



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

December, 2010

No. 132

OPENING MESSAGE

Katty Chace

As the year draws to a close, we'd like to take the time to recognize and thank the many officials who serve on town boards, elected and appointed. So many Weston citizens give of their time and expertise to make the town run smoothly and responsively. These thousands of people-hours are part of what makes Weston such a wonderful place to live, along with our easy accessibility to Boston and our beautiful, quite unspoiled green space, with mature trees and historical houses and public buildings and conservation land. We are grateful for such generous citizen participation and encourage the uninitiated to consider throwing their hats in the ring, as well.

The Massachusetts League of Women Voters has arranged for a number of sessions to focus on strategic planning for the future of the League. They are encouraging members of local Leagues to join them for several meetings throughout the state. In our region, they have set up a session on Tuesday, January 11th at the Morse Institute Library in Natick from 4 to 5:30 or 6 to 7:30 pm. Please let me know if you would be interested in joining us for some important brainstorming that day.

We are planning for future Coffee Hours in the new year. We have traditionally invited our elected state representatives, Susan Fargo and Alice Peisch to come in February to share with us their observations about events on Beacon Hill, and their own priorities for the coming legislative session, and will try to have that happen again this winter. In the spring, we like to focus a Coffee Hour on issues of importance at the upcoming Town Meeting.

Our League Book Club is reading "Denialism" by Michael Specter, and will meet to discuss it on Wednesday, February 9th at 7:30 p.m. at Barbara Fullerton's house (3 Winter Street). Please join us for some thought-provoking discussion.

League of Women Voters of Weston

President..... Katty Chace
781-891-1087

Treasurer..... Kathie Strehle
508-358-8937

Voter Service..... Sally Currier
781-235-9506

Membership..... Rochelle Nemrow
781-790-1138

Bulletin..... Katherine Wolfthal
Editor 781-891-9549

This LWV/Weston Newsletter is published monthly except July and August. The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age.

League of Women Voters of Weston
15 Conant Road, Weston MA 02493

VOTER INFORMATION

1-800-882-1649

League of Women Voters
of Massachusetts
133 Portland Street
Boston MA 02114
(617)523-2999

Submit articles to Katherine Wolfthal in
typewritten hard copy or by e-mail to
kate@weichi.com

We heard last week the results of the Federal census as it will affect the number of Congress members Massachusetts will have in the next decade. We will lose one member as the population shifts to the southwest. New York and Ohio will each lose two members and Massachusetts has to redistrict to eliminate one member. It will be the responsibility of our state officials to redraw the lines.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WESTON
WISHES TO EXTEND SINCERE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
WHO HAVE RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2010-2011.

Jane Buchanan	Sara Jones
Cindy Buzby	Beth Keane
Gene Castillo	Valerie Kirshy
Katty Chace	Lenore Lobel
Diana Chaplin	Kay McCahan
Robin Coutts	Rochelle Nemrow
Carter Bottjer Crawford	Mary Parker
Rosemary Cremens	Judy Price
Sally Currier	Robin Reisman
Nina Danforth	Maryanne Rogers
Polly Dickson	Kathleen Rousseau
Jean Emans	Patricia Shotwell
Inge Engler	Mary Ellen Sikes
Barbara Flannery	Kitty Smith
Barbara Fullerton	Wendy Spector
Phyllis Halpern	Katherine Strehle
Jessica Hammann	Joan Suit
Holly Heine	Jean Thurston
Barbara Hill	Ingeborg Uhlir
Priscilla Hindmarsh	Leslie Vensel
Marilyn Hirsch	Katherine Wolfthal
David Hutcheson	Shann Wood

We urge those of you who have not yet renewed to do so now. As a member, you'll receive our informative monthly bulletin about local issues. You'll also be a member of the state and national chapters, and will receive their newsletters and other educational materials. You can stay informed, know the issues and support the power of women's influence in politics.

