



# THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 56 ISSUE 7

MARCH 2016

## CALENDAR

Tuesday March 1  
9:30am

**Board Meeting**  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Tuesday, March 15  
10am

**Third Week Coffee**  
Location to be announced

## LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday, April 2  
9:30am

**LWVCCA Priorities Discussion**  
Harwich United Methodist Church  
*See important Page 2*

Tuesday, April 5  
9:30am

**Board Meeting**  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Saturday, April 30  
10am-noon

**Healthcare Forum on Medical Marijuana**  
Cape Media Studio, Dennis

[www.lwvcapecod.org](http://www.lwvcapecod.org)

P2 -- LWVCCA March 2016

**SETTING OUR PRIORITIES  
LWVCCA ALL-MEMBER MEETING**

**Saturday April 2 9:30am to Noon  
Harwich United Methodist Church**

*From Chris Meade for the Steering Committee*

The mission statement of the League of Women Voters . . . *encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy.* The key functions to support the mission are *voter service and education, and advocacy* (studying the pros/cons of an issue, coming to consensus on a position, and advocating for or against policies related to issue).

**The purpose of our LWVCCA priorities meeting on April 2** is to identify and agree on what we should and can do to have the most impact in supporting the League's mission on the Cape.

This important discussion will establish what our focus will be through the 2016 elections and into 2017. But identifying our priorities and goals will take us only partially there. Achieving any goals will require the *active participation (e.g., leadership, time, talents/skills, etc.) of our members.* Final selection of priorities and goals will depend on gaining an understanding of what our members can and will actively support through their leadership, time and talents.

We need your participation. Please plan to attend, provide your valuable input, and help shape our future. Additional information will be sent as we get closer to the event.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Meade at [cameade@comcast.net](mailto:cameade@comcast.net).

**LWVUS 2016-2018 Planning**

The LWVUS requested input on their program proposals for 2016-2018. The proposals support the overarching theme of *making democracy work* for every voter and every voice in our communities. The LWVCCA board members reviewed the programs proposed and provided feedback to LWVUS that we support them. The proposed programs are:

- ***Voting Rights and Voter Protection:*** Continue to push for restoration of the Voting Rights Act by supporting the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA); support positive reforms such as online voter registration for all, portable voter registration within each state, and reforms to provisional voting, areas for which there are already pending bills; push the current administration and the next to comply with the National Voter Registration Act by allowing voters to register through the federally-facilitated health care exchanges.

P3 -- LWVCCA March 2016 (April 2 planning meeting cont.)

- **Supporting Voting Rights and Voter Protection in the States:** In the states the fight continues in statehouses and courthouses to prevent legislation that suppresses the vote. Collaborating with LWVUS, state Leagues take the leading role in advocacy for voter protection and in coordinating statewide campaigns around voting issues.
- **Supporting Voting Rights and Voter Protection in Local Communities:** The 2016 election will be the first presidential election in 50 years in which voters cannot rely on the protections of the Voting Rights Act to ensure free and fair access to the polls. It is critical that, in this upcoming election, we promote and support a local presence in our most vulnerable communities by working together with community partners and using our 95 years of election experience to protect voters in the next election.
- **Voting Rights and Voter Protection Following Election 2016:** The president established the Presidential Commission on Election Administration to examine best election practices from the perspective of voter experience. The resulting recommendations provide an excellent road map for election reform at state and local levels.
- **Redistricting Reform:** Armed with a position every state League can use, we look forward to more robust efforts to accomplish this goal of reform. LWVUS will provide both venues for coordination and expert assistance.
- **Money in Politics:** Congress can take action to reform money in politics. There is legislation on each of the three pillars of our work on campaign finance: disclosure, stopping Super PACs, and public financing of congressional and presidential elections. There is also an anti-bundling bill. In addition, Congress can and must ensure meaningful enforcement of existing and future laws. These reforms can be made despite recent decisions of the Supreme Court.

They also provided the opportunity to comment on other issues of interest to our local league. We added the following comment: We believe the national position on nuclear energy is not broad and inclusive enough to be helpful to our League when it comes to advocating for the safe elimination of nuclear waste at a nearby nuclear power plant. Is this an issue for other state Leagues, and if so, could there possibly be a position which could be adopted by concurrence to make the position broader?



**RPM  
CARPETS  
&  
FLOOR COVERINGS**

**Russell P. Morris**  
*Owner*

192 Rt. 137 · E. Harwich, MA 02645  
508-432-4151 · Fax: 508-432-4162  
rick@rpmcarpets.com

**MOHAWK**  
FLOORSCAPES

www.rpmcarpets.com

MOHAWK MAKES <sup>THE</sup> ROOM

P4-- LWVCCA March 2016

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*Renate Sands, Legislative Chair*

### **Day on the Hill**

"*Why This, Why Now, What Finally Moves Legislation*" was the theme of this year's Day on the Hill. But since the bad weather prevented me from driving to Boston, I am providing a summary of the report issued by LWVMA.

All three panelists agreed that a personal approach from constituents is the most effective way of influencing their decision-making process. A personal email, letter or phone call from someone in their district explaining how the bill will affect them and why they care gets serious attention. Clicking a link does not indicate much level of commitment.

Other influences were mentioned by the panelists. Sen. William Brownsberger noted that criminal justice reform has gotten attention this session in part because it became an issue nationally and in part because of increased pressure from the minority community.

