

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

BULLETIN

LWVCC Website: www.lwvcc.org; LWVCC telephone #: (978) 254-1598

March 2012

P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034

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CALENDAR

MARCH

- 21 Wed LWVCC Privatization Consensus, 384 Hayward Mill Rd. 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
- 28 Wed LWVCC Book Group, Concord Library, Trustees Room 10:00-11:30 am

APRIL

- 4 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 384 Hayward Mill Rd. 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
- 11 Wed LWVCC Concord Warrant Review, 342 Sudbury Rd. 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
- 18 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct. #208 8:30-9:30 am
- 22 Sun LWVCC Carlisle Candidates Forum, Town Hall 3:00-5:00 pm
- 23 Mon Concord Town Meeting, CCHS (first night) 7 pm
- 25 Wed LWVMA Day on the Hill, "Democracy for Sale?" State House, Boston
- 30 Mon Carlisle Town Meeting, Corey Bldg, 150 Church St. 7:00 pm

MAY

- 2 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 418 Monument St. 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
- 5 Sat LWVMA Council, "Challenges to Democracy" Lasell College, Newton 10:00 am
- 8 Tues Carlisle Town Elections, Town Hall 7am - 8 pm
- 16 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct. #208 8:30-9:30 am
- 17 Wed LWVCC Campaign Finance Program: Tom Ashbrook, CCHS 7:30 pm
- 23 Wed LWVCC Annual Meeting, Newbury Court, Concord TBA
- 30 Wed LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Library 10:00-11:30am

JUNE

- 6 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 64 Strawberry Hill Rd. 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
- 8-12 Wed LWVUS Convention, Washington DC

*Members are invited to attend monthly Board meetings.
Please contact Cindy 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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CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

Cindy Nock and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

March 2012

Dear League Friends,

It is election time and our Candidates Forum committee is working diligently to help us become knowledgeable about candidates at every level. We hope you were able to attend LWVCC's Concord Candidates Forum held February 12th at the Town House. It was well attended and informative. We will also be likely holding a candidates forum for the 3rd Middlesex Senate District, before the September primary. A Carlisle Candidate Forum is planned for April 22 for the local Carlisle election on May 8. The stakes are always high and the League steps up to create platforms enabling the public to see and hear their candidates. At the same time Concord and Carlisle are preparing for April Town Meetings. Our League members are currently studying Concord warrant articles in preparation for Town Meeting which begins April 23rd. There will be an informal review of the warrant articles on April 11th at the home of Anne Hayden followed by a brown bag lunch and decision making about League positions on warrant articles. If there are warrant articles you want our League to consider supporting or opposing, please let us know and plan to attend the April 11th meeting.

Our membership will participate in the second LWVUS study this year, this time to identify the parameters and policy issues related to "Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions." We hope that you were able to read the article in the January Bulletin and those in this Bulletin in order to prepare for the consensus meeting which will be held at the home of Louise Haldeman on March 21st at 9:00 a.m. To prepare for the meeting, refer to further information available on the LWVUS website at: <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization>.

We continue to be active with strong committees. One is leading campaign finance reform (CFR): Follow the Money. On May 17th at CCHS, Tom Ashbrook will moderate a panel on issues and possible solutions resulting from the set-back of the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision. We expect to be filled to capacity. CFR is a pressing and important issue. A second committee, Town Government Initiative, is following local government activities. If you are interested in participating or observing town government in action, contact one of us. A third committee, working on defining Sustainability, will be making recommendations at annual meeting for adoption of a working definition and for education and local consensus meetings on Sustainability next fall. It has been a while since we have had a local study and adopted new positions.

This month we are participating in all three pillars of the League: voter service, study and consensus, and advocacy. We are also very involved in the League at all three levels; local, state and national. Stay informed, be involved and continue helping us make democracy work as we head into this season of Town Meetings in April, LWV State Council in May and LWV National Convention in June.

Sincerely,
Cindy Nock and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

MEMBERSHIP

By now you should have received your Membership Directory for 2012. If you haven't, please send a message to membership@lwvcc.org or contact Dee Ortner at 978.254.1598.

