

# Hingham Voter

Serving the Towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset and Norwell

June 2007

## HLWV Board

2007—2008

**President:** Julie Strehle  
**VP Voter Education:**  
 Debbie Courteau  
**VP Advocacy:**  
 Melanie Quackenbush  
**Green Study Co-Chairs:**  
 Kate Boland, Elizabeth Fetsko  
**Secretary:** Victoria Milano  
**Treasurer:** Marisa Costello  
**Membership Recruiter:**  
 Christine Dietterich  
**Publicity:** Jerry Elsdon  
**Web Site:** Lynn Cotter  
**Newsletter:** Lynn Cotter  
**Events Coordinator:** Dina O'Neil  
**Advisors:** Cindy Coe, Cathy Salisbury

## President's Letter: The Year Ahead

Happy Summer! Please take a moment to look left and view the fantastic Board that the Hingham League of Women Voters has for next year. I am excited to work with such fun and energetic women! Here are the activities for year that you can look forward to: In September, we will kick off the year with an **All-Member Meeting**, a presentation of the **Climate Project**. Deb Courteau, our new VP of Voter Education, has been training on the Climate Project, the slide show presentation that was featured in Al Gore's movie, [An Inconvenient Truth](#). So she and a Climate Project colleague will present the latest information on climate change to us.

In October we will host our annual **New Member Wine & Cheese event**. Also in October we will have another **Training on Observer Corps**. We hope to add more members to the ranks of the Observer Corps.

Looking ahead to next January, we plan to meet and have what is called a **"Consensus"**. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has been studying the issue of Fiscal Policy, evaluating the current status of financing of local government services, including Proposition 2 ½, State Aid, and Property Taxes. Our league will study recommendations made by the state league, go over the pros



HLWV Board Members, past and present, pose for a group photo at this year's Annual Meeting. Our guest speaker for the evening, Bruce Rabuffo, is standing in the back center.

and cons and try to reach consensus on the issue.

In the February/March time frame we plan to have a repeat of our successful **All – Member State of the State** meeting, where our State Representative and State Senator will meet with us and go over the latest issues that our towns and State are facing.

Then in April we will host our annual **Candidates Night** forum for any candidates running for local offices. We will pass out the **"I Voted Today"** stickers to voters at the local election. And in May we will conclude the year with another **Annual Meeting**.

And throughout the year we will have several exciting pro-

jects. One is the continuation of the **Green Study Committee**, which will be led by Kate Boland and Elizabeth Fetsko. Look out for opportunities to get involved with this great committee.

We will continue **Observer Corps**, and the reports and feedback that we get from our Observers will help steer the League toward any future projects that we think we should take on.

We will continue a service that has been provided by the League over the years called the **Thank You For Registering to Vote Postcards**. They are sent out to newly registered voters with information about the League and Hingham's Town Meeting form of government. (Continued on Page 4)

## Upcoming Events

### Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 28  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Julie Strehle's house  
 231 Leavitt Street

### All-Member Meeting:

The Climate Project  
 Tuesday, September 18

### New Member Wine & Cheese

Wednesday,  
 October 3

## Annual Meeting Recap

The 2007 HLWV Annual Meeting was a great success with the highest attendance we have seen in years. We gathered at the South Shore Country Club where Bruce Rabuffo, Chairman of the Hingham Development and Industrial Commission, was the keynote speaker.

The business meeting kicked off the evening with Cindy Coe, outgoing President, who commented on how far the Hingham League has come in the past two years: Initiating a very successful New Member campaign, conducting the Green Building Study resulting in an official HLWV Position and continued efforts with educating and building awareness (i.e. – lawn care workshop and the Green Corner published monthly in the Hingham Journal), creating and distributing “I Voted Today” stickers, and the establishment an official executive board. Cindy then passed the gavel to the new President, Julie Strehle, who discussed all the new and exciting things of what is to come as we head into the next year (as you can see in her President’s letter).

Marisa Costello reported on the progress of the newly implemented Observer Corps. Participants

of their findings thus far. Overall, it has been an extremely successful effort and a very rewarding experience for the participants. Many have been impressed with the quality and commitment of the town’s volunteers and impressed with the efficiency of many of the boards. Observer Corps summaries will be available in the Fall in the Voter Newsletter and the HLWV website. Participants of the Observer Corps include:

Marisa Costello – Planning Board  
 Laura Marwill – Advisory Committee  
 Christine Cadegan – Board of Health  
 Connie Coleman – Conservation Commission  
 Pat Granahan – Light Board  
 Ann Marie Schembri and Kathleen Nugent – School Committee

Samantha Anderson then gave an update on the School Building Committee: Where they started, what they did next and where they are now. They are currently waiting to hear on state funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which is expected sometime in July. On the design table are many green elements, like natural daylighting, solar heat, and rain waste runoff.



Annual Meeting speaker Bruce Rabuffo

The plan still calls for the new elementary school to be completed in 2009 and the renovated middle school in 2011.

