INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH

IRON JAWED ANGELS
Starring Hilary Swank, Angelica Huston, Julia Ormond

Thursday, March 27 at 7 PM
$5 Suggested Donation  Reception at 6:30 PM

Presented by Cinema Arts Centre and League of Women Voters

Iron Jawed Angels recounts a key chapter in US History: the struggle of suffragists who fought for the passage of the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote in 1920. The suffragists had no vote, no political clout, and no equal rights. However, what they lacked under the law, they made up for in brains, determination, and courage. Oscar-winner Hilary Swank leads an outstanding cast in the inspirational true story of women who dared to make a stand for women's rights. Their wills were made of iron and their courage inspired a nation and ended up shaping the future of America. USA, 2004, 124 min.

Come see this inspiring film and afterwards join in a discussion of this legacy, what is currently happening with our voting process, and how you can become involved. Democracy is not a spectator sport!
MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENT

I’m delighted to report that our Board, at its February 1st meeting, approved the appointment of Judie Gorenstein as Co-President of our LWV of Huntington through June 30th, and she has accepted the position. I look forward to sharing the presidency with her in the coming months.

In honor of Women’s History Month, we will be presenting, with the Cinema Arts Centre, a wonderful film, “Iron Jawed Angels,” which shows the difficulties the suffragettes went through to achieve the vote for women in the early 20th century. (See the cover page of this issue for information). Bring a friend, come early for refreshments, and spend an interesting evening with us.

Check our Calendar of Events for coming meetings: In April we’ll be hearing about a suggestion for an alternate method of electing the President called “A National Popular Vote Compact Among the States”; and in May, we’ll have a program on Health Care.

The State League has issued its Legislative Priorities for 2008, based on input from local leagues on which issues to focus for the year:


II. Cost Effective and Accessible Health Care

III. Energy and Environment

(Other State League positions which will still be supported as these come to the fore are: Abolition of the Death Penalty, Equity in School Financing, Reproductive Rights, Salary Equity Reform).

Don’t forget -

Members are always welcome to Board meetings. It’s a good way to learn about what is going on, and possibly find an activity you’d like to join. Just call to let us know if you want to attend. (We need a Recording Secretary - someone to take minutes at our monthly board meetings. If this is a possibility for you, please let us know. It is a very important position on the Board).

Marilyn Brown
Voter Service Report – We Won!

After years of our League members lobbying for the PBOS (paper ballot optical scanner), our efforts, as well as those of other groups, paid off. It appears that all counties in New York, other than Hamilton County, will be replacing their lever voting machines with a paper ballot optical scan system. The Commissioners of the Suffolk County Board of Elections have chosen the Sequoia Image Cast Ballot Marking Device/Scanner.

The testing of the voting machines was completed on February 27, 2008, and purchase orders were issued the following day. One ballot marker for the disabled was ordered for each polling site this year as per the agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ). More will be ordered later to replace all lever machines in 2009. Commissioners Anita Katz and Cathy Geier have made certain that our votes will be counted and counted correctly. I want to thank the commissioners, as well as the members of the voter service committee, for helping achieve our goal.

Besides the good news of the PBOS, we are all excited about the interest young people and, in fact, all voters, are showing in this election. Our voter service committee is looking forward to teaching Vote 18 in many of the neighboring school districts. In addition, we will be lobbying for less restrictions on absentee ballots. This is the perfect time to do this. In the public policy positions of the LWVS, under Citizen’s Right to Vote, it is stated that the League advocates protection of the right of all citizens to vote and the encouragement of all citizens to vote.

Questions asked on New York’s current absentee ballot application are an invasion of privacy and intimidate voters by putting them and their property at risk. Last year, Bill A07286, which called for a revision of absentee applications, passed the State Assembly on June 4th and was referred to the Senate. Bill S05172 was held in committee, though, and not brought to a vote. A similar bill will be voted on in the Assembly this year and, again, is expected to pass. Members of the voter service committee will be contacting our senators to sponsor and support this bill. Others are urged to do the same.

However, there is even more to do. Thirty one states have no-excuse absentee ballots. An absentee ballot is an affidavit ballot, and voters DO have the right to choose it in place of an in-person vote. In New York, one must be out of the county for business, studies, vacation, or confined due to illness, disability or incarceration to be able to obtain an absentee ballot. These restrictions definitely limit the number of people who can vote absentee. Next year, when our voting machines are replaced, we can anticipate some resistance to change by some voters and poll workers. Allowing people to vote absentee would not only increase voter turnout, but decrease confusion. There is no better time than now to lobby for this change.

