



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW CASTLE

The Voter

Summer 2008

Route 120 Bridge Update

Bid Awarded — Construction to Begin

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) has awarded a \$17.9 million contract to Conti of New York, LLC, for the reconstruction of the Route 120 Bridge in Chappaqua. Work is now scheduled to begin by September 2008, with an anticipated completion date of June 2010.

DOT Presentation on Project

At the June 24th Town Board meeting, representatives of the DOT were on hand to give an overview of the project, in what unfolded as a rocky presentation that created confusion about lane closures during construction. Joan Dupont, Regional Director for the Hudson Valley Region 8 that includes New Castle, opened the presentation by outlining some of the challenges of the project. She cited the bridge's location, which travels over electrified railroad tracks and sits at the nexus of two Saw Mill Parkway ramps. She also noted the critical need to maintain vehicular and pedestrian traffic over the bridge, in order to provide access to the Chappaqua business district, Bell Middle School, and the train station.

Phases of Construction

Next from the DOT was Ed O'Leary, who discussed the various stages of construction. The first phase will be the addition of a pedestrian bridge on the north side of the existing structure. The reconstruction of the south side of the bridge will run from September 2008 through July 2009, and the reconstruction of the north side of the bridge will comprise the final phase of the project.

Lane Closures During Construction

Mr. O'Leary then discussed times when two-way traffic could be closed on the bridge. There was disbelief in the audience, and even some Town Board members seemed taken by surprise, when it appeared that the bridge might be limited to single-lane traffic for hours at a time — as maintaining two-way traffic during construction was a major criterion of the project. However, Ms. Dupont sought to clarify the misunderstanding, emphasizing that any lane closures would be sporadic and very brief. Times when lane closures might occur are 9:00am to 2:00pm; 3:00pm to 5:00pm; and 7:00pm to 7:00am.

At the July 1st work session of the Town Board, Supervisor Barbara Gerrard offered further reassurance, after a follow-up discussion with Joan Dupont, that lane closures would be infrequent and of short duration. The town is working with the DOT and Conti to narrow the overnight window by two hours, from 8:00pm to 6:00am, to avoid conflict with the morning and evening commuter rush; and to ensure uninterrupted two-way traffic on Saturdays from 10:00am to 4:00pm, for sporting and other events.

In further discussions with the DOT and Conti, the town now anticipates receiving advance notice of lane closures, which will be posted on

President's Message

Nearly every week at least one of New Castle's various boards assembles. At meetings that are open to the public, members of the Town Board, the CCSD School Board, the Planning Board, or the board of the Chappaqua Library (to name a few) come together to discuss, debate and vote on issues large and small. Some issues are dispatched quickly; others find their way onto agendas over many months or even years.

How can you get a handle on what's happening? One of the best ways is to become a League observer. You don't need special training. All you need to do is attend meetings, take notes, and write up what's transpired for *The Voter* or the League website. You'll become more involved, and you'll be helping to keep other people in the community more informed too.

The first meeting I attended as an official League observer was a session of the Planning Board in May 2005, when a petition from Summit/Greenfield was under review to allow three tenants, in addition to Reader's Digest, use of the signature property. It was a fascinating evening, on an issue that, needless to say, has far-reaching implications for New Castle.

Being a League observer gives you a front-row seat to this and many other important issues in town. Contact me (238-8994 or asparks4@yahoo.com) if your interest is piqued. Being an observer is a great way to be part of "democracy in action."

Bridge Update

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the town website and e-mailed to residents who have signed up for the town's eAlert system (go to www.town.new-castle.ny.us, and click on "Latest News" on the top menu to sign up). When feasible, construction will take place underneath the bridge, which will further minimize the need for lane closures. In addition, construction over the Metro-North railroad tracks will take place in the late-night hours, as the electricity to the tracks must be turned off to ensure the safety of the workers.

Hunt's Lane Intersection

The DOT presentation made no mention of the intersection at Hunt's Lane, which will be reconfigured as part of the bridge project. Workers will remove or reposition the boulder at the south corner to create a wider right-hand turn from Quaker Road onto Hunt's Lane. The existing hairpin angle at the corner prevents buses and other large vehi-

cles from turning right. Currently, Chappaqua school buses travel up Quaker Road to turn around at Roaring Brook School, only to return to the intersection for a left-hand turn onto Hunt's Lane. Supervisor Gerrard noted at the July 1st work session that she would like this to be done first, to help alleviate some of the traffic congestion.

