

# League of Women Voters of Newton

# Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 8

October 2004

## WINNER TAKE ALL

# Time For A Change?

by Linda Morrison

**A**fter the contested results and vote-counting problems of the elections in 2000, many Americans started taking a harder look at our voting systems. The systems of registering votes - the ballots - were re-examined, and many localities, including Newton, upgraded their election equipment. The relative merits of paper vs. electronic backup were hotly debated at the national convention in June, with delegates insisting on a change in the position taken by the LWVUS board of directors to ensure that voting systems and procedures are "secure, accurate, recountable and accessible."

In our September newsletter, Beth Lowd reported on a Massachusetts ballot question advising the legislature to create an independent commission to redistrict congressional and legislative districts. This question has been endorsed by the state and Newton league. Other aspects of how we set up our system of representation are also being examined by local leagues in our LWVMA Voter Systems Study II.

Does the "winner take all" rule in most American elections really result in the fairest, most democratic way of choosing our elected officials that we are capable of constructing? Many European countries, and a few US localities, have for decades used variations of what is called "Proportional Representation." For instance, if 60% of the electorate voted for candidates in Party A, and 35% for those in Party B, and 5% for Party C, a proportional representation system would send two legislators from Party A, and one from Party B, to represent a three seat district. Proponents of Party B would have a representative who shares their views, instead of being shut out by the practice of having a single seat in which the winner took 100% of the district's representation.

There are a number of versions of proportional representation. In November, our LWVN Unit meetings will continue a study on voter systems and consider many of the pros and cons of "PR" [proportional representation] systems. Would they create greater interest among voters? Would they tend to make government more or less stable? What effects would they tend to have on political parties? We will explain the major types of "PR" and look at the offices for which they may or may not be appropriate.

The LWV has since its beginning sought to investigate aspects of democratic voting to bring it into greater conformity with the stated goals of our Constitution. Taking a closer look at how we are used to doing things to see if there are better possibilities, is a big part of what we are all about.

For more information on proportional representation by one of its advocate, go to prof Douglas Amy's web site : [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy) Please join us during the daytime on November 10th or in the evening on November 11th to explore this topic. See the calendar for details. ■

## FORUM ON FAIR DISTRICTS BALLOT QUESTION #1: Should We End Gerrymandering in Massachusetts?

**Time:** Tuesday, October 12 at 7PM

**Place:** Hyde Community Center,  
90 Lincoln, Newton Highlands

**Kay Khan**, *State Representative in the  
11th Middlesex District in Newton*

**David Harris**, *Executive Director of  
the Lawyers' Committee for Civil  
Rights Under the Law of the Boston  
Bar Association*

**Pam Wilmot**, *Executive Director of  
Common Cause Massachusetts*

**Moderator:** Beth Lowd

## DEBATES FOR STATE OFFICES

### State Senate Debate

Matthew Fraser vs. Cynthia Creem

### 11th Middlesex Representative District Debate

Greer Tan Swiston vs. Kay Khan

**Time:** Thursday, October 14, 7:30PM

**Place:** New TV Studios,  
90 Lincoln Street  
Newton Highlands

## US. 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

### 4th Congressional District Debate

Chuck Morse vs. Barney Frank

**Time:** Sunday, October 17, 7:30PM

**Place:** New TV Studios,  
90 Lincoln Street  
Newton Highlands

## LWVN Officers and Directors 2004-2005

*Steering Committee*  
LWVNSteeringComm@yahoo.com

Bonnie Carter	617-969-0686
Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
Amelia Koch	617-244-2647
Beth Lowd	617-332-1978
Sue Rosenbaum	617-332-0306

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Newsletter	Andreae Downs	617-969-7123
Public Relations	Andrea Kelley	617-964-4609
Membership	Jody Klein	617-244-4767
Environment	Martha Richmond	617-244-2076
Voter Service	Sharyn Roberts	617-969-9588

