

THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 55 ISSUE 9

MAY 2015

CALENDAR

Tuesday May 5
9:30am

Board Meeting
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Wednesday May 13
5-7pm

LWVCCA Annual Meeting
Sea View, Dennis Port
Payment deadline May 8

Fri-Sat May 15-16
West Springfield

LWVMA State Convention
Karen Mazza to co-lead workshop

Thursday, May 21
10am - Noon

Third Week Coffee -
Cape Cod Community Media Center
Shad Hole Rd, Dennis Port
See page 9 for details

LOOKING AHEAD...

Tuesday, June 2
9:30am

Board Meeting
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear Members:

Our Year: Our May issue reviews the achievements and activities of the past year and serves as a good reminder of the work that we have done together to contribute to the civic life of Cape Cod. Thank you to all the League members who prepared these events and to all members who participated. At the end of this letter, we have provided a YEAR IN REVIEW, so that our members are able to see the full sweep of our collective activity from Fall through May. It is an impressive array of work and is testimony to the commitment and dedication of our membership to providing the kind of service that helps make democracy work in our region and local communities.

Transition in Leadership: It has been our pleasure to serve as Co-Presidents this year, and for Karen to have served as President for the two prior years. We can both say that serving in this position has given us a much broader view of the League of Women Voters as an organization at local, state and national levels. We have had the opportunity to learn a great deal about forming policy on critical issues, about the importance of citizens making a difference, and gaining more awareness of issues facing Cape Cod -- as we are both washshores. The part of this leadership role that has been the most fun and inspiring has been meeting our members -- remarkable members who have contributed to their communities all of their lives and continue to be adventurers even in older age. As we step down from the President's role after Annual Meeting, please know that you, our members, have been our greatest joy. We will both continue on the Board in different capacities and look forward to continuing to advance the work of the League.

It is understandably difficult to find people able to devote the time necessary to assume the role of President for an organization as active as ours. Consequently, we are moving next year to a **Steering Committee** that will distribute the responsibilities of the presidency among three or more individuals. The three who have agreed to serve in this capacity for next year are **Barbara Wellnitz**, our current and continuing Co-VP, **Chris Meade**, current and continuing Voter Service Co-Chair, and **Joan Bernstein**, a past LWVCCA President and current Chair of the Health Committee. Joan will be stepping down from chairing the Health Committee and will be a Board Member at Large. Our Board as a whole has found in recent years that it is much more manageable to share leadership roles and this arrangement for a Steering Committee is a move in that direction. It is a model many other Leagues use, including Falmouth, which has used this model for several years and find that it works very well for them.

May Annual Meeting and End of Year Celebration: We will be holding our Annual Meeting at the beautiful Sea View Restaurant in Dennis Port, across the street from Nantucket Sound. The Sea View is an event facility with private rooms and we have chosen it so that we could have our program and meeting without the noise and bustle of wait staff moving in and out of the kitchen serving other patrons. It is a lovely location, conducive to socializing both in the room and on the patio if weather allows. We no longer have access to the Clubhouse that we used to use for annual meeting. So we are in a nicer space and will let them do the cooking for us.

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We will have an interesting program from two of our members, Nancy Erskine and Paula Bacon, who on separate trips have had the chance to travel to Cuba within the last two years. As President Obama has called for normalizing relations with Cuba, we thought it would be a great opportunity to hear Nancy and Paula's reflections on their experiences there.

We will also have a short and efficient Annual Meeting to approve officers and directors of the Board, and approve the budget and program for next year. So please come and celebrate our work and each other! We have accomplished much and we have much to look forward to with our new leadership team. Please join us!

Registration is needed by May 8 (Friday). See the last page of this VOTER for details.

