

Newsletter

Top 10 Items from Annual Meeting



AMELIA KOCH THANKS
PATRICIA HO



DAVID DELPORTO,
Ecological Engineering



ANDREA KELLY &
DEBORAH ATWOOD -
Welcoming Committee

- 1 We heard Angier student, Patricia Ho, read her prize-winning essay.
"If the president is an excellent listener, he will have better ideas for improving the country."
- 2 We learned more reasons for making sure we build Green Buildings from David DelPorto of Ecological Engineering.
"Investments in green buildings pay for themselves ten times over."
- 3 Amelia Koch reflected on the past year. (See President's Message, Page 2)
- 4 We adopted Local Action Priorities for 2004-2005
 - CPA – Continue to monitor and comment on CPA proposals as they are submitted.
 - Environmental Issues – Encourage the use of "High Performance" building standards in the city, especially Newton North High School. Continue to support recycling in the schools. Support the work of the Sustainable Newton Committee.
 - Monitor and advocate for proper maintenance of all city buildings especially the schools.
 - Continue to follow and support the development of Newton's Long Range Plan.
 - Continue support for same sex marriages including opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment, advocacy with other Leagues in Massachusetts, and dissemination of the videotape of the Newton League forum on the rights and privileges of marriage.
 - Citizen education regarding school and city finances including a forum in the fall.
- 5 We passed a budget similar to last years, including money for childcare.
- 6 We elected a Steering Committee: Nancy Crowley presented the report of the Nominating Committee which establishes a five member executive committee, known as a Steering Committee, in place of a President and Vice-Presidents.
- 7 We heard Member Direction to the Board:
"Observers are important. How about an Observer Committee?"
- 8 We planned to re-locate our archives to Brigham House in Newton Highlands.
- 9 We sent off three members to National Convention.
- 10 Last, but not least, we spent the evening with very special people. ■



ROBIN MALTZ, ANDREA KOZINETZ HOLTZ & BONNIE CARTER
Enjoying the Dinner

LWVN Officers and Directors 2003-2004

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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	617 244-4767
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
Recycling	Barbara Herson	617 964-7463

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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www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV

A copy of Amelia Koch's speech at the Annual Meeting

We have much to celebrate tonight ...

And much work still to do. I want to begin by thanking this year's leadership team Deb Crossley, Bonnie Carter, and Andrea Kelley. You've been role models, teachers, and friends. In short you've been leaders and we wouldn't be us without you! And thank you to the rest of this year's board. For each of the past three years I've put together the action log and each time I am amazed at all we accomplish. Thank you for the many times you stepped forward and said "I'll do it" and did!

Last years recommended local program included continued work to defeat the proposed constitutional amendment called the Defense of marriage Act and a special focus on observing including the election commission, the implementation of the Community Preservation Act, and the city's efforts to increase affordable housing.

The celebration here would be hard to miss. For those of you who were able to attend the celebration at city hall on Monday you know that Newton has joyfully welcomed gay and lesbian couples. The hard work still to be done is also hard to miss. The constitutional convention passed a bill that would undo the courts decision and we must not let that happen. Challenges to the legality of gay marriage in Massachusetts are constant and so must our vigilance be. Holly Gunner who wears many hats besides her League hat has been a passionate and tireless opponent of this Defense of Marriage act. She kept us informed of the many critical lobbying opportunities. Brook Lipsitt has retired from the board but not from activism and has been working actively on this issue with Holly.

Thanks to efforts by Deb Crossley, Annamaria Abernathy, Priscilla Leith, Jody Klein, and Sue Rosenbaum who observed the CPA proceedings, we read the proposals and have offered written comments to the committee on most of the proposals submitted to date. There is much to celebrate here as well; the flow of funds from the CPA continues to change the face of the city. Who can doubt that seeing Kessler Woods and other new opportunities for affordable housing? The League should be proud of its work in helping to pass the CPA and in supporting its implementation. There is a great need for continued vigilance at the state level where the various legislators have proposed using CPA funds for other purposes and at the local level where articulate non-partisan viewpoints are always needed.