### *Off Board Specialists*

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Handbook	Robin Maltz	617-969-1554
Human Rights	Holly Gunner	617-964-0767
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Recycling	Barbara Herson	617-964-7463
Unit Meetings	Linda Morrison <i>Co-Chair</i>	617-332-6539
Unit Meetings	Ruth Neiberg <i>Co-Chair</i>	617-969-9329
Web Site	Judy Jaffe	617-969-7427

### *Newsletter*

Editor	Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
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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.newtoncitizens.com/LWV](http://www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV)

*From the Steering Committee*

# In the Name of the League

As League members, we can be thankful for all of the volunteer hours that are spent in the name of the League of Women Voters of Newton! There are so many ways to become involved: join a committee, offer to register voters, help with the phonothon, bring in new members, observe and report on a city board or committee, help with a forum or debate, pass out information about League action items. Call 964-0014 to volunteer!

Thanks to the Environmental Committee, chaired by Martha Richmond and Linda Walden, and to the High Performance Building Coalition on which Deb Crossley represents the League and Brooke Lipsitt is co-chair, we are making a difference in the design process for the new Newton North High School.

Thanks to the Environmental Committee, chaired by Martha Richmond and Linda Walden, and to the High Performance Building Coalition on which Deb Crossley represents the League and Brooke Lipsitt and Kevin Dutt are co-chairs, we are making a difference in the design process for the new Newton North High School.

This group kicked off our Unit Meetings, ably organized by Ruth Neiberg and Linda Morrison this year, with a very informative and persuasive power point presentation by Kevin Dutt on High Performance Buildings and NNHS that will be shared with our city officials in the coming weeks. The program included an opportunity for the audience to respond, make suggestions, and ask questions.

Thanks to Sharyn Roberts and Sue Rosenbaum, the Voters' Service Committee is registering voters at the Farmers' Market and at local colleges. They are also encouraging parents to send absentee ballot applications to their college students -- don't forget yours!

Thanks to Ruby Ajanee, the Legislative Roundtable is off to a good start, with an excellent program on health care hosted by Holly Gunner and featuring all four of our Newton legislators.

We'll have a table at the Harvest Fair, Sunday, October 17 and would love some help there, encouraging membership and distributing voting information.

Beth Lowd and Bonnie Carter are organizing a televised public forum at the Hyde Community Center October 12 at 7 p.m. on the Fair Districts ballot question. Help is needed both for set up and clean up, and with camera work.

Many thanks to all of these wonderful volunteers for enriching the life of our League and of our city!■

*Beth Lowd*

*Welcome New Member!*

Heather Tausig  
20 Garland Road,  
Newton, MA 02459  
617-724-0363  
[htausig@aol.com](mailto:htausig@aol.com)

## League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Fall Conference

# OUR CHOICES, OUR FUTURE VOTE 2004

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30

Quincy Marriott Hotel • 1000 Marriott Drive, Quincy • 617-472-1000

9:00AM .....Registration

9:30AM .....Keynote

Speaker: Dolores Mitchell

*Vice President, Political Planning*

*National Women's Political Caucus*

*Founder, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus*

10:15AM .....Panel Discussion *Our Choices, Our Future*

HEALTH CARE

**Judith Kurland**

*Former Regional  
Director for the  
Department of Health  
and Human Services*

SECURITY

**Harvey Sapolsky**

*Director, Security  
Studies Program  
MIT*

EDUCATION

**Paul Reville**

*Executive Director,  
Rennie Center for  
Education Research &  
Policy, Mass INC*

THE ECONOMY

**John Walgreen**

*Director, Public Policy  
Program  
Wheaton College*

12 NOON .....Lunch

Speaker: Martha Coakley

*District Attorney, Middlesex County, Massachusetts*

1:30-3:30PM .....Workshops

- Voters Service Tools – Make Them Work for You!
- Justice in Massachusetts?
- Campaign Finance Reform – What is the Way
- Solving the Healthcare Crisis?
- No Better Time to Ask – League Membership in an Election Year

For more information, go to [www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org),  
email [lwvma@lwvma.org](mailto:lwvma@lwvma.org) or call 617-523-2999

