

THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 52 ISSUE 5

JANUARY 2012

CALENDAR

**Tuesday, January 3
9:30 am**

**LWVCCA Board Meeting
Cape Cod 5 Dennis**

**Monday, January 16
1:30 pm**

**County Committee
Media Center, Shad Hole Rd. Dennis**

**Thursday, January 19, 2012
10:00 am**

**Sandwich Unit
First Church, Sandwich**

**Saturday, January 21
9:30 – 12:00 am**

**HEALTH CARE FORUM
Harwich Community Center**

**Tuesday, January 24
1:30 pm**

**Environment Committee
Long Pasture Wild Life
Sanctuary**

Dear Leaguers,

A very happy and healthy New Year's wish to all of you! For the Cape Area League (and for all Leagues), it will undoubtedly be a very busy year with many opportunities for the League to serve the citizenry of our Area and beyond.

That also means there will be many opportunities for you personally to offer your service to the League and to the community. Do read on . . .

We have two excellent forums in the planning stages. The January forum dealing with **Health Care** will be full of new information. Please read the details from the committee and plan to attend with some neighbors and friends on **Saturday, January 19**. Our late April forum will deal with climate change – particularly as it relates to Cape Cod. The specifics of that will be shared closer to the date, but I assure you the speakers will be wonderful.

Voters Service will have the lion's share of the work as we move into the election cycles of 2012. We hope that during both the spring local elections and the fall general elections we will have the volunteers to staff as many candidate forums as we are asked to participate in. Would you be interested in being a time-keeper? We'll show you how to work the stop watches if necessary and we'll have new "stop" and "30 sec." signs to hold up. (We really could use some new recruits in this area from all parts of the Cape!) Would you like to learn what's involved in card sorting? How and why do we group cards? Why do we not use some cards? The card sorters play a very helpful role. Would you be interested in learning what is involved in moderating a forum? Moderating can be challenging but is also great fun. And we provide excellent training and tips. Spring local elections are a great place to get beginning experience.

But we can't read minds! If what I've mentioned sparks even a little bit of curiosity, please give Voter Service chair Elizabeth Levy (508-240-7297) or me (508-945-0511) a call.

Finally, our **nominating committee**, facilitated by Jean Mangiafico, has begun its work. Any organization is **revitalized by the addition of new leaders** with fresh new ideas and energy. All organizations need this revitalization in an on-going way. So . . . would you have interest in working at the "unit" level of the League, helping to conceive and plan activities and events that would be of interest in your area? How about becoming a co-chair of a committee – this way the work of the committee can be learned without full responsibility? Becoming a member of the board of directors is the best way to become acquainted with all things "League" – those ways of being an organization in which we differ from many other organizations. I'm hoping you might have 3-5 hours a month to spare or share to help your League! Please give Jean a call at 508-945-3746. She and the committee will work hard to try to find a match for your interests, skills and desires with the needs of the League. And if the committee calls you, please ask all the questions you need to ask and then say: YES!

Looking forward to an active and bright 2012 League year with you!

Judy Thomas

Navigating Health Care on Cape Cod

A Forum to Update the Community on Health Care Issues
Saturday, January 21 9:30 a.m.
Harwich Community Center

Do you understand what an Accountable Health Care Organization is? Will it impact your current health provider systems? How payments will happen differently? How can dental resources be accessed? What does SHINE do? **This forum is designed to help the public know What do we need to know now!**

The Health Care Committee has arranged for a superb array of speakers to help you and our audience understand what's happening currently in the health care arena.

- **Michael Lauf, President and CEO of Cape Cod Health Care** will be our principle speaker.

Responding to him and adding their own insights and perspectives are:

- **Brian O'Malley, MD (internal medicine)** Provincetown Medical Group
- **B.L. Hathaway**, expert in oral health resources
- **Sonia Brewer, SHINE**, will describe what SHINE offers to Medicare patients in terms of choosing their part D providers.

Panelists have been encouraged to bring literature they deem helpful, including physicians on Cape Cod, who is accepting new patients, etc.

