
League of Women Voters of Newton

Newsletter

Volume 16, Issue 3

visit us online at www.lwvnewton.org

May 2010

Charter Study Wraps Up

Last year at this time, there was conversation about forming a Charter Commission. Many of us thought that if a Charter Commission were necessary, it warranted a League of Women Voters study first. Members agreed and the 2010 LWVN Charter Study Committee was formed.

Your response and willingness to help with the study was inspiring. Thirty-seven League members assembled, and seven subcommittees were formed. The scope of the study was very broad. A study and research plan with strict timelines was put in place to insure efficiency and the ability to complete the study in one year. We reached that goal and the results were impressive.

Many governmental officials, government experts and academics were interviewed. Two lengthy documents were written to share the information gathered in the many hours of research. One was a study guide with the suggested program positions and the plusses and minuses for each outlined. The other was an Appendix that included every subcommittee report. Both documents were put online and printed copies were placed in the library.

Two well-attended and lively consensus meetings took place in April, 2010. Those in attendance debated 15 proposed program positions for consensus. The League Board reached consensus on 14 items for approval at the

Annual Meeting. The positions are in your Annual Meeting Workbook in the Program section. Please plan to attend and express your voice in the discussion.

In the end, the Charter Study Committee did not recommend a Charter Commission. Instead we concluded that the addition of strong support positions in our Local Program would prepare the League for meaningful action in several ways whether or not there is a Charter Commission.

With the proposed program positions the League will be able to:

- Lobby a charter commission, to the extent that one is elected (which could happen with or without League support)
- Lobby for certain changes to the charter via home rule petition
- Support or oppose an ordinance related to a League position
- Support or introduce a change in an administrative code.

Chairing this study has been one of the best of League experiences.

Thank you,

Rhanna Kidwell and Sandy Butzel, Co-Chairs

Please take time to appreciate the generous and first-rate members of the 2010 LWVN Charter Study Committee: Co-Chairs: Rhanna Kidwell & Sandy Butzel. **Electoral Process Subcommittee:** Ellen Glusman and Nancy Criscitiello, Co-Chairs; Andreae Downs, Shirley Farnham, Sue Flicop, Ingrid Kefauver, Lee Kefauver, Margaret LeBlanc, Brooke Lipsitt, Sharyn Roberts, Barbara Sydney. **Administration Subcommittee:** Alicia Bowman, Chair; Bonnie Carter, Ann Grantham. **Executive Subcommittee:** Carol Ann Shea and Nancy Crowley, Co-Chairs; Leslie Burg, Audrey Cooper. **Legislative Subcommittee:** John Stewart and Lisa Mirabile, Co-Chairs; Pat Acton, Giles Birch, Gail Glick, Sue Flicop, Verne Vance. **Finance Subcommittee:** Ruthanne Fuller, Chair; Harvey Creem, Terrence Finn, Sue Flicop, George Foord, Ellen Grody, Sondra Shick, Terry Yoffie. **Schools Subcommittee:** Gail Glick, Chair; Sue Flicop, Lisa Mirabile. **Land Use Subcommittee:** Myra Tattenbaum, Chair; Deborah Crossley, Maurya Sullivan.

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To receive an **audio version** of this Newsletter, call Terry Yoffie at 617-965-1796.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. Regular membership is open to all citizens (men and women) of voting age; associate membership is open to young people and noncitizens. Your annual dues give you membership in local, state and national leagues.

For more information about the League of Women Voters, including information on joining us, call 617-964-0014 or visit www.lwvnewton.org.

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Education Committee News

By Gail Glick

As a follow-up to the findings made by the CAG regarding school operations and budgeting, the LWVN Education Committee is undertaking a study of various education models with an eye toward assessing their relative merits and weaknesses to determine their feasibility for local implementation. When complete, the Committee plans to make its research available and accessible to the community, as well as present its findings to the public through informational forums or symposia, including interactive meetings where the pros, cons and trade-offs can be debated. The Committee's study will focus on aspects of models that are actually in use, as opposed to purely theoretical, and will address a diverse range of topics: pedagogical approaches for different learning styles; administrative structures and governance; teacher training, on-going support and development, and compensation structures; length of the school day and school calendar; virtual learning and off-campus models supported by technology; physical organization and construction of school facilities; and mechanisms enabling transitions to and from different models. The Education Committee meets once a month, and is presently in the process of organizing the study groups. If you are interested in participating in this study, please come to our next meeting, scheduled on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at Gail Glick's house, or contact either co-chair, Gail Glick or Sue Flicop.

From the President

May, 2010

Dear League Members,

This is my last letter to you as president. I am pleased to report that the nominating committee has developed a terrific leadership team and we can look forward to working with a very capable group of leaders. I will continue as a board member of the Newton League and hope to assist with membership outreach and mentoring as well as support the program and action committees. I also will continue to serve on the state League board.

I want to thank every one of you for your support and commitment to our mission over the past two years; I have cherished every relationship that has come from that partnership. Together, we have accomplished many things and because of all of your good work and ideas, we have touched many in the city making us one of the most successful Leagues in Massachusetts and the country. Our growth in new members has been excellent and since the 2008 annual meeting, we have added 50 new members. Membership development and retention depends upon all of the work we have done in outreach, voter service, program, and action. It took each of us to accomplish this feat and we can all be proud of our success.

