

INSIDE the New York City League

League of Women Voters of the City of New York

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www.lwvnyc.org office@lwvnyc.org

Spring 2011

2011 Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 4 9:30 - 2:30 p.m.

At the offices of National Council of Jewish Women
820 Second Avenue (44th St.), 2nd Floor

9:30 Registration & refreshments
10:00 Business Meeting
Report of Budget Committee
Report of Bylaws committee
Committee reports
Report on LWVNYC Convention
Forecast for 2011-12

12:00 Break for lunch

1:00 Speaker **John C. Liu, Comptroller, City of New York**

2:00 Direction to the Board

2:30 Adjourn



Registration Form for 2011 Annual Meeting

- I am a paid-up member of the LWVNYC and will attend the annual meeting.
 Enclosed is a check for \$25, payable to LWVNYC, for registration, lunch, and one raffle ticket (top prize: weekend for two at the Hotel Roosevelt) **OR**
 I will pay \$30 at the door.
 I am unable to attend and **enclose the proxy form** of this newsletter.

Name _____ # attending _____

Postal address _____ zip code _____

Telephone _____ Email (for LWVNYC use only – will not be shared) _____

Please reply before May 27 to LWVNYC, 4 West 43rd St., Suite 615, NY, NY 10036

Message from the President



*LWVNYC
President,
Miriam
Adelman*

A successful and active League year is coming to a close and we look back with pride and pleasure at the full array of events and publications that have filled our calendar. A particular highlight is the publication of a new edition of *They Represent You*, copies of which are being distributed to members with this newsletter.

On May 20-22, I will be one of our delegates to the New York State League convention in Albany. It will be a special pleasure to accept an award during that weekend which will recognize the efforts of our board and staff to increase the visibility of the City League through candidate debates, our website, Facebook, Twitter, electronic communications, and the excellent PSA prepared for us by WABC-TV. Although all of our board has contributed to these efforts, I want to pay special attention to the work of Beatrix Dinitz, Adrienne Kivelson, Laura Altschuler, and Ashton Stewart in bringing these projects to fruition.

Coming soon, on Saturday, June 4, is our 2011 Annual Meeting. We are delighted that John Liu, Comptroller of the City of New York, will be the speaker at this event and look forward to a large attendance. In addition to committee reports and decisions regarding our budget and bylaws, we will hear from our Program Committee about their plans for monthly meetings in 2011-12. It promises to be an exciting meeting and the start of another exciting League year. I look forward to seeing you there!

Miriam

Students Inside Albany

For three exciting days in April, two students from New York City's Nightingale-Bamford school joined with their fellows from around the state to learn about state government. "Students Inside Albany" is an annual conference, organized by the State League, which is designed to immerse students in the process by which public policy is proposed, enacted and changed in New York State and educate them as to how they can influence and affect this process. They heard Albany insiders discuss the operations of state government and how policy is shaped and enacted. They also met legislators and observed both the Senate and Assembly in action.

For **Yvonne Morel**, the decision to participate in SIA "was one of the best decisions I have ever made. All the information I had received previously was from textbooks and news articles. I wanted an opportunity to see how the government truly works and at this conference I was able to do so. It left me with memories that will last a lifetime. I was able to shadow legislators, hear great speakers, and form friendships that I know will last."

Katie Moore wrote that she had never given much thought to State matters but now realizes that "laws that are passed in Albany have a direct and crucial impact on our lives in the city." She was also surprised at "how different it was from the dignified atmosphere I was expecting" and how party politics dominated the process. "In the Assembly Rules Committee, I watched the Republicans vote no to every measure while the Democrats read their newspapers and sipped coffee. Everything passed. On the other hand, the only time I saw the Democrats have success in the Senate was when the Republicans weren't paying attention."

This was the first time in several years that NYC students participated in this all-expenses-paid event and it is our hope that more schools will nominate students in the future.

League of Women Voters of the City of New York

Officers

President	Miriam Adelman
1st Vice Pres.	Laura Altschuler
2nd Vice Pres.	Adrienne Kivelson
3rd Vice Pres.	Nancy Schwartz
Secretary	Mary Lou Urban
Treasurer	Alison Alpert

Directors

Toni Coffee	Helen Heller
Jane Colvin	Sheila Hosni
Fannie Conner	Evie Katz
Beatrix Dinitz	Gladys Krasner
Kate Doran	Elinor Miller
Hope Freeman	Joanne Pugh
Donna Landay-Laden	

Executive Director Ashton J. Stewart

Administrative Assistant Mary Palmer

Inside Editor

Toni Coffee

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS TO THE LWVNYC BYLAWS

FOR DISCUSSION AND VOTE BY MEMBERS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 4, 2011

Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is to be omitted.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 2. Types of Membership

(a) The membership of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York shall be composed of voting members who shall be citizens at least 18 years of age:

* * *

3. [~~Honorary~~] *Life* members -- Those who attain 50 years of more as members.

