



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

March, 2014

No. 162

OPENING MESSAGE

KATTY CHACE

League of Women Voters of Weston

- President..... Katty Chace
781-891-1087
- Treasurer..... Barbara Flannery
781-237-4878
- Membership..... Lenore Lobel
781-893-3155
- Bulletin Editor Katherine Wolfthal
781-891-9549
- Observer Corps.....Robin Peakes Coutts
781-899-2020

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 by e-mail at
kate@weichi.com

This coming Saturday, March 15, at 11:00 we will host a Coffee Hour with Representative Alice Peisch and State Senator Mike Barrett at the library. They will share with us their priorities for the current legislative session, and there will be plenty of time for a good exchange of ideas. Please join us with your questions and concerns.

Town Caucus took place on Monday night at Town Hall. The only contest that developed was for Selectman, between Michael Harrity and Isabella Jancourtz, both of whom garnered enough support at the Caucus to be designated Caucus nominees. We have scheduled Candidates' Night on Wednesday, April 30 at the Amy Potter Center at the Middle School (or possibly the Media Center at the High School, depending on room availability). A more detailed report on the Caucus can be found on page 5 of this Bulletin.

The Massachusetts League's Day on the Hill will take place in Gardner Auditorium at the State House on Wednesday, March 26 from 10am - noon, with registration at 9:30. State Auditor Suzanne Bump and Lowell Senator Eileen Donaghue will be the keynote speakers, addressing Advocacy: Beacon Hill and Beyond, and the League's legislative agenda for the year will be unveiled. If you would be interested in carpooling into Boston, please let me know.

The 6th Annual Civics Bee between Weston, Wayland, and Sudbury will take place on Sunday, March 30, from 2-4 pm at the Curtis Middle School in Sudbury. We have put together a dynamite team with School Committee member Rick Manley, Weston resident and Sudbury School Superintendent Bella Wong, Judge Dennis Saylor, High School students Laura Greenberg, Melanie Spencer and Lilly Mathers, and a contingent of Middle School students, yet to be named. A gorgeous eagle trophy is the prize to be won, along with bragging rights. Please come to support the home team!

An intrepid group of 5 gathered tonight at Katherine Wolfthal's house to try to answer the consensus questions posed by the National League's Agriculture Study. Due to the complexity of the topic and the short time we had to prepare, we narrowed the questions down from the 11 originally presented to a more manageable 4, mostly dealing with government farm subsidies and food labeling. Our answers will be submitted to the Weston League board, then sent to

Washington to be compiled with others from all over the country. The final results will be presented at the National Convention in Dallas in June.

On Saturday, April 26, we will hold a coffee hour at the library to discuss the proposal for a new police station, and other timely articles that will appear on the warrant for the May 12 Town Meeting.

CALENDAR MARCH - MAY 2014

March 15, Saturday 11:00 am – 12:00 Community Room, Weston Public Library	LWVW Coffee Hour with Rep. Alice Peisch and Sen. Mike Barrett
March 26, Wednesday 10:00 am, Gardner Auditorium, State House, Boston	LWVMA Day on the Hill
March 30, Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm, Curtis Middle School 22 Pratt's Mill Rd, Sudbury	6th Annual Civics Bee
April 14 Tuesday 9:15 am, 3 Winter Street (Barbara Fullerton, 781-893-7440)	LWVW Board Meeting All members welcome
April 26, Saturday 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 Community Room, Weston Town Library	LWVW Coffee Hour Proposed new Police Station and other Town Meeting Articles
April 30, Wednesday 7:30 p.m., Location TBD	Candidates' Night
May 10, Saturday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm, Weston Town Hall	Town Election
May 12, Monday 7:30 pm, Weston High School Auditorium	Town 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 Elizabeth Warren
2400 JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street
Boston, MA 02203
(617) 565-3170

317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4543
Contact:

www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email_senator

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
1 Bowdoin Square, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
617-565-8519

218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2742

www.markey.senate.gov/contact.cfm

U.S. Representative 5th District

The Honorable Katherine Clark
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-2105
(202) 225-2836
<http://katherineclark.house.gov/>

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 3rd Middlesex District

The Honorable Michael J. Barrett
(617) 722-1572
State House, Room 213A
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov

State Representative 14th Norfolk District

The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch
(617) 722-2070
State House, Room 473G
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: alice.peisch@mahouse.gov

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Kathleen Rousseau

The March meeting was held at the home of Barbara Flannery.

Treasurer's Report: We have \$120 in new dues and \$79 in bulletin ads. Payments were paid to the LWVUS and LWVM.

Coffee Hour: March 15 with Peisch and Barrett at the library at 11:00 a.m.

Student video contest posters have been put up in the High School by Laura. She will help with the voter registration on April 8.

