



# **THE CAPE COD VOTER**

**VOLUME 56 ISSUE 6**

**FEBRUARY 2016**

## **CALENDAR**

Tuesday February 2  
9:30am

**Board Meeting**  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Tuesday, February 9  
State House, Boston 9:30-noon

**Day on the Hill**  
*See details inside*

Thursday, February 18  
10am

**Third Week Coffee**

Friday February 26  
8:30am

**LWVCCA Legislative Breakfast**  
CCCC Lorusso Solarium

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

Tuesday March 1  
9:30am

Board Meeting  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Tuesday March 15

Third Week Coffee

Saturday March 19

Health Forum  
*"The State of Medical Marijuana"*

Tuesday March 29

All-member meeting

P2 -- LWVCCA February 2016

## **FROM THE LWVCCA STEERING COMMITTEE**

January has been an active month for the League. In addition to the final consensus meeting on Money in Politics and the Don't Just Stand There, Run! Forum, Paula Bacon organized a meeting of League members who have been actively involved in county governance issues. Representatives from the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, the Business Round Table, and the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce also attended and it was agreed all organizations would work together on the issues. Judy Thomas offered to be the ad hoc chair for the League. Under discussion are strategies to resuscitate forward movement on a plan to restructure county government to make it more efficient and effective. Stay tuned!

*Joan Bernstein, on behalf of the Steering Committee*

### **Report -- Consensus discussion on "Money in Politics" -- Barbara Wellnitz**

Ten members of the LWVCCA met in two sessions to discuss and try to reach consensus on the issue of Money in Politics, proposed by the LWVUS. While the mix of members wasn't the same each time, we as League members did have a lively discussion (of course!) both times. While there were several questions on which we either couldn't reach consensus or chose not to answer — due to the ambiguous language of a particular question — we did come to consensus on many. Here is a sampling of some of our answers.

We agreed that the goals of campaign finance regulation should be to:

- protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in campaigns.
- provide voters with sufficient information to make informed choices.
- ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections.

We agreed that there should be spending limits on contributions by wealthy individuals and by PACs, as well as by the political parties and by candidates spending their own money. We also agreed that spending from their general treasury funds by for-profit corporations, trade associations and labor unions should be banned.

We also agreed that the League should support campaign finance regulation that would abolish superPACs and place restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists.

We discussed at length the role the media play in candidate elections through editorial endorsements, news coverage and other communications directly to the public that can influence the outcome of an election. We came to consensus that unlimited spending likely should be allowed, because this is an issue of "freedom of the press," and to do otherwise could be considered censorship. We concluded that the media play a role in reporting contributions that could influence elections if they went unreported.

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*From Renate Sands*

**Day on the Hill** will be held on Tuesday, February 9 (snow day of February 23) in the Gardner Auditorium at the State House. This year, instead of a speaker, the LWVMA is having a discussion on "Why This? Why Now? What Finally Moves Legislation?" A panel will explore why bills that are introduced session after session finally gain traction and have a chance to become a law. Panelists will be **Sen. William Brownsberger** on criminal justice legislation; **Rep. Shawn Dooley** on election reform; and **Pamela Wilmot, executive director, Common Cause of Massachusetts**, on public records access. After the panel presentation, the state League legislative specialists will outline specific bills they are following.

**If you are interested in going** to Day on the Hill and would like to carpool with me, please contact me ASAP at [rhsands@comcast.net](mailto:rhsands@comcast.net) or 508-888-8349. Registration begins at 9:30, program runs from 10am to noon.

**Our Legislative Breakfast** will be Friday, February 26, at Cape Cod Community College. Please see the details, and reservation/payment form at the end of this VOTER. Reservations by Feb 22.

