



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

January, 2009

No. 113

OPENING MESSAGE

Barbara Hill

The Dawn of a New Era

I am extraordinarily proud to be able to pen this special Opening Message for the January League of Women Voters of Weston bulletin. Katherine Wolfthal, our tireless and generous editor was willing to extend the deadline for me, so that I could cover the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, but I thought that some of our readers might have caught that without my reporting on it directly. However, Republican or Democrat; black or white, young or old, red or blue, I hope you will agree with me that this is an historic moment in our country's history. (Disclosure; I am cribbing from both 43 and 44, not in that order!)

It is particularly exciting that some of our League members are in Washington DC for this event, and many others are watching – with their parents, with their friends and with their children as our country, facing more serious and more numerous crises than at any time in the past two generations, watches yet another peaceful transition of power. I hope that in next month's League Bulletin, we will have some small excerpts from eye-witness experiences in Washington – on the mall, walking along the streets, watching the procession, seeing the inauguration live, celebrating right in the heart of the capital.

Clearly the country is caught up in this celebratory time – notwithstanding the dire economic straits in which we find ourselves – notwithstanding the two wars that we are currently waging – notwithstanding the continuing violence in the Middle East - and notwithstanding the gas heat crisis across much of Eastern Europe. I was listening to National Public Radio's coverage of the Birmingham, Alabama civil rights foot soldiers (the oldest of whom is 84) who are taking a bus late Monday from Birmingham to Washington. (They didn't want to miss the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations on Monday morning.) They don't have tickets, but they want to be on this small spot of land where a long awaited milestone will occur. The Tuskegee

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Airmen were all invited, honored guests to the inauguration – a tribute long overdue. Millions of Americans, in Washington and across the nation will bear witness to the end of yet another barrier. In the words of our 44th President, we are on our way to creating “a more perfect union.”

For me, one of President Obama’s most impressive attributes is, without doubt, his ability to inspire so many disengaged American citizens to participate in the campaign, the election and the political life of America. This message of “Yes, we can,” is part of what the League of Women Voters is all about. Yes, we can – we can participate in the discussion of issues facing us; we can participate in our governance, and yes,

we can have a positive and important place at the table where decisions effecting our lives, our children and our communities are made. There are many among us who can identify precisely where they were when President Kennedy was shot, when man walked on the moon, when the Red Sox won the World Series after an 85 year draught. This transition, too, rises to the level of “Where were you when?” and, on Tuesday, January 20th, filled with great optimism (not immediate, but optimistic nonetheless), I will be grateful to be stand up and say, “I am proud to be an American.”

With pride and excitement, I wish you all the very best for the coming year – 2009!

CALENDAR

JANUARY – MARCH 2009

January 31, Saturday..... 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Community Room, Weston Public Library	LWW Coffee Hour Sen. Susan Fargo and Rep. Alice Peisch
February 3, Tuesday..... 9:15 A.M., 3 Winter St., Weston, MA (Barbara Fullerton, (781) 893-7440)	LWW Open Meeting
February 12, Thursday..... 7:30 P.M., 61 Beaver Rd. (Rochelle Nemrow, (781) 790-1138)	LWW Book Club: Michael Pollan, “The Omnivore’s Dilemma”
March 1, Sunday..... Wayland Town Building Hearing Room	Civics Bee – sponsored by Wayland, Weston, Sudbury
March 9, Monday..... 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Auditorium	Town Caucus
March 10, Tuesday..... 9:15 A.M., Location TBA	LWW Open Meeting

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Kathleen Rousseau

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)722-2080
(781)237-4719
State House, Room 26
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: rep.alicepeisch@hou.state.ma.us

The Board met at the home of Kathleen Rousseau.

There was a discussion of possible topics for future Saturday coffees.

The state has taken control of any new rail trails in our area. While there is enthusiasm to extend the trail through Weston, the state is very short of funds for such a project. The town may be asked to pay for the construction of the trail.

There was a long discussion of planning versus zoning issues when building in Weston. The planning board is thinking of requesting some changes to the regulations regarding the square-footage requirements for site plan approval.

We have a large number of members who have not renewed their memberships this year. If you are among them, we hope that you will remain a member of the League. You may hear from one of us in the near future. The state and national LWVs will be getting their per-member-payments soon, and they depend upon us for their activities.

Diana Chaplin has attended another planning meeting for the Civics Bee, to be held on March 1st.

Joe Mullin has offered to be a member of the adult team, and we are looking for the other two members of this team, plus alternates. U.S. history is taught in our schools in the 8th and 11th grades, so those are probably the classes from which the middle and high school teams will be drawn. There will be two coaching sessions before the contest.

The League Book Club (open to all) will meet on February 12 at Rochelle Nemrow's at 7:30 p.m.

We will be discussing *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan.

