absentee ballot applications. This year we want to beat that record and help even more voters get registered!

The State Fair is held in Syracuse from August 22 through September 3 and is open every day from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. Our exhibit is in a building (with air-conditioning) - not outside.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO STAFF THE TABLE FOR AS MUCH OF THE TIME AS POSSIBLE!

We will provide entrance passes and parking passes for the days that you're willing to work. We just need people to staff the table - even for one day! How about organizing a group of your members to come to the Fair for a day - you can share your time at the League table and enjoy other fair activities! It can become your "local League day at the state fair."

Email Jennifer@lwvny.org if you can help at the table! She has many spots open from 10 am to 10 pm most days.

2018 State Council

2018 State Council

[Click here to read the 2018 Council Report.](#) The Council meeting was held at the state office on June 7, 2018, at which time the proxy votes were counted and the 2018-19 State League Budget was approved. Thank you to all who participated and share the Council Report as it provides a good summary of the activities, accomplishments and disappointments of the state League during this past year.

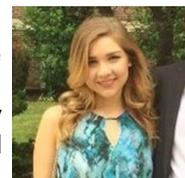
Legislative Updates

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Legislative Wrap-Up

The legislative session has ended and as expected, the Legislature failed to pass any of the progressive reforms we had advocated for. We weren't the only group scorned by the Assembly and Senate; very few issues were able to be resolved before the two-houses gaveled out on June 20th.



Election law reforms, single payer health care, the Reproductive Health Act, the Contraceptive Coverage Act, and closure of the LLC loophole all passed in the Assembly but were not taken up by

the Senate. Our two priority anti-corruption bills, the Database of Deals and Procurement Integrity Act, were passed by the Senate but not the Assembly.

The legislature did manage to pass an opioid take back program, implementation of a Prosecutorial accountability office, a mandate for feminine hygiene products to be available for all female inmates, and tougher laws on ticket scalpers.

It was a difficult year for all advocates. Between the Senate stalemate and the fear of looming state primaries for nearly all sitting members, it seemed the Legislature was afraid to vote on any meaningful reforms that could hurt their reelection bid.

Ballot Ready Recap of June Primary

Ballot Ready Recap of June Primary:

In spite of many New Yorkers not having a congressional primary, we had fairly good usage on Ballot Ready.

- In the month of June our site had 5,578 views.
- A total of 1,918 users.
- A total of 2,320 sessions (this accounts for multiple sessions by individual users.
- Ballot Ready uploaded all 13 Congressional races and 53 candidates.

In addition to timely usage data, Ballot Ready has provided us with a spreadsheet containing the emails of users who shared their contact data to either be reminded to vote or to be alerted when our next guide is live.

- 90 users "made a plan to vote"
- 175 users signed up to receive an alert when the next guide is live.

The website with races and candidates for the Sept 13 primary will be live by August 20 using the same link. Be sure to check out if you have races after August 20!

Local League News

The highlight of the **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara's** Education Committee's year was the May 23, 2018, forum *Perspectives on What Works in Public Education*, an informative panel featuring the following national and local educators: Sherry Cleary, executive director, New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute; David Mauricio, chief of Strategic Alignment & Innovation, Buffalo Public Schools; John Cotter Starkey, principal of School #207, the International High School; and Wendy Paterson, dean of the School of Education at Buffalo State College. The panel was followed by a spirited discussion with audience members.

Please join the **LWV of Westchester** and **LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck** for a forum addressing *Food Waste & Food Insecurity in Westchester County* on **Sat., September 8th, 10 a.m. at the White Plains Library Auditorium**. The highly praised documentary film **WASTED!** produced by the late chef Anthony Bourdain will be shown. A discussion with Leslie Gordon, Executive Director for Feeding Westchester, and Beth Radow, Chairwoman of the NYS League of Women Voters' for Committee on Energy, Agriculture and the Environment, will follow.



At the annual meeting of the **LWV of the Hamptons**, featured speaker Kristen Medeiros-Slevin, here (left) holding her campaign sign "For the People, By the People," recounted her eye-opening experiences running a grassroots campaign for Smithtown Town Supervisor in the fall of 2017, with no party affiliation and no fundraising. She garnered 8% of the vote.

The **Nassau County ILO (Inter-League Organization)** will have an intern over the summer, who will be doing research regarding the use of disposable plastic bags. Her research will help us to take a position, on the county level, on this issue. She will also be an observer for the League at meetings of the

Nassau County Legislature.

During the annual meeting of the **LWV of Rochester**, two community leaders were recognized for their ongoing commitment to important causes. Sister Grace Miller of the Religious Sisters of Mercy, and head of House of Mercy, received the "Making Democracy Work" Award for her years-long advocacy for poor and homeless people. In her remarks Sister Grace suggested that members advocate for the poor and conduct voter registration drives for them. Receiving the Carrie Chapman Catt Award, the highest honor for a LWV-RMA member, was Barbara Grosh, who has served the LWV-RMA in many ways since she became involved. Barbara challenged members to encourage the under-represented to vote.