Thanks to Deb Crossley and to League member Josephine McNeil for their vital and continuing efforts to expand affordable housing opportunities in Newton. Passage of the CPA has proved to be an excellent new tool and has already contributed to the success of several affordable housing projects. LWVN members have advocated for project funding from the CPA, we are active on the tax equity study group, and we participate with UCHAN (United Citizens for housing affordability in Newton). But we "Can-Do" so much more.

But of course that program is only a starting place for the Newton League we also need to recognize and celebrate Sue Rosenbaum with help from Bonnie Carter who handled voters' service for 54 candidates, yikes! And then an extra election. Thank you both. Ann Grantham has been an excellent newsletter editor, producing newsletters that have won positive comments from longstanding members and attracted new ones. We are very fortunate that she has agreed to continue in this role again for next year.

Continued on page 4

O b s e r v e r N o t e s

Albemarle Neighbors Challenge Newton North Little League

by Priscilla Leith

The Parks and Recreation Commission was advised in April that Newton North Little League's permit for use of Murphy Field (part of the Russell Halloran Recreational Complex) on Albemarle Road was up for renewal. This and other requests for a concession stand, commercial signs, and an electric batting cage were heard and debated by NNLL supporters and neighborhood residents on April 26.

Terry Morris and Ellen Brown of NNLL asked for use of the field and a concession stand for three years. During the hearing they added requests for bleachers and a sound system at the field, which hadn't been mentioned in the hearing notice. NNLL proposed to have Forte Construction Co. install bleachers at LL expense in time for a May 28 "big event" at the field. NNLL also wanted approval to use a sound system with two small speakers on May 28, and for more flags on the field flagpole.

Commissioner Bernheimer advised that the Commission has rules and a process, and that a separate public hearing would be required; Morris argued that NNLL should be able to construct the bleachers, which were to replace some moved by the city when work was done on the field. Therefore they should not be subject to a hearing, he felt. Likewise, he believed the concession stand permit was a renewal and not subject to a hearing.

Neighbors opposed the concession stand and the sound system, disliked the signs, and approved of the batting cage. The Commission approved the batting cage, but held the remaining items for its May 17 meeting, with due notice to the neighbors.

In May, Alternate Commissioner Peter Kastner requested a financial statement from NNLL so that Commissioners could see what monies were being raised and how in order to judge whether the concession stand income was necessary. NNLL's treasurer responded that \$7-9K is raised from concessions, \$70 per child or \$100 per family per year for kids who play, and it pays \$5-6K per year for maintenance of Murphy Field. No written statements were available. After more discussion the concession permit was granted for only one year.

Several neighbors voiced strong objections to the sound system, which has already been operating without permission. They questioned whether it violates the city's noise ordinance. Another resident revealed that a 110-volt conduit for underground electric wiring was already in place at Murphy Field, without the knowledge of the Recreation Department, the Commission, or the Inspectional Services Dept. Although a Little League parent who is a qualified electrician installed it, there was concern that it might not meet code standards, and city inspectors were to be sent to the site the next morning.

Requests for the sound system, the bleachers, the additional flags, the concession stand, and the commercial signs were tabled until the Commission's June 21 meeting. ■

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

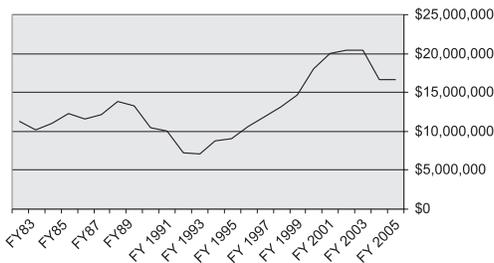
Newton's Financial Picture

Revenue Summary

At an April Unit meeting, Amelia Koch and Ruby Ajanee made a presentation about the City of Newton Finances, Fiscal Year 2005 Forecast. By popular request we reprint these slides prepared by Sandy Pooler, Chief Budget Officer.

