



THE MASSACHUSETTS VOTER

June 2003

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

Volume 79, Number 3

Day on the Hill

By *Alix Driscoll*
LWV OF ANDOVER/NORTH ANDOVER

Governor Mitt Romney chose the League's annual Day on the Hill, April 30, to make a major policy speech. And so did the Chief of Commonwealth Development, Douglas Foy, who laid out his mega-department's goals. League members packed Gardner Auditorium to hear about the state's crucial issues. The Governor and the Chief of Commonwealth Development understand that the League is the most important non-partisan sounding board for their proposals and that the League's reputation for sophisticated government watching and mastery of complex political topics is unrivaled.

The governor spoke about postponing his reorganization program until later in the year while reinforcing his three principal objectives: better and more jobs, health-care coverage, and excellent schools. He spoke of the need to consolidate departments having overlapping roles.

"Some leaders are born women," announced Chief of Commonwealth Development Douglas Foy, wielding his favorite League coffee mug emblazoned with that line. His goals are three, he said: "world-class educational system, quality housing, and great jobs." His real challenge is to cause the fiefdoms of government to work together. To give an example, he spoke of the need to rebuild the Longfellow Bridge connecting Boston and Cambridge. He rows under it often to keep in shape as a former Olympic rower and worries about the condition of this bridge. To fix that bridge requires the cooperation of myriad state, regional, and local entities; he plans to force them together to do what has to be done to keep the bridge safely over his head.

Secretary Foy strongly advocates that newly created affordable housing be built where there is infrastructure, near transportation, and must take environmental issues into consideration. Take the "sea of parking lots at Wonderland Station" at the T stop in Revere, he said. Surely this is not the best use of that land. This ocean-side parcel would do very nicely as affordable housing, he suggested.

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Save the Date! LWVCEF Fall Conference:

"Fixing our Broken Health Care System: Incremental or Comprehensive Change?" Saturday, October 25, 2003

LWVM Convention honors Rep. Meehan, adopts program

By *Jo-Ann Berry*
LWVM DIRECTOR

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Convention 2003 convened on Friday, May 16 and continued on Saturday May 17 with more than 100 delegates representing 40 local Leagues in attendance.

One highlight of the Convention was the presentation of the 2002 Civic Leader Award from the League of Women Voters of the United States to Congressman Marty Meehan for his work on campaign finance reform. This award was intended for presentation at the LWVUS convention in May 2002, with Congressman Christopher Shays (R-CT) receiving the same award. Rep. Meehan, who represents the Massachusetts 5th district, missed the LWVUS Convention, as he was awaiting the birth of his second child; outgoing LWVM Co-President Nancy Carapezza agreed to present the award at an appropriate occasion.

Representative Meehan spoke on the recent appeals court decision on the McCain-Feingold-Shays-Meehan Act. He told the delegates that the decision was good in that it upheld both the ban on federal candidates' raising soft money and the ban on political parties' using soft money for issue ads on TV. Political parties may, however, use soft money for getting out the vote and for voter registration work.

Finally, by upholding the provision that for 365 days a year only hard money may be used to pay for ads for or against federal candidates, the court mitigated the invalidation of one important provision. This provision regulated the use by such independent groups as the National Rifle Association and labor unions of money from unknown sources 60 days before a general election and 30 days before a primary election is not serious. Rep. Meehan expects that this ruling will be appealed, and that the Supreme Court will render a decision in the fall.

The first question from the delegates came from incoming President Madhu Sridhar. She asked if Rep. Meehan is a member of the LWV. He replied that he would join, whereupon he was provided with a membership form and much encouragement from the delegates. One other question that Leaguers may want to consider in efforts to gain visibility and credibility for the League was about how to get involved in dialogue in an effective manner. "Go to where the people are through letters to the editor and on talk radio," was Meehan's reply.

Rep. Meehan thanked the League for its ongoing, grassroots pressure. He feels that the League's work was the crucial factor in finally getting the campaign finance reform legislation passed.

Our new President, Madhu Sridhar, also addressed the delegates, stressing that we are in this together. Our common bond, she said, is our mission to encourage citizen participation in government. She is looking forward to moving the Massachusetts League forward with the help of the board and the members by reaffirming our values, developing a shared vision of the future and increasing membership. Sridhar issued a challenge to each member: to bring in one new member over the next year – she had done her part by inviting Marty Meehan to join. We should reach out in our communities and work to have our local Leagues reflect each community's diversity. If each of us works to make a small difference, together we can make a big difference, Sridhar concluded.

Delegates had a lively discussion about the motion by Patricia Muldoon of Arlington and the Administration of Justice Committee to adopt the Balancing Justice Community Dialogue as a project. This project was a non-recommended study item. There was some confusion as to the appropriate process and place for this motion, while there was strong support for the concept. The project would bring people such as judges, district attorneys, victims' families and others together to discuss and learn about the prison and justice system in Massachusetts, which currently operates without public scrutiny. The project was not passed as a study, but later was given as direction to the board.

Two studies were adopted. The first is on voting systems for state and local elections. As a demonstration of the instant runoff voting system, a group of delegates supporting the study conducted

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Rep. Marty Meehan, recipient of the LWVUS Civic Leader Award

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Madhu Sridhar
LWVM President

Take back the system

Democracy and freedom are two of America's greatest assets; together they form the cornerstone of our country's greatness. A healthy democracy is one in which citizens are actively engaged in shaping governmental policies that affect their lives. It is a democracy where the government welcomes and solicits citizen involvement. A healthy democracy is a participatory democracy in which citizens work together for the common good.

As a citizens organization advocating public policies that reflect the needs and concerns of all, the League works to serve the public interest by empowering citizens to get involved, to take charge of their future, and to make a difference. Citizens, and not special interests, should shape the future of our Commonwealth.

