

Newsletter

The Equal Rights Amendment

A Living Legacy of the League of Women Voters

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”

First proposed in 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment was finally passed by Congress in 1972 and sent to the states for ratification. The amendment was caught in a conservative swing of the political pendulum, and an extended deadline of June 30, 1982 passed with only 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. Reintroduced in every Congress since that time, the ERA is currently S.J.Res. 10 (chief sponsor Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-MA) and H.J.Res. 40 (chief co-sponsors Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-NY, and Rep. Stephen Horn, R-CA). Both bills have reintroduced the ERA without a deadline.

An alternative “three-state strategy” for the ERA surfaced after the 1992 ratification of the 27th (“Madison”) Amendment, which Congress sent to the states in 1789. Because a 203-year ratification period was considered acceptable, ERA supporters developed legal analysis proposing that Congress has the power to maintain the legal viability of the ERA’s existing 35 ratifications if three more states ratify. The Library of Congress’s Congressional Research Service concluded in a 1996 report that implementation of the strategy posed more of a political challenge than a constitutional one. An article explaining the strategy was published in the Spring 1997 William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law. H.Res.

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City Energy Update

by Deb Crossley, LWV Representative

The Newton Energy Commission has elected new officers: Katherine Gekas, (who also chairs the Energy Committee of the Green Decade) will serve as Chair; Ira Krepchin, will be Vice Chair and Treasurer (in the event we should be so fortunate as to obtain a grant); and yours truly will serve as Secretary.

Having previously met with members of the MA Energy Consumers Alliance (MECA), and having reviewed their publication: “Green Power and Energy Efficiency Opportunities for Municipalities in Massachusetts” the commission furthered its discussions on the value of using an electric aggregation model to supply power to Newton.

The question was asked: in what way(s) could such a model benefit Newton citizens? It appears there are three potential benefits: 1) Energy cost: consumers may experience a small immediate savings on their electric bill, and long term risks of cost increases may be contained; 2) A community that services its own power needs takes control of how it wishes to spend the money set aside for energy conservation (from everyone’s electric bill), and 3) the community gains some control over power source, and can elect to source more “green power” (clean energy source).

It was agreed that further information is essential to understanding real costs and implementation issues, and that follow up with those who implement the program on Cape Cod will seek to understand how we might borrow from their experience.

Next, we discussed briefly again the desire to develop a climate action plan for Newton (sets energy consumption policy - refer to June newsletter) and how to communicate those ideals and recommended policies to the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Comprehensive Planning, while it is working to develop the transportation and land use sections of the city plan. A subcommittee of the planning group was formed to address environmental issues, and I agreed to serve as a conduit for information and so that the commission can make itself heard.

The LWV seat on the Newton Energy Commission is established by the Newton Charter; all meetings are open to the public, and you are encouraged to attend! The Commission meets on the second monday of each month. Call me for time and location information – 617-244-7597. ■

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LWVN Officers and Directors 2002-2003

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Almost a VP	Pat Acton	617965-5572
Treasurer/ Education	Andrea Kozinetz- Holtz	617964-6490
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Unit Meetings	Ruth Neiberg	617965-5572
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Election Reform	Susan Rosenbaum	617332-0306
Legislation/ NewTV	Janet Stearns	617559-9987
Fundraising	Ben Weisbuch	617527-3262

Newsletter

President	Amelia Koch	617244-2647
Editor	Andrea Kelley	617964-4609

Committee Members

Liz Lieberman	617244-4402
Linda Morrison	617332-6539

The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461
617-964-0014

www.tiac.net/users/unnewton/LWV

...and the living is easy

Summertime, and the League feels a little quiet. Maybe it's the heat, maybe just a well needed break after the extraordinary efforts of last year. So I hope your summer has some sand between your toes, some wind in your hair, and just the right book (along with some time to read it).

I am delighted to have a very active committee working on setting up unit meetings for the coming year. The first result of their labors is a questionnaire that will be sent to you soon. I hope you will take the time to comment and send it in; we would love to hear from you. The committee includes Ruth Neiberg, Bev Spencer, Pat Acton, and Rose Davis. Ruth, who is committee chair, can be reached at 617-965-5572.

