



# THE CAPE COD VOTER

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 2019

## CALENDAR

**Tuesday September 3**  
**9:30am**

**BOARD MEETING**  
**Cape Cod Five, Dennis**

**Saturday September 21**

**U. N. International Day of  
Peace/ Climate Action**

**Tuesday September 24**  
**2-6pm (8 half-hour shifts)**

**National Voter Registration Day**  
**Cape Cod Mall, Food Court**

**Thursday September 26**  
**5:30pm**

**ALL MEMBERS GATHERING**  
**Hearth & Kettle Restaurant**  
**1196 Main St/Route 28 S. Yarmouth**

## UPCOMING

**Tuesday October 1**  
**9:30am**

**BOARD MEETING**  
**Cape Cod Five, Dennis**

**Saturday October 19**  
**10:30am**

**CAPE COD COALITION FOR  
SAFE COMMUNITIES**  
**Zion Union Heritage Museum, Hyannis**

**Thursday October 24**

**United Nations Day**

**[lwvcapecod.org](http://lwvcapecod.org)**

**[www.members.lwvcapecod.org](http://www.members.lwvcapecod.org)**

**[www.facebook.com/LWVCCA](http://www.facebook.com/LWVCCA)**

## *We'll gather together. . .*

. . .for our first meeting of the year on Thursday, September 26th at 5:30pm...for an evening of fellowship, sharing of summer memories ~ adventures/visits from family/beach days/seal and shark stories/traffic/heat/add your story here ~ and then we'll turn our thoughts to the future. There's a lot ahead of us, whether on the Cape, in Massachusetts or at the national level.

There's a lot behind us, too, as we look back on 100 years of the League of Women Voters and prepare to celebrate the years behind us and the amazing women and men who struggled to bring us here. Our speaker for the evening is well acquainted with the League's history and its struggles and successes over the last century.



**Richard Houston our dinner speaker**, has been a history teacher at Monomoy Regional High School for the past twenty-five years. He has won many honors in that time, but none more prestigious than this year's **Teacher of the Year award from The American Battlefield Trust**. The Trust's purpose is the preservation of some 130 historic battlefields, on nearly 50,000 acres of land--among them our own Lexington and Concord.

In nominating Mr. Houston for the award, fellow Monomoy teacher **Kevin Bates** wrote, "My nominee doesn't just teach history, he lives it. . . .He has created after-school AP US history study-sessions which, though voluntary, have drawn more than 90% of AP students. He is easily the most dedicated teacher with whom I have been associated and is clearly deserving of this honor."

Richard Houston describes his mission as "the preparation of good citizens --foundational knowledge of US government, critical thinking skills and effective communication are incorporated into all my classes."

We look forward to having Richard Houston with us as we start off this pre-election year ~ and our historic Centennial Year.

-----  
**PLEASE RSVP TO ANN RYAN**  
**ryan.annp@gmail.com 310.924.1650**

**PAYMENTS TO LWVCCA c/o A. Harris**  
**4 Chapel Hill Lane, Harwich 02645**

I/We will attend the LWVCCA FALL GATHERING \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

/ \_\_\_ / Enclosed please find check in the amount of \$30 per person \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dinner includes soup, salad, Scrod or Chicken Marsala, vegetables, apple crisp, coffee, tea, soda**

***Directions: Exit 7 to Rte 28, east on 28 for c 1.5miles. Exit 8 to Rte 28 west on 28 for 1mile.***

----- ***SEE YOU THERE!*** -----

**FROM SUZANNE BROCK  
FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Members.... It has been a busy summer for the Steering Committee. Richard, Ann and I have met a number of times in preparation for the year ahead.

Those of you who were present at the Annual Meeting in May might remember that one of the directions to the Board was to focus on County Government. In that vein, I testified before the Assembly of Delegates in July regarding the proposed Review of the County Charter. It is extremely important that we monitor these meetings and have a presence there when necessary.

**We are asking each of you** to consider attending a meeting--or watching one live via the County website [www.barnstablecounty.org/calendar/-2](http://www.barnstablecounty.org/calendar/-2) and report back to the Board with updates. The meetings are held twice a month at 4 p.m. on Wednesdays. If enough members are willing to cover two per year, we can get them covered. (Ed.You can read Suzanne's full report at the end of this issue of The Voter)

We have also been busy updating the Member Handbook and Directory, planning the September Membership meeting and attempting to develop interesting and informative programs for the new year ~ as well as planning ways to increase voter registration and participation in the coming year.

