

THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 54 ISSUE 10

JUNE 2014

CALENDAR

Tuesday, June 3
9:30 am

LWVCCA Board Meeting
Cape Cod 5, Dennis

Wednesday, June 4

Health Committee

Monday, June 23
10:30 am

County Committee
Cape Cod 5, Dennis

HAPPY SUMMER!

Look forward to an exciting fall calendar!

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

We are happy to start our new terms in the shared role of Co-President. We look forward to working with the Board and our membership in continuing to develop the role of the League as a strong leader for civic engagement on the Cape.

We would like to thank all of our members who were Voter Service teams at the two local debates we moderated in Dennis and Chatham in April. Thank you to Judy Thomas and Barbara Wellnitz who served as moderators. **We would also like to congratulate two of our members following May elections.** Claire Gradone has been elected to the Brewster School Committee. Florence Seldin has been re-elected to serve as Chair of the Chatham Board of Selectmen.

Annual Meeting was a very pleasant event allowing us time to socialize and make quick work of our annual meeting business. Thanks go to Bobbie Rennie-Greer who planned and prepared our delicious meal and to our hospitality team of Joan Craig, Phyllis Walsh, Sally Cahill, Chris Meade and Renate Sands.

Karen and two League members, Chris Meade and Pat Ryle attended the **LWVMA Council on May 10**. The keynote speaker was excellent and the workshops offered very useful resources for our local work related to preparation for the November elections, money in politics and membership development. Please see the summary article included later in The Voter.

This is a win! LWVMA is to be congratulated on its coalition work with other organizations to promote legislation to improve the election process in Massachusetts. Governor Patrick signed H.4072 into law on Thursday. This bill allows voters to register online and cast their ballots up to 11 days before Election Day. It also lets 16- and 17- year olds pre-register to vote. In a Cape Cod Times summary of the article: “The new law also creates an online portal to check voter registration status, provides for automatic postelection audits of randomly selected precincts after presidential elections, and requires municipal election officials to attend annual training sessions.” We have a very strong Legislative Action Committee at the state level and if you ever wonder where your dues to support the state League go – this is one example of the impact that we can have as a member of the League.

Marilyn will be attending the LWVUS Convention in Dallas this June as our delegate.

LWVMA will be sponsoring a caucus to present a resolution on money in politics at the national convention that is designed to get the League moving forward on advocacy in this area. We look forward to the information and resources that she will be able to bring home to us.

We wish you all a wonderful summer. See you in September at our opening membership meeting. Our speaker will be Diane Turco from Cape Downwinders, speaking about the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant. The date will be finalized as soon as we arrange the venue.

In League,

Marilyn Gullet and Karen Mazza; Co-Presidents

YOUTH SUPPORT COMMITTEE

In May, the Cape Cod Community College Class in Communications that volunteered to register students to vote, was successful in registering 35 students to vote. This partnership with students on a voter registration drive was more successful than the League doing this on campus by ourselves. We look forward to a continuing partnership.

As you may recall, the Youth Support Committee was initiated by participating in the Cape Cod Foundation strategic planning process to develop a Cape-Wide Youth Action Plan. After two years of planning and preliminary spadework, the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan was publicly launched at a news conference on May 19. To see the plan in its entirety, go to capecodfoundation.org, click on learn, and select community leadership from the pull down menu. You will find the Cape-Wide Youth Action Plan listed there. The League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area is listed as a partner. Our contribution to this plan will focus primarily on the youth empowerment goal, specifically targeted on civic education and leadership. This is one example where the League can multiply the impact of its work by participating in a coalition with other partners.

COUNTY COMMITTEE

The committee has followed all the events described elsewhere throughout the month of May. We sent a message to the Assembly at the time of the Special Meeting on Friday the 30. We noted that as their process had resulted in recommending passage of the commissioner's budget, we urged them to pass it as formulated, and to work on improvements and communications throughout the coming year. However no communication from the public was allowed at the special meeting. One of the speakers favoring override of the Commissioner's budget remarked on the presence of others in the community who sought dissolution of the Assembly and also favored the Commissioner's budget.

The events around the budget illustrate the many problems inherent in the present system, including the timing of the budget process, and even in the Assembly meeting framework outlined in the Charter calling for 2 meetings a month of the full body. Issues around timely communication are also paramount. The committee will be looking at possibilities, if any, to deal with the dysfunction.

The committee will continue to seek information on the implementation of the Commissioner's Strategic Plan. This creates another problem, since the administrative actions required are not public information as are policy issues discussed in open meetings. Perhaps we need to review what is included in consideration of "transparency" in government.