At the May 17th Forum (information found later in this Bulletin) membership will have a table after the event during which you can encourage your friends and neighbors to join the League. New members will be given a year's membership that is good through June 2013.

At Annual Meeting we will begin our membership renewal drive for the League year of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. What? So soon? Yes. We're trying to 'sync' our renewal period (late May through June) with the real League year and stay away from the fall when all of us are bombarded with fundraising and membership requests (and the sometimes confusing requests from State and National League). Please help us with this transition.

We hope you can join us at Annual Meeting – it's going to be great!

*Dee Ortner, Membership Chair
Membership Committee: Barbara Lewis,
Cindy Colleen, Irmi Doane, Mary Chapman
& Nancy Beeuwkes*

LWVCC SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

The Sustainability Committee has researched and discussed options for a definition of Sustainability for the League and will be recommending the adoption of a working definition at Annual Meeting in May. To see what the committee has been considering and collecting for background information visit our LWVCC.org website.

Cindy Nock, Sustainability Committee

CONCORD WARRANT REVIEW MEETING

Members are invited to attend the LWVCC's Concord Warrant review meeting which will be held at 342 Sudbury Rd. in Concord Wednesday, April 11th at 9:00 a.m for coffee and conversation with the program beginning at 9:30 a.m. We expect to have a few Concord town officials to give us their perspectives on what may be significant Articles. If you have any particular Warrant Articles that you wish the LWVCC to support or oppose, please let us know by attending the meeting.

Paula Vandever, Co-President

LWVMA COUNCIL

The Massachusetts League will not be meeting in Convention this spring as it is the year for National Convention. In its place will be State Council which will be held on May 5 at Lasell College in Newton. The theme for the Council will be **Challenges to Democracy: Protecting Voter Rights and the Influence of Money.**

The Council will feature a speaker, luncheon, and various workshops as well as the annual business meeting. All members are encouraged to attend. As more specific information arrives, it will be included in the LWVCC's Monday Member News or log onto the LWVMA website.

Louise Haldeman, LWVMA Specialist

VOTER SERVICE UPDATE

Barbara Lewis, Voter Service Carlisle & Erin Pastuszynski, Voter Service Concord

Upcoming Local Elections and Town Meetings

Carlisle: In Carlisle, the Town Caucus held on February 27 yielded candidates for all open positions for the first time in years, and two races are contested. There are four running for two open seats on the Board of Selectmen and two running for Town Clerk. The League will hold a Candidates Forum on Sunday afternoon, April 22, from 3 to 5 at Carlisle Town Hall. If you would like to help out, email VoterService@lwgcc.org.

The Carlisle Town Warrant will have its final review and close on March 13. It will be posted on April 9, the Town Meeting will be on April 30, and Elections will be held May 8.

Concord: Concord's Annual Town Meeting begins at CCHS on Monday, April 23 at 7:00 p.m., and will include a Special Town Meeting on April 24. If needed, Town Meeting will continue on April 25, 26 and 30 and May 1. To participate in these meetings, residents must be registered to vote by Tuesday, April 3. Contact the Town Clerk for registration forms, or email VoterService@lwgcc.org for information.

What can you do to prepare for Town Meeting? Carefully read the Warrant mailed to your home, or read it online at www.concordma.gov. Attend or view recordings (on Channel 8 or at www.concordtv.org) of the public hearings held by the Selectmen, Finance Committee and Planning Board. At Concord's town website, you can find extensive information on Town Meeting, as well as board and committee records. Several articles in this LWVCC Bulletin will deepen your

understanding of Town Meeting articles, as well.

LWVCC's Concord Town Meeting Warrant Review on April 11 (342 Sudbury Rd. 9:30 a.m.), to which we are inviting key town officials, is another opportunity to get up to speed on the issues you will vote on at Town Meeting. We hope to see you there.

New Projects Serving Our Community – Join In!

LWVCC is planning some new Voter Service projects. How can you help? Email Erin Pastuszynski and Barbara Lewis at VoterService@lwgcc.org to express interest.