This year portends to be extremely important for LWVUS, LWVMA and the LWVCCA. We all must rise to the occasion and work hard to be visible and vigilant when it comes to voter registration and participation. Our very Democracy depends on our members being focused and present. Join us, invite your friends, continue the legacy. The League's work is never done!

We look forward to a great year and invite you to Board meetings, or welcome your suggestions for ways to make us stronger together. Thank you for your continuing membership.

*Suzanne, Ann and Richard*

**\*\*DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR TOWN'S  
ASSEMBLY DELEGATE IS???**

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

*from Co-chairs Renate Sands and Rosemary Shields*

### **Ranked Choice Voting**

The legislature basically takes August off. So, the Election Day Registration (EDR) and Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) bills are still sitting in the joint committee on election laws. EDR had a hearing in June. We expect there will be a hearing on the RCV bills in Sept. or Oct. but nothing is set yet.

On August 7, Voter Choice Massachusetts (VCM), the non-partisan group advocating to bring Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) to Massachusetts, filed language with the Attorney General's office to put a question on the 2020 ballot that would adopt RCV for state and federal elections. No further information was available at this writing from Voter Choice or the Attorney General's office.

### **Pilgrim Update**

The Pilgrim bills we submitted in June to the LWVMA Legislative Action Committee for advocacy have now been approved. We are currently in the process of contacting other Leagues to help with advocating to advance these bills.

However, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has already moved ahead without public hearings and transferred the plant's license from Entergy to Holtec; we continue to be concerned as to what impact that decision might have on current Pilgrim legislation --so we sent an inquiry to Senator deMacedo's office. Chief of Staff Brendan Dutch responded, "Our understanding is that any bills passed now would still apply to Holtec since they would now be the holders of the NRC's Pilgrim operating license. The concern remains, however, that since Holtec created a specific LLC for Pilgrim, *that entity* may not have the financial commitment to meet those obligations.

LWVCCA has signed on to a letter\* sent by the Cape Downwinders and Citizens Awareness Network regarding the Pilgrim license transfer to Holtec without a public hearing on issues raised by local and state organization and citizens. We are hopeful that any ongoing legislation will both clarify what this specific LLC's obligations are, and attach any unmet liability to their parent corporations should this LLC become liquidated or insolvent. \*Late news: that letter has now been signed by 46 other state and national organizations!

### **Day on the Hill**

League Day on the Hill lobby day will be held on Thursday, **October 17** at the State House at 10AM. Featured speaker will be Senate President Karen Spilka. Let Renate know if you'd like to share a ride.

## NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY--

### --SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

*From Voter Service Co-Chairs Anita Rogers & Rosemary Shields*

**Tuesday, September 24** is National Voter Registration Day.

LWVCCA will mark the occasion by setting up a registration table at the Cape Cod Mall in Hyannis. From 2 to 6 pm...by the Barnes & Noble entrance at the western end of the mall... between the food court and the carousel--lots of action! Please let us know if you would like to join us during this national event. Or just drop by to say hello.

With election year coming up, we plan to set up a **Suggestion Box** for people to give us ideas on how to inspire citizens to get to the polls. (Only 60% of registered voters actually vote in presidential elections! And only 20% in primaries.) What's with the apathy?

Note: there is no dress code for this event, though it's been suggested that "Suffrage White" might be appropriate as we begin our celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. But really, we'll be delighted for you come as you are! Please contact Anita Rogers at [earogers2@comcast.net](mailto:earogers2@comcast.net) or Rosemary Shields, [shields\\_rosemary@yahoo.com](mailto:shields_rosemary@yahoo.com) (202) 222.5309

## YOUTH SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT--GOOD NEWS

*From Committee Chair Karen Mazza*

We are happy to report that the **Civics Trust Fund** included in the new civic education legislation has been funded in the state budget for FY 20! The Legislature and the Governor supported the requested amount of \$1.5 million. This money will be administered through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and is meant to fund civic education support activities by the Department, as well as direct grants or allotments to school districts. Now that the funding has been approved, the Department is in the process of developing guidelines, priorities and administrative requirements for implementing the trust fund. The Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition (MCLC), of which LWVMA is a member, is continuing to communicate and provide input to the Department on the use of the funds and the manner of distribution. Karen Mazza continues to serve as the LWVMA representative to the MCLC.

To take our Cape League activities to the next level of support for civic education in our local schools, the Youth Service Committee is developing a resource document for local schools to help them identify organizations and contact people who can provide information to support student civic education projects as called for in the new legislation. Students will be studying civic engagement *in the context of local issues* and we believe that our resource document will help them with their research on topics relevant to the environment, health, housing, immigration, education and other current issues. We will continue our dialogue with local schools to provide support in ways that they find beneficial. If you would like to help us with our efforts please contact Karen at [mazzak1623@gmail.com](mailto:mazzak1623@gmail.com).