## 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.

☐ My Email address may be shared with State and National LWV

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

## Committee Report

# Voter Service

*By Sharyn Roberts and Andreae Downs*

### Candidate Debates

- Legislative candidate debate nights have been set up by Bonnie Carter for Thursday night, October 14, at the NewTV Studio, 90 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands at 7:00 PM. Greer Tan Swiston will be debating Kay Khan for representation of the 11th Middlesex District and Matthew Fraser will be debating Cynthia Creem for the State Senatorship of First Middlesex and Norfolk Districts.
- Bonnie Carter in cooperation with Barbara McMann of the Wellesley League have set up a debate between Barney Frank and Chuck Morris, Candidates for the U.S. Fourth Congressional District, to be held on Sunday, October 17 also at the NewTV Studio at 7:00 PM.

### Student Voter Registration

- We are actively working with Lasell College and Mt. Ida College to have students register to vote.

At Lasell and Mt. Ida, the Voter Service Committee has been a presence at student orientations, activities fairs, and community service fairs. With the help of the staff of both colleges, students are now trained to run their own voter service booths at their respective college cafeteria every lunch and supper time for the next month.

- Pine Manor College is working in conjunction with the Brookline League to accomplish the same.
- The Voter Service Committee is also working with Newton North and South High Schools to register students who will be 18 years old by November 2. In addition, members of the committee are planning to make a presentation to a NNHS journalism class scheduled to begin at 7:50 a.m.

### Outreach to Newton Neighbors

- The Voter Service Committee is also working alternate weeks with the Newton Dialogues at the Farmers Market at Cold Spring Park, registering approximately 20 new voters each week with many more taking the forms home to be filled out by housemates, partners, and spouses.
- We are still welcoming League Members who are able to give an hour or two of their time at lunch to register high school students. If you are willing to give just two hours to work at a registration table this fall, please call Sue Rosenbaum at 617-332-0306 or email her at [dsr2@rcn.com](mailto:dsr2@rcn.com). You may also leave a message at the Newton League phone number: 617-964-0014. ■

# Be Watching For The Green

**We're familiar with the red and blue channels, but soon there will be another to consider as we determine what to view.**

In recent months, NewTV has begun upgrading the NewTV facilities using over \$230,000 in capital equipment funding provided by the City's renewed cable licenses with Comcast and RCN. The Red channel will continue as the Government channel. The Blue Channel will handle Public access programming and the Green channel becomes the Education access channel.

Capital funds are being spent on new and improved equipment available to NewTV members and staff. NewTV currently has 451 active members. One hundred and twenty-five of these members joined NewTV in FY 2004. Twenty-nine of these are Newton community organizations, including the League of Women Voters, accounting for the involvement of more than one person for each of those memberships.

Digital camcorders, editing equipment, video projectors are examples of equipment that has been added to support the work of these individuals and organizations. In addition, money was put towards the renovation of the reception area and upgrading of staff computers.

NewTV is an educational institution in our community. In Fiscal Year 2004, NewTV offered 27 different training classes and 444 members became certified in specific skills. You can view the variety of offerings under the main headings: Studio classes, Field classes, Editing classes and Computer based classes, at [www.newtv.org](http://www.newtv.org).

Over the last twenty-five years, the League has had a special interest in the value of community-based television. League members sat on the original committee to determine the relationship between the city and public access television. We continue to value our relationship as we present informative programs of public interest, such as candidate debates, public forums and our Legislative Roundtable.

**Count us in with those who are watching  
NewTV turn Green! ■**

## Legislative Roundtable



**For current schedule log on to  
[www.newtv.org](http://www.newtv.org)**

*Committee Report*

FROM: LWVN Health Care Committee

RE: Health Care Action Update

**LESS THAN WE HOPED FOR**

Governor Romney (or more accurately, Lt. Governor Healy) vetoed the bill that would have asked the Division of Public Policy and Finance to study the cost, and the savings of implementing the Mass Health Care Trust Bill – the bill that would have instituted single payer, universal health care in Massachusetts. It is unlikely that the Legislature will override the veto in its informal session, and so, Mass-Care is hard at work writing a new universal health care bill that will be filed in December. At this writing, it seems that this bill will include the costs and the savings involved in establishing single payer, universal health care in Massachusetts.