Bruce Rabuffo, Chairman of the Hingham Development and Industrial Commission (HDIC), was the keynote speaker. He spoke about development, updates and improvements made to the downtown Hingham area. The HDIC is a group that is action focused and helps to analyze, debate, decide and present to the Selectmen on Hingham’s economic development and infrastructure. Their most recent focus has been and continues to be the development of Downtown Hingham. To help them with the process, they had asked “Where are we today and where do we want to be tomorrow?” Mr. Rabuffo stated, “We have the opportunity to preserve what we were.” Discussed were the many problems or issues that Downtown Hingham faced

a few years back and how the HDIC and many other groups have worked together to reinvent the downtown area. Examples included improving the streetscape by working on compliance and safety issues for pedestrians, adding lampposts, trees, the clock, and larger sidewalks. Currently they are working on the tunnel cap, parking issues and the Station Street area. There are a couple more years of work, but are optimistic. Concerns for the future include parking, T commuters, traffic flow, and increased congestion from new developments.

Thanks to Dina O’Neil who organized this fun evening at SSCC, and also to Debbie Courteau for her work on logistics and details. It was a great evening to visit with old HLWV friends and meet new ones, and we look forward to doing it again next year.



## **Mark your calendars!**



The Hingham League of Women Voters  
will hold their first annual

All-Member Meeting

Tuesday, September 18, 2007  
7:00 – 8:45 p.m.

at the  
Hingham Public Library  
The Whiton Room

You've seen An Inconvenient Truth. You've made changes in your life to reduce your carbon footprint. Now, come see a live presentation of the slideshow presented in the film. A member of The Climate Project will be here to educate and challenge us as citizens into action against the growing crisis of global warming.

Don't miss this exciting opportunity!

To reserve your seat, call Debbie Courteau at 781-335-7558.

## President's Letter: Next Year's Events (continued from page 1)

Cindy Coe, who may be stepping down as President, is stepping up to head the reactivation of an initiative called "**Know Your Town**". Many years ago the League put out a booklet which helped residents of Hingham learn about their town government, history and local resources. This booklet will be an update of that, along with tons of new information, including schools and recreational opportunities. This new "Know Your Town Committee" will be forming this summer, and Cindy will

hold a kick-off meeting in July or August to get it all started. We will email members with the details.

And finally, an issue that is near and dear to the League's heart is something that we will try to concentrate on this coming year. And that is **Voter Turnout**. As Cindy Coe has so wonderfully put, Hingham has been known for years as "Tree City USA"...Well what if we were also known as the "Vote City USA". We have to find a way to light a fire under our townspeople to get them out to

vote—from the "big elections" down to the small ones, we all want Voters to learn the issues, take responsibility for their town and VOTE.

Don't forget to send in your membership dues for the new year!

Have a great summer and we'll see you in September!

Regards,  
Julie

## Local Government Update ... What Are They Up To Now?

**By: Debbie Courteau**

### STATE SENATE BUDGET PASSES

After two days of debate and swiftly dispensing with 850 amendments, the Massachusetts Senate unanimously approved a \$26.7 billion fiscal year 2008 budget. Senator Robert Hedlund provides us with some thoughts about the new budget and how it affects our lives and our community.

Based on just 3% growth in tax revenues and \$150 million from the state's stabilization fund, Senator Hedlund believes that overall the Senate budget is realistic and addresses some genuine needs of both our district and the Commonwealth, with a focus on investments in education, public safety, economic development and public health.

In the area of education, the senate budget increases education aid (Chapter 70) by more than \$220 million or 6.3% statewide. That brings Chapter 70 aid to more than \$3.7 billion for fiscal 2008, or nearly 14% of the entire budget. In part due to reforms Senator Hedlund supported last year that created increased and more equitable aid, **Hingham will receive \$500,000 more, or a 12.5% increase, in direct education aid in FY08.**

The Senate budget also includes a \$12.3 million increase in Special Education Circuit Breaker funding to help local school districts deal with the rising costs of special education and a \$6.5 million increase for Expanded Learning Time Grants and a \$6.8 million increase for Kindergarten Expansion Grants.

The budget also includes several key public safety proposals, including: full funding for the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) Program; \$4 million in new funding for Municipal Police Grants, and; \$21.3 million for Community Policing Grants. In addition, and in the wake of the tragic killings at Virginia Tech, the Senate budget includes \$250,000 for an emergency text-messaging notification system to be set up on all of public college and university campuses.

In the area of public health, the Senate budget included a 5 percent increase in MassHealth programs such as the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program and the Healthy Start Program. It also included \$9.9 million in new funding for the Rotavirus and Meningococcal vaccines and a \$600,000 increase for the Home and Healthy for Good Program.

With the Senate budget now complete, and the House budget having been completed in April, a six-legislator Conference Committee has been appointed to negotiate the differences between the Senate and House budgets and present a final, compromise budget for both branches to vote on. The new fiscal year starts on July 1.

*Information obtained from Senator Robert Hedlund's Office.  
If you have further questions or comments, Senator Hedlund  
can be reached at his office at 617-722-1646.*

# HLWV Membership Form May 2007 – May 2008

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**

- \*Municipal Finance Study
- \* Green Study Committee
- \* Report on Town Boards with Observer Corps
- Compile town data for the "Know Your Town" booklet

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

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



Youngest HLWV "member" Riley Cotter helps mom Lynn pass out "I Voted Today" stickers and membership information on Election Day in April.



More pictures from Annual Meeting: Outgoing President Cindy Coe says goodbye. Tables at South Shore Country Club.

**HINGHAM LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS**

30 Ward Street  
Hingham, MA 02043

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