

# GREENWICH VOTER



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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2010

## LWVG Program Planning Meeting

**March 3, 2010**

**6:00 PM Potluck Dinner  
7:15 PM Meeting**

**At the home of Nicki Markley  
16 Wyngate Road, Greenwich**

The LWV of Greenwich's local positions will be reviewed. Please bring a hard copy to the meeting for reference and discussion. To download a copy of the 2009-2010 local program, go to our website [www.lwvg.org/localwv.htm](http://www.lwvg.org/localwv.htm), or if that is not possible, when you RSVP ask Cyndy Anderson to bring a copy for you.

Positions reviewed more than 10 years ago will be re-affirmed, reviewed, restudied or dropped. We will also identify one or more positions for legislative priority for 2010-2011. For 2009-2010 our action priorities are Ethics, Health Care and Affordable Housing.

Please call or email Cyndy Anderson (203-637-1079 or [tyander@aol.com](mailto:tyander@aol.com)) if you plan to attend. Please specify your contribution of main course, salad or dessert to the Potluck Dinner.

***This is your chance to affect the course of our advocacy, programs and priorities. We hope to see you there!***

## From the President

As most of you know the League of Women Voters of Connecticut has been celebrating its 90th Anniversary with a number of events. Some of us attended the Grand Opening on January 7th in the Legislative Office Building and learned from Dr. Tracey Wilson about the history of the League as it developed from the Suffragette movement. We were surprised to learn the active and important role that Kathryn Hepburn's mother played in the movement. The historical exhibit in the lower concourse area was quite impressive. The Greenwich League will be 90 years old on October 24, 2011 and we look forward to celebrating it with you.

Did you know that the City of Stamford has Residential Single Stream Recycling? Some members of the Board attended a meeting on January 27th sponsored by the SoundWaters Business and Environment Series. What is Single Stream Recycling you ask? Single stream recycling allows Stamford residents to place all recyclable items in one single recycling bin. Greenwich has dual recycling so that we need to separate papers from plastic and bottles and only number 1 and 2 plastics are accepted. Single stream means only one container and plastic items through #7 are accepted. That means less garbage and reduction in waste which will help the environment. Recycled materials are sold and re-processed which can increase revenues for the town. I think we will be hearing more about this program as a possibility for our town.

I hope to see you all at the local program planning meeting on March 3rd. Your suggestions for League priorities and for review of League positions are valued.

*Naomi Schiff Myers*  
President

**LWVG Program  
Committee presents: "RTM 101"**

**Monday, March 1 – 1:00 PM at the Cos Cob Library**

Come learn how the RTM works with panelists Joan Caldwell, Moderator Pro Tem, District Chair and Chair of Labor Committee; Bob Brady, Chair of the Education Committee; and Mary Ferry, District Chair and Vice Chair of the Town Services Committee.

## Second 'Mary Award' – Nominations Due by March 1st

The LWVG Board is accepting written nominations for the second annual Mary Award (named in honor of Mary Lou Woods and Mary Sullivan). The Board's goal in establishing this award is to honor outstanding individuals during their lifetime. The first Mary Awards were given to Dodie Blanche and Annette Fox. This second award will be given at the 2010 annual dinner to a League member who has made outstanding contributions to the League and the community.

The individual who receives this award should be:

- a) a long term League member;
- b) an active participant and leader in the community;
- c) someone who has promoted the League's mission by encouraging informed and active participation in government and has worked to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influenced public policy through education and advocacy.

Please describe how your candidate meets these three criteria and email your nomination to Naomi Schiff Myers at [naomimy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:naomimy@sbcglobal.net) or send by snail mail to 15 Palmer Lane, Riverside, CT 06878. Nominations should be received by March 1.

