



# THE VOTER

The Newsletter of the League of Woman Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork  
Founded in 1977 Volume XXXIX, No. 18

December/January 2020-21



Election Day 2020  
Placing "I Voted" stickers on foam core markers at the grave of East Hampton/Suffolk County/NYC suffrage leader May Groot Manson on November 3 were, left to right, League members Arlene Hinkemeyer, Dale Grant, Vicki Umans, Eva Moore, Barbara McClancy and Estelle Gellman. Photo by Durell Godfrey

## LWV Ends Celebrations of 100th Anniversaries, 2017-2020

by Arlene Hinkemeyer, 100th Anniversary Committee Chair

For four years we've been planning and celebrating four 100th anniversaries, and now they have drawn to a close! I thank the wonderful 100th Anniversary Committee members Estelle Gellman, Barbara McClancy, Cathy Peacock, Martha Potter, Judi Roth and Susan Wilson. We also thank The Voter editor Eva Moore for getting into the spirit of the celebration by writing some special mini-bios!

In 2017 our committee sponsored or co-sponsored 11 events to mark the anniversary with speakers including historians Natalie Naylor, Antonia Petrash and Arlene Hinkemeyer at libraries and historical societies: The erection of a Pomeroy Foundation historic suffrage marker to East Hampton suffrage leader May Groot Manson outside her home on Main Street; Valerie di Lorenzo's "Ladies of Liberty" musical revue; the 4th of July Parade in Southampton; recognition at the East Hampton Artists v. Writers softball game; and our re-creation in

*Continued on page 3*

### What's Inside

- 100th Anniversary Committee Report  
Summing up four years work.....1&3
- Voter Services Committee Report  
Overview of the 2020 election .....4
- Suffolk County Voter .....5
- Heroes of the Women's Movement #7  
A salute to Congresswoman Shirley  
Chisholm .....12
- Education Committee Report  
A New State League initiative.....14
- Membership Application.....14
- Board of Directors.....15

### SAVE THE DATES

**January 18, 2021**

LWVHSINF Program Planning Meeting  
Via Zoom

**February 8, 2021**

Educational meeting on healthcare in preparation  
for consensus meeting.  
Via Zoom

**February 22, 2021**

Consensus meeting re updating the State leagues  
Positions on healthcare and financing healthcare  
Via Zoom

**Logon information for these meeting will be available as the dates grow near.**



**The League of Woman Voters of the Hamp-  
tons, Shelter Island and the North Fork**

**Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**Diversity Policy**

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork, in both its values and practices, is committed to diversity and pluralism. This means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of the East End.

**Membership**

Any person who supports the mission of the League may become a member.

**The Voter Newsletter**

The newsletter of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork League, *The Voter*, is dedicated to bringing useful information, background, perspective and commentary on public policy issues confronting League members and other community citizens in Southampton and East Hampton Towns, Suffolk County and the State of New York. It explores the work of the League to promote positive solutions, and it empowers people to make a difference in their communities.

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## Co-President's Message



The election is over! We didn't know all the results on election night and, with such a large voter turnout and so many people choosing to vote by absentee ballot because of the pandemic, it was no surprise that the counting took so long. Most importantly, however, we did know that every vote was being counted. In a fair election, which is a basic tenet of our democracy, we don't stop counting the votes until every legitimate vote is counted – and that can take time.

This election was not only historic in that Kamala Harris was the first women elected as vice-president but also in that, in the middle of a pandemic, more people cast their vote than in any other election. With all the attempts to make voting difficult in some states, the voters still turned out in unprecedented numbers. The more people who vote, the more representative the vote, and we deserve to pat ourselves on the back for helping in that endeavor. Even with the pandemic, we were out there on National Voter Registration Day with voter information and registration forms, we provided voter information on VOTE411, we did Public Service Announcements on voting that were aired on LTV and, with the technical expertise of SeaTV, we held two virtual debates on ZOOM, the first was between the candidates for Congress from Congressional District #1 and the second for the candidates for NYS Senate from NYS Senate District #1. The debates, which were available on YouTube and made available to other local TV stations for broadcast, had a very wide audience, much larger than we usually get when we do debates. These activities didn't happen by accident, however, and I would like to extend a thank you to everyone who participated, with a special thanks to Barbara McClancy, our Voter Services Chairperson, and Arlene Hinkemeyer, our Publicity Chairperson, both of whom worked so hard to bring these events to fruition.

