

GREENWICH VOTER

www.lwvg.org



FEBRUARY 2011

From the President

It has been a tremendous month for your Greenwich League! Our January 19 program, *Greenwich Water: Scarce and Precious*, attracted over 140 people to Town Hall to hear captivating presentations on the quantity and quality of our water. Given the large response, we are already planning follow-up events. All the credit goes to the Water Team of Priscilla Morphy, Jack Stoecker and Meline Dixon. They followed their passion about this vital natural resource and educated the public. I would also like to thank our moderator, LWVCT president Cheryl Dunson, and

the panelists: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health in Greenwich; David Medd, Manager of Supply Operations; Aquarion Water Company; and Denise Savageau, Director of the Conservation Commission in Greenwich.

The State League's 90th anniversary celebration was held in Greenwich and many of our members attended. They were treated to a League history exhibit including an original suffragist banner, a League overview by Cheryl Dunson, remarks by U.S. Representative Jim Himes and Christine Todd Whit-

man via Skype. Her talk was inspiring and refreshingly open about political discourse and solving our problems together. She lauded the League and its many contributions to democracy through nonpartisan means. We are all proud of this legacy.

Our Legislative Breakfast (held February 7) continues to be a great resource for learning about the critical issues that are facing our state from our three State Representatives and State Senator.

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MEMBER MEETING - STATE & LOCAL LEAGUE PROGRAM PLANNING

Wednesday, March 9
6:30pm Potluck Dinner – 7:15pm Meeting

At the home of Nicki Markley • 33 West Putnam Avenue, Apt. 2F, Greenwich, CT

This is the time of year when local Leagues begin to focus on the state program selection which, upon approval by the delegates at the 2011 Convention, will become the LWVCT's work plan for the next biennium. The two-part process begins with an examination of existing state positions to determine if they are still relevant and represent the current thinking of our membership. This is especially important for the 10-year positions which must be re-affirmed, reviewed, restudied or dropped. This year, the 10-year position on Quality Integrated Education needs thorough consideration. Members interested in the details of the LWVCT's legislative priorities and positions can go to the State League website, www.lwvct.org, and download a copy of *Impact on Issues 2009*. A copy of *2009-2010 Positions in Brief* is included on page three of this *Voter*.

In addition, LWVG's local positions will be reviewed. Positions reviewed more than 10 years ago will be re-affirmed, reviewed, restudied or dropped. LWVG's positions can be found on our website, www.lwvg.org. Scroll over the Members button for the drop-down menu to Current Positions/Local-LWVG. We encourage you to print and bring a copy with you to the meeting for a handy reference.

For both state and local programs, we are asked to identify one or two positions for legislative priority. Currently at the state level, Transportation and Election Laws are the member-adopted priorities. Priorities can include positions for LWVUS for LWVCT action. At the local level, Ethics and Affordable Housing have been the priorities of 2010 - 2011.

**This is your chance to affect the course of our advocacy, programs, and priorities. We hope to see you there.
Please call or email Karen Taggart (698-9411 or taggarts@optonline.net), if you plan to attend.
Please specify your contribution of main course, salad or dessert to the Potluck Dinner.**



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.

2010-2011 LWVG Board of Officers and Directors

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NOMINATING

From the President, continued

Don't miss our Program Planning Meeting on March 9 at Nicki Markley's new apartment. The potluck dinner is a fun way to meet and catch-up with other members. This is your opportunity to vote on our priorities for next year on the State and Local levels. All positions will be up for review as well. Make your voice heard! If you cannot make it and would like to comment, please give me a call.

Finally, it is the time of year to send me your nominations for our annual Mary Award. This award is our highest recognition of outstanding contributions to the League and to the community and is presented at the Annual Dinner. Past recipients include Dodie Blanche, Annette Fox and Jara Burnett. Please follow the guidelines below and submit your nominations by March 15.

