



THE HUNTINGTON VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HUNTINGTON

P. O. Box 20693

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December 2009 – January 2010

Katherine Hoak & Marcy Emerson, Co-Editors

Judie Gorenstein, President

SPECIAL ELECTION

Huntington

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

FORUM ON COUNCILMANIC DISTRICTS

**Determine How We Will Elect
Town Board Members in the Future**

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

7 PM - 9 PM

Harborfields Public Library

31 Broadway, Greenlawn

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2009-2010

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Usually, with Election Day over and holiday season upon us, members of the LWV of Huntington have time to reflect and also relax. Voter registration drives are done; Meet the Candidates Night is over; and there are usually not many League programs scheduled. THIS YEAR IS AN EXCEPTION! There will be a SPECIAL ELECTION on December 22nd, when Huntington residents will decide if Huntington will be divided into four districts with residents in each district voting for only their representative and not the entire Board. Members of our League had studied this issue in 2005 but did not reach a consensus. Therefore, we do not have a position on this issue other than it is extremely important to educate the public about the pros and cons on Councilmanic districts. We encourage people to come out and vote. We have formed a committee, chaired by Brenda Reiss and Mary McLaughlin, who have planned a forum on December 1st. Will Huntington residents continue to vote for Huntington Town Board members at large as we have always done, or will there be a change to people voting for a representative from their own district within Huntington? There are other communities who have changed to Councilmanic districts, but how would that change affect Huntington residents? What about the people who will be away on December 22nd? Can they vote? I urge you to come to this forum, learn the facts, hear opinions from our pro and con panel, decide for yourself, and then be sure to vote!

On December 9th, we will be having a very important and interesting event at the Cinema Arts Centre. As many of you know, there is the very important UN Climate Summit occurring from December 7th - 18th in Copenhagen. Those of us who are not lucky enough to go to Copenhagen can see "The Age of Stupid" at 7 PM. This is an excellent 90-minute compelling documentary about climate change. A man living alone in a devastated world in 2055 looks at old footage from 2008 and asks why we did nothing when we had a chance. Learn what we can do while we still have a chance. LWV of Huntington member Dorothea Cappadona has arranged for Sarah Newkirk of the Nature Conservancy to be our guest speaker. There is certain to be a stimulating discussion. The program begins at 7 PM and will end with a reception. I hope you will be able to attend both of our December programs.

Now, though it is still November and a time of Thanksgiving, I thank all the Board members and committee members who have worked so diligently to prepare complete and timely events. I thank the committee members, those who volunteered at our events, for helping them all run professionally and smoothly. I thank all our members for joining our League and doing whatever possible, whether it is attending programs, making donations, or just paying dues--making the LWV of Huntington so vibrant and strong. I thank everyone who has taken out ads in the Huntington Voter. I also thank the Cinema Arts Centre, the Harborfields Public Library, and Elwood Public Library for hosting our past and future programs and meetings. I wish you all a Happy Holiday!

Judie Gorenstein

VOTER SERVICE REPORT
SUFFOLK COUNTY

Other than many less voters, this year's poll sites in Suffolk County were the same as last year's. We had the lever machines; and in each of our 357 poll sites, there was a Ballot Marking Device for the voters with disabilities. Only 22 votes were cast on them. This year, Suffolk County was one of only 15 counties in New York that did not have any pilot projects using the Paper Ballot Optical Scan Systems. I do not yet have official results on how these pilot projects went in the counties that used them during the general election; but the reports from these counties during the primary election indicated that, for the most part, the ballot marking devices worked well. Some voters, though, reported concerns about privacy, feeling that poll workers were able to see how they voted when ballots were being scanned. In counties where there was a 3% hand-counted audit, the results matched. In Putnam County, where there was a 100% recount, 5 or 6 votes out of 4,527 cast were changed as a result of the recount. All of the changed ballots were marked in a way that the scanner did not recognize but were clear to recount teams. A way to ameliorate the problem is through circulation of training material to the public. This is something the LWV can help with.

So when is Suffolk County finally going to replace the levers? When I went on the website of the Suffolk County Board of Elections, I was very surprised to see that a bid had gone out for the transportation of BMDs and lever machines in 2010. Did this mean another year of using the levers? When I asked, I was told that it had to go out this way now; but once the certification of the PBOs was completed in December, the levers would be replaced. The Board of Elections knows it can count on the LWV to help educate the public.

I also learned from the BOE that there were several laws that were passed in New York this October that decreased restrictions on absentee ballots this year. People who were primary care givers when they cannot leave the person for whom they are caring were entitled to vote by absentee ballot for the very first time this November. Another law eliminated people from having to provide the nature of their disability or the name of the Medical or Christian Science

Practitioner treating them. However, since the law was enacted so close to election, the applications for the absentee ballots did not reflect the changes. Most people were not aware of them. We are aware of them now; so as League members, we can begin letting people know.

Another state law that was passed in October creates a requirement of having maps and street finders at the polls to assist in locating a voter's proper election district. In Suffolk County, we were already in compliance with this as poll workers have hand held devices which can indicate poll site and directions when voters go to the wrong poll.

In New York and in Suffolk County, we seem to be going in the right direction when it comes to voting.

Judie Gorenstein

VOTER SERVICE REPORT

This has been a very busy month for the Voter Service Committee. Judie Gorenstein and Brenda Reiss presented an educational program at the Dominican Village and showed "*Iron Jawed Angels*." We "manned" a table at the Huntington Town Festival with the help of Judie and Steve Gorenstein, Barbara Magaliff, Eileen Coblens, and me. In addition, we held a voter registration drive at SUNY Farmingdale which Linda Lessing, Judie and Brenda attended.

Our Meet the Candidates' Night was a big success. The room was filled with people who came to see 11 of our 13 candidates answer questions and present their views. Many thanks to the committee and Board members who all contributed to the success of this event!!

Finally, Judie and I presented "Vote 18" to two classes of undergraduate students from CW Post who are majoring in education.

Again, a big thank you to the members of the Voter Service Committee for their continued participation. Your support enables us to do many and such varied programs.

Dianne Slavin
Dec. 2009-Jan. 2010

MEET THE CANDIDATES' NIGHT

One of the most important tasks of the LWV is to help keep the electorate well informed. That function was fulfilled on Monday, October 26, 2009, at the Harborfields Public Library when the LWV co-sponsored a "Meet the Candidates' Night" with the Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce. Over 80 people attended.

Judie Gorenstein, President, and Dr. Dianne Slavin, Voter Services Chair, gave the introductions. The candidates who participated were: Frank Petrone, Peter R.Nichols, Jr. and William J. Dowler, Town Supervisor; Stuart Besen, Eugene Cook, Mark A Cuthbertson and Mark L. Mayoka, Town Council; Steve Stern and Matthew Groh, 16th legislative district; Louis D'Amaro, 17th legislative district; Kevin M. Meyer, running in the 17th legislative district, did not attend; and Jon Cooper and Frank J. Stalzer, 18th legislative district.

Lisa Scott, co-president of the LWV of Suffolk County, was moderator. She did an excellent job directing questions to the candidates that had been formulated by the LWV and members of the audience. She was also very skillful at keeping the meeting focused when some audience members reacted with loud applause and began calling out.

The questions that were asked covered a very wide range of topics, including aid for seniors and the handicapped, crime and youth violence, business growth and development, affordable housing, the environment, councilmanic districts and property taxes.

Dorothea Cappadona and Elizabeth Hubbard vetted the questions. JoAnn McCarthy, Brenda Reiss and Dr. Louis Verardo distributed and collected questions on index cards from the audience. JoAnn Alario-Paulson and Barbara Magaliff signed people in.

Everyone associated with the planning and execution of the meeting was very pleased with the outcome. It is hoped that the symposium on Councilmanic Districts to be held on Monday, December 1st, from

7 PM to 9 PM, at the Harborfields Public Library, will be as informative.

Barbara Magaliff

**POST ELECTION BREAKFAST
BELLPORT COUNTRY CLUB**

As a fairly new member of the League, I recently had the opportunity to attend the Post Election Breakfast held at the Bellport Country Club on November 8th. The atmosphere, food, company and the information shared was worth the trip out to Bellport. In case I might have forgotten, the reports presented were a reminder to never take anything for granted. Politics do make strange bed fellows. In addition, every vote is important enough to make a difference.

