



Bulletin

February 2006

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League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover

President's Letter

By Peggy Kruse

The LWV's major event in February is a discussion of Green Chemistry on Mon, Feb. 6, sponsored by the LWV's Sustainability Group. What's Green Chemistry? Green Chemistry is about reducing the use of hazardous substances when making products; the intent is to minimize the impact on human health and the environment while still being economically competitive. The speaker, John Warner of UMass Lowell, is a big name in this field, making this a great opportunity to learn about what will hopefully be the wave of the future.

January's Running for Office Workshop provided a valuable service to the five N. Andover candidates who attended. Thanks to Voter Service chairs Kathy Stevens and Diana Walsh and to Town Clerks Joyce Bradshaw and Randy Hansen for organizing the workshop. Thanks also to presenters Mary Lyman, Andover Selectman; William Kelly, North Andover School Committee member; and Denis Kennedy from the MA Office of Campaign & Political Finance.

The Home@Last forum painted a picture of the detrimental effect that the lack of affordable housing has, not only on people, but also on businesses in the region. Thanks to the forum presenters: Karen Wiener, Sarah Bartley, Susan Stott, Susan Dennett, John Hess, Joseph Bevilaqua, and Ellie O'Leary. The co-sponsors of this event illustrate the many opportunities to get involved: the Housing Partnerships and Housing Authorities of both towns are advisory and monitoring entities; the Andover Community Trust and Habitat for Humanity build affordable homes; and CHAPA, the North Shore Housing Trust, and the LWV's Affordable Housing committee are educational and advocacy groups. Many thanks to the many people who organized this event: Sarah Bartley, Susan Dennett, Joan Duff,

George Koehler, Annette Nickerson, Lisa Schwarz, Susan Stott and Jodi Weeks.

The LWV-sponsored informal discussion on Historic Preservation was a great learning experience for those new to the topic as well as for the seasoned preservationists. Thanks to our preservation and planning experts Karen Herman, Erica Holthausen, Lisa Schwarz, Lynn Smiledge and Kathy Szyska for leading the discussion. Thanks to Diane Hender for organizing the evening.

The League held both a lunchtime and an evening social this month. Our first ever Cocktails & Conversation, held at the request of members who are not available for lunch gatherings, was a convivial affair in a relaxed atmosphere, allowing LWV members to meet new friends, catch up with old friends, and actually finish conversations. At January's well-attended Lunch & Conversation, we had an interesting discussion comparing zoning issues across Andover, N. Andover and Haverhill (with members from all three communities represented). "Newcomers" are always welcome to these events, so if you've ever toyed with the idea of joining us, mark your calendar for Tue, Feb. 14 at 11:30 a.m. at Panera's.

As we move into spring, we start planning for next year. LWV Treasurer Cynde Egan has included a treasurer's report in this Bulletin. The LWV Budget Committee, Diana Walsh, Amy Janovsky and me, will meet later this month. If you have any budgetary suggestions for the LWV, please relay them to one of us.

North Andover Candidates Forum

Thursday, March 2, 7 pm, Selectmen's Meeting Room

Andover Candidates Forum

Thursday, March 9, 7 pm, Memorial Hall Library

The Candidates Forums showcase candidates for townwide offices, including Selectmen, School Committee, Moderator, and Housing Authority, and are broadcast live.

MA Legislative Action Update

By Carol Pelchat

Note: Andover/North Andover Legislators are noted in bold.

The LWVMA supports the following legislation:

Senate # 2034 – A Petition for a legislative amendment to the Constitution to authorize the General Court to provide for absentee voting by any voter has been reported on favorably by the joint committee on Election Laws (Senators Edward Augustus, Karen Spilka, Michael Morrissey, Andrea Nuciforo, **Steven Baddour**, and Scott Brown. Representatives Anthony Petrucci, Demetrius Atsalis, Paul Kujawski, Geraldine Creedon, James Eldridge, Steven Walsh, Joseph Driscoll, Patrick Natale, Cleon Turner, Paul Frost, and Mary Rogeness). It continues to await review at the next scheduled Joint Session on 5/10/06.

Senate # 12 – A petition for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to establishing an independent redistricting commission and criteria for redistricting was referred to the committee on Election Laws (see above). It continues to await review at the next scheduled Joint Session on 5/10/06.

