

Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 1

January 2004

It's Time For National Program Planning!

By Bonnie Carter

Every two years the national League (LWVUS) meets in convention to elect officers and directors, to approve a budget, and to adopt "program" for the biennium. "Program" is League jargon for the public policy issues adopted for study and action. How do we decide which issues to focus on? That's where the grass roots come in. Each League holds meetings to discuss, debate, and come to agreement on program recommendations for the upcoming biennium. The reports are sent to the national office, which compiles the results. Based on this information, the national board makes recommendations for the upcoming biennium's program. These national board recommendations are sent to League delegates before the national convention. At convention in June, delegates vote to adopt the program.

The LWVUS has public policy positions in four main areas: Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. The positions in brief can be found in your LWVNewton Handbook, or I can send you a two-page document if you call the League phone with your request. (617-964-0014). The complete text of the positions is a document called "Impact on Issues," which you can find on the members website at lwv.org/leaders.html. This site can be accessed by the User ID: lwv and the Password: carriecatt.

Continued on page 2

Do You Concur with the Proposed New LWVUS Position on the Selection of the President?

The League of Women Voters has long been among the staunchest supporters for the direct election of the President. The League has testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election. The measure, which passed the House and nearly passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each Congress. In 1997, the LWVUS again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the President and Vice President in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution. The League has also supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

The proposed updated position continues to support direct election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College. However, in the past 30 years, much has changed in the presidential selection process and we need to define and measure our values against other factors that appear to have dramatically altered the process. Today, the process of selecting the president is dominated by questions of campaign strategy and campaign finance, the role of the parties in the primaries and caucuses leading up to the convention, the role of the media and the effect of developing technologies. If the League's concerns include encouraging the best candidates and promoting the highest participation by informed voters, we need to understand the impact of the process on those values.

Convention 2002 adopted a process to update the Selection of the President position in order to address these gaps and examine other changes that have taken place since the League's last study on this subject over 30 years ago. A task force of state and local League representatives has been working with the LWVUS Board and staff to guide the update process. Now your input is needed!

Every member's opinion counts. A proposed new LWVUS position on the Selection of the President has been developed, and the LWVUS Board is seeking concurrence directly from individual League members. You will find the proposed position, along with a response form, in your January/February 2004 National Voter and online in the Position Update section of the LWVUS members' site.

It's easy to participate. We are being asked whether we strongly support, accept, or do not accept the proposed position. After you have studied the position and formed your opinion, send in your concurrence response to the LWVUS office, preferably online in the Position Update section of the LWVUS members' site (www.lwv.org/concurrence.) Or you may respond by mail. Postmark deadline is March 1, 2004. Online deadline is March 4, 2004.

If you want to do more to prepare, reread the articles on the presidential selection process that have appeared in the recent issues of The National Voter (www.lwv.org/position update) and attend the program planning meeting on January 14th. ■

LWVN Officers and Directors 2003-2004

Officers

President	Amelia Koch	617 244-2647
Vice President	Bonnie Carter	617 969-0686
Vice President	Deborah Crossley	617 244-7597
Vice President	Andrea Kelley	617 964-4609
Corresponding Secretary	Robin Maltz	617 969-1554
Treasurer	Andrea Kozinetz	617 964-6490

Directors

Membership	Pat Acton	617 965-5572
City Finance	Ruby Ajanee	617 243-9888
Fundraising	Deborah Atwood	617 964-7374
Newsletter Editor	Ann Grantham	617 964-0333
Education	Jody Klein	617 552-7844
At Large	Beth Lowd	617 332-1978
Unit Organization	Ruth Neiberg	617 969-9329
Voter Service	Sue Rosenbaum	617 332-0306

Off Board Specialists

Environmental Issues	Linda Walden	617 630-9538
Human Rights	Holly Gunner	617 964-0767

Newsletter

President	Amelia Koch	617 244-2647
Editor	Ann Grantham	617 964-0333

Committee Members

Pat Acton	617 965-5572
Liz Lieberman	617 244-4402
Linda Morrison	617 332-6539

The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan 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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617-964-0014
www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV

Make a difference; make the League part of your New Year!

