



The Voice

Editor: Patti Hamaguchi

2023

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County Serving all of Litchfield County, CT

The LWVLC is a non-partisan, all-volunteer organization committed to promoting effective public policy and the informed participation of citizens in government. All are welcome to join.

All members are welcome!

Board Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 8:45 am at the Litchfield Community Center. However, in the month of June we will not be having our usual board meeting since we are meeting on the 14th instead for our annual meeting.



Join us for our Annual Membership Meeting! Appetizers, sweets & drinks provided

Save the date!

Bibby Veerman's house at 415 South St, Litchfield

Wednesday,
June 14th
5:30pm

RSVP:
lwvoflc@
gmail.com

www.litchfieldlwv.org



Join our special guest,
Laura Smits, LWVCT
President



A Message from Marianne Seeber, Our President

Hello and Happy Spring!! The warming weather here in CT signals that our Annual Meeting will be upon us in just a few weeks. As I end my tenure as president, I want to offer a brief synopsis of changes to the board and committees that we have made this past year:

- We created a new *Communications Committee* to manage all publicity, social media and website, which is continuously updated by Patti Hamaguchi. If you haven't yet checked it out, it's worth a peek: <https://litchfieldlwv.org/>
- Last fall we emailed a survey, to learn how to better serve our membership. I hope we met some of those needs and expectations that you offered.
- This past November we held our first day-long retreat for board members. This allowed us the time to consider the need for some reorganization of positions, the creation of new positions and ways to better engage you, our members that we serve.
- We have moved the documentation of all activities, job descriptions and league communications to an electronic portal, which essentially has eliminated the position of Archivist.
- We renamed 'Hospitality' to *Special Events Committee* to best describe the work that the committee takes on throughout the entire year.
- We created a new board position for the Nominating Committee, believing it is essential for the person holding this position attend regularly scheduled board meetings, seeing up close and personal the work entailed for specific jobs.
- We voted to expand our Scholarship Program to include all 13 public high schools throughout the county. We have increased each scholarship to \$400 per student and will be including a copy of the book *In the Founders' Footsteps* by Litchfield-area author Adam Van Doren. To support this ongoing mission, please be generous with your financial contribution to this fund.
- Finally, with these expanded positions, we will be taking a vote at the Annual Meeting to expand the number of directors to 17. This change, along with expanding of committees, allows for all members to be more fully engaged in the mission of LWV.

Make your plans now to attend our Annual Meeting on June 14 at 5:30 PM at the home of Bibby Veerman. The invitation and details can be found on the front page of this issue. Annual Dues of \$55 are due by July 1. By attending the Annual Meeting and paying your dues that evening, you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a gift card!! Don't miss out on this chance to see old friends, make new ones and to hear LWVCT outgoing president Laura Smits speak about the progress we are making at the state level.

I wish to thank this year's Nominating Committee, chaired by Judi Armstrong, and supported by league member Tina Bernacki and board member Rosemarie Greco for their work in creating the new slate for this year's board. As of this writing of the newsletter, we are still seeking a nominee for vice-president, and directors to chair Programs, Scholarship and Book Awards position and Nominating Committee. We will be accepting nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting, so please consider taking on one of these roles. Look for the official notice for this slate in an upcoming email.

There is a national campaign to celebrate our nation's upcoming 250th birthday. This initiative is referred to A250, with cities, towns and organizations around the country being called to collaborate in celebrating this special anniversary. Stay tuned for opportunities for how you can be involved with this league's events to celebrate!

Finally, as I step down as president, I wish to thank you for your participation, attendance and support. This past year has been great learning experience for me and I hope to continue my league involvement as a member as we all witness the new board taking over the reins!

Wishing you all my best,
Marianne Seeber
Outgoing President, LWVLC

**Dues
Are
Due!**

Annual Dues are Due by July 1st!
It is \$55. Please pay at the annual meeting,
mail in your dues, or pay online on our
website.



Will you stay with us for another year so we can meet our goals?

Pay your annual dues by June 14th and be entered to win a \$50 gift card!

Pay on our website
litchfieldlwv.org or
mail your check to
P. O. Box 899
Litchfield, CT 06759

The Annual Luncheon on April 22nd was held at the Crystal Peak Banquet Hall in Winchester. It was delicious! It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with other members, meet some new friends, and listen to Bill Curry talk about his experiences in Washington and perspective on building bipartisan solutions to legislative gridlock.



Bill Curry, Guest Speaker



**Marianne Seeber,
LWVLC President**





A Tribute to our life-time member, Joyce Briggs who passed on May 6, 2023 after an amazing, giving life filled with meaningful contributions to her community. Please read about her impressive life and obituary here:

<https://www.thurstonrowefuneralhome.com/memorials/joyce-briggs/5188750/>

In March, Joyce was honored by the Wisdom House during its “Celebrate Women” month. From their tribute:



Joyce Briggs

This year, 2023, we mark the 15th anniversary of her reception of the Wisdom Award in 2008. The “Wisdom Award” is given to community members who have dedicated significant volunteer service to improve the lives of people and the environment in the community.