We look forward to seeing you.
In League,
Karen Mazza and Marilyn Gullett

2014-2015 -- THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Programs and Services:

1. In **September**, we began the year with a very well-attended opening membership meeting presentation by **Diane Turco of Cape Downwinders** regarding the **Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant**. Our Legislators Breakfast subsequently gave us the opportunity to follow up on Diane's presentation with questions to directly to our legislators about Pilgrim and their views on strategies for closing or decommissioning the plant.
2. In **October**, our Youth Service Committee collaborated with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute and the Cape Cod Collaborative to provide a **professional day for civics teachers** on the Cape. We are continuing to develop these partnerships so that a network for civic engagement for teachers and youth can be sustained.
3. Throughout the **Fall** we hosted many **voter registration events** and also hosted **debates** for state representative primary races and later for the election. Later, at our **December Social**, we enjoyed hosting **Elisa Zawadzkas**, who had been a candidate for state representative, and hearing her experience and perspective as a young woman running for office. We also moderated some local candidate nights during the spring.
4. In **March**, we co-hosted and moderated the Cape Women's Coalition's second **International Women's Day Breakfast**.
5. In **April**, our major forum was presented by the Health Committee, which arranged an excellent panel to discuss "Progress on the Mental Health Front: Involving the Community in Recognition, Prevention and Recovery". The program drew people from across the mental health field as well as people whose family lives have been affected by mental illness and substance abuse. This topic, too, we addressed with our legislators at the Legislative Breakfast and is one around which there is considerable momentum which we hope will lead to improved policy, resources and results.

Continues. . .

6. Our **Legislative Breakfast**, also in April, covered a broad range of issues affecting our towns, county and all of Cape Cod.
7. On **May 13** at our Annual Meeting we will hear from two of our own members, Nancy Erskine and Paula Bacon, with reflections on their recent trips to **Cuba --** a timely way to reflect on President Obama's call for normalized relations.
8. On **May 21**, our "**Third Week Coffee**" program will conclude with a visit to the Cape Cod Community Media Center and a viewing of the LWVMA program, "**Economic Inequality and Political Participation – Whose Voice is Heard?**" This will be the beginning of our efforts to see programs produced by the state, and other, Leagues and to re-broadcast them on local access TV across the Cape.
9. Through the winter, our **Money in Politics Committee** offered a series of articles in the Voter to explain the background of legal decisions that have brought us to the present state of affairs regarding the influence of big corporations on elections. It has been suggested that this series be edited into an informational brochure that we might distribute to the public.
10. We continue to monitor **County Government**. See the County Committee report. In addition to our observer role, we did speak out on a budget issue being considered when we heard that the position of Coordinator for the Barnstable County Human Rights Commission might be eliminated from the budget. We presented a statement at the budget hearing calling for the position to be retained.

New Approaches to Local Membership Informal Meetings:

We started **Third Thursday Coffees** and held them during several months in different locations across the Cape. This has proven to be a great way to visit with members more personally and a great way for some new members to be introduced to the LWVCCA. Our January coffee was also combined with our Planning Meeting to give input to LWVMA on their program for next year.

Partnerships: This year we have partnered with the following organizations to produce programs of some kind or share information: Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Cape Cod Collaborative, Cape Women's Coalition, Falmouth League of Women Voters, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, and Cape Downwinders. We have sent out information about environmental programs sponsored by the Association to Preserve Cape Cod. We have initiated a grant fund with The Cape Cod Foundation to provide grants to schools to support action civic experiences for students. Through the initiative of our Voter Service team we are developing an expanded relationship with local community-access TV stations to provide a wider reach for our educational and election services.

HEALTH CARE

From Joan Bernstein and Amy Harris

On Saturday, April 18, at the Harwich Community Center, the Health Committee presented its second mental health Forum, entitled “Progress on the Mental Health Front: Involving the Community in Recognition, Prevention and Recovery”. Moderated by Amy Harris, it addressed the mental health and substance abuse problems facing Cape families and communities--and the myriad ways--programs and services, in which the community is learning to come to terms and cope.

