

MAY 2020

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 8

CALENDAR

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY May 5 | 9:30 a.m.
Teleconference by invitation



May 5



May 10

**Memorial
Day**

May 25

UPCOMING

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY June 2 | 9:30 a.m.
Teleconference by invitation



LWVCCA ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, June 10 | 5:30 p.m.
Teleconference by invitation

STEERING COMMITTEE
GREETINGS

Greetings Members,

Another month has passed and we are still experiencing an alternative form of existence. I pray that this message finds you all healthy and engaged in new ways of making sure that our local, state and national governments continue to operate and work towards the benefit of all of their citizens. Political engagement is entirely different when one is trying to accomplish it remotely. It is definitely a brave new world.

Last month, the Board conducted its first virtual Board meeting. It actually worked fine in terms of getting this accomplished and included those members that have been unable to be present over the winter in the past due to their change in residence. So, from that perspective, it was a plus. I did miss the physical interaction, but am learning to adapt. One item that was addressed was the Annual meeting. We have definitely canceled the physical Annual meeting for May. The Board is now in the process of trying to decide whether to hold a virtual meeting in early June or postponing the Annual meeting until a later time. A number of important issues need to be addressed by the membership at this meeting including votes on the Budget, Bylaw changes, Board Member elections, and acceptance of the proposed Program Priority Issues. However our Annual Meeting is held, it is important that as many members as possible participate to make their voices heard. You all will be hearing more about how this process will unfold. Please stay tuned.

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In the meantime, please also continue to pay attention to the issue of upcoming elections; local, state and national. If it is necessary to change dates or the methods of voting, it is important that changes are made in a timely manner so that the process is legal and all citizens are notified as to the changes being made. Being vigilant of an ongoing health issue should not blind us to other important issues that continue to unfold. Americans have fought long and hard for the right to vote for all citizens. Now is not the time to ignore possible threats to that right. We still have the ability to call, to write, to use social media and whatever safe means are necessary to make sure that our upcoming elections are available to all. It is important for all of us to stay in the game.

Stay well,
Your Steering Committee: Submitted by Suzanne Brock



APRIL 7 BOARD MEETING REPORT:

- Minutes of the March Board meeting were approved and have been made available on the members only webpage.
- Treasurer’s report: the 2020-2021 budget was submitted.
The Board proposed not asking businesses for contributions this year, but to thank them for their past support.
We also approved a proposal to only ask members for contributions to the Ed. Trust.
Conducting online Board meetings using Zoom will add approx. \$15/mo. to the budget.
With the cancellation of the Legislative Breakfast, we have returned some of the collected fees to members. Some were designated as donations.
- Membership stands at 83.
- Voter Service announced that most planned events had been cancelled. The committee is following the Vote by Mail effort and members are encouraged to urge Senators Markey and Warren to support the Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act (as individuals because the League does not appear to have a position on it). They are also following the state’s changes to broaden the requirements for absentee ballots. Rosemary Shields and Anita Rogers will compose a letter to the editor in support of this.
- Youth Service said that the planned Model UN Day at D-Y High School had been cancelled
- The Legislative Committee announced that the Legislative Breakfast has been cancelled.
Renate Sands, Rosemary Shields, Jeanne Morrison, and Renate went on March 10 to make a presentation to the Macroeconomics Class at Cape Cod Community College. We discussed the bills we were going to ask the legislators to support at our annual Legislative Breakfast. When Jeanne spoke about the Parity on Boards, she received a round of applause. Parity on Boards is about equal gender and racial representation on public and corporate boards.

Complete minutes will be available next month on the members only web page.

Under normal circumstances members are welcome to attend Board meetings at any time – see the Calendar for dates.

But for the May meeting, because of the Covid-29 crisis and concerns about group meetings, we will be conducting the meeting as a teleconference by invitation for Board members only. We will have to decide about how to handle future events as the situation develops.

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT**COVID-19 and the minority communities**

We have heard a lot that Covid 19 is “the great equalizer. It is not, and never-ever was the case.” These were the opening comments of Dr. Julie Levison at a very compelling seminar hosted by YW Boston called An Unequal Crisis. Thank goodness LWVCCA member, Jeanne Morrison, cued me in to this webinar that took place on Tuesday, April 14.

