

WELCOME TO THE CAPE COD VOTER

Volume 50 Issue 1

September 2009

CALENDAR

**Tuesday, September 8
9:30 a.m.**

**Board Meeting
Harwich Community Center**

**Saturday, September 12
11:00 a.m.**

**Coast Week Celebration
Erica Parra's Home, 60 Payson Lane,
East Orleans**

Saturday, October 3

Health Care Forum

Coffee 9:30 Program 10 A.M. Harwich Community Center

Dr. Richard Salluzzo

President, Cape Cod Health Care Corporation

COAST WEEK CELEBRATION – A Great Way to Start the League Year

This year's League Coast Week Celebration is 11 a.m., Saturday, September 12 at Erica Parra's home, 60 Payson Lane, East Orleans. Payson Lane is the last driveway on the right off Barley Neck Road. Number 60 is half a mile down Payson Road on the right. Park in the field, or at the boat landing. Handicapped park in the driveway.

Judith Bruce, a member of the Orleans Conservation Committee, will discuss protecting clean waters. She has been president of the Orleans Pond Coalition, and very active in the publication of the "Orleans Blue Pages – A Guide to Protecting Cape Cod Waters".

Everyone is welcome. Bring a neighbor, friend, a prospective League member. Bring a brown bag lunch and a chair. Beverages, cookies and fruit will be provided.

**The League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area
P.O. Box 2347, Orleans. MA 02653
508 945-0511**

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings League Members,

Your League Board has had an unusually busy summer as some of the articles in this Voter/Bulletin will inform you. But before I tell you of some of the exciting things that have been happening, let me, first of all, **thank you** for renewing your membership in our organization this year. (And thanks also to those who included a contribution with their membership.) Your support means so much to the Board and to the effectiveness of our work together. As a future report from Jane Colby and the membership committee in October will indicate, we have over 100 members. This will keep us as one of the largest Leagues in the Commonwealth and entitle us to significant delegates at State meetings.

This was a summer of meetings and proposed activities. A general planning meeting allowed convention attendees and others to share ideas for revitalization. One of the ideas, a focus group, took off immediately. Under the capable leadership of our new first vice-president Betsy Bray, and with the civic-minded cooperation of a business in Hyannis called “Venture” (which offered us great meeting space), we held a focus group of primarily non-League women, including some under 40, who offered us invaluable information about what we could do of to sharpen and make more relevant the image and activity of our League. Some of these ideas we have already implemented and some are well into the planning phase.

An “Email” Board meeting gave approval to our League to have an organization page on Facebook. Those of you who are interested in seeing what this is like, would need to join Facebook (www.facebook.com) and then, in the search box, type in “League of Women Voters Cape Cod Area. Our focus group members clearly said Facebook is a presence an organization such as ours should have. We consequently discovered many other Leagues already have pages on Facebook. Now we do too.

Two experimental “Hot Topics” breakfasts are planned for September, pending Board approval on Sept. 8. Joan Grant will be facilitating one of these in Orleans and Florence Seldin the other one in Chatham. These breakfasts hope to foster socializing on important local topics and will be open to members and prospective members as well. They also have been used by other Leagues. If you have an interest in this idea for your town, contact overall coordinator Kathleen Vogt at kvogt@wheatonma.edu or 508-432-3767.

Betsy Bray is actively looking into running a course on Cape Civics at 4Cs in the Life Long Learning series. Articles are in this issue of the Cape Cod Voter.

Let me conclude by saying I hope this email format will not only save the League money, but also enable easier communication for members. I want your input, your new ideas and your inspiration as we all work together for better government and better communities. Email me at jmtrevid@aol.com.

And please join in as many League activities as your calendar allows.

In League,

Judy Thomas

JUNE BOARD NOTES

Judy Thomas, our new President, led the first meeting of the 2009-10 Board on June 2, 2009 at the Harwich Community Center. After calling the meeting to order, she thanked departing Co-Executive Presidents, Jari Rapaport and Erica Parra, for their work. She also thanked those going off the Board: Emily Hanna, Secretary; Jean Mangiafico, Environment; Gerrie Olthof, Co-Editor of the Bulletin, JoAnn Sprague, Assistant Treasurer; and Renate Sands and Bea Auty, unit chairs. New members welcomed to the Board: Betsy Bray, First Vice-President, Betty Floyd, Secretary; Terry Chesney, Co-Editor of the Bulletin; and Phyllis Walsh and Freddie FitzGerald, Unit Chairs.

