

Hingham Voter

Fall 2017

celebrating 84 years



A note from the Chair

Don't sweat the small stuff! I have heard this declaration all my life and must admit I have justified using it on more than one occasion. After our All Member Meeting on September 27, however, I am reconsidering its wisdom. Let me explain...

I have never been overly excited with the effort given to handing out I Voted Today stickers. I know...how can you not be excited about that cute little red, white and blue circle? Maybe as a teacher it was the years of endless sticking of every child's paper in an attempt to reinforce positive effort or the hours spent shopping for just the right sticker to affix to a birthday card that sapped my enthusiasm. I just know that when I joined the LWVH and was confronted with "Who will volunteer to pass out stickers on Election Day?" I was completely turned off. Of course I volunteered and to my surprise found it rewarding to see the many smiles and hear the endless thank yous when presented with this patriotic circle. But I was still not convinced. "These people are just being kind!" I thought.

Well, all of that changed at our recent member meeting. Our program for the evening examined the League's past, present, and future as we reviewed our local mission and governance model. In the informal discussion I Voted Today stickers found its way into the conversation. Julie Strehle shared that in 1992 while living in Arlington, Virginia, and waiting for one hour to vote, she proudly displayed her I Voted Today sticker on her coat as she boarded the Metro to Washington, DC where she worked. She continues to remember the pride she felt that day. Interestingly, years later Julie brought the idea to our League. Meg Wheeler shared a similar story of pride and patriotism when receiving her first sticker after voting.

The impressive, heartfelt stories were a game changer for me. As we march toward our 100th year, it is important to remember the major accomplishments of advocates like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Alice Paul, and many others. It is also important to remember how simple acts can make a difference. Whether it's finding time to attend a special program, contributing a plate of cookies for a meeting, or passing out stickers at the poles, never underestimate the small stuff...or the power of a symbol!

A big thank you to Anne Fanton for hosting our Wine and Cheese Member Meeting on September 27. The meeting was well attended and the program offered much sharing by our members.

Our next meeting will be at Kate Boland's home 338 Main Street at 7:00 PM. We will be reviewing current legislation with our Positions and learning about our new website. As in previous years we are asking that each member contribute 2 bottles of wine for The Vault. We hope you can join us!

Regards, Elizabeth

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages active and informed participation of citizens in government.

Steering Committee

Elizabeth Danis, Chair
Eva Marx
Catherine Salisbury
Jane Malme
Carolyn Locke

Treasurer

Nancy MacDonald

Facebook

Erica Sweeney

Communications

Eileen McIntyre

Website

Liza O'Reilly

School Outreach

Lisa Stein

Candidates Night

Chris Wilk

Membership

Kate Boland

Upcoming Events

October 19	Sip and Chat	Legislation and Local Positions; Website
October 24	Day on the Hill	Beacon Hill Boston 9:30-Noon
November 15	Hingham's Growth	Jennifer Smith, Chair Planning Board
January 25	<u>Give Us the Ballot;</u> Inside the Boxes	The Heritage Museum at Old Derby
February 28	Warrant Review	Lucy Hancock, Chair Advisory Com.
March 7	State of State Forum	State Representatives and Senator
April 4	Candidates Night	Town Hall
May 2	Annual Meeting	South Shore Country Club
July 4	Annual Festivities	Family Celebration Hingham



Communications Committee Recommendations

Kudos to Communication Committee members Eileen McIntyre, Liza O'Reilly, and Erica Ford Sweeney who met on September 5 and developed recommendations for our local League. The objectives are to build a well informed and active electorate, increase awareness of our mission and activities, help grow our membership by increasing awareness of LWV Hingham mission and activities, and share opportunities with members for involvement with LWV state and national initiatives and events. The primary tools to achieve these objectives is through our local League website, facebook page, well-informed voter calendar (coming soon) and Hingham Journal articles and columns. We look forward to hearing more from this committee about their important work.

Guest Contributors

As you all know, in addition to Membership Chair for LWV Hingham, Kate Boland serves on the LWV MA Board of Directors. I asked her to provide an update on what is happening at the State House.

Day on the Hill -- LWVMA Lobby Day: See what work the League does up close at the Day on the Hill. Join members across the state on Tuesday, Oct. 24, for the annual LWVMA lobby day. Our theme this year is *Moving the Needle on League Priorities*. Grab coffee at 9:30 am in the Great Hall of the State House, the program is from 10 a.m. to noon. Then meet your Senator and Representatives.

