

THE CAPE COD VOTER

SUMMER 2022

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LWVCCA PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

The Supreme Court has overturned the constitutional right to abortion. LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner and CEO Virginia Kase Solomón have issued a powerful joint statement and pledged to "continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored. Our lives depend on it."

The officers and co-chairs of the 2022-23 Board have hit the ground running, focusing on the upcoming election season (September for primaries, November for general). The conundrum for the Cape is that about 90% of residents are registered but their turnout is often low – we need to raise the percentages of registered voters who vote! Particularly now that Governor Baker has signed the VOTES Act making registering and voting more accessible.

We will be targeting underserved and minority communities and reaching out to partner organizations to get the word out, to get more people to the polls, and to engage people who often do not turn out, for example, youth and people of color.

A number of state and local races are important this year and many incumbents have been challenged by opponents: governor, attorney general, and secretary of state. In addition, locally we'll go to the polls to elect a new district attorney and sheriff. The League has already provided education forums on the latter two – see these on our website: What a Difference a DA Makes and Know Your Sheriff. We will also be hosting candidates forums for the district attorney's and sheriff's races.

A number of other local races coming up are competitive. There is an open seat for 1st Barnstable district and incumbents are being challenged, including Representatives Sarah Peake, Kip Diggs, and Senators Julian Cyr on the Cape and Sue Moran of Plymouth. In addition, the Fair Choice ballot question will be up for a vote with far-reaching effects.

We will continue to work with our state partners – e.g., Mass Women of Color Coalition (MAWOCC), LWVMA, the Mass Voter Table, ACLU of Massachusetts – to present candidates forums for state elections and voter education events to help educate voters on how their votes will affect them personally. For local elections, Voter Services will partner with the Cape Cod Times and community groups (such as the MLK Action Team and AmplifyPOC) representing underserved communities, to host local candidate forums, educate and encourage voters to go to the polls. We'll spell out details and provide in-depth articles in future newsletters. Stay tuned. Your ideas and your help are welcome!

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http://www.facebook.com/LWVCCA/

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In May, the League was honored with a generous and exciting proposal from the Seldin family in memory of Florence Seldin (memorialized in the May Voter and dearly missed). The family proposed to augment memorial donations to the League in Florence's name with a family donation to establish a Dr. Florence Seldin lecture series dedicated to the idea that, "Democracy is not a spectator sport!" The Board gratefully and enthusiastically accepted! A committee has been formed and is working out the details. Again, stay tuned for more information about this exciting opportunity in future newsletters.

Finally, LWVCCA members joined the Falmouth League and other organizations in the first annual celebration of our new federal holiday – Juneteenth – commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. Jeanne provided an article and photos of this milestone event.

Mary Hunter Utt and Jeanne Morrison, Co-Presidents, LWVCCA

CALENDAR



Independence Day MONDAY July 4

UPCOMING

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY Sept 6 | 9:30 a.m.

Zoom conference by invitation

MEMBERS' OPENING MEETING

September: TBD

To see our entire Google calendar, go to https://tinyurl.com/LWVCCA-calendar. Click on any calendar listing to see more detail.

DUES REMINDER!!!

We are still collecting membership dues. 70% have already renewed. We want to include you in our directory and all the things that make democracy work.

Please renew today! For a small fee, it's easy to do online at https://tinyurl.com/Renew-Using-Credit-Card

Or, you can print this form and send it in: *LWVCCA Join or Renew Form PDF*

Send your check to LWVCCA c/o Amy Harris, 75 Chipping Green Circle, South Yarmouth MA 02660.

JUNE 7 BOARD MEETING NOTES

This was the first meeting of the new Board: Jeanne Morisson presided. All members briefly introduced themselves.

Committee reports will continue to be included in the issue of the *Voter* prior to the board meetings: Committee chairs will only need to present information that is new or updated since the *Voter*. In this way, all members of LWVCCA will see the committee reports: in addition, it will streamline Board meetings.

There was a discussion of in-person vs. Zoom vs. hybrid meetings. No decision was made.

Our annual fundraising letter will continue with last year's decision to ask members to donate to the H. S. Aaron Ed Trust. We will discontinue the annual solicitation of business donations, as it has had limited success in recent years. Other fundraising idea will be discussed in future meetings.

