



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

November, 2012

No. 149

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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15 Conant Road, Weston MA 02493

VOTER INFORMATION

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Submit articles
to Katherine Wolfthal by e-mail at
kate@weichi.com

The noise and bustle of the presidential election has finally subsided, and, although I generally find election years exciting, I must say that this year it felt exhausting. The Weston League was very active during the months of lead-up to November 6. We held a Coffee Hour at the library in late October to provide an opportunity for discussion of the four ballot questions. Although the attendance was modest, the questions were intriguing enough to warrant the effort. The Coffee Hour was followed on October 30 by a forum co-sponsored with the Council on Aging at the Community Center, to discuss the complexities of Question 2, the *Death with Dignity* proposition. The panel made a concerted effort to use the forum to explain the origin and process of the proposal, with no attempt to influence the audience on one side or the other. We were rewarded with a large audience of about 100 people, and received many compliments and thanks for the presentation. Our co-operative effort with another Weston board was very gratifying, and I would look forward to another joint effort in the future.

We also offered rides to the polls for voters who couldn't drive themselves through the Council on Aging newsletter, and were surprised to have requests from only three people, many fewer than in past years. I think that may have been due to more absentee voting than in the past. We have two High School volunteers, who have undertaken as their community service commitment to give 20 hours of volunteer help to the League this year, and had expected to employ their help to drive voters to the polls, but we will now find other ways to use their enthusiasm.

We have scheduled our next Coffee Hour in early February to feature our newly elected State Senator, Mike Barrett. We are pleased to give Weston residents a chance to meet Mike and ask him questions.

Our 5th Annual Civics Bee will be back in Weston on the afternoon of Sunday, March 3, in the Great Room of the Community Center. Teams of nine adults, High School students and Middle School students will once again be competing against teams from Wayland and Sudbury to answer questions about the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and American history.

Please take this opportunity to renew your membership, using the membership form you can find elsewhere in this Bulletin. We need your continued support to keep the League strong and effective.

**CALENDAR
NOVEMBER 2012 – FEBRUARY 2013**

November 22, Thursday..... HAPPY THANKSGIVING

November 26, Monday.....Special Town Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Weston High School Auditorium

December 11, Tuesday..... LWVW Board Meeting
9:15 a.m. **All members welcome!**
Kathy Rousseau, 56 Bogle St.
(781-235-6559)

December 25, Tuesday..... CHRISTMAS

January 12-13, 2013, Saturday and Sunday.....Weston 300
Commemoration and
Winterfest

February 9, 2013, Saturday.....LWVW Coffee Hour
11:00-A.M. – 12:00 Noon **State Senator Mike Barrett**
Community Room, Weston Public Library

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: susan.fargo@masenate.gov
Home: (781) 259-9623

State Representative 14th Norfolk District

The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch
(617) 722-2070
(781) 237-4719
State House, Room 473G
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: alice.peisch@state.ma.us

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Barbara Fullerton

The November meeting was held on November 13 at the home of Lenore Lobel. Members present were Robin Coutts, Barbara Flannery, Katherine Wolfthal, Lenore Lobel, Kathie Strehle, Barbara Fullerton, Diana Chaplin, David Hutcheson, and Katty Chace presiding.

The Death with Dignity forum was held Oct. 30 at the Council on Aging, with about 100 people in attendance. It has been broadcast since then on the Weston TV channel.

Treasurer's report: Kathie Strehle needs some information from Rochelle about memberships that have been paid and the number of checks that have been sent, so that she can estimate the current status of our income. Lenore will call Rochelle and volunteer to assist with membership duties. Kathie did send in the IRS reports and we now have the 501-C4 certification for a nonprofit group. Contributions to the LWV are not tax deductible, since we do lobbying. We do have many educational activities; if we had a separate account for those educational activities, contributions for those would be tax deductible.

Voter Services: Katty reported no requests ahead of time for rides to the polls, but one couple called at the last minute and was connected to a driver.

Coffee Hour: The coffee hour on Oct 27 to discuss the ballot questions was very lightly attended.

