



***League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
2008 – 2009 Annual Meeting
May 12, 2009***

Pond House, Elizabeth Park

Welcome

Dinner

Guest Speaker

Demetrios Giannaros

Connecticut House of Representatives

Deputy Speaker

Topic

The Economic Crisis and the Role of Women in the Economy

Business Meeting

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>
Communications	Sandra Fry	2009
Director without Portfolio	Mary Andrews	2009
Voter Service	Elisa McCarthy	2009
Voter Service	Beverly Miller	2009
Treasurer	Mary Everett	2009
Voter Service	Carole Mulready	2009
Membership Records	Elizabeth Swietek	2009
Public Relations/LL	Doris Hedrick	2009
Special Projects	Marlene Wenograd	2009

**The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
2008 – 2009
Annual Report**

A Review of the League Year

Program

National Popular Vote

This year the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford participated in the LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact Consensus. Committee members Elisa McCarthy, Mary Murray, Carole Mulready and Marlene Wenograd gathered materials and shared them with members electronically over several weeks. The Committee also attended a discussion of the NPV compact at UCONN School of Social Work that was co-sponsored by the LWVCT. Featured speaker was Miles Rapoport, West Hartford resident and former CT Secretary of State. Mr. Rapoport spoke in favor of the compact that would go into effect when enough states representing 270 electoral votes join the agreement. The compact would require that each of the compact states cast its electoral votes for the presidential candidate who wins the popular vote in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Committee also joined the Greater New Britain LWV consensus meeting as presenters of the pro and con position of the compact. April 28 was LWVGH consensus night. The meeting was held at Town Hall preceded by a pot luck supper. LWVGH members were joined by the Windsor League. Jean Blair ably assisted in the note taking for the consensus and recorded the additional comments. Sandy Fry did a fine job moderating. The group reached consensus which was submitted to national on April 30.

Book Discussion

April 22 was a discussion of Dreams From My Father by Barak Obama, a compelling book about a young man's search for identity. Discussion was led by LWV member Carole Mulready. Eighteen members, including 5 from New Britain, joined us for a very interesting discussion of Obama in his Memoir and now as President. Those in attendance asked that we hold additional Book Discussions in the year to come. Under consideration is Malcolm Gladwell's *The Outliers*. Gladwell is a staff writer for The New Yorker and a best selling author of *Blink* and *Tipping Point*.

Running in High Heels Documentary

The League worked with St. Joseph's College to host a screening of a film about women running for political office. The discussion afterwards was lively, and interesting.

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 meeting of the New Britain LWV on the National Popular Vote Compact consensus. New Britain joined us for the Book Discussion Night featuring *Dreams from My Father* by Barak Obama Windsor LWV, which is also experiencing membership challenges, joined LWVGH for our consensus meeting on the National Popular Vote Compact. The discussion and questions were interesting and thought provoking.

Voter Service

Activities this year were varied. As usual, in an election year, interest in registration was high and League members were ready to respond. In September and October, 15 members (including 2 new members) worked at 15 different area events registering voters and answering questions on the process. We worked in Hartford, East Hartford, and Bloomfield, as well as West Hartford. We worked at 2 college events, as well as several high schools. CREC invited us to an English as a Second Language class where Spanish and Farsi were the major languages. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving runs an interesting program called Futures Initiative where we spoke at dinner meetings for families. Memorable was a Saturday morning women's group on Albany Avenue where they certainly understood the power of the local vote!

Also very informational is the monthly interview with district legislators hosted by Sandy Fry. Legislative update will continue next year. These are several examples of how important Public Access TV and net neutrality are to us.

In West Hartford, the Voters Guide and televised debates for state representatives 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. Judi Houpert coordinated the debates for the 18th, 19th 20th Assembly districts and the 5th Senatorial district. Janet Lenore, Danna Dyer, Carole Mulready and served as moderators aided by an able contingent of League timers. A very special thanks to Jennifer Evans in her first year as director at WHC-TV. The tapings went seamlessly. We were also very fortunate to be able to hold a debate for the 1st Congressional race between Joe Visconti and John Larson in cooperation with WHC-TV. The Town's legislative chambers served as the debate site. This made taping the debate for later showings possible as well as the live streaming that night. WHC-TV offered the tapes to other jurisdictions in the 1st District to show on their access TV.

The League worked with the Hartford Public Library and the Metro Hartford Alliance to sponsor debates for the primary candidates for City Registrar of Voters and for the general election for the contested city State assembly and senate races. We also assisted with candidate debates in Bloomfield.

Questions generated at the August meeting formed the base for the Voters Guide. Because of the high cost of printing and mailing Voters Guide, the Board decided to post the Guide on our newly designed website www.lwvgh.org as the primary source. About 2000 printed copies were distributed to libraries, offices, Senior Centers and some other selected sites in West Hartford. A few members hand delivered the Guide in their neighborhoods or condo complexes. Lynn Koroser again did the difficult job of taking candidates' answers and putting them together for publication. Her inter personal and computer skills and her refusal to complain, ever, are greatly appreciated. This year the Guide to Elected Officials was revised for online access, but was not printed as a palm card. It will be updated after the local election of 2009 and printed for public distribution. We continue to benefit from the formatting created by Linda Crookshanks.

