

The Bulletin

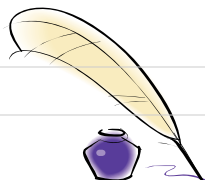
Westwood/Walpole League of Women Voters



Volume 6 Issue 7

February 2009

Page 1



Calendar of Events

What's inside:

Recaps:

Program Planning Mtg

Local Program

Don't stand there—Run

Reports

Treasurer

Membership

Event Reminders

-LWVUS NPV Consensus Mtg

-Essay Contest

-Day on the Hill -

Guardian of Democracy

-LWVM Convention

Studies

National Popular Vote—

Articles one-three

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PROPOSED EVENTS JANUARY—JUNE 2009

Changes happen —keep checking

Interested in joining the League, a study committee, attending a Steering Committee meeting, or getting more information on WWVP League?

Please call Marcia Hirshberg 781-326-8784.

February

03—SC meeting (all are welcome)

10 —local program Westwood: “Don’t Just Stand There Run”

11—local program Walpole: “Don’t just Stand There Run”

28—Fund Drive ends

March

03—SC meeting (all are welcome)

04—Day on the Hill see www.lwvma.org

06—Deadline for Essay Contest see page 5

10—LWVUS Consensus Meeting National Popular Vote Compact—

See pages 8-10

12—Guardian Of Democracy Award see www.lwvma.org

April

05—Essay Contest Awards

19—Westwood Candidate Forum

25—Walpole Hazardous Waste Day

May

16—Walpole Day our league will participate

29-30 —LWVM Convention, Newton Marriott. Watch bulletin and LWVMA, [lwvwestwoodwalpole websites](http://lwvwestwoodwalpole.com) for more information

June

07—Westwood Graduation & Lyman Scholarship Award

09—Westwood/Walpole LWV Annual Meeting

The **Bulletin** is published ten times a year, September-June, by the League of Women Voters of Westwood/Walpole MA. Visit the **LWVMA** home page at www.lwvma.org and the **LWVUS** home page at www.lwv.org

LWVM PROGRAM PLANNING—Recap



As usual this was one of the most enjoyable and informative meetings of the year. The 7 soup selections and various breads just made more perfect by the wine, coffee, and desserts. Hostess Karen Zingg accompanied by 4 months old Zoe, a Bernese Mountain Dog, welcomed us to her beautiful, comfortable home. The state positions were examined and discussed in-depth. **Marcia reports that —top priority for LWVM action were— natural resources, followed by health care, and transportation. Transportation was chosen for a new study or update. No drops.**



Thank you Marcia Hirshberg for coordinating this event AGAIN! How many years is this now, Marcia.

How can we really show our appreciation to the presenters who read lots of material, summarized it, and then delivered it to us in form we could absorb. Thank you Carol Lane, Virginia Fettig, Patty Stewart, Nancy Farris, Phoebe Joseph, Nan and Carrie Crossland, Joanne Damish, Judy Barrington, Jane Nash, and Susan White. Special thanks to new members Greg Atkins and Alisa Shapiro pictured below and to Lisa Compagnone who came after working a 10 hour day as a nurse anesthetist to present the healthcare position.

Karen, you and Zoe made us all feel so at home and welcomed. Thank you for being our hostess for this event



Marcia presents gift of League Cup to hostess Karen Zingg



New members Dave Atkins & Alisa Shapiro ready to present



Phoebe, Judy, Nancy chatting before meeting starts



Marcia Hirshberg starts meeting explanation of process



Cindy & Patty discuss a position



After a ten hour day as Lisa Compagnone found time to present on Health Care.

LOCAL PROGRAM: Don't just stand there-Run



Don't Just Stand There...RUN!

A two-night series that explains how to begin your career as a public servant.



“Democracy is not a spectator sport. Take an interest in your town, your state, and your nation. Think about it. Run for public office.”

This program is adapted from the Massachusetts Secretary of State's Office to encourage participation in running for elected office by sharing information about the process and the teaching of the skills that will enable success in a public career.

Join prominent speakers from around the Commonwealth who have either served on elected boards and committees, run successfully or unsuccessfully for state or town offices, and campaign workers as they share their life experiences with the democratic process.

