

THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 52 ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 2011

CALENDAR

Tuesday, October 4
9:30 am

LWVCCA Board Meeting
Cape Cod 5 Dennis

Thursday, October 6
1:00 pm

Environment Committee
Snow Library, Orleans

Monday, October 17
1:00pm

County Committee
Cape Cod 5 Dennis

Tuesday, October 18
10:10 am to 12:00

Nauset Unit Meeting
Snow Library, Orleans

Wednesday, October 19
10:00 am

Chatham/Harwich Unit
Harwich Community Center

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

In recent months, I have found myself thinking increasingly about the “common good,” and what seems to me, its loss from many current discussions. The term has been around for millennia going back to Plato and Aristotle. It’s been part of the tenets of most religious faiths. Its simplest meaning is something like the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number in a community, society etc. And in a pluralistic, diverse country it is very complex.

John Adams made the common good part of his Thoughts on Government written in 1776. “Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for profit, honor, or private interest of any one man [sic], family, or class of men [sic]; therefore, [people have the right to] reform, alter, or totally change [the government] when their protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness require it.”

The philosophers in particular have been willing to acknowledge that achieving the common good often requires sacrifice by some in order to achieve the common good. The concept of sacrifice seems to me to be the element so lacking in the political landscape today.

As I reflect on the common good and our organization, I wonder what role the League could play. As a non-partisan, political and yes, service, organization that educates the populace on all kinds of issues, how do we insure that the ethic of the common good is part of our efforts?

Traditional League processes – thorough study, examining an issue from multiple sides, giving equal “time and space” to the various sides of an issue – keep our organization in the mode of working toward the common good.

Recently I viewed a webinar sponsored by the LWVUS on voter registration. The presenters emphasized the need for the League to seek out traditionally under-represented populations when we do voter registration drives. I began to think, where would those populations be found on the Cape? (Most likely not too many in my town or my Stop and Shop.) To seek out these populations, too often voiceless in our democracy, would be a move toward the common good, wouldn’t it? And I suspect it would require us/me to move out of a certain comfort zone. Maybe a sacrifice of that comfort for the common good. As we move toward 2012 and voter registration drives, I think we might be mindful – for the common good.

Our recent September forum, attended by over 100 persons, worked toward the common good as it placed a focus on our county government. This government seems at times to be a bit bogged down, perhaps in power struggles that keep it from functioning at greater efficiencies for all. It was a forum designed to gently push, prod and remind those who have authority to rethink the possibilities of county government in a more common good oriented manner. One speaker, while not using the phrase common good, still spoke of it when he suggested we think of ourselves as from “Cape Cod” and not an individual town, and then act for the good of the Cape.

We all have role to play: to push, to prod, to educate, to remind, to be ourselves responsible citizens of our beautiful island.

Philosophically, and in League,

Judy

BOARD NOTES September 6, 2011

- The forum on environmental issues originally scheduled for November 2011 will be postponed till later next spring. The Board considered using the November date for a general membership meeting rather than a forum which takes such advance planning.

- The proposed participation in the LWVUS Education Study was dropped because of timing constraints. since the bulk of the study was to be carried out in the summer, a difficult period for cape activity.

- Joan Bernstein will become the new Chair of the Health Committee.

- The Holiday Brunch will be held on December 10, at the Back Nine Café at Cranberry Valley Country Club in Harwich.

- Joan Craig reported that a total of \$500 has been received for ads to be placed in the new Handbook. Major donors are also being solicited for the Ed Trust fund.

- Karen Mazza reported on the Youth Outreach Committee and the possibility of research on employment and educational opportunities for the 16-25 year old at risk individuals.

