



# THE VOTER

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

Founded in 1977

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March 2010

## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

The last *Voter* explained why a LWVH committee to explore opportunities to reform local government was formed, to participate in the LWVNY consensus study. This background article gives an abbreviated overview of current governmental structure. (For the full version of the article, go to the state League website, [www.lwvny.org/consolidation\\_sss.htm](http://www.lwvny.org/consolidation_sss.htm).)

New York has 1,607 general-purpose local governments, including 57 counties, 932 towns, 62 cities, 556 villages—all with power to tax and issue debt and with home rule protections under the state constitution—and 14 Native American reservations. The cities and towns completely cover all the territory of the counties, leaving no unincorporated areas. No city or town crosses county borders and with one exception, cities and towns do not overlap. All the villages reside within towns and 76 villages cross town boundaries. New York City operates as both a city and a county (the five boroughs are technically counties but operate under city government). This structure leads to a complex layering of local governments. Village residents have three layers: village, town and county; town residents have two: town and county. Cities outside New York City also have two layers: city and county. Only New York City and Native American reservations have one.

The vast majority of these general-purpose governments were established prior to 1920, when the state was primarily rural. Very little change has occurred in the number of cities and towns since. Villages, the only form of municipal government that can be incorporated or dissolved solely by local action, have seen more change, with 125 villages created since 1925 and 37 dissolved as of 2007, with more changes occurring even today.

The state has seen tremendous changes in population size, economic activity, transportation systems, communication technology, and settlement patterns since 1920, but the municipal classifications, boundaries, and laws under which these entities operate do not reflect this change.

Cities were traditionally the more populous and urban. But ten towns in the state have populations greater than 100,000 whereas among the state's cities, only the "Big Five" are that populous. Most of the state's cities (35 out of 62) have populations under 25,000 while 60 towns and six villages have populations greater than that level. The Town of Hempstead is the largest municipality outside New York City in terms of population.

### Why does this matter?

It matters because cities, towns and villages have very different governing structures, revenue structures, tax and debt limits, access to revenue sharing,

*continued on page 15*

## What's Inside

	page
President's Message	2
Repercussions of Supreme Court Decision in <i>Citizens United v. FEC</i>	3
Voter Services Committee Report	4
Calendar/Town Board Meetings	5
Health Committee Report	6
Education Committee Report	6
Have You Visited Our Website Yet?	15
Suffolk County Voter	16
Summary of February Board Meeting	17
Condolences	17
Do You Have a Good Story?	18
Peg Caraher	18
Save the Date! LWVH Trivia Challenge	19

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

### MEET YOUR TOWN SUPERVISORS

**Anna Throne-Holst**, Southampton  
**Bill Wilkinson**, East Hampton

**Monday, March 8, 2010**  
7:00 p.m.

**Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse**  
977 Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike  
(just south of Scuttlehole Road  
on the east side)

## The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

### Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, 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, 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 recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons 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 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, 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 ten times a year by the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, P. O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937.

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Joy Cordery, Advertising Coordinator; Proofreading

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## President's Message

To the wrongs that need resistance,  
To the right that needs assistance,  
To the future in the distance,  
Give yourselves.

Carrie Chapman Catt

The League of Women Voters celebrates its 90th birthday this year. The official birthday is February 14, but the celebration will last all year. We are planning to commemorate the milestone at our upcoming Annual Meeting in May and are working on other ways in which to observe this momentous landmark.

Carrie Chapman Catt first proposed a League of Women Voters to "finish the fight" and work to end all discrimination against women. And so the League of Women Voters was founded on Valentine's Day in 1920, six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

That fight—against discrimination against women—continues, but we have come to take stands on so many more subjects over the past ninety years, continuing to identify the issues upon which work is needed to make our country stronger and more democratic.