Please print, complete and return the attached membership form with your check made payable to the League of Women Voters of Weston.

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2011

- January 1, Saturday..... New Year's Day**
- January 11, Tuesday.....LWVW Board Meeting**
9:15 A.M., 376 Glen Rd
(Barbara Hill, 781-235-8861)
All members welcome!
- January 11, Tuesday.....LWVMA Strategic**
4:00-5:00 P.M. or 6:00-7:30 P.M.
Natick Public Library, 14 E. Central St., Natick
Planning Meeting
- February 9, Wednesday.....LWVW Book Group**
7:30 P.M., 3 Winter St.
(Barbara Fullerton, 781-893-7440)
Denialism
by Michael Specter

The League of Women Voters of Weston

wishes to extend sincere thanks to the following Friends
and Sponsors who have generously given their support to our work.

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Omni Foods Supermarkets
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Weston Travel Service
781 891 9110
483 Boston Post Road, Weston, MA

WHEN IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

President

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20510
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

U.S. Senators

- The Honorable Scott Brown
2400 JFK Building
55 New Sudbury Street
Boston, MA 02203
(617)565-3170
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202)224-4543
No e-mail address currently available
- The Honorable John F. Kerry
One Bowdin Square, Tenth Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617)565-8519
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202)224-2742
E-mail: john_kerry@kerry.senate.gov

U.S. Representative 7th District

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
(781)396-2900
(202)225-2836
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-2836
<http://www.house.gov/markey>

Governor

Governor Deval Patrick
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 360
Boston MA 02133
(617)727-3600
E-mail: Goffice@state.ma.us

State Senator 5th Middlesex District

The Honorable Susan Fargo
(617)722-1572
State House, Room 505
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: sfargo@senate.state.ma.us
Home: (781) 259-9623

State Representative 4th Norfolk District

The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch
(617)722-2320
(781)237-4719
State House, Room 26
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: alice.peisch@mahouse.gov

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Kathleen Rousseau

The December meeting was held at the home of **Error! Bookmark not defined.** on December 14.

The treasurer reported that we have over \$2000 in the bank after paying half of our state and national league per-member-payments.

There was a discussion of the Special Town Meeting and the changes that the new moderator has made. Presentations have a time limit, and must be on the stage.

Coffee Hours: We will ask Alice Peisch and Susan Fargo to meet with us for their yearly update on legislative priorities. This will probably be in February or March after the legislature has been in session for a while. We will try to schedule a town issues forum sometime in April before the Town Meeting.

There is an open meeting at the Town Hall tonight (Tuesday, Dec. 14) about the Tavern and Library issue.

Civility in government is an issue that we should try to address in some way. Should there be a simple code of conduct to present at the beginning of meetings? We could show support for committee chairs when they try to impose standards of behavior, perhaps in a letter. We would also thank them for their service to the town.

State League is organizing focus groups to help set its priorities. A number of our members will be attending these.



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OPEN MEETING TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF JOSIAH SMITH TAVERN AND OLD LIBRARY

Barbara Hill

On Tuesday evening December 14, our large Town Hall Auditorium was filled with Weston residents for an Open Meeting, arranged by the Selectmen, to discuss future possibilities for the Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library. The meeting was led by Ted Brovitz of The Cecil Group, hired by the Selectmen to help lead the Town to consensus on the future of these two historic buildings in the heart of Weston Town Center.

The Cecil Group (comprised of planners, architects, and landscape architects) has joined with Peter W. Smith (a real estate economist) and Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates (a group of engineers specializing in traffic, sustainability and sewage issues), to help the Town reach a viable consensus and, ultimately, to issue a re-use report. It is anticipated that their work will be concluded (and their report issued) by the end of February 2011, in time to bring any preliminary warrant articles which may be necessary or appropriate to advance the re-use to Town Meeting in May, 2011.

