



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

January, 2011

No. 133

OPENING MESSAGE

Katty Chace

Representative Alice Peisch (and maybe Senator Susan Fargo) will be joining us for a Coffee Hour at the Library community Room on Saturday, January 29 at 11:00 am.

The topic will be events on Beacon Hill and Representative Peisch's priorities for the current legislative session. It's a great opportunity to ask questions and get a good conversation going with your representatives. Please take the time to join us.

On Wednesday evening, February 9 at 7:30, we will be holding our annual League Book Club to discuss Denialism by Michael Specter. This intriguing book posits that we have become a society that increasingly questions scientific data and refuses to believe what the facts tell us. There is plenty of grist for good debate. We will be meeting at Barbara Fullerton's at 3 Winter Street.

Barbara Hill, Robin Coutts and I attended a strategic planning session in Natick, organized by the Massachusetts League of women Voters. About 25 members of local Leagues brainstormed, answering questions about which state League activities are the most important to us, and how valuable the services of the state and National Leagues are, and ways in which they could be more helpful to us in the future. All of this information will eventually be collated and made available for better planning in the future (See article on page 10).

On Monday morning I attended the 12th Annual Martin Luther King Day Breakfast at Saint Peter's, sponsored ICARE (Interfaith Citizens Advocating Racial Equality). The speaker was Weston resident Dr. Augustus White, who recently wrote a memoir entitled: "Seeing Patients: Unconscious Bias in Health Care". This book calls for more diversity in the field of medicine and an end to the disparities endured by minorities (including women and the elderly, as well as African-Americans and Hispanics). Dr. White writes that this disparity is "the last frontier of racial prejudice". White grew up in Memphis, TN during the Jim Crow era. The son of a doctor and a teacher, he attended Mount

League of Women Voters of Weston

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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.

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VOTER INFORMATION

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of Massachusetts
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Submit articles to Katherine Wolfthal in
typewritten hard copy or by e-mail to

kate@weichi.com

Herman School in Western Massachusetts, then Brown University. He was the first African-American to graduate from Stanford University Medical School, then the first black to become a resident and surgery professor at Yale. He served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during the Vietnam War. "I kept a journal and saw a lot of horrible things. Over time that changed me." He left the Army a strong opponent of the war. He is currently a professor of medical education at Harvard Medical School.

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

JANUARY – MARCH 2011

January 23, Sunday..... 2:00-3:00 p.m., 23 Pine St. (For more information, see Page 8.)	Open House for two affordable housing units
January 29, Saturday..... 11:00 a.m., Weston Public Library Community Room	LWVW Coffee Hour with Rep. Alice Peisch
February 8, Tuesday..... 9:15, 12 Hemlock Rd. (Robin Coutts, 781-899-2020)	LWVW Board Meeting All are welcome!
February 9, Wednesday..... 7:30 P.M., 3 Winter St. (Barbara Fullerton, 781-893-7440)	LWVW Book Group <i>Denialism</i> by Michael Specter
February 19 – 27.....	Weston Public School Vacation
March 5, Saturday..... 9:30a.m., Framingham, MA (See announcement on page 6.)	LWVMA: Conference on Women's Health in the 21st Century
March 7, Monday..... 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Auditorium	Town Caucus

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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2011 CIVICS BEE

Members of the Weston, Wayland and Sudbury Leagues gathered last Saturday morning to start the planning for this year's Civics Bee on Sunday, April 3 at Sudbury's Curtis Middle School. Boston College Law Professor Richard Albert will once again serve as our Judge, and Jo-Ann Berry, the Massachusetts League's Citizens Education Committee Chair, will be our Moderator. Each town will again field a 9 person team consisting of adults, High School and Middle School students. This year's special focus will be the Supreme Court. If you would like to volunteer to help as a team member or a behind-the-scenes contributor, please contact me at tackc@aol.com

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 January meeting took place on January 11, at the home of Barbara Hill.

Coffee Hours: The library community room is unavailable for most Saturday mornings. Katty will contact Susan Fargo and Alice Peisch to see if either of them could meet with us on January 29 for a legislative up-date.

LWV of St. Louis believes the LWVUS should advocate for the elimination of the death penalty. There is a UN declaration to eliminate it worldwide, which the US voted against. Our board felt that we need to know what other issues would get less attention if the priority of this issue were increased.

The Civics Bee this year will take place at the Curtis Middle School in Sudbury on April 3. It was agreed not to let the answers go on untimed in order to speed things up. The questions should be mixed up by topic more. Think about people to put on the team. (Anyone interested, please contact Katty.)

Community Preservation – The two affordable houses are done, and will be having an open house.

The League Book Club on will meet on February 9. We are reading Denialism, by Michael Specter.

The next Board meeting is on February 8 at the home of Robin Coutts.



The background of the entire page is a stylized American flag. The top portion features a dark field with numerous small, white, five-pointed stars scattered across it. Below this, a horizontal band of white stripes is visible, also containing stars. The bottom portion of the page is a solid white field, also populated with stars. The stars are of varying sizes and are arranged in a way that suggests a larger flag design.

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The League of Women Voters
Massachusetts

Women's Health in the 21st Century: What We Need to Know

March 5, 2011
McPherson Hall in
Medical Arts Building
MWMC, Framingham Campus
85 Lincoln Street, Framingham, MA
Snow Date: March 26, 2011

9:30 Registration and Refreshments

10:00 Impact of Media on Women's Health
Keynote speaker,
Judy Norsigian, Executive Director of
Our Bodies Ourselves

11:00 Disparities in Access and Treatment
Cheryl Hamlin, MD

11:30 Mental Health Issues for Women
Georgia Sassen, PhD

12:00 Health Fair

March 12, 2011
Wesley United Methodist Church
98 North Maple Street, Hadley MA
Snow Date: April 2, 2011

9:30 Registration and Refreshments

9:50 Welcome – Ellen Story, State Rep.

10:00 Why Should We Talk About Women's
Health? - Katherine Reeves, PhD, MPH

10:20 Vitamin D and Women's Health
- Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, ScD, SM

10:40 The Impact of Physical Activity
on Women's Health - Erin Snook, PhD
--- Break ---

11:10 More is not Always Better: Why
Comparative Effective Research Should
be Your Friend - Arlene Ash, PhD

11:30 Lesbian & Transgender Health: Needs &
Disparities in Care - J. Mary Sorrell

11:50 Our Bodies Ourselves: Women
Growing Older - Joan Ditzion, MSW

12:10 Discussion Sessions with Speaker of Choice
Health Fair

Free and open to the public. There will be a question and answer period after each speaker.

Applications for CEUs for nurses and social workers have been submitted.

Free parking at both facilities. For more information go to: lwvma@lwvma.org

Directions to Framingham: By car from the west: Take Route. 9. Turn left onto Main St. Continue about .02 of a mile to Union Street (a slight turn right). Go about 1.88 miles and turn left onto Lincoln Street. Turn left into a parking lot in front of Framingham Union Hospital or across the street from it. McPherson Hall is in the Medical Arts Bldg. at 85 Lincoln St. **From the east:** Take Route 9. Turn right onto Main St. and follow above directions. **By train:** Take train to Framingham. Walk 2 blocks east to Union Street; turn left onto Union Street; walk 3 blocks (on the right). Turn right onto Henry St., walk one block. The Medical Arts Bldg at 85 Lincoln St. will be across the street.

Directions to Hadley church: Take Route 9 to Hadley. At the intersection with N. Maple St. (Taco Bell, Home Depot), turn at the lights toward Home Depot. Continue straight thru the next lights at the Rocky Hill Rd. intersection. The church will be on your left just a short distance past that intersection.

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OPEN HOUSE - 23 PINE STREET AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS
SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2-3 P.M.

The Weston Affordable Housing Foundation, Inc. (WAHFI) is preparing to initiate a lottery to select tenants for the two-family house they are completing at 23 Pine Street. In advance of the lottery we are holding an open house so applicants, neighbors, town officials, and other residents of Weston can see this great new addition to Weston's affordable housing stock. The open house will be on Sunday, January 23 from 2-3:00.

- 23 Pine Street shall henceforth be known as the Dickson House, to honor the generosity, support, and long civic leadership of Polly and Ed Dickson (who also donated the property to WAHFI)
- 25 Pine Street shall henceforth be known as the Fish House, to honor the vision and tireless commitment of Ken Fish who was not only the founding President of WAHFI but also for his instrumental roles in creation of affordable housing at Merriam Village and Dickson Meadows.

Please note this does not conflict with the AFC Championship football game in which we hope the Patriots will be playing that evening at 6:30.

Please join us in celebrating the opening of this house which we believe is a credit to this town's commitment to affordable housing and leadership in energy-efficiency.

There will be a very brief ceremony to formally open the housing and to unveil plaques dedicating each of the two units:

For further information, visit

http://weston.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={F689D95C-36E9-4ADA-9616-E34BF56AA775}&DE={014CD89A-7E62-40D6-9EFB-34ED3D0A2A4A}

Did you know?

In Weston, there have been house fires started by dishwashers and clothes dryers.

Please don't leave your house with the clothes dryer or dishwasher still running! Remember to clean the lint from the clothes dryer hose regularly.

In Weston, someone recently created a hazardous situation for themselves when they used drain cleaner to clear a drain and then followed up with bleach to eliminate a bad odor.

