



LWV WINTER 2013

NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 5, 7:00 pm.
LWV Issue Forum: "Money and Politics", at the Rye Middle School, Multi-Purpose Room.

Friday, February 8 Deadline for students to submit applications for the "Students Inside Albany" scholarships.

Saturday, Feb. 9, 7:00 pm.
Chinese New Year, Cocktails and Dim Dum Party, at the home of Roz and Peter Larr, 6 Fieldstone Rd., Rye.

Last Week of February
Candidates Forums for contested Rye Brook and Port Chester village elections—dates and times to be announced.

Tuesday, March 19
Elections in Village of Rye Brook and Port Chester.

Friday April 12, 2013, 11:30 am.
Annual Sound Shore Leagues Spring Luncheon. Speaker: Nicole Sheindlin (daughter of judge Judy) Location: Hampshire Country Club. 10225 Cove Rd., Mamaroneck, NY.

Friday, June 14 Annual Meeting.

President's Message



Nobody living through the 2012 election cycle could escape the mind numbing influence money is having our political landscape. Figuring out what, if anything can be done about the situation inevitably raises a myriad of thorny questions about our notions of good government and freedom of speech. Let's discuss.

Our Next Issue Forum is from 7:00 – 9:00 on Tuesday, February 5 at the Rye Middle School, when our panel of experts will help us examine what we think we know about: "Money and Politics" Our panel will exchange their perspectives developed through first-hand experience with these issues.

Panelists include: George Latimer, Laurence Laufer, Bill O'Reilly, and Jeff Binder. Our moderator will be Gary Zuckerman.

Our premise:

The US Supreme Court's 2010 decision in Citizen's United stands for the proposition that money is free speech and that much of past attempts to limit such spending is unconstitutional. What have been the effects of this decision? Have they been beneficial or detrimental to our country?

Should one candidate have the ability to spend more than another?

Can, or should, spending be limited within the meaning of the constitutional guarantee of free speech? Should the public fund campaigns in order to equalize spending?

This Forum will address the following:

- * What does Citizen's United actually say about how money can be raised and spent?
- * What are the strategies for both raising and spending money? How successful are they?

Do candidates have any choice but to spend such sums in order to get their message across?

- * Are political contributions the same as "buying" candidates?
- * What are the most effective disclosure techniques to enable the public to be informed of who is making the contributions or sponsoring the messages?

- * What is a PAC and a Superpac? Is spending by these organizations which are not allowed to coordinate with campaigns, productive or counterproductive for the candidate? How do special interest groups coordinate campaign spending and lobbying to achieve their objectives?

Please join us as we delve into the arguments for and against public funding (in whole or part) of campaigns? What have been your experiences?

March 19, Village Election Deadlines

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Friday, March 8 -- Last Day to Register for Election in person at Westchester Board of Elections in White Plains

ELECTION VOTING DEADLINES:

March 12--Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot from the Westchester Board of Elections (Rye Brook), or Port Chester Village Clerk.

March 12—Early voting begins in Port Chester at Village Hall--222 Grace Church Street only. From Tuesday, March 12 to Friday, March 15, the Poll will be open: 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM. But on Saturday, March 16, voting hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

March 13--Last day to postmark and mail absentee ballots.

March 18 --Last day to apply IN-PERSON for an absentee ballot at Westchester Board of Elections.

March 19 – Village Election Day
Port Chester Polls are open from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM. Rye Brook polls are open from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

Westchester County now runs the Rye Brook Village Election. For information and questions contact the Westchester Board of Elections at (914) 995-5713.

Port Chester runs its own elections. For information and questions contact the Village Clerk at (914) 939-5202 or go to PortChesterVotes.com



Scholarship Application Due by February 8

The 11th Students Inside Albany Conference (SIA) will convene this year on April 14th –17th. This annual conference is sponsored by the LWV of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. The program is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The Conference is most of all a learning experience and has clear objectives.

Primary objectives are:

- * To increase student understanding of public policy in New York State.
- * To enhance student understanding of the roles of the various forces seeking to impact New York legislation and policy development, enactment and change.
- * To promote an increased understanding of the New York State legislative process through legislative shadowing experiences.

Chelsea Bodansky is this year's SIA Coordinator for the LWV of Rye, Rye Brook, and Port Chester and has distributed information and application forms for the SIA Scholarship Awards to all high schools in Rye, Rye Neck, Blind Brook and Port Chester. The local League provides a stipend for transportation to and from the conference and the League of New York State provides the conference, lodging and meals. Winning students share their experience at a meeting with our Board of Directors and also provide a written summary.

Some comments from past SIA attendees:

“Attending this conference provides you with the tools and know-how to make a difference in your local and state government. It was a great educational experience.” Alexa Salazar, 2011

“I am now aware that every vote counts and it only takes one person to make a change.” Tanasia Davis, 2011

Competition for the award is based upon a student's interest in government and leadership as demonstrated by a short essay, recommendations and pertinent extracurricular activities.