After introductions of the Cecil Group Team and discussion of the process, Mr. Brovitz set forth the agenda and reported on their review of the history and interviews with townspeople who had previously been involved in the process. Mr. Brovitz explained the process for this current open meeting and anticipated additional meetings as well as collection of additional information), Mr. Brovitz spent some time on the history and current conditions of the two buildings. Next, Mr. Brovitz asked the audience to consider Community Goals and Priorities for Future Uses of the Buildings, and then described the next steps towards Moving Forward.

In reviewing the existing buildings, Mr. Brovitz made the following points: the Josiah Smith Tavern and Barn together comprise

approximately 15,000 square feet of space, with the majority of that (over 8,000 square feet) in the Barn and connector. The Women's Community League has used the Barn since 1975, and in 2002 signed a ten-year lease that expires June 30, 2012. The Town acquired the property (together with a 500 year preservation restriction) from the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, now known as Historic New England, in 1983. The parcel is 6.61 acres, although much of that is wetland. Any future use would require significant upgrades to the interior.

The Old Library is approximately 8,000 square feet of space on three floors located on a small, 0.63-acre parcel, built in 1899 just as the automobile was coming into vogue, with 10-12 parking spaces. The Children's Entrance was added in 1920. The building is structurally sound, although also requires significant renovation for any use. Both the Josiah Smith Tavern and the Old Library are part of the National Historic District in Town Center.

A community survey is being considered, but Mr. Brovitz prefers to use that tool once some viable choices are identified, so that the survey would make use of appropriate information. However, at the December 14th meeting (and available on the Town Website) was a preliminary form soliciting a set of criteria to be used to determine the re-use of the buildings. For example, to me it is important that re-use of the Old Library be sensitive to historic preservation and public access. In considering re-use of the Josiah Smith Tavern, in addition to the two criteria set forth above, it is also important, to me, that we consider some self-sustainability. Other people might consider traffic, change of character, noise, financial drain on the Town, or many other criteria priorities to them. The Cecil Group

encourages residents to download, complete and return the forms for additional consideration. One interesting point Mr. Brovitz brought forth for consideration is that in these instances when a municipal building becomes “available” for some future use, inevitably, many people identify a “perfect use.” Mr. Brovitz counseled, wisely, I think, to separate our thinking on a perceived use of the buildings from a discussion of what the community would want in their town in that location. He counseled to consider why we are making our choices and what criteria we are using to evaluate the choices.

At that point, Mr. Brovitz opened the floor to comments from the audience. There was a wide-ranging (and very civil!) conversation about process, uses, and considerations that should be prioritized. The first speaker suggested demolishing the Old Library to increase the beauty of Town Center, but many subsequent comments made clear that there is a broad consensus that both buildings should be preserved. There was less consensus about ownership of the buildings, but apparently much consensus that the Town should retain control in some fashion --- certainly with regard to the preservation of the historic nature of the buildings. One resident suggested Habitat for Humanity affordable housing. A couple of residents suggested a Golden Ball Tavern model for a community non-profit with an endowment to maintain the buildings. Inge Uhlir made the point that Boston Post Road was a dangerous place to have children crossing and playing in the playground and suggested (to great support from the audience) that Tavernside Playground be moved to the park space next to Town Hall in order to increase the safety for users of the playground. Robin Coutts identified the importance of a Town History Center as a protected yet accessible home for important and valuable Town government records and historical documents, as well as the collection of the Weston Historical Society.

Other residents raised the issues of septic, traffic, safety, wetlands and historic preservation as

guiding the discussion. One resident indicated that, in his view, Boston Post Road is too narrow for two lanes of traffic with parking on both sides (although that stretch of road has two lanes of traffic and parking on both sides now.) Another resident suggested consideration of the long term – while the buildings may be “excess inventory” now, so too, Field School was considered excess inventory for many years and is no longer excess.

