

THE CAPE COD VOTER

Volume 51 ISSUE 9
2011

MAY

CALENDAR

Sunday, May 1
3:30 pm

New Member Wine and Cheese Party
Home of Joan Bernstein

Tuesday, May 3
9:30 am

LWVCCA Board Meeting
Cape Cod 5, Dennis

Saturday, May 14
9:30 am

Annual Meeting
Harbor Point Restaurant

Bring Your Workbook

Friday and Saturday
May 20 and 21

LWVMA Convention
The Publick House
Sturbridge

The Board of Directors and Judy Thomas, president

Cordially invite you
to the
Annual Meeting
of the
League of Women Voters
of the
Cape Cod Area

Saturday, 9:30 am, May 14, 2011
Harbor Point Restaurant, Cummaquid

Meet and greet your League friends!
Celebrate our League's accomplishments in the past year!
Plan our program for 2011 !
Elect officers, adopt the budget, approve by-law changes!
Certificates for 50 year members!
(Out in time for the opera)

[See flyer for directions and reservation slip](#)

APRIL BOARD NOTES

ED TRUST: Betsy Bray has been elected new president of Ed Trust

SMARTER CAPE COD SUMMIT: A conference will be held at Wequasset Inn on May 9 and 10. Regional leaders from business, government, research and communities will exchange ideas on building a smarter Cape Cod and economic development.

REDISTRICTING HEARING: Redistricting hearing will be held on June 27 at 6pm at the Cape Cod Community College.

LWVMA: The convention will be held May 20-21 in Sturbridge. Format will cover officers, local programs, studies, training, workshops, networking and strategic planning.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT: On April 6, Judy Thomas will address concerns to the County Commissioners. (See Judy's statement in this Voter)

MEMBERSHIP: A Tea/Wine & Cheese event will be held on May 1 at the home of Joan Bernstein at 3:30pm.

HEALTH CARE: The Health Care Committee met on March 28 and focused on Accountable Care Organizations (ACO), a group of coordinated health care providers that provides care to a group of patients.

DAY ON THE HILL: Several members attended the LWVMA Lobby Day and met with legislators.

Jane Teixeira-Henry, Secretary

COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

County government, its structure and functions, continue to be a major issues. Judy Thomas, our president, spoke to the County Board of Commissioners at their April 6th meeting and presented the League's view about the importance of a review as suggested by the Business Roundtable and the importance of transparency and community involvement.. It was well received.(The full text is reprinted in this issue of the Voter)

The committee is currently planning for presentations of further information and background related to the review of county structure for our members and the public.

The committee also continued to encourage our members to join our Observation Corps.

Jari Rapaport, Nancy Curley, Co-Chairs

**Statement to the
County Commissioners of Barnstable County
April 6, 2011**

I am Judy Thomas, president of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area. I thank you for this opportunity to offer our some of our thoughts on the County and its Charter to you.

The League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area has been interested in and followed the county government for years. Our own League program, adopted annually, always includes “County Government – monitoring” among its priority items.

Today, on behalf of the Board of the League and its county government committee, I’m pleased to offer these comments based on our study and numerous observations.

1. We strongly support a strong regional government and see it as an instrument of the people which can and does provide many important services to the people of the Cape. Sadly, due to under reporting and communication, a great majority of our residents are not even aware a county government exists.
2. We believe the County is uniquely situated to remind and assist the fifteen towns of the Cape in seeing the “big picture.” We see a need for strong voices at the County level to help the fifteen towns recognize and accept their interconnectedness. This recognition includes not only the benefits of, but also the necessity of, regional approaches to what are truly regional problems – problems not able to be solved effectively, efficiently or economically by individual town responses.
3. We support the recent questioning done by both individuals and organizations as to the current effectiveness of our county charter. The charter is now more than 24 years old. Previous five year charter reviews have done well at various “house-keeping” chores and minor revisions. But in nearly twenty-five years, times have changed. The County’s population has grown exponentially, changed in composition and is now in decline. Because of this, we believe it is an opportune time, a crucial time, to reassess the goals and purposes of county government and the means by which they might be achieved. Do the changing demographics, along with ecological, economic and technological changes suggest new, reprioritized or additional goals? Would the County benefit from different structures for support of these possible new goals? We believe a closer, more open, more imaginative look at Charter issues will benefit the County and its residents.

