

# INVITATION

Please join us for the

League of Women Voters of Weston

## ANNUAL WINE, CHEESE & DESSERT MEETING

Wednesday, May 28, 2008  
7:30 P.M.

Barn at the Josiah Smith Tavern

### Guest Speaker, Annette Lee

Schedule of Events:    7:30 Refreshments: Wine, Cheese, Dessert, Coffee  
                                  8:00 Guest Speaker, Annette Lee  
                                  9:00 Business Meeting

Annette Lee and her husband, John, raised their five children in their antique farm house in Carlisle surrounded by animals, gardens, fields and woodlands. Annette now teaches special education students in Lincoln's Middle School. She is on a committee that plans and organizes events for Slow Food Boston, she is the founder and co-manager of Carlisle's Farmer's Market, a full time foodie and part time caterer who incorporates the principles of the Slow Food movement in all aspects of her personal and professional life. She is married to an organic farmer who manages Allandale Farm in Boston, and writes a regular column for Edible Boston.

Her topic for our meeting will be:

### *The Slow Food Movement*

Please RSVP by May 25 to Katty Chace, 781-891-1087 (tackc@aol.com), to reserve your place. Attendance is free, but we would like to know how many people to expect.

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**Please remember to bring this bulletin with you on May 28. It is your Annual Meeting Book and contains the information upon which you will be voting at the meeting.**



# The League of Women Voters Of Weston

May, 2008

No. 107

## OPENING MESSAGE

Katty Chace

### League of Women Voters of Weston

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This LWV/Weston Newsletter is published monthly except July and August. The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age.

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Submit articles to Katherine Wolfthal in  
typewritten hard copy or by e-mail to  
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**A**s we close another year, I'd like to consider the achievements of the Weston League this year. Our priorities always include Voter Service right near the top. Last week we held a very successful Candidates' Night for local elections. Thanks to the interest raised by contests both on the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board, our attendance was up considerably from recent years. Sally Currier produced a fabulous Voters' Guide, which will appear in the Town Crier this week, and we also emailed copies to our entire membership for the first time.

We held four Coffee Hours on different topics of wide interest, and our attendance there, too, was unusually strong. We started off in the fall with Representative Alice Peisch speaking about the Governor's recommendations to build three "resort destination" casinos in the state. This item was a top priority of the Massachusetts League and many of us went to the Coffee Hour firmly convinced that we too opposed the Governor's bill, only to learn from Representative Peisch that the issue was more complex than we had thought, and that perhaps if the federal government was going to allow the Native American tribes to build casinos anyway, it would be in the state's best interest to stay in the picture and exert some control and retain some benefit. This spring, as you know, the casino proposal went down to overwhelming defeat.

In January we invited Department of Public Works Director Bob Hoffman to speak about various aspects of the DPW's work and the defeat at Fall Town Meeting of the Selectmen's' proposed \$18 million new DPW building. We

later followed that up with an April Coffee Hour at the DPW site, where we viewed plans for a pared-down proposal, which will be debated at Annual Town Meeting on May 12. This venue had the added benefit of allowing attendees to see the current facility and take a tour of the site.

In March, Diana Chaplin helped organize a Coffee Hour panel discussion of Affordable Housing, which included Town Planner Susan Haber, as well as Noreen Stockman, staff aide for Affordable Housing, and Bill Donnelly of the Housing Needs Committee. The presentation gave us an appreciation of the challenges presented by trying to increase the availability of more and varied affordable housing in Weston.

Barbara Fullerton continued to provide passionate and determined leadership in the area of environmental safety, with her focus shifting from the overuse of pesticides in town to the introduction of artificial turf playing fields at the High School and Country School. Although the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee had satisfied itself that these fields are safe for kids to play on, new information is constantly coming forth that raised the League Board's concerns enough to cause us to ask the Selectmen to delay the installation of the Country School field until all parties could be included in a new discussion. We met with members of the School Committee and the Board of Health to express our reservations, and last week found out that the Selectmen have, indeed, put a moratorium on installing the Country School field until next spring.

Changes in the operations of our League this year include a change from our paper Bulletin to an email Bulletin, which will be completed with this last Annual Meeting edition you are now reading and our on-going efforts to set up a Weston League website. New Board members Beth Keane and Cat Laine have moved us closer to that goal this year, and by fall we expect to launch our new information center.

