

# THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 53 Issue 4

DECEMBER 2012

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## CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 4  
9:30 am

LWVCCA Board Meeting  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

Saturday, December 8  
9:30 am  
Yarmouth

Holiday Brunch  
The Riverway, South

Monday, December 10  
1:30 pm

County Committee Meeting  
Cape Cod Five, Dennis

LOOKING AHEAD: Membership Meeting- January 12, 9:30am

**INSIDE -Last Call to reserve for the Holiday Brunch!**

**Come Join Your Friends for a Holiday Treat**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members,

In this month's Voter, I would like to share some updates regarding the survey that we sent to the membership and forecast some events to come.

### Survey

First, I'd like to thank the 47 members who responded to **our survey**. The Board appreciates the response that many of you made regarding ways that you would like to be involved in League activities. Many of you have already been contacted taking you up on the offer you made to be a communication link to other League members in your town or Unit. If you have not yet been contacted, you will be soon. The portion of our survey that asked for your input regarding future programming ideas was also very helpful. Thirty-two members responded favorably to the idea of small group meetings to promote social and educational interaction regarding issues. The responses to the particular types of meetings were as follows:

View a documentary and discuss issues (18)

Discuss League adopted positions and discuss advocacy strategies (17)

Attend a book talk by an author on a civic issue (16)

Participate in a book group on civic issues (11)

Both the Board and The Program Committee will work with these ideas as we plan future programs. Regarding the time of day for membership meetings the response was split with 20 indicating they prefer meetings during the day, 18 indicating that either was fine and 2 indicating a preference for the evening. We will attempt to vary our choices and locations to provide a balance of options.

### Upcoming Events

Please join us for the following events.

**December 8 Social and Program at 9:30 AM.** Good camaraderie, good cheer, and an interesting program sure to help us all reflect on ways we create community through education, civic service and advocacy.

**January 12 Membership Meeting at 9:30 AM.** Membership meeting with the LWVCCA Board to help us decide the input we will give the State Board on the creation of the statewide League Program for the coming two years. The LWVMA has provided us with a Program Planning Guide to help us review previously adopted positions and new initiatives. We will work from this document provided in advance to guide our discussion. (The snow date is January 26 and the location will be announced in the January Voter and by e-mail.)

Please note that we have had to change our **May Annual Meeting to May 9** at 5:00 PM. Location to be determined.

## **Election Follow-up**

As we close out the month of November the long campaign process has ended and it is now time to move forward forging legislative agreements that advance the important issues that face our local, state and national communities. Throughout the election the League at all levels has played an important role in supporting voter service and being an important voice for the protection of voting rights. Two troubling aspects of this election process were the numerous state attempts to restrict the ease of voting and the infusion of outlandish amounts of money into the campaigns. In Massachusetts in those districts that were able to vote on Question 4, there was widespread concern about the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United and the impact it had on the financing of campaigns. The LWVCCA is joining other League chapters in sharing resources on this topic and we hope to bring a program on this topic to the Cape during the spring.

The Board and I look forward to seeing you on December 8.

Sincerely,

Karen Mazza

## **BOARD NOTES - NOV. 13**

Board discussion of role of money in politics and consensus on planning a forum on this issue and include the topic of the movement to support an amendment to the constitution to reverse the Citizens United Supreme Court decision.

Board agreement also that the League follow through on voter suppression activities, and possible voter ID initiatives in this state.

Board is exploring possibilities for forming discussion groups with people holding different opinions, as one way to counteract the existing polarization in this country.

Emphasis on presenting Forums for the winter/spring on major issues  
January Membership meeting planned for developing framework for working with LWVMA on programming, reviewing existing policy positions, new initiatives.(See President's Report)

Commendation to Chuck Sands for his continuing very helpful assistance to the Board, especially in preparing for our Forums and meetings.

Very successful Forum on End of Life Medication, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, with over 110 in attendance. Health committee will follow through on possible improvements to

the bill turned down in the ballot question in Nov. elections.

Discussion on results of membership survey. (See President's report)

Judy Thomas thanked Sandwich for a great turn out at the candidates' debate in October. The Board commended Judy for a job well done as Voter Service chair.

Environment Committee- Judy Thomas and Renate Sands will follow up with members on wastewater, especially as information becomes available from the Commission.

Youth Outreach Committee- Karen reported on a planning meeting at the Cape Cod Foundation with Sen. Wolf, where he offered support to champion the Strategic Plan to Support Youth. The League's involvement will be to support civic education in the schools and to support regional collaboration on efforts to support youth. There was a suggestion that we might work for public support by involving units and members in looking at youth issues in their towns and the need for the plan's program on a local basis.

Appointments:

Secretary: Jane Teixeira-Henry

Voter Service Chair: Barbara Wellnitz, Chair

Unit Chair, Sandwich: Renate Sands

Environment Committee: Renate Sands, Judy Thomas

## **IN MEMORIUM**

### **Emmy Schenke**

Long-time LWVCCA and Chatham Unit member Emmy Schenke has died, peacefully and

in her beloved sea captain's home high on a hill in North Chatham. Emmy once mentioned

to me that she had been my predecessor as Unit Chair, a fact unbeknownst to me when I fell into the job. Having lived in Chatham for forty years, Emmy cared deeply about the town

and happily represented our unit on the steering committee of the Chatham Alliance for

Preservation and Conservation. She was also a regular member of our town meeting timer crew. A willing worker and a thoughtful friend ~ she will be missed. Emmy's family has suggested that gifts in her memory may be made to the Animal Rescue League (Brewster) or to the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC).