Tree Removals

An estimated 40 to 45 trees will be cut down to make way for the addition of the third lane and retaining wall. The area will be re-landscaped at the conclusion of construction. Not related to the bridge project was the removal in mid-July of the towering sycamore tree that stood at the corner of Quaker and Douglas Roads. The tree was slated for removal after determining that it was rotted through.

Opposition to Bridge Project

Meanwhile, a group calling themselves the Concerned Citizens of Chappaqua is fighting to halt the reconstruction of the bridge. In a letter to William Gorton, Regional Design Engineer for Region 8 of the DOT, the group's lawyer James Periconi has alleged that the DOT did not comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The group seeks to stop any work on the bridge pending the outcome of an environmental assessment and analysis of options instead of reconstruction, which they claim were not properly conducted. Sandra Jobson, Public Information Officer for Region 8 of the DOT, confirms the letter has been forwarded to the DOT's legal department in Albany, where the matter is being researched in accordance with department protocol.

Sheila Crespi

Reader's Digest Update

Hospital Parking Approved and Other News

The Town Board voted at its July 8th meeting to approve a temporary zoning amendment for the Reader's Digest property, allowing Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH) the use of 140 parking spaces on the campus for up to three years.

NWH is embarking on an expansion that will add 30,000 square feet to the hospital, designated in part to house a new emergency room facility. The project will also add a parking garage with 430 spots. During construction, which is expected to take up to three years, the hospital needs 250 off-site parking spaces for employees. It approached Summit/Greenfield for 140 of those spots. Summit/Greenfield

petitioned the town on behalf of the hospital for the temporary change.

A central issue during discussions leading up to the vote was ensuring that the additional traffic did not interfere with peak periods at Horace Greeley High School. Accordingly, a blackout period has been established when hospital employees may not enter the Reader's Digest parking lot. The jitney service that will shuttle employees between Reader's Digest and the hospital is also subject to restrictions.

In addition to the spaces at Reader's Digest, the hospital has secured 50 parking spots at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Mount Kisco,

directly across the street from the hospital on Route 117. Negotiations are in process for another 60 spots at the Universalist Fellowship of Northern Westchester, on Route 172 in the Town of Bedford.

Summit/Greenfield Grieves Tax Assessment

Grievance Day, the annual day to grieve your taxes, was held at Town Hall on June 17th. Representatives of Summit/Greenfield appeared before the Board of Assessment Review to ask for a substantial reduction in the assessed value of the Reader's Digest property.

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The League at the United Nations **A Local Goes Global**

Is your experience with the United Nations like many of ours? Limited to a tour? Was your first and perhaps only tour of the UN with your elementary school, or your child's scout troop? This was my experience, and therefore it was a personal milestone when I returned to the United Nations in the fall of 2007, 43 years after my elementary school tour, all because of the League of Women Voters.

I have since learned that there is a unique, historical relationship between the League and the United Nations. Through our membership in the League, there are so many more opportunities available to us at the UN beyond that tour.

Although I was in a life transition, and busy, I decided to attend a briefing arranged by the League on Women and War. Hearing UN experts from around the world on this topic, combined with meeting interesting women in the audience who wanted dialogue, stirred my desire to explore how I could pursue a lifelong interest in international relations and become involved in the UN. Today, six months later, I am so honored to be associated with Doris Schapira, LWVUS Observer to the United Nations, and her work at the UN. By her invitation, I was able to attend the 52nd Annual UN Conference on the Status of Women, and assisted with a workshop on advocacy. Doris serves on the Steering Committee for UNICEF-Working Group on Girls, and I have attended several meetings at her request.

I am learning that the UN operates in much the same way as the League — doing research by committee, proposing position statements, conducting workshops, and advocating for focus on issues of public concern.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the League of Women Voters at the United Nations, contact me [Suzie Maltz] at yellowrosesbm53@aol.com.

The League's Statement of Position on the United Nations was announced by LWVUS Board in June 1977. It read: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the United Nations remains the best existing instrument to promote world peace and to improve the social and economic health of the world's people. The League strongly supports U.S. participation in the UN system and favors U.S. policies that strengthen the UN's capacity to solve problems of global interdependence.

