

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

BULLETIN

March 2011

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

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CALENDAR

MARCH

2	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Anne Hayden)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
		LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING (brown bag lunch)	11:30 am
5	Sat	LWVMA WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY	9:30 am-1:00 pm
		MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham	
6	Sun	LWVCC Concord Candidates Forum	1:30-3:00 pm
23	Wed	LWVCC ESC meeting (Paula Vandever)	8-9:00 am
23	Wed	LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Library	10-11:30 am
29	Tues	Concord Town Election	polls open 7 am-8 pm

APRIL

1	Fri	River Stewardship Award Nominations Due	
6	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Erin Pastuszenski)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
13	Wed	LWVMA Day on the Hill, Gardner Auditorium, State House	9-noon
20	Wed	LWVCC Warrant Review Meeting (Erin Pastuszenski)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
25	Mon	Concord Town Meeting begins, continues nightly, CCHS	7 pm

MAY

1	Sun	LWVCC Carlisle Candidates Forum, Clark Room, Town Hall	3-5 pm
4	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting (Paula Vandever)	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
9	Mon	Carlisle Town Meeting, Corey Building	7 pm
17	Tues	Carlisle Town Election	polls open 7 am-8 pm
18	Wed	LWVCC ESC meeting (Becky Shannon)	8-9 am
20-21	Sat/Sun	LWVMA Convention, The Public House, Sturbridge, MA	
25	Wed	LWVCC Annual Meeting, Concord Park, 68 Commonwealth Ave.	6:30-9:00 pm

*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.

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EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Becky Shannon and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

March 2011

Dear League Members,

What a winter! All those snowy Wednesdays may have delayed our Membership Breakfast and our meetings but never our activity! We were able to hold the Membership Breakfast a week late and, although we missed hearing the latest on health care in Massachusetts, members did have an opportunity to reflect on their membership in the LWV, discussing and sharing personal highlights of years of activism. The members participating raved about the chance to just talk to each other revealing an interest in more social opportunities.

The annual Concord “Our Town, Our Schools, Our Money” was not snowed out this year and we had the opportunity to hear presentations by the Town Finance Director, Tony Logalbo; Town Manager, Chris Wayland; Superintendent of Schools, Diana Rigby; and Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Operations, John Flaherty. The format of the evening provided a nice overview of the Town Meeting budgets with plenty of time for questions from the audience. This year, we learned how Concord’s employee pension and health care programs are funded, the health of the funds, and how they affect our budgets this year and moving forward. Funding issues for health care and pension plans are the talk nationwide as towns and states try to balance their budgets. Be sure to catch the program on CCTV’s Video on Demand online (www.concordtv.org).

Now as the snow piles recede, and the days become longer and the sun brighter, the LWVCC is going into overdrive! In late winter the LWVCC puts on its town hat as we head towards town elections and Town Meetings. We held the Concord Candidates Forum March 6th and are pleased that there are three candidates for the Concord Housing Authority, the only contested election. Concord’s town election is March 29. Carlisle’s Candidates Forum will be held on May 1st and Carlisle’s town election is May 17th. We know you will vote, even for the uncontested races. Please take a friend to the polls as well.

On March 5th, League members participated in the “LWVMA Women’s Health in the 21st Century” forum held in Framingham. The same day, we also had a table at the “Getting to Green” forum in Concord, displaying the many tools, forums and activities the League provides in the environmental and climate action arenas.

The League provides members with the background needed to be informed, active and successful participants in government. As a result, LWVCC members think seriously about running for elected positions and joining town committees. Green Cards for volunteering for Concord committees are available on the town website.

It will be a busy spring for the two towns and the LWVCC. We hope you will participate and add your voice to the conversation! It’s our democracy.

Sincerely,

Becky Shannon and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

By now you should all have received the new 2011 Membership Directory in eye-catching pink. Welcome to all the 15 new members who joined us over the past year, and I look forward to continuing this wonderful influx of energy and enthusiasm that fresh members contribute. But that only happens with your help. If there is someone you know, or someone you meet, who you feel might be interested in the work the LWV is doing, encourage them to join, or let me know and I would be happy to send them information and a membership form.

