

Newsletter

WINNER TAKE ALL

Time For A Change?

by Linda Morrison

After the contested results and vote-counting problems of the elections in 2000, many Americans started taking a harder look at our voting systems. The systems of registering votes - the ballots - were re-examined, and many localities, including Newton, upgraded their election equipment. The relative merits of paper vs. electronic backup were hotly debated at the national convention in June, with delegates insisting on a change in the position taken by the LWVUS board of directors to ensure that voting systems and procedures are "secure, accurate, recountable and accessible."

In our September newsletter, Beth Lowd reported on a Massachusetts ballot question advising the legislature to create an independent commission to redistrict congressional and legislative districts. This question has been endorsed by the state and Newton leagues. Other aspects of how we set up our system of representation are also being examined by local leagues in our LWVMA Voter Systems Study II.

Does the "winner take all" rule in most American elections really result in the fairest, most democratic way of choosing our elected officials that we are capable of constructing? Many European countries, and a few US localities, have for decades used variations of what is called "Proportional Representation." For instance, if 60% of the electorate voted for candidates in Party A, and 35% for those in Party B, and 5% for Party C, a proportional representation system would send two legislators from Party A, and one from Party B, to represent a three seat district. Proponents of Party B would have a representative who shares their views, instead of being shut out by the practice of having a single seat in which the winner took 100% of the district's representation.

There are a number of versions of proportional representation. In November, our LWVN Unit meetings will continue a study on voter systems and consider many of the pros and cons of "PR" [proportional representation] systems. Would they create greater interest among voters? Would they tend to make government more or less stable? What effects would they tend to have on political parties? We will explain the major types of "PR" and look at the offices for which they may or may not be appropriate.

The LWV has since its beginning sought to investigate aspects of democratic voting to bring it into greater conformity with the stated goals of our Constitution. Taking a closer look at how we are used to doing things to see if there are better possibilities, is a big part of what we are all about.

For more information on proportional representation, go to Professor Douglas Amy's web site: www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy. Please join us during the daytime on November 10th or in the evening on November 11th to explore this topic. See the calendar for details. ■

FORUM ON FAIR DISTRICTS BALLOT QUESTION #1:

Should We End Gerrymandering in Massachusetts?

Time: Tuesday, October 12 at 7PM

Place: Hyde Community Center,
90 Lincoln, Newton Highlands

*Kay Khan, State Representative in the
11th Middlesex District in Newton*

*David Harris, Executive Director of
the Lawyers' Committee for Civil
Rights Under the Law of the Boston
Bar Association*

*Pam Wilmot, Executive Director of
Common Cause Massachusetts*

Moderator: Beth Lowd

DEBATES FOR STATE OFFICES

State Senate Debate

Matthew Fraser vs. Cynthia Creem

11th Middlesex Representative District Debate

Greer Tan Swiston vs. Kay Khan

Time: Thursday, October 14, 7:30PM

Place: New TV Studios,
90 Lincoln Street
Newton Highlands

US. 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th Congressional District Debate

Chuck Morse vs. Barney Frank

Time: Sunday, October 17, 7:30PM

Place: New TV Studios,
90 Lincoln Street
Newton Highlands

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Web Site	Judy Jaffe	617-969-7427

Newsletter

Editor	Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
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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.

PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461
617-964-0014
www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV

From the Steering Committee

In the Name of the League

As League members, we can be thankful for all of the volunteer hours that are spent in the name of the League of Women Voters of Newton! There are so many ways to become involved: join a committee, offer to register voters, help with the phonathon, bring in new members, observe and report on a city board or committee, help with a forum or debate, pass out information about League action items. Call 964-0014 to volunteer!

Thanks to the Environmental Committee, chaired by Martha Richmond and Linda Walden, and to the High Performance Building Coalition on which Deb Crossley represents the League and Brooke Lipsitt and Kevin Dutt are co-chairs, we are making a difference in the design process for the new Newton North High School.

This group kicked off our Unit Meetings, ably organized by Ruth Neiberg and Linda Morrison this year, with a very informative and persuasive power point presentation by Kevin Dutt on High Performance Buildings and NNHS that will be shared with our city officials in the coming weeks. The program included an opportunity for the audience to respond, make suggestions, and ask questions.

