



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. 42

October - December 2025



Co-President Arlene Hinkemeyer, left, with the three presenters at this year's Holiday Gathering on December 16—LWV members Anne Seelbach, Jacqui Lofaro and Tracy Grathwohl—who spoke about their work in creative fields.

LWV Holiday Party Draws Big Crowd

By Arlene Hinkemeyer

Our League's Holiday Gathering on December 16 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bridgehampton drew a crowd of nearly 50 members. Delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts organized by Mary O'Brien and Sharon Lewis were provided by the LWV Board, and a silent auction and basket auction were organized by LWV Board members Terri Levin Davgin and Marian Zucker. As is our League's custom, we asked members to bring checks for the food pantry of their choice and were pleased to raise \$975 for seven East End food pantries.

(Continued on pages 13, 14)

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Southampton's Rogers Memorial Library
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The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, 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, Shelter Island, and North Fork 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 the Town of Southampton, East Hampton, Shelter Island, and the North Fork, 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
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Co-President's Message

Volunteer to Join Board in 2026

Terry and I hope you had a happy holiday, and after one of the busiest falls ever for our League, we hope all are ready to begin work anew in this New Year of 2026. We will need several new Board members to fill open positions as Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Voter Services, so we hope many of you will volunteer for these important jobs to our Nominating Committee chair Mary O'Brien, mobrien42@verizon.net or the other four members of the committee—Glorian Berk, Neil Cohen, Dale Grant or Kathleen Mulcahy—as they prepare the slate to be voted on at our Annual Meeting. Our Board meetings take place on Zoom on the first Wednesday of every month at 4 p.m.

250th Anniversary in 2026

2026 is the year when our nation is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence—the semiquincentennial, 1776-2026—when many events throughout the nation are planned, including a Suffolk County 250th Anniversary Passport, to encourage residents to visit landmarks, museums and historic sites that tell the story of Long Island's role in the nation's fight for independence. It includes, of course, the 613-acre William Floyd Estate in Mastic Beach, the former home of Floyd, who was the only signer of the Declaration of Independence from Long Island, and one of only four from NYS.

New Election Procedures in 2026 Elections

2026 is also the year when the New York State primary election takes place on June 23 (with new voting machines expected to come into use) and when the mid-term Congressional, NYS Governor, State Senate & Assembly, and now town elections, too, all take place on general election day, November 3. As a result of the NYS Legislature's passage of a bill to eliminate odd-year elections for most local offices, we will have an even larger number of candidate debates to hold in the fall of 2026 than the record five we held in the fall of 2025.

Important Federal and State Victories for LWV

On October 31, a federal court ruled in *League of Women Voters Education Fund v. Trump* to permanently block a provision of his executive order that would require the showing of a passport or similar document proving citizenship when registering to vote, with the court saying that election procedures rest with Congress and the states.

On December 12, Governor Kathy Hochel signed the ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) bill into law, for which LWVNY and 40 local NYS Leagues including ours, sent a special letter urging her to sign. The bill, already adopted by 26 other states, uses data from state voter files, DMV records, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Social Security Administration to help election officials clean up voter rolls by identifying cross-state movers, in-state updates, deceased voters, etc.

Leagues continue to have a lot of important work to do. We need your help and send every best wish to all for the New Year,

Arlene Hinkemeyer

Mensaje del Co-Presidente

Voluntario/a para unirse a la Junta Directiva en 2026

Terry y yo esperamos que hayan tenido unas felices fiestas y, después de uno de los otoños más ocupados que ha tenido nuestra Liga, esperamos que todos estén listos para comenzar a trabajar de nuevo en este Año Nuevo de 2026. Necesitaremos varios nuevos miembros de la Junta Directiva para cubrir los cargos vacantes de Vicepresidente, Secretario, Tesorero y Servicios al Votante, por lo que esperamos que muchos de ustedes se ofrezcan como voluntarios para estos importantes puestos contactando a la presidenta del Comité de Nominaciones, Mary O'Brien, mobrien42@verizon.net, o a los otros cuatro miembros del comité —Glorian Berk, Neil Cohen, Dale Grant o Kathleen Mulcahy— mientras preparan la lista de candidatos que se someterá a votación en nuestra Reunión Anual. Nuestras reuniones de la Junta Directiva se realizan por Zoom el primer miércoles de cada mes a las 4 p. m.

