

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

# BULLETIN

September 2007

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

Volume 12 07-08 #1

## CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER

4	Tues	Massachusetts Primary for Special Election	Polls open 7 AM-8 PM
5	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 1360 Monument St. (Nancy Beeuwkes)	9 coffee, 9:30 meeting
19	Wed	LWVCC ESC Mtg (Ardis Bordman)	1:30 PM
25	Tues	<b>LWV Congressional Candidates Debate-Foreign Policy (Acton - ABHS)</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
		<b>Note: Tsongas and Ogonowski have declined to attend this debate</b>	
27	Wed	LWVCC Autumn Member Coffee, Concord Greene	9:30-11:30
27	Wed	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> LWV Congressional Candidates Debate-Domestic Policy (Andover HS)</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
		<b>Note: all five candidates are expected to attend</b>	

### OCTOBER

3	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 384 Hayward Mill Rd.. (Louise Haldeman)	9 coffee, 9:30 meeting
13	Sat	<b>LWVMass Fall Conference: Fiscal Policy</b>	
16	Tues	Special Election – Congressional Election	Polls open 7 AM – 8 PM
17	Wed	LWV ESC Mtg (Shawna Reid)	1:30 PM
18	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps Meeting, Everett Garden	9:30
24	Wed	<b>LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Main Library</b>	<b>10-11:30 AM</b>
28	Sun	<b>LWV Sudbury Forum on Mass Health Care</b>	

### NOVEMBER

5	Mon	Concord Special Town Meeting on Willard School	
7	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 41 Canterbury Court, Carlisle (Cindy Nock)	9 coffee, 9:30 meeting
15	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps Meeting, Everett Garden	9:30 AM
16	Fri	<b>LWVCC Book Group, 342 Sudbury Rd (Anne Hayden)</b>	<b>10-11:30 AM</b>
28	Wed	LWVCC ESC Meeting, (Lauren Bakewell)	1:30 PM
28	Wed	<b>LWV Regional Affordable Housing Meeting (Chelmsford)</b>	

### DECEMBER

1	Sat	Concord Town Coordination Meeting, Town House	8:00 AM
3	Mon	Concord Town Warrant Opens	
5	Wed	<b>LWVCC Board Meeting &amp; Member Holiday Potluck, 1360 Monument St. (Nancy Beeuwkes)</b>	9:00 coffee, 9:30 meeting <b>12:00 potluck lunch</b>

### JANUARY

2	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 63 Copper Mine Rd, (Betsy Sluder)	9 coffee, 9:30 meeting
18	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps, Everett Garden	9:30 AM
23	Wed	<b>LWVCC Member Breakfast, Colonial Inn</b>	9:00 AM
29	Mon	Concord Town Caucus	7:00 PM

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

# EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Nancy Beeuwkes & Shawna Reid, ESC Co-Chairs

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Dear LWVCC members,

Welcome back from your summer adventures and wanderings and welcome to the League's busy year ahead. Please plan to join with LWVCC members for an **Opening Members Coffee** at Concord Greene on **Wednesday, September 26, 2007** from 9:30 to 11:30 am. This is a great opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones, to find out about our activities for the months ahead, to connect with the board and to volunteer your special talent for a specific project – small or large! It's also the perfect time to sample some excellent breakfast treats.

The summer of 2007 was a busy one for the LWVCC. We co-sponsored with other Leagues in our district two regional Candidates' Forums for the 5th Congressional District before the September Primary Election. There will be two more **Candidates' Nights on September 25th and 27th** before the Fifth Congressional District Special General Election on October 16th. Please note that the forum in Andover (27<sup>th</sup>) is the only one where all five candidates will be present. If friends ask you, September 16th was the last day to register to vote in this election. We particularly want to thank Erin Pastuszynski, new to the Concord/Carlisle league, but a very experienced ex State Board League member. Erin worked to design and publicize these extremely well run and well-attended forums. We are very excited that she now joins our Board.

Several members in Carlisle and in Concord have been working hard on gathering data and interviewing Concord and Carlisle town officials for the State Fiscal Policy study. Committee Chair, Nancy Cronin, has an in-depth report in this bulletin on our League's progress to date. You will be asked to attend a consensus meeting in '08 when all the information statewide has been collected.

The **State Affordable Housing Study Committee** will hold a **regional consensus meeting** in Chelmsford on **November 28th**, to present the results of their years of study. The presentation will cover Mass. Affordable Housing laws and is expected to last less than one hour with discussion following. This should be a very interesting meeting to attend. If you are willing to attend this meeting as a recorder for the LWVCC, please contact Membership Chair, Barbara Lewis. We will be having consensus on this important and controversial subject at the holiday potluck. Watch your *Bulletin* for information on this subject to study, and please make the meeting on the 28th a priority.

