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From: League of Women Voters of Andover/North Andover <league@lww-andovers.org>
Reply-To: league@lww-andovers.org
To: Kerri Ford kerriford@verizon.net
Conversation: October 2010 Bulletin



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ANDOVER/NORTH ANDOVER**

Bulletin

www.lww-andovers.org

October 2010

Bulletin Editor: Ann Cobliegh
President: Kerri Ford

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President's Letter

By Kerri Ford

I love the warmth of summer but fall is my favorite season. This past weekend my family and I spent an afternoon picking apples and pumpkins and snacking on apple cider and warm cider donuts. As my five year old said, it was a great afternoon. We had fleeces on and in general it felt like fall. The day before was a different story though. It was no less a great day but the temperature hit 90. That day was also Andover Days and once again the League organized the Know Your Town Fair. As many of you know, the turnout was incredible.

Many thanks to Heather Holman for organizing the KYTF and to Nuala Boness, Jackie Kovacs, Ann Cobleigh, Abby O'Hara, and Peggy Kruse for helping me man the League table. The children's crafts we had in the tent were a huge draw. I believe we were successful in once again projecting a strong positive image of the League to the community beyond those folks that regularly attend our voter service events and thus increasing our name and mission recognition among that group which should serve us well as we look to build membership.

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Peggy Kruse, Nuala Boness, Jackie Kovacs; KYTF; 9/25/10

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Some League members stopped by our table to pick up their 90th Anniversary League Handbook. If you did not, I will be bringing them to the next couple of board meetings and Panera lunches and we will have them available at the holiday dinner in December. I will also keep some in my car so if you see me around town you can ask me for your copy. Ann Cobleigh did a great job putting the handbook together. A big thank you goes out to her and to Stefani Traina who worked with me on the content updates.



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Molly Bicking organized the League's precincting effort for the September 14 State primary. I worked at the precincting table for the first time and loved it. I was there for the last two hours of the day but had I had an earlier shift I may have stayed longer if the next shift didn't mind. It was a great way to see many members of the community and it was wonderful to see how appreciative folks were of the service we provide. Thank you of course to Molly and also to Cynthia Barakatt, Peggy Kruse, Ann Cobleigh, Stefani Traina, Florence Feldman-Wood, Joan Duff, Becci Backman, Ellen Sebasky, Liz Elowe, Heather Holman, Chris Young, and Abby O'Hara who volunteered their time at the polls.

A Better Life.
 ATRIA SENIOR LIVING



Looking forward to October, we have another busy month. Our regular monthly board meeting is on

Wednesday, October 13th and our monthly lunch at Panera is Thursday, October 14th. All members are invited to both the meeting and lunch. If you are interested in attending the board meeting please send me an email to let me know. No RSVP is needed for the lunch.

On October 10th thousands of communities across the globe will be taking action to address climate change -- celebrating what people can do right now to make an impact, garnering media attention for climate action, and sending a strong message to decision-makers at all levels. The 10/10/10 campaign is being organized globally by 350.org, an international movement aimed at uniting the world around solutions to the climate crisis. The League is supporting the combined efforts of many Andover organizations in spreading awareness of the sustainable projects and initiatives underway in the town and steps we can all take to reduce our carbon footprint. Activities begin now but the focus will be during the week leading up to 10/10/10. On Friday, October 8th the 10/10/10 committee will host a Being Green Made Easy Forum from 6-9pm at Andover's Old Town Hall. I encourage you to attend to learn about new ways to reduce your carbon footprint and help Andover become a more sustainable community. There will also be information available about the proposals for Bancroft School and the town yard.

On Sunday, October 24th the League will host two voter service events to provide you with an opportunity to hear from candidates you will see on the ballot on November 2nd. Please see Stefani Traina's article below for details. This is a great chance to hear directly from the candidates. I hope you will all attend or watch on your local access TV channel.

I hope to see you at one or more of the League's meetings or events this month. If you have questions or comments you can reach me at league@lww-andovers.org.

Voter Service Update

By Stefani Traina, VP Voter Service-Andover

Important Dates

Last day to register to vote:

Wednesday, October 13

League Candidate Events:

Sunday, October 24

Election Day:
Tuesday, November 2

Resources

www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm
www.townofnorthandover.com
www.andoverma.gov

Local League Events

This is shaping up to be a busy election season in Massachusetts. The League is organizing candidate events in both Andover and North Andover to help educate voters before the November 2 election.

Andover's Candidates' Forum is scheduled for Sunday, October 24 at 2:00 p.m. at Memorial Hall Library. It will feature the state representative candidates for the 17th and 18th Essex districts, as well as the candidates for the state senate 2nd Essex & Middlesex district. The forum will air live and be taped for rebroadcast and online viewing. All candidates have agreed to participate.