1. High School Voter Registration

As part of the League of Women Voters' "Power the Vote" initiative this year, the state League is encouraging all local Leagues to conduct a voter registration project in their high schools in May. We've got lots of great materials and ideas from our League network, and we are exploring how we can add to existing registration efforts in our high school. If you are or were the parent of a CCHS student, share your ideas with us. If you like encouraging young people to become active and informed citizens, sign on to help design or implement our plans. Contact Erin or Barbara today!

2. Pre-Primary State Candidates Forum

The State Primary will be on Thursday, September 6, three days after Labor Day. With the retirement of Senator Susan Fargo (3rd Middlesex District), a lively race for that seat is developing, with contests for both the Democratic and Republican nominations. LWVCC traditionally holds a forum in the fall for State Senate and Representative candidates, and we plan to do so again this

VOTER SERVICE UPDATE

Barbara Lewis, Voter Service Carlisle & Erin Pastuszynski, Voter Service Concord

year, but the Board also wants our League to host a forum for all primary candidates before September. We are reaching out to other local Leagues in the 3rd Middlesex District (which includes Bedford, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Lincoln, Waltham, Weston and parts of Lexington and Sudbury) to explore joint sponsorship. Lots of energy will go into this summertime forum. Please contact Erin or Barbara if you'd like to get in on the action and join our team.

March 6 – Presidential Primary and Concord Town Election

As the March 6 Election Day approached, LWVCC planted “VOTE Tuesday” signs around our towns. In Concord, we also held a Candidates Forum at the Town House on February 12 and collaborated with the *Concord Journal* on a Voter Guide published March 1. Carlisle had a 20% voter turnout at its Presidential Primary, and Concord drew 24% of registered voters to the polls for its dual election (Town Election plus Presidential Primary).

In addition to a contested Housing Authority seat, Concord unexpectedly ended up with a

Board of Selectmen contest when one candidate withdrew and two write-in candidates stepped forward. LWVCC had time to invite the write-in candidates to participate in both the Candidates Forum and the Voter Guide. The audience at the forum was close to 50 people, and the replays on CCTV reached an even larger group of voters.

The League thanks everyone who helped with the Concord Candidates Forum, including Jo-Ann Berry (LWV-Acton Area) who moderated, Kester Krueger of CCTV, Ruth Lauer (Board of Selectmen's Office), Anita Tekle (Town Clerk), and League members Erica Morrison, Cindy Nock, Becky Shannon, Irmi Doan, Dee Ortner, Louise Haldeman, Ardis Bordman, Marge Daggett, Nancy Cronin and Anne Hayden.

LWVCC also thanks the eight candidates who ran this winter in Concord for their commitment to public service and for participating in League voter education efforts. We also appreciate our partnership with the *Concord Journal* on the 3-page Voter Guide and thank Editor Cheryl Lecsse for supporting the project.

Honored Citizen Award

This year the Concord Honored Citizen Award will go to Ruth and Hugh Lauer! Ruth and Hugh are long time League members and pillars of the community. The award ceremony will be on Sunday March 18th at 1:30 p.m. at the Town House.

LWVCC BOOK GROUP

The next meeting of the LWVCC Book Group will be on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 in the Trustees Room of the Concord Public Library from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. The book is *Corporations are Not People: Why They Have More Rights Than You Do and What You Can Do About It* by Jeff Clements.

Campaign Finance Reform has been at the top of the League of Women Voters “to do” list for decades. We have always been at the forefront of the efforts to clean up our elections, put limits on campaign contributions, and create a strong and forceful Federal Election Commission.

The Supreme Court’s decision in the *Citizens United* case two years ago gave everyone, corporations as well as individuals, the right to spend unlimited amounts of money during campaigns. We are seeing the results of this decision in the effect that the SuperPACs are having all across the country in the presidential campaign.

If you would like to learn more about the background of this court case, the issues that are involved, and some of the ways that this ruling can be reversed, please read *Corporations Are Not People* and come to our March book group meeting. This will be an excellent opportunity to become informed about this important and timely League issue.

All League members and Concord and Carlisle residents are invited to attend and participate in the discussion.