Now that the election is over, that doesn't mean that we have nothing more to do. Our committees will be working hard and we welcome everyone to join us. Our meetings will remain virtual for the foreseeable future but our work will continue. As always, we will be looking into the issues that affect our community, visiting/communicating with our local elected officials to learn about the issues that they are facing and letting them know our positions, and helping young people learn about our political system and encouraging them to become involved. All members are welcome to join us on January 18th for our program planning meeting, where we select our priorities for the next year. There will also be a consensus meeting on February 22nd to consider whether to update the positions of the NYS League of Women Voters on healthcare and the financing of healthcare. The logon information for joining these meetings will be made available as the time gets closer.

I'm looking forward to working with you as we move ahead.

Estelle Gellman

## 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee

*Continued from page 1*

### LWV Ends Celebrations of 100th Anniversaries, 2017-2020

August 2017 of the 1913 East Hampton suffrage rally, with prominent speakers NYS Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul and Elizabeth Cady Stanton descendant Coline Jenkins—all to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women winning the vote in New York State.

Then in November 2019, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the formation of the LWVNYS, with a PowerPoint program in the Bridgehampton library on the history and accomplishments of the State League over the decades, followed by specially-decorated cupcakes and a festive toast.

In February 2020, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of LWVUS, founded by Carrie Chapman Catt, by holding a "day of action" as LWVUS requested. We worked with local high schools to plan student voter registration and pre-registration drives; contacted our state legislators for more funding for early voting in NYS; publicized the 100th anniversary in the local papers; and through the membership committee, reached out to the local community via "voting ambassadors" in the libraries.

In August 2020, because of COVID, we had to shift our live programs planned in the Shelter Island, Southold,

East Hampton, Westhampton and Southampton libraries in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, to virtual PowerPoint events, with speakers Antonia Petrash and Martha Potter, and Valerie di Lorenzo's musical revue. We mailed "Votes for Women" suffrage sashes and invitations to 45 women elected officials in our four towns, and recognized them by name, to show how far women had come from the time when they could neither vote nor hold office.

On Election Day, November 3, we had our last 100th anniversary event, placing "I Voted" stickers on the graves of East Hampton/Suffolk County/NYC suffrage leader May Groot Manson and Southampton suffrage leader Lizbeth Halsey White, just as we did on Election Day 2017, in recognition for all they had done to win women the vote. We were not alone in this final act, as it was duplicated throughout the nation. Susan B. Anthony's grave in Rochester, NY was covered with stickers!

In the course of all these celebrations, as well as through all the historical programs on television and other media, we learned a lot about women pioneers in many fields and found inspiration in all they accomplished.



At the grave of suffrage leader Lizbeth Halsey White in Southampton, those who gathered to place "I Voted" stickers were, left to right, League members Arlene Hinkemeyer, Bonnie Doyle, Estelle Gellman, Howard and Judi Roth, Alan and Stephanie Snider, and Southampton History Museum members and/or White family members Sherrill Adams, museum manager Laurie Collins, museum business manager Sally Van Allen, White's grandson Merritt White and White's grandson Gerald Adams.

## Election 2020

by *Barbara McClancy, Chair*

Most normal years, our elections are over by Election Day and the major news outlets have called the winners that evening. The losing candidates call the winners and congratulate them and the winners give congratulatory speeches to their followers. Well, this is not one of those years. Election season is not quite over. Temporary changes to the way we vote made to accommodate the fear of spreading the Covid-19 virus led to an unprecedented number of Absentee Ballots (ABs) filed in this year's election cycle. Governor Cuomo issued Executive Orders to allow the use of "temporary illness" to permit absentee voting by anyone. Before any voting results can be certified, the ABs must be counted since there are enough of them to affect the outcome of the elections. Election results have been called in most states, but some have not. Some have potential law suits pending and some are close enough to be subject to automatic recounts. This leaves many national and local races in doubt.

