



THE VOTER

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork

Founded in 1977

Volume XL No. 41

July - September 2025

LWV Hosted Voter Info Tables At Sites All Over East End This Fall

by *Arlene Hinkemeyer*

Our League's Voter Services Committee under Neil Cohen and committee sub-heads hosted voter information tables at multiple events this fall, fanning out all over the East End. These included farmers markets in August; the East End Disabilities Associates Fair in Riverhead on September 10; the Sag HarborFest tables on LongWharf organized by Rachael Foggo on September 13-14; National Voter Registration Day tables organized on September 16 by Tracy Grathwohl; and Southampton Town's Anti-Bias Task Force Picnic in Red Creek Park on September 20.

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Terry Wildrick and Tracy Grathwohl outside Panera's in Hampton Bays on National Voter Registration Day.

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Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork is 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.

The Voter is published four times a year: Jan-Mar/Apr-June; July-September, and October-December by the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island, and the North Fork
P.O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937

Arlene Hinkemeyer, Interim Editor
Lianne Alcon, Design & Production
Arlene Hinkemeyer, Photographer; Advertising Manager

Printed on recycled paper.

Co-President's Message

The summer passed quickly, and fall is the busiest time of year for LWV. Thank you to the many members who staffed voter information and registration tables at farmers markets and festivals throughout the East End over the summer. September 16 was National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), and again, our League was available in many places in our towns. Our highly effective Voter Services Committee, led by Neil Cohen and Tracy Grathwohl organized our tables for the day. Twenty-four volunteers distributed 26 voter registration forms, and hundreds of pieces of literature including the current Directory of Public Officials, a list of elections in the towns and the two propositions, a flyer on our September School Board forum, a handout on our five October debates, and LWV membership brochures. It was more difficult this year to obtain permission to have tables at certain locations, with local managers referring us to corporate managers.

On Thursday, September 18, our League hosted a free forum titled "School Boards, the Training Wheels of Democracy: What You Should Know and How to Get Involved" at East Hampton LTV Studios in Wainscott. Moderated by LWV Board member Andrea Gabor, the panelists included Robert Vecchio, executive director of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Ass'n; Assemblyman Tommy John Schiavoni, a former Sag Harbor school board trustee; Germain Smith, a Southampton school board trustee and member of the Shinnecock nation; and Kate Rossi-Snook, a recent Shelter Island school board trustee. The receptive audience asked thoughtful questions. This was our first attempt at holding an in-person meeting with live interpretation in Spanish. With the exception of a glitch that caused a gap in the sound, it went smoothly. We thank Leydy Merced of Central Corazon de Maria for donating her time. The forum will also be available to Spanish speakers on YouTube.

You might have heard about the recent policy decision to ban nonprofit organizations from registering voters at naturalization ceremonies conducted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Fortunately, the ban does not include citizenship ceremonies conducted by the Federal Courts. We have historically provided voter registration forms at citizenship ceremonies at the Federal Courthouse in Islip and will continue to do so unless the situation changes. These ceremonies include hundreds of new citizens, and we often bring 50 or more voter registration forms to the Board of Elections on our way home. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend this hopeful, heartwarming ceremony, please think about making it a goal for this year.

LWVUS announced that we are an official partner of the No Kings 2 Rally on October 18. We are in solidarity with partners to stand up against hate and authoritarianism. It is likely that we will continue to partner in future protest activities. While we cannot control the messages of other organizations, our message is always nonpartisan. As part of Unite and Rise 8.5, we should have a League presence at these nonpartisan rallies to protect our democracy, and we must keep our message focused on issues, not candidates or parties. Please make an effort to coordinate with other League members to wear similar attire or a LWV pin or sash so that our presence will be noticeable.

By the time you read this, the voter registration deadline will have passed, debates will have ended, and early voting will have begun. We hope that our countless hours of work will encourage high turnout by informed voters.

From the entire Board of Directors, best wishes for a happy holiday season.

Terese Wildrick, Co-President

Mensaje del Co-Presidente

El verano pasó rápidamente, y el otoño es la época más ocupada del año para la LWV. Agradecemos a los numerosos miembros que atendieron las mesas de información y registro de votantes en los mercados agrícolas y festivales de todo el East End durante el verano. El 16 de septiembre fue el Día Nacional de Registro de Votantes (NVRD), y nuevamente nuestra Liga estuvo presente en muchos lugares de nuestros municipios.

