

# League of Women Voters of Newton Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 3

March 2001

## Environmental Action and Advocacy Forum

*by Deb Crossley*

There was a full house at the Library Auditorium for the third annual "Environmental Legislation - Action and Advocacy" forum that the League cosponsored with Green Decade Coalition. For the first half of the meeting, state legislators discussed current environmental issues and bills, and the balance featured a presentation introducing what implementation of the Community Preservation Act could mean to Newton, and a lively dialogue with the audience.

Mayor Cohen expressed his continued support for efforts to maintain the environmental health of our city, praised Newton's state legislators for their devotion to environmental issues, and welcomed Senator Cynthia Creem, and Representatives Ruth Balser and Peter Koutoujian. Senator Creem spoke at length about her interest in shaping government policy toward energy conservation, and of the introduction of her newest bill: "An Act to Promote an Energy Efficient Massachusetts", which proposes specific measures to increase energy efficiency in MA by 20% over the next ten years.

Representative Balser first described a statewide initiative that would offer further protection for open space. Currently, lands set aside as park lands by Article 97, can be reclaimed for development by a 2/3 vote of the legislature, if petitioned by a city or town as "necessary". Balser's "No Net Loss Bill", would set a standard for approval of such development requests on Article 97 lands only if the community will set aside other lands of equal environmental value and quantity. The Representative is also busy working on ways to clean up and preserve Hammond Pond in Chestnut Hill, which is being destroyed by stormwater runoff from Route 9. She has been meeting actively with Mass. Highway and the state DEP to come up with a solution to divert this runoff.

Representative Koutoujian spoke of his support for a range of environmental bills, including those sponsored by Creem and Balser, but focused on ways for citizens to most effectively reach their legislators on the issues they care about. During the second half of the evening, James Broderick of the Newton Conservators, who chairs the Community Preservation Alliance in Newton, presented the essential components of what implementation of the Community Preservation Act in Newton would require, defining what kinds of projects could be considered in the city if we could approve and administer the fund this would establish. Broderick and other members of the CPA Alliance, who include representatives from the Green Decade Coalition, The Newton Conservators, U-ChAN (affordable housing advocates) and the League of Women Voters, responded to a wide range of questions and comments from the audience. Detailed descriptions were provided of what impact various tax levies would have on Newton taxpayers, exemptions that can be established for low income and senior homeowners, and how the CPA offers a vehicle to implement planning objectives the city currently has no funding to support.

*Continued on page 4*

## Unit Meeting on Framework Plan - Open Discussion of City Planning

*by Deb Crossley*

What is the status of Newton's Comprehensive planning effort? Several League members contributed regularly to the Mayor's Framework Planning Committee, whose charge it was "to identify consensus values for a planning framework" to guide later, more detailed studies. Under the volunteer direction of Mr. Philip Herr, two years, two public forums and over two dozen meetings later, a draft The Framework Plan was first published last fall, and again revised just this week with input from the Aldermanic Zoning and Planning Committee. It is still a draft.

This document is not a comprehensive plan. It is not the policy document that needs to follow, and as Mr. Herr said in a recent memo to the committee, a full comprehensive plan must not only satisfy the requirements of Newton's City charter, but must also respond to the most recent Mass.' law (Chapter 41 MGL) defining elements of such a plan. And there are further topical guidelines proposed by ongoing studies of the American Planning Association (APA) on "Smart Growth" (remember our report from LWVM Fall Conference where this topic was presented as part of the Water Rules session).

Although many League members have attended the public forums and read parts of the framework plan, we would like to hold a critical discussion of its content for League members. You should read the most recent draft plan

*Continued on page 5*

## LWVN Officers and Directors 2000-2001

### Officers

President	Deb Crossley	244-7597
Vice President	Amy Koch	244-2647
Vice President	Bonnie Carter	969-0686
Treasurer	Judy Jaffe	969-7427
Recording & Corresponding Secretary	Robin Maltz	969-1554

### Directors

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Newsletter	Deborah Hirsch	965-1475
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Unit Meetings & Membership Information	Elaine Reisman	244-6439
Local Action	Carol Ann Shea	969-2121
Education	Beverly Spencer	965-6365
Legislation & Program	Beth Wilkinson	969-4443

### Off-Board Positions

Nominating Committee	Andrea Kelley, Chair	964-4609
	Linda Morrison	332-6539
	Sheila Shulman	965-5331
Gender Issues	Cheryl Kosmo	964-2666
Human Rights	Holly Gunner	964-0767
Natural Resources	Dede Vittori	964-8190
Recycling	Barbara Herson	964-7463

### Newsletter

President	Deb Crossley	244-7597
Editor	Andrea Kelley	964-4609

### Committee Members

Deborah Hirsch	965-1475
Liz Lieberman	244-4402
Linda Morrison	332-6539

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 964-0014.

