

LWV SUMMER, 2015

NEWSLETTER

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

September 24, 2015 – 7:30 PM --

**Rye City Council Candidates
Forum - Rye Middle School
Multipurpose Room**

September 27, 2015 – 4:00 to
6:00 PM – Election Season

**Opening Party - 46 Woodland
Drive, Rye Brook**

October 14, 2015 – 7:30 PM –

**Westchester County Legislator
Candidates Forum - Rye Middle
School Multipurpose Room**

October 15, 2015 – 7:30 PM –

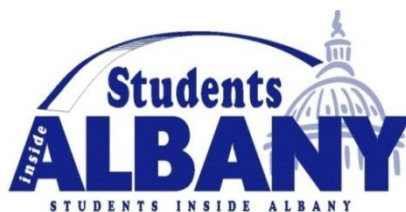
**Rye Town Supervisor and
Council Candidates Forum –
Port Chester Senior Center.**

November 22, 2015 – 3:00 PM –

**American History Fireside Chat.
21 Norman Drive, Rye NY.**

.....
**"We in America do not
have government by the
majority. We have
government by the
majority who
participate."**

--- Thomas Jefferson



The 15th annual Students Inside Albany (SIA) program took place from May 17-20 and brought approximately 60 students from across the state to Albany to get a first-hand education about their state government. The program is designed to increase high school students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide information about the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility. Our League chapter sent two students to this year's SIA program: Haley Neiman, a junior at Rye High School, and Spencer Kaplan, a sophomore at Blind Brook High School.

Following is a statement from Spencer Kaplan about his experience attending the SIA program which he read at the League's annual meeting on June 19th:

"To start off, I'd like to thank the League for sending me on this great trip to Albany. It was an enlightening experience I would surely recommend to everyone. I made some great friends, but more importantly I learned what it means to be involved in government. Amongst people my age, "being involved in government" is a relative term which can mean anything from voting, to being president. Few citizens really know about government operations and how it affects the, and that's what Students Inside Albany was all about. Over the course of the conference, I

learned that being involved can be as simple as writing my assemblyman an email.

Personally, I think it's extremely important for young people like myself to be actively engaged in civil affairs for several reasons. First and foremost, today's young people will one day be adults in the community, so being educated now ensures an involved population later. Secondly, just like adults, we are members of the community and the decisions made by our government can affect us and our future. Furthermore, we offer a valuable perspective different than that of our lawmakers, so our input can have a direct impact on their actions.

I would also like to thank Assemblyman Otis and Senator Latimer for allowing Haley and I to shadow them. It was fascinating to see the difference between the Assembly and the Senate and how political motives drive every little nuance of each. I was astonished by how informal the Assembly was, and I could understand why people liken it to a three-ring circus. In regards to the Senate, they did not accomplish much during the session which we attended. The republicans tried to sneak a bill through, but realized they did not have enough votes so they tabled it, and while that was all going down behind the scenes, military veterans were honored for several hours.

The conference also occurred at an intriguing time for Albany. We got there just a few days after former Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos was indicted, and thanks to Assemblyman Otis, we got to sit in on a committee meeting with also indicted former Assembly Majority Leader Sheldon Silver. In addition, we got to see debate and a

vote on a controversial bill that passed in the Assembly, which grants an extension to mayoral control of the New York City School District.

I also would like to once again thank Senator Latimer because he provided us with an experience unlike any of the other students at the conference. Senator Latimer went out of his way to provide us with extra information booklets as well as setting aside extra time for us before the session began and having his staff brief us on how his office runs. On top of all that, Senator Latimer came to the rescue when one of the presenters had to cancel at the last second. He came to our hotel and made an impromptu demonstration of how to lobby, and I know that everyone was quite impressed.

I have always been interested in politics and I would like to study international relations or public policy in college, so the conference was a great preview of what's to come. Thanks again to Senator Latimer, Assemblyman Otis, and the League of Women Voters for this extremely valuable experience."

Student Civic Achievement Award



2015 Student Civic Achievement Award winner Sam Zarkower with Joan Feinstein

Samuel ("Sam") Zarkower, a rising senior at Blind Brook High School, has been chosen by the League of Women Voters of Rye, Rye Brook & Port Chester to receive its 2015 Student Civic Achievement Award. This award was started in 2014 and will be given annually to a high school student who is a junior and lives in and attends a high school in the City of Rye, Villages of Rye Brook and Port Chester, or the Rye Neck section of the Town of Rye, in recognition of the student's overall contributions to his or her school and community in the areas of civic engagement, advocacy, leadership or voter education.

Sam is the Vice President of Junior States America, founder and member of his school's Debate Team, has participated for three years in the Tools for Change research project sponsored in part by the League and the Town of Rye and is currently serving as a teaching assistant, is a member of his school's Student Congress, is a three year member of Model United Nations, volunteers at a soup kitchen and is a peer tutor. This summer Sam will go the south side of Chicago with the goal of introducing a character education and leadership program to the schools as an alternative to the gun violence that has taken too many young lives in that area.

In his application essay, Sam commented, "... I am drawn to civic engagement, politics and advocacy because they are fundamental to our nation's foundation and have made us what we are today and will determine what we will become in the future."

We congratulate Sam on being the recipient of the 2015 Student Civic Achievement Award.

"Tools for Change"



Professor Bill Tobin leads the group

The 2015 Tools for Change seminar attracted approximately 25

students from Blind Brook High School, Rye Neck High School and Port Chester High School. Tools for Change is sponsored in part by our league chapter and is a collaborative research seminar for high school students led by Dr. William Tobin of Duke University. The program, which is designed to help students learn collegially and to foster and develop research, team building and leadership skills, is modeled on an honors program in the Sociology Department at Duke University.