Citizens' gradual loss of confidence and trust in the way the government functions and their prevailing belief that elected officials pay no heed to what they think is of serious concern to the League. Such attitudes are deeply harmful to our democracy. They cause citizens to stop going to the polls, to shun government service as a career, and to avoid becoming involved in the political process. Public alienation from politics calls into question the very legitimacy of our democratic form of government.

The League firmly believes that implementation of the Massachusetts Clean Elections Law could go a long way toward restoring citizens' faith in government. The roller-coaster ride of the voter-approved Clean Elections Law only serves to reinforce citizens' distrust of the Legislature. The Clean Elections Law was passed by a majority in every Massachusetts legislative district in 1998 and was upheld by the Supreme Judicial Court. Yet

the Senate's attempt to repeal the law through a budget amendment, with no public input and without a roll call vote, reveals some legislators' contempt for democracy and the people they are supposed to serve. Democracy requires an open debate and a recorded vote on such an important measure.

Massachusetts ranks second to last among all states in the country in the percentage of contested races for state legislatures. Incumbents' ability to raise large amounts of money not only deters new candidates from running; it also determines what issues are discussed and advanced in the Legislature.

Citizens are beginning to realize that the issues that they care about – whether it's health care, education, or the environment – are heavily influenced by special interests whose campaign contributions drown out their voices and opinions. Many sense that the power of money makes political leaders less responsive to their concerns and more responsive to contributors.

Restoring trust in democracy requires curbing the power of money and strengthening the role of citizens. The burden of improving the political process rests on each of us. The League of Women Voters will remain in the forefront of this issue. We will pursue this battle to enact meaningful campaign finance reform until we succeed. Now more than ever we need to TAKE BACK OUR SYSTEM.

As President Truman said, "It is not the hand that signs the law that holds the destiny of America, it is the hand that casts the vote."

League members urge veto of clean elections repeal

By Beth Tietze Lowd
LWVM CAMPAIGN FINANCE SPECIALIST

League members throughout the Commonwealth expressed their outrage at the recent actions of the state Senate to repeal the Clean Elections Law. The repeal "vote" was not by roll call, a cowardly way to slip through the repeal of a law that two-thirds of Massachusetts voters put in place in 1998.

The Clean Elections Law has never been allowed to work. During the 2002 election cycle, the Legislature refused to fund the law in a timely and adequate fashion, prompting a rebuke from the Supreme Judicial Court for their "blatant and flagrant disregard" of their constitutional duties. The sale of state property was the court's only recourse to raise the needed funds, but the money came too late for most candidates to opt in to the system.

President Madhu Sridhar, on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, wrote a letter to all state senators urging them to vote against the budget amendment to repeal. To initiate grassroots action, the League emailed hundreds of League members alerting them to the threat to the Clean Elections Law and urging them to contact their own state senators and the governor.

The League also joined Common Cause, CPPAX, MassVote, Mass Voters for Clean Elections, Oiste (the Massachusetts Latino Political Organization), and SEIU-509 (the Massachusetts Union for Public Sector and Human Service Workers) in writing to Governor Mitt Romney asking to meet with him to explain he should veto the repeal of the law.

In all these letters, the League argued against repeal for the following reasons:

- We believe that a law supported by 1.1 million voters deserves a full debate and roll call vote by both bodies of the Legislature. It is wrong that the Senate took this action through an outside section of the budget, thereby bypassing the committee process and avoiding full debate in both bodies of the Legislature. We believe that voters deserve the opportunity to know how their elected officials voted on this critical reform measure in order to hold them accountable for their votes.
- The problems that gave rise to the need for Clean Elections, namely the lack of competition and accountability on Beacon Hill, are worse now than when the law was passed in 1998. Two-thirds of the legislative races in Massachusetts were uncontested in the 2002 election cycle. This means that candidates have no need to campaign or debate and little to no

accountability to voters. Massachusetts still ranks second to last in the nation in the percentage of contested legislative races; only Arkansas holds a worse record. Our state needs Clean Elections so that voters can have more choices on the ballot and more accountability on Beacon Hill.

Clean Elections are working in Arizona and Maine. Since the implementation of the law in these states, there has been a significant rise in the number of contested primary and general elections races. In Maine, 62% of the candidates took part in the system, while 53% did the same in Arizona. A recent General Accounting Office study of Clean Elections showed a rise in voter confidence in government after the implementation of the law. Voters in these two states support Clean Elections because they know that it means more choices at the ballot box and more accountability for their states' political leaders. In these states, the law was used well by both Republicans and Democrats.

Money in politics affects every issue in our government, from the environment to healthcare to energy. One of the reasons that reforms long sought by the League have not come about is the array of moneyed interests working against them. Each and every League member needs to speak up for reducing the influence of money in political campaigns. Let's let our Clean Elections Law work!

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Diversity Policy of LWVM

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is committed to reflect, in its principles and practices, the diversity and pluralism in our state. In both its principles and practices, the League of Women Voters will promote inclusion: there shall be no barrier based on race, ethnicity, national origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age in leadership, staffing, membership, or participation in any League-sponsored activity. The League acknowledges that pluralism and diverse perspectives are necessary for responsible and representative decision making, as well as fundamental to the values the League upholds.

New LWVM officers and directors

By Michael Frishman
LWVM DIRECTOR

The delegates to Convention 2003 elected officers and directors as recommended by the Nominating Committee. Short biographies of several of the new officers and directors appear below; similar biographies of the other officers and directors will appear in future issues of the Voter.

Jo-Ann Berry (board) has "always been interested in the workings of government" and is "curious as to why people don't take advantage of the opportunities afforded them by virtue of their U.S. citizenship." She earned a BA at Boston University and a MAT at Simmons College. She was a member of the Dedham League from 1988 to 1993 and then continued with the Acton Area League, where she has been Vice-President, President, and chair of several committees. Jo-Ann is an elected member of the Acton Public School Committee and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee. For a day job she is State Director of Massachusetts YMCA Youth & Government. "I also enjoy spending time with my family, gardening, and reading."

