

# INSIDE THE LEAGUE

SUMMER 2018 EDITION



## Celebrating 2018 by Beth Kelley

The Annual Meeting was held in a beautiful space at the Society for Ethical Culture on June 7th. Annual League business included approving the annual budget, voting on changes to the bylaws, and nominating and approving officers. We also honored long-time leaders for their service.

Past-Presidents Robin Bahr and Laura Altschuler received awards of appreciation. Robin was President when the 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred. Laura has been in the League since 1973 and was President from 1987-1991. Other League leaders stepping down from the Board who were honored include Kate Doran, Sheila Hosni, Edna Rosen, Nancy Schwartz, and Mary Anne Sullivan. Like Laura and Robin, these women have served in a variety of roles over many years. Adrienne Kivelson, Tiana Leonard, and Judy Tashji were thanked for their updates to "What Makes New York City Run?" and "They Represent You."

Kate Doran of the Bylaws Committee spoke about changes to the bylaws. An amendment was passed to reduce the size of the Board of Directors. All of the officer nominations listed in the pre-meeting packet passed and the proposed budget also passed.

Jennifer Rodgers, of Columbia Law's Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity, our keynote speaker at the event, discussed the Center's mission to assemble a community whose goal is a corruption-free government. She offered her reflections on current events, and there was a lively question and answer session. Thank you to the officers, members and staff who helped to make this year's annual meeting a success!



*L to R: Ruth Altman, Jennifer Rodgers, Cathy Gray*

## LWVNYC Honors CPJ at Awards Breakfast by Barbara Ettington

"We strongly believe that the press is the lifeblood of our democracy," said Ruth S. Altman, Co-president, on June 21st, as she opened the League's 2018 Breakfast Awards Program. This year's honoree was the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) for the work they do in their fight to protect the freedom of the press.

Catherine Gray, Co-president introduced special guest Sarah Bartlett, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York as she chatted with Honoree Joel Simon, Executive Director of CPJ. Discussion included steps that CPJ has implemented to address the current attacks in the US, including the launch of a tracker of incidents from physical attacks, equipment confiscation or subpoena and denials of access.

Held at the Roosevelt Hotel with 120 guests, Catherine Herkovic, Senior VP of Client Services, Nielsen led the supporters of the event: AppNexus, CIT, ConEd, Manhattan Neighborhood Network, Nielsen, Partnership for New York City, and WABC-TV.

As we look forward to next year, let us know your thoughts to help us plan the 2019 centennial event!



*Ruth Altman honors  
Joel Simon, Executive Director, CPJ*

# Engage with our League

## Mark Your Calendar! National Voter Registration Day: September 25th!

Mark your calendar for *Tuesday September 25: 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm.*

Join the League at locations listed below as we try to get NYC residents registered to vote, and provide a helpful way to remind them when it is time to vote.

At each location will be a core team of volunteers ready to hand out supplies and clipboards, and direct volunteers to fan out into the neighborhoods. Come for any or all of the time shift. Bring a friend. The locations have been chosen as part of our effort to reach NYC's assembly districts with the lowest voter turnout.

### Assembly Districts (more TBA):

- AD #75 ( Clinton, Chelsea, Hudson Yards, Midtown, part of Upper West Side and Murray Hill, Garment District, Korea Town)
- AD #54 ( Bed Stuy, Bushwick, Cypress Hills, East New York)
- AD # 65 (East Harlem)



*Reshma Patel leads a Speaker Training*

## Get Out The Vote Postcard Campaign

Can you host a postcard party? Or join one of ours? We will be holding a postcard party on Monday, October 15th at 6:30 PM. The event will be located at our office.

The Voter Services Committee will be sending postcards to registered voters in NYC's assembly districts that have had the lowest voter turnout. Each postcard will simply remind them it is time to vote - and remind them their vote does matter. Can you contribute by bringing postcard stamps? \$.34 each.

Would you like to host? What you need to host:

- Purchase pre-stamped postcards, or any postcard + stamps.
- Ask us for a list and we will email you a portion of our lists.
- Mail them on November 1st.

## Worry About the 2020 Census *Now!* by Barbara Ettington

The next Census will take place in 2020. The results of that headcount will affect your representation in federal and state government, federal funding for items such as Medicaid, Medicare Part B and school lunches, as well as planning for the provision of health care, education, employment, and transportation.

Under-counting will have dire consequences for New York City and New York State.

*Today*, the budget to fund the census is severely underfunded. It will not support the staff and technology necessary to get an accurate count. *Today*, you can call your legislators to tell them to fund the census. *Today* you can ask candidates if they will fund the census.

The League's Speakers Bureau is preparing a presentation on the Census 2020 and Redistricting. Join us to learn about this issue and help us be the voice of reason. Join the Speakers Bureau today.