The Board will meet on **October 3rd** and part of this monthly meeting will be dedicated to a **discussion of the Willard School Proposal**, which will come before a Special Town Meeting in Concord on November 5th. As always, members are invited to attend the Board meeting and take part in this important discussion. Please call Louise Haldeman so she can plan for food and seating.

Seven League members marched in the West Concord parade last Saturday and we really enjoyed ourselves despite 95-degree temperatures. Nothing beats having people of all ages waving and smiling at you and cheering the league. We do this every year, so consider joining us next September when we celebrate the birthday of the town. Many thanks to Caroline McCloy who manned the voter registration table for the League.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the Opening Members Coffee,

*Shawna and Nancy*

Shawna Reid and Nancy Beeuwkes, Co-Chairs  
LWVCC Executive Steering Committee

# LWVCC MEMBERS

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By now, everyone should have received their membership renewal forms in the mail. Please return them as soon as possible. And don't forget to include updated contact information. Meeting reminders are often sent out via email, so be sure to include that information on your form.

## AUTUMN MEMBER COFFEE

This fall's Member Coffee will again be at Concord Greene in the Club House meeting room on **Wednesday, September 26<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 11:30 AM**. This is an enjoyable event where members can gather to socialize with each other as well as catch up on League activities in and around Concord and Carlisle.

## LWVCC BOOK GROUP:

### OCTOBER & NOVEMBER MEETINGS

The League's book group has two meetings scheduled this fall. The first is on **Wednesday, October 24, 2007 from 10:00-11:30 AM in the Trustees Room of the Concord Main Library**. The book will be *Team of Rivals* by **Doris Kearns Goodwin**. This will give us all an opportunity to discuss Abraham Lincoln's presidency and the Civil War – a period that we have not looked at yet in the book group.

Then, on **Friday, November 16, 2007 at 10:00 AM we will meet at 342 Sudbury Rd, Concord** (Anne Hayden's home) to discuss a book written by a friend of Anne's who worked for the CIA in the 1950's and 60's. His name is **Carlos Luria** and he has written a memoir about his experiences called *Skating on the Edge*. He has been giving talks all around the country and will not only talk about his experiences working behind the "iron curtain," but also on how the Spy Machine got into the trouble it's in and what it will take to fix it. After the meeting everyone is invited to stay for lunch and further socializing with each other and the author.

All League members and their friends are invited to participate in one or both of these book group meetings. Our meetings are lively, stimulating and enjoyable. For more information, please contact Anne Hayden ([anne.hayden@comcast.net](mailto:anne.hayden@comcast.net) or 978-369-8526).

*Anne Hayden, Book Group Chair*

## ELSIE BRACCO MEMORIAL

The sudden death of long time member, Elsie Bracco, came as a shock to her family, friends, and neighbors. Elsie, along with her husband Don had been an active member of the League for many years. They rarely missed an open meeting and took an active interest in League issues. For many years, Elsie served as the observer to the Board of Health. Her careful and accurate reports were of value not only to the readers of the Observer Report but also to the Board of Health itself as she had become a living repository of BOH history. She had just delivered her last Observer Report when she died. She will be greatly missed.

*Louise Haldeman, Observer Corps Chair*

## THE NEW MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH CARE LAW – HOW WILL IT WORK?

A public forum sponsored by the LWV of Sudbury will be held for League members and the public to provide insight into the new Massachusetts health care law, (Chapter 58 of the Act of 2006). Two speakers will present their perspectives on how the law is proceeding. The forum will be held on:

**2:30 PM to 4:30 PM**

**Sunday, October, 28, 2007**

**Goodnow Library, 21 Concord Road,  
Sudbury, MA 01776**

The two speakers are:

Delores L. Mitchell,  
Executive Director of the Group Insurance  
Commission and Member of the Connector  
Authority, the governing body of the new health care  
law

Jackie Wolf, PhD. Sociologist  
Co-chair of Mass-Care and Member of the LWVM  
Health Care Committee.

For further information, or to carpool, contact Paula Vandever, 978-369-9268 or [VandeverP@AOL.com](mailto:VandeverP@AOL.com).

## Leagues in the 5<sup>th</sup> District Present Congressional Candidate Forums

In an exemplary cooperative effort, the Leagues of Women Voters in the Massachusetts 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District joined together over the summer to plan a series of forums for the candidates vying to fill the U.S. House seat vacated by Martin Meehan. The LWV of Concord-Carlisle, along with the Acton Area, Andover/North Andover, Chelmsford, Harvard, Sudbury and Westford Leagues and the Haverhill Member-at-Large Unit, formed a planning committee that worked to educate voters about their choices in the September 4 primary election and the October 16 special election. Erin Pastuszenski represented LWVCC on the planning committee, and Nancy Beeuwkes and Susan Sekuler each also attended a planning meeting. Debbie Barr and Judy Hill were part of the volunteer crew at the pre-primary forum in Acton on August 21. Thank you to all LWVCC members who contributed to this League effort, including those who submitted questions for the candidates and those who attended the forums.