*Anne Hayden & Ginny Lamere
LWVCC Book Group Co-Chairs*

CATS IN CONCORD

The discussion around Article 45 on the Concord Town Warrant has occasioned considerable discussion about cats, rabies, and a few other feline related topics. We should all be aware that whatever the Town Meeting decides about the warrant article, Massachusetts law has required anti rabies vaccination for cats for a number of years. There was a period when it was required only for dogs but within the last 25 years or so, rabies which was once fairly rare in New England has become much more common.

Many of our “wild” neighbors such as raccoons, field mice, coyotes, skunks, and foxes have succumbed to the disease. Since cats are very likely to “interact” with their wilder neighbors, protecting them against this deadly and fatal disease is important for them and for their families including the human ones. Bats are also known to be carriers and the recent death from rabies of a man on the South Shore was assumed to have been caused by a bat bite.

While this may be less of a problem for cats who never go outdoors, it should be noted that all veterinarians routinely inoculate cats for rabies and usually for feline distemper and feline leukemia as well. No commercial cat boarding facility will accept a cat that is not up to date on his/her immunizations.

For more specific information on this issue please go to the Concord Board of Health website.

Louise Haldeman

LWVCC NATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT

Following the Board meeting on Wednesday, February 1st at the home of Cindy Nock, the LWVCC held a National Program Planning meeting open to all LWVCC members. Seventeen members attended. This was the biennial grass roots planning meeting that precedes the LWVUS convention which will take place in June this year. This is the first step in developing the LWVUS program which involves planning, study and consensus followed by advocacy by all three levels of the League.

Since the inception of the LWVUS multiple studies have been completed resulting in positions for advocacy in areas of Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. They are compiled in detail in the LWVUS document entitled Impact on Issues which is available on the National League website www.lwv.org.

In the planning process local Leagues have the option of suggesting either a new study, a review and update of a current position, concurrence with a position arrived at by a state or local League, or none of the above.

At the February meeting a number of topics were suggested. These included nuclear waste and energy policy, money in politics, United Nations, citizens' right to vote, veterans' benefits, economic and environmental sustainability, and no change. The topic receiving the most support was the United Nations.

Our report to the LWVUS was framed this way: "The LWVCC recommends a review and update of the LWVUS position on the United Nations as it relates to the current role of the United States in the United

Nations. Our concern is that the United States is not fulfilling its role in the United Nations as anticipated by our LWVUS position."

The recommendations of all participating local Leagues will be reviewed by the National board and will result in a proposed program for the next two years to be voted on at the June convention.

*Nancy Cronin
National Issues Chair*

LWVMA DAY ON THE HILL Wed, April 25, 2012 Gardner Auditorium Massachusetts State House 10 AM to Noon

Democracy for Sale? will be the subject of a panel discussion at our annual League of Women Voters state lobbying day. We will also hear from League specialists who will update us on the progress of the legislation in which the League is interested. Much is happening in the State Legislature and there have been victories as well as disappointments. Following the conclusion of the session we will plan to have lunch with our legislators if possible.

While the legislators hear frequently from the LWVMA specialists it is important that they hear from more of us. Plan to come if possible. Please call Louise Haldeman (978) 254-1598 for more information.

*Louise Haldeman,
LWVMA Casino Gambling Specialist*

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Follow the Money (FTM) Committee

Money in elections, SuperPACs, fact-checking political ads – all topics in the media, and also in Concord-Carlisle. The FTM Committee has been busy on many fronts. Here's what's coming...

DISCUSSION SESSIONS: Research and script-writing are complete. The discussion groups are almost ready to begin. What will be discussed?

Several members of the committee designed a 2-part, 90-minute, interactive program that addresses the issues around and consequences of our election process specific to campaign finance. The goal is to increase the level of awareness in our members and others in our communities regarding these issues and remedies for national reform. This program is intended to be used in informal group discussions in which we first provide information on the history and impacts of decisions made by Congress and the Supreme Court. After some discussion on this segment of the program, the group then examines a variety of options to rectify *money in politics*.