Bernadette Buck (board), a native of Easton, Massachusetts and a graduate of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, became involved with the League of Women Voters while living in the San Francisco Bay area. She was on the board of directors of the LWV of Cupertino-Sunnyvale and served on the Election Systems Study committee. When the employment picture in Silicon Valley changed drastically, she returned home to Massachusetts and spent last fall as an intern in Senator John Kerry's Boston office. Her focus was on energy and environmental policy, and she is currently exploring employment opportunities in energy consulting, renewable energy, or alternative fuels. She also teaches evening courses in test preparation for The Princeton Review. Bernadette is very interested in voting systems and is a member of the state committee for the new voting systems study, which was adopted at Convention.

Joanna Corrado Daniel (Vice-President) a native of New York, says she fell in love with New England and moved to Boston in 1981; she currently lives in Boxford. She is a graduate of Boston University and holds a degree in Systems Engineering. Joanna is President of the LWV of Topsfield/Boxford/Middleton and has served in various other positions on its board since 1991, including Director, Vice-President and Bulletin Editor. From 1997 to 2003 she was the Natural Resources Specialist for the LWVM Program and Action Committee.

Patricia Elen Costello (board) has been a member of the LWVM board since 2001 and a member of the Lexington League board since 1990. She is New England Division Executive Associate, Volunteerism/Human Resources for the American Cancer Society and has been with the organization since 1995. She has also worked in development at the Wang Center for the Performing Arts and the Cambridge YWCA, where she was also a Planning Committee member for Women of Color conferences. Pat received her BA from Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN. She lives in Lexington with her dog Jacques.

Michael Frishman (board), after nearly 20 years as an editor at The New York Times, returned to Massachusetts in 1981 to be a full time father with some freelance activity and considerable community involvement. He joined the Andover/North Andover League in 1999 and has been Bulletin Editor for three years. He has been a Campaign Manager and has done research for the United Way, and was Executive Director of the American Red Cross of Northern Essex County. He was Information Officer for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Office of Technical Assistance for Toxics Use Reduction, reviewed and surveyed restaurants and hotels for a national travel guide, lectured about OSHA standards and inspections at a Vocational Technical High School, and cooked for a couple of small restaurants. Community service and interests include the Andover School Committee (elected),

Andover Town Democratic Committee Treasurer, Foster Care Review Community Volunteer for the Department of Social Services, and Essex County Small Claims Courts Volunteer Mediator. Michael attended Columbia University, where he helped establish an Urban Studies Department; he has also received certificates for Mediation and Toxics Use Reduction Planning.

Carol Reimers (Vice President), a member of the League for over 20 years, has been local League President in Hingham and in Fairfax Area, Virginia. She served on the board of the Connecticut state League as Legislative Director and Public Issues Vice-President. For LWVM, she was Financial Manager and Local League Services Vice-President. She is a member of the Town of Hingham Advisory Committee and was a LWVUS Rosalee Goodman Fellow in 1990. Carol was elected to the Wilton, Connecticut Board of Education. She worked as Events Coordinator for the Forum for World Affairs in Stamford, CT. She has been a member of the Board of Trustees for The Montessori School, Wilton, CT and Old Colony Montessori School, Hingham, MA. While living in Fairfax County, Virginia, she served on Fairfax 2000 committee and the Fairfax County Public Schools Elementary Language Arts Textbook Selection Committee.

Melodee Wagen (Treasurer) is past President and current Vice-President of the Lexington League. She is President of her own consulting firm, Melodee Wagen Consulting, Inc., and has over 15 years' experience in consulting, facilities management, project management, and design. When she was Senior Planning Analyst at Harvard University, she produced and implemented short-range and long-range strategic plans for building resources of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences and developed the program goals and migration plans for the \$25 million, multi-use renovation of Memorial Hall and Sanders Theater. Melodee holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Western Michigan University and a business degree from Radcliffe College.

League gets a seat on Advisory Committee to "Help Massachusetts Vote"

By Nancy Carapezza
LWVM REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
HAVA STEERING COMMITTEE

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is represented on the state's Advisory Steering Committee, which will make recommendations for the implementation plan required to make Massachusetts eligible for federal funding under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

HAVA was signed by President Bush in October 2002 in an effort to improve voting across the country and in response to the problems that arose in the 2000 presidential election. The bill calls for up to \$3.9 billion in spending by the federal government over the next three years on a number of grant programs.

The actual legislation is lengthy and contains numerous provisions. Highlights are as shown in the box at right:

In order to be eligible for the federal grants, each state must establish a fund and develop an

implementation plan by a public process. Carrying out the plan will require legislative as well as administrative changes. Each planning committee must submit the state plan to the EAC to secure federal funds. These plans are not binding, so League diligence during all steps of implementation is of utmost importance.

The Advisory Steering Committee, on which the League is represented, includes representatives from the Governor's Office, the House of Representatives, the Senate, the political parties, the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities, city and town clerks, and several minority citizen organizations. The plan for implementation must be completed by September 15, 2003 for public inspection and comment and must thereafter be published in the Federal Register no later than October 15, 2003.

The impact in Massachusetts covers numerous areas. As with any federal legislation, the implementation varies from state to state. Massachusetts has already applied for the Title I funding to be used to replace lever machines and data-vote voting equipment, as well as for acquiring voting equipment accessible to the handicapped.

