

# GREENWICH VOTER

www.lwvg.org



SUMMER 2010

## Welcome to our new members

Ty Anderson  
Chloe Beatty  
Sandra Bendfeldt  
Carolyn Bonheim  
Rebecca Breed  
Linda Camel  
Elizabeth Greene  
Christine Hayworth  
Nancy Kail  
Ned Lamont  
Annie Lamont  
Emily Lamont  
Lindsay Lamont  
Leora Levy  
Drew Marzullo  
Ralph McDermid, Jr.

*Please join us for the kickoff  
League of Women Voters of  
Greenwich fall program:*

## **BET 101: Follow Your Money**

Our speakers are Jeffrey Ramer and Stephen Walko, current members of our town's Board of Estimate and Taxation. This will be an insightful discussion of where our tax dollars are being spent and how the current economic times are influencing the committee's decisions. A question and answer period will follow.

**Tuesday, September 21  
7:00 PM - Cos Cob Library**

*Mark your calendars now  
as seating is limited!*

## *From the President*

Democracy is fun and the League is unique! This is my firm belief and the passion that motivates our exceptional Board. Where else can we obtain first hand, unfiltered information on which to make our voting decisions? Where else can we have a conversation about politics without it escalating into an argument? Where else can we get involved in issues that affect every aspect of our daily lives? This is *your* League – take advantage of it!

Our first program of the year, *BET 101: Follow the Money*, will be on **Tuesday, September 21 at Town Hall at 7 PM**. Come hear from current members of the BET about how it operates and where our tax dollars are going. In this era of belt tightening, it is important to pay attention and ask questions. This is a great opportunity for everyone.

Our local debates are being planned for **September 29 and 30 at Town Hall**. There are gubernatorial and senatorial debates sponsored by the State League in the works as well. Please visit our website, [www.lwvg.org](http://www.lwvg.org), for the latest information.

Speaking of the website, our marvelous webmaster Vivian Chaunu is open to any suggestions to making the site more interactive. The Board is committed to making it the “go-to” site in this critical election year. If you have ideas, please contact me or Vivian.

Now, importantly, let's highlight some of the amazing people who make the League such a special organization. Pam Sloane was the maestro behind the Annual Dinner. She and her committee, particularly Judy Goodchild and Louise Finch, created a memorable evening for us all. Thank you! Naomi Myers had a huge hand in the success of the evening as well. She worked tirelessly as President for the past two years, taking on many extra responsibilities. Her dedication and love of the League are inspirational.

I welcome any comments, questions or suggestions for improvement of any aspect of our operations. There are plenty of opportunities to get more involved. What role does the League play in your life?

All the best,

Cyndy

## **Are you missing something?**

To all that attended our Legislative Picnic – a wooden bowl and spoon set was left behind. Please contact Gay Coe at 203-869-8703.

**2010 Annual Meeting & Dinner "Mini" Photo Gallery**  
 (go to [www.lwvg.org](http://www.lwvg.org) for more!)



*LWVG 2010-2011 Board of Officers and Directors: Left to right, standing: Karen Taggart, VP Program; Leslie Petrick, Membership Director; Barbara Bellefiore, Communications Director; Meredith Sadler, Treasurer; Gay Coe, VP Advocacy; Marla Laney, Greenwich Voter Editor; Caroline Adkins, Secretary; Claudia Carthaus, Development Director. Sitting: Cindi Tredwell, VP Program; Cyndy Anderson, President; Jara Burnett, VP Voter Services*



*Keynote speaker Jen Psaki*



*Jara Burnett, after receiving her Mary Award*



*A capacity crowd attended our Annual Dinner this year! We have room to show only a few here. See our website for more!*



*Former LWVG Treasurer Sherri Hutchinson receiving a token of appreciation from former President Naomi Schiff Myers for her many years of service to the League*

## Report from the Legislative Picnic July 14, 2010

by Jara Burnett, VP Voter Services

More than 50 League members and supporters attended the annual Legislative Picnic to hear the report of Greenwich legislators on the completed legislative session. For the first time in recent memory, it poured during the event held at the home of Gay Coe and attendees had to relocate indoors.

Each legislator was asked to discuss the most significant bills considered by their committees during the session and report on the legislative session as a whole. All legislators expressed concern about the budget deficit for the next year and state finances in the future. In addition, Representative Lile Gibbons praised the state of democracy in our country; although circuitous and slow, she said, it really does work.

