

# Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 9

November 2001

## Election Laws at the Polling Place

*Your Rights as a Voter:  
Understanding the Election Laws*  
By Bonnie Carter

Michelle Tassinari, Legal Counsel, Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, gave a clear presentation at the LWVM Fall Council on Oct. 13 of many of the laws which are relevant to Election Day.

The minimum hours polls are open are set by state law. State laws govern a myriad of topics, such as: signs at polling places, observers at polling places, challenging ballots, inactive voters, assistance for voters, escrow ballots, closing of polls, and counting votes.

Signs are prohibited within 150 feet of a polling location, as is distribution of material intended to influence the action of the voter.

Observers are allowed inside the polling place, outside the guardrail, unless they are disorderly or obstruct the access of voters. Poll workers at the check-in table must announce the names of the voters loud enough for the observers to hear.

Any person may challenge a voter for any legal cause, such as: they are not who they say they are; they do not live where they say they live, etc.

A voter is put on the "Inactive List (Drop List)" if he/she has not voted for more than four years. Voters on the list can vote after filling out and signing a form.

A voter may designate a person to assist them in the polling booth. This occurs most often in cases of blindness or other physical disability, or inability to read English.

If the name of a person claiming the right to vote is not on the voting list, either the active or inactive list, the warden must communicate with the election office to determine whether or not the person is entitled to cast a ballot.

The warden is the person in charge at the polling place. Anyone who encounters a problem, can approach the warden. The warden should be able to resolve any issues. However, if the problem persists, the Election Commission should be contacted. If the problem still cannot be resolved, contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 617-727-2828.

A seven-page document summarizing these laws is available. Call the LWV Newton phone if you would like a copy. 617-964-0014. ■

## Newton Legislators to Remain after Redistricting Threat

by Amelia Koch

Late Wednesday night October 17th, Speaker Thomas Finneran put forward a new redistricting plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The plan was to be voted on Monday October 22nd, and no complete maps were made available to the legislature and no public hearings were scheduled to allow input from constituents. The League reacted by creating a flyer, writing a letter to Speaker Finneran and drafting a letter to the editor of the Boston Globe (see below). Following is the breakout of districts that would have resulted.

Rep. John Locke(R) Wellesley would represent Newton precincts 5/1, 8/3 and 8/4. Parts of Representative Kay Khan's and Ruth Balser's districts would go to Rep. Rachel Kaprielian (D) Watertown and Rep. Peter Koutoujian (D) Newton.

The remaining precincts would be combined into ONE district, thereby requiring Reps. Khan and Balser to run against one another.

On Monday night, Oct. 22 Representative Kay Khan offered an amendment to the proposed plan that realigned the districts so Reps. Kay Khan and Ruth Balser were no longer in the same district. The amendment garnered sufficient support and Finneran's plan was passed with the amendment. Thank you to all of you who called the various state offices. We can make a difference!

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Reform . . . . .	3
Conflict of Interest . . . . .	3
Membership News . . . . .	4
Size of Board of Alderman . . . . .	5
School Comm. Candidate forum . . . . .	5
2002 Calendars . . . . .	8

Continued on page four

## LWVN Officers and Directors 2001-2002

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### Newsletter

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Editor	Andrea Kelley	617964-4609

### Committee Members

Deborah Hirsch	617965-1475
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 964-0014.

PO Box 610207  
Newton, MA 02461

# Each To Her Own

**W**hew! October was quite a month. I hope you had the opportunity to come at least to one of the many League events. Thanks to everyone for working so hard!

I want to take a minute to tell you about my experiences at one of the October events - the State League phonathon. I volunteered on a Monday night, and had a great time making calls and talking to League members. I recommend it as a heartening thing to do. It's very rewarding to talk to people who support the League and are willing to show their support. Many of those I spoke with were willing to help by making a donation, but many of those people also expressed guilt about not doing more for the League.

This is really important because, while a little guilt can be a great motivator, too much can be one of those silent killers of the joy in life. So I want to tell those of you in the position of feeling guilty just how the system works. You see, none of us can do everything. No, really. Many of you try, but it really can't be done and that's why it's a good thing there are other people. You see other people doing other things, and they do some of the things you can't get to yourself.

The League works this way too. We need all of you, in one way or another, who are members. We need the ones who care about voters' service and the ones who care about legislation. We need the ones who come to one event a year and those who can't come to any but show their belief by staying with us as a member, adding their strength, demonstrating their belief in our work by counting themselves one of us.

So this is your job. Find your place and do your work. Maybe it's the League, and I hope it will be, but maybe it's not. If it's not, then you're doing the things I can't get to in other areas, and wish I could. It takes all of us. Thanks for doing your part.