Judie Gorenstein

Pierson High School Seniors Predict

Obama Wins Presidency!

The Social Studies classes at Pierson High School took part in VOTE 18 on February 29th. In addition to holding a mock election to decide which student candidate was their choice for President, we asked the students to make real-life decisions: who did they think would win the Democratic primary, and who did they think would win the presidency? In the Democratic primary, the vote was almost 2 to 1 for Obama over Clinton. In the general election, the vote was 33 to 17 for Obama over McCain. So you heard it here first …! (Or probably in the Sag Harbor Express which came to cover the story).

My deepest thanks to and admiration for Judie Gorenstein, co-president of the Huntington League and Voter Services Chair for Suffolk County, for running Vote 18 for us in the Hamptons. Judie was first exposed to Vote 18 at the State Convention in White Plains and decided that she was going to take on the task of running the program in local schools. She didn’t hesitate to agree to come out here and has said she will do it again, that is until some homegrown talent steps up.

We had a great time. The two sessions could not have been more different. The first class at 9:00 AM was very loose and humorous; the second group, many of them who were AP students, was serious and got right down to business. I had asked Dr. John Baer what was on the students’ minds and then made up a list of sample questions that were given to the students before the meeting. The questions ranged from the war in Iraq, to affordable housing, to student loans.

Judie’s technique differed from that of Vote 18 originator, Walt Townes, in that she put the questions into League language. Instead of just asking the students what they thought about the war in Iraq, Judie gave some background and asked the students which one of two views they agreed with. And this, in this way, we began a dialog rather than just obtaining conflicting views, one after the other.

With the invaluable assistance of Arlene Hinkemeyer, Heidi Mack and Judy Samuelson, things went smoothly; and we registered 25 voters!

Since both Judie Gorenstein and I are going to the National Convention in Portland, Oregon, in June, I have made contact with the Planning Committee; and am 99% sure that Vote 18 will be on the National program! More to follow.

Judie Roth

LWV of the Hamptons
Notes From Town Hall  February 5, 2008

The Town Board reserved decision to amend the code Chapter 198 (Zoning) for the Huntington Station Overlay District. People spoke in support of the proposals.

The Town amended the Uniform Traffic Code to include handicapped parking in private parking lots, thereby adding handicapped spaces in 16 private lots.

Enactment #2008-108 extended the moratorium on the issuance of approvals, grants or permits for golf course properties held in private ownership for an additional 6 months to August 9, 2008.

The Town Board authorized the Supervisor to execute an amendment to the contract with Andrus Architecture for the expansion of the Ice Rink Facility in Dix Hills Park.


The Board voted to urge the N.Y.S. Senate and Assembly to sponsor legislation proposed by the County of Suffolk known as the 2008 “Downstate Suburban Workforce Housing for Economic Sustainability Act.”

The Board voted to urge the N.Y.S. Senate and Assembly to actively support legislation introduced by Assemblyman James Conte that will require the N.Y.S. D.O.T. to prepare a comprehensive master plan for Republic Airport prior to any new construction.

The Board amended the Code Chapter 159 regarding the use of signs for advertising by sponsors of athletic teams. There are specified limits for sizes of signs and allowable times for display with approval by the Parks department.

A Public Hearing is scheduled for March 4, 2008 to consider amending the Code to add Chapter 157 Public Benefit Incentives and Article III Apprenticeship Incentives.

The Community Development Agency executed a 10 year lease with the Huntington Enrichment Center for 1264 and 1266 New York Ave.

JoAnn McCarthy

“EXONERATED”

On Thursday , Feb. 21, at our monthly meeting , Susan Schindler, the NYC organizer for New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty*, presented a film “The Exonerated” about six people who were wrongfully convicted of murder and who were later exonerated after years of imprisonment (5 men,1 woman—one of the men was executed before exoneration).

Some of the facts brought out in the discussion after the film:

- **NYS Court of Appeals:** 2004 Ruling in People v. LaValle found the State’s 1995 capital punishment statute unconstitutional. On 10/23/07, it upheld the 2004 ruling, overturning NY’s last remaining death sentence (People v. Taylor).