Title II funding is to be used for continued implementation of the requirements of the act, including poll-worker training, improving voter education, and improving the administration of

federal elections. Each state is required to provide matching funds, in the amount of five percent of

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- Authorizes grants to the states to buy out punch card and lever machines
- Requires states to provide second chance voting – an opportunity for voters to correct ballot errors in a private and independent manner
- Requires states to have in each precinct at least one voting machine that is accessible to the disabled
- Requires states to provide provisional ballots to anyone who requests one
- Requires states to implement a computerized, statewide voter registration list
- Requires states to maintain an accurate voter registration list that includes all eligible voters and guards against erroneous purges
- Authorizes grants to the states to implement the statewide voter lists, provisional ballots, and disability access, and to purchase new voting systems, train poll workers, and carry out voter registration
- Establishes a federal commission, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), which will develop voluntary guidelines for voting systems, administer federal election grants programs, test and certify voting systems, and study election issues

Joan Vennoch Speaks At Convention Banquet

By Joanna Corrado Daniel
LWVM VICE-PRESIDENT

The Friday evening Banquet of LWVM Convention 2003 was topped off with our guest speaker, Joan Vennoch, writer for the Boston Globe and member of the Melrose League of Women Voters. A self-proclaimed shy person, not a public speaker, Ms. Vennoch addressed the question, "Is the Commonwealth in business for the common good?" with refreshing, casual charm.

Pointing out that "identifying problems is easier than effecting change," Vennoch stated that the Commonwealth is not in business for the common good. She went on to explain that in Massachusetts business and politics are run by men, and they have different priorities from those that women would have, as evidenced by the amount of time devoted to finding a way to spend \$100,000,000 on a new park for the Red Sox and not on human needs.

"Ego, not politics" drives Beacon Hill, said Ms. Vennoch, and in Boston this ethos is gender-neutral and bipartisan. She also observed that Beacon Hill refuses to accept that the "truth and solutions are somewhere in the middle" of any given dispute. Concluding this observation, she admitted she does not know how we can change the way we do (political) business in the state.

Vennoch answered dinner guests' questions about the current administration and offered more of her well-informed insight. She thought that Bulger would win the Romney-Bulger power struggle in the short term but would exit by the end of the year. Ms Vennoch also observed that Governor Romney governs like a CEO, with a "my way or the highway" approach, and not like a legislator. She stated that he will ultimately have to reform like a legislator and be more conciliatory.

Encouraging Local Candidates to Run for Office

By Karen Sheridan
LWV OF TOPSFIELD/BOXFORD/MIDDLETON

The workshop on encouraging local candidates to run for office featured three panelists who have set up "How to Run for Office" forums or participated directly in the political process. Barbara Mercier of the Worcester Area League spoke on the logistics of setting up a forum and urged local Leagues to join with other organizations in sponsoring such a forum, so as to have more visibility.

Alice Peisch, former Town Clerk of Wellesley and now a State Representative, reminded would-be candidates to get more signatures than required on nomination papers, as some people are not registered who think they are. She highly recommended the website of the Office of Campaign & Political Finance for downloading a guide for candidates for office; it is at

www.state.ma.us/ocpf

Michael Frishman of the Andover/North Andover League, former candidate for local office and State Representative, in true League fashion was able to fill in on a moment's notice for an ill panelist. He strongly urged would-be candidates to go to meetings of the boards or committees they would like to serve on and always to ask the local League of Women Voters to schedule a candidates' night for contested races.

Panelists Share Membership Successes

By Erin Pastuszewski
LWVM VICE-PRESIDENT

For Leagues interested in growing, the membership workshop at Convention 2003 was the place to be. Three panelists shared their stories with about 20 League leaders from around the state. The featured Leagues reached their growth goals by planning well, exploring new ideas and approaches, and diligently following up with prospects.

Marcia Hirschberg, LWV of Westwood, detailed her League's experience with the LWVM membership growth incentive program, Shaping the Future (STF). STF motivated the Westwood League to conduct a poolside planning session last summer and carry out an ambitious schedule of events in program areas with high appeal, such as education and the environment. The League leveraged its visibility to recruit men and women already active in town affairs, it being clear that busy people have a critical role as supportive League members, even when they have little or no time to give. Westwood's local membership soared from 28 to 44.

The LWV of Westford also hit its STF goal thanks to a solid, but flexible, tailor-made plan, resulting in a jump in local membership from 69 to 81. Westford's Chris Kandianis prescribed guidelines for STF success:

- (1) Use the STF program materials and LWVUS resources;
- (2) plan and stick to the plan;
- (3) seize opportunities; and
- (4) build upon your strengths.

From a champagne and chocolate membership social, to a forum on a hot traffic issue, to mock elections involving over 1,200 children, the Westford League used large events to stay in the public eye and contribute to civic life, while also attracting new members.

Mary LeSueur of the LWV of Plymouth described how STF supported the Plymouth Area League as it grew from 49 to 63 local members. The keys to Plymouth's success were choosing issues relevant to the community (the town charter and affordable housing in Plymouth's case) and extending many one-on-one invitations to League events and following up afterwards.

For the latest on LWVM's Shaping the Future program, call Erin Pastuszewski through the state office at 617-523-2999 or visit the state League website at www.lwvma.org.

Convention plenary sessions

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a mock election of favorite ice cream flavors, with five choices. Their handouts listed various voting systems that could be studied, including instant runoff voting, proportional representation, and semi-proportional voting.

Several delegates spoke in favor of the voting systems study, making points about the need to learn about systems other than winner-take-all, and about how such a study is a hot topic and can help draw new members. Many people are ready to join the study committee and would welcome more participants. No delegates spoke against the study.

The second study adopted is on ballot questions, including referendum, initiative petition, and

Baited? League already has credibility

By Alix Driscoll
LWVM DIRECTOR

State Convention 2003 had just commenced with the ingathering of delegates for luncheon when Suzanne Bates, president and CEO of Bates Communications, a firm that helps executives and firms hone their public images, shared with members several techniques that she employs, proposing that they might be useful to the League. These include: telling the truth, being willing to listen, speaking persuasively and provocatively, (with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as an example), and nurturing the "credibility pipeline."

