Charter Commission Petition

By Rhanna Kidwell

The charter commission petition drive is in full swing, and we are very busy gearing up for our Election Day effort. You may have seen some of the results of our public relations work. We have had two letters to the editor and an op-ed published in the Newton Tab this month. We have been featured on the Newton Patch Website and OurNewton.org, in PTO newsletters, and on some Newton email listservs. We also spread the word at the Harvest Fair, where we collected signatures.

Bonnie Carter and Sandy Butzel have been reaching out to League members to line up volunteers for Election Day. And Maurya Sullivan and Lisa Mirabile are working out the logistics of supplies for November 6 and creating an educational flyer for potential signers. We have ordered bright red LWVN t-shirts (in sizes large enough to pull over a coat!) so that our signature collectors will be easy to spot at the polls.

As of this writing, we have lined up 71 volunteer hours at the polls on November 6. We can always use more, so if you have been meaning to sign up and not yet done so, please email charter@lwvnewton.org, or call Rhanna Kidwell at 617-244-3832.

If you aren’t able to volunteer that day but would still like to help, there are other things you can do:

• Loan us a clipboard, a card table, or TV trays…we are collecting them in a bin on the back porch at 56 Kenwood Avenue in Newton Centre, or call Rhanna if you need your item picked up. Make sure your name is on it if you want it returned.
• Carry a petition around…if you come across Newton voters in your daily travels, you can carry a petition with you for a week or two and collect signatures. Email us at charter@lwvnewton.org to have one mailed to you.
• Think sunny thoughts for November 6!

2012 Voter Registration Events

By Sharyn Roberts

This year, Leagues across the country increased their voter registration efforts, with a focus on high school and college students. LWVN did, too! Here is a re-cap of the voter registration events we held from April-October, with the approximate number of new voter registrations in parentheses:

• May 2, Newton North HS (NNHS), National LWVUS Voter Registration Project (65)
• May 3, Newton South HS (NSHS), National LWVUS Voter Registration Project (27)
• May 30, NNHS, Senior Checkout Day, National LWVUS Voter Registration Project (31)
• June 4, NSHS, Senior Checkout Day, National LWVUS Voter Registration Project (84)
• Starting on July 3 and for most Tuesdays, Farmers Market, Cold Spring Park (150+/-)
• Fourth of July, Albemarle Field (61)
• August 16, Cabot Village (8)
• August 27 thru September 7, Mt. Ida College - for 2 straight weeks minus weekends, mostly lunch time but also a few supper times (226)
• September 13, Lasell College Student Fair
OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2012-2013

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For an audio version of this newsletter, call Anne Borg at 617-244-6366.

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 617-383-4598 or visit www.lwvnewton.org.

Visit LWVN on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/lwvnewton

HELP WANTED

LWVN is looking for volunteers for both long-term and short-term commitments – have fun while you help LWVN!

• LWVN Education Study
• LWVN Transportation Study
• Events planning
• Publicity
• Fundraising
• Membership
• Print and electronic communications: newsletter, monthly postcard, email blasts, website, LWVN Facebook (training provided!)
• Committees (Environmental Issues, Education, Elections, Housing, Municipal Finance, Archives)

Contact Anne or Sue at info@lwvnewton.org if you are interested or have any questions.

Committee Chairs

Education Committee
Jo Corro
Lynn Scheller

Elections Committee
Nancy Criscitiello
Ellen Glusman

Environmental Issues
Alison Leary Mooradian
Lucia Dolan

Municipal Finance
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Charter Commission Initiative
Rhanna Kidwell

Topic Meetings
Open

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Bonnie Carter
Sharyn Roberts

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Nominating Committee
Lynn Scheller

Newsletter & Website
Anne Borg
Sue Flicop
October Topic Meeting – 2012 Ballot Questions

By Sue Flicop and Lisa Mirabile

On October 18, LWVN members discussed the 2012 Ballot Questions:

**Question 1: Availability of Motor Vehicle Repair Information**

The parties on each side of this question reached a compromise that was voted on by the State Legislature recently. Part of the agreement was that all groups would recommend that voters skip this question on the ballot; however, recently some of the proponents have recommended voters vote in favor of this ballot question, which has stricter standards than the compromise.

