



***League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
2009 – 2010 Annual Meeting
May 25, 2010***

Pond House, Elizabeth Park

Welcome

Dinner

Guest Speaker

Dr. Tracey Wilson

West Hartford Historian and Teacher

Topic

The Women's Suffrage Movement in Connecticut

Business Meeting

Announcements

Credentials Report

Annual Report

Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Proposed Budget

Re-adoption of Current Consensus Positions

Proposed Program

Call for Nominations

Proposed Governance Structure

Other Business

Adjournment

Officers and Board of the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford

<u>Executive Committee</u>		<u>Term Ends</u>
Chairwoman/Voter Service	Carole Mulready	2010
Communications	Sandra Fry	2010
Secretary	Mary Andrews	2010
	Beverly Miller	2010
Treasurer	Mary Everett	2010
Program Study	Elisa McCarthy	2010
Membership Records	Elizabeth Swietek	2010
Special Projects	Marlene Wenograd	2010

**The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
2009-2010
Annual Report**

A Review of the League Year

Program

National Popular Vote

A footnote on NPV. Our group reached consensus (to by-pass the Electoral College) which was submitted to national on April 30, 2009. Unfortunately, National tallied the consensus responses in a very strange way. Any question that had a response that qualified an answer (which was allowed) was taken as a no vote though there was no indication that this would be the method of count in the instructions. This resulted in a negative consensus on NPV. There was a high degree of dissatisfaction expressed by State Leagues including Connecticut. There is a resolution before the Convention this year to address the issue.

Our planned study in education did not occur because of varying commitments of the members and lack of a convener. The same was true for a regionalism study. Elisa McCarthy and Mary Murray planned to convene a group, but the scope of the research and planning for the LWV 90th Anniversary Exhibit precluded sufficient time for the study. The Executive Committee is recommending the study for 2010-2011 with Elisa McCarthy as convener.

Book Discussion

In partnership with the West Hartford Public Library the LWVGH held the first of two discussions on *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. It was held on October 19, 2009 in the meeting room of the Noah Webster Library. In this book Gladwell is “interested in people who are outliers—in men and women who, for one reason or another, are so accomplished and so extraordinary and so outside of ordinary experience that they are as puzzling to the rest of us as a cold day in August.” Twenty-seven participants, fourteen members and thirteen non-members, joined us for a very interesting discussion. Our second choice was *Team of Rivals: The political genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Doris Kearns Goodwin “illuminates Lincoln’s political genius in this highly original work, as the one term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become President.” Ten members and seven visitors joined in a discussion of this fascinating look at Lincoln.

Those in attendance asked that we hold additional Book Discussions in the year to come.

Communication

Website and Electronic Communications:

We are relying more and more on electronic communication and less on printed communications. The website is regularly updated (2 or more times per month) and provides information for members and the general public. The site also provides easy links to State and National League websites.

Collaboration with Other Groups

Motivated by the challenge of a decreasing membership, the LWVGH has increased our collaboration with other local Leagues and organizations. Our members participated in a joint meeting with New Britain Area LWV during March. The meeting was a pleasant gathering for dessert and a viewing of *Iron-jawed Angels*, an outstanding movie on the suffrage movement. Windsor/North Central LWV, which is also experiencing membership challenges, joined LWVGH Executive Committee at our February meeting. There may be future collaboration, but no definitive

decisions were made. Windsor/North Central will join us at our annual dinner in May to hear the presentation on CT Women's Suffrage by Tracey Wilson.

Voter Service

Activities this year were varied.

Very informational is the monthly interview with district legislators moderated by League member Sandy Fry. West Hartford Public Television hosts this monthly legislative update program which runs during the legislative session with the West Hartford legislative delegation (state Representatives Beth Bye, Andrew Fleischmann, and David McCluskey and state Senator Jonathan Harris) participate. The show is a live call in (except when it is rebroadcast) and provides an opportunity for residents to talk to their legislators about current issues. Check the WHC-TV guide on its website, www.whctv.org for program times.

In West Hartford, the Voters Guide and televised debates were again our major focus. The August session of question preparation for both activities was led by Nancy Rion who later edited the suggested questions which were wide ranging. Several members helped with fine-tuning and editing via e-mail. Selected questions from the sub-committee were sent to our local candidates for their responses for the Voters Guide. As a result of LWVGH's very successful and profitable Poll Reporting job for the presidential election, we were able to work with *West Hartford Life* in 2009 and pay for print publication of the local Voters Guide. *Life* is delivered to every residence in West Hartford. We negotiated a price we could afford with the publisher. The Guide was also posted on-line (www.lwvgh.org). The finance drive is the major support for the printed version of Voters Guide which has many fans throughout West Hartford. We are hopeful that the 2010-2011 drive will provide the funds needed for the upcoming 2010 election of state senator and district representatives.

