



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW CASTLE

The Voter

March 2009

Chappaqua Central School District Budget Discussions for 2009-2010

The CCSD Board of Education continues its discussions of the proposed 2009-2010 budget at a series of PTA meetings in March and April. The remaining meetings will take place at the Bell Middle School on Monday, March 23 at 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday, March 25 at 9:30 a.m.; and Wednesday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. (see page 4 for details).

Since November, the Board has been pursuing a zero-to-zero percent budget increase for 2009-2010. Its goal is to keep the budget at the same amount as this year, just over \$107 million. Given year-to-year increases in costs such as salaries and health care, which would raise the budget by approximately 5%, achieving a level budget for next year will require \$6.4 million in cuts.

Three budget presentations on the CCSD website (go to www.ccsd.ws and click on "Budget Information") offer a broad overview of the proposed cuts and their impacts at the elementary, middle and high school levels. School Board members and CCSD administration will elaborate on those cuts at the upcoming budget meetings, with opportunity for questions from the community. It is important to attend these meetings to understand next year's budget and provide feedback to the Board.

At the same time, the Board will be devoting weekly work sessions to discussion of specific aspects of the detailed budget for next year. This process began on March 3 with an overview of budget and staffing, and continues at 8:15 p.m. in the Academic Commons at Horace Greeley High School in accordance with the following schedule:

- March 17** – Curriculum and Instruction, and Technology
- March 24** – Special Education, Athletics and Projected Revenues
- March 31** – Non-Instructional Matters including Employee Benefits, Debt Service, Administrative Offices, Transportation, and Operations and Maintenance; Revenue and Estimated Property Tax Rates
- April 14** - Revenue/Estimated Property Tax Rates
- April 21** – Adoption of Budget
- May 5** – Public Hearing on CCSD and Chappaqua Library Budgets

The school budget comes to a vote on Tuesday, May 19th, at the HGHS gymnasium. The Chappaqua Library budget, and open seats on both boards, will also be on the ballot. **You must be registered to vote.**

If you are not registered to vote, or have not voted in the last four years, you may register in person with the School District Clerk at the Chappaqua School District Education Center, 66 Roaring Brook Road in Chappaqua (238-7200), during normal business hours up to five (5) days before the vote. The last day to register to vote is Thursday, May 14, 2009. For more details, see the district website at www.chappaqua.k12.ny.us/ccsd/SchoolDistrict/vote.htm.

Sheila Crespi

President's Message

Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, May 19. Why? It's the day of the school budget vote. In the Chappaqua Central School District, the vote takes place in the gym at Horace Greeley High School. The library budget will also be on the ballot, and open board seats.

In challenging economic times, the CCSD Board of Education is pursuing roughly \$6.4 million in budget cuts to keep next year's budget level with this year's, at \$107 million. The extent of these cuts, and their impact in the classroom and beyond, is being debated at PTA budget meetings and school board work sessions which are all open to the public (see articles to the left and on page 4 for schedules). You can also go onto the district website at www.ccsd.ws to view budget information.

However you feel about the budget, make your views known. Write to the Board of Education at board@ccsd.ws, speak up at an upcoming meeting, and make sure you vote on May 19th.

Sheila

**Roundtable Discussion with
Barbara Gerrard
New Castle Town Supervisor**

**Thursday, March 26th,
10:00 a.m.**

First Congregational Church
210 Orchard Ridge Road,
Chappaqua

*Open to the Public See back
page for more details*

LWVUS: Review of 2008 at the United Nations

In follow-up to our trip to the United Nations in November, here are a few highlights of activities at the UN in 2008, as reported by the national League's representative there, Doris Schapira. Climate change, reform of the United Nations Security Council, and the global food crisis were top priorities for the General Assembly during its 62nd session. Read more below, and visit the website links to follow your own interests for more detail.



A Summary of 2008 at the UN (Excerpts) by Doris Schapira, UN Observer

Status of Women

In February 2008, during the UN Status of Women Commission on the Status of Women Meeting, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched his campaign to end violence against women. The whole UN system is involved in this effort. For some background information on this violence see <http://www.un.org/women/endviolence/docs/VAW.pdf> and <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/launch/english/v.a.w-exeE-use.pdf>.

In December, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions on violence against women: Resolution 63/155 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women; and Resolution 63/156 on trafficking in women and girls.

