LWVH Expands Election Season Efforts

By Anne K. Marshall

When the LWVH Board decided that Get Out the Vote would be our theme this election year, we challenged ourselves to cement some existing methods as well as go down some new roads.

To expand our efforts to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, the LWVH looked beyond our traditional efforts. In some cases we enlarged categories, in others we created new

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ABOVE The League’s first debate of the election season took place on October 15 at the Hampton Bays Senior Center, co-sponsored by the Hampton Bays Civic Association. Participating in the debate organized by voter services chair Anne Marshall were, left to right, LWVH moderator Susan Wilson, HBCA president Bruce King (seated behind podium), and NYS Senate candidates Bridget Fleming and Senator Kenneth LaValle. The lively debate covered a wide range of issues--LIPA rates, the widening of Route 27, LIRR worker abuses, the 2% tax levy cap, NYS campaign finance reform, medical services on the East End, microstamping gun legislation, Southampton Town trustee powers, Suffolk County sewer issues, auto accident and Lyme disease rates this past summer. A second Senate debate was scheduled for October 22 at the East Hampton Firehouse. Photo by Arlene Hinkemeyer.

SAVE THE DATE(s)!

November 11 - 10:30 AM  
Post-election brunch at Bellport Country Club

November 12 - 7 PM  
General Membership Meeting  
Topic: NYS Campaign Finance Reform  
Hampton Library, Bridgehampton

November 14 - 9:30 AM  
LWV Suffolk County Meeting  
Riverhead Culinary Institute, 20 East Main St., Riverhead

December 10 - 6 PM  
LWV Hamptons  
Annual Holiday Party.  
Details to be Announced

ALL ARE WELCOME
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 eight times a year (January/February, March, April, May/June, July/August, September, October, and November/December) by the League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, P. O. Box 2253, East Hampton, NY 11937.

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President’s Message

by Judi Roth

Remember how happy we were that New York State made the absentee voter application less rigorous? Well, according to the New York Times (“Error and Fraud at Issue as Absentee Voting Rises,” Sunday, October 7, 2012), this may not be a good thing after all. As the percentage of people who vote by absentee ballots increases, so do the number of disputed and discarded ballots. And if your absentee ballot vote is rejected by an election official because you didn’t sign the outside of the envelope or your signature looks different on the voter register than it does on the absentee ballot, you won’t even know it. So much for my having my 94-year-old mother request an absentee ballot rather than go to the polls. Her signature now is so vastly different than it was when she registered 30 years ago that even I would consider it invalid!

Here are some disturbing statistics from a study by Charles Stewart III, a political scientist at MIT. He found that in the last presidential election, 35.5 million voters requested absentee ballots but only 27.9 were counted. An amazing 3.9 million ballots requested by voters never reached them; another 2.9 million ballots received by voters never made it back to election officials; and election officials rejected another 800,000 ballots for various reasons. Thus the failure rate of the absentee ballot system in the last presidential election was 21 percent. With an even greater number of people voting by absentee ballot or by mail as in Washington State the chances for ballot failure only increases.

In addition to the “error” problems of mail arriving late, addresses not being clear, not enough postage on an envelope, there are of course the problems of “fraud.” In many senior centers across the country absentee ballots are filled out – often with the help of campaign volunteers. A former county attorney in Florida says he views this as “help, in quotation marks.” In a school board election in Wisconsin a candidate won the race by “what appeared to be a disproportionate amount of absentee votes.” The vote was 675 to 647 but the winner had 217 absentee votes to her opponent’s 86. The degree of enforcement required to track down such instances as they grow will be well beyond the ability of our already-taxed Boards of Election.

In Florida, where both early voting and absentee ballots are in place, the election supervisor in Leon County said there was not one case of fraud in early voting – the only cases of election fraud were in absentee ballots. Ironically, according to law professor Justin Levitt of Loyola Law School who testified before the Judiciary

Continued on page 19
LWVH Receives Accolades For Voter Registration Efforts
by Arlene Hinkemeyer

The Hamptons League received national recognition for our plans to set up voter registration tables at 15 sites from Westhampton Beach to Montauk on Tuesday, September 25, the first-ever National Voter Registration Day. Captains for the effort were Ursula Lynch in Westhampton, Hampton Bays and Quogue; Joanne Samborn in Southampton, Bridgehampton and Sag Harbor; and Julia Kayser in East Hampton, Wainscott and Montauk.

