

League of Women Voters

Port Washington-Manhasset March-April 2010



President Jane Thomas

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Call for Consensus on Legislation that Affects Everyone

by Jane Thomas

The Port Washington-Manhasset League of Women Voters will attempt to answer the consensus questions provided by the NYS League Study Committee on "Consolidation of Local Governments and Shared Services." This study was initiated in response to legislation that goes into effect on March 31st called "*The New NY Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act.*" Marie Bellon's excellent article (enclosed in this newsletter) prepared for Nassau County League's study on Special Districts raises many questions about this new law. Please find time to read it as well as the consensus questions and other materials that can be found at www.lwvny.org. Scroll down the LWV New York home page to find the "State Study on Consolidation..." and click on the following items: "Discussion Guide and Consensus Questions" and "Consolidating Local Government." Please plan to attend our Consensus Meeting on **Wednesday, April 7th at 11:30 am at the United Methodist Church on Middle Neck Road, Port Washington.** This law will have a major impact on all of us. Bring a brown bag lunch and we will have coffee, tea and cookies.

Rita Tanski Named to Town's Women's Roll of Honor

Rita Tanski, a long-time, active member of the Port Washington-Manhasset League of Women Voters, has been honored by the Town of North Hempstead for her numerous community achievements. Her name has been entered into the Town's Women's Roll of Honor on March 18th at a ceremony at the Roslyn Claremont Hotel.

Message from the President's Desk

Jane Thomas

Our own Rita Tanski will be inducted into the Town of North Hempstead's Women's Roll of Honor at the 17th Annual May W. Newburger event on March 18 at the Roslyn Claremont. I am delighted that Rita will be honored. In addition to being my right arm and buddy as the League's Program Director, she has done so much good work for this town through the years and continues to be a stalwart member of many other groups that hold her dear. Congratulations, Rita.

IMPORTANT! We will hold a consensus meeting on the NYS Study of "Consolidation of Local Governments and Shared Services" at 11:30 am directly following our Board meeting on April 7th. Included in this newsletter you'll find Marie Bellon's article on this item that deals with the NYS legislation on reorganizing local governments. Please read the whole article and attend the consensus meeting on April 7th. This issue affects us all directly.

FYI: On May 5th in Albany, the State League, NYPIRG, Common Cause and Citizens Union have organized an educational forum on government reform issues. Gubernatorial candidates and current legislative leaders will be invited to respond to questions on campaign finance, redistricting, election law (absentee ballot process, voting machines) and ethics. The event will include free busing from around the state to Albany. We need to show the politicians that people want a change in Albany! Anybody interested?? Contact me at jane.thomas107@gmail.com.

We are already preparing for our Annual Spring Fundraiser at which our dear, long-time Leaguer, Joan Gay Kent will be honored. I would love to receive any anecdotes you have about Joan throughout her career as local historian and so

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LWVPW-M to Honor Joan Gay Kent

The Port Washington-Manhasset League of Women Voters will honor Joan Gay Kent on Sunday, June 13th at the Manhasset home of Edna and Vito Vincenti at 5:30 p.m. Joan Gay Kent is a Past Director of the Port Washington Library Foundation, Past President of the Board of the Port Washington Public Library, Past Chairman of the Historic Landmark Preservation Commission of the Incorporated Village of Sands Point., and Past President of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society.

Mrs. Kent is the Historian for the Town of North Hempstead (appointed 1994). As Town Historian, she directs Town staff and taxpayers to sources of historical and genealogical information and works on special Town projects and serves on the Town's Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission.

A former weekly newspaper and business magazine editor and advertising copywriter, Mrs. Kent has written and had published many articles on Long Island history. She is the author of *Discovering Sands Point*; a 240-page hardcover volume published by that Village in 2000 and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of New York State History* published by Syracuse University in 2005.

Mrs. Kent also serves on the Board of the Port Washington-Manhasset branch of the League of Women Voters and of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society. She is a member of the Nassau County Historical Society, the North Hempstead Historical Society, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, the Shelter Island Historical Society, and the Lecture and Membership Committees of the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club.

Mrs. Kent, a genuine native Long Islander, grew up in Manhasset, lives in Port Washington, NY and is a descendant of several old Long Island families. She is, presently working on a 100th Anniversary Timeline for the Village of Sands Point and a Town of North Hempstead publication about the importance of Colonial Grants to colonial growth. She was graduated from Manhasset High School and Colby College.

Invitations for June 13th to follow.

LWV Member and Town Clerk to Present at NYS Historical Conference

North Hempstead Town Clerk Leslie Gross and North Hempstead Town Historian Joan G. Kent have been invited by the New York State Historical Association to present a paper and a computer photo program about the Dongan Patent (land grant) at its 31st annual conference. The patent, the original copy of which was recently rediscovered by the Town, was applied to the New Town of North Hempstead when it was established in 1784.

The presentation will feature replicas of the actual documents. Particular focus will be on the 1684 document, signed by English Governor Thomas Dongan, which, in addition to setting boundaries and setting up a governing body, gave the Town power over its coastal waters. The provisions of the Dongan Patent continue to play a role in Town Life. In 1915, for example, it helped establish fishing rights in Manhasset Bay. In 1910, provisions of the Dongan Patent were applied to keep an important recreation area (Bar Beach) in the hands of the Town. In 1962, the New York State Supreme court used it to settle The conference will take place in Ithaca, NY. at Ithaca College on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 3-5, 2010.