### 2009-10 LWVG Board of Officers and Directors

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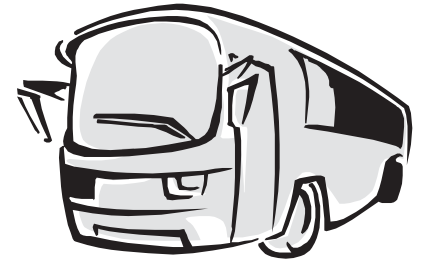
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Lori Jackson NOMINATING	698-0158

## State Capitol Tour Day

**Tuesday, March 30**



***A great way to learn about  
how government works and  
how you can be a part of the process!***

On **Tuesday, March 30**, the League of Women Voters of Greenwich will take to the road to visit the State Capitol Building in Hartford. Our day **begins at 9:00 AM** when we board our bus at the Old Greenwich Civic Center. Upon arrival we will be greeted by a leading State Official, then tour the Capitol. Our guides will be our three State Representatives and our State Senator or any combination of these four depending on pending legislation. The tour will include lots of background information while we walk through the House and Senate plenary rooms, the caucus rooms and through the Legislative Office Building. We have arranged for the Directors of the Fiscal Analysis and Office of Legislative Research to speak to us briefly as well. A room will be set aside for us in the cafeteria so we will get the full experience. Lunch will be purchased by the participants.

The \$30 fee covers transportation. **There are only 30 spots available, first come, first served with LWVG members having priority.** Please send your check for \$30 made out to LWVG to Cyndy Anderson at 22 Marlow Court, Riverside CT 06878. Include your phone number and cell phone number. You will be phoned to confirm your participation. The bus will depart promptly at 9:00 AM and will return at approximately 4:00 PM. A waiting list will be maintained but it is the responsibility of the participant to find a sub. There will be no refunds.

## *Dr. Sidney A. Freund, Superintendent of Greenwich Public Schools, reports on his first few months in office*

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Dr. Sidney A. Freund has enjoyed a long and distinguished career before his appointment as Superintendent of Schools in Greenwich. He is the recipient of numerous awards including recognition by *Executive Education* magazine as one of the top 100 upcoming school administrators in North America. His prior school district as Superintendent, Dobbs Ferry was ranked 49th in *Newsweek* magazine's top 100 high schools in May 2005. He was educated at Cornell, and was awarded a masters and doctorate in education from Teachers College at Columbia University.

Dr. Freund began his teaching career in the NYC public schools and has spent the rest of his career in New York State. He views Greenwich as the capstone of his career and is aiming to establish continuity and long-term leadership in the Superintendent position. He is a visible presence in the schools where he gets the best first hand information. He is working to change the top down administrative impression that characterized the public schools in the past. He is changing the way data is interpreted, enabling school building teams and instructional level data teams to interpret information as to how to deliver services to the kids. The emphasis is on what to do better or differently to improve

the kids' education. This impacts staff development where professional learning is driven by the kids' needs.

Dr. Freund discussed the "Vision of the Graduate," a core body of knowledge that a student should accomplish upon graduating from the high school; for example, "Be



*LWVG VP Program Cyndy Anderson, Dr. Sidney A. Freund, and program organizer, Meredith Sadler*

responsible for own mental and physical health." It is imperative for kids to think critically and cooperatively to prepare them for the workplace.

Another priority is the "achievement gap." Eleven percent of the children come from economically disadvantaged homes and many more kids have different levels of home support. He is striving for equal results for all our children as public education is the great equalizer and a cornerstone of our democracy.

There was a lengthy Q and A session. No new initiatives are

currently planned although some are being identified at the building level. Teacher retention is an issue; yet they are well paid and well trained by the system. The big problem is affordable housing in Greenwich and the nearby area. Eleven percent of the school population is classified as special education students. Twenty percent of the budget is allocated to them. This is in line with other districts. Laws and requirements have changed over time to over insure the rights of the special education kids and their parents. This places more of a burden on the schools. A lot of money is spent on litigation with parents as the district is committed to a "free and appropriate education." What constitutes

an appropriate education can be a source of disagreement between parents and the school system.

Dr. Freund received a lot of input on current conditions in the schools some of which he had not heard before. He is an impressive and candid speaker and we appreciated his remarks.

# Annual Legislative Breakfast, January 14, 2010

Once again Mary Bruce and staff at Nathaniel Witherell outdid themselves in decorating and breakfast set up for our group of 46 plus our four legislators on this January morning. On a less positive note, our state continues to be in financial distress, which impacts all areas including four priorities for the LWVG: Campaign finance, healthcare, state budget and transportation. All the legislators spoke to the question in each of these areas of concern and it was clear that budgetary constraints continue to have negative affects. Consequently, our legislators were talking about “wish lists” rather than actual outcomes in these precarious times for our state.

