

the Voice



the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County
Box 899, Litchfield, CT 06759

Sept 2009

Serving Litchfield and Surrounding Communities

Understanding Probate Courts

***How they work and
how they may change***

Wednesday Sept., 23,
Oliver Wolcott Library
7 PM

Election Day November 3rd

***Volunteer needed to put out
the "Vote Today" signs
around the Litchfield Green***

*Please contact Denise
dbutwill@gmail.com
567-2035*

Cable TV Study Meeting

Tuesday, Sept., 29,
3:30pm

at the Common Ground
All Welcome

For more info contact Pat Donovan
567-5689, pad199@optonline.net

Board Meetings

First Monday of the Month

Open to all League Members

October 5

November 2

December 7

Litchfield Bancorp
at 9am

President's Message

Lately, Charles Dickens' famous opening line from *A Tale of Two Cities*—"it was the best of times, it was the worst of times"—has been haunting my thoughts. Personally, it has been a great summer. My son got married, my daughter gave birth to our first grandchild, and my husband retired—all in the space of 11 days. However, I'm also painfully aware that life has not been equally auspicious for many others—people continue to lose their homes to foreclosure, the unemployment rate continues to rise, and the future looks a little bleak for the younger generation (I have a 22 year old son).

Equally distressing is the tension that's been rising in our communities. I'm troubled by what's transpired at health-care town hall meetings this month. Congressmen requiring police escorts to their cars? Protesters bringing guns to political rallies? At times, it seems that we have lost the habit of civil discourse—or worse.

And that's where League comes in. The League of Women Voters sponsors activities to help Connecticut voters become better informed on current issues and active participants in government. We're known for our non-partisan stance and our civil approach which gives us great stature in policy debates. With municipal elections fast approaching, our Voter Service Committee has been hard at work scheduling debates in Torrington, Litchfield, Morris and Woodbury. Please contact Denise Butwill (dbutwill@gmail.com or 567-2035) if you would like to volunteer. We'll keep the debates civil and hopefully everyone will learn something.

We're also starting "Knit, Purl, Politics," an informal monthly get together to chat and craft. Bring your project and come with your ideas. We'll discuss the issues of the day while we craft—in a civil manner, of course. Please contact me (cshorrigan@optonline.net or 567-3268) if you would like to join.

So what's the next line of Dickens' famous quote? "It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...." Indeed. It's going to be a great year!

Christine

Voter Services Election 2009

Runners
Question Reviewers
Timers
Greeters

We need you.
To volunteer, please contact
Marie at
567-4062 or
mariescirica@optonline.net.

Four evenings of Meet the Candidates Forums are planned for this election season. Marie Scirica is coordinating helpers for each evening. Any other questions or concern can be directed to Denise 567-2035 or dbutwill@gmail.com.

Woodbury, Wednesday, Sept. 30 – Nonnewaug High School Auditorium

7pm Selectmen		
First Selectmen	Gerald Stomski (R)	Paul Hinckley (D)
BOS	Barbara Perkinson (R)	George W. Hale III (D)

Litchfield, Wednesday, Oct. 7 – Litchfield Intermediate School Auditorium

6:30pm BOE	Donald R. Falcetti (R)	Sandra H. Becker (D)
	Wayne F. Shuhi (R)	Amy Rosser (D)
	Betsy Fabbri (R)	Kathleen A. Orr (D)
7:30pm First Selectperson	Leo Paul (R)	Martha Bernstein (D)
8:30pm P&Z	Susan W. P. Lowenthal (R)	David E. Pavlick (D)
	Thomas H. Waterhouse (R)	Julie A. Fedorovich (D)
	William S. Post (R)	-----

Torrington, Tuesday, Oct. 13 – Torrington Middle School Auditorium

7pm Mayor	Ryan J Bingham (R)	Samuel E. Slaiby (D)
	Thomas Iffland (I)	
8pm Councilmen	Drake L. Waldron (R)	Marie P. Soliani (D)
	Rick E. Dalla Valle (R)	Michael Colangelo (D)
	Elinor C. Carbone (R)	Paul E. Cavagnero (D)
	Thomas C Jerran (R)	Paul F. Samele Jr. (D)

Morris, Wednesday, Oct. 21 – Morris Town Hall

7pm Selectmen		
First Selectmen	Karen Paradis (R)	
	or Connie Trolle (R)	Allan Bernardini (D)
BOS	John Zarella (R)	
	or Barbara Bongiolatti (R)	Marty Weiner (D)

All debates are open to the public.

Written questions will be taken from the audience on index cards provided that evening.

All debates will be taped for future broadcasting on local cable channels.

Understanding Probate Courts

How they work and how they may change

Wednesday, September 23, 2009
Oliver Wolcott Library
7 PM



Speaker

The Honorable Michael F. Magistrali
Judge of Probate,
Torrington

Judge Magistrali will take questions at the end of his talk.
Light refreshments will be served.

