The 2014-2015 LWVN Board & Steering Committee

This year the LWVN has a Tetrarchy instead of a single President.

At the annual meeting in May, a new board was elected and tasked with creating a steering committee to lead the LWVN in the coming year. The board met in June, and chose a steering committee of 4: Bonnie Carter (Board Clerk), Sue Flicop, Lois Levin and Lisa Mirabile.

Please communicate with the steering committee as a group by emailing scomm@lwvnewton.org.

This final, fearsome, fantastic foursome has agreed to split the manifold duties of the President as shown below.

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The Tetrarchs, a porphyry sculpture sacked from a Byzantine palace in 1204, now standing at the southwest corner of St Mark's Basilica, Venice. (Wikipedia)
Greetings, and Welcome to a new League Year!

We launched the new League Year with the LWVUS national convention and the LWVNewton annual meeting last spring. Since then we've been working on local action and planning for the coming year.

The LWVUS national convention was held in Dallas, TX in June. Attending as delegates from the Newton League were: Doug Borg, Andrea Kozinetz, and Alison Leary. Anne Borg served as a delegate from the LWVMass. The delegate body adopted the following program for the coming biennium. (“Program” is League jargon for issues that we study and advocate for.) The Campaign Finance Task Force is conducting a review of constitutional amendments that have been proposed in response to Citizens United. The LWVMass committee on Campaign Finance has developed materials that the LWVUS is using to inform members and the public about money and politics. The delegates adopted by concurrence the position of the LWV of New Jersey on Human Trafficking.

The LWVNewton Annual Meeting was held at the home of Terry Yoffie on May 22. Thanks so much, Terry! Our guest speaker was Meryl Kessler, Executive Director of the LWVMass and member of the LWVNewton. She spoke about the challenges of League visibility and broadening our membership base. Both issues were addressed by the League-sponsored student video contest, "Dear Future Governor." Rachel Brown, a Newton student who had produced a video was present and recognized at the meeting.

The Jane Leighton Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Jo Corro (photo page 8). Unfortunately for us, Jo and her husband have decided to re-locate to a milder climate. We thank her for all her good work for the Newton League and wish her well in her new location -- North Carolina. Members adopted program for the coming year as printed in the Annual Meeting Workbook, including continuation of the campaign to collect signatures for a City Charter Commission. (See article by Rhanna Kidwell.)

Local Action. We wrote letters to:

- Mayor Warren urging him to move forward to sign the MWRA permit for adopting the top of the aqueducts for linear parks. The League position adopted in 2006 includes "Development of linear open spaces with provision for maintenance."
- The Mayor and Board of Aldermen urging them to reinstate the Stormwater Advisory Board.
- The Board of Aldermen asking them to renew the ordinance requiring property owners to clear their sidewalk of snow and ice, and include enforcement and fines.
- Scott Lennon, President of the Board of Aldermen, asking that he begin the legislative process to form a Transportation Department.

Voter Registration is a basic League activity. We registered graduating seniors, 152 at Newton North and 180 at Newton South High Schools (photos page 8). Thank you, Sharyn Roberts, for coordinating this, and continuing to register voters at the farmers' market throughout the summer!

The first annual Civics Bee was held on June 12 at Brown Middle School (photo page 8). Jo Corro and Lynn Scheller worked with 8th grade teacher Sam Mc Graw formulating questions about civics. Students were well-prepared and very competitive. The moderator was Brooke Lipsitt, former president of the Board of Aldermen. Judges were Meryl Kessler, Executive Director of the LWVMA; Ellen Gibson, member of the Newton School Committee; and Superintendent David Fleishman who stepped in for State Representative Ruth Balser who was unable to attend.

Candidates' forums. On September third we held two debates in conjunction with NewTV. One was for the Democratic primary candidates for Governor's Council; the other for the special election for Ward 3 Ward Aldermen. Thank you to Sue Flicop and her committee for making it happen!

There are many ways to get involved in the League this fall. We hope that you will find some area of League activity to interest you, such as: environmental issues, public education, community preservation, municipal finance,
voter registration, vote yes on 2, observer corps, public relations.
We hope that you will get in touch and get active in the League!

In League,
Bonnie, Sue, Lois & Lisa
scomm@lwvnewton.org
617-383-4598

Charter Commission Signature Drive Update

Our signature collection team has been making great use of the beautiful weather we’ve had this summer! As of the June annual meeting, we needed 60 completed petition sheets (2,700 signatures). Over the summer, 6 of us have collected 24 sheets (1,080 signatures) at the library and the farmers’ markets, which brings our remaining tally needs to 36 sheets (1,620 signatures). We hope that this group can fill another 20 of these 36 sheets before the end of October.