We continue to fight against the wrongs that need resistance. The League works to eliminate wrongs on many fronts—from impediments to the right to vote, such as antiquated voter registration and absentee voter laws, and restrictions on affording the franchise to ex-felons, to issues of good government, including campaign finance reform, redistricting, and effective ethics legislation.

We support the rights that need assistance. We defend citizens' rights to know and facilitate civic participation; we oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights, and we protect the constitutional right of privacy of individuals to make reproductive choices.

We work for the future in the distance. We know that our future is dependent upon implementation of health care reform, and our efforts to fight the effects of global climate change and to bring a sane energy policy to fruition are part of our commitment to the future of our country.

To these and to the multitude of other issues important to our members, we commit ourselves and our organization to continue working to give citizens a greater voice in their government. And we are proud to do so in an organization that depends upon its members to decide what positions it will take on the issues that are important to the country.

We join our national president Mary G. Wilson, in affirming that the League will, as it enters into a new year, continue to do what it has been trusted to do for more than 90 years:

Discuss the important issues;  
ask the difficult questions;  
and demand accountability from our government.

Happy Birthday to us!

Carol Mellor, President

537-6998

## REPERCUSSIONS OF SUPREME COURT DECISION IN *CITIZENS UNITED v. FEC*

The reaction of the LWVUS to the decision of the Supreme Court, which enables unlimited political spending by corporations, was unequivocal and clear. Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League of Women Voters, said that the Supreme Court had made a tragic mistake, one that is constitutionally irresponsible and that will bring about an anti-democratic revolution in how we finance elections in this country. She said that basic pillars of American democracy have been undermined.

### What caused such a strong reaction?

The *Citizens United* case, initially, tested the limits of the 2002 McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. Last summer, however, the Supreme Court signaled that it was prepared to use the case as an opportunity to revisit the constitutionality of campaign-finance laws more generally and to decide whether and to what extent corporations and unions were able to spend money in support of a candidate. There had been a long line of cases which held that such spending could be circumscribed; critics had argued that such laws violated the First Amendment's free speech clause.

The Supreme Court agreed and erased bans on the ability of corporations to spend money in support of (or against) a candidate. The court did not change the law on corporations' ability to contribute directly to a political campaign; such direct contributions continue to be banned. In addition, companies could organize and alert employees to the existence of PACs (political action committees), but they could not give money out of their general treasuries to PACs before the *Citizen's United* decision, and that rule remains the same. But now, under this decision, there are no limits on a corporation's ability to spend as much money as it wants on a sort of shadow campaign on behalf of a candidate, so long as a company does not coordinate directly with a campaign. As a result, there will be a spate of "informational" ads and, many feel, the whole landscape of political campaigns has changed. \*

### How did the Court reach its decision?

The First Amendment prohibits Congress from fining or

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\*The case did not change the rules on an individual's right to contribute to a federal campaign. Individuals are permitted to give up to \$2,400 to a candidate during the primary and \$2,400 to a candidate during the general election. Individuals are also still allowed to give \$5,000 to any given political-action committee. The amount an individual can give a campaign is \$115,500 over a two-year period.

jailing citizens, or associations of citizens, for engaging in political speech. The Supreme Court held that the government cannot ban political speech merely because the speaker is an association with a corporate form. The right to free speech is not absolute; laws restricting free speech are allowed so long as the government can show that the law serves a compelling governmental interest and is narrowly tailored to its purported purpose. In *Citizens United*, however, the court ruled that the interest at issue—keeping elections free of too much corporate influence—was not good enough to justify the restriction on use of corporate funds to support a political position or a candidate.

Among the concerns about the decision is the fear that corporations will use their financial clout to influence the conduct of elected officials behind the scenes, as well as through direct advertising. The threat of a corporate challenge could cause officeholders to change their votes in office, so as to preempt a corporation from running ads against him or her during reelection.