All the while, the number of uninsured, the costs incurred by physicians, hospitals, and patients – and the profits of HMOs – soar!■

**MBTA ON-LINE CUSTOMER SURVEY**

TransitWorks (a non-profit) is conducting an “MBTA Ridership Survey” to collect customer feedback from riders. We have LWVN members who regularly ride the T and might want to know how to participate. Go to: [www.transitworks.org/resources/survey\\_form.htm](http://www.transitworks.org/resources/survey_form.htm).■

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS ELECTION SEASON?**

Opportunities for action by League members on the Fair Districts for Fair Elections ballot question:

- 1** Write letter to editor: Oct. 1, 8, 15 or 22
- 2** Hand out literature at the Library or Newtonville Star Market on weekends
- 3** Hand out literature in your neighborhood.
- 4** Hold a sign at a busy corner during commuting hours.
- 5** Put a lawn sign in your yard - especially if you live on a busy street.
- 6** Help at the public forum, Hyde Community Center, Oct. 12 6-9:30 p.m.
- 7** Help at the Harvest Fair, Oct. 17, 12-6 p.m.
- 8** Pass out palm cards at the polls Nov. 2 either 7-9 a.m. or 5-7 p.m.

Contact Beth Lowd, 332-1978 or [blowd@mindspring.com](mailto:blowd@mindspring.com)

**Committees - in - Action***Local Action*Contact Deb Crossley, Chair <sup>617</sup>244-7597

## OBSERVER CORPS

*Community Preservation Committee*Jody Klein  
Priscilla Leith*Election Commission*Bonnie Carter  
Nancy Criscitiello*Finance Committee, Board of Alderman*Ruby Ajane  
Amelia Koch*Newton Citizen Commission on Energy*Deb Crossley,  
LWVN Representative*Newton Free Library Board*

Mary Adelstein

*Parks and Recreation Commission*

Priscilla Leith

*Zoning and Planning Committee,  
Board of Aldermen*

Judy Jaffe

*Environmental Issues*Focus Promoting source reduction,  
and recycling programs in  
municipal offices and public  
schoolsMembers Deb Crossley  
Katherine Gekas  
Beth Lowd  
Barbara Herson  
Robin Maltz  
Martha Richmond  
Sharyn RobertsContact Linda Walden, Chair <sup>617</sup>630-9538*Nominating Committee*Members Barbara Lietzke  
Carol Ann SheaContact Janet Stearns, Chair <sup>617</sup>559-9987

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





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

## Massachusetts Voters BILL OF RIGHTS

### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

- ☉ Vote if you are a qualified registered voter.
- ☉ Cast your ballot in a manner that ensures privacy.
- ☉ Vote without any person trying to influence your vote and to vote in a booth that prevents others from watching you mark your ballot.
- ☉ Remain in the voting booth for five minutes if there are other voters waiting and for ten minutes if there are no other voters waiting.
- ☉ Receive up to two replacement ballots if you make a mistake and spoil your ballot.
- ☉ Request assistance when voting from a poll worker or anyone of your choice, except your employer or an officer of your union or their representatives.
- ☉ Vote if you are disabled. The polling place must be accessible, and there must be an accessible voting booth.
- ☉ Vote if you cannot read or write or cannot read or write English.
- ☉ Vote but must show identification if: you are a first-time voter who registered to vote by mail and did not submit identification with the voter registration form; or your name is on the inactive voter list; or your vote is being challenged; or if requested by the poll worker. Acceptable forms of identification are: Massachusetts driver's license, other printed documentation containing your name and address such as a recent utility bill, rent receipt on landlord's letterhead, lease, or a copy of a voter registration acknowledgment or receipt.
- ☉ Vote by absentee ballot if: you will be absent from your city or town on Election Day; or if you have a physical disability that prevents your voting at the polling place; or if you cannot vote at the polls due to religious belief.
- ☉ Cast a provisional ballot if you believe you are a qualified registered voter but a poll worker tells you that you are ineligible to vote.
- ☉ Follow up any challenge to your right to vote through the complaint process.
- ☉ Vote if you are not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction and have registered as a voter after your release.
- ☉ Take this Voters' Bill of Rights or any other papers, including a sample ballot, voter guide or campaign material, into the voting booth with you. Please remember to remove all papers when you leave the booth.
- ☉ Vote at your polling place any time between 7 am and 8 pm for state and federal elections—hours may vary for local elections. If you are in line at your polling place when the polls close at 8 pm, you have the right to vote.
- ☉ Bring your children into the voting booth with you.