There are a few edits that need to be made in the new directory. Patricia Berger has joined locally, so please cross out 'National' in her entry. Sue Curtin's email address is at comcast.net, not att.net. And this year we will be recognizing Mary Clarke and Marion Thornton for their tremendous commitment to the League as Honorary Fifty Year Members. So make a note of that in your directories. My apologies for these omissions. If you find any other errors or changes you would like me to make in any of your entries, please just let me know.

I have been little by little gaining ground on my goal of having all the dates that members first joined the League. After folks received this directory I got a few very nice phone calls from members letting me know of the year they joined, and I appreciate that they took a moment to give me this information. Send me an email or call if you see that there is no date with your entry. Best guesses gladly welcomed.

Hope to see you all at the Annual Meeting on May 25th.

Barbara Lewis, Membership Chair

MARCH BOOK GROUP

The March meeting of the LWVCC Book Group will be on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 from 10-11:30 am in the Trustees Room of the Concord Public Library. The book we will be discussing is *The Places In Between* by Rory Stewart. The book describes the author's 2002 walk across Afghanistan and his encounters with the people, and was chosen as one of the *New York Times* Ten Best Books of 2006.

The League Book Group is open to the public. Our discussions are lively, informative and thoroughly enjoyable. For more information contact Anne Hayden (Book_Group@lwvcc.org or 978 369-8626).

Anne Hayden, Book Group Chair

Do-It-Yourself Campaign Finance

Do you know that public funding for presidential campaigns was recently eliminated by a vote of the House of Representatives? And do you know that the number of taxpayers using this option has fallen from 28.7% in 1980 to 7.3% in 2009? Well, you can do something about this.

1) Be sure to check the box marked YOU on the line labeled 'Presidential Election Campaign' on the first page of your federal tax return, just under your address. Three dollars will then go directly from the U.S. Treasury to this fund at no charge to you. And remind your friends and relatives.

2) The senate hasn't voted on this yet, so call your senators John Kerry 202-224-8525 and Scott Brown 202-224-4543 and urge them to preserve this option.

Nancy Cronin, State Action

**LWVCC ANNUAL MEETING
CONCORD PARK, WEST CONCORD
WED, MAY 25, 2011
6:30-9:00 PM**

Concord Park has graciously offered to host our LWVCC Annual Meeting this year in their lovely dining room. Come enjoy a special social hour of appetizers and light supper, followed by an opportunity to hear from League member Virginia “Dinny” McIntyre about her experiences serving the town of Concord. We will then conduct our Annual Business Meeting and conclude the evening by enjoying fabulous desserts provided by Concord Park.

2011 RIVERFEST

The ninth annual Riverfest celebration is upon us. The Concord-Carlisle League joins with the River Stewardship Council to honor and appreciate the glorious river system we live in. The Concord, Assabet, and Sudbury Rivers that flow through our communities are our pride and joy.

The League Riverfest Steering Committee consisting of the Leagues of Concord-Carlisle, Bedford, Sudbury, and Wayland are looking for candidates for the Riverfest Award. It will be presented on June 10th at the Minute Man National Historical Park, 174 Liberty Street in Concord from 6 pm to 8 pm. Eligible nominees can include individuals - young or old, businesses, institutions, faith groups, schools, local government employees, and teachers.

If you have some good ideas, please call Betsy Sluder (978-369-1851) for a nomination form to complete and send back to her as soon as possible or download the form from our website, www.lwvcc.org. The deadline is April 1st. The League selection committee in Boston will choose the winners. Decisions will be made in May and will be made public then. We look forward to hearing from you.

Betsy Sluder & Janet Rothrock

**COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA
COMMITTEE – YOU’RE INVITED!**

LWVCC is launching a new Communications and Media Committee, offering a fun opportunity to get more involved with the League, to share your talents and knowledge, and to further the League’s mission. For more information, contact Erin Pastuszenski at 978-369-3842 or Communications@lwvcc.org.

