

the Voice

Winter 2020



the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County
Serving Litchfield and Surrounding Communities

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Board Meetings

Board Meetings are on the first Monday of the month at 9:30 AM at the Litchfield Community Center.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been one hundred years since women got the vote! Since then, League members have been continuously working to create a more informed electorate, to ensure honest and open government, and to promote issues on which we have action positions. We are entering into the 'Action Season'. Our state legislature has just convened and since this is the short session, lots of legislation will be jammed into the docket. We need to stay on top of what is happening.

Luckily, as part of a three-tiered organization, League members receive information on important action issues from State and National. Although we count on their lobbying efforts, it is essential that we step up and do our part; express our views. Later in this issue you will find contact information for all our legislators. When you take action you can always spread the word to your friends and encourage them to do the same.

Looking at our busy calendar, you will see that we are accomplishing many things that cover two important league goals:

6 Candidates' Forums involving 20 plus volunteers. **Education and Action.**

"Feet on the Ground at the Border". **Education and Action** opportunities.

Legislators Breakfast. **Education and Action** (lobbying).

And, coming **Education and Action**:

- ◆ Lunch & Learn: regional government,
- ◆ Big Issues/Small Towns: local governments
- ◆ Annual Luncheon: Census 2020.

Let us charge into the next Hundred years with renewed commitment to creating a more perfect democracy. Use your voice!

Hope to see you at upcoming events.

Thank you, Kerry

www.litchfieldlwv.org
lwvoflc@gmail.com
Box 899 Litchfield, Ct 06759

Upcoming Programs



BIG ISSUES/SMALL TOWNS

**Sandwich and Salad Luncheon
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 @ NOON
BANTAM BOROUGH HALL**

**Our invited guests will be the First Selectmen from
Goshen, Litchfield, Morris, Woodbury, and Washington**

Please RSVP to Diane Ryan at 860-567-2723

Leave a message with your name and whether you will bring sandwiches, salad, drink, or finger desserts to share

Connecticut Suffrage Program

The CT League is supporting towns across the state in preparation to celebrate the Centennial of Women's Suffrage with educational and entertaining events built on community involvement. Here in Litchfield County, Torrington's Mayor, Elinor Carbone has convened a committee to highlight the 100th Anniversary, as well as make plans for this celebration and encourage voter registration. League members, Kerwin Mayers and Rosemarie Greco are participating in shaping events for Memorial Day parades in Torrington and Litchfield, to encourage education through films and historical presentations and to collaborate with students for voter registration.



Mayers and Greco met with the Torrington Mayor's Youth Council to begin collaboration for Voter Registration among their members ...young voters. This is what the Suffrage movement was about: the right to vote, women's right to vote... everyone's right to vote!



Upcoming Programs Continued

Every Person Counts Annual Luncheon May 2nd 2020



We are pleased to announce that the 2020 Annual Luncheon on May 2nd will focus on the importance of the census and what each of us can do to be sure that we are all counted.

Our speakers will be Congresswoman Jahana Hayes; Catherine Marx, Partnership Specialist, Regional Census Center and Julie Loughran, President and CEO, Connecticut Community Foundation.

Connecticut and the rest of the country will begin the decennial census next month. So much depends upon this count. Federal infrastructure, education, and public safety funding; representation in Congress and the state legislature; and even economic development all rely on the data collected.

The Census Bureau is dealing with constrained budgets, long-standing distrust in government, informal living arrangements, a mobile population, increasingly diverse populations, and rapidly changing technology. Because each and every person living in America at the time the Census takes place must be counted, it needs help from all of us.

The data will not be revised in a few months or a few years, and the next census won't be until 2030, so an undercount can affect us for an entire decade.

Eleven billion dollars in federal resources came to our state this past year based on census figures. That money represents over 55 different federal programs including SNAP, housing programs, and Community Development Block Grants. Connecticut sends more money to Washington than it gets back, so making sure the census is accurate is paramount to maintaining the funding that the state and municipalities receive.

The census is at the heart of good economic development; businesses make all kinds of decisions for retail and manufacturing placement based on population data. It can make the difference between losing a representative in Congress and staying at five, maintaining or even increasing federal funding we bring into the state, and economic development opportunities as businesses decide whether Connecticut is right for them.

The census, like elections, is an exercise in civic participation and, arguably, as important. Because it only happens every ten years, it increases the need for full participation. Mark your calendar and plan to join us to learn more!