Nuestro eficaz Comité de Servicios al Votante, dirigido por Neil Cohen y Tracy Grathwohl, organizó nuestras mesas para esa jornada. Veinticuatro voluntarios distribuyeron 26 formularios de registro de votantes y cientos de folletos, entre ellos el Directorio Actual de Funcionarios Públicos, una lista de elecciones locales y las dos proposiciones, un folleto sobre nuestro foro de juntas escolares de septiembre, un documento informativo sobre nuestros cinco debates de octubre y folletos de afiliación a la LWV.

Este año fue más difícil obtener permiso para colocar mesas en ciertos lugares, ya que los responsables locales nos remitían a los gerentes corporativos. El jueves 18 de septiembre, nuestra Liga organizó un foro gratuito titulado “Las Juntas Escolares, las Ruedas de Entrenamiento de la Democracia: Lo que Debes Saber y Cómo Participar”, celebrado en los estudios LTV de East Hampton, en Wainscott. Moderado por la miembro de la Junta de la LWV, Andrea Gabor, el panel contó con la participación de Robert Vecchio, director ejecutivo de la Asociación de Juntas Escolares de Nassau-Suffolk; el asambleísta Tommy John Schiavoni, exmiembro de la junta escolar de Sag Harbor; Germain Smith, miembro de la junta escolar de Southampton y miembro de la nación Shinnecock; y Kate Rossi-Snook, exmiembro de la junta escolar de Shelter Island.

El público, muy receptivo, formuló preguntas reflexivas. Este fue nuestro primer intento de realizar una reunión presencial con interpretación simultánea al español. Con la excepción de un pequeño fallo técnico que provocó una interrupción en el sonido, todo transcurrió sin problemas. Agradecemos a Leydy Merced, de Central Corazón de María, por donar su tiempo. El foro también estará disponible en YouTube para los hispanohablantes.

Es posible que hayas oído hablar de la reciente decisión de política que prohíbe a las organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro registrar votantes en las ceremonias de naturalización llevadas a cabo por el Servicio de Ciudadanía e Inmigración de EE. UU. (USCIS). Afortunadamente, la prohibición no incluye las ceremonias de ciudadanía que se celebran en los Tribunales Federales. Históricamente, hemos

proporcionado formularios de registro de votantes en las ceremonias de ciudadanía en el Tribunal Federal de Islip y continuaremos haciéndolo mientras la situación no cambie.

Estas ceremonias reúnen a cientos de nuevos ciudadanos, y con frecuencia llevamos 50 o más formularios de registro de votantes a la Junta Electoral de camino a casa. Si aún no has tenido la oportunidad de asistir a esta emotiva y esperanzadora ceremonia, te animamos a que te lo propongas como objetivo para este año.

La LWVUS anunció que somos socio oficial de la manifestación No Kings 2, que se celebrará el 18 de octubre. Nos unimos en solidaridad con nuestros socios para oponernos al odio y al autoritarismo. Es probable que sigamos participando en futuras actividades de protesta. Aunque no podemos controlar los mensajes de otras organizaciones, nuestro mensaje es siempre apartidista.

Como parte de Unite and Rise 8.5, deberíamos tener presencia de la Liga en estas manifestaciones apartidistas para proteger nuestra democracia, manteniendo siempre nuestro mensaje centrado en los temas y no en los candidatos ni en los partidos. Por favor, procura coordinarte con otros miembros de la Liga para vestir de forma similar o llevar un pin o banda de la LWV, de modo que nuestra presencia sea visible.

Cuando leas esto, el plazo de registro de votantes ya habrá finalizado, los debates habrán concluido y la votación anticipada habrá comenzado. Esperamos que nuestras innumerables horas de trabajo fomenten una alta participación de votantes bien informados. En nombre de toda la Junta Directiva, os deseamos unas felices fiestas.

Terese Wildrick, Co-presidenta

Correction from April/May/June Voter:

Judi Roth reports that the quote she attributed to Glorian Berk, describing the No Kings Rally on June 14 in Manhattan, was actually given by Andrea Gabor.