PO Box 610207  
Newton, MA 02461

## A Small but Thoughtful Group

If ever I feel short-handed in working to serve all of the many efforts we undertake, I can quickly put my angst into perspective by thinking of

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can make a difference. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

some of you extraordinary people who make up our League, how much you contribute, and what you give up in order to further our mission. I remind myself that it is thoughtful persistence over time that makes the difference. Like water on stone, as one member reminds me often.

As with so much else in our lives, we have many grand ideas, hopes and dreams, but planning, grinding out the message, piecing together the work of many into a coherent whole, and supporting one another's efforts, that is what it takes to get the job done.

This month, no fewer than eight of our most active members were suddenly beset by death or illness of family members or close friends, depleting our resources temporarily. Yet every single one of you, when delivered expressions of sympathy, thought quickly of what you needed to do next for the League, either to keep a project on track, or to consider an issue before the board. And others step in so readily when asked to fill a gap.

OK - it's not as though everyone can say yes to every request. That does not happen, and will not happen as long as women are caught between the pressures of career, family, AND community service. But the willingness to serve is extraordinary - League members really know how to do the work!

Condolences, sympathies and get well wishes to you and your families who have suffered. And thank you, thank you, thank you, for maintaining the League as a priority in your lives.

Hope to see you all at our big events this spring!



LWVMA Presidents' Mail is now also available online- any interested League member can access Presidents' Mail at no charge. If you would like to receive the online version of Presidents' Mailing, please send an email to [lwvma@ma.lwv.org](mailto:lwvma@ma.lwv.org), and type "Online Only" in the subject line. Include your name and local League in the body of the email. ■

### Looking for Jane Leighton Award Nominations

The Jane Leighton Award was established to honor Jane Leighton, a long time league volunteer, for her wonderful good humor and hard work.

Each year a volunteer is honored at our annual meeting. If you have a nomination to make please contact

**Amelia Koch** by email at [akoch@risd.edu](mailto:akoch@risd.edu) or by phone at **617-244-2647**.

Nominations should be received by April 7th.

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# Not-so-Trivial Question

**Thanks to Florence Rubin for answering our question**

**Q:** Why does Newton have term limits for School Committee and not the Board of Aldermen?

**A:** The Newton City Charter, adopted by the voters in 1971, forbids School Committee members from running for a fifth consecutive two-year term. (After skipping a term, the former incumbent may seek election once again). The intent of this temporary term limit was to encourage more people to run for the School Committee and to give new candidates a fair chance of success.

By the end of the nineteen sixties, most School Committee members had been in office for many years. Newton's local ballot was as long then as it is now and name recognition was an important advantage for incumbents. It seemed to some neighborhoods that the School Committee was a closed club, not representative of the whole City.

Removing an entrenched incumbent periodically seemed a relatively benign way of generating more contests as well as creating a level playing field for the candidates. The public agreed and voted against removing the School Committee term limit every time it appeared on the ballot.

The 1971 Charter did not impose any limits on Aldermanic terms. Incumbents left voluntarily from time to time and no legal remedy was necessary. However, incumbency patterns among the aldermen seemed to have changed during the past decade. Maybe it's time to mandate open seats once again.

**Editor's Note:** The League is opposed to term limits, believing that voter participation through elections is the way to achieve turnover in public office. ■

# Don't Stand There, Run!

(Note new date) \*

by Bonnie Carter

The League of Women Voters of Newton is inviting all candidates, potential candidates, their campaign managers and interested members of the public to a workshop on how to run for local elected office. A panel of experts has been invited to share their experience and expertise. The workshop will be held on Thursday, evening, May 3\* from 6:30 to 9:30 pm at the Newton Senior Center.