The questions were also used for the televised debates done in cooperation with WHC-TV. Carole Mulready coordinated the debates for the Board of Education and Town Council. Once again we are grateful for the tremendous cooperation of Jennifer Evans, Executive Director of WHC-TV, and her staff of professionals. Thanks also to Margo Callahan who is often working the cameras. **Debate moderators Danna Dyer, Janet Lenore, Carole Mulready, and Nancy Rion** did an excellent job once again. Timers for the cumulative time method for debates are an important component for the success of the debates. Serving during the last election were: **Vicki Albert, Beatrice Bell, Jean Blair, Leah Bronner, Margot Callahan, Kathy Golas, Kiki Eglinton, Carol Hamilton, Kathleen Keegan, Elisa McCarthy, June Rosenblatt, Libby Swietek, Nan Streeter, Marlene Wenograd, and Kathy Wilson.** Their service is greatly appreciated.

LWVGH was approached by LWVCT to conduct a debate for the local election in Avon. Planning was done in cooperation with the two major parties in August and early September. The League's valuable "Planning for Debates" packet was to set up ground rules and debate format that everyone was comfortable with. The planning also included allowing minor party candidates to participate. Our members served as moderator and timers.

Additional service was provided by **Leta Marks** and Carole Mulready who agreed to moderate debates in Farmington and Cheshire.

The League worked with the Hartford Public Library and the Metro Hartford Alliance and others to continue with the momentum of voter interest generated during the presidential cycle. The group is now called Hartford Votes/Hartford Vota, and LWVGH is a participating member through **Sandy Fry's** efforts with the group. It constitutes our presence in the city. Meetings are held at the Hartford Library. Hartford Votes is offering many opportunities for citizens to meet candidates; for

governor 6/8, senator 6/22 and secretary of the state 6/1 all at 6pm, and possibly others before the 2010 fall elections. Search Hartford Votes on the internet for updates.

Finance

Mary Everett reported that the results of the 2009 Finance Drive were as follows: A total of \$3995 was collected in our annual finance drive. Of this, \$1370 was contributed to the Education Fund.

Membership Committee

Elizabeth Swietek reports that we have 112 members, including 14 fifty year members. Four new members joined: Patricia Groves, Constance Morin, Jewel Miller, and Pam Nadler. Longtime member Helen Mazur passed away during the year. Several contributions were made in her name to LWV.

League Events and Activities

Important items on the League calendar included our Potluck Supper in September which was held at the Lyceum in Hartford and featured as guest speakers Joan Gallagher from Mercy Housing and Shelter and Kate Kelly from Reaching Home. Both groups are part of the Partnership for Strong Communities. The speakers compared the costs of supportive housing with the significantly more costly alternatives like prison and inpatient hospital and psychiatric care. Representative Green (Hartford/Bloomfield) joined them for the Q&A session.

Other events were: Elected Officials Reception in December which was held at **Ilze Krisst**'s home amidst generous hors d'oeuvres, wine, and lively conversation; the Legislative breakfast in January which was well attended by both representatives and guests; and the Annual Meeting last June at which Demetrios Giannaros, Deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, spoke on the economic crisis and the role of women in the economy. These events give us an opportunity to socialize while doing the work of the League. Many thanks to **Elisa McCarthy, Jean Blair, Mary Andrews Sandy Fry and Carol Hamilton** for making sure these events were successful.

A special event for last year was our participation in Celebrate! West Hartford in June. Thanks to the efforts of **Elisa McCarthy, Mary Murray and Pat George** with her amazing talent for artistically creating an appealing space in the booth, we were a presence. We registered voters, gave out League information, took questions for the debates, and handed out balloons. Several members volunteered to "women" the booth and one gentleman who came with Leta Marks and just pitched right in.

LWV 90th Anniversary Activities

During January of 2010, the League of Women Voters (LWVCT) had a large display at the state Capitol /Legislative Office Building in commemoration of the 90th birthday of the League of Women Voters. **League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford** took the lead for this huge project. West Hartford residents **Elisa McCarthy and Mary Murray** researched and wrote the text for the Exhibit and gathered the materials for the display covering the 19th and early 20th century Suffragist Movement and the 20th century to present day League of Women Voters in Connecticut. Many local Leaguers contributed pictures, articles and labor. Assisting Elisa and Mary with the project:

Art Direction –**Pat George** provided materials and the final design of the exhibit. Her hours of dedication resulted in an impressive display that was appreciated by many visitors to the Legislative Office Building.

Print Manager – **Doris Hedrick**, with assistance from **Mary Everett**, organized the text for printing.

