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GREENWICH VOTER

FALL 2018

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fall is on its way, school is back in session and political campaigns are in full flight.

League activities never took a break during this summer. We had a respectable presence at the Old Greenwich Memorial Day Parade (see photo on back cover). Thank you all who disregarded the rainy forecast and marched through the village to Binney Park. Then, it was off to the LWVCT Annual Convention, followed by the LWVUS Convention in Chicago. Several members also attended the meetings of the RTM Governance Committee to observe its activities.

A well-attended Legislative picnic at the home of Nancy and Andy Duus brought a lively discussion of legislative activity during the past session. Please see the report on the picnic on page three.

To alert voters to the various deadlines for the August 14 primary, we sent a letter to the editor alerting those who wish to change their party affiliation of the May 14 deadline; the last day to have the change be effective for this year's primary. We also published information on absentee ballots in the newspapers, on the League website and in a Constant Contact to our members. "Exercise Your Right to Vote" yard signs were posted to encourage voter participation, and two Constant Contacts were sent urging eligible members to vote.

For the November 6 election, you'll find information about obtaining an Absentee Ballot as well as new voter registration deadlines on page four.

We will be participating in National Voter Registration Day on September 25.

Plans are under way for various voter service activities – debates on October 10 and October 21 and a *Voter's Guide* to be inserted into the *Greenwich Time* on November 1.

The Program Team has planned two high profile programs this fall (see below and page two for details). I hope to see many of you in attendance.

The campaign season will be hectic and possibly quite partisan. Please read the article in this *Voter* on the League nonpartisanship! We want everyone to take part in the election activities, but we need to be mindful of maintaining our nonpartisanship stance.

Our membership chairs, Rita Baker and Barbara O'Shea, are busy collecting the 2018-19 dues. Won't you help them out and pay yours promptly, if you haven't yet done so?

Jara Burnett

**The League of Women Voters of Greenwich
together with the Greenwich Library invites you to...**

FIXING CONNECTICUT'S FINANCES:

A Discussion with the Co-Chairs of Connecticut's Commission on Fiscal Stability

Be an informed voter in 2018! Join us to learn more about Connecticut's fiscal challenges and hear the solutions put forward by a non-partisan Commission of experts.

Commission Co-Chairs, in order of appearance:

Jim Smith, Chairman of Webster Financial Corporation and Webster Bank
Bob Patricelli, Founder and Former CEO of Value Health, Evolution Benefits and Women's Health USA

Moderator:

Nancy Cooper, Director of Guardian Life Insurance and Former CFO of CA Technologies

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Greenwich Library, Cole Auditorium

Refreshments at 6:30pm • Program from 7:00-8:30pm

RSVP: League.RSVP@gmail.com by September 25

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of Greenwich
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UPCOMING EVENTS

The Programming Committee has been hard at work to deliver a full and fascinating menu of events this fall!

On **Tuesday, October 2**, at Greenwich Library's Cole Auditorium, the LWVG will present "*Fixing Connecticut's Finances: A Discussion with the Co-Chairs of Connecticut's Commission on Fiscal Stability.*" This program is designed to inform voters about Connecticut's fiscal challenges and solutions put forward by a non-partisan Commission of experts. The Commission Co-Chairs are Jim Smith, Chairman of Webster Financial Corporation and Webster Bank, and Bob Patricelli, Founder and Former CEO of Value Health, Evolution Benefits and Women's Health USA. The moderator for the evening will be Nancy Cooper, Director of Guardian Life Insurance and Former CFO of CA Technologies. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 pm, and the program will run from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. If you would like to attend, and we hope you do, please RSVP to League.RSVP@gmail.com by September 25, 2018.