We are very fortunate to have the following people serve as panelists: Lois Pines, Dorothy Reichard, Ruth Balser, Andy Vizulis, and David Mofenson. The panelists will discuss what it is like to serve on the Board of Aldermen and School Committee. They will talk about how to run a campaign: mobilize your supporters, identify your voters, get out the vote (GOTV), deal with the media, create your brochures, do mailings and prepare for debates. Also, the filing requirements under the Campaign and Political Finance Law will be discussed. There will be ample time for questions from those in attendance. Hand-outs will be available.

This is very timely because the nomination papers for candidates for local office will be available starting May 1. They are due to be filed on July 5.

All local elected officials are up for re-election in the fall: the mayor, 24 aldermen and 8 school committee members. Four of the School Committee members have reached their term limits, thus making four empty seats to be filled.

*www.dnet.org/ma is a web site available to local leagues to post local election and candidate information. Candidates can enter into an online dialogue with their opponents. Viewers can log on to read about candidates and issues. ■*

*R.S.V.P.*

Those who wish to attend should leave a message on the League phone at 964-0014. Since the program starts early, we will offer a light supper of pizza. It will be useful to know how many plan to attend. Pizza and politics, anyone? ■

\*Change of date since last Newsletter

# Day on the Hill for 2001

by Beth Wilkinson

Day on the Hill is an annual event cosponsored by the State League and our state legislators to provide League members with an opportunity to obtain updated information on recent legislation and to meet with their local legislative delegation. This year, the event is planned for Tuesday, April 10 (in spite of earlier reports of the 25th and the 11th).

The day will begin with coffee and conversation in Nurse's Hall in the State House from 8 to 9 AM. From 9 to 10:30 or 11:00, there will be speakers (yet to be announced) on lobbying and the general topic of current legislation. From 11:00 to 12:00, legislators will be available to answer questions and to discuss their legislative priorities.

Will Newton League members planning to attend Day on the Hill please notify Beth Wilkinson (Legislative Chair) either by phone at 969-4443 or by e-mail at EWilkin579@aol.com. We either will schedule lunch with our legislators (as we have done in past years) or will plan to meet from 11 to 12 in a private office. Knowing how many members plan to attend will help us to finalize those plans.

Consider bringing a prospective member to this event: it would be a great way to introduce a friend to the League and its concerns! ■

## Library Support Letter

March 11, 2001  
 Mayor David B. Cohen  
 City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
 Newton, MA 02159



Dear Mayor Cohen,

The League of Women Voters of Newton strongly supports an increase in the FY102 budget for new library staff. Over the past ten years since the library was built, no other department of the city has had such an increase in demand for its services. The new main library building is the busiest in the state. Circulation has grown 120%, while library staff has increased only 40%. Growth in circulation is unrelenting and current staffing levels are insufficient to keep up with the demand for services.

The League monitors several city services and we are mindful that the operating budget must be stretched to fit many needs. Nevertheless, we support this increase because it is essential to maintaining library services.

The library's request for an additional \$132,764 to pay 4.65 FTE\* new library workers and increase the responsibilities of three existing staff members is reasonable and necessary. It is the result of a year's planning effort to try to meet increasing demand for services. With 4.65 FTE\* more staff, and assuming no further increase in circulation, the Newton Free Library will still have the highest workload per staff member of any library within the Minuteman network.

The library's \$100,000 request for books and materials should not be seen as an increase in library expenditures. It is a transfer from the capital budget to the operating budget. For the past three years, \$100,000 of the library's book budget has been funded from capital accounts. In view of the increasing demand for this material, this expenditure is more needed than ever. It matters little where the money originates.

We urge you to keep these considerations in mind as you make difficult decisions about the city budget for FY 2002.

Respectfully,  
 Deborah Crossley, President, LWV Newton

\*full time equivalent

## Environmental Action

*Continued from page one*

Excellent handouts were distributed explaining what the steps Newton must follow to place the question on the 2001 ballot, and the specifics of the bill. The article written by AnnaMaria Abernathy in our February issue on the Community Preservation Act was referenced, and it was noted that signature collection to put this question on the ballot may begin before the aldermen take up the issue, in the event they might not vote in favor.