The LWVCC Board has directed the new committee to “support LWVCC’s efforts to communicate with and engage the public and ... advise the Board on issues relating to communications and media. Its responsibilities will include developing an updated communications plan for Board approval and assisting in the plan’s implementation.” The plan will address:

- LWVCC’s Bulletin or other periodic publications for members and the public
- LWVCC’s online presence, including the website and social media
- Community relations
- Media relations
- Local access cable television

An organizational meeting for the committee will be scheduled in late March or early April, and once we get our bearings, there will be plenty of ways to participate, including on small teams focusing on segments of the overall communications picture. If you have suggestions for how the League can improve its communications, this is the committee for you!

Erin Pastuszenski, Communications

LWVMA 2011-12 ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

After thoughtful deliberation, the LWVMA Program and Action Committee voted on February 17th to continue its focus on three major pieces of legislation related to environmental matters:

- **The Updated Bottle Bill** (UBB: <http://www.bottlebill.org/legislation/campaigns/massachusettsc.htm>)
HB 890; SD45 (temporary number)
- **The E-Waste Bill**
(<http://www.cleanwateraction.org/proraminitiative/electronics-take-back-campaign>)
HB 252 (Click on this link to an 8 minute video on e-waste issues: <http://storyofstuff.org/electronics/>)
- **The Safer Alternatives Bill**
(<http://www.healthytomorrow.org/2011/01/sa-cosponsors-2011.html>)
HB1136; SB 397

All of these bills have been before the Legislature for multiple years: 17 years for UBB; 11 for E-Waste; 9 for Safer Alternatives. After hopeful signs of votes on UBB and E-Waste last summer, the session closed with all three bills still in the House without a vote. Coalitions around all three bills have been gearing up ever since for a concerted, strategic campaign aimed at passage this session. Please stay posted for LWVMA Action Alerts related to all three bills over the coming weeks and months and please be sure to act as requested so legislation can move from limbo to legislation.

A Better Way to Deal with Waste: Extended Producer Responsibility

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a full lifecycle policy approach that requires manufacturers to plan and pay for the management and disposal of their products. This approach shifts the responsibility for the collection and disposal of discarded, often

toxic, products from municipalities and taxpayers to producers and users. The Bottle Bill and E-Waste Bill are examples of EPR legislation. Where enacted, these bills have resulted in immediate financial relief for municipalities.

When producers are responsible for ensuring their products can be reused or recycled responsibly, they have a bottom-line incentive to design products that are more durable, easier to repair and recycle, and less toxic. For example, since disposal of toxic material is costly, producers find safe alternatives. Evaluating product design has led to reassessment of manufacturing practices and the adoption of more energy efficient production methods to offset costs. EPR also boosts the local economy by supporting and expanding recycling and repair businesses and jobs.

More than half the states have EPR laws, with 23 boasting E-Waste bills. The Massachusetts legislature has EPR programs for certain mercury-containing products. EPR is one of five essential components of the MassDEP Draft Solid Waste Master Plan, to be released soon.

Along with the re-filed Updated Bottle Bill and E-Waste Bill, an EPR Framework bill has been newly filed. It would allow the addition of product categories over time eliminating the need to file legislation for specific product categories. Concord and Carlisle have recently adopted resolutions in support of EPR Framework legislation, serving as models and leaders in this statewide effort.

For too long, citizens and municipalities have had to bear the financial burden of the management and disposal of discarded products and the untold impact of such products on finite supplies of valuable resources, the environment, wildlife and marine life and public health. It is time for an approach that will control waste at the source and promote a “healthier” municipal budget and environment.

TOWN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

The Town Government Initiative Committee has started a review of our local League positions and is developing ways to become more informed about existing sources of information provided by the Town. (To help us become more informed about town events and policies, we recently sent our members an email listing various on-line resources. If you missed it please let us know, and we can resend it to you.)

