

Huntington League Supports 9th Annual Northport Water Quality Presentation

More than 100 people filled the Northport Yacht Club on April 18 to hear the latest information about the quality of the water we drink and the water around us, particularly in Northport Bay.

Stephanie Quarles, chair of the Huntington League's Issues & Advocacy Committee, coordinated the program, which was sponsored by the yacht club with support from the Huntington League and the Greater Huntington Boating Council. Stephanie coordinated her work with Janice Winter, Chair of the Northport Yacht Club Special Events Committee, and the yacht club's Sustainability Committee.

Some good news was presented during the evening, but also the reality that much remains to be done.

Northport Bay remains in poor condition, Dr. Ryan Wallace reported. Dr. Ryan is Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences, at Adelphi University. Old-fashioned septic systems leach nitrogen into the bay and contaminate drinking water with nitrates. He said that Northport Harbor has some of the lowest dissolved oxygen levels on Long Island, leading to the death of marine life. The heavy load of nitrogen is also intensifying harmful algal blooms, hypoxia, and acidification.

A big part of the solution to improving our water quality is installing new septic systems that treat nitrogen. The good news is that money for that effort will be included in the Suffolk County Clean Water Protection Act. It is almost certain to pass the state legislature and the Suffolk County Legislature leading up to a chance for voter approval in November.

Stephanie said she sees a need for educating residents about the pros and cons of the water quality proposal and the new systems and expects that the League will make that effort a priority.

Another step forward, pointed out Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, was full implementation this year of a statewide Ban on 1,4 Dioxane, a likely carcinogen, in products. One result is that Proctor & Gamble has reduced 1,4-dioxane in all their products sold in North America.

Other presenters that night included: David Ansel, Vice President of Water Protection, Save the Sound; Jennifer Juengst, Deputy Suffolk County Executive; NY State Assembly Member Keith Brown; and Kevin McDonald from the Nature Conservancy.