

Thumbs up, Thumbs down

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Thumbs up to Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill, Connecticut's top elections official, the Greenwich registrars of voters, town clerk and the dedicated workers who staffed each polling station throughout town on Tuesday.

One week after a massive storm slammed into Greenwich and the rest of the Tri-State area, voting proceeded smoothly on Election Day. Government of the people doesn't happen by itself. It takes a lot of hard work to pull it off. Work that too often goes unrecognized in all the excitement that surrounds elections.

Thumbs down to the drop in voter participation in town. Seventy-one percent of registered voters in Greenwich, or 25,765, turned out at the polls Tuesday, down from 27,543 for the last presidential election in 2008, a slip of roughly 6.5 percent.

To paraphrase: Government of the people didn't happen by itself. Our right to vote is the gift of those who risked or gave their all to create and preserve it. Voting is a trust for which each American is responsible. None of us should take it for granted.

Thumbs down to political signs. We've never seen how a mere piece of cardboard or plastic with a candidate's name on it can really sway voters. But the people who run campaigns must know more about these things than we do.

That said, the signs stuck in lawns and along roads might have qualified as advertising on Monday and Tuesday. Today they are litter. It's each candidate's responsibility to pick them up and get rid of them.

Voters have been barraged by ads this election season. Time for a break.

Thumbs up to the candidates. Whether they won or lost, they were the brave souls willing to enter the arena, and submit themselves to the judgment of their neighbors. More important, they were the ones willing to serve.

In particular, a nod to those who ran for the General Assembly in Hartford. Serving in Hartford requires significant sacrifice -- beyond the long commute. It means hours away from family and, for some, away from work. Being a state representative or senator can be a career boost. It can also mean leaving job opportunities and money on the table while you are occupied with matters of the state.

The match-ups for state office in Greenwich this year were some of the best town voters have seen in a long time. May all election seasons be like this in the future.