Did you know it's healthy to be a "joiner"? Yes, it's true; it's good for your heart to be part of a group. Being active in the League helps you stay current with local, state, and national issues and it helps you to meet interesting people, and it keeps you healthy! Did you also know that people who keep their brains active are less likely to get Alzheimer's? Yes, that's true too, according to the Wellness letter from the University of California, Berkeley. So think about it and start your New Year off on a healthy footing. Be active in the League, we are good for your brain and we're good for your heart.

Unit meetings will continue this winter and are a great way of keeping your wits sharp. In January we participate in program planning for LWVUS. Lots of good information and great discussions, too – see the calendar for details of upcoming meetings. Plan to attend the February unit meetings on Environmental Issues, plus the League/Green Decade Coalition timely program on Sustainable Building Design in Newton. In March, there will be Unit meetings on Voting Systems. These meetings will be opportunities to meet many members of the current board and help direct the future energy of the League. Or just call up a board member working in your area of interest and ask what needs doing.

The League's nominating committee will also be getting started soon. So please keep us in mind as you make your plans for next year. You'll be good for us and we'll be good for you!

Amelia Koch

Welcome New Members

MANDY BASS
74 Hillside Ave. Newton 02465
617-965-1740
mandybass@comcast.net

JANE HARPER
11 Fenno Road, Newton 02459
617-965-5574

CATHERINE OFFENBERG
211 Greenwood St, Newton 02459
617-244-9590

Continued from page 1

National Program Planning

What issues has the LWVUS been working on recently? Campaign Finance, HAVA implementation and Energy Legislation. These topics certainly resonate with Newton League members!

Come to the unit meeting on January 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the home of Fran Seasholes. Share your ideas, and participate in the grass roots effort the League is built on. ■

Committee Notes

Environmental Issues Group

Save these dates!!

1) UNIT MEETING: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY - Wednesday, February 11, 2004 at 11:30 a.m. at the home of Susan Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Road (Beacon St. to Beethoven Rd. to Puritan Rd. to Winslow Rd), Co-hostess Robin Maltz. The unit meeting will include an update of the City's environmental initiatives and programs and a viewing of "More Fun, Less Stuff", a video produced by the Center for a New American Dream, which challenges the American consumerist lifestyle.

2) SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN: co-sponsored with the Green Decade Coalition, Monday, February 23, 7:00 p.m. at the Druker Auditorium. Using the Newton North High School project as a demonstration, the program will examine how sustainable building technologies can be adopted for public buildings. Brooke Lipsitt, Past President of the Newton Board of Aldermen, will moderate. Nick Parnell, City of Newton Public Building Commissioner, will provide an overview of the Newton North project. David Del Porto, Ecological Engineering, and Barbara Batshalom, Green Roundtable, will discuss the importance and applicability of green building solutions.

We've also been working on a number of items including eagerly following the work of the Energy Commission, specifically the draft Energy Action Plan (EAP) that will be released to the community as a draft document sometime in the New Year.

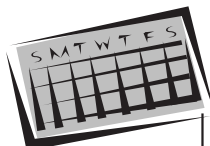
Linda Walden, Chair

Education Committee

Thank you to Carol Daynard, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services and Judy Malone-Neville, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Newton for being the guest speakers at the two unit meetings on Education held in October. Topics discussed included Newton's compliance with the No Child Left Behind Law, MCAS testing, curriculum frameworks, school renovations, user fees, METCO, special education, school safety and more. We appreciate their willingness to share their expertise.

Jody Klein, Chair ■

2004 League Calendars



LARGE BLOCKS
TO WRITE IN...
NO FRILLS,
NO PICTURES.

Holidays and special days of interest (e.g. Nat'l LWV Birthday on Feb 14, United Nations Day on Oct 24) are duly noted.