Open to the public

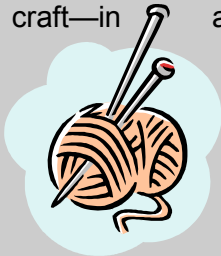
Sponsored by League of Women Voters
Litchfield County

“Knit, Purl, Politics”

starting this fall “Knit, Purl, Politics,” an informal monthly get together to chat and craft.

Bring your project and come with your ideas.

We'll discuss the issues of the day while we craft—in a civil manner, of course.



Please contact Christine

(cshorrigan@optonline.net
or 567-3268) if you would like to join.



On 4th of July, Pat Donovan, Bernie Harrington and Mary Ellen Spiegel joined forces with the Litchfield Historical Society to participate in the annual Pet Parade. Bernie was accompanied at the event by his dog Millie. Sugar came with Pat but both dogs chose not to march in the parade.

Non -Fiction Book Group

at the
Oliver Wolcott Library
come to one or all meetings

Meeting the second Thursday of the month
at **1pm**
in the Community Room

October 8

Persepolis 1: the story of a childhood &
Persepolis 2: the story of a return
by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novels)

November 12

This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind by Ivan Doig

December 10

Once Upon a Town: the Miracle of the North Platte Canteen by Bob Greene

Copies of these titles are available at the library circulation desk.

Membership

Dues for the period
July 2009 through June 2010 are now due.
Please remit \$45 for individual dues to
LWV /LC
P.O.Box 899
Litchfield, CT 06759.

New Members are always welcome!

Have a friend who may be interested to join?
Let the Membership Chair know. She will send
out pertinent material and an invitation to join.
Your suggestions should be mailed to:

Ingley Forbes (LWV Membership Chair)
109 Shear Shop Road
Litchfield, CT 06759

Congratulations!



Christine Horrigan,
our leader and chief, is
also a proud
grandmother.

Emmet Martin

Osowiecki,

born 8/21 to great fanfare.

A tough delivery (he was 8 pounds, 7
ounces), but a very happy ending.

Vicki Claman

Vicki, as everyone knew her, was a supreme advocate for the right to live with freedom. She took up many causes from the right of wild donkeys to live without fear of slaughter to the right of all persons to eat a good meal at the Torrington Soup Kitchen to the right of any person to end-of- life care through Hospice at Home.

She was a longstanding member of the League who was most active in the fight for a women's right to choose and the banning of hormones from the milk supply. It is hard to find a part of community life in Litchfield County where her hand was not one of the most active. She died August 7th after a long battle with cancer. We will miss her presence.

Making Our League Stronger

***Want to make a difference but don't have much time?
Here's a list of areas where your small contribution can be a big help.***

- Take pictures at an event
- Help with a voice mailing
- Proof reading
- Design flyers
- Distribute flyers
- Candidate debates- greeter/timers/setup
- Election night reporting
- Take RSVP's for a League event

- Host the legislative breakfast
- Put events on board in front of town hall
- Coordinate new members gathering
- Set up for probate court program

Please contact Christine and she will put you in touch
with a committee that would appreciate a helping
hand! 567-3268 or cshorrigan@optonline.net

Thank You!

LWV Celebrates 90th Anniversary

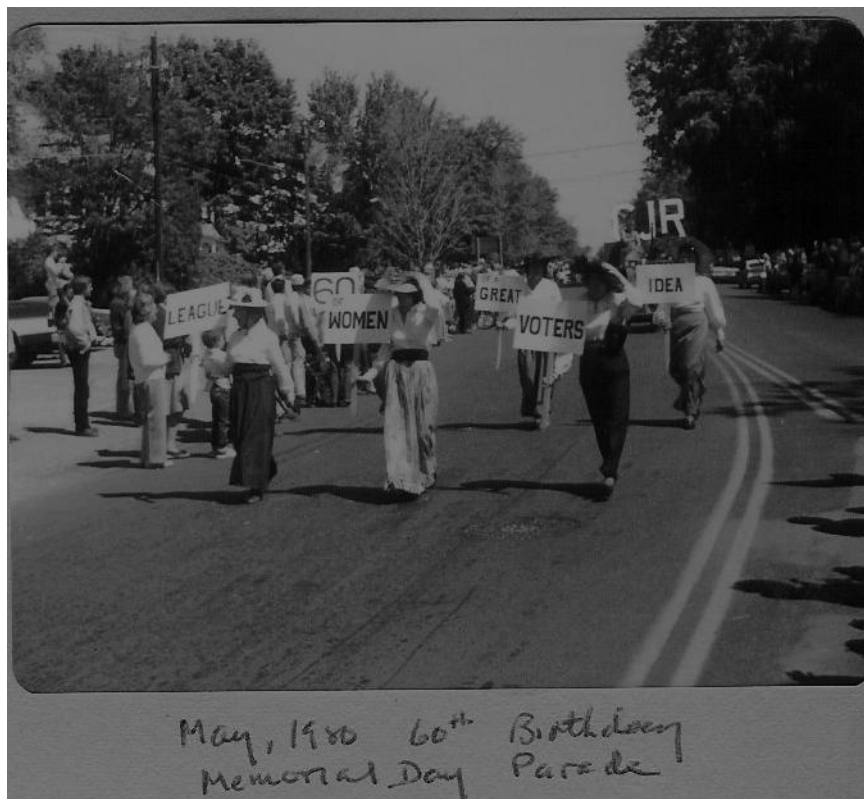
The LWVCT is planning to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of our organization's founding with a series of events beginning in January 2010, the year of the founding of the national organization, and continuing thru the early part of 2011, the founding the CT League.