As part of our outreach, we have handouts on background information, resource lists, questions to ask candidates, remedies to consider – the list is lengthy and inclusive and materials will be available to those attending the sessions. Also, we will make our multi-media program and all research materials available to every local and state-level League across the nation – at no cost (i.e., electronic distribution of materials). We are most fortunate to have such a strong League and talented members willing to commit their time and energy to this project.

We'd love to have you attend a discussion session or perhaps you'll decide to host a gathering for your neighbors. Please let us know by contacting FTM@lwvcc.org.

MAY 17TH FORUM: A public forum on campaign finance reform entitled "***Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012***" will be sponsored by the LWV of Concord-Carlisle, WBUR and the LWV of Massachusetts. Tom Ashbrook, host of WBUR's *On Point*, will moderate the panel of experts who will discuss a variety of remedies for mitigating the effects of the vast amounts of money in our elections and the undue influence it has on our elected officials and us, the voting public. Panel members include:

- Lawrence Lessig - Director of the Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics at Harvard University and Professor of Law at Harvard Law School
- Jeff Clements - attorney and author
- Mimi Marziani - counsel for the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice

At the conclusion of the panel discussion and audience Q&A, we will ask the audience to join us in the high school cafeteria for refreshments and informal discussion with the speakers. This will offer people an opportunity to reflect on the program, better understand the issues we face in *pushing back on 'money politics'* (the new buzz term), get to know others in the community that share similar concerns and share some nibbles. Hope to see you!

This forum is free to the public. To help defray the costs of producing this program we will cheerfully collect donations as you leave the building!

We are looking for volunteers. If you are interested in being an usher, collecting donations, working on public relations, running a camera, or staffing the refreshment tables - please let us know. Just leave a message at the League 'office' (978-254-1598) or send a message to membership@lwvcc.org.

SAVE THE DATE
Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012
Thursday, May 17th
7:30 to 9:30pm
Concord-Carlisle High School Auditorium
500 Walden Street, Concord

NATIONAL CONVENTION: The theme of the 4-day convention this year is “Power of the Vote” and the LWVCC is going big time! Not only are we sending eight members to Convention this year, but we are hosting a caucus. Working with the Amherst and Sudbury Leagues, we plan to bring a resolution to the floor not only for expanded advocacy but also real action on campaign finance reform. This is a true grassroots effort across the country and LWVCC is one of its leaders.

There is much to prepare before the start of Convention on June 8th. If you would like to learn more about the process of Convention or would be interested in joining this effort, please let us know. Leave a message at the ‘office’ (978-254-1598) or send a message to FTM@lwvcc.org.

HELPFUL WEBSITES: You can find more information on campaign finance reform at a variety of websites. Here are just a few links...

<http://www.lwv.org/our-work/improving-elections/money-in-elections> - A direct link to the League of Women Voters efforts in addressing money in elections.

<http://www.brennancenter.org/> -The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law is a nonpartisan public policy and law institute that focuses on the fundamental issues of democracy and justice.

<http://www.democracy21.org/> - Democracy 21, and its education arm, Democracy 21 Education Fund, work to eliminate the undue influence of big money in American politics and to ensure the integrity and fairness of government decisions and elections.

<http://www.commoncause.org> - Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded in 1970 as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest.

<http://www.freespeechforpeople.org> – Free Speech for People is a national, nonpartisan campaign working to restore democracy to the people and to return corporations to their place as economic rather than political entities.

<http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/campaign-finance-reform-links.aspx> - The website for the National Conference of State Legislatures provides links on campaign finance reform.

<http://www.rootstrikers.org> – A grassroots project of [United Republic](http://www.unitedrepublic.org) (www.unitedrepublic.org), created to curb the undue influence of corporate lobbyists over the US political process, Rootstrikers began as a project of Fix Congress First, an organization founded by Lawrence Lessig and Joe Trippi.

*Dee Ortner,
FTS Committee member*

CONCORD WARRANT REVIEW

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Concord's Finance Committee is responsible for establishing fiscal guidelines for the Town Manager, the Concord Public School Committee and the Concord Carlisle Regional School Committee in preparing their budgets. The guideline is typically set in November, under Town bylaw.