The question is about allowing those who either own or lease cars to have access to the “same diagnostic and repair information made available to the manufacturer’s dealers and in-state authorized repair facilities.” The compromise would allow for this access, but the ballot question requires it several years earlier.

**Pro:** Repairing your car would be less expensive if you don’t have to go to the dealership to find out what the correct repair codes are. Owners would have more options for service.

**Con:** Manufacturers already share this information under a national agreement and state legislators have already worked out a compromise for our state. There is no reason to vote on this question.


**Question 2: Prescribing Medication to End Life**

This question allows a doctor to prescribe medication to a terminally ill patient that would end that patient’s life. There are some specific requirements, including:

- the patient must be able to make their own health care decisions;
- the patient must be expected by doctors to die within 6 months;
- the patient must express twice within 15 days a wish to die; and
- the patient must take the medication himself or herself, without help.

**Pro:** This question gives citizens the choice to determine their death with dignity; they would have control over the end of their lives. The process is solely between patients and their physicians, though the patient alone must administer the medication. There are a number of requirements, including that the patient be mentally capable and be diagnosed by two physicians with an illness that would lead to death within 6 months.

**Con:** Many in the medical establishment oppose this question. They are not against death with dignity, but don’t believe this law is necessary to ensure it. In particular:

- Doctors take an oath to keep their patients alive or make them comfortable. They can do this without prescribing life-ending medication.
- The opposition feels that the law wasn’t written properly to ensure that patients aren’t coerced into taking this pill by financial or other issues.
- Patients are not required to see a psychiatrist to ensure that they are mentally capable.
- There is no oversight to ensure that the prescription is used as intended and not abused in some way.

**Overall:** Statistics from Oregon, where a similar law has been in effect since 1997, show that in the past 15 years, 935 people have received prescriptions for death with dignity. Only 596 people have taken the prescriptions; most of these people are older (median age 70), white, well-educated, suffering from cancer, enrolled in hospice but living at home, and almost all had health insurance.

**3. Medical Use of Marijuana:**

A yes vote enacts the proposed law and allows patients meeting certain conditions to get a prescription for marijuana with written physician approval. A no vote means no change in existing laws.

**Pro:** The law requires written certification by a doctor with whom the patient has a bona fide relationship. The patient would have a 60-day supply for personal medical use, to be determined by the Department of Public Health. There are no long-term effects from the use of marijuana, and its stimulation of a person’s appetite is a positive aspect of treatment for some illnesses such as cancer. There are other specifics about who can help a person to use the marijuana. The state would allow 35 treatment centers the first year, with approval needed by DPH to allow more centers. If a patient doesn’t have access to a center, he/she can
Fall Candidates’ Debates

By Anne Borg

LWVN has been very busy this election season sponsoring candidates’ debates and forums.

In partnership with NewTV, LWVN held three local candidates’ debates, which were taped live for cablecast and video-on-demand:

**State Representative, 11th Middlesex District:** Kay Khan (D) and Greer Swiston (R), taped on Wednesday morning, October 10; the video is available at: http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01443&video=132786.

**State Representative, 10th Middlesex District:** John Lawn (D) and Francis Stanton (R), untaped on Wednesday evening, October 10; the video is available at: http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01443&video=132781.

**Governor’s Council, Third District:** Marilyn Devaney (D) and Tom Sheff (I), taped on Thursday evening, October 11; the video is available at: http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01443&video=132783.

All three debates can also be seen on NewTV’s Government Channel (Comcast 9 • RCN 13 • Verizon 33). The broadcast schedule can be found at: http://www.newtv.org/programming/government/full-schedule/.

On Monday, October 15, LWVN joined the Brookline, Needham, Sharon-Stoughton, and Wellesley Leagues, as well as Wellesley College, to sponsor a candidates’ forum at Wellesley College for the 4th Congressional District open seat of retiring Congressman Barney Frank.

Candidates Sean Bielat (R) and Joseph Kennedy III (D) answered both written questions and oral questions asked directly from audience members. Two sign language interpreters, one for each candidate, were also on stage.

LWV Acton Area member, Jo-Ann Berry, did a fine job moderating the forum, before a packed auditorium of 1200 spectators.

