

## League of Women Voters of Norwalk

December 2007 - January 2008

The League of Women Voters wishes a Happy New Year to all of our members and friends...may the new year give us all a renewed spirit and drive to work towards creating good government for all!

### ***LWVN: Brown Bag Lunch/Good Government Series!***

In response to members' desire for more daytime meetings, we have organized an exciting lunchtime lineup of interesting and timely speakers and topics. Whether you are free during the day or can sneak out on your lunch hour—you'll enjoy this "food for the mind"!

**ALL MEETINGS IN ROOM A300, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, NORWALK CITY HALL  
THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, Introductions 12:00- 12:15 Speaker 12:15-  
1:15 pm**

Thursday, January 17, 2008

**Norwalk's State of Emergency Preparedness: ARE WE READY?,**

**Michelle DeLuca, Norwalk's Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness**

Learn what City and Citizens need to do to be ready for disaster!

Thursday, February 21, 2008

**WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HARTFORD: LWVCT Legislative Priorities,**

**Cheryl Dunson, LWVCT Vice President, Public Issues**

Join in a lively review of the issues affecting you in Hartford. Do some homework in advance to prepare for this enlightening discussion.

Thursday, March 20, 2008

**RECYCLING, WASTE AND LEAVES: Oh My!,**

**Chris Okafor, Department of Public Works Superintendent of Operations**

Quality of life issues that affect us all! The league has advocated for years on recycling, household hazardous waste and leaf removal and composting. Always a timely topic!

Thursday, April 17, 2008

**JUST HOW DOES THE CITY PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE MASTER PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT?, Speaker TBA**

Review the current Master Plan at [www.norwalkct.org](http://www.norwalkct.org). How can we make these ideas a reality? An area of League concern and advocacy for years!

**FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WELCOME!!**

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

*Officers*

President	Diane Lauricella	2007-2009
	858-1537	
Vice-President	OPEN	2007-2009
Administration/Program Advocacy		
Vice-President	Mary Oster	2007-2009
Voters Service		
Secretary	Carol Davis	2007-2009
Treasurer	OPEN	2007-2008

*Directors*

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

Additional Positions Open:

Bulletin Chair/Publications  
Fund Development  
Observer Corps  
Public Relations/Marketing

and a Council leader has asked the LWVN to consider helping recruit new Ethics Commission members from the community. This 2007-2008 Program was selected because no specific study was done this year and the initiative represents the very foundation upon which we were built. It is a part of the air League members breathe...

We should be the "go-to-guys for good government" advice and information...

The League still has a long-standing reputation for standing up for democracy and doing our homework, but this reputation will fade away without increased activity within our member ranks. Now, more than ever, there is a need for the league's mission. People will listen to us less when they think our numbers are few...and quiet...

We have had some problems and growing pains related to having a progressive agenda with too few bodies to march forth. This is not a phenomena unique to the Norwalk League or other non-profits like the Rotary Club, Lion's Club, for I have asked other community groups if they have had a difficult time finding and grooming the leaders of tomorrow...but we cannot let that be our excuse for failure...

My New Year's wish for our organization is this: Each member should try to spend at least an hour a week or four hours a month working on a LWV project, recruiting new members, observing a City Hall meeting, reading about democracy or writing for this Bulletin... It's time to recommit...as I have said before, call me and I will help you select a job you could enjoy with whatever time you can spare!

I spend a part of each day doing something for the League of Women Voters. As President, I should. How much time do you spend? Could you spend a little more? WE need your support so that we will not suffer "burn out". Call me at 858-1537 if you have ideas about how the LWV can accomplish its mission.

*Diane Lauricella*

## President's Message

The first thing I want to convey is to wish all of you who are reading this Bulletin is to have a terrific holiday, hug your loved ones, and have a safe and healthy new year. Thank you for your support... I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their service and participation "to the cause" and urge them to find new strength for 2008!

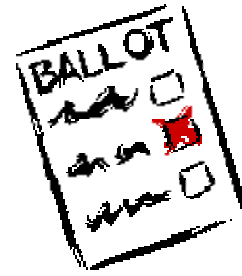
As 2007 comes to a close, I decided to take a look at previous Messages and Bulletin articles that I had written and review where we've been and where we're going...