We should plan on a coffee hour for Mike Barrett in January or February. The first weekend in February may be the best date, and Katty may also invite Alice Peisch to come.

Lenore reported that Mike Barrett is in debt after the election, and a fundraising event is being held on Nov. 17 in Concord.

The Special Town Meeting will be held on Monday, Nov. 26 to decide important permitting issues connected with the planning and zoning boards.

High school volunteers: Two students volunteering to help the LWV attended the Death with Dignity forum and will write an article about the event. They will be helping for the remainder of the second semester.

Civics Bee: Katty is not yet sure of the final date for the event. She checked into the availability of the Amy Potter Center and the Weston Community Center. Doug McDougall will give us a discount on the fee for rental of the space. Most people thought that the Amy Potter Center would be a preferable location.

Weston 300: Dave Hutcheson distributed a page of questions for the Weston 300 event. Everyone should take the list home to formulate any questions or suggestions for final use. Robin Coutts said that the town committee is considering the idea of a special Weston 300 stamp that would be designed and available through the post office.

The first celebration of the 300th will be on Sat., Jan. 12, 2013, with a variety of activities in Weston center. The town hall will be decorated for a special reception to which Governor Patrick will be invited.

Merchandise will be sold, including hats, mugs, tote bags, and other items at the transfer station, the high school, and the Women's Community League. Additional information is available on the town web site.

Robin discovered that the Gift Gallery in Weston needs more business. Possibly we could help them with an ad in the Bulletin, and people could think about shopping there more often.

Bulletin: Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the bulletin will be delayed until Nov. 26.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held Tues., Dec. 11 at Kathy Rousseau's on Bogle St.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

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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ELECTION RESULTS 2012

	Weston Results	Massachusetts Results	National Results
PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT			
Johnson and Gray (Libertarian)	45		
Obama and Biden (Democratic)	3390	61%	50.4% (332 Electoral Votes)
Romney and Ryan (Republican)	3159	38%	48.1% (206 Electoral Votes)
Stein and Honkala (Green/Rainbow)	27		
SENATOR IN CONGRESS			
Scott Brown	3626	46%	
Elizabeth Warren	2989	54%	
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS			
Edward Markey	3820		
Tom Tierney	2509		
SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT			
Michael Barrett	3135		
Sandi Martinez	2811		
QUESTION 1: RIGHT TO REPAIR			
Yes	5070	86%	
No	802	14%	
QUESTION 2: DEATH WITH DIGNITY			
Yes	3898	49%	
No	2492	51%	
QUESTION 3: MEDICAL MARIJUANA			
Yes	4007	63%	
No	2365	37%	
QUESTION 4: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (distinction between corporations and individuals)			
Yes	4027		
No	1390		

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The pages that follow constitute Part II of a guide to Cons and Scams drawn up by the Weston Police Department and handed out at a special program given at the Council on Aging. Part II will be included in next month's Bulletin.



WESTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
180 Boston Post Road by-pass
Weston, Ma. 02493
781-786-6201 (f) 781-786-6219

An Introduction To **"CONS, SCAMS AND SCHEMES"**

Part II

IMPOSTER BURGLARS

Jon Grow

The National Association of Bunco Investigators, Inc. (NABI)

Suspects posing as legitimate workers approach elderly homeowners at their residences with the intent of gaining entry under a seemingly legitimate ruse. The real purpose is to divert the homeowner while accomplices search for currency and jewelry.

Some of the more frequently used ploys, by the suspects, are claims to be from the local electric company, water department, cable company, roofing, paving, or other building trade workers, city inspectors, surveyors, tree trimmers, or government personnel from a Social Service Agency.

In some instances, women and children accompany male suspects and participate in the diversion of the homeowner. The suspects may offer a rebate by giving the victim a \$100 bill with a request for change. This allows the suspect(s) to determine where the victim keeps currency in the house.

The victim is distracted either inside the house, i.e. turning a light switch on and off, knocking on water pipes, etc.; or outside, i.e. to show the victim damage outside of the home, areas needing repair, determining property lines, etc. Once the victim is distracted, the unseen suspects enter the home and remove currency and jewelry. In some cases, the suspects have gone as far as to remove safes from the homes.