### What can be done?

There are, at the present time, three avenues being pursued to lessen the effect of this decision. First, there is a campaign underway to amend the United States Constitution to explicitly exclude corporations from the purview of the free speech clause. Second, legislation such as The Fair Elections Now Act (S.752 and H.R. 1826), introduced by Senate Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and House Democratic Caucus Chairman John Larson (D-Conn.), can counteract the effect of the *Citizens United* decision. These bills blend small-donor fundraising with public funding to reduce the pressure of fundraising from big contributors. Finally, the Brennan Center has a different approach. It has issued a report that proposes changes in corporate law as an antidote to the post-*Citizens United* reality. The Brennan Center suggests two specific reforms: first, require managers to report corporate political spending directly to shareholders and, second, require managers to obtain authorization from shareholders before making political expenditures with corporate treasury funds. Modeled on existing British law, these changes are designed to ensure that shareholders' funds are used for political spending only if that is how the shareholders want their money spent.

Written by Carol Mellor

## Voter Services

While some of us were hibernating, simply trying to endure the winter blasts, the Voter Services arm of the state League was doing its share to warm up the proceedings by holding certain elected officials' "feet to the fire" in the form of two pointed communications sent in early February. One was to the NY Senate Codes Committee and the second to the NY State Board of Elections.

### **Memorandum to the Senate Codes Committee: Absentee Ballot Changes**

Dated February 2, 2010, the LWVNYS memorandum reiterates a previous position by urging that body to take steps to approve the bill (S.2868B), which would simplify the state's absentee ballot form. Specifically, it refers to the section that would eliminate the requirement that voters "provide unnecessary and intrusive personal information about the reason for their applications."

In addition, it states, "[T]he simplified absentee ballot application requirements in this legislation will encourage eligible voters to exercise their right to vote."

Having just had my son complete an absentee ballot application for the special election in Southampton, which asks him where he will be (on election day) and when he will return, we both can loudly echo the need for this change.

### **Letter to the New York State Board of Elections: Possible Problems with Optical Scan Overvoting Results**

Now that the new optical scan voting machines will be in place for this fall's elections, the League together with other voter advocacy groups sent a letter on February 3 expressing concerns about a possible problem involving the counting of completed ballots. When the voter makes an error on a paper ballot, there is no plan in place to return the incorrect one to the voter, therein creating the potential for "overvoting." The letter states:

"New York's new optical scan machines will treat overvotes in a way that threatens the voting rights of millions of New Yorkers. As you know, unlike most optical scan systems, the ES&S DS200 and ImageCast machines purchased for New York do not automatically return overvoted or otherwise

erroneous ballots to the voter for correction.... We strongly urge the Board of Elections to correct this problem immediately. The New York Board of Elections must require that the ES&S DS200 and ImageCast machines automatically return overvoted or otherwise erroneous ballots to the voter for correction."

Citing problems in Florida where the percentage overvoting in one instance was 18%, the letter points to even larger error percentages in New York, given some unique circumstances here:

"Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that New York will have an overvote rate that is even higher than the overvote rates in Florida. Specifically, (1) voters in New York have used lever machines which contained interlock systems that prevented overvotes for decades; (2) New York allows fusion voting, which results in the repetition of a candidate's name by all endorsing parties and can result in a confusing ballot prone to overvotes; (3) the statutory requirements for the design of paper ballots make them far less usable than paper ballots used in other states (such as Florida); and (4) there are frequent contests where voters are entitled to choose multiple candidates in the same election."

The letter was signed by the following groups:

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law  
Center for Independence of the Disabled NY  
Citizen's Union of the City of New York  
Common Cause/NY  
League of Women Voters of New York State  
NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund  
New York Public Interest Research Group  
New Yorkers for Verified Voting  
Women's City Club of New York

Given the widespread concern about this issue, we intend to keep informed about the response from The Board of Elections as we move closer to using the optical scan machines in upcoming elections.