November 19, 2011
A very special
General Membership Meeting

“A Conversation with Kathy”

Dr. Kathy Schatzberg, president of Cape Cod Community College, will be our featured “conversationalist” at a general membership meeting on Saturday, November 19. Kathy, following a tradition she had established elsewhere, has been a member of the Cape Area League ever since she arrived on the Cape. She has been most helpful in many ways, critiquing us when necessary, but ALWAYS lending a strong supportive hand and voice and mind – as seen most recently in her central role as co-sponsor and the college’s strong support of our September 2010 forum on civility. Kathy will be retiring next year. Before she left, we thought it would be interesting, stimulating and fun to simply have a conversation with Kathy. There may be some pre-determined topics, but for sure it will be “open ‘mike”” also. We have a special location for this format. The Club House of Cobblestone Development off Phinney’s Lane in Hyannis will provide a large living room type space – carpet, couches, even a fireplace. So make sure you mark your calendar for this special meeting and watch the November Voter for further details. (The November Environmental Public Forum is tentatively rescheduled for May.)

Judy Thomas, President

SUCCESSFUL SEPTEMBER FORUM

Our September Forum on Governing Cape Cod : Challenges and Opportunities attracted over 110 concerned citizens and accomplished our major goals., We aimed to provide solid expert guidelines to examine county functions and structure and to stimulate a lively meaningful discussion with our very experienced panel of responders.

The keynote speaker was Dr.Ronald J.Oakerson political science professor of Houghton College in New York. League member Teresa Martin, Eastham representative to the Assembly of Delegates, was the moderator. Panelists included Robert O’Leary, Co-chair, Special Commission on Governance, State Senator Dan Wolf; Paul Niedzwiecki, Director, Cape Cod Commission, and Maggie Geist, Executive Director, Association to Preserve Cape Cod.

Because of the interest generated we had to extend the conclusion to noon, and even then folks lingered to continue the discussion informally. Attendees included Selectmen from at least six towns, members of the Special Commission on Governance, the three County Commissioners and several members of the Assembly of Delegates.

Two local newspapers covered the Forum in excellent articles. The article by Susan Vaughn in The Register is attached. David Still gave a fine detailed review in the Barnstable Patriot which you can find on line at www.barnstablepatriot.com/home2 under “O’Leary: Wastewater may provide focus for reform”. In addition, Terry Duenas, Director of the Cape Cod Community Media Center, enabled the Forum to be videotaped for Channel 17 and has provided the League with copies.

We are gratified to have this coverage which makes this important discussion and information available to the broader community. The League’s County Government committee will be looking at ways to continue to contribute to this important subject.. All interested are invited to join the group.

Jari Rapaport, Co-Editor

COAST WEEK

This September we celebrated our traditional Coast Week Celebration at Audubon’s Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellfleet. Bob Prescott the Sanctuary Director, an old friend of the League, gave us a very interesting talk on horseshoe crabs.

Horseshoe crabs are yet another endangered species. Our human lack of care for these animals is especially foolhardy as modern medicine depends on lysate extracted from horseshoe crab blood to establish that a medical substance is totally bacteria free. At this point there is no viable substitute. The Audubon and other groups are working to safeguard these important ancient animals.

There was good attendance at the meeting and we were pleased to have some 14 non-League visitors. It was a good star for the Environment Committee’s year.

Erica Parra, Chair, Environment Committee

**NAUSET UNIT MEETING - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18
10:10 AM – 12:00 PM**

Current Plans for Waste Water Management in the towns of Brewster, Eastham, Orleans and Wellfleet will be the focus of the Nauset Unit Meeting on October 18, to be held at the Snow Library at 10:10 AM. Representatives from each town will discuss the status of plans in their specific towns and also discuss cooperative measures that are contemplated or have been undertaken with others towns. Presentations will be followed by questions from the audience and general discussion. The meeting will conclude with an opportunity to hear about the activities of the LWVCCA committees and the chapter as a whole. Nauset Unit members are invited to bring an interested friend. Other units interested in the topic are also welcome. Presenters include:

Sue Levin, Town Planner from Brewster
Jane Crowley, Health Agent from Eastham
George Meservey, Director of Planning and Community Development for Orleans
Curt Felix and Alex Hay, From the Waste Water Study Committee in Wellfleet

Please note that the meeting starts at 10:10 AM because the library does not open its doors until 10:00 AM. Overflow parking is available at the Nauset Middle School located next to the library on Route 28. A staircase from the parking lot to the right of the school descends from the Middle School to the Snow Library.