Rep. Shawn Dooley noted that one of the major forces behind last session's election law reform bill was the commitment to action by the Joint Committee on Election Laws and their determination to involve both parties.

Pamela Wilmot, executive director of Common Cause, discussed the public record access bill and noted that the issue took off when media organizations decided it was important for them to become involved. She stated that broad coalitions of organization can often be effective in advancing legislation.

About 10,000 pieces of legislation are introduced every session. As an example, The Joint Committee on the Judiciary is considering 800 bills this session. About 50 of those bills address difficult and substantive issues and require an enormous amount of time. The legislative process is deliberately designed to be slow which allows more participation from organizations and voters.

### **BARNSTABLE TAXI & LIVERY**

**(508)524-8818**



est. 2003

Local & Long Distance  
Reservations Welcome  
E-mail: [Barnstabletaxi@yahoo.com](mailto:Barnstabletaxi@yahoo.com)

Prompt Service  
Clean Vehicles

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*from Helen Bresnahan*

**New member Betsy Gasek** has lived in a number of places, but is no stranger to Cape Cod. Presently living in Harwich, she often visited her great-grandfather's farm and bog in the Falmouth area. She received her B.A. from the University of Michigan, moved on to Columbia (graduate degree in Chinese art history), then to Hofstra, where she earned her law degree and passed the New York bar ~ going on to practice criminal defense and civil litigation.

Interested in Pilates, travel and art history, she volunteers much of her time to PATH -- People Against the Trafficking in Humans -- and to passage of a bill that supports PATH. Some 14,000 to 17,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. The PATH bill seeks to increase awareness of human trafficking and to create a coalition of social service agencies, both public and private, dedicated to the elimination of trafficking.

Marriage last May to a reconnected friend brought Betsy back to the Cape. She has a son, soon to be married

Our League's mission encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government by influencing public policy through advocacy. Betsy Gasek certainly epitomizes that mission.

**Marie and Tom Caruso**, of Harwich, have joined us from Holden, Massachusetts, just outside Worcester, where they lived for 28 years before retiring to the Cape.

Both graduates of the University of Massachusetts, they devoted their lives to education. Marie, with a BA and M.Ed, went on to teach both French and Spanish.

Tom, with a BA in political science/education and an MA in school administration, started out as a sixth grade teacher but moved on to become principal of a Pre-K to six school with 500 students and 60 staff. Needless to say, both Carusos devoted many hours outside the classroom as school volunteers.

Once on the Cape, and with their two grown children in California, the Carusos have continued their volunteering. Marie is now on the board of the Harwich Library. Tom was a volunteer at Chatham's First Night and, with the carpentry skills he learned from his father, he's thinking about helping out with Habitat for Humanity (along with some work on their own house!).

Together Tom and Marie joined Chatham-Harwich Newcomers -- and ran into Barry and Judy Thomas. We're glad they did!

## HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Health Committee continues to study marijuana and the state of medical use in Massachusetts. It has been a challenge to find credible sources who will speak to the benefits. Yes, medical marijuana is legal. But getting a diagnosis, registering to a part of the “Medical Use of Marijuana Program” . . .obtaining a prescription. . .and then filling the prescription is a complex and time-consuming undertaking. At present only six medical marijuana dispensaries are open in Massachusetts, although dozens more are moving through the state application process. The latest, in Brookline has just opened and serves clients by appointment only during its initial trial period. On the Cape, we have dispensaries in Mashpee and South Dennis. The Haven Center of Orleans has applied for both growing and retail locations in Brewster.

Needless to say, the situation is in flux. We hope our forum on April 30th will shed some light.

Thanks to a generous grant from Gosnold on Cape Cod, we are fortunate to have as a speaker **Dr. Kevin Hill, MD, MHS**, an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard’s McLean Hospital, where he was awarded the 2013 Alfred Pope Award for Best Research Paper by a Young Investigator. Dr. Hill’s marijuana research is funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation and the American Lung Association. He is also a consultant to a number of professional sports organizations. He has authored or co-authored articles in more than thirty peer-reviewed scientific publications and is most recently the author of The Unbiased Truth About the World’s Most Popular Weed.

## BOARD NOTES -- LWVCCA BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 2ND

*From Board Secretary Judy Thomas*

1. Our bank balance is \$8,926.27
2. Planning for 2016-2018 in preparation for the LWVUS national convention this June was completed, with LWVCCA agreeing that a major program focus should be on “Making Democracy Work” -- with an emphasis on voting rights, voter protection, money in politics and redistricting.
3. Judy Thomas and Mary Lou Petitt, co-chairs of the county committee (affirmed by the board) sent a letter to the editor of the *Cape Codder* describing the need for county structure to be reviewed and changed.
4. Five members will attend the LWVMA Day on the Hill.
5. New member Betsy Gasek has indicated she would like to be trained as a moderator.
6. “Don’t Just Stand there, *Run!*” is available for viewing on channels 98 and 99 or through a link on our website.
7. Karen is reporting that Nominating Committee work has hit a major hurdle with several vacancies remaining. Reasons for this were discussed and some strategies outlined. The Priorities Meeting on April 2 will include a focus on meeting leadership needs.

P7 -- LWVCCA March 2016

**P.S. Our Legislative Breakfast has just concluded and critics on both sides of the Aisle” were unanimous: it was our Best Breakfast Ever!  
Congratulations to all involved.**