**Anne K. Marshall, Chair**

**537-3257**

## March 2010

Note: Meeting dates and times are published several weeks in advance and are subject to change. There will be no Membership, Health, or Natural Resources committee meeting in March. Please contact the Chairs or visit our website at <http://hampton.ny.lwvnet.org> for updates. If you don't see a meeting for a committee of interest, contact the Chair of that committee. Contacts are listed on page 19 and on the website.

<b>March 3</b> 5:30 p.m.	Wednesday	LWVH Board Meeting	Bridgehampton National Bank. Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton. Members and guests welcome.
<b>March 8</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Membership Meeting</b>	<b>Newly elected Town Supervisors of East Hampton and Southampton</b> will discuss their plans for the upcoming year. UU Meeting House, Bridgehampton Turnpike. Contact Anne Marshall 537-3257.
<b>March 9</b>	Tuesday	<b>SPECIAL ELECTION</b>	<b>SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL VACANCY ON SOUTHAMPTON TOWN BOARD. POLLS OPEN 6 A.M. TO 9 P.M.</b>
<b>March 10</b> 12:30 p.m.	Wednesday	Voter Services	Hampton Library, Bridgehampton. Contact Anne Marshall, 537-3257.
<b>March 12</b>	Friday	Education Committee Meeting	Rogers Memorial Library, Southampton. Contact Judi Roth, 283-0759.
<b>March 17</b> 10:00 to noon	Wednesday	LWVSC Board Meeting	Riverhead Library.
<b>March 17</b> 2:00 p.m.	Wednesday	Special Events Committee Meeting	Starbucks, Bridgehampton. Contact Sue Wilson, 283-6549.
			<b>LOOKING AHEAD</b>
<b>April 7</b>	Wednesday	LWVH Board Meeting	Bridgehampton National Bank. Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton. Members and guests welcome.
<b>April 12</b> 7:00 p.m.	Monday	<b>Membership Meeting</b>	<b>Public forum on Agriculture and Aquaculture on the East End.</b> UU Meeting House, Bridgehampton Turnpike. Contact Ann Sandford, 537-2382.
<b>April 15</b> 8:30 a.m.	Thursday	<b>Running and Winning</b>	Program at which high school girls meet and interact with elected women officials and are introduced to public service as possible career choice. Southampton Cultural Center, 25 Pond Lane, Southampton. Contact Judi Roth, 283-0759
<b>April 25</b> 2:00 p.m.	Sunday	<b>Trivia Challenge</b>	Fundraiser to benefit the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons and the Ellen Hermanson Breast Center at Southampton Hospital. Parrish Hall, Southampton Hospital. Contact Susan Wilson, 283-6549

### TOWN BOARD MEETINGS

<b>March 4</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>East Hampton</b>	Town Hall Courtroom, 159 Pantigo Rd., East Hampton NY 11937
<b>March 9</b> 1:00 p.m.	<b>Southampton</b>	Town Hall Board Room, Southampton Town Hall, 116 Hampton Rd., Southampton, NY 11968
<b>March 18</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>East Hampton</b>	Town Hall Courtroom, 159 Pantigo Rd., East Hampton NY 11937
<b>March 23</b> 6:00 p.m.	<b>Southampton</b>	Town Hall Board Room, Southampton Town Hall, 116 Hampton Rd., Southampton, NY 11968

## Health

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### LEAGUE URGES QUICK RESPONSE TO NATION'S HEALTH CARE CRISIS

On January 27, President Obama's State of the Union address touched on the importance of passing health care legislation. Earlier that day, Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League of Women Voters, issued a statement that strongly supported the President's position. The following is Mary Wilson's statement on the fight for health care reform legislation in America.

"We have a health care crisis in America. Too many citizens lack adequate health insurance coverage and rising costs threaten everyone. The failure of Congress to act on these issues over decades has simply compounded the problems and undermined faith in government.

"The League of Women Voters urges our elected members of Congress to finish work on health care reform and send a bill quickly to the President for his signature. While many of the provisions of the House bill are preferable to those in the Senate version, we believe that the House of Representatives should step forward and pass the Senate bill.