Upcoming events include a state Municipal Finance study unit on Friday morning, May 16 at 10:00 am at Sally Currier's house at 170 Ridgeway Road. (Consensus questions can be found on page 25 of this Bulletin). Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, May 28, at the Josiah Smith Tavern Barn, with refreshments served at 7:30 and our speaker Annette Lee at 8:00. You can read about her on your Annual Meeting invitation at the front of this Bulletin. In the fall, we expect to have a Candidates' Night for candidates for our State Representative and our State Senator in October.

I would like to close by thanking my wonderful board. Many of them have served in their board positions for five or more years, and, although we are always looking for new recruits to join us and get involved, the current board continues to be eager, helpful, generous with time and effort, and a complete pleasure to work with. Many thanks to all of them for their interest in making Weston and the larger world a more interesting and responsive place.

## CALENDAR

### APRIL – MAY 2008

**May 10, Saturday..... Town Elections**  
**8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M., Upper Town Hall**

**May 12, Monday..... Annual Town Meeting**  
**7:30 P.M., Weston High School Auditorium**

**May 28, Wednesday..... LWVW Annual Meeting**  
**7:30 P.M., Location TBA**

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

**This** issue of the Bulletin is the last one you will be receiving in print. This month, you will be receiving an online version of the Bulletin in addition to the print copy. Your online Bulletin should arrive around the same time as your hard copy.

We are using a webmail service to distribute the Bulletin, so **please make sure your firewalls and spam filters are set to accept mail from [info@westonlww.org](mailto:info@westonlww.org)**

**If you are unable to receive e-mail, or to open links or attachments, please contact me (781-891-9549) or Katty Chace (781-891-1087) to request a hard copy of future Bulletins.**

For at least the next few months, the online Bulletin will be distributed in the form of a PDF file, accessible by clicking on a link in the e-mail you receive from [info@westonlww.org](mailto:info@westonlww.org). This may change, as we determine the most efficient way of distributing the Bulletin.

To read the Bulletin, you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. This is a free download from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

We hope you will enjoy the new online Bulletin. Thank you for your patience in this transitional period.



*Katherine Wolfthal*

## WHEN IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

### President

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### U.S. Senators

- The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
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### U.S. Representative 7<sup>th</sup> District

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Home: (781) 259-9623

### State Representative 4<sup>th</sup> Norfolk District

The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch  
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Boston MA 02133-1054  
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## BOARD NOTES

Kathleen Rousseau

### MAY

The May meeting of the board of the League of Women Voters of Weston was held at the home of Barbara Hill.

We have found a speaker for our ANNUAL MEETING – Annette Lee. Please read the information about the meeting in this bulletin and join us on May 28.

CANDIDATE'S NIGHT: There was a discussion of the format for the candidate's night on April 30. We want to be sure that there is enough time for questions on the many important issues on the Town Warrant. Sally had copies of the Voters' Guide which will be printed in the Town Crier. We will have some copies made to hand out at the candidate's night. We will also mail copies to our members. While we do not want to bother our members with unnecessary e-mails, this one seemed to have important information.

NOMINATING: Everyone on the board agreed to continue in the same position. We would like to add some new members, especially as back-ups for current members. This is especially true for the bulletin, since it must be done each month.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE: The unit meeting for this state study will take place at Sally Currier's house on May 16 at 10:00. All members are welcome to have their voices heard on this issue.

ARTIFICIAL TURF: There is no new information on this, but Rochelle suggested that we should advise people to send any concerns about the new fields to the selectmen.

PEARLINGTON: The new community center is coming along well. There was a cookout held there which was the largest gathering in the area since Katrina.

## PEARLINGTON UPDATE

Lenore Zug Lobel

In mid-April I returned to Pearlington, MS. The weather was lovely- warm, clear, dry days in the 70s, cool, clear, starry nights in the 40s. Although there was a small crew working on the community center, I spent my time with a small film crew working with the Building Goodness Foundation. The crew interviewed and filmed a number of Pearlington residents; they talked about their struggles during and subsequent to Katrina, their appreciation of the ongoing work of volunteers and their excitement about the community center.



*A young citizen of Pearlington outside the new Community Center.*

The community center is progressing beautifully. Completion is likely to be in the fall. Pearlington residents and volunteers consumed five hundred hamburgers and hot dogs at the first cookout at the center. Reverend Rawls gave a blessing. Musicians sang and played instruments on the porch. Pearlington residents were able to experience a bit of community. The energy was palpable.