NIGHT ONE:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Westwood Public Library Large Meeting Room

668 High Street, Westwood, MA 02090

7:00 PM Arrival for Speakers, 7:30 Arrival for Guests

NIGHT TWO:

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009

Walpole Town Hall Meeting Room

135 School Street, Walpole, MA 02081

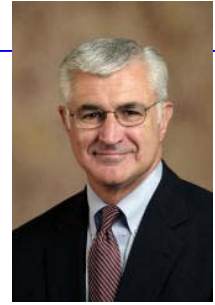
7:00 PM Arrival for Speakers, 7:30 Arrival for Guests

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**Guardian of Democracy
Award**

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Citizen Education Fund



**Guardian of Democracy Award Dinner
March 12, 2009**

Reception 6:30 p.m. | Dinner 7:30 p.m.

honoring

Paul Guzzi

**President & CEO Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Former Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Featured Speaker

Ralph C. Martin, II

Managing Partner Boston, Bingham McCutchen LLP

Former Suffolk County District Attorney

Marriott Copley Place, Boston

Driving Directions to Marriott Copley Place, Boston

go to lwvma.org click on "more" Guardian of Democracy Award

Onsite parking available for the evening - \$16.00 special event rate (with validated ticket)

Ticket price: \$150 (\$75 is tax-deductible)

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

For more information contact Kim Jerdon at 617-523-2999 or jerdon@lwvma.org

LWVUS COUNCIL June 8th-11th,

- Council 2007 will be June 8-11, 2009 at the Marriott Metro Center in Washington, DC. "Strengthening our Leaders" will be the theme. State presidents and presidents of ILOs, capital and big city Leagues will be invited to attend. The registration fee of \$295 includes the banquet. Hotel rooms are \$165 per night. The goals are:

100% participation of State Leagues

Networking opportunities

Meaningful workshops and learning experiences

DAY ON THE HILL— Come, Hear, Voice Your Opinions



Day on the Hill Aiming for Transparency: Restoring the Public's Trust

March 4, 2009

**9:00 a.m. Registration & Reception – Nurses' Hall
Come meet your legislators and join us for a light breakfast.
10:00 – 12:30 Program – Gardner Auditorium
Hear featured speakers on the issues.
12:30 – Lobby Your Legislators**

Experts Scheduled to appear on the panel:

**Janet Domenitz, Executive Director, MassPirg
Judith C. Meredith, Founder and Executive Director, The Public Policy Institute and
author, "Lobbying on a Shoestring"
Pam Wilmot, Executive Director, Common Cause**

A panel discussion on transparency within our Commonwealth, with experts in the fields of regulation, legislation, budget, and public access to information, will define the process and problems with transparency and how the League and its members can most effectively address those problems. Specialists will discuss legislative priorities in the 2009-2010 session. After the discussion members will have the opportunity to lobby their Legislators on League priorities.

[Click here to go to our Program and Action page](#)

**Hate driving in Boston's traffic?
Well you don't have to, the State Office will pay for a **FILL-A-BUS-TER, AGAIN!**
Contact the State Office (617) 523-2999 or lwwma@lwwma.org**

[Marcia Hirshberg is working with a teacher at the High School for students to attend from Westwood.](#)



MEMBERSHIP

HELP OUR LEAGUE GROW

Our League is 88 members strong as of February 2009
Marcia has made an extraordinary effort to bring in new members.
As the membership chair of both our local league and the LWVM, she knows the importance of numbers to keep our League viable at the local as well as state and national levels.

But there is just so much Marcia can do without
your help!

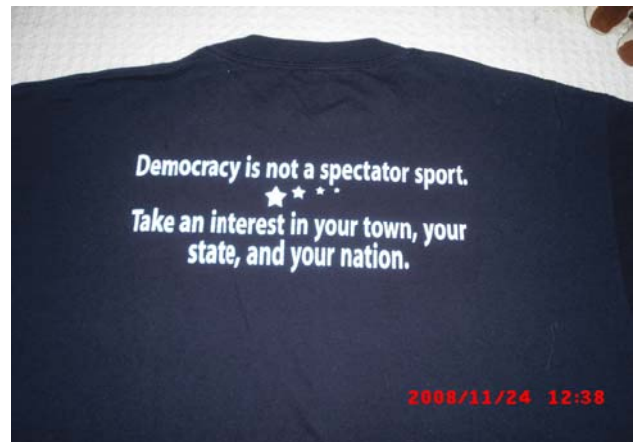
You can help spread the word and increase our membership by:

- Telling your friends and neighbors about the League.
- Handing out our Membership Brochure
- Inviting people to League meetings
- Purchasing items that advertise our League like these shirts & mugs.

Interested in purchasing a shirt or mug!

