

League of Women Voters of Newton Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 1

January/February 2002

World Trade

by Linda Morrison

During 2001 the LWV has been engaged in updating our 30-year old positions on world trade. Articles in the National Voter have described some of the problems and competing interests in our new global economy; individual members could participate in developing the position by mail or thru the internet.

Although the new Trade position cannot be modified when we decide on concurrence in February, we can, here in Newton, take some time to think and learn about the issues. A four person committee (members: Priscilla Leith, chair; Linda Morrison, Mary Huse, Fran Seasholes) is doing just that. The proposed LWV positions support a liberal trade policy and lower barriers, BUT call for decisions to be made on trade issues with long-term public interest as the priority.

The LWV would support a world trade organization BUT requests that its proceedings be open and its rules clear to all. Trade policy goals worked out by congress should include input from a spectrum of interests and perspectives. We request that trade strategies protect both human rights and the environment. Finally, trade and related policies should explicitly address the needs of

developing countries. The full 2 page position statement will be printed in the January National Voter. If you are interested in seeing it earlier than that, check the LWV US web site. [www.lwv.org/join/trade/]

A variety of differing views attempt to describe the global economy we find ourselves in now. Here are some points that our committee has found helpful in explaining the bewildering changes we encounter.

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"World Trade and the Environment"

cosponsored by the Newton League of Women Voters and Green Decade Coalition, at the Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 7 PM

What can we do as a nation to adapt global economics as a tool to protect the environment? From an environmental point of view, economic globalization provides both greater problems and greater possibilities to safeguard our planet and its natural systems. Better understanding of the new global economy is a first step to making that result happen. Invited guest Congressman Barney Frank and other experts will help give greater understanding to this complex environmental concern. The World Trade Organization's approach is "...to strike a balance between two fears: that trade and environmental protection might be in conflict and that environmental concerns could turn into trade protectionism."

Education Reform Consensus

The Newton League will hold its unit meetings to come to consensus on March 6 and 7. (See calendar, page 8) If you are unable to attend one of these meetings but would like your input to be included, you may answer the questions below and submit your replies to AKoch@RISD.EDU.

After we submit our results to the State League, and they receive all local leagues' consensus reports, a committee, separate from the study committee, will review the reports and determine whether there is a consensus on the questions and what that consensus is. Their report will then be submitted to the State Board for approval. Assuming that a consensus has been reached, then such consensus will become part of the State League program and may be used both by the state League and local Leagues in the furtherance of program objectives.

Consensus questions

- Should there be statewide curriculum standards for Massachusetts's students?
- If yes, how should such standards be developed? Should the standards be developed to set minimum standards only or should they also be used to raise the level of academic performance for all students? What latitude, if any, should individual school districts have in using the standards? What should be the role of the local community?

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The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

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www.tiac.net/users/unnewton/LWV

Midwinter Reverie

This is the season for nominating committee to do its magic and I want to thank Barbara Sydney for serving as chief wizard, and also thank and wish good luck to all five Nominating Committee members. They would love to have your ideas, so call Barbara at 617-332-2160 or others of the committee and let them know what you think. Nominating next year's Board is part of the rhythm of the year, a time when lots of information is shared about what's working with LWVN and what's not – a vital connection between the years.

For me it's also a chance to dream of all the things we could do if only*, and I am particularly excited this year to see if we can build on Elaine Reisman's outrageous success (22 new members and counting) and create a bigger board. My wish list includes building an observer corps – a group of people willing to spare one or two evenings a month to attend a city meeting and report on the outcome. It would also be great to have someone interested in working on fundraising for the League, and then of course I would love to have someone or some ones interested in working on a study in Newton, and then maybe someone willing to help plan and arrange unit meetings. A winter reverie I know, but I can dream, can't I?

The League is a source of so much that's interesting, challenging and downright exciting in my life right now. I confess I am grateful to be part of it. I've gained a great deal personally and learned much that will stand me in good stead professionally as well. I have particularly relished learning more about Newton's finances through the meetings that Deb Crossley describes in her article in this issue, working with the excellent materials on education reform developed by the state league on a committee with Susie Heyman, Janet Stearns, and Andrea Kelley, and striving to find the right connection for people with the League.

