



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

June, 2009

No. 118

OPENING MESSAGE

Katty Chace

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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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

As the League year ends and we begin our summer break, we know that there are on-going issues that we will want to continue monitoring during these calmer months. Chief among these at the local level is the clean-up of the Case Estates by Harvard University before the town takes possession of the land. You will find a summary of the meetings the Selectmen have held for the last two weeks elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Also included in this Bulletin is your league membership renewal form. I encourage you to renew today before summer's distractions move in, so that we won't have to chase you down in the fall. Keeping our membership up keeps our league strong.

Four of our board members attended part or all of the Massachusetts League's biennial Convention at the Marriott. The theme of the convention was health care. We voted to conduct two re-studies (transportation and home rule) over the next two years. We have a vibrant, young new state league president who is excited about the future. See the article about the convention elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Our Annual Meeting in May was lively and informative. Pam Wood, Massachusetts Jury Commissioner and Weston resident, entertained and informed us with her description of our system. The Middlesex County innovation of one day or one trial is now the standard for the whole country. We thank Pam for taking time from her busy schedule to join us. I could have listened for hours!

We brainstormed at our June board meeting about a speaker for our fall fundraiser. We are hoping it will all come together for October, and will keep you posted as we solidify our plans.

Hope you all have a relaxing and rewarding summer. Our league book group will be discussing Jeffrey Toobin's "The Nine" (about the current Supreme Court) in the fall.

CALENDAR

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2009

June 25, Thursday..... 7:00 – 9:00 P.M., Town Hall Auditorium	Harvard University Meeting, re 7:00 – 9:00 P.M., Town Hall Auditorium
July 4, Saturday.....	Independence Day
July 9, Thursday..... 7:00 – 9:00 P.M., Town Hall Auditorium	Selectmen’s Meeting, re Harvard clean-up of Case Estates
July 10, Friday..... 10:00 A.M. , 61 Beaver Road (Rochelle Nemrow, 781-790-1138)	LWW Board Meeting Discussion of Fall Fund-Raiser



September 7, Monday.....	Labor Day
September 15, Tuesday..... 9:15 A.M. Location TBA	LWW Open Meeting

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 Edward M. Kennedy
2400 JFK Building
Boston, MA 02203

(617)565-3170
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202)224-4543
senator@kennedy.senate.gov

- 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)722-2230
(781)237-4719
State House, Room 26
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: rep.alicepeisch@hou.state.ma.us

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Robin Reisman

The June Board meeting was held on the evening of June 16 at the home of Katherine Wolfthal.

Website: Katty Chace reported that the cost to maintain the website jumped from \$160 to \$200. The question: Is this still a good value? Marvin Wolfthal reported that in his professional opinion, the two most important interactive services we receive, i.e. the ability to edit content online and the handling of email addresses, could most likely not be replaced at a lower cost, and that we could pay a different provider as much or more money for less functionality with more hassle, so the answer is: Yes, we are getting good value, even though the cost has increased. Robin Coutts suggested that the Massachusetts League might consider developing a template as a revenue-producing instrument, a template with more functionality than the California model we use presently.

Awards: The Leagues of Weston, Wayland and Sudbury received the Lotte E Scharfman Voter Services Award for 2007-2009 from the Massachusetts League for planning and executing the highly successful Civics Bee this past March.

The LWVW annual book award of a \$50 gift certificate from Dragon Books was awarded to Weston High School senior Derek Park.

Fall Fundraiser: Much of the Board meeting was spent brainstorming ideas for a potential topic and coming up with names for a speaker for an October fundraiser. A special meeting to discuss progress made on the fundraiser was scheduled for the middle of July.

Membership: Rochelle Nemrow suggested setting up payment arrangements with Paypal to permit dues payments via the website. Paypal charges 2.9% of the transaction amount, plus a \$.30 transaction fee, which would come to \$2.04 for a \$60 individual membership. Instead of the LWVW footing

the cost of online memberships, it was thought that members availing themselves of the convenience should pay the fee. Rochelle will consult LWWV webmaster Beth Keane.

State Convention: Katty Chace reported on the State convention. See her article on this topic elsewhere in this Bulletin.

OUR LEAGUE WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING!

FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR LEAGUE AND ITS ACTIVITIES, GET VOTER INFORMATION,
READ PAST ISSUES OF OUR MONTHLY BULLETIN.
BE INFORMED ON OUR LOCAL POSITIONS.

<http://www.westonlww.org>

Dear friends,

It's time again to renew your membership to the Weston League of Women voters. We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated individuals who have kept the Weston chapter active and vibrant, but it is only through your continued support that our League can survive and flourish.

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.

Your membership does not require any of your time or work. However, we welcome and encourage you to attend our monthly board meetings, weekly coffee hours and contribute to our monthly newsletter. Any activity or event you participate in will be an even greater benefit to the League and will enrich your experience as a member and a citizen.

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

Thank you for your support.

Warmest regards,
Rochelle Nemrow
Membership Chair

League of Women Voters of Weston

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2009-2010

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.



JOIN WESTON'S FIRST ENERGY SMACKDOWN!

October 1 - November 30, 2009

Start the school year lean and green! Join the Energy Smackdown -- a friendly competition among families to reduce electricity use and shrink our NSTAR bills.

The contest will measure October and November 20 reductions in kilowatt hours compared to last year. (Every NSTAR bill gives you a history of your kilowatt consumption for a year.) Other categories will be winners too.

Register at westonclimategroup.org before September 20.

Recruit friends and neighbors. Encourage organizations and local businesses to enter the contest too!

Come to the launch party & workshop at the Library on Sunday, September 27 at 3 PM. Bring your August NSTAR bill. We'll meet one another, share concerns, and get tips on ways to reduce our electricity usage.

Celebrate at the final party at the Library on Sunday, December 13 at 3 PM.

STATE CONVENTION

Katty Chace

Kathie Strehle, Barbara Fullerton, Robin Coutts and I attended part or all of the Massachusetts State Convention at the Marriott on May 29-30. The health care theme was addressed by all of the outside speakers, including Elaine Ullian, CEO of Boston Medical Center, who reported that her hospital has suffered terribly from the new state health care coverage and is in dire financial straits. We voted to conduct two re-studies over the biennium: transportation (last studied in 1975) and home rule (1966). Zaxaro Bennett is the new state president. She is young and enthusiastic, and will have her hands full with the financial challenges of the state league's

treasury. Most of the Mass. league's fundraising efforts of the last year have fallen woefully short of their goals, including the loss of about 100 members statewide. The Lincoln league, with 72 members and \$18,000 in the bank, went belly-up a few months ago, for lack of leadership. I regret that no outreach was made to our league, as we might have been able to regionalize with them.

On the bright side, the Weston, Wayland and Sudbury leagues were recognized at the convention with Lotte Sharfman Awards for our civics bee.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

June 19, 2009

LWVMA Votes YES on Health Care Resolution at Convention 2009

Dear League Members,

I previously wrote to you all providing a recap and update of Convention 2009. However, I regret to report that I omitted one very important action. My apologies to those Leagues who worked hard to write, present, lobby and pass the resolution listed below, and to all of you who did not know of this action.

A resolution presented by the Amherst, Cape Cod, Harvard and Sudbury Leagues regarding possible action taken on single payer health care legislation at the national level passed by a large majority during the second session of plenary on May 30, 2009.

The resolution in its entirety is as follows:

Resolution

Whereas, the LWVUS consensus position on health care (adopted 1993) clearly states that the LWVUS supports publicly financed, privately delivered health care,

Whereas, this position calls for a national health plan financed through general taxes, commonly known as the "single payer approach",

Resolved:

That the LWVMA asks the LWVUS to actively support that principle of Single Payer National Health Insurance by

- affirming that the state and local Leagues can advocate and lobby for single payer health care
- vigorously advocating that a single payer legislative proposal be included in deliberation of health care reform by Congress and the Administration.

LWVMA joins the Leagues of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, and Washington in asserting the basic League principle of advocating for legislation that clearly follows well-established League consensus positions.

LWVUS has been notified of LWVMA's passage of this resolution and support of continued advocacy for a national health plan incorporating the single payer approach.

If you have any questions or comments about the resolution, please feel free to email me at zbennett@lwmma.org or our Health Care Specialist, Judy Deutsch at REVJD@aol.com.

Thank you,

Zaxaro Bennett
President



DEALING WITH CASE ESTATES CONTAMINATION

Barbara Fullerton

The Case Estates has been one of the central regions that has helped define the feeling that Weston residents have for the town. Despite being so close to Boston, the Case Estate land and the nearby Land's Sakes gardens invoke a feeling of country that is appealing to many. It was not unexpected that in 2007 the town voted to purchase the Case Estate land from Harvard University for \$22.5 million. Unfortunately, soon after the vote, soil tests showed contamination with lead, arsenic, chromium, DDT, and DDE at levels that raised health concerns and the necessity to remove them from the site. These chemicals were associated with the previous agricultural activities on the property.