Voters' Service will be putting together a debate for the democratic race for Kay Khan's district, the one contested primary in September. Ann Grantham can always use help with questions and other logistics. Ann can be reached at 617-964-0333.

We are still looking for someone with an interest in filling the League slot on Newton's Energy Commission. Deb Crossley has been filling the slot on a temporary basis and would be glad to answer questions about the Commission for anyone interested. The work of the Commission includes helping to recommend policy in a number of areas that could have important environmental impact. Deb can be reached at 617-244-7597.

While I'm advertising for volunteers I should mention that we would love to have additional people to work on the newsletter. Andrea Kelley would be happy to find ways for you to be involved. Working on the Newsletter is great for finding all about League activities. Andrea can be reached at 617-964-4609 or rtcdesign@aol.com.

These are only a sample of the many interesting things the League is involved with. I hope to see you all at some point during the year when the sand is out from between your toes.



Poll Workers Needed

Newton Election Commission Executive Secretary Peter Karg is looking for Poll Workers to work on the Fall Election days, Tuesday, September 17 and Tuesday, November 5, 2002. His first preference would be for workers who can commit to the entire day. However, if you are interested in working for half a day, please let him know and he may arrange for workers to share a position. In addition to the usual election-worker responsibilities, there will be on-site counters who tally the absentee ballots from each precinct. For more information, contact the Newton Election Commission (617) 796-1350. ■

**Look for an upcoming
LWVN Member Survey
in the mail!**

UChAN (United Citizens for Housing Affordability in Newton)

by Deb Crossley

Since working with UChAN to help pass the CPA in Newton, and because our League Rep. Joan Bates moved away, I have been serving as the LWV representative to this committee of dedicated affordable housing advocates.

Led by the enthusiastic and tireless chair Josephine McNeil, the monthly meeting draws normally 8-10 of its members (even in summer).

At our July meeting, we reviewed two items in some depth:

National Housing Trust Fund

The National Housing Trust Fund Legislation has been introduced in Congress to enact the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of

2001, which would establish a National Housing Trust Fund in order to provide a permanent source of funding for construction, rehabilitation and preservation of housing for low-income people. If passed, the Act would provide the means to create, rehabilitate, and preserve 1.5 million units of affordable housing over the next 10 years.

In addition, this legislation would:

1) to fill the growing gap in the national ability to build affordable housing by using profits generated by Federal housing programs to fund additional housing activities, without supplanting existing housing appropriations; (2) to enable rental housing to be built for families with the greatest economic need, in mixed-income settings and in areas with the greatest economic opportunities; (3) to promote homeownership for low-income families. Most of the funds in the National Housing Trust Fund are for rental housing and at least 75% of the funds are targeted to extremely low-income households. States receiving funding from the National Housing Trust Fund would be required to provide 25% matching funds from non-federal sources.**

UChAN members have drafted, and are proposing that Newton's Board of Aldermen pass a resolution petitioning our Massachusetts' Congressional delegation to support this bill. Specifically, the resolution reaffirms the importance and need for affordable housing, urges the Massachusetts Congressional delegation to support the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2001 (S.1248 and H.R. 2349), and requests that our Mayor implement all measures reasonable and necessary to enable the City to take advantage of the National Housing Trust Fund.

Tax Relief Study Group

During and following the campaign to support the property tax override in Newton, UChAN members and many others throughout the city became more aware of the inherent inequities in property tax as a means of funding local services. That is, it is a tax predicated on what one owns, not on what one earns, and therefore there are people, such as the elderly and aging population on fixed incomes, and families whose circumstances of employment have been compromised, who are hard put or unable to

pay this tax. The MA Law provides for limited relief to seniors over 65 and certain persons with disabilities, however income eligibility limits are set so very that many who are in need still do not qualify for relief.

Recognizing this reality, UChAN members Adele Hoffman, Alderman Brooke Lipsitt, Ted Hess-Mahan, Ginny Robinson and I formed a subcommittee to look more closely at options communities may have to make the distribution of the local tax more fair, either by exercising provisions of the MA law that would provide relief, or by suggesting modifications to the law. We invited others in the community to join us who have expressed interest in this subject, and are so far joined by George Foord, Ginny Gardner, Mark Marderosian and Donna Pasquerosa. Others have expressed interest and plan to sit in at future meetings.