The community of Litchfield and the State of Connecticut have been the environment where Joyce's influence for good has been experienced by many.

Under Joyce's leadership, she has been a key figure in helping the Litchfield Housing Trust create 47 units of affordable housing that have allowed young families, individuals and senior citizens of limited financial means to live in town.

She was elected to the Litchfield Board of Education for multiple six year terms. She has served as President of the Litchfield League of Women Voters and as Government Director of the State League of Women Voters. It's said that if you need something done in Litchfield, you "call Joyce".

Joyce has witnessed in her life what the author Alice Walker once wrote, "It is clear that you have to cherish everyone...that every soul is to be cherished, that every flower is to bloom."



Meet Our Incoming Co-Presidential Candidates!

(Both with previous experience as LWV Presidents, will serve together 2023-2024)



Pat Donovan

After a career as a Compliance Office for a Financial Services Firm I relocated to the Town of Litchfield. In 2005 I joined the LWV of Litchfield County. During my time in the LWV of LC I have served as the Voter Service Chair & President, and am currently an At-Large Board member. Additionally, I have acted as the Voter Service Chair of the CT State League.

Currently I serve on the Board of Finance of the Town of Litchfield. In my spare time I enjoy mysteries & am a long-time member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of New York & London.

We are grateful to the leadership that kept us going during the difficult pandemic years. We look forward to getting out & about in the community & reacquainting ourselves, in person, with our members and elected officials.



Bernie Harrington

I was President of this League 2012-14, served as Treasurer for several terms, was a member as Treasurer of the LWVCT for 2 terms.

I was the Moderator of several Debates and was a timekeeper and question reviewer on others. I also did voter registration at UCONN-Torrington, and at Torrington Summer Fair nights and other places like supermarkets.

The majority of my work experience was as an accountant in New York City with hospitals, brokerage firms etc. We moved to CT in 2005, and I joined the League in about 2007.

The Current 2022-2023 Board:

President: Marianne Seeber
VP Voter Services: Kerry Mayers
VP Programs: Marie Pettibone
Treasurer: Theresa LaVoie
Secretary: Patti Hamaguchi
Membership: Bibby Veerman & Margaret Goodhouse
Advocacy: Rosemarie Greco
Voter Services: Kerry Mayers and Laura Stancs
Communications: Candy Perez
Hospitality & Corresponding Secretary: Diane Ryan
At Large: Pat Donovan

The Proposed 2023-2024 Board:

(assuming the proposal for additional board members passes)

Co-Presidents: Pat Donovan and Bernie Harrington (new, but not new to the board)
Vice-President **Open**
Treasurer: Theresa LaVoie (continuing)
Secretary: Patti Hamaguchi (continuing)
Membership: Bibby Veerman & Margaret Goodhouse (continuing)
Programs: **Open**
Nominating: **Open**
Advocacy: Rosemarie Greco (continuing)
Voter Services: Kerry Mayers and Laura Stancs (continuing)
Communications: Candy Perez (continuing)
Special Events & Corresponding Secretary: Diane Ryan (continuing)
Scholarship: **Open**
At Large: Erin Strouse (new to the board)
At Large: Marie Pettibone *(new to this position, but is a current board member)*



Meet Erin Strouse, nominated for At-Large Board Position

At the suggestion of a smart, passionate and community minded friend, I joined the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County in 2021. This was shortly after my family had moved to Goshen, full time, but I've actually been a resident of the area for many years. Woodridge Lake was where I spent every summer of my life from ages 1-20. After living in Los Angeles for twelve years while working as a writer for film and television, my husband and I moved back to New York City. And when we were looking for a weekend home, I said it's got to be Goshen! In 2020 we doubled down on our love for the area, and moved here full time with our two little boys. Having my parents, grandparents extraordinaire, a couple miles down the road was a huge plus. And while much of my time is currently taken up with shuttling children to sports games and practices, I have tried to prioritize involving myself in the community we live in and offering my help whenever possible. This has included working, through our PTO, to support the students and amazing teachers at the Goshen Center School, volunteering with the Prime Time House holiday store, joining the board of Goshen Community Care, as well as becoming a member of the LWV. One thing I love about living in a small town is the opportunity to participate in and learn about the political process on a local level. I firmly believe, the more people, of all ages and walks of life, we have involved in this process, the better off our community. This is why I so greatly appreciate the work of the LWV, to involve ALL in our political process.



*Open Board Positions
Can you help?*

As you can see, we are still in need of a **Vice-President** (who would eventually take over as president) and someone to head up the following: **Programs**, **Scholarship**, and **Nominating**. Might you be interested?

Vice-President: Serves as a board member, supports the work of the board, is considered a “president in training”.