## A New Value Statement From National: Are We Now A Women's Organization? By Jane Colvin

At the League's 2018 National Convention last month, an interesting and somewhat disconcerting discussion was NOT concluded: the subject was the new Value Statement that the National Board formally adopted at their October 2017 Board meeting. As part of their top-to-bottom review of the League in preparation for its second century, the National Board adopted the following new Mission, Vision and Value Statements:

Mission Statement: Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

- Vision Statement: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.
- Value Statement: We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

What drew the attention of League members at the Convention was the Value Statement that appeared at odds with the League's long-standing commitment to membership inclusivity and diversity. Norman Turrill, a former member of the National Board and delegate from Oregon drafted a resolution prior to Convention, calling on "the LWWUS Board to rescind the Value Statement, and if it thinks we still need a Value Statement, to create a transparent process and discussion with all League members to adopt one." The Resolutions Committee, prior to the first plenary session, did not recommend this resolution so it couldn't even be discussed at a plenary meeting, according to Convention Rules. At the first Plenary session of the 2018 Convention, before the Rules of Convention had been adopted, Norman Turrill, offered an amendment from the Floor to revise the procedures for Resolutions and thereby, permit discussion of the Value Statement on Sunday during discussion of other Resolutions. After increasingly heated comments about the statement and the need for discussion, both pro and con, the Parliamentarian was consulted and ruled that the Rules of the Convention must first be passed before any amendment could be considered. The Rules of the Convention were adopted but then the amendment was prohibited from further discussion and failed in a voice vote quickly. No discussion took place and the Value Statement remains on the League Web site where it will stay until the Board decides to change it.

It is not clear how National intends to use the Value Statement. Although all three statements appear prominently in the National League's website, National's published Action Plans for 2017/2018 call for all State and local leagues "to adopt use of the new *mission and vision statements* in all communications, including websites." The Value Statement is noticeably absent.

The New York State League Board of Directors discussed these new statements at its meeting in December, 2017, and sent a letter to LWWUS Board registering its agreement with the Mission and Vision Statements, and disagreement with the Value Statement. The LWWUS Board appears to be deaf to the criticism of this Value Statement and unwilling to discuss the fact that this Statement conflicts with our efforts for diversity and inclusion. The LWWNYC Board plans to discuss the Value Statement at a future board meeting. If you have comments, please let us know what you think by contacting the office or Co-Presidents, Cathy Gray and Ruth Altman at [president@lwwnyc.org](mailto:president@lwwnyc.org) and [ruthlww@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlww@gmail.com) respectively.

# ***Meet Our Future: Intern Corner***

## **2018 Students Inside Albany**

By Reanna West

When I stepped off the AMTRAK train and into the station at Albany, I was welcomed warmly by our chaperones for the few days that we spent in Albany. From the moment I met up with the group, I felt as though I fit perfectly. I was surrounded by a group of students who were about my age who were just as smart as me and cared as much as I do about government, legislation, and most importantly-making a valuable change in our respective communities. Prior to this program I thought I knew it all about the way our government works and everything surrounding that. However, I was wrong. The students inside Albany Conference not only educated me, but gave me hands on experience within legislation. We had what was called a “mock assembly” in which we all took on roles that our respective senators and representatives played and voted on bills, for instance, a bill we discussed was one to repeal the New York Safety Act which of course I voted against. At this conference I was able to express my beliefs and passion for government and the way it works but in a professional, respectful, and articulate way which is very hard for many people- even current politicians with positions in office. I am grateful for the opportunity that I received to attend S.I.A and all that it has taught me and allowed me to experience.

## **Seeing the City Through New Eyes**

By Amelia Cotins

At 16, working at the League of Women Voters has been my first real office work experience. This past summer, I worked as an intern from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 P.M. Four days a week. I have worked on projects ranging from the mundane (alphabetizing old membership cards) to the absorbing (staffing a table at a community forum), with everything in between. I have also received some priceless opportunities, such as sitting in on a newspaper interview and writing for the newsletter. Many of these experiences were what I had expected when I applied for the internship. I knew the goals and purpose of the League and anticipated working on projects that would further those goals. While my internship has met those expectations by offering both substantive learning and practical office experience, I believe it will also significantly impact the way I am able to handle adult roles and expectations in the future. Through my internship I have developed a new level of personal responsibility and a considerable amount of independence in unexpected ways. As a student, I mastered a regular commute to school, but a commute to and from midtown, surrounded by working adults, offers a different experience from traveling early in the morning to school.

It is perhaps an unintended benefit of this internship that it has allowed me to understand the New York subway system better through daily use. Experiencing the city from a different view has allowed me to grow as a worker and as an individual, as I am now much more sympathetic to the stressors faced by workers.