Heather McNeil is organizing a Meet the Candidates event at the North Andover Senior Center. The event is scheduled for Sunday, October 24 at 12:00 p.m. More detail will be distributed regarding participants as the date nears.

Ballot Questions

By now you have received the booklet from MA State Secretary William Galvin's office. It contains important voter information. More information on the ballot questions will be distributed separately, however the League will not be hosting a ballot question forum this year. In the meantime, if you'd like to read more about the ballot questions the Eagle Tribune carried a piece on September 26. [Click here](#) to read this pro and con discussion of the three questions.

At its meeting on Tuesday, September 28, at the recommendation of the Program & Action committee, the Massachusetts state League board voted to oppose all three ballot questions.

There is information about affordable housing on the state League website, including information on Question 2. [Click here](#) for the link. Additionally, there is an article on 40B by George Koehler in this *Bulletin*.

North Andover News

By Sandy Glead, VP North Andover

My daughter just turned eighteen, and since she's now able to register to vote, I've been thinking a lot about the importance of voting and the League of Women Voters' efforts to educate voters.

I have always taken the right to vote seriously. I'll confess here, however, that I haven't always been an informed voter. Here's the wisdom I hope to impart to my daughter: it's not enough to just cast a vote...the right to vote comes with a civic responsibility to know the issues and to vote according to your values, your philosophy regarding the role of government, and your belief in the direction you want your government - on every level - to take.

My daughter knows that good things happen when private citizens partner with municipal staff and elected leaders to get things done. She knows that solutions to our fiscal challenges are complex and the people we choose to represent us at the local, state and federal levels makes a big difference. For instance, locally, our Town Manager and Board of Selectmen have worked closely with the employee unions that consequently stepped up to the plate and agreed to increased contributions to premium splits to reduce health insurance costs. At the state level, however, it was a different story. I personally believe that re-configuring the mass health care system is in order, given that it now has quickly ballooned to roughly 50% of our entire state budget. Reducing these costs could free up additional monies that could be sent back to our community in local aid.

My daughter knows that whoever is elected in November will determine the economic direction we take. I want my daughter to vote, not with a reactionary fervor so prevalent these days, but with a sense of urgency that we have systematic problems that require systematic changes. Kicking the can down the road doesn't work anymore. Blaming prior leaders, regardless of which party they represented, serves no productive purpose. Finding positive actions that lead to real solutions, lead by people that can actually accomplish those goals, must be our quest at the ballot box.

We're doing all we can at the local level, yet we still need more local aid. Our town fire apparatus is failing...our sped costs are soaring... our health costs are spiraling out of control...all while our revenues are falling...and we are accumulating unfunded pension liabilities at a rate of \$7 million per year.

One positive thing that North Andover Town Meeting

approved last year was the creation of a fund to reserve monies to meet our future pension obligations. It will be increasingly important in our town for voters to recognize the importance of incremental deposits to this fund - the importance of not spending everything we have the minute we have it.

I'm carefully optimistic about our economic prospects, but know that the key will be the government leadership we have in place. For me, hope comes knowing we have the freedom to make changes. Change comes at the ballot box. Courage comes with the determination to cast votes wisely. As my daughter casts her first votes in November, she'll already know that voting means hope, freedom and the courage to work hard for success.

Member Reflections

by Nancy Mulvey



This month's article on the history of the LWVANA comes to us from Nancy Mulvey, a League member since 1966.

My first memory of the League, which I officially joined in 1966, was attending the Annual Meeting at the Log Cabin in May, 1965. Rusty Dunbar was just completing her two-year term as President. I remember being awe-struck by the many bright, well-spoken women who were gathered (all of us undoubtedly in our shirt-waist dresses or chino skirts and blouses!) to ponder, debate and decide on what our local program for the 1965-66 year would be. It was exciting and intoxicating, and I was hooked.

In the fall of 1966, I attended a conference in Boston on state government, possibly focused on reform. The only memory is that one of our speakers was then State Rep. Michael Dukakis. It didn't take long before I found myself chairing a study committee on County Government with committee members Nancy Gump and Cornelia Fitts, later joined by Phoebe Kwass, Dale Pierson and Dana Duxbury. We visited the Essex County School in Lawrence (now the Correctional Alternatives Center along Rt. 495) where "wayward boys" were housed in dormitory living and schooled in some academics, but mostly in a trade. We noted that the trades seemed to focus on agriculture, including a creamery--hardly a growth vocational opportunity. We also visited one of the Essex County houses of correction on Lawrence St. in Lawrence, a gray stone fortress built in 1853 that was a dark, overcrowded

facility without flush toilets in the cells. Rehabilitation opportunities were non-existent.