PHONE SCAM REQUESTING BAIL MONEY FOR A RELATIVE



The suspect(s) contacted an 86 y/o female victim by phone, purporting to be her grandson. The suspect stated that he was detained by law enforcement on the border of New York State and Canada, and needed "bail" money. The suspect proceeded to request that the victim purchase Money Pack cards from a local retail store in the amount of \$2,000, and supplied a phone number that she should call to provide the card numbers. The victim followed the suspect's instructions,

contacted the phone number, and spoke with another suspect who identified himself as a (generic) law enforcement officer. The victim had provided the card numbers to the suspects prior to calling her actual grandson to verify that he was not involved in this incident. As a result, the suspects obtained the funds from the Money Pack cards.

THE GRANDPARENT SCAM

Scammers will place a call to an older person and will say something along the lines of: “Hi Grandma, do you know who this is?” When the unsuspecting grandparent guesses the name of the grandchild the scammer most sounds like, the scammer has established a fake identity without having done any background research. Once “in,” the fake grandchild will usually ask for money to solve some unexpected financial problem (overdue rent, payment for car repairs, etc.), to be paid via Western Union or Money Gram, which don’t always require identification to collect. At the same time, the scam artist will beg the grandparent “please don’t tell my parents, they would kill me.” While the sums from such a scam are likely to be in the hundreds, the very fact that no research is needed makes this a scam that can be perpetrated over and over at very little cost to the scammer.

SWEEPSTAKES SCAMS IMPERSONATING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS



Some con artists use the lure of a [sweepstakes](#) to convince consumers to send in money to claim a “prize” they’ve supposedly won. They tell consumers that the only thing that separates them from their “winnings” is a fee to cover the taxes or service charges. But as all too many consumers know, the winnings as described never materialize.

In a new spin on the age-old sweepstakes scam, crooks are getting bolder, using names of government agencies and legitimate phone numbers that mask where they’re calling from. Claiming to represent the National Consumer Protection Agency, the non-existent National Sweepstakes Bureau, and even the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), they say that the delivery of the sweepstakes prize is being supervised by the supposed government agency. They’re using Internet technology to make it appear that they’re calling from Washington, DC or the consumer’s own area code.

These scammers then convince consumers to wire money to a foreign country — they usually suggest using a commercial money transfer company like Western Union to wire the money — to an agent of “Lloyd’s of London” or some other well-known [insurance company](#) to “insure” delivery of the “prize.” In fact, no insurance company is involved; con artists take the money and disappear.

- Don’t pay to collect sweepstakes winnings. If you have to pay to collect your winnings, you haven’t won anything. Legitimate sweepstakes don’t require you to pay “insurance,” “taxes” or “shipping and handling charges” to collect [your prize](#).
- Hold on to your money. Scammers pressure people to wire money through commercial [money transfer](#) companies like Western Union because wiring money is the same as sending cash. If you discover you’ve been scammed, the money’s gone, and there’s

very little chance of recovery. Likewise, resist any push to send a check or money order by overnight delivery or courier. Con artists recommend these services so they can get to your money before you realize you've been cheated.

- Look-alikes aren't the real thing. It's illegal for any promoter to lie about an affiliation with — or an endorsement by — a government agency or any other well-known organization. Disreputable companies sometimes use a variation of an official or nationally recognized name to try to confuse you and give you confidence in their offers. [Insurance companies](#), including Lloyd's, do not insure delivery of sweepstakes winnings.
- Phone numbers can be deceiving. Some con artists use Internet technology to call you. It allows them to disguise their area code: although it may look like they're calling from Washington, DC or your local area, they could be calling from anywhere in the world.

Warning to individuals responding to these scams

People who respond to these sweepstake offers, often find themselves inundated with similar type offers and telemarketer calls. **Once you respond**, or the minute you show interest, your name goes on a "sucker list" that is sold to other con artists from around the world.

SWEETHEART SWINDLE SCAM



We have investigated numerous cases in Weston on behalf of family members. Victims rarely cooperate and deny they are being scammed.

This is a con game normally perpetrated by transient criminals, targeting mostly elderly widowed or single males/females.