An anniversary committee chaired by LWVCT VP Cheryl Dunson is already at work developing an array of ideas and programs to appeal to many tastes and pocketbooks. We will also be sharing revenues from some selected events with local Leagues for their participation.

Keep a lookout for more details on the events in the months ahead but here is a sneak preview:

- Jan 2010 – online auction of items, from restaurant gift certificates and specialty chocolates to spa services.
- Jan 2010 – display of LWV history and memorabilia in the concourse of the Legislative Office Building. ***Does your League have historical photos in your files?*** If so, please let us know. We're probably going to need them for the display.
- May 2010 – a one-woman show on the life of Susan B. Anthony, combined with a celebratory tea, to be held at the historic Keeler Tavern in Ridgefield.

Also under consideration are author events, comedy performances and film nights. Stay tuned!



If you like party planning and want to join the planning committee, or if you want to help with a discreet piece such soliciting an item for the auction, please contact Jean Rabinow.

Committee members:
Cheryl Dunson, Chair,
Jara Burnett,
Donna Conway,
Christine Lodewick,
Elisa McCarthy,
Carole Mulready,
Jean Rabinow
Lynn Taborsak,
Elona Vaisnys

Photo taken from LWV of Litchfield Country Scrapbook
May 1980, 60th Birthday for LWVCT & LWVUSA

1969-2009

Imagine-Forty Years

Happy Birthday. Marking forty years in anyone's life certainly is a startling occasion, a defining moment to think about how it all happened and what lies ahead. Marking forty years in the existence of the LWV Litchfield is mind boggling.

Those of us who were a part of the founding group in the spring of 1969 remember that little group whose boundless energy and enthusiasm will probably never be surpassed. They wrote the first KNOW YOUR TOWN booklet required to move from a provisional League status to a full-fledged League, took on every national, state and local study and rarely, if ever, missed a meeting. We were so young, determined, dedicated and so thin.

Purportedly Rousseau proclaimed "Le plus ca change le plus ca le meme". Voila! Throughout the 70's and 80's League studied recycling, school vouchers, the use of local public buildings, solid waste, water protection, affordable housing, the income tax, health care---every cause became a mission. Forty years later take a look at League's agenda...clean air, water protection, recycling, health care et al. The fight goes on and League is ever vigilant.

Times changed. The little woman at home in 1969 yearning for friends and causes to expand her horizons suddenly went off to work or back to school. Those exhilarating and often bitter days of the 70's witnessed Neil Armstrong walking on the moon, racial and anti VietNam War demonstrations and the rise of a counter culture. There was heavy competition for League's demands. Despite the setbacks, however, League remained steadfast in Litchfield and soon returned to its large membership and full programs. About 1995, as Leagues in the surrounding towns disbanded, their members flocked to the Litchfield League and the Board renamed us the LWV of Litchfield County, Inc.

League was not only a serious study and lobbying group, busy registering voters and disseminating information on legislation, but also an organization of exciting women (soon to include male members) who relished the annual SIR Symposium, trips to historical sites, civic participation in the schools, awarding school scholarships and monitoring exit poll sites. The Candidate Debates became a League trademark each fall and continue today. Breakfasts and luncheons with our area legislators and selectmen and our annual International Luncheon are always jam-packed exciting occasions.

Today our legislators know most of our League members by name for we are forever by their sides via emails or lobbying and we enjoy a warm and rewarding rapport.