We have invited Michael Brillhart, Interim Administrator, who came on board last winter, to meet with us and get acquainted at our June meeting. He was hired on an interim basis at the time to carry on until decisions were made on changes in the structure of county government. Around the same time, the functions of the Administrator and Finance Director were separated into separate positions.

Jari Rapaport, Nancy Curley, Co-Chairs

HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Health Committee for 2014-15 will be meeting June 4th in the afternoon. If you would like to join us in planning the next phase of our topic on mental health, please join us. Call Joan Bernstein at 508-896-8383 for details.

HIGHLIGHT – NEW MEMBER INTERVIEW

KATHY GIACOPONELLO

Having owned their Cotuit home for over twenty years, Kathy Giacomponello and her husband moved permanently to Cape Cod in May of 2013. Having lived in Mont Vernon, New Hampshire for 25 years, Kathy says she's still unpacking. In fact, they had a Christmas tree without the angel gracing the top this past December – they still haven't found the angel!

Like many Cape Codders, the Giacomponellos are “snowbirds,” spending the colder months at their condominium in Florida, which they purchased two years ago. Kathy states that she's still learning about Cape life – eg: when to go off/on the Cape during the week; how to avoid the rush at the bridges, etc. Haven't we all been there?

Prior to retirement, Kathy worked for the Hillsborough County, in New Hampshire, eventually retiring as the business manager for the county. Her husband worked for and then consulted with Lockheed Martin (now BAE) in New Hampshire. The couple moved to that area from Pennsylvania, where they raised their two children.

When asked about outside interests, Kathy mentions gardening as a “necessity” and also enjoys walking the beaches of Cape Cod. An avid reader, she has joined a number of book clubs in the past, which has broadened her perspective on different genres of books. She loves to travel and explore new areas with her husband, and says she likes to cook.

Kathy was involved in LWV in Pennsylvania when her youngest (now 40 years old) was only 4. He went to many a LWV meeting, held signs and helped mom. To this day, he has strong political opinions thanks to his early initiation with the League. When she moved to New Hampshire, Kathy joined a local tri-town League where she met many interesting women.

Unfortunately, as her involvement with her job became a priority, the League disbanded. Joining the Friends of the Cotuit Library brought Kathy in contact with a few of our current LWVCCA members. They were chatting about the League and invited Kathy to join. Wanting to get involved in an organization she supports, Kathy agreed, and is one of our newest members. She is interested in learning more about county government and the Cape Cod Commission, and wants to understand the differences between county and town government.

Kathy joined us for our Annual Meeting and was very impressed with LWVCCA and sees us as a viable organization – one that is “alive and well.” She is looking forward to getting to know us better and getting involved in a supportive manner. Welcome Kathy!

Interview by Joan Craig for the Membership Committee May 2014

COUNTY ISSUES

This has been a battleground month in which the Assembly has rejected the county budget for 2015 and passed its own version which eliminated the commissioner’s proposal to increase income by 2 and ½ %, as allowed counties and municipalities. The Commissioners had moved to implement the tax in order to increase in so far a possible the one source of stable income to protect against the fluctuations of the real estate tax, the only other source of income apart from grants. Among the issues leading to this rejection was the Assembly’s concern that requested information was not forthcoming,

The Assembly also cut the equivalent amount from the budget, eliminating half of it from the IT Department, which was under fire because of its greatly increased budget to standardize and upgrade communications. They also took a similar amount from the Cape Cod Commission’s Joint County Project fund. This has been used to fund particular projects which jointly serve county residents, such as establishing the resource to serve municipalities and schools with data through Open Cape network. It is the only Cape Cod Commission income which draws on county funding. The Commission by statute has its own tax base.

The Assembly, after taking this action on May 7, was asked by one of its members to reconsider that vote and they again passed the Assembly version on May 21, with an even higher count. The Commissioners could have taken no action, and their budget would have stood. However they felt obligated to present their budget again and seek acceptance. At a special meeting of the Assembly held on May 30, the Assembly vigorously again rejected the commissioner’s budget, which leaves their version to guide fy2015. The timing was such that the statutory reconciliation process could not take place in order to meet the requirement for passage by June 1. This whole process illustrates the extreme lack of useful communication between the 2 branches of government, serious problems in statutory procedures in the process, and what looks like mutual distrust which limits interaction.

