



THE CHESHIRE-WALLINGFORD VOTER

Volume V – Issue 4

January 2009

League of Women Voters of Cheshire-Wallingford

P.O. Box 394

Cheshire, CT 06410

Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education.

OFFICERS

KATHY NANKIN, PRESIDENT,
272-8126,
KATHY.E.NANKIN@SNET.NET

ELAINE LAU, SECRETARY-
TREASURER, 272-0819,
ELAINLAU@NTPLX.NET

PAT VITA, MEMBERSHIP DIREC-
TOR, FINANCE
272-3963, PATVITA@COX.NET

ALETA LOOKER, VOTER SERVICE
CO-CHAIR, CHESHIRE,
272-6821, EYE-
SPY@MEGAHITS.COM

PATTI FLYNN-HARRIS, VOTER
SERVICE CO-CHAIR, CHESHIRE,
272-1392, PAFH@AOL.COM

DIANE MATURO, PUBLIC RELA-
TIONS DIRECTOR / HISTORIAN,
272-9822, DJMATURO@COX.NET

BILL MATURO, VOTER EDITOR,
272-9822, WDM1@COX.NET

CLÉ PALCSO, ACTION CO-CHAIR,
VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE,
WALLINGFORD,
269-9530 CPALCSO@YAHOO.COM

LAURA LYTTON, ACTION CO-
CHAIR

GAIL COLLINS,
NATURAL RESOURCES
271-2841,
MFCOLLINS@SNET.NET

LILLIAN BLAKE, HOSPITALITY
CO-CHAIR, FINANCE
269-9163

ANN FRITZ, HOSPITALITY CO-
CHAIR, VOTER SERVICE COM-
MITTEE-WALLINGFORD
269-5209

REBECCA SIMPSON,
NOMINATING CHAIR,
272-4107, RSIMP-
SON49@COX.NET

President's Message

I hope everyone has enjoyed a happy and healthy holiday season, but now it's time to get back into full swing. Our January Lasagna dinner meeting will be held at Cheshire Senior Center @ 6:00 p.m. In September we had a great meeting about the bottle bill and recycling. Continuing along that theme, we have invited the Cheshire Chamber to attend the January meeting since our focus will be recycling in the business community. To that end our speaker will be C. J. May, Yale University Recycling Coordinator and President of the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition. We hope to see all of you there.

The State LWV Fall Conference was held December 6th at the Capitol in Hartford. A presentation was made about the National Popular Vote by Carol Mellor, LWV President Hamptons, NY and LWV National Popular Vote Study Task Force, and Hon. Gayle Slossberg, Co-Chair CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee. Please also check out their website: www.NationalPopularVote.com. As I get more information, I will pass it along.

There was also a most interesting report on the post election Audit by Luther Weeks, Director of the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition, Lesley Mara, Deputy Secretary of the State and again Hon. Gayle Slossberg. The new system is working, but it is still a learning process for all involved.

We are already beginning to look ahead to next year and our Nominating and Budget Committees have begun their work. The Board needs YOU, please consider a position when they call.

Lastly, to better plan for the future of this League, the Board has created a survey. Please take a moment to complete and return it either by mail or bring it to the January meeting. It will not take more than five minutes, but your input will provide a major contribution to the continued health, growth and success of this League.

Kathy

General Membership Meeting

On January 28th is the night of our annual Lasagna Dinner membership meeting. This year we are very fortunate to have as our speaker C. J. May, Yale University Recycling Coordinator and President of the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition. We all have the opportunity to recycle on a residential level, but what does the business community do? How can we help to promote more affordable choices for local business in recycling? These are but a few of the questions we hope to be able to answer. So save January 28th on your calendar and join your fellow League members for good discussion and as always a good meal.

TWO CHESHIRE FARMS

The Cheshire Land Trust launched its 40th year with "A Long Winter's Walk" by inviting town residents to the Ives Farm, Cheshire Street.

The Friends of Boulder Knoll Farm did their groundwork for 2009. With their commitment to local organic agriculture, they can benefit from the same community support that has made town open space a reality in Cheshire.

THE RESOURCE RECOVERY QUANDRY

By year's end we may know who will own and/or run the trash-to-energy plant used by Wallingford, North Haven, Meriden, Hamden and Cheshire. Will it be the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority or Covanta, a New Jersey business? All the towns have voted in favor of Covanta, which has been running the plant for some time. However, the CRRA has the right to purchase the plant, and evidently wishes to do so. Municipal, commercial and residential waste management are all part of resource recovery, the topic for our League's meeting on January 28.

DID YOU KNOW?

Connecticut participated in the first two cap-and-trade CO2 emissions auctions in the country in 2008. At the second auction, on December 17, 2008, more than 3100 carbon dioxide emission allowances were sold at a clearing price of \$3.38 per allowance. The proceeds from this auction will be distributed among the ten participating states according to the number of emissions sold by each state. The money is to be used for energy efficiency and clean energy technologies.