Thanks go to WLNG, who broadcast our locations, and to those who participated in the effort: Dorothy Artenberg, Glorian Berk, Julie Burmeister, Terri and Richard Davgin, Jane Dell, Bonnie Doyle, Mary Felix, Estelle Gellman, Arlene Hinkemeyer, Marie Jacobs, Julia Kayser, Mary Licata, Ursula Lynch, Anne Marshall, Felicia Metcalf, Carol Lee Nespolo, Mary O’Brien, Martha Potter, Judi Roth, Joanne Samborn, Judy Samuelson, Ann Sandford, Rosa Scott, Helen Smith and Joan Trabulski.

Bonnie Doyle and Mary O’Brien at King Kullen Supermarket in Hampton Bays. Photo by Ursula Lynch.

Mary Felix and Ursula Lynch at Westhampton Beach Free Library.

Joanne Samborn at Waldbaum’s supermarket in Southampton. Photo taken by Voter Services chair Anne Marshall, who worked with Joanne, registering voters.
The Joint Commission & LWVUS
by Donald Peifer

The Government-Health Committee is delighted to be joined by Donald Peifer, whose extensive background in hospital administration includes, most recently, a member of The Joint Commission.

Quality health care, one of the League’s stated health priorities, has been the goal of a Chicago-based group now named The Joint Commission (TJC). In 1951, it was called the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), becoming The Joint Commission On Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in 1987, after expanding its scope of services to include other health care modalities. Its current name was adopted in 2007 to make it easier to remember and to position itself to continue its responsiveness to organizations seeking accreditation. Its tag line is “Helping Health Care Organizations Help Patients;” its mission “To continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.”

Its origin is credited to Ernest Amory Codman, MD, a surgeon, who in 1910 proposed the thesis “End Results,” wherein physicians should track the outcomes of their treatment of patients and make the data public.” To that end, he published his own results, titled ”A Study in Hospital Efficiency.” He also helped found the American College of Surgeons and its Hospital Standardization Program. However, due to colleagues’ lack of enthusiasm for his thesis, the College's Hospital Standardization Program (forerunner to the Joint Commission) adopted a more conservative standard-based approach. He died before realizing his vision for measuring and publicizing patient outcome. The Joint Commission, however, began integrating outcomes into the accreditation process by the mid 1980's and made performance information available to the public in the late 1990's.

LWVUS On TJC’s Board?
The TJC Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from almost all the US professional health care organizations plus the American College of Surgeons. Each organization has an assigned number of revolving seats. In addition, several seats are assigned for public representation. The League, with its quality healthcare concerns, might be a prime candidate for one of the public seats.

Among the board's other duties is approval of any and all revisions to the current set of standards. Such revisions only occur after being made public by representatives of the impacted specialty, ie. nurses for nursing standards, etc. After consensus is reached on wording, timing and importance, each proposed revision is field tested and evaluated before being submitted for final approval.

Participation prior to the 1965 Medicare law was voluntary and remains so basically because there are other alternatives for proving compliance with Medicare's Conditions of Participation. TJC has federal status because a hospital meeting TJC’s standard also satisfies federal standards. Three East End hospitals (Southampton, Peconic Medical Center, Greenport) have chosen to be affiliated with TJC. General results of their reviews/surveys can be viewed on TJC's website: www.jointcommission.org, and a certificate of compliance may be found in each hospital’s lobby. League members should avail themselves of this information not only in monitoring community resources but personally when considering an elective procedure and/or admission to a facility.
Autumn’s Here…
Can Winter Be Far Behind?
by Susan Wilson

It’s a no-brainer, really. That is, the fact that environmentally-friendly actions so often coincide with what’s best for your health and your wallet. Here are some such cold weather tips.

- Bring in outdoor plants. They'll help clean indoor air.
- As leaves begin to fall, consider raking them up rather than using a blower. They can be used as mulch to protect plants throughout the winter or add them to a compost pile.
- Check the air pressure in your tires and make sure they are properly inflated. Cooler temperatures lower tire pressure and that, in turn, lowers fuel efficiency.
- Use nontoxic de-icers on your driveway and other areas. Rock salt contains cyanide and chemical de-icers which can be harmful to pets and wild animals. Instead, throw plain sand on your driveway for traction.
- Generator exhaust is toxic. Always locate generators outside well away from doors, windows, and vents. Carbon monoxide (CO) is deadly, can build up quickly and can linger for hours.
- According to the U.S.EPA, a typical household spends about $1,900 a year on energy bills and contributes twice the amount of greenhouse gases to the environment as an average car.
- One way to reduce heating bills and lower energy consumption is to wear more layers inside. Turning the heat down just a few degrees can make a big difference in your energy consumption.
- Check weather stripping and make sure doors and windows have good seals.
- No storm windows? Use a sheet of clear plastic over windows to reduce heat loss.
- Have your furnace inspected and cleaned once a year.
- If your heating equipment is more than ten years old, it may be time for replacement by a more energy-efficient unit.
- Inspect and clean the chimney and fireplace.