LWV Hosted Voter Info Tables At Sites All Over East End This Fall

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Ursula Lynch and Ed Salsberg at the Westhampton Beach Farmers Market in August.



Ellen Goldstein and Rachael Foggo at Sag Harbor Fest on September 14.



Neil Cohen, Mary O'Brien and Sharon Lewis at the East End Disabilities Associates Fair in Riverhead on September 10.



Marian Zucker and Alicia Sullivan at Sag Harbor Fest on September 14.



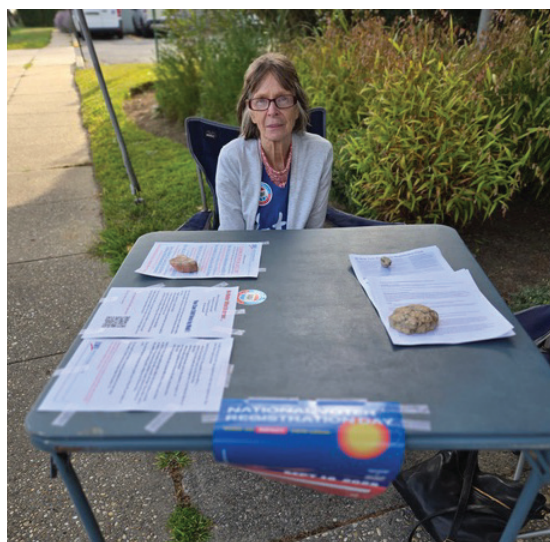
Donna Vallone and Ed Salsberg at Southampton Town's Anti-Bias Task Force Picnic at Red Creek Park on September 20.



Neil Cohen, Marian Zucker and Alicia Sullivan at the Springs Farmers Market, Ashawagh Hall, August 23.

Voter Info Tables Blanket East End for Nat'l Voter Registration Day, September 16

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Eva Moore (and Estelle Gellman taking photo) outside the Montauk Post Office.



NVR Day: Mary Pellicane and Louise Muzio at the Westhampton Library.



NVR Day: Renee Charles and Arlene Hinkemeyer outside the East Hampton Post Office.



NVR Day: Alexis Mayer and Glorian Berk outside Southhampton's Rogers Memorial Library.



NVR Day: Sue Blair and Keelin Carlos outside Schiavoni's in Sag Harbor.



NVR Day: Stacy Menzer and Eileen Mercer outside the Bridgehampton Post Office.

LWV Held September 18 Forum at LTV on “School Boards, the Training Wheels of Democracy”

By Arlene Hinkemeyer

It was a primer not to be missed, when our League held a forum on September 18 at East Hampton Town’s LTV Studios in Wainscott on “School Boards, the Training Wheels of Democracy: What You Should Know and How to Get Involved.”

Months in the making by LWV Board members Andrea Gabor and Cathy Kenny, it was moderated by Andrea Gabor, the Bloomberg Professor of Business Journalism at Baruch College/CUNY, who is also a former Bloomberg Opinion education columnist and author of “After the Education Wars.”

Invited to attend were all the school board trustees in all 20 school districts on Long Island’s East End. The panelists, all veteran school board members, included Assemblyman Tommy John Schiavoni, a

former high school social studies teacher and Sag Harbor school board trustee; Robert Vecchio, a former William Floyd school board trustee and the executive director of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association, which oversees the school boards on Long Island; Germain Smith, a current Southampton school board trustee and member of the Shinnecock Nation; and Kate Rossi Snook, a recent Shelter Island school board trustee.

Introducing the forum topic, Ms. Gabor explained that today “public education faces a host of challenges—culture wars over everything from masks to mascots to gender issues, privatization, the need to provide a host of services for underprivileged students, and the federal government’s plans to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education.”



The panel included, left to right, recent Shelter Island school board trustee Kate Rossi-Snook, Assemblyman Tommy John Schiavoni, Southampton school board trustee Germain Smith, Nassau-Suffolk School Board Association executive director Bob Vecchio, LWV moderator Andrea Gabor, and LWV program co-chair Cathy Ann Kenny.