After Bates's speech and a lively question-and-answer period with her, League members split into five working groups to discuss what Bates had told them. In one such breakout session members agreed quite vociferously that we belong to an institution that already has enormous credibility and integrity; our positions rest on the bedrock foundation of study. Our nonpartisanship is unwavering. No image buffing is needed here for the organization that stands on suffragist integrity. But Ms. Bates did get it right when she said: "history gives you credibility ... not automatically, ... but what you do with your credibility." We build ours on 83 years of working very publicly and successfully to strengthen the democracy process in Massachusetts.

But breakout-group members did agree that the League today could and must be more visible in this Commonwealth, taking due and public credit for what we do very well. Here are ideas to share that welled up from this group:

Suggestions for actions outside-the League:

- We need to become more public to settle the ongoing confusion between our non-partisanship towards candidates and our advocacy role with policy issues.
- Sound bites cannot contain two years of directed study on a complex issue. Therefore more publicity is needed, with comprehensive explanations.
- Take credit; the positions from the League's 1995 study on education financing are just now surfacing in at least one bill before the Legislature.
- The State League needs to designate a Public Relations leader and mount a campaign.

Suggestions for improvements inside-the League:

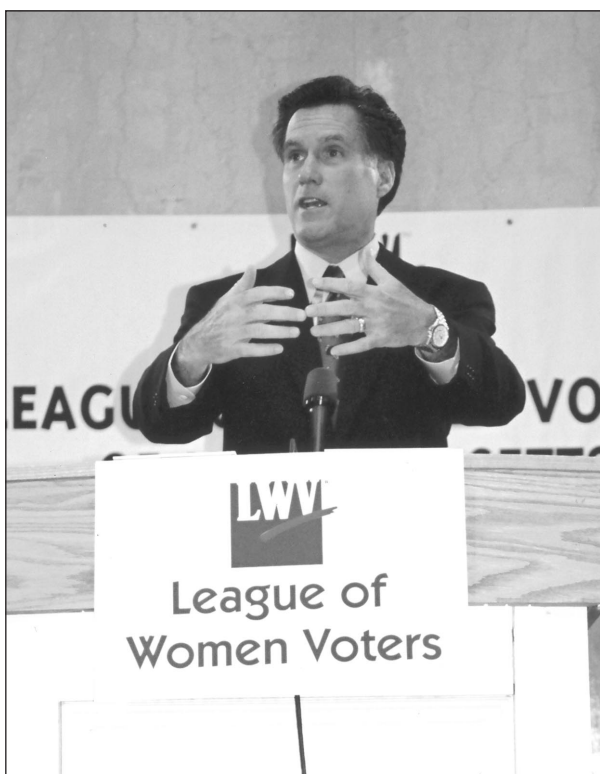
- Streamline the study approach with one-year studies, such as the one that the Falmouth League is doing on wind energy.
- Generate 'buzz'. Printing a laundry list of accomplishments that the local Leagues are justly proud of adds weight to local press releases.

constitutional amendment. Points made in favor of adopting the study included the need to learn more about this process and how it is used and misused. Another point was that we need to believe in the voter. Finally, all were urged to consider the law of unintended consequences.

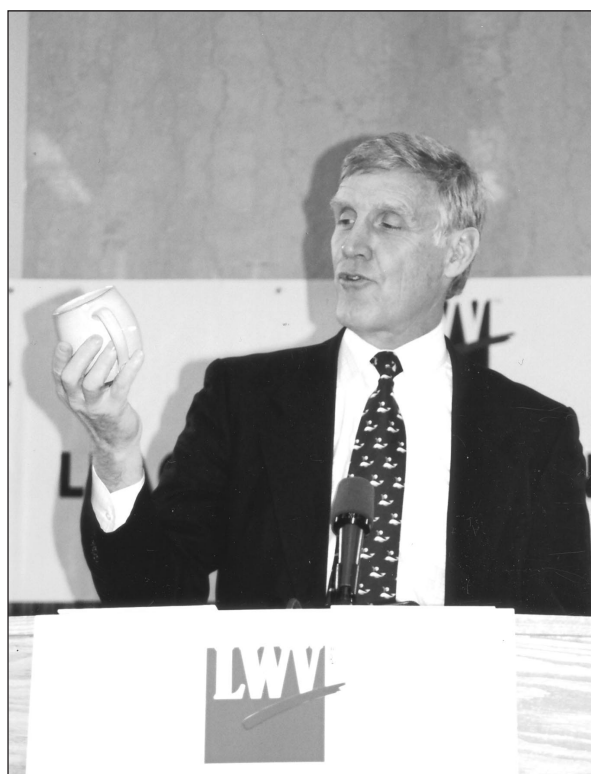
In other business, health care, education and education finance, casino gambling, reproductive rights, and the north-south rail link in Boston were