"Both the House and Senate have now passed comprehensive health care legislation, and the bills share many essential elements: they greatly expand health care coverage to include millions more Americans; they protect the coverage that currently delivers care to most; they contain essential elements to

reduce costs over the long term; and they accomplish these goals at a reasonable cost.

"Opponents of health care reform, however, have been irresponsible in adopting a strategy of fear, delay and obfuscation. They have misled and lied about the provisions of the legislation and have relied on the 60-vote rule of the Senate to block progress. These fundamentally anti-democratic tactics cannot be allowed to prevail.

"Medicare was enacted over strong opposition from those who opposed 'socialized medicine.' Social Security was adopted despite loud and prolonged complaints. Yet, both these systems are now sacrosanct. Many other accomplishments, from civil rights to environmental protection, were controversial when first adopted but have proven to be critical steps forward. Health care reform is part of that tradition.

"We understand that there may be a number of ways for health care reform to succeed. None of these possibilities will accomplish all that needs to be done, and Congress will need to revisit many issues in coming years. But any of these alternatives moves us toward successful health care reform and thus is better than the status quo. Congress should not miss this historic opportunity to enact comprehensive health care reform legislation."

**Judy Samuelson, Chair**

**267-3055**

## Education

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The second Running and Winning event is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, at the Southampton Cultural Center. This year, in addition to the seven high schools that participated in 2009 (Southampton, Bridgehampton, Ross, Hampton Bays, Westhampton Beach, East Hampton and Pierson), we have added Shelter Island. We hope for a large turnout of both students and elected women officials.

The juniors and seniors who attend the program will be asked to imagine that they are running for election to the school board. They will work on their platforms to be presented to the public and also seek to find ways to energize voters to turn out for school elections. In line with this theme, Christine Strassfield, member of the Southampton School Board (and curator and museum

director at Guild Hall), will speak on the responsibilities of a school board.

As reported previously, the program has received funding from the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls and Bridgehampton Bank. Anne Marshall and I attended a funding seminar held by the Long Island Fund and got to meet many of the other interesting groups that the fund supports. We were introduced to an online reporting system that will help us keep track of what we need to do to submit our final report to the fund.

League volunteers are needed to serve as facilitators, registrars and hospitality workers. If you are interested please contact me at [rothhandj@yahoo.com](mailto:rothhandj@yahoo.com) or 283-0759.

**Judi Roth, Chair**

## CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

*continued from page 1*

and other forms of state aid and access to county and state services, grants and programs. For example, cities tend to receive more state aid than towns and villages with similar problems. Despite differences under state law, the functions and services provided by the different classes of government are converging, making old designations outdated. Cities tend to receive more aid from the state, yet many towns and some villages are larger than our cities, with the same problems that population brings.

### **There's more**

New York state government also includes districts and other special government entities, such as 1,811 special-purpose districts (school, fire, library and other districts, plus commissioner-run districts like parks, water, sewer and solid waste). Each has an elected board and the ability to impose taxes and/or issue debt directly or through the local government. Boundaries often cross town, village, city and even county borders, creating issues of administration, taxing, and coordination with multiple local governments. Many operate outside of citizen and local press oversight and hold elections outside of the General, Village or School District elections, resulting in low voter interest and turnout.

### **And more districts!**

New York has 1,302 local government entities with independent boards. These boards are usually appointed but can also be elected by a select group of individuals. They can impose costs and/or issue debt with little local control. A few examples of this type of entity are BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), community colleges, consolidated health districts, housing authorities, sewer and utility authorities. Their scope of powers ranges

from local to regional and vary in the degree to which they are independent of the local government oversight.