That would bring our remaining need to only 16 sheets. Based on our experience, getting a completed sheet takes roughly 2 hours of work.

We are seeking League members who will volunteer to complete 1 or 2 sheets before the end of October. It’s more fun to collect with a friend, so team up with someone… or if you are inexperienced and would prefer to go with a signature gathering buddy, please contact Rhanna Kidwell (617-244-3832) or Bonnie Carter (617-969-0686).

You can collect by standing out at the library, by going door-to-door, or by taking a sheet with you to meetings or other gatherings with a concentration of Newton voters. Again, doing it with a friend is much more fun!

If you can help out, or have any questions, please contact Rhanna Kidwell at the phone number above or at RhannaKidwell@comcast.net

LWVN needs (more than) a few good League members…

…for both long term and short term commitments – have fun while you help LWVN!

☐ Observer at Board of Aldermen Finance Committee
☐ Events planning
☐ Photographer to record events for our Facebook page
☐ Membership Team
☐ “Ambassadors” to greet and sign in people at events
☐ Publicity
☐ Fundraising
☐ Communications: newsletter, monthly postcard, email blasts, website, Facebook (training provided)
☐ Committees: Archives, Environmental Issues, Education, Elections, Housing, Municipal Finance

Contact the steering committee (scomm@lwvnewton.org) if you are interested or have questions.
You are the League!
From the LWVMA

LWVMA Resources for November Election

Ballot Questions
The November 4, 2014, statewide election will include 4 ballot questions. **LWVMA has taken positions on three of them** (Chris Steel and Lois Levin discussed these at NewTV on September 3 - shown in the NewTV News of Sept. 10. Their talk begins at 4 min 50 sec into the show and lasts 6 minutes.):

- **Question 1:** Eliminate Gas Tax Indexing – LWVMA urges a NO vote
- **Question 2:** Expanding the Beverage Container Deposit Law—LWVMA urges a YES vote
- **Question 3:** Expanding Prohibitions on Gaming—LWVMA urges a YES vote
- **Question 4:** Earned Sick Time for Employees—LWVMA has no position

In support of these positions, LWVMA has prepared information about these questions and published it on their website, at lwvma.org/member-resources/2014-ballot-question-resources (go to Member Resources and click the second item).

Voters Guide
Also, read the **LWVMA Voters’ Guide to Statewide Races**, a set of questions and answers directed to each of the candidates for statewide office. There are 5 questions to gubernatorial candidates, and 3 each for the other 5 offices.

**LWVMA Blasts McCutcheon Decision by the Supreme Court**

4/2/2014, BOSTON - The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts strongly disagrees with today's U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission, that aggregate campaign contribution limits are invalid. The case challenged the limits on the total contributions from an individual donor to candidates and political committees, limits that had been designed to prevent corruption and the appearance of corruption.

"With this ruling, the Supreme Court continues to dismantle campaign finance reforms and protections and to enable the corrupting influence of moneyed interests on our democracy," said Anne Borg, co-president of the state League.

"The Supreme Court is allowing our political process to be even further corrupted by huge financial contributions from special interests.

"This and other recent Supreme Court decisions make it crucial that the Massachusetts legislature strengthen our state's campaign finance laws with bills such as the 'disclose act' now pending in the legislature." (Ed. note: [Gov. Patrick signed the bill, H.4366, on August 1, 2014.](http://www.governor.mass.gov/senate/senate-bills/H.4366))

The League of Women Voters of the United States filed an *amicus* brief in this case.

**LWVUS - The League Update**

from LWVUS email (Elizabeth McNamara), August 28, 2014

Public health is a key concern for every community and the League of Women Voters has long supported protect*ing the environment*, including our air and water, as a matter of public health. That support has been invaluable recently in blunting attacks by special interests on efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate
common sense regulations to protect the air we breathe. Most recently, League members have stood up to be counted among those supporting the EPA’s Clean Power Plan which limits carbon emissions from power plants. In hearings around the country, League members appeared and testified in support of reductions in pollution by new and existing power plants. So far, the League has generated over 50,000 comments on the new rule.

This week, League members from around the country had the opportunity to join a conference call with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. In addition to thanking the League for its support of this very important effort, McCarthy reiterated that it is our moral obligation to fight climate change by cutting carbon pollution. As respected members of our communities, we must take the necessary steps to address this public health crisis by spreading the word among our friends and neighbors. This crisis disproportionately affects our children, seniors and minority populations. In the United States alone, one in ten children need an inhaler because of respiratory problems.