We need volunteers to complete the community center. If interested, please call me at (781)893-3155 or Jack Higgins at the Building Goodness Foundation (434)973-0993. You can fly into New Orleans or Gulfport. Lodging, food and showers will be provided. If we get a group of ten or more volunteers, we should be able to get a special

volunteer group rate on airline tickets. Upcoming workweeks are scheduled as follows:

Saturday, May 10- 17

Saturday, May 24- 31

Monday, June 2- 7

Saturday, June 8- 14

Although there has been some real progress on the housing front in Pearlington, there are still many families who need assistance in rebuilding. The Pearlington Recovery Center is the entity that is supposed to oversee the construction of new homes for residents who need the assistance of volunteers. Unfortunately the PRC has not operated with the professionalism, expertise and organization of the Building Goodness Foundation. Residents tell me of favoritism, lack of planning, perceived dishonesty and incompetence. A group of skilled students and contractors from Massachusetts went down to Pearlington during April vacation week to volunteer to build houses and were told after several days that the PRC might not have enough work for them to do! Fortunately, the group was able on its own to find constructive work. As of the last couple of weeks, there is a new Director of the PRC. Residents report that they already see improvement in the operation of the PRC; let's hope that it continues.

This summer soprano Mary Shaw and pianist Bill Sano of the First Parish Church in Weston will be on tour on the Gulf Coast presenting "Songs of World War II", a one hour program of live music and historical narrative. After performing at the WWII Museum in New Orleans, they have offered to go to Pearlington. Their show will be the first live performance in the Pearlington community center!

A MS resident asked if a friend of hers could open a clinic in the community center for a period of time if she were successful in obtaining a grant...good things are coming to Pearlington!

## CANDIDATES AND ISSUES FORUM

Sally Currier

“Nothing like a couple of contested races to drum up interest in Weston’s annual Town Elections”, noted Weston LWV President Katty Chace after nearly ninety residents attended the League’s *Candidates and Issues Forum* last Wednesday evening at the High School Media Center.



*A full house at the High School Media Center.*

Eleven of the eighteen candidates for town office participated in the event, including the four candidates running in the contested races for a seat on the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board.

Katty Chace began the evening by welcoming the candidates and attendees and by introducing the moderator for the event, former Selectwoman Jean Thurston.

The forum began with brief statements by the uncontested candidates. Moderator Bob Buchanan gave an overview of upcoming Town Meeting.



*Moderator Jean Thurston*

Voters will elect candidates for town office on Saturday, May 10 at Town Hall and they will also vote on two ballot questions: the first concerning a proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion to pay for a bond issue to cover costs related to maintenance, repair,

and equipment replacement in various town departments; the second concerns the sale of wine at the Omni grocery store in town center. At Town Meeting on May 12 and May 14, voters will decide on 29 articles, some of which will probably



*Town moderator Bob Buchanan, running uncontested*

require extended discussion, such as the DPW design fees and using CPA funds for Josiah Smith Tavern/Old Library restoration design fees.

**In addition to Bob Buchanan, other Candidates in uncontested races were:**

**School Committee member Joanna Stimpson** is running for her second term on the School Committee. She noted the challenge of the transition that will result from several new key leaders, especially that of Cheryl Maloney, who will assume the position of Superintendent. The other major issue will be to analyze and plan for the future use of Field School, all in an environment that demands the minimization of costs.

**Library Trustee Dianna Coates**, running for another term, spoke of her vision of the town library as a central town institution that provides a wide and changing array of services. She noted her hope that the library might be able to increase its operating hours, as well as the need, in her opinion, for an assistant library director. She commented on the increasing example of cities and towns who have privatized their public libraries for budgetary purposes – a phenomenon that she does not support and strengthens her resolve to work to maintain Weston’s library as a strong public institution.

**Library Trustee Joe Mullin** extended his thanks to many members of the audience who supported the

building of a new library, an initiative that occurred when he was a town selectman. He noted that the trustees will need to decide how to best to invest some recent additions to their trust fund (through bequests). They will also be involved in the process of housing archives for the Weston Historical Center. Finally he paid tribute to his “teammates” – staff and fellow trustees who possess complementary skills and have worked effectively together under the leadership of Library Director, Susan Brennan.



Candidates Coates, Angiolillo and Mullin

**Joel Angiolillo, candidate for Library Trustee**, highlighted the big differences in generational use of technology and what this means for the library. The “fifty-somethings” usually consulted an encyclopedia to look up information when we were children, whereas today’s children will consult Google or Wikipedia and they are also much more likely to depend upon their cell phone and the internet for information than older generations. Joel then proceeded with a “show and tell” of the evolution of how we archive books and information, by holding up a video cassette, then a compact disc, an MP3 player (which will hold several books) and then an Amazon Kindle device which can hold 1000 books. He did this to emphasize how the process is changing dramatically; his goal is to help guide the library through the transitions.

