

# THE CAPE COD VOTER

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VOLUME 54 ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2014

## CALENDAR

**Tuesday, February 4  
9:30 am**

**Board Meeting  
Cape Cod 5 Bank, Dennis**

**Saturday, February 8  
10 am**

**Mental Health Forum  
Harwich Community Center**

**Monday, February 10  
1:30 pm**

**County Committee  
Cape Cod 5 Bank, Dennis**

**Wednesday, March 26**

**Day on the Hill  
Boston, MA**

**Friday, March 28  
12 pm**

**Legislative Lunch  
Community College**

**Our February Mental Health Forum brings crucial facts on needs and resources in our community. Bring friends and neighbors to this impressive program!**

**See p.4 for details!**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

**Good News for Voters:** At the state and national level two promising developments have occurred. At the state level, the Senate has passed an Election Reform Bill that provides for early voting, online registration, election day registration, and pre-registration for 16 year olds. The bill now goes to conference committee to reconcile with the house bill. On the national level, the Presidential Commission on Election Administration has produced their report calling for improvements in administration that LWVUS views as very promising and a good guide for states to use in improving their effectiveness in election administration. Our state and national Leagues have been very influential in these developments and this is one reason to be proud of our membership in the League.

**Thank you:** Thank you to Helen Bresnahan for completing the revision of our Legislative Directory. The new 2014 edition is yellow and will soon be distributed to town libraries and town halls and available at our upcoming events.

Thank you also to members Jan Hively, Chris Meade and Patricia Ryle, who attended our January Board Meeting to discuss program planning for next year. At that meeting we voted to support the LWVMA proposal to ask LWVUS to do a study to update their position on campaign finance in light of the Supreme Court decision, Citizens United.

**Upcoming Events:** I am very excited about our upcoming forums. Our February 8 forum on Mental Health Parity has an outstanding panel exploring this important topic and local resources. Our April 12 forum will provide an essential update on wastewater management developments that voters will want to be aware of in advance of their own town discussions on this issue. Please come to these events and invite your friends.

Our March 28 meeting with our Cape legislators will be a **lunch** at Cape Cod Community College. We hope this new time will be more appealing for our membership to attend in full force and it will avoid any potential issues with a snow delay at the college. See details of these events in The Voter.

Yours in League, Karen Mazza

## LWVCCA BOARD NOTES January 7, 2014

- Ira Seldin reported that on 12/31/2013 the balance in the account was \$8,182.86.
- The board agreed to support the LWVMA recommendation to the LWVUS Program Planning a review of the existing League position on campaign finance.
- Another proposal for a new LWVUS study on “Alternatives to Partisan Primaries” was not approved by the board.
- The following recommendations were sent to the Program Committee.

### Recommendations

1. **Voter Service:** Activities will look very much the same.
  2. **County Government:** will evolve depending on the vote by the Assembly of Delegates on the recommendations of the Special Charter Review Committee. We should continue to advocate for transparency in local government.
  3. **Wastewater:** Continue our present position of providing education and monitoring town and county activities. The forum planned in April will feature an update of the 208 plan being developed by the Cape Cod Commission. This should be listed as an action goal in our handbook.
  4. **Renewable Energy:** developing a plan for supporting renewable energy was suggested. Jan Hively volunteered to help.
  5. **Health Care:** A very complex issue, should we broaden or narrow our scope. The state and national League are stressing suicide and early childhood prevention. Another issue is substance use. Perhaps we should focus on youth. Another consideration is the effect and implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act.
  6. **Promoting a Positive Future for Cape Cod Youth:** We will support the programs of the Cape Cod Foundation. We will continue to support civic education. The possibility of coordinating with the Health Care Committee was introduced if they choose a youth focus.
  7. **Immigration Policy:** will look very much the same.
  8. The issue of **Income Inequality** was brought up as a possible program study.
- Marilyn Gullett and Helen Bresnahan investigated CCCC, Hearth and Kettle and Riverway Lobster House for future events. It was decided to have the Holiday Brunch at the Riverway Lobster House. The Legislative Breakfast will be held at Cape Cod Community College.
  - The revisions to the 2013-2014 Legislative Directory have been made. Copies (1,000) will be made and distributed.
  - Barbara Wellnitz will lead a Moderator Training Workshop on March 25, 2014 at the Brewster Ladies Library starting at 2 PM.
  - The following positions will need to be filled next year: President, Environment Committee Chair and publisher of the Voter.
  - The following committees were scheduled to have meetings in January: County Committee, Environment Committee, Ed Trust, Youth Committee and Program Committee.
  - Renate Sands, Secretary