*L to R: LWWNYC intern Emily Mehler, Member Mary Jenkins, LWWNYC intern Amelia Cotins registering voters at JASA, July 2018*



# One Person Can Make a Difference

By Marc Torres

My name is Marc Torres and last month I started interning for the league. I'm currently a student at York College, a school in the CUNY system. My major is English and my minor is Journalism. My passion is creative writing, and I graduate in the Fall 2018.

Last month, I trained to help the league sign people up to vote; a civic duty one too many citizens take lightly, but not because they always want to.

The first event I worked was the Youth Day festival at Washington Houses in East Harlem. Working the event as a newly trained intern helped me realize the importance of voter education. Walking up to people, asking them to vote and letting them know that there were elections coming up not only surprised some people, but also helped encourage them to vote.

One person I spoke to told me that he was registered to vote, but didn't know that there were elections coming up. I gave him a list of election dates and told him that the information could also be found online. He thanked me then left, and although I didn't register him to vote I got the feeling he would be voting later this year because of information he had just acquired.

Another person I walked up to and tried to register told me voting just doesn't work. So, I asked her why she felt that way. She explained to me that she thought all politicians were corrupt and that they never make any real changes. I explained to her that real changes can happen, but that they start on the local level and that it's up to us as citizens to vote for the people who will

represent us best and those who have our best interests at heart. She didn't budge, and instead walked away. I didn't try to sway her and so I lost a potential person to register.

However, both these experiences made me see why voter education is so important. People should be able to understand how government works and how they can make effective changes within their communities through the power of the vote. There isn't enough being done to help educate people on why to vote, how to vote, where to vote, and how important local elections actually are.



*LWVNYC and Dominicanos volunteers with Marc Torres*

If we want more people to sign up to vote, we have to actually start making people see why voting even matters and how their voices can be heard (with resources like their community boards). We have to show citizens that elected officials have to be transparent with what they do and how they allocate funds.

Interning for the league has given me the proper tools to help register citizens to vote, and to help educate them. I am one person, but hopefully I can continue to help many other people understand the same things I do in regard to the power of the vote. Hopefully we can all help others become more informed citizens through simple conversations, and get millions to go out there and complete their duties.



*LWVNYC Intern Marc Torres registering voters at 96th Street, August 2018*

# **A Roadmap for the Future: 2018 National Convention, Chicago, June 2018**

By Cathy Gray

The 2018 LWV Annual Convention, "Creating a More Perfect Democracy", held in a hot and steaming Chicago, June 28-July 2, focused on training the participants in three areas: diversity, fundraising, and the new road map for the next century. This new road map will transform the League to a larger, more unified, and effective organization. The transformation process will address four strategic priorities. First of all, the League will focus on our compelling vision and mission for the next 100 years. Secondly, we will organize and align resources to create a healthy network including local, state and national levels. Next, the League will create a welcoming, inclusive, and trusting culture for our volunteers. Lastly, the League will ensure there are sufficient resources to accomplish our core work even on the local level. This will include robust technology, communication, programs, revenue and staffing.

During the Plenary sessions, there was great enthusiasm for several important motions passed by the delegates. One of the highlights of the convention was a unanimous, spontaneous standing ovation for a new emphasis promoting the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Another important motion encouraged the abolishment of the Electoral College. The League has held this position for many years.

Two major trainings were held for all delegates at the convention. The first focused on diversity, inclusion, and equality. The second focused on fundraising. Both of these sessions supported the road map initiative.

Attending the LWV Annual Convention is a great way to meet other people from around the country who are also energized to do this important work. Next year's convention will be held in Washington D.C.



## **Member Profile**



Elana Foundos, a talented graphic artist, has been a member of LWVNYC for several years. She was motivated to join the League in order to register voters before the 2016 Presidential election. Her artwork, including a very popular ceramic tile of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, is available for sale on the LWVNYC website. She has also crafted beautiful tiles that will be available for purchase on our website under the "Publications and Merchandise" tab.

# League Speakers Program Address Critical New York Topics

By Joanna R. Leefer

This fall's monthly speakers program is kicking off with outstanding speakers who will address a series of important political topics impacting New Yorkers. We are pleased to announce that our October speaker will feature Andy Byford, Chief Executive Officer of the New York City Transit Authority. He will join us on October 16 to discuss his plans to improve NYC's subways.

Other fall programs will include an analysis of the political issues facing New Yorkers in the upcoming November election; a conversation on New York State and City census; and a discussion on testing in New York City schools.

Every month the program committee presents speakers who address important political topics that impact the lives of New Yorkers. All League programs are scheduled as afternoon Lunches with the League or as evening Drinks with the League. The NYC Ethical Culture Society generously provides space in their building for these meetings. Their address is 2 West 64th Street off Central Park West. The cost of attendance is \$15. A finalized calendar of all programs will be distributed in early September.