The Community Preservation Alliance has planned a follow up citywide forum for the evening of April 11. ■

*Special thanks to the Community Preservation Alliance and to members Barbara Herson and Nancy Crowley for their great work organizing this year's forum!*

## Committees - in - Action

### Education

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 965-6365  
 Board Liaison

### Human Rights

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

Members Joan Bates Ruth Nemzoff  
 Marion Cowan Wand Persimmon  
 Holly Gunner Dorothy Reece  
 Lilly Jefferson Jeanne White  
 Anne Larner

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair (964-0767)

### Land Use/Transportation

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 969-9483

### Local Action

Focus Reducing the size of the Board of Aldermen

Members in formation - all welcome

Contact Carol Ann Shea 969-2121

### Newsletter

Members Jane Leighton Liz Lieberman  
 Deb Hirsch Linda Morrison

Contact Andrea Kelley 964-4609

### Education Reform

Focus LWVMA study on ED Reform

Members Deborah Hirsch  
 Andrea Kelley  
 Anne Larner  
 Leslie Lockhart  
 Robin Maltz

Contact Leslie Lockhart 527-5046

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



*membership news*

*We are pleased to announce  
and welcome the following:*

**NEW MEMBER**

Diana Collopy  
85B Seminary Ave. Apt 343  
Lasell Village, Auburndale 02466-2620  
617-969-5441

**REJOINED**

Mary Margaret Pappas  
70 Prospect St. W. Newton 02465

Linda Bilotta  
34 Whitlowe Rd. W. Newton 02465

Corinne Chan  
20 E. Quinobequin Rd. Waban 02468

Beverly Droz  
35 Islington Rd. Auburndale 02466

**LIFE MEMBERS**

Fran Seasholes (current member)  
became a lifetime member

Lillian Astrachan  
11 Amy Circle Waban 02468  
617/928-0981  
(became life member as a gift  
from her mother Suzanne Spatz)

**Framework Plan**

*Continued from page one*

before the meeting, which I can provide, or which you can obtain at the city Planning office. Other handouts will be available at the meeting.

*Join us!*

Andrea Kelley is hosting @  
28 Putnam Street, April 25,  
from 11:30am to 1:30pm;

*BYO Lunch!*

# Environmental Assessment Committee

*by DeDe Vittori*

The second meeting of the newly formed Environmental Assessment Committee will be on April 26 from 7:30-9:30 at 18 Linder Terrace in Newton. This Committee will study, assess, and report on the status of selected aspects of Newton's environmental programs. Plans so far include writing articles for the local newspaper and League newsletter and hosting a public forum sometime next year. If you are interested in participating in this committee, please call Dede Vittori at 964-8190 or Barbara Herson at 964-7463. ■

# Newton Legislative Roundtable on NewTV

*by Deb Crossley*

This month, Senator Cynthia Creem and Representative Ruth Balser joined the League on NewTV. After providing updates on their current legislative priorities, legislators contributed to a discussion of the funding and future of the Massachusetts' Campaign Finance Law, which is before the legislature this month for implementation. Both Creem and Balser support implementation, and recognize the legislatures' responsibility to properly fund the law which was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 1998. However, they each noted aspects of the Law which are imperfect, which they hope can be ironed out through implementation.

*Tune in for the full discussion!*

The next taping will be Tuesday, April 3. Proposed topics include prison reform and the death penalty, MCAS, Keeping house in MA: the care and maintenance of our infrastructure. Please call the League phone or NewTV to comment on the show, or if you would like to be involved in any way in helping to prepare for or produce the show. ■