Reason: to conform the Bylaws of the NYC League to a change made in the Bylaws of LWVUS at its 2010 convention.

ARTICLE IV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Number, Manner of Selection and Term of Office. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the League, six to nine elected Directors and not more than nine appointed Directors. Elected Board members shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors have been elected and qualified and shall appoint such additional Directors as they deem necessary *but not more than nine*, to carry on the work of the League. The term of office of the appointed Directors shall be one year and shall expire at the conclusion of the next Annual Meeting. Officers and Directors, whether elected or appointed, shall be limited to six consecutive years in the same office.

Reason: to clarify that the Board of Directors may appoint additional directors as it deems necessary, but no more than nine, to conform to the prior sentence which provides for a maximum of nine appointed directors.

ARTICLE IX. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

~~[Section 1. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the Board, the Chair and two members, who shall not be members of the Board, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. The other members shall be appointed by the board at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting. Any vacancy in the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the board. Suggestions for nominations for officers and directors may be sent to the Nominating Committee by any voting member.]~~

Section 1. Nominating Committee. The Chair of the Nominating Committee shall be the immediate Past President of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York. The Chair shall select two members of the League, not more than one of whom shall be from the League's Board of Directors, to prepare a slate for the elective offices. It shall be the function of the Nominating Committee to recommend to the Board of Directors candidates for vacancies in the elective offices occurring between elections. Suggestions for nominations for officers and directors may be sent to the Nominating Committee by any voting member.

Reason: to establish a new method for selecting the members of the Nominating Committee. In the past, under the existing Bylaw provision, Nominating Committees have found it difficult to find persons to replace themselves as members of the Nominating Committee for the following year. The recommended new procedure provides that the immediate past president, who is most familiar with members who could serve as officers and directors of the League, would be the chair of the Nominating Committee. The proposed amendment also provides a method of appointing two other members of the committee. This procedure would provide an automatic method for establishing a Nominating Committee that would serve until a new president is elected.

New National Study of Education Gets Under Way

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. has released the first of three papers which will provide background for our new study of **The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education**. Entitled “**Historical Perspectives**,” this paper will be followed by “Equity Components of the Elementary and Secondary Act” and “Common Core Standards and Assessments.”

Our study committee will be reviewing these materials and other sources and will make a presentation at a membership meeting in October. A second meeting will be held in November, when members will be asked to respond to questions which we hope will lead to consensus on this important issue.

To learn more, visit the League's website, www.lwv.org, click “For Members,” then Leader's Update, and scroll down to Education.

Interested??? Ready to dig into a meaty topic? Join the Education Committee; come to a meeting in the League's NYC office on Thursday, May 19th at 1 PM.

Nancy Schwartz, Education chair

Redistricting Forum Draws Full House

An attentive audience filled every seat at the Brennan Center on February 24 to hear a panel presentation on legislative redistricting. The speakers were Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries, State Senator Adriano Espaillat, Myrna Perez and Erika Wood of the Brennan Center, Barbara Zucker of the Women's City Club, and filmmaker Jeff Reichert, who showed clips from his film, *Gerrymandering*. Joanne Pugh, LWV Legislative Action Chair, was moderator.

Discussion focused on the shortcomings of the existing system, including protection of incumbents, partisan control of district lines which divide communities with common interests, and disparities in population of districts. With the Governor threatening to veto any bill which continues the existing process and several legislators backing away from pre-election pledges to support an independent redistricting commission, controversy over the issue continues. Panelists stressed the need for the public to force its way into the legislative process with demands for public hearings and transparency at every stage of the debate.

Evie June Katz, Legislative Action Co-chair

LWV comments on Legislative Ethics Reform

To the editor, *New York Times*,

As you noted in an April 9 editorial, “three men in a room” is no way to negotiate ethics reform. Since Albany's similarly secretive effort at ethics reform in 2007, which resulted in a deeply flawed bill, 11 legislators have been indicted or convicted of crimes committed while in office.

The League of Women Voters of New York State has spent decades working for ethics reform in this state. We believe that all New Yorkers deserve to see whether the terms of any proposed new ethics reform accomplish full disclosure, independent enforcement and meaningful penalties for misbehavior.

It is time for legislators, regardless of party affiliation, to vote for meaningful reform. Public officials are elected to uphold the public trust. New Yorkers should insist on transparent ethics regulation through an independent ethics commission.