Administrator McCarthy called upon League members to continue to work in their own communities to elevate this issue and build support for this historic regulation. We can also continue to give the EPA feedback on this groundbreaking proposal. When I testified in Atlanta last month, I was most impressed by the number of young people who took the time to appear in support of this plan. One high school student pointed out that when we talk about the future of climate change, we are talking about his life. Let’s not let him down, let’s keep up this vital effort.

**Encourage your graduate to register to vote (and to join the LWV!)**

LWVUS, 5/20/2014

Graduation is a major milestone after which many young adults move and embark upon new challenges. The League of Women Voters wants to help these recent graduates become active and engaged members of their new communities – **help us encourage the graduates in your life to register to vote.**

**The League registers voters year-round,** especially those voters who turn 18, move homes, change their name or need to update their registration for any other reason. But today we’re celebrating the power of registering to vote more than ever because it’s the 21st anniversary of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)! The League led the charge to pass this vital legislation that made it easier for Americans to vote, and brought millions of citizens into the democratic process, protecting the integrity of federal elections across the country.

**Celebrate the 21st anniversary of the NVRA by sending the new graduates you know our eCard encouraging them to register to vote today.** The League’s eCard directs recipients to VOTE411.org, our online elections resource where they can easily start the process of becoming active participants in our democracy.

**“Join the People’s Climate March”**

from LWVUS, 9/4/2014

In September, world leaders will gather in New York City for a **Climate Summit at the United Nations.** UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon is bringing these leaders together to discuss, and hopefully commit to meaningful, action-oriented solutions to fight climate change.

Just days before this landmark event, over 850 organizations will gather on **Sunday, September 21**, on the streets of New York City for the **People’s Climate March** urging strong action. The presence of thousands of activists from around the world will call attention to the strong public support for moving ahead with meaningful action to fight climate change.

Join the League and other organizations on September 21 in New York City for the People’s Climate March.

**Voting Info from the LWVUS for November 2014**

**Registering to Vote:** This website: [www.vote411.org/registertovote.php](http://www.vote411.org/registertovote.php) provides voter registration forms in both English and Spanish. Please follow the instructions on how to fill out the form, print and mail it to the correct election official in your state. For more current info – see Sec. Galvin’s page at [WhereDoIVoteMA.com](http://WhereDoIVoteMA.com)
Voter and Election Information: Visit [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) for election information, including election dates and registration deadlines, absentee ballot information, polling place finder, candidate information and much more (may not be up to date). For more current info – see Sec.Galvin’s page at [WhereDoITvoteMA.com](http://WhereDoITvoteMA.com).

State and Local Leagues: Leagues across the country can provide information on local elections and opportunities for civic engagement in your community. To find your local League, please use this website [www.lwv.org/get-involved/local-leagues](http://www.lwv.org/get-involved/local-leagues).

Absentee Voting and Voting from Overseas: Please utilize the Overseas Vote Foundation ([www.overseasvotefoundation.org/vote/home.htm](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/vote/home.htm)) for more information on absentee voting or voting from overseas.

Research Resources:

- The Center for American Women and Politics ([www.cawp.rutgers.edu/](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu)) provides information on women in politics, voting patterns and more.
- Civic Youth ([www.civicyouth.org/](http://www.civicyouth.org/)) provides information and research on the civic and political participation of young Americans.

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**About LWV observers**

from Lucia Dolan, November 12, 2013

“I think observer/aldermen meeting notes/summaries are a very important part of League work and should be included in the newsletters.”

Your newsletter editor agrees, of course! Observers, please send your notes to the editor!

(Editor: Doug Leith, jdleith@verizon.net)

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**LWVN Archives News**

**The archives have moved!**

Linda Morrison, Archives Committee, March 7, 2014

We have reached an excellent milestone in our efforts to make secure the history of the Newton League of Women Voters. **The Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study** sent a truck on June 26, 2014, to collect the 32 cartons of LWVN records that we have collected and organized! The LWV Newton Board of Directors has signed an agreement with the Library; we have donated the records but have retained the copyright to them. Now we can be assured that the records are safe, and given the amount of work that we have put in, the processing time at the Schlesinger Library should not be too long.

Access to the records is unrestricted. Retaining the copyright means that any researcher who wants to publish direct quotations from material generated by LWVN will need our permission.

Transferring the cartons of records to the Schlesinger Library required making a list of the contents of the cartons.