Reasons for lack of change in municipal boundaries and/or classifications and rules include (in addition to simple inertia and sentimental attachment to what exists):

- Lack of unincorporated land, making expansion of cities extremely difficult.
- State laws such as the “Selkirk Law” (1961) that require representatives of all affected areas to agree to a city annexation of land, as well as a formal referendum of city and town residents and a special act of the legislature. In 1963 the Selkirk law was extended to villages.
- Home-rule protections for all local governments in the state constitution limit the state legislature’s ability to pass a law affecting a specific local government without a request from the local government itself.
- Patterns of state aid to local governments based on traditional legal categories rather than more appropriate criteria.
- Stake of local officials in the current structure.

Because definitions have changed so little over the past 90 years, it is important to keep in mind that what a municipality is called is an artifact of the past and not a true reflection of its size or urbanization. This uncertainty is one factor in recommending that initiatives to consolidate local government entities remember that “one-size-does-not-fit-all” and that the analysis should not be influenced by terminology but evaluated on the facts.

For a summary of Suffolk’s local governmental entities, go to the Attorney General’s website, [www.oag.state.ny.us](http://www.oag.state.ny.us).

## HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE YET?

If you haven’t done so already, be sure to check out the new and improved League of Women Voters of the Hamptons website: <http://hamptons.ny.lwvnet.org>. And if you have checked it out, have another visit. It is being continually updated with League news and information, photos, *The Voter* (past and current), links to our advertisers and other useful sites, and much more. Also, please support two new advertisers: The Lodge, a restaurant in East Hampton; and Cognitive Screening, for a cognitive evaluation with LWVH member, Valerie King, Ph.D.

If you have photos from one of our meetings or events, you’re very welcome to send them to the webmaster at League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, P.O. Box 2253, East Hampton NY 11937 (if you have paper photos) or if your photos are digital, please e-mail to [wm@hamptons.ny.lwvnet.org](mailto:wm@hamptons.ny.lwvnet.org). Use the same e-mail address to send comments or suggestions for material that could be added to our new website: <http://hamptons.ny.lwvnet.org>. We look forward to hearing from you!



# Suffolk County Voter

www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org Box 1440, Stony Brook, NY 11790-1440 631-862-6860

March 2010

Wed. March 17 LWVSC Board Meeting, Riverhead Library 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

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## Fund for Modern Courts and LWVSC Seeking Volunteers for Court Monitoring at Family Courts in Suffolk County

The Fund for Modern Courts is an independent nonpartisan statewide court reform organization committed to improving the court system for all New Yorkers. They support a judiciary that provides for the fair administration of justice, equal access to the courts, and that is independent, highly qualified and diverse.

### Why Family Court?

Family Courts are woefully under funded and yet have the greatest number of cases of any court. Problems include frequent delays and adjournments, inadequate legal representation for the poor, overcrowded court rooms and substandard court facilities. These problems affect the most vulnerable members of society, including children who have suffered abuse or neglect, and victims of domestic violence. We need to bring citizens and community members into the family courts to observe and provide a much needed tool to inform the public and effect change.

### Volunteer Service Activities:

- Observe Suffolk County Family Court proceedings over several months, 1+ days a week, and complete Monitoring Forms documenting findings and recommendations for improvements.
- Attend in person or via phone regular status update meetings with FMC.
- Provide follow-up monitoring, 6 months—1 year after project to report on implementation (or lack of) of recommendations.

### Accomplishments As a Result of Court Monitoring:

- Based on our court monitors reports, The Fund for Modern Courts will publish a detailed report on the monitors' findings and recommendations for improvement.
- FMC will distribute the findings and recommendations to the FMC Board of Directors and the administrators of the state court system, state & local legislators, new media and other interested parties, for action.
- Provide follow-up to ensure actions recommended result in improvements to the Suffolk County Family Courts.

### Why Citizen Monitoring?

We believe that those who administer justice should always act under the sense of public responsibility, and that every citizen should be able to satisfy, with their own eyes as to the mode in which a public duty is performed.

Modern Courts has sponsored court monitoring programs around the state, through which ordinary citizens observe and evaluate their courts, report their findings, and issue public recommendations for improvement.