This last is an ongoing challenge, but if people aren't the point I don't know what is. We each have skills that we want to contribute, we want to feel challenged and appreciated and we want to be involved with others who feel as we do. An organization also has needs and fitting those together is a tall order for any organization. So here's to the Nominating Committee and to all of you past, present, and future who find your place with us for a while. Come join us, or come back and rejoin us.


Amy Koch, President

Members Invited to Attend a TV taping:

All new, prospective and seasoned League members are invited to attend a special taping of the Newton Cable Access program, "Legislative Roundtable". President Amy Koch will moderate the show with our legislators discussing Education Reform. NewTV will set up seats for our private audience!

CALL AMY KOCH TO RESERVE A SPOT 617-244-2647

Tuesday February 5, 2002

7:15 pm (taping starts at 7:30 so arrive early to get your seats)

NewTV Studio, Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands ■

Working With the Newton Election Commission

by Deb Crossley and Priscilla Leith

Since the summer of 2001, Bonnie Carter, Nancy Criscitiello, Ann Dorfman, Priscilla Leith, Carol Ann Shea and Deb Crossley have been regular observers at the monthly meetings of the Newton Election Commission. We find ourselves welcome and often participating in some of the Commission's efforts to improve the process and product of Newton elections.

At the Commission's January meeting, Bonnie Carter presented a summary report chronicled by LWV observers who tallied the vote from most precincts at the close of the last election. Members had reported items needing improvement ranging from better signage directing voters to accessibility to entrances, to ensuring that the machine tally sheets are posted for public review for a minimum required time. Bonnie's letter was gratefully accepted by Acting Secretary Karen Griffey, who has been working to address such issues.

In addition, the Commission unanimously adopted the Mission statement, Goals and Objectives prepared by League members working with Commissioner Fay Cohen last summer. We were thanked warmly and in turn acknowledged that many strategies have been successfully implemented over the past months which address those goals. In particular, poll-worker training materials have been improved.

Acting Secretary Griffey is compiling an information kit for candidates for the ward 8 alderman seat. She met with Carter, Criscitiello and Crossley to review its contents (city charter, campaign finance law, etc.), as Carter offered to share what she put together for prospective candidates last spring, when she ran the workshop: 'Don't Stand There....Run!'

The EC has changed its monthly meeting times to the first Tuesday of each month. If you can take a lunch break and would like to observe/ participate, please let us know. It is an excellent way to learn about the local election procedures. We feel that the League's presence contributed substantially to many beneficial changes in the way Newton holds elections, and that all voters have benefited. ■

Continued From page 1

Newton Election Commission

MISSION STATEMENT

The responsibility of the Newton Election Commission is to oversee and administer the annual city census and elections, to increase voter awareness and participation in the electoral process, and to improve the process by utilizing technology, when appropriate.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- 1 Improve in-house practices to provide timely, accurate and user-friendly information to the public.
- 2 Provide accurate and timely election and census results.
- 3 Maintain accurate and timely voter registration lists.
- 4 Utilize voting procedures and practices that will assure ease of accessibility, efficiency of operation, and reliability and accuracy of the count.
- 5 Improve ability to provide well-trained poll workers.
- 6 Maintain regular and timely communication with voters on information pertinent to elections as required by statute.
- 7 Ensure that all statutory requirements are known and met governing the conduct of all poll workers and security personnel during elections.
- 8 Maintain an accurate and complete record of all proceedings of the Election Commission, which shall be made available to the public upon request.
- 9 Make use of technology where appropriate to improve productivity in house and to improve information gathering (census).

Education Reform Consensus Questions

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of state-wide curriculum standards?
- How should the performance of students and districts be measured?
- What is the role of standardized tests, (for example, the MCAS, Stanford, CAT, or Iowa tests) in assessing student and district performance relative to meeting the curriculum standards?
- What other measures could school districts use to assess their curriculum and student and school performance? What is the role of alternate forms of assessment such as

"portfolios" in determining student performance?

- Should meeting the state standards be a requirement for graduation from high school and/or for admission to state colleges and universities? If yes, what criteria should be used by a school district to establish that a student has met the state standard?
- If state standards have not been met, what actions should be taken by the state, the district, and the student to provide a remedy?