Please send \$3.50 to cover cost and postage to Priscilla Leith, 162 Islington Rd, Newton 02466 or contact her at islpris@comcast.net to place an order.

Printed by the LWV of Missouri ■

Treasurer's Report

Notes from the LWV Newton Treasurer

We currently have over 200 members and our financial position is stable.

We bill annual dues for membership on a quarterly schedule. We appreciate prompt payment to save the additional cost of mailing a second reminder notice!

Paying your dues renews your membership in the local, state and national leagues. Of the \$50 we ask for annual dues, \$23 goes to LWVUS, \$23 goes to support LWVMA and \$4 stays with LWVN. Dues for membership and contributions to the LWV Newton are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes.

Local leagues have the option of paying up to 25% of their total LWVUS assessment in the form of tax-deductible gifts to the LWV Education Fund, the tax-deductible affiliate of LWVUS. If you make a contribution to the LWVEF and send it to me to forward, we can record the contribution locally and take the credit. Therefore, your tax-deductible contribution will help nationally and locally.

A second way of supporting the work of our local league in Newton is to give a membership to a friend. Membership in the League gives one an opportunity to be active, informed and heard!

If you have questions please feel free to call me at 617 964-6490 or email me at andreaik@comcast.net. Happy New Year to all.

Andrea Kozinetz, Treasurer ■

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.

☐ My Email address may be shared with State and National LWV

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

Observer Notes

REPORT ON THE Parks and Recreation Commission

by Priscilla Leith, LWVN Observer

This report encompasses the September and October, 2003 meetings of the Commission and includes regular reports given at each meeting by Fran Towle, the Department Head of the Parks and Recreation Department. Members of the Commission are Peter Johnson, W3 (Chair); Jennie DeVito, W1; Francis Rice, W4; Walter Bernheimer, W5; Andrew Stern, W6 (Vice Chair); Gwen Fineberg, W7; and, Robert Platt, W8. Ward 2 Commissioner James Mahoney resigned effective October 7 and was not present at any of these meetings. Alternate Commission members Peter Kastner, Michael Clarke, and Jack Neville usually attend meetings and substitute when any Commissioner is absent.

Albemarle Playground

Construction of this playground, a CPA project of the Albemarle Playground Committee chaired by Margaret Doris, got underway this summer with playground equipment that satisfies the recently approved safety guidelines. Adjacent to the tot lot is an Outdoor Community Classroom. Fundraising efforts continued toward the goal of raising \$50,000 from the community to supplement the \$85K of CPA funds.

In early October, without notice to the Newton Recreation Department, the School Committee discussed moving the Newton North High School football stadium to the Russell J. Halloren Recreation Complex, aka Albemarle Field. Department Policy requires prior notice, a public hearing, and approval of the Parks and Rec Commission for any "structure" proposed on its land. The idea is no longer being discussed.

Master Planning

The Commission discussed at length at its September meeting the need to develop a citywide plan for all park space and recreation facilities under its jurisdiction. The first step would be to do an inventory that would cost \$40-50K.

Associate Commissioner Peter Kastner said that an existing Open Space Plan should be the starting point. Commissioner Bernheimer believes the goals of the Open Space Plan were different and suggested a "needs assessment."

In October, Marion Presley (Pressley Associates) suggested that a Master Plan should look at supply (inventory of existing space and facilities), demand (public hearings in neighborhoods) and goals (set by Parks and Rec Commission). Commissioner Andy Stern proposed appointing a sub-committee to work with Fran Towle on this issue.

Commissioner's Report

Fran Towle reported excellent results from the summer programs. There was apparently no outcry over the increased fees charged for various summer programs and camps. The department enforced pass requirements, and all summer camps were charged fees to cover costs. The camp attendance was excellent. The combined income for Gath Pool and Crystal Lake 2003 was \$130,296 vs., \$78,063 in 2002, a 67% increase in revenue. New docks have been ordered for Crystal

Lake. Newton South athletic complex is underway. The dedication of the Marty Sender Riverwalk was held on October 19. An October 15 windstorm caused the loss of over 50 trees and 250 fallen tree limbs on Department property.