- Nationally, at least 123 innocent people have been exonerated from death row.—about 1 for every 8 executed (an error rate of more than 10%). In addition, during the past 2 1/2 years in NY, at least 9 men sentenced to long prison terms have had their convictions overturned with conclusive evidence of their innocence.

- In NY, those accused of murdering white victims are more than twice as likely to face the death penalty as those who murder black victims according to a recent study by the Center for Law and Justice in Albany.

- More than half of the State’s death sentences sought in the last ten years come from just 6 counties.

- When New York’s death penalty statute was enacted, we did not have the sentencing option of life without parole; now that it is available, the death penalty is not needed to keep those convicted of murder off the streets.

- Support for the death penalty in NY has dropped approximately 20% since the early 1990’s. According to a 2006 NY Times/CBS poll, 50% of the people favored life without parole, while 29% favored the death penalty.

- Since NY reinstated the death penalty in 1995, NY taxpayers have spent at least $20 million pursuing capital cases without a single execution taking place.

- Most state studies have found that a system of life without parole is significantly cheaper than the death penalty even when costs of long-term imprisonment are included. The death penalty’s costs divert resources from other areas, including crime prevention and victim’s services.

(Note: The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.)

*New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty (NYADP) is “a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals committed to the abolition of capital punishment. It advocates for public policy change through education, grassroots organizing, and lobbying.”

Marilyn Brown
**IS YOUR SENATOR VOTING FOR THE EXECUTION OF INNOCENTS?**

In July, the New York State legislature passed its third death penalty bill for 2007. It had already passed S319 in May, a bill that would impose the death penalty for killers of police and correctional officers. Simultaneously, it **rejected** an amendment that would have incorporated widely-recommended innocence protections, one that would improve the collection and retention of DNA evidence; provide access to testing of that evidence to those seeking to prove their innocence; require videotaping of all interrogations; and implement eyewitness identification reform. These are minimal steps recommended by the Innocence Project to safeguard the innocent. New York has the dubious distinction of leading the nation, including Texas in wrongful convictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>For Death Penalty?</th>
<th>For Innocence?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth P. Lavalle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Flanagan</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Caesar Trunzo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Owen Johnson</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Marcellino</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kemp Hannon</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Craig Johnson</td>
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<td>Charles Fuschillo</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Dean Skelos</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

**TAKE ACTION NOW!!!**

If you can do one thing:

Please contact your State Legislators by written letter and phone, even if you have done so, and give them the message. “New York does not need the death penalty. What we do need are protections for the innocent.”

*Remember to include your address in your letter.*

To identify and find out how to reach your State Senator, visit: http://www.lwvnyny.org/, click on Citizen Action Toolkit and scroll down to My Elected Officials, or call 518-455-2800.

If you can do 2 things:

Give a copy of this alert to at least 3 people and ask that they pledge to write a letter or make a call.

If you can do 3 things:

Host a NY State Exoneree as a speaker at your social, political, educational, or faith-based meeting, or show a film about innocence and the death penalty.

Go to [www.nyadp.org](http://www.nyadp.org) or contact info@nyadp.org for more information, or call New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty organizer Colleen Eren at 516 849 2363.
# New York’s Shameful Record of Wrongful Convictions

The list of those exonerated so far, with details listed for Nassau/Suffolk County cases. For more information, contact info@nyadp.org or go to www.nyadp.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Habib Wahid Abdal</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Roy Brown</td>
<td>Cayuga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leonard Callace</td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anthony Capozzi</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Terry Chalmers</td>
<td>Westchester</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Charles Dabbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jeffrey Deskovic</td>
<td>Westchester</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Scott Fappiano</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Hector Gonzalez</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Dennis Halstead</td>
<td>Nassau</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>John Kogut</td>
<td>Nassau</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kerry Kotler</td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Antron McCray</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Michael Mercer</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Alan Newton</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>James O’Donnell</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Victor Ortiz</td>
<td>Newburgh (Orange County)</td>
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<td>John Restivo</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Yusef Salaam</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Raymond Santana</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Douglas Warney</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Kharey Wise</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Jose Garcia</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Barry Gibbs</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Olmado Hidalgo</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>David Lemus</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>David Wong</td>
<td>Clinton County</td>
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Suffolk County Health Centers: Funding, Services, Privatization and other Issues for 2008