If you feel that your right to vote has been violated in any way, call the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683). This call is free within Massachusetts.

Your voting rights are protected. These rights are guaranteed to qualified registered voters.

*Prepared by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, June 2004*

## LWVN CALENDAR

### October

- 1 Friday, 9:00 a.m., **Environmental Committee**, at the home of Linda Walden, 39 Rokeby Rd., Waban, 617-630-9538
- 4 Monday, 5:30-9:00 p.m., **Phonothon**, AG Edwards & Sons, Newton Lower Falls, Contact Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Supper provided
- 5 Tuesday, LWVN at **Volunteer Job Fair**, Newton Free Library
- 6 Thursday, 7:00 p.m., **Potluck/Working Board Meeting**, at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Pkwy, Newton, 617-964-0333, Chair- Beth Lowd
- 12 Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., **Forum on Ballot Question # 1**, Should We End Gerrymandering in Massachusetts? Hyde Community Center, Public Invited
- 13 Wednesday, **Final Day to register to vote and to change party enrollment** for the November State/Presidential Election.  
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, Ballot Question #1 with Michael Sriquei/Asst. Director of Common Cause, at the home of Marianne Hudec, 48 Druid Hill Rd., Newton Highlands, 617-527-4276. Brown bag lunches encouraged.  
1:00 p.m. LWVN at the Newton Senior Center
- 14 Thursday, **Newsletter Deadline**  
7:30 p.m., **Debate for State Offices** at NewTV, Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Public Invited.
- 17 Sunday, Noon to 5:00 p.m.  
**Harvest Fair**, Newton Centre Green (rain date 10/24)  
7:30 p.m. **Debate for 4th Congressional District** at NewTV, Bonnie Carter, 617-060-0686, Public Invited

- 19 Tuesday, **LWVMA Voters' Guide** in Boston Globe
- 21 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **Board Meeting** at the home of Sue Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Rd. Waban, 617-332-0306, Chair- Beth Lowd
- 30 Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-3:30p.m. **LWVMA Fall Conference**, "Our Choices, Our Future - Vote 2004!" Quincy Marriott

### November

- 2 Tuesday, **State/Presidential Election Day**, Polls Open 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- 3 Wednesday, 12:00 noon, **LWVN @ Newton Highlands Women's Club**
- 4 Thursday, 7:00, **Potluck/Working Board Meeting** at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Parkway, Newton, 617-964-0333, Chair-Beth Lowd
- 10 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **LWVMA Study on Voter Systems II**, at the home of Ruby Ajanee, 161 Sumner St., Newton Centre, 617-243-9888. Coordinators- Linda Morrison and Sue Rosenbaum
- 11 Thursday, 7:30 p.m.- 9:30 p.m. **LWVMA Study on Voter Systems II**, at the home of Linda Morrison, 14 Floral Place, Newton Highlands, 617-332-6539. Coordinators - Linda Morrison and Sue Rosenbaum.
- 14 Sunday, **Newsletter Deadline**
- 18 Thursday, 7:15 p.m., **Board Meeting** at the home of Beth Lowd, 38 Hobart Rd., Newton Centre, 617-332-1978. Chair- Beth Lowd

League of Women Voters of Newton

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### What's Inside

Voting Systems .....	1
Forums & Debates .....	1
From the Steering Committee .....	2
LWVM Fall Conference .....	3
NewTV Green .....	4
Health Care Committee Update .....	5
MBTA Survey .....	5
Massachusetts Voter Bill of Rights .....	7