Forte Park

A lighting request went before the Conservation Commission, which requested revisions to protect the birds that nest in nearby trees. This is the \$125 K Phase II of the CPA project and includes multipurpose lighting for soccer, bocci, softball and baseball. There is a tight timeline on this, so the project will begin by December 2003 to satisfy both CPA and federal requirements. Completion date is June, 2004.

Millenium Park

This is located on the south side of Newton City Hall, along Homer Street. The project started in late September, has stopped for the winter, and will be completed in Spring 2004.

A Skatepark

A "Skateboard Day" and fundraising kickoff was held October 8. The Skateboard Committee is meeting with Ms. Towle to discuss fundraising ideas. The committee is not yet a tax deductible 501(c) (3) organization, but it should be.

West Newton Common

Irrigation will be the subject of a proposal to be submitted for \$81,092 of CPA funds. Like the proposal for the Bowen playfield submitted last year, it would require digging a well to provide water for grass on the ball field.

Stearns Park

Stearns Park is the subject of a second CPA proposal approved (5-2) by the Commission. This is a \$25,000 project requested by the Nonantum Advisory Committee that was to have received \$200,000 from the Community Development Block Grant program. However, the Advisory Committee wants to put the CDBG funds into improvements at Pellegrini Park and request CPA funding for a master plan for Stearns Park. There was discussion of the half-acre vacant parcel adjacent to Stearns, whether it should be acquired and added to the park. ■

November 17, 2003

To: Newton Parks and Recreation Commission
Re: Advertising Signs on Public Land

The League of Women Voters of Newton has positions that support the work the Parks and Recreation Commission does to improve recreational facilities in Newton. One of our goals for recreation and open space is the "retention of appropriate portions of the recreation parks as natural areas." We recognize the difficulty you face in balancing active recreational uses with more passive and natural park space.

Toward that end, we very much support the policy you adopted in 1993 to help guide decisions for granting permits on Parks and Recreation property. That policy lays out the criteria for granting requests for signs and structures, and we hope you will adhere to it while considering the most recent request for advertising signs at Newton Centre Playground to benefit the Little League East. Using an established framework to evaluate each individual request makes for better and more consistent development. The criteria to address and apply in this case are:

- * that any proposal must be in the long term interest of the City
- * that the petitioner must demonstrate, in writing, the need to erect the structure or sign, and
- * must show that other suitable avenues for fundraising have been researched or attempted
- * take into consideration the potential adverse effects that the proposal will have on the environmental and economic parameters of the area in question

We urge the Parks and Recreation Commission to adhere to the rules, procedures and policies you have already adopted, and not permit advertising signs unless all of the above criteria have been met to your full satisfaction. We suggest that advertising signs on public open space are not in long term interest of the city.

Additionally, we encourage you to apply appropriate penalties to all organizations that do not comply with the guidelines for post-season removal of signs that have been approved. We suggest that prohibiting installation of signs the following season is an appropriate consequence to organizations that have been given a permit for the signs but have not removed them as stipulated.*

Sincerely,
Amelia Koch, President
Deborah Crossley, Vice President
League of Women Voters of Newton

**It is our understanding that rules of the Parks and Recreation Commission require Little Leagues to apply for and receive permits each year before they can place advertising signs at any play field, and that signs granted a permit must be removed by September 30- the end of the season.*

Local League Action

November 24, 2003

To: Community Preservation Committee
Re: Second Round of CPA Proposals

The League of Women Voters of Newton recently convened a subcommittee to discuss the most recent round of CPA proposals taking into consideration both the law and the CPC's own plan and guidelines. Without seeking to duplicate your work, we offer our draft review for each proposal in the form of comments and questions for further clarification or consideration, but do not express our explicit support or opposition. We remain very interested in the process of awarding CPA funds, which is rapidly evolving, because of our support for passage of the CPA and our concern that this valuable program be administered wisely so as to build public trust and ensure its future.