So far we are assembling and reviewing information while we contemplate our focus. Some are gathering census data to try to better identify the need in our city. We have a clear list of the relief options allowed under MA law (also available on the city website), and support the efforts of some to see Newton implement the \$500 tax rebate option to seniors over 65 who volunteer in the community. We support the Home Rule petition filed with the state legislature early this summer by the Board of Aldermen. This proposes to expand eligibility for tax deferments by raising the income limit from \$40,000 to \$65,000. We are monitoring the status of the so-called "Self Sufficiency Act", which is stuck in the House Ways and Means Committee, as it proposes to increase eligibility for social programs across the board by raising the income cut off to an area median. It would therefore cost the state quite a bit of tax revenue. Our goal for Newton is not to propose anything that would reduce tax revenue, but to consider ways of shifting the burden to make it fairer.

Since June we have met monthly, on the middle Friday at 8:30 a.m. at my house. UChAN also meets monthly, usually the third Wednesday morning at the Eliot Church in Newton Corner @ 8:15 a.m. - Would you like to join us? Please call me: 617 244-7597. ■

**Ted Hess-Mahan contributed facts on the Housing Trust Fund

Democracy Net

by Ann Grantham, Voters Service Chair

Have you discovered that you have a comprehensive voter resource as close as your computer? The Democracy Net Website - www.dnet.org for the national picture and www.dnet.org/MA for a direct link to Massachusetts, is a wonderful creation of the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

This unique website offers all candidates a chance to engage in an ongoing online dialog throughout the election season. It's a level playing field without sound bites or fat campaign chests. Every candidate's response is unedited and unfiltered.

Some of the features of this site are a candidate's grid, ballot question information, voting information, candidate forum schedules and contact information for elected officials. All one needs to enter is a zip code and the site does the rest.

The state league has invited all the candidates on the September ballot to participate on this site. It's a rather straight forward procedure. Candidates are provided with a password and an address to which they enter their responses. As league members, we need to encourage our candidates to participate in this opportunity to get out their message and let them know that we are voters who care what they think. ■

Committees - in - Action

Education

Focus Increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards

Members Ann Grantham Anne Learner
Susie Heyman Robin Maltz
Jody Klein

Contact Andrea Kelley 617964-4609
Andrea Kozinetz 617964-6490
Co-Chairs

Human Rights

Focus League outreach, relevance and support for the human rights of Newton's diverse populations

Members Sharon Balfour
Susie Heyman
Jody Klein
Linda Morrison

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair 617964-0767

Land Use/Transportation

Focus Interrelationship between land use and transportation and its effects on Newton & surrounding communities

Members AnnaMaria Abernathy
Anita Capeless
Carol Ann Shea
Lynne Sullivan

Contact Anita Capeless 617969-9483

Local Action

Focus Various local issues

Members In formation - all welcome

Contact Deb Crossley 617244-7597
Chair

Newsletter

Members Jane Leighton Liz Lieberman
Linda Morrison Jody Klein

Contact Andrea Kelley 617964-4609

You may call committee contact or a Board officer or director to learn more about current committee work. All are welcome to participate.

Observer Report

Finance Committee Meeting, Board of Aldermen

by League Observers Ben Weisbuch and Amelia Koch

July 22, 2002

Room 212 Newton City Hall

Committee Members present: Coletti, Bullwinkle, Lipof, Ciccone, Schnipper, Parker, Lipsitt (ex-officio)

Other Aldermen present: Salvucci

Vote tallies are listed as For/Against/Abstained/Absent Item #262-02. The Committee voted 4, 0, 0, 4 to reappoint James E. Shaughnessy for a term as a member of Board of Assessors. Term to expire on Feb. 1, 2005.