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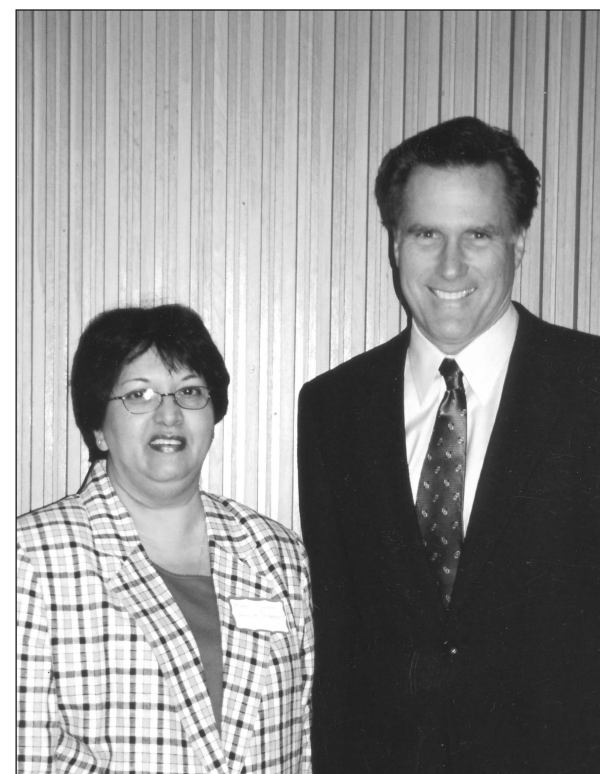
Day on the Hill: April 30, 2003



Governor Mitt Romney addressing the League



Douglas Foy, Chief of Commonwealth Development



Governor Romney with Madhu Sridhar, LWVM President

Day on the Hill

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He plans to direct the agencies that report to him to make it happen. "It is not complex; the challenge is to do it." He holds the New England village model dear, believing services for new affordable housing must be nearby. "Every child should be able to walk to a library," says Foy. League members nodded in assent.

Day on the Hill was organized by Enid Thuermer with committee members Maria Bartlett, Alix Driscoll, Mary Frantz, Louise Haldeman, and Madhu Sridhar. This annual lob-

bying day drew an audience of over 300, including student groups from Acton, Arlington, Westford, and North Andover, and at least a dozen film crews and reporters. National Public Radio reviewed Romney's address, which emphasized that he encouraged the high school students in the audience to ask him questions. New England Cable News aired a clip of Romney addressing League members, and WBUR covered it too.

To strengthen League members' lobbying skills, several League specialists shared facts and well-crafted talking points on specific pieces of legislation. Our Administration of Justice Specialist, Archie Lyon, spoke about the courts'

dependence on adequate funding, a crucial budget issue right now. Betsy Dunn discussed access to services and prescriptions for emergency contraception. She shared with the group a vintage photo of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger with her lips taped shut so she would not be able to discuss this once-forbidden subject. A thorough explanation of the single-payer system for Massachusetts health care was spelled out by health-care specialist Barbara Sullivan. Mary Frantz discussed the League's funding formula for education, being given a second look now that state funding for education is diminishing radically. Many members then set off to share working lunches with their legislators; others dropped by their lawmakers' offices to lobby for the League's legislative and budgetary priorities.

Convention plenary sessions

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adopted for priority action. A proposal to adopt transportation as a priority action item failed.

The budget was adopted as presented, accounting for \$1,650 in gifts from the local Leagues. Concern was expressed that one-third of the budget is expended on office rent. Incoming President Madhu Sridhar assured the delegates that this situation would be reviewed by the incoming board.

Existing positions on government, natural resources, and social policy were readopted unanimously. The election of the officers and members of the Board of Directors for 2003-2005, as proposed by the Nominating Committee, was also unanimous.



League members and others attending Day on the Hill in the State House

Student On-Line Essay Contest Awards

Seeing Democracy Work

Editor's Note: This note is adapted from an article by Michael Frishman in the Andover/North Andover Bulletin.

"We the People: Making Democracy Work" was the title and theme of the LWVMA fourth Annual Student Essay Contest. The award ceremony was Sunday, April 6 in Faneuil Hall – as it has been every year. Nearly 900 students submitted essays to this year's contest; 10 were selected as the

winning essays; each of the 10 had its own message.

The featured speaker, Harvard Law School Professor Lani Guinier, was charming, gracious, and brilliant. She began her remarks by quoting from nearly all of the 10 winning essays we had just heard, addressing each student by name, and emphasizing the importance, relevance and intelligence of what we all together had just heard in the original. She then spoke from her experience about the importance of voting, of public involvement. Lastly she answered questions from the students – her response to "Is affirmative action necessary and

right and if so why?" was what we would all wish the Supreme Court to produce: tax dollars support these public institutions and it is both right and in our best interest that those institutions reflect who we – the nation as a whole – are.

The Emerson College Select Chorus opened with the "Star Spangled Banner" and later performed several other appropriate songs. Massachusetts League Co-president Donna Kemp spoke persuasively about the need and right to vote by all in our society and about the growing response to this essay contest.



On-Line Student Essay Contest Winners, with Lani Guinier and the LWVMA Co-Presidents



Brian Collins and Jeannette Sisco, librarian and teacher from West Roxbury High School

Excerpts from Winning Essays

By Risa Nyman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CITIZEN EDUCATION FUND

Lauren Walsh, Danvers, First Place, Grades 4-5

"In schools a group of kids from kindergarten through 12th grade will be recruited and taught to explain how to register and even how to become candidates. They would be called Candidate Kids. Parents will be informed of how to vote in their own language because it's coming from their sons and daughters."

María E. Morales, Framingham, Second Place, Grades 4-5

"Can't wait till you get older? I mean, a car, dances, responsibilities, well neither can I, but you know one of those responsibilities is the duty to vote, to give your opinion in what's going on. Remember this: "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Well, guess what. We are the people!"

Lisa M. Dunker, Newton, Third Place, Grades 4-5

"But you also have to make voting seem like it's a reward for living in a democracy. There should be no question whether you are going to vote. You have to vote because it's your future! It's like brushing your teeth in the morning. You have to take the time to do it or you could end up in a worse situation, like getting a cavity."

Rebecca E. Agostino, Andover, First Place, Grades 6-8

"The rich culture of America is home to hundreds of customs and different values. If we do not allow these values to be put on the table of discussion in our government, they will not be heard. If we had hindered the ideas of our greatest thinkers, their thoughts would not be heard, and their contributions not currently improving our society."