It is a pleasure to participate in some of the many activities the League sponsors because I feel the contribution the League makes to our world is extremely valuable.

JoAnn Alario-Paulsen

ELECTION RESULTS

The LWV of Huntington congratulates our newly elected Town and County representatives:

Frank Petrone -Town Supervisor

Mark Cuthbertson -Town Board

Mark Mayoka -Town Board

William Naughton - Superintendent of Highways

Steve Stern - 16th Legislative District

Louis D'Amaro - 17th Legislative District

Jon Cooper - 18th Legislative District

NOTES FROM TOWN HALL
OCTOBER 6, 2009

HEARINGS:

The Preliminary Annual Operating Budget and the Preliminary Capital Budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2010, were open for discussion. Eugene Cook and Mark Mayoka, both candidates for Town Board positions, spoke against the Budget. Bill Dowler, the candidate for Town Supervisor, also spoke against accepting the Budget. There were no speakers for the Hearings to consider adopting Assessment Roll for the Huntington and Centerport Sewer Districts.

RESOLUTIONS:

The Town Board adopted Resolutions:

- Providing for the Larkfield Road signalization primarily using Federal funds.
- Executing an agreement with Suffolk County for the provision of recreational programs and events at Coindre Hall for a period of 10 years, and the exclusive use and occupancy of the Boathouse for 15 years sharing the cost for improvement at the same location.
- Rehabilitating the North Parking Garage at the Huntington LIRR Station using primarily Federal funds.

JoAnn McCarthy

HUNTINGTON TOWN HALL TOUR

On October 19th, many of our members attended a special meeting at Huntington Town Hall with Town Clerk Jo-Ann Raia who had arranged for presentations from the following departments: Public Safety; Transportation and Traffic Safety; Planning and Zoning; and Waste Management.

Mary Davis, Senior Guard II, explained that, though the duties of the Dept. of Public Safety mainly were to patrol the LIRR stations, they were also the "eyes and ears" for the Police Dept. Public Safety now has the responsibility for all enforcement of town owned facilities, including the beaches, parks and vehicles that are illegally parked. They are on call for 24 hours. Their 24 hour phone number is 351-3234. We were informed that any resident of the Town of Huntington can call for any reason. If your call is not within their jurisdiction, they will direct you to the correct place.

Steve McGowan heads up the Department of Transportation and Public Safety. His responsibilities include the Hart Bus service, Traffic Safety and Street Lights. There is new technology for traffic lights that work better, are energy efficient, and track data. They track data, such as volume of traffic and speed, to increase

The Huntington Voter

safety. In keeping with trying to better the environment, the department has purchased a hybrid electric street light service truck, as well as five hybrid buses with 80% of the money coming from a federal grant. There is currently a study on the ridership of the Hart bus routes to be able to respond to those areas that need bus service the most.

Rob Riekert, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning, spoke about how the application process for subdivisions and site plans for office buildings and stores operates. We learned that not only is there an acronym for "Not in My Backyard," commonly know as "NIMBY," but there is another really funny one; that is, "Bananas: Build Absolutely Nothing Near Anywhere." He said that the Town tries to keep a balance between what's good for you and also for your neighbors when considering an application for building. Mr. Riekert ended his presentation with a tour of the newly renovated offices of this department. We got to meet the people who work behind the scenes to create maps and conduct the research.

Our final presentation was given by Neal Sheehan and Matt Laux, Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of the Department of Waste Management. Their responsibility is the disposal of both solid and liquid waste. We all know how important that department is to our community. They proudly told us that we have a state of the art incinerator that generates steam that creates electricity for their use. Smithtown pays for our town to dispose of their burnable waste. The ash is disposed of safely. We have an excellent recycling center which will accept all electronic waste, including computers and cell phones. Mr. Sheehan reassured us that they do not use companies that ship these electronics to China where people are employed to extract the valuable metal but, in the process, get very sick. They both said that the calendars we all get have lots of valuable information, and we should be sure to read them carefully.