**Fred Camillo** (151st district), a member of the Appropriations Committee, was principally concerned as the current budget was balanced by borrowing, total depletion of the Rainy Day Fund and federal stimulus money. Fred warned of large structural budget deficits in the outlying years and regretted that serious reductions in expenditures were not enacted. He hailed the passage of the “seat belt” bill for school buses and the cost will be fully paid by raising the renewal fee on suspended licenses and will not raise budgeted expenditures. A bill simplifying the Certificate of Need process was also passed this session.

**Lile Gibbons** (150th district) has served on the Human Services Committee since joining the legislature. Several “fixes” on important issues were passed this year. Lile has hailed the passage of a bill to expand the Primary Care Case Management program; the program has helped reduce medical costs in the state. Another bill addressed the abuses by some foster care parents who have misappropriated the social security identities and payments of the foster children. A credit check is now required

of funding was due to the budgetary problems of the state.

**Livvy Floren** (149th district) worked with Mayor Pavia of Stamford to bring corporate offices of Starwood Hotels to Stamford (creating 900 new jobs) and with First Selectman Tesei to bring 300 new jobs to Greenwich for the American Way via a partnership with Sky Blue Productions. Such focused business development programs need to continue; she also co-sponsored a small business Tax

Credit program for companies who hire new employees. As a long-time member of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, she was one of the original supporters of the Campaign Finance Reform legislation, a long-time priority for the League. She expressed relief that the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals upheld most of this legislation and promised to work to enact the needed fixes next year.



Left to right: Representatives Floren, Gibbons and Camillo, Senator Frantz, LWVG board members Jara Burnett and Cyndy Anderson

for all 16-year olds in foster care to make sure this abuse is not happening. Of special interest to Greenwich was a proposed amendment to the Safe Haven for children and youth that would have in effect prevented Kids in Crisis from offering temporary residential stay to its clients. A coalition prevented this from being enacted. She also touched on the Nathaniel Witherell loss of the Certificate of Need funding and stated that the entire Greenwich delegation was actively involved and the loss

**Senator Scott Frantz** (36th district) echoed the concerns about the economic future of our state due to the serious debt problems facing the state: securitization of various obligations, such as pensions and Medicaid and the decrease in all state revenues. He stated that Connecticut has a ratio of about 87% of debt to the state’s gross domestic product. He also deplored the flight of wealthy individuals out of state and hoped that Connecticut would take quick and strong action to become a more business-friendly

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. It was founded in 1920 as an outgrowth of the 72 year struggle to win voting rights for women.

## Legislative Picnic, cont'd

state. We are facing daily competition for businesses from other states and we must do better to attract them here to create the new jobs needed, he stated.

In general, legislators stated that they worked well with their Democratic counterpart and often formed strong coalitions to pass needed legislation. In response to a question from the audience regarding the possibility of eliminating the “strike-all” amendment option from the Rules of the General Assembly, all legislators agreed that such a change would be beneficial and encouraged the League to take this up before the next Rules are adopted. The “strike-all” amendment allows legislators to eliminate all the language of a proposed bill and substitute totally unrelated language of another bill and debate and possibly pass it without public hearing. This practice has existed for a number of years.

### **2010-2011 LWVG Board of Officers and Directors**

#### **OFFICERS**

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### **HOLD THESE DATES!!**

### **LWVG DEBATES for State office candidates**

**Town Hall Meeting Room**



**September 29, 8:00-9:00 PM**

**Candidates for the 36<sup>th</sup> District**



**September 30, 7:30-9:00 PM**

**Candidates for the 149<sup>th</sup> and 151<sup>st</sup> Districts**



**Jean Rabinow of the Bridgeport Area League  
will serve as Moderator**

If you are interested in helping with the debates (no experience is needed!), contact Jara Burnett at 203 637-9244 or cdb299@aol.com.

# Report from Convention 2010, Atlanta, GA

by Jara Burnett, VP Voter Services

Thank you to the Greenwich league for sending me to Atlanta to represent it at the biennial League of Women Voters Convention June 11-15. I was among 725 delegates from 45 states and DC; the LWVCT's delegation numbered 9 including the current president and Greenwich member, Cheryl Dunson.

