

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

# BULLETIN

January 2008 LWVCC Website: [www.lwvcc.com](http://www.lwvcc.com) P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034 Volume 12 07-08 #3

## CALENDAR

### JANUARY

23	Wed	LWVCC Member Breakfast, Colonial Inn	9:00-11:00 AM
27	Sun	Helping the Homeless Child in School, Trinitarian Church	7-8:45 PM
28	Mon	Concord Town Caucus	7:00 PM
29	Tues	LWVAA – Illegal Immigration: A Crisis, not a Crime, Acton Jr High School	7:30 PM
30	Wed	LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Main Library	10-11:30 AM

### FEBRUARY

1	Fri	LWVUS Immigration Consensus Deadline	
2	Sat	LWVM Super Saturday, Worcester	10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
5	Tues	Massachusetts Presidential Primary	polls open 7 AM – close 8 PM
6	Wed	Natural Resources Presentation – Wetlands Protection By-Law LWVCC Board Meeting, both at 141 Kyes Road in meeting room	9:00 coffee, 9:30 program 11:00 AM
13	Wed	LWVCC Fiscal Policy Consensus Mtg, 29 Willard Common (Cynthia Deysher)	7:00 PM
21	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps Meeting, Harvey Wheeler Building	9:30 AM
27	Wed	LWVCC ESC (Barbara Lewis)	1:30 PM

### MARCH

5	Wed	LWVCC Board Mtg & Local Program Planning, 229 Musketaquid Rd.	9:30 Bd Meeting
19	Wed	LWVMass Day on the Hill	
25	Tues	Concord Town Elections	Polls Open 7AM – 8 PM

### APRIL

2	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 89 Crescent Rd. (Erin Pastuszenski)	9 coffee, 9:30 meeting
16	Wed	LWVCC ESC (Ardis Bordman)	1:30 PM
27-29		Concord Town Meeting	

### MAY

4-5		Concord Town Meeting	
7	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Nancy James)	
12	Mon	Carlisle Town Meeting	
20	Tues	Carlisle Town Elections	

*Members are invited to attend monthly Board and Observer Corps meetings.  
Please contact Nancy Beeuwkes if you would like to attend any of them.*

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan grassroots organization of men and women formed in 1920 and dedicated to the principles of self government established by the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

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# EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Nancy Beeuwkes & Shawna Reid, ESC Co-Chairs

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Dear Concord/Carlisle League Members –

Happy New Year everyone and welcome 2008! The snows of December haven't quite disappeared and as I write, another blast of winter is predicted to slow the Monday rush down to a crawl. I love the anticipation of a snow day, a fire and no where to be! I have gotten my wish for a real New England winter and I apologize to all who are not happy about the record setting snow falls. I hope you all had happy, healthy celebrations and good times with family and friends during the holiday season.

Your League board has been busy with plans for 2008.

We completed the National Program planning at our January board meeting with Health Care recommended as a high priority for the National LWV focus for the 2008-2010 term. Other areas we emphasized for continuing focus were: Citizen's Right to Know and Individual Liberties, International Relations, Environmental Protection- Energy and Full Funding of Entitlements. The National LWV Convention will be in Portland, Oregon in June and I would encourage you to attend and participate in this vital League process. Please visit [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for more information.

We all look forward to seeing the membership at our annual **Members Breakfast** at the Colonial Inn in Concord on **Wednesday, January 23**. We have invited the Acton Area LWV to attend and participate in an informational presentation on the state Fiscal Policy Study and upcoming Consensus. State LWV Fiscal Policy Committee members will be talking about the data they collected from all the local Leagues and answering questions on consensus issues. Please come and bring a friend who might want to join the LWVCC.

Our February board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 6** at the Concord Town Public Works building at 141 Keyes Road. The

Concord Natural Resources Commission will be presenting their preliminary Wetlands Protection Bylaw to the LWVCC beginning at 9:30am. LWVCC Environmental Resources Chair, Betsy Sluder, has worked long and hard for a new wetlands bylaw and the League will be the first to view and comment on the proposal.

The **Fiscal Policy Consensus** meeting will be at **7pm, Wednesday, February, 13** at 29 Willard Common, Concord. Thank you to League member, Cynthia Deysher, for hosting this very important meeting. The purpose of this meeting is for our local League to come to consensus on questions set by the state Fiscal Policy Committee. Please read Nancy Cronin's article elsewhere in this bulletin for more details.

