

LWV SUMMER, 2013

NEWSLETTER

Candidates Forums

Candidates Forums for the contested elections in our area are as follows. There will be three forums in our area for County Executive, two forums for Westchester Legislators and one forum for Rye City Council and Mayor. **Here are the details:**

There will be three forums featuring the two men running for Westchester County Executive, Rob Astorino (incumbent) and Noam Branson (current Mayor of New Rochelle). The first is to be held Wednesday, October 9 at the Osborne Home in Rye at 3 pm. (It is not sponsored by the League of women Voters.) The second will be held in Rye Brook on Wednesday, October 16 on the 5th floor of 800 Westchester Avenue at 5:30 pm. This event is being sponsored by the Westchester Community and several other business associations. **Note:** The LWV is not a sponsor and is not involved in planning the program questions for this forum. The third County level event is being sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Westchester County. It is on Wednesday, October 23rd at Pace University, 1 Martine Avenue in White Plains. The program begins at 6:00pm and will feature sessions for:

- * County Clerk (6-6:45): Timothy Idoni (incumbent) & Mary Beth Murphy, Somers Town Supervisor
- * District Attorney (6:45 - 7:15), Janet DiFiore, who is running unopposed
- * County Executive (7:15 - 9:15): Rob Astorino and Noam Branson

County legislator Races:

Our League is co-sponsoring two forums for the candidates running for the Westchester County Legislative Districts for our area: In District 7 (includes Mamaroneck, Larchmont, Rye and portions of Harrison and New Rochelle) the candidates will be John Verni (Republican), Catherine Parker (Democrat and Independence), and Thomas Murphy (Working Families). In Legislative District 6 (includes Rye Brook, Port Chester and Harrison) the candidates will be Mark Jaffe and David Gelfarb.

The first forum is being planned with the LWV of Larchmont-Mamaroneck on October 9, 7: pm, Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Rd., 2nd Fl.

On Thursday, October 17, 7:00 pm, a forum will be held at the Veteran's Memorial Building located at 210 Halstead Avenue in Harrison. This event will be co-sponsored by us together with the LWV of Harrison.

Finally, comes the Rye City Council & Mayoral forum. This will be held on Wednesday, October 30 at 7 PM at Rye Middle School, 2 parsons Lane in Rye.

Candidates for Rye City Council are: Julia P Killian (incumbent), Terrence E McCartney, Kirstin A Bucci, Margaret L Cameron, Shari Punyon and Jason L Mehler.

Candidates for Mayor are: Joseph A Sack, Nancy L Silberkleit and Peter W Jovanovich.

Meet the Officers & Directors for 2013-14:

The membership voted in the officers and board as presented by our nominating committee:

President- Debbie Reisner Rye

VP & Voter Services- Peter Larr Rye

Secretary-Roz Larr Rye

Treasurer- Paula Gamache Rye

Naturalization Chair- Barbara Brunner Rye

Newsletter- Tom Kissner Port Chester

Directors:

Gary Zuckerman Rye Brook

Liz Rotfeld Port Chester

Roz Carvin Rye Brook

Joan Feinstein Rye Brook

Joan Grangenois-Thomas Port Chester

Off Board Positions:

Membership/Advisor to Treasurer- Steve Meyers

Facebook & Video- Howard Lim

Website and Youth Programming- Chris Nicholson Rye Brook

Special Thanks are due to outgoing Directors Dan Lipka and Jack Zaccara.

Rye-Rye Brook-Port Chester League of women voters held annual meeting June 7

The League's Annual Meeting was held on Friday June 7th this year. President Debbie Reisner led a roomful of League members, local public officials and student guests through the business meeting and closing pot-luck supper. The following report highlighting the major activities of the League was presented after the election of new Board members and Officers.