Senate # 444 – A petition for legislation relative to Election Day registration has been referred to the joint committee on Election Laws (see above). A public hearing was held on 7/19/05. An attempt to establish a pilot program through the budget process was initiated and failed to garner sufficient votes to pass. The bill continues in Committee, which is favorable to the proposition. It may be combined with other election reform proposals as a package, but will not be enacted by the upcoming election.

Senate # 465 – A petition for legislation to ensure voting rights in the Commonwealth has been referred to the committee on Election Laws (see above). A public hearing was held on 7/19/05. It has not as yet been scheduled for Executive Session.

Senate # 2144 – A bill relative to responsible welfare reform was passed with amendments in the Senate on 9/20/05. Bill as amended in conference was passed to be engrossed (printed) in the Senate as # 2193. It is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee for review and vote prior to referral to the governor for signature.

Senate # 929 – A petition for legislation relative to drug mandatory minimum sentences was referred to the committee on the Judiciary (Senators Robert Creedon, **Steven Baddour**, Robert Antonioni, Thomas McGee, Cynthia Creem, and Brian Lees.

Representatives Eugene O'Flaherty, Barrett Bradley, Kay Khan, James Murphy, Michael Costello, Alice Peisch, John Keenan, Daniel Webster, and Lewis Evangelidis). A Public Hearing was held on 11/22/05. It currently remains in Committee. Senator Creem has requested that the Committee move quickly to report favorably on the bill.

House # 876 – A petition relative to the administration of the Trial Court with reference to recommendations made by the Monan Committee was referred to the committee on the Judiciary (see above). A public hearing was held on 6/28/05. It has not been scheduled for Executive Session as of this date.

Senate # 350 – A petition for legislation to simplify and make more equitable the provisions of Chapter 70 relative to distribution of state aid and the requirements for spending by local governments was referred to the committee on Education (Senators Robert Antonioni, Edward Augustus, Dianne Wilkerson, Pamela Resor, Karen Spilka, and Scott Brown. Representatives Patricia Haddad, Geraldine Creedon, Douglas Petersen, Paul Kujawski, Stephen Le Duc, Alice Wolf, Robert Nyman, Matthew Patrick, Martha Walz, Jeffrey Perry, and Richard Ross). A public hearing was held on 6/2/05. It has not as yet been scheduled for Executive Session.

Senate # 619 – A petition for legislation relative to equitable coverage for annuity policies was referred to the committee on Financial Services (Senators Andrea Nuciforo, Dianne Wilkerson, Mark Montigny, **Susan Tucker**, Stephen Buoniconti, and Scott Brown. Representatives Ronald Mariano, Robert Spellane, William Galvin, James Murphy, Peter Kocot, Robert Coughlin, Joyce Spiliotis, Joseph Driscoll, James Welch, Susan Gifford, and Daniel Webster). It has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.

Senate # 755 – A petition for legislation to establish the Massachusetts health care trust was referred to the committee on Health Care Financing (Senators Richard Moore, Steven Tolman, Susan Fargo, Harriette Chandler, Karen Spilka, **Susan Tucker**, and Scott Brown. Representatives Patricia Walrath, James Marzilli, Frank Hynes, James Fagan, Thomas Stanley, Christopher Fallon, James Leary, Robert Coughlin, John Scibak, Robert Hargraves, and Susan Gifford). A Public Hearing was held on 7/20/05. House 4463 accompanied this bill. Following votes on multiple amendments, the bill is currently in conference as House 4479.

Continued on page 9

Townwide PTO

January 20, 2006

by Diane Hender

Reports from School Improvement Councils

Annie Gilbert, Bancroft parent, summarized the joint plan for Andover's elementary schools. While an individual plan was developed for each of the six buildings, the principals chose two overriding needs for the level which became their joint proposal. The first reflects what they believe is a strongly-held community value: class size should not exceed the mid-point of the range for grade. Because the current policy was adopted in 1977, and because of the considerable increase in expectations over the intervening years, an assessment and possible revision of the policy was requested.

The second request is for staffing increases to meet each school's unique needs.