NOTES FROM THE LWVMA COUNCIL 2014

Karen Mazza, Chris Meade and Pat Ryle had the opportunity to attend Council 2014 on May 10 at Framingham State University. It was a very informative and inspiring day. In the paragraphs below each of us take turns sharing some notes with you from the general session and the workshops we attended. If you are interested in seeing the workshop materials they are available on the LWVMA website (<http://lwmva.org/2014-council/>) for the 2014 Council.

General Session Address: Civility in Politics

Susan M. Jeghelian, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) was the general session speaker and she described the services of MOPC in serving as a neutral forum and state-level resource for public policy dispute resolution and collaborative governance. She described the role that the office played in resolving several disputes including the controversy in policing services in Provincetown. She challenged League members to become a voice for civility and collaborative problem solving by encouraging members to take mediation training. There are 14 mediation centers affiliated with MOPC across the state, including one in Orleans. She described what it would be like for us to take on the role of a convener of collaboration. She stated that a convener plays the following roles:

- Bring together people to problem solve
- Help frame the issues
- Identify options for solutions
- Assess the situation
- Invite people
- Work with an experienced facilitator
- Frame or reframe the situation

This presentation was particularly meaningful to me as a former Assistant Superintendent of Schools, who in my 24-year career in that role witnessed multiple occasions when towns needed someone to help with a more productive and collaborative discussion. I wished I had known then that such a resource was available. Her challenge to us as League members to become conveners of collaboration is something to think about.

Submitted by Karen Mazza

Workshop: Money in Politics -Is Democracy out of balance?

The campaign Finance Study Committee has developed tools that we can use to play a role in the growing movement against campaign corruption and imbalance in our representative government. The workshop at the LWVMA call to council at Framingham State University on May 10, 2014 addressed spreading the word on money and politics and provides the league with

access to a working adaptable presentation including an overview of the history of the challenge to our democracy and options for resetting the balance. The presentation addressed the extraordinary sums of money candidates need to run for elected office, growing polarization of the electorate, and the lack of progress on issues ranging from climate change, to voting rights, to gun control, to jobs, to student debt, to public education and investment in the future.

Submitted by Pat Ryle

Is your League ready for the November election?

In the November 2014 election, four statewide questions are expected to be on the ballot on which we will have supporting or opposing positions. As soon as the final versions of the ballot questions are available, the MA League will issue a list of our stands and the reasons. This information is expected to be available in July.

Currently, it is expected the League will actively support:

Patient Safety Act – H 3843

This proposed law would limit how many patients could be assigned to a registered nurse in Massachusetts hospitals and certain other health-care facilities, but not rehabilitation or long-term care facilities. The maximum number of patients per registered nurse would not exceed 6.

Transparency in Operating Margins – H 3844

If it becomes law, it would regulate the annual operating margins, chief executive officer (CEO) compensation and financial asset disclosures of certain health-care facilities not to include rehabilitation or long-term care facilities.

Updating the Bottle Bill – H 3848

This proposed law would expand the state's beverage container deposit law, also known as the Bottle Bill, to require deposits on containers for all non-alcoholic non-carbonated drinks in liquid form intended for human consumption, except beverages primarily derived from dairy products, infant formula, and FDA approved medicines. This bill has faced many hurdles. At one time it was thought the Legislature would pass the bill, but it has not. Currently, the League is once again collecting signatures to have the question appear on the November 2014 ballot.

The League will likely actively oppose:

Repeal of the 2013 Gas Tax Indexing – HB 3847

This proposed law would eliminate the requirement that the state's gasoline tax, (1) be adjusted every year by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index over the preceding year, but (2) not be adjusted below 21.5 cents per gallon.

Submitted by Chris Meade

**NEW DUES STRUCTURE AND REMINDER TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP
BY JULY 1**

We appreciate your continuing membership and the support that your dues provide to the voter service, citizen education and legislative advocacy of your local, state and national League of Women Voters. At our Annual Meeting on May 8, 2014 we voted to approve a new dues structure. The dues are as follows:

Single membership	\$55 (Same)
Household (two members)	\$85 (Same)
Assisted Single membership *	\$30 (New)

* This represents a reduced amount available to those who wish to be active in the League but for whom the full amount would be an impediment to joining.

Please remember that \$54 of our dues amount pays for our required membership in the state and national League.

WHO DOES NOT NEED TO RENEW?

People who are 50-year members are no longer required to pay dues.

Also, new members who joined in February or later are already paid up through June 2015.

Mail dues with this slip to:

Ira Seldin 321 Deer Meadow Lane Chatham, MA 02633

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Amount Enclosed:

Please indicate if any of the information above is new so that we may edit your contact information in the handbook if necessary.