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## MEMBERSHIP

*Helen Bresnahan, Membership Chair*

***We are delighted to welcome to three new members--all from Harwich--to start our new year:***

Marie and Tom Caruso live at 37 Harwoods Ave, Harwich 02645. Phone: 508-430-2712,  
Email [mariecaruso8@verizon.net](mailto:mariecaruso8@verizon.net) and [thomascaruso@verizon.net](mailto:thomascaruso@verizon.net)

Elizabeth (Betsy) Gasek has recently moved from Colorado to 22 Blueberry Lane, Harwich 02645,  
Phone: 516-527-7078 Email [elizabethpgasek@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethpgasek@gmail.com)

Please enter these names in your handbook. And always remember to alert Membership if your personal information changes. [Sunrisedawn110@aol.com](mailto:Sunrisedawn110@aol.com)

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT REPORT

### COUNTY COMMITTEE MEETING -- NEXT STEPS

Following up on the December *My View* article co-authored by LWVCCA, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC), the Business Roundtable (BRT) and the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, a group of LWVCCA members met on January 11 to consider the next steps to be taken in an effort to revitalize Barnstable County Government.

Guests were Ed DeWitt of APCC and BRT, Elliott Carr of BRT and Wendy Northcross of the Chamber of Commerce. Attending for LWVCCA were Paula Bacon, Joan Bernstein, Nancy Curley, Nancy Erskine, Chris Meade, Mary Lou Petitt, Jari Rappaport, Pat Ryle, Renate Sands and Judy Thomas. Judy volunteered to take notes ~ the following is from her notes.

**Why a collaborative among our four organizations?** Ed DeWitt answered by saying the APCC hosts the BRT, the BRT and LWVCCA were very involved in prompting the formation of the Special Commission on County Structure (2011). . .the Chamber is involved because the Cape's economic well-being and the County are closely tied. . .and finally, that the current structure does not support effective functioning of County government.

- We are people who have constituencies that can have an influence.
- In December we jointly submitted a "My View" position statement calling for structural change to be in the works by March.
- This past weekend the *CCTimes* wrote an editorial which echoed our position and called for both the Assembly of Delegates and the County Commissioners to "look at the big picture and make bold decisions for the good of Barnstable County."

We meet to consider what might be the next step.

Joan Bernstein inquired what **the main obstacles** to moving forward are. Several answered.

- Elliott: Barnstable County is unique in the state; he believes it has the largest, most complex county government in the country
  - Nancy Curley: County residents are either not informed or are ill-informed re the county government and what it does. (Mentioned by others as well.)
  - Lower/Outer Cape towns are resistant as they fear loss of voice (Ed, Mary Lou)
  - Forming regional representation would not be easy as precincts cannot be divided -- yet equal representation is required (one person/one vote) (Ed and Elliott)
  - Many of the problems have been less known until just recently. (Ed) Ron Bergstrom reiterated to him that when Ron inquired about the draft My View that "we're not getting complaints."
  - Most Delegates don't think of structure; they just attend meetings every two weeks to do the agenda (Mary Lou)
  - Charter calls for Assembly Delegates to amend the charter; they are not likely to vote to eliminate their jobs (Judy)
- continued. . .*

**How can the charter be amended? Ed answered: [below is simplified version]**

1. If the Commissioners and Assembly Delegates were to agree on changes.
2. The Assembly could file for a special law
3. If a number of citizens equal to 5% of voters in the most recent election were to file a petition it could go to the ballot.
4. The legislature/Beacon Hill could pass a special act.

**Is anything currently in the works?**

1. **Sen. Dan Wolf** would be willing to file a bill; he would most likely get Cape delegation support. (Elliott)
2. **Assembly member Patrick Princi (Barnstable)**, with 21% of the weighted vote, is planning to move something forward in the very near future. (Ed) Ed has heard Princi's plan would call for an appointed administrator with 5 regional legislators, none of which would be at large.
  - Princi and Julia Taylor (Falmouth) constitute 36% of the vote. If 2/3 of the weighted vote was supportive, the measure could go directly to the voters in a general elections. Paula asked if Princi is open to modifications to his plan. Ed felt he is willing to listen and is open to modifications.
  - If only a majority of delegates are in support, the changes would have to go to the state for approval first and then to the voters.
  - Wendy stated Princi has worked with Rob O'Leary and Paul Niedzwiecki on his proposal. He will be sending it to Wendy on Wednesday so that she can have it before she meets with her board on Friday.