SAVE THE DATE

Wine Tasting
SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2009
Home of Elaine & Dick Lau

Survey:

In an effort to address an issue that is affecting our League, the following survey was designed to solicit your thoughts and ideas and suggestions about direction of the League. Please take a few moments to complete the survey. Remember, we are only as strong as our membership.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

WHERE HAS ALL THE ENTHUSIASM GONE?

(Cheshire-Wallingford LWV Survey)

Increasingly, it has been difficult to attract our local members to attend general meetings, to pick a study topic of local concern and to identify members willing to work on that effort, and to engage members to serve in leadership positions on the Board.

In order to plan better for the future, the Board is asking you to take a few minutes to give us your thoughts through the following survey. Please return your survey to Cheshire Wallingford LWV, PO Box 394, Cheshire, CT 06410. **Thank you** for participation.

1. I am interested in general meetings (3-4 times a year) on the following topics: *Pick 2*

- Education
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Energy Sustainability
- Civil Liberties
- Recycling
- Natural Resources
- Land Use/Water Use
- Other (please list)

2. I would attend general meetings if: *Pick all that apply*

- they are held in the evening (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekend). Sat Sun
- I had a reliable ride to the meeting.

3. Are you more interested in working on a study for:

- Local
- State
- National

4. I would attend local study meetings if: *Pick all that apply*

- they are held in the evening (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekend). Sat Sun
- I had a reliable ride to the meeting.

5. I am interested in serving on the Board. Yes No

6. I would attend Board meetings if: *Pick all that apply*

- they are held in the evening (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekday).
- they are held during the day (weekend). Sat Sun
- I had a reliable ride to the meeting.

7. Please give us your comments/ideas/suggestions.

In a few sentences or in list form below, will you please tell us what it is for you personally that keeps you from more active participation with the League? Please be honest and feel free to submit your survey anonymously if you prefer.

THE 40th ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The SIR Committee continues to shape this year's Symposium on the four BRIC countries: "Brazil, Russia, India, China - GIANTS ON THE MOVE. Area university students from these countries are being invited to participate. The date is Thursday, April 23, 2009.

TO THE EDITOR

There will be many memorable images from election 2008, but perhaps none is more heartening than that of Americans voting in amazing numbers at the polls. It is an affirmation our democracy is alive and well. Voters deserve to be congratulated for their deep commitment to voting and for their patience and perseverance. They showed real dedication by submitting their absentee ballots on time, standing in long lines when necessary, and making sure their voices were heard.

In our state, thousands of concerned citizens worked late into the night at our polls, drove neighbors to vote, and delivered ballots to hospitalized voters—all this to ensure that our state's Election Day would run smoothly and Connecticut voters would have a voice in selecting our next president and our state lawmakers.

Democracy got a big boost this election with such enthusiastic participation from voters and campaign workers of all ages. But this spirited engagement shouldn't end at Election Day. The challenges we face together in our towns and in our nation will require our continued involvement. Members of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut work year-round to safeguard democracy at all levels of government. We were immensely gratified to see so many people engaged in the political process. As the League's work continues, we invite others in Connecticut to maintain their commitment to civic improvement by joining the League. Together we can keep our state strong, healthy, and vibrant.

Sincerely,

Pat Donovan, Vice-President, Voter Service
League of Women Voters of Connecticut

January 2, 2009

Edgar Hurlle
Transportation Planning Director
State of Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

League of Women Voters of Connecticut Comments on the Notice of Scoping for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Improvements

Members of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, a nonpartisan political state-wide organization of 2,400 men and women, have re-adopted Transportation as one of its 2009 legislative priorities. We continue to believe that the principal goal of the state's transportation policy must be the reduction of all vehicular traffic on our roads.

To make mass transit more attractive to current and potential users, service and passenger capacity must be improved on existing railroad lines. The Start Up Service between New Haven and Springfield, MA proposed in the June 2005 [Final Report of the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Study](#) is a

step in the right direction. While the League will not comment of the scoping details, we strongly support the inclusion of the following:

Service will supplement existing Amtrak service in the corridor;
Four additional stations will supplement the nine existing passenger stations and the Windsor Locks station will be enhanced to provide a waiting area and transfers between the train and the shuttle to Bradley Airport;
Local bus service will be modified to provide appropriate service to the stations.
All stations would include pedestrian amenities with separated crossings, bicycle storage and racks and any additional parking required to accommodate the projected ridership.

The League believes that these steps are necessary for the coordination between feeder bus service, existing rail service and comfort of passengers. We support the proposed Scoping Plan and look forward to the implementation of the plan.

Sincerely,

Jara N. Burnett, Transportation Specialist

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT
2009 STATEMENT OF INTEREST
ELECTION LAWS AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut wants....

To ensure that every individual, legally entitled to do so, has the opportunity to vote

Reduce barriers to voting by absentee ballot.
Adopt constitutional amendment to permit “no excuse” absentee voting
Reduce burdens on distribution of absentee ballot applications
Allow permanent absentee ballot status

....and that if someone does vote, his/her vote counts

Ensure uniform implementation of procedures by registrars and poll workers through better forms, instructions, training and procedures

Ensure uniform implementation of random audits—see detailed recommendations in Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition August 2008 Report and Feedback.