The final event of the day was a tour of the archives. Jo-Ann Raia is solely responsible for creating these archives and was very proud of this fact, as well she should be. We now have a Town historian, Antonia S. Mattheou, Town Archivist, who curates the archives and takes care of the documents that date from the beginning of the Town of Huntington. The deeds that were granted to the settlers by the Native Americans in 1653 and 1656 are on display, as are many of the ledgers and records of meetings. The Town Seal, which is still used by the Town Attorney when needed, dates back to the early 1800's. Replicas of all these documents are available. You can arrange for a tour by calling Town Hall.

I can honestly say that this day was a very special one that I will remember. Because of our interest and many questions, the day went longer than expected and some of us had to leave early. Jo-Ann told us that she will arrange another tour of the archives in 2010. Plan on attending; I know I will!

Brenda Reiss

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

We will visit Huntington representatives, Mr. Steve Stern, Mr. Louis D’Amaro, and Mr. Jon Cooper, after they have received their committee assignments in the Suffolk County Legislature next year. Preparation for those interviews will include gathering information about each of the legislators; reviewing the LWVSC Action Kit and League positions; observing a County Legislative session, and a committee meeting. This may sound like a lot to bite off, but done together, it is both stimulating and fun. I welcome your suggestions to this agenda and would like to get started during the second week of December.

If you are interested in Suffolk County government, join your League’s Legislative Committee.

Arlene Forward

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome a new member to the Huntington League of Women Voters of Huntington this month and look forward to meeting her at one of our meetings or presentations:

Annette Maltin

Happy Holidays to all!

Irene Ferrand

CALENDAR

Date	Time	Subject	Location
Dec. 1	7 PM – 9 PM	Forum on Councilmanic Districts	Harborfields Public Library, Greenlawn
Dec. 9	7 PM	Film “The Age of Stupid,” followed by guest speaker and reception	Cinema Arts Centre, Huntington
Dec. 17	12 Noon	Board Meeting, Holiday Pot Luck Luncheon	Rosemarie Sepanski’s home
Dec. 22		Special Election – Councilmanic Districts – Be Sure to Vote!	
Jan. 21	2 PM	Orientation Meeting for New, Potential and Current Members	Elwood Public Library

Committee meetings for Voter Service, Legislative and Women’s History Month have not been scheduled yet for January. Chairs of these committees will be notifying people who have signed up. If you are interested in joining these committees, call Judie (491-3177). She will give you the name and number of the Chair.



HEALTH CARE REFORM

**What's in it for Me?
October 14, 2009
Brentwood Library
Brentwood, New York**

By a stroke of good fortune, the Health Care Forum co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County, the Islip Town NAACP, the Long Island Council of Churches, the American Cancer Society- Suffolk Region, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, was planned many weeks ago for Wednesday, October 14. It took place on the day following the Senate Finance Committee's release of its long-awaited health care bill. This fortuitous timing allowed Mary Dewar, chairman of the Public Issues Committee of the Long Island Council of Churches, the first panelist called on to speak very specifically about the contents of the two Senate bills and the three being considered by the House.

According to Mary, three House committees each produced their own bills, the major one being HR 3200, or "America's Affordable Health Choice Act of 2009." Two Senate committees, HELP (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions) and Finance, also produced bills, the last of which was moved out of committee. All five bills provide for maintaining the status quo for all those covered by private insurance. Originally there was talk of a so-called "robust public option," whose lower administrative costs would provide pressure on the private insurance companies to bring down their prices; such a plan would have been open to anyone. However, the House committees and the Senate HELP

committee opted instead for a watered-down version of the public option, which would be offered only to those who are presently uninsured. The Senate Finance Committee bill does not offer a public option at all.