Submit your input via email to AKOCH@risd.edu. ■

Committees - in - Action

E d u c a t i o n

Focus Increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards

Members Nancy Crowley Anne Larner
Deborah Hirsch Robin Maltz
Andrea Kelley Beth Wilkinson
Andrea Kozinetz

Contact Beverly Spencer 617965-6365
Board Liaison

H u m a n R i g h t s

Focus League outreach, relevance and support for the human rights of Newton's diverse populations

Members Joan Bates Ruth Nemzoff
Marion Cowan Holly Gunner
Anne Larner

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair 617964-0767

L a n d U s e / T r a n s p o r t a t i o n

Focus Interrelationship between land use and transportation and its effects on Newton & surrounding communities

Members AnnaMaria Abernathy
Anita Capeless
Carol Ann Shea
Susie Heyman

Contact Anita Capeless 617969-9483

L o c a l A c t i o n

Focus Various local issues

Members Information - all welcome

Contact Carol Ann Shea 617969-2121
Deb Crossley 617244-7597
Co-chairs

I n t e r n a t i o n a l T r a d e

Focus Study existing U.S. trade policies, and problems arising from a global economy

Members Priscilla Leith
Fran Seasholes
Mary Huse
Linda Morrison

Contact Priscilla Leith 617969-6837

N o m i n a t i n g C o m m i t t e e

Barbara Sydney, Chair 617332-2160

N e w s l e t t e r

Members Jane Leighton Liz Lieberman
Deb Hirsch Linda Morrison

Contact Andrea Kelley 617964-4609

You may call committee contact or a Board officer or director to learn more about current committee work. All are welcome to participate.

CPA Referendum Passes by 448 Votes!

N o w t h e W o r k B e g i n s

by Deb Crossley

In a close contest, voters carried the CPA to victory in Newton: 6343 to 5895, winning solidly in five out of eight wards. Now that you see our success as a 1% surcharge on your tax bill - you may want to know, what has been happening toward implementation of the CP program in Newton?

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

On November 19, the Board of Aldermen approved, 19-0, an ordinance defining the Newton CPC. As the CP Alliance recommended, the mayor appointed the four members in addition to the five specified by the Act. The ordinance requires him to appoint three citizens, at least one of whom has expertise or demonstrated interest in open space, one in recreation, one in historic preservation and one in affordable housing. In making such appointments, the mayor shall be guided by the goal that the (whole) membership of the committee include persons with professional expertise in real estate development, finance, architecture and law. The first five members must be drawn one each from the Conservation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Board, the Housing Authority, and the Historic Commission.

The Aldermen also felt that the appointed members should be drawn from across the city, so added: "There shall be a residency requirement for the appointed members. One appointed member shall be from ward 1 or 2, one from ward 3 or 4, one from ward 5 or 6, and one from ward 7 or 8". The Board added another feature: "No person shall be eligible to serve as a member for more than two consecutive full terms" (3 years).

There was much interest in serving on the CPC, and dozens of names were recommended to the mayor before he made his final nominations, who were approved by the Board of Alderman in January 2002.

What's Next?

We hope the CPC will begin meeting soon. Their mandate is to research the city's needs, consult with the relevant boards and commissions and others (neighborhood groups and citizens organizations will doubtless contribute their ideas), and recommend expenditures to the Board of Aldermen. The CPC's deliberations will be open to the public and must include well-publicized public hearings. The actual appropriations will be made by the Aldermen through their usual open procedures, who may approve or disapprove of expenditures, but may not use the money for purposes other than those stipulated by the statute.

Many Thanks! On behalf of the LWVN and the CP Alliance, a hearty "thank you" to AnnaMaria Abernathy who joined me to represent LWV during the campaign, and the several dozen LWV members, and dozens more in the Newton community who pitched in by contributing much time and money to the CPA campaign to spread the word and get out the vote. It is clear that every effort counted; in the last weeks of the campaign, we found ourselves not only needing to work to get information to voters' attention, but also to counter misinformation and a negative TV ad campaign funded by big business against the CPA passing in Boston.