- **Item #264-02** Discussed but held for further discussion the items dealing with the elderly and property tax forgiveness (see details of item listed below).
- **Item #189-02B2** The Committee voted 4, 0, 0, 4 to approve \$15,000 to be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund for improvement to Jackson Homestead signage. Different banners and signs along key points on Washington St. to increase number of visitors, a sign to indicate whether the Museum is open, and signage on the property to give historical information about the City when the Museum is closed.
- **Item #253-02(2)** The Committee voted 5,0,0,3 to approve the appropriation of \$91,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of relocating and refurbishing two modular classrooms from the Carr School to the Horace Mann School.
- **Item #246-02** The Committee voted 5, 0, 0, 3 to approve \$150,000 for purpose of masonry repairs to Cabot School. There was considerable discussion about the repair and cleaning of the masonry.
- **Item #247-02** The Committee voted 5,0,0,3 to fund \$14,000 for energy efficiency at Zervas and Pierce schools.
- **Item #243-02** The Committee voted 5,0,,3 \$25,000 to implement Phase I of plan to reconfigure science rooms at Brown Middle School Details of 264-02: The committee took up five items dealing with the elderly and property taxes. The committee voted 5-0-0-3 to hold the items in the committee.
- The first item under **#264-02**, brought by Alderman Salvucci and the Lucky Star Group, seeking to allow tax payers to check off donation from their tax return to establish an Aid to the Elderly Taxation Fund. According to several representatives of the Lucky Star this program has been adopted in Sudbury and Acton and falls in line with G.L. c. 60, s. 3D, allowing voluntary tax contributions.
- The second, **#221-02** brought by Alderman Coletti, seeks to allow the City to set aside a maximum of \$350,000 in overlay reserve. The details of this plan were not clear and the committee requested more information.
- The third, **#220-02**, brought by Lipsitt, Bullwinkle, Coletti and the Mayor, seeks to allow seniors to volunteer their time to the City for \$500 credit toward their taxes. This idea raises all kinds of tax, employer/employee, liability and budget problems.
- Fourth, **#214-02**, brought by Alderman Stewart, seeks to create a "Senior Tax Assistance Study Commission."
- Finally, **#53-02** brought by Alderman Yates, to encourage taxpayers to utilize the Circuit Breaker Program. The details on this needed further clarification, but this benefit takes the form of a renewable credit, although there are some income requirements (single, \$41,000), and some property valuation requirements (accessed at \$400,000 plus). ■

Citizens Rap with Legislative Roundtable

by Deb Crossley

The next best thing to calling in to a live TV show might be sending your message to your legislators via videocamcorder for an on the air response...

For this month's show, producer Mike Padden and staff went to the Newton Free Library seeking Newton citizens "who might have something to say to their elected state officials". We heard from four Newton citizens: about future allocations of state aid to Newton; complimenting the representatives on their standing up for separation of church and state, posing a detailed query about the future of regional water supply systems, and finally a general question addressing the overall condition of our environment and how well - or not - are we taking care to leave a clean place for future generations.

Representatives Ruth Balsler and Kay Khan responded thoughtfully, sometimes providing an answer, stating their position and why, and sometimes describing a process necessary to go after an answer, while welcoming citizens to bring their ideas forward.

To see more, tune in to the BLUE Channel on NewTV for the full half hour show: Monday Tuesday and Wednesday at 5:30 and 10:30pm.

Contact NewTV or the League with your ideas for future topics! ■

The Equal Rights Amendment

Continued from page one

98 (chief sponsor Rep. Robert Andrews, D-NJ) resolves that if three more states ratify, the House of Representatives will take action to declare ERA ratification complete; a companion bill may soon be introduced in the Senate. (For information on the three-state strategy, visit the web site of the National Council of Women's Organizations' ERA Task Force, www.equalrightsamendment.org.)

Since 1995, ERA ratification bills have been introduced in Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Virginia, and have been voted out of committee in the first three of those states. The only floor vote thus far (in the Missouri House in 2001) was a loss for the ERA, but progressive legislators and activists in the unratified states are building momentum for increased political action. The other unratified states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Utah.

The challenge for ERA supporters is not only political but also educational. A July 2001 poll by Opinion Research Corporation showed the highest level ever of public support for the issue. But while 96% of respondents support constitutional equality for women and men, and 88% want the Constitution to specifically guarantee it, 72% mistakenly believe that the Constitution already includes that provision. (More information about this poll, which was commissioned by the ERA Campaign Network, is available at www.ERACampaign.net.)