Climate Change

For a detailed overview report on some of the UN work on climate change, please see: <http://www.un.org/climate-change/pdfs/Acting%20on%20Climate%20Change.pdf>

The last United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Poznan, Poland from December 1-12, 2008. The conference was considered an important half-way mark in the two-year negotiating process to reach a post-2012 climate change agreement in Copenhagen in 2009. (2012 is the year the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ends.) Among the decisions made in Poznan were agreements on technology transfer both for mitigation and for adaption technologies.

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment. Some of their resources that might be helpful to League members may be found here: <http://www.unep.org/tools/default.asp?ct=clim>

Committees of the General Assembly

As some League members know, the General assembly has six main committees that do much of the work of the General Assembly before bringing items to the full session. (It is something like the committees of the US Congress.) The six main committees are:

- First Committee (Disarmament and International Security Committee) on disarmament and related international security questions
- Second Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) is concerned with economic questions
- Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) deals with social and humanitarian issues
- Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee) deals with a variety of political subjects not dealt with by the First Committee, as well as with decolonization
- Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Committee) deals with the administration and budget of the United Nations
- Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) deals with international legal matters

League Urges Community Outreach on 2009–2010 CCSD Budget

In letters to the CCSD Board of Education, LWV of New Castle urged outreach to the community on the unprecedented budget process underway for next year —first, by sending a mailing to every household in the district on the budget process; and second, by making available more detailed budget information at www.ccsd.ws.

League Letter to the CCSD Board of Education – January 14, 2009

The League of Women Voters of New Castle is a non-partisan organization dedicated to educating voters and involving them in major issues that concern our community. As such, we are pleased the Board of Education is devoting two public meetings, on January 27th and February 10th (at Horace Greeley High School), to a discussion of the conceptual outline of the 2009 – 2010 CCSD budget.

Given the current economic climate, we are aware that some cuts will be necessary to achieve the Board's stated goal of a zero percent budget increase for next year. No doubt these cuts will involve some difficult choices for the district. Therefore, it's important for the community to have ample time early in the budget process to understand the impact of the proposed cuts, and to provide feedback to the Board.

To ensure that all community members have the opportunity to participate in this dialogue affecting our schools and our taxes, the League urges the Board to send a mailing to every household in the Chappaqua Central School District with information on the up-

coming budget meetings. The mailing should also explain where people can access budget information — not only in its final form, but also as it's evolving during the Board's work sessions in March and April — and how people can contact the Board with their input.

We know that financial pressures affecting next year's budget make this a difficult time to undertake a district-wide mailing. However, the school budget is a matter that comes before all the voters of this district. Thus, all voters need to be aware of these meetings so they have the opportunity to be involved, be informed, and participate in the budget process.

League Letter to the CCSD Board of Education – February 24, 2009

The League of Women Voters of New Castle would like to thank the Board of Education for its outreach to the Chappaqua Central School District regarding the 2009-2010 school budget. We appreciate the mailing sent to all CCSD households on the budget process, as urged by the League; as well as the informative meetings held in January and February on budget challenges and overview of proposed cuts.

We know the Board will be hosting a series of PTA budget meetings beginning in mid-March to discuss the details of the proposed cuts. In order for these meetings to be truly productive, the League feels that details of the proposed cuts should be made available immediately for review and reflection.

Specifically, the community needs to know what academic and administrative cuts will be made at the elementary, middle and high school levels; how those cuts will impact students, classes and school facilities at each of these levels; and what will be substituted into the school day to compensate for curtailed programs and services. This information is essential for the community to provide the Board with meaningful feedback on educational priorities for the district.

It is our hope that the information will be posted on the CCSD website (www.ccsd.ws), along with the very useful PowerPoint presentations that are already available from the January and February meetings. Only as a fully informed community can we weigh the difficult choices that we face for next year's budget.

LWV of New Castle

PTA / CCSD Budget Meetings

Come with your questions to these meetings on the proposed school budget for 2009–2010.

Monday, March 23 – 7:30 p.m.

Bell Middle School

Focus on middle and high school

Wednesday, March 25 – 9:30 a.m.

Bell Middle School

General budget overview

Wednesday, April 1 – 7:30 p.m.

Bell Middle School

General budget overview

A previously held meeting on March 12 focused on changes at the elementary school level.