## *We extend condolences. . .*

to our long time member and dear friend Joan Bernstein on the death of her husband, Merton, on August third at the age of 96. Mert was a world-renowned expert in the field of pensions, wrote the groundbreaking book in its field in 1964 and in 1988 co-authored~with Joan~*Social Security: The System That Works* providing a positive rationale for that program, its strengths and its accomplishments.

Over the years, Mert went on to contribute endless articles on the subject of pension reform, taught at five universities, including a Fulbright year at Leiden in the Netherlands, served on a number of government commissions (including the Greenspan Commission) and in 1991-92 ran for the Senate from Missouri, finishing third in a field of fourteen.

His platform? Campaign finance reform, single payer healthcare and strengthening Social Security!

A service in Merton Bernstein's memory was held August 10th, with Joan and Mert's four children and many grandchildren reminiscing lovingly about their dad and granddad. The service then closed with Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and the Mourner's Kaddish. May he rest in peace.

*Gifts in Mert's memory may be made to the Merton C. Bernstein  
Internship in Social Security, c/o Kristine Quinio at [kquinio@nbasi.org](mailto:kquinio@nbasi.org).*

### **SAVE THE DATE**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019 10:30am  
IMMIGRATION INFORMATION**

**ZION UNION HERITAGE MUSEUM  
276 NORTH STREET, HYANNIS**

**Presenter: Mark Gabriele, Cape Cod Coalition for  
Safe Communities**

**Six short films, each followed by a question and**

## A FEW THOUGHTS FROM OUR TREASURER, AMY HARRIS

Greetings! It's the beginning of a new financial year and as I look over LWVCCA's books for our past fiscal year 2018-19, I can't help thinking about prospects for the coming year.

In your Annual Meeting Workbook, you received a partial year-to-date (July-May) financial statement which we voted for re the coming year's budget. The biggest difference from that statement to the year-end statement is the amount which we collected in dues. Dues are not a fundraiser per se, there is a fraction of what is due to LWVMA and LWVUS paid by the Helen Aaron Trust to fund the cost of literature and educational materials. In June, there were also some additional expenses for our phone bill and for the State Convention.

*For the coming year, we are woefully down in fundraising and contributions.* "Fundraising" refers to amounts collected from local businesses who advertise in the Voter. That amount is split with the Helen Aaron Trust. Proceeds of \$1000 from our 75th Anniversary were also split with the Trust.

"Contributions" are the gifts we garner from November fundraising letters. Our budget for the coming year is based on the amount raised last year. (when we fell below our forecast).

All that being said, we remain financially healthy: last year was a breakeven overall and the prior year had a \$3000 surplus. We are beginning this year with about \$13,000 in our checking account and \$6500 in savings.

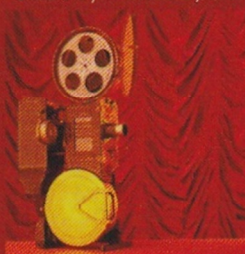
How did we get to breakeven when our income was low? We kept our expenses down. An example being the State Convention where we budgeted \$800 but spent only \$144. The cost of getting our website migrated to MyLo hasn't happened yet --though our website has had a terrific facelift and is now timelier in its content. Thanks to Richard Utt for his expert work on this during the year and over the summer!

During our Budget meetings and later, at Board meetings, there was much thoughtful discussion as to why we are not meeting our forecast/budget expectations on income. One reason, we concluded, is the fact that by far the largest source of so much of our funding comes from membership only--dues and meal payments. For that reason, we feel we must "up" the effort for business solicitations.

*At this writing, however, our fundraising effort has been poor.* We have four business card advertisements when last year's Voter had seven and the prior year had 16. Will that mean additional effort to raise vital funds through membership contributions? It will have to in order to be able to run our programs. However, will it be enough to cover the shortfall when the contributions have been down overall? More than half of our programs have a meal included. The costs of those meals is borne by attendees' checks, not League funds. This led our Budget committee to wonder if, by asking for a check for every event, are we then discouraging the opportunity to donate later on.