### Absentee Ballots

ABs were used in unprecedented numbers. They had to be returned to the Board of Elections by November 3rd, or if mailed, postmarked by the 3rd and received by November 10th when the count was to begin. There was also an option to deposit ABs in drop boxes at the voting site. (Newsday reported that the Suffolk County Board of Elections would conduct the count on November 16th to allow time for military and special federal ballots to be returned on time.)

Mail-in ballots were enormously popular, but recent changes at the US Post Office led to the loss of confidence in the Post Office's ability to get the ballots to the Board of Elections.

### Early Voting

This is only the second year Early Voting (EV) has been allowed in New York State. It rolled out for the general election in November of 2019 and was intended to give us our first exposure to EV so that the 2020 presidential election this year would be a smoother experience.

As you know, that didn't happen. In Suffolk County the number of EV sites was increased from 10 to 12 to accommodate more populous areas, but it also eliminated an EV site on Shelter Island, which is only accessible by ferry. Generally, there was just one site per town. Some sites experienced mechanical breakdowns and had to wait for repairs. There were some very long lines and rain made EV a difficult experience for many. A lack of signs about dropping off ABs at EV, and, most egregious, no specific designations for handicapped, disabled or elderly, caused confusion. Calls to the Board of Elections solved some small problems but many were not addressed.

### Election Day Voting

On November 3rd traditional voting took place at our regular polling sites. In fact, because of the large number of early voters, most election day polling sites experienced a lighter turnout than usual.

### The Takeaway

--The Board of Elections should have more signs clearly indicating where to wait to vote at early voting and regular polling sites. They should clearly mark and explain ABs can be dropped off without waiting on long lines.

--Staffing the polling sites was not sufficient. Some staffers were ill informed and gave out incorrect information.

-- Although there is no rule about expediting anyone through the voting lines, there should be allowance for the handicapped, disabled, and elderly. Absentee Ballots are an accommodation for many, but there is a growing movement to allow the disabled to participate fully in all life experiences and should be recognized.

--In some good news, 65% of eligible voters exercised their right to vote. That is the highest percentage of voters in a presidential election year since 1900. It is also a record number of voters ever in the United States. The bad news is that 35% of eligible voters, whatever their reasons, didn't vote. Many of them are still not registered to vote. Our dilemma is



The League's Zoom candidates' debate for the 1st Congressional District race on October 19, hosted by SEA-TV Southampton, between Dr. Nancy Goroff (D) and Congressman Lee Zeldin (R), bottom left and right, garnered 3,916 views as of November 16! Serving as moderator and timekeeper were Cathy Peacock and Barbara McClancy, top left and right.



Also hosted by SEA-TV Southampton, the League's Zoom candidates' debate on October 20 between Laura Ahearn (D) and Anthony Palumbo (R), bottom left and right, received 268 views as of November 16. Moderator and timekeeper were Estelle Gellman and Barbara McClancy, top left and right.



December 2020

# Suffolk County Voter

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LWVSC Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 16, at 10am via Zoom

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## Making Democracy Work:

### Independent Redistricting Commission to Ensure Fair Elections in NY

While we await the BOE's certification of our election results (required by December 7<sup>th</sup>) we need to plan our priorities for the incoming NYS Legislators. Of critical importance is post-census redistricting. After the mid-2021 release of the 2020 census results, states must redraw their state and congressional district lines. These districts determine how communities are represented at the local, state and federal levels, influencing how our government works for us.

Gerrymandering (the intentional manipulation of the redistricting process by the people in political power to keep or change political power) can result from partisan redistricting in a number of ways, such as by consolidating communities into one district, or packing, which gives that community only one representative in the legislature. Or by dividing the community across districts, called cracking, ensuring that the community is always the minority and less likely to be adequately represented by their representatives. Two common forms of gerrymandering are racial gerrymandering and partisan gerrymandering. In 2018, the Supreme Court had the opportunity to set federal standards when states draw their districts that could ultimately curb partisan gerrymandering. Instead, the Court ruled to allow states to make their own determinations about partisan gerrymandering practices.