Elisa McCarthy and Carole Mulready worked with Conard High staff and faculty to stage a mock presidential election prior to November 4. Students had to find their voting district on a map, pick up the appropriate ballot, fill it out, and cast the vote in a mock "reader" box that we created. Each "voter" received an "I Voted Today" sticker. The cafeteria was a buzz of activity all through the lunch waves. We registered several new voters who had not filled out the forms during the Spring Voters Registration Drive sponsored by the Student Activities Coordinator and History department.

We also had a very successful and profitable Poll Reporting job for the presidential election. AP approached our League to assist it on election night. Forty League members did reporting in Avon, Bloomfield, Farmington, Hartford, Newington, West Hartford and Wethersfield.

Finance

Mary Everett reported that the results of the 2008 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. These results were slightly higher than the 2007 Finance Drive, probably due to interest in the League generated by the presidential election.

Membership Committee

Elizabeth Swietek reports that we have 118 members, including National and Life members. One of our members reached Life membership this year: Victoria Albert.

Sadly, three of our local League members passed away this year: Margaret Christie, Helen Mazur, and Evelyn Zeman.

League Events and Activities

Important items on the League calendar include our Potluck Supper in September which was held at the Lyceum in Hartford and featured as guest speaker Developer Carlos Mouta who talked about development in Hartford, and his projects in particular; the Elected Officials Reception in December which was held at Elaine Title Lowengard's home and which nearly 60 people attended; the Legislative breakfast in January, which was well attended by both representatives and guests; and the Annual Meeting last June at which Pamela Trotman Reid, President of St. Joseph's College gave an interesting and informative presentation. These events give us an opportunity to socialize while doing the work of the League. Many thanks to Elisa McCarthy, Jean Blair, Janet Lenore and Carol Hamilton for making sure these events are successful.

Evaluation Committee

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 during the past year when no leader emerged from within the membership and the model's impact on meeting goals and sustaining the future of the chapter. Several League members, Karen Rosen, Beverly Miller, Doris Hedrick, Marlene Wenograd and Jean Blair, took on this important task. They were assisted by numerous League members who agreed to interview a cross-section of community partners and the current Executive Committee.

Findings of the Committee:

- We are perceived mainly as a voter service.
- Most consider us a valuable asset to the community; reliable, knowledgeable, non-ideological, and issue-oriented.
- We need greater visibility in the community.
- We need to address the diverse population of our town.
- We are not always considered nonpartisan and some consider us liberal. Most interviewees see us as neutral, credible, reliable and knowledgeable.
- We need to continuously increase the use of technology.
- More Executive Committee members said the LWVGH is working than not working despite the difficulties or weaknesses encountered.
- There is not good communication or many opportunities for interaction between the Executive Committee and the membership.
- Those presently on the Executive Committee are willing to stay on in their positions and some would consider another role within the Executive Committee.
- There must be a leader or leaders – “go-to persons.”

- All members must acknowledge that it is a new world today and that much communication is done electronically.
- While poll reporting attracted the largest number of member volunteers (40), the quantitative measurements overall little interaction of members' with the League; i.e., number of hits on our web site, members wishing to continue to receive League publications, etc. A small core is most active (approximately 30%), some of whom become available as short-term, intermittent activities are presented

Recommendations of the Evaluation Sub-Committee:

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 Executive Committee voted for Option 2, continue in the current mode, with an Executive Committee. The following summarizes the feelings of the Executive Committee in this regard:

Do we (do I) have the energy to keep this organization going? Sometimes we think of ourselves as “the League”, but we are more accurately stewards of the organization. We have been given a very precious commodity – this organization that thinks before it speaks or acts, that cares very deeply about the fairness of our electoral system, that provides us with wonderful opportunities to impact public discourse. Right now we are in a difficult spot – we have a number of members who have given so much to the organization for so many years, and they are tired, they are frustrated that we don't do what we once did, and rightly they ask, why should we continue? And we look out at our prospects – not a lot of new members, not a lot of people stepping up to the plate, difficulties in truly being a League of Greater Hartford. This seems to dictate that we should fold. But then we think about all those who have gone before us, that they left this organization to us, and we think about our relevance – is it relevant to have a non partisan organization, that is willing to look closely at issues and that develops positions based upon careful study and analysis? Is it worthwhile, at this time when newspapers are shrinking and the web outlets that might take their place do not seem to be terribly objective, to have an organization that wants to get non partisan election information into the hands of voters?

If there were no LWV, we would want to create this kind of organization. We will persevere!

