

League of Women Voters of Norwalk  
September 2007

**Bulletin**

Fall member kickoff

**Freedom of Information Forum**

**Shine A Light On Open Government:  
The Freedom of Information Act Made Easy**

**Speaker: Tom Hennick**  
**Public Outreach Coordinator of Freedom of Information Commission**

**October 10, Wednesday at 7 pm**  
**City Hall Council Chambers 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

**Open to the Public**

We will be inviting neighborhood groups, Board and Commission members,  
Council, Mayor's office and candidates...

**Program: 7 pm Refreshments; Handout materials**  
**7:30pm Speaker**  
**8:30pm Role-play, Questions from audience**



**Diane Lauricella and Mary Oster recently attended a Fall season kickoff for Local Presidents and Voter Service Chairs hosted by the State League of Women Voters at Wilton Library"**

**BULLETIN**

Working on the Bulletin has been among the many enjoyable things that I have done these past years, but, now, because of family commitments, I will need to focus my attention on being a better mother, sister and relative.

Board members and members contribute articles; some information comes from LWVCT and the LWV web site. Formatting and adding graphics onto a template already in place is the creative and fun part of working on the Bulletin.

Thank you for all your help in making things easy for me. I am ready to pass it on.

*Mohan Tracy*

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORWALK

*Officers*

President	Diane Lauricella	2007-2009
Vice-President	OPEN	2007-2009
Administration/Program Advocacy		
Vice-President	Mary Oster	2007-2009
Voters Service		
Secretary	Carol Davis	2007-2009
Treasurer	Diana Pritkin	2007-2008

*Directors*

Education Co-Chairs		
	Flora Major	2007-2009
	Missy Conrad	2007-2009
Membership	Jan Lalich	2007-2009
Student Observer Corps		
	Stephen Cooper	2007-2009

Positions Open:

Bulletin Chair  
By Laws  
Fund Development  
Hospitality  
Nominating Committee Chair  
Observer Corps  
Public Relations/Marketing  
Publications  
Vice President:  
Administration/Program Advocacy

## President's Message

The fall season is upon us and promises to be an exciting mix of politics and position advocacy. Please read this Bulletin thoroughly in order to note the many activities we have planned for you AND REMEMBER, because we are a volunteer organization, we count on our membership to help out with many of the various day-to-day needs, whether it be helping write a Letter to the Editor to timing candidates at a debate...

This year, our Fall Membership Event, Shine a Light on Open Government: the Freedom of Information Act Made Easy will feature State Freedom of Information Public Outreach Coordinator Tom Hennick on October 10, Wednesday, at 7 pm. Look for a more detailed announcement in this Bulletin.

In addition, Mary Oster, our Voter Service Vice President, has been busy setting up the October 15<sup>th</sup> Municipal Debate Forum, always one of our most publicly popular events. Later in the year, in mid-November, our Education Committee Co-Chairs, Flora Major and Missy Conrad are working on a forum centered around School Start Time, modeled after the success in the Wilton School system.

Lastly, the league's efforts are fueled by dues contributions. The LWV mission is very grant-worthy but we need help of foundation grant writers. Call me if you can help.

Time to renew that membership! This year, the Board has chosen NOT to raise dues, but is asking all members to consider making an additional \$10-20 contributions to LWV Norwalk when you renew your membership. In addition, I have an open challenge: if each member brought in AT LEAST ONE NEW MEMBER by next June, we would DOUBLE our numbers...let's make the effort!!! Special prizes will be given to those who bring in the most new or "recaptured" members!!!

*Diane*

### League Want Ads:

We need a new Bulletin Editor! After many years as our talented scribe, Mohan Tracy has plans for travel so will be publishing her last LWVN bulletin with this issue. We wish Mohan well in her travels and thank her for her patience and clever graphics. A great "thank you" from all of us! Please call Diane L. if you would like to take over this important way of league member outreach...I and Committee Chairs write much of the copy...we need the talents of someone who knows how to make it all make sense and look good....