Historical print materials - **Beverly Miller** shared many pieces from her personal collection.

History of CT Suffrage – **Dr. Tracey Wilson** shared her manuscript on CT Women’s Suffrage. Dr. Wilson also was the guest speaker for the opening of the exhibit.

Mounting Committee – **Kathy Golas, June Rosenblatt, Marlene Wenograd, Carol Hamilton, Libby Swietek, Carole Mulready**

The Exhibit Committee was fortunate to have the cooperation of the Connecticut State Museum with a loan of materials and advice. The Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame based in New Haven was also generous with portraits and information. The CT State Library Collections, CT Historical Society, the Dodd Center, and the LWVCT archived files provided important materials and information.

The Exhibit (which is traveling to libraries around the state) celebrates our Suffragist foremothers and the intense struggle to win the right to vote. The Exhibit has examples of League activities over the decades, some well-known and some not.

Evaluation of Executive Committee Structure

In October 2008, the LWVGH Executive Committee created a sub-committee (the Evaluation Committee) for the purpose of evaluating itself in terms of its governance model. The Committee offered three options for the League at the end of the study which are shown here:

Recommendations of the Evaluation Sub-Committee (2008):

Option 1 - Have one leader or two members become co-leaders and take charge of all that would be necessary to become a viable operation: new member recruitment, new means of communication, greater visibility, etc.

Option 2 - Continue in the current mode, ignore our bylaws, and rely on a small number of Executive Committee members to carry out our voter service activities for another year. Neither our visibility nor membership would grow, but we would be “on the ready” to respond to critical town issues as they arise.

Option 3 - Close the chapter. In light of what our Community Partners, according to their interview comments, ask of us and the limited number of people we have to meet their needs, along with a perceived lack of interest or ability on any member’s part to fully take on the lead responsibility for a reinvigorated organization, the prospect of growth and vitality will be elusive.

The current Executive Committee chose Option 2 as the mode in which to continue for 2009-2010. The Executive Committee believes it has managed to carry out the mission of the League. We were able to:

1) maintain and expand our role in voter service activities (mock election, held debate for another community, moderated outside West Hartford); 2) a chair was chosen to be a “go-to-person as recommended by the Evaluation Committee; 3) Board and off-board members took responsibility for the several activities that have been reported elsewhere in this document; 4) there was significant LWVGH involvement in 90th Anniversary activities.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Total assets - \$3,141.36

All PMPs are paid

PROPOSED BUDGET

LOCAL PROGRAM CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

PROGRAM ITEMS FOR REAFFIRMATION MAY 2010

EDUCATION, May 2006

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford supports EQUAL and EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN in the areas of program, personnel, and facilities. All students should be offered high quality and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities in a welcoming and multicultural environment that reflects economic, ethnic and racial diversity.

Children learn at different rates, have different learning styles and different life experiences; therefore, to facilitate development of each child's full potential we support and encourage:

Flexible methods of instruction in all areas of curriculum that address student differences and assure growth at every level;

An ongoing program of curriculum evaluation and improvement;

Class size that enables effective teaching and learning, and sufficient additional support for classrooms which include highly impacted special needs children;

Use of the best available local, state, and national data and research to drive decision-making in order to address student needs and improve student learning;

Development of technology competency in all students through incorporation of technology applications wherever appropriate throughout the curriculum;

Comprehensive programs that include, in addition to core academic disciplines, foreign language; career and technical education; fine and performing arts; wellness, nutrition and physical education; and extra-curricular activities;

Preparation of students to actively participate in the civic and political life of the community and the global economy;

A substantive and qualitatively different gifted program for grades one through twelve;

Exposure to possible career opportunities at all levels of education; such exposure should include opportunities such as mentoring, job shadowing, internships, cooperative work experience;

Access to high-quality pre-school programs that meet the needs of children and their families so that children come to school (K-12) prepared to learn.

In order to maintain a high quality staff we support:

Appropriate training and state certification for all educators in the areas in which they teach and supervise;

Curriculum and staff evaluation programs that incorporate specific, measurable criteria of performance and effectiveness;

A strong, ongoing staff improvement program which includes opportunities from outside of the school system as well as from within;

An appropriately computer-literate staff;

Structured programs (using all relevant data) to assist staff in assessing student progress, with a goal of improving both teaching and learning;

Effective, ongoing supervision and evaluation of all teachers, principals and administrators (tenured and non-tenured);

Innovative utilization of all staff whenever and wherever possible, to maximize student learning and experiences.

Children need an appropriate , safe and orderly facility in which to learn. Therefore we support:

Well-maintained school buildings with spaces appropriate to the programs offered, flexible classrooms, and sufficient classroom and building supplies;

Infrastructure to support the integration of technology into teaching, learning, and administration;

Relevant and up-to-date texts and media centers;

A safe environment for students, teachers and families, one in which self-discipline, personal responsibility and respect for others are taught, modeled and encouraged.