The Affordable Care Act is intended to cover mental illness and we learned how addiction is indeed a mental illness and requires treatment in the same way as any other disease. In understanding how intertwined mental illness and addiction may be, we learned prevention and recovery is not just for the person with the disease but for those within the community – family, schools, judicial system. Prevention and education is accessible in school curriculums; on the Barnstable County portal for behavioral health networks; within the various primary care service centers. Because treatment and recovery are long term rehabilitative processes for all of those involved (families, jails, schools, etc.), there continues to be a need for studying these issues and advocating for an affordable health care system that provides equal access to quality health care (mental or physical) for all.

An impressive panel of experts presented measures being taken on the Cape to deal with these problems: **Cheryl Bartlett**, Executive Director, Cape Cod Healthcare Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative; **Tim Ryan**, Senior Prevention Specialist, Freedom from Dependency, an affiliate of the Hazelden-Betty Ford Foundation; **Fiona Jensen**, Founder/Director of Calmer Choice; **Beth Albert**, Director, Barnstable County Dept.of Human Services, who presented the County’s new “*Network of Care Behavioral Health Portal*”; **Marta Dikke Hansen**, Director of Behavioral Health, Outer Cape Health Services; **James Cummings**, Barnstable County Sheriff, who has introduced an innovative substance abuse program in the county jail; and **Randy Hunt**, State Rep., 5th Barnstable District who has taken an active role in the legislature and community to deal with substance abuse problems.

A wide-ranging question period followed during which we heard from many of the professionals in the audience as well as from two mothers who shared heart-rending accounts of their children’s struggles with addiction and their frustration with a system which, while it is beginning to take action in the face of the enormity of the issues, still allows some kids, and adults, to fall through the cracks. Are the cracks within the healthcare system itself?

Our thanks to our hard-working committee members for putting this forum together.

Ed. Note -- The forum was recorded by Cape Cod Community TV Channel 99 for later broadcast. Detailed information will follow.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

From Renate Sands

The new legislative session has had a slow start and is just beginning to move on bills submitted when the new session began this past January. The reason the start was so slow was because the House and Senate leadership had a dispute over the joint committee structure used in the legislature. Formal numbers and committee assignments were not finalized until the week of April 13, 2015.

“**Day on the Hill**” is also late this year and will not be held until April 28th. Look for a report in the next issue of the Voter.

The **Legislative Breakfast** was held on Friday, April 24, 2015 at Cape Cod Community College. Dr. Cox, President, again waived any fees for the use of the facility. Joan Craig did an outstanding job as moderator. Six legislators or their representatives participated in the breakfast and 35 LWVCCA members and guests attended. Three people who had signed up were unable to attend. Here are a few highlights of the event:

Sen. Dan Wolf spoke passionately regarding income inequality. He believes revenues should be increased by higher taxes from the very wealthy. He feels that a regional approach will be taken to managing wastewater on the Cape, yet with local control. He also stated that many more services need to be regionalized. Legislation to change the Barnstable County Government structure needs to be filed.

Lance Lambros, representing Sen. Vinny deMacedo, felt that the nuclear power plant should be closed in an orderly fashion to mitigate the economic effects on our region. When it comes to taxation, there is a problem of ownership with the fuel rods. They are supposed to be the property of the government but they are in possession of a privately owned company. If they are the sole property of the government they cannot be taxed.

Mental health was an issue that came up repeatedly. Rep. Randy Hunt named three mental health/substance addiction bills he felt would have the most impact if passed.

H1796 – SBIRT - Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment expands use of school nurses. H1793 – Use of Taunton Hospital for crisis unit to take pressure off ERs for mental health patients. H1810 – Telemedicine for mental health patients.

Owen Fletcher, Rep. Brian Mannal’s chief of staff, stated that Rep. Mannal favored solar over wind energy. He felt wind generators should only be placed in non-residential areas.

Rep. Timothy Whelan said that although he agrees with Governor Baker on most issues, he is opposed to the Governor’s proposal to increase charter schools.

Rep. Sarah Peake’s chief-of-staff, Dorothy Smith, said some of their issues of concern are the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, wastewater, transportation and fisheries.

A special thanks to everyone who helped with the Legislative Breakfast.

The “**Directory of Elected Officials**” is completed. If you would like any copies please let me know.