	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005		
GENERAL FUND					
Estimated Revenues					
Property Tax	\$180,170,221	\$187,384,725	\$193,783,893	6,399,168	3.4%
Local Revenues	\$20,274,826	\$21,013,061	\$21,225,972	212,911	1.0%
State & Federal Aid	\$20,635,315	\$16,816,006	\$16,816,006	0	0.0%
Other Available Funds	\$3,915,996	\$4,447,379	\$4,962,334	514,955	11.6%
Total Est. Revenues:	\$224,996,358	\$229,661,171	\$236,788,205	7,127,034	3.1%

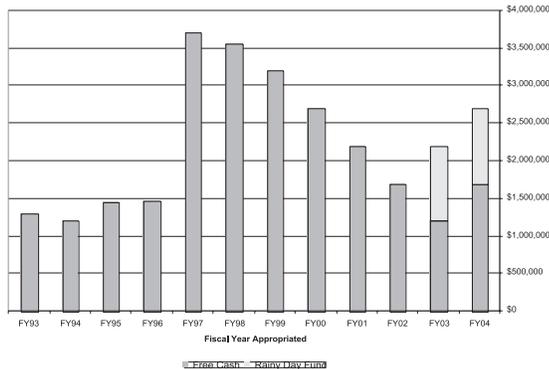
State Aid



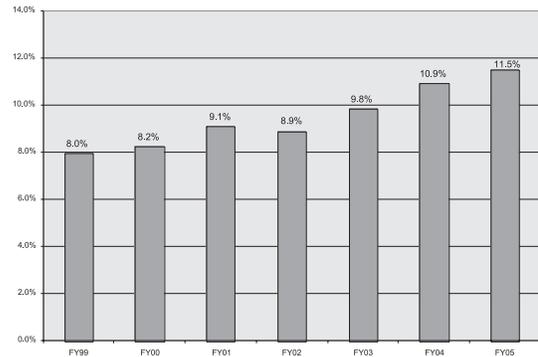
Mayor's Allocation

- TOTAL NEW REVENUE.....\$7 MILLION
- CITY DEPARTMENTS.....\$2.1 MILLION
Increase of 30% of new revenue
 - SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.....\$4.9 MILLION
Increase of 70% of new revenue

Free Cash Used in Budget



Health Insurance as a Percentage of Revenue



President's Message

continued from page 2

One of the real surprise pleasures this year was the environmental committee. They have effectively raised a number of issues with the schools and the city regarding recycling and "high performance" buildings among others. Thanks to Linda Walden and Barbara Herson for running an active and effective program.

Ruby Ajanee joined us for the first time this year and dove right in observing the finance committee of the board of aldermen and serving on Nominating committee. Ruby is particularly interested in National issues and will serve as one of Newton's three representatives to National Convention.

And the year wouldn't have been nearly complete without the unit committee's work. So thank you to Ruth Neiberg,

Rose Davis, Bonnie Carter, Pat Acton and Priscilla Leith for arranging and coordinating an informative and interesting series of units with topics from the PATRIOT Act to city finances.

Thanks to Robin Maltz who gallantly agreed to publish the 2004 handbook. Yea Robin!

Deborah Atwood was a very successful fundraising chair arranging phonothon, getting things back on track with newsletter and handbook advertisers and then helping with 'Champagne & Chocolate.' For anyone who missed Susie Heyman's masterpiece you missed a great event, Susie you throw a fabulous party!

There are some people you just can't imagine what you

Continued on page 8

Action Alert:

Help the Citizen Review Board Bill for the Department of Correction Pass

Patti Muldoon, Chair, LWVN Administration of Justice Committee

The LWVN Administration of Justice Committee has set its top priority to establish some checks and balances for the prison system where little is open to public scrutiny. We have been working for two years to pass a bill to create a citizens review board for our state prisons.

We urgently request local Leagues to lobby to pass H.4457, the Citizen Review Board for the Department of Correction during June and July.

The bill has already passed two committees in the House, and a variant of the bill (that was weakened) passed the House as an outside section of the budget. Plans are underway to have H.4457 introduced as an amendment into the Senate budget.