In our early meetings, our discussion has focused on how to increase participation in government, and particularly why there are not more candidates running for local offices. How can we encourage citizens to serve on non-elected boards and committees? We have touched on the warrant process and citizen information via

hearings. We also are perusing our local League positions and how they pertain to local government.

At present, we are in a study and learning mode, and hope to continue the process next year. Some of us are newer to town and have a lot of information to share about our experiences, some of us have lived in Concord for a long time, and many if not all of us have served a town in some capacity.

Please join us and share your thoughts. Contact Susan Sekuler (978-369-8025, Local_Initiative@lwwcc.org) or Ardis Bordman (978-369-7914, Secretary@lwwcc.org).

Ardis Bordman

Run, Women, Run!

Encouraging Women to Run for Office

March 23, 2011 4:00 - 6:00 pm

UMass Boston, Healey Library, Rm. 11B

www.umb.edu

Moderator

Dr. Carol Hardy-Fanta, Director,
The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

Panelists

Former Mayor and City Councilor E. Denise Simmons, Cambridge
State Senator Katherine Clark, Middlesex and Essex Districts
Sheriff Andrea Cabral, Suffolk County
State Representative Gloria Fox, Suffolk County

Sponsored by:

The Hispanic Studies Program, UMass Boston
League of Women Voters of Boston
The Women's Studies Program, UMass Boston
The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

<http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/centers/cwppp/RunWomenRun.php>

LWVCC CANDIDATE FORUMS

On Sunday, March 6, 2011, the LWVCC held its Concord Candidate Forum in the Town House Hearing Room. Board of Selectmen candidate Jeffrey Wieand, School Committee candidate Pamela Gannon, and Housing Authority candidates Anita Barker, Stephen Newbold and K.C. Winslow all participated, answering a wide range of questions from the League and the audience. (Eric Van Loon, who will also be on the ballot for election to a second term as Town Moderator, was unable to attend.) Jo-Ann Berry of the LWV-Acton Area served as moderator of our forum, and Town Clerk Anita Tekle graciously opened the Town House for us. Many LWVCC members volunteered to work on the event, including Nancy Beeuwkes, Nancy Cronin, Louise Haldeman, Erica Morrison, Cindy Nock, Erin Pastuszanski, Becky Shannon and Paula Vandever.

The *Concord Journal* and ConcordPatch.com both covered the forum. You can watch the recorded program as Video on Demand at www.concordtv.org, CCTV's website, or on cable Channel 8, and we appreciate the assistance of CCTV's Kester Krueger and Lindsay Alaimo. In addition, LWVCC and the *Concord Journal* are collaborating on a Voter Guide to be published on March 24. Election Day is Tuesday, March 29, and the League encourages all Concord voters to go to the polls.

Carlisle Candidate Forum May 1st

LWVCC will hold a Carlisle Candidate Forum on Sunday, May 1, 2011, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the Clark Room at Town Hall. For more information, contact League member Barbara Lewis. The Carlisle Town Election will be on Tuesday, May 17, and we urge everyone to turn out to vote.

For information on voting and elections, visit LWVCC's website, www.lwvcc.org, and your town's website, www.concordma.gov or www.carlislema.gov.

Erin Pastuszanski, Communications

GEAR UP FOR FUTURE ELECTIONS - JOIN THE CANDIDATE FORUMS COMMITTEE

Do you wish that candidate forums could be more informative for voters? Do you have ideas on making forums more viewer-friendly, more lively, and a better experience for candidates and for the audience? Would you like to learn about a wide variety of formats for candidate and issue forums, and design variations or even a new model? Do you want to learn the ropes of running a good League forum and perhaps even become a League-trained moderator? If so, please email Communications@lwvcc.org and ask to have your name added to the Candidate Forums Committee list today.

The Candidate Forums Committee plans to start meeting in April, and we want all interested LWVCC members to get involved as much or as little as their time and energy allows. The committee's official charge is to support our League's voter education efforts by advising the Board on format and ground rules for LWVCC-sponsored candidate forums and by assisting in planning and conducting such forums.