## Women of the World Festival

by Amy Matthews

On Tuesday, July 24, Patricia Manning, Cathy Gray, Amy Matthews attended a planning meeting for the 2019 WOW Festival, to be held at the Apollo Theater in May, 2019. WOW stands for Women of the World, and the festival is a powerful, multi-day gathering of artists, activists, and thought leaders from around the globe using their work to advance gender equality. WOW has grown to 42 festivals on 5 continents. The planning session, held at the Apollo Theater, included about 100 women from different non-profit groups, artists, community leaders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and musicians, from all over New York City, with a strong Harlem presence. At the introductions, each participant quickly described their affiliation and announced their "power word". After Cathy Gray introduced herself as Co-President of the LWVNYC, she told the group that her power word was "Vote". She got cheers and clapping from an enthusiastic crowd.



## New: Women's Rights Committee

by Dorothy Ouzidane

On June 12th a group of enthusiastic women met at Genesis on the UES and decided to start a new committee to address Women's Issues. During the discussion we agreed that there are many issues and areas of concern to be addressed. On July 16th we officially adopted the name, "The Women's Rights Committee". Our Committee's Co-Chairs are Elizabeth Dougherty and Marion Novack. In order to determine which issue(s) to take on first the

next course of action was to break down into subcommittees to research and educate ourselves regarding some of the pressing issues that concern us and to present our findings to the Committee at large. We began making our presentations at our August 13th meeting.

Our mission statement is, "Whatever project the Women's Rights Committee (WRC) takes on should be focused on increasing the understanding of the issue, identify public policy opportunities and influence these public policies through education and advocacy."

We are looking forward to determining which issue(s) facing us today we will address first. Please join us on Monday, September 24 at 6PM at the League office as we strive to make a difference in the lives of our fellow New Yorkers.



# 2018 Annual Meeting



**Member, Nicky Heller**



**Member, Kate Doran, addresses bylaw changes**



**Voter Services Committee Chair,  
Barbara Ettington**



**Members Tiana Leonard and Jane Colvin**



**L to R: Ruth S. Altman, Robin Bahr,  
Laura Altschuler, Catherine Gray**



**Past President and longtime member Robin  
Bahr**



# *2018 Awards Breakfast and Honoring the Committee to Protect Journalists*



*The crowd listens over breakfast to Sarah Bartlett, Dean of CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and Joel Simon, Executive Director, CPJ*

*Event Chair, Catherine Herkovic, Senior VP of Client Services at Nielsen*



*Co-Presidents Ruth S. Altman and Cathy Gray*



*LWVNYC awards the Committee to Protect Journalists the 2018 Distinguished Service Award*

## New Partner!



WOMEN LEADING THE WAY

**100** A CENTENNIAL OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

**CALL OUT TO HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS!**

Join *Women Leading the Way*, a national research, art and storytelling project that challenges high school students to explore the fundamental human right to vote by connecting their family history to the Suffrage Movement. The project is free and open to all U.S. high schools.

[www.suffragettes2020.com](http://www.suffragettes2020.com)

Sponsored by Lynne Thompson at New York University  
Women Leading the Way: The Project and the People © 2019 by Lynne Thompson  
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior written permission of the publisher.

NATIONAL RESEARCH & ART

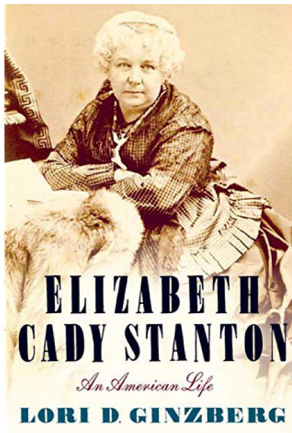
STORY-TELLING PROJECT

## Planning Next Year's Fundraiser

LWVNYC has begun to meet to plan next year's major fundraiser for the League. We welcome anyone who would like to get involved in planning this important event. Please contact the League office at [office@lwvnyc.org](mailto:office@lwvnyc.org) for more information about when this committee will be meeting.

## Book Club at LWVNYC

by Crystal Joseph



In collaboration with Humanities New York, the Votes for Women series will return with the League this fall.

The book selection for the upcoming discussion will examine the life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her history with the suffragist movement.

For more information, please look out for the launch email in late September and invitation to join. To learn more about the Reading and Discussion series contact:

[campus@lwvnyc.org](mailto:campus@lwvnyc.org).

## Newsletter Staff and Acknowledgements

**Ruth S. Altman** - Project Coordinator

**Emily Corvi** - Senior Editor and Designer

**May Takahashi** - Content Manager

**Diane Burrows** - Associate Editor

*Thank you to all of our contributors!*



**4 W 43rd Street, Suite 615**

**New York, NY 10036**

**(212) 725-3541**

**[office@lwvnyc.org](mailto:office@lwvnyc.org)**