In the meantime, we need to keep up our efforts to move H.4457 out of the Committee on Bills on Third Reading and onto the House Floor ASAP.

What You Can Do:

Contact Rep. DeLeo of Winthrop, Committee Chairman, and urge him to move the bill along to passage. His email address is Rep.RobertDeleo@hou.state.ma.us and his phone is 617-722-2410. If you have already contacted him, please do so again. A groundswell of support could be created if just two members of each local League called. (Note: the other two members of the committee are Reps. LeDuc of Marlborough and George of Yarmouth.)

Also, contact your own State Representative and Senator Creem, urging them to support this important bill. See pages 9 & 10 in your 2004 LWVN Handbook for addresses ■

Got Mold?

A Threat to Teachers and Students

By Ellie Goldberg

In Nature, fungi help clear the forest floor of debris. Outdoors, fungi send aloft their seeds (spores) as part of the cycle of life, death and decay. In our homes and workplaces, fungi (commonly called mold and mildew) can be seeds of misery.

On Tuesday, July 13, at 7 p.m., the Green Decade Coalition/Newton, League of Women Voters and the Newton Free Library present Jeffrey C. May, a nationally recognized expert and popular speaker on mold and indoor air quality.

May is the author of *My House is Killing Me! The Home Guide for Families with Allergies and Asthma* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) and co-author with Connie May of *The Mold Survival Guide: For Your Home and for Your Health, How to Identify, Prevent and Solve Indoor Mold*



JEFF MAY

Problems. He is a familiar presence to TV viewers on CNN, Inside Edition, Discovery Health, and Boston Channels 5, 7, and 56.

Jeff May demystifies mold and clears up popular misconceptions about a range of indoor air quality problems. His program includes pictures that show mold growing in the ducts of air conditioning or heating systems and in the dust in carpeting and on bathroom ceilings and walls. He explains why mold can cause whole families to suffer from headaches, fatigue, asthma and other respiratory ailments which may not have been thought to be related to this problem.

He knows that mold can make children sick and ruins the careers of dedicated teachers as has happened in Newton and other communities. Come and join us and learn how you can protect your home and work place environment. ■



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*Our politics may lean to the left,
but our work... NEVER!*

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

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 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 Pat Acton Nancy Crowley
Ruby Ajanee 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

June

- 10 Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Steering Committee at the home of Sue Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Rd., Waban, 617-332-0306
- 17 Thursday, 6:00 p.m., Steering Committee at the home of Beth Lowd, 38 Hobart Rd., Newton Centre, 617-332-1978
- 30 Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Steering Committee at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Parkway, Newton Corner, 617-964-0333

July

- 13 Tuesday, 7 p.m., Jeff May, expert on mold and indoor air quality, co-sponsored with the Green Decade Coalition and the Newton Free Library in Druker Auditorium.
- 14 Wednesday, 2004-05 Board Orientation

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on to
www.newtv.org

President's Message *continued from page 4*

would do without. In fact we are blessed with a number of board members who could fit that description however Bonnie Carter easily comes to mind. As Vice President she has worked with other board members, helped with organizing and of course voter's service. Bonnie's connection with NEWTV is an ongoing blessing. Many thanks!

Andrea Kozinetz Holtz makes numbers look easy. She has honed the treasurer's role to a science. And that's not all. She also finds time to help with the education committee and has followed the ups and downs of the Newton North high school task force.

Some of Deb Crossley accomplishments have already been mentioned but my celebrating wouldn't be complete without more than a mention of this talented, dedicated, thoughtful, and wonderful League woman. Just when Deb says she's out of time, she finds a way to do something more. Keeping us tied into the city planning process and the energy commission, mentoring new members, moderating the legislative roundtable, working on affordable housing and monitoring the CPA. And with all of that she still finds time to work? What would we have done without her!

Many times have I written in my president's message about the wonderful women I have the privilege of working with. Women who are not always easy, but smart women who care. Who care about their families, their schools, their cities, and their country. You are why I love the League. You are The League of Women Voters of Newton and you make me proud! ■

League of Women Voters of Newton

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