"It was a busy year for the League with voter registration drives, Candidate's Forums, Issue Forums and the publication of a Voters Guide. Seven forums were held for candidates for local offices, as well as for US Congress, New York State Senate and Assembly. On a more local level, the League sponsored forums for both the Mayor and Board of Trustees for Port Chester. School Trustees elections also benefitted from forums in both Rye and Port Chester. The League is also known for selecting and sponsoring forums on major areas of contention or confusion to the local community. This past year the forum entitled "Money & Politics" was arguably one of the best we have produced to date. Our featured panelists lead a spirited discussion on the effect of money on the political process and on election campaigns. All of the forums were recorded for broadcast and posted for on demand viewing. The League provided translation of the Port Chester Forums in Spanish and for the first time was able to then post it as a podcast.

The bi-lingual Voter's Guide was published and distributed through local newspapers, available at various locations and online. Vote 411.org is a national website for voter information/guide that is provided by local Leagues and will be up and running in September this year.

Voter Registration drives were successfully carried out throughout Westchester County. Local Leagues cooperated in manning sites at colleges, shopping and senior centers and even at nursery-schools. We will be establishing a Voter Registration team to identify area festivals and other new venues to assist new voters in exercising their privilege to vote in this important election season.



The 12th "Students Inside Albany" Conference (SIA) will convene this year in April, as usual. The annual conference is sponsored by the LWV of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. and is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The Conference is most of all a learning experience and has clear objectives. Primary objectives are:

- * To increase student understanding of public policy in New York State.
- * To enhance student understanding of the roles of the various forces seeking to impact New York legislation and policy development, enactment and change.
- * To promote an increased understanding of the New York State legislative process through legislative shadowing experiences.

Christine Nicholson is this year's SIA Coordinator for the LWV - Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester and will be distributing information and application forms for the SIA Scholarship Awards to the local participating high schools in Rye, Rye Neck, Blind Brook and Port Chester. In addition to selecting the students who will attend, our League provides a stipend for transportation to and from the conference and the League

of New York provides the conference, lodging and meals. Winning students share their experience at our Annual Meeting and also provide a written summary.

Some comments from SIA graduates: "Attending this conference provides you with the tools and know-how to make a difference in your local and state government. It was a great educational experience." Alexa Salazar, 2011

"I am now aware that every vote counts and it only takes one person to make a change." Tanasia Davis, 2011

Competition for the award is based upon a student's interest in government and leadership as demonstrated by a short essay, recommendations and pertinent extracurricular activities.

The league looks forward to reviewing applications and awarding scholarships to the deserving winners and hearing from them on their return from Albany.

Tools for Change 2013

Last year's Tools for Change Seminar got off to a robust start with a cohort of 35 students who conducted research on the impact of our social environment on participation in the Rye Town community. Co-sponsored by our League together with the Town Council and local community group Building Community Bridges, "Tools" is a collaborative action-research seminar for high school students that is designed to help Rye Town students prepare for college, work with each other to develop leadership and team building skills and, above all, learn to solve problems.



The students and adult staffers of last season's "Tools For Change" program.

Students Speak at Our Annual Meeting

At our 2013 Annual Meeting on June 7th our SIA (Students Inside Albany) participants for last season spoke about their experience learning about state government.



Meg Stomski and Brian Kerr, the two students we sent to Albany last season.

LWV's UN Day is Coming Up – October 8!

The New York State League of Women Voters' UN Day is Oct. 8 and includes a tour of the UN, lunch in the Delegates Dining Room and a briefing by UN experts. The subject of this year's briefings is the United Nations Secretary-General's *Unite to End Violence Against Women* Campaign, which aims to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world. See more information about the campaign at the UN's website

(<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/index.shtml>).

To attend the UN Day, complete the [registration form](#) available on our website and send it with payment (or fax or email with credit card information) to the state League office. The number of attendees is limited, so be sure to send in your registration now!

February 9th Chinese New Year Party

We held a Chinese New Year party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Larr, in Rye. There was no charge, but donations were welcome and there was a raffle. All proceeds went to our student outreach programs. We enjoyed cocktails and dim sum with new State Assemblyman Steve Otis. Other municipal officials attended.



Steve Otis, New York State Assemblyman from our district, addresses the attendees at our Chinese New Year Party.