On **Tuesday, November 13**, the LWVG will present the next in our ongoing series of Harvard Case Studies at Greenwich High School, *LWVG Harvard Case Study #2: Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Black Voting rights (1965)*. This highly anticipated follow-up to our first LWVG Harvard Case Study will present students with a pivotal moment in U.S. history and raise questions facing decision makers at the time, asking them to weigh choices and consequences, wrestle with momentous decisions, and come to their own conclusions. Greenwich High School teachers, trained at Harvard by Professor Moss and team, will present the course and the historical case studies on which it is based to students and community members. The aim is to revitalize conversations about governance and democracy and show how the United States has often thrived on political conflict. The LWVG Harvard Case Study series is part of LWVG's ongoing commitment to Community programming events. This program hopes to promote participation and optimism in democracy.

And on a date in **early October** soon to be confirmed, the LWVG will co-host a **Sandy Hook Promise training** at Greenwich High School. The training session, entitled "*Say Something*," will be offered to all Greenwich High School students and faculty. The aim is to create a school environment that fosters community, communication, and early intervention as a means of preventing school violence. A follow-up discussion session for parents and interested adults is also being planned for a date in November.

The Programming Committee is a fun and talented team, and more members can only make it better. If you would like to add your energy and ideas, please email lwvgct@gmail.com. Thank you!



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.

VOTER SERVICES – LEGISLATIVE PICNIC & UPCOMING DEBATES



At the July 11 Legislative Picnic



Legislative Picnic

On July 11, the League held its Annual Summer Picnic at the Riverside home of Andy Duus and Nancy Cooper. Referring to the recent legislative session as “bizarre... very political... unique... and tumultuous at times,” members of the local Connecticut state delegation summarized achievements as well as issues on the horizon for Connecticut voters.

State Senator Scott Franz (36th District) and State Representatives Livvy Floren (149th District), Mike Bocchino (150th District) and Fred Camillo (151st District) addressed the 100-person audience.

They shared their concerns about the Connecticut state budget, and the need for leadership to take steps to control spending and increase revenues, to restore confidence in the state and to find new ways to retain and attract businesses to the state. They fielded questions about tolls, taxes and bonding from the audience. They are working with First Selectman, Peter Tesei, to host an economic forum in Greenwich this October. This will bring experts in finance and investing together with Connecticut state legislators to discuss issues and possible solutions to the state’s public sector pension fund financing.

September 25 – National Voter Registration Day

Voter Services Committee along with other volunteers plan to set up voter

registration tables at Greenwich High School, The Boys and Girls Club, Neighbor to Neighbor, YMCA, YWCA and a possible location in Byram.

DEBATES

Please plan to attend!

Wednesday, October 10

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich plans to host two consecutive debates in one evening for candidates for the **State Legislature** from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at our **Town Hall Meeting Room, 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich.**

The first debate is scheduled to last 45 minutes and will feature candidates for the **36th Senate seat**, Democrat Alexandra Bergstein and Republican State Senator Scott Frantz.

The second debate will be for candidates in the **150th House District**, Democrat Stephen Meskers and

Republican Representative Michael Bocchino and for candidates in the **151st House District**, Democrat Laura Kostin and Republican Representative Fred Camillo. This debate is scheduled to last 75 minutes.

The debates will use the Cumulative Time Format. Our Moderator is Kay Maxwell from Stamford. The public will be invited to submit written questions and a bipartisan Screening Committee of League members will screen the questions for relevance and duplication.

Sunday, October 21

Candidates for **Representative to the US Congress from Connecticut’s 4th District**, incumbent Jim Himes, Democrat, and Harry Arora, Republican, will debate from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the **Clune Performing Arts Center, 395 Danbury Road, Wilton.**

The debate is being organized by the Wilton League of Women Voters and co-sponsored with other local Leagues. Kay Maxwell will serve as moderator and will coordinate the debate format in accordance with state LWV guidelines.

The *Voter’s Guide* will be published digitally on the League website around October 15, and a paper copy will be available on Thursday, November 1 in the *Greenwich Time*.



Voter registration at Brunswick and Greenwich High School

UNDERSTANDING THE LEAGUE AND THE NONPARTISANSHIP POLICY

As many are aware, the League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates for political office, elective or appointive. Yet, we encourage our members to be politically active in the political arena.