Application forms and brochures are available in school guidance offices and from our website.

Tools for Change 2013

This year's Tools for Change Seminar has gotten off to a robust start with a cohort of 35 students who will be conducting research on the impact of our environment on the Rye Town community. Co-sponsored by our League together with the Town Council and local community group Building Community Bridges, “Tools” is a collaborative action-research seminar for high school students that is designed to help Rye Town students prepare for college, work with each other to develop leadership and team building skills and, above all, learn to solve problems.

Our League is also happy to announce that President Debbie Reisner, who has been volunteering and serving on the Steering Committee for several years has accepted the position of Program Director. Steve Meyers will now represent the League on the Steering Committee.

So, what is Tools for Change?

Most of us are quite aware of the range of social problems that confront communities around the world. But few of us believe we can do anything about them. How do we develop solutions to contemporary social challenges? Tools for Change is one answer that has been provided to our community high school students for the past three years.

The Tools for Change curriculum is modeled on an honors program in the Sociology Department at Duke University. The voluntary program is a college level seminar course that allows students to form real world policy recommendations by employing research methods and analytics used by social scientists. Dr. William Tobin of Duke University and Dr. Valerie Feit of Rye Neck High School teach the seminar.

Contact the seminar's community coordinator, Steve Meyers at lww.Rye.RyeBrook.PortChester@gmail.com

February 9th Chinese New Year Party

We are planning to hold a Chinese New Year party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Larr, 6 Fieldstone Rd., Rye, beginning at 7:00 pm. There is no charge, but voluntary donations are welcome, and there will be a raffle. Proceeds will go to our student outreach programs. Enjoy cocktails and dim sum with our special guest and supporter, newly-elected State Assemblyman Steve Otis. Last year over 70 members, friends and municipal officials attended. All of the students, and their parents, who have applied for the "Students Inside Albany" scholarships are invited to attend the party.

Community Service Hours

If you know high school students who would like to intern, we need help with filing and with our Social Media program. We can also use interns to help staff candidates and issue forums.

Seeking Volunteers for Candidates Forums

Our League of Women Voters will sponsor Candidates Forums for contested Rye Brook and Port Chester village elections during the last week of February—dates and times to be determined. Anyone wishing to work on the Candidate Forum Teams should contact Debbie Reisner.

General Election Candidates' Forums



On October 15th, at the Rye Middle School, our League chapter held a candidates' forum. Above, the candidates for NY state senate from this district present their views.



On October 23rd, at the Harrison Library, our chapter joined the League of Women Voters of Harrison to sponsor a candidates' forum for the U.S. Congressional and NY State Senatorial races. Above, the candidates for United States Congress present their views.

The LWV is willing to organize Drop-in Coffee Discussion Groups in homes or meeting places concerning topics of voting or civic matters. Contact Debbie Reisner if you are interested.

Cumulative Voting

Port Chester is unique in New York State. It is the only municipality that uses cumulative voting. It's also the only one with early voting (during the week prior to the established Election date). This is the result of a federal court decision after a civil rights suit. On March 19, Port Chester citizens will vote for all six of their village trustees and their mayor at their usual designated polling places. But, if they find it more convenient, they can actually choose to vote for these positions during the week prior to the 19th at the Village Hall. The mayor runs "at large" with one vote per voter. But when voting for trustees, cumulative voting is in affect which provides that the voter can cast up to six votes for one candidate, or he or she may split up those six votes among any of the Trustee candidates running, or among write-in candidates.

League of Women Voters supporting "Running and Winning" Program

Do you know of any young women who might consider serving in elective office? A League workshop is planned for this April, bringing together two students from each high school in Westchester County for an active political experience. Working in small groups, participants will interview local female elected officials, learning about their experiences in seeking and holding public office. Afterwards, each small group will plan a campaign, analyze issues, design publicity, and write and deliver a campaign speech. This event is being sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Westchester County. Volunteers will be needed as facilitators.



Rye, Rye Brook
& Port Chester
**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**

LWV WINTER 2013 NEWSLETTER

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The League of Women Voters of Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester is a nonpartisan political organization that promotes political responsibility through the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Our mission is to foster a better understanding of policy issues that will impact our lives and our communities.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - RYE, RYE BROOK & PORT CHESTER

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Select Membership Level: Make checks payable to Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester LWV

___ Individual \$65 ___ Family \$85 ___ Sponsor \$125* ___ Patron \$250*

The LWV is a 501 (C) 4 advocacy organization, membership dues are not tax deductible.

*Includes membership. Monies in excess of \$65 Individual and \$85 Family go to the LWV Educational Foundation, a 501(C) 3 organization, and are tax deductible.

RETURN APPLICATION WITH CHECK TO: LWV RYE-RB-PC, PO Box 194, Rye, NY 10580.