**What strategies can we undertake now?**

1. We can begin to investigate and lobby delegates to support the Princi plan, not waiting for March to see what happens by then. Effort should be all four organizations trying to meet with all the town delegates, especially those who might support. This would be easiest way to get Assembly support.
2. Ed believes semantics are important: it is better to speak of abolishing the commissioners rather than "merge" the commissioners and Assembly; keep the Assembly, just downsize it.
3. Joan suggested more letters to the editor which would serve to advocate and educate.
4. Ed suggested calls to Assembly delegates to remind them/familiarize them of our joint position/statement.
5. Ed will set up meeting with *CCTimes* to encourage as much coverage of county government as possible and further support.

We need coverage of what's good about county government as well as what the negative is, particularly as more financial information becomes the news.

Mary Lou offered it will be challenging to convince readers of need for government when national mood is for less government.
6. Ed said it was important to talk about "Why action now?" and that we need to be articulate about the problems.

*Continued. . .*

P6 -- LWVCCA February 2016

7. Wendy urged talking points include why it is important to maintain a strong county government. That we need to “beat the drum” for the Princi plan and play down the budget situation.
8. Chris suggested that talking points stress the value County government brings to the smaller towns.
9. The *Cape Codder* is a good vehicle for educating the Lower/Outer Cape. Letters to be written on “Why regional government makes sense for the lower Cape: Elliott from Brewster; Mary Lou from Eastham.
10. Mary Lou urged talking with delegates.
11. Judy asked that each organization keep the others in the loop of what they are doing and what is happening. She will be the point person for the League for now.
12. When the new administrator is hired (search committee to report to Commissioners this Wednesday), the League could urge the Commissioners to delegate some of their powers to this person per charter provisions.
13. Joan Bernstein will send Judy a draft of a letter she will write re county functioning.
14. Chris will call Sue French to see what is happening with the Citizens Government Academy. Might this be done on Channel 98 at the Cape Media Center?

Paula was again thanked for putting the meeting together and her perseverance in keeping up with county affairs, particularly since our county committee’s co-chairs had had to resign for various reasons.

After meeting: Jari will resume forwarding the agendas of the Commissioners and Assembly.

NOTE: Please see a Chronology of LWVCCA actions re County governance at the end of this edition of The Voter.



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## VOTER SERVICE

*From Joan Grant and Chris Meade*

### ***Don't Just Stand There, Run! A Successful Workshop***

On January 23, the Don't Just Stand There, Run! Workshop was held at the Cape Cod Community Media Center. It was aired live to all 15 towns across the Cape and taped for future viewing. We co-sponsored the event with the Cape Cod Times, Cape Women's Coalition and CCYoung Professionals. The LWVCCA committee members were Joan Grant, Florence Seldin, Judy Thomas and Chris Meade. Also on the committee were Linda Cebula from the Cape Women's Coalition (and a LWVCCA member) and Stefanie Coxe from CCYP.

Thirty people attended the event. The blizzard forecast influenced overall attendance. Fourteen of those who pre-registered did not come, but 9 unregistered people did attend. It is likely, had it not snowed, there may have been more than 45 attendees.

Twenty-one attendees completed evaluations. Nine of the evaluators indicated they are currently considering a run for public office. The evaluators gave the event an overall rating of 1.4 (1 = very informative, 2 = mostly informative, 3 = not very informative). Their comments included: *Excellent! Very well done. Awesome and very thought-provoking! Great, informative event!* Suggestions for enhancing content focused on including additional information (e.g., how to engage younger voters, more about using social media).

