

# THE CAPE COD VOTER

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VOLUME 55 ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2015

## CALENDAR

Tuesday February 3  
9:30am

Board Meeting  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Thursday February 5  
2pm

Health Committee  
Home of Joan Bernstein

Monday February 9  
1:30pm

County Committee  
Location tbd

Tuesday, February 17  
10am

Third Week Coffee  
Panera - Hyannis

Wed-Thurs Feb 25-26  
Hyannis-Resort & Conf Center

Cape Cod Commission  
2nd Wastewater Summit  
*watershed@capecodcommission.org*

## LOOKING AHEAD...

Tuesday, March 3  
9:30am

Board Meeting  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Friday, March 6  
8-9:30am

**Int'l Women's Day** Breakfast  
Doubletree Hotel, Hyannis

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Members:

We begin this February newsletter with a very wintry greeting as we brace for what the news media are calling a historic top five storm. Best wishes to all for weathering the storm in comfort and safety.

**Planning Meeting Results:** Thanks to the 20 members who attended our special planning meeting to provide input to LWVMA about State League priorities for the next two years. We had very lively small- and large-group discussions culminating with a summary of our top recommendations. The dining room of Maplewood at The Mayflower Retirement Community was a lovely setting. Please see the summary of recommendations on the next page.

**Volunteer to Help the Board or Serve on the Board:** It takes many people to help an organization function effectively. We are finding that it helps to have people share roles so that no one person is overtaxed in fulfilling a role. Several of our important organizational functions require a team approach. **These are membership expansion, fundraising and communications.** People who like to recruit and perhaps speak to other organizations would be an asset to the membership team, chaired by Helen Bresnahan. Marilyn Gullett will be leading fundraising and she would like a co-chair and team to work with. This committee will write letters and make follow-up phone calls. The communications team sends notices about League events to the news media via e-mail and we may branch out into posting information through social media such as Facebook. If you feel like you could help with either of these communication tasks we would like you to join our communication team. Another way to help is to **serve as a Board Member.** We are interested in having newer members join the Board to learn more about our organization and to prepare for future leadership positions on the Board. We need to train the next generation of League Leaders and coming to Board meetings is the best way to do that. Don't be shy.

Please contact Karen Mazza at [lwvccapres2012@gmail.com](mailto:lwvccapres2012@gmail.com) if a Board position or a committee interests you. If you would like to talk with Karen for more information, please call her at our League number 508-945-0511.

**International Women's Day Breakfast:** The Cape Women's Coalition, of which LWVCCA is a member, is hosting a free breakfast on Friday March 6 from 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM at the Doubletree Hotel in Hyannis. There will be speakers and discussion on the theme, "Women Breaking Through". Please plan to join us for this well attended event to move progress forward for women on the Cape.

Stay warm!

Karen Mazza and Marilyn Gullett

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**PLANNING MEETING  
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO LWVMA**

**New Studies:**

1. Mental health. Include a variety of dimensions such as opiate addiction, dementia and issues related to public safety
2. Focus on Voter Action. Get more people engaged in voting. Look at new tools/policies and their effectiveness in turning out the vote.

**Action Priorities:**

1. Civic education and engagement
2. Income Equality

**Action Items:**

- Develop strong voter information and education program centered on the 2016 election at state and local levels.
- Develop action plan on civic education and engagement, including researching existing programs and projects local Leagues could use.
- Develop recommendations and tools for implementing the new voting laws in Massachusetts at state and local levels.

**COUNTY COMMITTEE** *From Jari Rapaport for Nancy Curley and the County Committee*

Commissioners are currently preparing recommendations for the FY16 Budget and are holding meetings with department Directors to review their requests for next year. They will also be appointing a committee to help screen applicants for the position of County Administrator which will become vacant in June.

We have been contacted by the committee appointed by the County Commissioners to develop a Barnstable County Academy, to “engage and educate citizens about County functions and Operations” and we will arrange a meeting with them. The leaders of the committee have already conducted such a program for the Town of Barnstable.

At our next meeting, we will focus on goals for the coming year and review outstanding county issues. We will also review the County Strategic Plan.