All the best,
Cyndy

'Mary Award' Nomination Guidelines

The LWVG Board is accepting written nominations for the third 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. Past Mary Awards recipients are: Dodie Blanche, Annette Fox and Jara Burnett. The award will be given at the 2011 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 e-mail your nomination to Cyndy Anderson at tyander@aol.com, or send by regular mail to 22 Marlow Court, Riverside, CT 06878. The Board will make its decision after all nominations are reviewed. **Nominations should be received by March 15.**

Welcome to our newest members!

Lydia Anderson
Ellen and Robert Barolak
Stephen Munger

Peter McSpadden
Patty Sechi
Brook Urban

GOVERNMENT

Campaign Finance Reform (1975; affirmed 2005)

Support: limitations on campaign contributions and expenditures, full disclosure, and partial public funding of campaigns.

Election Laws (1983; amended and affirmed 2007)

Support: political process open to all citizens; right to vote with confidence in the election process; availability of adequate information to make informed voting decisions; expanded registration processes, including Election Day Registration; voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable and accessible; adequate funding and support for state agencies responsible for supervising elections, enforcing election laws, and assuring the integrity of voting technology.

Ethics (2004)

Support actions to: reform, strengthen, and clarify Connecticut's codes of ethics as they apply to public officials, public employees, and lobbyists; require a transparent, competitive, and clearly defined state contract selection process; and Promote the establishment of municipal ethics commissions and municipal ethics codes as applied to municipal public officials, municipal public employees, and municipal lobbyists.

Fiscal Policy; (1981; updated and affirmed 2003)

Support: state budget that is an effective policy-making tool with stated goals and priorities with financial data on past performance in meeting goals, economic impact data and program costs. The Spending Cap should be made more responsive to fiscal realities.

Oppose: bonding for current expenditures; increased tax burden on business.

General Assembly (1982; affirmed 2003)

Support: measures to improve the effectiveness of the General Assembly, legislative committees, public hearings, and staff.

Internet and Media (2008)

Support: government policies that promote broadband, wireless, and other means of high speed Internet deployment throughout the state; state efforts to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet; adequate protection, promotion, and fund-

ing of community access television channels regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents; government provision of opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access TV.

Initiative and Referendum (1984; affirmed 2003)

Support: ratification of Constitutional amendments by referendum; improved voter information and ballot questions.

Oppose: proposal of Constitutional amendments by initiative; direct initiative to propose laws.

Primaries, Procedures and Parties (1983; affirmed and updated 2003)

Support: participation in party's nominating process for party members only; increased participation by party members.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use (1975; affirmed 2005)

Support: comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development.

Transportation (1975; affirmed 2005)

Support: the planning and development of a balanced multi-modal transportation system in Connecticut.

Water Resources (1967; affirmed 2005)

Support: measures to improve water quality and preserve wetlands; regional, long-range approach to planning.

SOCIAL POLICY

Death Penalty (2006)

Support: abolition of the death penalty.. Capital punishment should not be a sentencing option for murder or any other crime. Until the death penalty in Connecticut is abolished, support an immediate moratorium on executions.

Gambling (1994; updated and affirmed 2003)

Support: the 2003 repeal of the so-called Las Vegas Nights legislation; inclusion of safeguards in any bills that are considered by the legislature.

Oppose: legalization of additional forms of gambling, especially the expansion of casino gambling and all legislation that enables such expansion.

Mental Health (2003)

Support: comprehensive community-based mental health systems for children and adults to include early detection, intervention and a range of services, and a public health initiative on mental health.

Quality Integrated Education in Connecticut Schools (1991; affirmed in 2001)

Support: quality education that reflects the diversity of our society; collective responsibility; alternative means of school assignment; state responsibility for funding; local responsibility for the initiation and implementation; and shared responsibility for planning, monitoring and assessment of programs.

School Finance (1990; updated and affirmed 2000)

Support: a system that: makes available to each community sufficient financial resources to provide a suitable program of educational experiences for every child; removes the cap on the ECS grant, and sets the Foundation in the state's biennial budget.