- 1) Bancroft: school adjustment counselor, increase from .8 FTE to 1 FTE
Cost: \$ 9,000
- 2) High Plain: ed team facilitator (SpEd services coordinator) .6 FTE to .8 FTE
Cost: \$10,000
- 3) Sanborn: school adjustment counselor, .5 FTE to .8 FTE
Cost: \$15,000
- 4) Shawsheen: learning specialist, .5 FTE to 1 FTE
\$31,000
New fulltime SpEd teacher (none on staff at present)
Cost: \$51,522
- 5) South: RN (as required) rather than LPN (school handles 48% of medical administration at elementary level
Cost: \$14,000
- 6) West El: additional custodian (half of building now cleaned daily)
Cost: \$27,000

Andrea Zaines, high school parent, explained that the AHS PAC has been addressing the school's budgetary needs – 990 hours, 7.5 credits, social worker, clubs, etc. – so the focus of the SIP is somewhat different than those at the other levels. Their plan also reflects the active participation of student representatives on the council.

- 1) Improve communication and build strong relationships with all members of the school community, with the installation of an AHS sign and the eventual introduction of a newsletter for all residents of Andover.

- 2) Target the diverse learning requirements of all students by identifying and addressing particular needs, including basic life skills.
- 3) Prepare all students for post-high school life; provide practical education for college or vocational training through mentoring and internships with alumni and other local business people.

Internet Safety

Ray Tode, Technology Coordinator, introduced NetSmartz, a national program developed by the Internet Crime Against Children Task Force to reduce the risk from sexual and other predators. The program will be integrated into the health education and technology curricula, and a series of presentations are planned to raise parent awareness of the dangers and how they can protect their children. For more information, visit www.NetSmartz.org.

Massachusetts and the School Budget

Tom Brady reported on the January 18th "lobby day" on Beacon Hill for the Initiative for Local Aid, spearheaded by a Chelmsford group. Among the interesting statistics cited were:

1. The current range of per pupil Chapter 70 funding is approximately \$500 to over \$9000; Andover receives \$903 per student in state aid.
2. It is estimated that, on average statewide, districts will experience at \$110 per pupil shortfall this year in fuel funding.
3. In the 1970's, Chapter 70 funding was about 13% of the state budget; it decreased to 10.2% in the 80's, and now Massachusetts spends about 9.6% on education.

All three of Andover's state legislators were present at the meeting. Representative Barbara L'Italien mentioned that overall school budgets are funded 54% through local revenues, 40% by the state, and 6% by the federal government. These percentages reflect the steady decline in state support for Andover: FY01 was \$7.8 million; FY02 almost \$8.5 million; then \$5.2 million for FY06. Governor Romney's anticipated budget proposal for FY07 indicates 17% for local aid; this can be viewed as baseline since the legislature usually increases this amount.

Senator Susan Tucker commented that, after the state economy crashed about four years ago, with the resultant massive (\$3 billion) cuts to the state budget, municipalities found creative ways to maintain many programs and services.

Continued on page 9.

Home @ Last

By Annette Nickerson

The Home@Last program cosponsored with the North Shore Housing Trust and CHAPA was held on January 11 at Andover Library with more than 50 attendees. The program featured the Home@Last video focusing on the importance of Affordable Housing in Essex County and included Andover Commons and Greenwood Meadows as successful examples of attractive and affordable condos and single-family units.

Following the video, Sarah Bartley of North Shore Housing Trust and Karen Wiener of CHAPA provided information on the critical need for Affordable Housing in Essex County and the importance of community involvement. The CHAPA Home@Last website has sample letters that can be used to bring attention of the issue to local officials. Sarah and Karen presented the following facts to highlight the problem: an annual income of \$140K is needed to buy a median priced home in Essex County (\$420K); in Andover and North Andover the average sales price of homes is \$525K and \$500K respectively.

Susan Stott of Andover Community Trust and Susan Dennett of North Andover Housing Partnership presented information (including photographs) on the affordable units in Andover and North Andover. The photos help to re-emphasize an important aspect of the video: in general affordable units are attractive and indistinguishable from other housing in the area.

The following panelists provided additional insights regarding the Affordable Housing issue:

- John Hess of the Andover Board of Selectmen spoke about the importance of affordable housing in maintaining a diverse community and how the general public needs to be educated in the meaning of "affordable". He also discussed residential vs. commercial property and their corresponding portion of taxes and use of services. The common argument is that affordable housing overburdens the community's services (particularly schools) without a proportionate share of the tax burden. However, studies have shown that this is not the case and there is the added economic benefit to the community of a diverse population.
- Joseph Bevilacqua, President Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce discussed the impact on business development when affordable housing is not available. As housing in Merrimack Valley continues to become less affordable it is difficult for communities to maintain employees who can live and work in their community. It is also a problem for small

business development when potential employees cannot live in the area.