### Membership Committee:

Jan Lalich and LWVN need your help! It's dues renewal time...please look in your mailboxes in the next two weeks and send back your support and fill out the new Member Questionnaire that will help us make sure we know of your talents and needs. Thank you in advance. Also note our Fall Member Kickoff featuring the Freedom of Information Facts and Fiction Wednesday, October 10 at 7 pm in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Council Chambers. We will need your help in preparing for the event so please call Diane L. or Jan.

### From the Treasurer:

Our League may use unrestricted, tax-deductible contributions made to the LWVUS Ed Fund, on behalf of our Norwalk CT League (must be written on the check...) to satisfy up to 50% of our local league's PMP (Per Member Payment) to LWVUS. This can cost almost \$2,000 a year. This is a relatively new offer made by LWVUS in order to offset local league dues pressures. Please consider this method of helping our league in two ways!

### Environment Committee:

Westport Library will host Dr. Philip Landrigan, a renowned expert on environmental health and pediatrics in mid-October. Call the library for details.

Do You Know What is in Our Master Plan of Conservation and Development? Well, the LWVN has been tracking the process and watch for additional announcements of public hearings in order to finalize the City's Planning document. You can read the entire draft on the City Web site at [www.norwalkct.org](http://www.norwalkct.org)

**Emergency Management Coordinator finally hired!**  
Hot off the press...Michelle DeLuca has been hired to take over the vacant position and the LWV Norwalk has been advocating this need for many years. We welcome Michelle, formerly with the American Red Cross Disaster Services, and will plan to have her speak to our membership in the future. Check out the LWVUS web site on homeland security [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and the federal web site [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

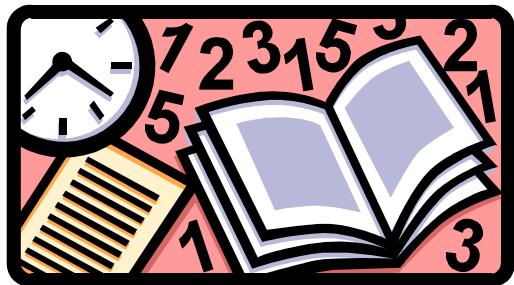
Your LWN has been working throughout the summer to help coordinate a new Emergency Response Public Information flier that will appear in the Hour very soon. Thanks to Diane Lauricella and Diane Witkowsky for their wise counsel.

#### **Brown Bag Lunch Forums to Return:**

Look for announcements in our next Bulletin in November for monthly lunch forums with speakers. This proved to be a great way for members to keep up with Norwalk issues of the day...call Diane L. for ideas or speakers to invite.

#### **Macy's Shop for A Cause**

will contribute matching funds to our LWVCT Ed Fund for each \$5.00 coupon purchased. Shopping Day is October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Macy's is located at the Stamford, Danbury and Trumbull Malls. A member of the State Board found out about this offer, where Macy's has chosen to celebrate a national day of support for local nonprofit organizations. By making a donation of \$5.00, shopper can save 10-20% and enter for a chance to win a \$500.00 gift card. Call or email Diane L.



## **A VISION FOR A STUDENT OBSERVER CORPS**

The Norwalk League hopes to sponsor a "Student Observer Corps" in the coming months. The operative word here is *sponsor*, as the entire effort would be administered by the schools. However, the League would print up suggestions on how to understand what happens at public meetings. For example, we will encourage observers to obtain a meeting agenda before a meeting begins. We will also encourage observers to check out the Code of the City of Norwalk on the Internet. Besides presenting all municipal laws, the Code reveals how Norwalk's government is organized. (We should glance at it too!)

We hope that a Student Observer Corps will help students become more active citizens. Students would undoubtedly indicate their participation on their college applications; and this may help students fulfill any public service requirements they may need. This effort may also introduce students to the League.

For now, this is just a vision. Our Education Committee Co-chairs (Flora Major & Missy Conrad) and I will arrange meetings with the appropriate school officials to get this implemented.