There was significant promotional activity to support the event. The Cape Cod Times developed and ran 4 free ¼ page ads and published a "My View" piece written by Judy Thomas; WOMR broadcast a 28-minute interview with Florence Seldin and Stefanie Coxe which was also aired on community TV; editorial and ad in the Chronicle submitted by Florence; two other short radio interviews and announcements; and event announcements in other local newspapers.

The video on-demand link will be on the LWVCCA website and will remain on the site for an extended period as the content will remain relevant for the foreseeable future. The link is:  
<http://74.92.45.225/Cablecast/public-site/index.html#/show/13958?channel=1>

**NOTES FROM JANUARY BOARD MEETING**

*From Board Secretary Judy Thomas*

1. LWVCCA review of possible LWVUS program for 2016-2018 will take place at the February 2 board meeting.
2. Treasurer Ira Seldin gave a financial review to prep the board for planning the 2016-2017 proposed budget planning, suggesting some questions for possible consideration: Should the League consider raising dues in order to increase revenue? Should the League charge a bit more when we have "meal" meetings? Should the League consider investing our current money- market funds in a CD if interest rates continue to rise? Is it likely we will be sending a delegate to the LWVUS convention in Washington this year?
3. The revenue from the Jazz Concert Benefit Concert will be divided equally between the LWVCCA budget and the Ed Trust budget--approximately \$600 for each, minus a few expenses.
4. Archival material has been delivered to Cape Cod Community College for storage.
5. The Health Committee will be applying to the LWVMA Scharfman Educational Trust for \$250 to support the Health Forum this spring.
6. We have three new members bringing the total to 76.

**Reservation and payment form**

**LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST 2016  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 -- 8:30am  
CAPE COD COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
LORUSSO BUILDING - SOLARIUM**

As of end January, the following legislators have accepted our invitation for the breakfast:

- Senator Vinny DeMacedo
- Senator Dan Wolf
- Representative Timothy Whelan
- Representative Brian Mannal
- Representative Sarah Peake
- Representative Randy Hunt

**Feel free to bring a friend or relative who would be interested in this event. We are also expecting students from Cape Cod Community College.**

**Directions: From the campus entrance, go around the campus road to parking lots 10 and 11. Walk up the hill. Handicapped parking is up the hill next to the Lorusso building.**

-----**Please print and send with payment**-----

**Cost of breakfast -- \$11.00 per person. Deadline for reservations -- February 22nd.  
Checks payable to LWVCCA and sent to:**

**Ira Seldin  
321 Deer Meadow Lane  
Chatham, MA 02633**

**I will attend the Legislative Breakfast. \_\_\_\_\_**

**I am bringing the following guests. Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_**

**Enclosed is a check payable to the LWVCCA for \$11/per person. \_\_\_\_\_**

**CHRONOLOGY OF LWVCCA STATEMENTS  
& POSITIONS RE COUNTY GOVERNMENT (2009 - 2016)**

January 2009. First LWVCCA forum on County Government.

January 2011. Second forum on County Government. Panel: Niedzwiecki, Sen. O'Leary, Wendy Norcross, Julia Taylor, Bill Doherty. Elliott Carr of BRT urged special committee to quickly work to evaluate the county government.

April 6, 2011 – LWVCCA actively supports charter review commission in statement to Commissioners.

June 15, 2011 -- LWVCCA statement to Commissioners urging action to set up Special Commission announced by Commissioners 2 months ago with no visible action since.

Sept. 17, 2011 -- 3rd forum on County Government with Prof. Ron. Oakerson, Rob O'Leary, Paul N, Dan Wolf, Maggie Geist, moderated by Teresa Martin.

August 2011 – MMA Consulting report urges that County Commissioners reorganize the administrative structure of county government. All departments should report to one executive. This report dealt with the internal organization and framework of administrative functions.

November 30, 2011 LWVCCA statement to Special Commission re Structure urging strong administrator and two branch government (executive and legislative).