Expand investigatory and enforcement powers of State Elections Enforcement Commission.

...and that citizens have confidence in the integrity of the election system, the legislative process, and government generally.

Authorize creation of an Independent Audit Board.

Require public hearings on all bills and amendments which create an exception to an existing statute.

Require strike all amendments to be printed and on legislators' desks at least two legislative days prior to final passage.

Seek a mechanism to require all amendments, substitute pages and revisions to regulations comply with existing law.

Mandate adoption of municipal ethics codes. Also, address issue of posting minutes and agendas on municipal websites.

LWVCT will monitor legislation beyond our priorities and may speak in support or opposition on related legislation.

For more information, please contact Christine S. Horrigan at cshorrigan@optonline.net

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT

2009 STATEMENT OF INTEREST TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

Members of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut re-adopted transportation as one of the legislative priorities for the 2008 and 2009 legislative sessions. On behalf of the approximately 2400 state-wide members and supporters of the League, we are pleased to submit our transportation and transportation-funding priorities for the upcoming session.

Transportation alternatives keep our economy viable and our workers working. Additionally, the subsequent reduction in road congestion, the decrease in pollution, and the improved availability for moving freight through the state all have broad implications for keeping Connecticut competitive and modern. **The state's fiscal situation is creating a serious scarcity of resources that will necessitate careful priority setting among programs. The League will advocate for the following measures:**

Increase dedicated funding sources for mass transit, highway congestion relief and highway maintenance.

Complete the feasibility studies of new funding options and explore public/private partnerships to implement various projects.

Increase fines for safety, speeding and other infractions.

Aggressively pursue receiving a higher share of federal transportation funds.

Continued funding for existing bus service, careful consideration of expanding service and incentives for intra-state mass transit users.

Bus ridership is up approximately 15%. Buses provide a relatively low cost and flexible alternative to automobile travel. Provide bus shelters and schedule information to increase ridership.

Coordination of transit schedules with shuttle bus service. Continue improving service and passenger capacity on existing railroad lines.

Continue employers' and employee incentives for the use of public transportation and flexible hours of employment.

Expanded freight traffic on existing rail lines, shipping of cargo via barges and incentives for users.

Adopting a Fix-It-First Policy giving priority to maintenance of highways and bridges over new construction.

Expanding efforts to promote safety on Connecticut's highways.

Develop a highway safety program that includes measures such as increased surveillance and enforcement, including the expanded weigh stations hours.

Better coordinated land use/transportation planning.

The LWVCT welcomes the opportunity to discuss specific suggestions with you on each of these areas.

For more information, please contact Jara Burnett at 203/288-7996

League Sends Letter to President-Elect Barack Obama

The League's letter congratulated the President-Elect and urged him to explore new ways to bring all Americans into policymaking efforts.

December 8, 2008

Dear Mr. President-Elect,

First, the League of Women Voters would like to congratulate you on your election. The League has a deep commitment to promoting the informed and active participation of citizens in their government. This year's election was an impressive example of the kind of widespread involvement of citizens that makes our democracy strong!

It is with that same commitment to true citizen participation that I write to you now as you assemble the members of the administration that will govern for the next four years.

We all recognize the extraordinary number of issues facing your Administration. In subsequent letters to you and the appropriate members of your Cabinet, I will address the League's specific concerns about such major problems as health care, climate change and partisan tensions in our nation's government.

But, the most important message I want to send to you now is that none of the issues can truly be resolved by the officials in your Administration without the full and active participation of multiple voices. Nor can problems be solved if they are discussed behind closed doors. Please encourage each of your Cabinet nominees to commit now to explore new ways to bring all Americans into the policymaking efforts of their departments. We see your health care policy team's current efforts as an excellent start in that direction.

For almost 89 years, the League has been well known for our work in engaging the public in the policymaking work of government at all levels, and in holding those governments accountable. Many organizations are expert at bringing their organizations' points of view to the attention of elected officials. But, the members of our 850 state and local Leagues around the country and the dedicated staff at our national office in Washington, DC, are not concerned just about making our organization's voice heard. We work to make sure that everyday Americans, who are affected by government policies, have a chance to be heard by both elected officials and the federal bureaucracy.

The League of Women Voters looks forward to working with you to help bring transparency to the federal government and opportunities for the public to be heard.

Sincerely,

Mary G. Wilson

President, League of Women Voters of the United States

League of Women Voters of Cheshire-Wallingford

P.O. Box 394
Cheshire, CT 06410

LWVCW@lwwct.org
www.lwwct.org/lwvcw



Upcoming events:

January

- 7:** Legislative session opens
- 21:** Board Meeting, Cheshire
- 28** General Membership Lasagna Dinner Meeting, Cheshire Sr. Center

February

- 25:** Board Meeting

March

- 18.** Women in History Program, Honoring Women Educators
7:00 pm, place to be determined
- 25.** Board meeting, SCOW building, Wallingford, 7:15 pm

-
- For those of you that have not yet paid your dues,
 - PLEASE send check for \$55. to Elaine Lau. We need an accurate count for National PMP (payment) this month.

Many thanks,
Pat Vita, Membership

Happy New Year