*Amelia D Koch*

# Consensus on Education Reform: January Unit Meetings

by Priscilla Leith

The Newton League will participate in a statewide League consensus on Education Reform at meetings to be held from January 7-10, 2002 - one in the daytime and one in the evening, concluding a study that began in 1999. League members are being asked to discuss specific questions (see below) and respond to them by mid-March. The State LWV Board will examine the returns, determine the areas of agreement and/or disagreement, and formulate summary statements that express Massachusetts LWV members' position on this topic. The LWVM positions will be implemented by legislative action or working with various state agencies.

Please contact

Priscilla Leith, 617-969-6837,  
to help with these meetings.

## Consensus Questions

### 1. SHOULD THERE BE STATEWIDE CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS?

- a) If yes, how should such standards be developed? Should the standards be developed to set minimum standards only, or should they also be used to raise the level of academic performance for all students? What latitude, if any, should individual school districts have in using the standards? What should be the role of the local community?
- b) What are the advantages and disadvantages of statewide curriculum standards?

### 2. HOW SHOULD THE PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS AND DISTRICTS BE MEASURED?

- a) What is the role of standardized tests, (for example, the MCAS, Stanford, CAT, or Iowa tests) in assessing student and district performance relative to meeting the curriculum standards?
- b) What other measures could school districts use to assess their curriculum and student and school performance? What is the role of alternate forms of assessment such as "portfolios" in determining student performance?
- c) Should meeting the state standards be a requirement for graduation from high school and/or for admission to state colleges and universities? If yes, what criteria should be used by a school district to establish that a student has met the state standard?

### 3. IF STATE STANDARDS HAVE NOT BEEN MET, WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN BY THE STATE, THE DISTRICT, AND THE STUDENT TO PROVIDE A REMEDY? ■

## Conflict of Interest Policy

*The following policy was readopted by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts late last summer. It pertains to state board members and off board specialists, and is food for thought for local leagues and boards.*

**Securing Appointments.** LWVM may encourage and assist League members in securing appointments to government boards, commissions, and committees. These recommendations shall be approved by the President and Board of Directors. Recommendations for appointment to politically sensitive positions should be made with care. Appointments for which party affiliation is a requirement will not be made. Appointees shall serve as individuals rather than as formal representatives of the League unless the position was offered to the League.

**Serving on Boards.** The president and board members may serve on other boards; however, if a serious conflict arises between the two entities, it should be brought to the state board.

**Lobbying.** Neither the president nor board members shall lobby for or take public positions in opposition to or in conflict with an LWVUS or LWVM position. In cases in which League program may apply but LWVM has not taken a position, a board member may publicly state a position that is in accord with League program. LWVM president and board members may publicly or privately express opinions on public policy issues that are not included in the League program, but in doing so it must be clear that they are not representing the League.

**Testifying for Other Organizations.** Board members may not testify on state legislation on behalf of another organization without approval of the president or the Program & Action vice president.

The president or Program & Action vice president may not testify on state legislation on behalf of other organizations unless the organization is a coalition partner.

**Employment.** The board shall evaluate and resolve any questions of conflict of interest arising from a board member's employment. No board member may participate in any decision-making process when that person has an interest that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the League. The board shall evaluate and resolve any questions of conflict of interest arising from the employment of a board member's immediate family.

## Committees - in - Action

### *E d u c a t i o n*

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

Members Nancy Crowley Anne Larner  
Deborah Hirsch Robin Maltz  
Andrea Kelley Beth Wilkinson  
Andrea Kozinetz

Contact Beverly Spencer 617965-6365  
Board Liaison

### *H u m a n R i g h t s*

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

Members Joan Bates Ruth Nemzoff  
Marion Cowan Wand Persimmon  
Holly Gunner Dorothy Reecho  
Lilly Jefferson Jeanne White  
Anne Larner

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair 617964-0767

### *L a n d U s e / T r a n s p o r t a t i o n*

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

Members AnnaMaria Abernathy  
Anita Capeless  
Carol Ann Shea  
Susie Heyman

Contact Anita Capeless 617969-9483

### *L o c a l A c t i o n*

Focus Various local issues

Members In formation - all welcome

Contact Carol Ann Shea 617969-2121  
Deb Crossley 617244-7597  
Co-chairs

### *I n t e r n a t i o n a l T r a d e*

Focus Study existing U.S. trade policies, and problems arising from a global economy

Members Priscilla Leith  
Fran Seasholes  
Mary Huse  
Linda Morrison

Contact Priscilla Leith 617969-6837

### *N e w s l e t t e r*

Members Jane Leighton Liz Lieberman  
Deb Hirsch Linda Morrison

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.

