

GREENWICH VOTER

www.lwvg.org



SEPTEMBER 2016

LWVG Celebrates 95 Years!

With great pleasure, the LWVG announces the celebration of its 95th Anniversary. A cocktail party will be held on October 16 at the Round Hill Community House from 4:00-7:00pm. A variety of historical information and photos will be featured that illustrate the impressive history of our group as well as of the League itself. This collection has been gathered and researched from archives and events. It will be fascinating and informative.

We proudly announce that our speaker will be Coline Jenkins, the great-great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who fought with Susan B. Anthony for many rights women now have. Coline offers valuable and treasured insights into the decades and accomplishments the League has achieved.

The fare will be hearty hors d'oeuvres, wine, beverages and a celebratory cake.

Admission to this event is Friend \$45, Supporter \$90, Sponsor \$150.

Look for your invitation in the mail.

For more information, contact Mary Ann Henry at MaryAnnInfo@aol.com or Joanne Stavrou at jojows@aol.com.

From the Steering Committee

We ended a busy six months with a well-attended and successful Annual Dinner. Our keynote speaker Hagar Hajjar Chemali's story of her work at the U.S. Treasury, White House and United Nations on international security and terrorism issues was fascinating. Our Mary Award winner was Cyndy Anderson, whose contributions to the growth and well-being of the League, over many years, were so important. (See next page for more.)

Our focus now turns to our election season which will be intensive, given that it is a Presidential election year. We have debates for local elections scheduled for Thursday, October 13, with candidates for the 151st CT Assembly District and candidates for the 36th CT Senate District. We are also co-sponsoring, with other Leagues of Fairfield County, a debate on October 23 between candidates for our U.S. House of Representative seat. Central to our efforts to inform citizens will be the publication again of our *Voter's Guide*, which will highlight the candidates and their responses to questions about the critical issues they will face if elected.

Of particular relevance to our upcoming elections are issues related to the integrity of our electoral system, voter suppression and voter fraud. Given the importance of these issues to our democracy the League is sponsoring, along with the Greenwich Republican and Democratic Town Committees, a panel discussion

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The League of Women Voters together with the Greenwich Democratic and Greenwich Republican Town Committees and the Greenwich Library

invite you to

Election Matters: The State of Voting in 2016

Featuring the short documentary, *Electoral Dysfunction*, after which a distinguished panel will discuss and respond to questions

Moderator: **Victoria Bassetti**, Author, *Electoral Dysfunction: A Survival Manual for Voters*

- **Michael Brandi**, Executive Director, State Elections Enforcement Commission
- **John Fund**, National Affairs Columnist, *National Review*
- **Denise Merrill**, Secretary of the State of Connecticut
- **Michael Waldman**, President, The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law

Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Greenwich Library, Cole Auditorium

Refreshments and Voter Registration Drive: 6:30pm • Program: 7:00-9:00pm
RSVP: sheila.LWVGgreenwich@gmail.com • Admission is free



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From the Steering Committee, continued...

Election Matters: The State of Voting 2016. It will be held at Greenwich Library on September 20.

We are also looking forward to a festive celebration of the LWVG 95th Anniversary on October 16 at the Round Hill Community House. Tickets for this popular event must be purchased ahead of time. And finally, a reminder that our membership renewal drive is in full swing. Please check our website www.lwvg.org for more information about all these events.

Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who support our efforts and please remember to vote on November 8.

Best wishes,

Caroline, Jara and Liz

Annual Dinner

The LWVG held its Annual Meeting and Annual Dinner at Riverside Yacht Club on June 1 with a record attendance of 120 members and guests for dinner. Our keynote speaker was Hagar Hajjar Chemali, a Greenwich native who discussed her fascinating career in Washington, D.C. She spoke about her experiences working on issues connected to terrorism and financial intelligence for the U.S. Department of the Treasury, as the Specialist for Middle East Affairs on the National Security Council in the White House, and as Communications Director and Spokeswoman for the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power.