February 29, 2012. LWVCCA statement to Special Commission: Single strong administrator, LWVCCA preferring elected and emphasizing structure is of primary importance.

February 2012. Special Commission completes its study: *Strong administrator, merging Board of Commissioners and AofD in a single legislative body of 7 (5 elected by district, 2 at-large)*

March 29, 2012. LWVCCA consensus meetings held on the structure of regional government.

**April 2012** LWVCCA announces in *Voter* the consensus position reached: a single, strong, appointed executive and reduced size legislative body elected regionally and "Strong support that the League continue to advocate for change to create a more responsive, efficient regional government. [Consensus represents significant change from 2005.]

June 6, 2012 Statement LWVCCA made to the County Commissioners on June 6, 2012 which states "The League supports the Special Commissioners' recommendation that asked for a single, strong executive who would be appointed. While there were good arguments for an elected executive, our membership felt that the arguments for an appointed executive were more compelling particularly in the current political climate." And size reduction in legislative body, elected regionally, no consensus on number -- more study needed. Strongly urge the League to continue this important work.

December 19, 2012. (Jari). Statement to AofD. Distributed Nov. 29, 2012 statement to Commissioners and to the AofD. Main purpose of statement to urge better communication between the two branches of government. *Continues. . .*

March 27, 2013. *CCTimes* editorial "County Contortions"-- "Did anyone really expect the legislative body to vote itself out of existence? The Assembly must do what is best for the county's citizens, not what is best for each of them."

P11 -- LWVCCA February 2016

May 7, 2013. My View piece on structure by Karen Mazza after the appointment of a Charter Review Committee by Assembly of Delegates. References Special Commission report and LWVCCA support of the Commission's recommendations. Piece mentions and critiques "openness" of AofD to Special Commission's report in light of AofD resolutions to increase the number of commissioners to 5 while retaining 15 town delegates.

October 2013 Re county charter review committee hearing on three possible revisions – statement made – in Orleans. Dec. 13, 2013

Barnstable Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 submitted by Ridley and Associates calls for streamlining county governance by merging Commissioners and AofD into new legislative body and establishing a new county executive position.

- June 23, 2014. County Committee meeting with Michael Brillhart on County government.
- June 24, 2014. Our letter to Attorney General Martha Coakley re Charter and conflict of interest. Reply an area for the States Ethics Commission.
- Nov. 24, 2014. Letter from State Ethics Commission: they are not replying to our query because they only give opinions to people who are asking for an opinion about how the conflict of interest law applies to themselves. They don't give third party opinions, unless the inquirer has consent of the third party. A member of the Assembly could request it.

May 29, 2015. Albright's article in *Barnstable Patriot* quoting Julia Taylor on the ad hoc administrator search committee. Barnstable County suffers from an "unclear core mission, shaky finances, dysfunctional relationships among elected officials, worried employees" as well as a deteriorating physical plant and a "possible loss of court money". Taylor questions whether it is fiscally prudent to have a full-time administrator considering how little authority the position has [under the current charter]. Other relevant comments from Julia.

December 2015. Joint letter to Editor/My View *CCTimes* on Dysfunction of County Government with APCC, CC Business Round table, Chamber of Commerce and LWVCCA

January 9, 2016 *CCTimes* editorial: Foundering Governance. Growing tensions among Commissioners and AofD. Questions over Taylor's meeting with Paul N over possible interim administrator position after search committee was unable to select candidate.

- Legal counsel evaluation
- Deteriorating fiscal situation
- Mismanagement of fire academy
- Questionable handling of court leases
- Lack of strong leadership

January 6, 2016 Albright article in the *Barnstable Patriot* following budget presentations to County highlighting missed financial opportunities: failure to increase town assessments by 2.5% as allowed by law (loss over ten year period \$700,000+), increase requests defeated in Assembly (which approves budget); contracts with TD bank, sole manager of County funds which benefit the bank far more than the County; missed rental income with the State.