As our Nonpartisanship Policy clearly states, leaders in “sensitive” positions may not engage in any political activity during their term of office. In Greenwich, this means that a President, Advocacy Vice-President, Voters Service Vice President and the Youth Coordinator do not speak publicly on behalf of a candidate, do not sign or circulate petitions on behalf of a candidate, attend no fundraisers and do not work on a candidate’s campaign. All other board members and members can be active in partisan political activities.

However, some degree of discretion is required of all leaders and members. When speaking for a candidate, please make it clear that you are speaking as an individual and not in any League capacity. Keep your League work and position and your political work separate.

In today’s political climate where the divide between the party platforms is very deep, suspicions arise all too frequently. A close attention to the “optics” of a situation will go a long way to prevent misunderstandings and will keep our organization’s nonpartisanship stance clear and unassailable.

Thank you all for your understanding.

Jara Burnett
President

CHECKING YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS, OBTAINING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT, AND REGISTERING TO VOTE

To check your status and voting place go to www.greenwichct.gov/1191/Find-My-Polling-Place

Absentee Ballot: If you will be away on Election Day, you may still vote by obtaining an Absentee Ballot. To obtain an Absentee Ballot, you must request an application for the ballot from the Town Clerk by calling 203-622-7897 or by going to www.greenwichct.gov/1187/Get-an-Absentee-Ballot or by visiting the office at 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich. The application for an Absentee Ballot must be completed and mailed back to the Town Clerk.

An Absentee Ballot will be mailed to you. Complete the ballot, carefully following the instructions that are included, and return it by mail or in person. You may deliver it in person before 4:00 pm, November 5.

If you choose to mail it in, be sure to mail it early enough that it arrives at the Town Clerk’s office by 8:00 pm on Election Day, November 6. The mailing address is Town Clerk, Town Hall, 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich, CT 06830.

If you are able to visit the Town Clerk office on or after October 5, you may fill out the application, receive your ballot and vote at the same time. If you have any questions, please call the Town Clerk’s office at 203-622-7897.

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION DEADLINE DATES

- If you are not yet registered to vote, you may register by mail, in person, or online at voterregistration.ct.gov/OLVR/welcome.do
- Registration applications from new voters registering by mail must be post-marked by October 30 to be accepted for the November 6, 2018 election. Online deadline is 11:59 pm on this date.
- October 30 – Hand-delivered mail-in registration applications must be received by this date.
- October 30 – In person cut-off in ALL towns. Applicants must appear in person.
- November 5 – Limited Session – those whose rights as to age, citizenship or residence mature after October 30 may apply in the office on a daily basis until 5:00 pm on Monday, November 5.

November 6 – Election Day

Don’t forget to

EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!!!

ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER

On Wednesday, May 16, the League of Women Voters of Greenwich held its Annual Meeting and Dinner at the Riverside Yacht Club. The evening started with the Annual Meeting, chaired by Jara Burnett, President. Bylaw changes were submitted and approved. Committee Chairs reported on their activities. The 2018-19 League Board was approved (see photo below). The meeting was adjourned, and members attended a cocktail reception.



Keynote Speaker, Kevin Convey

Dinner followed with keynote speech “The Crisis in the Media and the Future of the Fourth Estate” by Kevin R. Convey of Quinnipiac University’s Department of Journalism. Mr. Convey discussed some of the issues surrounding the media today, including their credibility, the low esteem in which they are held by many members of the public, and their financial challenges. He decried the general drift of journalism to analysis at the expense of “just the news.” He urged journalists to provide audiences and readers with more coverage of the state of the union and less of their own opinions. He also urged journalists to “get out of their bubbles” and meet and talk with all sorts of people, including those with views different from their own. At the same time, he urged citizens, on their part, to read widely with open minds, and to support news sources with subscription dollars.

