



Westport Voter

March 2011

Visit our website: www.lwvwestportct.org

CELEBRATING (62) YEARS IN WESTPORT



Come in out of the cold
and

Join us for our Annual
Winter Warm Up Celebration

Sunday, March 13, 2011

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Wine & Delectables

At the Home of Yvonne Senturia
17 Blue Ribbon Drive, Westport

GUEST SPEAKER: Cheryl Dunson
President, LWV of Connecticut

Enjoy being with good friends and meeting new members.
Don't forget, this is a perfect opportunity to bring a prospective member!

R.S.V.P. Doris Skutch, (203) 227-6114



The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, community-based political organization that encourages the informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. It was founded in 1920 as an outgrowth of the 72 year struggle to win voting rights for women.

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LWV websites

www.lwvwestportct.org
www.lwvct.org (Connecticut)
www.lwv.org (U.S.)

Book Group News

All meetings are at 1:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. The group is open to all League members. Please join us!

March 28: **Things I've Been Silent About** by Azar Nafisi. *Nafisi shares her memories of living in thrall to a powerful and complex mother against the backdrop of a country's political revolution.* At the home of Athena Bradley, 7 Northgate.

April 25: **The Lacuna** by Barbara Kingsolver. *Kingsolver takes us on an epic journey from the Mexico City of artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to the America of Pearl Harbor, FDR and J. Edgar Hoover.* At the home of Sheila Creatura, 45 Owenoke



From the Co-Presidents



March 2011

Greetings to all,

In this time when Washington, the country and the world seem to be in turmoil, being a member of the League of Women Voters seems more important than ever. As one of 900 state and local Leagues of the League of Women Voters of the United States, with approximately 71,000 members, we have the unique opportunity to have our voices heard ... as a group, and individually.

As a member of the Westport League, you automatically became a member of the LWVUS and the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, both organizations working tirelessly to assure that the League's core principles of responsible and fair government are upheld. Engaging thousands of volunteers at the state and national level, these organizations are addressing a wide range of issues affecting all of us today ... open government, proof-of-citizen requirement, clean air, campaign finance reform, gun laws, ethics ... just to name a few.

Our schedules are all busy, we know, but we urge you to make it a habit of regularly visiting the national and Connecticut League websites... www.lwv.org and www.lwvct.org ... not only to keep informed about current issues but to find new ways you can expand your participation as a League member and importantly how your voice can be heard.

And last but not least, we hope you will join us at on Sunday, March 13 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for our annual Winter Warm Up Celebration. We'll welcome Cheryl Dunson, President of the LWVCT, and look forward to her speaking about how the League makes a difference in the state and how local Leagues can be involved.

Doris & Yvonne

TOPIC TALK

Monday, March 14 @ 1:30 p.m. at the Westport Library McManus Room
"Connecticut Death Penalty Legislative Update"

SPEAKERS:

Ben Jones, *Executive Director*, Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty
Ellen McBride, *LWVCT Death Penalty Specialist*

For more information, contact Liz-Ann Koos at (203)227-2024

SAVE THE DATE

42nd Symposium on International Relations
"Global Change Agents in Health, Education and Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century"
Presented by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut Education Fund

Wednesday, April 27, 2011 - 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
137-141 Frontage Road, Yale West Campus, in Orange
For more information, visit www.lwvct.org.



Join us in welcoming our newest members:

Clarinda Higgins (Rindy)
9 Madeline Avenue
Westport, CT 06880
226-4398

Barbara Licker
24 Jennie Lane
Westport, CT 06880
226-4455

Our LWV Westport Website is on the Cusp of a Major Redesign!

If you've ever wondered why it is laid out the way it is or have opinions about how it should look, please let us know. We have an expert ready to do the programming, but would welcome your input on content and layout. Contact Lisa Shufro (221-1350) or Yvonne Senturia (226-6683) for more information.



The February 14 Valentine Tea & State and Local Program Planning



Energized by a **Valentine's Day Tea** at the home of **Liz-Ann Koos**, there was lively discussion on Westport's recommendations for State Programming for 2011-2013. (*Kudos were given to Westport by the State League for being the first League to accomplish this and report back to LWVCT!*)

After a review of current **State Positions**, the group recommended that LWVCT's top priorities for advocacy remain **Election Laws and Transportation**. The Position on **Quality Integrated Education** is undergoing a 10-year review statewide for relevance and updating, and the consensus of the group was that this policy should be updated. Lois Green is willing to participate in the review by LWVCT. Also, the group expressed that the State Position on **Primaries and Parties** should be updated. The LWVCT position to repeal the death penalty has strong support, and our League member Ellen McBride is representing the State League in the coalition Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty.

For **Local Program Planning**, the group looked at three priority areas for Local Programs identified at last June's Annual Meeting: **affordable housing, an Ethics Code, and consolidation of town services**. The group favored continuing our League's focus on **affordable senior housing**. Yvonne Senturia and Liz-Ann Koos have been representing our League in a community organizations group chaired by Lynn Goldberg and Stan Nair supporting the use of town-owned land at Baron South for senior housing and other support services. There is continuing interest in an **Ethics Code** for Westport. Pat Porio and Christine O'Sullivan are willing to initially revisit work on this topic done by our League over the years. Given the financial difficulties facing Connecticut towns, the consolidation of town-related expenditures continues to be an issue of concern, but we need interested members to gather information and work on it.