The League of Women Voters and the ERA

LWVUS Position (under Social Policy: Equality of Opportunity): "Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA."

The League of Women Voters adopted support of the Equal Rights Amendment on the floor of the National Convention in 1972 and added the second clause to the position in 1980. During the 1972-1982 ratification campaign, the League co-founded the national ERAmerica coalition of over 80 organizations, raised more than \$2.5 million for the campaign, joined as amicus in key ERA lawsuits, and developed the National Business Council for the ERA and the Joint Media Project. Countless League members across the country were deeply involved in the struggle, as documented in the 1988 LWVUS publication; "Changed Forever: The League of Women Voters and the Equal Rights Amendment" (written by Roberta Francis, former LWVUS ERA Committee member and current Chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations' ERA Task Force).

Patricia Jensen, then LWVUS ERA Chair, wrote in 1982, "The ERA is THE issue League members remain deeply committed to. We feel the need for equality not just with our intellects, but with our hearts.... Eventually the ERA will move into the states once again for ratification. We must be ready."

Continued on page six

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- I would like to join the League of Women voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$50 payable to LWVN.
- Lifetime membership \$1000**
- I would like to receive materials about the League.
- I would like to be contacted by a League member to talk about LWVN.

Mail this form (and your check, if joining) to:
Andrea Kozinetz Holtz at 8 Stoney Brae Road,
Newton Highlands, MA 02461

continued from page five **ERA**

What the League can do for the ERA

Twenty years after the end of the first ERA campaign, it is now time for the League of Women Voters to assume its historical position of national leadership on this issue – and the first step toward that goal was taken at Convention 2002. The St. Petersburg Area, FL, and Newton, MA, Leagues earlier this year submitted a proposal that the League increase its involvement with the ERA. Since the current ERA position under Social Policy adequately covers any desired actions at the present time, delegates Sandy Oestreich and Priscilla Leith collected individual Statements of Support from over 140 delegates and submitted them with a list of specific requests in “Directions to the Board” during the final plenary session of the Convention.

These requests included the following”

- Assign the ERA issue to an LWVUS lobbyist and have that person represent the League at the bi-monthly meetings of the National Council of Women’s Organizations’ ERA Task Force.
- Publish an article in the National Voter to inform members about the renewed ERA campaign, and regularly include ERA updates through Presidents Mailings, website pages, and other communications with League leaders and members.
- Establish an ERA communications network of League members with ERA experience and skills (educational, legal, political, financial, organizational, technological), to liaison with members of the LWVUS Board.
- Seek grant funding to produce an updated edition of “Changed Forever: The League of Women Voters and the Equal Rights Amendment.”

The new LWVUS officers and Board will consider “Direction to the Board” items during a mid-August retreat, and a response is expected in September.

What the ERA can do for the League

“Many women involved in the campaign have commented on the extraordinary level of commitment and energy that the ERA drew from a vast number of League members throughout the country. Former LWVUS President Ruth Hinerfeld remarked, ‘In my whole time in the League, I’ve never seen another issue that had that personal effect.’ Former ERA Chair Joanne Hayes remarked that the ERA was ‘reality-shaping’ for many League members. ‘Once in the ERA fight, we are changed forever.’... A Montana League reported: ‘It bound young and old women into the suffrage tradition of both the League and our state, and made us proud to be women active in a continuing effort to secure individual rights for all.’”

(From “Changed Forever: The League of Women Voters and the Equal Rights Amendment”)

The ERA can do for the League what it has historically done:

- Activate a high level of member involvement and promote increased membership.
- Generate successful fundraising, both for the issue and for Leagues in general.
- Provide an advocacy experience that will educate and energize a new generation of League members to learn how government really works.
- Give League members an increased understanding of the League’s historical roots and the relationship of the struggles for woman suffrage and the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Promote LWVUS involvement with the National Council of Women’s Organizations (which was established as the Council of Presidents in 1982 with major League leadership).