- Ellie O'Leary of Coastal Homebuyer Programs gave a summary of their educational programs and a general profile of the attendees:

Age group: mainly twenties and thirties

70 percent have a household income of \$30K to \$60K

58 percent have Bachelor's degree

33 percent have Graduate degree

Thanks to Peggy Kruse for moderating and the Affordable Housing Study Group for coordinating the program.

No. Andover Channel 8 TV Listings

Home@Last From 1/11,2006

Sun. 2/5--9:30pm

Wed. 2/8--10:00am

Fri. 2/17--8:00pm

Sat. 2/25--9:00am

Mon. 2/27--5:30pm

Planning for Affordable Housing

From 1/26/2006

Fri. 2/3--7:00pm

David S. Drinon, ChFC
Senior Vice President

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Local Program Planning

Save the Date!!

Safe Lawns for Children: Organic Garden Fair

Saturday, March 25, 2006
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
West Parish Church
Andover

Local Program Planning Update: Date Change

By Stefani Traina Goldshein, VP Program/Action

To allow members more time to develop ideas for new local League studies, we are rescheduling local program planning to early April. Details will appear in the March Bulletin, as well as on our website calendar. If you have any questions, contact Stefani at 978-470-3140 or stefraina@comcast.net.

Membership

Don't Forget!!

Andover/North Andover Town Elections

Tuesday, March 28, 2006
7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Membership Dues Reminder

Member Dues Overdue for 2005/2006

If you have not paid your 2005/2006 dues, they are over due. We do not want to lose you as a member, but if we do not receive your dues by the end of this month, we will have to drop you from our roster. League of Women Voters of Massachusetts requires that we provide them with the final roster at the beginning of the New Year.

To maintain your membership and continue the benefits of receiving the local Bulletin, National Voter and the Massachusetts Voter, as well as to support the work of the LWV of Andover/North Andover, please forward your membership dues today!

Checks may be sent to the post office box, with the form below. If you are unsure if you have paid, please check the mailing label of this Bulletin to see your status or call Joan Duff at (978) 685-3212.

Handbook Updates

New Members:

George Koehler, 41 Quail Run, North Andover, MA 01845;
(978) 683-2087

Susan Stott, 4 Robandy Road, Andover, MA 01810; (978) 475-3748.

LWV Andover/North Andover 2004-2005 MEMBERSHIP

____ \$55 Basic ____ \$60 Contributing ____ \$75 Sustaining ____ \$100 (and over) Patron

____ \$75 Household (2 persons in same household) ____ \$35 Senior Citizen (65 and over)

____ In addition to my membership, I'd like to make a contribution of \$ ____.

____ Enclosed is a separate check, my tax-deductible contribution of \$ ____ to the Education Fund.

Send checks payable to: LWV OF ANDOVER/NORTH ANDOVER:

Membership, P.O. Box 514, Andover, MA 01810

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____ Areas of Interest _____

Thank you! Joan Duff, Membership, 978.685.3212

Town Budget Study Group

Town Budget Study Group

By Lolli Sumberg

The Town Budgeting Process Study Committee would appreciate your input. If there is a budget shortfall and an increase in State Aid will not cover the shortfall, what options do we have? Reduce or eliminate services, increase fees or raise property taxes, or some combination of all of these. It is our intention to generate discussion by "thinking outside the box" when making decision about Andover's current and future budget issues.

A survey has been sent via email to all members whose emails are on file. It is also included in this Bulletin. Please return to Lolli Sumberg 4 Woburn St. Andover, MA 01810 or send your email request for the survey to lollisumberg@comcast.net.

Although TBPSC has focused on Andover's budget, responses from our North Andover members will also be important. League members from North Andover might find it valuable to fill out the survey to use as a reference when reviewing North Andover's budget.

Town Budget Study SURVEY

Please check one:

Andover Member or North Andover Member or

Other: _____

A = agree, D = disagree, DK=Don't Know

Do you agree with the following assumptions?

Free Cash and the Stabilization fund must be replenished.

Health care costs, energy costs, employee compensation, and SPED costs continue to rise.

