

Bulletin - April 2013

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April 2013

President: Ann Cobleigh

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League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover Newsletter

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President's Letter

Dear Members,

As the signs of Spring appear, we feel the energy of the renewal of life everywhere. For the League, spring comes with return of local elections, Town Budgets, Annual Town Meetings, as well as local League planning for next year. LWV of A/NA has been approached and utilized as a resource in our two communities which I view as reinforcement of the League's strong presence and purpose. Candidates, town officials, community groups and new members seek the League out for input and assistance on a variety of questions, issues and projects. This is one of the most dynamic, opportune ways to discover how the League "remains relevant" in today's world.

Our own Annual Meeting will take place in late May making it time to prepare the list of next year's projects and priorities for LWV of A/NA. During the course of the year, I hear people toss out ideas and identify problems needing attention. One example is finding a creative way to have as many "Vote" yard signs out the week of elections to encourage greater turnout at the polls. This is the time to put your thoughts forward and I hope you will do so. **Reserve the date:** Wednesday, May 22, 6:00-9:00PM. The League will be meeting at the Andover Historical Society and the evening will include an abbreviated "Speak Easy" presentation. Please don't miss out. Submit your program ideas to anncobleigh@gmail.com.

Many of you may already be acquainted with a new website in town, www.TownofAndover.com from the recent article in the *Andover Townsman*. The group's stated mission "is to be the Taxpayers' Advocate in the Town of Andover, Mass..." and to provide easy access for taxpayers to the information they deem vital for decision-making. Their website provides publically available financial information regarding Town operations which they were able to gather under the *Freedom of Information Act*. Please peruse the site and judge for yourselves.

An Envelope From National League - Just this weekend, LWV of A/NA received a *Certificate of Special Recognition* from LWVUS for growing our membership by over 10% this year. A special "Thank You" to our new members again!! The certificate can be viewed on our website.

Last month I mentioned we would find out who would be speaking at the state League Convention in May and here it is! Dr. Meira Levinson, associate professor of education, Harvard University, will be the keynote speaker at the Friday, May 17, banquet offering her take on the convention theme, "The Future of Our

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Democracy: What's Next?" For Dr. Levinson, "the future of our democracy" lies with engaging young people. Dr. Levinson writes about civic education, multiculturalism, and youth empowerment. Her latest book, *No Citizen Left Behind*, argues that the United States suffers from a civic empowerment gap that is as shameful and anti-democratic as the academic achievement gap targeted by the No Child Left Behind education law.

Yes, we are all busy, but I urge everyone to consider attending some of the interesting events being organized by our fellow area Leagues. I have personally heard Lawrence Lessig present content from one of his books and he is a wonderful and knowledgeable speaker, and the House Tour in Concord is one of those events where you will learn things you don't know now that you'll appreciate later.

Respectfully,

Ann Cobleigh, President
anncobleigh@gmail.com

Spring 2013 Calendar

For the most up to date calendar information visit [our website](#).

April

- 4 Thu Monthly Board Meeting, 7-9:00 PM Memorial Hall Library, Andover. Join us as we plan next year's projects!
- 6 Sat LWV Concord-Carlisle Annual House Tour
- 9 Tue NA Finance Committee Public Meeting, 6:45 PM, NA Town Hall
- 9 Tue Youth in Town Government Day
- 10 Wed Andover FY2014 Budget Forum, 7:00 PM School Committee Room, 36R Bartlet St.
- 10 Wed Last day to register to vote in June Senate Election
- 25 Thu LWV Needham, Guest Speaker, Lawrence Lessig
- 29 Mon Andover Town Meeting Preview, 7:00 PM Memorial Hall Library
- 30 Tue U.S. Senate Special Primary, polls open 7:00AM-8:00PM

May

- 4 Sat [Zero Waste Day](#), 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM, Brickstone Square
- 6-8 M-W Andover Town Meeting, 7:00 PM, Collins Field House
- 17-18 F-S LWVMA State Convention, Beverly, MA
- 21 Tue North Andover Town Meeting, 7:00 PM, NAHS
- 22 Wed LWVANA Annual Meeting, 6:00 PM Andover Historical Society

June

- 25 Tue U.S. Senate Election, polls open 7:00AM-8:00PM

Youth in Town Government

by Molly Foley

Twenty-six Andover High School students will be participating in the second annual Youth in Town Government program on April 9th - more than double the number of participants last year. The students will once again spend the morning shadowing the Town Manager and town department heads and join them for lunch. In the afternoon, they will participate in a discussion with Town Moderator, Sheila Doherty, about Town Meeting.