Automatic Voter Registration: This important bill and League priority needs a push now to get it to the floor of the House. There are 680,000 eligible voters not registered to vote. AVR will improve accuracy and security on voter rolls.

Women's Issues: The League testified at the Tuesday, Oct. 3 hearing at the Joint Committee on Financial Services in support of the bill to assure insurance coverage for contraceptives. These Bills are S.499/H.536 An Act relative to advancing contraception coverage and economic security, also called the ACCESS bill, to provide insurance coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices without copays or deductibles. Insurance companies across the state support these bills.

LWVMA Climate and Energy Solutions Series: If you haven't gotten a chance to attend one of the many LWVMA practical and educational forums on climate change, now is the time! Some Hingham members attended the sold-out event (400 attendees) filling the Aquarium's Simons IMAX® Theatre for "*Extreme Events and Climate Change: What We Know and What We Can Do*". These informative opportunities coupled with the many Bills the League is supporting is part of its important work based on its positions.



Got a minute? Take a look at these videos and podcasts....

<https://lwvma.org/check-out-the-video-contest-winners-2/>

<https://www.alicepaulpodcast.org>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWXfgoWieHs>



Opportunities to Engage

Join our Centennial Celebration Committee

Contribute Refreshments for meetings

Attend Day on the Hill

Assist with Warrant Review

Assist with Candidates Night

Pass out I Voted Today stickers in April



IDENTIFYING FAKE NEWS

By Eileen McIntyre, LWV Hingham

Being an informed citizen and voter is more challenging when "fake news" circulates so freely on social media platforms. Given the interest in this topic expressed at our recent All Member Fall meeting, I thought I would use my space in the October newsletter to address this topic briefly.

First, how am I defining "fake news?" For me, fake news is a false or mostly false "news article" appearing on a social media site. Regardless of how much I may trust someone who may have shared such a post, my antennae start to twitch when something sounds either too-good-to-be-true OR so outrageous that I react with an emotional outburst.

What to do?

1) look carefully at the source of the "news". Sometimes a fake news source has only slightly altered the name or logo of a respected news source. But manufacturers of fake news (often operating from Macedonia, Serbia and Russia) also make up a name like "Morning News" or "USA Breaking News". If you are not familiar with such a publication outside of social media, chances are it is bogus.

2) When unsure of the source but still questioning the content, make use of a respected fact-checking source. Good choices are Snopes.com and Politifact.com. (The latter focuses on fact-checking of political news.) Many times, the content that you are questioning already has been reviewed and assessed for its factual basis (some/all or none). If not, these sites act on your tip and investigate.

3) When suspicious of the "slant" of an item I've seen on social media, I also check out the facts behind the story on one or more news sites that I trust (and to which I subscribe.) I am, admittedly, a bit of a news junkie, but I also want to point out that good journalism requires our support. Democracy depends on freedom of "the press" and professional news organizations increasingly rely on subscriber income to support their operations.

For more on how to detect fake news, here is a helpful list of "red flags":

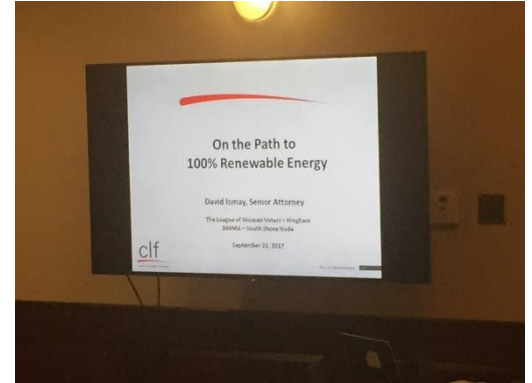
www.thenewsliteracyproject.org/sites/default/files/GO-TenQuestionsForFakeNewsFINAL.pdf

PANEL DISCUSSION: ON THE PATH TO 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY – Notes and Takeaways

Panel sponsored by the LWV-Hingham and 350MA South Shore,
Sept 21, 2017, Glastonbury Abbey

*Article submitted by Turner Bledsoe, MD
Member LWV-Hingham and 350MA South Shore*

As we are reeling from news of the growing ravages of global warming, the recent panel on “the Path to 100% Renewable Energy” provided welcome reassurance that much is happening in MA to speed the transition to renewable energy and provided practical information on the steps that we can take as individuals to protect the future of our civilization. Here are the details:



David Ismay, CLF Attorney

- Reduction in GHG emissions is urgent. “Climate Change Resilience” is needed - but alone will be inadequate if GHG emissions from all petroleum fuels are not curtailed promptly.
- An 80% reduction of GHG Emissions by 2050 is mandated by our Global Warming Solutions Act – a mandate strengthened recently by action of the Supreme Judicial Court. A 100% reduction is its goal for 2100.
- A 100% Renewable Energy economy is achievable through practical and affordable purchasing decisions to everyday products that can be powered by electricity. These purchase decisions can/should be made - starting now and proceeding at a pace consistent with normal replacement schedules. (Ref “The Pathway to Deep Carbonization” E3/LBNL/PNNW 2014)
- Intermittency of renewable energy sources is no longer a threat to grid reliability and is not a legitimate reason to delay the transition to 100% renewable energy. The technologies are in place now to start this journey.
- Actions: Convert to electric power for everything; maximize efficiency; Work politically to speed the greening of the electrical grid.

Eugenia Gibbons: Clean Energy Program Director Mass Energy

- “Greening of the electrical grid is the most cost-effective way to reduce GHG emissions”
- Existing laws are critical to assuring the “Greening of the Grid” with renewable energy.
 - Electric utilities are heavily invested in oil and gas, fear the transition and resist growth of renewables. The outcome of this contest between fossil based and renewable energy will, in the next few years, decide the future of our environment for the next 1000 years.
 - New England states regulate the utilities through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
 - Electrical Utilities, by this compact, are required to purchase a percentage of renewable energy from their portfolio of sources. Each year this percentage (now 12%) must increase by 1%. This requirement is set by our “Renewable Portfolio Standard” - which in turn is established by our legislature.
 - To make this regulation work, each megawatt hour of electricity produced from wind, solar, or bio-gas sources is measured, certified and registered by an interstate regulatory agency (ISO New England) that controls all aspects of maintaining the integrity of the electrical grid. The purchase of this Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) assures that one megawatt hour of renewable energy has been produced. RECs that are derived from power sources located in MA are designated as Class I RECs and serve as important funding for new renewable resources. Currently our utilities must purchase 12% of their energy supply by purchasing Class I RECs.
 - In Massachusetts Municipal Light Plants are exempted from the requirements of the Renewable Portfolio Standard

- The Purchase of Class I RECs is also a mechanism by which an individual may purchase their own portfolio of renewable electricity and/or by which a municipal light plant can - on behalf of their customers - meet or exceed the requirements of the current Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Mass Energy itself is providing statewide access to purchase Class I RECs for municipalities and individuals directly or through cooperative municipal light plants. Some towns have joined Mass Energy's Community Aggregation program which can offer whole communities a wide range of "personal greening" of one's "personal renewable portfolio"

Roger Freeman: Board member Hingham Municipal Light Plant.

- The movement to commit to 100% renewable energy is quickly becoming a national movement. Major industry giants such as Google, major cities and towns across the US and Massachusetts are making this pledge. Many scholarly studies like "Deep Decarbonization" are confirming the feasibility as well as the need.
- Currently HMLP's energy portfolio is less "CO₂ intensive" than the RGGI requires and include 3 wind farms in which HMLP is part owner, Nuclear from Seabrook, Hydro in MA plus electricity from Energy New England (whose portfolio is 15% renewable). The current portfolio is based upon the existing Board policy seeking lowest cost and most reliable sources. While the wind, solar and nuclear sources offer the environmental benefit of being low carbon, they were not selected for that reason. In fact; the HMLP sells the Class I RECs from its wind farm to lower the price impact of it being a renewable source. This revenue may have contributed to a recent price reduction for Hingham – thus relinquishing the "green attribute" that might have been desired by environmentally oriented customers.
- The key to a change in board policy to favor more explicitly expanding its renewable portfolio requires political involvement with the Board and in the town of Hingham. Roger Freeman's election to the board has contributed to improvements in its interface with solar energy producing residents of Hingham. HMLP has expressed willingness to assist customers who wish to buy Class I RECs from Mass Energy to enhance their personal profiles and is already seeking low priced renewable energy.

Final Take Away Messages:

1. Taking the Path to 100% Renewable Energy is feasible, necessary and urgent.
2. Essential Steps include switching all personal power sources to electricity. (cooking; space and water heating; electric vehicle; efficient light sources)
3. Offsetting carbon sourced electricity with purchased Class I RECs
4. Become politically active (With LWV Hingham and 350MA) in support of statewide legislation to raise the Renewable Energy Standard; remove the caps on growth of photovoltaic solar installations; adoption of the Carbon Fee and Dividend Program on fossil fuels and a statewide commitment to 100% Renewable Energy
5. Become politically active in Hingham to campaign for commitment to 100% renewable energy and support your advocacy through involvement with the HMLP Board.