The Board discussed the proposal by the Seldin family to set up a Florence Seldin Memorial Lecture series. The Seldins have offered a generous donation to add to contributions already made in Florence's memory. It was moved and seconded to set up a committee to oversee the direction of the lecture series. The motion was approved unanimously.

Rosemary Shields offered special thanks to the town liaisons who gathered data for the spring election voter turnout chart recorded in the Voter.

DID YOU KNOW-?

...that homeless people may register and vote in all 50 states? States have varying requirements for the information needed to register, such as a mailing address—a shelter, a PO box, a relative's mailing address—at which a voter can receive registration materials. Most states, including Massachusetts, accept a description or a sketch of the place considered to be a homeless person's residence—such as a park, an intersection, or near a specified landmark—in order to assign a polling place or precinct to that voter. The Federal Voter Registration Application includes a special section for such a hand-drawn sketch. According to one Cape Cod Town Clerk, election officials in the Commonwealth often find it easiest to register a homeless person in person so they can answer questions about the voting process, determine the location where the voter sleeps at night, and encourage every eligible citizen to vote on Election Day.

ACLUM/LWVCCA 'KNOW YOUR SHERIFF' FORUM

The presentation of the <u>ACLU Massachusetts</u> "Know Your Sheriff" voter education forum was organized by the <u>MLK Action Team</u> (of the Nauset Interfaith Association) and LWVCCA. Organizers were Karen Boujoukos and Jeanne Morrison.

The webinar was held the evening of May 24th. The Cape Media Center hosted the evening event and the Cape Cod Times was the Media sponsor. The ACLU presenters were Olivia Santoro and Javier Luengo-Garrido.

Some highlights:

There are 14 Sheriff Departments in the Commonwealth, one for each county. Sheriff elections are every 6 years and they are accountable only to the voters.

There is no higher office or authority to oversee

the sheriff departments. In the 2016 election only

4 of the incumbent sheriffs had challengers. In the last election, over 670,000 ballots left the sheriff selection blank.

Though 33% of people the ACLU polled thought that job responsibilities of the sheriff were similar to the role of police officers, that is actually not the case. The sheriff's primary responsibility is the welfare of those incarcerated in the county jail and includes overseeing their medical concerns, educational programming and preparation for reentry into society when they have completed their sentence. The Sheriff also controls prisoners access to visitors and their attorneys, telephone access to families and its costs, and access to voting.

There is currently a bill in the state legislature to address the current practice of some county jails of charging exorbitant prices for prisoner telephone calls. The 2021 budget for the Barnstable Sheriff's Department was \$32,685,210. The budget for the much smaller Duke's County is \$3,859,939. The current Barnstable Sheriff is retiring this year and there are two declared candidates running to replace him.

There was a lively discussion and Q&A session where voters asked questions related to accountability and responsibilities. Participants requested that a candidates forum be held before the election. The program was interpreted live in Spanish and a representative of the Brazilian community attended the forum and will be translating the recording to Portuguese for members of the Cape's Portuguese speaking community. There is also a plan for the Cape Verdean Museum and Cultural Center to host a viewing and discussion of the forum in their community. Both of these groups will be doing outreach with an emphasis on voting and both of these events will be accompanied by voter services. A recording of the session will be posted on our YouTube channel. FB and website.

A recording of the forum is available on the LWVCCA YouTube channel at this link:

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https:/tinyurl.com/ACLUM-Know-Your-Sheriff

Respectfully submitted, Karen Boujoukos

Sponsoring Organizations:

MLK Action Team

Amplify POC Cape Cod

Coalition for Safe Communities

NAACP Cape Cod Area

MA Coalition of Women of Color

Ma Voter Table

League of Women Voters Massachusetts

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

The LWVCCA and LWV Falmouth helped ArtsFalmouth kick off its first Juneteenth celebration as part of its annual Arts Alive Festival, a 25-year old, weekend-long program held on the Falmouth Library lawn and adjacent parks. Our DEI community partners, the Cape Cod Cape Verdean Museum and Cultural Center and AmplifyPOC Cape Cod also participated.