**Carl Hirsch, a member of the Board of Health**, noted his long-time residency in Weston and his desire to preserve “what we have here”. He commented on how effective the diverse professional backgrounds of the elected members (engineer, pediatrician, clinical lab research) have complemented each other and will be effective in evaluating the environmental

issues that are coming before the board, such as the potential problems associated with increased use of pesticides and herbicides and the potential impact from the installation of synthetic turf fields.

**Janice Glynn**, seeking her second term on the **Board of Assessors** encouraged homeowners to open up their homes to the assessor, as more information contributes to greater accuracy in the assessments. She reminded voters that the board works for them. She noted that Weston’s housing stock is much more diverse than commonly thought and she pledged to work to make assessments fair. She ended by noting that at the end of the upcoming term, she will look forward to a new person coming on the board in her place.



Candidates Hirsch, Glynn and Stimpson

### Contested Race: Planning Board

#### Diana Chaplin

Candidate Diana Chaplin began by pointing out the long-time connection of her family to Weston – they first settled here in 1678. She cited her experience observing her family’s land being developed over the year, which ultimately led to her career in real estate.

She said that she will bring a “hands-on” approach to serving on the Planning Board. She is running for a few reasons. First, she wants to give back to the town that she has lived in most of her life. Second, although the Planning Board has done a good job over the years, she feels that there is still room for improvement. Third, she thinks she can successfully

bring people together to collectively solve conflicts that arise.

### **Gary Lee**

Candidate Gary Lee is a lawyer and a CPA, who worked for Dolomite Touché. He is running for several reasons. First, he wants to work to ensure that the zoning by-laws in Weston fully reflect the vision that Weston residents have for their town. Secondly, as a lawyer, he feels that he can bring a rational voice to the discussions. Third, he believes that Diana Chaplin's candidacy represents a conflict of interest, due to her career in real estate development in town, regardless of how well-intentioned she may be as an individual. Gary noted that his goal will be to attempt to solve disputes at the town level, before they go to litigation.



*Planning Board candidates Chaplin and Noone answer questions from the attendees.*

### *Questions for Chaplin and Lee:*

*Q: What is your position regarding the Related Project in Waltham on the current Polaroid site?*

**Chaplin:** This will be an opportunity to work with the Waltham planning committee to mitigate traffic issues. We need to work with the Planning Board in Waltham to come up with a plan that works best.

**Lee:** He is amazed by the magnitude of the project – a 2 million square foot shopping center development. When you put it all together, it will have a huge traffic impact: it would require a traffic lane on 128 to service it all day. He supports its

being sent to the Massachusetts EPA for further evaluation. He wants residents to appreciate the magnitude of this project.

*Q: To what extent does the PB have the power to moderate the size of homes that are being built on today's properties?*

**Chaplin:** Recognizes that this is an important issue. But the Planning Board is constrained by property rights, if residents are building within the 40A guidelines. It is important to work harder to create more affordable housing options in town.

**Lee:** Government cannot dictate the size of a house. Someone can build up to a 6,000 sq. ft. house without it being reviewed by the PB. The board must walk a fine line and mediate between a home owner and neighbors. It might be a good idea for the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) and the PB to work more closely together to tighten the wording of the zoning by-laws and eliminate loopholes.

*Q: Won't increased oversight only further increase the already high cost of building a home, which in turn, will only create more financial incentive to build larger homes on a given piece of land?*

**Lee:** Yes, it will. Still recommends a review of the by-law to possibly tighten the language and introduce a non-binding mediation process when conflict arises. In the end, people have to know the rules.

**Chaplin:** The cost of tightening restriction will further increase the cost of housing. We need to find a way to purchase and build homes that is not beyond the means of families.

*Q (to Diana Chaplin): You have been associated with a few projects that have been before the PB. How would you handle these as a member of the PB?*

**Chaplin:** After a sale has gone through, then there is no longer any conflict of interest. She said that she would be happy to defer to Town Counsel if there is a question of a conflict of interest. In addition, her

expertise will help her be pro-active on the board. involved in the re-sale of properties. In the case of development of her own properties, she would recuse herself, as would any other board member.

**Lee:** He speculated that Town Counsel would be frequently involved with making decisions regarding Chaplin. Also, a prospective buyer of real estate might have an incentive to deal with Chaplin professionally, if they know that she is on the town planning board.