Recognizing that education begins in the home and that the community plays an integral role in the successful education of its children, we encourage:

Schools, families, and community to assume supportive and cooperative roles in meeting the needs of children, including pre-school for 3 to 5 year olds; parent education; home- school partnerships; school- business partnerships; and before and after school extended day programs;

A shared role for all in addressing and meeting the challenges of funding.

TOWN GOVERNMENT:

**COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR TOWN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT,
May, 1985**

The League of Women Voters of West Hartford continues to support long-range comprehensive planning which protects orderly growth. The League wishes to preserve the suburban character of the Town, while recognizing that optimal use of commercial areas is necessary for economic well-being. We support a diversity of dwellings, including multi-family units, located in areas which

provide ease in shopping and access to public transportation. Special attention should be given to traffic safety, adequate parking, provision for open space, and buffering.

The League favors preservation of as much open space land as is realistically possible, and places priority for acquisition in the most densely developed sections of town. We support diligent maintenance and the judicious use of open space. The Town Plan of Development should include an open space plan.

The League believes that the properties in West Hartford Center could generate more revenue for the Town. At present, Town Center properties are under-utilized from both a physical and economic standpoint. The League supports an easing of the four-story height restriction in the Center, taking into account topographical conditions, adjacent residential neighborhoods, esthetic considerations, traffic patterns, and parking.

In order to accommodate commercial growth, increased parking demands must be satisfied. The current method of granting case-by-case exceptions does not promote orderly development. The League suggests a variety of approaches, such as:

- Making better use of existing surface parking
- Providing separate parking for Center employees
- Encouraging flexibility of parking requirements which restrict building expansion
- Developing new schemes for sharing off-site parking
- Building a parking garage located away from residential areas, serving all businesses equally, and integrated unobtrusively into the commercial district. The primary financial responsibility for a parking garage should not be borne by residential property owners.

The League supports mixed-use buildings, with retail establishments on street level and office space or residential units above.

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, Spring 1986

The West Hartford League of Women Voters supports the concept of the Special Development District as a means of allowing flexibility in land development while maintaining strict control over it. Since 1979 when the acreage limitation was eliminated in the ordinance, Special Development Districts have often been used on small developments located in what have become buffer or mixed-use areas of town. The League feels that such use of Special Development Districts should be minimized. By revising and updating the town's zoning ordinances, new zone districts can be created which would protect community interests in these mixed-use areas.

The League feels the procedure for applying for and obtaining a Special Development District designation should be modified to encourage interaction between the developer and the affected community interests before the Council receives the formal petition. Such modification should not attempt to simplify the application and approval process; instead, its purpose should be to eliminate some of the problems which prolong the process.

The League also feels that a distinction should be made in the Special Development ordinance between minor and major changes in established Special Development Districts. The procedure for a minor change should be simplified, but notification to the public and opportunity for public input should be required in the process.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE, Spring 2003

We support comprehensive community-based mental health systems for children and adults. These systems should include early detection and intervention with a range of services to facilitate recovery.

We support a public health education initiative on mental health.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL LEAGUE PROGRAMS 2010-2011

For Study

Regionalism

Present programs on regional government – what works elsewhere, what programs are most suitable for a regional approach.

PROPOSED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Operate with an Executive Committee:

- The Executive Committee will include a treasurer, a membership chair, an email coordinator, a Voters Service Committee
- One person will be named the convener of the group each quarter.
- Proposed members of the Executive Committee and assignments:
 - Carole Mulready (chair/voter service)
 - Mary Andrews (secretary)
 - Beverly Miller (secretary)
 - Mary Everett (treasurer)
 - Sandy Fry (email coordinator and website content)
 - Elisa McCarthy (Program)
 - Libby Swietek (membership)
 - Marlene Wenograd (outreach to membership)

Focus and activities for the year:

- Key activity will be the production of a Voters Guide
- A finance drive will be conducted to support the Voters Guide
- Provide other Voters Service: register voters, candidates debates, guide to elected officials
- Hold a Pot luck supper in September
- Hold an elected officials reception in December
- Hold an annual meeting and dinner in May
- Distribute information electronically via e-mail and our website
- Publish League's Latest if possible
- Hold program meetings as desired

Collaborate with other Leagues

- Coordinate activities throughout the Year with the Windsor League and New Britain when interests merge.
- Investigate the specifics of how a merger could be constructed and how to meet National League requirements should one or more Leagues have interest.
 - Review bylaws of both organizations
 - Consider budget ramifications
 - Develop a governance structure that will enable each group to continue to serve their "home market"