



Bulletin

January 2006

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P.O. Box 514
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www.LWV-Andovers.org

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League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover

President's Letter

By Peggy Kruse

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone is refreshed from the holidays and ready to join us at one of the many LWV events planned for January.

We start the year with a doubleheader on Jan. 11: The LWV's annual Running for Office Workshop teaches potential candidates the ins and outs of the local election process. This year, the event will be televised live from Town Hall in North Andover. In future years, we hope to rebroadcast an edited version of the taped workshop in addition to holding a live workshop.

The second event for Jan. 11 is Home @ Last, a forum about affordable housing in various Essex County communities. This event promises to be an eye-opening glimpse into the mismatch between housing prices and incomes of the majority of Essex County residents. This event is being co-sponsored by an impressive array of housing advocates – the LWV's Affordable Housing study group, the Housing Partnerships of both towns, the Andover Community Trust and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lawrence.

Jan. 18 brings our discussion of Historic Preservation, led by several LWV members, with an overview of how a building qualifies for the historic building registry and a discussion of community and individual benefits of preservation.

January brings two informal membership discussions, our monthly Lunch & Conversation on Fri, Jan. 13 and a new gathering to include those who cannot make lunch – Cocktails & Conversation on Tues, Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. at Glory Restaurant. From the comments at the Holiday Dinner, Cocktails & Conversation promises to be a hit. Join us if you can.

Speaking of the Holiday Dinner, many thanks to Amy Janovsky for organizing this festive, well-attended event. Thanks also to Diana Walsh for leading a stimulating discussion about national-level issues and to Stefani Goldshein for braving the online discussion with hundreds of LWV members across the country in preparation for the national program planning meeting.

The LWV always welcome new members, men and women, so feel free to invite any interested friends, colleagues and neighbors to any LWV events.

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

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.

Smart Growth
The graphic showing the Smart Growth community proposed for Osgood Landing was blurry in the December Bulletin.
For a better graphic, go to the LWV website:
www.lwv-andovers.org, click on Bulletin, and click on December 2005. The graphic is on page 3.

Lawmaking in Massachusetts *Participating in the Legislative Process*

Source: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/trs/trslaw/lawidx3.htm>

Massachusetts citizens are permitted and encouraged to take an active role in the lawmaking process of the state legislature. It is a good idea for a person who feels strongly about an issue to present his or her ideas to a Representative or Senator. That person may discover that those concerns have already been formulated into a bill which is awaiting legislative action. If not, the citizen is allowed to file legislation addressing the subject. Massachusetts is one of the few states to allow its citizens to do so. This access is called the "right of free petition."

Although it is not mandatory that a Representative or Senator sponsor a citizen's bill, the rules of the House and Senate provide that a petition must be endorsed for presentation by a member before it can be considered by the General Court. Obtaining the support of individual legislators, then, is most advisable.

Legislation must be filed in either the House or Senate Clerk's office by the first Wednesday in December preceding the first annual session of the two-year General Court. The joint rules, as changed and adopted in 1995, provide that any matter pending before the legislature at the end of the first annual session shall carry over into the second annual session at the same legislative status, except Appropriation Bills recommended by the Governor. Other pieces of legislation that do not have local approval of a city or town and which are filed at any other time would be considered late filed petitions and thus start their course in the respective Rules committees of the two branches. The legislature is elected biennially in even-numbered years.

When a bill is filed, it is recorded in a docket book in the Clerk's office. The book provides the name of the legislator filing the bill, the names of the petitioners, the subject matter of the bill and the number the bill has been given for the legislative session.

January LWV ANA Board Meeting

Please note a time change for the January 4th LWV ANA Board Meeting - the meeting will be held at 9:15 a.m. at 6 Roulston Circle, Andover. The time was changed to allow members who so wished to attend Representative Marty Meehan's Town Meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. on January 4 at Memorial Hall Library in Andover.

Tobacco Tax

By Michael Frishman

To no good result so far, Senator Sue Tucker introduced into the Massachusetts legislature agenda as a citizen's petition (see description of citizen's petitions in the adjacent column) the following proposed Tobacco Use Tax. The legislature has discussed various statewide health care proposals and reportedly have discussed increases in tobacco taxes as part of that effort, but not my proposed tax, which last I heard had been referred to the Committee on Tourism and Entertainment.

Senate 2123 -
In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT CONCERNING TOBACCO USE IN BROADCASTS
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1.