Revenues projections from new growth and State aid will not fully cover current increases in expenses

Town and school buildings and other physical structures (roads, etc.) must be maintained in a timely manner

State aid is not adequate or fair

We must honor state mandates

Other/Comment :

Do you agree that the town boards have some discretion over the following expenditures?

The level of services provided by the town.

The number and amount of capital improvements undertaken by the town.

Other/Comment :

What town services are essential (services that the Town MUST provide) and what are non-essential?

E = Essential, N= Non Essential, DK=Don't know

Safety – fire, police

Education/schools

Town clerk, general government offices

Planning, Health, Zoning and conservation

Senior services

Youth services

Recreation / Community Services

Public works(water, sewer, road maintenance)

Trash Collection

Other ESSENTIAL services:

Other NON-Essential services :

How should essential services be funded?

From within the budget

General override

Other:

How should non-essential services be funded?

Self-supporting fees

General override with multiple options

Eliminated

Other:

How should capital improvements and projects be funded?

From within the budget

Debt-exclusion override with multiple options

Eliminated

Other:

Other Questions:

Should Pay-As-You-Throw be instituted?

Comment:

Should the NESWC money be put into the Stabilization Fund with a % (or all) of the interest earned annually spent on Capital Improvement Projects?

Comment:

To close the budget gap would you

eliminate a service

List service(s) to be eliminated -

List service (s) to be self supporting -

Green Chemistry

By Joyce Ringleb

John Warner, a world class green chemist from UMASS Lowell is speaking on February 6, at Andover Memorial Hall Library, 3rd floor, at 7:00 p.m. The Sustainability Committee is presenting this educational program, which is free and open to the public.

Dr. Warner started the world's first Green Chemistry PhD program at UMASS Boston. He continues to explore how Green Chemistry principles can be put to immediate use in better, safer, products. Come catch his enthusiasm for this timely topic.

Mercury Pollution

The Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a statewide coalition working to protect our health from toxic chemicals, is currently engaged in a no-holds barred team effort to pass the Mercury Products Bill (H-4319 An Act Relative to Comprehensive Mercury Management). When the legislature opened the 2006 Formal Session, staff and volunteers for the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow delivered a letter to Representative Robert DeLeo (D-Winthrop), Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, signed by 81 Representatives requesting that the bill be released from the Ways & Means Committee and brought for a floor vote in early 2006.

Thanks to this momentum and grassroots support, the Mercury Products Bill is scheduled to be released from committee and brought for a floor vote on February 1st! After working on this bill for nearly five years, the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow is incredibly close to a legislative victory, and one that will make strides towards reducing dangerous mercury pollution. Despite the fact that Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, and Vermont have already passed similar legislation, much opposition remains. Industry lobbyists are eager to stop this bill in its tracks and their pressure will only increase as it gets closer to passage. For that reason, the success of the bill depends on grassroots support. Please contact your legislators and urge them to vote "Yes" on the Mercury Products Bill. Your help will be crucial! Together, we've gotten the bill this far and together we can pass it.

Correction: Due to an editing error, the article in the December Bulletin about trash collection incorrectly reported what was currently picked up curbside in Andover. Couches, gas grills and mattresses (but not appliances) are, at the moment, picked up at no charge; however, the Andover Recycling Committee would like to charge for these bulky items as a way to decrease the tonnage of trash collected.

Trash Tonage

Eight months and the trend continues! Trash tonnage down and recycling up since May 1, 2005.

In the eight months since Andover started actively enforcing the state waste bans:

-Trash has dropped by 9% or ~100 tons each month compared to the same months last year. Since May, this represents a decrease of 785 tons and a savings of over \$50,000.

-Andover is approaching 12000 TPY, about halfway to the Selectmen's goal of 11,000 TPY.

-Recycling increased 7% over eight months, reversing a declining trend from the past year.

Background

In September 2004, the Andover Recycling Committee advocated to the Board of Selectmen a series of steps to reduce the generation of solid waste. The steps included setting a specific goal, publicizing the trends and progress towards the goal, implementation of a new policy of waste ban enforcement, and, if needed, implementing a fee for bulky items. After adoption of the new goals, the Recycling Committee started its publicity with periodic updates at Selectmen's meetings, press releases in the paper, and information on the cable TV.

