

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

BULLETIN

January 2011

LWVCC Website: www.lwvcc.org
P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034

Volume 15 2010-11 #3

CALENDAR

JANUARY

19	Wed	LWVCC Membership Breakfast, Topic TBD, Colonial Inn, Concord	9:00-11:00 am
20	Thurs	LWVCC 1 st Town Govt Initiative Mtg (Susan Sekuler)	10:00 am
26	Wed	LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Public Library	10-11:30 am
31	Mon	Concord Town Caucus, Concord Town House	7:30 pm

FEBRUARY

2	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Barbara Lewis)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
		LWVMA STATE PROGRAM PLANNING (brown bag lunch)	11:30 am
16	Wed	LWVCC ESC meeting (Barbara Lewis)	8-9:00 am
16	Wed	LWVCC Public Forum: "Our Town, Our Schools, Our Money" Concord Town House Hearing Room, Monument Square	7:30 pm

MARCH

2	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Erica Morrison)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
		LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING (brown bag lunch)	11:30 am
5	Sat	LWVMA WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham	9:30 am-1:00 pm
6	Sun	Ending Homelessness Forum, Concord Trinitarian Church, Walden St.	3-5:00 pm
13 or 20	Sun	LWVCC Concord Candidates Forum, Date TBA	
23	Wed	LWVCC ESC meeting (Paula Vandever)	8-9:00 am

APRIL

6	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Erin Pastuszenski)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
13	Wed	LWVMA Day on the Hill	9 coffee; 9:30 program
20	Wed	LWVCC Warrant Review Meeting, Erin Pastuszenski	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
29	Tues	Concord Town Elections	polls open 7 am - 8 pm

MAY

4	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
25	Wed	LWVCC Annual Meeting, TBA	

*Members are invited to attend monthly Board meetings.
Please contact Becky or Paula if you would like to attend any of them.*

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political 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.

Co-Presidents	Becky Shannon	(978) 371-1806	Co-Presidents@lwvcc.org
	Paula Vandever	(978) 369-9268	Co-Presidents@lwvcc.org
Membership	Barbara Lewis	(978) 287-0049	Membership@lwvcc.org
Bulletin Editor	Anne Hayden	(978) 369-8526	BULLETIN@lwvcc.org
Webmaster	Erin Pastuszenski	(978) 369-3842	wm@lwvcc.org

EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Becky Shannon and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

January 2011

Dear League Members,

Wishing you a happy and successful 2011. Thank you for your support of the League by renewing your membership and welcome to new members! We are an active League of many highly skilled women and men who are working to safeguard our democracy.

At the December Holiday Party we had a chance for members to reconnect during that festive time of year. We enjoyed the talks by Kathy Balles and Pamela Hathaway who reported about new activities of elementary students in Carlisle and Concord schools—Carlisle Grows Green and Kids Eat Smart in Concord. It is empowering to see how much a few citizens can achieve when certain factors align. We are growing greener at the local level.

Two of our traditional public meetings will be held soon. On February 16th, Concord's annual "Our Town, Our Schools, Our Money", will be held at the Town House. Town Manager Chris Whelan; School Superintendent Diana Rigby; Deputy School Superintendent John Flaherty; and Finance Director Tony Logalbo will speak about budgets and other issues facing Concord at this challenging time. Another standard League event, "Concord Candidates Forum," will be held March 13th or 20th at the Town House. We will know who the candidates are on February 8th.

Members are invited to participate in Program Planning for the state League in February and for the LWVCC in March. Program Planning is the basis for education and action. We will survey our Positions and can choose to: recommend an update, a new study, a concurrence, an elimination of an outdated position, or make no recommendations.

Two new local committees are currently organizing. The Town Government Initiative will have its first meeting on January 20th. We will review our existing local League positions first and determine what areas of local government are of most interest to the group. Contact either Susan Sekuler or Ardis Bordman if you would like to participate. There is also a Candidates Forum Committee developing to help us coordinate and document the successful procedures we have used recently and to prepare for up-coming elections. If you are interested in joining the committee, contact me.

At the state level, the LWVMA has organized Strategic Planning Focus Groups to help the state League with some important decisions and allow the state board to hear what is important and successful at the local level. Two areas to be discussed: how can we encourage more collaboration between local Leagues and the state League on administration, politics and education; and ideas regarding partnering with other organizations to fulfill our mission.