Whereas tobacco is a human carcinogen and also a hazard to human health in other ways as well, and whereas this has already been acknowledged in judgments that awarded states damages for past costs, and whereas tobacco products are still vigorously marketed and continue to be a hazard to health, in order to reimburse the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for future costs that will be incurred because of this health hazard, beginning with enactment of this law all future broadcasts on television or projection of movies showing any of the five leading actors using tobacco products shall be taxed \$10,000.00 for each instance of such tobacco use. This tax shall also be applied to actors or performers participating in live performances. (<http://www.mass.gov/legis/billsrch.htm> is website where it can be found.) Michael Frishman, 11 Crescent Drive #4, Andover MA 01810, 978-475-2605, frishma@comcast.net.

Home @ Last

Wed, January 11, 7:30 pm, Memorial Hall Library

The LWV ANA's Affordable Housing group is co-sponsoring the Home@Last public awareness campaign on affordable housing in Essex County. Please join us for this educational event.

Historic Preservation

Wed, January 18, 7 pm, Memorial Hall Library

As part of our informal discussion series, the LWV ANA is sponsoring this discussion of local historic buildings and preservation efforts. Bring your questions and your friends.

Voter Service

Running for Office Workshop

By Diana Walsh & Kathy Stevens, Voter Service

Wed, January 11, 7 pm, North Andover Town Hall

Our annual workshop on “How to Run for Local Elective Office” will be held this year at the North Andover Town Offices, 120 Main Street. A representative from the MA Office of Campaign and Finance will discuss campaign financing and reporting. Joyce Bradshaw and Randy Hanson, Town Clerks from North Andover and Andover, respectively, will describe the election process including requirements for filing nominating papers and important deadlines.

Local elected officials will be available to describe their experiences with the election process. The workshop will be broadcast live on the local cable channel in North Andover.

While we will be informing potential candidates about this event through the usual channels, word of mouth works well too. If you or someone you know is wondering what the process is and how current officials got started, this is a great opportunity with no strings attached!

To officially become a candidate, nomination papers must be submitted by February 7, 5 p.m.

Observer Corps

National Grid Describes Tree Cutting Plans

by Amy Janovsky

A standing room only audience attended a public hearing on National Grid’s tree cutting proposal on Thursday, December 1st in the Andover Selectmen’s meeting room. More than 200 town-owned trees and a similar number of privately owned trees have been identified for action, with the majority being slated for removal.

National Grid, which is currently paying State-imposed fines due to inadequate system reliability, is implementing a new program that has had enormous success in New York State, as discussed by Ken Finch, the project manager. The program includes several elements: first, identifying specific electric power “feeder” lines that are responsible for outages impacting the greatest number of customers. Next, identifying hazardous trees outside of the usual “trim zone.” Then, evaluating each tree to determine if trimming or removal is appropriate, based on tree health, location relative to the lines, and species characteristics. Finally, proposed actions are brought to the Town and to individual residents whose properties are affected.

Residents concerned about impacts to the landscape of Andover, a “Tree City” for the past six years, actively questioned the need for removal of so many trees. At a cost of \$500 per linear foot, the idea that the power lines could be buried was deemed unlikely. A suggestion that lines could be relocated to avoid massive cutting along particular roads was answered by an explanation that the structural integrity of the power lines is

influenced by pole and line placement, and realigning poles is undertaken very rarely.

Trees on private property will only be removed with the concurrence of the property owner, and National Grid has contacted each owner during the past few months. Likewise, Andover arborist Randy Pickersgill has reviewed and photographed each Town tree on the list and will submit a plan to the Selectmen detailing agreement or changes to the proposed actions.

National Grid has \$250,000 allocated for grants to the 50 communities in which this plan is being implemented, and Joe Piantedosi, Superintendent of Parks and Facilities, indicated that his staff will apply for grant money to supplement the \$2,000 that Andover has budgeted next year for street trees.

National Grid will not grind stumps from the tree removal. Superintendent Piantedosi indicated that Andover owns a stump grinder and will grind stumps along Town roads to the extent that time and staffing constraints allow.

Several people suggested that citizen input to management of Andover’s urban forest could be beneficial and asked that the Town consider this. Joe Piantedosi indicated that residents wishing to have street trees planted on their property should contact him or Randy Pickersgill. The hearing was continued on Thursday, December 15th, and an evening presentation to the Selectmen is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10th at 7 p.m. in the Andover School Committee Room.