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2014-2015 VOTER SERVICE

Submitted by Joan Grant & Chris Meade

Last September, we held sixteen voter registration and education events in ten towns. Thirty-eight voters were registered and both absentee ballot applications and general election information about the four ballot questions were distributed.

We also held two candidate forums in September -- both for candidates in the primary race for State Representative in the 1st Barnstable District, formerly held by Cleon Turner. The first was televised live from the Cape Cod Community Media Center in Dennis Port, the second was hosted by Heatherwood in Yarmouth Port.

On October 8, we moderated two candidate forums at Cape Cod Community College, co-sponsored with the Cape Cod Times. The first was for the two finalists for the 1st Barnstable District Representative, and the second for the Plymouth-Barnstable Senate seat. All of the above forums were well attended.

During the year, an ad hoc committee was formed to visit the local media stations on the Cape. We have met, toured, and spoken with people from the Cape Cod Community Media Center in Dennis Port and the Lower Cape Community Access TV station located at Nauset Regional High School. Both centers are interested in helping the League gain more visibility across the Cape. The committee plans to visit Sandwich Community Television in the near future.

Several different town candidate events were planned for April 2015, however all but one were affected by the lack of opposition in many towns. The one remaining in Brewster will simply be a "meet and greet" rather than a debate, and will be co-sponsored with the Brewster Ladies Library. In Chatham, LWV sponsored a "Conversation with the Candidates"--which proved quite successful in encouraging candidates to talk freely on their backgrounds and their goals. The Orleans selectman candidate's night is being moderated by the Orleans Citizen's Forum. Barnstable's elections are in the fall, and we may be involved with some of those events.

At the planning meeting in January, one of our members, Mary Lou Petitt, proposed that, for the next 18 months until the 2016 elections, the League as a whole focus its attention and energies solely on voting and elections. We presented this idea at the April Board meeting and are hopeful that the general membership will endorse this plan at the Annual Meeting.

We would like to express our thanks to the many members who assisted with all these events.

YOUTH SERVICE COMMITTEE

From Karen Mazza

Our committee began the year by presenting a professional day for civics teachers on the Cape and Martha's Vineyard in October. This event was co-sponsored by the Edward M. Kennedy Institute and the Cape Cod Collaborative. Teachers at the conference expressed an interest in maintaining a Cape and Islands Civics Network and we are currently in discussion with the Cape Cod Collaborative to provide the support for such a network.

Following this conference, Karen Mazza, as a representative from the LWVMA Education Committee, attended an input session at Brandeis University for the Commission on Civic Learning and Engagement that has been established by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to investigate the current status of civics education and make recommendations to the Board regarding improvements. Karen continued that input by working with LWVMA Education Chair Terry Yoffie to draft a letter which was submitted to the commission providing a comprehensive list of recommended improvements and supports.

We (LWVCCA) completed the process of signing a formal agreement with the Cape Cod Foundation to initiate a grant fund, known as The League of Women Voters Civic Education Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation. This fund will provide grants of up to \$1000 per school district, or vocational high school, or charter school to support action civics projects. Grants are to be submitted by September 28 and awards will be made in October. We have just sent out mailings to all eligible schools and are now beginning the process of fundraising. Our approach is to ask businesses and organizations for donations. Our committee will be focused on this task for the next several months. When grants are awarded we will focus on publicizing the work of students who are benefiting from these grant projects. This will help to put a spotlight on the positive contributions of youth in the community.

We are appreciative that the League of Women Voters of Falmouth has joined us in contributing to this fund with a donation of \$1000. Our own Ed Trust has also made a contribution. Karen was invited to speak about the grant fund at a program on civic education sponsored by the Falmouth League in April at which the keynote speaker was a representative from Tuft University's CIRCLE, (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).

Karen will also be co-presenting a workshop on civic education with Terry Yoffie at the LWVMA convention on May 15.