County government was a two-year state study, and after reviewing the prisons, court system, Essex Aggie, Registries of Deeds, and the functions of the County Commissioners in the first year, we had consensus units in the second year. From this study, a state position was reached to support "an intermediate level of government to solve regional problems, either through a revised county structure or an emerging regionalism." It only took thirty years, but by the late 1990s to 2000 the functions of county government had been shifted to the state or eliminated.

A word about unit meetings in the late 1960s. They were held on five occasions during the week: Monday noon, Tuesday morning and evening, and Thursday morning and evening. The Tuesday and Thursday mornings were held at Cooley House at P.A., but the other three units were in members' homes and the job of Units Chair was to find the homes, as well as discussion leaders and recorders for all of those dates. It was a demanding job. By 1972 when I became president, the schedule for each study committee presentation was a much more reasonable Monday noon, Tuesday morning, and Thursday night.

There were several major issues/activities during the 1970s. The League published a new edition of Know Your Town in 1974, under Harriet Ahouse's editorship, with a bright green cover and inside directory of important telephone numbers and "where to get...." It was updated in 1978 and 1981; new editions followed in 1984, 1989, and 1994. The comprehensive guides were available at the library and book store and were very popular with real estate agents and teachers.

Re-districting of the Massachusetts House of Representatives occurred in 1974 as a result of implementing "one person, one vote" and eliminating multi-member districts. The Andover League testified against the proposed plan for Greater Lawrence. It would have divided Andover into several districts even though the population of the town at the time (26,000) was the exact designated size for a legislative district. Frayda Oston crunched all the numbers for the census tracts of Greater Lawrence and came up with a countering plan that made Andover a single district. She and Nancy Mulvey testified before the re-districting committee and eventually something very similar to our plan prevailed. Andover remained intact as a district until 1994 when precincts began to be whittled away

and attached to other districts, but we are still fortunate that the 17th Essex District has a majority of our precincts. The state League also led a successful initiative effort to reduce the size of the House in the Mass. Legislature from 240 representatives to 160 which was approved in 1978 and effective in 1979.

The most controversial League study in the 1970s, probably in its history, was the state study of Birth Control and Abortion Laws. In the fall of 1971, the study began by examining the existing laws re: birth control and abortion and drew 130 attendees, including 50 guests. The BC&A Committee invited several individuals with different views to present them to the committee and also held an open meeting where moral and ethical philosophies could be presented. Consensus units were held in spring 1972, attended by 86 members, and the Andover LWV reached consensus that family planning should be available for all who wanted it and abortion laws should be repealed. Although all minority views were included in the final report, a small minority took issue with the consensus and a petition was submitted to the Board signed by about 15 LWV members, initiated through several members' connections with the Mass. Citizens for Life, a "right to life" organization. It was alleged that the study was not fair and that consensus had not been reached at the units. (Interestingly, about five of the signatories had not even attended a unit meeting.) The Board reviewed the claims and did not find reason to invalidate our consensus, which concurred with the state position adopted subsequently.

Ballot Question 2: 40B Affordable Housing

By George Koehler

Editorial Note: The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has taken a position opposing Question 2 on the November 2010 ballot. The League has long-standing local, state, and national positions supporting affordable housing.

Question 2 asks voters if they want to repeal Chapter 40B, the State's affordable housing law. A Yes vote acts to repeal the law. A No vote acts to keep the law in place.

Chapter 40B enables builders to develop affordable housing for low-income families. In the context of 40B, "low-income" does not mean poverty level. In Andover and North Andover, a family of 4 earning no more than \$64,400 would be classified as low-income. Roughly 30% of the households in our towns are eligible to buy

or rent affordable housing developed under Chapter 40B. This group includes young people starting careers, municipal workers, retail clerks and many others that make important contributions to our communities.

It was recognized in the '60's that housing prices were rising faster than income levels, and that over time an increasing number of families were going to face difficulty in finding satisfactory housing. If people can't find housing, they will move elsewhere. Businesses will then face increasing difficulty filling positions at the lower end of the wage spectrum. And this difficulty will be an impediment to the development of a strong and vibrant economy in Massachusetts. That was the rationale for passing Chapter 40B in the 1960's.

Chapter 40B is based on the premise that in order for the Massachusetts economy to remain vibrant and strong, special measures need to be taken to assure continued production of affordable housing. Market forces were acting to make housing unaffordable to low-income families - the primary force being the scarcity of land. Massachusetts' small size relative to its population, the practice of requiring large lots (one or two-acres, or more), and the prevalence of zoning districts that forbid multi-family housing were making it impossible for builders to build low-income housing profitably.