The opening ceremony featured Jeanne Morrison, LWVCCA Co-President, who provided the history of Juneteenth and the meaning of the flags commemorating the

holiday. Juneteenth legislation was passed in Massachusetts on July 24th, 2020, by Governor Baker, making it a state holiday. President Biden made it a federal holiday on June 17th, 2021, officially commemorating, nation-wide, the emancipation of enslaved African-Americans.

Juneteenth is the oldest African-American holiday that officially celebrates the end of slavery. Juneteenth gets its name from combining June and 19th, the date in 1865 when <u>slavery finally ended</u> in Galveston, Texas.



The Juneteenth flag flying over the celebration was created in 1997 by Ben Haith, the founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation

(NJCF). He collaborated with a Massachusetts illustrator and others, and the flag was first flown in Roxbury, Massachusetts', Heritage Park in 2000.



Also flying over the celebration was the <u>pan-African flag</u>, also known as the Afro-American flag, of three equal horizontal

bands of red, black, and green.

Falmouth High School students and a visiting college student (Mati Ligon's grandson) re-enacted Black (and one white) Civil War heroes and heroines of the time, including Alexander Augusta, Robert Small, John Lawson, Harriet Tubman, Clara Barton, and Susan Baker King Taylor.



Representative David Vieira portrayed U.S. Maj. General Gordon Granger who marched his troops into Galveston, Texas on June 19th, 1865, to issue General Order No. 3, enforcing the executive order from President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, informing the people of Texas that slavery was

indeed ended <u>Major moment in history</u>.
Also recognized was a local Civil War hero, John Wilson, born into slavery, who enlisted in the Union army in one of the first all-Black regiments. He and his family resided in Sandwich,

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Massachusetts. A plaque honoring him is located at the entrance to the Sandwich boardwalk.

Several members of both leagues attended the Friday night event, discussing the importance of voting rights. Jeanne and Representative Vieira also discussed the 15th amendment passed by Congress on February 26, 1869, and ratified February 26, 1869, giving African-American men the right to vote. Many newly freed slaves put their newfound freedom to use, electing scores of Black candidates. During post-Civil War Reconstruction, 16 Black men served in Congress and 2000 Black men served in elected local state and federal positions according to Columbia university professor and writer **Eric Foner**. Mati Ligon spoke about the importance of voting in the upcoming elections, and voter materials were made available to the audience.

The remainder of the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) was filled with entertainment, arts, and crafts, all well attended by the public. The LWVCCA and Falmouth LWV jointly set up a voter registration and information tent. Volunteers from both leagues provided two days of voter registration and education, answering questions and working the crowd throughout the festival providing information on the upcoming state and local elections, voter deadlines, voter registration, and more. Materials were provided in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Materials for the What a Difference a DA Makes and Know Your Sheriff educational forums were also available in these three languages.



The Juneteenth 2022 festival volunteers included, from the LWVCCA: Suzanne Brock, Madeline Zevron, Mati Ligon, Karen Boujoukos, Mary O'Connor, Renate Sands, Jeanne Morrison, and Anita Rogers. From the LWV Falmouth were:

Chinna Mapp, Jackie Rider, Judi Ziss – as well as Marcia, Carol, Olivann, Olivia, and Lynne, whose last names we didn't get

Submitted by *Jeanne Morrison, Co-President, LWVCCA*

DEI COMMITTEE

Book Discussion: The Sum of Us

On Thursday, June 2, 14 people, in two groups, attended Zoom discussions about the book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee. This book addresses systemic racism and its roots in American government policies as well as the lasting effects of these policies on people of color that are still in force today. The discussions raised a greater awareness and empathy for the continual struggle of people of color (POC) in America.

This book emphasizes the economic consequences of systemic racism and one major takeaway from this discussion is that "white economic privilege is invisible" to the majority of white Americans. The facts presented in this book are eye openers, to say the least. Most white, middle class people have been able to get ahead financially due to the equity in their homes along with intergenerational wealth from families. People tend to equate white wealth with a "bootstraps mentality" rather than with the generous and discriminating public policies which were not available to POC throughout our history. Starting with slavery, Jim Crow laws and even the Homestead Act of 1862 and continuing into the 1940s with the GI Bill, as well as exclusionary membership to trade unions. redlined neighborhoods, unequal pay, and unaffordable child care to name a few, POC have been excluded time and again from realizing the American Dream.