To implement the waste ban enforcement, the committee met with both the solid waste and recycling haulers and discussed the logistics and set a start date of May 1, 2005. The publicity started two months prior to the start date with inserts in the water bills (which reaches all residents on a 6 month cycle), a color insert in the local paper, revisions to the annual recycling calendar, press releases, and announcements at the Selectmen's meetings. A key part of the publicity was stickers to be put on the cardboard.

Starting on May 1st, the trash truck drivers were instructed to leave behind any "visible recycles or waste ban items". They did not have to open trash bags. If a resident left a cardboard box, however, alongside the trash and it was clearly not prepared for the recycling collection, it was to be left behind with a sticker on it. Likewise, if a cardboard box was used as a trash container, it was to be left behind. There was some resistance on the part of the haulers to leaving the cardboard because of the pressure put on them by residents. There was also a reluctance on the part of the truck drivers to use the stickers. After repeated encouragement from the DPW and Recycling

Continued on page 8.

Sustainability/Natural Resources, Trash Tonnage: Continued from page 7.

Committee, they did leave the cardboard behind in most cases. The initial weeks involved a significant increase in the number of phone calls to the DPW asking why their cardboard wasn't being picked up. After about 3 weeks, the number of calls diminished.

The keys to success in Andover were:

- The presence of state regulations which have been around for 10 years;
- Support of the Selectmen, Town Manager and DPW;
- Having staff at the DPW and Town Manager's office who were good at fielding calls and emails from unhappy residents;
- Offering the help of a Boy Scout Troop for those who couldn't manage the job of cutting cardboard into 2'x2' pieces for recycling (although no one has actually requested the help);
- The Town of Andover does not have a drop-off area open to the public for recyclables, although there are cardboard only dumpsters at every school and town building, at the local private school, and a few local businesses. The Town did not publicize the availability of cardboard dumpsters due to concerns about illegal dumping but residents who were aware of them may have brought cardboard to those dumpsters if they had large quantities to recycle.
- The Town offers an unlimited number of recycling bins free to residents and also offers "Bottle and Can" stickers for residents who want to use barrels for their co-mingled containers. There was a surge in demand for bins and stickers. Most residents now have two or more recycling bins.
- A series of press articles throughout the year urging waste reduction of all kinds and reminding residents of the cost savings the result, promoting paper recycling, food waste composting and a reusable items collection event held in May.

Please Keep Watch for the PIP!

The Public Involvement Plan information repository has been established at the Memorial Hall Library for the Andover Town Landfill. Remember that Andover's watershed contains Fish Brook.

The MA Campaign to Protect Drinking Water

As you know, there is a meeting with DEP and EOE in early March to discuss our Drinking Water Protection Platforms, and to highlight the local drinking water issues of the member groups. This Planning Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1st in Westborough at Conservation Services Group offices located at 495 and Rte. 9 at 7:30 pm.

1. Introductions
2. Review campaign principles and platforms; make edits and suggestions
3. Discuss local concerns/campaigns that you would like to bring before the agencies' staff members
4. Finalize logistics and agenda for DEP/EOEA Meeting

Save the Date!!

The League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover's Sustainability Committee Presents

Green Chemistry

Dr. John Warner

Monday, February 6, 7 pm

Memorial Hall Library, 3rd floor

Andover Warrant Forum

Help Wanted

By Stefani Traina Goldshein, VP Program/Action

Andover's Town Meeting will begin on April 24. The League's public Warrant forum is scheduled for Wednesday, April 5 at Memorial Hall Library. We are looking for a chairperson and members to work on the forum. The tasks include selecting and researching Warrant articles and presenting the information to the public at the forum. We strive to present accurate, balanced information to help educate voters prior to Town Meeting. It's a great way to learn about the issues you will be voting on. If you think you might be interested, please contact Stefani at 978-470-3140 or stefraina@comcast.net. Any and all help is welcome.

Legislative Update: Continued from page 2

The LWVMA opposes the following legislation:

Senate # 442 – A bill requiring photo identification for the delivery of a ballot;
House #56 – a bill requiring voters to furnish identification. These bills were referred to the committee on Election Laws (see above). A public hearing on both bills was held on 6/7/05. The Committee recommended that House 56 not pass. It was referred to the House Steering, Policy and Scheduling Committee, which had the measure placed on the Orders of the Day. The Committee's report was accepted on 1/10/06. The Committee recommended that Senate 442 not pass. It was referred to the Senate Ethics and Rules Committee, where it remains, the concern apparently being that the bill, as written, exceeds federal guidelines. There is currently a House bill (#92) which requires identification if the person registered by mail after 1/1/2003 and has not previously voted in a primary, caucus, preliminary, or other election in the Commonwealth, which is consistent with federal guidelines. This bill was reported on favorably by the Election Laws Committee and referred to the House Steering, Policy and Scheduling Committee, was placed on the House Orders of the Day. A second reading has held on 10/27/05 and ordered to a third reading. This is pending.