There was not a lot of news about the CPC. The board is looking for new members. There were discussions on treating wooly adelgid; the Conservation Commission is trying a new treatment on some stands of hemlocks. The

court has ruled that CPC funds can be used for the maintenance of recreational lands only if the lands were bought with CPC funds. This may be changed by legislation.

Katrina Committee - March 21 – Dedication of Community Center. Lenore Lobel, in particular, deserves a lot of praise for her continued work on this project.

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>

Coffee Hour

Our next Coffee Hour is scheduled for Saturday, January 31st at 11:00 am at the library Community Room. Representative Alice Peisch and Senator Susan Fargo will be joining us to share their observations on the events on Beacon Hill, especially as they affect the budget shortfall and the need to make cuts in the budget. They will also talk about their priorities for the upcoming legislative session. There will be plenty of time for questions from the rest of us, so please join us. We hope to see many of you there.

PEARLINGTON UPDATE

Lenore Zug Lobel

In November 2008 I joined nine women in Pearlinton, Mississippi to work on the community center. All the women were skilled carpenters from Charlottesville, VA. A number of them owned their own construction companies.

We all were volunteers, working under the direction of the Building Goodness Foundation, the non-profit entity overseeing the construction of the community center. We painted walls and window trim, prepped and polyurethaned doors

and cut and installed window trim. Everyone was patient while instructing the one unskilled volunteer on the trip...

A final work crew from the BGF is in Pearlington this week, painting the outside of the community center, building the handicap ramp and completing the installation of the screens on the porch. Hancock County will oversee the final detail work on the building and the grounds. At the end of January the State of Mississippi will reclaim the MEMA trailers which are presently being used as housing by many MS residents who

have not yet completed construction of their houses. I do not know where these residents will live. I do not know why the State is demanding the return of the MEMA trailers. In November I passed acres of unoccupied FEMA trailers as I drove from Hattiesburg, MS to Pearlington. Perhaps the unoccupied MEMA trailers will keep the FEMA trailers company.

In late March Sally Currier and I shall fly to Mississippi and attend the dedication of the community center on March 21st.



Pearlington Community Center Work Crew. Front row, right: Lenore Lobel

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

...People of Wayland, Sudbury and Weston, of all ages



You can become a better citizen, make your town proud and make our democracy stronger – all in one exciting new event. Students, teachers and other adults are invited to participate in the

Inter-town Civics Bee



Sponsored by the League of Women Voters
Sunday, March 1, 2009 • 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.
Wayland Town Building, Hearing Room

The Event: Town teams will compete to answer fundamental questions on civics, including the U.S. Constitution, the federal government, and American history. The team with the most correct answers will bring home the **League of Women Voters' Civics Trophy** for their town to hold during this year.

The Teams: Each town team will consist of 9 people: 3 middle school students, 3 high school students, and 3 adults who will compete against the other towns, one age group at a time. The players may reach out to other age groups on their team using a limited number of “lifelines.” Group coaching sessions and other ways to prepare for the event will be provided by the Leagues during January and February.

The Audience: The public is invited to be present – family, friends, legislators, everyone! We also anticipate that the event will be broadcast live on WayCAM with later re-broadcasts.

How might you participate?

You could be a player on a team.

You could help create questions or be one of the coaches for your town's team.

You could help with publicity or with hospitality.

You could contribute refreshments or serve them.

You could donate gifts for contestants.

You could donate the trophy or its engraving, or flowers or name cards for the event.

Interested? Contact one of the people listed below for more information or to offer to get involved.

Tell us by Feb. 1 if you want to participate.

Sudbury Contact: Bonnie Glass 978-460-1458 robertaglass@comcast.net	Wayland Contact Sandy Coy 508-653-6014 14 Hawthorne Rd., Wayland sandycoy@verizon.net	Weston Contact: Diana Chaplin 781-893-6288 diana@greatestate.com
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LOOKING FOR THE TROPHY!!

Mark your calendar and Save the Date: March 1st from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Wayland Town Building, the Weston Team will face off against the Wayland Team and the Sudbury Team for the honor of the first ever Metrowest Civics Bee tournament trophy. Each team will consist of nine team members – 3 adults, 3 high school students and 3 middle school students. Adults will face off against other adults, high schoolers against their peers and middle schools against their peers from the other towns.

Town teams will compete to answer fundamental questions on civics. Topics include questions relating to the U.S. Constitution, the federal government and American history. Weston's social studies and history curriculum covers US History in 8th grade and again in 11th grade, so we

are looking for students who will have a keen interest in US History as well as broad subject knowledge to join our team.

Joe Mullin and Barbara Hill have agreed to be two of the adults on the Weston Team. Cyana Chiltern and Hannah Hill have agreed to serve as High School team members. We are recruiting additional team members, alternates, coaches and volunteers, as well as hosts, helpers and refreshment-bringers. We hope this will be the start of a long tradition.