There has been an increase of people's awareness of the Norwalk LWV's double mission of Voter Education and Issue Advocacy via a stepped-up visibility campaign at City Hall, NAACP, Human Relations Commission, Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhoods and City Boards, Commissions and Council Committees. However, without more help "in the trenches", we will not be able to be effective in accomplishing our mission of advocating for an informed electorate. We need to keep finding member recruitment opportunities and use creative ideas like Membership Chair Jan Lulich's distribution of \$25 restaurant gift certificates for every new member brought on by one of you!

As stated in our last Bulletin, we began an open government program initiative called "Shine a Light on Open Government" that has begun to bear fruit. Two neighborhood associations have asked the LWVN to help them receive a fair public hearing,

## 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. at 858-1537 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:

A friendly reminder to send in your membership dues to help us carry on the mission.

Also, please fill out the LWVN survey form that was sent with the renewal request letter. This lets us know what issues you feel are important to you and what volunteer time you can devote to league business.

Our telephone squad will be calling with a friendly reminder in the next month or so.

The Board is currently reviewing adding different Membership levels such as Business, Student, and Senior dues amounts. We have received positive feedback from members, LWVCT and some prospective members that this would greatly assist in building our ranks. Please let us know if you have any input about this possible change.

## 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!

## **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)

## Voter's Service:

Thanks so much to all who helped with our Mayoral and Common Council Candidates forum. Like any other event, this one requires the help of many people. I really appreciate all of you who helped out before and during the event!

*Mary Oster*

## From the Education Committee:

The forum on School Sleep Time has not been forgotten. The Education Committee is working on planning this forum and you will be hearing more about this very important topic in the New Year. Missy and I would be delighted to have any members who are interested in this topic or who have other items of interest related to education to join our committee. You can contact me at 866-2761. I look forward to hearing from some of you.

*Flora Major*



Mark your calendars and prepare to welcome our newly-elected officials. Our 2005 Municipal reception was a big hit!

Mayor-Council-B of Ed Winter Reception

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

7 pm -8 pm

(Snow date February 12)

3rd Floor front hallway of Council Chambers

Meet and greet our newly-elected officials with a little sampling of warm and sweet refreshments just before the Council meeting at 8 pm.

Please consider staying beyond 8 pm to observe democracy in action...The evening's Council agenda will be available on the City web site

[www.norwalkct.org](http://www.norwalkct.org) 24 hours before the meeting.

Please help us prepare for this event...we will be asking for donations from our many talented and delicious local caterers and bakeries...Call Diane Lauricella at 858-1537 to coordinate food and refreshment choices. Call Jan Lalich at 847-8440 to assist setting up info table, refreshment tables, cleanup....



**Don't Miss It !  
The LWVN Second Annual  
Pie and Politics !**

Volunteer today for the planning committee for the League's Second Annual Pie and Politics. For those of you who were there last year, it was an afternoon of stimulating conversation with our state legislative leaders.

Contact Diane Lauricella or Mary Oster today to help with this great event. We need help in setting a date, finding a location, contacting our elected officials, publicizing the event and procuring refreshments! **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TODAY!**

**POST ELECTION AUDIT**

I had the privilege of observing the hand count performed in Kent CT as part of the post election audit of the new optical scanners used in the 2007 local election. Because the machines and procedures are new this year, the Secretary of State selected 70 voting districts as a sample. The Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition, of which the LWV is a part, sent observers to the sites. My partner was the League voter service chair from Greenwich, Kathy Burweger. The Coalition provided us with instructions and questions to answer. Each team observed only one district, not our home district, to maintain our neutrality. In that district, for the races chosen at random, the tape totals from the optical scanner were compared to the hand counted results. We reported our results to the coalition coordinator, including suggestions to make the process run more smoothly in the future.

We can be happy to learn that the optical scanners reliably counted the votes in Kent. At this time, I do not know how it went at the other sites. To learn more about the results, check the website: [ctelectionaudit.org](http://ctelectionaudit.org). It is essential that voters have confidence in the new voting process in order to accept the elected officials. For this reason, I hope such audits will continue.