Karen Mazza, Chair, Nauset Unit

CHATHAM/HARWICH UNIT

Please plan to join us and Joan Bernstein for what promises to be a very informative session on our health care system, particularly the recently adopted Affordable Care Act and its implications. Joan has been involved with health care issues for many years through her work with OWL (the Older Women's League) and will have copies of their impressive 2011 report for each of us.

Bring your questions and thoughts: Oct. 19, 10 a.m., Harwich Community Center. All League members are welcome

Nancy Erskine, Kathleen Vogt, Chairs

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee met on September 14th and welcomed new member Rory Marcus from Yarmouth and a potential new member Ken Ainsworth from Eastham. We are considering a forum in the Spring about the "greening" of Cape Cod. We will approach this topic from a regional point of view. If there is anyone interested in helping us plan this exciting forum, please contact Erica Parra at 508-255-3116 or Joan Grant at 508-255-0303 or grantoncape@yahoo.com. We are always looking for new ideas and enthusiastic people. The committee will meet again on **October 6th at 1pm at Snow Library** in Orleans in the small study room downstairs.

Joan Grant, Erica Parra

COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee started off the fall with the very successful September 17th Forum “Governing Cape Cod :Challenges and Opportunities. We will be meeting at 1:30, on Monday October 17th to plan for next steps. We will also be following the progress of the Special Committee to review County Governance, chaired by former State Senators Rob O’Leary and Henri Rauschenbach. Three current members of the LWWVCCA are on the Commission: Mary LeClair, Mary Lou Pettit and Florence Seldin.

Our County Observation Corps continues to be active in observing both the meetings of the County Commissioners and the Assembly of Delegates, which take place on Wednesdays. We watch our government in action, learning more about the issues, current problems as well as solutions and advances. We appear to be the only civic group to regularly monitor these meetings without a specific cause other than responsive government. Our issues actually center around transparency and open government. We are also concerned with supporting regional approaches to meeting the needs of Cape Cod.

Belonging to the Observation Corps does not obligate you to a specific schedule, and allows members to select observation dates to suit individual needs. However we want to get together to review standards for observations and to organize feed back to the committee so that we can make the best use of the observations.

We welcome interested members to join us and become part of this Corps. and the Committee. Come meet with us on **Oct. 17 at 1:00pm at the Cape Cod 5 in Dennis** and learn more about our work. For more information call Co-Chairs Nancy Curley or Jari Rapaport. Also, please let us know if you would like to participate but cannot be present on the 17th.

Nancy Curley 398-2775 Jari Rapaport 255-2476

VOTER SERVICE

In addition to registering voters and staffing candidate debates, we are sometimes called upon to exercise our expertise in other areas. An example is town meeting. We have distributed our town meeting flyers to participants as they enter their meeting place and we have found them to be quite pleased to receive this piece of historical and procedural information.

For the past two years our members, Bea Auty and Anita Mewherter, who were experienced in time-keeping at debates, were called upon to fulfill that function at Eastham’s town meetings. The moderators and audience members expressed their appreciation for assistance in regulating comments and questions.

As our new year begins we will be looking for new and veteran Leaguers to participate in our activities.

Elizabeth Levy, Chair

CONGRATULATIONS

League member Mary LeClair is to be honored by the Hyannis Area Chamber of Commerce and will be presented with the Patrick Butler Citizen of the Year award at the Chamber's annual meeting on October 5th. The Chamber cited her "great passion for her community" We certainly know all about that as Mary continues to assist the league in every possible way!

Member Nancy Erskine and her husband Bill were given the Ev Stoye Spirit of Service Award this year by Habitat for Humanity Cape Cod for "being humble servants, with true hearts who serve with wisdom, diligence, kind spirits, and love." Again, we know that if help is needed, Nancy is always there.

Three of our members were invited to serve on the newly formed Special Commission to Study County Governance. They are Mary LeClair, Mary Lou Petitt, and Florence Seldin. This is true recognition of their long term services to strengthen the county and its government.

The Connecticut Library Association Executive Board has nominated Betsy Bray as an Honorary Member. This honor must be confirmed by the Association membership. Her "curriculum vitae" included her work with the League of Women Voters, among many other accomplishments.