School Start Time (2006)

Support: policies and practices that delay school start times in Connecticut high schools, middle schools, and junior high schools in order to facilitate the alignment of instructional time with adolescent sleep patterns.

School Vouchers (1996; amended and affirmed 2008)

Support: system of elementary and secondary education that is fiscally and educationally accountable to citizens.

Oppose: the use of public funds through vouchers, state tax credits or any other state incentives or payments, direct or indirect, to provide tuition support for students attending non-public schools.

Teen Pregnancy (1989; affirmed 1999; amended and affirmed 2009)

Support: Measures to ensure that all school-aged children have access to age-appropriate sex education programs; school-based health clinics with services including reproductive health; programs and services designed to help adolescents delay parenthood and to enable adolescent parents to finish high school.

Oppose: restrictions on adolescents' rights to obtain a full range of reproductive health services.

The Bridgeport Recount Report and Recommended Further Steps

By Jara Burnett

The Connecticut Citizen Audit Coalition conducted a citizen recount of the ballots cast in the gubernatorial race in Bridgeport, in conjunction with the *Connecticut Post* and with the cooperation with the City of Bridgeport. The Coalition is comprised of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, Common Cause, Connecticut Citizen Action Group and CTVotersCount. The LWVCT played a pivotal role in the organizing and implementing of the recount.

The recount counted all ballots cast in the City of Bridgeport in the race for governor and compared ballot counts to voters checked-in. The recount was conducted by fifty-six (56) citizen volunteers donating over one-hundred and fifteen (115) days to the cause of democracy.

Luther Weeks of CTVotersCount (and a Glastonbury league member) states, “We found evidence suggesting just about every type of counting and calculation error one would imagine from officials who worked extended days and counted under pressure. We also found differences between numbers of ballots cast and numbers of voters checked-in at the polls.”

Our own Cheryl Dunson stated, “Voters deserve better. Municipalities must provide sufficient numbers of ballots. Election officials need more training, organization, and more time to determine and report results. There is also a need for more enforcement of our election laws.”

The good news is that the recount showed no evidence of fraud. But, in a closer election, similar errors could have

changed the election result, precluded a necessary recanvass or caused an unnecessary one.”

The Coalition suggested possible components of a comprehensive solution:

- **Mandatory formulas for minimum ballot orders**
It should be noted that, simply printing more ballots only reduces the chance of the specific problem that occurred in Bridgeport. There are other causes that could result in a municipality having to scramble to photocopy ballots or perform hand counting such as a massive power failure or ballots lost in a fire, flood, or accident shortly before or during Election Day.
- **Enforceable laws, regulations, and procedures** for the monitoring of turn-out to provide sufficient warning of ballot shortages and for the security, and accounting for all ballots as well as the creation and handling of emergency photocopied ballots
- **Additional state-provided training** and improved manuals for election officials

Additional technical recommendations have been formulated and will be discussed with the newly-elected Secretary of the State, the Honorable Denise Merrill, at a meeting this month with Cheryl and Christine Horrigan, the LWVCT VP-Advocacy. The LWVCT’s long-term goal is to professionalize elections in Connecticut by having a nonpartisan professional staff in charge of elections.

Revised Ethics Policy

By Mary Ferry

A revised Ethics Policy for town employees was approved by the Board of Selectmen on December 16th, 2010. This policy includes:

1. **A form of acknowledgment that an employee has read and understands provisions of the Ethics Policy.**
2. **Prohibition of non-financial conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest.**
3. **Prohibition on divulging confidential information.**
4. **Prohibition on using town resources inappropriately.**
5. **Firm gift policy.**

Based on the LWVG position on ethics, the League has been lobbying for an updated Ethics Policy for town employees and for an Updated Code of Ethics for all town officers. Inclusion of the above provisions, which are in agreement with the League position, in the Ethics Policy for employees is a major step forward. The Board of Selectmen and the Human Resources Department are to be commended for writing and approving the new Ethics Policy.