VOTE411.org is an online Voters Guide where you can find answers to your questions about the candidates, registration and voting, including voting procedure and where your neighborhood voting place is located. This website is provided by the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

Our First Board Meeting of the Season Was Open to all League Members

On September 12, at the Clay Arts Center, 40 Beech St., in Port Chester, all league members were invited to join us for a tour of the Center's facility and exhibit at 3:30 pm, followed by our open board meeting at 4:00 pm. We wish to thank Leigh Taylor Mickelson and the excellent community resource, the Clay Arts Center for their gracious hospitality.

Community Service

Hours: For people who know high school students who would like to intern, we need help with filing and with our Social Media program. We can also use interns to help staff candidates and issue forums.

Annual Spring Luncheon featured speaker Nicole Sheindlin

On April 12, at the Hampshire Country Club in Mamaroneck

This year, the keynote speaker at the Annual Sound Shore Spring Luncheon was Nicole Sheindlin, Founder and Executive Director of Her Honor Mentoring Program. In 2006, Nicole began looking for a more proactive way to work with the community. She launched what ultimately turned out to be her new full-time job: the Her Honor Mentoring Program. The organization seeks to provide a platform for young women to reach their full potential. Practical skills to realize a life full of promise are attained through a structured framework for learning and growth. The program endeavors to reinforce the importance of college education and ultimately a meaningful profession. Young women achieve a sense of confidence and independence that will lead them to a career guided by their passion. The legacy of this esteemed program will be apparent in the many lives it influences

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We are planning to sponsor Voter Registration days at Nursery schools around Rye Town and the City of Rye. Members interested in helping out should contact Debbie Reisner.  
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Calendar of Upcoming events, including 2013 Fall Candidates

Forums (See first article for times and locations.)

September 16- Affordable Housing Forum (see enclosed flyer).

October 9, 3 pm, Candidates for County Executive, at the Osborne Home in Rye.

October 9, County Legislator, District 7. 7 pm, Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 Boston Post Rd., 2nd Fl. Courtroom.

October 16, for County Executive sponsored by The Westchester County Association at 800 Westchester Ave., 5th floor, 5:30-7:00pm.

October 17, County Legislator, District 5, 6 & 7, 7pm, Veterans Bld., 210 Halstead, Harrison.

October 19, Vote 18 Workshop (see the description on this page.)

October 23, County-Wide Candidates Forum - LWV Westchester at Pace University Campus, 1 Martine Ave., White Plains.

* 6-6:30 pm Candidates for County Clerk: Timothy Idoni, incumbent, and Mary Beth Murphy, Somers Town Supervisor.

* 6:45 - 7:15 p.m. Statement and questions from the audience from the unopposed incumbent, Janet DiFiore, who is running again for District Attorney.

* 7:15 - 9:15 pm - Candidates for County Executive: Rob Astorino, incumbent, and Noam Bramson, New Rochelle mayor.

October 30, Rye City Council & Mayor, 7 pm, Rye Middle School.

In September, we will be working on printed and online voters' guides. They will be in English and Spanish.

The League is publishing electronic and print editions of our English-Spanish Voter's Guide for the November 5 General Election to ensure our communities have access to trustworthy information about the candidates who are running and other important information about the November election. In order to perform this service, we look to the community to help support the costs of production and distribution. Our sponsors will appear in over 20,000 online and printed editions of our guide. Our Sponsorship Categories include: Gold (\$1,500), Silver (\$1,000), Bronze (\$500) and Contributor (\$250 and under). If you would like to support our guide with a tax deductible sponsorship, please contact Debbie Reisner by October 1st.



On Saturday, October 19th, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the "One World" offices located at 203 North Main St., Suite 203 (above Acuario Restaurant) our League will sponsor a Workshop in which Julianne Ross assisted by her

husband Aaron Joseph Kleinman will train about a dozen League members and community leaders to teach Vote 18. Reservations are required: contact us at LWV.Rye.RyeBrook.PortChester@gmail.com or (914) 481-3234.