## **LWVCCA Mental Health Care Forum-February 8, 2014**

### **OUR COMMUNITY CHALLENGE: MENTAL HEALTH PARITY**

Theme: *“Mental illness is the leading cause of disability worldwide; it costs more to ignore mental illness than to treat it. When we fail to treat people who suffer from mental disorders like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression, we all lose. The economic burden of associated health problems, lost productivity and lost lives is more than 10 times the budgets now being spent to treat people with mental illness. Some might think that this dismal state of affairs is regrettable, but ultimately not unforgivable, until we consider that low-cost, effective treatments already exist.”* (Excerpt from *New York Times* Letter to Editor, 11-11-13 submitted by Kathleen M. Pike, Executive Director and scientific co-director of the Global Mental Health Program, Columbia University.)

### **WHAT DOES PARITY MEAN?**

Ron Holmes: Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Cape Cod: Understanding the broad spectrum of mental health disorders and differences requiring

### **WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP**

Diane Wolsieffer: Psychiatric nurse at Cape Cod Hospital (CCH) and an organizer of Cape Cod and the Islands Behavioral Health Summit, Oct. 4, 2013. How CCH and its emergency room manage mental health crises. What are the resource gaps in the community?

### **MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES IN BARNSTABLE COUNTY AND THE STATE**

Beth Albert: Director, Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services. County initiatives include an Advisory Council to study and report on emerging trends (top 2 issues are untreated/undertreated mental health and substance abuse); establishing a Substance Abuse Council; addressing the issue of suicide on the Cape; piloting a Navigator for short-term case management and long-term services, “gatekeeper” training mandated for the schools.

Howard Baker-Smith: Director for the Southeast Region, Department of Mental Health. State services and resources provided by the MA Dept. of Mental Health.

### **THE ROLE FOR STATE GOVERNMENT**

Dan Wolf: State Senator. Legislative measures that have passed recently or are in the pipeline to address the twin problems of lack of trained personnel and affordable facilities for mental health treatment. What can our community at large do to help?

## **YOUTH SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

The Youth Support Committee met on January 23 to plan next steps in supporting civic education efforts in schools. Our October forum on Revitalizing Civic Education was a starting point for thinking about civic education that is meaningful and effective. We are exploring ways to develop a relationship with and among schools that would focus on this issue.

Karen Mazza reported on two efforts that she was invited to attend that have bearing on civic education in schools. Meira Levinson, our keynote speaker for our October Forum invited Karen to join a working session on civic education co-sponsored by Harvard University and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute. The purpose of the working session was to convene a network of schools, universities and community organizations that support civic education and discuss ways to network and support civic education programs. The second invitation came from Cape Cod Community College, which has formed a planning group to develop strategies for civic engagement at the college.

The committee agreed to continue our existing goals into the coming year and focus on ways to assist in the development of a network of civic educators across the Cape. We discussed the potential of linking Cape educators to the network being developed by Harvard and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute. Our next actions will develop communication with the schools.

Karen Mazza, Chair

## **LEGISLATIVE NEWS**

The Day on the Hill, sponsored by the LWVMA, will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at the State House in Boston. This is a great opportunity to hear presentations on critical proposed legislation and to meet with fellow Leaguers from all over the state. Please let me know if you can join us for the Day on the Hill. Mark your calendars now. We may be able to arrange car pool to Beacon Hill.

This event will be followed by our own Legislative Luncheon on March 28<sup>th</sup>. to be held at the Community College. More information will follow. Our "Directory of Elected Officials", as revised in January, is now prepared and being distributed.