Following his prepared remarks, Mr. Convey engaged with attendees in lively Q&A. We thank Mr. Convey for sharing his timely observations with us.



2018-2019 LWVG Board – Left to right: Louisa Greene, Aya DeSimone, Nancy Duffy, Liz van Caloen, Marla Laney, Pamela Toper, Deirdre Kamlani, Lynn Garelick, Joanne Stavrou, Jara Burnett, Rita Baker, Hillary McGuire, Janet McGuigan, Caroline Adkins, Anne-Marie Hesser, Barbara O’Shea, Michele Kinner. Not pictured: Elise Hingson

CO-ED STUDENT MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

In an effort to better prepare our youth for the responsibilities of citizenship, the League of Women Voters of Greenwich recently launched a Co-Ed Student Membership program for students 16-18 years of age. The membership fee is \$25 annually.

The long term plan for the Co-Ed Student Membership program includes identifying qualified students to join a steering committee. The steering committee would then generate ideas for forums, advocacy, voter registration, and debates under the guidance of the LWVG. If you know of any students who would have an interest in being a part of the inaugural steering committee, please encourage them to join via lwvg.org and to contact me directly at annemariehesser@gmail.com

CT'S TRANSPORTATION CRISIS: TAXES, TOLLS & TRAFFIC

Riverside Yacht Club was the gorgeous setting for the March 28 Cocktails and Conversation with commuter advocate Jim Cameron. Over 40 LWVG members and guests listened in rapt attention as Mr. Cameron addressed our state's transportation crisis. His stated goal of the night was to bust myths and provide some heat and light – to rally his audience to action, armed with educated solutions to the challenges he raised. The presentation was incredibly informed and informative and included an engaging question and answer session that drew in members of the Greenwich RTM, BET and state legislature who were in attendance.

After providing a brief background on the history and current state of affairs of Connecticut's public transportation system and highways, Mr. Cameron specifically spoke to the state's gas tax, proposed highway tolls and

commuter rail scheduling and ticket pricing. He noted that the gas tax has not been increased to reflect inflation since it was introduced in 1983. Mr. Cameron also pointed out that tolls are not taxes, but user fees, and while they may be regressive, Connecticut drivers already pay a sort of toll in time spent in traffic and vehicle repair costs caused by poor road maintenance. The idea has been floated to only impose tolls on out-of-state drivers, but this is unconstitutional. He said it is a myth that Connecticut could lose federal transportation funding if tolls were to be imposed; tolls are allowed if they are designed to reduce traffic congestion, and indeed are a major component of traffic management in other states.

Proposed stoppages of weekend commuter rail service to some towns may lower real estate prices and prompt some local businesses to close. Connecticut only subsidizes

rail costs at the rate of 30%, whereas in neighboring states rails service is subsidized at rates as high as 75% in the interest of motivating drivers to take public transportation.

Mr. Cameron, a journalist featured in a number of newspapers including the *Greenwich Time*, has authored the weekly column and blog "Getting There" since 2003. From 1993 to 2013, he served on the Connecticut Metro-North Rail Commuter Council, holding the position of vice chair or chair for fifteen of those years. Currently he serves on the Darien RTM, runs his town government's TV station, serves on the Area Nine Cable Television Council and is a member of the Darien LWV. The LWVG thanks him for the expertise he lent to this exciting evening, and hopes he will join in again at future events that address the state's continuing infrastructure challenges.

COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATION WITH DIANE FOX



On April 12 at The Milbrook Club, a standing-room-only Cocktails and Conversation crowd heard former Greenwich Town Planner and LWVG member, Diane Fox, speak about the possible impact of two projects now under study – a widening of I-95 and a high-speed train.

While both are still in early stages, Ms. Fox expressed concern that any such plans fully take into account the possible impact on our neighborhoods, particularly those in the south of town. It is likely these projects, should they go forward, will become big issues, so stay tuned.

Thanks to Ms. Fox for giving us some background.