*Stephen Cooper*

## **SLEEP AND SCHOOL START TIME**

At our Annual Meeting in June we were privileged to have Catharine Kempson from the Wilton League speak to us on the subject of "Adolescent Sleep Patterns and their implications. For several years a good amount of research has taken place on this subject. Prof. Mary Carskadon from Brown University has been one of the leading researchers on the subject.

I am going to share just some of the ideas that have come out of her research. Biologically speaking - teenagers really are out of it early in the morning. Sleep deprivation can affect mood, performance, attention, learning, behavior and biological functions. Issues surrounding sleep - who needs how much and when - are usually given short shrift in efforts to improve student achievement.

Catharine was the person in Wilton who was instrumental in doing the study on sleep patterns of teens and facilitating the process that made it possible for the Wilton Schools to implement a later start time. The plan has been in place for several years there and everyone seems to be happy with the plan.

Some of the questions to consider with the Implementation of Later School Start Time.

- Is this a statewide issue?
- Have there been any studies about the actual benefits of later start time for adolescents?
- How can a community structure a change in school start time?
- How much will it cost to make the change?
- Will parents be consulted about the change?
- Will there be follow up surveys?

You will be hearing more about this subject this fall as our League determines when and how we might get our leaders in the school community to consider this very important subject.

*Flora Major, Education Committee Chair*

# **Candidates' Forum**

**Monday, October 15, 2007  
Norwalk City Hall  
Community Room**

*Co-sponsored by  
The League of Women Voters of Norwalk,  
The Norwalk Chapter of the NAACP  
and The Hour*

**6:30-7:30 Common Council  
At Large Candidates Forum**

**7:45-8:30 Mayoral Candidates Forum**

**8:45-9:30 Common Council by District  
Candidates Roundtables**



**For more information call 834-8194**

## VOTERS SERVICE

We're busy planning the candidates' forum that we will be sponsoring with the Norwalk Chapter of the NAACP and *The Hour*. It will be Monday, October 15 in the community room at City Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m.

We are in need of members to help organize and write questions with other members and members of the NAACP. We also need members that night to serve as timers, ushers, question screeners, and roundtable moderators.

There will be a short moderator/timer training held before the night of the forum so, if you've never done it before, there will be some training. We need everyone's help to make this a successful evening.

Please let me know what you can do!

Thanks.

*Mary Oster, Voters Service Chair*



**STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN:**

**NEW VOTING MACHINES ARE COMING YOUR WAY!**

### INTRODUCTION FOR VOTERS

This November, Connecticut voters will be using new voting machines. Good-bye to lever machines. Hello to paper ballots, optical scanners and special privacy booths.

What should you expect when you get to the polls on Election Day?

#### Checking-in:

First, you will see the demonstrator table staffed by an election official to answer your questions, show you a sample ballot and allow you to view a quick video overview of the voting process. Please remember to bring an ID with you. Next, check in as usual.

#### Getting your ballot:

After the check-in, the ballot clerk will hand you a paper ballot and direct you to a privacy booth for completing your ballot. The booths will be equipped with felt-tipped pens and magnifying sheets for your convenience. Completely fill the ovals near the names of the candidates of your choice, paying attention to the number of choices permitted for each race. If you have questions about how to mark the ballot correctly for the candidates of your choice, you may always ask an election official for further instructions.

#### The optical scanner:

Take your completed ballot to the scanner – there will be at least one in each polling place – and insert it into the machine. For privacy, folders are available to cover your completed ballot. You may insert it either right side up or down. The machine will scan it, count it and store it in a locked compartment.

#### Errors:

Whoops! Did you mistakenly vote for too many candidates in one race? Did you circle the name instead of filling in the ovals? Are there any stray marks on the ballot? The scanner will reject the ballots immediately, returning it back to you to pick up so you can check it for errors. Voting officials stationed next to the scanner will assist you in determining the problem by reading the message in the machine's display window. Take your ballot back to the ballot clerk to get a new one, if needed. The spoiled one will be invalidated and you can start over again.

We urge you to make voting a priority on Election Day! Come early and bring a friend. It's your world, your voice, your vote. Every vote counts.