Dr. Julie Levison works in Chelsea, directly across the Mystic River from the City of Boston. With a population of over 40,000 people it is the second most densely populated city in MA. The Chelsea Urgent Care Clinic is affiliated with Beth Israel Deaconess and serves a very diverse population, many immigrants and Spanish speakers. Another fallacy coming out of Covid 19 is that it is the “fault” of the community because they are not social distancing and have immuno-compromised diseases such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease. These diseases can be the result of isolated neighborhoods without groceries, basic care at medical facilities and years of neglect by indifferent city services. When you're working at 3 service jobs where you have to take a bus to get there, and don't have the luxury of staying home, social distancing starts to look more like privilege. Also many do not have smart phones, so tele-medicine is not possible for the community.

Dr. Jonathan Jackson, Executive Director of CARE Research Center MGH, says because the resources are not available to many in the community, we are seeing the COVID crisis as if we are in a dark room with a pen flashlight. We only see the most obvious patients who can get to the clinic or the hospital. We're not seeing the whole picture from the neighborhoods who are left out. We need to partner with the most vulnerable, put resources where they can get to them and don't patronize the community. We need to keep records of the racial make-up of who are getting sick and who are dying.

[From The Boston Globe article 4/15/20: Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell pointed to statistics that show Boston's Black residents make up more than 40 percent of the city's coronavirus cases where data on race is available, while only comprising about a quarter of the city's population. She called such data extremely troubling.]

Dr. Jackson continued by saying “science is slow. It usually takes 17 years from problem to vaccine.” Put on a very fast track, the Covid 19 vaccine will probably take around 18 months to develop. So we're looking at seeing a “vaccine in August 2021.” The vulnerable communities don't even have the chance to be part of clinical trials where they might get additional help. The medical establishment needs to become more creative to do outreach – perhaps with Facebook or What's App. Also from past experience, it takes time to develop trust with communities.

Dr. Jackson ended his comments by saying if you remember nothing else REMEMBER THESE TWO THINGS: Hold on to how helpless you have felt over these past weeks and realize that there are people who feel helpless all of the time.

Dr. Jackson also asks us to go out and vote, do the Census and communicate. Support 3 people in your life – give your time, perhaps some money, listen.

Dr. Levison advised us not to neglect the spiritual portion of being connected. Share this information and get peer support. She asks what will the “new normal” look like? And look for a culture that is less directive and more solicitous to our neighbors and communities.

Dr. Jackson's closing words -- "Do not underestimate your power. Everyone can and are called to help the most vulnerable. If we don't then we will all remain vulnerable." The real public health issue is vulnerability.

Beth Chandler, President & CEO of YW Boston led this discussion. YW Boston was established in 1866 dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. There were over 520 attendees to this seminar. For more information on YW Boston, go to [COVID-19 | A message from YW Boston President & CEO Beth Chandler](#)

Submitted by Rosemary Shields

Co-Chair Voter Service, League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area

Additional information:

The [coronavirus is infecting and killing black people](#) in the United States at disproportionately high rates, according to data released by several states and big cities, highlighting what public health researchers say are entrenched inequalities in resources, health and access to care.

"This is a call-to-action moment for all of us," said Lori Lightfoot, the mayor of Chicago, who announced statistics of the outbreak in her city this week. African-Americans account for more than half of those who have tested positive and 72 percent of virus-related fatalities in Chicago, even though they make up a little less than a third of the population.

In Illinois, [43 percent of people who have died](#) from the disease and [28 percent of those who have tested positive](#) are African-Americans, a group that makes up just [15 percent of the state's population](#). African-Americans, who account for a [third of positive tests in Michigan](#), represent [40 percent of deaths](#) in that state even though they make up [14 percent of the population](#). In Louisiana, [about 70 percent of the people who have died are black](#), though only [a third of that state's population is](#).