Local school boards, she said, serve two important functions—“to represent the concerns of citizens, taxpayers and parents to school administrators, and to represent the needs of students and schools to citizen stakeholders. They also frequently serve as a stepping stone for higher elected office and thus serve as the training wheels of our democracy.”

Each of the panelists discussed why they decided to run for office (most were asked), how eliminating the U.S. Department of Education will affect their district (not entirely clear yet, though cuts to Special Education and Native American education are expected), whether school board members should be paid (it’s an unpaid “priceless” volunteer job with a huge time commitment, but everyone can bring something to the table), and the enrollment and educational challenges the small East End school districts are dealing with now (most enrollments are declining, and they all face challenges educating Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students and those with mental health issues after COVID). All were opposed to vouchers, because they take funds away from public schools. In conclusion, the panelists all recounted their most

satisfying experiences and thought serving on a school board was one of the most rewarding things they have ever done. They encouraged more residents to attend school board meetings and to consider running for office for this important “training wheel for democracy.”

This year for the first time, each school district in NYS with a high school is required to include a student as an ex officio member of its school board to represent student views. The two student reps from the Southampton School District—Noah Kent and Mateya Silvera—were in the audience, and all will be invited to the LWV Youth Committee’s “Running and Winning” program for high school juniors and seniors on November 19.

For those who missed this outstanding forum, excellent coverage was provided by reporter Steve Kotz in the Express News Group’s papers afterwards, and the complete program is available for viewing on LTV’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/LTVEastHampton. A Spanish translation by Leydy Merced, executive director of Centro Corazon de Maria in Hampton Bays, is also expected online.



Attending from the East Hampton School District Board were trustees, left to right, vice president Sarah Minardi, president James (J.P.) Foster and vice president Christina DeSanti.



Attending from Southampton School District Board were, left to right, student rep Noah Kent, Board trustee Monique Proctor, student rep Mateya Silvera and Board trustee Germain Smith.

NOT A MEMBER?

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN US!

To join the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork in NYS, go to our website – LWVHSINF.org – and click on the JOIN button. Follow the prompts and be sure to indicate that you wish to be a member of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork. The recommended dues is \$75. We look forward to having you join us. *From Membership Co-Chairs Estelle Gellman and Ursula Lynch*

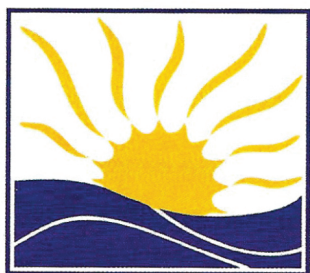
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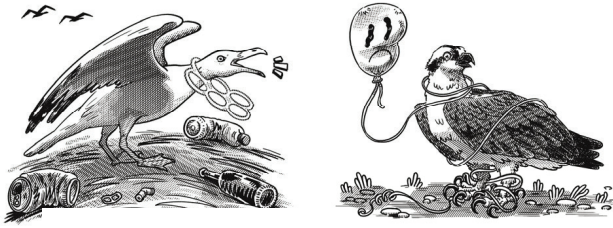
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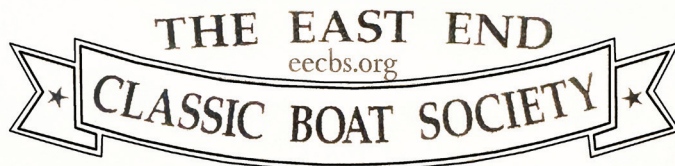
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Prior Results Do Not Guarantee A Similar Outcome

LWVNYS and LWVUS Announce Consensus Study Results

by *Arlene Hinkemeyer*

This summer the State and National Leagues announced the results of the consensus studies that were conducted last spring in Leagues across the state and nation. Leagues will now be able to lobby on these new positions.

LWVNYS New Positions

On February 10, we held a consensus meeting at the Bridgehampton library on the LWVNYS consensus questions, and we thank the two committees who studied and presented the information to our membership—Sharon Lewis, Julia Mead and Stacy Menzer (all poll workers) on the topic of the NYS Board of Elections process of approving voting machines; and Rachel Foggo, Andrea Gabor, Cathy Kenny, Kathy Mulcahy, Donna Vallone and Susan Wilson on the topic of ranked choice voting (RCV) and the use of non-partisan primaries to elect federal, state and local officials. In June the LWVNYS Board announced the adoption of its new positions at the state convention in Albany.