The LWVG will continue to lobby for an updated Code of Ethics for all town officers.

Greenwich Water: Scarce and Precious - Water Panel Presentation

By Michele Graham

Despite the blustery weather, The Selectmen's Main Meeting Room at Greenwich Town Hall was filled on January 19 for the League of Women Voters Panel Presentation *Greenwich Water: Scarce and Precious*. Cyndy Anderson, LWVG president, welcomed the over one hundred person capacity audience and gave a brief introduction about the LWVG and the important role it plays within the community. She was followed by former LWVG president and current LWVCT president Cheryl Dunson, who introduced the panelists and the growing concern about having an ample supply of high quality drinking water.

Credit for the evening's presentation goes to LWVG members Meline Dickson, Jack Stoecker, and Priscilla Morphy. Meline kicked off the panel discussion by illustrating how topical the subject of drinking water has become. From national publications like *Newsweek* to our local *Greenwich Time*, the scarcity of drinking water is becoming big news. Although Greenwich is renown for its beautiful waterfront, it only takes one look at the town's reservoirs to see the dramatic decrease in available fresh water.

David Medd of the Aquarion Water Company, which owns and manages the Greenwich Water System, spoke about the town's surface water, watershed, and reservoir systems. He explained the water distribution and treatment systems, and the multiple barriers that are in place to protect both the quantity and quality of water.

Next up was Caroline Calderone Baisley of the Greenwich Department of Health. Baisley focused on the groundwater supply and private wells, which in recent years have run the risk of running dry on certain properties. She also addressed the quality of well water. Of 8,000 parcels in town that are served by private wells, only a fraction submits samples for water quality testing. As the lead person to protect the town's health, with a sophisticated laboratory at her department's disposal, Baisley expressed concern that property owners are failing to periodically check for contaminants such as lead,

arsenic, and coliform bacteria. Her concerns are based on the percentage of water samples that fail to meet the maximum allowable contaminant levels for lead (7%), arsenic (17%) and coliform bacteria (11%).

Denise Savegeau, Director of the Greenwich Conservation Committee, wrapped up the presentations and explained the interconnection between surface and ground water. Her charts on water consumption illustrated the dramatic and deleterious impact that irrigation has on the town's water usage. This past fall with reservoirs at just 30-32% capacity after a summer with extremely low rainfall, the town came close to putting into effect drought protection measures (28% would have required mandatory measures). Savegeau explained the delicate balance between conserving the water supply and Aquarion's mission to service its customers. The Conservation Committee is currently revising the town's Watershed Management Plans and Drought Management Plans, and actively working with nearby towns that share in our watershed area.

Savegeau ended with tips on what residents can do to ensure an ample and safe water supply, including:

- ✓ Promoting open space policies
- ✓ Supporting land use protection
- ✓ Making water conservation a priority
- ✓ Supporting stream flow regulations

The session concluded with Q&A and closing remarks by Cheryl Dunson. Audience members were also provided with a pair of valuable handouts: "Well Water in Greenwich" by the Greenwich Department of Health's Division of Environmental Services and "Clean Water for Greenwich" by the Greenwich Conservation Commission, and the Green Fingers and Hortulus Garden Clubs. Denise Savegeau had a large map available for residents to examine to see which watershed they are located in.

You can view photos from the presentation on our web site: www.lwvg.org.

Please Join the LWVG!

It's easy! You may download a membership form from our website, www.lwvg.org, and mail it in with your check. OR, you can now join electronically using PayPal!

Your membership is very important because it helps us continue our educational and advocacy work.

Together, we really can make a difference!

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

- February 7 *LWVG Legislative Breakfast*, 7:30 am at Nathaniel Witherell. Snow date: February 10
- March 9 *Member Meeting - State & Local Program Planning* at the home of Nicki Markley, 6:30pm Potluck Dinner - 7:15pm Meeting
- May 25 *LWVG Annual Meeting & Dinner* at Riverside Yacht Club



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREENWICH
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