Robert M. Dye, Braintree, Second Place, Grades 6-8

"To judge someone by what they look like would be like trying to see through a wall. You can't see what's inside of the room and you can't see the personality or morals of a person unless you really take your time and get to know them. In my opinion, if a person has the best ideas for the government then they should be voted in no matter what their culture, appearance, or gender."

Caroline Paula McSherry, Natick, Third Place, Grades 6-8

Education is the most important social institution to allow all ethnic groups the same chance to run for office. All of our schools are not equal. Schools, in areas where people earn a lot of money tend to offer more programs and classes for its students. Computers and advanced classes are the standard and those classes are usually filled with white people. Native American children are taught on reservations in schools that do not have the money, many white schools have.



Prof. Lani Guinier, Harvard Law School

Jose L. Machado, Jr., Boston, First Place, Grades 9-12

"Regarding political matters, all I can remember growing up was walking outside my door and stepping out to play when I would run to a group of adults playing dominoes out on some stools. All I can hear the adults discussing was how all politicians were corrupt. They discussed how they did not vote because they felt all

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Thank You to the Wonderful Judges of the 4th Annual Online Student Essay Contest

Ellen Barber, Yarmouth Port
Nancy Brumbach, Sudbury
Gladys Chan, Shrewsbury
Lynn Cohen, Westford
Denali Delmar, Westford
Roberta Demers, Needham
Heidi Elsinger, Methuen
Carrie Flood, Concord
Carma Forgie, Arlington
Sharon Fradkin, Stoughton

Michael Frishman, Andover
Mary Ann Hardenbergh, Boston
Barbara Hill, Chestnut Hill
Patricia Johnson, Brookline
Karen Kavet, Wayland
Paulina Knibbe, Acton
Christina L'Bassi, Shrewsbury
Christina Lehrich, Chestnut Hill
Mary Leite, Randolph
Margaret Lynch, Cohasset

Kelly Marcimo, Shrewsbury
Barbara Morrison, Norwood
Stella Neiman, Amherst
Dorothy Perkins, Shrewsbury
Beth Quigley, Arlington
Deborah Romeo, Westford
Lucy Rosborough, Concord
Dan Scharfman, Belmont
Cheryl Schiarizzi, Walpole
Florence Seldin, Chatham

Mawya Shocair, Weston
Priscilla Stevens, Carlisle
Katherine Strehle, Weston
Audrey Stuart, Acton
Mary Tamer, Roslindale
Margaret Thorne, Norwood
Enid Thuermer, Boxford

Excerpts from Winning Essays

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politicians were lying and deceiving. I conclude that in order to have a higher level of political participation in the minority groups, we the minority need to see changes. We need to see that politicians are able to stay true to their word and bring the empty promises to a halt."

Sarah Gelinias, Boxford, Second Place, Grades 9-12

"Unfortunately, one thing that allows those currently in power to be elected is money. Money is necessary for every successful campaign. However, many underrepresented groups simply do not have the funds necessary to be elected for office in today's society. A limit could be placed on the amount of money allowed to be spent by each campaigner, giving all candidates a fair chance at winning regardless of how much money they have. When the differences that make America's people great permeate its government, we will have democracy."

Audrey M. Gibbons, Lexington, Third Place, Grades 9-12

"The United States has many defining characteristics, but two of its most notable elements rest in its governmental and cultural composition. Worldwide, the U.S. is renowned for its dedication to democracy as well as for the multicultural, diverse society that sustains it. Nevertheless, this democracy, considered a "government of the people, by the people, for the people," does not yet have all members of its population equally represented."

Carl E. Kubler, Williamstown, Third Place, Grades 9-12

"An even more basic strategy for expanding representation among elected officials would be to increase the general populace's understanding of non-white peoples so as to break down prejudice in America. As the son of a Chinese mother and a German-American father, I have myself sometimes felt misunderstood or stereotyped by my peers. Without first better understanding each other and reconciling our differences, the American people will never be able to increase the political representation of women, citizens of low income, and racial and ethnic minorities."

Reading fosters understanding

By Pat Costello
LWVM DIVERSITY SPECIALIST

Continuing with the idea that knowledge aids understanding, the following are more books from the Diversity Bibliography and Resource List that you might like to consider for your own reading or a book group.

"The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother" by James McBride, Riverhead Books, Reissued 1997. A portrait of growing up in a black neighborhood as the child of an interracial marriage, but mostly a tribute to his mother, a Rabbi's daughter who was raised in the South, fled to Harlem, married a black man, founded a Baptist church, and put 12 children through college. Two years a Newark Times Best Seller.

"Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White" by Frank H. Wu, Basic Books, 2001. Wu, an associate professor of law at Howard University School of Law in Washington, DC, and a columnist for *Asian Week*, attempts to expand discussion of the races by including Americans of Asian descent. Starting with his own childhood experiences, Wu talks about the difficulties of being Asian in America, discussing the stereotypes associated with Asian Americans and the reasons why they are often blamed for discrimination.

"In the Spirit of Crazy Horse" by Peter Matthiesen, Viking Press, 1983; Penguin USA 1992. A controversial history of the Lakota tribe's efforts to maintain its traditions from Red Cloud's war and the Little Big Horn in the nineteenth century to the 1975 shoot-out between Indians and the FBI. A case for the retrial of Leonard Peltier, who is serving concurrent life sentences in a federal penitentiary.

The Diversity Advisory Committee welcomes your suggestions sent to: pcostello@lwvma.org

*Thank you for your support of the 4th Annual
Online Student Essay Contest*



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Spotlight on Local Leagues

By Lynn Cohen

LWVM EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

Local Leagues in Massachusetts had an exceptionally busy spring sponsoring an impressive number of citizens education forums and voters service activities.