*Louise Golub*





## Council Election Wrap-Up

An exciting photo-finish occurred in the Council races in Districts A and E. The narrow margin, sometimes only two or three votes, triggered a hand recount that was witnessed by LWVN members Louise Golub and Diane Lauricella. We noticed that, while the use of the new optical scanners seemed to work pretty well on Election Day, the ballot handcount process was at times inconsistent in the way the ballot "reader" and the ballot "recorder" physically looked at the ballots. We will convey this to the LWVCT and the Registrars. While this really speaks to the declaration that every vote really does count, we were disappointed in the overall voter turnout, the lowest we have seen in years! The LWV has two years to strategize how to help increase voter interest for municipal elections. Email me or Mary Oster if you would like to pursue this goal.

While bi-partisan spirit was spoken of often, we will see how this terrific idea is actually achieved.

Kelly Straniti was selected as the first woman to head up the Republican council minority caucus. A lively debate witnessed by LWVN ensued for the selection of Council President and Democratic Majority Leader. The words "democracy" and "bipartisanship" were uttered so often that we are hopeful it will be practiced with a fervor!.

The counts are in, and we are off and running with the Moccia administration and many new Council faces and leaders! We attended the swearing-in ceremonies of both the Mayor and the Common Council, wore our LWV buttons proudly and observed the body language and promises. We have already begun to observe at some of the Council committees that handle our issues.

### Of note:

Council Planning Committee is now chaired by Phyllis Bolden. She will be responsible for managing the Council's final review of the Master Plan of Conservation and Development. We will make sure that the discussion occurs in the public domain and includes many of the ideas we advocated for the last six years. Please contact me if you would like to help finalize this agonizingly long process. Our participation in the Brownfields Task Force, which is staffed by the Redevelopment Agency and an effort to identify toxics in underutilized land parcels, made sure that the consultant that was hired will spend more time on citizen education than the first phase.

Council Health, Safety and Welfare Committee: Will now be chaired by new council member Mike Geake. I look forward to discussing LWV ideas and have already been asked to help gather educational information about assuring that Health threats such as toxic dust are reduced during demolitions. Again, the Norwalk League will be advocating for increasing the public's awareness about Emergency Preparedness. I attended a fall forum on Preparedness sponsored by NCC and the Mormans...impressive and shows just how far the City still needs to go to improve.

Council Personnel Committee is now chaired by veteran Rick McQuaid, and it will be noteworthy to see how he approaches citizen complaints about staff service.

Council Ordinance Committee is now chaired by new member Amanda Brown. The LWV has suggested ordinance ideas and strategy in the past and we won't stop now. In particular, we are interested in suggesting amendments to the Ethics ordinance passed last session and the Aquifer (Drinking Water) Protection Agency. Both are items we advocated over the years.

Council Committee Chair, Mayoral, and Department Head interviews are being scheduled by your President so that we can be assured that our mission is known, that the public is given appropriate access, and that some of our long-standing ideas are made a reality! If any of you would like to accompany me to these meetings, let me know as soon as possible. This is a ritual I started last year in order to give the LWVN visibility and credibility. It puts us "in the belly of the beast" and allows us to offer input and assistance.

In future Bulletins and emails, I will also report about additional meetings that the LWV schedules with the Mayor's Office and other entities in order to show how important it is to be visible, be current, and be effective.

## Connecticut Primary Information Important Dates to Remember



Tuesday, November 5, 2007	Deadline for <i>enrolled</i> party members to transfer enrollment <i>from one party to another</i> .
Tuesday, January 15, 2008	Absentee Ballots become available.
Tuesday, January 22, 2008	Mandatory enrollment session—all towns
Thursday, January 31, 2008	Deadline for <i>new voters</i> and for <i>unaffiliated voters</i> to enroll in a party for its primary. For <b>new voters</b> , mail-in applications must be postmarked <u>or</u> received by the Registrar of Voters by this date. For unaffiliated voters, the mail-in application must be <u>received</u> (not merely postmarked), by the Registrar of Voters, by this deadline. (See exception below for in-person enrollment).
Monday, February 4, 2008 12:00 noon	<i>In-person</i> enrollment deadline, for new and unaffiliated voters enrolling in a party, in person, at Town Hall for voting in primary.
Tuesday, February 5, 2008 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Presidential Preference Primary

(Source: [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov))

### A FEW WORDS FROM THE LWVCT---

#### **Public Issues Team Report** Cheryl Dunson and the P.I. Team

**Voting Machines:** With the November elections, the League's main focus over the past two months has been on the voting machines. On October 29, the League participated in a meeting of stakeholders at the Secretary of the State's office to discuss security and other issues related to the new voting machines. The League also submitted comments on the *Recanvass Procedure Manual*.