COUNTY COMMITTEE

Submitted by Jari Rapaport, Co-Chair

Our committee continued our observation of the Board of Commissioners and the Assembly of Delegates throughout the year, both with personal attendance and via the Internet. Meetings of the Commissioners were held sporadically, especially in the Fall (election season).

We had hoped to follow implementation of the Strategic Plan developed the previous year, but were disappointed to find that this did not occur. Newly-elected Commissioner Leo Cakounes, of Harwich, joined the Board in January, replacing retiring William Doherty (also of Harwich).

The 2014 elections also brought new members to the Assembly of Delegates. Of major concern to us is the need to develop a regional grounding for the Assembly's approach to governance. We continue to work toward implementation of the recommendations for structure which came out of the Charter Review process. There are indications that this effort will be renewed in the coming months. In the future, we will give additional attention to issues around transparency.

There are also serious issues in funding for County governance currently dependent on real-estate activity.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Membership Report

From Helen Bresnahan, Chair

With our membership soaring to over 85, we are full on our way to enhancing our committees, forums and studies. A new renewal membership form is in the process of being developed that encourages our sustained membership. The new form includes the "Assisted Single" with \$30 dues. These new forms were made available at libraries, and interested group meetings including the Cape Women's Coalition and Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women.

And a warm welcome back to **Linell Grundman**, of Sandwich

Editor's note: Apologies to new member Suzanne FINNEY, whose name we misspelled in last month's VOTER.

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You are cordially invited to attend the

ANNUAL MEETING

of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area

Wednesday, May 13, 2015
Dinner 5-7 pm

The Sea View Restaurant
76 Chase Avenue, Dennis Port

Come and enjoy wonderful food, a beautiful setting, time to mingle before dinner, members Nancy Erskine and Paula Bacon talking about their respective trips to Cuba and reflections on U.S. policy toward Cuba, and a short and efficient Annual Meeting.

The cost of dinner is \$25. Deadline for reservations is **Friday, May 8.**

Buffet will include: Cranberry-stuffed Chicken Breast, Oven-baked Honey Ham, mixed greens with vinaigrette, seasonal vegetable and potato, assorted petite desserts, coffee and teas. Cash bar will be open throughout the meeting.

To reserve, please complete the form below and send with your payment of \$25 made out to LWVCCA to: Ira Seldin, 321 Deer Meadow Lane, Chatham, MA 02633

Directions from Route 6: Take Rte 6 to Exit 9A for Rte 134 south. Follow 134 south to Rte 28. Take a left onto 28 and shortly take a right onto Shad Hole Road. Take a left onto Lower County Road. Turn right onto Inman Road. Turn left at Chase Road and the Sea View will be on your left.

Directions from Chatham and Harwich: Take Rte 28 west. Just past Harwichport center, take a left at the fork onto Lower County Road (2.2 miles). Turn left onto Belmont Road. Turn right onto Chase Avenue. The Sea View will be on your right.

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To: Ira Seldin, 321 Deer Meadow Lane, Chatham MA 02633

Re: LWVCCA Annual Meeting and Dinner

I will attend the Annual Meeting and Dinner and am enclosing my check for \$25 per person

Name _____ Guest _____

PLEASE TAPE THIS REMINDER TO YOUR REFRIGERATOR!

**RENEW YOUR LWVCCA DUES
BY JULY 1**

Our fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Our new expenses begin in July, which is why we need renewed dues by July 1. We do appreciate your sending your dues by then. It also eliminates the need for us to send follow-up reminders. If you'd like to pay your dues at Annual Meeting on May 13, we'll be happy to collect checks then. Otherwise, please use the form below to mail your check to our Treasurer, Ira Seldin, 321 Deer Meadow Lane, Chatham, MA 02633.

Thank you.

New members who joined in February 2015 or later do not need to pay new dues until June 2016.

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To: Ira Seldin, 321 Deer Meadow Lane, Chatham MA 02633

Re: 2015-2016 Dues

Membership Level (*Please check one*)

Single --- \$55

Household --- \$85

Assisted Single --- \$30 For those wishing to be active members in the League but for whom \$55 would represent an impediment

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____