Thanks to Sharyn Roberts and Sue Rosenbaum, the Voters' Service Committee is registering voters at the Farmers' Market and at local colleges. They are also encouraging parents to send absentee ballot applications to their college students -- don't forget yours!

Thanks to Ruby Ajanee, the Legislative Roundtable is off to a good start, with an excellent program on health care hosted by Holly Gunner and featuring all four of our Newton legislators.

We'll have a table at the Harvest Fair, Sunday, October 17 and would love some help there, encouraging membership and distributing voting information.

Beth Lowd and Bonnie Carter are organizing a televised public forum at the Hyde Community Center October 12 at 7 p.m. on the Fair Districts ballot question. Help is needed both for set up and clean up, and with camera work.

Many thanks to all of these wonderful volunteers for enriching the life of our League and of our city! ■

Beth Lowd

Welcome New Member!

Heather Tausig
20 Garland Road,
Newton, MA 02459
617-724-0363
htausig@aol.com

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Fall Conference

OUR CHOICES, OUR FUTURE
VOTE 2004

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30

Quincy Marriott Hotel • 1000 Marriott Drive, Quincy • 617-472-1000

9:00AMRegistration

9:30AMKeynote Speaker: Dolores Mitchell
Vice President, Political Planning
National Women's Political Caucus
Founder, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus

10:15AMPanel Discussion *Our Choices, Our Future*

HEALTH CARE	SECURITY	EDUCATION	THE ECONOMY
Judith Kurland <i>Former Regional Director for the Department of Health and Human Services</i>	Harvey Sapolsky <i>Director, Security Studies Program MIT</i>	Paul Reville <i>Executive Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, Mass INC</i>	John Walgreen <i>Director, Public Policy Program Wheaton College</i>

12 NOONLunch Speaker: Martha Coakley
District Attorney, Middlesex County, Massachusetts

- 1:30-3:30PMWorkshops
- Voters Service Tools – Make Them Work for You!
 - Justice in Massachusetts?
 - Campaign Finance Reform – What is the Way
 - Solving the Healthcare Crisis?
 - No Better Time to Ask – League Membership in an Election Year

For more information, go to www.lwvma.org, email lwvma@lwvma.org or call 617-523-2999

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

Committee Report
Voter Service

By Sharyn Roberts and Andreae Downs

Candidate Debates

- Legislative candidate debate nights have been set up by Bonnie Carter for Thursday night, October 14, at the NewTV Studio, 90 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands at 7:00 PM. Greer Tan Swiston will be debating Kay Khan for representation of the 11th Middlesex District and Matthew Fraser will be debating Cynthia Creem for the State Senatorship of First Middlesex and Norfolk Districts.
- Bonnie Carter in cooperation with Barbara McMann of the Wellesley League have set up a debate between Barney Frank and Chuck Morris, Candidates for the U.S. Fourth Congressional District, to be held on Sunday, October 17 also at the NewTV Studio at 7:00 PM.

Student Voter Registration

- We are actively working with Lasell College and Mt. Ida College to have students register to vote.

At Lasell and Mt. Ida, the Voter Service Committee has been a presence at student orientations, activities fairs, and community service fairs. With the help of the staff of both colleges, students are now trained to run their own voter service booths at their respective college cafeteria every lunch and supper time for the next month.

- Pine Manor College is working in conjunction with the Brookline League to accomplish the same.
- The Voter Service Committee is also working with Newton North and South High Schools to register students who will be 18 years old by November 2. In addition, members of the committee are planning to make a presentation to a NNHS journalism class scheduled to begin at 7:50 a.m.

Outreach to Newton Neighbors

- The Voter Service Committee is also working alternate weeks with the Newton Dialogues at the Farmers Market at Cold Spring Park, registering approximately 20 new voters each week with many more taking the forms home to be filled out by housemates, partners, and spouses.
- We are still welcoming League Members who are able to give an hour or two of their time at lunch to register high school students. If you are willing to give just two hours to work at a registration table this fall, please call Sue Rosenbaum at 617-332-0306 or email her at dsr2@rcn.com. You may also leave a message at the Newton League phone number: 617-964-0014. ■

Be Watching For The Green

We're familiar with the red and blue channels, but soon there will be another to consider as we determine what to view.

In recent months, NewTV has begun upgrading the NewTV facilities using over \$230,000 in capital equipment funding provided by the City's renewed cable licenses with Comcast and RCN. The Red channel will continue as the Government channel. The Blue Channel will handle Public access programming and the Green channel becomes the Education access channel.