We need member feedback, interest and ability to contribute time on local issues in order to continue the League's important role. If you would like to know more about how you can become involved, contact **Liz-Ann Koos** at (203) 227-2024.

2nd Grade Water Quality Training is Underway!



Our first training for the new Second Grade Water Quality presentation will begin on March 16, with this first wave of volunteers presenting in the second grade classes at Saugatuck Elementary School during the week of March 28. Come observe the presentation and sign up to present next year when we roll the lesson out at all the other elementary schools. To learn how you can be involved, contact Jill Greenberg at (203) 454-3723 or at jsgreenb@optonline.net.

Our town directory, *Know your Town*, has recently been updated to reflect changes in representation at the local, state and national levels. Check the *Know Your Town* link on our website at www.lwvwestportct.org. Look for hard copies at the library, Senior Center, and Town Hall in the coming month.

MAY VOTER DRIVE *Democracy in Action!!!*

In May, we will again assist our town Registrars of Voters by registering eligible high school students to vote. We will be going to Staples and Greens Farms Academy, dates to be determined soon. Depending on the school's schedule, we typically meet in the morning for a couple of hours. It's really a fun and rewarding experience. If you are interested in becoming part of the democratic process first-hand, please contact me at 203 222-1206. As soon as we have confirmed the dates, we will let you know.
Becky Ruthven



JOIN THE TAG SALE TEAM

It's official ... our annual League **Tag Sale** has been scheduled for **Friday, May 13 and Saturday, May 14**. We need donations ... and volunteers ... and would love to hear from you if you have an available garage or barn for the event. This is a great opportunity for creative and energetic League members to join the Team. Be a part of this important League fundraiser ... call Tag Sale Team Leader Karen Curtis at 203/259-1880.



What's New from the Observer Corps/Action Committee

February reports from our Observers on issues of interest to the League included:

- **Septic Maintenance.** Inspection of septic systems as required now for certain building additions has identified failing septic systems within the town. Our League has supported both educational and enforcement efforts to remedy this significant source of water pollution.
- **Parks and Recreation.** Work is underway on a draft policy for the use of town athletic fields, which will address issues including littering and damage to fields.
- **Non-Agenda Items.** How do Boards/Commissions track non-agenda items raised by members of the public in order to ensure a response?
- **Baron's South Senior Housing.** The League has submitted two statements to the P & Z in support of the concept of a senior housing facility, and two members are serving on an ad hoc group of town organizations and individuals providing community input and following the development of the proposal. If you have an interest in this topic and would like to review the text amendment or to learn more, contact Liz-Ann Koos at (203) 227-2024 or Yvonne Senturia at (203) 226-6683.

TAG SALE TIME IS ALSO PLANT SALE TIME

As you get your garden in shape this spring (yes, it's coming, it really, really is!), please remember the LWV and pot up any unwanted or extra divisions, seedlings and volunteers. We've had great success in the past with all types of plants and planters, but perky-looking plants in pots sell best. If possible, please dig early and think big. There's always a market for red maple seedlings and other woodies. A wide variety of pots are available from Lisa Shufro. And, she will also provide plant-sitting services, if you'd like a dropoff ahead of the sale. Contact her at 203-221-1350.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WESTPORT

Westport Voter
P.O. Box 285
Westport, CT 06881-0285

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 110
WESTPORT, CT 06881



JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Individual Dues: \$50 Household (limited to 2): \$75

Membership year: July 1 through June 30

Send check made payable to:
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WESTPORT
P.O. Box 285
Westport, CT 06881- 0285

Contributions to LWV Education Fund are tax-deductible; LWV dues are not.

All League meetings are open to all members.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- March**
- 9 **Tag Sale Team Meeting** - 9:30 a.m. Westport Town Hall, Room 102
 - 13 **Winter Warm-Up Celebration**- 4:00 p.m.. 6:00 p.m. At the home of Yvonne Senturia, 17 Blue Ribbon Drive
 - 14 **Topic Talk, "Connecticut Death Penalty Legislative Update"** - 1:30 p.m., McManus Room, Westport Public Library
 - 17 **Observer Corps/Action Committee** - 9:00 a.m.. 10:30 a.m. At the home of Ann Gill, 53 High Point Road
 - 28 **Book Group** - 1:30 p.m. At the home of Athena Bradley, 7 Northgate
- April**
- 6 **LWV Board Meeting** - 8:30 a.m.. 11:00 a.m. At the home of Jill Greenberg, 7 Strathmore Lane
 - 21 **Observer Corps/Action Committee** - 9:00a.m. . 10:30 a.m. At the home of Ann Gill, 53 High Point Road
 - 25 **Book Group** - 1:30 p.m. At the home of Sheila Creatura, 45 Owenoke
 - 27 **LWVCT Education Fund's 42nd Symposium on International Relations** - 8:30 a.m. - 12:30p.m., Yale West Campus in Orange