For more ways to increase energy efficiency, use the Energy Star Home Advisor on the US Environmental Protection Agency website (www.epa.gov)

Sources: US Environmental Protection Agency, How to go green in winter (eHow.com)
Held on October 3, 2012

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Bay Street viewing of Presidential debate on 10/16/12 is in place.
- Congressional and State Senate debates – reviewed assignments.
- Lunch at Muse on 10/29/12 is set. We hope for high attendance.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Investment strategy for Betty Desch CD tabled until November meeting but meanwhile Judi, Estelle and Judy will work on a policy for use in future. Then the board will vote on amount of funds to invest and approve or amend the policy proposed.
- 2013 LWVNYS legislative agenda suggestions. We voted to endorse 2012 issues again:
  - Election reform
  - Campaign finance reform, particularly vis-a-vis Citizens United decision
  - Redistricting, ethics, open government
  - Health care reform, particularly Affordable Care Act, based on who is president
  - Environment, especially hydrofracking
- Recap of fund raising efforts to date. Committee sent 124 appeal letters w/o Sept. 24. Bad news: some came back because of bad address. Good news: already received $95 in response. Postage cost $60+/-, no other expenses.
- Holiday party. Date set for Monday Dec. 10. Will discuss location in November.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Voter Services – Anne.
  - County board requests volunteers at Islip naturalization ceremonies of Oct. 23 and 30 to distribute voter registration forms. Board members agreed it’s too difficult to fit in the last month before elections. Judy will ask members to volunteer via Constant Contact and Facebook.
  - Debate schedule and tasks in place
  - New LWV buttons available through Anne.

- Media – Judi.
  - Public service announcements (PSA’s) about voting recorded, to be aired on LNG (92.1). They sound great. Arlene, head of public relations statewide, will send to all leagues as example of what can be done.
  - Judi and Anne to appear on Bonnie Grice show (PPB--88.3) on Oct. 15.
  - Public Relations – Arlene. Report of successful promotion of events, pre- and post. Arlene requested a Southampton resident accompany her to Southampton town board meeting to testify for restoration to the 2013 budget of position of SEA-TV program director. Glorian will examine town budget before board can approve step. Moreover, the League would only speak to the benefits SEA TV provides to the League and the taxpayers.
  - Special Events. Judi for Gladys. Muse luncheon details in place, time to promote. Flyer sent to board for mailing, posting, etc. See “fund raising” above for fund appeal letter info.

- Membership – Glorian. No report

- Education – Terri. Looking at sources for grants, will then choose program tailored to appeal to the grantor. Sue Wilson suggested appealing to Girl Scouts, who may have funds available and offer a badge for “government.”

- Natural Resources – Sue.
  - Group to do program in April about Earth Day. Titled “Beyond Earth Day…what you can do now,” they will have authorities speaking on what to do to preserve natural resources on the most local level.
  - On November 14, at 9:30 a.m., LWVSC to have Bob Deluca, president of Group for the East End as speaker at meeting at Riverhead Culinary Institute. All are welcome.

- Government and Health – Judy for Naomi.
  - Next step for Council/Town Manager model promotion is addressing civic groups together, maybe at a community meeting sponsored by GGG in EH, Southampton group not selected.
  - Revise interview questions.
  - The Town Manager pamphlet should be revised. Judy Samuelson volunteered to work on it. No target date set for distribution.


The next meeting will be held on November 7, 7 PM at the Bridgehampton Bank. The public is welcome.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Samuelson
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November-December 2012

Note: Meeting dates and times are published several weeks in advance and are subject to change. Please contact the Chairs or visit our website at www.lwvhamptons.org for updates. If you don’t see a meeting for a committee of interest, contact the Chair of that committee. Contact information is listed on last inside page of The Voter and on the website, www.lwvhamptons.org.