4. Therefore, we support the concept of the recently recommended and approved County Charter Review Commission. For this, we encourage a very open and transparent process for the Commission. The process should establish deadlines for its work that foster both thoroughness and meaningful and timely progress. All meetings should be open, invite public comment and provide timely minutes for the public's review.
5. As to the composition of this special Commission, we support representation from varied segments of the community as well as from county and town levels of government. Ideally, representation would take into consideration gender, age and ethnicity as well as those with backgrounds in various relevant fields.
6. Finally, going back to a point made earlier, communication about what is going on within, and because of, our County government needs major enhancement. This includes communication with the various media and the towns. The League will continue to do its part to keep county government on the public's radar but it will take much more than our organization can provide to create a well-informed and literate Cape Cod population with regard to the County.

Thank you for your interest and attention.

Judy Thomas

President, League of Women Voters Cape Cod Area

CONTINUE ON TO THE NEXT SECTION FOR OUR ANNUAL REPORTS

President's Report 2011

My second year as your president began with the LWVUS convention in Atlanta. Among the many things learned was that the League works hard at many levels in many places! We are a vital organization, not without problems, but an organization which continues to live its mission of citizen education, voter services and advocacy on important issues impacting all of us.

Our Area League shined in all these areas this past year. To highlight: our collaborative Civility Forum, with emphases on education and advocacy, drew a large crowd at Cape Cod Community College in September. It, in turn, was a direct influence on the level of civility at our congressional candidate forum, a voter service activity, in October. Wastewater management and county government were the subjects of our other two forums, both educational activities. We're delighted that the county government forum was the stimulus for a lengthy discussion of functioning, structure and some type of on-going charter review at a subsequent Assembly of Delegates' meeting. I feel certain we will hear (and be part of) more to come in that important area. The County is greatly appreciative of our on-going interest; we'd so welcome more members to be part of our County Government Observer Corps. Our small but loyal group is the only group which plays this important role for the County.

One of the exciting things of my and the Board's work is seeing the increase in interest and activity of members that the work of our committees and board generates. For example, the number of meetings that vice-president for program, Renate Sands, and the county government committee, Jari Rapaport and Nancy Curley from the board, plus several others, have held would tire most of us, but they remain so committed and enthusiastic. So many Board conversations when we veer off topic conclude with a suggestion that we need to have a forum on "that" subject. Program planning for 2011 – 2012 may be a challenge! We need and sincerely seek the input of all our members. Please attend May 14 and participate.

I have great praise for our nominating committee facilitated by Phyllis Walsh. The 2011-2012 board will include some new faces along with the familiar (assuming their election). We will be saying goodbye to Freddie Fitzgerald, Elaine Bono and Renate Sands who have done superb work over the years.

Sometimes the work is the nitty-gritty. Last summer three of us reviewed the By-Laws making a few not too significant changes, primarily clarifying and simplifying the language. The board approved them in February and they now await approval at the Annual Meeting. My thanks to Elizabeth Levy and Betsy Bray for their help on this project.

Debbie Aikman has been superb as treasurer, keeping us in line, offering suggestions and doing all our data entry for the LWVUS. We've kept her busy with that by the addition of twenty new members since this time last year!

What the Cape Area League is so fortunate to have is a great team spirit that produces amazing work with notable results. Thank you all,

Judy Thomas

UNIT REPORTS

CHATHAM/HARWICH

The subjects of Chatham/Harwich's regular meetings this past year were school regionalization and county government. In anticipation of possible Town Meeting votes in the fall on the merger of the Chatham and Harwich schools into a single regional district – a very controversial issue -- we scheduled our Unit meeting in July rather than waiting until the more usual time of September/October. Members of the combined regional school planning board attended, explaining their work and findings, answering some of our many questions and presenting some concerns of their own. It was a well-attended meeting (perhaps because we gathered in a restaurant).