As always, we would particularly welcome some new members and new points of view.

Wastewater Summit (see Calendar) supporting the critical issue of water quality planning, follows the first very successful conference last year and will be reviewed in the March VOTER.

Weather casualties: The Regional Policy Plan Stakeholder meetings for the Mid- and Upper Cape, sponsored by the Cape Cod Commission and scheduled for January 28 and 29, were canceled due to the blizzard. *The Mid-Cape meeting has been rescheduled for February 3 at 9am in the Commission Conference Room, 3225 Main St., Barnstable Village.* The new date for the Upper Cape meeting had not been scheduled at the time of VOTER printing. Please check Commission website.

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*From Renate Sands*

The new legislative session has begun. The state Senate is considering a proposed set of rules for the new session that includes efforts to improve transparency. The new rules would require the Senate to make a list of bills available to the public two days prior to a scheduled meeting.

Below is the "2015 Legislative and Advocacy Agenda" on which the LWVMA will be focusing this coming year.

**Elections and Voting:** Support early voting in statewide elections, option for early voting in local elections, Election Day registration, and measures to increase voter turnout.

**Money and Politics:** Favor full and timely disclosure of campaign contributions, rules on corporate campaign spending and reducing the impact of money on our political system at every level.

**Public Financing of Campaigns:** Endorse restoring the "clean election" system the voters chose in 1998 and the legislature repealed in 2003.

**Climate Change:** Back a carbon tax to encourage use of less-polluting fuels.

**Environment:** Endorse rules for disposal of electronic products and for the use of certain toxic chemicals; measures to increase recycling.

**Economic Equality:** Explore and educate on the issues of economic inequality.

**Gun Safety:** Advocate for effective implementation of Massachusetts gun laws.

**Fiscal Policy:** Back a more progressive, graduated state income tax.

**Civic Education:** Favor greater emphasis on civics in middle and high schools and involvement of teens in government.

**Civic Engagement:** Support restoring civility in public discourse and encouraging citizen participation in government at all levels.

**Basic Human Needs:** Support training and education programs to help people get off of welfare.

**Transportation:** Favor adequate funding for infrastructure and alternatives to auto travel.

**Health Care:** Endorse measures to improve access and care and to reduce costs, including continued support of a single-payer health care option.

**Women's Issues:** Support a woman's right to choose and to safely exercise that right. Advocate for gender equality in wages, insurance and other areas.

**Transparency:** Back compliance with the Open Meeting law and recommend that the legislature be subject to that law.

## **VOTER SERVICE**

*From Joan Grant and Chris Meade*

We will continue to monitor all upcoming town elections to determine potential opportunities to sponsor candidates' and/or issues forums. If you are aware of upcoming opportunities in your town, please contact us as soon as possible so we can put them on our schedule. On May 7, we will co-sponsor a candidates' night with the Brewster Ladies' Library. It will be held in their auditorium and moderated by Joan Craig. Specific information on the candidates and key issues will be available in the middle of April.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

*Submitted by Helen Bresnahan*

Committee members Joan Craig, Maggie French and I met on January 20th to review and update the recent draft of the Informational Booklet. With minimal changes and the addition of LWVCCA website photos, our final draft will be available for review and acceptance by the Board. This ensures that copies of the new booklet will be printed sooner rather than later. On Board acceptance and publication, the booklet will be available at the Cape Women's Coalition breakfast on March 6. Historically, this breakfast is the largest gathering of women On Cape Cod. Libraries and other public locales will provide access locations for placement of the booklets, which will prove productive with the increase of newly interested and informed members.

**Meet new member Patricia Eldridge**, who uses the motto, "Life is good" for all her work past and present. Born on Martha's Vineyard, Pat has also lived in Dennisport and now Chatham.

Although her first formal education studies at Bates College were in biology, she later elected to pursue paralegal studies. A hard worker, she was employed by the Massachusetts Legislature, working with luminaries Howard Cahoon, Paul Doane and Henri Rauschenbach. With references and hard-working principles, Pat went on to hold the position of Assistant Clerk Magistrate in the Orleans District Court, from which she is now retired.