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<td>Post-Election Brunch</td>
<td>Bellport Country Club, 40 South Country Rd., Bellport Village</td>
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<td>Natural Resources Committee Meeting</td>
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LWVSC continues our efforts to monitor healthcare in Suffolk County: Suffolk County Legislature Health Committee Meeting (October 4, 2012)

The Suffolk County Executive and Legislature are working hard to bring our budget back into alignment. Selling the JJ Foley property and the additional acres in Yaphank will certainly add to the positive side of the equation. Both those sales have raised questions relating to the process that was followed and the advisability of one-time revenues that could cost us in the long run. Questions have also been raised about cuts in funding that were matches for Federal or State funds. For example, a representative of Thursday’s Child, an organization which services the needs of families who are dealing with AIDS and HIV and may not be eligible for other social services, made an impassioned plea asking (begging) the County to restore its funding, which was cut from the County Budget. In addition to losing their County funding, they will also lose Federal matching funds.

The budgets for the County Health Center are slated for more cuts in 2013. The Centers cut of 7.2 percent in 2013 will necessitate fewer evening and weekend hours as well more staff cuts, which will lead to decreases in patient load. The number of patients began to decrease when the county raised the fee for self-pay patients. More expensive emergency room visits have increased as a result. The hospitals are already under pressure to reduce readmissions because they lose reimbursement if a patient is readmitted within thirty days. Good follow-up care by patients directly after release from the hospital is the best prevention of readmission, but the cost of the higher fee has made that more difficult.

In the meantime, we are watching the success of the Hudson River Qualified Health Center, which took over the Coram Health Center this summer. So far, it has enrolled about half of the patients who were seen at the Coram Health Center, and its sliding scale for self-pay patients is lower than that of the health center, but all services outside the health center are paid by the patient. If it succeeds, it may be able to take in other health centers, but it would have to break even beyond the subsidy it is receiving from the county (payment of its mortgage for thirty-five years, maintenance, and an additional fee).
Why Debates Are Important

This information is adapted from the League of Women Voters U.S. website

Candidate debates have a long history in American politics. At every level of government from town council to state legislature, from Congress to President of the United States, candidates participate in debates to help voters understand who and what they stand for. A debate gives them a chance to state their views and to respond to their opponents’ statements. It provides a chance to directly compare the candidates and their positions. Watching debates is an important way to learn more about the candidates and the issues before the election, so you can cast an informed vote. At the same time, voters need to view debates with a careful eye to get the most information.

Candidates rehearse thoroughly for debates, making it hard to get candid, spontaneous answers. Debates can emphasize form over substance, such as the candidates’ appearance instead of their stands on the issues. You may watch a debate and still not get answers to questions about the candidates and issues. Get the most out of a debate by thinking about the issues and candidates in advance, viewing with care, and continuing to research the issues and the candidates afterward.

During the debate, do the candidates:
- Answer questions directly, or evade them or fail to answer the specific question
- Give specifics about their stands on the issues, or speak in generalities. Do they support their positions and arguments with facts and figures?
- Talk about their own policies and positions, or do they mostly attack their opponents?
- Present proposals that are realistic. Can they actually carry out the promises they are making?
- Appear sincere, confident and relaxed
- Show how their backgrounds and experience qualify them to hold the office
- Give answers consistent with their previous positions, and if not, do they explain why?
- Respond in way that seems overly rehearsed or “canned”

CLARIFY YOUR THOUGHTS
Take some time after the debate to reflect on what you have just seen and heard. Try to:
- Compare your impressions with others who watched the debate
- Ask yourself, based on the information you got from watching the debate, which candidate appears most qualified for the office
- Identify the issues on which you agree with a candidate and those on which you disagree, and decide whether that makes you more or less likely to vote for that particular candidate
- Ask yourself if you learned something new about the issues or the candidate
- Think about whether you have more questions about the issues or the candidates
- Get more information about the candidates’ positions from news reports, candidate websites and nonpartisan voter information websites such as VOTE411.org.
- Watch later debates for more information or to confirm your current impressions of the candidates

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BELOW LWVH’s Anne Marshall hosting the October 2011 debate between candidates for Southampton Town Board. Photo by Arlene Hinkemeyer
approaches. During that time, we made some discoveries and forged some new partnerships. All in all it was a rewarding and education experience.

