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GREENWICH VOTER

FEBRUARY 2018

Wanted!

Specialists to Join the LWVG PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM

Are you passionate about a public issue that influences our community? Do you follow media coverage, legislation and community events related to that issue? If you answered "yes," we invite you to join the League of Women Voters of Greenwich *Public Issues Team* as a Specialist.

As a LWVG Specialist, you will have the opportunity to share your passion and knowledge about your issue with membership and the community. As a member of the *Public Issues Team*, you will report to the committee about the issue at quarterly meetings. You will be the point person for the issue regarding media coverage, legislative initiatives, community events, and if needed you can connect with the LWVCT Specialists Team about your area of focus.

Finally, please be sure to attend the LWVG Program Planning meeting in February where membership reviews current positions and discusses issues for potential study, date to be announced soon. See page four for a list of our active and archived positions.

If interested in joining the LWVG *Public Issues Team* please contact Claudia Carthaus at claudiacarthaus@gmail.com.

FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Greenwich League had the usual full schedule of pre-election events prior to Election Day 2017 (see page two), but the election campaign was unusual in many ways.

There was an unprecedented number of new endorsements for the Republican contenders for the Board of Estimate and Taxation, as three of the seated board members were not re-endorsed by their Town Committee. One candidate, Leslie Tarkington, successfully petitioned her way onto the ballot, creating a primary on the Republican side and successfully gaining a place on the November ballot.

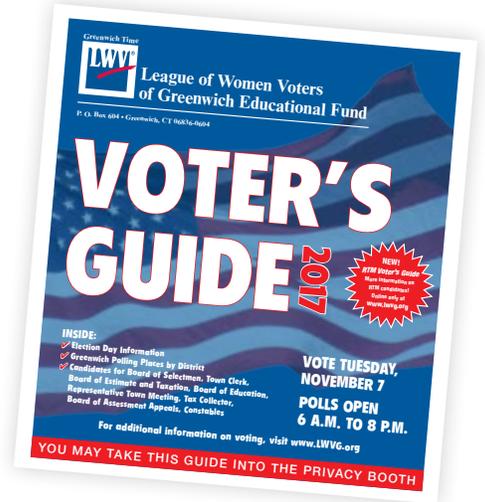
There was a most unusual interest in the RTM races. For the first time in a long time, there were 76 additional candidates overall for the 230 RTM slots, creating competitive elections in the majority of districts. District 5, Riverside, had 31 candidates for 19 open slots. Although several districts had a shortage of candidates on the printed ballot, ultimately all districts had official write-in candidates, and all districts provided a choice.

The campaigns were lively, with candidates engaged and issues discussed. On Election Day, many voting districts had active campaigning while the polls were open. The League's electronic *RTM Voter's Guide* was reproduced and offered to voters in some districts. An unofficial survey showed that many more voters than usual brought the various *Guides* to the polls with them. There were many complimentary comments to poll workers and League members about the *Voter's Guide*, especially the electronic, enhanced *RTM Voter's Guide*.

The election results were also quite unusual: for the first time ever, the majority of votes cast for the BET were Democratic, giving the chairmanship to the Democrats, along with the second vote to break any future tie. The Tax Collector's office also went Democratic. Many of the long-time delegates to the various RTM districts were not re-elected.

The League looks forward to working with all newly-elected officials to make the next term a productive one.

Jara Burnett
Claudia Carthaus
Liz van Caloen



League of Women Voters of Greenwich 2017-2018 Board of Officers and Directors

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Deirdre Kamlani	203-862-4055

VOTER SERVICES' BUSY ELECTION SEASON

The Greenwich League did its usual thorough voter service preceding the 2017 election. We participated in the **National Voter Registration Day** in September by holding registrations at the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club for a period of four hours each. Although we registered only two voters, the mood was festive at the Boys and Girls Club.



We have cooperated in several forums and debates with traditional and new partners. A **pre-primary forum for the Republican candidates for the Board of Estimate and Taxation** was held on September 5 at the Cone Room at Town Hall. Kay Maxwell

moderated the event using the cumulative time format. We had the participation of the six party-endorsed candidates and Leslie Tarkington, who was not endorsed by the Republican Town Committee and petitioned her way onto the ballot.

On October 10, the League co-sponsored the **Board of Education candidate debate/forum** with the PTA Council at the MISA Auditorium at the High School. As in previous years, the PTA Council solicited questions for the candidates from the various PTAs. Moderator Jara Burnett consolidated, prioritized, and asked the questions.