"The League of Women Voters believes that the United States should support the United Nations and its specialized agencies and should provide financial contributions commensurate with its ability to pay. The United States should actively work for international cooperation among nations through the UN system. The League reaffirms its support of the basic procedures specified by the charter, while favoring modifications that would make the UN system more efficient and better equipped to deal with complex world problems." (The complete and updated LWVUS position on the United Nations can be found in "Impact on Issues, 2006-2008." Go to the League's website at www.lwvus.org, and type in "United Nations" in the search menu.)

Suzie Maltz

For information on UN briefings, visit the United Nations website at www.un.org/dpi/ngosection. Archived webcasts of briefings may also be available at this site.



VISIT THE UNITED NATIONS

with LWV of New Castle

Thursday, November 6, 2008

**Briefing and Lunch
10:30am-1:15pm**

Open to LWV members and the Public

Go Global at the United Nations with the League of Women Voters of New Castle!

We will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a briefing on a topic of the day. After the briefing, we will continue on to lunch in the Delegates Dining Room. This is a very special opportunity — briefings are not open to the general public, and the Delegates Dining Room is a real treat, with delicious food and sweeping views of the East River.

Background materials will be provided to registrants prior to the event.

For those who are interested, we will gather as a group to travel into New York City by Metro-North.

Mail in your registration today!

Cost: \$30pp for LWV members \$35pp for non-members

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail: _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Send check payable to LWV of New Castle to:
LWV of New Castle P.O. Box 364 Chappaqua, NY 10514

For more information contact Mary Fox (666-3536)
or Sheila Crespi (238-8994)



Reader's Digest Update

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Currently, the property is assessed at \$11.1328 million. Using New Castle's tentative 2008 equalization rate, established by the New York State Office of Real Property Services (www.orps.state.ny.us), this assessment results in a full market value of approximately \$65.5 million. Summit/Greenfield has requested a reduction in the assessed value of the property to \$4.839 million, which, when using the same equalization rate, would result in a full market value of approximately \$28.5 million. In 2007, at the current assessment, taxes on the property totaled \$1.424 million.

Decisions of the Board of Assessment Review are expected in mid-September. This year, approximately 131 grievances were brought before the Board.

Town to Examine Possible Municipal Uses

At its June 24th meeting, the Town Board adopted a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to analyze a number of possible municipal uses of the Reader's Digest property.

The RFP is the result of several months' work, as the Town Board sought input from the Planning Board, the Recreation and Parks Commission, and the CCSD School Board on ideas for the property. The purpose of this collective "brainstorming" was to come up with a menu of options for further examination. These are outlined in the RFP as: playing fields; ownership of the Wallace Auditorium as a community facility; relocation of the Recreation Department offices or other municipal use; open space preservation; an indoor recreation center with pool, basketball courts and teen facility; studio space for NCCTV; and adaptive reuse of the northernmost buildings of the Reader's Digest complex.

Working with the Town, the consultant will produce a feasibility study that will prioritize these uses and examine the impacts of each, both alone and in combination with other uses, including those proposed by Summit/Greenfield. A short list of scenarios will become the subject of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) and design study.

Sheila Crespi

The New Selling of the President 2008 Thursday, September 18th at 8:00pm at Jacob Burns Film Center

Join us Thursday evening, September 18th, when the LWV of Westchester, together with the Jacob Burns Film Center, will present "The New Selling of the President 2008" — a provocative look at the impact of the internet on the presidential campaign this year.



Blogging, YouTube, email, and internet viral campaigns have now joined TV commercials as essential influences in the process of electing an American president. But what does that mean? Does the proliferation of unfettered media represent an expansion of the democratic process — a boon for "everyman" participation — or has it created a new Wild West where anything goes? Or both? As voters, are we more educated...or more manipulated?

Join us for a panel discussion on navigating the Brave New World of electioneering, circa 2008. It's an evening of commercials, and internet clips from both the Obama and the McCain campaigns interspersed with conversation, speculations, and interpretations as we try to sort it all out. It promises to be an entertaining, provocative guide to this moment in American political history.

A Q&A panel includes David Schwartz (chief curator, Museum of Moving Image), Steve Apkon (executive director, Jacob Burns Film Center) and Allison Fine (author of *Rebooting America* and CEO of E-Volve Foundation) among others.