Six members of the Cape League attended the State Convention and reported that the Convention chose **Health Care** as an action priority and **Human Needs, especially affordable housing**, as a second action position. **Transportation** and **Home Rule** were chosen for restudy. Rhondda Tewes reported that the Convention had voted to continue support of Single Payer as the League's position on health care.

The Board set up a special membership task force to be led by Freddie FitzGerald as Coordinator to develop plans to recruit new members from the mid-Cape area.

The Board set dates for many League functions to be held throughout the year. They include: September 12, Coast Week; October 24 (since changed to October 3), General Meeting on Health Care; December 5, New Members and Holiday Gathering; a Friday in February or March, possibly March 12, Legislative Breakfast; February 6 and April 10, other general meetings; and Saturday, May 22, Annual Meeting.

Betty Floyd, Secretary

“Hot Topics” for Breakfast

As a number of you will remember, we've been talking for a while about the possibility of creating new opportunities for members and prospective members to get together in meaningful, yet less formal gatherings than our forums or even unit meetings provide. So when, at the Board's summer planning meeting, Jari told of the “hot topic” sessions she heard about at the state conference, we were prompted to push forward in our thinking toward something similar.

Result: we're proposing to the Board a set of trial breakfast meetings in Chatham and Orleans, for any interested members and non-members, during the last week in September. The gatherings would take place, for one hour, in a public space, such as: Larry's PX in Chatham and Hot Chocolate Sparrow in Orleans. Florence Seldin would be in charge of Chatham and Joan Grant, Orleans. As a first topic, some aspect of education would provide the theme. If these trials were successful, our idea is that the concept would spread to other units or towns. Please watch for more information about exact dates, times, and topic, following our September Board meeting

Kathleen Vogt, Co-Second Vice President

NEWS FROM LWVUS

NO CONSENSUS ON NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT

Here are the results of the NPV Compact consensus in which we participated in January and February 2009. The LWVUS Board approved the following statement of position: “The LWVUS affirms its support of the direct election of the president and abolition of the Electoral College, but the LWVUS has no position on the National Popular Vote Compact as studied in 2008-2009”. About 50% of the 390 Leagues responding were in favor. However consensus requires that 2/3 of the Leagues achieve consensus. The remaining 50% were split between not favoring the compact or unable to reach consensus.

Members will recall this League’s confusion and concerns as we undertook the consensus process. The report of the national Study Committee reflects our questions. The Study Committee said that the comments received reflected 1) concerns about bias in the questions; 2) the misunderstanding that a choice had to be made between advocating for abolition of the Electoral College OR supporting the NPV Compact, and 3) statements which seemed to contradict a given League’s responses to questions. This will sound familiar to all who participated and are similar to our own concerns and comments sent to LWVUS. Other recommendations were presented on the flaws in the process and possible future efforts.

The League Lobby Corps of the Washington area was active on the Hill in recent weeks in helping to secure passage of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (HR 2454). This bill was supported by Cape Congressman William Delahunt. The Act when passed in the Senate will both help curb the greenhouse gases that lead to climate change and help move the United States into a cleaner energy economy.

LWVMA CONVENTION

The LWVMA State Convention in late May was rewarding and stimulating for our seven members who attended, and they brought back a host of new ideas about membership and program as well as the monthly Bulletin. Particularly meaningful was the opportunity to speak in support of the resolution on health care sent to LWVUS. Our Board had earlier approved it along with a number of other local Leagues. The resolution opposed the recent LWVUS directive to not support single payer national health insurance at this time because of concern that the single payer issue would harm efforts to pass other significant reform issues. Membership felt our basic single payer position on health care should be upheld, not abandoned.

Florence Seldin chaired the State Nominating Committee, and the new State Board and officers appear to be strong and active. The Workshops and speakers were informative and interesting. We were the largest delegation and were very active participants, getting to know members from other parts of the state and formed great working relationships with the new President, Zaxaro Bennett and Vice-President Marcia Hirshberg.

The bad news is that the LWVMA, like many organizations this year, fell far short in annual fundraising, so that there will have to be severe budget cuts. As a result the monthly newsletter will now be on-line only, and the fall conference also becomes an on-line proceeding, similar to LWVUS Council this summer.