For more information, please contact Erin Pastuszanski at 978-369-3842 or Communications@lwvcc.org.

Erin Pastuszanski, Communications

DAY ON THE HILL

The annual LWVMA lobbying day will be on April 13 in Gardner Auditorium at the State House. The meeting will open with a presentation by a panel of speakers on the all too worrisome subject of Money in Politics. This will be followed by presentations from the LWVM Program specialists on the legislation which The League considers a priority for this Legislative session.

High on the priority list will be legislation concerning the expanded bottle bill, the safer alternatives bill, and the e-waste bill. Health Care legislation including efforts toward single payer, safe staffing, limits on administrative spending for insurance companies will also be heard. Campaign financing including disclosure legislation will be reported on as well as redistricting. We will hear about important and often overlooked human needs legislation and last but hardly least, legalized casino gambling.

Since we are in the first year of the legislative session, we can expect many changes over the next year. Many of the bills we will be looking at were considered last session but failed to pass before the session concluded. Many have been re-filed in basically the same form, while changes have been made to others. Although the task of working for or against legislation is often frustrating, at the end of each session we can look back at many successes as well as disappointments.

While the League continues to press its case on a year round basis, through hearings, testimony etc., Day on the Hill is the one time that League members from all over the state can come together as a body and make our voices heard in the State House. Many local League's arrange to meet with their legislators afterwards and usually we in the LWVCC have lunch with our Rep and Senator if they are not needed on the floor for a vote.

Louise Haldeman, Liaison to State Board

STATE PROGRAM PLANNING

Following the LWVCC Board meeting of February 9, members of the Board joined by other members met together to review the LWVMA Program (positions) and make recommendations in advance of the State convention which will be held this May.

After careful review, it was agreed that all the current positions* remain valuable and should be retained. There were no recommendations for totally new studies. However, there was an interest in updating our education position to take a closer look at charter schools and calendar matters such as "Time on Learning." The group also strongly recommended that the LWVM revive the study of Transportation which was initiated two years ago at the last convention but which seems to have lapsed. The group also concurred with all the current legislative priorities.

The results of the state program planning meeting were approved by the LWVCC Board on March 2 have been sent to the state League where they will be combined with the results of the other Leagues and presented at State Convention in May.

*All of the current League positions are the results of careful study and research by a group of members willing and able to commit time to doing it followed by consensus of the membership.

Louise Haldeman, Liaison to State Board

**ENJOY THE RICH ONLINE
RESOURCES OUR TOWNS OFFER**

Did you know that you can subscribe to a number of informative email lists at the Town of Concord website? Go to www.concordma.gov and click on the "Subscribe to News" tab. Read the instructions and then subscribe to (or unsubscribe from) any or all of the nine available lists, including:

- News and Notices (includes safety alerts, election information, meeting notices and other news)
- Town Manager Reports
- Board of Selectmen Agendas or Minutes

My favorites are News and Notices and Town Manager Reports. It's easy to sign up, and the moment you spend today will keep you updated on important town happenings for the future.

For Carlisle residents, a similar service is available at www.carlislema.gov for two lists: Planning Board Agendas and Recreation News.

Town websites can also be a rich source of information for those interested in town government. For example, at www.concordma.gov, you will find:

- Agendas and minutes for Town boards and committees;
- Important Documents, at http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_Bylaws/index, which has links to the town charter, bylaws, policies, reports, plans, budgets and other documents; and
- The Warrant for Concord's 2011 Town Meeting, at http://www.concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_BOS/2011%20Warrant%20for%20the%20website.pdf, which includes the Public Hearings schedule.

Take advantage of the resources that are just a click away! If you have any questions, please contact Erin at 978-369-3842 or Communications@lwvcc.org.

Erin Pastuszewski, Communications

STATE LEAGUE CONVENTION



May 20 & 21, 2011 –

Public House Inn, Sturbridge

Please mark your calendar for the 2011 LWVMA Convention. The theme this year is "Women Making a Difference." State Convention is where we conduct the business of the League and vote in new Board members for the next biennium. The cost for convention will be \$115 for both days, including lunch and dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday. Other options are \$40 for Friday lunch and workshops, \$35 for Friday Banquet or \$45 for Saturday lunch and workshops. More information will be included in League Leader Updates and on the LWVMA website, www.lwvma.org.