The New York State Constitution was amended in 2014 to designate an Independent Redistricting Commission to replace the legislature-controlled New York State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR) as the entity responsible for drawing the lines. The new commission is made up of four Democratic and four Republican appointees. Two additional nonaffiliated commissioners who are not members of those parties are then selected by a majority vote of the eight politically-appointed commissioners. Members shall represent the diversity of the residents of the state with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, language and geographic reference. They cannot have been a member of the NYS legislature or US Congress, or a state-wide official, or have been a state officer or employee or legislative employee, a registered lobbyist in NYS, or a political party chairman, or the spouse of any of those mentioned. Co-executives, one from each party, direct it. A chairperson, to organize the panel, is elected by majority vote. The legislature has recently appointed its eight members, and those eight members selected two additional nonaffiliated commissioners. The commission also recently met to hire its Co-Executive Directors and begin planning its bylaws and staffing plans.

To ensure that the redistricting process is fair and doesn't lead to racial or partisan gerrymandering, districts should contain as nearly as possible an equal number of inhabitants and shall consist of contiguous territory and be as compact in form as practicable. It should consider the maintenance of cores of existing districts, or pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities and towns, and communities of interest. Data showing race, income, education, employment, and age will guide the process. Although New York State has not passed a Voter Rights Act, It should follow the guidelines set by the federal Voter Rights Act, which targeted certain New York election districts for pre-clearance before changing election lines.

Because the date for releasing the census counts was moved from April to July 31, 2021, and June 2022 is now the first NYS primary affected, there is a shortened time frame for public review of the plan, and input of community members as the plan is made. The commission must hold 12 public hearings with proposed maps available at least 30 days prior to the first public hearing. The plan must be submitted to the legislature by January 1, 2022. If it is rejected by the legislature or the governor, the commission must submit a second plan no later than February 28, to be approved by the legislature and implemented by March 2022. If it is not then approved, the plan will be drawn up by the legislature, or by a court master.

*continued on p. 15*

## Heroes of the Women's Movement #7



### **Shirley St. Hill Chisholm**

**Born November 30, 1924**

**Died January 1, 2005**

Upon her election as Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris remarked, "We [women] stand on the shoulders of Shirley Chisholm and Shirley Chisholm stood proud."

From the 1960's to the early 80's, Chisholm was the most notable Black woman in politics in the country.

She was the first African-American woman elected to the United States Congress and to run for President of the United States for a major party.

The daughter of immigrants from Barbados who settled in Brooklyn, Shirley spent some of her early years with her grandmother in Barbados where she was taught in traditional, British-style schools. She views this time as the bedrock for all that came after. "Granny gave me strength, dignity, and love," she said. "I learned from an early age that I was somebody. I didn't need the black revolution [of the 60's and 70's] to tell me that."

She finished her education in Brooklyn, becoming a star debater in her class at Brooklyn College and an advocate for inclusion, lobbying for such causes as the integration of Black soldiers in the military during WW II, and for the involvement of more women in the student government.

After college, Shirley's passion for early education led her to a teaching job in a nursery school while earning a master's degree in elementary education from Teachers College of Columbia University in 1952. She spent the years between 1959 and 1964 as a teacher and an authority on issues of early education and child welfare.

At the same time, Shirley was active in the world of politics, inspired by her father, a factory worker who was a dedicated supporter of the rights of trade unions. She joined organizations that pressured candidates to support civil rights (she resigned from one group because the leader failed to give female members more input in decision making), and white dominated political groups, including the League of Women Voters. She started her public service in 1964, running for the Democratic State

Assembly seat to be vacated by Thomas Jones, Brooklyn's second Black assemblyman. Meeting with resistance from the male politicians, Shirley focused her campaign on women voters. She won the party's nomination, and went on to soundly defeat her opponents in the general election. Her first official act was to hire an all-woman staff.

When a seat for the United States House of Representatives for newly reapportioned 12th congressional district (Brooklyn) in 1968 opened up, Shirley saw the opportunity to run for the office and expand her influence. With some early financial support, she opened her campaign with the slogan "Unbought and Unbossed." After an easy victory in the primaries, Shirley topped her male Republican candidate by a surprising two-to-one margin to become the first Black woman elected to Congress. She was the only woman in the freshman class that year.

From January 1969 until her retirement in 1983, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm achieved a reputation as an outspoken force for the poorly served and unfairly treated. She sponsored numerous bills and resolutions on education, families, housing, immigration and labor. This includes legislation for a Farmworkers Bill of Rights, bilingual vocational training, protection of Sioux land and mental health services.