It was a pleasure to serve on the CPAAlliance with so many wonderful people who are and represent organizations dedicated to improving the future of our community. As a political action committee, the Alliance is disbanded, but "Friends of Community Preservation" has organized a new and expanded membership, to keep up with the CPC's deliberations, and maintain an open dialogue among its members and the community. ■

Stay tuned - this is a big job, and the LWV will be observing. If you might like to be more involved, please call me (617) 244-7597 or dcrossley@rcn.com.

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World Trade

The energy of commerce and manufacturing based on the revolution of computerized industry and electronic products has overcome the slower pace of political negotiations. The pace of economic change has accelerated so much that it challenges our methods of guiding, if not managing it. Although trade organizations such as GATT (since 1947), NAFTA, and the World Trade Organization (established 1995) attempt to free investment and provide guidelines for the exchange of goods, a rapidly evolving world economy persists in jumping ahead of our attempts at planning. These changes require us all to rethink our understanding of economics and inter-related fields such as foreign policy, labor interests, the environment and human rights.

In today's economy, money can flow swiftly across national borders. Labor is far more stationary, and this gives corporations more leverage in locating and then changing production locations. National governments have also lost leverage vis-à-vis the large multinationals.

William Greider, in his 1997 book *One World, Ready Or Not: the Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* explains that we live in an era of constant goods surpluses. This over production, as well as freer trade, contributes to the lower price of consumer goods. Production units function at considerably less than capacity everywhere. Greater automation of production reduces the number of workers needed while increasing the amount produced. Manufacturers compete for new markets – for example, currently in Asia – and cut deals agreeing to shift some production to new countries in exchange for a share of their markets and other political concessions.

Until national governments can organize collectively to impose orderly limits on this frantic pace of change, conflicts over many kinds of issues will continue. Mechanisms for taxation; protection of human rights, the environment and intellectual property need to be further developed on an international stage.

Just as the United States created ways of regulating, channeling, and safeguarding our national economy after the crisis of the 1930s, we must now develop ways of asserting human control over international, globalized commerce.

Whether the World Trade Organization will succeed in grappling with this new situation remains to be seen. We may be skeptical of the benefits its public relations people claim. For instance, a mechanism for settling trade disputes can indeed promote peace, but if the WTO is not successful in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor, other kinds of conflicts can be expected.

The new LWV positions attempt to provide principles by which economic policy and planning should be guided.

On February 25th the League will sponsor a public forum on this topic, and we will hold two unit meetings on Feb. 11 and 13th (see calendar) at which we can discuss these and other facets of World Trade issues.

Contact: Fran Seasholes 617-969-5927 ■

*The League Of Women Voters
Of Massachusetts*

INVITES YOU TO THE
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DAY ON THE HILL

Wednesday, February 27, 2002
Massachusetts State House

*In the public interest
let your voices be heard!*

- 9:00am Coffee with your Legislators
Nurses' Hall
- 10:00am Panel Discussion
Gardner Auditorium

Panelists Include

Sen. Robert L. Hedlund (R) *Weymouth*
State Rep. Susan W. Pope (R) *Wayland*
State Rep. Benjamin Swan (D) *Springfield*
Sen. Susan C. Tucker (D) *Andover*

- 11:00am League's Program Specialists
Gardner Auditorium

Present League's 2002 Legislative Priorities

- Clean Election Implementation
- Education Reform
- Financing Equitable Coverage
in Annuity
- Gun Control
- Health Care Financing
- Standards for Basic Human Needs
- Equitable Coverage of Reproductive
Services In Health Planning

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- ☐ I would like to join the League of Women voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$50 payable to LWVN.
- ☐ Lifetime membership \$1000
- ☐ I would like to receive materials about the League.
- ☐ I would like to be contacted by a League member to talk about LWVN.

Mail this form (and your check, if joining) to:
Andrea Kozinetz Holtz at 8 Stoney Brae Road,
Newton Highlands, MA 02461