The pre-primary forums—August 21 at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and August 23 at Phillips Academy in Andover—were well-attended, with as many as 500 people present at each. All Democratic and Republican Party candidates participated in those forums, and two independent candidates also appeared and made brief statements. WBZ-TV's Jon Keller moderated the first forum, and WBZ-TV news anchor Lisa Hughes moderated the second. The August 23 forum, which focused on foreign policy, was webcast on WBZ's web site and replayed on our local cable TV station. The League's pre-primary forums garnered high praise for their inclusiveness, their professionalism, and the

high quality of the League-prepared questions posed to the candidates.

Coming soon are the League's two pre-election forums. All five candidates vying for the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District seat have agreed to participate in the **Thursday, September 27 forum in the Collins Center at Andover High School, 100 Shawsheen Rd., Andover.** This forum will be moderated by Emily Rooney, host and executive editor of *Greater Boston* on WGBH television, and begins at 7:30 p.m. The forum will be replayed on our local cable station at times to be announced. The candidates participating, in the order they will appear on the ballot are James Ogonowski, Republican; Niki Tsongas, Democrat; Kurt Hayes, independent; Patrick Murphy, independent; and Kevin Thompson, Constitution party.

The League has also scheduled a forum **Tuesday, September 25, at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, 36 Charter Rd., Acton,** beginning at 7:30 p.m. All of the candidates were invited to participate in the Acton forum, but Ogonowski and Tsongas declined. The independent candidates will answer voter questions at this forum.

At both of the September events, audience members will be able to submit written questions for the candidates before the program begins at 7:30 p.m. The written questions must be addressed to all candidates. All questions will be asked by the forum moderator. If you would like to carpool to the Acton or Andover forum, contact Erin Pastuszenski ([ErinSP@aol.com](mailto:ErinSP@aol.com), 978-369-3842).

# LWVMA FISCAL POLICY STUDY

## **The Fiscal Policy Study Needs You**

Concord-Carlisle Leaguers Shawna Reid and Susan Sekuler were instrumental in achieving agreement on updating the current LWVM positions on Fiscal Policy at the last state convention. LWVM has a number of positions based on studies that were done in the early 1970's and again in 1992-3. However local budgets are now being strained by rising costs of employee health insurance, special education, and high stakes testing, along with cuts in state aid.

Statewide, from 2001 to 2005 the cost of municipal employee health insurance increased 63.2%, local budgets increased 14.8%, and state aid decreased 1%. Property taxes increased and in some communities services were cut. The goal of this study is to evaluate the current status of financing local government services and to decide what standards the League will follow in assessing proposals to correct the effect on municipal taxpayers.

The LWVM study committee has compiled a wealth of information to prepare local Leagues for coming to consensus on this topic. Leagues are now engaged in studying their own municipal finances, the results of which will be forwarded to the state committee at the end of September. The state committee will analyze this information and will distribute consensus materials to local Leagues in November. We plan to hold an informational meeting for members in January and a consensus meeting in February.

In the meantime the featured topic of the LWVM Fall Conference will be Municipal Finance – Who Pays for Local Government. We urge members to join us at the Fall Conference on Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at the Quincy Marriott.

The Concord and Carlisle Fiscal Policy study committees are hard at work collecting information about the financial situation in our two towns. In Concord Shawna Reid and Nancy Cronin have compiled information about such topics as the sources of our local revenue, overrides, state aid, and town and school expenditures over the past few years. Judy La Rocca has interviewed Town Manager Chris Whelan, and Peggy Lawrence has interviewed Finance Director Tony Logalbo. To complete Concord's report we will also interview School Superintendent Brenda Finn.

In Carlisle members Barbara Lewis, Cindy Nock, and Lauren Bakewell are pulling together financial information and interviewing town officials.

We welcome more help from members on this topic that affects all of us. To volunteer, call or email Nancy Cronin at 978-369-5399 [ncy821@attglobal.net](mailto:ncy821@attglobal.net) or Barbara Lewis at 978-287-0049 [blglewis@comcast.net](mailto:blglewis@comcast.net).

*Nancy Cronin, Fiscal Policy Chair*

# **LWVMA AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY**

## **CONSENSUS MEETING**

### **HOLD THAT DATE!**

The Affordable Housing Consensus Meeting for the Concord-Carlisle League and all Leagues in Region 3 and 6 will be held on November 28 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the lecture room in the Chelmsford Police Station

Recognizing the pressing need for more affordable housing in Massachusetts, the LWVM Convention, 2005, adopted a study with the following scope.