LWV of Tompkins County had a great response to its program on gun control. Fifty five people came to hear a panel which presented the history of gun legislation, gun violence, impact of gun violence on families, and gun suicides.

The **League of Women Voters of New Rochelle** presented two new interviews on its cable television program, *City People and Issues*. Phillis Maucieri, Executive Director of the New Rochelle Office of the Aging, talked to host Tamar Tait about the many programs available in the city for senior citizens to help them and enrich their lives. Amy Bass, New Rochelle author and College of New Rochelle history professor discussed her new book, *One Goal: A Coach, A Team, and the Game That Brought a Divided Town Together*, with host Ina Aronow. Dr. Bass showed the challenges and benefits that occur in a once prosperous New England town revitalized by Somali immigrants who bring their values and their passion for soccer to the high school team and the community.

A Candidate Forum for the Democratic Primary Election for CD 2 was held on June 11, at the Massapequa Public Library at Bar Harbour, which co-sponsored the forum. The event was organized by the **LWV of East Nassau** and Paula Blum moderated (right).



LWV of Brookhaven members Dee Henson and Joan Keily visited twelve senior classes at Miller Place High School to talk about voting and registering, and brought 121 registrations to the Board of Elections. They also talked to the students about organ donations, a need that the NYS League is helping with because of the low number in our state. Legislation recently made it legal for 16 and 17 year olds to sign up to donate their organs.

How to Talk. How to Listen: Fractured Conversations in a Polarized Society was the topic in a May meeting of the **LWV Albany County** and the Women's Press Club of NYS. The panel discussion included Casey Seiler, Senior editor for news and columnist at the Time Union; Susan Arbetter, Moderator and Host of syndicated public radio program, "The Capitol Pressroom;" Scott Fein, Chair of the Government Law Center at Albany Law and senior partner at Whiteman Osterman & Hanna; Linda McKenney. Former vice-president of education & training for SEFCU; and Lara Whelan. Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Siena College. The panelists discussed ways we can restore civility in our everyday interactions and dialogues. This included finding and forging common grounds, extending tolerance and respect for one another, and focusing on how we "listen" as well as talk.



Congratulations to **LWV of Utica/Rome's** Voter Services Chair, Karen McBride Karen, who was one of 6 local women to receive the 2018 Women of the Year Award, presented by the Mohawk Valley Chapter of New York State Women, Inc.

LWV of Utica Rome also held a panel discussion on voter registration at which the following community members provided insight, tips and inspiration for helping improve the number of local citizens who are registered to vote: Ted Tottey, Committee for Voter Registration Expansion (CVRE); Sonia Martinez, Mohawk Valley Latino Association; Venice Ervin, President of local chapter of NAACP; Dietra Harvey, Administrator of United Way's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI); Diane Berry, CVRE and League of Women Voters, Utica/Rome.

At the annual meeting of the **LWV of Syracuse**, Michele Jones Galvin, a great- great- great grandniece of Harriet Tubman and a League member was the speaker. When Michele was in the fourth grade she was given a history assignment to write a report on a historical figure that was greatly admired. Her mother Joyce Stokes Jones suggested she write about "Aunt Harriet." Unfortunately at

that time there was little information on this famed abolitionist who helped so many people escape slavery. Michele's mother soon changed that by beginning years of research on Aunt Harriet. Her research not only centered on central New York but it also took her to other places including several towns in Maryland and St. Catherines, Ontario. In 2013, after years of research, Joyce and Michele co-authored and published "*Beyond the Underground, Aunt Harriet, Moses of Her People.*" The book is a tribute to a great woman.

LWV Steuben sponsors monthly issues forums to spotlight issues that might not otherwise come to the attention of local citizens. The goal of the series, titled Finding Voice, is to offer people a way to have a say in a safe and courteous environment. Each Finding Voice program includes a feature presentation and an open mic session. During the open mic session attendees are encouraged to speak up and say what is on their minds about any issue.



Members of the **LWV of Saratoga** marched in the Flag Day Parade celebrating women's suffrage centennial.

LWV of Schenectady offers an educational program for people preparing to take the US Citizenship exam. There are eight two-hour class sessions held on Tuesdays to help prepare for the US Citizenship Interview and Exam. All books and materials are provided at no cost. One-on-one tutoring is also available.

Click the link to view a [video](#) of the **LWV of Scarsdale's** congressional candidates forum, held on June 24th, featuring the

Democratic Primary Candidates for New York State's 16th Congressional District. LWV of Scarsdale co-sponsored the forum with the **Leagues of New Rochelle, Larchmont/Mamaroneck, and Rivertowns.**

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