THE DICE ROLL ON A PERSONAL OBSERVATION

As we all know the move to legalize Class 3 gambling, which is casinos and slot machines, passed the Legislature last year but was stopped at the last minute by Governor Patrick. He supports resort casinos but not slot machines at race tracks.

However, the issue is far from dead and will reappear soon. Legislation has again been filed to allow for the construction of casinos and possibly slot machines in Massachusetts. (I note that the “black hats” in my not unbiased opinion always refer to the subject as “gaming while the “white hats” always say “gambling.”)

Historically, the subject comes up in times of severe financial strain as a way to create jobs and add to the states revenues. To be fair, it is one business that won't move offshore although a lot of what profits there are may do just that. There is no doubt that the construction of resort casinos will bring much needed construction jobs and will ultimately employ a number of people, though how many of those will be “new” jobs is open to question.

There is also no doubt that the business interests behind this move will make a lot of money, at least initially. But casinos can and do go bankrupt. There is serious doubt as to whether the State will earn enough from the casinos over the long term to offset the acknowledged problems which come with gambling.

I am thankful to report Senator Brewer has filed a bill calling for an independent cost benefit analysis of all proposals for gambling including those on tribal land. The bill has been endorsed by many in the Senate including Senator Fargo. Whether the bill can go anywhere or not will depend on public pressure. So far, all studies of the issue have been done by groups or persons connected to the gambling industry as well

as a few by those strongly opposed. We should demand to have a better understanding of what we may gain and what we may lose before this goes forward.

Many League members have said to me that they feel there would be no harm in having one casino. I would agree with that if having just one was a realistic option, but it is not. There are many variables. Anything the Commonwealth allows is automatically allowed to the two sovereign nations within our borders. Federal legislation may greatly increase the ability of the Native American Nations to use land not currently included in their borders. Right now that is limited by a recent Supreme Court decision.

There are many variables, but limiting us to one casino is virtually impossible. The question of what the market will bear is something we all should be concerned about even if we are reluctant, as some are, to consider the social aspects.

*Louise Haldeman
LWVMA Legalized Gambling Specialist*

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY: What we need to know

The forum was the first of a two part program to educate attendees on women's health issues while raising money for the LWVMA. Sponsors were sought to contribute to the forums. The LWVCC made a contribution of \$1,000 as did the LWV of Amherst. The most significant contribution was \$2,500 from the Massachusetts Nurses Association. About \$6,000 will be given to the LWVMA.

The keynote speaker, Judy Norsigian, Executive Director of Our Bodies Ourselves spoke on "The Impact of Media on Women's Health." She painted a grim view of our current status. Some of her points:

- Media portrayals of new medical research are often inaccurate or incomplete with "quick fix" or "pill for every ill."
- Increasing influence of the pharmaceutical industry on research, physician prescribing practices, and the educational/advertising materials aimed at consumer or patient instead of the clinician or hospital.
- Emphasis on appearance and the sexualization of women and young girls.
- Increasing use of cosmetic surgery among higher income white women, and young girls, mostly on the west coast.
- Rising Cesarean section rates and falling VBAC (vaginal birth after Cesarean) rates.
- Rising rates of premature births.
- Removing healthy ovaries at the time of a hysterectomy leading to fewer cases of ovarian cancer but higher rates of deaths by coronary heart disease and deaths from hip fractures.

Ms. Norsigian listed many groups who are fighting these problems and stated that it is important to promote a view of public health that stresses primary prevention – identifying and eliminating disease-causing agents in our food, water and air.