At the national level, it is time to submit our choices for the LWVUS Advocacy Priorities. Those are the recommendations for which we urge the LWVUS to focus their lobbying efforts. Currently the three top Advocacy Priorities are: Global Climate Change, Campaign Finance Reform and Health Care Reform.

There are many activities in which you can participate—working with interesting people, working for League goals, and making a difference in our democracy. Have a great new year.

Sincerely,

Paula Vandever, Co-President

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

This has been one more successful year for our local League chapter regarding new members, with 16 people joining in the past year. We welcome all these new members and encourage them to attend meetings and membership events to meet other members, and to learn about our activities and how to become involved.

At the time of this writing however, we still have approximately 34 who have not sent their renewals in yet. And this does not include the folks whom we are not expecting back for various reasons. So final membership totals for 2011 are still uncertain.

New member Irmingard Doane has been helping with membership duties, maintaining the information that is stored on the national data base. It has been such a pleasure getting to know Irmi and I am very grateful for all of her wonderful support.

If you are interested in becoming more active and finding a way to help the League at the level that is comfortable for you, please contact me at 978-287-0049 or send me an email at blglewis@comcast.net.

Barbara Lewis, Membership Chair

LWVCC BOOK GROUP

Wednesday, Jan 26, 10:00-11:30 am

Trustees Room, Concord Public Library
Book: *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Douglas A. Blackmon. This book was a Pulitzer Prize winner for nonfiction.

League members and their friends are invited to participate in any and all of our Book Club meetings. This book promises to be interesting and thought-provoking. Questions? Contact Anne Hayden by email (Book_Group@lhwcc.org) or by phone (978-369-8526).

Anne Hayden, Book Group Chair

OUR TOWN, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR MONEY:

Facing Concord's Financial Challenges

This popular LWVCC forum returns to Concord on February 16th at 7:30 pm in the hearing room of the Town House. Proposed budgets for the town and schools will be reviewed and explained by:

- Christopher Whelan, Town Manager
- Tony Logalbo, Town Finance Director
- Diana Rigby, Supt of Schools
- John Flaherty, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance.

This meeting's discussion is always lively and interesting and an ideal preparation for Town Meeting. Please bring a friend to this wonderful program. Refreshments will be served. Snow date is February 17th.

Erin Pastuszewski, Communications

TOWN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

At our 2010 annual meeting we voted a Town Government Initiative. We plan to start with a review of our existing local positions, leading to increased public awareness and participation in Town government through education and advocacy. Every year the League sponsors a Concord meeting called "Our Town, Our Schools, Our Money," with that same purpose.

During the last two years, our efforts have been directed to a superb series of forums about food, energy, and water resources, with less focus on local issues. This initiative will be directed at local government. As the financial situation of cities and towns becomes more constrained, it is even more important for citizens to understand how our Town governments function.

The first meeting of the committee will be held on January 20, 2011, at 10:00 am at the home of Susan Sekuler. All are welcome. Questions? Please contact Susan Sekuler 978.369.8025, Local_Initiative@lhwcc.org, or Ardis Bordman (978.369.7914 or Secretary@lhwcc.org).

LEAGUE PROGRAM PLANNING

In the next two months members of the LWVCC will take part in program planning activities. On February 2, at 11:30 a.m., following the board meeting at Barbara Lewis' home, all members are invited to participate in state League program planning. Then on March 2, at 11:30 a.m. at the home of Erica Morrison we will discuss local program planning. All members are invited to attend either one or both of these meetings and participate in one of the central activities of the League. "Program" refers to specific policies and position statements on which the League can take action. Our current Positions at each level of the League can be found on our website: www.lwvcc.org.

The League is unique in its grassroots approach to planning and adopting issues to be studied. At these planning meetings, members will consider what parts of the existing local and state program need special attention and what new issues, if any, should be studied. Recommendations for issues to be studied, restudied, added by concurrence with other Leagues' Positions or dropped altogether are forwarded to each appropriate level of the League. The state and national conventions and our own annual meetings use these recommendations to help decide what issues to pursue.

Although League issues are governmental, action need not be confined to lobbying elected officials. Action can be a public relations effort to persuade citizens to recycle, for example, or to conserve water. Our "Life in the Balance" forums were based on specific Positions and were meant to encourage action reflected in those Positions in addition to education about the issues.