Fixing the now unconstitutional **campaign finance law** to amend the eligibility requirement for minority candidates to participate is of utmost importance to the LWVG. Rep. Livvy Floren spoke to this question in agreeing with Gov. Rell’s proposal to eliminate additional qualifying requirements for minority parties and petitioning candidates, to provide equal reduced grants for all eligible candidates; and to delay grant amount increases until 2014. Rep. Floren told us that the Circuit court heard the state’s appeal of the constitutional case the day before so we await the court’s decision. Sen. Scott Frantz said the expense of the campaign finance law is a problem and that campaigns should be cheaper and that the constitutionally proscribed offices

should get the most money. He worries that public financing will become another big government program, which is also a concern of Rep. Fred Camillo, who also finds the constitutional challenges troubling. Rep. Lile Gibbons agreed with Sen. Frantz about the expenses of campaign finance reform but emphasized that the law was designed to encourage people to run for office since 75 legislative seats are uncontested now.



Left to right: Representatives Fred Camillo, Livvy Floren, Lile Gibbons and Senator Scott Frantz.

**Healthcare reform in Connecticut** will be affected by any national reform but the Charter Oak plan does exist to increase access to basic care, according to Rep. Gibbons. But she said that the problem is that reimbursement levels are too low so that doctors don’t sign up. We must deal with the issues of pre-existing conditions eligibility and accessibility on both the national and the state level. Sen. Frantz agreed but came back to, “What can we afford?” Rep. Camillo supports the use of points and penalties by insurance companies for good and bad behavior not unlike auto insurance. Rep. Floren think it will take at least a year beyond whatever Washington

does on healthcare to do anything meaningful in the state.

The three time defeat of a **final budget deal** threatens the fiduciary duty to keep the state solvent, according to Sen. Frantz. Each year borrowing has taken place, clearing out the budget reserve funds in our state. Now Connecticut faces \$35 billion in unfunded obligations to state employees and serious spending problems with 7 % increases each year, which break the constitutional spending cap by a factor of 2. He feels that we can outsource social services to non-profits and private companies, for example, to help cut spending. Rep. Gibbons felt that we should be looking at cuts to line items otherwise there will be a \$350 million deficit. Rep. Floren reiterated that we need

more government efficiency. Rep. Camillo is working on bringing energy jobs to Connecticut so that we grow the job base not the government.

Rep. Camillo started **the transportation discussion** by emphasizing the need for smart growth nearer transportation centers and he supports dedicating monies that might come in from possible new tolls to the transportation fund rather than have them go into the general fund, as happens now. We need further study on tolls before he’d support even “smart tolls” such as E-Z Pass. Sen. Frantz spoke about the 360-380 new rail cars from Japan that are being readied

## Legislative Breakfast, cont'd

here to come on line in a few months. We need to figure out what is reliable in mass transit. He feels there should be more train service between New Haven and Springfield, which was seconded by Rep. Gibbons who's championed a fast rail line in the region. She said that we need to improve mass transit before pushing people into it. She supports reinstating tolls but not just at the state borders. Also, congestion pricing needs to be implemented for rush hour via a user tax or toll. Rep. Floren mentioned that mass transit needs to be clean and connected to population centers in our state.

When a question was raised from the audience about **Charter Schools**, Sen. Frantz opined that he is for them, as is Rep. Camillo, and we need measured results. Rep. Gibbons does not see charter schools as the total solution. All children in the state, including immigrants, need to be educated in our schools. Rep. Floren is concerned about siphoning of tax money to charter schools and that there should be more flexibility and less paperwork to hamstring our schools.

Thank you to our members who helped with the Legislative Breakfast including Leslie Petrick and Bunny Prokop at the check-in tables along with our "recorders" Claudia Carthaus, Jackie Hammock, Cyndy Anderson and Eileen White.

## *Things you can do ... in as little as a day*

*Want to make a difference but don't have much time? Here's a list of areas where your small contribution can be a big help.*

### **Membership**

If you enjoy meeting others, Membership can use your help!

- Welcome others at a Newcomer's Coffee (2-3 hours)
- Help with a mailing (2-3 hours)
- Help proof the Membership Directory (2-3 hours)
- Call new members to welcome them (1 hour/month)

Contact: Leslie Petrick at 625-0039 or lesandpet@aol.com

### **Publications**

If you enjoy research, writing, editing or fundraising, Publications can use your help!