*Q: What will happen if the Town Counsel decides that he/she no longer wants to keep making these conflict of interest decisions? Have you consulted the State Ethics Commissions about this?*

**Chaplin:** No.

*Q: How will you vote on Article 26 in the warrant? (Article 26 amends the current zoning by-law that limits buildings and "structures" to be situated with certain setbacks relative to abutters. The definition of "structure" is currently broadly defined. The by-law as amended would clarify the definition of the term "structure", limit the size of fences and retaining walls, and specify certain other items that would require a variance.*

**Lee:** He will support that resolution, arguing that it is important to "put a stake in the ground" and start to establish a rule, even though modifications may be necessary over time and existing structures will need to be "grandfathered" in.

**Chaplin:** She thinks that the article needs further review before being voted on and that input from a broader spectrum of town residents should be obtained, possibly by holding a forum. She acknowledged that a lot of work has already been put into this project.

#### **Contested Race: Board of Selectmen**

**John Noone:** He understands how many people are involved in town government because of their concerns about the town. He expressed his appreciation for the candidates as town volunteers.

Further, she is not a listing agent, so she is not He is running for three main reasons. First, he values and wants to preserve the semi-rural character of Weston and is concerned about some upcoming projects that may compromise that character. Secondly, he is concerned about the magnitude of recent capital expenditures and the increased debt burden that has resulted. He understands that there is not much fat in the operating budget, but questions how effectively town officials are managing the large capital expenditures. Thirdly, he feels that it is important to spend wisely and frugally, as he believes previous generations have done before us. In particular, he is concerned about proceeding with the DPW building project and the Josiah Smith Tavern/Old Library restoration projects, as they are currently proposed, especially since many recognize that the Field School will also most likely, require some renovation. He feels that Weston officials must focus on prioritizing these projects and that they should be re-examined more closely, given the increasing debt burden.

He believes strongly in public service, having worked in the public sector for a few years. He is running because he has concerns and should get involved instead of just complaining.

**Michael Harrity:** He cited his community experience in Weston, especially his work on the Board of Assessors. As Selectman, he worked to get people to view the town and school budgets not as one budget, but as a single budget, an important accomplishment. Harrity's approach to being a Selectman: 1) work at being a good listener, to take advantage of the considerable expertise among the town's volunteers; 2) Promote open discussion and open the process up; 3) Spend carefully – he concurs with Noone, that the little expenses add up. 4) Invest wisely; the projects he supports are expensive but delaying them will not save money. The key in making policy and deciding on whether to support these projects is to seek a balance between the burden of the expense and the expected benefits to the town and to consider whether the project promotes sustainability, i.e., sustains important services and benefits for the environment and for future generations.



Candidates Harrity and Noone answer questions.

### Questions for Harrity and Noone:

*Q: What is your position with respect to the proposed Regis College development and if you are opposed, are you willing to fight it legally?*

**Noone:** He is opposed to an eleven-story building in Weston. Regis has been a good neighbor in the past, but this type of project does not fit in Weston. He would support a legal reserve fund to fight it. The development as proposed will have a huge impact, not just on the abutters, but on the whole town. Therefore, it is a town issue.

If we have to fight, so be it. We should still keep talking. Regis is still in poor financial shape. They should know that we will continue to fight this. Ultimately the trustees will make the decision. The worst outcome is for Regis to fail financially and go out of business. Then Weston will struggle with another whole set of issues.

**Harrity:** He is saddened by Regis's legal tactics and how these tactics are destroying the goodwill the College had enjoyed in Weston. The scale of the proposal is preposterous and the project itself is not economic. He does not believe they will prevail. The Selectmen have committed funds in their budget to fight this development, although it is not in a separate reserve fund. Weston is willing to talk, but Regis must find a project that is appropriate for Weston. Harrity has met with abutters and told them that there was a strong alignment of interests,

but not 100%, so that they would still need separate legal counsel.

Harrity agrees with Noone that the door remains open for discussion but that we will fight it aggressively otherwise. Weston is using the 1998 Town Meeting pledge from the President of Regis, that they would not undertake a commercial development if Weston allowed them the right to connect to the Waltham sewer.

*Q: What should we do to provide housing for families that make \$60,000 per year?*

**Harrity:** The need for affordable housing is even greater than currently defined by the state. It is difficult to build densely in Weston and there are few sites for a large project. We also need rental options. We are going to have to continue with developing 2-3 houses at a time. Most of the proposals that came before the town in the past couple of years have passed. Town voters should vote on whether to use town land for affordable housing – it is a town issue, not one to be decided by officials.

**Noone:** He thinks that priority should be given to the elderly in providing affordable housing. He is also concerned about providing low income housing when there are few social support services available locally. These services need to be developed with the housing.