Please visit our website at [www.lwvcc.com](http://www.lwvcc.com) for notices and information about possible LWVCC open meetings and forums. The Concord Town Meeting Warrant is available at the Town House and there are several interesting articles that would make for lively and informative discussions in the next few months. Please contact us with any ideas for Public Forums you are willing to help organize.

**The Concord Town Caucus is Monday, January 28 at 7:30pm at the Alcott School.** Please attend to see who is running for office, hear your neighbors give interesting nominating speeches and VOTE for caucus nominees!

Don't forget to vote February 5<sup>th</sup> in the State Presidential Primary.

Thank you for all your hard work in 2007 and cheers to 2008!

Your Co-Chairs,

Shawna Reid and Nancy Beeuwkes

## MEMBERSHIP

We have had a very good membership renewal period, which will end on January 31. So look for our new 2008 directories to come out soon after that, in early February. If you would like any changes to be made to your listing in the directory, please contact me by the 25<sup>th</sup> of January. Thank you to all for your strong commitment to the League by continuing your membership, and to so many for your efforts to bring more people to this wonderful organization.

*Barbara Lewis, LWVCC Membership Chair*  
978-287-0049, [blglewis@comcast.net](mailto:blglewis@comcast.net)

## LWVCC BOOK GROUP JANUARY MEETING

The LWVCC's Book Group will meet this month on Wednesday, January 30, 2008 from 10-11:30 AM in the Trustees Room at the Concord Free Public Library in Concord Center. The book that we will be discussing this month will be *American Bloomsbur* by Susan Cheever.

The subtitle of this book is: *Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau: Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work*. In the book, Cheever looks at how these five individuals interacted with each other and helped each other grow and develop as a scholar, thinker and person. While some of her interpretations and conclusions may not be accepted, there is no question that she is enthusiastic for and cares about her subjects.

This promises to be an energetic, enlightening and thought-provoking discussion. All League members and their friends are invited to attend.

*Anne Hayden, Book Group Chair*

## LWVCC WEBSITE: URL CHANGE

Soon you should be able to access LWVCC's website at a new address that is easier to remember: [www.LWVCC.com](http://www.LWVCC.com). Until that time, please continue to visit our site at [www.lwvcc.ma.lwvnet.org](http://www.lwvcc.ma.lwvnet.org).

*Erin Pastuszewski, Webmaster*

## NATURAL RESOURCES PRESENTATION WETLANDS PROTECTION BYLAW

On February 6, 2008 Concord's Natural Resources Commission and its staff will present to League members, along with slides, the proposed bylaw for wetlands protection. The presentation will be in the Meeting Room in the Public Works Building, 141 Keyes Road.

Concord is the only town in this region that does not have one, and the abuse to our wetlands and even town owned lands is becoming ever more egregious. Without a bylaw the Natural Resources Commission is without authority to control violations.

The League will be the first organization to view this presentation, and your comments are very much wanted by the Natural Resources Commission. Please come. We look forward to seeing you.

The program will begin at 9:30 AM (coffee and light refreshments at 9:00 AM). After the presentation the LWVCC Board will conduct a brief business meeting.

*Betsy Sluder, Environmental Resources Chair*

## LAST REMINDER: LWVCC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BREAKFAST WED. JAN 23, 9:00 – 11:00 AT THE COLONIAL INN

Members from Concord Carlisle as well as Acton Area, gather for a light continental breakfast and to hear about the Fiscal Policy Study results from Mass. League Co-chairs of the Study Committee. Cost: \$10 payable at the door. RSVP to Barbara Lewis, 978-287-0049, [blglewis@comcast.net](mailto:blglewis@comcast.net).

*Barbara Lewis, Membership Chair*

**9th Annual online Student Essay Contest**  
**“Making Democracy Work**  
**– Vote 2008”**

**For Mass grades 4-12 and 18-24 yr olds**  
**Contest deadline is March 4, 2008**  
**Go to [www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org) for essay questions,**  
**rules & prizes info.**  
**Awards event Sunday, April 13, 2008**

**OBSERVER CORPS**  
**NEW MEMBERS NEEDED**

The LWVCC’s Observer Corps is in need of new members if it is to continue. Most of our observers have been doing it for some time now and while willing to go on, they would like reinforcements. We particularly need observers for the school committee, the Board of Health, Planning Board, library boards, and the Finance Committee. It would be great to cover many of the other committees as well. An additional observer for the Selectmen would be welcome, too, as well as substitutes.