This year, in preparation for the setting of the guideline, the Finance Committee met several times with both the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools. In addition, the Finance Committee reviewed figures assembled by one of its members, comparing rates of growth in tax burden and citizens' income, reviewing levels of satisfaction and concern reflected in town-wide surveys over the years on town services, and comparing expenditures with other similar towns and school districts.

With the recent approval of construction of the three elementary schools and the high school, the Finance Committee has been alert to the need to constrain increases in the operating budgets.

Acknowledging the challenging economic situation with stagnant real estate values and household incomes, together with the cumulative impact of town budget increases, the Finance Committee proposed a guideline adding \$1,850,000 to last year's final budget, representing a projected tax increase of 2.98% to existing taxpayers, and a 3.85% increase in overall budget, the difference accounted for by new growth. This includes an \$850,000 contribution from free cash, a \$475,000 allocation from the Elementary School Debt Stabilization Fund, a \$407,877 allocation from the Thoreau School MSBA grant, and \$366,356 from unused levy limit

from FY'12, leaving a projected \$1,627,685 in unused levy limit for FY'13.

Over the last several years, the Town has tried to keep well within the Prop. 2-1/2 levy limits, understanding that the levy limit, with new growth and past voted debt exclusions, is actually well over 2-1/2% without the need for an override vote.

The Town Manager's budget is within the approved guideline, but both the Concord Public School and CCRSD approved budgets exceed the guideline.

The Finance Committee met at the end of January with the School Committees and administration, noting that while Concord schools achieve superb outcomes for our students, this achievement comes at a higher per pupil cost than in comparable, neighboring towns.

It should be noted that the recommended guideline is higher than the initial guideline proposed in the fall of \$1,700,000, which passed by divided vote, some members opposing because it was too high and some because it was too low. This initial proposal was increased to make more funds available to the Concord Public Schools.

At the public hearings on February 27 and 29, there was limited public input on the Town and School budgets, and the School budgets remain above the guideline. The Finance Committee will continue to meet with the budgeting authorities as Town Meeting approaches to monitor new information, particularly matters of new growth and projected state aid.

Virginia McIntyre

Town Government Initiative Committee

CONCORD WARRANT REVIEW

**ARTICLE 39:
LAND ACQUISITION FOR THE
BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL
RIGHT-OF-WAY**

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee is sponsoring Article 39: Land Acquisition for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Right-of-Way in Concord. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is a multi-use path for non-motorized transportation and recreation from Lowell to Framingham.

Phase 1 from Lowell to Route 225 in Westford has been constructed, is open and used regularly. Phase 2A, that runs through the remainder of Westford, Carlisle, and Acton, and Phase 2C, in Concord, is currently in final design. Phase 2B, that crosses Route 2 to Commonwealth Ave. is in preliminary 25% design. The other phases to the south are in various stages of planning.

Article 39 authorizes the Board of Selectmen to acquire necessary and appropriate real property interests, for a nominal fee, to establish the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) in Concord, including the entire length and width of the former Lowell Secondary Track railroad right-of-way in Concord from the Acton/Concord town line to the Concord/Sudbury town line, comprising approximately 3.5 miles.

Article 39 authorizes the Board of Selectmen to acquire the right-of-way for a nominal sum by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise fee, easement, leasehold, license and/or other real property interests. This article also allows for acquiring temporary grading and construction easements, and more permanent access, sight-line, and parking easements.

Article 39 does not make reference to or make any changes to the design elements that were voted and approved at Town Meeting 2008.

This article is being brought to Town Meeting because, as part of the final design process, The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has requested that this article be put forth and passed prior to the town entering into negotiations for the acquisition of the right-of-way. A similar article has already been passed by Town Meeting in Acton.

*Judy LaRocca
Town Government Initiative Committee*

CONCORD WARRANT REVIEW

MINUTEMAN CAREER AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL WARRANT ARTICLES

Article 12

This article adopts the Minuteman School's budget of \$17,251,713 (as of 2/27/12) and sets the assessment for Concord. The budget for FY13 represents an increase of \$816,240 over FY12, a 4.97% increase, which was driven mainly by salary and health insurance increases.