- What is Vote 18?
- A fun, interactive 45-minute program that helps new and prospective voters understand the value of their vote, encourages them to register, go to the polls and get involved in their communities. Vote 18 takes the form of a fun, fast-paced interactive game. It covers the history of voting, explains how that is relevant to the lives we are living today.
- What makes Vote 18 so effective is the interactive teaching style and role-playing technique. During one class period the leader leads the students through the history of voting, graphically illustrating voting laws and history. Through the dynamics of exclusion, mock elections, group interaction and rewards students experience the economic and social impacts of voting. Vote 18 makes voting personal. Instead of telling students to vote they become active participants in the democratic process and teach each other WHY they should vote.
- Our League will be delighted to send teams of instructors to schools or community organizations to present the program. Please contact us to register for the workshop or arrange for a Vote 18 class be given at your school or organization.

Last Season's Political Candidates Forums:

Our League of Women Voters sponsored Candidates Forums for contested Rye Brook and Port Chester village elections.



The two candidates for mayor of Port Chester answer questions from the League and from the public.



All ten Port Chester Trustee candidates participated in our Trustee Candidate Forum.



Rye and Port Chester Local School Board Candidates' Forums

On October 15th, at the Port Chester High School, our chapter of the League held a candidates' forum. Above, the candidates for Port Chester School Board present their views.

Season Opening Event

Our first big event of the Fall season was held on September 8. It was a cocktail party fundraiser on the lawn of the beautiful home of Barbara and Fred Cummings, Jr., located on the water's edge of Long Island Sound. The theme was "Meet the Mayors." Featuring a silent auction of new books donated by several friends, and wine donated by "Grapes The Wine Company", it was the most successful fundraiser we've ever had.



The president of our league, Debbie Reisner, addresses the attendees at our first event of the season.



The auction table displaying sacks of wine and stacks of new books by category.

An Alert from our State Senator George Latimer regarding a Need to Re-register for “STAR” Homeowner tax exemptions:

In an effort to root out the few bad apples who are claiming STAR tax exemptions but are not legally entitled to them, the State of New York is asking all STAR recipients, except for senior citizens who are currently receiving the Enhanced STAR Exemption, to re-register. This will be a one-time procedure; again with the exception of Senior citizens, it will not be necessary to re-register every year.

Registration takes place from August 19, 2013 to December 31, 2013. The New York State Tax Department will mail instructions to all homeowners currently receiving the Basic STAR Exemption. The letters will include a STAR code which homeowners will need in order to register.

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS:

ONLINE: The fastest and easiest way for homeowners to register is through the tax department’s website www.tax.ny.gov .

Homeowners will need the STAR code that was mailed to them. Additionally, the STAR code can be obtained through an online lookup or by calling the Tax Department at (518) 4547-2036.

To complete the registration online, the homeowner will need to:

- **provide the STAR code and confirm the property address.**
- **provide the names and social security numbers for all owners of the property and spouses.**
- **confirm that the property is the primary residence of one of its owners (married couples with multiple residences may only claim one STAR exemption).**
- **confirm that the combined income of the owners and their spouses who reside at the property does not exceed \$500,000.**
- **confirm that no resident owner receives a residency-based tax exemption from another state.**

BY TELEPHONE: (518) 457-2036

Homeowners who are unable to register online will be able to register over the phone.

The Tax Department at this phone number will also provide answers to homeowners’ questions about online registration.

Those STAR exemption recipients who do not re-register will not receive the STAR Exemption in 2014.

Those homeowners deemed ineligible to receive the STAR Exemption will have the right to appeal.

League of Women Voters of Westchester

Join Our List

SAVE THE DATE: HOUSING SETTLEMENT COMMUNITY FORUM

WHEN: Monday, September 16, 2013, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

WHERE: White Plains Library

100 Martine Ave, White Plains

Community Forum

The Westchester County/HUD

Housing Settlement Agreement

Where Do Things Stand?
What Is and Is Not Required?

What are the Obligations and Opportunities?