The con artists will have a "[chance meeting](#)" with the intended victim on the street; in a supermarket; bank; or other public areas frequented by the elderly. Conversations will ensue and over a period of time the con artist will engage the victim in a bogus romantic relationship. The con artist may indicate that they are in dire financial circumstances and tell the victim they are waiting on a large insurance/law suit settlement. The con artist may ask for a loan for a sewing business (either for material or machinery) or they may ask for a loan for an expensive medical procedure and promise to pay the loan back when they get the money from the settlement. This relationship may lead to professions of love and even promises of marriage.

As the relationship progresses, the con artist may ultimately induce the victim into signing a Power of Attorney form. This opens up the opportunity for the con artist or an associate to completely drain all the financial assets of the victim. The con artist may also induce the victim to change an existing will, having them named as the major heir. In some of these cases, the con artists are successfully able to get the victims to sign over the ownership of their homes. Once achieved, the con artist immediately resells the home and pockets the proceeds.

Once the con artist has depleted all of the victim's finances, they may obtain a life insurance policy on the victim, naming himself or herself or an associate as beneficiary. The sweetheart scam will continue until either the money runs out, the victim dies, or fear that the police might become involved.

Very rarely will the victim call the police. Usually it's the victim's family that eventually discovers the scam and reports it against the victim's wishes. When confronted by police, the victim may or may not remember every incident in which he or she has been scammed out money. The victim may also be reluctant to prosecute, because he or she's in love, scared, or embarrassed. Prosecution of these types of cases is sometimes difficult, due to either the victim's reluctance to assist or because of their advanced age, their memory is so poor that they tend to make bad witnesses.

FORTUNE-TELLING FRAUD



This scam is rarely reported, but occurs more often than people believe.

A crime designed to financially exploit a victim under the guise of providing assistance. It involves gaining the victim's complete trust and, then through carefully managed manipulation, convincing the victim to give valuables to the suspect(s).

Victims of these cases are of any age and background and share a common trait of seeking help in solving a problem in their life. Problems generally fall into three major categories: Love, Money and Health. The offense starts off innocently with a 'reading' for a nominal fee. The suspect may use a method and props such as: Religious icons, Tarot Cards, Crystal Ball, Palm Reading, Tea Leaves Reading, Coffee Grind Reading, Sand Reading, ESP Psychic Reading, and Dice etc.

During the reading, the reader elicits information from the victim, using both verbal and non-verbal clues, and then repeats it back in such a way as to reinforce the fact that the reader does, in fact, have certain powers. In subsequent sessions, the victim is most often convinced that their 'problem' is the result of a curse that has been placed on them or their family. The reader convinces the victim that through spiritual or psychic powers she/he alone is able to remove this curse.

To prove that a curse exists, many different ploys are used. The reader performs a ritual, (using common magic tricks) which is designed to convince the victim that the evil of the curse has manifested itself in the item. For instance, a devil's head that appears when an egg is broken, needles that come out of a tomato, water that turns red, a live chicken dies, a small snake or worm appears to come out of an item or the victim's body. The reader convinces the victim that she/he 'has the gift' and can remove the curse. The curse removal sometimes entails the destruction of the cause of the curse, which invariably is money or jewelry. In some cases the suspect takes the valuables, with a promise to return them, to have them blessed or prayed over.

In other cases, the reader convinces the victims that the valuables must be destroyed or buried with an accompanying ritual to remove the curse. The curse removal can be carried out in one short operation or more generally is carried out over a period of months and sometimes years, taking all of the victim's liquid assets. When these assets are used up, some offenses continue by having the victim obtain more money through the use of their credit.

A long-term offense results in the total psychological manipulation of the victim, which isolates them from any independent support from family or friends and keeps them vulnerable to any suggestions given by the reader

WESTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Quick Reference Guide to Credit Card Fraud and Identity Theft – If You Become a Victim

1.) CONTACT THE THREE MAJOR CREDIT BUREAUS to place a fraud alert and “victim statement” on your credit report. Order a copy of your report from each bureau and review for any inaccuracies.