Jari Rapaport

NATIONAL DEBATE OVER HEALTH CARE

Unfortunately, the debate began with President Obama's administration denying a seat at the table to advocates of an expanded, improved Medicare system for all U.S. residents. Prominent supporters of such a system were told their presence and views were not welcome in the public discussions that the Obama administration began in regions throughout the United States this past spring. When the discussion then moved to Congressional hearings, prominent advocates like Dr. Marcia Angell of Harvard University and President Obama's former Chicago physician, a former president of the Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP) were again told that they were not welcome. Indeed, physicians who tried to make their voices heard at a Senate Finance Committee hearing were ejected, handcuffed and arrested.

The LWVUS, wanting flexibility and a seat at the table, informed its state and local leagues that they could no longer support the Conyers bill, HR676 (an expanded, improved Medicare plan), until further notice. At that time, the insurance and pharmaceutical lobbyists were being courted by the administration and Congress and were actively promoting their cause before Congressional committees. Major newspapers have devoted considerable space to the minimal concessions that have been negotiated with these industries.

President Obama, remembering the dismemberment of the Clinton plan, chose to assign the job of defining health care reform to Congress. His only request was that any reform bill include a strong public plan option that he said would keep the private insurance companies honest.

In the meantime, polls were showing that over 65% of the American people preferred the creation of a Medicare for All plan that would automatically cover everyone. Now, after months of talking and delaying, and with Congress in recess until September, the opposition to any reform is

busy fomenting misinformation and confusion. What we're seeing now is history repeating itself. The same scenario that played out in 1970 when Senator Ted Kennedy attempted reform and 1994 during President Clinton's effort is once again unfolding.

The difference is that now, at a time when our economy continues to be troubled, we cannot afford to continue wasting money on an inefficient system that leaves 47,000,000 citizens uninsured and costs 2.5 times as much per capita as the health care systems of other industrialized nations that provide universal, comprehensive coverage to their citizens. Our system is broken - it needs a major overhaul - not tweaking.

It is in this chaotic and volatile atmosphere that the LWVUS has elected at this time to support the House bill HR3200, the America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009. Under this bill, a public plan would be created to compete with private plans. Participation in this plan by physicians would be voluntary. The Congressional Budget Office suggests that enrollment in a public plan, at full implementation, could be as many as 8 or 9 million people out of the estimated 30 million who would get coverage through the exchange created by the plan, many of whom are currently uninsured.

Because real health care reform is so critical to the health and well-being of so many American families, our voices need to be heard. I urge you to contact your elected representatives and write letters to the editor in support of real reform - reform that will provide comprehensive health care coverage to all of our citizens while eliminating the enormous administrative and profit-driven costs of our current system.

Rhondda Tewes

Health Care Committee Chair

Rhondda is a member of the National League Health Care Task Force. Her latest article for the Task Force, titled "Evolution of the Health Care System in the United States", a short history of U.S. health care, is now on our local web site. The article also refers to other articles on the LWVUS site. The LWVUS address is [HYPERLINK "http://www.lwv.org."](http://www.lwv.org) \o "blocked::http://www.lwv.org/" www.lwv.org. To get to Health Care Task Force articles, click on the green Health Care heading on the opening page. Rhondda's article is at the bottom of that page or you can click on Background articles on that page. There are also other shorter articles listed under Voter-Ready articles including one she did on What is Driving Health Care Costs.

COMMITTEE ON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The Barnstable County Board of Commissioners weekly meetings are now officially videotaped! The LWVCCA campaign for open government and transparency has had results. In 2008 President Joan Bernstein wrote to the County Commissioners asking them to have the meetings videotaped, as are the meetings of the Assembly of Delegates. Many of the Delegates, who represent the individual towns, were also supportive of the taping of the Commissioners' as well. The then Chairman of the Commissioners announced his belief that the money should be spent on services, rather than on videotaping, despite his belief, the Assemble of Delegates allotted the monies for these meetings to be taped.

Transparency then became a major issue in the fall 2008 campaign for open seats on the Board of commissioners, and both Sheila Lyons and Mary Pat Flynn supported the taping of Commissioner's meetings and assuring open government in general. The League had also called attention to such violations of the Open Meeting Law as changing times and places of meetings without required notice, thus preventing the public from attending, failure to post agendas and minutes in timely fashion. Following the election of Lyons and Flynn to the Board, there has been considerable improvement. You can view the videos on community TV and on the web at barnstablecountyvideo.com. You can also find notice of the meetings along with agenda and archived minutes on the Barnstable County website. (barnstablecounty.gov.)

Open government is a central focus of the work of our Committee on County Government, spearheaded by Chairperson Karin Roche. Attending county government meetings is a very effective way to understand the county and how it affects all of us as Cape Cod residents. It also serves notice to public officials that the citizenry cares and is alert. It makes a difference! We need to expand the Observer Corps and your help is needed. Please join the Corps! Voting is important, but the public presence is essential after the election is over.