250.º Aniversario en 2026

2026 es el año en que nuestra nación celebra el 250.º aniversario de la firma de la Declaración de Independencia —el semiquincentenario, 1776-2026—, cuando se planifican muchos eventos en todo el país, incluido el Pasaporte del 250.º Aniversario del Condado de Suffolk, para alentar a los residentes a visitar monumentos, museos y sitios históricos que cuentan la historia del papel de Long Island en la lucha de la nación por la independencia. Esto incluye, por supuesto, la finca William Floyd de 613 acres en Mastic Beach, la antigua residencia de Floyd, quien fue el único firmante de la Declaración de Independencia de Long Island y uno de solo cuatro del estado de Nueva York.

Nuevos procedimientos electorales en las elecciones de 2026

2026 también es el año en que la elección primaria del estado de Nueva York se llevará a cabo el 23 de junio (con la entrada en uso prevista de nuevas máquinas de votación) y cuando las elecciones de medio término

para el Congreso, el gobernador del estado de Nueva York, el Senado y la Asamblea estatales, y ahora también las elecciones municipales, se realizarán todas el día de las elecciones generales, el 3 de noviembre. Como resultado de la aprobación por parte de la Legislatura del estado de Nueva York de un proyecto de ley para eliminar las elecciones en años impares para la mayoría de los cargos locales, tendremos un número aún mayor de debates de candidatos en el otoño de 2026 que el récord de cinco que realizamos en el otoño de 2025.

Importantes victorias federales y estatales para la LWV

El 31 de octubre, un tribunal federal dictaminó en *League of Women Voters Education Fund v. Trump* bloquear permanentemente una disposición de su orden ejecutiva que habría exigido la presentación de un pasaporte o un documento similar que comprobara la ciudadanía al registrarse para votar, señalando el tribunal que los procedimientos electorales corresponden al Congreso y a los estados.

El 12 de diciembre, la gobernadora Kathy Hochul promulgó la ley ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center), para lo cual LWVNYS y 40 Ligas locales del estado de Nueva York, incluida la nuestra, enviaron una carta especial instándola a firmarla. La ley, ya adoptada por otros 26 estados, utiliza datos de los archivos estatales de votantes, registros del DMV, el Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos y la Administración del Seguro Social para ayudar a los funcionarios electorales a depurar los padrones electorales mediante la identificación de personas que se mudaron entre estados, actualizaciones dentro del estado, votantes fallecidos, etc.

Las Ligas continúan teniendo mucho trabajo importante por hacer. Necesitamos su ayuda y enviamos nuestros mejores deseos a todos para el Año Nuevo.

Arlene Hinkemeyer

NOT A MEMBER or TIME TO RENEW?

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN US!

To join or rejoin 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*

LWV Hosts a Record Five Candidate Debates in October

By Arlene Hinkemeyer

Our League made an effort to extend our reach more deeply into the North Fork this fall and as a result, hosted a record five county legislative and town candidate debates in October, before the November 4 general elections.

Our outstanding Voter Services Committee chair Neil Cohen, who sadly is leaving our Board, thanks all who made this possible—the debate organizers Mary Pellicane, Valerie Levenstein, Ena Pappas and Alicia Sullivan; the moderators Cathy Kenny, Judi Roth,

Estelle Gellman, Terry Wildrick and Jo-Ann Robotti; the timekeepers Eileen Mercer and Mary O'Brien; the shadows Ellen Goldstein, Kathleen Mulcahy and Stephanie Snider; the question vetters Glorian Berk, Susan Wilson, Estelle and Kathleen; and Arlene Hinkemeyer, who did set-up with SEA-TV and LTV, and publicity news releases and flyers.

Fall of 2026 will see an even larger need for candidate debates, as November 2026 will bring elections not only for U.S. Congress, NYS Senate and Assembly, as before, but also local elections, which have been moved by the NYS legislature from odd-numbered to even-numbered years.



League of Women Voters Debate County 2nd Legislative District

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At the Monday, October 6, 7 p.m. virtual debate for Suffolk County Legislature, 2nd L.D., on SEA-TV's YouTube channel, Estelle Gellman (top left) served as LWV moderator, Eileen Mercer (top right) as LWV timekeeper, for candidates Raheem Soto (R) and Ann Welker (D). Welker was re-elected.



East Hampton Town Council Candidates Debate | October 15, 2025 | LWV

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East Hampton Town's LTV hosted the virtual debate on Wednesday, October 15, 7 p.m. on YouTube for the three candidates running for two seats on the East Hampton Town Board—Ian Calder-Piedmonte (D), Cate Rogers (D) and J.P. Foster (R). Incumbents Calder-Piedmonte and Rogers were the winners. Terry Wildrick, left, served as LWV moderator, and Eileen Mercer (top center) as timekeeper.