The League's purpose in organizing this event is to increase our visibility in the community, demonstrating our continued commitment to promoting educated, civic participation in government. We are also hoping to attract new members through this effort and need your help in spreading the word and bringing a non-league friend — or friends — to this event. Tickets will cost \$9 for JBFC members and \$13 for all others and will begin at 8pm on September 18.

A committee has been formed to coordinate this program. If you want to get involved, please contact Nancy Orem Lyman at nancy.oremlyman@globalhorizonsone.com. We are looking for volunteers to work on publicity (flyer and public service announcement), and help the evening of the event. You can contribute as little or as much time as you would like. All ideas and suggestions are welcome!

LWV New Castle: Program for 2008-09 Approved at May 21st Annual Meeting

ONGOING FUNCTIONS

A. VOTER SERVICE

Prepare, publish and distribute nonpartisan information on registration, voting, candidates, ballot issues and elections including general election, fire districts elections, and school and library board elections. Outlook for Work:

- a) Produce and distribute:
 1. Voters Guides
 2. Directory of Officials
 3. New Residents Mailing
- b) Organize Candidates' Nights
- c) Collaborate with LWV Westchester on Voter Service
- d) Participate in Naturalization Court ceremonies

PROPOSED LOCAL PROGRAM

A. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- I. Monitor, study if needed, and take action on issues affecting government and planning in New Castle:
 - a) Plans for Reader's Digest (aka Chappaqua Crossing) redevelopment.
 - b) Plans for the Chappaqua Hamlet.
 - c) Plans for the Millwood Fire House
 - d) Plans for pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.
- II. Monitor, and take action as needed, on land use policy, in particular as it affects the acquisition and use of open space.
- III. Monitor, and take action as needed, on town budget, including special districts (fire, sewage, sidewalk, water, refuse, parking, etc.).

B. SCHOOLS

Monitor, study if needed, and take action on any plans affecting the Chappaqua schools. Outlook for Work:

- a) Observe and report on School Board meetings.
- b) Publish Voters Guides and organize Candidates' Nights for contested elections; provide voter education for uncontested elections.
- c) Monitor school budget and take action as needed.
- d) Raise awareness of traffic congestion at the schools.

C. LIBRARY

Monitor, study if needed, and take action on the needs of the Library. Outlook for Work:

- a) Observe and report on library board meetings.
- b) Monitor library budget.

D. ENVIRONMENT

I. Monitor and take action on local environmental issues covered by National, State, County and local LWV positions, i.e., air quality, energy, land use, water resources, waste management, and nuclear issues.

II. Take action on the position from the sewage disposal options consensus.

III. Monitor and take action on the Town's policy on educational programs on the care and maintenance of septic systems. Monitor and take action on the Town's implementation of Stormwater Phase II Regulations, including coordination with the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee.

E. SOCIAL ISSUES

Monitor and take action on local social issues covered by National, State, and County LWV positions, including domestic violence; senior, workforce and other forms of affordable housing; and childcare. Outlook for Work:

- a) Gather information and engage in educational outreach on community health care centers and universal health care.

F. ELECTION LAW

Collaborate with LWV Westchester on HAVA Implementation

LWV New Castle: Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon

Members and friends of the New Castle League of Women Voters gathered at Crabtree's Kittle House on May 21st for the League's annual meeting and spring luncheon.

Annual Meeting

The day began with the annual meeting — to review the past year, install a new slate of officers, and adopt a program for 2008 – 2009.



Committee chairs recapped their activities. The report of the environment committee highlighted its ongoing work to promote countywide management of some 40,000 home-based septic systems in Westchester, vital to protecting the integrity of our drinking water supply. The local planning committee continues its focus on major development issues, including proposals for the Reader's Digest property and the construction of a new firehouse #1 in Millwood. The budget chair re-

ported a positive financial position for the fiscal year, but emphasized the importance of holding a fundraiser in 2008-09, the first in almost three years.

Membership reported on the launch of an e-mail communication system, a cost-effective, efficient and environmentally friendly way to reach out to members and others.