Shirts \$10 ea or \$5 for two or more; Mugs \$5.00 ea

Call Marcia at 781-326-8784 or email her at hberg40@comcast.net



LWVUS STUDY— National Popular Vote Compact

Article One

This is the first in a series of articles to prepare members for a consensus meeting on the LWVUS study — National Popular Vote Compact

The Event is coordinated by Nan Crossland, Jill Onderdonk, and Christine Previtera and will be held on March 10, 2009, 7:30p.m. at 100 Edgewood Road, Westwood.

Watch the Bulletin and the Westwood-Walpole League of Women Voters website at www.lwvwestwoodwalpole.org for more information

Members can access all the available information on this study by going to www.lwv.org, choosing “for members and clicking on Projects & Program.

Background to National Popular Vote Compact

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue?

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LWVUS STUDY—National Popular Vote Compact

Article two

Support for the National Popular Vote Compact

Because the League already supports direct election of the president, arguments against the Electoral College (EC) are not included in the material supporting the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact).

Constitutional Issues The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. The same result would be achieved by constitutional amendment but the U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend. The NPV Compact is a viable way to attain the same goal as amending the Constitution to eliminate the EC.

A constitutional amendment is not needed to effectuate the NPV Compact because states already have the right to implement changes in how electors are appointed.

The NPV Compact is a compact between states – a method of concerted state action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts.

Evaluating Fairness A candidate can be elected president by receiving the most electoral votes even though he or she did not receive the most popular votes. This is not a result voters expect or desire. As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are concentrated in key EC battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate which would foster greater voter participation.

The argument that the plan would negatively impact states' rights is countered by poll results showing that most voters want their individual vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole.

Any claim that the NPV Compact is an unprecedented disregard for the U.S. Constitution ignores the reality that voting rights have been changed through state action many times. Women's suffrage, for example, was instituted by twenty states before passage of the constitutional amendment that made the right universal.

Mechanical Considerations Those opposed to the NPV Compact cite mechanical issues that might lead the NPV to fail, but the Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels and recounts.

Other Issues The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

League Issues Opponents say that the NPV Compact conflicts with the League's support of uniform voting standards. Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had signed on to it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally.

Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

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LWVUS STUDY—National Popular Vote Compact

Article Three

Against the National Popular Vote Compact

There is little respect for the Electoral College (EC). The League opposes it and most voters want a direct popular vote. But is the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) an appropriate way to achieve that result?

Evaluating Fairness Voters supporting the candidate who receives the majority of votes in their state want their state's electors to support their choice. Adoption of the NPV Compact may require a state elections official to direct its state's electors to cast their ballots in support of a candidate who was not favored by the voters of that state.

Passage of the NPV Compact will result in the emphasis of presidential campaigns shifting from the battleground states to areas of large concentrations of population. So, while some voters are disenfranchised by the EC, others might be disenfranchised by the NPV Compact. Because the Compact requires entry into a contract with other states which binds state elections officials to direct electors to vote in a certain way, regardless of the outcome of the election in their state, states' rights are diminished.

In addition, one can question the advisability of a method that bypasses the normal constitutional amendment process in this manner.

Constitutional Issues Many constitutional scholars argue that this plan will lead to extensive litigation involving challenges to the NPV Compact on issues such as the scope of constitutional powers, the Compact itself, the need for congressional approval, the concerns of non-compacting states, and constitutional protections of state interests and their role in elections.

Mechanical Issues/Flaws The methods for enforcement of this plan are unclear. Opponents question the power and timing to withdraw from the Compact and the power to enforce compliance.

Others express concern about an onslaught of lawsuits between compacting and non-compacting states, as well as procedures in close elections.

The plan, allowing the election of a president by a plurality of votes, does not improve on the current system; neither the present system nor the NPV Compact requires that the president be elected by a majority.

Other Issues The Voting Rights Act requires pre-clearance for legislative changes. This, too, has the capacity to engender lawsuits to ensure compliance.

League Issues This proposal does nothing to achieve the goal of uniform standards of voting. The NPV Compact is effective when passed by states representing 270 electoral votes, effectively negating the impact on presidential elections of the voters in states which represent the other half of electoral votes. A system which assures no voter disenfranchisement is a better way to assure that every person's vote counts.

The League has long supported the abolition of the EC. Although the NPV Compact purports to foster the same result, it creates additional concerns. Amending the U.S. Constitution is a difficult process, and we should seriously consider supporting the normal amendment procedures to abolish the EC versus this specific "work-around."