Michael Harrity, chairman of the Weston Board of Selectmen conducted recent public planning meetings (charrettes) on June 11 and 18 to inform the public about details of the plans to this point and to solicit concerns from abutters and other residents about the contamination and the cleanup of the land. Court Chilton, a member of the School Committee, moderated the meetings, and recorded the main points of the charrette for further thought and discussion. It was clear from the meetings that everyone would like more information about the health effects of the materials and what the levels of risk are with different uses of the land after the cleanup.

Professionals working with the town are Jim Luker, a licensed site professional from Green Seal Environmental, and Kate Ewald, an environmental risk assessment consultant. Ewald's focus is to determine the health risk involved with the known levels of the contaminants and the possible exposure of different individuals (for example, young children versus large adults) to the chemicals.

Harvard has tested about 700 spots on the property so far, and in most places the

contaminants are located about 12 inches from the surface of the soil. The remediation of the contamination, therefore, will involve removal of the top 12 inches of the soil. If Weston asks Harvard to make the land suitable for "unrestricted" future use, Harvard is obligated to remove all the contaminated soil. It is possible that the town can choose to leave some parts of the land cleaned to a lower standard, in which case the land will be restricted in possible uses.

Much of the discussion on June 11 focused on not knowing Harvard's assumptions of the use of the land in the determination of the levels of risk. The amount of exposure of individuals to the chemicals depends in part on how often they walk over the property and whether they are contacting subsurface soil containing the chemicals.

The remediation of the contamination was also the subject of some discussion during the meeting. The release of dust in the air during the process of removal of the contaminated soil could allow another potential exposure of residents to the chemicals. Michael Harrity stated that Harvard should use the "best practices" to decrease the risk of exposure, including control of dust, as well as 24-hour dust monitoring at the site, and confirmation of the removal of all contaminants at the end. It was recommended that soil be trucked away as soon as it was removed from the ground, and not stockpiled.

The June 18 charrette involved a summary from Michael Harrity of the whole process so far, and what the final steps will be. Even though Harvard still owns the land, Weston has a fair amount of control over the situation. After presenting the detailed cleanup plan, Harvard must receive a permit from Weston before proceeding with the removal of any soil. Harvard must also get a permit for the replacement of any landscaping

elements on the property. The planning board will inspect the property again prior to its final purchase by the town. If Harvard is not required to clean all areas to the same degree, they have said that they will give some credit to the town for the purchase price.

Brian Donahue, the chairman of the Conservation Commission, presented some information on possible plans for the restoration of the land. The town has hired Tom Wirth, a well-known Boston area landscape architect, to help plan the restoration of vegetation on the land. The details of the restoration will also be worked out with the planning board. Concerns have been voiced by some residents that the area will look like a “moonscape” if all the vegetation is removed, including large trees and rhododendrons, along with the contaminated soil. The most stark change will be during the cleanup period, but it will be followed by a replanting phase. Harvard is obligated to restore the landscape, but they obviously won’t be able to bring in trees and shrubs as large as those currently on the site. Brian explained that certain more visible areas will receive a bit more attention than others. Most people voice concern about the old rhododendron area (along Wellesley Street), but another important region is the “nose” area at the intersection of Ash, Wellesley, and Newton Streets. This area will be planted with new beech and sugar maple trees and restored to a natural appearance.

Some of the questions and suggestions from the June 18 meeting include examination of some of the legal issues, and questions about restoration. Residents want a clarification of the law with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Does Harvard have an exemption from testing properties that are outside their property lines? Can we push Harvard to test more widely, i.e., on abutter’s lands. Can we get the DEP to weigh in on the issues before the process is too far along? One restoration question centered on how to possibly save some of the present shrubs by just cleaning the soil from the roots and adding new soil. Residents also wanted information from other sites in which cleanup and restoration had taken place, and where some areas were left only partially cleaned.

Additional details from the meetings and PDF files showing the maps of the land are available on the town web site under “News & Events”.

[\(http://weston.govoffice.com/\)](http://weston.govoffice.com/)

There will be a PIP (Public Involvement Plan) meeting run by Harvard on **Thursday, June 25 from 7-9 pm** in the Town Hall. This is a meeting mandated by the DEP to explain the public information process during the cleanup.

The Weston Board of Selectmen will hold another informational charrette meeting on **July 9 from 7-9 pm** in the Town Hall.



HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!