*From LWVCT Board Report, August 13, 2007*

## NONPARTISAN POLICY

### FOR LWVCT and LWVCTEF BOARD MEMBERS and EMPLOYEES

1. The State President, VP-Public Issues, VP-Voter Service and board members with Voter Service portfolio shall not run for any elective office. Other Board members and employees shall not run for state-level elective office but may run for local office after consultation with the State Board and the President of the local League, if serving on the local League Board.
2. No State Board member or staff member shall be a member of the State Central Committee of any party.
3. State Board members other than the President and all Vice Presidents, and staff, may serve on Town Committees but not as a chair.
4. Board members are requested to consult with the Board when considering accepting a position on a state and/or local board. Staff members are requested to consult with the President or CIT Director as appropriate.
5. The President may not:
  - a. attend nor host political fundraising events at any level; nor
  - b. Make contributions to any local, state or national political campaign or party.
6. The Vice Presidents and board members with Voter Service portfolios and CIT Director and staff may not:
  - a. Attend nor host state-level political fundraising events; nor
  - b. Make contributions to any state-level political campaign or party.
7. All other Board members should use discretion in attending political fundraising events, making political contributions or making political endorsements.

*From LWVCT Board Report, July 25, 2007*

### IMMIGRATION: National Topic for Study



LWVUS has embarked on a new national study: Immigration. This is the first new study since "healthcare" in 1992.

Immigration is an enormous, complex issue – but almost *everyone* agrees that the system is broken and needs to be fixed. The issue is in the news every day. It will be part of the Presidential campaigns. Legislation has already failed in the House and Senate. And here in Connecticut, two cities have taken very opposite steps in dealing with their undocumented residents. In Norwalk, too, immigration has an impact on education, the economy, employment, and many other areas.

Since LWV Delegates at the 2006 Convention approved the topic, a national study committee has been busy defining the scope of the study, providing background material, and writing “consensus questions”.

Now Leagues all across the U.S. are studying, learning, and discussing so they can be informed participants in a League *consensus*. In Norwalk, we also want to have our voices count.

**PLEASE JOIN US (Carol Davis and Judy Salzer) in forming a committee to get started.**

Call to let us know you can do some reading and summarizing. There’s no better way to learn about an issue! And to influence League positions for years to come!

### IMMIGRATION CALENDAR

**October 17 (Wed) – Noon.** Committee meeting at Judy Salzer’s. Light lunch and coffee.

**PLEASE CALL** Carol or Judy **BEFORE WED. 10/17** to let us know you'll join us.

**November 14 (Wed)–1:00pm.** “The Future of the Immigration Problem”. New Canaan LWV meeting at Lapham Community Center with Chris Shays or his representative. Reservations required; call 966-4370 or 594-3620.

January (TBA) Consensus Meeting

*Judy Salzer*

Stephen Cooper:

*I wrote this almost four years ago. It is particularly relevant now because a federal judge finally ruled that part of the USA Patriot Act is unconstitutional. That happened today.*

*I was just thinking how wise were the founders of the United States, particularly James Madison. They were so concerned that majority groups could tyrannize minorities, that they made it difficult for the same groups to maintain continuous control over all institutions of government. In my opinion, today's ruling by a single judge saved our country.*

**FOUR YEARS AGO (OCTOBER 2003 BULLETIN):**

**ON PRIVACY & CIVIL LIBERTIES:  
TROUBLING REPORT OFFERED AT OUR FALL KICKOFF  
By Stephen Cooper**



...Teresa Younger, Executive Director of the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, was our guest speaker. She described the USA Patriot Act, and threats to citizens' privacy posed by that and other laws.

Congress passed the Act in October 2001 – shortly after the attacks of September 11. Few citizens recognized its ramifications at that time. Ms. Younger summarized those as follows: “The act has little regard for the Bill of Rights, encourages a high level of secrecy, has little regard for checks and balances, and perpetuates an atmosphere of fear. [...] Historically, our government takes advantage of the powers it is given.”

