

THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 52 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2011

CALENDAR

**Tuesday, December 6
9:30 am**

**LWVCCA Board Meeting
Cape Cod 5 Dennis**

**Tuesday, December 6
12:00 after board meeting**

**Health Care Committee
Cape Cod 5 Dennis**

**Thursday, December 8
10:30 am**

**Voters Service Committee
Brewster Ladies Library, Route 6A**

Saturday, December 10

HOLIDAY BRUNCH

**Monday, December 12
1:30 pm**

**County Committee
New Media Center
17 Shad Hole Road
Dennisport**

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

**Sandwich Unit
First Church, Sandwich**

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

**Environment Committee
Long Pasture Wild Life
Sanctuary**

Dear Leaguers,

As I write this, it is an almost balmy 55 degrees outside and hard to imagine that the winter solstice is 24 days away. Maybe this milder than usual autumn is why the League has been and continues to be so busy currently!

Before the end of November, a subgroup of the County Committee will be meeting to draft comments to present to the Special Commission on County Governance on Nov. 30. The Health Care Committee is finalizing its plans for the January 21 forum titled: “**Navigating the Health Care System on Cape Cod**” which will feature, among others, Michael Lauf, CEO of Cape Cod Health Care. The Nominating and the Ed Trust By-Laws committees will begin work in early December. And, of course, I’m hoping a great many of us will join together for brunch and a good time for our **Holiday gathering** on Saturday, December 10. The brunch will feature **LWVMA president Eva Valentine**. It will be meet, greet, eat, question and learn. The Brunch and forum have more information about them on inside pages. Please take a look and see!

LWVMA is also active. I am part of a small group working to prepare an advocacy policy for presentation at the LWVMA Council next spring. This work is in response to a resolution adopted at the 2011 convention. State specialists are presenting supporting testimony on Beacon Hill on legislation such as H1106, commonly known as “same day voter registration” and S185, an act trying to stem the tide of the increasing high school drop out rate. An excellent Presidents’ Breakfast was held by LWVMA the end of October.

With many more resources, LWVUS is always active in numerous areas. Hard work continues in support of clean air (one of six priorities) and against voter suppression legislation. On that subject, I was shocked by what is happening in nearly half the states in the US according to testimony given by LWVUS president Elizabeth MacNamara and available on the LWVUS website. In an email to League leaders, she also drew attention to a hitherto unknown (for me) organization, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which she characterized as a “factory for anti-voter legislation.” For more on ALEC, Google the name.

These things in particular remind of the truth found on our membership brochure: “*because democracy is not a spectator sport . . .*” Our work/your work is so needed in so many areas. Our work/your work of strengthening democracy and informing the citizenry of important issues goes on and on. It would be wonderful to have more involved. So I close by encouraging you to invite someone you know who cares about our country and community to our Holiday brunch. It would be an excellent introduction to the League and its work. Just indicate the number and include the name and dollars needed on your registration which you’ll send to Debbie Aikman (see inside).

While I hope to extend my warmest holiday wishes to you in person on Saturday, December 10 at the Back Nine Restaurant, for those of you who will be unable to make that event, please know that I wish each of you a wonderful holiday season, one that includes strong hope for the New Year.

Best Wishes,

Judy

BOARD NOTES

November 2011

- Judy Thomas reported the LWVCCA President's Breakfast was well done and well attended. Progress is being made in several areas of the Strategic Plan adopted last year at the Convention
- Communications: LWVMA will send MA League Voter to all members quarterly. Anyone not receiving the MA Voter should notify Natalie at the state office.
- Program and Action: Look for LWVMA press releases of action on the LWVMA Facebook page

- Dates: Day on the Hill will be held either April 4 or April 11. The State Council meeting will be held on May 5, 2012. Council meetings are held in the "off-years" between state conventions and are worthwhile attending. LWVMA President Eva Valentine announced plans in the formation for three forums in spring on environmental issues in the western, central and eastern parts of Massachusetts focusing on concerns from each area
- Voter Service: There is a referendum petition drive in MA requiring Voter ID for the 2012 election. Recommend members pay close attention to this issue. The Board agreed unanimously to focus on registering high school students prior to the MA presidential primary.
- Reminder: The Holiday Brunch, Saturday, December 10 at the Back Nine Café, Cranberry Valley Country Club, Harwich
- Reminder: The Legislative Breakfast will be held on Friday, March 23, 2012 at the Cape Cod Community College Lobby at \$15 per person
- Nauset Unit Report: The October 18 meeting at the Snow Library, Orleans, was well attended. The talk on waste water management by the panel members from Brewster, Eastham, Orleans and Wellfleet was well prepared.
- Chatham/Harwich Unit Report: The meeting on Affordable Health Care on Wednesday, October 19 at the Harwich Community Center was informative and well done.
- Environment Committee: The next meeting is scheduled on November 18 at the Long Meadow Audubon site.
- County Government Committee: Jari Rapaport and Nancy Curly continue to monitor meetings held by the Special Commission on County Governance.