David Kaczynski Speaks Against the Death Penalty



The meeting was followed by lunch, with guest speaker David Kaczynski, Executive Director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty. David shared the story of his personal involvement with a death penalty case. In 1996, his brother Theodore Kaczynski, the so-called Unabomber, was arrested after David and his wife Linda approached the FBI with their suspicions that Theodore was involved in a series of bombings that caused three deaths and numerous injuries over 17 years.

In his talk and in his work, David uses these experiences as a

starting point to explore the many issues surrounding the realities of a death penalty policy. He pointed out, for example, that New York State is one of the leaders nationwide in the incidence of wrongful convictions. Further, the "ultimate justice" of the death penalty is one that is hard to apply fairly. Often, where the crime is committed can determine whether the death penalty is imposed. Mental illness, the adequacy of defense services, and race are other factors.

David also discussed some of the broader costs of death penalty justice: In the nine and a half years when New York State had the death penalty, the state spent \$200 million on the seven people who were on death row — much more costly than life without parole. He suggested that instead of spending on costly and lengthy appeals, funds could be diverted to programs such as crime prevention, counseling and rehabilitation for families of victims, and programs for troubled youth. A question-and-answer discussion followed the talk, revealing strongly divergent opinions and equally strong emotions about the death penalty.



At their annual meeting in May, New Castle Leaguers studied committee reports, planned next year's program, enjoyed lunch, and heard speaker David Kaczynski discuss the death penalty.

**Greet New Citizens
at Naturalization Court!
September 24 – 1:00pm**

Volunteer to represent the League of Women Voters at Naturalization Court, and share the joy as dozens of people are sworn in as new citizens of the United States!

Naturalization Court takes place on Wednesday, Sept. 24th, beginning at 1:00pm at the Westchester County Court House in White Plains. One by one, you'll shake hands and congratulate each person on this momentous occasion. You'll also remind everyone to register to vote — and exercise one of the most important rights of citizenship.

It's a memorable experience!

If you would like to volunteer contact Sheila (238-8994 or asparks4@yahoo.com)



Leaguers Mary Ann Bayer and Karen Issokson-Silver marched in Chappaqua's Memorial Day parade.

2008/2009 Membership

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW CASTLE
PO BOX 364, Chappaqua, NY 10514

Membership Dues: to June 30, 2009
Individual \$55; Family \$80; Student \$21
Check payable to LWV of New Castle

I enclose for membership \$ _____

I am adding a tax-deductible contribution
to the LWVNC Citizen Education Fund \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

I would like to work on:

<input type="checkbox"/> Local Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> State/National Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Voter Service
<input type="checkbox"/> Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> TV Production
<input type="checkbox"/> Call me to discuss what I can do	<input type="checkbox"/> Observe Public Meetings

I cannot be active at this time, but I want to support LWV goals with my membership.

Summer 2008



Leaguer Polly Kuhn moderated Candidates Night for Library Board and School Board elections in May 2008.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NEW CASTLE**
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CHAPPAQUA, NY 10514

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CALENDAR

Tuesday, Aug. 12th 7:45pm	Town Board New Castle Town Hall
Tuesday, Aug. 19th 8:15pm	CCSD Board of Education Seven Bridges
Tuesday, Sept. 2nd 10:30am	CCSD Board of Education Horace Greeley
Tuesday, Sept. 9th 7:30pm	Library Board Chappaqua Library
Tuesday, Sept. 9th 7:45pm	Town Board New Castle Town Hall
Thursday, Sept. 11th Time TBA	9/11 Memorial Dedication Adjacent to Gedney Park
Wednesday, Sept. 17th 9:30am	LWV Board Meeting Home of Mary Fox 90 Seven Bridges Rd., Chappaqua
Thursday, Sept. 18th 8:00pm	Selling of the President Jacob Burns Film Center (see p.6)
Tuesday, Sept. 23rd 7:45pm	Town Board New Castle Town Hall
Wednesday, Sept. 24th 1:00pm	Naturalization Court Court House, White Plains (see p.9)
Saturday, Sept. 27th 11am-4pm	Community Day Train Station

**COMMUNITY DAY
Sat., Sept. 27th**

Chappaqua Train Station

Mingle with your neighbors and friends at Community Day — and learn more about the many groups that contribute to the vibrancy of our town!

If you're interested in volunteering at the LWV of New Castle booth, contact Diane Wendel (lwvnewcastle@optonline.net).

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