A new resident raised a novel suggestion to create a National Training Facility for Fencing in the Old Library and create housing for the athletes training there in the Josiah Smith Tavern. Another resident suggested using the bottom floor of the Old Library for a “central office” --- a command center for telecommunication switching equipment (a commercial use bringing in revenue and still leaving the remaining space for other use). Another resident suggested creating a Town “Meeting House” available for all organizations in Weston to meet in a central location. One resident, having looked at the numbers, indicated his view that commercial use was not financially viable. Several residents raised the possibility of reconsidering the prior proposal (which had received Town support prior to the last vote) but addressing some of the concerns that may have derailed that project. Many residents brought up consideration of the nature of our Town Center --- some people wanting to consider the aesthetics, some increasing the vibrancy, and some respecting the current organizations using the space – the Weston Historical Society, the WCCA, and the Women’s Community League.

The meeting was recorded and notes were taken about all of the comments made. The next steps will be to collect the “criteria” forms and to gather additional information. In sum, this was a respectful and productive meeting; a good first step to moving the discussion forward once again. I encourage each of you to participate in this process to determine the future for these two buildings and the character of our historic Town Center.

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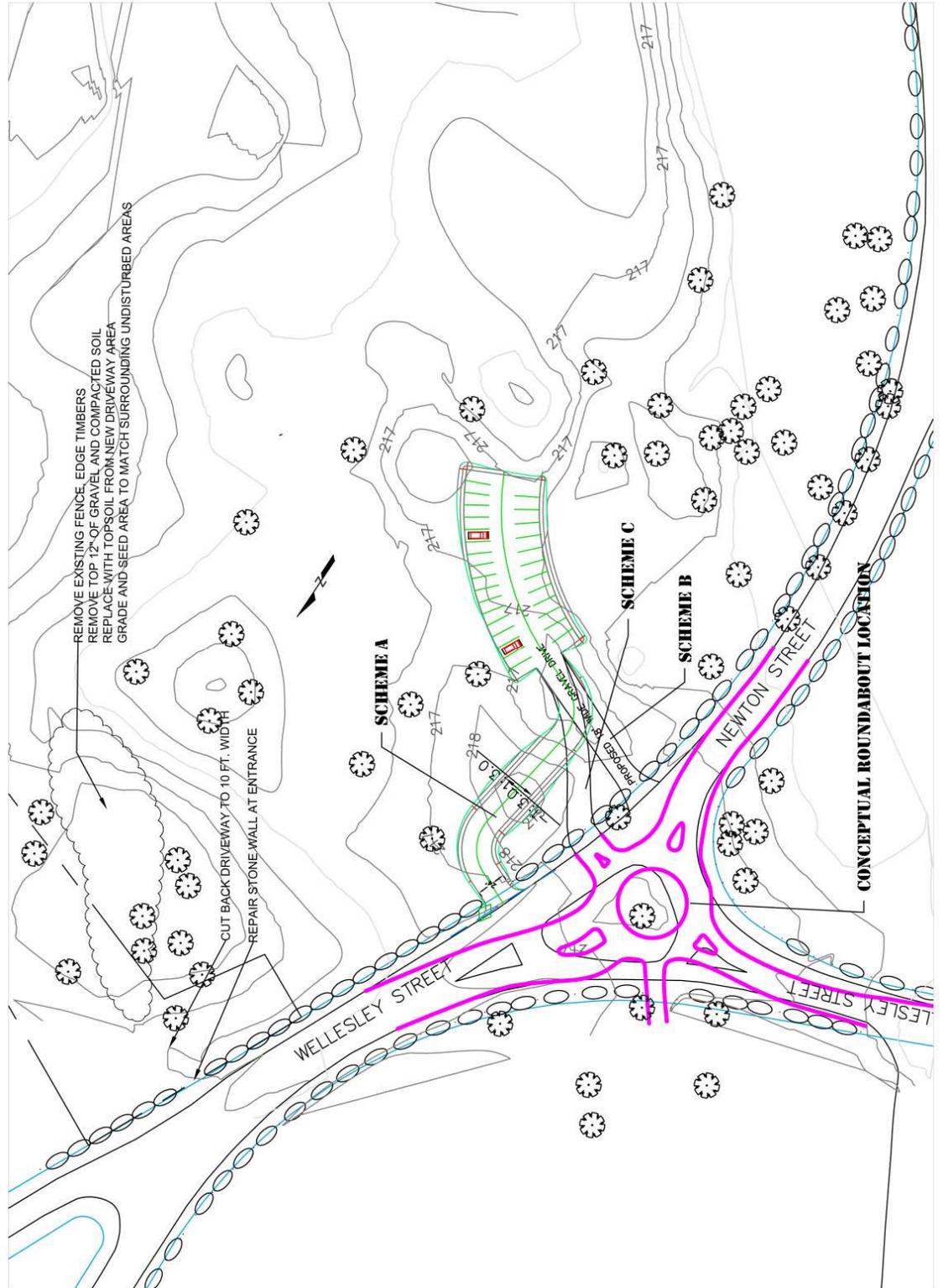
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PROPOSALS FOR CASE CORNER AND LAND'S SAKE ACCESS
Contributed by Nina Danforth