Raising Healthy Families in a Toxic World

Lush green lawns are iconic to life in the suburbs. We think of children and pets playing on them. They nicely set off flower gardens and homes. But could the products we use be a threat to our environment and our health?



Patricia Wood, Executive Director and co-founder of Grassroots Environmental Education, spoke to just this concern at a February 5th program jointly sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New Castle and the Chappaqua Garden Club.

Grassroots is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to researching and disseminating information about chemical toxins and their impact on human health and the environment.

Ms. Wood captivated the audience by describing the risks associated with chemical lawn products and then offered advice for improving the health and beauty of our lawns and gardens without detrimental impact to our environment.

Dangers from Certain Lawn Chemicals

Chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers can provide a quick fix to an ailing lawn. But the fix is not always sustainable. A growing body of evidence suggests an association with certain lawn chemicals and several types of cancer, neurological and developmental problems, endocrine disruption, asthma, reproductive harm and birth defects in people. Children are at particular risk due to their rapidly developing bodies and their penchant for playing on the ground and putting their hands in their mouths.

The chemicals don't just stay on our lawns. We bring them into our homes on our shoes and clothing and with our pets. Rain can wash the products into our water supply endangering our communities and wildlife.

How to Have a Toxic-Free Lawn

There is, however, a way to have beautiful non-toxic turf. The first step is to develop and maintain healthy soil. You can do this by adding one half to an inch of compost to your lawn each spring and fall. The bacteria and fungi in the compost help support the beneficial organisms in the soil. These organisms, in turn, release essential nutrients to the grass. Also, test the pH of your soil. You can do this yourself with a simple kit you can find at a garden center or you can have it tested at a co-operative extension. If it is acidic, which it usually is around here, you may need to add lime in addition to the compost. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to add nitrogen and if desired, in the spring fertilize the grass with a low nitrogen water insoluble organic fertilizer with a nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (NPK) ratio of 3-1-2.

Aerate and reseed the lawn annually in the fall. A thick turf keeps weeds out and conserves moisture in the soil. Keep the grass at least 3" to 3 1/2" high to again conserve moisture; to keep out weeds; and to aid in photosynthesis. If necessary, water once a week and give 1 1/2" of water.

Use an organic corn-gluten product in the spring (when the forsythia is blooming) to control weeds. Vinegar works well for spot weed control on walkways and driveways. You can also control pests without chemicals by using beneficial nematodes and or milky spore powder depending on your problem. Compost tea, which is essentially diluted compost, fights fungal diseases.

Where to Learn More

Are you confused? You can learn more about the Grassroots Healthy Lawn Program by going to www.ghlp.org. The site gives lawn care tips, lists local landscapers who have been trained in organic lawn care, and garden centers that carry organic lawn care products. Learn more about Grassroots Environmental Education at www.grassrootsinfo.org.

Amy McNamara

Easy Steps to an Organic Lawn

Adapted from Grassroots Environmental Education

Feed the Soil: Rake 1/2 inch of compost into your lawn each spring and fall.

Feed the Grass: Leave grass clippings on your lawn. In the spring, you can add a low nitrogen water insoluble organic fertilizer with a nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) ratio of 3-1-2.

Re-seed Annually: A thick turf is one of the best ways to control weeds. Seed with indigenous grasses in late summer or early fall after aerating soil.

Mow High: Cut grass 3-3 1/2 inches to conserve moisture and deter weeds. Rotate mowing patterns.

Water Less, But Longer: Water your lawn once a week in early morning for several hours if needed.

Consider recent rainfall and soil type: sandy soil requires more water than clay-based soil.

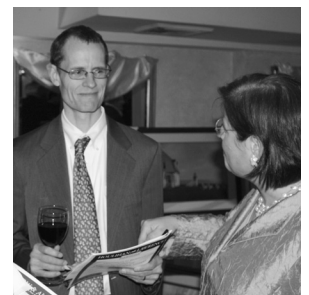
Control Weeds: Use an organic corn-gluten product on established lawns when the forsythia is blooming (early spring) to prevent weed seeds from germinating. Dig out dandelions.

Control Pests: Beneficial nematodes control common pests (grubs, sod webworms, chinch bugs). Milky spore powder also controls Japanese beetle grubs.