*Q: How will you vote on Article 26, which expands the definition of "structure" for setback requirements?*

**Noone:** He believes that the definition is too restrictive, that it has gone too far.

**Harrity:** He agrees that there are issues with the expanded definition, as an individual, but as a selectman, his opinion does not matter. It is a Planning Board issue and the process is that we will vote on it at Town Meeting and decide.

*Q: Do you support the CPA surcharge at its present level?*

**Harrity:** Weston has benefited enormously from being in the forefront. The real estate market was hot and the town obtained large amounts of matching funds from the state. He continues to support it because it promotes sustainability. But, there the tax burden is heavy and town voters will decide.

**Noone:** It was prudent when we approved the surcharge and we have accumulated a lot of funds. He supports the CPA surcharge.

### Questions for all Candidates

*Q: Will we re-evaluate the installation of artificial turf fields?*

**Harrity:** This project is on hold. We have found mixed information regarding this issue. There is good data that suggests some health concerns, but the environmental issues are more complicated. Over-use of regular fields also has adverse environmental impacts.

*Q: Do you support the Josiah Smith Tavern/Old Library project?*

**Noone:** This is a major issue that causes great concern. He is opposed to spending \$7-10 million of CPA funds to develop a restaurant, an inappropriate project for the town. We should not need to provide a liquor license to restore an historic building. He would restore the Old Library and keep it as a town-owned asset. Noone expressed his dismay that this proposal has gotten so far and noted that St. Julia's Church is opposed to this project. He would like to see the buildings restored, but would like to see a different purpose and is unhappy with the prospect of a restaurant being located between two churches.

He would have liked to have seen more information about this project, as he did about the DPW project. He objects to the amount of money needed to turn JST into a restaurant and he sees this as a poor use of public funds. If this restoration did not involve a restaurant, then there would be no need for such a large septic system and a 50-car parking lot. Also, he was angered by the fact that the zoning change that

this project required was voted on at a Special Town meeting last November, instead of the Annual Town Meeting in the spring. It seemed to run counter to normal process.

**Harrity:** Agrees that these two buildings are important and they had been identified as priorities for restoration. He thinks that \$6-10 million may be reasonable, but does think that at some point the cost may be too high. The town had held off on this project for a long time, but was unable to find an economically feasible use. A study was performed and the conclusion was that a restaurant was the most feasible use, but would not be without complications. Most of the funds to be used will go toward making the building re-usable for any purpose; a relatively small share will go toward turning it into a restaurant.

One of the benefits of the proposed project was that Weston needed an income stream, since we have a lot of facilities but need more operating resources. Ultimately, this should be decided by voters. If they say no, we will step back and re-consider.

After all of this discussion, it was 9:30 PM and time for refreshments outside in the hallway, where many animated discussions continued.



*Katty Chace and other attendees enjoy refreshments and a chat with candidates after the forum*

When I left the parking lot in my car after 10:00 PM, I passed a group of attendees still engaged in discussion outside. It was a very successful night!

*Photographs by Katherine Wolfthal*

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## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF SYNTHETIC TURF IN WESTON?

Barbara Fullerton

In recent years there has been a movement in the U.S. to replace natural athletic fields with synthetic turf. Synthetic fields were proposed in Weston in early 2007 as a solution to the difficulty of providing enough athletic playing fields in town, and there were a small number of public meetings at which the synthetic turf was discussed. The suggested advantages of the synthetic fields included the increased capacity and quality of the town playing fields, as well as the lack of need for pesticides and fertilizers, and the monetary savings with reduced maintenance of the natural grass. Most of the disadvantages mentioned by the proponents were minimal- the need to periodically replace the rubber crumbs that washed away and to cool off the turf by hosing it on warm days. Any serious health hazards were not discussed; it was difficult to find any scientific studies showing negative effects on the environment or on the individuals playing on the fields.

Two synthetic fields were planned for Weston- one at the Weston High School, and a second at Alphabet Lane next to Country School. Both of those fields have adjacent wetlands. The first field was installed during the summer and was ready for use in September. The Alphabet Lane field was put on hold for resolution of wetlands-associated problems, one of which involves the peat in the ground under the field.

In August of 2007 a nonprofit research group, Environment and Human Health, Inc. of Connecticut (EHHI), published their evaluation of the possible health and environmental risks of the ground rubber that is the largest component of artificial turf. They discussed both the ability of chemicals in the rubber to pass into the air and dust around the fields, as well as the leaching potential of metals in the rubber. The volatilization of the rubber chemicals takes place at an increasing rate as the rubber heats up in the sun. The health hazards included acute and chronic allergies (with possible latex allergy being of great concern), skin, eye and respiratory irritation,

methicillin-resistant staphylococcus bacteria infections and possible long-term cancer risk. The leaching of zinc, lead, cadmium, and selenium into the soil and any nearby wetlands can also be a problem.