This Month at the League

This month, we will focus on our annual meeting and the transition from current to future leadership. Please join us for annual meeting on May 27 at the Senior Center starting at 6:00pm. We will accomplish a busy

agenda including the report and recommendations from the charter study as well as new proposals on a land use study and award proposals for community leaders and high school students. In your annual workbooks, which you should have received by mail, you can learn more about our agenda and I encourage you to bring the workbook along with you to the meeting. We will be joined for dinner by entertainers from Newton South and will follow with the business meeting. For those who have had a hard time hearing the proceedings at prior annual meetings, I will provide scripts to read as we move through the evening's events. Look for me when you arrive if you would like a copy.

On May 22, the Massachusetts League held its annual meeting in Newton at Lasell College. The LWVN set up a panel for a workshop on how to run for office from 2:30 to 3:30pm with Sheriff Andrea Cabral and Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz. The panelists covered best practices and review best and worst experiences. We also offered a workshop on how to organize candidate debates and forums, timely for the fall election season. You can learn more about the Council at www.lwvma.org.

Respectfully,

Terry Yoffie
President, League of Women Voters Newton

Archives Committee Seeks Copier

Are you upgrading to a new printer/copier? We are looking for a donated (2nd hand) photocopy machine for the archives room. Material on acidic paper, including newsprint, needs to be photocopied onto acid free paper for conservation purposes.

Members researching LWV Newton material need to be able to copy relevant documents, as archives material SHOULD NOT be removed from the collection (take notes!).

Ideally, a printer /copier scanner with a usb hub for a memory stick would be a great help, allowing people to scan material onto a memory stick to take with them.

Contact Linda Morrison or Ann Grantham, lc Morrison@mindspring.com.

In Memoriam: Anita Capeless

Anita Capeless, longtime member and president of the LWVN from 1979-1981, died on March 7 at age 90. Below is the tribute Sandy Butzel gave at the Library when Anita and her husband, Bob, moved from Newton to Pittsfield in 2003.

This is a bitter sweet moment for me. It is an honor to give the tribute to Anita, but I am going to miss her. I've had the pleasure of friendship and working with Anita for the last 25 years. We've served together on three boards, the LWV, the YMCA, and the Library Board of Trustees. Anita Capeless is a great woman. In addition to service, many other words come to mind: Anita is sophisticated, pretty, fun, fashionable; she is organized, no-nonsense and fair; she's a leader, role-model, good friend... and she's a "fitness queen" to rival her "tennis freak" husband!

Anita was born and educated in Washington, D.C. During World War II, she and a friend were riding in an open car when two handsome naval officers standing on the curb asked for directions to the officers' club, to which the women replied, "Hop in, we'll take you there." That "pick up" was the beginning of Anita and Bob and a life time together.

Anita and Bob married and moved to Pittsfield, MA, Bob's home town. Five baby boys joined their sister, Victile. Bob practiced law and then became the mayor of Pittsfield. Fortunately, for us, Bob became Tax Commissioner for the Commonwealth, they and moved to Newton. Anita joined the League of Women Voters and the rest is history.

Anita has applied her expertise and leadership skills in many organizations. However, we in the League, like to think that her primary identity is with the League of Women Voters. Born in the year of suffrage, it was joining the League that made Anita really appreciate its significance and the women who worked so hard to make the vote a reality. Anita's first letter to the membership as President of the League, she wrote, "I had spent 10 years doing a variety of volunteer jobs. When I joined the League I was surprised and delighted to find myself learning new and valuable skills not taught elsewhere and absorbing larger amounts of information on a variety of subjects. Every year I feel that the dues I pay are minuscule compared to the education I continue to acquire.

Therefore, I felt compelled out of a sense of obligation and affection to accept being president of the League of Women Voters of Newton, and I am prepared to work very hard and GIVE THE VERY BEST I HAVE."

THE VERY BEST I HAVE. . . That is what Anita has

given to the City of Newton for the last 40 years, and that is what we will miss so much.

However, her real legacy is the number of leaders she has trained to follow in her footsteps. In Anita's second letter to the membership as president, she wrote "League members are in training to be leaders in the community. Developing the skills that constitute a large part of an executive's ability and learning to deal successfully with people take time and practice. This kind of training is available in the League. Don't turn down this opportunity to gain skills in decision making, behaving assertively, and running a meaningful meeting in a supportive environment. "

There are many of us in this room who have benefited from Anita's mentorship and training and gone on to be leaders in our own right. The influence of Anita's style and leadership will be felt for a long time to come.

In addition to Anita being a leader, she is known and respected for her considerable knowledge in a number of content areas. For thirty years she has been the League's expert in Land Use and Affordable Housing. She has spent untold hours observing the full Board of Aldermen, and the Land Use and Finance Committees to keep up-to-date. In her characteristic conscientious way she has worked hard to find a balance between economic development, affordable housing, population density, and open space.