The FY13 assessment for Concord (as of 2/27/12) is \$437,910 for 18 FTE students, 15 high school students and 3 post graduates. Of the 15 high school students, 11 are in Special Education. Each town is assessed an extra \$4500 for each SPED student. Over the past 15 years Concord reached an enrollment high of 27 students in 2006 followed by 26 in 2009.

Article 13

If passed by two-thirds of the 16 member towns in the Minuteman district, a Stabilization Fund would be established where capital-cost funds could be placed. Capital costs are assessed based on the student enrollment in the member towns. A town with less than five students is assessed as having five. Once established, funds could be used for repairs, renovations, and improvements to the school facilities. This article would only establish the fund; no money is associated with this article.

Emergency Repairs

In June of 2011 Lexington's Assistant Fire Chief condemned all of the wooden structures in the large space known as the Trades Hall. Room-like structures had stood for probably 20 years where students practiced wiring, carpentry, etc. All these wooden structures had to be taken down and replacements constructed before the school could open in September. Minuteman contacted the MA School Building Authority asking for emergency funds but funds were denied as this condition did not fit its definition of an "emergency." The cost was \$485,000 and must be paid by the towns in FY12. After extensive discussions with the state and legal counsel, Superintendent Bouquillon stated at the Feb. 29 Finance Committee hearing that the towns will be sent a separate assessment. The Chair of the Finance Committee said that a Special Town Meeting would be held to handle this. At that time the estimated assessment for Concord was approximately \$25,000.

Carlisle

Carlisle enrolled 7 high school students this year; six of the students were in Special Ed. Over the past 15 years, Carlisle's enrollment at Minuteman peaked in 2004 with 11 students. Over the past 5 years, the average number of students enrolled is 7. The Carlisle assessment for FY13 is \$190,231.

Marge Daggett

Town Government Initiative Committee

CONCORD WARRANT REVIEW

**ARTICLE 47:
LEGISLATION ALLOWING
CONCORD THE CHOICE OF
REDUCING THE PROPERTY TAX
WITH A LOCAL INCOME TAX**

In 2009 the Selectmen appointed a Local Option Local Income Tax Committee (LOLIT) “to secure enabling legislation to permit Massachusetts cities and towns to enact a local income tax to replace *in part* the local property tax.” This idea was based on a recommendation of the 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan which recommended consideration of “a municipal income tax to preserve the diversity of the town.”

There are residents in Concord and other similar towns who are on fixed incomes and others in difficult circumstances whose incomes cannot keep pace with the increasing property tax. The property tax is the product of an agrarian society where land and farm buildings were a fair measure of the owner’s ability to pay. But that is not entirely true today when incomes are a more accurate measure of that. The LWVMA position singles out ‘equitability’ as one of the essential characteristics of a sound tax policy.

The LOLIT committee brought a warrant article to the 2010 Town Meeting, and the Meeting approved it. Representative Cory Atkins filed a bill, H.3375, to allow communities to choose to combine a local income tax with the property tax as a way of paying for town and school services. That bill was heard on March 8 before the joint Committee on Revenue at the State House. However it is not expected to pass without a surge of interest from other towns.

So the LOLIT Committee has decided to take a parallel path by proposing Article 47, a ‘home rule’ petition to allow Concord the option of choosing to reduce its property tax with a local income tax. Town Meeting approval of Article 47 would request the Selectmen to ask our legislators to make this option available to Concord alone. If passed by the legislature, this proposal would give Concordians the opportunity to consider reducing the property tax with a local income tax at a future Town Meeting, and if passed there, by a vote at the polls.

Nancy Cronin

Town Government Initiative Committee

Status of LWVMA Environmental Legislative Priorities

Launa Zimmaro, Environmental Specialist

UPDATED BOTTLE BILL (UBB):

HB 890; SB1650

It's hard to believe that a bill that saves money for municipalities, dramatically reduces litter and pollution, and boosts recycling rates can be anything but a shoo-in, but it's crunch time once again for the Updated Bottle Bill. If the Bill is not reported favorably out of Committee (Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee) by March 21st, it means rebooting the effort to pass this legislation in the next session.