WHITHER GREENWICH? by Janet MacKenzie

Did you buy your latest book at your local bookstore or online?

Greenwich Magazine's lead story in the April edition, "Our Changing Downtown," noted thirty vacancies in downtown Greenwich. The League of Women Voters forum, held on April 24 at the Cole Auditorium, "Reimagining our Economic Future," addressed problems facing businesses in our town and throughout the country. Online shopping, the waning of high paying jobs and the flight of residents from Connecticut to tax-friendlier states challenge local business. Deirdre Kamlani, Board Member of the League of Women Voters, introduced Melissa Kaplan Macy of the Regional Planning Association, Courtney Hendrickson of Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Katie Deluca, our Town Planner, and Patrick McMahon of Connecticut Main Street Center. Ms. Kamlani noted that although the economic forecasts for Connecticut seem dire, many people see a silver lining in the predictions.

All speakers emphasized the importance of improved infrastructure, better roads, transportation and parking to attract businesses to Greenwich. Courtney Hendrickson stressed the need to have business regulatory rules streamlined.

Katie Deluca noted that businesses are attracted to great places and Greenwich has many assets which make it a "great place." These include its reputation for financial prudence, its balance between natural areas and developed environments, and its public/private partnerships. Greenwich has the lowest tax base in the entire state of Connecticut and Greenwich was the first town to apply for an "age-friendly" designation. Planning for the future requires a systematic approach and strategies for improvements. The challenge is to maintain the town's character while supporting businesses, preserving open spaces, and developing diversity of housing.

Patrick McMahon spoke of restoring civic value and "place-making" as well as "complete streets," i.e., all residents' needs could be met in the downtown area.

Walkability is important; stores should be close to transportation.

He said: "Festivals such as wine tastings and art shows bring people downtown." Using the phrase, "lighter, quicker, cheaper," Mr. McMahon added that inexpensive enticements such as yoga classes and chess tables attract people to town. He invoked the mantra: Great art makes great places. Great places attract great talent. Great talent creates great jobs.

In the Q and A session following the presentation, some questions included:

How do we encourage societal change, getting people to use public transportation?

Melissa Kaplan Macy said public transport must be cost-effective, safe and efficient.

Patrick McMahon urged towns to be bike-friendly, noting that some towns instituted shared bike programs.

Other questions included:

What is the town doing to retain the financial businesses which are the biggest drivers of growth in town?

Since high rents discourage new businesses from coming to the Avenue, are there ongoing conversations with building owners about lowering rents?

Are more residents working in New York than in Greenwich?

Suggestions for encouraging business development in town submitted on cards from audience members included:

- Build a town trolley which supplants the bus system to transport residents from parking lots to stores and restaurants.
- Improve the town's infrastructure: roads, schools and the senior center.

- Consider moving the Farmers' Market from Exit 3 location to Greenwich Avenue.
- Publicize Economic Advisory Council Meetings.
- Revitalize the train station to include apartments, car parks, and improved access to the waterfront.
- Appoint a staff member to oversee Economic Development, beginning with the retention of current businesses. Offer a forum for commercial realtors on Greenwich Avenue.
- Construct a bike path connecting the East and West waterfronts.
- Promote an East /West multi-use trail recommended in Greenwich Bicycle Master Plan.
- Attracting young people who will become Greenwich future citizens depends on effective tools of communication.
- Create more opportunity for fun on the Avenue. Businesses should support activities which attract multi-generational residents to the downtown area.
- Consider how to create an affordable housing plan which is right for Greenwich.

Katie Deluca answered the last question: "In the interplay between planning and development, which is the cart and which is the horse?" by noting that the Plan of Conservation and Development should be the overriding document which has a strong tie to capital development.

If you love the town of Greenwich, if you want to help it thrive, if you have ideas about how to augment the commercial viability of current businesses, speak up at the next town meeting, which will feature an open microphone for residents to express their views. Of course, shopping locally is a prime way to support businesses currently in town, encouraging them to stay here.



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