The Candidate Forum on Shelter Island took place live on Sunday, October 19, at Shelter Island School for the candidates for Town Supervisor, Town Council, Town Clerk and Town Superintendent of Highways. Jo-Ann Robotti served as moderator. The forum was later aired on the Town's Channel 22 and YouTube.



The Southold Town “Meet the Candidates” Forum took place live on Thursday, October 23, 7 p.m. at Peconic Landing in Greenport for the six candidates running for the Southold and Fishers Island Town Council seats—Christopher Talbott (R), Nicholas Planamento (R), Stephanie Hall (R), Brian Mealy (D), Kate Stevens (D) and Alex Suess (D). LWV moderator was Judi Roth (at podium); Eileen Mercer was timekeeper.



Monday, October 20, 7 p.m. was the SEA-TV virtual debate on YouTube for the three Southampton Town Council candidates—Rick Martel (R), Cynthia McNamara (R) and Tom Neely (D)—running for two seats, with McNamara and Neely as the winners. Serving as LWV moderator was Cathy Kenny (top left) and as LWV timekeeper, Mary O'Brien (top center).

LWV Southampton Town Board Debate 10/20/25



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LWV Holds New Member Gathering on October 30th

*By Ursula Lynch,
Membership Co-Chair*

Membership Committee co-chairs Estelle Gellman and Ursula Lynch held a New Member Gathering on October 30, 5-7 p.m., at Southampton's Rogers Memorial Library to get to know new members better and familiarize them with our League. Despite the terrible weather, six new members were able to attend. Co-President Arlene Hinkemeyer and committee chairs spoke about their programs and events, while League positions on the national, state and local levels were explained



At the New Member Gathering, Membership Co-Chairs Ursula Lynch and Estelle Gellman, standing, welcomed, left to right: new members Megan Noonan, Sarah Hussain, Heather LoNigro, Marianne Goerges, Margo Manukian and Jackie Leopold.

by Co-President Terry Wildrick and Membership Co-Chair Estelle Gellman.

At gathering's end, attendees also enjoyed refreshments and socializing.

Youth Committee's "Running & Winning" Focuses on Running for School Boards (Continued on next page)

By Arlene Hinkemeyer

Piggybacking on the Government Committee's forum titled "School Boards, the Training Wheels of Democracy," moderated by Chair Andrea Gabor at LTV Studios on September 18, the Youth Committee also chose that title this year for its "Running & Winning" program at the Water Mill Community House on November 19.

The program focused on how to run for School Boards, since this year for the first time, every school district with a high school in NYS was required to select a student to serve as an ex officio member of its Board, to provide student input.

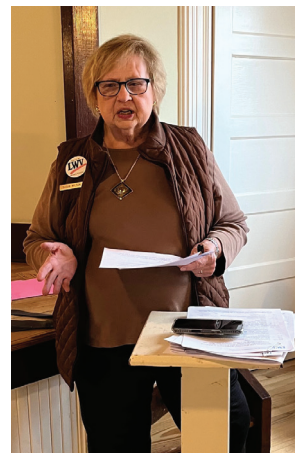
Nearly 40 students attended R&W this year from seven

East End high schools—East Hampton, Greenport, Hampton Bays, Mattituck-Cutchogue, Sag Harbor's Pierson High, Southampton and Westhampton Beach—including eight of the new student ex officio school board members.

After a welcome and opening remarks by Youth Committee chair Susan Wilson, Co-President Arlene Hinkemeyer introduced the six school board trustees and the eight student board members attending.

Kathleen Mulcahy introduced the three featured speakers—Kathee Burke-Gonzalez, a former Springs School Board President who is now East Hampton Town Supervisor; Brian Mealy, former Mattituck-Cutchogue School Board trustee, now Southold Town Councilman; and Suzanne Mensch, recent Westhampton Beach School Board President. They spoke about why and how they ran for office; the important responsibilities and challenges of a School Board member, such as creating all district policies, hiring a Superintendent of Schools, and presenting a Proposed Budget every year for a May public vote, with a 2% tax cap.

Students then had a chance to ask questions of the



Youth Committee chair Susan Wilson kicks off the program, welcoming all.



Youth Committee members Eileen Mercer and Ursula Lynch check in the East Hampton students, who are the first high school to arrive.



Youth Committee member Kathleen Mulcahy, standing right, introduces the three featured speakers—Kathee Burke-Gonzalez, Suzanne Mensch and Brian Mealy.