Youth Services has been very helpful in providing transportation for the students to and from the town offices and AHS. AYS also will conduct an ice-breaker activity in the morning to kick things off and introduce all of the participants to each other.

Andover Budget Forum - April 10

by Bonnie Zahorik

Prepare for Annual Town Meeting by attending a Budget Forum, planned by the League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover, on April 10, 7:00pm, in the School Committee Room, Second Floor, 36R Bartlet Street. The Budget Forum brings together leaders of town government to discuss issues and answer citizen questions around the FY 2014 Budget.

Jon Stumpf, Finance Committee, will provide an overview of the key drivers of revenues and expenses and discuss components of the budget. Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski and Superintendent Dr. Marinel McGrath will present notable changes in anticipated revenues for FY2014 and look at specific cost increases as well as efficiencies and cost reduction efforts. The chair of the Board of Selectmen, and the chair of the School Committee will discuss the general budget situation and look at issues requiring resolution prior to Town Meeting.

Each year, the League organizes this opportunity for residents of Andover to interact directly with town leaders in order to learn more about the budget, ask questions, and voice concerns in advance of Town Meeting. The forum will be televised live and taped for rebroadcast on Andover TV, Comcast Channel 99 and Verizon Channel 43.

We need your questions! Please email them in advance to VoterServiceAndover@lwv-andovers.org. Additional questions will be taken from those who attend in person and can be emailed in during the forum.

Voters Service - North Andover

by Heather McNeil

North Andover's Annual Town Election Results and Stay Tuned for Town Meeting Preview Programming

It was a quiet election day on March 26th. Only 9% of the 19,177 registered voters turned out to choose one member of the Board of Selectmen, one School Committee member, and one member of the Housing Authority. Rosemary Smedile, the incumbent, ran unopposed for the Board of Selectmen. Mary Beth Soucy also ran unopposed for the seat she held on the Housing Authority.

The only contested race was for School Committee. Christine Allen decided not to seek re-election. Thus, two candidates emerged, Mark Mezzina and Zora Warren. Ms. Warren won receiving 68% of the votes compared with Mr. Mezzina's 31%. We hope you were able to watch the League of Women Voters Candidates' Forum and get out to vote in our local election.

Next, stay tuned for Town Meeting Preview Programming on North Andover CAM. You can get informed by first attending this month's Finance Committee Public Meeting regarding the budget which will be on Tuesday, April 9th at 6:45 PM at the Town Hall. North Andover's Town Meeting begins the evening of Tuesday, May 21st.

Here is the contact information for some of North Andover's town officials and administrators. For more town officials and more detailed contact information, please see the town's website at www.townofnorthandover.com. Always feel free to contact them with questions, concerns, and thoughts.

Town Manager: Andrew Maylor 978-688-9510
Superintendent: Kevin Hutchinson 978 794-1503

Finance Committee Chair: Alan LeBovidge

Town Moderator: Mark DiSalvo 978 794 3366 x 322

Board of Selectmen:

William Gordon, Chairman 978-685-1471

Tracy Watson 978-208-7224

Rosemary Smedile, Licensing Chairman 978-689-2949

Donald Stewart 978-682-9038

Richard Vaillancourt, Clerk 978-291-6800

School Committee:

Laurie Burzlaff, Chair 978-688-3669

Brian Gross 978-557-5423

Stanley Limpert, Vice Chair 978-683-2781

Andrew McDevitt 978-835-2283

Zora Warren 978-258-9690

LWV Book Award

We are looking for a League member to present the League of Women Voters Book Award to a deserving North Andover graduating Senior. The Awards Ceremony will be on June 4th at 10:30 AM. It would require little planning on your part. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Heather McNeil at 978-686-6717. It would be greatly appreciated and is a great way to keep the League and civic involvement in the minds of our younger citizens.