[www.moderncourts.org](http://www.moderncourts.org)

### Timing:

Orientation and Training for Court Monitors  
**March**  
(locations to be announced)

Court Monitoring  
**April-May-June**  
Central Islip and Riverhead Family Courts

Interested?  
Send your contact info ASAP  
[lisawscott@optonline.net](mailto:lisawscott@optonline.net)  
or call 631 523-1653

## SUMMARY OF LWVH BOARD MEETING February 3, 2010

### INFORMATION ITEMS

- Carol reported receipt of a thank you note from the Bridgehampton Food Pantry.
- Carol announced that the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls will host an event on April 26 with Madeleine Albright as guest. She will keep the Board updated.
- The NYS League's Spring Fling, in celebration of the League's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, will take place in Manhattan on May 14-16. Details about this fundraising/networking opportunity will be forthcoming.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Annual Meeting:** Sue reported that in addition to the business meeting, the LWVH will celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of the League. It will take place at the Southampton Cultural Center on Sunday, May 23 at 2 p.m.
- **Celebration Fundraising:** Sue proposed that an announcement postcard of the Annual Meeting be sent that would include a request for donations. It would go to businesses, chambers of commerce and other groups, as well as to members.
- **Consolidation Consensus Meeting:** Carol reported that Naomi and her committee are preparing a background article on governmental structure for the March *Voter* and that she will send out the web address of the NYS League's materials for use at the consensus meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 10.
- **Lobbying:** Judy will set up the meeting with Assemblyman Thiele. The meeting with Senator LaValle, which will focus on ethics reform, will be set up later.
- **Family Court Monitoring:** The Fund for Modern Courts has asked for volunteers from the LWVH to monitor the Riverhead family court. Although this is not a League project, Carol will communicate the request for volunteers to our membership via Constant Contact.
- **Bylaws:** Judy reported that her committee is suggesting two changes: one is to add, besides a president and co-presidents, the option of an executive committee to serve in the presidential role. The second is to formalize the practice of sending information electronically to specific email addresses, as an alternative to post mail.
- **Citizens United Supreme Court Case:** Carol noted that this case gives corporations and other groups First Amendment rights that preclude Congress from prohibiting them from contributing to political campaigns. The national League and others will be lobbying Congress heavily on the implications of the decision on voting rights.

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- **Running and Winning:** Judi announced that Shelter

Island High School will participate. Her committee continues its work on the questions for the students and it will invite a school board member to address the group.

- **Agriculture/Aquaculture Panel** on Monday, April 12, 7 pm: Ann reported that there will be four panelists: John Halsey, farmer (the Milk Pail); Jennifer Pike, farmer; Kim Tetrault, Cornell Marine Program; Stephanie Talmage, East Hampton Town Trustee. She will begin to work with Arlene on a publicity plan. The theme is "research, public policy, entrepreneurship."

### COMMITTEES

- **Special Events:** Sue reported on the trivia event planned for April 25 at the Parrish Memorial Hall, to be co-sponsored by Southampton Hospital's Breast Center. Winner's prize will be \$200. There will be a 50-50 raffle. A team of four will pay \$100 and individuals in the gallery, \$15. Everyone may participate in the pop quizzes. Earnings will be split 50-50.
- **Natural Resources:** Glorian for Sue Avedon noted that the group is continuing to evaluate a film.
- **Voter Services:** Anne has acceptances from the two town supervisors for the March 8 membership meeting. She also updated the Board about the candidates debate on February 24, 7:30, at the Southampton Cultural Center, between Bridget Fleming and William Hughes who are running in the Special Election on March 9 for Southampton Town Board.
- **Publicity:** Arlene updated the Board on school budget issues.
- **Website:** Judy reported that January usage was the busiest yet with 2515 requests.