A. As a result of the consensus study of the first topic by Leagues throughout the state, it announced “The League of Women Voters of New York State believes that a more transparent and open voting systems approval process would improve voter understanding of and confidence in our elections. It supports greater transparency and public input in the approval process, including increased demonstrations open to the public, followed by comment periods. Public demonstrations should be scheduled to provide public input earlier in the certification process.”

B. As a result of the consensus study on the second topic,

it announced “The League of Women Voters of New York State supports the use of ranked-choice voting (a.k.a. instant runoff voting) in primary, general and/or special elections to elect federal, state and/or local officials. With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important, and funding for startup and voter education should be allocated.

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports changing from a closed partisan primary system to a primary system, including a nonpartisan primary system, that allows all registered voters to participate, regardless of party affiliation or lack thereof. We support the use of nonpartisan primaries to elect federal, state and local officials.”

New LWVUS Position on Federal Judiciary

In June, the LWVUS Board announced the adoption of the new League position on the Federal Judiciary, after 321 Leagues representing 45 states and D.C. participated in the study. This position, says the League, “now enables it to act on legislative and executive efforts towards its reformation.”

We thank Tracy Grathwohl, Renee Charles and Marian Zucker who led the study in our League and conducted the consensus meeting on March 18 at the Bridgehampton library.

In summary, the LWVUS Consensus states that “the overarching principles of transparency, accountability, independence and ethics are essential to an effective federal judiciary. These principles are not only essential for a strong democracy but foster public trust in the federal judiciary and adherence to the rule of law, the essence of our constitutional democracy.”

Specifically, “The LWVUS supports the essential principles of:

- . Transparency: Federal court documents, proceedings and rulings, including those in ‘shadow docket’ cases, should be open and available to the public within the bounds of the law, recognizing the need for limited exceptions, such as legally protected sensitive information.

- . Accountability: Federal judges and Justices should be held legally liable and ethically responsible for the integrity of their actions, with enforceable consequences for violations.

- . Independence: Federal judges and Justices should act in accordance with the Constitution and statutory and case law, free from the influence of the other branches of government and free from shifting popular and political opinion.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The new ExpressVote XL touch screen voting machine that Suffolk County is expected to use for next June’s primary election.

. Ethics: Federal judges and Justices should adhere to ethical standards of conduct that apply universally at all levels of the federal courts. There should be a meaningful enforcement process with judges and Justices subject to penalties for failure to comply with the standards.”

“The League believes that standards of conduct for federal judges and Justices should include requirements to disclose non-judicial income; other financial benefits including, but not limited to, gifts and hospitality; and investment holdings. Federal judges, Justices, and their partners or spouses should be subject to penalties for failure to disclose accurately and in a timely manner. The League believes that standards of conduct should include a process that requires a judge or Justice to recuse themselves upon evidence that a bias or reasonable perception of a bias exists for or against any party or issue raised in a case. A judge’s or Justice’s decision and rationale not to recuse, despite evidence raised in the court proceedings, should be disclosed in the court’s record.

The League believes that respect for precedent (stare decisis) under most circumstances contributes to a strong democracy and promotes predictability and stability of law. Stare decisis does not mean precedents cannot or should not be overruled, but that such instances should occur in exceptional circumstances. The League believes that the elements of this position contribute to judicial integrity and are essential to a strong democracy. These elements exemplify what the League expects from the federal courts, building trust and buttressing the Courts’ legitimacy. Adherence to the principles of accountability, transparency, independence and ethics ensures both a strong federal judiciary and a stronger democracy.”



U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington D.C.

Voter Info Tables Blanket East End for Nat'l Voter Registration Day, September 16

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Ethel Sussman and Queen Bell at Riverhead Library.



Sharon Lewis (and Mary O'Brien taking photo) outside Hampton Bays Stop & Shop.



Tracy Grathwohl and Stephanie Snider outside the Southampton Stop & Shop.

Stay Tuned

Look for coverage of our five October candidate debates in the 4th Quarter Issue (October/November/December) of the Voter.

LWVH/SI/NF Board

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