The plan, right, presented at the meeting of the Traffic and Sidewalk Advisory Committee on December 21, shows proposals for changes at Case Corner, with the possible rotary in pink, and the chosen entrance to Land's Sake in bold. The new driveway will be constructed as soon as soil testing is finished.





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Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year.**

UPCOMING "TOWN HALL" EVENT
Announcement from the Strategic Planning Committee
of the Massachusetts LWV

Terry Yoffie is this year's chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and a member of the board of directors for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. She has asked us to publish the first notice from the committee, announcing the upcoming "Town Hall" face to face and online meetings across the state. At these meetings, members will be asked to share their ideas and opinions about where the League should focus in the next three years. Please watch out for the next notice about how to sign up for Town Hall meetings in January.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts wants to hear from you! This past election season underscored for all of us how much our communities need the League. The Strategic Planning Committee and the state board of directors are working to serve members and communities better and your feedback is essential. Please join us to share what you believe are the key areas the League should work on, what you like and want continued, and what you feel needs improving.

We will be holding a series of "town hall" meetings across Massachusetts to hear directly from members about the issues they are concerned about. There are two formats we will use, an online option and a face-to-face option.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the state Office at 617-523-2999 or Terry Yoffie at lwvmasp@yahoo.com

Town Hall Meeting Dates and Locations are as follows:

Date & Times	Location	Leagues
January 11 4pm to 5:30pm 6pm to 7:30pm	Natick	Metro Boston Leagues

Watch for an email soon with information about how to sign up for the Town Hall Meetings.

CHEMICALS IN OUR LIVES (AND BODIES). IS YOUR MICROWAVE POPCORN TOXIC?

Barbara Fullerton

Modern life has many conveniences not as well known in our parents' days, and man-made chemicals are among them. One of the chemicals in wider use now include the family of perfluorochemicals (PFC's).

What are PFC's? PFC's are chemicals used to make products resistant to oil, grease, stains and water. They are used in coatings on furniture, non-stick cookware, carpets, clothing, and food packaging. The linings of food wrappers, such as those for popcorn and fast food are a large source of contamination in the blood of consumers. Common brand names containing PFC's include Teflon, Scotchgard, and GoreTex.

PFC's are very long-lasting in the environment and can be found in the soil, sediments and water. They have been found in the blood of virtually all of several thousand Americans tested. Scientists found some types of PFC's at a higher level in children than adults. Some children with the highest levels were in the same range as those workers in the 3M plant where the chemicals are manufactured.

PFCs in the blood will circulate in the body for years, with a half-life estimated to be 3 to 4.4 years (the amount of time required for humans to excrete half of the amount of the chemical in the body). One characteristic of the different PFC chemicals is that there does not seem to be a mechanism by which they can be broken down in the environment. That means that every PFC molecule produced will be in our world permanently.