Agriculture Study - Diana Chaplin will cover food labeling and Kathleen may cover commodity supports. The study will be discussed on March 11 at Katherine Wolfthal's at 7:30.

Our High School student contestants for the Civics Bee will be: Laura Greenberg, Melanie Spencer, and Lilly Mathers.

Candidate's Night will be on April 30 at either the Middle School or High School.

There is no news on membership. Members may ask to have a friend added to the mailing list as a complimentary member for the rest of the year.

We discussed the affordable housing project by the old water department.

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DIVERSITY DISCUSSION

Laura Greenberg

In an early morning meeting at Weston High School on Thursday, February 13, the topic of diversity within our community was discussed along with a story entitled “The Right Environment,” from Steve L. Robbins’s *What If* book of short stories. This story describes a young mother who wants to make the pond outside her house diverse by introducing the very elusive rainbow trout along with bass and other kinds of pan fish. The determined and energetic young mother calls up the local fish store to inquire about the possibility of getting rainbow trout. The owner of the store is hesitant and warns her that the conditions of the pond need to be altered in order to maintain a good environment for these new fish. The mother however does not seem to listen, and instead of first making the environment suitable for the new fish she puts them in and hopes they will simply adapt. The fish end up dying

out and she loses her dream pond, but she does gain knowledge of a valuable lesson. She learns that “people are much the same as rainbow trout when it comes to their environment” and if one “puts a lot of stress on people we don’t develop an environment for them in which they can survive and thrive.” This concept can be applied to many things. What we discussed in particular is how our school is able to allow all kinds of students to thrive. Whether it is new kids, a racial or a religious minority, we decided that Weston High does a pretty good job helping kids assimilate to their new environment. With after-school activities such as sports or plays, students can find new friends who might share a common hobby or interest. However there is always more that can be done to help people better adapt to their environment, and we are continuing to brainstorm ideas.

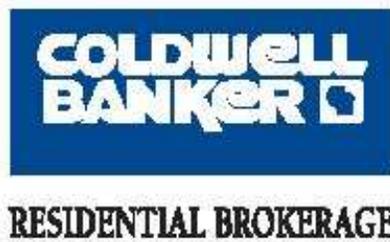
TOWN CAUCUS

Katty Chace

The Town Caucus on Monday night nominated the following candidates, with the only contested seat being for Selectman: Town Moderator - Tom Crane, Selectman - Michael Harity and Isabella Jancourtz, Assessor for a 3-year term - Tamilyn Levin, Assessor for a 2-year term - Alan Orth, School Committee member - Danielle Black, Recreation Commissioners - Elly Pendergast and Rick Hall, Planning Board - Al Aydelott, Library Trustees

- Joe Mullin and Julie Panagakos, Board of Health - David Komintz, Measurers of Lumber - Robin Peakes Coutts, Jim Barry and Cameron Peters, and Commissioner of Trust Funds - Charles (Mac) Ganson. All of the nominees are incumbents, except for Isabella Jancourtz and Rick Hall, who had been on the Recreation Commission before taking some time off to build his house.

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**"TO FRACK OR NOT TO FRACK:
THE SHALE GAS REVOLUTION AND ITS DISCONTENTS"**

Tack Chace

On March 4, 2014 @ 7:30 p.m., at the First Parish Church in Wayland, the Walden Forum presented Henry D. (Jake) Jacoby, Professor of Management, Emeritus in the MIT Sloan School of Management, Educator, Author and Researcher. He gave a 90-minute presentation, followed by a Q+A period.

Hydraulic fracturing: a process in which fractures in rocks below the earth's surface are opened and widened by injecting chemicals and liquids at high pressure: used especially to extract natural gas or oil.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hydraulic+fracturing>.

Jake's presentation focused on fracking for natural gas.

We are a petroleum-based society and we are in the fracking business.

Fracking is here: (He pointed out that the title of this talk is a misnomer) 35,000 wells have been drilled since 2005 in 28 states.

2005-2012 North America's (U.S.'s ?) gas resources have increased 130%

Where to frack:

In “source rock,” where petroleum originates. In North America these are called “shale plays.” They are all over North America. We know where it is.

How to frack:

- Drill 1.5-4.5 kilometers deep and then 1-3 kilometers horizontally.
- Blast/explode in spots along the horizontal bore to fracture the shale.
- Force water (H₂O) and some chemicals down the well at high pressure to open those fractures. (About 4-5 million gallons of H₂O, or 4-5 Olympic pools worth, per well.)
- Push sand down the well to keep the fractures open.
- Flowback: 40%-60% of the H₂O returns, with pollutants from both the chemicals sent down the well and the natural pollutants around the bore, like metals in the soil, etc.