- Solicit sponsors for a publication (2-3 hours)
- Edit a publication (4-6 hours)
- Proof a publication (1-3 hours)
- Obtain printing bids (1-2 hours)
- Fact check a booklet (1-2 hours)
- Deliver publications to local venues (1 hour)

Contact: Anne Wichman at 637-5977 or annewich@gmail.com

### **Publicity**

If you enjoy seeing your hard work in the news, Publicity can use your help!

- Experienced help with photography (1-2 hours)
- Deliver press releases to local media (2-3 hours)
- Writing/word processing (2-4 hours)
- Design a flyer or ad (1-3 hours)

Contact: Anne Wichman at 637-5977 or annewich@gmail.com

### **Voter Service**

If you enjoy making democracy work, Voter Service could use your help!

- Voter Registration (2 hours)
- Candidate Debates - greeters/timers/set-up (1-3 hours)
- Election Night Reporting (2 hours)
- Voters Guide - proof/collect data/typing (2-4 hours)

Contact: Jara Burnett at 637-9244 or cdb299@aol.com

### **Program/Action**

If you enjoy being at the heart of the action, then Program and Action could use your help!

- Take RSVPs for a League event (only minutes a day!)
- Host a League meeting in your home (3-4 hours: we'll tell you the estimated meeting size)
- Coordinate meeting room facilities (1-3 hours)
- Identify interesting speakers for monthly informal lunches or community-wide forums (1-2 hours)
- Write a letter to the editor on priority issues (1-2 hours)
- Phone, write, fax or email legislators on priority issues (1-2 hours)
- Make "action alert" calls to members and community leaders (1-2 hours)

Contact: Cyndy Anderson at 637-1079 or tyander@aol.com

### **Finance**

If you enjoy seeing the money roll in, then Finance can use your help!

- Help identify new contributors (1-2 hours)
- Stuff fundraiser envelopes (2-4 hours)
- Follow-up calls to potential corporate donors (2-3 hours)
- Help write thank-you notes to contributors (2 hours)
- Design fund-raising event promotional material (1-3 hours)
- Greet and check in event guests (1 hour)

Contact: Sherri Hutchinson at 531-5430 or shni@mac.com

*You can help in many ways  
...in as little as a day, or  
even just an hour or two.*

*Give us a call! Get involved!*

## Development Update

The League wishes to thank again all those who donated to the League of Women Voters Greenwich Educational Fund year end appeal. Our goal was \$5,000 and we are pleased to report that over \$4,000 has been raised so far. The LWVG Educational Fund activities depend upon League member funding. We are grateful for these donations that will support on going voter service activities and upcoming educational events. In addition, Educational Fund donations will also provide the much needed funds to print update and distribute useful publications regarding Greenwich government. *It's not too late to donate to the LWVG Educational Fund and help us reach our \$5,000 goal.* Please consider a donation today.

## Welcome to New Members

The League wishes to extend a warm welcome to our newest members who have very recently joined. Your membership is vital to the continuing educational and advocacy work of the League.

**Louise Finch**  
**Penny Bartko**  
**Albert Griswold**  
**Linda & Jim Waterbury**

Also, thanks to all the members who have renewed promptly.

## *Mark Your Calendars for these LWVG Events*

- February 10 LWVG Board Meeting, 7:15 PM – Mazza Room, Town Hall
- March 1 RTM 101, 1:00 PM – Cos Cob Library
- March 3 LWVG Program Planning Meeting, 6:00 PM Potluck Dinner, 7:15 PM Meeting – RSVP Cyndy Anderson, 203-637-1079
- March 10 LWVG Board Meeting, 7:15 PM – Mazza Room, Town Hall
- March 30 Bus Trip to Hartford
- April 14 LWVG Board Meeting, 7:15 PM – Mazza Room, Town Hall
- June 2 Annual Membership Meeting 5:30 PM, followed by reception at 6:30 PM and Annual dinner at 7:30 PM – Riverside Yacht Club.

League of Women Voters of Connecticut DVD of the 2009 Fall Conference, *Health Care in Connecticut: What's Next*, is available for viewing. Email Naomi Schiff Myers at [naomimy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:naomimy@sbcglobal.net) if you wish to borrow a copy.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREENWICH  
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