Bring a bag lunch and come for the LWVCC Board Meetings, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. on February 2 and March 2 or join board members at 11:30 a.m. for the program planning only. You may have a new and important area to recommend that the League add to program at the state or local level. Please contact Paula Vandever if you can attend at: Co-Presidents@lwvcc.org or 978-369-9268.

Paula Vandever, LWVCC Co-President

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE? FORUM UPDATE

A report with the results of the breakout sessions from the second LITB Water Forum has been prepared and is available on the LWVCC website www.lwvcc.org.

Cindy Nock, LWVCC Vice-President

MONEY IN POLITICS FORUM UPDATE

A group of LWVCC members met in November to discuss holding a forum that would address the impact of *Citizens United v. FEC* and legislative responses. The group presented a forum proposal to the Board of Directors at its December meeting. The Board thanked the group for its proposal and decided to place it on hold until the 2011-12 League year, rather than going forward in the next six months. When the time comes to reactivate this project, LWVCC members will be notified. If you would like to be involved, please contact Paula or Becky.

If the topic of money in politics interests you, please plan to attend the state League's Day on the Hill on April 13th in Boston. The program that morning will focus on campaign finance issues. We'll be arranging carpools from Concord as the date approaches.

Erin Pastuszewski, Communications

WHAT IS LWVMA PROGRAM AND ACTION

Study, consensus, and action are the hallmarks of the League of Women Voters. As a grass roots organization the topics for study are determined by the membership through the program planning process which occurs in alternate years for State and National Leagues and annually for local Leagues.

Topics proposed for study are those which are considered to have significant implications for public policy and ones on which the League has no current position. League studies are significant in that they are adopted not to prove a predetermined assumption, but to truly explore. Very often those engaged in the actual process find that as their knowledge expands their own opinions change. Studies are complex and usually take two years of research. Once they are completed and a consensus has been reached and accepted by the State (or National) convention or the annual meeting, the topic becomes part of the League's program and remains there unless they are at some point reversed or removed.

Action is the next step in the process. The LWVMA has a committee of specialists called the Program and Action Committee (P and A) with each specialist pursuing legislation in her area. A list of specialists and a partial summary of their recent work can be found on the LWVMA website. The issues covered by LWVMA program are many and in a given year there may be no legislative action on some of them. In the last session, Health Care, Environmental issues, and Legalized Casino Gambling topped the list but that did not mean that other items were not discussed and tracked. This month marks the start of the first year of the new Massachusetts Legislative session and we can be reasonably sure that all of the above will be back.

Massachusetts will be facing difficult financial decisions in the future. Although our state is better off than many of our sister states and appears to be slowly recovering from the recession, what happens at the Federal level will affect us. It is probable that there will need to be cuts in spending and state aid to cities and towns, and how these cuts will affect the citizenry must be under close scrutiny as we look at the effect of cuts on education, basic human needs, environmental protections, etc.

In February, the Concord-Carlisle League will be participating in State program planning in preparation for the State Convention in May. To do so we should review the League's extensive program which can be found on the LWVMA website under *Issues and Action*. Both a summary and a complete version are available for reading and/or down loading. As the LWVMA program is already extensive, it may be that no new study is indicated at this time but it is important to review our position and recommend priorities, always understanding that lobbying effectiveness in a given session will depend in large part on what the Legislature is doing. Many bills are filed each session which either never see the light of day or are incorporated into others.

In April the LWVMA will hold its annual Day on the Hill at the Massachusetts State House. There will be a panel of speakers on the topic of "Money In Politics" along with reports from our specialists on the progress of the legislation which they are following. There will also be an opportunity to meet with our legislators. Plan to attend if possible. The input of informed voters is a most important part of successful legislation and information is the best defense against ignorance.

*Louise Haldeman,
LWVMA P & A Committee*

TIME TO RESTART CONCORD'S OBSERVER CORPS

For many years the LWVCC had a sizeable Observer Corps in Concord which reported regularly on the activities of many town committees. But with the death of a beloved member and the retirement of several other long term members, it has dwindled down to one indefatigable member, Betsy Sluder, who keeps close watch on the Natural Resources Commission. It's time to begin again.

Why do we need League Observers?

Concord is served by many citizen committees whose members give of their time and energy to shape and recommend policy for the town. With the exception of the Selectmen and the School Committee, most of these committees labor in relative obscurity. We learn their recommendations at Town Meeting but often we know little about the issues the Committee had to consider while reaching them.