PRISCILLA M. LEITH, MBA

162 Islington Road
Newton, MA 02466
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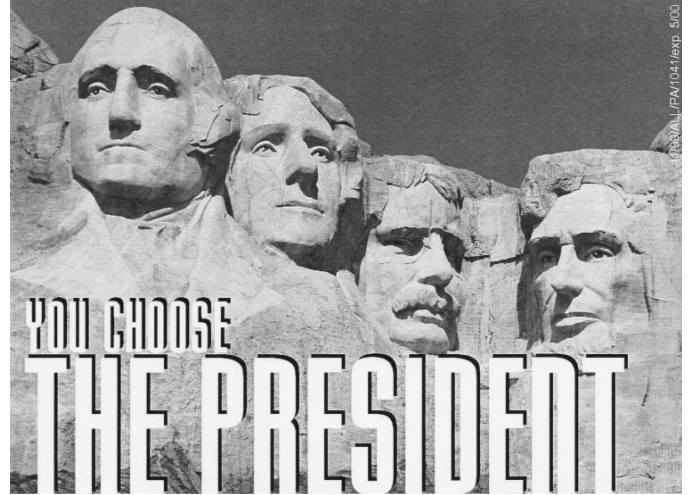
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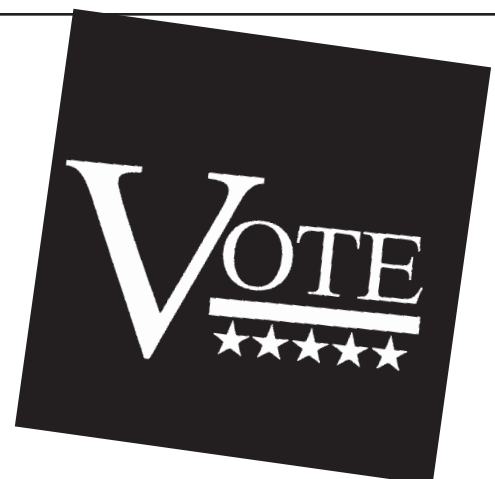
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LWVN CALENDAR

January

- 28 Mon., 7:00 pm, Green Decade and LWVN sponsored Public Forum, "National Policy on the Environment post-Sept 11", at Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library featuring Diane Dumanowski, author; former Boston Globe environmental editor Paul Epstein; Jane Holtz Kay, author. Call Barbara Herson at 617-964-7463 for details.
- 31 Thur. 7:30 pm State of the city finances, league discussion at Butzel 237 Mill Street, Nville, 617.332.8021

February

- 5 Tues., 7:00 pm, Mass. Ed Reform, legislative roundtable taping, NewTV studio, 90 Lincoln St, N Highlands, LWVM members invited to be in audience. RSVP Koch, 617-244-2647
- 11 Mon. 7:30-9:30 pm. National Study: International Trade, with concurrence, Evening Unit meeting, at Fran Seasholes', 163 Cypress St., Newton Centre.
- 13 Wed. 11:30am-1:30pm. National Study: International Trade, with concurrence. Daytime Unit meeting, at Nancy Crowley's, 77 Kirkstall Rd, Newtonville. Bring bag lunch.

NOTE: The Brookline and Belmont Leagues will also be attending our February Units on Intl. Trade. We can expect a lot of people and much dis-

cussion. The hostess would appreciate your calling ahead if you are coming, so she can plan for seating space.

- 25 Mon., 7:00 pm, WORLD TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT, Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library, LWVN-Green Decade co-sponsored Public Forum. Barney Frank, speaker.
- 27 Wed., 9 am- noon, Day on the Hill, State House, Boston

March

- 6 Wed, 11:30 am, Ed Reform Consensus at Capeless, 19 Saxon Road, N. Highlands
- 7 Thurs, 7:30 pm Ed Reform Consensus at Lietzke, 83 Kirkstall Rd, Newtonville
- 25 Monday, 7 p.m. @ Newton Free Library, GreenCAP presents "Pesticides, the Ongoing Experiment On Our Children: A Discussion For Parents, Citizens and Scientists."

May

- 14 Tues., LWVN Annual Meeting. Save the date.

Kindness Needed

Some League members like to attend meetings, but either do not have transportation or are more comfortable if they can go with another person. If you are going to a meeting and could pick up others, please let me know. This is one of the ways to be involved in the League which takes only a little bit of time.

Elaine S. Reisman, Membership Chair
617-244-6439
or bresreis@mediaone.net

Welcome to new members

Edith Michelson

250 Hammond Pond Parkway 1606S
Chestnut Hill 02467
617-527-1211

Lynn Weiner
156 Arnold Rd.
Newton Center 02459
617-527-1200
617-244-6439

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