The second speaker, Cheryl Hamlin, M.D., Clinician, Mt. Auburn Hospital, spoke on, "Disparities in Health Care: Access Limited by Culture, Language Barriers and the Lack of Insurance." There were other grim findings by the 2011 CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report. During 1980-2000, the U.S. population became older and more ethnically diverse, and during 1992-2005, household income inequality increased. Although difficult to access, the disparities in healthy days for racial/ethnic diversity and income disparity is likely to continue even though overall health outcomes are increasing for the nation. Dr. Hamlin used three anonymous cases with whom she had worked as examples of daily life struggles with health care problems.

The third speaker, Georgia Sassen, Ph.D., Visiting Scholar at Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center, spoke on "Mental Health Issues for Women." Her talk was not as grim. She finds that one of the most important factors to influence mental health is family support and community interaction. Consequently, some ethnic cultures with strong family and community support report fewer problems with mental health.

The forum was well attended with nearly 100 present, mostly women and mostly League of Women Voters members.

Unusual Help Needed for Victims of Domestic Violence in Privileged Communities *(this article was edited by N.P.James)*

By Kiersten Warning, Director and creator of the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP)

In communities of privilege or affluence, victims of domestic violence face special challenges. Some of the very characteristics we value in our community may act as obstacles when it comes to seeking or being offered help when there is violence in the home. These represent substantial challenges that impact victims' ability to leave their abusers.

Characteristics of Privileged Communities that May Silence Victims

Isolation: Because some parts of a Massachusetts privileged community resemble rural communities with large tracts of land and few neighbors, there is no one nearby who can hear the abuse. This physical isolation can be a critical factor in more safety planning, as there may be no one in sight or hearing to respond to a call for help.

High level of education: Victims who call upon the services of the police and other providers in privileged communities are often professors, lawyers, doctors. If the victim has a high level of education, this often increases the shame and self-blame people feel about being in a battering situation. There is also a mistaken belief, even among some helping professionals, that domestic violence does not occur among well-educated people, making it difficult for victims to be readily believed.

Elevated social status is one of the greatest barriers preventing victims from seeking help. Victims and abusers in affluent communities *are* the judges, doctors, lawyers, and town selectpeople that are held in high social esteem by others. A victim must have great courage to identify to herself that she is in an abusive relationship. She must also accept that her neighbors and friends may not be willing to admit that domestic violence affects their community, let alone anyone they know.

Little support from family members: Family members tend to minimize the abuse because of the elevated income and social status of many victims in privileged communities. "What are you going to do? Leave your big house and live on the streets with your kids who have only known the best of the best?" "Are you crazy?" "You should stay for the kids." "How bad can it be?"

System-phobia: Most residents in affluent communities are unfamiliar and uncomfortable asking for help from traditional social service agencies such as a domestic violence hotline and the Department of Social Services. They may feel their pride insulted to make such contacts, and the agencies themselves may suffer from stereotypes about helping victims from privileged communities.

Systems warfare is one of the most common tools of privileged abusers. Victims recount horror stories of bankruptcy from defending against their partners' abuse of the legal and social service system. Abusers' threats that their victims will never have anything if they leave are very, very real in privileged communities.

Bizarre abuse: According to victims and to batterer intervention programs, bizarre acts of abuse are also characteristic in privileged communities. The higher the education and social status the more commonplace the bizarre forms of abuse. This bizarreness also becomes a barrier to victims asking for help as it can be particularly shameful to admit and the risk of disbelief is high.

ABOUT DVVAP: THIS COMMUNITY COLLABORATION WAS FORMED IN OCTOBER, 1998 BY THE CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE NETWORK FOR WOMEN'S LIVES. CURRENT COLLABORATORS INCLUDE THE ACTON, BEDFORD, CARLISLE, CONCORD, LINCOLN, MAYNARD, AND STOW POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES OF CENTRAL MIDDLESEX, INC. DVVAP IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE CONCORD-CARLISLE COMMUNITY CHEST AND THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH UNITED WAY. REACH DVVAP AT P.O. BOX 1556, CONCORD, MA 01742, (978) 318-3421, OR DVVAP@CONCORDMA.GOV. DVVAP'S TOLL-FREE WARMLINE IS (888) 399-6111.