Positive effects of fracking:

Natural gas costs less than oil. This reduces the cost of heating with gas and of using gas to run factories and generate electricity. This lowers the cost of goods made in the U.S. Some companies are bringing some manufacturing facilities back to the U.S. because of this lower cost. Both fracking and the natural gas production provide a stimulus to the economy through jobs. The natural gas has displaced a lot of coal and some oil. To get the same number of BTUs (measure of a unit of energy), burning coal generates more CO₂ than burning oil. Burning oil generates more CO₂ than burning natural gas.

Fracking has also produced a revolution in oil production. Texas has had a major expansion since 2008. North Dakota now produces more oil that

the North Sea, about 1 million barrels/day. This increase in oil production replaced the oil lost from Libya production, etc., that we used to import.

There is a 3-part conflict:

- Industry – The oil and gas industry wants to produce and sell oil and natural gas. They want to make and sell petrochemicals. Industries want to use the inexpensive fuel.
- Environmental concerns – How is this harming our environment?
- Landowners – Communities and individuals want the revenue from oil and natural gas found on their land.

He pointed out that a concern not addressed in his presentation is that moving natural gas and oil is a big deal. It is moved by truck, rail, and ship (as Liquefied Natural Gas), and by pipeline. Who is responsible for regulating it? (He noted that the Keystone Pipeline issue is often presented incorrectly. Canada has developed and will continue to develop its Alberta sands shale oil resources. The question for the U.S. should be, “What is the safest way to transport it?”)

Water and Air Pollution

Issue	Regulator
• Management of H ₂ O returns	• State and local governments
• Disclosure of fracking chemicals	• State
• On-site oil spills	• Clean-Water Act; state implementation
• Wastewater disposal	• State programs

(In some localities this is now pumped into the sewer systems, which have no ability to remove metals and some chemicals, or even into local streams.)

- Ground-water contamination
- Air pollution
- State programs, not the Safe-Drinking-Water Act
- Clean Air Act; State implementation

Texas and Oklahoma are the only states that have a good regulatory infrastructure.

Community Disruption

Local environment:

- Road traffic
- Noise
- Boomtowns

Local economy:

- Royalties
- State and local tax revenue

Determining if the gas boom is good for the climate is complicated:

Greenhouse gases, especially CO₂, increase versus the lower CO₂ caused by the recession.

The shift to natural gas plants from coal plants lowers the CO₂ per BTU.

Natural gas leakage is a serious issue. CO (=natural gas=methane) has an atmospheric effect 25x that of CO₂. There are leaks during the flowback of the fracking H₂O. Some of that escapes, some is burned off with flares, and some is directed into green completion. (There is a system-wide problem with methane leakage. Think of the trucks you see repairing gas leaks.)

Natural gas is a bridge to the future, but...

- Cheap gas pulls the legs out from the renewable resources.
- Investing in natural gas fracking uses venture capital and industry resources that could be used for other purposes.

Developments to watch

- State and local laws and regulations.
- Fugitive methane
- Water regulation
- Expert reserves – How much is there? (or was it Exporting resources?)
- LNG (liquefied natural gas) - What's the market? How much should/will we export? What's a good national policy?

Jake provided a list of resources:

The Future of Natural Gas, An Interdisciplinary MIT Study (2011)

<https://mitei.mit.edu/publications/reports-studies/future-natural-gas>

Union of Concerned Scientists, 2013: Toward an Evidence-Based Fracking Debate

<http://www.ucsusa.org/center-for-science-and-democracy/toward-an-evidence-based-fracking-debate.html>

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DIRE SITUATION AFFECTING MONARCHS AND BEES.

Part 1. The monarchs.

Barbara Fullerton

Population loss of two of our more revered insects, namely monarch butterflies and bees, has recently been in the news, and we have followed these stories in the LWV Bulletin for the last year or two.

Did you see any monarch butterflies in your yard last summer? Their numbers have dropped so low, that sightings at least in our wider Boston area were much less common than ever before.

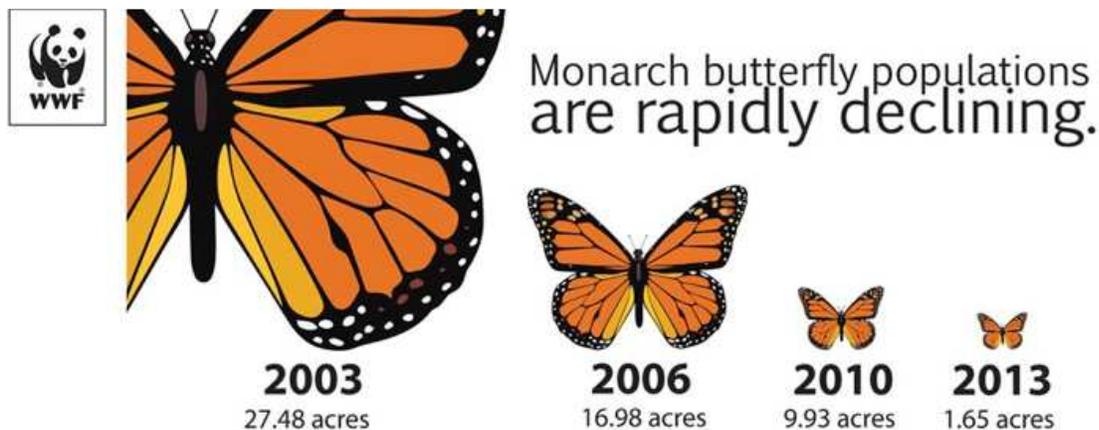
To briefly review the life cycle of the monarch, the adults emerge from hibernation in the mountains of central Mexico, to mate and return north to the eastern and middle US, looking for milkweed plants on which to lay their eggs. The eggs hatch into caterpillars, which eat the milkweed and attach to it to form a chrysalis. The 1st generation monarch emerges after about 10 days and flies off