Measurement of temperatures on the synthetic turf by Tom Sciacca of Wayland showed that synthetic turf fields can be 55-70 degrees hotter than the ambient air temperature, leading to the possibility that players can be exposed to temperatures of 130-155 degrees F. Research has not yet been done to show exactly how the release of chemicals into the air changes as a result of turf temperature and more importantly, how this affects human health. It is expected that the volatilization of chemicals in the rubber will increase with the increased field temperatures.

The Weston Board of Health met in February of 2008 with the Field Committee and LWV representatives to discuss the health risks of synthetic turf fields. At the time of the meeting, the Alphabet Lane field was still scheduled to be installed in the spring. The group discussed the study done by EHHI and other published reports that had been collected by the Field Committee over the period of 18 months. The majority of available reports, however, are not necessarily based on objective data and carefully controlled studies, and are published by groups with a financial interest in synthetic turf. The EHHI study referenced epidemiological data from the tire fabrication industry, in which strong and sufficient evidence for cancer in humans was demonstrated after long-term exposure. Proponents for the synthetic turf fields argued that exposure to any of the chemicals from the fields will be significantly less than that of the tire factories, and therefore don't apply to this situation. The final decision of the board was that any possible risks to health from the synthetic turf had not been shown to be clear enough at the time to delay construction on the field at Alphabet Lane.

During the past couple of months, many communities have shown increasing concern about the health and environmental effects of the synthetic turf. Fields in New Jersey and New York have been closed because of the discovery of high levels of lead in the turf, which reportedly is associated mainly with the nylon grass. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is now planning to investigate the presence of lead in the turf. The town of Wellesley will be installing two fields and is considering a thermoplastic elastomer product, which supposedly does not have the same problems as the rubber crumb. (It may, however, have problems associated with bisphenol-A, which is present in polycarbonate plastics and has been linked to hormone disruption.)

As announced at Candidates' Night on April 30, the Weston Board of Selectmen decided to put the Alphabet Lane synthetic turf field on hold until the health and safety issues could be further explored. The decision had not previously been publically announced, so many details are not yet known. It is

not clear what the new criteria will be for either continuing or halting the installation of the second field. In addition, there is still the issue of the guidelines for the continued use of the high school field. Wendy Diotalevi of the Weston Board of Health had earlier stated that she was expecting the board to vote by June on having coaches monitor field temperatures and post temperature warning signs at the field.

The synthetic turf issues have not gone away, but have slowed momentarily to allow the town to carefully examine the evidence. It will be important to continue to watch the news and look for alternative ways to develop playing fields that do not involve synthetic chemicals that may be harmful to human health and the environment. Organic turf using a new variety of grass with 12 inch roots requiring less water and fertilizer might provide a solution to the problem (see "Ultimate green lawn tips", Weston/Wayland Town Crier, May 1, 2008).

## Membership News

**I** am happy to report that our membership increased for the second consecutive year. We grew from 79 members last year, to 84 members this year, 18 of whom are new to the Weston LWV. We were successful in attracting a younger generation of women to the league by reaching out to organizations such as the PTO and focusing on topics of interest to families with school-age children, like the turf fields. My goal for the coming year is to increase membership by 10-20% and continue extend the reach of the Weston LWV to women who may not have been familiar in the past with the valuable and relevant work the League is doing.

Thanks to all of our members for your continued support and involvement.

Rochelle Nemrow  
Membership Chair

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## MUNICIPAL FINANCE CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

1. What principles should govern the fiscal relationship between the state and local governments?
2. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts currently has a position opposing the adoption of new, local non-property taxes by statewide mandate or local options.

Should LWVM eliminate this position opposing the adoption of new, local non-property taxes by statewide mandate or local option?

If yes, should LWVM support the adoption of new local non-property taxes by statewide mandate or local option?

- 3a. Should the League of Women Voters of Mass. support changes in state laws to ease the financial burden on municipalities in the following areas? Municipal Employee Health Insurance? Municipal Employee Pensions?