As a new venture for us, the League **co-sponsored another BOE debate/forum** on October 11 at the Hamilton Avenue school with the Byram, Chickahominy and other local neighborhood associations. It was the first candidate forum held in the western part of town, and it

was very well attended. The League was pleased to be able to work with the new partners, and we look forward to future co-sponsorships.

The **Board of Selectmen debate/forum** was held at the Round Hill Community church with the co-sponsorship of the Round Hill Association. Our original date and location had been scheduled for October 24, but one of the candidates was unable to participate



(continued on next page)

Voter Services, continued

on that date. The League was grateful to the Round Hill Association for their venue and co-sponsorship. In a new format, both candidates for Selectman were debating at the same time as the candidates for First Selectman; we will re-evaluate this format in two years.

The **Tax Collector forum** was held on October 24 in the Cone Room at Town Hall. The candidates had a lively discussion of issues, and it was a very well-attended event.

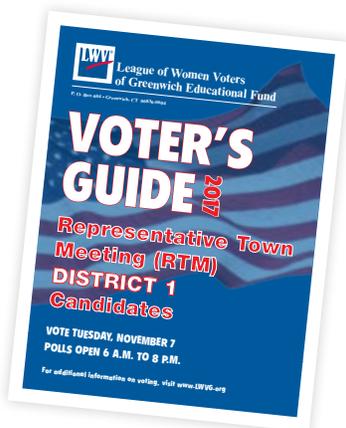
Finally, in a new venture, the League decided to host a **Meet and Greet for RTM candidates** on October 29 in the Central Middle School gym. Most of the candidates came out despite torrential rain.

As in previous years, the League compiled a **Voter's Guide** published as an insert in the *Greenwich Time* on October 26. The *Guide* was also published on the League and *Greenwich Time* websites. Many more *Guides* were seen at the polls this year, and several voters expressed appreciation for the *Guide*.

The League is particularly proud of the **Enhanced, Electronic Voter's Guide for RTM Candidates (RTM Guide)**, a new venture this year. A small committee of League members solicited and ultimately received input from over 235 RTM candidates, 76 of which were new. The *RTM Guide* provided voters with names, addresses, biographical information and an answer to two questions, as well as a photo of each candidate. The *RTM Guide* went live on October 26. There were some minor glitches during the data collection process, but ultimately, the *RTM Guide* fulfilled the anticipated role and provided valuable information to the voters. We plan to continue this initiative during the next election cycle.

Several candidate groups printed copies of their *RTM Guides* and made them available to voters outside of the polling place. A group of candidates were greeting voters outside of the 75' non-campaign zone in many precincts. Many of the new candidates were at the polls most of the day. The candidates were organized, committed and available to voters. It was a lively election with deep impact on the electoral results.

As always, Joanne Stavrou and Hillary McGuire placed numerous **Just Vote! signs** in prominent locations around town.



A HARVARD CASE DISCUSSION

On Monday, November 13, the League of Women Voters of Greenwich, together with the Greenwich High School Social Studies Department and the Harvard Club of Fairfield County, welcomed award-winning Harvard Business School Professor, David Moss, for a discussion of a key Constitutional question: **How much power—and what type of power—should the federal government have over states?** Participating in equal numbers, both high school students and adults had read the first case in Professor Moss's recent book, *Democracy: A Case Study* and came prepared to engage in a lively and thought-provoking discussion. The evening highlighted the importance of informed and constructive debate in our democracy and the key role it played in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Based on the success of the standing-room only event, the Greenwich League plans to create a series of community programs around the cases in Professor Moss's book, while simultaneously working to scale the program with League chapters around the U.S.



Left to right: Lucy Arecco, Greenwich High School Social Studies Department; Carol Reimers, LWVCT President; Professor David Moss; Dierdre Kamalani, LWVG Director-at-Large; and Representative Fred Camillo

COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATION

Dr. Jill Gildea

On October 11 at the Water Club, as part of the League's popular Cocktails and Conversation series, LWVG members and guests had the opportunity to meet Dr. Jill Gildea, the new Superintendent of Schools of Greenwich. The event was well attended.



Dr. Jill Gildea

In her talk, Dr. Gildea said that education is now in a "transformative time," and in that context she shared her thoughts on topics pertaining to the future

of education in Greenwich. One of these was long-range master facility planning. Dr. Gildea said she is looking forward to being part of the important conversation about what physical plant will best fit the school system for the next 50 years.