LWVCT delegates took up seats right next to the appropriate microphone to be among the first in line to make our case for a change in Convention Rules that would allow us to present a Resolution. To respond to the pleas of local leagues burdened by high PMPs (LWVUS proposed a PMP of \$29.60 for the coming year), the LWVCT crafted a resolution asking the LWVUS to do an internal study of its financial structure. It was emailed to the 846 state and local leagues as required; however, it was ruled out of order prior to Convention as it didn't meet the restrictive Resolution Committee's criteria. We lost the floor vote as well but we made our point of view well-known.

Convention activities started on Friday and ended Tuesday at noon. The schedule included plenary sessions, early morning and evening caucuses (27), workshops (10), networking sessions (5), briefings (10), exhibits (including big blowups in the plenary hall of relevant historical pictures and captions), handouts of all kinds, and a wares market. Caucuses are meetings arranged by delegates to brief others on initiatives proposed by League members while the workshops are sponsored by the LWVUS. National board members attend caucuses only if invited by the caucus sponsor. I have attended three separate ones dealing with the financial administration of the LWVUS.

Presidents of state Leagues used their one minute time to speak about their League's historic accomplishments. Cheryl Dunson highlighted

the LWVCT's successful advocacy to abolish the voting machine party lever in the 1960s and to pass the Campaign Finance Reform law in 2005. (We received a special award for this accomplishment in 2006).

Nine former LWVUS presidents, among them Kay Maxwell of Greenwich, regaled the audience with stories of significant League events during their tenures from the 1960s to the present while photos on a mammoth screen showed them meeting various shapers of U.S. policy on the League's behalf.

The main task of the convention was to adopt motions relating to program and budget that will guide the work of Leagues until the 2012 convention. Although the national board has appointed a committee to do the internal fiscal study that LWVCT was proposing in the resolution, there was little detail presented to the convention. Thus, the LWVCT submitted a "Guidance to the Board" recommendation that this committee include representatives from urban, suburban, and rural Leagues, that an interim report be provided at Council, and that a final report be ready for the 2012 Convention.

Convention 2010 was inspirational; Congressman John Lewis reminded us that change comes when groups like the League are not afraid to "get in the way." Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius thanked us for the League's key role in achieving significant health care reform and reminded us that much more still needs to be done. Walter Shur joined us to celebrate the legacy of his wife, long-time League member Ruth S. Shur; he established the Ruth S. Shur Leadership Training Institute so his wife would continue to be active in perpetuity in the League she loved. The first 12 League coaches have already received training at the Institute and will start

assisting local Leagues throughout the land. The initiative is intended to provide leadership training and membership recruitment tactics.

We received messages of support and thanks from the President and the Speaker of the House. And throughout Convention 2010, delegates from Leagues all over the country reminded us that the League does not rest on its laurels and that there is much work still to be done to make our democracy work better.

Delegates approved studies on the privatization of federal agencies and institutions and on the role of the federal government in education. Scope and committees will be determined later.

The addition of another study resulted in a lively debate about its source of funding. Some of the new 2010-2011 Per Member Payment (PMP) increase will be used for this purpose, as well as donations made by supporters on the Convention floor. Delegates voted in a PMP rate of \$29.70 (10 cents higher than originally proposed and strongly opposed by the LWVCT delegation!) for FY 2010-2011 and \$30.00 for FY 2011-2012.

An enthusiastic young African American, Howard Franklin III, greeted us as the first male president of the Georgia state League.

As always, it was wonderful to meet and interact with so many old and new friends. Convention is an energizing event, tiring and at times disappointing if the votes do not go your way. However, it makes everyone proud of the work that is being done by Leaguers nationwide. I hope some Greenwich members might be inspired to go in 2012 (scheduled for DC); it is a unique and worthy experience. I would be very happy to talk about Convention with anyone interested to hear more details.



## **Membership Renewal Reminder**

Our annual membership drive is well under way. If you have not already renewed your membership, you may download a membership form from our website, [www.lwvg.org](http://www.lwvg.org).

Your membership is important to us! Help us continue our educational and advocacy work. Help us make a difference!

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- August 10** Primary
- September 14** LWVG Board Meeting, 5 PM at Town Hall
- September 21** *BET 101: Follow Your Money*, 7 PM at Cos Cob Library
- September 29** Debate - Candidates for 36th District, 8 PM at Town Hall
- September 30** Debate - Candidates for 149th & 151st Districts, 7:30 PM at Town Hall



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREENWICH  
P.O. BOX 604  
GREENWICH, CT 06836**

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