National Program Planning

By Stefani Traina Goldshein, VP Program/Action

The holiday potluck dinner was followed by a discussion of national program planning, led by Diana Walsh. The beginning portion consisted of a game where members were asked to identify the topic that was not a national position in the following groupings (* indicates non-national position):

Representative Government:

- Citizen's Right to Vote
- Selection of the President
- Proportional Representation*
- Promote a balance of power between executive and legislative branches
- Individual Liberties
- Electronic voting/paper trail*

International Relations:

- Support a strong U.N.
- Immigration Reform*
- Arms Control
- Military Policy and Defense Spending
- US Relations with Developing Countries

National Resources:

- Resource Management
- Environmental Protection & Pollution Control—Air, Water, Land
- Energy
- Waste Management
- Ocean Ownership*
- Agricultural Policy

Social Policy:

- Gun Control
- Funding of Entitlements
- Equitable tax system and responsible deficit spending
- Housing Supply
- Health Care
- Death Penalty*

Added to this list was:

- Drug policy. Revisit the "war on drugs" in terms of treatment, legalization, punishment, justice

The following list was generated of those topics thought to be most important. Some issues were added.

- Marriage policy
- Arms control
- Campaign Finance reform
- Environmental Protection
- Ocean Policy
- International Resource management
- International energy policy – global warming
- Immigration reform
- Voter rights
- Electronic voting/paper trail
- Death Penalty
- Drug Policy

After more discussion, the list was narrowed to the following, and a two round runoff election was conducted. The first round results were:

- Election Reform – integrity of voting process, including paper trail (10)
- Climate change (7)
- Election Reform – redistricting (3)
- Immigration reform (3)
- Drug policy (1)
- Death penalty (0)

Second round, the top two vote getters were:

- Election Reform – integrity of process (17)
- Climate change (8)

Election reform – integrity of voting process, including paper trail, will be submitted to the e-mail listserv as our League's suggestion for a national LWV study. Our final report is due to the LWVUS in March. Thank you to all who attended the dinner and participated.

Cocktails and Conversation

Tuesday, Jan. 17, 6 pm

Glory Restaurant, 19 Essex St, Andover

We invite League members and guests to join us to at Cocktails & Conversation to discuss local, state and national events at Glory Restaurant in downtown Andover.

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ANTHONY S. CONTE, DIRECTOR

Town Budget Study Group

By Lolli Sumberg

The committee is going through a process of research, resources and review. We are currently developing "What if...?" scenarios to see what the impact on the budget would be if they were to happen. Of course, we are looking at both the possible positive and the negative results.

To name a few:

What if there were no school fees?

What if there was an override?

What if the fees departments charge had to pay for the entire cost of that department?

What if we went to a debt exclusion on certain projects?

What if the Town was able to make some changes to the health insurance package?

What if "pay as you throw" was adopted?

Another area that is being considered is a report done by Al Robbat, a Tuft's professor, who did a comparative study of department costs in various towns similar to Andover.

Our next meeting is January 10th.

Membership

Membership Dues Reminder

The 2005/2006 dues are now due. If you have not paid your dues, please send a check 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, Membership Chair at (978) 685-3212.

LWV Andover/North Andover 2004-2005 MEMBERSHIP

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____ \$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

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Calendar of Events

	Time	Type of Meeting	Description	Address	
January	4	9:15 a.m. (Note time change)	Board Meeting	January Board Meeting	Stefani Golshein's Home 6 Roulston Circle, Andover
	10		Monthly Meeting	Budget Study Group	Lolli Sumberg's Home 4 Woburn Street, Andover
	11	7:00 p.m.	Running For Office Workshop	Info session for prospective local candidates	N. Andover Town Hall 120 Main Street, North Andover
	11	7:30 p.m.	Home@Last	Affordable Housing Forum	Memorial Hall Library Elm Square, Andover
	13	11:30 a.m.	Lunch & Conversation	Monthly Lunch Gathering	Panera Bread Rt. 133 and Rt. 114, N. Andover
	17	6:00 p.m.	Cocktails & Conversation	Informal gathering for members and guests	Glory Restaurant 19 Essex Street, Andover
	18	7:00 p.m.	Historic Preservation	Informal Discussion	Memorial Hall Library Elm Square, Andover
	20	All Day	Deadline	February Bulletin	jennessa@celebratestudio.com
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	January Bulletin	Jennessa Durrani: jennessa@celebratestudio.com



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