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Ann Grantham & Linda Morrison with boxes of LWVN archives to go to the “Schles”.

LWV Newton Newsletter 20(3), September 2014
Anyone who would like to see the one-page list, click HERE, or please email Linda Morrison, and I will forward a copy to you. It’s quite a comprehensive and impressive record.

We were able to put together an incomplete run of LWVN newsletters 1980-2000 which are kept in the vault at the Newton Library, giving researchers some local access.

We need to continue with good records management practices; which include making paper copies of newsletters and final reports [electronic records have a very short life, and may not be readable by newer programs or machines]. **Once a year we should collect and sort our permanent records** and transfer them to the Schlesinger Library.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who searched their storage spaces, helped during our “archives mornings,” and otherwise supported this massive multi-year project.

### We welcome new members:

- Daniel Habtemariam
- Carolyn Potts
- Elaine Priovolos
- Catherine Willinger

### Education Committee

Linda Green, Education Committee, 9/12/2014

The Education Committee welcomes additional members to help advance our 2014-15 agenda. Members are welcome to attend monthly meetings, help with events on the day of, or keep all the planning on track for us – all types of help welcome. This year, the Education Committee will be focusing on the following activities:

**Advancing Civic Education:** Building on last spring’s successful event, the Education Committee hopes to organize and present the second annual “civics bee” for middle school students. We will need hands-on help on the day of the event and to coordinate with a teacher at the selected middle school.

**Funding Curriculum-Driven Technology:** The Education Committee is teaming up with the Municipal Finance Committee to present a topic meeting on creating a sustainable funding model for technology in Newton’s schools. A topic meeting is scheduled for later this year.

**Thinking about class-size measures:** The League currently has a position regarding class size. Current methods of measuring class size fail to recognize the other staff resources available in the room. This year, we will look at how other school districts handle this in order to start the process of making any changes to the position, if necessary.
LWV Newton in action

Civics Bee, Brown Middle School, 12 Jun 2014
Lynn Scheller, Jo Corro, Superintendent David Fleishman, Meryl Kessler, and Ellen Gibson preparing for the civics bee at Brown

NNHS, June 2014 - Jo Corro, Sharyn Roberts and Ellen Glusman registering voters

NSHS, June 2014 - Ellen Glusman, Lynn Scheller, and Sharyn Roberts register voters

Jo Corro receives the LWVN Jane Leighton Volunteer of the Year Award, 2014
Late breaking LWVN news – two invitations

We wanted to send along information about two upcoming events near us that you may be interested in:

Friday, September 19th: 6:00-9:00
Money in Politics
MIT Anti-Corruption Symposium

LWVMA has received a special invitation to attend this free event with Harvard Law Professor, Larry Lessig and other leaders in the fight against the corrupting influence of money in our political system.

Public awareness is the first step in addressing the issue of the influence of money in our political system. The League has been at the forefront of public education efforts on this topic helping to spread the word at the local, state and national level. No matter your level of understanding of this serious issue, you won't want to miss this opportunity to learn more from national leaders in the anti-corruption movement and what we, as citizens and voters, can do to effectively combat this problem!

Please click here to go to the Citizens Rising Symposium website for more information and registration.

Monday, Sept. 22, 7:00pm (refreshments @6:30pm)
MAYDAY: The Fight to Save American Democracy
Brookline LWV
Selectman's Hearing Room, Town Hall
333 Washington St., Brookline MA

Lawrence Lessig, a HARVARD LAW SCHOOL professor, technology theorist and longtime advocate of getting big money out of politics, will speak at the September 22 Opening Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Brookline with a talk entitled MAYDAY: The Fight to Save American Democracy. Long opposed to "big money" in politics, he launched a "super PAC to end all super PACs", which he named Mayday PAC on May Day 2014.

Prof. Lessig will discuss how fundamentally good people, with good intentions, have allowed our democracy to be co-opted by outside interests, and how this exploitation has become entrenched in the system. He will use examples that resonate powerfully on the Right and on the Left, using real-world analogies and real human stories. He will offer ideas and achievable solutions to regain control of our corrupted, yet redeemable, representational system.
LWVN CALENDAR

Be sure to visit the LWVN’s Calendar Page (www.lwvnewton.org/calendar) for the most up to date information.

Wednesday, October 8, 11:30am:  LWV Newton Topic Meeting:  Waste Water
Thursday, October 9, 7:30pm:  LWVN Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 11:30am:  LWV Newton Topic Meeting:  Affordable Housing

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