There are some good points to the bills, as Mary pointed out. Medicaid would be expanded from a program available only to those whose income is at poverty level to a level of 133% of that figure, or approximately \$26,000 yearly income instead of \$21,800 for a family of four under the Senate bill. The bills also include an individual mandate, requiring that everyone buy in and offering government subsidies to those with incomes up to \$40,000 and fines for those who decline to be covered. The ability of insurance companies to refuse to insure people with pre-existing conditions would end. This provision seemed more palatable to insurance companies because the numbers of new, healthy enrollees would help cover the cost of those with medical conditions. In addition, insurance companies would not only be barred from charging different prices based on health status, but would have to limit price variations based on age.

However, Mary cautioned, there is no talk of regulating insurance companies to prevent them from increasing premiums, or changing plan doctors or covered drugs. The proposed fines for those people who choose to opt out of coverage have been brought down from an exorbitant level to about \$400 a year. On Monday the AHIP, the umbrella organization of health insurance companies, announced that they could no longer support the bill because too many people might decide that a \$400 fine is a cheaper option than insurance coverage. (According to a New York Times editorial published on October 15, the industry's analysis of the impact of this reduced fine is "deeply flawed".)

Two proposed amendments should be watched, she said. The first, offered by Dennis Kucinich, says that if there is no universal Medicare, states should be permitted to try such programs. This amendment passed, though local representatives Carolyn McCarthy and Tim Bishop voted against it. The second, offered by Anthony

(Health Care Reform - continued from page 7)

Weiner of Brooklyn, proposes Medicare for all. A floor debate is expected on Mr. Weiner's amendment this week, but it is not expected to pass.

A major issue yet to be dealt with is how to pay for whatever health care reform is eventually passed. The House and the Senate differ widely in their proposals: the House proposes a reinstatement of the tax on the wealthy by the last administration, as well as increased taxes on those in the highest income brackets; the Senate supports savings achieved through reducing fraud, cutting subsidies to hospitals and nursing homes, cutting the subsidies to private Medicare Advantage plans, and instituting a universal electronic records system.

Holly Rhodes-Teague, Director, Suffolk County Office for Aging, said that the health care reforms being proposed could have a positive impact on Medicare. Enrollees could benefit from a number of changes. Reforms proposed encourage the use of preventative services by eliminating deductibles and co-payments for preventative screenings such as mammography's and colonoscopies. Other proposals will phase out over several years the donut hole in the Part D prescription program. Immediate savings would be realized as a 50% discount on brand name drugs while in the donut hole is also proposed. Proponents of health care reform also claim that Medicare will be strengthened and preserved as efficiencies are found.

Diane Cohen, Special Advisor to the CEO of the Nassau Healthcare Corporation and Director of their new program, Nu-care, described Nu-care, a program designed to provide medical services to the uninsured. Nu-care replaces the traditional emergency care model by offering to both documented and undocumented patients primary care, as well as care management for six major illnesses, including diabetes and obesity in a "medical home" which would allow for patient follow-up and coordination of

services among doctors. When asked if Suffolk County offers a similar program, she replied, "not yet."

The last presentation was introduced by Leah Jefferson, Director of Advocacy for the American Cancer Society on Long Island, and Survivor Catherine Marquardt, who described her horrendous experience in dealing with the GHI, her insurance company, during and after her treatment for breast cancer. A number of people in the audience later expressed the feeling that personal anecdotal accounts such as Catherine's could go a long way to convincing the public of the necessity for health care reform.

In a question-and-answer session following the presentations, Mary told listeners that despite the perception that the U.S. has "the best medical care in the world," this country actually ranks #37 in quality of health care among industrialized nations according to a study by the World Health Organization. In fact, Mary continued, the U.S. is the only industrialized nation that does not offer some form of universal coverage.

The program was moderated by John Glaser of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. Reverend Roderick A. Pearson, President of the Islip Town NAACP, delivered the opening and closing remarks, ending with a plea to the audience to actively advocate for high quality health care reform. Marilyn McKeown, treasurer of the Suffolk County LWV, delivered a similar plea. Nelson Horchak of the Coalition to Preserve Social Security and Medicare led the planning and presentation of this forum.

When all is said and done, there will still be 25 million uninsured people in America.

Eileen Coblens

NOTE: Some of the above information may have changed from the time of this event a few weeks ago.