*As we end our year, and with it our publication of a printed Bulletin, the League of Women Voters of Weston would like to thank all the advertisers who have made this print edition possible with their generous support of our organization. We hope our members will continue to patronize these firms.*

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WESTON 2008 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

7:30	Refreshments, socializing	
8:00	Introduction of Guest Speaker Guest Speaker	Rochelle Nemrow Annette Lee
<b>9:00</b>	<b>Business Meeting</b>	
	Call to order	Katty Chace
	Re-adoption of Local Positions	Barbara Hill
	Budget Presentation Adoption of Budget	Kathie Strehle
	Election of 2008-2009 Officers and Directors	Sally Currier
	Discussion and Adoption of Local Program	Barbara Fullerton
	Adjournment	

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WESTON  
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009**

<b>INCOME</b>	FY to 5/02/08	Budget 07-08	Proposed 2008-09	Notes
A. DUES	\$4,047.00	\$3,700.00	\$3,800.00	
B. CONTRIBUTIONS				
1. Member	\$473.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	
2. Non-member		\$50.00	\$50.00	
C. FUNDRAISING				
1. Bulletin ads		\$2,000.00	\$0.00	
2. Know Your Town				
3. House tour				
D. ANNUAL MEETING				
E. INTEREST	\$4.52	\$15.00	\$10.00	
<b>INCOME SUB TOTAL</b>		\$6,165.00	\$4,260.00	
F. (TO) FROM RESERVES		\$2,095.00	\$1,115.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$4,524.52	\$8,260.00	\$5,375.00	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
A. SUPPORT				
1. State PMP	\$1,776.75	\$1,600.00	\$1,800.00	
2. National PMP	\$2,073.80	\$1,750.00	\$2,200.00	
B. OPERATING				
1. Supplies	\$294.79	0	\$25.00	
2. Postal permit		\$160.00	\$0.00	no longer need with online Bulletin
C. BULLETIN				
1. Postage	\$300.00	\$400.00	\$100.00	mailing to members not online
2. Printing	\$2,431.04	\$3,000.00	\$50.00	
D. ADMINISTRATIVE				
1. President		\$50.00	\$50.00	
2. Board		\$100.00	\$100.00	
3. Membership				
a. General				
b. Book		\$200.00	\$200.00	
c. Mailing		\$50.00	\$50.00	
4. Website				
5. Fundraising				
a. House tour				
b. Taxes				
E. MEETINGS				
1. Opening		\$50.00	\$0.00	rarely have one
2. Annual		\$100.00	\$250.00	rentals increase
F. DELEGATES & AFFILIATES				
1. Conventions				
a. LWVUS accrual		\$300.00	\$0.00	
b. LWVM		\$100.00	\$100.00	
c. Workshops		\$50.00	\$50.00	
G. VOTER SERVICE				
1. Voter education		\$25.00	\$25.00	
2. Fall candidates' night		\$0.00	\$50.00	fall elections
3. Spring candidates' night		\$50.00	\$50.00	
4. Coffee hours		\$25.00	\$25.00	
H. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES				
1. Publications		\$25.00	\$25.00	
2. Program		\$25.00	\$25.00	
3. High school award		\$50.00	\$50.00	
I. POSITION SUPPORT				
1. Expenses		\$50.00	\$50.00	
2. Donations		\$100.00	\$100.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$6,876.38	\$8,260.00	\$5,375.00	

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## League of Women Voters of Weston Proposed Slate of Officers and Directors 2008-2009

### Officers:

President	Katty Chace*
Secretary	Kathleen Rousseau*
Treasurer	Kathie Strehle*

### Directors:

Voter Service	Sally Currier
Membership	Rochelle Nemrow
Bulletin Editor	Katherine Wolfthal
Bulletin Ads	Diana Chaplin
Legislation	Katty Chace
Natural Resources	Barbara Fullerton
Technology	Cat Laine and Beth Keane
Observer Corps	Open

### At Large

Gene Castillo  
Robin Coutts  
Barbara Hill  
Lenore Lobel  
Robin Reisman

\*Members of the Executive Committee, who may act for the Board between meetings of the full Board.

## PROPOSED LOCAL PROGRAMS 2008-2009

**LOCAL ISSUE FORUMS:** The League will continue our series of Saturday morning Coffee Hours and informational meetings on topics of local interest, including issues facing the town and opportunities to meet and converse with local officials and elected state representatives, in an effort to encourage greater and more informed participation in the democratic process on the part of town residents.

**PESTICIDE USE:** We will continue to educate voters on the hazards of pesticide use on public and private land, and seek to influence the town to curtail pesticide use where feasible.

**VOTER SERVICES:** The League will sponsor voter registration drives as appropriate to increase the voter rolls and to encourage registered voters to exercise their right to vote in an informed way. We will conduct Candidates' and Issues Nights before local and state elections and offer rides to the polls for people in need of transportation.