- To evaluate legislation, regulations and programs in Massachusetts, to determine their effectiveness in providing affordable housing and propose a new position through consensus or concurrence.

In addition, the bulletin articles published during the winter, the committee has assembled their research into booklet form for posting on the state League website, accessible to each League member.

The committee has focused on major Massachusetts legislation that enables development of affordable housing in the state. The presentation, expected to be a little less than 1 hour, it will cover major Massachusetts affordable housing laws, how they

work, what they have achieved, and how we might preserve the affordable housing already in place and more. A discussion hour will follow the presentation.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSENSUS QUESTION**

What changes to Massachusetts laws are needed to more successfully encourage the production and retention of affordable housing? In discussing this question please consider the following:

- a. Reasonableness and fairness of current eligibility for purchase or rental of affordable housing in Massachusetts.
- b. Methods of counting affordable housing units under Chapter 40B.
- c. Duration of affordability restrictions on housing units – in perpetuity, in perpetuity with some provision for reversion to market rate, or for a specified time.
- d. Effectiveness of state incentive programs for smart growth, including Chapter 40R and 40S.

**LWVCC Banner at West Concord Family Festival Parade**



## LWVM Affordable Housing Study: Part 1 Why Affordable Housing?

By Jane Nash, LWVM Affordable Housing Study Committee co-chair

The purpose of the Massachusetts League's study of affordable housing is to learn about major Massachusetts legislation that encourages and enables communities to provide affordable housing for residents. The LWVM Affordable Housing Study Committee has a wealth of research to share. For the next six months, through your local League Bulletin, the Committee will share its findings in an abridged form for easy reading. We urge you to keep these articles in preparation for the consensus meetings starting in September 2007. Sources will be provided at the end of each article and on the LWVM website ([www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org)) for further study.

Along with these Bulletin articles, information will be available in the *Massachusetts Voter*, the monthly League Leaders Update, and with the packet of our findings to be distributed to each League in June 2007. In fall 2007, the Committee will hold regional forums to prepare for local League consensus.

### **Affordable housing needs in Massachusetts**

Few deny the need for more affordable housing in Massachusetts. Housing is the largest single expense low and moderate income households face. Most people agree that affordable housing for those with very low incomes and for the disabled is in very short supply here. Some claim that even those of moderate means are unable to find housing without cutting back on other necessities.

Economists define the maximum households can "afford" to spend on housing as the total household income less the amount needed to cover basic needs (food, clothing, transportation and medical care). The federal government (HUD) calls housing affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's income.

In reality, because the cost of meeting basic needs is relatively fixed, most very-low-income households can afford to spend even less than 30%. Using HUD's definition, 21.5% of Massachusetts households had housing affordability problems in 1999.

In August 2006 the State House News Service reported that Massachusetts is adding new housing at one of the slowest rates in the nation. According to them, "Massachusetts added 15,953 units of housing between July 1, 2004 and July 1, 2005 or a 0.6 increase as compared to the 1.5 percent increase of

overall growth in the nation." When one subtracts the housing lost through demolition or "expiring use" there has been a net loss of affordable housing statewide.

### **Why affordable housing matters to all citizens**

Diverse communities are described as those that include people of all income levels and skills. Such communities are seen by many as healthy communities. Some see diversity as a social need allowing citizens to live in a community more like the world at large.

In addition, others see a diverse community as a practical necessity. Several recent news articles claim that the lack of affordable housing is causing skilled workers and seniors to look for housing out of the state. News articles and Gov. Romney claim that the loss of skilled workers is having a negative effect on Massachusetts' ability to compete economically. Employees who work in many suburban communities often cannot afford to live where they work.

Consequently, more towns are becoming less diverse. The hometown of the past where peoples of all economic levels and skills lived within the same community is becoming obsolete.

Since 1969 and the enactment of Chapter 774, Massachusetts has recognized the necessity of affordable housing in every city and town. There is agreement on the need and advantages of affordable housing, but the methods of providing it are contested. The articles that will follow this one will address the laws for and the challenges to increasing affordable housing.

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**Websites:** [www.chapa.org](http://www.chapa.org); [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org);  
[www.macdc.org](http://www.macdc.org); [www.mass.gov/dhcd](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd);  
[www.mhp.net](http://www.mhp.net)

**Sources:** Scott, Janny and Randal C. Archibold. "Across Nation, Housing Costs Rise as Burden." New York Times, October 3, 2006.

Norton, Michael P. and Kyle Cheney. "Mass Adds Housing Units at One of Slowest Rates in Nation, Census Data Shows." State House News Service, August 2006. <[www.statehousenews.com](http://www.statehousenews.com)>

Greenberger, Scott S. "Romney Targets Housing Shortage." Boston Globe, January 7, 2004.