Wildlife around the globe have been found to have significant blood levels of PFC's. At least 400 different mammals, fish and birds all over the world, as well as bald eagles in the Midwest contain PFC's.

Why should we worry about PFC's? Scientific studies have shown that low doses of PFOA (one type of PFC) will cause harmful effects at lower blood levels than those found in some children. Lab animals exposed to PFOA from fetal age up to early adulthood show changes in the weight of body organs such as the liver and pituitary gland, which is usually a sign of toxicity and organ damage. Even low levels were associated with low birth weight and slower growth. Levels of PFOA in human blood are in the same range as those that cause harmful effects in animal studies.

PFOA is associated with tumors of the testicles, breast, liver and prostate in people, and with hypothyroidism in lab animals.

Veterinarians and pet bird lovers have been aware for many years of bird deaths associated with exposure to fumes from non-stick pans that were overheated, or heated for the first time. The sensitivity to these fumes is not restricted to pet birds, since broiler chicks have also died after exposure to gas fumes from light bulbs coated with a Teflon chemical. These reports should cause all of us to pay some attention to our exposure to the chemicals.

How can we avoid exposure to PFC's? Avoid the use of Teflon and other non-stick pans, and if using them, do not allow them to overheat. Don't purchase furniture, rugs or clothing that have been treated to be stain-proof. And last, but not least, avoid when possible eating microwave popcorn and other fast food and prepackaged foods enclosed in treated wrappers.

Unfortunately, these chemicals are unregulated, and therefore the chemical companies are not required to report their emissions of PFC's into the air or water. Industry has, however, agreed to slowly decrease the use of some of the PFC's. In 2006 3M, DuPont, and others agreed to greatly

reduce the environmental pollution for some PFC's. In addition the US EPA plans to phase out 95% of the use of perfluorooctanoic acid (one of the PFC's) by 2010 and entirely by 2015.

The EPA should be more aggressive in requiring companies to remove substances like these that are proven to be harmful to people and the

environment. Revision of the Toxics Substances Control Act is necessary in order to protect the public. Some of the provisions that would help would include regulations requiring industry to prove the safety of new chemicals, rather than waiting for "demonstrated harm" in order to remove a chemical from the market.

Additional information can be seen at:

- Minnesota Department of Health: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/pfcshealth.html>
- Environmental Working Group: <http://www.ewg.org>
- Clean Water Action: <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/node/466>



League of Women Voters of Weston

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2010-2011

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization, which encourages informed and active participation in all levels of government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We serve the local community in many ways:

- Sponsor Candidates and Issues nights before elections
- Provide voter information and conduct voter-registration drives
- Encourage voter participation with banners and rides to the polls
- Study local, state and national issues and hold open meetings
- Act upon carefully considered positions by lobbying and circulating petitions
- Publish a "Know Your Town" booklet
- Train members to be active and involved citizens.

Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. As a Weston member, you also belong to and receive publications from the State and National Leagues.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Check one: Renewal New Member

I enclose a check made payable to **The League of Women Voters of Weston*** for:

\$60 Individual Membership (covers required local dues to the State and National Leagues)

\$75 Family Membership (two individuals in the same household)

Name of second household member: _____

\$50 Basic Membership

\$ _____ Additional Contribution (Any contributions above and beyond regular dues are greatly appreciated and assist our local league in providing more services and offsetting our operating expenses.)

\$ _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED

.....
 \$ _____ LWV Education Fund (Tax-deductible contribution made payable by separate check to the LWV Education Fund)

Return form to: Rochelle Nemrow, 61 Beaver Rd., Weston, MA 02493

Do you know a friend who might be interested in joining the League of Women Voters?
Name, address & phone _____

* It is the policy of the LWV of Weston that no resident shall be refused participation in the League because of inability to pay. If a hardship preventing payment of dues exists, please contact Katty Chace at 781-790-1087.