## 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:**  
Judy Jaffe at 158 Moffat Road, Waban 02468

**PRISCILLA M.  
LEITH, MBA**

162 Islington Road  
Newton, MA 02466  
617.969.6837

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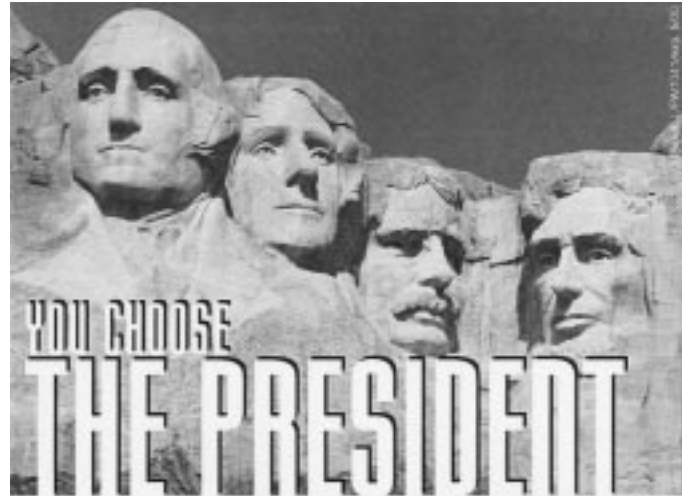
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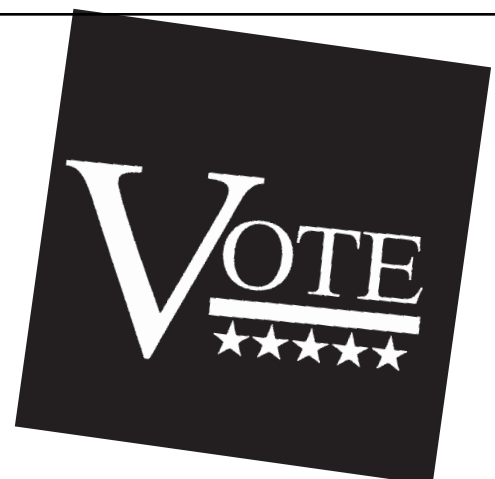
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but our work... NEVER!*



## LWVN CALENDAR

*March*

- 7 LWVN Board meeting 7:30 pm at Koch, 117 High Street, Newton Upper Falls
- 21 Wednesday, 7:30 pm, Local Program Planning, 237 Mill Street, Newtonville
- 22 Thursday, LWVN Environmental Assessment Committee meeting, @ 18 Linder Terrace, N. Corner, call DeDe Vittori for info 964-8190
- 26 Monday, 7 pm "Messing with Mother Nature": Environmental Endocrine Hypothesis, speaker Sheldon Krinsky, Environmental Speaker Series by Green Decade, Pesticide Month, Newton Free Library
- 29 Thursday, 4-6pm Relationship Violence Action Committee (RVAC) public "idea" forum, Newton Free Library
- 29 3:30-6 pm "Afternoon with Mass. Women Legislators", Great Hall, State House, American Assoc. of University Women-Mass. in collaboration with others call 617-732-6703 days or 781-665-8108 evenings

- 31 Saturday, 9-4:30 Women Building Community Conference @ Boston College, Kasey Kaufman, special guest, organized by City of Newton Women's Commission, BC Sociology Dept., and Office of Mayor David B. Cohen

*April*

- 3 Legislative Roundtable taping at NewTV\*
- 4 LWVN Board meeting Wednesday, @ home of Deb Hirsch, 49 Olde Field Road, Newton Centre
- 10 Tuesday, Day on the Hill, Statehouse, 8-9 am coffee, 9 to noon program, members only, call Beth Wilkinson 969-4443
- 11 Wed 7pm, Community Preservation Act, at Newton Free Library, Citywide focus group open to the public
- 25 Wednesday, 11:30-1:30 LWVN Open Discussion on the Newton Frameworks Plan, 28 Putnam Street, W. Newton, brown bag lunch, all LWVN members invited, call Deb 244-7597 for info
- 26 Thurs. LWVN Environmental Assessment Committee meeting, 18 Linder Terrace, N. Corner, call DeDe Vittori for info 964-8190

- 29 Sun. 3-5 pm Champagne & Chocolate Fundraiser with Martha Coakley, Middlesex County D.A. 3-5pm, see your invitation, call Amy Koch @ 244-2647

*May*

- 3 "Don't Stand There - Run!" Thursday, 6:30 to 9:30 pm at the Newton Senior Center 'How -To' Workshop for local candidates & campaign managers, call 964-0014
- 7 Monday 7-9pm Affordable Housing Forum at Newton Free Library, Barney Frank, key note speaker, co-sponsored by LWVN, call Joan Bates 527-1858
- 15 Tuesday, 6 pm LWVN Annual Meeting, Newton Senior Center Members and invited guests
- 18, 19 Fri and Sat, State League Convention, Radisson Hotel, Milford

*\* Newton Legislative Roundtable airs on Channel 10 (the blue channel) on AT&T Broadband on: Mon 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 10:30 pm/Tues 3 am, 5:30 am, 9 am, 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 10:30 pm/ Wed 3 am, 5:30 am, 9 am*

League of Women Voters of Newton

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