

# Hingham Voter

Serving the Towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset and Norwell

February 2007

## HLWV Steering Committee

2006—2007

**President:** Cindy Coe**Secretary:** Judy Parsons**Treasurer:** Marisa Costello**Membership Recruiter:**

Christine Dietterich

**Publicity:** Jerry Elsdon**Web Site:** Lynn Cotter**Newsletter:** Julie Strehle**Advisors:** Helga Jorgensen, Cathy Salisbury

## President's Letter: Large Turnout for the "State of the State"

Dear Members,

I am delighted to report that we are enjoying a terrific year, with increasing membership and quality events. Our new members are a vibrant, energetic group, who have jumped right in to contribute to the League, and I thank them for that. We are in the process of forming our Steering Committee/Board for next year, and welcome the participation of our new members. If you want to get involved in any way, please contact me (749-6522) or you are very welcome to come to our next **Steering Committee** meeting at my house on March 13.

We had a terrific turnout on February 8 for our **State of the State All-Member Meeting**. (See story and another picture on page 2.) I thank State Rep. Garrett Bradley and Ted Langill, State Senator Bob Hedlund's Chief of Staff, for coming out to provide HLWV members the latest updates on state and town issues, and I also thank Cathy Salisbury for hosting the event.

Mark your calendar for some more exciting upcoming events. Our Green Study Committee continues its efforts to educate the public about Green issues with an **Organic Lawn Care Workshop** on March 17, 10:00 a.m., at the Derby Street Shoppes. See page 3 for more details.



HLWV President Cindy Coe introduces Rep. Garrett Bradley (seated left) and Ted Langill, Senator Bob Hedlund's Chief of Staff

## Upcoming Events

### Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 13  
7:30 p.m.  
Cindy Coe's house  
Call 749-6522

### Organic Lawn Care Workshop

Saturday, March 17  
10:00—11:00 a.m.  
Derby Street Shoppes

### Candidates Night

Wednesday, April 11  
7:00 p.m.  
Hingham Town Hall

### Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 23

Our annual **Candidates Night** is coming up on Wednesday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m. at Hingham Town Hall. It is a terrific way to learn about the candidates who are running for local office, so please come and help us run the event. You can contact Cathy Salisbury at 749-4730 if you would like to help.

**Observer Corps** was launched last month, thanks to the thoughtful and organized training held by long-time members Jane Malme and Pat Facey. Eight HLWV members were trained to report on various town boards, so stay tuned for future updates from this group! (See story on page 3.)

For the Hingham town election this spring, HLWV will be distributing "**I Voted To-**

**day**" lapel stickers to voters after they have done their civic duty. Thanks to Christine Dietterich for designing an attractive sticker, intended to thank voters, as well as remind other voters to vote! See page 4 for a sample sticker.

Finally, our 2006—2007 year will come to a close with our **Annual Meeting** on Wednesday, May 23. At this meeting, we will host a speaker and hear reports from our Steering Committee. Then we will welcome our new Steering Committee for next year. I am delighted that Julie Strehle will serve as our next President, and we will have a strong, dedicated group backing her up, including two Vice Presidents. Look out for the Call to Annual Meeting invitation in April. Regards, Cindy

## “State of the State” Meeting

HLWV’s “State of the State” All-Member Meeting was held on February 8 at Cathy Salisbury’s house for twenty-five League members and friends. Thank you to Cathy for agreeing to host last minute! State Representative Garrett Bradley and Ted Langill, Senator Bob Hedlund’s Chief of Staff, answered questions that League members had prepared for them. Senator Hedlund sent his regrets; he was unable to attend the event, as he was invited to visit the White House.

The issue of Health Care Coverage was discussed in depth, as both Rep. Bradley and Ted Langill agreed that health care coverage should be available to everyone. In discussions with League members, Bradley acknowledged the problem of having to pay for illegal immigrants to get emergency care, as no hospital would turn them away. Under The Commonwealth Care program, all Massachusetts residents must have health insurance by July 1, 2007 or face financial penalties. Currently, debate continues on what types of plans to offer, and at what cost. Bradley also spoke about growing financial pressures

faced by towns who have teachers retiring well before the age of 65; towns have to pay their share of healthcare coverage to these retirees for more years before they reach the age of Medicare coverage (Hingham currently has a 50/50 arrangement with its teachers). This increasing financial burden is something that Bradley thinks should be reevaluated.

Langill spoke about legislation that Senator Hedlund is co-sponsoring in an effort to make Massachusetts more affordable for middle-income families. Known as the Working Families Tax Credit, the legislation would allow taxpayers to claim up to \$20,000 in deductions on their state income tax return to offset a variety of everyday living expenses, including rent, utilities, college tuition and child care.

Regarding the state budget, both spoke about how cuts are going to have to be taken. Langill mentioned that Governor Patrick had reversed former Governor Mitt Romney’s cuts to the fiscal 2007 budget of \$450 million. Unfortunately, Patrick did this without prioritizing some of the cuts. Senator Hedlund



Twenty-five Hingham League of Women Voters members and friends attended the “State of the State” meeting.

was embarrassed that cuts in human services were not restored, but some “pork” projects—such as a \$100,000 gazebo in Braintree—were restored. Both Bradley and Langill discussed how towns are going to have less money due to flat revenues and “maxed out” lottery revenues, and that towns are going to see less growth in revenue as they have had in the past.

When asked about the trend of decreasing population in Massachusetts and the possibility that the state could lose a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, both Bradley and Langill said that depends on the next census, which will not be taken until two years from now. How-

ever, Bradley acknowledged that Massachusetts would probably lose a seat.