Preoccupied as we were with the school issue until the November vote, (regionalization passed in both towns!) we didn't meet again as a Unit until February. This meeting, a follow-up to the League's January forum on county government, had us talking with our local Assemblymen (Ron Bergstrom, Chatham, and Leo Cakounes, Harwich), in an effort to increase our understanding of county structure, issues, and problems from the points of view of our elected town representatives to the Assembly of Delegates. In Chatham, April brought the traditional warrant meeting ~ this time, however, not with Town Manager Bill Hinchey who is departing in May for Yarmouth, but with new Finance Director, (Ms) Alix Heilala. Alix has impressed us all with her quick grasp of the many and complex issues facing the voters ~ and while we will miss Bill Hinchey, it was interesting to get a different perspective. In Harwich, a town-appointed Voter Information Committee has assumed the role traditionally filled by the League.

Kathleen Vogt and Nancy Erskine, Co-Chairs

Upper and Mid Cape Unit Meetings

Betsy Bray was our guest speaker on the life of Beatrix Potter at the October 19th unit meeting. Betsy has been a member of the Beatrix Potter Society since 1984. She talked about the life of Beatrix Potter as a children's author, illustrator, sheep farmer, land conservationist and community activist. Potter overcame a strict childhood to become a woman "ahead of her time".

February 15, 2011 the unit gathered to hear from four members of the Assembly of Delegates. The purpose was to share information and points of view on their roles in Barnstable County government. Mary LeClair, a league member from Mashpee, provided perspective as a former County Commissioner. The discussion was lively and informative.

Sally Cahill, Phyllis Walsh, Co-Chairs

Nauset Unit

The Nauset Unit, made up of the towns of Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet (Truro and Provincetown welcome), held two meetings during the 2010-2011 year. In October, Florence Seldin presented information about the Open Meeting Law. In February, as a follow-up to the January forum on County Government, the Delegates to the Assembly, Teresa Martin from Eastham, Chris Kanaga from Orleans, and Tony Scalese from Brewster, provoked a lively and informative discussion about their roles as delegates, the lack of communication to the public about the Assembly, regionalization, and weighted voting. The unit also arranged forums and meetings in Brewster, Orleans and Eastham to discuss Town Meeting warrants.

Joan Bernstein, Freddie Fitzgerald, Co-Chairs

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

This was a study year for the Health Care Committee. We decided to look into health care on the Cape and found that substantive changes in the way health care is provided by physicians are planned and will be implemented over the next few years.

The changes involve the development of new alliances of physicians called Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) through which patient care will be provided. Governor Deval Patrick is a strong supporter of this concept and foresees ACOs as the solution to the increasingly unsupportable cost of the "Massachusetts Miracle" health care plan.

Our committee met in early May with the Medical Director of Cape Cod Hospital to learn how the ACO concept will work on Cape Cod with an eye toward developing a forum for next year that will present the pros and cons of ACOs to members of the Cape Cod community.

We also plan to print and distribute an updated Low Cost Health Care pamphlet prepared by one of our members this year in early Fall 2011.

Rhonda Tewes, Chair

THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee started off the year with a successful meeting to celebrate Coast Week at Audubon's Long Pasture. Sean Gonsalves from the Cape Cod Times and his six year old son were among the ten non-League members who joined us.

We've had several discussion meetings on Waste Water. Orleans Waste Water expert, Judith Bruce has been most helpful. The over all slow progress on all environmental issues has been a constant theme. Next year I hope we can interest more active members to work effectively for clean energy, clean water- a better environment for us all.

Erica Parra, Chair

TER SERVICE

We started the year with our annual distribution of birthday cards with voter registration forms to most of the Cape high schools. In January we reevaluated the program in light of the feedback which we solicited. The decision was made to continue with those schools which actively supported the effort. Other schools, or town clerks, would be contacted to explore student registrations, with the idea of offering assistance in other ways.

We organized or officiated at many candidates' forums at the local, state, and national level. Several more Leaguers became moderators; others took on time-keeping and card sorting.