On November 5, Jill Cromwell represented the League in a press conference with the Secretary of the State and spoke about the historic election the next day on electronic voting machines. On November 14, Christine Horrigan and Luther Weeks "did the honors" randomly drawing names of districts to be audited at the Secretary of the State's office.

**Transportation:** LWVCT submitted a statement to the Governor’s Commission on the Reorganization of the Connecticut Department of Transportation chaired by Michael Critelli of Pitney-Bowes. The Commission has held a series of listening sessions throughout the state. As a follow up to the testimony, Transportation Specialist and LWVCT President Jara Burnett met with Michael Critelli and provided additional information on the LWVCT transportation priorities.

The long-awaited bond package finally passed on October 30, authorizing \$864 million for transportation projects. These include the following LWVCT-supported projects:

- purchase of 38 electric rail cars for the New haven and Shore Line East;
- purchasing equipment and facilities to expand Shore Line East Commuter rail expansion;
- improving bicycle access and storage at transportation centers;
- up to \$ 20 million to improve bus connectivity and service and the purchase of specific equipment for the elderly and disabled;
- an “evaluation” of purchase of the rolling stock for direct commuter rail service connecting Connecticut and New Jersey via the Penn station in NYC.

**Water Supply:** The Legislature repealed legislation that would have allowed mining of rocks on the New Britain Water Company land. While we are very pleased with the repeal and thank Sen. DeFronzo and especially Rep. O’Brien for their leadership, we must be ever vigilant to protect Class I & II water company lands. We will be working to propose legislation to improve watershed protection in the upcoming session. Natural Resources Director Karen Burnaska attended the Connecticut Watershed Conservation Network Conference on November 16, 2007. An excellent presentation on “Water, Energy & Global Warming” explained how saving water saves energy and will help reduce greenhouse emissions.

**Climate Change:** In November, LWVCT joined other coalition partners in a campaign to stop global warming. Coalition partners so far include Clean Water Action, CT Fund for the Environment, Environment Northeast, Environmental Defense and The Nature Conservancy. The Coalition is calling on Governor Rell and the Connecticut General Assembly to enact a mandatory cap that limits global warming emissions at 10% or below 1990 levels by 2020 and cuts emissions at least 80% by the year 2050.

#### **Health Care:**

**Mental Health:** The League will support the legislative agendas of the National Alliance for Mental Illness and Keep the Promise Coalition which will focus on the development of housing and supportive housing for people with mental illness throughout the state.

**Governor Rell’s Proposal For Expanded Health Insurance:** The Governor’s independent initiative is the proposed Charter Oak insurance program, which will include families and individuals with incomes up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) which is \$41,070 for a household of 2), prescriptions and lab tests with co-pays and a lifetime benefit of \$1,000,000. The target date for implementation is July 1, 2008.

### **Mark Your Calendar**

January 17, 2008	12:00 Noon Brown Bag Lunch, Room A300, Norwalk City Hall
January 22, 2008	7:00 p.m. Reception—Elected Officials, Norwalk City Hall Council Chambers Hall
January 23, 2008	6:00-8:00 p.m. CT Permanent Commission on Status of Women Public Hearing at NCC; West Campus Room 105. Topic: CT and Family Economic Security. See details on <a href="http://www.cga.gov/pcsw">www.cga.gov/pcsw</a>
January 23, 2008	7:30 p.m. Board Meeting Place TBA
February 21, 2008	12:00 Noon Brown Bag Lunch, Room A300, Norwalk City Hall
February 27, 2008	7:30 p.m. Board Meeting Place TBA

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Dues \$45 .....

Household Dues \$65 .....

Contributions .....

LWVUS Ed Fund .....

(Please write separate check to LWVUS with the words "Norwalk CT LWV" in the check

notation section or designate how much of the one check you send to us should be forwarded to LWVUS beyond your dues payment. Each LWVUS Ed Fund dollar will be deducted from what we owe to LWVUS for our per-member-payment)

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*

*We're looking for someone to update our portion of the State League website! If you are or know a website master who would be willing to donate some time to a worthy cause, please contact Diane.*

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



**Season's Greetings !**

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.”