An active Observer Corps can bridge this gap. An observer agrees to follow a given committee, attend its meetings regularly, and report back to the League on the committee's progress. It often happens that several committees are working on different aspects of the same problem but are not necessarily in touch with one another. While their recommendations come together as the pre-Town Meeting hearings approach, League Observers can make us aware much earlier and occasionally this may help to facilitate discussion.

Concord's committees have an excellent record of complying with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Laws but in the rare cases when the rules are violated, usually inadvertently, an observer can politely but effectively call it to their attention.

We are in a period where the increasing demands from the public run headlong into the shrinking resources of the Town. While

virtually all home owners and developers desire to work with the Town and not against it, private wealth can greatly outstrip the financial ability of the Town to combat intentional violations of town regulations. In such cases the light of day in the form of regular observers, is a good tool.

An observer must be willing to attend meetings as regularly as possible, and most committees apart from the Selectmen and School Committees meet once a month. An observer must also be objective, we are not trying to play "gotcha," and able to write a report on a regular basis for the Bulletin or a special On-Line Observer report.

Committees which particularly need observers are the Planning Board, the Board of Health, the Zoning Board, Public Works, the Light Board, Historic Districts, Board of Assessors and many others. Anyone interested should contact me, Louise Haldeman, at (978) 369-8562, or Observer_Corps@lhwcc.org for discussion and more information.

Louise Haldeman, Observer Corps

2009 WETLANDS BYLAW UPDATE

Concord Town Meeting passed a new Wetlands Bylaw in 2009 that strengthened the ability of the Natural Resources Commission to correct violations of our wetlands. Recently, the new bylaw was used to enforce the removal of materials that had been placed in the wetlands by a local business. Still outstanding is work to delineate the historic wetlands (after removal of materials) and restore the original elevation in the wetland and 25-foot No Disturb Zone.

Betsy Sluder, Environmental Chair

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Join League members and the public on Saturday, March 5, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at McPherson Hall in the Medical Arts Building of MetroWest Medical Center, 85 Lincoln St., Framingham, MA. Speakers will be: Judy Norsigian, Ph.D., Director, Our Bodies Ourselves, "The Impact of the Media on Women's Health;" Cheryl Hamlin, M.D., Clinician, Mt. Auburn Hospital, "Disparities in Health Care: Access Limited by Culture, Language Barriers, and Lack of Insurance:" and, Georgia Sassen, Ph.D., Visiting Scholar at Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center, "Mental Health Issues for Women." A Health Fair will follow the speakers from noon to 1:00 p.m.

This forum and a parallel forum to be held in Hadley, MA are sponsored by the LWVMA and are free and open to the public. Directions can be found on the state League website: www.lwvma.org . For more information, contact Paula Vandever at Health_Care@lwvcc.org or 978-369-9268.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS: Recent Successes and Next Steps Seventh Annual Interfaith Homelessness Forum

**Sunday, March 6, 2011, 3:00-5:00pm,
Trinitarian Church, Concord**

Family homelessness remains a severe crisis in Mass. with record high foreclosures and layoffs. Over 33,000 families in housing crisis applied for emergency shelter last year, far exceeding the 3,000 families in emergency shelters nightly. Lt. Gov. Tim Murray, keynote speaker, will highlight the state's encouraging homeless prevention initiatives. Tina Brooks, Co-leader of Mass Commission to End Homelessness, will describe the successes, innovations, and proposed growth plans of the pilot regional network programs that involve preventing homelessness. Tina Close, Co-Convenor of the MetroWest Regional Program, will detail achievements using prevention, diversion, and rapid re-housing. A family that avoided homelessness by using these services will share its first hand account. Hear from area lawmakers and learn how we can help with proven strategies.

ANOTHER INCONVENIENT TRUTH

In times of prosperity, meeting basic human needs is often over looked. It is assumed that a rising tide lifts all boats. However, even before the recent recession there was great disparity in income among Massachusetts citizens. All around us there is a great deal of real poverty, largely hidden from our more well to do communities although it is no longer as rare as it once was to see people using food stamps at our markets.

At the November meeting of the LWVMA's P & A committee, Clare Gordon, specialist in Meeting Basic Human Needs, shared with the committee a report entitled *Poverty in the United States and Massachusetts*. It indicated that as of Sept. 2009, 10.3% of the residents of Massachusetts lived below the federal poverty level which for a family of four is \$22,050. The older cities have the highest proportion of the poor with Lawrence at 30.6%, Springfield 27.1%, New Bedford 22.5%, Worcester 19.5% and Boston at 16.9%. Overall 13 % of our state's children and 23% of families headed by a single mother were below the poverty level.