Most important, the ERA, when it is finally ratified, will provide the League and the nation with a constitutional guarantee that “equality of rights . . . shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex.” This principle will shore up the legal foundations of many League policy initiatives and will prevent the weakening or reversal of many of the advances the League has supported for over 82 years. ■

Written by

Roberta Francis (LWV of Chatham-Madison Area, NJ)
 Priscilla Leith (LWV of Newton, MA)
 Sandy Oestreich (LWV of St. Petersburg Area, FL)
 LWV United States

Election Calendar

August 28 Last day to register to vote or change party affiliation for State Primary. The Election Commission is open until 8 pm on this last day of registration.

September 16 12 Noon Last hour and day to apply for Absentee Ballot for the State Primary

September 17 STATE PRIMARY Polls open 7 am – 8 pm

October 16 Last day to register to vote for the State Election. The Election Commission is open until 8 pm on this last day of registration.

November 4 12 Noon Last day and hour to apply for an Absentee Ballot for the State Election

November 5 STATE ELECTION Polls open 7 am to 8 pm

Anti-Gay Constitutional Amendment Killed by Legislature

by Holly Gunner, Human Rights Chair

On July 17 the proposed anti-gay Constitutional amendment for Massachusetts bit the dust. It could have made it unconstitutional to pass laws or offer benefits, through collective bargaining or employment policies, that give all unmarried couples (gay or straight) and their children the same legal protections for their families that married people have for theirs.

Many married people don't realize the extensive automatic legal protections they have (literally, hundreds). These protections, which the proposed amendment would have forbidden any governmental unit from conferring on unmarried couples, include automatic visitation rights for a partner of someone ill or dying in a hospital, health insurance coverage or survivor benefits for the life partner and children of an employee, and the ability to adopt a partner's birth child, thus giving that child the safety of two legal parents with obligations to support and care for it. Massachusetts is the first-in-the-nation to stop one of the right-wing's signature so-called "Defense of Marriage" referenda. This is a tremendous victory that will have an impact around the country. The amendment's sponsors have, however, vowed to keep their anti-gay, anti-family campaign alive here, and it's likely they will file something similar before long.

The amendment bit the dust for several reasons.

First, many people—gay and straight—did a spirited and diligent job of contacting legislators and getting friends to do the same. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts joined a long list of civic, human rights, civil liberties, child welfare, labor, and business organizations, bar associations and clergy to register opposition. On the very morning of the vote, Nancy Carapezza, President of LWVM, responded rapidly to my call to help persuade a particular legislator to vote with us.

Second, some very principled people took a stand against bigotry and an attempt to misuse our Constitution (which was designed to protect equally the rights of ALL people) by turning it into an instrument of prejudice against a minority group. These people very centrally included Senate President Tom Birmingham (D) and Minority Leader Brian Lees (R); the entire Massachusetts Congressional delegation, which took the unusual step of sending a letter to state legislators urging opposition to the measure; Harvard Law School's Prof. Lawrence Tribe, who wrote a letter to all legislators in which he said this amendment violated the Equal Protection clause of the US Constitution; several courageous and prin-

cipled Catholic parish priests (including Newton's own Father Walter Cuenin), Newton's Sheila Decter of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) and the Executive Board of the Mass. Academy of Pediatrics. Newton's Dottie Reichard, of Barney Frank's office, played an essential role in informing the press of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation's letter to state legislators.

Newton's entire Beacon Hill delegation opposed the amendment. Senator Cynthia Creem and her staff person, former Alderman Myra Tattenbaum, helped in many ways, particularly at the time of the legislature's public hearing on the measure. Representatives Ruth Balser and Kay Khan waited in a long line of legislators to testify against it. Martina Jackson, Co-Chair of the state Democratic Party's Public Policy Committee and Chair of Newton's Democratic City Committee, helped convey the Party's view that this is a human rights issue, and that the rights of a minority should not be decided by plebiscite.

Third, some highly skilled volunteer legislative lobbyists who know their onions worked tirelessly. Without Arline Isaacson of the Mass. Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus and Norma Shapiro of the ACLU of Massachusetts (formerly a Vice President of the LWVMA) this could not have happened.