For many public health experts, the reasons behind the disparities are not difficult to explain, the result of longstanding structural inequalities. At a time when the authorities have advocated staying home as the best way to avoid the virus, black Americans disproportionately belong to part of the work force that does not have the luxury of working from home, experts said. That places them at high risk for contracting the highly infectious disease in transit or at work.

Longstanding inequalities also make African-Americans less likely to be insured, and more likely to have existing health conditions and face racial bias that prevents them from getting proper treatment.

Voting in the Time of COVID-19

The Secretary of the Commonwealth has determined that any person taking precaution of COVID-19 may request an absentee ballot for the **September 1 State Primary and the November 3 Election**.

Here is the link to request an absentee ballot:

[Absentee Ballot Application](#)

Please request the absentee ballot in plenty of time to be filled in and then mailed. Send the completed application to the local election official at the voter's town hall. Applications can be mailed, hand-delivered or may be submitted electronically by fax or e-mail, as long as the requester's

signature is visible. Please allow ample mailing time for this application and for the ballot. Ballots must be returned to your local election official by or before Election Day.

Here is the list of town halls:

http://www.lwvcapecod.org/Voter_Information.html

So, what's the difference between Absentee Voting and Mail-In Voting? Absentee voting needs to be requested, and in MA, you must have an excuse. Right now, the Secretary of the Commonwealth determined that taking precaution of COVID-19 qualifies for an absentee ballot.

States that have Mail-In Ballot systems, automatically mail out ballots to all enrolled voters, without voters having to request them.

LWVMA Advocacy group is looking into the possibilities of mail-in voting for MA. Here is what Nancy Brumback has to say:

There are several bills being filed to deal with the fall elections, and the Election Modernization Coalition is meeting to discuss them and to look at options that are feasible to implement in four months. The proposal of bill SB 2912 has some problems. MA currently has about 5% mail in voting--it's almost impossible to go to 75% or more without the necessary infrastructure in place; states that do universal vote by mail have put those systems in place over a period of years, adding the infrastructure to handle it as they went along. LWVMA hopes to get out a letter to all members in the Mass League Voter by April 29. Until then, here are a couple of links, and some comments in response to a similar question:

Coalition letter to legislature: <https://lwvma.org/lwvma-urges-legislature-to-act-to-protect-fall-elections/>

Article on some of the logistics problems: <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/news/mail-in-elections-covid-19-supply>

Please note that The Secretary of the Commonwealth has filed legislation which, if passed, would offer expanded mail-in voting options for all voters for elections held this year. Any updates on new laws will be posted on the Sec'y's webpage: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/covid-19/covid-19.htm>

Voter Service Committee report
Submitted by
Anita Rogers
Rosemary Shields
Co-Chairs of the Voter Service Committee



SAVE THE DATE: LWVCCA ANNUAL MEETING

LWVCCA ANNUAL MEETING
Wednesday, June 10, 5:30 p.m.
(or date T.B.D.)

We'll be conducting a "Zoom" meeting.
Information on how to participate will be
sent to all members.

Spring Really is Coming.....




While we shelter in place, with all our plans on hold, the virus and COVID-19 seem to have changed everything. But spring *is* coming, and LWVCCA will keep doing our work, and asking everyone to Stay Well, and Stay Safe!
And wear your masks!



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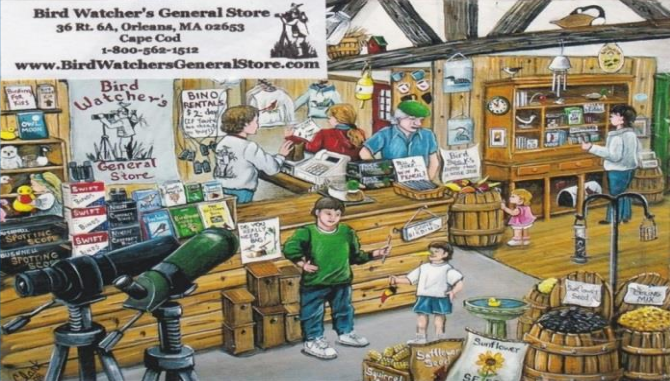
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