Plan now to attend. Invite a neighbor, friend, or especially, an acquaintance new to the Cape. As always, the gathering will start with coffee and sweets.

THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Here is an announcement of an important Meeting on Cape Cod environmental protection:

PRESERVING THE CAPE'S FRAGILE BEAUTY

Beth Schwartzman, author of Nature of Cape Cod

Dr. Eric Davidson, WHOI director, discussion on climate change/global warming

Panel discussion (interactive with audience) on Cape environmental protection

January 17th, Lecture Hall A at Cape Cod Community College 9am to 3pm

Registration begins at 8:30

The next Environment Committee meeting will be held January 24th at 10 am at Audubon's Long Pasture, Bone Hill Rd. Barnstable. Bone Hill Rd. is off of 6A.

Joan Grant

COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Nancy Curley, Co-chair, presented a series of recommendations for County structure at the December 14th meeting of the Special Commission on County Governance. The meeting was devoted to comment from invited organizations and the public. The League statement is attached to this Issue of the Voter. The statement, approved by the League Board, was developed by the Committee, based on current analysis. As additional recommendations and resulting Commission discussion warrant, we may refine our current statement. The Special Commission has scheduled meetings for January 4th and 11th at 6:30 at the Superior Courthouse in Barnstable.

Committee members continue observation of the Commissioner's meetings and those of the Assembly of Delegates as well as the Special Commission. We urge all interested members to join us, even for just one session for a better picture of our regional government. Call Nancy or Jari for information.

Jari Rapaport, Co-Chair

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

Gail Anderson, newly of Barnstable, is a Massachusetts and League returnee. Back in the 70's when she lived in Andover she was head of the state league study of energy until she moved to Vermont where she worked for the Shelburne Museum as head of guides and volunteers. She is looking forward to learning more about Cape government and politics and to being reconnected with the League.

VOTER SERVICE

New ways of reaching young voters were discussed at a meeting of Leaguers interested in voter service activities. As the birthday card project winds down, plans were made to contact high school principals to elicit their current practices in registering students turning eighteen, and to explore ways in which we might help. Town clerks will also be interviewed as to their role. Liaison with Cape Cod Community College will be pursued.

Attendees also signed up to participate in upcoming debates as timers, moderators, and ushers.

Because there are many varied activities associated with voter service, we have resisted referring to participants as a “committee”. Part of the reluctance springs from the belief that all Leaguers should participate in some way, and most do. Whether it’s timing at a debate, staffing a voter registration table, addressing envelopes, or encouraging neighbors to attend Town Meeting, our name assumes our involvement.

Looking ahead to February 15th, an impressive panel has been assembled for our “Don’t Just Stand There, Run” program. If you, or some one you know, is considering becoming a candidate for selectman, school committee, or any elective position, this is an evening you won’t want to miss. State Representative Sarah Peake, former County Commissioner Mary Le Clair, Town Clerk Linda Hutchenrider, Cape Cod Times journalist Sean Gonsalves, and former Selectman and current Town Moderator David Schropfer will be on hand to offer advice and speak of their own experiences.

Elizabeth Levy, Chair

Statement of the
League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area
To
The Special Commission on County Governance
November 30, 2011

Good afternoon/evening. I am Nancy Curley, co-chair of the County Committee of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area. I thank you for the opportunity to present to you our current thinking on the issues raised in the “invitation to the public” for this hearing.

The League has had a strong interest in County government for many years. Indeed, we worked on the committee that established the first county charter. Some of you may recall our member, Ellen Jones, who closely followed the workings of the county government for years.

More recently, we were instrumental in securing the development and the distribution of the valuable chart “How Barnstable County is Governed.” This was revised in January 2011 and distributed again with the assistance of the County Commissioners. Members of our County Committee are regular attendees at both Commissioner and Assembly of Delegates meetings. In the past, when the county charter has been reviewed, we have participated in the review process by our own study, reflection and testimony. Most recently, it was our January 2011 public forum on county government that was one of the motivating factors in the establishment of this Special Commission.