Since these figures are from 2008, the levels are probably higher now due to recession job losses. In addition, there are many families barely living above the poverty level.

On a further note, Massachusetts is tied with Arizona as having the largest income disparity. The top 10% of our citizens have incomes equivalent to the lowest 70%.

NEWS FROM LWVUS

Here are the National League issue priorities for the 2011-2012 Congressional session. Sign up on www.lwv.org for Action Alerts and you'll be notified by email when to contact our Congressional representatives.

DC Voting Rights

Citizens of the District of Columbia have no representation in the U.S. Senate and only a nonvoting delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives. A basic principle of democracy is at stake. U.S. citizens living in the capital of the free world deserve to have full voting representation in the bodies that make their laws, tax them and call them to war.

Election Administration

When the 2000 election exposed the many problems facing the election system, the League leaped into action. Bringing our coalition allies together, the League worked to ensure that key reforms were part of the congressional debate. With the League's special expertise, we argued for improved voting systems and machines, provisional balloting and other safeguards, and improvements in voter registration systems, poll worker training and administration.

Global Climate Change

Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts.

The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to

cleaner technologies. Cities, states and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution, and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers exist.

To reinforce and expand on those efforts, the League urges federal action that reduces global warming pollutants on a national and global scale.

Health Care Reform

The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.

Through decades of work in their communities, League members have learned that Americans believe that fairness and responsibility, as well as access, are important values for any health care system. We believe that health care reform can only succeed if it takes all these values into account.

Introduction: national and state **League of Women Voters** chapters have made a significant commitment to domestic violence prevention with reports in every **Concord-Carlisle League** newsletter. Included:

- **Rachel's' Box Project**
- **Domestic Violence Services Network [DVSN]** (including **DVVAP**)
- **Network for Women's Lives [NWL]**
- other timely area projects

Rachel's Box Project serves victims of domestic violence, as well as child and elder abuse, in **50 locations around the western suburbs**. Please notify Nancy James 978-369-2771 if you notice boxes in disarray or needing materials. *The Network for Women's Lives* Rachel's Box Committee tends the boxes and provides updated materials and *Network* newsletters.

Domestic Violence Services Network through **DVVAP** trains community volunteers to become advocates who "offer empowering knowledge and gentle compassion. Emergency numbers on the web site are below.

Emergency Numbers

Police	911
Emerson Hospital	978-287-3690
Rape Crisis Center	800-542-5212
Domestic Violence Victim Assistance (DVVAP)	888-399-6111
Network for Women's Lives Referral Service	978-287-4089
Support Group for Women with Controlling Partners	978-369-0259 or 978-369-2208
Concord District Court D.A.'s Victim Witness Advocate	978-369-0225
Dept. of Transitional Assistance	617-629-1400
Food Source Hotline	800-645-8333
[Jane Doe] Mass Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence	www.janedoe.org
Domestic Violence Shelter	877-785-2020

By: Nancy P. James
1/12/2010
978-369-2771



The League of Women Voters
Massachusetts

The League of Women Voters
Massachusetts



WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Saturday, March 5, 2011
9:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

McPherson Hall in the Medical Arts Building of MetroWest Medical Center
85 Lincoln St., Framingham, MA

Registration, Coffee and Tea
9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.

Speakers and Discussion

10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.

"THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON WOMEN'S HEALTH"
Judy Norsigian, Ph.D., Director, Our Bodies Ourselves

11:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

**"DISPARITIES IN HEALTH CARE: ACCESS LIMITED BY
CULTURE, LANGUAGE BARRIERS, AND LACK OF INSURANCE"**
Cheryl Hamlin, M.D., Clinician, Mt. Auburn Hospital

11:30 A.M. to 12:00 Noon

"MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES FOR WOMEN"
Georgia Sassen, Ph.D., Visiting Scholar at Brandeis University
Women's Studies Research Center

Health Fair

12:00 Noon to 1:00 P.M.

Snow date: March 26.

Please call Paula Vandever, 978-369-9268, for more information.
Visit the www.lwvma.org site for directions.
A parallel forum will be held in Hadley on March 12 (Snow date: April 2).
Call 413-549-2958 for information.
Both events are free and open to the public.
Application for CEUs for social workers and nurses has been submitted.