The premise of this book is that for people of color to make progress (win) economically in America, white people don't necessarily have to lose something. This zero-sum (win/lose) mentality still permeates American culture, and ultimately becomes a lose-lose situation for all of us. White people believe that

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they will lose out if POC succeed in housing, education and employment. The continuing outcry over affirmative action and college admission quotas are evidence of this.

Looking ahead as the LWVCCA, we can continue to help change the narrative that has existed in America for over 400 years. We must challenge this zero-sum mentality and help change the narrative that has existed in America for over 400 years. As Heather McGhee says on the final page of her book, "We must challenge ourselves to live our lives in solidarity across color, origin, and class; we must demand changes to the rules in order to disrupt the very notion that those who have more money are worth more in our democracy and our economy." We must allow "our diversity to be our superpower."

Evaluation responses

Evaluation surveys were emailed to the 14 participants: 7 were returned. The responses were very positive about this book, which is widely acknowledged to be groundbreaking in its breadth and depth. One reader found that given her wide experience in DEI work, it did not present new material, but that is not a negative observation. This section highlights representative evaluation responses.

"[The book] gave me additional information that confirmed beliefs I already had. [It] deepened my beliefs by making it clear just how pervasive racism is."

"[The book is] one of the best I have read on racism. It clarified a lot of answers I have had about how our present culture developed. Examples cited in the responses included: excluding black people from unions, privatization of public goods is not just for economic reasons, inability of black veterans to access GI Bill benefits."

There is interest in further reading:

"[It] would be good to read about existing good models of people working together to create a solidarity dividend on important projects....[and] to read some black feminists and activist women together—it would be especially helpful to read

and discuss their critiques of how white women in the feminist movement failed them historically, and their prescriptions for how white women can be present for them and center their voices now as friends and as allies."

Finally, one reader noted, as her most important takeaway, the explanation of how the zero-sum game works "gives me an additional tool with which to try to reach closed minds. It's sad to say, but there are some for whom an economic incentive for ending systemic racism may have more appeal than a moral one."

For more information:

All responses to the evaluation questions are on the website

https://tinyurl.com/The-Sum-of-Us-Eval-Responses

Additional comments that Jeanne recorded during the discussions are at

https://tinyurl.com/The-Sum-of-Us-Jeannes-Notes

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

You often hear the question "What does Barnstable County Government even do?"

They're not very good at blowing their own horn, but here's an example from the Cape Cod Commission: they've provided substantial subsidies for sewer projects in Cape Cod towns.

Orleans, where I live, received \$14.8 million in 2019 towards a \$59.4 million project – a 25% subsidy, with additional contingent awards of \$12.5 million for planned projects. The full list of towns and subsides awarded is at this link: https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-and-islands-water-protection-fund

From their <u>webpage</u>: "To date, the Cape Cod and Islands Water Protection Fund has awarded nearly \$95 million to Cape Cod communities to fund new water quality and wastewater projects and certain pre-existing wastewater debt."

This could also have been filed under an "Environment" heading, since water quality is so important in protecting our aquifer, our ponds,

and our seashore. And of course, the availability of sewering affects the health of our businesses, and opens up possibilities for affordable housing – all Cape-wide issues that Barnstable County government is uniquely positioned to address.

Submitted by Richard Utt

YOUTH SERVICE COMMITTEE

LWVCCA Celebrates Barnstable High School Civics Day

Barnstable High School organized their first Civics Day for the presentation of student-led civics projects on June 15. Students from 35 classes and 11 teachers presented their projects displayed throughout the school library from 8 AM to 2 PM. A ceremony was held from 10:30 to 11 to recognize the achievement of all the students and teachers who participated in these projects, and to feature the work of five students who spoke about their work. As one small part of that celebration, LWVCCA was invited to speak briefly and present certificates of achievement to these five students, and to be distributed later, classroom certificates for each teacher and the sections they taught.