Cole Scholarship News

by Mary Beth Nason

Please partner with us as we seek to identify qualified candidates for the League's annual Virginia H. Cole \$500 college scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a female AHS graduating senior who has demonstrated the ideals of the League of Women Voters through community service, student government, education, political involvement and/or environmental protection (e.g. recycling). Help us extend our outreach by encouraging appropriate candidates to complete an application available from Maureen Wholey, AHS Guidance Office. Application deadline is April 30th.

Contact [Mary Beth](#) for more information.

Thank You

The League could not do any of its work without dedicated volunteers. Many thanks to those who staffed our precincting table at the March election: Ann Cobleigh, Stefani Traina, Joan Duff, Susie Novick, Florence Feldman-Wood, Susan Stott, Becci Backman, Ellen Sebasky, Liz Elowe, Annette Grams and Chas Bicking. And many thanks to Molly Bicking for coordinating it all.

Thanks also go to the volunteers who worked on the Andover Candidates' Afternoon: League members Molly Bicking, Maureen Sundberg and our moderator, Heather McNeil, and Andover High students, Marika Cerbone, Emily Granoff, Ronan Maye, Jake Tarricone, Nicholas Renton, Mia McDougall, Bryce Jenkins, and Jacky Wang.

We in North Andover would like to thank all of our volunteers who helped organize and run our Candidates' Night including League members Kathy Stevens, Stefani Traina, Cynthia Blandini, and Caroline Cole. We also have some wonderful citizen volunteers; Crowell Freeman, Rene Heron, and Keith Connors. We owe a very big thank you to Brian Frasier, Sandy Glead, Cary Friedmen, Tiffany Begin and the crew at North Andover CAM for preparing for, taping and rebroadcasting the event. And one final thank you to Joyce Bradshaw, our Town Clerk, who filmed some public service announcements with NACAM regarding where to vote, the absentee ballot process and other voter concerns, some of which aired during the broadcast of the Candidates' Night. And thank you to Diane Huster who has organized and presented the League's Book Award to a deserving North Andover graduating senior over the past several years. Thank you for everyone's help!

It's A Life Skill: Debating!

by Lois Jeanne Pustell, Guest Columnist

I am a parent and coach with the James Otis Communicators, a speech and debate club in Andover with members from the Merrimack Valley and North Shore. We are affiliated with the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) and Haverhill Area Homeschoolers as well as North Shore Christian Homeschoolers (NSCH).

April, NCFCA will hold its regional invitational speech and debate tournament not far from here in Concord, NH. We are in need of many community members to judge speech and debate events during the tournament. There are three categories for speech (Individual Events) - Interpretive, Platform, and Limited Preparation; and two types of debate, Lincoln-Douglas Value and Team Policy.

Do you have three hours to give? No experience as a judge is necessary and a short training session will be given. Adults, of all ages, from all walks of life, can offer our students a variety of comments and perspectives. All judges must be at least 18 years old and must not have been eligible to compete in any NCFCA event during the current season, and must not be currently enrolled in high school. Parents may bring their own students to watch. *{Quiet younger students are always encouraged to watch with their parent(s)!}* Judging can count toward Community Service Hours for several organizations.

The myriad benefits for students participating in these events include: the opportunity to learn how to listen to others; weigh the information presented; speak their minds politely and courteously; critical thinking; impromptu speaking; research; checking the validity of facts; considering the sources; and examining bias.

I, personally, chose to educate my children at home and, yes, all of my children participated in speech and debate club and tournaments, even though it was NOT anyone's first choice. There has been our fair share of blood, sweat, and tears over the preparation and performance, participating completely outside of our comfort zones. And, YES, it is worth the work! For example, my very quiet, reserved daughter was called for jury duty when she was not yet 20 years old. She was placed on a jury that lasted three days. She told me she was easily able

to follow the arguments and even clarify points during deliberations. In the end, she came home pleased with her participation. She told me how glad she was that I had required her to engage in NCFCA Debate tournaments. She was disappointed that the attorneys did not have to follow the NCFCA rules against *Ad hominem!*

The NCFCA Region 10 Invitational Tournament takes place April 22-25, in Concord, NH. It recently dawned on me that members of the League of Women Voters would make super judges!!! The students rely on the judges' valuable feedback for improvement, growth, and encouragement. Community judges offer various points of view and expertise, not just the parental input they have already heard. No experience in either speech or debate is necessary. Friendly volunteers will give you a short orientation and ... cookies! Please consider coming to judge and spreading the word about this speech and debate tournament.