Keynote speaker Hagar Hajjar Chemali and Julien Chemali



First Selectman Peter Tesei and Cyndy Anderson

Cyndy Anderson was presented with the well-deserved Mary Award for her years of dedication, innovation and leadership of the League of Women Voters of Greenwich. Cyndy spoke movingly of her mother's talent and approach to issues as well as her own philosophy. Peter Tesei lauded Cyndy's success in working with the community for the League. Mary Ann Henry expressed the Board's great appreciation for Cyndy's skillful leadership and inspiration, which contributed greatly to the growth experienced by the League during her many years of service.

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich

invites you to...

CANDIDATE DEBATES

Thursday, October 13, 2016

Town Hall Meeting Room • 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich

7:00 - 8:00 pm

Candidates for the 151st Assembly District

Fred Camillo
REPUBLICAN INCUMBENT

Dita Bhargava
DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER

8:10 - 9:10 pm

Candidates for the 36th Senate District

Scott Frantz
REPUBLICAN INCUMBENT

John Blankley
DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER

Jean Rabinow of the Bridgeport Area League will moderate.

For more information, call Jara Burnett at 203-637-9244

Debate Event Help Needed

To volunteer to help with the event, please contact Jara Burnett at cdb299@aol.com.

LWVG Members are Invited to Help Register New Citizens to Vote

LWVG members are invited to join the Bridgeport League and several other local Leagues to register new citizens to vote at Bridgeport naturalization ceremonies.

Upcoming dates are September 22, October 21 & 22, November 18, December 16 & 22.

There are several ceremonies on each of these days, so volunteers could choose morning or afternoon. The location is a short walk from the train station in Bridgeport.

If you are interested, please contact Liz van Caloen at LWVGliz@gmail.com, indicating your preferred dates.



2016-17 LWVG Board from left: (back row) Nancy Duffy, Hillary McGuire, Jill Oberlander, Julie Faryniarz, Jara Burnett (middle row) Joanne Stavrou, Marla Laney, Dierdre Kamlani, Elise Hingson (front row) Caroline Adkins, Liz Van Caloen, Mary Ann Henry, Louisa Greene. Not pictured: Rita Baker, Sheila Mehta, Barbara O'Shea

Legislative Picnic

We held our annual Legislative Picnic on July 14 at the waterside home of Nancy Cooper and Andy Duus. We thank them again for their incredible generosity and hospitality. In attendance were all of our legislators:

- State Senator Scott Frantz - Deputy Minority Leader of the Senate Republican Caucus, Finance, Commerce, Transportation and Legislative Management Committees
- State Representative Livvy Floren, 149th District - Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committees
- State Representative Mike Bocchino, 150th District - Energy, Technology, Higher Education, Employment Advancement and Children's Committees
- State Representative Fred Camillo, 151st District - Commerce, Banks and Executive and Legislative Nominations Committees

They spoke about their accomplishments and efforts in their respective committees. They felt that there are a lot of complex government regulations that, if revised, could make legislation flow more smoothly. Most seem to feel that the Department of Education would be more effective if it was under state and not federal jurisdiction.

Overall, we had some lively discussions and, as always, thank our Legislators for the time and energy they give to our community.



From left: State Representatives Mike Bocchino, Livvy Floren and Fred Camillo, and State Senator Scott Frantz

Convention 2016: The League of Women Voters of CT

Members from Leagues throughout Connecticut gathered on June 4 for the 55th annual convention. The business of the convention involved voting on the budget, adopting a slate of Board officers and voting on changes in the by-laws. Finishing her 2015-2017 term, Gloria Bent continues as our Connecticut state president. The major and only by-law change, which passed, changed the nominating process to allow more time for the nominating committee to locate and vet candidates including candidates proposed in floor nominations.