TREASURER'S REPORT

LWVGH 02-08-All Accounts

Net Worth Report
As of 5/9/09

5/9/09

Page 1

Acct	5/9/09 Balance
ASSETS	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
CD 3 Month	0.00
Checking	4,010.93
In-Kind Contributions	0.00
LWV CT Education Fund	0.00
LWVUS Education Fund	289.45
Post Office	0.00
Savings	0.00
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	4,300.38
TOTAL ASSETS	4,300.38
LIABILITIES	
Other Liabilities	
PMPs	0.00
TOTAL Other Liabilities	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00
OVERALL TOTAL	4,300.38

PROPOSED BUDGET

Income	Actual 5/1/07	Proposed 07/08	Actual 08/09	Proposed 09/10
LWVGH				
Balance forward			1200.00	1500.00
From Finance Drive (to LWVGH only)	3540.00	2500.00	2625.00	2000.00
(Donations to ED Fund)	2828.00	1500*	1370.00	1200*
Other Fundraising	350.00	400.00		
From Dues	4565.00	6500.00	4980.00	4600.00
From CT Ed Fund Gifts - flags				
Other fund raising				
Interest from Savings				
Other - Poll Reporting			1785.00	500.00
Annual Meeting (in and out)		2000.00	1691.00	1800.00
Pot Luck			80.00	100.00
LWVUS Ed Fund reconciliation				
LWVUS Ed Fund for PMP	508.00			
LWVUS Voter Service	1850.00	2000.00	1200.00	1200.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL LWVGH INCOME	13641.00	13400.00	13561.00	11700.00
Expenses	Actual 5/1/07	Proposed 07/08	Actual 08/09	Proposed 09/10
PROGRAM/EVENTS				
ANNUAL MEETING				
Expenses				
(In and Out)	1736.42	2000.00	1759.90	1800.00
PROGRAMS/EVENTS/PROJECTS		100.00		100.00
LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST		50.00		50.00
POT LUCK	82.00	100.00	31.33	100.00
RECEPTION FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS	161.57	200.00	132.82	200.00
ACTION				
VOTER SERVICE				
GUIDE TO ELECTED OFFICIALS	199.28	300.00		200.00
VOTER GUIDE	1850.00	3800.00	1550.52	1500.00
LWV PUBLICATIONS		50.00		50.00
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS		100.00		1000.00
NEW CITIZEN PROGRAM				
ADMIN				
SUPPLIES	211.42	400.00	172.59	300.00
BANK FEES	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
POSTAGE/BULK MAIL/MAILBOX	581.79	800.00	431.00	500.00
PRINTING	1241.45	1400.00	299.45	400.00
WEB DESIGN				
			682.45	500.00
PMP				
STATE	1982.75	2100.00	1529.00	1500.00
US - Paid from Checking	2539.85	2600.00	2476.00	2600.00
US - Paid from US Ed Fund	508.00			
CONTRIBUTIONS/GIFTS	138.00	150.00		100.00
CONVENTIONS		750.00	295.00	750.00
TOTAL LWVGH EXPENSES	11232.53	14900.00	9360.06	11700.00
LWVUS Ed Fund Account				
	Actual 5/1/07	Proposed 07/08	Actual 08/09	Proposed 09/10
Starting Balance	1086.45	1556.45	289.45	289.45
Contributions				
From Finance Drive	2828.00	1500.00	1200.00	1200.00
Other				
Withdrawals (25% 03/04 PMP)				
Reconciling withdrawal				
Withdrawals (25% 04/05 PMP)				
PMP Withdrawal	-508.00			
Voter Service Grants	-1850.00	-2000.00	-1200.00	-1200.00
Ending Balance	1556.45	1056.45	289.45	289.45

LOCAL PROGRAM CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

PROGRAM ITEMS FOR REAFFIRMATION MAY 2009

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 2009-2010

For Action and Study

Education

Strive to present programs that will raise the level of debate about education and education funding, especially focus upon presenting the latest research on factors proven to improve education outcomes.

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, a publicity chair, an email coordinator, a Voters Service Committee
- One person will be named the convener of the group each quarter. Elisa McCarthy will serve in this capacity the first quarter.
- Proposed members of the Executive Committee and assignments:
 - Carole Mulready (chair)
 - Mary Andrews (at large)
 - Mary Everett (treasurer)
 - Sandy Fry (email coordinator and website content)
 - Elisa McCarthy (voters service)
 - Mary Murray (at large)
 - Beverly Miller (voters service)
 - 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 dinner in May
- Produce a Leagues Latest quarterly. Distribute electronically to the extent possible
- Hold program meetings as desired

Investigate merger with Windsor League:

- Coordinate activities throughout the Year with the Windsor League.
- Investigate the specifics of how a merger could be constructed and how to meet National League requirements.
 - Review bylaws of both organizations
 - Consider budget ramifications
 - Develop a governance structure that will enable each group to continue to serve their “home market”