Representative Bradley also spoke about his bill to ban Thimerosal, a type of mercury used as a preservative in the flu vaccine. Some activists argue that mercury causes autism in children. Though this link has not been proven, the number of autistic children has tripled in the past ten years. Bradley promised to keep members updated on the status of his bill.

The “State of the State” was truly an informative evening, and HLWV plans to hold the event again next year. (Thank you to Debbie Courteau for her reporting!)

## Contact Your Elected Officials!

**US Senator Ted Kennedy**  
315 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-4543  
senator@kennedy.senate.gov

**US Senator John Kerry**  
304 Russell Bldg., Fl. 3  
Washington D.C. 20510  
202-224-2742  
Senator@kerry.senate.gov

**US Congressman Bill Delahunt**  
1250 Hancock Street, Suite 802-N  
Quincy, MA 02169  
617-770-3700  
In Washington:  
2454 Rayburn House Off. Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-3111  
William.Delahunt@mail.house.gov

**MA State Senator Bob Hedlund**  
State House, Room 313C  
Boston, MA 02133  
617-722-1646  
Robert.Hedlund@state.ma.us

**MA State Rep. Garrett Bradley**  
State House, Room 136  
Boston, MA 02133  
617-722-2396  
Rep.GarrettBradley@hou.state.ma.us

*“Green is not just for shamrocks!”*

# Organic Lawn Care Workshop

Saturday, March 17, from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Derby Street Shoppes  
in the management office Meeting Room  
The program is free and open to the public.

*Why reduce synthetic pesticide and chemical use.*  
For the health of the environment, your children, as well as your pets and yourself.

David Macdonald, an accredited organic land care professional and owner of Summit Landscape, will provide tips on how to care for your lawn without the use of pesticides.

Sponsored by the Hingham League of Women Voters.



Directions to the Meeting Room at Derby Street Shoppes:  
Drive around Crate and Barrel to the rear parking area. Behind REI, look for the green awning that says Derby Street Shoppes. Enter that door and take the elevator to the second floor. Meeting room is right there.

## Observer Corps Training Held



Observer Corps Training Session attendees: (Clockwise from left) Helga Jorgensen, Trainer Jane Malme (obscured), Trainer Pat Facey, Ann Marie Schembri, Marisa Costello, Laura Marwill, Julie Strehle and Christine Cadegan (not pictured: Cindy Coe and Connie Coleman).

HLWV Observer Corps was launched again in January after many years. Longtime members Pat Facey and Jane Malme put together a wonderful training session for eight HLWV members on guidelines to follow.

Corps members observe town boards, commissions and committee meetings. Observers can get first-hand information on matters facing the community, and under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, citizens have the right to attend open sessions of official entities and may take notes. The Observer writes notes about the meeting and a Corps Chair will assemble the reports from time to time and submit them to the League Steering Committee/Board. The Board may decide to undertake a study based on any trends seen emerging from

the notes on a particular board. A synopsis of Observer Corps notes will be published from time to time in this Voter newsletter.

Observers were given a manual with guidelines, including a suggested Report Form, and information on the State Ethics Commission “Introduction to the Conflict of Interest Law” and “Open Meeting Law Guidelines”.

Town Boards in Hingham that will be covered this spring by Observers are Health, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, School Committee, Advisory Committee, and Long Range Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Committee.

If you would like to get more information on Observer Corps or would like to cover a town board or committee, please contact Cindy Coe at 749-6522.

On Election Day in Hingham this spring (Saturday, April 28), Hingham League of Women Voters will be handing out "I Voted Today" lapel stickers (like the one pictured here) to voters as they exit the polling station. Thank you to Julie Strehle for the idea, and to Christine Dietterich, who put together this fantastic sticker layout. If you would like to volunteer to pass stickers out to voters, please contact Julie Strehle at 749-6956.



League of Women Voters

# Candidates Night

APRIL 11, 2007 AT 7PM  
HINGHAM TOWN HALL  
(THIRD FLOOR SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM)

SPONSORED BY:



The Hingham League  
of Women Voters

Candidates running for office in the  
Town Election have been invited to attend to  
answer questions and make a presentation.

This event will be broadcast on  
Comcast cable TV during the two week period  
prior to the April 28, 2007 Town Election.

# HLWV Membership Form Winter/Spring 2007 – May 2008

## Hingham League of Women Voters

Send to:  
Marisa Costello  
43 Woodlock Road  
Hingham, MA 02043

Name \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*We need your email address so we can alert you from time to time about a League meeting or let you know when a new Voter newsletter is on our website\*

Individual	\$50.
Household	\$75. (\$50, first member; \$25 second)
Full time student	\$25.
CONTRIBUTION	\$ _____
PAYMENT ENCLOSED	\$ _____

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate. We are delighted to get help from our Members. Below is a list of activities in need of your help. Please check or circle any items with which you can assist:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Voter Education**

- \* Help run Candidates Night
- \* Register voters
- \* Pass out "I Voted Today" stickers at the polls

\_\_\_\_\_ **Advocacy**

- \* Green Study Committee
- \* Report on town boards with Observer Corps

\_\_\_\_\_ **Social Event Planning**

- \* Plan All-Member meetings, including Annual Meeting

**HINGHAM LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS**

231 Leavitt Street  
Hingham, MA 02043

*Democracy: The more you use it,  
the better it gets!*

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The League of Women Voters has two separate and distinct roles.

- **Voters Service/Citizen Education**: We present unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues
- **Action/Advocacy**: We are also nonpartisan, but, after study, we use our positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest.