

GREENWICH VOTER

www.lwvg.org



JANUARY 2011

From the President

Water is something that most of us take for granted. Are we vulnerable to shortages, excessive use or disposal problems? Come and learn more about this vital natural resource at our January 19 program, *Greenwich Water: Scarce and Precious*. We will have a panel of experts moderated by our own Cheryl Dunson, with a question and answer period to follow. This is a program not to be missed! Please encourage your friends to join you.

This was a critical year with so many of our national, state and local elected positions on the ballot. Your League worked hard to get dependable first

hand information out to the electorate. The highlight of this effort was our *Voters' Guide* which was so ably put together by Marilyn Myers assisted by Jara Burnett. The League received many accolades for this enlightening information which was provided directly by the candidates. Thank you both for your dedication and real public service!

You should be aware that the Connecticut League of Women Voters was a part of the Connecticut Citizen Audit Coalition which conducted a recount of the Bridgeport ballots. A number of members from our Greenwich League

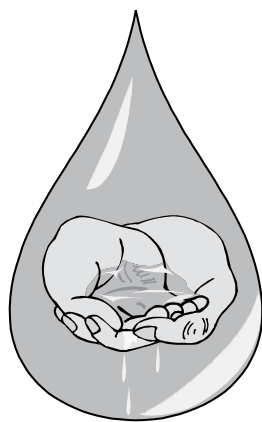
including Cheryl Dunson (LWVCT President), Kath Burgweger and Jara Burnett were actively involved. This is a critical contribution to democracy which only a non-partisan, well-respected organization like the League can perform.

2011 is a big year for our Greenwich League as we will turn 90 in October. Plans are already in the works for commemorating this milestone. We are incredibly proud of all the members over the years who have done so much to keep the League strong and engaged. The Connecticut League is celebrating their 90th anniversary with a Gala at the Hyatt on January 27 with keynote speaker Christine Todd Whitman.

Speaking of parties, it was wonderful to see so many of you at our holiday gathering! It was a fun way to catch up with friends, hear from the Selectmen and talk about the year ahead. There was a very exciting announcement at the party made by Peter Tesei that our Ethics proposals are on the December 16 agenda for implementation. This is a positive step towards local ethics reform and I would like to thank Cheryl Dunson, JoAnn Messina and Mary Ferry for all their hard work on formulating our position and advocating for it. We will report in full in the next *Voter*.

My best wishes to you and your families for a joyful holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year!

Cyndy



Greenwich Water: Scarce & Precious

**Wednesday, January 19
7pm at the Town Hall Meeting Room**

Are we vulnerable to shortages, excessive use, or disposal problems? Come hear from the experts where we stand on this vital resource.

Panelists:

Caroline Baisley, Director of Health, Greenwich
David Medd, Manager of Supply Operations, Aquarion Water Company
Denise Savageau, Director of Conservation Commission, Greenwich

Moderator:

Cheryl Dunson, President, The League of Women Voters of Connecticut

Co-Sponsored by:

Byram Watershed Coalition, Greenwich Garden Club, The Greenwich Land Trust,
Mianus River Watershed Council, Old Greenwich Association,
Pemberwick-Glenville Association, Round Hill Association

For more information, visit www.lwvg.org or contact Jack Stoecker at 203-253-9348.



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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Debates & Election Season Wrap-up

The League is probably best known for its sponsorship of debates. Although the LWVUS no longer sponsors Presidential debates, state and local Leagues work very hard to organize debates at the federal, state or local levels. This year, local Leagues in Connecticut organized 28 debates for state legislative candidates, many including up to 12 candidates. There were also debates for the US Congress in 1, 2, 4 and 5 Congressional districts. Regretfully, the LWVCT has been unable to organize debates for the US Senate, Governor. or other state-wide offices.

Why are debates so important? Although they seldom make a winner out of a long-shot nor do they destroy a candidate who is far ahead in the polls, they tend to have the greatest impact on undecided voters. Debates stimulate interest in the election and inform the public about the issues involved in the campaign. They put candidates on the record, so they can be held accountable once in office and provide a great deal of information about the personalities of the candidates. In sum, candidate debates play a vital role in our democracy.

In addition to the very successful September 29 debate for state candidates, the Greenwich League co-sponsored with 11 other Fairfield County Leagues a 4th Congressional district debate between incumbent Jim Himes and challenger Dan Debicella. The debate was a resounding success. Kay Maxwell moderated and Cyndy Anderson, Jara Burnett and Gay Coe were the able helpers.

Debates, though, will remain only as good as the public wants them to be. Because many candidates want safe debates – or all too often, no debates at all – it will be up to the public to persuade candidates to debate and to accept better, more challenging formats.

The 2010 *Voters' Guide* was once again edited by Marilyn Myers and distributed in the October 29 edition of the *Greenwich Time* and *Greenwich Citizen*. It was also posted on the League website the week preceding its publication. Additional copies of the *Guide* (about 200 copies) were left at the libraries, grocery stores and Town Hall.

It's not too late to renew!!!

If you have not already renewed your membership, this will be the last issue of the *Greenwich Voter* you will receive. You may download a membership form from our website, www.lwvg.org, and mail it in with your check. OR, you can now renew electronically using PayPal!

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

Affordable Housing Program – November 18, 2010

Affordable Housing was voted on by the membership as one of our two priorities for this program year. To honor this emphasis, *Affordable Housing 101* was presented to a well-attended group at Town Hall. The program was presented by Bernadette Settlemyer, member of the Housing Authority and Nancy Brown, chair of the Housing Task Force, a committee created based on the recommendations of the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development.



From left: LWVG President, Cyndy Anderson; Nancy Brown of the Housing Task Force; Bernadette Settlemyer of the Housing Authority; and LWVG VP Program, Karen Taggart

“Affordable housing is not simply housing for the lower economic level. It includes housing for critically-needed town employees such as policemen, firemen and teachers. Providing housing for these groups is an investment in our community,” stated Bernadette Settlemyer.

Connecticut encourages municipalities to devote 10% of their housing

stock to affordable housing. Greenwich currently has about 5% of its housing in affordable units. There is no penalty for failing to reach the target. However, developers whose project includes affordable housing that was rejected by the local zoning authority can speedily move ahead with a lawsuit challenging the denial.

A private homeowner who offers affordable units asked why the Town does not include their units in the statistics. One reason is that the Town does not know about these units. The panelists encourage such homeowners to make themselves known to the various Town groups. Competition for affordable housing units by employees of non-profit groups such as the hospital, or private schools, was also noted.

In closing, Nancy Brown stated, “We can and we should maintain our primary residential community with housing for our diverse population.”

Thanks to our presenters, to Mary Ellen LeBien for her advice and to Karen Taggart for organizing. Please contact any of these people to get more involved.

LWVG Internal Study Committee Report

The Committee on the Internal Study of the League of Women Voters of Greenwich met on November 18 to kick off the study adopted by the membership at the Annual Meeting. Attending: were Kath Burgweger, Jara Burnett, Tina Linstedt, and Naomi Schiff Myers.

The group reviewed the proposed Scope of Study. It was decided that this was not a true study but a review of the activities of the LWVG and a preparation of a strategic plan

for the future with the ultimate goal of recommending strategies to maximize the League’s impact on the community and its relevancy to the membership.

We have reviewed the just-completed Voter Services activities and the educational programs presented earlier this year and those coming in the near future.

Other topics discussed were the members’ lack of knowledge of

League’s local, state and national positions and the advocacy on these positions. It was also suggested that the committee consider how to build a mechanism for succession of board members and officers. We plan to further discuss these issues at the next meeting.

We welcome new additions to this committee; it is a good way to learn more about the League! Please call Jara Burnett at 203 637-9244 or email cdb299@aol.com.