For more information, please look for the Civics Bee flyer elsewhere in this Bulletin. If you are willing to join our efforts, as team member, alternate, coach or volunteer, please contact Katty Chace at 781-891-1087, or Diana Chaplin at 781-893-6288.

NATIONAL TEACH-IN ON FEBRUARY 5

Come to the community room at the library at 7 PM for a webcast and panel discussion by elected officials commenting on the opportunities for presidential directives and environmental legislation during the first 100 days of Obama's presidency. Study the full plan at <http://www.climateactionproject.com/plan/>

HELP WANTED!

The Selectmen's Environmental Baseline Committee needs volunteers to help acquire data, particularly from residential and commercial sectors. The work consists of contacting people with access to data, and asking them to share what they have with us. Other projects, like estimating the average miles driven by cars owned by Weston residents, will also develop.

The committee next meets on Tues, Jan 20, at 7 pm in Town Hall.

OBSERVER CORPS

Jean Thurston



BOARD OF SELECTMEN - Jan. 6, 2009

1. Cultural Council Candidate

Karen Gallagher was appointed for a three-year term.

2. Housing Partnership Candidates

Ten volunteers interested in joining the Housing Partnership were interviewed. The number of committee members will be decided and committee members will be appointed by the Selectmen at their next meeting on Wed., Jan. 14, 2009. The Partnership Committee will undertake a comprehensive look at Weston's affordable housing stock and affordable housing needs. A copy of the charge is available at Town Hall.

3. Telecommunications Facility – Cat Rock

Susan Haber, Town Planner presented a proposal from T-Mobile to put a 100 ft. monopole at Cat Rock to improve cell phone coverage within the town. The town would be compensated. There was discussion as to whether a freestanding monopole or something attached to the standpipe would be preferred. It was decided to issue an RFP for several different heights and locations.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Jan 14, 2009

1. Permanent Building Committee candidates

Two volunteers were interviewed and James Blundo was appointed to the PBC for a 3 year term. He has experience in building design and as a plumbing and fire system engineer.

2. Permanent Building Committee – DPW Facility Questions.

Mark Susser, Chair asked for guidance on septic system location and size. A larger system to accommodate a future new Police Dept. would impact the current location of the salt storage area and would add about \$200K to the cost. The Selectmen indicated that it would be prudent to plan for the larger system. The PBC expects final bids by the end of April.

3. Billboard on Rtes. 90 and 128

Pete McCleary, a Weston resident, alerted the Selectmen to the likelihood that large billboards could appear along these highways without any regulation by the Town. He suggested the town hire a consultant to advise how to prevent this. One suggestion was that the Town issue permits that don't require that anything be built for some of the most likely areas and then not do anything. These permits would be valid for 1 year. No decision was made.

4. Housing Partnership Appointments

Steven Charlip, Susan Haber, Wendy Kaplan Armour, Ted Kirchner, Shirley Dolins, Sarah Rhatigan, Bill Donnelly, Hugh Jones, Keith Gross, Shams Alam, Rev. Steve Melius, Nicholas Timperio. William Kelsey, Thalia Price and Polly Dickson were appointed. There are representatives of elected officials, town employees, the current WAHFI committee, finance professional, local clergy, real estate developer (who does not do development in Weston) and residents with experience related to

housing, fund raising, development and/or management. A Chair will be designated at the first meeting.

5. FY10 Preliminary Budget and Revenue Projection

Donna VanderClock, Town Manager presented an overview. Her recommendation would not require an Override, and would provide a current level of service. The property tax levy, because of new construction, would be increased by 5.3%. A 10% decrease in State Aid is assumed and a 9% decrease in local receipts. Total revenues would then increase 2.7% to \$62,880,833. The property tax provides 86.2% of revenue.

Capital Requests would be contingent on approval of a debt exclusion vote at the election and would include DPW equipment, DPW new facility (\$12,000,000), technology (phone system and network), School bus replacement and Field school (\$600,000). Water main rehab and storage tank maintenance would be paid for out of water revenues as well as the water dept. share of the DPW building (20% of total cost).

\$330,000 from the free cash account will be used for the unfunded pension liability in addition to the assessment. \$100,000 will be put in the stabilization fund with a possibility for \$200,000 more and \$50,000 will be added to the snow and ice budget.

Projections for FY11 and FY 12 indicate a significant shortfall then.

Of Interest...

A few noteworthy events you might like to attend.

FILMS:

First Parish, Sundays at 7 PM in the Parlor:

“Blue Vinyl” on Feb. 22. What is the truth about America’s most popular plastic?

“The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream” on Jan. 25.

OTHER EVENTS:

“Living Green” with Carol Hohle in Concord on Jan. 22, 29 and Feb. 5. See www.inspirationhouse.org

Winter Harvest Dinner at Drumlin Farm, Friday, Feb. 6, with Brian Donahue. Call 781-259-2206.