(Message from President, cont. from p. 1, col. 2)

much more. Send your kind thoughts and memories to jane.thomas107@gmail.com and we'll include them in the festivities. Save that date: **Sunday, June 13th** at the lovely home of Edna and Vito Vincente. **Jane**

League Supports Census

The U.S. Census happens only once every 10 years and Census 2010 is fast approaching! Across the country, individuals and families are beginning to receive their Census questionnaires. The League of Women Voters is dedicated to ensuring an accurate count, so we've mobilized a network of more than 300 state and local Leagues who are working in their communities to ensure broad participation. These Leagues are providing resources and getting the public involved.

Go to www.lwv.org to get involved.

What's in the Plastics You Use, and Why Should You Care?

by Star Anthony

Plastics are everywhere in our lives. They are used to make baby bottles, furniture, toys, food wraps and containers, flooring, and clothes, as well as thousands of other applications. Many of us assume that plastics are inert and not affected by most environmental influences. Contrary to that general perception, plastics are not. They are made of highly refined petroleum and have many additives to, for example, stiffen them or make them more flexible. During use they release some of these chemicals.

There is rising concern about a common chemical called Bisphenol A (BPA). The Chemical Industry leaders issue statements attempting to reassure the public that BPA is safe. Unfortunately there is overwhelming evidence otherwise.

BPA is found in very many items we come in contact with everyday. It was originally developed to be a synthetic estrogen so it is no surprise that it is an endocrine disruptor - causing hormone imbalance. A five year study was done comparing workers in a plant that made BPA with workers who didn't. It showed that the men who worked with BPA had four times the risk of erectile dysfunction and seven times more risk of ejaculation difficulty. A 2008 study found that adults with the highest levels of BPA in their systems had twice the incidence of heart disease and diabetes.

BPA has been linked with many other health issues. Hundreds of animal studies have associated BPA with cell damage that has led to breast, prostate and testicular cancer, miscarriage and genital deformities. It is believed to affect the nervous system and behavior as well. Even when low doses of BPA were tested, rats developed urinary tract problems and early puberty.

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Besides interfering with sexual function of adults, the risk to the development of reproductive organs of babies, children and adolescents are of great concern. Babies are exposed to much more BPA than adults are usually and have less ability to metabolize it. An investigation into a typical diet for a baby found that an average 1-month-old girl is exposed to the same amount of BPA that caused mammary gland changes in mice. Those same changes in humans can lead to breast cancer.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PLASTICS

Besides BPA, there are other chemicals in plastics that are considered toxic. Whenever possible, check the bottom of the container for a recycling triangle with a number in it. Those plastics considered safe are numbered 1, 2, 4 and 5. The other numbers, 3, 6, and 7 are plastics which have known or suspected carcinogens.

Unfortunately, **all cans**, aluminum and steel, are lined with an epoxy resin that has BPA. There is a push to find replacements for that lining material. Fortunately, almost all plastic wraps are safe to use, as are the aseptic packages, i.e. juice boxes.

HOW TO AVOID BPA

Even those plastics considered safe can give off toxic chemicals when heated. Never heat any food in a plastic container or with plastic wrap. Use glass and ceramic. Stop consuming canned food and drinks. Buy baby bottles from companies producing them without BPA, and use silicone nipples. Give babies toys made from wood and natural materials to teethe on.

We won't be able to completely avoid BPA and other chemicals from plastic. Enough care can help you reduce the amount you and your ingests and that could be very important. For more information visit the Environmental Working Group at www.EWG.org, or put "Chemical fallout" or "BPA plastics" into a search engine. To help change public policy find out what your county or state is doing about BPA and let your representatives know what you think.



CALENDAR:

Thursday, April 1: deadline to mail U.S. Census forms. Alert all relatives, friends, neighbors.

Tuesday, April 6: Port Washington Public Library Budget & Trustee Vote at Port Library

Wed, April 7: LWVPW-M Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m.- 12 noon, followed by Consolidation Study Consensus, United Methodist Church, PW

Wed, April 21: Manhasset Public Library Budget & Trustee Vote at Manhasset Library

Wed, May 5: LWVPW-M Board Meeting, 9:30-12 noon, United Methodist Church, PW

Wed, May 26: Nassau County Call to Convention. Invitations to follow.

Sunday, June 13th: PW-MLWV Spring Fundraiser honoring Joan Gay Kent, 5:30 pm at the home of Edna & Vito Vincenti

PROJECT INDEPENDENCE The Town of North Hempstead is sponsoring a shopping and medical transportation service for senior citizens. On Mondays between 11 and 2 there will be free taxi service to North Shore Farms. On Wednesdays between 11 and 2 there will be service to King Kullen and Stop and Shop area. To participate call the Town of North Hempstead at 311 for further details. There is no charge for the service. One day advance notification is required for transportation to medical appointments. For reservations call 311 and the TNH program will pay 50% of the taxi fee.

Volunteers Needed at Library Vote

The Port Washington Public Library is requesting volunteer poll workers for the Budget and Trustee vote scheduled for April 6. Interested members please contact Rosann McManus at the library at 883-4400 for further information.

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Port Washington-Manhasset
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Mission Statement: *The League of Women Voters is a civic, non-partisan organization dedicated to building citizen participation in the democratic process and to fostering government that is responsive to its citizens. It takes positions on issues but supports no political candidates or parties.*