## On a Roll with Membership

*Elaine S. Reisman, Membership Chair*

Eighteen prospective members attended the two October membership meetings. After brief introductions, League process and procedures were explained. Work of the League was presented on a chart indicating how members can spend no time other than paying their dues, through many hours working on a committee, or doing Voters' Service work. Lively discussion followed on local issues. Questions from the participants indicated that they were seeking information. Several commented that they felt it was time to get back into a more active role in the community.

In this current atmosphere of uncertainty about terrorist activity, I personally feel that there is little I can do directly. What makes me feel better is working on membership with the hope that by increasing our numbers, our voices become stronger and we develop a larger cadre of informed and active citizens. It may not deter terrorist activity, but it certainly can help to strengthen our own democracy.

Join me in this effort of outreach, and encouraging growth and new input to our organization, by bringing someone to an event. Note the six recently joined members we welcome below. If you send me names of potential members, I will follow up with a phone call and mail League materials.

bresreis@mediaone.net, 617-244-6439 ■

## New Members

Welcome to the following members who have joined the Newton League recently. We look forward to seeing you at LWVN events, and getting to know you and your interests.

Rose Davis  
209 Commonwealth Ave, Suite PA  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467  
617-244-9502

Jodi Klein  
15 Newell Rd.  
Newton 02466  
617-244-4767

Debby Max Reisman  
75 Beethoven  
Waban, MA 02468  
617-332-3980

Dawn Golub  
11 Chatham Rd.  
Newton Highlands 02461  
617-965-5774

Kathy Glick-Weil  
16 Acacia Ave.  
Chestnut Hill 02467  
617-277-8815

Frances Rosen  
114 Lowell Ave.  
Newtonville 02460  
617-969-0319

**REDISTRICTING** *Continued from page one*

**\*Letter sent to the editor of the Boston Globe, approved by the LWVN Board, but not published:**

We, The League of Women Voters of Newton, deplore the tactics used in Speaker Finneran's most recent redistricting proposal. We call for the establishment of State Representative districts that will maintain the integrity of existing districts in the City of Newton, with advanced distribution of statewide maps prior to voting on this matter. Redistricting is a vital part of democracy. New districts must be drawn to equalize population, maintain compact districts, and provide equality of access to the ballot box for all Americans without regard to racial heritage. This has not been achieved in the proposed plan.

Amelia S. Koch, President, League of Women Voters of Newton ■

## School Committee Candidates Tackle Difficult Issues

By Bonnie Carter and Ann Grantham

The School Committee candidates answered a wide range of questions at the forum held on October 11 at the Newton Main Library. To start the evening they were asked whether they would support a Proposition 2 1/2 override, and when is it appropriate for teachers to discuss sexual preference.

From there, they went on to discuss tight budgets, quality education, class size, the Community Preservation Act, and renovations to the high schools. The League co-sponsored the School Committee candidates' forum with the PTO Council and NewTV.

We are very grateful to the Newton Free Library for giving us Druker Auditorium for the evening. Patti Muldoon of the LWV of Arlington served very ably as moderator. Our thanks go to her and the following: Andrea Kozinetz Holtz for refreshments, Sally Flynn for serving as timer, Ruth Neiberg and Andrea Kelley as ushers, Terry Yoffie and Pat Acton for sorting questions. We are also grateful to the hard-working staff and volunteers of NewTV for videotaping the forum, thus making it available to viewers who were unable to be present: Michael Padden, Burt Mummolo, Walt Sawyer, Min Chul Ko, and James Vance. ■

### Size of Board of Aldermen



To the Editor:

Aldermanic candidate, John Stewart, in his letter to the TAB, bases his opposition to cutting the size of the Board of Aldermen on the ground that the voters are confused as to how the Aldermen are elected.

The voters are not confused but frustrated by the impossible task imposed on each voter in the City to choose sixteen individual Aldermen at Large plus one Ward Alderman at each city election. Their ignorance is not as to how the system works but as to how to make a sensible choice of sixteen candidates - about whom it is extremely challenging to be reasonably informed.

The proof of this fact is the huge number of blanks recorded in every election of Aldermen at Large, running to 50% of the total vote cast. Further, in non-mayoral elections, e.g., 1999, the total turnout is usually below 20% of the registered voters.

Given the opportunity to express their opinion about this situation, Newton voters in the last state election cast 19,000 votes in favor of cutting the number of Aldermen at Large from sixteen to eight, a margin of 2 to 1 over the "No" votes. With 30 of 31 precincts voting, all 30 were in favor of the cut.

The voters spoke clearly at the polls last year. They want the size of the Board of Aldermen reduced. It is now the job of our elected representatives to act.

Amelia Koch, President, League of Women Voters of Newton  
with members Robert Capeless and Florence Rubin

*published in the Newton TAB, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2001*

#### Conflict of Interest *Continued from page 3*

**Stipends.** The president and board members may not receive stipends, fees, or grants for League projects while sitting on the policy-making board that is responsible for administering the grant.