How many checks can one write? Well, there is a special enhancement this year-- thanks to Richard Utt, we can now skip the check part and go directly to Paypal ~ which we hope will make payments easier for all our members. (We'll continue to accept checks of course.) On a later page you will see three terrific new ads just received. And there's still time to solicit more. If they haven't been received in time for this issue, there are still nine monthly editions to go ~ until June of next year. Please consider asking your plumber, your hairdresser, your favorite breakfast/lunch spot. . . your lawyer, or your real estate agent or any of your contacts to please support the League of Women Voters. THANK YOU!

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*Thanks to Terry Moore, a new member*



*Thanks to Michael, our most loyal supporter and to Richard for staying in touch*



## CAPE COD COMMISSION HOSTS ONE CAPE SUMMIT--JULY 29-30

*From Florence Seldin*

Paula Bacon and I were among several hundred people--local and regional planners, elected and appointed officials, town employees--gathered to discuss a future heavily influenced by climate change and to hear about ways to lessen the impact to the region's environment and economy. Speakers praised the Cape's 208 Plan to address wastewater management.

Plenary sessions on the environment started with **Kristy Senatori, CEO of the Cape Cod Commission**, speaking on "Framing the Future: Resilient Communities."

The Commission is updating regional plans for transportation and capital infrastructure, and has developed a web-based tool, the Cape Cod Coastal Planner, to help educate the public and municipalities on social and economic impacts of the problems and solutions. I saw this demonstrated at one of the breakout sessions.

She was followed by **Eric Fisher, Chief Meteorologist for CBS Boston's Channel 4 news, who defined** global warming: more record heat, shorter winters, northward trend in occurrence of tornadoes, heavier rains and more rapid intensification of hurricanes. CapeCod, according to scientists, is more vulnerable than ever to storms like last winter's nor'easters. Nearly a foot of sea rise since 1921 means that even a relatively small storm can breach natural and manmade barriers and cause flooding as occurred in January in Provincetown.

**Daniel Sieger, MASS undersecretary of environmental affairs** told of State efforts to address the problem including passage of a \$2.4 billion environmental bond bill in 2018 which set aside more than \$200 million for climate change adaption planning and projects.

The morning plenary session was followed by breakout sessions. In the afternoon plenary session attendees heard from Paul Niedzwiecki, Erin Perry, Dan Wolf and Dorothy Savarese.

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**Testimony by Suzanne Brock  
Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates  
Hearing on County Charter Review  
July 17, 2019**

**To the honorable members of the Assembly of Delegates:**

The League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area has followed Barnstable County Government for years, particularly relating to reviews of the County Charter. In 2012 the League conducted a study of the charter with a particular eye to its structure and achieved a consensus among our members. In 2015, we advocated for changes, in conformity with that consensus, acknowledging that with any changes there are likely to be strengths and weaknesses.

Today, in 2019, the Assembly is considering another review as required by the Charter. At this time there are no specific proposals, simply a request by the Speaker to the delegates to review the Charter for possible needed changes, either minor “housekeeping” changes or possibly major structural changes.

I would like to first address the process to be used by the Assembly--which has approved acting as a “committee for review as a whole”. We are pleased that the first order of business is a public hearing. It’s important to gather information from as many knowledgeable voices as possible on how the public perceives the functioning of the County. As the process evolves we hope the Assembly will hold additional hearings as possible changes to the charter are proposed -- and well before they are presented to the Assembly as a whole for approval. Transparency is of the utmost importance if trust in the process and its final results are to be valued.

As part of our 2012 study, we identified the following strengths and weaknesses of the existing structure that we hope may still be helpful to the Assembly as it considers what potential changes might result in improved, effective, and transparent county government.

**CURRENT EXECUTIVE BRANCH:  
3-MEMBER BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Strengths:

1. Elected Cape-wide, to appeal to and take into consideration the needs of the entire region.
2. Offers a distinct separation of powers between it and the legislative branch -- a check and balance in the traditional understanding of the term.

Weaknesses:

1. The entire 3 member board is given general supervision and direction over all agencies of the regional government, resulting in a lack of direction. There is no consistent “voice of the County” since reorganization happens each year. Who gives direction to the administrator? Whom does the administrator call with a question? How does a whole board act as a CEO or make inquiries into conduct?
2. Having three commissioners means that, under the Open Meetings Law, no two commissioners may communicate in any form with each other because two constitute a

majority of the board. This, therefore, discourages discussion of new ideas and allows no opportunities for clarification of a position or a misunderstanding or disagreement except before the public.

