

## **The L: Warwick's e-mail discussion group**

The L made its debut during the 1997 Old Home Days when Ed Hawes, its founder, walked around the Town Park, handing out a flyer that announced its existence and told people with e-mail-equipped computers how to subscribe. Its purpose is to make up for the fact that there is no longer any place for Warwick folk to bump into each other by chance. The L is meant to foster cohesion and communication among townspeople.

Today it has about 135 subscribers and an estimated 250 readers. Between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007, subscribers received some 1,000 messages. Anything pertaining to the town and its people is appropriate for sending to The L.

Everyone who lives in Warwick, whether full or part time, or has ties to the town from a distance, is welcome to subscribe to The L. This is done by writing to <the-l-owner@warwickma.us> and including the subscriber's full name, street address, and phone number. People who don't have a Warwick address should include a sentence about their connection to and interest in Warwick matters. The purpose of this requirement is to keep out people who would like to use the list of email addresses for commercial purposes.

Through The L, subscribers receive agendas for selectboard meetings, meeting and hearing notices from some (but not all) town boards and committees, some (but not all) other announcements that are posted on the Town Hall bulletin board as well as sporadic notices of new postings on the town web site, [www.warwickma.org](http://www.warwickma.org), occasional newspaper-style reports on actions of the selectboard and other groups, and background on town meeting warrant articles.

To participate, a subscriber sends an e-mail message to The L, which relays it to every subscriber at once. The list managers see messages at the same time everyone else does; there is no attempt to control or censor what is said. All that is required of participants is the kind of civility we expect to see on Town Meeting floor: no personal attacks, no questioning of others' motives or character. The rare transgression is met with a private and polite reminder to the sender.