

INSIDE THE LEAGUE



Winter 2019

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Measuring Success for Voter Registration in 2018

By Barbara Ettington, Voter Services Committee Chair

One way to measure success is through numbers – and for 2018, the numbers for voter registration outreach were staggering and pushed all of our volunteers, and office staff, to new heights to keep up with the demand. From the beginning of January 2018 until October 12th, the deadline for voter registration, LWVNYC volunteers were on the streets, and in libraries, schools, corporations, houses of worship, retail stores, YMCAs, and Broadway theaters – registering over 3,300 voters and training over 1,100 people to assist others.

	Voter Registration Events	Completed Registration Forms	Training Workshops	People Trained
2018	190	3,300	46	1,102
2017	159	785	20	436
2016	127	1,000	16	289

Another measure of success is engagement. Our volunteers took on the challenge of entering districts with the lowest voter turnout records in an effort to engage citizens. While the number of completed registration forms in those neighborhoods



League volunteers at AppNexus...

was indeed lower, the number of conversations held to answer questions on the importance of voting were the true success of outreach.

Of course, the final measure of success was voter turnout. The number of ballots counted in New York was up 45% compared to the last midterm in 2014!



... on the street



... on campus



... at Spotify



... at Fishes Eddy

Registering Google Employees

By Barbara Ettington, Voter Services Committee Chair

In 2018, the League received several requests from large corporations to conduct voter registration drives or to train their employees to conduct them. One such example was Google. Here is their thank you note for the services the League supplied:

We just wanted to take a moment to say THANK YOU so much for your all your help and hard work this last month to support the Google Voter Registration drive. Barb, you gave our efforts shape by training 65 of us how to entice people to register to vote! Diane and Cathy, your on-the-ground support yesterday was invaluable in answering questions as we got over 200 employees registered in New York & New Jersey! That's 3% of our office! Thank you again!!



Cathy Gray (2nd from left) at Google HQ in NYC

Postcard Party Success

By Diane Burrows, 2nd Vice President

On Monday, October 15 and Tuesday, October 23, the Voter Services Committee hosted two postcard events. The postcards were designed by Robert Matthews, who is the son of our Secretary, Amy Matthews. The message on the postcard highlighted reasons why every single vote does matter. The goal was to target the lowest turnout districts in each borough to encourage registered voters to get to the polls on Election Day.



Over 75 volunteers donated postage and addressed 3,000 postcards over the two days of the event. The postcards were mailed the week before Election Day. Voter turnout did increase in NYC for this election.

It Shouldn't Be Complicated to Vote

By Kate Doran, Elections Specialist

That is one of the important messages from LetNYvote and a coalition of good government groups, including the League, to our representatives in Albany. New York may be progressive on many fronts, but our election laws are antiquated. We should be a leader in encouraging active participation in government, not a state that practices "soft suppression."

LetNYvote is a coalition of New York State grassroots and "legacy" groups working to achieve 21st century election reform in New York State. The League of Women Voters is one of those legacy groups, and we are vital to the effort since we consist of local Leagues speaking for voters throughout the state – rural, suburban, and urban.

Optimism about change is high since the November elections, and LetNYvote has held two recent gatherings to generate enthusiasm and provide tools to achieve reforms in the 2019 legislative session. We met in Albany on Saturday, December 1, and then in New York City on Sunday, December 9. Jennifer Wilson and Aimee Allaud were present for the Albany event. Wendy Byrne, Cathy Gray, and Carol Van Deusen, were at the New York City event.

The reforms we seek include:

- Early voting
- Automatic voter registration – with all state agencies participating
- Consolidating the federal and state primaries to one single date in June
- Same-day voter registration
- No-excuse absentee voting
- Readable and well-designed ballots
- Electronic poll books

Passing these reforms to improve our elections will make registering and voting more accessible and equitable for all eligible New Yorkers.

Thanks to all of you, and thanks for your hard work. We've been focused and persistent. Let us carry the momentum onward to success. **Please contact your State Senator and Assembly Member and say that you want voting reform included in the budget, and bills passed early in 2019.**

New E-book Edition of *What Makes New York City Run?*

By Adrienne Kivelson

An updated, revised edition of *What Makes New York City Run?*, the League's citizen's guide to the workings of city government, has been revised, updated and issued as an e-book now available on Amazon. Using the New York City Charter as a road map, the book describes everything from the roles of elected officials to how and where citizens can play a role and effect change.

The new e-book edition delineates the responsibilities of city agencies and informs New Yorkers about how they can access services and programs. The book also includes information on how citizens can participate in the decision-making process, through community boards, testifying at public hearings and online.

"To many New Yorkers, local government is an unapproachable labyrinth of laws and policies that they don't always understand and can't change," said Catherine Gray, Co-President of the New York City League. "The League has

long believed that you can fight City Hall – and win, if you know the rules."

"Since its founding almost 100 years ago, the League of Women Voters has always promoted informed active citizen participation in government," stated Ruth Altman, Co-President of the city League. "The publication of this guide is one way in which we are fulfilling our mission."



What Makes New York City Run?, written by League member Adrienne Kivelson, was first published in 1979. The book was revised in 1991 and 2001 and kept current with annual inserts to account for changes in laws, government policies and procedures, primarily those which changed the City Charter.

The new e-book edition of *What Makes New York City Run?* is available for \$9.99 on Amazon. For further information contact the League of Women Voters at office@lwnyc.org or call 212-725-3541.

New Commission Reviewing the Entire Charter

By Adrienne Kivelson

After approving three amendments to the City Charter in the November election, New Yorkers can anticipate voting on additional charter amendments in 2019. While the mayor-appointed Charter Revision Commission was holding hearings, deliberating, and proposing the three amendments which passed (i.e. lowering campaign contribution limits, creating a civic engagement commission and setting term limits for community board membership), the City Council created a new Charter Revision Commission to review the entire charter.

League representatives have testified before both commissions in support of long-held positions on elections and education, and will continue to monitor and offer testimony as the current commission holds additional hearing and develops its recommendations.

Bella Wang, Chair of the Election Reform Committee, testified before the City Council-created Charter Revision Commission

on September 27, 2018 in support of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), or Ranked Choice Voting. The New York City League has long supported substituting Instant Runoff Voting for the current law requiring a separate runoff if no candidate in a primary for citywide office achieves 40 percent of the vote. The League believes IRV would achieve the purpose without necessitating a poorly attended and costly new election. Given the experience other cities have had with Instant Runoff Voting, some are proposing that all city elections use this form of voting.

The New York City League has also long supported including the governance structure of the New York City Department of Education in the City Charter. While mayoral control of the schools is still considered temporary, this governance structure has been in place for more than sixteen years, and we believe it should be included in the charter, understanding that all laws are subject to change.

Welcoming Lesley Sigall

Meet our newest board member!

We are delighted to welcome Lesley Sigall to the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York. Lesley joined the League in July and has been very active since then. In addition to participating in many voter registration events, Lesley has provided the League with valuable advice on governance and technology.

Most recently, Lesley was Vice President and Business Operations Manager for the Global Infrastructure Services division at a large technology services provider. Prior to that she spent 9 years at a major Swiss bank, culminating in her role as Managing Director and COO for Technology



Infrastructure Services and Corporate Real Estate & Services. She also spent nearly 13 years at a large global insurance broker, where she concluded her tenure as Senior Vice President and CFO for IT & Operations. Lesley holds an MBA in Finance from the Stern School of Business, NYU and a BA in Liberal Arts from the Gallatin School, NYU.

Lesley lives with her husband, Alan, and two cats on the Upper West Side. She is an avid genealogist and loves the Yankees, the opera, travel, museums, and nearly anything produced by Apple.

Please join us in welcoming Lesley and wishing her much success!

My Time at the League

By Hayley Herzog, Winter 2018 Intern

As a dual public health and social work major, I am always looking for opportunities to both further my career and satisfy my interests; the League of Women Voters offers me both. Working at the League gives both concrete experiences in working in an office, and allows for personal growth through



education, communication, and collaboration. For concrete experiences, the League gives me opportunities to talk with New York constituents to educate and aid them in whatever capacity necessary. Many times when I found myself in the office, I was not just able to learn about the inner workings of the organization

itself, but I also found a more broad education that was fostered in friendship. The League and its staff cultivate a loving and enjoyable environment, that I couldn't be prouder or more humbled to work in.

Reflections on My Internship

By Kimberly Ramos, Winter 2018 Intern

Working with the League of Women Voters was a great and different experience for me. At first I was worried that I didn't know enough information about voting, but I was able to catch on and gain insight on voting information. I learned things about the process that I didn't know before and will now use in the future. I found this experience to be new and useful. I enjoy being a well-rounded person and learning new things. Answering phone calls was new for me here but I quickly became used to it and felt more confident with every person's needs. I was also happy that I got to incorporate my artistic skills here with the League. Having



some input feels great when you are at a new job. This company is pretty neat and I enjoyed my entire time working here, especially with the joy of Emily and May each coming day. Thank you so much!



Fall 2018 Interns – Youjin Koo, Hayley Herzog, Kimberly Ramos

Looming Concerns on 2020 Census Explained at November Lunch

Joanna Leefer, Program Committee Chair

Why is the 2020 Census important? Jeff Behler, Regional Director at the U.S. Census Bureau, riveted attendees with the explanation at the November 13, 2018 Lunch with the League.



Jeff Behler speaking at November Lunch with the League

Mr. Behler explained that the Census provides a snapshot of the United States population and how it has changed since the last survey. The Census has been conducted every ten years since 1790. The data is crucial to insuring communities are properly represented in government and that over \$400 billion of federal and state funds are equitably distributed to needy districts.

One looming question that he addressed concerning the 2020 Census: what if the survey includes a citizenship question? Behler explained all survey responses are anonymous and there is no way of tracking the respondents. For those individuals who are not convinced, they can leave the question blank and still have the remainder of the answers included in the final results.

The 2020 Census program was one of the monthly events planned by the New York City Chapter's Program Committee. Every month from September through May, the committee invites speakers to discuss a political issue impacting New Yorkers. The next program, scheduled for Friday, January 25, 2019, will feature New York City District 30 State Senator Brian Benjamin, who will discuss crucial details in criminal justice reform.

All League members are invited to suggest a topic, a speaker, or to join the Program Committee. To contact us please email programs@lwnyc.org.

The League's Legacy of Speakers

By Barbara Ettington, Voter Services Committee Chair

For 100 years, the League's members have been speaking about the importance of voting and understanding issues of the day.

Our Speakers Bureau continues that tradition and asks you to join. As a League member, the public turns to you for insight – whether your audience is your family gathered around the evening table, or a large group.

We offer training for presentation skills as well as content information so you are well informed. In 2019 we expect requests for: Census 2020/Redistricting, the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters, and The Importance of Voting.

Let your voices be heard and join the Speakers Bureau!



Peggy Kennedy, professional speaking coach, delivering tips at the October training workshop

Upcoming Events

All meetings are held at the LWVNYC office unless otherwise specified.
For more information, please visit our website, www.lwvnyc.org,
or call the office at 212-725-3541.

- January 15 – Voter Registration Training @ LiveOnNY, 6:00pm
- January 15 – Voting Reform Meeting @ 6:00pm
- January 16 – Voter and Information Services Meeting @ 6:00pm
- January 19 – Women’s March, meeting between 11:00am –11:30am
in front of the New York Historical Society (77th St. & CPW)
- January 23 – Education Meeting @ 5:30pm
- January 25 – Special Friday Lunch with the League @ 12:00pm
State Senator Brian Benjamin re: Criminal Justice Reform
- January 28 – Women’s Rights Meeting @ 6:30pm
- February 13– Education Meeting @ 5:30pm

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

Save the Date

May 21, 2019

Centennial Celebration Evening Gala

June 13, 2019

Annual Membership Meeting

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*Thank you to all of our
newsletter contributors!*

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