Nancy Erskine, Chatham Unit Chair

**LAST CALL**  
**2012 HOLIDAY BRUNCH**

**SATURDAY, December 8, 2012      9:30 A.M.**

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS - MONDAY,**  
**DECEMBER 3**

**(See Reservation Coupon Below)**

**COST - \$15**

**PLACE: THE RIVERWAY LOBSTER HOUSE**

**Speaker: Jan Hively**

**Attendees invited to bring a wrapped “shelf” book\* to share in a holiday grab bag.**

**Directions to:** Riverway Lobster House, 1338 Route 28, South Yarmouth,

Take Exit 8 Station Ave. from Route 6 toward Yarmouth

Drive south 2.1 miles to Main St. and go .04 miles.

Make a second right onto Rt. 28.

Riverway Lobster House will be .03 miles on the right.

Note: The Riverway Lobster House is around the corner from the Cultural Center in South Yarmouth.

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**Coupon**

**The breakfast including tax and gratuity is \$15.00 per person. Please make your check payable to LWVCCA and return this coupon with your check, no later than Monday, December 3, 2012, to:**

**Ira Seldin, 321 Deer Meadow Rd., N. Chatham, MA 02633**

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**YES! I'll be there. My \$15 check  
is enclosed.**

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## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee presented a statement to the Board of Commissioners on November 7<sup>th</sup>, expressing concern that little action had been taken on the major recommendations of the 2 studies of county government. We also asked for immediate development of a new user-friendly county website. That statement is included in this issue of the Voter. The Chair of the Board explained that much action was delayed until after the election when all elected officials were in place. The Board agreed that a new website should be developed as part of the plan to improve communication with the public.

At the next meeting on November 14, the County Administrator presented an account of actions taken over the past 6 months to respond to the various recommendations of the Special Commission. Wastewater issues were met immediately with the charge to the heads of the Cape Cod Commission and the Wastewater Collaborative to develop in cooperation with the towns a plan to meet the problem.

The Committee felt that the report to date was somewhat superficial and more detail of the response to the specifics of the recommendations would be valuable. Structural issues were not looked at, pending the November elections.

The Assembly of Delegates also wants to discuss the Special Commissions' recommendations, particularly those that recommend structure changes. The Assembly had been considering doing this through their power to undertake charter review, but have decided not to take that step. The Assembly also approved an ordinance to separate the position of county finance director from the duties of the Administrator. This was also a recommendation of the consulting firm hired to advise the Commissioners in 2011. The Ordinance was rejected by the Board of Commissioners on Nov. 14.

Our Committee has been particularly interested in efforts to enhance the regional approach to county government. The Committee meets next on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. All interested members are invited to attend.

Jari Rapaport, Co-chair.

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CAPE COD AREA

## Communication to the Board of County Commissioners

November 7, 2012

I am Jari Rapaport, Co-chair of the LWVCCA Committee on County Issues. As you know this committee has been actively observing County government and following current developments. Our League Board has also called your attention to the need for transparency and openness, as well as structural issues.

We are now concerned about the fate of the work of the recent studies of county government. The past 2 years have seen the completion of 2 major reviews of county government, its organization of services and structure, and each presented a number of recommendations for a more efficient regional government. I refer to the MMA Consulting Group Inc. report (August 2011) funded by the County board of Commissioners, and to the work of the Special Committee on Governance, which was set in motion as the result of community pressures for a comprehensive look after 20 years of the new structure established in 1989. Action on the MMA study was delayed to receive the recommendations of the Special Commission.

The absence of response to these important studies is disturbing; a kind of continual rolling-over of responsibility till yet another study has been completed. The Commissioners have looked at some of the recommendations of the Special Commission, but their progress and resulting decisions are not clear, and there has not been any public accounting of their work.

We fear another postponement of action as the Commissioners develop the next 5 year Strategic Plan for County government for 2014-2018, and are thinking of including in it an analysis of how to move on the studies of county government cited above. The last 5 year plan was for the period of 2009-2013. While that plan called for semi-annual monitoring and reporting on the goals, I am not aware of any such public reports. Because of these concerns we make the following recommendations:

We recommend that the Board of Commissioners make a formal report to the public on the Board's responses to date on the Special Commissions' recommendations without further delay. This should include current action/decision on each, along with future possibilities if appropriate. Such a report should make clear any disagreement or special concerns in any area, and cite those recommendations not yet reviewed

We recommend that as part of the preparation of the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan the 2009-2013 Plan be reviewed and that a report to the public be issued. The progress and steps taken and the problems encountered over the last 5 years are important to understand as the County moves forward. Many of the issues that plan focused on remain as priorities now.

Our third recommendation, after commending you for your recognition of the need for better communication with the public, is to urge you to act as quickly as possible to improve that communication. A first step would be the immediate creation of a more user friendly website. If all the major county departments are able to develop individual responsive websites, surely the county government itself should be able to do so.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share our concerns. In closing I want to tell you how rewarding it has been to observe so closely the responsibilities of county governance, and our appreciation of the dedication and hard work of each member of the Board of Commissioners brings to this challenge.

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