Capital funds are being spent on new and improved equipment available to NewTV members and staff. NewTV currently has 451 active members. One hundred and twenty-five of these members joined NewTV in FY 2004. Twenty-nine of these are Newton community organizations, including the League of Women Voters, accounting for the involvement of more than one person for each of those memberships.

Digital camcorders, editing equipment, video projectors are examples of equipment that has been added to support the work of these individuals and organizations. In addition, money was put towards the renovation of the reception area and upgrading of staff computers.

NewTV is an educational institution in our community. In Fiscal Year 2004, NewTV offered 27 different training classes and 444 members became certified in specific skills. You can view the variety of offerings under the main headings: Studio classes, Field classes, Editing classes and Computer based classes, at www.newtv.org.

Over the last twenty-five years, the League has had a special interest in the value of community-based television. League members sat on the original committee to determine the relationship between the city and public access television. We continue to value our relationship as we present informative programs of public interest, such as candidate debates, public forums and our Legislative Roundtable.

**Count us in with those who are watching
NewTV turn Green! ■**

Legislative Roundtable



**For current schedule log on to
www.newtv.org**

Committee Report

FROM: LWVM Health Care Committee

RE: Health Care Action Update

LESS THAN WE HOPED FOR

Governor Romney (or more accurately, Lt. Governor Healy) vetoed the bill that would have asked the Division of Public Policy and Finance to study the cost, and the savings of implementing the Mass Health Care Trust Bill – the bill that would have instituted single payer, universal health care in Massachusetts. It is unlikely that the Legislature will override the veto in its informal session, and so, Mass-Care is hard at work writing a new universal health care bill that will be filed in December. At this writing, it seems that this bill will include the costs and the savings involved in establishing single payer, universal health care in Massachusetts.

All the while, the number of uninsured, the costs incurred by physicians, hospitals, and patients – and the profits of HMOs – soar!■

MBTA ON-LINE CUSTOMER SURVEY

TransitWorks (a non-profit) is conducting an “MBTA Ridership Survey” to collect customer feedback from riders. We have LWVN members who regularly ride the T and might want to know how to participate. Go to: www.transitworks.org/resources/survey_form.htm.■

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS ELECTION SEASON?

Opportunities for action by League members on the Fair Districts for Fair Elections ballot question:

- 1 Write letter to editor: Oct. 1, 8, 15 or 22
- 2 Hand out literature at the Library or Newtonville Star Market on weekends
- 3 Hand out literature in your neighborhood.
- 4 Hold a sign at a busy corner during commuting hours.
- 5 Put a lawn sign in your yard - especially if you live on a busy street.
- 6 Help at the public forum, Hyde Community Center, Oct. 12 6-9:30 p.m.
- 7 Help at the Harvest Fair, Oct. 17, 12-6 p.m.
- 8 Pass out palm cards at the polls Nov. 2 either 7-9 a.m. or 5-7 p.m.

Contact Beth Lowd, 332-1978 or blowd@mindspring.com

Committees - in - Action*Local Action*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*Newton Free Library Board*

Mary Adelstein

Parks and Recreation Commission

Priscilla Leith

*Zoning and Planning Committee,
Board of Aldermen*

Judy Jaffe

Environmental Issues

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

Members Deb Crossley
Katherine Gekas
Beth Lowd
Barbara Herson
Robin Maltz
Martha Richmond
Sharyn RobertsContact Linda Walden, Chair ⁶¹⁷630-9538*Nominating Committee*Members Barbara Lietzke
Carol Ann SheaContact Janet Stearns, Chair ⁶¹⁷559-9987

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

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

Massachusetts Voters BILL OF RIGHTS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