Perhaps the most audacious decision Shirley made in her life was to run as a Democratic contender for the party's 1972 presidential nomination. She was only the second woman ever to run for president (after Senator Margaret Chase Smith who ran in the 1964 election) and the first Black woman. She announced her candidacy at an event in the Americana Hotel in New York City in December of 1971.

"I'm here to tell you tonight, yes, I dare to say I'm going to run for the Presidency of the United States of America!" she proclaimed. She told her audience she was out to prove to the public "that other kinds of people can steer the ship of state besides the white men ... Regardless of the outcome the [people] will have to remember that a little 100-pound woman, Shirley Chisholm, shook things up!"

In addition to Shirley, six men ran in the primary. With so much competition Shirley worked hard and managed to enter the primaries in 14 states. She was the first woman to appear in a United States presidential de-

bate. Despite garnering some 400,000 votes, she came in last.

She had no regrets. After losing the nomination, Shirley explained that she had run for office "in spite of the hopeless odds to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo."

Later she would say, "When I ran for Congress, when I ran for president, I met more discrimination as a woman than for being Black. ... Men think I am trying to take power from them. The Black man must step forward, but that doesn't mean the Black woman must step back."

After retiring from Congress in 1983, Shirley returned to her first love, education, and was named to a special position at the all-women Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. She kept her hand in politics, too, by traveling to speak to minority groups, urging them to take part in local politics to become a greater force in their communities.

She spent her last years in Florida. During that time, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She died on New Year's Day 2005. There followed many accolades and honors, including Presidential Medal of Freedom presented to her grandnephew by President Barack Obama in 2015.

—Eva Moore



Kamala Harris gave a nod to Shirley Chisholm by choosing a poster design using colors and typeface similar to those used on some of Shirley's posters.

## Youth Civics Initiative – New Project for Education Committee

by *Judi Roth, Chair*

A new initiative has been put forth by the State League and the League of New York City. The idea behind this is that young people who get involved in a “civics” project will be more likely to vote and to continue throughout their lives to be interested in influencing government. To put it more succinctly the aim is to “Connect activism to the ballot box”.

How is this to be done? Here are the steps that may be taken:

1. Identify non-profit organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations that have openings for volunteers and interns that the League, as middle-women, can showcase for young adults.
2. Contact teachers we have worked with before to identify the “activists” in their classes who are seeking such opportunities.
3. Contact other organizations that work with young people such as I-Tri, the Southampton Youth program, etc. to have them become a part of this initiative.
4. Use Instagram and the existing Youth Civics Initiative (YCI) to post the volunteer opportunities.

5. Have the interested students sign up with YCI to learn of local and regional opportunities.

6. Emphasize the opportunity for networking with other young people and people who run these organizations – also the chance to find information for careers and jobs.

On the Zoom program that Terri Wildrick and I attended, it was said that young people are particularly interested in the environment, racial justice, LGBTQ issues, and gun control. Moving those ideas to our area leads us to think of contacting the following organizations:

- The Group for the East End – which has a very vibrant website with lots of opportunities for environmental action
- The Peconic Land Trust – lots of chances for teaching groups
- The Anti-Bias Task Force of both East Hampton and Southampton
- The Accabonac Protection Committee
- Drawdown East End

A Zoom meeting to discuss this project with the State was scheduled for November.

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### NOT A MEMBER? JOIN OR DONATE NOW

Membership Dues /\_ / \$60 Individual /\_ / \$90 Household /\_ / No Charge Full-time Student /\_ / \$\_\_\_ Donation

Dues Year is June 1 through May 31.

Questions? Call us at 631-324-4637. Send this form and payment option (with check or credit card information) to League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937. Make checks payable to LWVH.

Individual Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Household Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in these committees: \_\_\_\_\_

/\_ / Check or /\_ / Credit Card  
Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVC # \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



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## Suffolk County Voter

*continued from p. 5*

The Independent Redistricting Commission can curb gerrymandering through increased public input, accountability and transparent processes. We urge the legislature to ensure that the commission follows open meetings laws and allows for ample citizen input at the twelve public hearings that are required and as the plans are drafted. The success of New York's first independent redistricting commission hinges on whether the legislature can provide adequate support and allow sufficient independence for the newly formed maps commission. *by Nancy Marr*

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# The Voter

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