Anita is always current if not ahead of the game. During her presidency in the early 80's, some of the headlines in the League Bulletin were:

Pros and Cons of Tax Limits, The League as Professional Development for Careers, Newton Wants National Health Care Study, LWV Seeks Mandatory Recycling Pick-up, What You Should Know About Housing: A Housing Primer, Is It True What They Say About Welfare?, ERA Boycott Squeaks By, and Newton Leaguers Attend Pro-Choice Day.

One of my favorite stories about Anita concerns a grandson who stayed with Anita one summer. While on the phone with his mother Anita over heard him whisper, "Mom, Did you know grandma is a feminist?"

It was during Anita's presidency that the League worked so

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hard to defeat Proposition 2 1/2. Though the proposition passed, Newton voters defeated the measure. As a firm believer in the democratic process, Anita wrote to the members, "The League must give the same dedication to the implementation of 2 1/2 that it gave in trying to defeat it. Hard decisions will have to be made and the League should be part of the process of making sure that these decisions are also wise ones. If we believe in good government we must contribute our voices in the painful process of cutting back on almost all aspects of municipal government. Please plan on making your voice one of those we can count on during this period." Certainly that paragraph would be appropriate in a League Bulletin today.

The league takes action, makes statements and writes letters, on the topics it studies and on which it has positions, and Anita set a very high standard for doing so. She taught us that you only take action when you have studied the topic thoroughly from every point of view. Then make a statement only if it is honed to one page, framed in the context of League positions, and most importantly, "Don't make a statement unless you have something valuable to add to the conversation. Don't waste your words, your time and your reputation."

Not wasting time is very important to Anita. Her time management skills far exceed the average person's. She is a no-nonsense woman and has the ability to keep a phone call short better than anyone I know. She calls with a specific request and then, "Thanks, Dearie, that is all I needed to know. Bye."

What do YOU think?

Provide Guidance to Delegates to the LWV National Convention

We will have a voting delegation attending the LWVUS national convention in Atlanta, GA, June 11-15, 2010. At Thursday's Annual Meeting, the delegation would like to receive guidance from the membership regarding the Recommended Program (as well as NOT Recommended items) for 2010-2012.

Please visit the link below (a PDF doc distributed as Part 1 of the National Convention Workbook). Pages 3-5 list the RECOMMENDED proposed Program items, indicating any edits being suggested for each item. Pages 5-7 identify the NOT Recommended items. Please review the information and come to Annual Meeting prepared to offer your views.

www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Convention_Workbook&CONTENTID=15287&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

Digested Docket now online!

Check our website toward the end of each week to see the LWVN's "Digested Docket," which highlights issues of interest that will be coming up in the week's Aldermanic committee meetings.

WELCOME

New Members

Ellen Light, Newton Centre
Sarah Barnett, Newton Centre



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

JOIN US, DONATE, OR LEARN MORE!

www.lwvnewton.org

info@lwvnewton.org 617-964-0014

- I'd like to learn more about the LWVN: please send me information by mail and/or have a member of the Newton League contact me.
- I would like to make a donation to the LWVN. My check for \$_____ is enclosed.
- I would like to join the LWVN as indicated below.

Name(s)		Daytime Phone	
Address		Evening Phone	
City/State/Zip		Email	

PLEASE CIRCLE preferred method of contact: Daytime Phone / Evening Phone / Email

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- Individual - \$55
- Household (2 members) - \$75
- Student Membership - \$25
- Sustaining Membership - \$75
- Supporting Membership - \$100

Please note: financial assistance is available if the membership fee would pose a financial burden. Contact the treasurer (treasurer@lwvnewton.org) if you would like assistance with the fee. Dues for membership and contributions to the LWV Newton are not deductible for tax purposes. Tax-deductible contributions to LWVUS Educational Fund may be made; please mail c/o LWVN.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR JOINING MEMBERS

- I'll read the newsletter online to save paper and money – just email me when it is published.
- Please do *not* share my email address with the State and National Leagues.

I'm particularly interested in:

Specific Topics/Committees

- Education
- Environmental Issues
- Housing
- CPC Readers
- Municipal Finance
- Election Commission

League Outreach/Education

- Observer Corps*
- Topic Meetings
- Legislative Roundtable
- Voters Service
- Voter Registration
- Drive voters to the polls
- Candidates' Nights

LWVN Functions

- League Leadership
- Communications
- Membership
- Fundraising
- Events
- Publicity

Please indicate other interests: _____

*Observers represent the League as impartial listeners and note takers at municipal meetings. Training is provided.

Please mail your completed form and either mail your check (payable to "LWVN") to the address below.

<p>Treasurer, League of Women Voters Newton PO Box 610207 Newton, MA 02461</p>

LWVN CALENDAR

MAY

27th Thurs., 6:00 pm. LWVN **Annual Meeting**.
Newton Senior Center,

JUNE

2nd Wed., 7:00 pm. LWVN **Education
Committee Meeting**, Gail Glick's house, 24
Carleton St.

22nd Tue., 7:00pm, LWVN **Board Meeting**, TBA

→ *Don't forget to check our online calendar for any late-breaking changes! www.lwvnewton.org*

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