Helen Bresnahan, Legislative Liaison ([sunrisedawn110@aol.com](mailto:sunrisedawn110@aol.com))

## **COUNTY COMMITTEE REPORT**

The County committee meeting concentrated on developing ideas for our focus in the coming year. We also had to consider any repose to the Assembly of Delegates rejection of the recommendation of the Charter Review Committee for a new legislative body of eleven members elected from districts composed of equal populations. It was agreed we needed time to think it through since it happened the previous day, before planning any response. Among the suggestions for further activity was of course the continuing monitoring of county meetings regarding transparency and conformance with the open meeting law. It was also felt that following the 5 year strategic plan would be valuable. We will meet on February 10 for further consideration. See County Update article for more information on County news.

Jari Rapaport, co-chair

## Environment Committee

It's hard to think April when the temperatures are in the single digits and teens, but the Environment Committee has been doing just that. Mark the date below on your April calendar now so that you AND YOUR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS won't miss the important forum the League is sponsoring on the issue that won't (and shouldn't) go away until it is dealt with – WASTEWATER! Here's the data:

Saturday, April 12, 2014

Harwich Community Center

10 am to noon

**The Cape Cod Wastewater Challenge:  
New Developments, New Opportunities!!**

**For all Towns**

For many years and especially last year the Cape Cod Commission has been working hard to gather the scientific data and the needed resources to help towns with their planning. For the last year, to fulfill the obligations to the EPA, the Commission has worked to update what's known as the Section 208 Plan which will describe the plan of plans that towns might choose (or modify) to remove nitrogen from ground water. The Commission has gathered "stakeholders" from every town; they've listened, shared, explored and learned. By April, the Commission believes that the various solutions with some recommendations will be close enough to completion to present to the public. Our speakers will be:

**Paul Niedzwiecki**, Executive Director of the Commission

**Ken Kimmell**, Commissioner of the MA DEP Collaborative

**Bob Ciolek**, financial consultant working with the Cape Cod Water Collaborative

**George Heufelder**, Director of the Alternative Septic Testing Site for the County

See you there!

Judy Thomas, Chair, Environment Committee

## BARNSTABLE COUNTY UPDATE

The Voter is introducing this new column to bring monthly updates on county government activities as they occur. The good news is that the Commissioners have acted to procure a new website design which will be introduced in February. This will be a major step forward.

- This month marks the second month in the term of the **new Interim County Administrator**, Michael Brillhart. Former administrator, Marl Zielenski has returned to his position as Director of Finance. This process officially separates the functions to bring sharper focus and responsibilities for the Administrator.

- The Board of Commissioners has prepared a **Strategic Plan** for County goals to be accomplished in the next 5 years. It is a very comprehensive document and includes goals, implementation with time lines for action and follow- up evaluation. This is in marked contrast to previous 5 year plans that were outlined general goals, or limited actions, and never evaluated. It will be presented to the Assembly in February. The plan can be found on the County website.
- The Assembly committee on **Charter Review** presented it first recommendations to the Assembly of Delegates. The Assembly rejected the first recommendation for a new legislative Council composed of 11 members to be elected through newly defined units (based on equal population) by a narrow margin. The second recommendation for the election of a strong chief Executive was tabled.
- The Commissioners are now working on developing **the County Budget** for FY2015 and the Assembly will begin its own review of the budget before voting to approve or reject.

Jari Rapaport

### **IN MEMORIAM - Terry Chesney**

Terry was a treasured member of our League for many many years, following memberships in the league wherever she lived in this country. Mary Lou Pettit put it this way: "Terry reflected all the qualities you find in the best of friends -intelligence, determination, compassion, and commitment. She loved the league and served it well". Elizabeth Levy shared these feelings and especially remembered Terry's chairmanship of the LWVCCA Ed Trust for many years, and the special annual gatherings for Eastham members where we tried to solve all our local issues. Terry died on January 25 nearly 4 months after surgery to remove a tumor. It is fitting that memorial gifts can be given to our Helen Aaron Education Trust. Terry's friendship made a major difference in my own life.

Jari Rapaport