Topics ranged from school based issues such as gender inclusive bathrooms, vaping, peer mediation, and the dress code to large social issues such as homelessness, affordable housing, teenage mental health, and substance abuse. Town and state officials, and community members were invited to attend and listen to the student presentations. Thank you to the several members of the LWVCCA and a representative each from the Falmouth and Plymouth Leagues who attended. Special thanks to Co-President Jeanne Morrison for attending. A special News coverage of the event can be found at this link:

https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/making ch anges_cape_cod_times_june_16_2022.pdfprojects/ 7622301001/



Barnstable High School has worked with Generation Citizen to implement the curriculum that supports the development of these action civics projects. The school, under the leadership of Ginny Turner, Social Studies Coordinator, began piloting the Generation Citizen curriculum four years ago in Grade 8 and Grade 11. For the 2021-2022 school year, BHS received a grant from the Civics Project Trust Fund (part of the 2018 state legislation to enhance civic education and engagement) that allowed them to train all of their Social Studies teachers. They are the first school on the Cape to be able to offer a full scale Civics Day featuring student-led civics projects.

The Youth Service Committee of the LWVCCA developed a relationship with Barnstable High School three years ago by working with the Social Studies Coordinator, and asking their pilot teachers how we might assist them. The teachers explained that it was sometimes challenging to help students become familiar with issues in the

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larger community. This inspired our committee to develop the Cape Cod Civic Resource Directory for Student-led Civics Projects, CIVIC RESOURCE **DIRECTORY** which we subsequently gave to all high schools on the Cape. We then renewed our relationship with BHS this year, after hearing that they had received the grant, to see if we could assist them with a celebration event, as audience members, or judges or in the presentation of certificates. BHS chose to invite us as an audience and to present the certificates. Our involvement as a League has been as a light partner on the side. Barnstable High School and their Social Studies Department deserves all the credit for their implementation of the Massachusetts action civics curriculum and LWVCCA congratulates Ms. Turner, the teachers and students for their outstanding work.

<u>League Members Attend Generation</u> <u>Citizen MA Civics Day</u>

On June 6 several League members attended the Generation Citizen Massachusetts Civics Day, organized for schools that are using the Generation Citizen curriculum model to conduct their student-led civics projects. Schools from more than a dozen communities attended with over 300 students. LWVMA members attended as some of the 100 Community Advisors who volunteered to offer students feedback about their projects as the students think about ways to influence progress in their communities on these important issues of student interest. Participation gave our League members an opportunity to connect with students and to think about supporting showcase civic events in our local communities. Thanks to all who attended and to especially to LWVMA President Elizabeth Foster-Nolan for participating. Karen Mazza and Cindy Battis from the Youth Service Committee of LWVCCA attended.

As part of the LWVMA Civic Education Committee work to encourage all local Leagues to develop a partnership with their local middle and high schools to support these student civics projects, LWVMA has established a landing page on their website to highlight the work of these local League partnerships with schools. This section of the LWVMA website appears in the dropdown menu and can be found at this link: https://lwvma.org/civics-education-celebrating-student-led-civics-projects/

Submitted by Karen Mazza

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

ABOUT THE LWVCCA'S NEW MEMBERS

The officers and members of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area gladly welcome all of its new members who have joined since December 2021. Gratefully acknowledged among the 2022 new members are: Kathleen Sherman, Christine McCarthy, Lindsay LaCorte, Marcia Fredlich, Susan Cameron and Alison Carter. The LWVCCA benefits from the sharing of information about the life's experiences of new members and the reasons why they chose to join The League. It is anticipated that the bio-sketches of members who have joined during 2022 will be presented in future monthly issues of *The Voter*. The current LWVCCA membership continues to earnestly be interested in learning about their experienced challenges, their career victories, their former League participation and their sociopolitical concerns. The willingness of new members to participate in the on-going interview/write-up process serves as a viable means of introducing new members to The League and vice-versa. The LWVCCA values and appreciates all of its new members whose diversity of talents and skills can serve to support the principles and beliefs of The League.

May the entire membership of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area enjoy a safe, restful, and peaceful Summer 2022!

Submitted by Matilda Ligon, Chair, LWVCCA Membership Committee

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HEALTH COMMITTEE

The LWVCCA Health Committee is reviewing current health-related bills regarding abortion, gun control, Death with Dignity, Common Start, and Medicare for All. We are assessing the health-related issues of these bills and will provide a synopsis for the next Voter newsletter.