The convention heard a report about the threat to our state program, Citizen Election Proud (CEP), which uses public money for public elections. Both parties in the Legislature voted to drop the program, but resistance by concerned citizens and our League members resulted in the bill failing to pass. As a result of this assault on campaign finance reform, LWVCT is launching a three year effort to inform the public about the ongoing threat to CEP. The program is important because it helps people without money compete for public office and diminishes the influence of special interest groups.

The Convention was also introduced to a new initiative on engaging our communities, "The Red, White and Blue Project," which involves civic education programs for K-12 schools. The project is a collaboration between the State Department of Education and the Office of the Secretary of the State. Each year, a theme will be announced and schools will be encouraged to develop activities, curriculum and community outreach central to the theme. The theme for 2016 is the Electoral Process. The role for the League with respect to this process is to become a community partner with the schools to help implement this civics education. Local leagues could, for example, go into classes and discuss our *Voter's Guide*, the voter registration process, and the debate process for candidates for public office. Implementation of the "Red, White and Blue Project" will depend on schools' voluntary participation and the Department of Education's efforts to successfully inform and involve schools in this project.

Did You Renew Your Membership?

Our membership renewal drive is in full swing. If you have not yet renewed, please do so at your earliest convenience. You can also renew via PayPal on the League website, www.lwvg.org. Can't remember whether you are paid up? Contact Jara Burnett at cdb299@aol.com.

LWVG Members Attended 2016 National Convention in Washington, DC

Four members of the Greenwich League—Caroline Adkins, Hillary McGuire, Joanne Stavrou and Liz van Caloen—travelled to Washington, D.C. in June to attend the LWV National Convention. Delegates were kept busy from 7:15am to after 10:00pm with plenary sessions, caucuses, presentations, workshops and networking opportunities galore. The purpose of the annual convention is to confirm new leadership and a budget, to review bylaws, and to commit to a program for 2016-2018 and happily all these were accomplished.

The new president is Chris Carson. In her statement she praised the League saying:

“Nurtured in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect, people are empowered to improve our communities and build democracy.... Where else besides the League?” Other new officers included Wylecia Wiggs Harris, CEO, who urged Leagues to adapt with the times and embrace younger members and others not traditionally represented in the League.

A long line-up of speakers and topics was presented over the three days. One of these was Democrat pollster Celinda Lake, who presented her findings on the public perception of the League. She noted that people love the LWV and wish we were more visible. She also



National Convention delegates from left: Joanne Stavrou, Caroline Adkins, Liz Van Caloen and Hillary McGuire

mentioned that they appreciate the *Voter's Guide* and debates, view the League as honest, and appreciate that we do not endorse candidates or issues. But, she said, few people realize that the League grew out of women's fight for the vote—perhaps something we can work on.

Positions presented, discussed and passed at the convention pertained to behavioral health, promoting a more open and accountable governmental system, voter protection and mobilization, and redistricting. Changes to bylaws now make it possible for non-citizens and teenagers 16 and over to join the League as full voting members.

Notable workshops included: Using Facebook, “Vote 411” (an online voter information site supported by National) and Registering Voters at Naturalization Ceremonies. LWVG is looking into possible ways for our League to use Facebook and also “Vote 411” when it gets fully up to speed in Connecticut. Look elsewhere in this *Voter* to find details about volunteering to register new Americans to vote.

With such an action-packed convention, more happened than can be described here. Do ask any one of the attendees for more detail or read the full write-up which can be found at: <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention>.

LWVCT Events of Interest

Meetings of interest to our members organized by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut are:

- **Leadership Lunch: Strategies for being “Election Ready”** — September 24, 10:00am to 1:00pm at the Jewish Community Center of New Haven, 360 Amity Rd., Woodbridge
- **Fall Conference: Follow the Money** — October 22 at the Norwalk City Hall

For additional information on these events and to register, please contact the LWVCT office at 203 288-7996 or email league@comcast.net.



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