Townwide PTO: Continued from page 3

Now, however, there are few if any local options left. On the plus side, current state revenues are higher than expected, but continuing federal cuts, especially in health care, are likely to counter any surplus. Speaking of Chapter 70, she acknowledged the significant differential between funding for urban and "wealthier" suburban communities but reminded that the courts preclude sole reliance on property taxes for funding public education. There is popular sentiment that the foundation budget formula needs to be changed, but there can be no agreement on the how; any proposal that would hurt any community (and almost any conceivable change would), simply won't pass. Therefore, rather than reallocating the Chapter 70 pie, Massachusetts may have to enlarge it to ensure that the quality of education is not eroded. Businesses move into "good" communities; good schools help define "good" communities; and new businesses are essential to the growth of state revenues.

Dr. Bach spoke of the "Acton initiative," and the recommendation that the minimum Chapter 70 funding for any district be \$2000, significantly above the current \$500+ received by one district.

Representative Barry Finegold noted that Andover's is the 27th largest school district in Massachusetts. In light of the fact that the state is rebuilding, he asked what money would be needed over the next few years for the schools; he has put the same question to the Town Manager for the town as a whole. Dr. Bach replied that her FY07 budget proposal will lay out the costs to maintain the existing level of services and a 5-year rebuilding plan. School Committee member Tony James indicated a \$3 million gap plus an additional \$1 million for "modest" rebuilding in FY07. The gap primarily is attributable to salaries, health care (\$1 million annual increase), out-of-district SpEd, and a less dramatic increase in utility costs. The budget for FY06 is \$51,340,000; the proposed for FY07 is around \$55 million. School Committee chair Debra Silberstein remarked that, unless this funding can be found, Andover's schools will be "moving on the road to mediocrity."

As a result of the political reality in this election year and with the Republican base of support in the suburbs, Representative L'Italien foresees an acceleration of the uncapping of the lottery and a quicker return of 100% back to the municipalities. She also mentioned that the legislature is considering some relief for health care costs.



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INDEPENDENT
WELLNESS
CONSULTANT

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ANTHONY S. CONTE, DIRECTOR

Historic Preservation

By Michael Frishman

What is historic? What is preservation? What should be preserved? Those are the three questions that began the January 28 discussion at Andover Memorial Hall Library. Fifteen League members, guests and other invited participants from Andover, North Andover and Methuen spent the next two hours answering those questions and discussing the current status of preservation and specific situations in their communities.

Even within our three communities the approaches and emphases overlap, but also have differences and different levels of success. The discussion itself was more a comparing of efforts and description/analysis of current activities than an effort to propose guidelines of programs.

Methuen's Director of Historic Planning is working to update guidelines and rules. The city presently considers historic pre-1875 buildings, which includes almost none. All three communities are facing the fact that they had major surges in development, especially housing, beginning in the 1950's and those structures are now over 50 years old and among the most vulnerable to the various permutations of removal and replacement. The Bicentennial in the mid 1970's saw the first significant interest in cataloguing and preservation of community heritage and much at that time was still comparatively new.

North Andover voters were among the first Massachusetts communities to approve the CPA (Community Preservation Act) tax surcharge and has annually received a full match from

the state. That money has been used in several instances to help plan for or to actually protect threatened neighborhoods. The six month required demolition delays as originally enacted have not been much help; developers just work it into their calculations. New bylaws are increasing the delay to a year or more and have been more effective in either negotiating changes in the plans, finding ways to move the threatened buildings, or at the least prepare a thorough record of the structure. The next step will be to try to amend the bylaws to establish an age rather than specific year to use when a building can be considered for potential preservation activities.

Andover has been losing 10 -15 structures a year, with renovation of interiors, especially in conjunction with lead paint and asbestos removal, also occurring regularly. One problem that regularly arises is the difficulty of coordinating activities among the various regulatory and advisory boards. One current good news project in Andover is a joint venture by the library, the Andover Historical Society and the Historic Preservation. These groups are creating a comprehensive database of all 900 structures that were deemed to be of interest following the first comprehensive survey of the Town at the time of the Bicentennial. If you have read this far, this is a subject that interests you – there are numerous volunteer opportunities in this arena including help with the data entry for those 900 buildings.