to lay eggs for the 2nd generation monarchs, which are born in May and June. The 3rd generation will be born in July and August. The first through third generation monarchs only live 2-6 weeks before laying their eggs.

Rather than dying, the 4th generation monarchs migrate south to Mexico and hibernate in the mountain forests.

The population of monarch butterflies has been steadily decreasing over the 20 year period during which their numbers have been recorded. The total area covered by hibernating monarchs in 1994-95, in the first year measured, was 19.7 acres.

The highest level was about 52 acres in 1996-97. Since then the numbers have decreased to 7 acres two years ago, 3 acres last year, and only 1.65 acres this winter.



Butterfly population is relative to number of acres inhabited during seasonal hibernation.

Why are the monarchs disappearing?

The three main reasons given have been deforestation, weather and industrial use of pesticides in the Midwestern US. Deforestation

from illegal logging has reduced the forest cover where the butterflies overwinter. These areas are also at a high elevation where winter temperatures can dip below freezing; the monarchs can survive,

but not if they get wet. The worst recorded storm hit the mountain area in 2002 and about 75% of the population was killed by rain, snow, and freezing.

Two years ago Texas experienced a massive drought, reducing the wildflower nectar sources along the migration route. Monarchs depend on eating wildflower nectar along the route in order to store energy to survive the Mexican winter. When the monarchs began to move north in the spring of 2013, they were also delayed in reaching their usual northern breeding territory by an extended cold front. Climate change may be a factor in changing the weather patterns to make it difficult for the monarchs to recover to their previous levels.

The third factor seriously affecting the monarchs is the widespread and increasing use of the herbicide Roundup in the Midwest. Roundup, or glyphosate, is a systemic herbicide used to kill weeds, especially broadleaf weeds and grasses that compete with commercial crops. Monsanto developed Roundup and then introduced genetically engineered "Roundup ready" crops that were resistant to the herbicide. In that way the farmer can spray the herbicide, killing the weeds and leaving the crop intact. Current glyphosate resistant crops include soy, corn, canola, alfalfa, and cotton.

The Roundup ready crops are planted in the grassland ecosystems of the US where monarch butterflies have historically done most of their breeding on the milkweed plants growing along with the crops. The herbicide kills all emergent seedlings as well as the perennial plants where it is sprayed. Research has estimated that 60% of the 108 species of milkweed have been eliminated in the Midwest farmlands.

Besides killing the milkweed plants, the herbicide also kills the large variety of wildflowers that are an important source of nectar for the adult monarchs.

This leads to the conclusion that other nectar-gathering insects must also be affected by the loss of wildflowers, although the monarchs may be more easily quantifiable. Bees come to mind, since we know that they are also in decline. Some of the reasons for their difficulties may be separate from those of the monarchs, but they may also overlap.

What can people do to help?

The web site Monarch Watch suggests several steps that can be taken.

One is to create as many monarch "waystations", or habitats, as possible, where monarch-friendly plants, such as milkweed and other wildflowers are planted. These could be in home gardens, schools, parks, and along roadsides.

The most efficient regions in which to improve the monarch habitats would be along the migration route, from Mexico into Texas and the southern and middle states.

The roadside areas could be much more wildlife-friendly than they are. In many areas road crews keep the grasses cut short and discourage native wildflowers that could be a source of nectar. Knowledgeable citizens would need to interact with their local town and regional maintenance departments in order to improve the situation for wildlife.

Sources:

Plummer, Brad. Monarch butterflies keep disappearing. Here's why. Jan. 29, 2013.

Washingtonpost.com

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/01/29/the-monarch-butterfly-population-just-hit-a-record-low-heres-why/>

<http://www.monarchwatch.org>

The King of Butterflies- the Monarch Butterfly

<http://www.monarch-butterfly.com>

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League of Women Voters of Weston

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2013-2014

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 _____

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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 to Lenore Lobel, 31 Love Lane, 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.