The **Waltham** League cosponsored a forum on zoning reform, featuring an especially informative presentation by Kurt Gaertner of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Division of Growth Planning. Gaertner focused on legislative solutions to help alleviate problems of sprawl.

Both the **Framingham** and the **Lexington** Leagues held forums that addressed the crisis in affordable housing. Participants in the Framingham forum not only learned more about the problem but also broke into working groups to formulate action plans in three areas: advocacy on the state level, organizing and outreach on affordable housing at the local level, and strategies to develop and preserve affordable housing in MetroWest.

The Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Probate and Family Court, the Honorable Sean Dunphy, spoke on judicial independence at the **Northampton** League's annual meeting. The **Norwood** League sponsored a forum on free air time, while in **Bedford** the League's forum prompted an animated dialogue on identifying community needs and expectations and exploring ways in which town-wide communication can be enhanced.

The **Beverly** League held its annual State of the City event, featuring the mayor, the City Council President, and the Superintendent of Schools.

Several Leagues met with their area legislators in a variety of different forum settings, but the

dominant theme was always the same: the state's daunting fiscal situation. The **Andover/North Andover, Arlington, Cape Cod Area, and Plymouth** Leagues all talked with their state representatives and senators about the Commonwealth's fiscal crisis and its effects on many of the programs and services the League has long supported.

Looking at a significant and timely national issue, the **Worcester Area** League invited Carol Rose, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, to speak on the USA Patriot Act.

Meetings sponsored by the **Brookline** and **Melrose** Leagues focused on international topics. The Brookline League's forum on "Crisis with Iraq: A Global Perspective" featured Stanley Hoffman, chairman of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University. At the Melrose unit meeting on "The United Nations in the New Millennium" Phyllis Cuttino, Vice-President for Public Affairs for the United Nations Foundation and the Better World Fund, described the many functions performed by the UN and its agencies.

Forums are not the only way Leagues work to educate citizens. As part of its study of drinking water, the **Norwood** League toured the Dedham-Westwood Water Treatment Plant to learn more about this type of facility. The town of Norwood is considering supplementing its current MWRA water supply with groundwater from a town well.

The **Andover/North Andover** League published a report on the first year of its in-depth study that assessed the role and opportunities for volunteer involvement in town government and examined the workload and priorities of the appointed town boards on which the volunteers serve.

Continuing its tradition of educating the public about the electoral process and government services, the **Boston** League published its updated *2003 Guide to Elected Officials and City Services in Boston*. Demand for last year's guide exceeded supply, so the League printed even more this year.

Taking action on important public policy issues is very much a part of the League's mission. The **Needham** League supported two override questions – for the library and for schools – on the spring ballot, while in **Acton** the Area League supported an override there and funded a town-wide mailing publicizing its position. The **Newton** League wrote a letter to the Board of Aldermen supporting five proposals for use of Community Preservation funds.

Leagues also took time to honor their pasts and plan for the future. Several members of the **Cape Ann** League have been meeting weekly to organize their League's records. Their Bulletin reports that the first local League meeting was held in Gloucester City Hall in 1920, the year women got the right to vote and the year the League was founded!

Twenty-two members of the **Hamilton-Wenham** League attended a workshop on "Strategizing our Future," to explore the League's present practices and to plan for the future. An organization-development consultant expertly facilitated the workshop. Participants developed an action plan to be used at their local program planning meeting as the basis of the League's program for next year.

Congratulations to the **Williamstown** League! It celebrated its 80th anniversary of service to the town. Former governor Jane Swift was the event's guest speaker.

LWVM studies get underway

By Carol Reimers

VICE-PRESIDENT CITIZEN
EDUCATION/VOTERS SERVICE

Convention 2003 adopted two studies for the 2003-2005 biennium, and now LWVM is looking for volunteers to work on the committees that will lead the study process.

The studies are:

Voting systems for state and local elections

Scope: To examine the process and effectiveness of voting systems for state and local elections, such as plurality voting, instant run-off voting, proportional voting and propose a new position through consensus or concurrence

Study may include, but is not limited to:

- Review the mechanism of various voting systems
- Review the use and effectiveness of various voting systems on elections in Massachusetts, other states, and other countries
- Review applicable election laws in localities using alternative voting systems

Ballot Questions (referendum, initiative petition, and constitutional amendment)

Scope: To evaluate the process, regulation and effectiveness of ballot questions (referendum, initiative petition, and constitutional amendment) in Massachusetts and propose a new position through consensus or concurrence

Study may include but is not limited to:

- Review the issue of legislation by ballot question
- Review ballot questions as to type, rate of passing, relationship to legislation
- Review regulations regarding identification of sponsors; signature requirements including the number of signatures, time limits for gathering signatures and the use of paid signature gathers; financial reporting requirements including limitations on individual contributions and acceptance of out-of-state contributions
- Review matters that are appropriate subjects of ballot questions and the wording and titles of ballot questions
- Consider the need for fiscal or environmental impact statements on the subject of a ballot question
- Review the role of the legislature in implementing and amending initiative petitions approved by voters

Each study will have a committee comprising League members from across the state. To volunteer for the Voting Systems study, contact Carma D. Forgie at forgie@ix.netcom.com or 781-643-7622. For the Ballot Questions study, contact Carol Reimers at creimers@lwvma.org or 781-749-4077.

This will be an exciting two years with these topics to study. Join us!

Help Massachusetts Vote

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the funds supplied by the federal government. Massachusetts could receive up to \$69 million. Again, in order to receive the funds, a plan detailing compliance with the act must be submitted, and the state will need to contribute \$3.45 million in matching funds.

The remainder of funding through HAVA will be used for such programs as accessibility improvements, including increasing polling place access for disabled voters; research to improve voting technologies; and pilot programs to test new voting systems and voting technology.

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