The other school board members attending were, left to right, Pat Arslanian (Mattituck-Cutchogue S.B. President), Dr. Carolyn Probst (Westhampton Beach Sup't of Schools), Sandra Vorpahl (East Hampton), Ruth White-Dunne (Southampton), Monique Proctor (Southampton) and Dawn Hedberg (Shelter Island).

(Continued from previous page)

school board members. And the student ex officio board members also spoke about what they felt their responsibilities were in bridging the gap between students and the administration, and in collecting information to bring to the Board. After the group session, students interviewed the school



The student ex officio school board members attending were, left to right, Stella Brecker (East Hampton), Faith Welch (Greenport), Laurel Richards (Mattituck), Brooke Walling (Mattituck), Estefani Gomez (Mattituck), Emily Edwards (Westhampton Beach), Mateya Silvera (Southampton) and Nico Grazina (Westhampton Beach).

board members who served as a resource at their tables. Then each table of students prepared a campaign to run for a school board position, and after lunch presented it to the entire group. Hopefully, as is its purpose, R&W will encourage students to consider running for office some day!



Table 5 presents its school board campaign to the group.



LWV Youth Committee members gather for a group photo at program's end—left to right, Terry Wildrick, Susan Wilson, Mary Pellicane (seated), Ursula Lynch, Sarah Hussain, Rev. Kimberly Johnson, Eileen Mercer, Kathleen Mulcahy, Arlene Hinkemeyer. Not in photo, who also worked on the event, Nada Barry, Anne Marshall, Martha Potter, Judi Roth, Stephanie Snider.

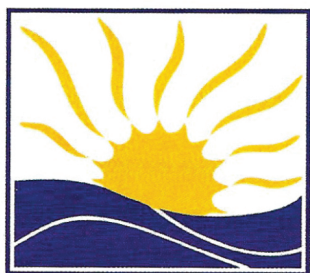
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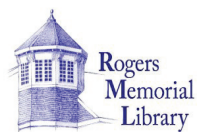
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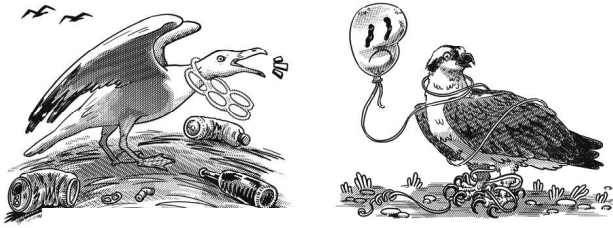
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Prior Results Do Not Guarantee A Similar Outcome

LWV Holiday Party Draws Big Crowd

(Continued from page 1)



Roland Baer and Renee Charles gather with Mary O'Brien and Sharon Lewis who made the food, drink and dessert arrangements.



Ed Salsberg and Donna Vallone with new Southampton Town Councilman Tom Neely.



Terri Levin Davgin and Marian Zucker, who headed the silent auction and basket auction items for the party.

In introducing the evening's program, Co-President Arlene Hinkemeyer reviewed the League's busy fall schedule: the Voter Services Committee's intensive voter registration/information efforts in September; the Government Committee's September 18 forum at LTV Studios on "School Boards, the Training Wheels of Democracy"; the Voter Services Committee's five live or virtual SEA-TV/LTV debates in October; some members' attendance at "No Kings" rallies; and the Youth Committee's "Running & Winning" program on Nov. 19.

At the party, Arlene then introduced a program of short, upbeat presentations by three LWV members in creative occupations—Tracy Grathwohl, an attorney who transitioned into becoming a local newspaper humor columnist; artist Anne Seelbach, who has held art residencies abroad and shows regularly at Long Island galleries; and filmmaker Jacqui Lofaro, who became founder/executive director of Hamptons Doc Fest, which celebrated its 18th year, with 33 films December 4-11 at theaters in Sag Harbor and Southampton. Jacqui has a long history with the League, having served as its president from 1993-97 and then headed Suffolk County LWV, too. All in attendance were encouraged to volunteer for League work and also positions on the Board, to continue its many community involvements.

(Continued on next page)



Martha and Mark Potter, members, and Rev. Kimberly Johnson, minister, of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, where the party was held.

(Continued from previous page)



Lisa Michne, Stacy Menzer, Valerie King and Susan Wilson.



Grania Brolin and Jackie Leopold.



Eileen Mercer, Howard and Judi Roth, Mary Pellicane.



Bob Riskin and Estelle Gellman.



Sarah Hussain, Ursula Lynch, Jacqui Lofaro.



Nada Barry, Bob and Anne Marshall.

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