Please bring news of special recognition of our members to the attention of the editors, we would like to include this feature when these events occur.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

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THE REGISTER – WICKED LOCAL

Forum looks at regional options



wicked local photo by Susan Vaughn

Former state Sen. Robert O’Leary, right, makes a point at the League of Women Voters’ forum on governing Cape Cod Saturday in Harwich. Also on the responding panel are from left are Maggie Geist, executive director of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, state Sen. Dan Wolf and Paul Niedzwiecki, executive director of the Cape Cod Commission.

By Susan Vaughn

[THE REGISTER](#)

Posted Sep 22, 2011 @ 07:00 AM

CAPE COD

—
“Cape Cod’s basic government structure is in place. All it needs is some tweaking,” an authority on local and regional government told a League of Women Voters forum on Governing Cape Cod Saturday in Harwich.

More than 100 people, including local, county and state officials, attended the talk led by keynote speaker Ronald J. Oakerson, political science professor at Houghton College in New York, author of the book “Governing Local Public Economies.” The responding panel included former state Sen. Robert O’Leary, co-chairman of a new Special Committee on Governance, Cape Cod Commission Executive Director Paul Niedzwiecki, state Sen. Dan Wolf and Maggie Geist, executive director of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod.

Oakerson said Cape Cod has “an enormous advantage” for governance being one ecological unit. He said the regional governance structure needs multiple political

jurisdictions to serve as provisional units, which is provided by the towns. Political jurisdictions should also be nested, he said.

Barnstable County is the overlay for a two-tier system. “This is good,” Oakerson said, but he stressed that a county should serve purely as an overlying unit and not compete with the underlying units.

Intermediate units serve special purposes for education, water supply or sanitation, he said. Since Cape Cod has towns of radically different sizes, Oakerson said clusters of small towns could benefit from such services that are not needed by the larger towns.

Citing the state’s long history of civic engagement, Oakerson stressed the importance of civic associations participating in government. “The strength of local government lies in citizen engagement as an asset to be protected and nurtured,” he said. He said initiatives also come from professional associations of town officials such as police and fire chiefs and school superintendents.

“A multiplicity of organizations creates civic space. Use that civic space to its full advantage,” Oakerson advised. He added that he is “not a huge fan of weighted voting” such as exists with the current Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates.

Wolf responded saying, “I’m not convinced now whether the issue is weighted votes or the form of county government.” He suggested calling the county “Cape Cod County,” to give a different perspective on understanding town and county issues.

Wolf commented on O’Leary’s committee, which is looking at the structure and function of the county government. “It’s an opportunity to deliver a form of county government that allows towns to remain strong and solve problems,” Wolf said.

O’Leary said the county had a stronger connection to the towns before the county charter because of the financial connections. “Most ideas of governmental reform tend to percolate up,” he said.

Geist agreed, saying that on the regional level every issue should be addressed by a committee of town representatives, not the officials. She also said people need to think about themselves as living on Cape Cod as opposed to being from a village.

“We need to think out of the box to organize ourselves,” Niedzwiecki agreed. “We have to come to terms with the fact we are a seasonal economy, not a tourist economy,” he said, and added that the Cape has become a second homeowner community.

To support these economies, Oakerson said the Cape probably needs a combination of property taxes for the second home community as well as a sales tax for the tourist economy.

The talk of regional issues kept returning to wastewater, which O’Leary called the Cape’s “single biggest issue.” Citing the overwhelming vote last week that turned down a sewer construction proposal in Yarmouth, O’Leary said, “My instinct is we’re going to have to agree there is a problem. I don’t think we’re there yet. The public isn’t persuaded. No one wants to pay for it.

“We have to agree on how much we are going to do,” O’Leary continued. “If there’s not an agreement and we don’t have public support, we won’t get there. It’s important to come together as a community.”

Wolf said the Cape needs to make wastewater a state and federal issue because of the amount of state and federal land here and because of tourists who like to come here. “We need to get everyone to pay,” he said.

Oakerson concluded, “There is no one right way to do cooperation.” He said the county would be well suited to providing options.

Susan Vaughn can be reached at svaughn@wickedlocal.com

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