a presentation by Dr. Joseph Harder

At the January SCLWV Board meeting, the Chairman of the Health Center Liaison Committee, Dr. Joseph Harder, spoke about challenges currently faced by the Suffolk County Health Center System. The system, which now has eight family health centers (Amityville, Brentwood, Coram, Greenlawn, Patchogue, Riverhead, Shirley and Wyandanch, and three satellite centers, East Hampton, Central Islip and Southampton) was established during the seventies to provide comprehensive care for residents of Suffolk County, particularly those who could not afford care from private physicians. Six of the centers are backed up by proprietary hospitals, which welcomed the establishment of the centers because they could care for patients who would otherwise have had to rely on their hospital emergency rooms.

Two other health centers, Riverhead and Tri-Community, are run by the Suffolk County Health Department through its Division of Patient Care. Fees at the centers are paid by private insurance and Medicare, by patients who pay on a sliding scale, and by patients covered by Suffolk Plan, which is an HMO established for health center patients. The majority of patients are families, roughly 50-55%; about 20% are seniors, while the remainder are single persons.

Each center has an Advisory Council which meets regularly to provide community support for the health centers. Dr. Harder, who has been Chair of the Advisory Council for the Brookhaven Health Centers, East and West, since 1998, is also Co-Chair of the Liaison Committee, which represents all the Health Centers in their negotiations with County Executive Levy and the Legislature. The Liaison Committee is currently concerned about the lack of support from the County Executive for the Health Centers. The center managers have been instructed to submit no-growth budgets for 2008, despite a two-percent rate of inflation, and an increase of 4.5% for medical supplies for all centers. In addition, there is a 4% increase for staff in the centers which are backed up by a contract hospital. Underfunding the health centers would impact the hours of service, as well as the ability to recruit critically needed staff and to schedule prompt appointments. The Coram Center has been seriously underfunded this year by one million dollars (a very significant percentage of their operating budget).

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Editorial  CPEP: An Unmet Responsibility

Suffolk County has generally suffered from a shortage of services for the mentally ill, but the problem has grown more acute in recent years. Limited housing options, insufficient inpatient psychiatry beds, and long waits for many outpatient services have left many individuals seeking psychiatric help with few options.

The CPEP (Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program) facility at Stony Brook Medical Center was established in 1990 to provide emergency evaluation and triage services for the public mental health system. These growing systemic deficiencies have made this crucial program the default service for virtually every unmet mental health need. The CPEP provides a safety net for both the immediate care needs of the general public as well as for the chronically mentally ill, many of whom may be homeless, uninsured, and lacking in social support. Of the nearly 6000 visits per year to the CPEP, more than half arrive in the custody of police. The police are often called to provide secure transportation for people suffering from schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, clinical depression, and substance abuse as well as personal and family crises.

About 25% of the patients brought to CPEP require admission to an inpatient psychiatric unit at Stony Brook or other community hospitals but the lack of ready access to such beds may lead to...
Of greater concern is the possibility that the County Executive and his staff are reviewing all options for the future of the health center system on the grounds that efficiency may dictate privatizing them, and even possibly selling the Suffolk Health Plan. Despite figures that show that the Suffolk Health Plan has earned money, County Executive Levy has been exploring the possibility of selling the plan to a private insurance provider. To make a profit, a private provider might choose to target healthier patients, and limit services for patients requiring more care. No effort has been made to bring the idea to the public. There is no indication that it has been found to be a sound medical decision by the Division of Patient Care. Changing to a privatized system would eliminate the funding from New York State and from Suffolk County that covers any shortfall, therefore making it impossible for the health centers to fulfill their mission, which is to cover all persons in need of health care.

Contrary to the direction taken by Mr. Levy, Governor Spitzer is working to reform the New York State Health Care system, focusing on lowering the cost of health care while improving patient outcomes. He hopes to target primary and preventative care to reduce the long term costs. In the same vein, the Berger Commission in 2007 reported that in New York State “Primary care is insufficient, so that some patients go without preventative care and basic services. Inadequate primary care worsens health care status, allows chronic conditions to go unmanaged, and results in back-end care that is more costly and less beneficial than front-end services. New York should expand primary care capacity, including facilities, equipment, information technology and workforce.”