The basic bargain struck in Chapter 40B is that builders are allowed to build at greater densities than local zoning by-laws permit PROVIDED they make 20 - 25% of the units affordable to low-income families. The money the builder loses on building affordable units is made up for by being allowed to build additional market rate units.

The last 50 years bears out the legislature's rationale for Chapter 40B. Housing prices have indeed continued to rise faster than incomes. Increasing land costs, due to scarce land and increasing population, have contributed to rising housing prices. Even with the bursting of the housing bubble in the last 3 years, housing is still priced high enough to make it difficult for low-income families to find satisfactory housing.

It is often said Chapter 40B allows builders to ride roughshod over local by-laws. Chapter 40B does allow building at greater density than local by-laws permit, and it may allow builders to by-pass local wetland protections. But, it does not allow builders to by-pass State wetland protections. It does not allow builders to by-pass local building codes. And it does not allow

builders to circumvent local health and safety ordinances.

Under Chapter 40B, there have been over 29,000 affordable units built. In the last decade, 40B is responsible for over 80% of the affordable housing built in Massachusetts outside the major cities.

Question 2 asks if the voters want to repeal Chapter 40B. The repeal would take effect on January 1, 2011. Any existing 40B project, however, that had received a building permit for at least one unit would be allowed to complete.

A Yes vote on Question 2 is a vote to repeal Chapter 40B. A No vote is a vote to retain Chapter 40B.

Information put out by proponents and opponents to the question can be obtained at www.repeal40b.com and www.protectaffordablehousing.org.

SIDE BAR

For purposes of this law, families are considered low-income if the total family income is less than 80% of the median family income for the local area. Median income refers to the income that divides the population in equal halves; 50% of families earn more than the median income and 50% earn less. This low-income threshold is determined yearly by the Census Bureau. For Andover and North Andover in 2010, low-income families are families earning less than the amounts shown below.

Family Size : Income Limit					
1	2	3	4	5	6
\$45,100	\$51,550	\$58,000	\$64,400	\$69,600	\$74,750

In order for housing to be affordable, for purposes of Chapter 40B, a family earning at these thresholds must be able to own or rent the property for 30% of their income. In the case of ownership, the 30% includes principal and interest on a mortgage, property taxes, insurance and condo fees if applicable. For rentals, the 30% includes rent, heat and utilities.

Welcome to Our New Members

We welcome new League member Gerry-Lynn Darcy of North Andover!

Fall/Early Winter Calendar

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

October

8 Fri Being Green Made Easy Forum,
6:00-9:00 p.m., Old Town Hall, Andover

- 13 Wed Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 14 Thu Lunch & Conversation, 11:30 a.m.,
Panera, Rtes 114 & 133, North Andover
- 22 Fri November Bulletin Article Submissions
Deadline
- 24 Sun Candidate Meet & Greet, 12:00-1:30
p.m., North Andover Senior Center
- 24 Sun Candidates' Forum, 2:00-4:00 p.m.,
Memorial Hall Library, Andover

November

- 2 Tue Election Day
- 10 Wed Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 15 Mon Lunch & Conversation, 11:30 a.m.,
Panera, Rtes 114 & 133, North Andover
- 15-19 Community Read-Along
- 23 Tue December Bulletin Article Submissions
Deadline
- TBD Town of Andover Mid-Year Review

December

- 6 Mon Andover Special Town Meeting
- 8 Wed Holiday Dinner, 90th Anniversary Event
and Board Meeting location/time TBD
- 10 Fri January Bulletin Article Submissions
Deadline
- 14 Tue Lunch & Conversation, 11:30 a.m.,
Panera, Rtes 114 & 133, North Andover

Available Board Positions

If you'd like to have a greater impact on democracy in our communities, consider joining the League Board of Directors. The following positions are accepting applications/nominations for the current fiscal year:

Position	Primary Responsibilities
Secretary	Keep board and annual meeting minutes
Membership Chair	Keep membership data, organize membership materials, coordinate new member recruitment
Nominating Chair	Coordinate nominating slate for officers and directors
Legislative Action Chair	Distribute Action Alerts, write monthly column for the <i>Bulletin</i>
Cable TV - Andover	Coordinate local cable

coverage of events

Andover School
Committee Observer Observe school committee
meetings and write a
summary monthly column
for the *Bulletin*

About the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a 90-year old national nonpartisan 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.

Membership in the League is open to all women and men.

Membership Form

--Sign up online at www.lwv-andovers.org or complete and mail the below form. The League's membership year is July-June.

_____ New _____ Renewal

_____ \$55 Basic Member

_____ \$60 Contributing Member

_____ \$75 Sustaining Member

_____ \$100+ Patron

_____ \$35 Senior Citizen (65 yrs. old and over)

_____ \$35 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

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