For more information and online registration, please follow this link to the League's website for the full invitation and events schedule.

Local Members Attend Day On the Hill

Kudos! New members, Elizabeth Wilson and Joanne McConaughy, joined me for Day On the Hill for their first time.

Two featured speakers were Rep. Thomas Conroy, 13th Middlesex District and Elizabeth Saunders, Mass Director of Clean Water Action. Rep. Conroy explained his support of the carbon tax and which interest groups would be supporting it and why. Both he and Ms. Saunders provided excellent instruction regarding effectively lobbying our legislators and how to maintain our energy and passion for the long haul which is usually what it takes.

The event began with a message from LWVMA President, Eva Valentine, followed by the featured speakers. The Program and Action Committee presented the current status of their bills and the talking points to be used when lobbying legislators. Once the general meeting was adjourned, League members made their way to their respective representatives' offices. Our group went to visit Sen. Finegold and Rep. Lyons both of whom were not in their offices.

VP of Program and Action Committee, Carole Pelchat explained that while there are many bills the committee monitors, the ones on the list for today happen to be timely at present so they are receiving the benefit of the focused effort of Day On the Hill. It is interesting to point out that the "Call to Action" emails that come either directly from LWVMA or from LWV of A/NA regarding bills at the state level originate here with this committee who so diligently monitor and advocate on behalf of the League.

The LWVMA staff did a terrific job organizing and running the event and materials provided were well-designed and very helpful.

Concord-Carlisle League Event on April 6

Celebrate spring's arrival with the League of Women Voters' "What's New!" tour of seven unique Concord homes on Saturday, April 6, from 10:00am to 3:00pm. These new and newly remodeled houses feature the latest trends in energy efficient and green technologies, accessibility, and design.

Pick up your tour map on April 6th between 10 and 12 at the Alcott School, 93

Laurel Street, Concord, and then chart your own course among the houses. Don't miss your chance to get an inside view of these seven extraordinary residences, including a LEED platinum-certified home, a bold contemporary and a modernized antique.

Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$35 on April 6. Purchase tickets online at www.lwvcc.org. Tickets may also be reserved in advance by mail. Send check, name for pickup, phone and email to: LWVCC House Tour, P.O. Box 34, Concord, MA 01742. All proceeds benefit the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle.

For information, visit <http://lwvcc.org/housetour2013.html>, email HouseTour@lwvcc.org, or call 978-254-1598. Also, see Kate Stout's recent Concord Journal article about the tour at <http://www.wickedlocal.com/concord>.

Needham League Event on April 25 The Influence of Money on Our Democracy: What Can We the People Do

Date: Thursday, April 25, 2013

Time: 7:30 pm

Place: Milas Hall, Olin College, Needham (Olin Way, off of Great Plain Avenue)

LWV Needham brings a world-renowned speaker to Needham for a public forum that will address the causes and effects of money in our political system. "The Influence of Money on Our Democracy: What Can We the People Do?" will feature Harvard Law School Professor Lawrence Lessig, Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership, Harvard Law School, and Director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University.

Professor Lessig will discuss the corrupting influence of money on the decisions made by our elected officials in Congress, and offer alternatives to the current system for financing campaigns. Questions from the audience will follow the presentation. Seating is limited to the first 300 people. The event is free and open to the public.

Event flyer: http://www.lwv-needham.org/files/2013-04-25_lessig_influence_of_money.pdf

Lexington League Event on April 5 Our State Budget: Making Tough Choices

The League of Women Voters of Lexington's First Friday Forum on April 5 will provide an interesting look at the Massachusetts state budget and its effect on Lexington. How do we, as a Commonwealth, choose to invest our resources to strengthen our communities, support vulnerable residents, and build a vibrant economy?