The video of the forum is available on the Wellesley cable website: http://www.wellesleymedia.org/ondemand.html.
Voter registration, continued from page 1

- September 23, NUF Village Day (13)
- September 25, National Voter Registration Day with 3 opportunities: twice at Lasell; a concert at Yamawaki Cultural Center; and lunch time at the Valentine Dining Hall in the Edwards Student Center; then on to the Farmers Market for the rest of the day.
- September 30, The Towers (12)
- October 3, First Presidential Debate (before, during, and after), the Brightman Rosen Auditorium, Lasell College
- October 9, Student Faculty Panel, Rosen Auditorium, Lasell College
- October 11, Make Your Voice Heard, the West Dorm Quad outside for lunch, Lasell College
- October 9-12, Valentine Dining Hall, Lasell College, both lunch & supper times & in between
- (Lasell College total for 5 weeks: 682)
- October 14, Harvest Fair (60)

At least 1,419 voter registration and absentee ballot applications were processed from April through October with the help of many people, whom I will list below. This is an approximate total. It does not include a multitude of blank forms given out which could easily increase the total by several hundred more. I can’t include or count them because I don’t know if they were actually filled out and sent in.

Thank you to the following LWVN members who helped: Anne Borg, Bonnie Carter, Jo Corro, Shirley Farnham, Sue Flicop, Ellen Glusman, Ingrid Kefauver, Lee Kefauver, Rhanna Kidwell, Andrea Kozinetz, Alison Leary, Ellen Lipson, Sue Rosenbaum, Tami Roberts, Lynn Scheller, Jean Tullius, and Terry Yoffie.

Thank you to Lasell College students, faculty, and staff: Marcella Hinman, Carolyn Kenniston, Prof. Tessa leRoux, Danielle Monastiero, Patricia Moran, Anne Mullaney, Sarah Richardson, and other students who helped, but I only have their first names.

Thank you to Mt. Ida College, and many students, faculty, and staff; especially Dean Will Cribbey and Ricardo Junquera.

We also advised on voter registration procedures. Those receiving our advice were:

- Barbara Howard, NNHS PTSO;
- Elizabeth Broderick, Boston College Community Action Committee;
- Prof. Dorothy Weitzman, BC Graduate School of Social Work;
- Prof. Judy McMorrow, BC Law School;
- and a myriad number of parents and educators who stopped by the League table at events and Farmers Markets.

Thank you to the faculty and staff of both NNHS and NSHS.

We made contact with other senior living centers, the Second Step battered women’s shelter, and the private high schools in Newton, who thanked us for our offer, but said that they would handle voter registration efforts themselves.

All of the schools where we had a presence bent over backwards to accommodate us, whether it was to supply us with student helpers who were well trained, secure our parking so we wouldn’t be towed, or print out voter registration forms every time we came close to running out.

I love working on voter registration and with all the wonderful people who helped. Can you tell?

Thank you, Sharyn Roberts

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November Topic Meetings: Newton’s Override Proposal

Join the League on Thursday, November 15, for a discussion of Mayor Warren’s proposal for three override votes.

We will be having two meetings on that day:

- 11:30am-1:00pm, at the NewTV Conference Room, 23 Needham Street.
- 7:30-9:00pm, at the Waban Library, 1608 Beacon Street, Waban.

You are welcome to attend either or both discussions; each meeting will cover the same information.
LWVN CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

6th
Tues., 7am-8pm, Presidential and State Election.

15th
Thurs., 11:30am-1:00pm, November Topic Meeting: Discussion about Newton’s Override Proposal*, NewTV Conference Room

NOVEMBER, CONT.

15th
Thurs., 7:30-9:00pm, November Topic Meeting: Discussion about Newton’s Override Proposal*, Waban Library, 1608 Beacon St, Waban

(*You are welcome to attend either or both discussions; each meeting will cover the same information)

→ Don’t forget to check our online calendar for any late-breaking changes!

www.lwvnewton.org

→ Find us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/lwvnewton

Keep up with the workings of the Board of Aldermen!

Read the LWVN Docket Digest, available each week at www.lwvnewton.org.

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