These past fifteen years since League's history was recorded for our 25th anniversary have been equally productive and exciting. In 1995, at Ming's Restaurant in Litchfield, League sponsored an incredible program on womens' human rights delivered by three Litchfield County women who had attended the 1995 UN Conference on Womens' Rights held in Beijing, China. Betty Katzin, a past League president, even wore her Chinese work outfit previously purchased while on a LWVCT-sponsored trip to China. Following the death of our President Jane Knowlton, League purchased and placed an inscribed bench in her memory on the sands on Lake Waramaug. We sponsored (with massive persuasion) the first Hazardous Waste Collection at the town garage in Litchfield. Most recently a major study on the protection of water in our area has been instituted and continues to be a major program. Fundraisers these past years have been fun and successful by the showing of "Calendar Girls" at the Community Center and by the most generous, excellent and provocative programs on the political scene delivered by author Kevin Phillips and his cohort James Hatt. And, then there was that guest speaker at an annual meeting at the Litchfield Country Club a few years back who caught the attention of the reporters including the NEW YORK TIMES.

The impetus that inspired the suffragettes to establish a League "to finish the fight" following the passage of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote is alive in Litchfield County today. As League members we cherish the privilege of an unmatched opportunity we possess to make a difference in our communities, state and nation.

Judy Simoncelli, a late editor of the LITCHFIELD ENQUIRER once wrote *"League is not for the dilettante but if you wish to make a contribution to your community, League is for you"*. Yes, it is a happy birthday.

Marie H. Wallace

League of Women Voters of Litchfield County
40th Birthday Party
June 17, 2009

Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me

(A sampling of the questions used at the 40th birthday party celebration)

- 1) From its inception the Litchfield League has been involved in Study. Topics have included Solid Waste in 1972, Tax Reform in 1976, and the Water Quality and Supply Study in 1987. Which of these events marked their first controversial study, the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) Study in 1973?
 - a) They were not allowed to hold meetings at town hall
 - b) Members met to burn bras on the Litchfield Green
 - c) Even husbands looked up ... What is this League? What's this about your own credit card, going back to school, getting a job?
- 2) Movies programs have been used by this League as a vehicle for education, fundraising and for fun. Which of the following movies has **not** been used in a League program?
 - a) "Not One of the Boys"
 - b) "Calendar Girls"
 - c) "Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang"
 - d) "Dirty Harry"
- 3) The Drop Box at the Oliver Wolcott Library was established by an organized woman with an eye towards always making life easier. The Drop Box
 - a) Is still used today to drop off material when the library is closed
 - b) Was used for League Members to drop off items at the library for one another
 - c) Was the first spot in town for collecting materials for recycling
- 4) In 1976 our local League chapter conducted a Recreation Study and Survey. That study resulted in a recommendation that Recreation Commission include at least two teenager members. Another outcome of that study was
 - a) The addition of more soccer fields
 - b) The first town bulletin board
 - c) Morning lap swims at Mount Tom
- 5) During 1975 the League went through a period that the papers called "Imaginative Fundraising". Which of the following was **not** offered as a means for raising funds at that time?
 - a) Popcorn balls at Borough Days
 - b) A goat to stud in May
 - c) Homemade jellies
 - d) Yoga lessons
 - e) House plants in homemade pots
- 6) Voter registration, debates, and "meet the candidate" nights: It seems that every other page of our scrapbooks, which cover 40 years, is devoted to these three topics. During the 2000 election season one particular debate stands out in the minds of seasoned organizers. Would that be
 - a) A failed attempt at using cumulative time, where a candidate spent so long on his first question he wasn't permitted to talk for the remainder of the debate.?
 - b) When a timer fell asleep and was heard on cable 5 snoring?
 - c) When candidates got 15 minutes of uninterrupted airtime because one candidate sent a tape instead of coming in person?

Answers 1(c) (Quote taken from the 25th years history written by Marie Wallace in 1994) 2(d), 3(b) (established during Valerie Vondermuhl presidency, from 1973 to 1975, the group also made the Vote Today signs that are still used today), 4(b) (still present on the side of @the corner), 5(a), 6(c) (Nancy Johnson 5th district debates set on cable 5)

League of Women Voters of Litchfield County
P.O. Box 899
Litchfield, Connecticut 06759

Special thanks to
Niraj Patel
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in Litchfield
for printing the Voice

**Litchfield League
Calendar of Events**

Wed., Sept 23	Probate Court Program
Tues., Sept 29	Cable TV Study Meeting
Wed., Sept 30	Woodbury Debate
Mon., Oct 5	Board Meeting
Wed., Oct 7	Litchfield Debates
Thurs., Oct 8	Non-fiction Book Group
Tues., Oct 13	Torrington Debates
Wed., Oct 21	Morris Debate
Mon., Nov 2	Board Meeting
Tues., Nov 3	Election Day
Thurs., Nov 12	Non-fiction book group
Sat., Dec 5	Fall Conference LWVCT
Mon., Dec 7	Board Meeting
Thurs., Dec 10	Non-fiction Book Group

Events to watch for

November	Cable TV Study Meeting
December	Meet and Greet for New Members