Rather than being a traditional committee, voter service utilizes many Leaguers who participate in everything from voter registration to addressing birthday cards. Voting is what we are about and we encourage every member to be involved.

Our town meeting brochure continues to be distributed at both League and community functions. It, as well as other functions, are funded by the Educational Trust.

Elizabeth Levy, Chair

LWVCCA Legislative Chair Report, 2010-2011

- Updated and maintained LWVCCA email list
- Monitored legislation and forwarded alerts to email list
- Held legislative breakfast at Ardeo at Kings Way on March 25, 2011. Attended by 57 people, including seven out of eight of our legislators (or their staff representatives) and our new Congressman, Bill Keating.
- Day on the Hill, April 13, 2011—a delegation from the board and other members went to this event at the State House. The theme this year was transparency in government.
- Updated and distributed the Directory of Elected Officials for 2011-2013

Elaine Bono, Legislative Chair

County Government

The Committee has been following the county government and the development of regional approaches . Members have been observing The Assembly of Delegates meetings, and at times the weekly meetings of the Board of County Commissioners. We continued following the work of the Charter Review committee which ended its work with some minor “housekeeping” changes to the charter which were approved by the voters in November. They mainly clarified language, eliminated duplicative sections.

When we found that the Charter Review committee was not following through on holding hearings on possible changes to the structure, we began to think of how the League could fill the gap. As a result we planned for the forum on County Government held in January. It was extremely successful and attracted a standing room only audience. It coincided with the Business Round Table proposals for a commission to study the current operations of the now 25 year old county. Judy Thomas, our president, spoke in support of the need for such a commission to the County Commissioners. The Committee is now planning future actions to provide background information to our members and the public.

Jari Rapaport, Nancy Curley, Co-Chairs

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Twenty new members have joined the League this year. Thanks to all who have helped recruit them. When they join, a note of welcome and Membership Handbook is sent. In early March a Membership Task Force meeting was held. The attendees were Judy Thomas, Karen Mazza, Mary Hunter Utt and Phyllis Walsh. They made suggestions for recruitment of new members. We will hold a membership wine and cheese Party on May 1 to welcome new members who have joined and recruit new members.

Betsy Bray, Membership Chair

THE HELEN S. AARON EDUCATIONAL TRUST

At the March 15 meeting, funds were allocated to the League’s educational projects such as: printing the Directory of Elected Officials, Birthday card project, low cost healthcare brochure. Co presidents Carroll Adams and Terry Cheney stepped down, and we thank them for their many years of dedicated service to the Trust.

Betsy Bray was elected Trust President. Florence Seldin and Nancy Curley will be on the nominations committee. The next meeting will be held in the fall.

Betsy Bray, Chair

LWVCCA

IMPORTANT ANNUAL MEETING

We have many tasks to accomplish: the program for next year, elect new leadership and finalize the by-laws. We also need to celebrate our exciting 2010-2011 season. Please remember to bring the annual Meeting Workbook.

BREAKFAST AT HARBOR POINT RESTAURANT (508-362-2231)

DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 14
TIME: 9:30 AM TO 11:15
COST: \$15.00

DIRECTIONS:

From Route 6 take exit 7 for Willow St. toward Yarmouthport, W. Yarmouth
Turn right at Willow St. (.2 mi.)
Turn left on Rte 6A (1.2 mi.)
Turn right at Bone Hill Rd. (.4 mi.)
Take first right onto Harbor Point Rd. (.3 mi.)

Fill out and send in the coupon below, along with your check. **Reservations must be received by May 9, 2011. No refunds after May 9.** If you have any questions please contact Renate Sands at 508-888-8349.

REGISTRATION FORM
ANNUAL MEETING
SATURDAY, MAY 14, 2011 AT 9:30 AM

The Annual Meeting will be held at the Harbor Point Restaurant. Cost is \$15.00 per person and includes breakfast, tax and gratuity. Make you check payable to **LWVCCA** and send to: Renate Sands, PO BOX 1447, Sandwich, MA 02563


Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone No: _____ (In case we need to contact you)

Amount Enclosed _____ # Attending _____

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