- Vote if you are a qualified registered voter.
- Cast your ballot in a manner that ensures privacy.
- Vote without any person trying to influence your vote and to vote in a booth that prevents others from watching you mark your ballot.
- Remain in the voting booth for five minutes if there are other voters waiting and for ten minutes if there are no other voters waiting.
- Receive up to two replacement ballots if you make a mistake and spoil your ballot.
- Request assistance when voting from a poll worker or anyone of your choice, except your employer or an officer of your union or their representatives.
- Vote if you are disabled. The polling place must be accessible, and there must be an accessible voting booth.
- Vote if you cannot read or write or cannot read or write English.
- Vote but must show identification if: you are a first-time voter who registered to vote by mail and did not submit identification with the voter registration form; or your name is on the inactive voter list; or your vote is being challenged; or if requested by the poll worker. Acceptable forms of identification are: Massachusetts driver's license, other printed documentation containing your name and address such as a recent utility bill, rent receipt on landlord's letterhead, lease, or a copy of a voter registration acknowledgment or receipt.
- Vote by absentee ballot if: you will be absent from your city or town on Election Day; or if you have a physical disability that prevents your voting at the polling place; or if you cannot vote at the polls due to religious belief.
- Cast a provisional ballot if you believe you are a qualified registered voter but a poll worker tells you that you are ineligible to vote.
- Follow up any challenge to your right to vote through the complaint process.
- Vote if you are not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction and have registered as a voter after your release.
- Take this Voters' Bill of Rights or any other papers, including a sample ballot, voter guide or campaign material, into the voting booth with you. Please remember to remove all papers when you leave the booth.
- Vote at your polling place any time between 7 am and 8 pm for state and federal elections—hours may vary for local elections. If you are in line at your polling place when the polls close at 8 pm, you have the right to vote.
- Bring your children into the voting booth with you.

If you feel that your right to vote has been violated in any way, call the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683). This call is free within Massachusetts.

Your voting rights are protected. These rights are guaranteed to qualified registered voters.

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, June 2004

LWVN CALENDAR

October

- 1 Friday, 9:00 a.m., **Environmental Committee**, at the home of Linda Walden, 39 Rokeby Rd., Waban, 617-630-9538
- 4 Monday, 5:30-9:00 p.m., **Phonothon**, AG Edwards & Sons, Newton Lower Falls, Contact Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Supper provided
- 5 Tuesday, LWVN at **Volunteer Job Fair**, Newton Free Library
- 6 Thursday, 7:00 p.m., **Potluck/Working Board Meeting**, at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Pkwy, Newton, 617-964-0333, Chair- Beth Lowd
- 12 Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., **Forum on Ballot Question # 1**, Should We End Gerrymandering in Massachusetts? Hyde Community Center, Public Invited
- 13 Wednesday, **Final Day to register to vote and to change party enrollment** for the November State/Presidential Election.
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, Ballot Question #1 with Michael Sriquei/Asst. Director of Common Cause, at the home of Marianne Hudec, 48 Druid Hill Rd., Newton Highlands, 617-527-4276. Brown bag lunches encouraged.
1:00 p.m. LWVN at the Newton Senior Center
- 14 Thursday, **Newsletter Deadline**
7:30 p.m., **Debate for State Offices** at NewTV, Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Public Invited.
- 17 Sunday, Noon to 5:00 p.m.
Harvest Fair, Newton Centre Green (rain date 10/24)
7:30 p.m. **Debate for 4th Congressional District** at NewTV, Bonnie Carter, 617-060-0686, Public Invited

- 19 Tuesday, **LWVMA Voters' Guide** in Boston Globe
- 21 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **Board Meeting** at the home of Sue Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Rd. Waban, 617-332-0306, Chair- Beth Lowd
- 30 Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-3:30p.m. **LWVMA Fall Conference**, "Our Choices, Our Future - Vote 2004!" Quincy Marriott

November

- 2 Tuesday, **State/Presidential Election Day**, Polls Open 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- 3 Wednesday, 12:00 noon, **LWVN @ Newton Highlands Women's Club**
- 4 Thursday, 7:00, **Potluck/Working Board Meeting** at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Parkway, Newton, 617-964-0333, Chair-Beth Lowd
- 10 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **LWVMA Study on Voter Systems II**, at the home of Ruby Ajanee, 161 Sumner St., Newton Centre, 617-243-9888. Coordinators- Linda Morrison and Sue Rosenbaum
- 11 Thursday, 7:30 p.m.- 9:30 p.m. **LWVMA Study on Voter Systems II**, at the home of Linda Morrison, 14 Floral Place, Newton Highlands, 617-332-6539. Coordinators - Linda Morrison and Sue Rosenbaum.
- 14 Sunday, **Newsletter Deadline**
- 18 Thursday, 7:15 p.m., **Board Meeting** at the home of Beth Lowd, 38 Hobart Rd., Newton Centre, 617-332-1978. Chair- Beth Lowd

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