You may have already received an Action Alert from LWVMA asking for member help through specific actions. One of the most critical and time sensitive of those actions involves an email campaign directed to Speaker DeLeo urging him to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. The goal is to have 2,000 signatures before March 21st.

If you haven't already done so, please support this campaign by going to the following site and sending an email message to the Speaker:

<https://secure3.convio.net/engage/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=5007>.

E-WASTE BILL: S.2078

The E-Waste Bill was reported favorably out of committee and into Senate Ways and Means in November, but a careful reading of the bill raised concerns about its potential efficacy. Representatives of the major advocacy groups working for passage of E-Waste legislation met in early March to identify key elements that all agreed were critical to strong E-waste legislation. As of

this writing, advocates are drafting a joint letter to Senate Ways and Means urging revisions that will strengthen the bill based on their analysis, expert knowledge and broad experience. As a major supporter of EPR based E-Waste legislation, LWVMA will be asked to sign the letter. A brief summary of the requested provisions follows:

- Convenient collection for Massachusetts citizens to maintain current levels of convenience;
- Higher collection target to improve upon current levels of e-waste recycling;
- Limit definition of "consumer" to households and small businesses;
- Greater flexibility in certifying electronics recyclers by allowing either e-Stewards or Responsible Recycling (R2) third-party certifications;
- Authorize DEP hiring of electronics program staff to ensure that the Department of Environmental Protection can effectively regulate, administer, and enforce the provisions of this bill;
- Greater DEP authority regarding producer plans and scope of covered products to keep pace with changing consumer products.

The E-Waste bill has passed one hurdle by moving from committee to Senate Ways and Means. The main objective now is making sure that a strong E-Waste bill makes it to the floor for a vote during this legislative session.¹

¹ The March 21st deadline does NOT apply to the E-Waste bill since the bill was reported favorably out of committee in November.

March 2012 Domestic Violence Prevention activities

RACHEL'S BOX - a history

What an amazing impact our quiet sentinels, Rachel's Boxes, have made in Concord and surrounding communities. ***And thanks primarily to the League of Women Voters, without whose support the project never would have succeeded.*** Nancy James

PURPOSE

Rachel's boxes contain material for domestic abuse prevention and help, with a section for individual institution/host source material. The boxes are dynamic, not static, and flexible to meet the needs of the institution/host. For example, a church will have denominational abuse prevention material, a clergy guide perhaps, as well as local event and resource information. A church forum on domestic abuse will be featured in the Lucite sleeve. Schools will contain teen violence, date-rape, and faculty assistance material, and may feature school programs on alternatives to violence in dispute resolution. The Council on Aging box will contain information and help on elder abuse.

Importantly, these boxes will become a symbol of a safe space. Spaces will become safer. Education will be vital and constant in violence prevention.

Volunteers who assist our hosts were originally from the Quota Club, then the Network for Women's Lives, now DVSN. Volunteers assist in establishing initial contact within each institution/host, box distribution, and the replenishing of supplies.

MISSION AND GOALS OF "RACHEL'S BOX" PROJECT

The "Rachel's Box" project, conceived in 1995, is designed to provide victim assistance resource and informational material in public buildings. Each box is a dynamic unit, containing material appropriate to its institutional setting. Recent years have seen Rachel's Boxes in a variety of retail settings. A new "Salon Initiative" will bring the box idea into hair and nail salons.

Seeing Rachel's Box in many places in part furthers the principle that our public buildings must be safe spaces for all who enter, as well as to serve as constant reminders to all the community, victims and abusers alike, that abuse is not acceptable. Domestic violence help resource material and counseling service information will be among the range of referrals available in Rachel's Box.

Over the past years since the project's inception, we have discovered some of the answers to the hosts' questions in our efforts to assist victims of domestic violence. The boxes are a recognizable container for violence prevention and resource material, and serve as inspiration and hope to victims everywhere. We know they provide both. Family members, neighbors, and friends of domestic violence victims can learn of community resources to become better informed to assist when asked. A greater understanding of how to reach victims of abuse is being gained by the entire community, the project institutions, and service organizations.