The main requirements are to be willing to attend the meetings of the committee you are observing and to write objective and balanced reports of the meetings.

We are also considering making the Observer Report available only on the website and would like to hear your thoughts. If we want to continue mailing the report to everyone, the chair would like a bit more help, too.

Please call Louise Haldeman to volunteer or to ask questions (978) 369-8562.

*Louise Haldeman, Observer Chair*

**DAY ON THE HILL**

This year Day on the Hill (March 19) is titled “Balancing Economics and the Environment.” The keynote speaker is Sal DiMasi, Speaker of the Massachusetts House. Please mark the date and plan to attend. At least one carload of LWVCC members attends each year. More details to follow.

**CASINOS IN MASSACHUSETTS?**

The Governor’s proposal to license three casinos in the state will probably reach the legislature in the next few months. This is an important issue. If passed, the negative effects will far surpass any positive ones. While casinos do produce revenue, most experts have concluded that they will cost us \$3.00 for every \$1.00 that is raised. Casinos do bring jobs, but they act mostly as a job transfer mechanism forcing independent businesses to close. Casinos themselves are attractive and well-maintained, and the majority of people who attend them do so responsibly, but the number of people who develop gambling problems is significant and growing. Gambling addiction can lead to tragic consequences. At a time when the state needs money and a recession appears on the horizon, casinos may seem like a quick fix. But there is no quick fix to our financial problems. Casinos will only make them worse.

**LWVM SUPER SATURDAY!**

On Saturday, February 2, 2008, the Mass League will be holding morning and afternoon training workshops for League members. Sessions include moderator training, voter service, lobbying and blog training, and public speaking. For more information call the state league office at (617) 523-2999.



**JUDGES WANTED!**

**FOR OUR 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**  
**ONLINE STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST**  
**\*no meetings \*no mailings \*on own schedule**  
**\*runs thru March 2008**  
**\*all judging and communications happen**  
**via email**

**PLEASE EMAIL THE STATE LEAGUE AT**  
**[judges@lwvma.org](mailto:judges@lwvma.org) TO INDICATE YOUR**  
**INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING.**

## Coming to Consensus - Financing Local Government

The League is currently involved in a Fiscal Policy Update of our positions on financing municipal government. Local Leagues throughout the state have compiled profiles of their communities' financial situation and submitted them to the LWVM Fiscal Policy committee. Many cities and towns have been faced with severe cuts of staff and services. The state committee is analyzing this information and soon will be distributing consensus information to all local Leagues.

On the morning of January 23<sup>rd</sup> the Acton Area League will join the LWVCC at 9:00 for a continental breakfast at the Colonial Inn. We will host Kathy Leonardson and Zaxaro Bennett, the co-chairs of the LWVM Fiscal Policy committee, who will share the results of the study and discuss with us some of the key issues to consider in arriving at consensus. Then on Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 9 PM we will hold our consensus meeting at the home of Cynthia Deysher, 29 Willard Common. We hope to see you at both events.

In developing the Concord and Carlisle financial profiles we have found that our towns have probably not been as critically affected as some communities, but we have been feeling the budget crunch due to the increasing costs of employee health insurance, special education and high stakes testing, along with cuts in state aid.

For Carlisle specifically, the added costs have been compounded by the recent housing downturn. Property taxes account for over 98% of Carlisle's revenue. Carlisle has had no new housing starts in 18 months which means there will be no new revenue to help offset the increasing health care, retirement and mandated salary increases which trend at 6-7% per year. An override will be needed and cuts will still be required, setting the town up for some very tough decisions in the months ahead.

Here are some facts that we gleaned from completing our reports to the LWVM.

	Concord	Carlisle	Statewide
% revenue from property tax	80%	98%	53%
State Aid	6%	8.80%	24%
% of property tax exempt	15%	5%	50%
% education expenditures 2005	57%	65%	19%
% special educ expenditures	26%	22%	
Residential % of property tax	91%	98%	
Successful overrides	6 out of 7	24 out of 33	
Successful debt exclusions	11 out of 14	60 out of 75	