**Honoraria.** Honoraria received by the president and board members shall accrue to the LWVM or LWVEF.

**Specialists.** Off board specialists in their area of specialty are subject to this policy.

**Review.** This policy shall be reviewed annually by the LWVM board of directors and the LWVEF trustees. Copies of this policy shall be given to each board member. ■

## 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

**PRISCILLA M. LEITH, MBA**

162 Islington Road  
Newton, MA 02466  
617.969.6837

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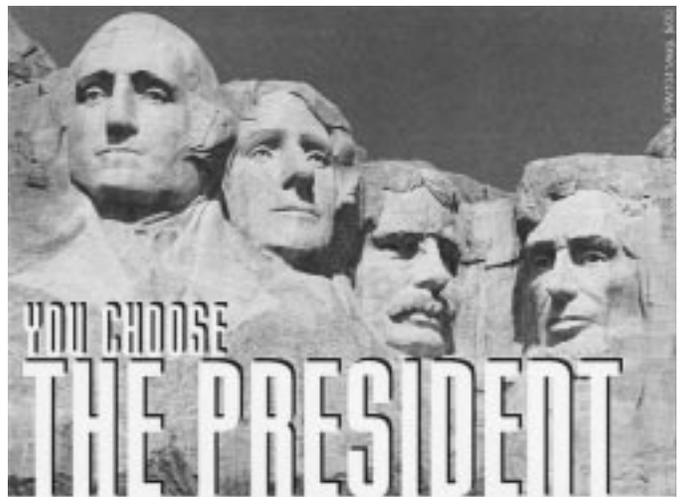
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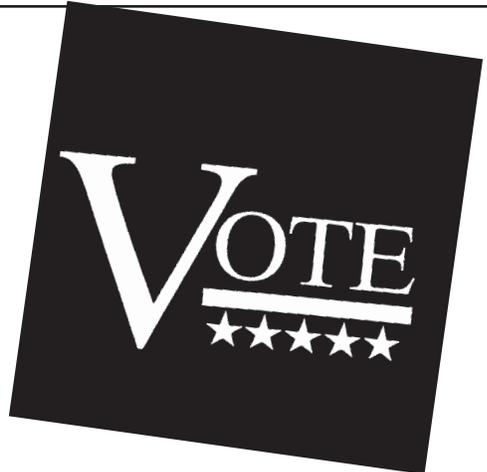
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## LWVN CALENDAR

### November

- 6 Tues. ELECTION DAY- *Vote!*
- 7 Wed. LWVN Board meeting 7:15 pm, Location tba.
- 13 Tues. 7:30 pm Evening Unit meeting, Topic: "Update on State and National Health Care Legislation" at Sandy Butzel's, 237 Mill Street, Newtonville
- 14 Wed. Daytime Unit. 11:30 - 1:30 pm. Topic: "Update on State and National Health Care Legislation", at Barbara Lietzke's, 83 Kirkstall Road, Newtonville
- 15 Thurs. 6-7:30 pm, Transportation Plan Workshop, to discuss the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan Update, Newton City Hall, Room 202, Metropolitan Planning Organization, co-sponsored by the City of Newton
- 20 Tues. 9:30-11:30 am International Trade Study Committee, at P. Leith's, 162 Islington Road, Auburndale
- 28 Wed. 6:30-9:30 pm. LWVN Working Board meeting. at Bonnie Carter's, 177 Homer St. N. Centre

### December

- 2 Sunday, Holiday party, 5-8 pm at Ruth Neiberg's, 72 Dalton Road, N. Centre. Look for your invitation in the mail.
- 5 Wed. Board meeting 7:15 pm at E. Reisman, 28 Fairway Drive. W. Newton

### January

- 9 Wed. 7:15pm. LWVN Board meeting, location tba

#### NEWTON LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE

airs on Channel 10 (the blue channel) on AT&T Broadband on:

- Mondays 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 10:30 pm
- Tuesdays 3 am, 5:30 am, 9 am, 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 10:30 pm
- Wednesdays 3 am, 5:30 am, 9 am



## 2002 LWV Calendars for Sale

Order now, while they last! It's the calendar some of us can't do without... no frills, no pictures and lots of writing space for each day of the month. Dates of special interest to LWV members are noted.

Calendars are 8 1/2" X 11" on card stock with punched holes and a silk hanging cord for wall use. They are printed by the LWV of St. Louis, MO.

Please send a check made out to Priscilla Leith for \$3.50 per calendar, and mail to her at 162 Islington Rd., Newton, MA 02466.

Calendars will be mailed to you or personally delivered. All profits after costs benefit LWVN.

**For more information, call Priscilla at 617-969-6837. ■**

League of Women Voters of Newton

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