The students became aware that 16 year olds participated in Scotland's 2014 national referendum, and 16 year olds have recently been given the right to vote in local elections in Takoma Park, Maryland. After a debate about what the students would study, they decided to focus on the following topic: How might lowering the minimum age to 16 in local elections impact the quality of citizenship in our communities? This research topic continues a tradition of the program's focus on how to improve civic engagement in the Town of Rye.

The students researched the issue, studied the pros and cons of lowering the voting age, invited State Senator George Latimer to meet with them to discuss the process to change the voting age in New York local elections, conducted a survey regarding the issue, prepared a position paper in favor of lowering the voting age, and drafted an amendment to the current law in consultation with Senator Latimer's office. On June 2 the students presented their findings to a group of interested Town of Rye residents at the Port Chester Senior Center.



In late April Debbie Reisner, President of our chapter, and Joan Feinstein, who is in charge of student outreach, each taught the Vote 18 program to two classes of high school seniors at Rye High School.

Vote 18 is an interactive program designed to inform students as to the history of voting and the changes over time to our voting laws. The program also makes new voters aware of the value of their vote and how their vote can make a difference. Students are encouraged to register, go to the polls and become informed voters.

Following the Vote 18 program, Chris Nicholson and Barbara Brunner, league members, set up a table with registration forms outside the school cafeteria and assisted students in completing them. The good news is that more than 25 students are now registered voters.

Many thanks to James Rinaldi, Chair of the Social Studies Department at the Rye City Schools, for making the necessary arrangements to have Debbie and Joan teach Vote 18. We also thank Sara Charles and Peter Thomas, social studies teachers at Rye High School, for allowing them to come into their classrooms to teach the course.

For information on youth programs, contact Joan Feinstein at: jfeinstein@wfsnyc.com.

Zephyr Teachout was featured speaker at the Sound Shore LWV Spring Luncheon



Professor Zephyr Teachout addresses the Sound Shore chapters of the LWV on April 24th at the Orienta Beach Club in Mamaroneck. She spoke on democracy and corruption.

Note the Calendar of events on the first page for the dates of our CANDIDATES FORUMS for the November Elections.

Our Annual Meeting



Students Inside Albany participants Haley Neiman (left) and Spencer Kaplan (middle) with State Senator George Latimer and League President Debbie Reisner at our Annual Meeting.

On June 19th, at the home of Barbara and Fred Cummings in Rye, we held our League of Women Voters Annual Meeting where we elected two new board members, conducted league business, and held our usual party to celebrate the end of another productive year.

“Common Core” Was Topic of Our May 7 Community Issue Forum



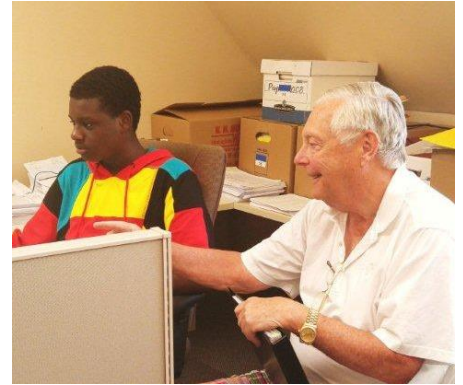
Dr. Frank Alvarez, Dr. Edward Klizsus, and Dr. Peter D. Salins

LWV of Florida to Sponsor a Tour of Women’s Suffrage Historical Sites

Visit Seneca Falls, NY with the LWV of Florida on a special tour of locations involved with the founding of the Women’s Suffrage movement. Travel date: October 21st to the 25th. To learn more

about the price and itinerary from the Florida League, please visit lwvfevents@gmail.com or call: (850) 224-2545

Summer Intern Wins Praise, Gains Employment Skills



League Board Member Peter Larr advises Onya Solomon, a 9th grader from Port Chester High School, as he works on the “Vote 411” website, where people can read about the candidates in this November’s elections.

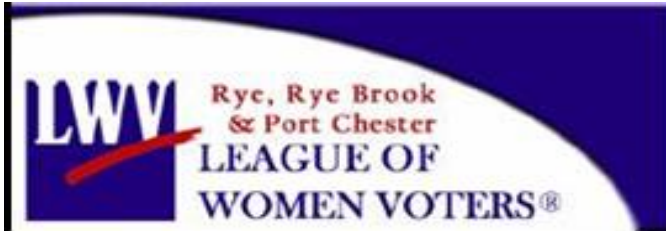


Alex Payan (left) and David Thomas (right) of the Town of Rye present a certificate to Onya Solomon. Our chapter of the League of Women Voters also received a certificate for participation in the Rye Town Summer Internship program.

VOTE411.ORG
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED
Click on this website to find your polling place, who is on your ballot and a wealth of useful information.

Notice of increase in the price of annual membership

Please note the *slightly* increased membership fees by category listed in the membership form on the last page of this newsletter.



LWV SUMMER 2015 NEWSLETTER

PO Box 194
Rye NY 10580
(914) 481-3234

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

Email:
LWV.Rye.RyeBrook.PortChester@gmail.com

Website:
www.lwvrbpc.org

Facebook Page:
[Facebook.com/LWVRRBPC](https://www.facebook.com/LWVRRBPC)

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

----- (cut here) -----

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

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

Student \$25 Individual \$67 Family \$90 Sponsor \$125 Patron \$250*

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

*Includes membership. Monies in excess of \$67 Individual and \$90 Family go to the LWV Educational Foundation, a 501(C) (3) organization, and are tax deductible.

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