Jane Teixeira-Henry

COUNTY COMMITTEE

Nancy Curley, Co-Chair of the committee will present comments on county structure to the Special Commission on County Governance at their November 30th meeting. The Commissioners have organized this meeting to hear from all individual groups and individuals before they proceed to study the issues. Our County Committee has been attending the meetings of the Special Commission and is pleased to bring forward our thinking. The League, since its inception has been working for recognition of the need for a regional approach to issues facing Cape Cod, its residents and governments. The League was a participant in the development of our home rule charter in 1989, and welcomes this opportunity to review county governance structure after more than 20 years' experience with that charter. Our Statement is included in this issue of the Voter.

Jari Rapaport, Co-Chair

VOTER SERVICE

Attention all members who have participated in voter service activities during the past few years.....registering voters, distributing birthday cards, staffing candidate debates as moderators, timers, ushers, assisting at special programs:

We need you again to help us plan for the 2011-2012 season. We need your feedback on what's been tried, as well as new ideas you may come up with. We will be joined by Karen Mazza, our youth outreach liaison, who has been making contact with other Cape organizations which serve young people.

A special invitation is extended to both new members and to others who could make a contribution to our programs.

We will meet:

Thursday, December 8th

10:00 a.m.

Brewster Ladies Library

1822 Main St. (Rt. 6A)

Remember, VOTER is part of our name, and what we are best known for.

Elizabeth Levy, Chair

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee is now at work planning the League Forum to be held on April 28, 2012 on climate change and its effects on Cape Cod. Edward DeWitt, the new Executive Director of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, is interested in participating. We are also in the process of getting speakers from the Woods Hole Research Center, the Cape Cod National Seashore and the MA Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The next meeting of the committee will be Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at the Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary at 1:30 pm. We welcome all members who would like to join us.

Renate Sands

LONG PASTURE WILD LIFE SANCTUARY

If anyone members are interested in finding a new meeting place I would highly recommend the Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary. The staff is very accommodating and looking for organizations to use their facilities in the off season. One room could accommodate twenty plus people with media equipment available. Another smaller room could accommodate 8 to 10 people. Long Pasture is located off exit 7 on 6A.

435 Bone Hill Rd., Barnstable, MA 02637 (508-362-7475)

Renate Sands

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012

The Health Care Committee has been planning the League forum “Navigating the Cape Cod Health Care System” scheduled for Saturday, January 21 at the Harwich Community Center. Michael Lauf, chief of Cape Cod Healthcare will be the principal speaker. We are inviting a responsive panel who can represent doctors, nurses, dental resources, and help navigating Medicare. Save the date! And don’t forget our committee meeting on Dec.8!

Nauset Unit is planning a meeting in February to discuss resources available as we “age in place.” The Harwich-Chatham Unit will probably join us and all League members will be welcome. Details on specific time and place will follow in the new year.

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.

- 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.

HOLIDAY BRUNCH

BACK NINE CAFE

Cranberry Valley Golf Course
183 Oak St., Harwich, MA 02645

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010
9:15 A.M

SPEAKER: Eva Valentine, New President, LWVMA

The breakfast will consist of juices, seasonal fresh fruit, assorted pastries and muffins, hot entrees and fresh brewed coffee. The cost is \$15.00 per person including tax and gratuities. The deadline for registration is **this Friday, December 2, 2011**. If you have questions please contact Phyllis Walsh at 508-4206111 or walshpf@comcast.net

The Back Nine is a new venue for our area league. League members who have eaten there say the food is delicious. In addition, we have a dynamic speaker, Eva Valentine, the new president of the LWVMA. Come learn about the focus of the LWVMA for this year. We'll **start at 9:15** so members going to the opera will have ample time for both events.

Attendees are invited to bring a wrapped "shelf" book* to share in a holiday grab bag.
*Shelf book – a book you have read or will read from your shelf that you would like to pass on to someone else.

Directions: From Rt. 6, Exit 10 – Turn onto 124 toward Harwich.

Turn left onto Queen Anne Rd. at lights.

Take the third right onto Oak St.. The entrance to the Cranberry Valley Golf Course will be .5 miles on the left.

The restaurant and golf shop are at the end of the drive. There is ample parking and a handicap accessible entrance.

Note: The Cranberry Valley Golf Course at 183 Oak St. is less than a mile east from the Harwich Community Center at 100 Oak St. where we've had many forums and meetings

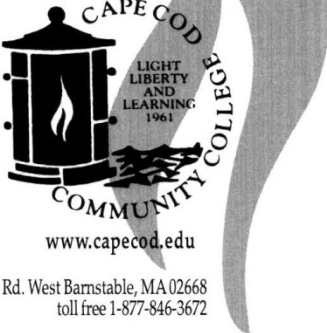
Please detach the coupon below and send with your check payable to the LWVCCA to: Debbie Aikman, 78 Water St., Chatham MA 02633 - **Deadline Friday, December 2, 2011**

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Count me in and register me for the Holiday Brunch on December 10. I have enclosed my check for \$15.00.

Name: _____

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