Chapter News



Feet on the Ground at the Border

The League partnered with the Litchfield Historical Society on November 24th to present a talk entitled “Feet on the Ground at the Border” by Mary Alice McCabe, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. McCabe shared her border experience working with immigrants at the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas and with the asylum seekers waiting on the Brownsville-Matamoros Bridge. She has spent more than half her life working with rural communities in Latin America. Her current experience at the border has shown a dedication to alleviate the ordeals suffered by the many seeking refuge in our country. Her passion affected all those who attended this talk.

The crisis at our borders continues to demonstrate the drastic changes to our country’s immigration policy. Limiting access to the number of families has resulted in returning them to Mexico where they must wait for court dates for 2 months or more, living in conditions that are crowded and dangerous. As our government’s policies constrict the number of people allowed to apply for asylum, the crisis at the border cannot be ignored.

The policy of the League as stated on the website is:

“We support federal immigration laws that provide efficient, expeditious systems for immigrants to enter the United States. Seeking asylum at points of entry into the United States is part of our legal immigration process and assaults on asylum seekers are un-American. The League of Women Voters stands in solidarity with immigrants and our partners in the immigrant rights community. The 116th Congress must take immediate action to pass common sense, fair immigration policies that end the crisis at our border, ends the separation of families, and provides a path to citizenship.”



Chapter Programs & News Continued

It Is Time to Register To Vote!

The League of Women Voters of Litchfield County wants to update all potential voters about elections and registration guidelines.

Connecticut's Presidential Primary is on Tuesday, April 28, 2020. In order to vote in a Connecticut primary election, our laws require voters to be enrolled in the party holding the primary. If voters wish to switch their party affiliation in order to vote in a new party in the April primary, they must change their affiliation by January 28, 2020 in order to gain voting privileges in the new party.



Unaffiliated voters, who have not been enrolled in any party for at least 3 months may enroll in a political party up to April 23 by mail or by April 27 by noon, in person, at your registrar's office. If you are a member of the Independent Party of Connecticut and wish to vote in the Presidential Primary of either major party, you must change your affiliation by January 28, 2020. Eligible citizens can change their party affiliation at voterregistration.ct.gov.

If you are a U.S. citizen and a Connecticut resident who will turn 18 by Election Day, November 3, 2020, you are eligible to participate in the Presidential Primary on April 28th. You can register online with a DMV-issued ID at <https://voterregistration.ct.gov/OLVR/welcome.do> or download the voter registration form and mail it, pick one up at your local library, community center or visit your local city/town hall's Registrar of Voters office. Visit <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS> for more information about voting in Connecticut.



The LWWUS has relaunched the election information website. Please share this handy tool that provides information to voters;

<https://www.vote411.org/>

Chapter Programs & News Continued



The Annual Legislators' Breakfast

The Litchfield Historical Society hosted the State Legislators' breakfast on January 25, 2020, which was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County thanks to the organizing of Theresa LaVoie. In attendance were state Representatives Michelle L. Cook, D-Torrington; Maria Horn, D-Salisbury; David T. Wilson, D-Litchfield; John Piscopo, R-Thomaston; and Jay M. Case, R-Winsted. Over three dozen League members and guests were in the audience.

Attendees were able to question Legislators about their stands on current Connecticut issues, including truck tolls, the U. S. Census, the opioid crisis, the Citizens' Election Fund, and a proposal for free community college for some state residents. The representatives were mutually respectful, while their interests going into the next legislative session were mostly divided between political parties. The general consensus of participants was that the event was informative and worthwhile.

Donovan Elected to Bd. of Finance

Congratulations to our past president, Pat Donovan. When asked about how she was finding this new job she commented, "being elected to Litchfield's Board of Finance has taught me several things: The scope of the work is much broader than I thought. Local politics is more cordial than national politics. My experience tells me that everyone, regardless of party, wants the best for the town & its citizens. I would encourage everyone to go to a board meeting; Selectmen, Education, Finance or Planning & Zoning. What you learn might encourage you to participate local government."

Thank you, Pat!

Chapter Programs & News Continued



Valentines Day was the ACTUAL 100th Birthday of the LWV. And to make it even more special, the US House of Representatives voted to eliminate the deadline requirement for states to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Now it is the Senate's turn. In January, Virginia became the 38th state to Ratify the ERA crossing the 3/4 threshold of support required.

In 1972 without being a League member, I participated in the LWV Equal Rights Amendment Study in Burlingame, California. At the weekly meetings, I had my two year old in tow. The night before presenting our findings to the membership, I found out I had to become a member in order to participate. By then I was passionate about the issue and there was no way that I was not going to participate. Thus began my (very rewarding) journey down this LWV rabbit hole.

Kerry

Lunch and Learn

No L&L this month . Next one will be March 19, noon at Oliver Wolcott Library, Litchfield. The topic will be the COG (Council of Governments in Northwestern CT). This discussion ties in nicely with Small Towns/Big Issues, our **March 25** luncheon with First Selectmen. more to follow.