Ms. Younger cited details: The USA Patriot Act establishes secret courts. It allows non-citizen immigrants to be detained and deported for any reason. One provision (section 213) permits “sneak and peak” searches of citizens' homes without search warrants. That blatantly disregards the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

According to Ms. Younger, “there has been an expanded definition of domestic terrorism. It used to apply only to actions of foreign entities against the United States; now it doesn't.” She is concerned by the “general lack of openness” engendered by such laws. The Patriot Act, for example, allows military courts to implement death penalties, and no one need know about it. A special court, created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, can issue warrants under a much lower standard than that of open courts. Moreover, all of its actions are secret. Finally, an executive order by President Bush closed access to presidential records forever.

By the end of the evening, just about everyone was asking what we can do about this. Ms. Younger mentioned that over 172 towns and 3 states have passed resolutions supporting the Bill of Rights. She exhorted us to do the same in Norwalk. She noted that all of Connecticut's congressmen and senators voted for the Patriot Act. She encouraged us to lobby them to rescind those sections which threaten civil liberties...

**TODAY (SEPTEMBER 6, 2007, WASHINGTON POST):**

**JUDGE RULES PROVISIONS OF PATRIOT ACT UNCONSTITUTIONAL**

By Dan Eggen  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Thursday, September 6, 2007; 3:36 PM

A federal judge today struck down portions of the USA Patriot Act as unconstitutional, ordering the FBI to stop issuing "national security letters" that secretly demand customer information from Internet service providers and other businesses.

U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero in New York ruled that the landmark anti-terrorism law violates the First Amendment and the Constitution's separation of powers provisions because it effectively prohibits recipients of the FBI letters (NSLs) from revealing their existence and does not provide adequate judicial oversight of the process.

Marrero wrote in his 106-page ruling that Patriot Act provisions related to NSLs are "the legislative equivalent of breaking and entering, with an ominous free pass to the hijacking of constitutional values."

The decision has the potential to eliminate one of the FBI's most widely used investigative tactics. It comes amid widespread concern on Capitol Hill over reported abuses in the way the FBI has used its NSL powers.

NSLs allow agents in counterterrorism and counterintelligence investigations to secretly gather Americans' phone, bank and Internet records without a court order or a grand jury subpoena. Although the FBI has had such power for many years, the Patriot Act, enacted in October 2001, significantly expanded its ability to issue the letters...

### Mark Your Calendar

September TBA Voter Services Meeting Call Mary Oster for details  
September 26 Board Meeting Place TBA  
October 10 Freedom of Information Forum 7 pm City Hall Council Chambers  
October 15 Municipal Debates City Hall Community Room  
6:30 At-Large Council 7:45 Mayoral 8:45 District Council  
October 17 Immigration Study Group. Noon. Call Judy Salzer for details  
November TBA School Start Time Forum: A way to Raise test scores and Lower  
childhood obesity levels  
November 14 The Nature of the Immigration Problem, New Canaan. 1p.m.  
Call 966-4370 or 594-3620.

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!  
JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORWALK!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Dues \$45	.....
Household Dues \$65	.....
Contributions	.....
Total	_____

Membership Year: July 1 to June 30

Send check made payable to: League of Women Voters of Norwalk, P.O. Box 644, Norwalk, CT 06852

#### The League's WEB SITES

A lot of League information is waiting on the web.

Just go to [WWW.LWV.ORG](http://WWW.LWV.ORG) and check out what's happening on the national scene. Anyone who wants to get a head start on the Immigration study will find a lot of background information there.

Or try [WWW.LWVCT.ORG](http://WWW.LWVCT.ORG) for Connecticut news. You'll be able to find your local legislators. Or see a demo of the new optical scan voting process.

*Judy Salzer*

League of Women Voters of Norwalk  
P. O. Box 644  
Norwalk, CT 06852  
203-834-8194

Visit our Web Site [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

“The LWV is a nonpartisan local, state and national nonprofit grassroots organization of women and men. We work to influence public policy through education and advocacy.”