The Suffolk County Liaison Committee plans to meet with County Executive Levy to endorse the concept of comprehensive affordable care and to present its requests for adequate funding. It will also oppose the idea of privatizing the health centers and the Suffolk Health Plan. The Liaison Committee would welcome the support of League members, either through contact with their legislators, or attendance at a meeting with County Executive Levy when it is scheduled.

The Advisory Councils at each health center would welcome anyone who is interested. The Advisory Council for the two South Brookhaven centers meets the first Thursday of every month at either the Patchogue or Shirley Center. The next meeting is March 6 at the Shirley Marilyn Shellabaeger Health Center at 9:30 am. For more information about any of the centers, or about the Liaison Committee meetings, you may call Millie Riggio at the Patchogue Center, 854-1307 or Joe Volodka at the Shirley Center, 852-1022. Nancy Marr and Marilyn McKeown

Editorial: CPEP: An Unmet Responsibility, continued

delays in placement and congestion in the CPEP. In general, the goal of the program is to provide short-term assessment, stabilization, and triage services which often lead to cost effective outcomes by avoiding unnecessary hospitalization. Many Suffolk County agencies rely heavily on the availability of the CPEP program. Many referrals are made by the Sheriff’s department and the Riverhead Jail, by Adult and Child Protective Services, the Family and Criminal Courts, along with the network of County sponsored outpatient clinics and housing providers. Moreover, a significant homeless population depends on CPEP to access housing services provided by the Department of Social Services.

Overcrowding and over-utilization of the available facilities, the lack of sufficient inpatient beds, and long waits for housing placements for people with mental illness through Single Point of Access (SPA) drive up the length of stays in CPEP, leading to congestion and delays in placement. As a result, the limited space and capacity of the program is frequently saturated, leading the facility to go on “diversion” as much as 25% of the time. When this occurs, the police are notified and all transports are directed to the nearest community hospitals which are far less well equipped to provide the range of services available at CPEP.

The Stony Brook University Medical Center is currently working on a plan to build a new CPEP annex which would greatly improve the capacity and functionality of the program. The goal is to substantially increase the physical size of the unit, double the evaluation and intervention space, and provide a more therapeutic environment conducive to the comfort and care of the patients. It will also increase significantly the number of available beds.

The cost of this expansion presents a significant challenge to the facility. The NYS Office of Mental Hygiene has committed some capital funding to support the plan, indicating its recognition of the justification of both its need and the specific plan. At the same time, the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at Stony Brook has sought additional resources from private philanthropic sources as well as from Suffolk County. Dr. Mark Sedler, Chair of Psychiatry at the Stony Brook Medical Center, has described the CPEP as the “cornerstone of the Suffolk County public mental health system.” He adds that “we have been overwhelmed with so many diverse demands and unmet needs that it is apparent that an expansion at this time is the right thing for both the hospital and for the county.”

It is the county’s responsibility to provide adequate care for its residents. Such vulnerable people cannot be dismissed to live on the streets. They often barely survive, and may present public safety concerns in many communities. Moreover, an expanded CPEP program is likely to be the most cost effective solution to the current crisis in services for the mentally ill compared to the expenses associated with repeated emergency room services, unnecessary in-patient stays in hospitals, as well as incarceration for behaviors resulting from untreated mental illness.

County Executive Steve Levy and the Suffolk County Legislature should recognize the critical role that CPEP plays in the public mental health system, accept the responsibilities which our government has for supporting public health programs, and produce the funding which is so urgently needed. The League strongly recommends that they do so.

Katherine Hoak
### Calendar for LWV Meetings

#### General Meetings (Members and Public)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 27</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
<td>“Iron Jawed Angels” movie presentation followed by discussion</td>
<td>Cinema Arts Centre</td>
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<td>Park Avenue Huntington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 4</td>
<td>1:00 PM - 3 PM</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, May 15</td>
<td>6:30 PM – 8:30 PM</td>
<td>Compact for a National Popular Vote</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, June 19</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Annual Dinner and Meeting</td>
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#### Board Meetings (Members)

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<th>Subject</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, April 4</td>
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<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, May 2</td>
<td>1:00 PM - 3 PM</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, June 6</td>
<td>1:00 PM - 3 PM</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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#### Informal Social Afternoons (Members and Guests)

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd Thursday of each</td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Movie and snack – Call Judie Gorenstein at 421-5164 for details</td>
<td>Cinema Arts Centre</td>
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