Betsey B. Swan

*President, League of Women Voters of NY State
April 11, 2011*

News from the State League

The 54th convention of the LWV of New York State will be held in Albany on May 20-22. The State Board will not be recommending a new study since there is still much to be done on our agenda for legislative reform as well as in such areas as health care, judicial reform and natural resources.

A highlight of the weekend will be presentation of awards to local Leagues, including an award for Visibility to the LWV of NYC. This award is based on our innovative use of technology to garner publicity, including Facebook, Twitter, our constantly improving website, and public service announcements promoting League membership.

The convention is also a time for members to support the State League's fundraising projects, the **Silent Auction** and the **Big League Raffle**. Two books of raffle tickets were sent to every member; if you need more, call the State League office, 518-465-4162. We will receive 20% of the proceeds from all tickets purchased by NYC League members and friends so it is a fundraiser for us as well as State. Details of the Silent Auction, including information about offerings and ways to submit bids online, can be found on the website of the State League, www.lwvny.org.

Progress in Voter Registration

One of the features of the League's advocacy regarding Election Law has been simplification of voter registration. Although many of our objectives, such as Election Day registration, are not yet achieved, we welcome the issuance of a new form which may be simpler to complete. The form now on the Board's website must still be amended in order to include the Green Party, which received 50,000 votes in the 2010 gubernatorial election and thus obtained a permanent place on the ballot and consequently on the Voter Registration form.

For many years, we have been urging the Board of Elections to provide sample ballots so that voters would know their options before entering the polling place. The New York City Board of Elections has now agreed to put them on their website. We are delighted - but will remain vigilant until we see them on line.

We encourage you to visit the Board of Elections website: www.vote.nyc.ny.us.

May 9 - Equality & Justice Day in Albany

At the 2010 convention of the LWVUS, the League's position on equality of opportunity was expanded to include Marriage Equality. In New York State, efforts to legalize same-sex marriage have passed the State Assembly but they have consistently been defeated in the State Senate, despite evidence of strong public support. In an effort to bring about action this year, the State League has joined with Empire State Pride Agenda to organize a lobby day when members will work to change votes so that action in this session can be successful. In NYC, our lobbying efforts will be directed toward Senator Andrew Lanza (Staten Island), Senators Joseph Addabbo and Shirley Huntley (Queens) and Senator Carl Kruger (Brooklyn).

If you would like to join with members who will go to Albany on May 9, call the Empire State Pride Agenda, 917-522-3406 for bus reservations. \$40 includes lunch.

From the Executive Director

In the effort to provide more comprehensive and accurate information about candidates in an accessible format, the League has developed a new online voters guide, VOTE411.org. In preparation for the 2010 election, we in NYC uploaded information for 251 candidates representing 104 State Assembly, State Senate, and Congressional seats in the five boroughs. Candidates were invited to participate by answering questions developed by the League, uploading their photographs, and adding or updating any missing campaign contact information. Candidates and users alike were excited to use this comprehensive, user-friendly guide and we are pleased that we will be able to continue its use. The National League has decided to offer VOTE411.org once again and sent a message of thanks for our hard work to bring it to fruition: "your League was an integral part of VOTE411's success...thank you again for your tremendous work!" We look forward to using the program in future elections.

Our website continues to receive a lot of attention and refinement, with a new home page (coming soon) and one easy-to-navigate page which contains all the information about city government and elected representatives. We have also added a new educational resource, a video of our February redistricting meeting, filmed and edited by Manhattan Neighborhood Network. Zenaida Mendez, Director of External Affairs at MNN said, "The forum was phenomenal...keep up the great work!" Do take a look at our website (LWVNYC.org) to see the improvements and get up-to-date information about meetings and other events, committee work, and our advocacy efforts.

We recently began to accept applications for unpaid internships at the League and have already arranged with one intelligent, politically minded individual to work with us during the summer months. She will help us stay up-to-date with our social media postings, refine our file archives, and help with research. Her effectiveness, and that of our staff and volunteers, would be greatly enhanced by the addition of a computer to our office; if you know someone who would like to donate a desktop computer and monitor (a tax-deductible contribution), please have them contact me.

We are in the final stages of preparing the grant proposal for our webinar, "How to Run for Public Office in New York City," and hope to have feedback from our potential funder very soon. We are also developing a Request for Proposal for the project we have undertaken with the McFarland bequest to increase voter turnout in 2012. I look forward to putting these projects into action.

I urge you to encourage friends, family, and colleagues to join the League. Bring them to the annual meeting on June 4 to get a strong introduction to our work. As always, we are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers - we couldn't do what we do without you!