A New Kind of Fundraiser for the League



Over 120 League members and friends from the community came together at the Kittle House on Friday, February 27th for an evening of fine food, wine, art & memorabilia. The Kittle House's hors d'oeuvres and small plates were delicious, while the breadth of art and music, sports and entertainment memorabilia on display was staggering. Special thanks go to the Kittle House and to Houlihan Lawrence for their sponsorship, and to all of the local merchants who purchased ads in our auction journal.



Help LWV Go Green!

Help us save postage and paper by sending us your e-mail address.

You'll receive LWV New Castle e-mails on events, meetings and news of interest.

Send your e-mail to:
lwvnewcastle@optonline.net

**Reader's Digest Update
Town Studies Alternative
Uses, DEIS Incomplete**

The New Castle Town Board has hired Saccardi & Schiff, a White Plains consulting firm specializing in planning and development, to examine a range of possible municipal uses for the Reader's Digest property.

The Town has identified a preliminary list of potential uses for the property, assigning top priority to ownership of the Wallace Auditorium and possible conversion to a performing arts center; construction of playing fields, possibly with lighting; and establishment of studio facilities for New Castle Community Television (NCCTV). Other uses to be studied are relocation of the Recreation Department to the site; retention of open space with public access; indoor recreation center including pool, basketball courts and space for teen programs; and adaptive reuse of the three northern-most buildings that are part of the existing Reader's Digest facility.

Saccardi & Schiff will examine the feasibility and impacts of these proposals, both individually and together to see if the site can serve more than one municipal use. Saccardi & Schiff is also being asked to evaluate possible municipal uses in combination with Summit/Greenfield's propos-

al for office and residential use of the site.

The resulting study will identify the most feasible municipal uses for the property, as well as those that are not suitable, leading to the development of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) that will parallel the environmental impact statement that is currently being prepared by Summit/Greenfield.

In January, after an extensive review, the Town Board determined that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) submitted by Summit/Greenfield for their proposed redevelopment of the site was incomplete. This means that the DEIS did not ade-

quately address all the questions outlined in the scope document adopted by the Town Board for the project. The determination does not express an opinion on the substance, or content, of the DEIS itself.

The Town Board's formal response to the DEIS can be found on the town website at www.mynewcastle.org. Type SummitGreenfieldDEIS into the search engine and download the document. Summit/Greenfield must now make the specified revisions to the DEIS and resubmit it to the Town Board. There is no set timeframe for their resubmission.

Sheila Crespi

MEMBERSHIP

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW CASTLE

PO BOX 364, Chappaqua, NY 10514

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:
 - Environment
 - Local Issues
 - State/National Issues
 - Schools
- Voter Service
 - TV Production
 - Observe Public Meetings

Call me to discuss what I can do

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

March 2009



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NEW CASTLE**
P.O. BOX 364
CHAPPAQUA, NY 10514

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www.lwvnewcastle.org
lwvnewcastle@optonline.net

CALENDAR

Tuesday, Mar. 31st 8:15pm	CCSD Board of Education Horace Greeley
Thursday, Mar. 26th 10am	Roundtable Discussion with Supervisor Gerrard First Congregational Church
Wednesday, April 1st 7:30pm	PTA Meeting: Budget Overview Bell Middle School
Tuesday, Apr. 14th 7:45pm	Town Board New Castle Town Hall
Tuesday, Apr. 14th 8:15pm	CCSD Board of Education Horace Greeley
Tuesday, Apr. 21st 7:30pm	Library Board Chappaqua Library
Tuesday, Apr. 21st 8:15pm	CCSD Board of Education Horace Greeley
Wednesday, Apr. 22nd 9:30am	LWV Board Meeting Home of Bonnie Gartner 12 Garey Dr., Chappaqua
Tuesday, Apr. 28th 7:45pm	Town Board New Castle Town Hall

**Roundtable Discussion with
Barbara Gerrard
Thurs., Mar. 26, 10:00am**

*First Congregational Church of
Chappaqua, 210 Orchard Ridge Rd.*

Join us for a lively discussion with New Castle Town Supervisor Barbara Gerrard on what's happening in New Castle. Topics will include Reader's Digest, developments in the Chappaqua & Millwood hamlets, environmental initiatives, fiscal outlook for the town, and more. Come with your questions for the Supervisor!

*Open to the public — bring a friend.
Coffee and light refreshments served.*

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