Call or email Jari Rapaport or Karin Roche. You can also use the LWVCCA email address to reach us. We will have a meeting in September to organize further and to set up calendars and guidelines. The Observers calendar can be arranged to meet your own schedule.

GETTING TO KNOW BARNSTABLE COUNTY

Mark Zeilinski, the Barnstable County Administrator graciously invited League members to meet with him and selected other Department heads for a "101County Government" session last June. The Falmouth League is doing a 2 year study, and he had provided such a session for them. Seeing our continuing interest in attending meetings of the Delegate Assembly and the Board of Commissioners, he thought we would appreciate the session also.

Fourteen members attended the 2 and a half hour presentation on June 5th and it was hard to tear ourselves away. Mark gave an overall view and then staff from various departments spoke about their functions. We can't duplicate the presentation in print, but it is worth a trip to the county website where you will find some information about each department. The Barnstable County Cooperative Extension is the County's Education Department, and was of particular interest, along with the Cape Cod Commission.

As a follow-up to our County visit Mark invited us to join the August 12th tour of a number of the programs provided by the Cooperative Extension, along with the County Commissioners and members of the Delegate Assembly. This was a fascinating experience. We went by bus to visit two shell fish propagation programs in Mashpee and Marstons Mills. Additional programs are situated in other parts of the cape, all operating in partnership with the towns. The focus on the shellfish fisheries has resulted in amazing expansion of shellfish sites through aquaculture and in increasing the numbers of clams and oysters in native habitats. At the same time the number of shell fishing permits has expanded, and in bad economic times, this means an affordable source of nutritious food for families as well as income. And did you know that oysters help clean up our water by decreasing the nitrogen?

We also visited a household hazardous waste program, a children's garden project, and a fire retardant effort in a Barnstable conservation area. The trip culminated in a delicious lunch at the County Farm, now leased to an organic farmer. It was inspiring to see the acres of crops. The farm stand there, off of rte 6A is now open, and I took home some summer squash and some potatoes. The tour really illustrated the role of the county in providing expertise and resources to the 15 towns of the cape and their residents. The tour was videotaped and will be put on barnstablecountyvideo.com in the coming week.

Jari Rapaport

VOTER SERVICE

We were excited by the number of Leaguers who signed onto the Voter Service Committee. The large group that showed up for the assembling of birthday cards/registration forms accomplished that formidable task in record time. Now our focus is getting the cards distributed to the cooperating high schools. This, of course, has become a major League function. It not only serves our goal of registering voters, but spreads our name across the Cape, and is possible through the funding of our Educational Trust.

Every now and then we get some feedback that reassures us of the worthiness of this project. The following letter from a parent is an especially satisfying validation:
My son Christopher, who is turning 18 next week, received the birthday card from The League recently. I thought you would like to know that it had the intended effect. Chris filled out the voter

registration card that came in the envelope immediately, with a kind of eagerness that may me truly proud. We'll trot it down to the TH next week on his birthday. I think the idea of sending out our newly minted citizens cards like this is grand. I also think the design hits just the right note of seriousness and pizazz, without being fussy or too cute.

I thought you should know that your card worked, at least in this case, and I hope Chris is merely an indication of a much greater effectiveness.

Elizabeth Levy, Chair

BE A VOLUNTEER

We need your help and interest

"Civics 101"

We are looking at the possibility (pending Board approval in September) of having in the spring a League of Women Voters sponsored 5 session class called "Civics 101". We would explore various aspects of government here on Cape Cod with various speakers in different locations. The class would be modeled after a successful program held by the LWV in Charlotte, North Carolina. If you are interested in being on the Civics 101 planning committee, please contact Betsy Bray 508-432-4824 or braybetsy@gmail.com

The League membership notes with sorrow the death of Richard Favreau, husband of Alyce Favreau, former president of the LWVCCA, on July 26, 2009, and of Mary Wilson, daughter of Harriet Wilson, an active Yarmouth unit member, on July 5th, 2009.

William Prinz

Bill Prinz, a member who served on the Board and as Treasurer of the Helen S. Aaron Education Trust, died in late May. He was a retired geologist and very active in Yarmouth land conservation. Bill was the husband of the late Barbara Prinz, who was president of the League in 1995 to 1997. For Barbara and Bill one of their happiest projects was providing a home for "retired" seeing-eye dogs.

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