The next Board meeting is March 3, 2010, 5:30 p.m. at



### CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathy to Joy Lupoletti on the death of her brother, Elio Betty.

We offer our thoughts and prayers to the family of long-time LWVH member, Peg Caraher.

## DO YOU HAVE A GOOD STORY?

National has begun a program of collecting and housing the stories of achievement from League members across the country. They are looking for personal stories on what League membership has meant to its members.

When new members join, the LWVH introduces them with a short biographical sketch in *The Voter*, which includes the reasons why they have joined the League. We have not, however, in the past followed up by asking what membership has meant to the members after one, or ten, or fifty years. We thought that as part of our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration this year, we might want to share some of our stories with each other and to submit some of them to national. The following is a description of the project.

### What is the LWV Storybank?

The League of Women Voters Storybank is a collection of stories from League members across the country. The stories reflect the value of being a member of the League. We are seeking story submissions from members just like you—exceptional individuals who have exceptional stories. We need stories about what the League means to you and/or what your membership has meant to your community.

### Why is LWV collecting stories?

There is no better way to explain the benefits of membership than to share stories from current LWV members that communicate the benefits of League membership. Every member's story is valuable and important. The League of Women Voters is *the* place where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement; your work has demonstrated this and sharing your story can inspire others to join.

### How are the stories used?

The stories that LWV collects will have multiple uses. LWV may highlight a story on the League's website, use it in new membership materials, share it with members of the media, or print it in *The Voter*.

### How can I submit a story?

Submitting a story is simple! Just e-mail it to Carol Mellor at [camellor@aol.com](mailto:camellor@aol.com). Please indicate if you want the story submitted to the national LWV.

## PEG CARAHER

My recollection of **Peg Caraher** is that of a very determined petite woman, always meticulously coiffed and turned out. However, that is not what she was about.

She was a nature enthusiast—zeroing in on birds as a particular fascination. She approached everything she did with enthusiasm and seemingly without effort.

She had been a League Board member for many years when I first joined over twenty years ago. As Chair of the Action Committee, Peg always came completely prepared. She was responsible for meeting with the various politicians on specific issues that we were advocating for based on state, national or local positions, which we had reached through consensus. No politician made her nervous, because she knew she could present our causes with conviction.

As a LWVH Board member, Peg knew she could not hold political office so she resigned from our Board.

She became a member of the Southampton Town Planning Board and then went on the Southampton Town Zoning Board of Appeals, where she was known and respected for her impartiality. This is a legacy we would all like to leave.

If I may quote from her obituary in the *Southampton Press*, “ ‘She was very dedicated, very thorough, very articulate,’ recalled Dennis Finnerty, current chairman of the Planning Board, who also noted her equitable treatment of applications.”

Her intelligent approach to issues contributed to my respect for the workings of the League.

Peg was president and board member of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge and also a board member of the Eastern L.I. Audubon Society. Donations to the Quogue Wildlife Refuge (P.O. Box 492, Quogue, NY 11959) will be appreciated.

**Written by Eموke Forman**

# LWVH Board

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## **SAVE THE DATE!**

### **2nd Annual LWVH TRIVIA CHALLENGE**

**April 25, 2010  
2:00-5:00 p.m.**

To benefit LWVH and  
Ellen Hermanson Breast Center at Southampton Hospital

Parrish Memorial Hall, Southampton

Emcee: Radio personality Walker Vreeland

**TICKETS:** Teams of 4: \$100 per team (\$25 per person)  
Gallery: \$15 per person  
Tax Deductible

**PRIZES:** \$200 Prize for the winning team  
50/50 Raffle  
Tabletop Decorating Contest  
Pop-Quiz Prizes (open to Gallery participants)

Light Refreshments

Call Susan Wilson at 631/283-6549 for more info  
or to register your team.

# The Voter

League of Women Voters of the Hamptons

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## The League of Women Voters

**Nonpartisan. Political. Grassroots. Volunteer.**

**Making democracy work through voter education,  
issue advocacy, and civic participation.**