The Committee is also planning a forum on mental health to occur in November 2022 by Zoom. The forum will address the impact of Covid on mental health for youth, parents, and elementary/high school faculty or administration. The forum will provide League members and the community with both an understanding of the challenges due to Covid and how they can be addressed. The Forum's November date and panelist information will be identified in the next Voter newsletter.

In addition, the Health Committee is very interested in having new members join the Committee. If you are interested, contact Eileen Elias, Chair at eileen.elias@comcast.net.

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Many hands make light work

I want to thank the League's liaisons for helping the Voter Service Committee put together our Spring Election results, which were printed in last month's Voter, page 8

https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/cape_cod_voter_vol_61_issue_10_june_2022.pdf

Local elections are the elections where you can have the biggest impact. Local elections are really the most important ones because they help determine who is running your town, whether it's the Board of Select, Water Commissioner, or your Town Clerk. These officials determine the budgets, test for water quality or make sure our elections are run smoothly. Local issues such as affordable housing, school budgets, and waste water management are accomplished locally. And yet, and yet, only 15 to 25% of registered voters participate. It makes our votes four times more

powerful and yet, and yet, we need the wisdom of the crowd. We need to get as many citizens to have a stake in what is happening in our democracy.

There is lots to do, and yet, if a bunch of us individually find out 4 or 5 facts from our town hall website or from our Town Clerk, it's work shared and the task is accomplished without burden. I want to encourage everyone to choose one simple activity on behalf of the League – showing up at a voter education event, writing an e-mail to your State Representative as directed by our Action Alerts, sending ideas for clever posts we can put on our Facebook page. These small acts of devotion to a cause add up. When we all work together there is a lot we can accomplish.

Submitted by Rosemary Shields Co-Chair Voter Service Committee

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

LWVCCA's Legislative Committee met for an outdoor lunch among the rhododendrons at the home of Renate Sands this month. The Committee thanks Renate for her gracious hospitality.

The legislative session ends on July 31, 2022, for most bills. Updates to pending legislation include the following:

- GREAT NEWS! Governor Baker has signed The VOTES Act –after both the House and Senate passed it. Unfortunately, the final bill does NOT include Election Day Registration but does include many of the reforms that resonated with voters in 2020—mail-in voting, drop boxes, joining the ERIC interstate compact, and more.
- MORE GREAT NEWS! The Work and Family Mobility Act has been passed again by the legislature, over-riding the veto of Governor Baker. This law will allow all qualified state residents, regardless of immigration status, to obtain standard drivers' licenses, which will NOT be accepted for voter registration but WILL make our roads and highways safer.
- The LWVMA has requested League members to write to their legislators to support funding

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provisions in the House and Senate budgets for the Common Start bill. See their recent Alert sent to members by email on June 13, 2022. See LWVMA testimony here.

- The Medicare for All bill has been sent to "study".
- Several other bills are still pending in Ways and Means Committees and have received extensions through June. The LWVMA Envoy Team will be alerting us to any of our bills requiring fast action by members.

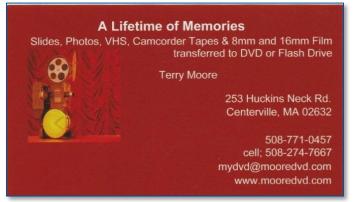
The time between July 31 and the end of the year is considered an informal session which allows the Legislature to conduct non-controversial items of business, all of which must pass unanimously.

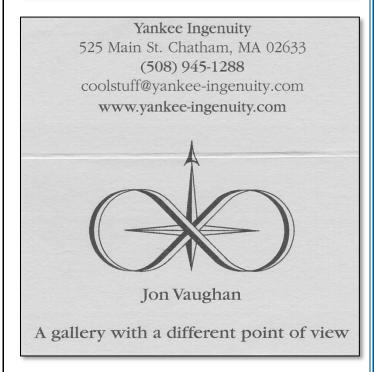
Carole Young-Kleinfeld, Renate Sands, Elaine Dickinson, *Co-Chairs, Legislative Committee*

BUSINESS SUPPORTERS of LWVCCA

Support these businesses that support LWVCCA!







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