Please don't mix bleach with drain cleaner or any substance with ammonia. It is a toxic combination!



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**The Daryl Christopher team wishes you a
Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year.**

FOCUS GROUPS

Barbara Hill

This month the Board of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has been holding a series of Focus Groups, Face-to-Face and Online, to help the LWVMA determine how it can best serve its local leagues and members. Katty Chace, Robin Coutts and I (Barbara Hill) attended a Face to Face Focus Group in Natick on January 11. Approximately 8 – 10 MetroWest Leagues were represented in our meeting: Brookline, Needham, Newton, Belmont, Weston, Worcester and more. Most Leagues had several people in attendance. Other Face to Face Focus Group sessions were held in Weymouth, Middleton and Florence. In addition there were a number of opportunities to participate online.

The Focus Group we attended was professionally run, with a very timely leader, a scribe and a specific series of questions. Professional facilitators donated their expertise to gather information designed to determine what members think are the key areas that the LWV MA should work on, should continue doing and should improve. LWV MA President, Zaxaro Bennett, spoke briefly and encouraged honest feedback --- and she got it.

There was a large range of opinions about what the League priorities should be, how important the State League is to the success of the Local Leagues. There was some consensus that the LWV MA should continue Voter Registration and Education, Studies/Re-Studies, Public Forums and Training Workshops. There was scattered support for many of the League's other activities. Almost universally, there was support for a better website presence and support. Universally Local

Leagues are struggling financially.

There was some discussion as well on the issue of membership problems: 30% of League members have belonged for 30 or more years; 43% have belonged for 20 or more years. 73% are over 55 years old, and 47% are over 65 years old. We can all understand intuitively why there is a dearth of young members, but nonetheless we must find ways to encourage people under 50, under 40, and even under 30 to join the League to ensure the continuation of this vital, important organization, particularly in these very trying political times.

True to the League's flyer, we were done in 1 - 1/2 hours, and now we wait for the compilation of the information, as well as a report from the strategic planning committee.

Towards the end of the Focus Group we reviewed the LWV MA Mission Statement, and I offer it for your consideration as well:

"The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy."

As we go forward in this polarized partisan political climate, I cannot imagine a more important mission. I encourage each of you to continue to participate and to seek ways to make the League's future successful.

OBSERVER CORPS
Jean Thurston

Weston Board Of Selectmen
Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011

1. Regional Housing Inter-Municipal Agreement

This will help to form a regional group and includes Weston, Lexington, Bedford, Concord, Lincoln and Sudbury. Weston will contribute \$11,420 for FY 12 which is 13% of the expected work. This group would handle the second lottery for affordable housing. The contractor would do the first.

Under planning for the unexpected and for financial stability, \$700k would be taken from "free cash" and \$250k from the stabilization fund.

Current "unknowns" are the amount of state aid, the cost of the GIC health insurance plan, any debt exclusion to be voted and new requests approved at town meeting.

2. FY12 Proposed Budget and Financing Plan

This proposed budget was presented by Town Manager, Donna VanderClock. It provides the same level of service, however demand has increased in some areas, such as schools.

Revenue is projected to increase by 4.5% and expenses will increase by 4.5% also. Property taxes are estimated to increase by 5.3% and state aid will likely decrease by 15%.

Schools are proposed to increase 2.9% and the unclassified area to increase 8.3% (due to pension obligations)

Budget requests include two more dispatchers for the Fire Department and ten hours more to support the Planning and Land Use areas.

There is no net change in General Fund.

A request to begin the installations for automatic meter reading was not recommended at this time.

3. CPA Requests

Old library – a placeholder of \$800k

Support for the Housing Partnership \$11,420 plus \$4,600

Case Estates – a placeholder. There is \$4.3 million remaining for Parcel 9 and the town has more than \$3 million

Elderly Housing – Brook School \$600k

4. Designate Town Manager to be Voting Delegate for MMA & MIIA Annual Meetings

This was approved.

5. Fee for Replacement Transfer Station Sticker

This is \$15 now and was approved to be lowered to \$5

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Board of Selectmen would like to hear from Weston residents wishing to serve on the Town's newly created Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC). This Committee is tasked with evaluating current services, identifying opportunities and unmet needs, and providing recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, Weston's MBTA Advisory Board Representative, and Weston's Metro-West Regional Transit Authority Representative.

The PTAC shall consist of at least five Weston residents with an interest in public transportation. The Town's MBTA Advisory Board Representative and MWRTA Board Member shall both serve as *ex-officio* members of the committee. The committee should report at least twice each year to the Board of Selectmen.

Interested residents please email a letter of interest with background information to selectmen@westonmass.org or by mail to the Town of Weston, Board of Selectmen, P.O. Box 378, Weston, MA 02493 by February 4, 2011.