Panelists for the discussion included: Karen Herman: Chair, Andover Preservation Commission; Erica Holtzausen: Trustee, Merrimack Valley Preservation Group; Lisa Schwarz: Senior Planner, Andover; Lynn Smiledge: Historic Planner, Methuen; Ballardvale Historic District Commission; Andover Preservation Commission; and Kathy Szyska: North Andover Historic District Commission; North Andover Preservation Committee.

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Your Help Needed in Passing Empowering Voters Project Bill in the House

By Cathy Dowd, LWVM VP of Program and Action

With your help, the LWVM-drafted S.2277 ("Strengthening Voting Rights and Voter Confidence") passed in the state Senate this past November, and our Empowering Voters Project got a great boost. We will now need your help once again to ensure passage in the House this spring.

The Empowering Voters Project is designed to improve voter turnout and prevent voter disenfranchisement in Massachusetts by making voting easier and more convenient and by improving the fairness and efficiency of the system. S.2277 would enact three of the project's key reforms:

- Ensuring the continuing impartiality of the administration of elections, by prohibiting election officials from serving in a fiduciary capacity in someone else's political campaign. In the past two presidential elections, Secretaries of State elsewhere in the country acted as campaign chairs, which eroded the confidence of voters from across the country in the impartiality of elections, thus adding to cynicism and reducing turnout. This bill assures Massachusetts citizens that these clear conflicts of interest will not happen here and will restore confidence in the system.
- Expanding the pool of potential poll workers, by removing the restriction against hiring from other cities or towns, and allowing certain 16 and 17-year-olds to work as poll workers. Shortages of poll workers are a key contributor to long lines at the polls, which can discourage voters who must get back to work, pick up a child, etc. This bill will give more flexibility to the cities and towns who now have difficulty recruiting enough poll workers.
- Ensuring the wide dissemination of voting rights information, by mandating the posting of the Voters' Bill of Rights.

Other elements of the Empowering Voters Project include lifting unnecessary restrictions on absentee voting, allowing Election Day registration, enabling early voting, and more.

S.2277 was filed by the Joint Committee on Election Laws (co-chairs Sen. Edward Augustus and Rep. Anthony Petruccelli)

and has been publicly endorsed by Secretary of State William F. Galvin. With a great lobbying effort on the part of local Leagues, it passed the Senate on Nov. 16, 2005. We are now waiting for a vote to be scheduled in the House.

Once a House vote is scheduled, we will be counting on you to lobby your state representatives on behalf of this bill. We will send out an action alert, which will have all the relevant talking points.

Thank you in advance for your support!



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Calendar of Events

	Time	Type of Meeting	Description	Address	
February	1	9:15 a.m.	Board Meeting	February Board Meeting	Amy Janovsky's Home 6 Snowberry Road, Andover
	6	7:00 p.m.	Green Chemistry with Dr. John Warner	Sustainability & Natural Resources Forum	Memorial Hall Library Elm Square, Andover
	14	11:30 a.m.	Lunch & Conversation	Monthly Lunch Gathering	Panera Bread Rt. 133 and Rt. 114, N. Andover
	17	All Day	Deadline	March Bulletin	jennessa@celebratestudio.com
March	1	7:15 p.m.	Board Meeting	March Board Meeting	Joan Duff's Home 12 Greybitch Road, Andover
	2	7:00 p.m.	Candidates Forum--North Andover	Candidates Forum	North Andover Town Hall 120 Main Street, North Andover
	4	9:00 a.m.	Candidates Coffee	Candidates Coffee	TD BankNorth Main Street, Andover
	9	7:00 p.m.	Candidates Forum-An- dover	Candidates Forum	Memorial Hall Library Elm Square, Andover
	14	11:30 a.m.	Lunch & Conversation	Monthly Lunch Gathering	Panera Bread Rt. 133 and Rt. 114, N. Andover
	15	9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	Day on the Hill	Day on the Hill	State House Beacon Hill, Boston
	17	All Day	Deadline	January Bulletin	Jennessa Durrani: jennessa@celebratestudio.com



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