2010 Holiday Party at GADCC - more photos on our website!



Selectman Drew Marzullo, Mary Ferry, First Selectman Peter Tesei, JoAnn Messina, and Selectman David Theis



Denise Savageau, Joan Faust, LWVG VP Development Claudia Carthaus, and Michele Graham



LWVG Webmaster Vivian Chaunu and Betsie Harkins



Kath Burgweger and Loraine Salerno



Meg Cole and Carolyn Westerburg



Larry Simon, LWVG VP Advocacy Gay Coe, LWVG Membership Director Leslie Petrick

Bridgeport Ballot Recount

From November 27th through December 3rd and on December 6th, a total of 56 citizen volunteers from the Connecticut Citizen Audit Coalition, under the direction of Luther Weeks, President of CT Voters Count and Cheryl Dunson, President of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut (LWVCT), “recounted” the City of Bridgeport ballots for the gubernatorial race. Because the LWVCT is a part of the Coalition, many of the volunteers were League members. Greenwich was well represented by Cheryl Dunson, Kath Burgweger, Jara Burnett and Naomi Myers. Kath even enlisted the help of her son, Sherman Burgweger.

The recount was prompted by the *Connecticut Post*’s successful filing of a Freedom of Information request to perform a recount of the Governor’s race in the City of Bridgeport due to the Election Day troubles in that city. As you may recall, there was a ballot shortage reported in many of the districts, and the City had to provide photocopied ballots and held some of the district polling places open until 10 pm. This meant that election officials had to hand count all the photocopied ballots at the end of the night after having already worked 12-14 hours at the polls.

With the full cooperation of the two Bridgeport registrars, the volunteers counted every absentee ballot

and machine counted ballot and all the hand counted ballots (which included printed ballots with write-ins, photocopied ballots, provisional ballots, and post-8 pm ballots) in Bridgeport’s 25 districts.

On December 8, Weeks and Dunson, leaders of the Coalition, along with the editor and reporters from the *Connecticut Post* met with City attorneys and the registrars to review the results of the recount. All agreed that the machine counted ballot process was accurate. The problem came with the hand counted ballots. Of the approximately 6,000 hand counted ballots, approximately 1,500 votes were inaccurately counted. Dunson and Weeks agree that, while these inaccuracies would not have changed the ultimate result of the election, voters deserve better.

Broadly speaking, the Coalition sees three key recommendations growing out of this recount experience: more ballots, more time, and more consistency/organization. The Coalition will present a report to state public officials sharing our observations and recommendations resulting from this recount in hopes that better procedures will be put in place for future elections so that voters can be confident that their votes have been counted properly.

LWVG Nominating Chair Announced



The Board of the League of Women Voters is delighted to announce that Jennifer (Jenny) Baldock will be our Nominating Chairman. Jenny is a very accomplished individual and an active community volunteer. She is

currently the President of the Board of Trustees of the Greenwich Library where she has been a Trustee since 2003. In addition, Jenny is a current member of the Executive Committee and the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee of GEMS and has been a Director since 2001. In 2004, she joined the board of the public company, Asset Acceptance Capital Corporation. At Asset, Jenny is Chairman of the Nominating Committee and Governance Committee as well as a member of the Audit and Compensation Committees.

Jenny graduated from Princeton University and Stanford Law School. After clerking for a United States District Court Judge, she joined the law firm of Latham & Watkins in New York City where she practiced corporate, litigation and employment law. After a few years she left Latham to become General Counsel of World Color Press, Inc., where she rose to become Vice Chairman, Chief Administrative and Legal Officer and a member of the three person Office of the Chairman overseeing the day-to-day operations of the company. She now devotes her energies to her volunteer and Board work.

Jenny is married and has two sons, one currently at Stanford University and the other at Brunswick. Please join us in welcoming Jenny to the Board!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

- January 11, 2011 LWVG Board Meeting, Town Hall, 5:00 pm
- January 19, 2011 *Greenwich Water: Scarce & Precious*, 7:00 pm at Town Hall Meeting Room
- January 27, 2011 *LWVCT 90th Anniversary Gala* with speaker Christine Todd Whitman,
Greenwich Grand Hyatt
- February 7, 2011 *LWVG Legislative Breakfast*, 7:30 am at Nathaniel Witherell (look for postcard
in your mailbox with further details) Snow date: February 10
- May 25, 2011 LWVG Annual Meeting & Dinner at Riverside Yacht Club

A Happy and Healthy New Year to All!



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREENWICH
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