Listen to and Ask Questions of a

Distinguished Panel Composed of the Federal Monitor and
Senior Representatives of HUD and Westchester County

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Westchester

and the League of Women Voters of White Plains

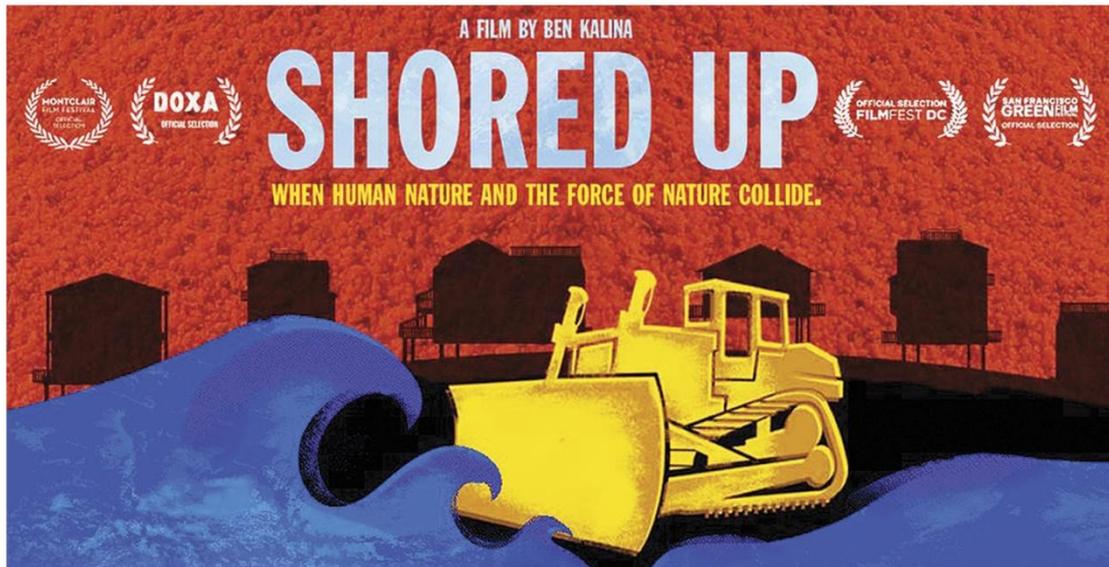
About the League

The League of Women Voters®, a nonpartisan, grassroots organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

Superstorms...Rising Waters... Climate Change...and the Threat to Coastal Communities

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich

invites you to view...



Please join LWVG, in conjunction with The Avon Theatre, LWV of Darien and LWV of Westchester, for a new film about the threats to our coastal communities, followed by Q & A with Denise Savageau, Conservation Director, Town of Greenwich.

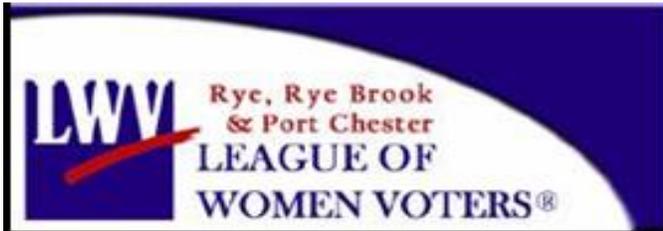
Tuesday, September 24 at 7:30 pm

**The Avon Theatre
272 Bedford Street, Stamford, CT**

Avon Members: \$6 / Students & Seniors: \$8 / Non-members: \$11

More information: Joanne Stavrou at jojows@aol.com or 203-637-7050.

The League of Women Voters does not endorse or dispute the views expressed in this film.
We are co-hosting this special screening to provide information to the public
so that people may form their own informed opinions.



LWV SUMMER 2013 Newsletter

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www.lwvrbpc.org

Facebook Page:
[Facebook.com/LWVRRBPC](https://www.facebook.com/LWVRRBPC)

The League of Women Voters of Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester is a nonpartisan political organization that promotes political responsibility through the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Our mission is to foster a better understanding of policy issues that will impact our lives and our communities.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - RYE, RYE BROOK & PORT CHESTER

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Select Membership Level: Make checks payable to Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester LWV

Individual \$65 Family \$85 Sponsor \$125 Patron \$250*

The LWV is a 501 (C) 4 advocacy organization, membership dues are not tax deductible.

*Includes membership. Monies in excess of \$65 Individual and \$85 Family go to the LWV Educational Foundation, a 501(C)3 organization, and are tax deductible.

RETURN APPLICATION WITH CHECK TO: LWV RYE-RB-PC, PO Box 194, Rye, NY 10580.