Luc Schuster, Senior Policy Analyst, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, will show, through data prepared by MassBudget, how past tax policy choices have contributed to the state's ongoing fiscal crisis, leading to painful cuts to many programs. Mr. Schuster will also outline how these decisions have affected programs designed to support cities and towns: general local aid and Chapter 70 education aid. A discussion will follow with Senators Michael Barrett and Ken Donnelly and Representative Jay Kaufman about ways the state could improve its revenue system.

This is the sixth in a series of 2012-2013 First Friday Forums hosted by the League of Women Voters of Lexington to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Coffee will be available at 9:15 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:30 in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue. The library is easily accessible by Lexpress and from the Minuteman Bikeway. For more information, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

LWVMA - New Easy Way to Track Bills

Keep Track of Legislation on the state Website

Program and Action Specialists have researched many of the bills submitted to the legislature at the beginning of the new legislative session. The bills the LWVMA Board has voted to support or oppose can be found on our [new website](#). You will be able to follow the progress of bills in which you are particularly interested, be informed of hearing

dates, obtain contact information for legislators reviewing the bills, and know when debates are scheduled and votes are being taken. Click [here](#) to go directly to the legislation page on the website.

Current legislation topics being followed include water quality, recycling, and the environment; election and campaign finance reform; health care financing; civics education, and supporting low-income families to become financially stable. Additional topics to be investigated over the coming months include gun control, fiscal policy, agricultural initiatives, and voting rights.

<http://lwmvma.org/advocacy/league-supported-legislation/>

LWVUS

Leaders' Update

Many of the important issues being argued and debated in Washington involve the issue of federalism. What is the proper role of the Federal and state governments with regard to immigration, health care, marriage and voting rights? As Congress and the Supreme Court consider these questions, state legislatures are meeting and passing laws that impact these issues and more. In the League, it is state convention season and a good time to remember that we are a federated organization [taking action](#) at the local, state and national level.

To read entire Newsletter, click here.

http://hq-salsa.wiredforchange.com/o/5950/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=142666

Member Survey

from the Board of Directors

The member survey is available online. Please take a few minutes to copy the survey into an email and send your input to info@lww-andovers.org.

If you prefer, mail the survey to LWV ANA, P.O. Box 514, Andover, 01810. Your time and feedback are greatly appreciated.

[Click here to access the survey.](#)

Resources of Interest

Occasionally we come across articles and information that might be of interest to our members. Topics range from running for office to environmental issues and everything in between. We hope this will become a regular way to share interesting information that cannot be quickly found in the usual places. **If you have an item to share, please submit it to bulletineditor@lwv-andovers.org.**

Find information about League studies completed across the country at

<https://sites.google.com/a/leagueofwomenvoters.org/clearinghouse/>

Trying to describe the branches of government or the constitution to kids?
Looking for great activities about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship?
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<http://www.icivics.org/>

Check the validity of those political claims:

FactCheck.org (U of PA)

PolitiFact.com (Tampa Bay Times)

Washington Post's Fact Checker

Another tool for voter information is: <http://votesmart.org>

New York Times editorial about Citizens United from March 25 can be [read here](#) .

About the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a 92-year-old national nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of individuals in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League neither supports nor opposes candidates for office, elected officials or political parties at any level of government.

The Andover/North Andover League focuses on topics directly impacting the citizens of our communities.

League membership is open to all citizens, both women and men.

Membership Form

Sign up [online](#) or complete and mail the form below. When you sign up online you will have the option of paying by credit card or PayPal. The League's membership year is July-June.

New Renewal

\$60 Basic Member

\$65 Contributing Member

\$75 Sustaining Member

- _____ \$100+ Patron
- _____ \$40 Senior Citizen (65 yrs. old and over)
- _____ \$40 Student (under 24 yrs. old)
- _____ \$75 Household Dues (2+ persons in same household)

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

_____ Enclosed is a separate check containing my tax-deductible contribution of \$_____ payable to the Education Fund, which supports the LWV's educational activities.

Please make checks payable to:
"LWV OF ANDOVER/NORTH ANDOVER"

Mail form and check to:
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P.O. Box 514, Andover MA 01810

Member Information

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____