3. There is the potential for a quorum issue; if two are absent there is no meeting.
4. Re-organization happens on a yearly basis. Typically this means that the chair is rotated. It is possible that, in two succeeding years, the views/passions of a chair could differ greatly from the previous year's chair resulting in little consistency year to year.
5. A budgetary process involving both Commissioners and Assembly makes the process both lengthy and hard for departments to plan and implement programs in a timely and efficient manner. (Ridley/Strategic Plan)

6. It is extremely hard to do personnel reviews in public. Ideally reviews are done in a private setting where there can be open discussion of what's been done and where areas of improvement are needed.

Many management consultants view an elected official as less able to make a fair evaluation of employees, to do the hiring and firing [as an appointed administrator would be able to do]. Politics complicates these relationships and responsibilities.

**CURRENT LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:  
15 MEMBER ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES**

Strengths

1. Each town has its *distinctive voice*.
2. Each town has its own *percentage of vote*.

Weaknesses

1. Regionalism is not fostered to its potential since a delegate only represents his/her own town.
2. The inter-connectedness of the towns is less obvious; parochialism is potentially a problem.
3. Proportional voting is less than the ideal standard.
4. There is the potential problem of a quorum -- 8 members AND 50.1% of the vote. [If the delegates from the three largest towns and Mashpee happened to be absent, there is not a quorum.]
5. A 15 member legislative body is not streamlined. It is a lot of government for the size of the budget and the population of the region.
6. Charter revision decisions are delegated to persons who, in addition to the effectiveness of county government, might also be influenced by self-interest, i.e., maintaining health benefits.

\*\*\*\*\*

## LWVCCA-SUPPORTED POSITIONS

### County Structure in General:

- We support an appointed single, strong executive rather than a Board of Commissioners.
- We support a reduced size legislative body (significantly less than the current 15) to be elected on a regional basis.
- We support changes in that would foster greater responsiveness, efficiency and visibility of the Cape Cod Regional Government.
- We support strong, effective, and transparent regional government, including the Cape Cod Commission, as the most effective way to be responsive to the current and future needs of the region.

**The League of Women Voters Cape Cod Area's 2012 position calls for a reduced- size government in which the current Board of Commissioners executive branch) is eliminated and replaced by either an elected or appointed administrator/executive/ manager. In addition, our position calls for a reduced-size legislative body where delegates are elected on a regional basis with the County divided into jurisdictions of approximately equal size.**

### A. Strengths of an executive branch with a single executive officer:

1. Both internal and external communications would be simplified, helping to reinforce a unified county identity or brand, and to build public awareness of the array of services and programs provided by the county and the accruing benefits to the towns.
2. It is more efficient.
3. A single strong executive would be an obvious, consistent spokesperson for the region who could also:
  - a. function as a vision setter.
  - b. function as a catalyst for action.
  - c. bring additional cache at the state and federal levels of government
4. With all executive power in the hands of one individual; blurred functions are entirely removed from the current situation.

### B. Weaknesses of an executive branch with a single executive officer:

1. This would be a new structure which can be a difficult "sell" as it involves change.
2. Some might feel the power in the hands of one individual (who may or may not be elected) is too great.
3. The cost (salary plus benefits) would be greater for a single executive than for three commissioners.
4. Some element of the traditional concept of checks and balances could be lost.

**A. Strengths** of a reduced-size legislative body:

1. The legislative body is streamlined.
2. Regionally-elected members would give this branch of government a one person, one vote system of voting.
3. Policy-making would reside solely in one branch of government.
4. While the wastewater crisis and 401 plan have managed to foster regionalism in that area, regional reps would foster the concept of regionalization even more. Economies of scale would also be available and beneficial in some areas. Further, regional delegates might help voters/residents to think regionally and see their connectedness to other towns and the advantages of regional cooperation.
5. A single, smaller policy-making body, by concentrating power in the hands of fewer people, would increase efficiency and streamline government. Yet the body would still be large enough to allow sub-committees to engage in work.
6. Some cost would be reduced by a smaller number of delegates.
7. The regional position might create more interest in the legislative position and thus lead to more contested, though still non-partisan, elections. Contested elections help educate citizens on the issues, value and role of county government. In the most recent election 10 towns had uncontested elections, 4 towns had contested and one town had only write-ins. Of the four contested, two of the towns had an open seat.

**Weaknesses** of a smaller-sized legislative body:

1. Residents of towns might feel they are losing their individual voice.  
(However, public comment on agenda items always allows for voice.)
2. Towns would lose their distinctive vote which, regardless of the size of the share, might be important to them.
3. Citizens might not know their delegate well.
4. Delegates in certain districts would have to campaign in larger geographical areas.
5. Salaries might need to be higher.

Ed. Note: Jan Hively joined Suzanne at this Assembly meeting.



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