The League has a particular concern with this round because the funds available to be spent significantly exceed the project requests. This may mean that there will be an increased expectation that all projects should be funded. We understand that each project is much desired by those who propose the expenditure but a project may be at the same time meritorious, of general benefit to the community, and still not be appropriate for funding under CP guidelines. We remain concerned that only those projects that conform to both the letter and the spirit of the Law, especially as interpreted in the Community Preservation Committee's own guidelines, be funded.

There is one further concern we would like to raise which relates to more than one of the proposals and that is the issue of "master plans". It was recommended to the Park and Recreation Department during last year's CP funding process that they should develop a master plan for the city's parks. It would help the Parks and Recreation Department prioritize not just their requests for CPA funds but also their own limited funds. We applaud the concept of master planning but would be reluctant to see planning funded for one park when it remains unclear how this park relates to Newton's park system. Further it is unclear how the funding relates to the CP guidelines.

No letter from the League would be complete without thanking the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for their great service to the community. We appreciate the time and commitment that your task entails.

Sincerely
Deborah Crossley, Vice President
League of Women Voters of Newton

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Committees - in - Action

E d u c a t i o n

Focus Renovations, increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards

Members Susie Heyman Robin Maltz
Andrea Kelley Fran Osten
Andrea Kozinetz Beverly Spencer
Anne Larner Beth Wilkinson

Contact Jody Klein, Chair ⁶¹⁷244-4767

E n v i r o n m e n t a l I s s u e s

Focus Promoting source reduction, and recycling programs in municipal offices and public schools

Members Deb Crossley Robin Maltz
Katherine Gekas Martha Richmond
Barbara Herson Sharyn Roberts
Beth Lowd Rohna Shoul

Contact Linda Walden, Chair ⁶¹⁷630-9538

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 Sharon Balfour Susie Heyman
Linda Morrison

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair ⁶¹⁷964-0767

L o c a l A c t i o n

Contact Deb Crossley, Chair ⁶¹⁷244-7597

OBSERVER CORPS

Community Preservation Committee Deb Crossley
Jody Klein
Priscilla Leith

Election Commission Bonnie Carter
Nancy Criscitiello

Finance Committee, Board of Alderman Ruby Ajanee
Amelia Koch

Newton Citizen Commission on Energy Deb Crossley,
LWVN Representative

Parks and Recreation Commission Priscilla Leith

Zoning and Planning Committee, Board of Aldermen Judy Jaffe

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

Members Nancy Crowley Deb Hirsch

Contact Fran Seasholes, Chair ⁶¹⁷969-5927

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

LWVN CALENDAR

January

- 7 Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Working Board Meeting at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Parkway, Newton, 617-964-0333.
- 14 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Unit Meeting, **National Program Planning**, at the home of Fran Seasholes, 163 Cypress St., Newton Centre, 617-969-5927. Brown Bagging encouraged.
- February Newsletter Deadline
- 26 Wednesday, 7:15 p.m., Board Meeting at the home of Pat Acton, 48 Miller Rd., Newton Centre, 617-365-5572

February

- 11 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m., Unit Meeting, **Think Globally, Act Locally**, at the home of Susan Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Rd., Waban, Co-hostess Robin Maltz, 617-969-1554. Brown Bagging encouraged.
- Deadline to Register to Vote or to Change Party Enrollment for Presidential Primary to be held on March 2, 2004
- 6:30 p.m., Working Board Meeting/ Newsletter Deadline
- 15 Sunday Evening, Democratic Presidential Primary Debate sponsored by LWVUS
- 23 Monday, 7:00-9:00 p.m., **Sustainable Building Design**, a panel discussion on this current local issue, co-sponsored with the Green Decade Coalition at Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library. Public Invited!
- 25 Wednesday, 7:15 p.m., Board Meeting
- 26 Thursday, LWVM Day on the Hill, State House, Boston

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