During the winter, Pat and her husband enjoy their condo in Bokeelia, boating on the Florida Gulf Coast and walking nearby beaches. On her return to Chatham she will continue her love of flower gardens and her pursuit of "Life is good".

## MONEY IN POLITICS

*Since LWVCCA's April 2013 forum on the subject of Money in Politics, not much new has happened except for further draconian rulings by the Supreme Court allowing bigger donations. Last November, a study committee consisting of members **Florence Seldin, Marilyn Gullett, Renate Sands and President Karen Mazza** agreed to write a series of articles for *The Voter* on this very important topic. This month, Florence outlines the history of campaign finance up to McCain-Feingold. Next month, Marilyn will address what has happened since McCain-Feingold and what the League of Women Voters is doing on national, state and local levels. In April, Renate will provide information on current legislation that might provide relief from Supreme Court decisions.*

### **Part One -- Up to McCain Feingold**

*Submitted by Florence Seldin*

Money often seems to be the biggest determinant of who gets elected to public office and the price for that has skyrocketed. Although things have gotten worse in recent years it may come as a surprise to many that fundraising and campaigning as we know it may have begun with Andrew Jackson's campaign in 1828. When he made his bid for the presidency in 1828 he became the first organized campaigner, harnessing the power of the media and forming an early grassroots movement. Although he did not seek financial support on his own behalf he was an early practitioner of rewarding political loyalists with federal positions.

In 1867 Congress passed the first federal campaign finance law - Naval Appropriations Bill - which prohibited officers and employees of the Federal government from soliciting political campaign funds from naval yard workers. And in 1883 Congress placed further restrictions on soliciting campaign donations with the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act. For much of the 19th century new government appointees were often large campaign contributors. This Act created the Civil Service Commission which existed until 1978. Appointees to jobs had to be based on merit not money!

Did you know that William McKinley back in 1896 received more than \$16 million for his campaign? His chief fundraiser was Mark Hanna who is famously purported to have said, "There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money and I can't remember what the second is."

Between 1907 and 1925 a series of Federal Corrupt Practices Acts were passed and amended. 1943 saw the birth of the PAC. Because prior laws had prohibited unions, trade associations and other special interest groups from contributing to parties and campaigns, a way around was found. PACS were voluntary associations that raised money from individual members for candidates.

In 1971 Congress passed the Federal Election Campaigns Act (FECA) and Revenue Act. It replaced the earlier Federal Corruption Act. The bill called for more comprehensive and frequent reports of receipts and expenditures. It also allowed corporations and unions to use their own treasury funds to establish, operate and solicit voluntary contributions for PACs. This law was rewritten in 1974 as a result of Watergate and the new law created the Federal Election Commission. It set contribution and spending limits for all federal campaigns and implemented the tax check-off program in filing federal income taxes.

But this law was challenged in 1976. The ruling in *Buckley vs. Valeo* said that, while contributions could be limited in order to avoid corruption, or the appearance of corruption, spending by individuals and groups or by candidates' personal resources could not corrupt elections and thus should not be limited under the First

*Continues. . .*

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*“Money in Politics” continued*

Amendment. The distinction between “contributions” and “spending” remains a linchpin of campaign finance law.

1979 saw the introduction of so-called “soft money”. National, state and local parties began directly funding “party building” expenses that weren’t at first tied to a particular campaign. At the federal level unlimited donations began to flow in from corporations and unions-- sources of funding otherwise prohibited. The limitation on money from these sources was upheld in the Supreme Court in 1990 (*Austin vs. Michigan Chamber of Commerce*) but then overturned when the Court ruled in *Citizens United vs. FEC* in 2010.

Our first installment of “Money and Politics” ends with passage of the bi-partisan McCain-Feingold Campaign Reform Act of 2002. But what is quite clear is that, although the idea of fundraising would have been completely foreign to our Founding Fathers, it did not take long for money to enter the American political scene. And its influence continues unabated.

*Sources: Center for Responsive Politics and [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org)*