Fourth, most people are fundamentally decent. Nearly 75% of our legislators saw this proposed amendment as discriminatory and a mark of bigotry that doesn't fit our state. They did not want to harm people. They stood up to something they saw as "mean" – a word many used to describe it.

There is still work ahead of us. All this does is ensure that we are back to the statusquo, in which gay couples are not treated equally by the laws. But the climate on Beacon Hill changed a little. At the end of the day, what the right wing accomplished was to create an occasion for legislators and others to be educated about the ordinary lives of gay & lesbian couples and families. They learned that these families are just like all families, have the same needs and take on the same responsibilities. But, this work of educating the public remains, for a long time to come.

The LWVN Human Rights Committee will be working this year on a program of education and advocacy of equal rights for all committed couples and families, gay and straight. If you think you might like to help with this, please call Holly Gunner by September 15 at 617-964-0767 or e-mail at hgunner@attbi.com. ■

PRISCILLA M. LEITH, MBA

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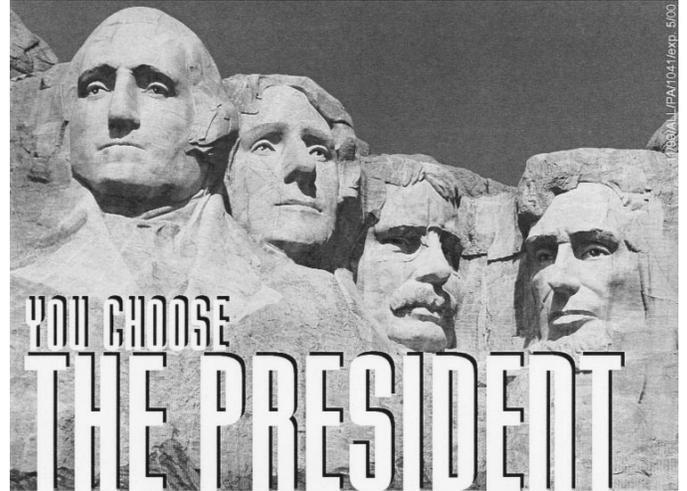


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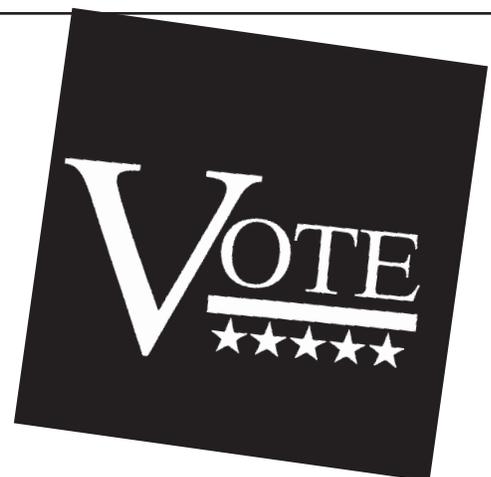
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*Our politics may lean to the left,
but our work... NEVER!*



LWVN CALENDAR

August

- 7 Working Board
- 28 Lay day to register to vote or change party affiliation for State Primary- Election Commission open until 8 pm

September

- 4 Working Board
- 11 Newsletter Deadline
- 11 11:30 am, Unit Meeting: topic ERA, at 72 Dalton Road, Newton Centre, (617) 969-9329
- 16 12 noon last day and hour to apply for absentee ballot for State Election
- 17 State Primary, polls open 7 am to 8 pm
- 25 Board Meeting @ Rose Davis'

October

- Harvest Fair, Phonathon
- 5 State League Fall Conference, All day @ Minuteman Vocational Ed School, Lexington
- 16 Working Board/Newsletter Deadline
- 16 last day to register to vote for state election, Election Commission open until 8 pm.
- 17 Relationship Violence Forum, at the Newton Senior Center
- 30 Board Meeting @ Sue Rosenbaum's

November

- 4 12 noon last day and time to apply for absentee ballot for tomorrow's election
- 5 State Election Day, polls open 7am-8 pm
- 6 Working Board
- 13 Newsletter Deadline
- 20 Board Meeting @ Ann Grantham's

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