The LWVCCA for a considerable time has had a strong position in support of regional government and in regionalization as a means to achieving success with various issues facing Cape Cod.

Now, after attending numerous meetings and reflecting among ourselves on observations of the County at work and the testimony at meetings of the Special Commission, we offer the following comments.

Firstly, we are impressed by the testimony of various speakers which indicates that the county has already been able and continues to accomplish much “regionally.” However, there remain important areas which see little progress.

Secondly, we are impressed with the attendance of the public and interested parties at Special Commission meetings. The interest shown gives credence to the importance of the Special Commission’s work and the need for reforms in some areas of the regional government.

As we turn to address the bullet points of your public invitation, we have found it most convenient to combine bullets 1 and 3 and then bullets 2 and 4.

Bullets 1 and 3. With regard to the need for strong executive county administrative leadership and the representation and role of the Board of Regional Commissioners –

It seems to us that the county would be better served by a single, strong executive.

- A single executive would have responsibility for and be able to articulate a clear vision for the county. This would decrease the blurred lines for both vision creation and execution which currently exist.

- One executive would be the “spokesperson” for the county, generating greater visibility both to the office and to County government.
- If this single executive were elected, we believe interest in the election would be significantly greater than currently exists with the election of three commissioners on a rotating basis. The candidates for this one office would run on a cape-wide basis. Rather than individual opportunities to hear a particular candidate’s views, we can imagine multiple candidate forums where candidates would share their views, positions and vision for the county. In other words, there would be debates that would offer voters the opportunity to come to know each candidate better. Discussion of county issues would be fostered. Residents would become more aware of both their county government and of issues facing the region and possible directions for action.
- With only one executive, accountability would be obvious. Accountability generally works as a motivator to accomplish concrete objectives. If this official was elected, this accountability would be directly to the voters.

Bullets 2 and 4. With regard to the two branch structure of the regional government and the representation and role of the Assembly of Delegates –

We believe the two branches of regional government are a good model and we see merit to having both an executive and a legislative branch. However, the current model and its method of representation to the Assembly of Delegates often fails to foster regional approaches to common problems. Therefore, we urge consideration of representation by region on the Cape rather than by town, possibly representation by state representative districts. We believe this form of composition would encourage greater cooperation within the legislative branch and work to temper the hue and cry for local control when local control actually works against the best interests of the people of Cape Cod as a whole.

Bullet 5. With regard to the County’s relationship to the fifteen towns –

We wish to highlight a single aspect – communication. Our comments may apply more to the general populace of the fifteen towns than the local town governments. We continue to note that much of the Cape is unaware that a county government even exists. For those who have some awareness, there is a great lack of understanding about what the county does and what services it provides. This lack of awareness and understanding presents a huge obstacle to regional efforts to improve the quality of life on the Cape, the economy (economies of scale are too frequently missed opportunities) of the Cape and to protect its fragile environment. Public communication of members of the Assembly to town governments is irregular and sporadic. If the county issues press releases, we are unaware of them. With this lack of communication there is little opportunity for members of the public to know what is going on so that encouragement might be given to local governments to support regional solutions to Cape-wide problems.

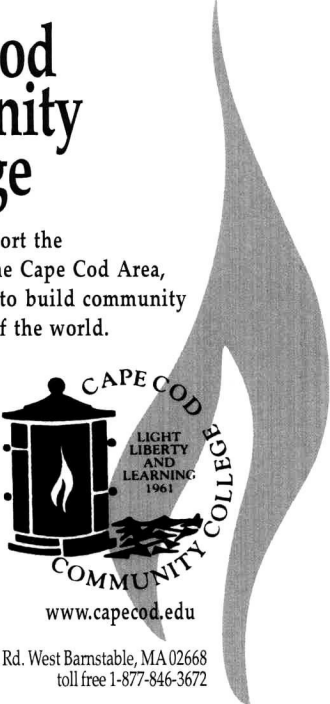
We close our statement by thanking the Special Commission for its work thus far on this important study. We look forward to the Commission’s reflection and discussion and ultimately its recommendations. We hope they will be well publicized.

Welcome to our newest advertiser!

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