Another topic was that of personalized learning, which Dr. Gildea noted was one of the reasons she came to Greenwich, whose schools' compelling strategic plan has already generated momentum in that area. She views personalized learning—something like the one-room-school approach of old in concept, but combined today with the latest technologies—as the only way to eradicate the achievement gap.

Questions at the end of the talk included "How can we know what education for the future should be?" Dr. Gildea responded that while we can never know exactly what the future will require of our learners, an important part of education should be inculcating skills such as leadership, citizenship, responsibility and self-advocacy. She also pointed out the need to train students to be lifelong learners.

Fran Pastore

Despite pre-holiday busy-ness, a good crowd of League members and

guests gathered on November 29 at Innis Arden Golf Club for Cocktails and Conversation with Fran Pastore, the dynamic CEO of the Stamford-based non-profit, Women's Business Development Council.

In her talk, Ms. Pastore explained that organized support for female entrepreneurship is relatively new. As recently as the 1980s, women could not access capital without a male co-signer "over the age of sixteen." Gradually, thanks to lobbying by various women's groups, the situation improved, and these and similar restrictions were outlawed. In 1988, the US census was mandated to collect information about women's business, and organizations such as the National Women's Business Council and the Office of Women's Business emerged.



Fran Pastore

These advances notwithstanding, by 1995, Connecticut was the only state that did not have an organization for supporting women's business.

Fran Pastore, seeing the need, went about starting one. Today, 20 years later, the organization is still going strong. Through the WBDC, women entrepreneurs across Connecticut can now learn effective use of business accounting tools, test the viability of business plans, and get feedback on marketing strategies, and network. Since its founding, the WBDC has assisted in the creation of close to 2,000 businesses, serving more than 18,000 clients. Women's entrepreneurship in general, is also going strong; the National WBDC reports that were U.S. women-owned companies their own country, it would rank as the fifth largest GDP in the world. Thanks to Fran Pastore for enlightening us about the WBDC and its role in this important progress.

CURRENT AND ARCHIVED POSITIONS OF THE LWVG

Positions currently advocated by the LWVG are as follows. They were chosen after formal study and adopted by membership vote.

ACTIVE LWVG POSITIONS:

Town Government:

- RTM Study Recommendations

Housing:

- Affordable Housing
- Mixed Use Neighborhoods
- Historical Preservation
- Commercial Development Planning & Zoning Commission
- Regional Approaches

Water Long Island Sound:

- The Watershed or Drainage Basin
- Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) of the Long Island Sound Study
- Implement Combination of Fiscal Measures on Developers

ARCHIVED POSITIONS/LOCAL POSITIONS:

Town Government:

- Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET)
- Executive Branch Town Government
- Town Budget Process

Natural Resources:

- Greenwich Land-Use Planning
- Drinking Water Supply & Protection
- Open Space Preservation
- Property Acquisitions by the Town of Greenwich
- Transportation Management
- Waste Management

Social Policy:

- Greenwich Public Health Care Services
- In Conformity with the National League's healthcare position that "every U.S. Resident should have access to the basic level of healthcare"

For more information, go to lwvg.org

HOLIDAY PARTY AT THE RIVER HOUSE



The LWVG Annual Holiday Party was held December 6th at the River House Adult Day Center in Cos Cob. The facility, which overlooks an illuminated waterfall, was beautifully decorated for the occasion.

The Board provided white poinsettias for the tables and prosecco for a holiday toast. Members brought their favorite treats to share. Music by the holiday duo, Jay Carthaus and Brian Landi, added the perfect note. The festive atmosphere with munching and mingling was enjoyed by over 80 members and guests.

We were joined by State elected officials including Scott Frantz, Fred Camillo, Livvy Floren and Mike Bocchino. Peter Teisei, our First Selectman and Howard Richman, newly-elected Town Tax Collector also attended. In contrast to past years, we did not ask officials to give speeches; instead we encouraged members to chat with them informally. Steering Committee member Liz van Caloen spoke briefly, thanking those who made the party such a success, most notably, our Events Coordinator Pamela Toper.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREENWICH
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**GREENWICH
VOTER**

COMING EVENTS!

Looking forward to the spring, we are happy to announce that the speaker for our May 16 Annual Dinner will be **Kevin R. Convey**. Former editor in chief of the *(New York) Daily News*, the *Boston Herald* and Community Newspaper Company, Mr. Convey is now Chairman of the Journalism Department at Quinnipiac University. His professional interests include mobile journalism, new journalism technology, entrepreneurial journalism, and leadership, management and organization in the digital newsroom. The title of his talk will be announced later. Stay tuned.



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.

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 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!