LWVCT Advocacy Workshop February 26, Rm 310 in the Capitol Building. Learn how to be most effective in your advocacy efforts. Our Legislative Consultants Paul Bailey and Alan Deckman will introduce us to the legislators, committee and commission members who will be speaking. The team will also show us some features of the www.cga.ct.gov website. Space limited, please register at advocacy@lwvct.org



Welcome New Members



Nancy Kapstein

Constance Matson

Dale Staub

Susan Vontell



2020 LWV CALENDAR

FEB 22	LWV 100 th GALA DINNER Stamford
MAR 2	BOARD MEETING – LCC – 9:00
MAR 19	LUNCH & LEARN – OWL-noon
MAR 25	SMALL TOWNS/BIG ISSUES- Bantam Borough Hall - noon
APR 6	BOARD MEETING – LCC 9:00
MAY 2	ANNUAL LUNCHEON – TBD
MAY 4	BOARD MEETING – LCC 9:00
MAY 21	LUNCH & LEARN - OWL
JUNE 1	BOARD MEETING – LCC 9:00
JUNE 17	ANNUAL MEETING – home of Joyce Briggs

Who you gonna call

Listed below and on the other side of this page is the contact information for National and State elected representatives serving communities in Litchfield County.

US Senators

Richard Blumenthal Democrat
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2823
Website: <https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/>
Email: <https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/contact>

Hartford Office
90 State House Square 10th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Tel 860 258-6940
Fax 860-258-6958

Chris Murphy Democrat
B404A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-225-4041
Website: <https://www.murphy.senate.gov/>
Email: <https://www.murphy.senate.gov/contact>

Hartford Office
Colt Gateway
120 Huyshope Ave. Suite 401
Hartford, CT 06106
Tel 860 549-8463
Fax 860-524-5091

US Representatives

Jahana Hayes Democrat District #5
1415 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4476
Fax: Not listed
Website: <https://hayes.house.gov/>
Email: Use email form on website

Waterbury Office
108 Bank Street
2nd Floor
Waterbury, CT 06702
Phone: (860)-223-8412

John B Larson Democrat District #1
1501 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2265
Fax: (202) 225-1031
Website: <https://larson.house.gov/>
Email: Use email form on website

Hartford Office
221 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 278-8888
Fax: (860) 278-2111

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Litchfield County Senators and Representatives

STATE SENATORS

Kevin Witkos (Republican) District #8 (Avon, Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Granby, Hartland, Harwinton, New Hartford, Norfolk, Simsbury, Torrington)

Legislative Office Building, Room: 3403, 300 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106

Telephone: 860 240-8800

Website: <https://ctsenaterepublicans.com/home-witkos/>

Email: kevin.witkos@cga.ct.gov

Craig Miner (Republican) District #30 (Brookfield, Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Milford, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, Winchester)

Legislative Office Building, Room: 3403, 300 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106

Telephone: 860 240-8816

Website: ctsenaterepublicans.com/home-miner/

Email: Craig.Miner@cga.ct.gov

Eric Berthel (Republican) District #32 (Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Middlebury, Oxford, Roxbury, Seymour, Southbury, Washington, Watertown, Woodbury)

Legislative Office Building, Room: 3403, 300 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106

Telephone: 860 240-8800

Website: ctsenaterepublicans.com/home-berthel/

Email: Eric.Berthel@cga.ct.gov

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Mailing address for all Representatives is: The Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106. The telephone # for all Republican Representatives is 860-240-8700 and the telephone # for all Democratic Representatives is 860-240-8585

William Simanski District #62 (Barkhamsted, Granby, Hartland and New Hartford)

Email: bill.simanski@housegop.ct.gov

Jay Case Republican District # 63 (Colebrook, Goshen, Torrington, Winchester)

Email: Jay.Case@housegop.ct.gov

Maria Horn Democrat District #64 (Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington) Email: maria.horn@cga.ct.gov

Michelle Cook Democrat District #65 (Torrington)

michelle.cook@cga.ct.gov

David Wilson: Republican District #66 (Bethlehem, Litchfield, Morris, Warren, Woodbury) david.wilson@housegop.ct.gov

Joe Polletta Republican District #68 (Watertown, Woodbury)

Email: joe.polletta@cga.ct.gov

Arthur O'Neill Republican District #69 (Bridgewater, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington)

Email: Arthur.Oneill@housegop.ct.gov

John Piscopo District #76 (Burlington, Harwinton, Litchfield, Thomaston)

Email: john.piscopo@housegop.ct.gov