Ashton Stewart

Welcome new members

*Florence Falk-Dickler
Ruth Goodgold
Mary Hughes
Judy Liss
Madeline S. McEneny*

Tributes/Contributions

LWVNYC celebrates the life of Sylvia Berman, a loyal member who joined the League in 1989 and passed away peacefully at home in her 95th year in March. Sylvia served as secretary of the New York City League and for decades was chairman of the Upper West Manhattan Branch. She was tireless in her efforts to keep the branch active by arranging for interesting speakers and she also worked on League studies at the national, state and local levels. She also worked tirelessly for the Friends of Fort Tryon Park and succeeded in having the members of the Friends group join the League and vice versa. A talented and respected French teacher, she traveled extensively and lived her life to the fullest. There was always a membership form and a voter registration form in her handbag, just in case. We will remember her as a dedicated Leaguer who was always prepared, well informed and enthusiastic about democracy.

Laura Altschuler

A very special thanks to all who made contributions in memory of Sylvia Berman:

*Laura Altschuler
Beatrix and Martin Dinitz
Nicky Heller
Adrienne and Robert Kivelson
Rose and Harvey Yalan*

In honor of Ernie Diedwich
Jane E. Latour

In memory of Lucille Helfat
Marjorie Dycke Ferrigno

In memory of Edith Sable
Marjorie Dycke Ferrigno

and all others who contributed to support the work of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York.

Notes on Membership

from committee co-chair Elinor Miller

Nicky Heller and I have the benefit of an interesting, thoughtful, and intelligent group of committee members whose priorities are similar – strengthening the membership and leadership of our League – but who have many different ideas on how best to fulfill them.

In our search for new and perhaps younger members, we are planning to sponsor an evening devoted to understanding hydraulic fracturing as best we can with a screening of the movie “Gasland.” Moderated by a knowledgeable member of our League, with some local experts on hand, we will seek to understand what is happening in New York State and how to continue to protect New York City's water supply from contamination.

Our nation has abundant resources of natural gas in a number of states and “fracking” has been used in many areas for a long time. If this process can be managed safely over time, with close inspections, we will all benefit.

If you and young friends, family, or neighbors are interested in attending this event, email or call our office so we can send you details when the plan is in place. (There will be no charge.)

In the coming months we will also be working on an ambitious project to increase voter turnout in 2012. Watch for more information on this campaign.

If you joined the League through our national office and wish to continue to receive information about activities of our New York City League, we need to hear from you. Please send your contact information, including email address, to our office (212-725-3541, office@lwnyc.org)

Meeting Schedule for 2011-12

(Subject to change)

September	Media/An Informed Electorate
October	Preparation for consensus on national study: Role of Federal Government in Public Education
November	Education Consensus
Dec/Jan	LWVUS President
February	State Government Issues (especially Hydrofracking)
March	Women's History, Pay Equity
April	Justice and the Courts
May	Update on Health Care
June	Annual Meeting

Details of these events will be forthcoming as they are determined. To insure prompt notification, please be sure we have your email address; write to office@lwnyc.org.

Calendar of Coming Events

Tuesday, May 10th 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. LWVNYC Board Meeting (*all members welcome*)*
Tuesday, May 17th 10:30 – 1:00 p.m. Legislative Action Committee*
Thursday, May 19th 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Education Committee*
Friday, May 20th –Sunday, May 22nd LWVNY State Convention, Hotel Desmond, Albany
Saturday, June 4th 9:30 – 2:30 p.m. LWV of the City of New York Annual Meeting*

**At League office, 4 West 43rd St.*

PROXY FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK to be held on June 4, 2011

Article IX, Section III, Quorum: One hundred voting members, or 10% of the total members entitled to vote, whichever shall be less, shall constitute a quorum at the Annual Meeting. The record in the office of the LWVNYC paid-up members as of 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting shall determine the voting membership count for this purpose. Any member entitled to vote may designate by written proxy another member to be present to vote in his/her stead. Mailed proxies must be received at the League office no later than three (3) business days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Please sign and date the proxy where indicated, print your name next to your signature, and return to the League office by May 31, 2011 (LWVNYC, 4 West 43rd St., Suite 615, New York, NY 10036).

KNOW ALL MEN AND WOMEN BY THESE PRESENT the undersigned member of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York hereby constitutes and appoints Elinor Miller or _____ (member may select agent*) my true and lawful attorney and agent in my name, place, and stead to vote as my proxy at the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York to be held on June 4, 2011, or at any adjournment thereof, for the approval of a budget and for the transaction of any other business which may legally come before the said meeting, and to act as fully as I would do if personally present; and I hereby revoke any other proxy heretofore given by me.

Witness my hand this _____ day of _____ 2011

Signature

Print Name

*If no name is filled in, the named designee will be deemed the appointed agent to exercise the Proxy. If you fill in a name, only your named agent will be authorized to vote as your agent at the Annual Meeting.