OLD PLACES, OLD FRIENDS
- Worked with the Rogers Memorial Library in Southampton to sponsor a primary debate and to register voters
- Sponsored debates at the Southampton Senior Center in Hampton Bays and the East Hampton Village Emergency Services Building
- Co-sponsored a Congressional debate with the Southampton Press and its affiliates
- Worked with local businesses and schools to use their locations to register voters and offer information
- Expanded our presence at the Federal Court House in Islip to offer voter registration assistance to new citizens at their naturalization ceremonies
- Publicized Vote411.org and encouraged wider participation by our local candidates

NEW VENUES, NEW PARTNERS
- Co-sponsored a debate with the Hampton Bays Civic Association
- Conducted a Congressional Debate at the Westhampton Beach High School with the district’s invaluable technical assistance
- Invited Patch.com to serve on a debate panel
- Employed the energy and youth of a talented intern, Sophie Parker of Sag Harbor, to reach out to her peers to register to vote
- Made PSA announcements in cooperation with radio station 92.1, WLNG
- Appeared with Bonnie Grice on 88.3, WPPB to encourage voter participation
- With Bay Street Theater, co-sponsored airing of the second of three presidential debates
- Participated with multiple organizations nationwide on National Voter Registration Day at 15 different sites in the Hamptons
- Divided the Hamptons geographically into three areas with regional captains to increase the voter registration possibilities

With the assistance of Isabel Sepulveda de Scanion, provided Spanish language voter registrations and voter information.

With all this effort, we certainly hope that voter turnout on November 6 will have improved in the Hamptons and beyond. As our co-president, Glorian Berk, noted in her October Voter message, New Yorkers need to increase their voter percentage. If locally we improve from the current 50%, that would contribute to increase the abysmal 42% statewide. In any event, we are proud of our efforts this year and value the connections we have made in the process.

The Naturalization Ceremony Experience
by Judi Roth

On September 24, Joanne McEvoy-Samborn, Vicki Umans and I went to what turned out to be the largest naturalization ceremony ever at the Islip Federal Court House, when 179 people became citizens. We gave voter registration forms to 129 of them – an amazing 72 percent! Plus an additional 30 people took registration forms for friends and family. Of course, the fact that we told them they were now eligible to vote in this Presidential election didn’t hurt. Still, we were overwhelmed by the response – as were volunteers at naturalization ceremonies earlier in the month.

I want to share some of the comments of Federal Judge Joseph Bianco, who spoke so eloquently in welcoming these new citizens to America. Here, paraphrased, are some of his remarks:
- “Today you are the equal of any person born in this country – this country embraces you and blesses you.”
- How shocked his Italian immigrant grandparents would be to see their grandson presiding over a naturalization ceremony as a judge.
- “If each of you told your stories we would all sit here with tears in our eyes.”
- “You are now citizens of the greatest, most powerful, most diverse and most generous country in the world.”
- “You came from 49 countries, from every corner of the world and every continent except Antarctica and we welcome you to America from sea to shining sea.”

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<td></td>
<td>Sally James</td>
<td>267-2582</td>
<td><a href="mailto:voter@lwvhamptons.org">voter@lwvhamptons.org</a></td>
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<td>Anne K. Marshall</td>
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<td>Barbara McClancy</td>
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<td>Joy Cordery</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:advertising@lwvhamptons.org">advertising@lwvhamptons.org</a></td>
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<td>Estelle Gellman</td>
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<td>Susan Wilson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PORTFOLIO CHAIRS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td>Naomi Epstein</td>
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<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Publicity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Special Events</strong></td>
<td>Gladys Remler</td>
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<td><strong>Voter Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Webmaster</strong></td>
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### President’s Letter

*Continued from page 2*

Committee on this topic, the efforts to prevent fraud at polling places (ID cards and the like) will “drive more people into the absentee system, where fraud and coercion have been documented to be real and legitimate concerns. That is, a law ostensibly designed to reduce the incidence of fraud is likely to increase the rate at which voters utilize a system known to succumb to fraud more frequently.”

As we head home from the polls on November 6 we can be grateful that we can vote and hopeful that more and more people will exercise this right. But as with all our freedoms, we need to remain vigilant to ensure their continuation in the face of good or ill intentions that have unintended consequences.

### Naturalization Ceremony

*Continued from page 18*

Judge Bianco urged people to vote, recognized the efforts of the League of Women Voters and told the new citizens that they should work to improve our democracy.

It’s no wonder that everyone who goes to the Naturalization Ceremony wants to return— and how newcomers come away in a state of bliss. What a wonderful experience! You owe it to yourself to join us in future months. Contact Anne Marshall for dates.
The League of Women Voters


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