Programs: This person helps put together our presentations/informative lectures and topics for the membership and public. Some of these are coordinated with the Litchfield Historical Society.

Nominating: This person serves on the board and helps suggest/find people for the various open board positions.

Scholarship: This person coordinates the selection/receipt of the book award and financial scholarship with the local high schools in Litchfield County.

Our May 10th Social at Patti Hamaguchi’s in Watertown was a wonderful time!

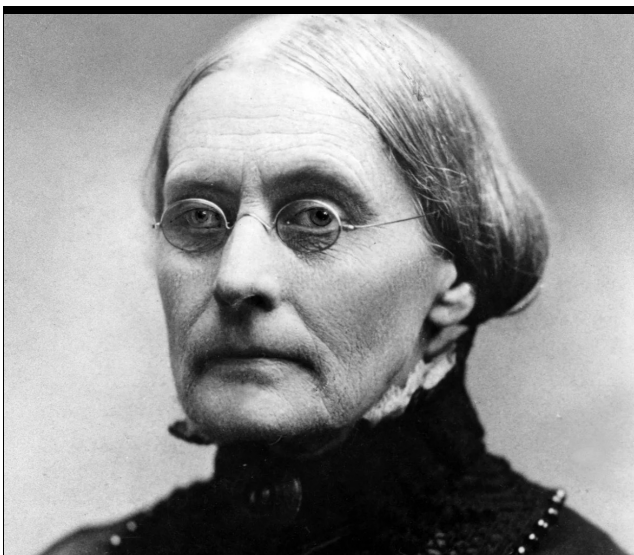
A huge thanks to Diane Ryan for being a super helpful hospitality chair and bringing lots of delicious treats for the get-together. We had great conversations and even learned a bit about Susan B. Anthony!





Some of the many accomplishments of Susan B. Anthony:

- She worked tirelessly to change the laws that did not allow women to own possessions or keep the money they earned.
- She, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone started the first national women's rights associations
- She started the first labor unions in NYC for women for garments and publishing
- She ran a women's rights newspaper
- She helped the University of Rochester start accepting women and helped fund their first residence halls for women
- She spoke an average of 75-100 times a year throughout her life on behalf of ending slavery, temperance and mostly women's rights, especially suffrage!



The "Rebel with a Red Shawl" was NOT a dour old lady despite the photos we've all seen. Those of you who came on May 10th know the "rest of the story".

Jean Rabinow from LWVCT trained 6 future debate moderators from our chapter!

Was on May 5th!



Thank
you to
Bibby
Veerman
for
hosting!

On Friday May 5th, Bibby Veerman hosted a session to train Debate Moderators. Jean Rabinow, a person with vast LWV experience explained the process, the ‘do’s and don’t’s, the League rules and format as well told us how to do question screening. One thing we learned is that there is not only one way to have a debate. She also stressed the importance of strongly maintaining our non-partisan stance throughout the process, from planning to conclusion.

The people who attended the training were Patti Hamaguchi, Denise Butwill, Krista Rizzo, Susan Kennedy, Margaret Hunt, Bernie Harrington, Kerry Mayers, Judi Armstrong and Bibby Veerman. Now our League is proud to be able to provide trained moderators for our Litchfield County elections as well as offer this service to neighboring Leagues. We are very grateful to our long-time moderators, Christine Horrigan, Pat Donovan and Bernie Harrington who will be happy to share the responsibility.

Providing services to the voters is the primary mission of the league of Women Voters. During election time we need about 10 people for each debate and 3 people for each voter registration session. If many of our members did not volunteer more than once, it would require every single member to fill these slots.

Proposed Changes in Bylaws for our June 14th Annual Meeting

Our bylaws require us to have a membership-wide vote at the Annual Meeting to amend any current bylaws. As we move forward with creating specific committees, as well as some board members wanting some co-chair positions, we would like to amend our bylaws by the following:

ARTICLE IV Board of Directors

Sec. 1. Number. This Board will consist of the officers as enumerated in Article V, Sec. 1, and a minimum of five other elected directors to a maximum of seventeen (17). The number of officers and/or directors may be increased or decreased within the above limit by resolution of the Board.

Look for the official notice for this change in an upcoming email!

Our Book & Scholarship Program Spring 2023

We voted to expand our Scholarship Program to include all 13 public high schools throughout Litchfield County and increase each scholarship to \$400 per student. Each awardee will receive a copy of the book, *In the Founders' Footsteps* by Litchfield-area author Adam Van Doren, which we have purchased through our local bookseller, The Hickory Stick Bookshop in Washington Depot. To support this ongoing mission, please be generous with your financial contribution to the educational fund when you renew your membership. A huge thank you to our busy Treasurer, Theresa Lavoie for working so hard on this program and reaching out to the schools to organize this. We would welcome any additional volunteers to present the books/scholarships to the awardees.