EQUIFAX

To order a report call
800-685-1111

To place a fraud alert
888-766-0008

EXPERIAN

To order a report call
888-397-3742

To place a fraud alert
888-397-3742

TRANSUNION

To order a report call
877-322-8228

To place a fraud alert
800-680-7289

OR YOU MAY GO ONLINE AT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES

www.equifax.com

www.experian.com

www.transunion.com

2.) REVIEW YOUR CREDIT REPORTS and close any accounts you believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. (Continue to review your credit reports every six months)

3.) CHANGE P.I.N. numbers and passwords on existing accounts.

4.) CONTEST all fraudulent accounts with the effected financial institution / business in writing and follow up by sending them the Federal Trade Commission's identity theft affidavit. This form is available on their website at: www.ftc.gov/idtheft

5.) FILE A POLICE REPORT AND GET A COPY. The police report should identify all fraudulent activity. Under the “Police Report Initiative” the credit bureaus will accept a copy of the police report to block any fraudulant account information from appearing on your credit report.

6.) CONTACT THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION at 877-438-4338 or online at www.ftc.gov/idtheft They will enter your complaint information into the National Identity Theft database and provide victim assistance and consumer education material. Their website will also provide additional information about your rights as a victim and further explain all the steps you will need to take to repair your good name.

*Repairing your credit may be a time-consuming and frustrating undertaking. Keep a detailed log of every step you take. These records will be useful as you contest any fraudulent activity and for law enforcement, if any investigation is conducted.

For additional help and information on this and other consumer based problems, log onto the Massachusetts Attorney Generals website at www.mass.gov/ago and type “Identity Theft” into the search bar.

DEATH WITH DIGNITY SYMPOSIUM

Alex Keane

In advance of Election Day, the Weston League of Women Voters, the Council on Aging, and Weston Community Health Coalition sponsored a “Death With Dignity Symposium” on October 30 to discuss and review Question 2 on the general election ballot in the state of Massachusetts. Held at the Weston Community Center, the event was intended to inform voters and concerned citizens about the details and implications of Question 2.

Question 2, known commonly as the Death With Dignity Referendum, would, if passed, allow select patients to request prescription of lethal drugs to self-administer. Patients must have the capacity to make health care decisions and have been determined by a physician to have a terminal illness that will cause death within six months.

The symposium was moderated by Mitch Finnegan, the Weston Public Schools’ wellness director and featured panelists Jane Brigham, interfaith chaplain; Katherine Chace, president of Weston League of Women Voters; and James Vernon, MD, surgeon at Newton-Wellesley Hospital.

After a brief welcome and introduction by Mitch Finnegan, Katherine Chace began explaining the law, providing basic background information to the audience of close to 100. Addressing common concerns regarding the referendum, Chace explained the multitude of fail-safes built into the law to ensure that the patient’s death is truly voluntary. While many European nations have legalized assisted suicide, the American Medical Association and the Massachusetts Medical Society strongly oppose the process.

James Vernon, the next speaker, explained the medical side of the process and the legislation with an emphasis on the security built into the referendum. Vernon explained that a consulting physician must verify the patient’s attending physician’s conclusions. The attending physician’s responsibilities range from ensuring that the patient is a legal resident of Massachusetts to confirming the patient’s psychiatric stability. The objective is to certify that all appropriate steps are carried out properly and that the humanity and appropriateness of the process are upheld.

Jane Brigham, the final speaker, put the legislation into context. After explaining existing patient requests – from “Do Not Resuscitate” to “Do Not Hospitalize” – Brigham went on to elaborate on the patient’s role. Question 2, Brigham stated, “is a request, not a directive,” so the physician doesn’t have to agree to supply the lethal dose if he or she deems the patient unfit. But once given medication, the decision and action is “entirely within the person’s hand.”

The forty-minute panelist review of the referendum was followed by an interactive audience question-and-answer session during which misconceptions were explained and various viewpoints were brought to light.

Though the referendum was not passed on November 6 (it was defeated 51%-49%), it is still a pressing concern in the minds of many citizens, and will likely be raised again.

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League of Women Voters of Weston

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2012-2013

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.