



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

LWV FORUM: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Cary Memorial Library has been an anchor of Lexington's center for nearly 150 years. As times change, so has the library which continues to have one of the highest circulation rates in Massachusetts. At the League of Women Voters of Lexington's February 3 First Friday Forum, Library Director Koren Stembidge will be talking about the library's services and how those services are expanding and changing as we move into the digital age

Since the public library in the 21st Century will be delivering more and more content electronically, Cynthia Johnson, Head of Reference, will talk about the library's online resources, digitization of historic collections, and e-Books.

Jeanne Krieger, President of the Cary Memorial Library Foundation and former Library Trustee, will speak about library governance and the private/public partnerships essential to sustain and improve the Cary Library.

This is the fifth in a series of 2011-2012 First Friday Forums hosted by the League of Women Voters of Lexington to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Coffee will be available at 9:15 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:30 in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue. The library is easily accessible by Lexpress and from the Minuteman Bikeway. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

Yes for Our Schools Debt Exclusion Passes

On January 24, Lexington voters approved two debt exclusion ballot questions. Thank you for supporting our schools!

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Town Elections - Candidates Night February 16

The League of Women Voters of Lexington will present a Candidates Night on Thursday, February 16, at the Clarke Middle School on Stedman Road. The snow date is March 1 also at the Clarke Middle School. An annual event presented by the League to encourage greater participation in Town elections, this is an opportunity for candidates to present their positions on the issues and to listen to their constituents' concerns.

In the first part of the evening, candidates for Town Meeting will gather in assigned classrooms to meet and exchange ideas with voters from their own precincts. In the second part, the audience will meet in the school auditorium to hear the views of people seeking Town-wide elective office, after which a League moderator will preside over a question and answer period. The evening will be informative and provide a lively forum for discussion of topics that will be voted upon at Town Meeting.

Doors will open at 7:00 p.m. and precinct meetings will start at 7:30. The meeting with Town-wide candidates is scheduled from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. There is no admission charge and the public is encouraged to attend. For further information, call the League of Women Voters 781-862-6435.

Rides to the Polls

Thank you to Liz Andrews who again coordinated rides to the polls on January 24. There was only one request but it's a full day's job.

For a free ride or to volunteer to drive voters to the polls for the Lexington Elections on Tuesday, March 6, call the League of Women Voters of Lexington at 781-862-6498.

National Program Planning in Lexington

Every two years state and local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues for study, review and update or concurrence. This is one of the ways we remain a grassroots organization.

The Lexington League is joining with the Arlington, Bedford and Winchester Leagues to discuss LWVUS Program Planning on Sunday, February 26, at 12:30 p.m. at the Yangtze River Restaurant in Lexington. We will be using the buffet and/or dim sum at \$13.95 per person.

As a League member you can prepare for participation in Program Planning by looking at Impact on Issues, 2010-2012, available on the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues. There is a summary at <http://www.lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions> which you may want to print to take to the meeting. We also encourage you to think about possible issues not covered by current LWVUS positions.

RSVP to Pat Costello at pecostello@verizon.net or 781-862-6435 if you plan to attend.

LWVMA

LWVMA Calendar

- February 15: Last day to register to vote and change party enrollment for Presidential Primaries
- February 27: LWVMA Board Meeting, Noon-2pm, 133 Portland Street
- March 6: Presidential Primary Election
- March 19: LWVMA Board Meeting, Noon-2pm, 133 Portland Street
- April 14: League Leaders Lunch, 11am-3pm, Amherst
- April 25: LWVMA Day on the Hill, 10am-Noon, State House
- May 5: LWVMA Council

Come to Day on the Hill April 25

The League's annual lobbying day at the State House is set for Wednesday April 25, from 10 am to noon. Please plan to participate. There's power in numbers!

This year's theme is "Democracy for Sale?" and we will announce the speakers on that timely topic closer to April 25. The program will also include presentations from the state League's legislative specialists on key pending legislation.

Local Leagues are encouraged to contact their state Senators and Representatives to set up a meeting to discuss League-supported legislation after the morning's program. Details on the bills, including specific talking points, will be distributed to local Leagues before Day on the Hill, so you will have the information you need to make the case with your legislators.

LWVMA Council 2012:

Challenges to Democracy: Protecting Voter Rights and the Influence of Money

Plans are underway for Council 2012, May 5 at Lasell College in Newton. Registration and other information will be available at a later date. The preliminary agenda is below. We welcome your comments on the agenda. Send them to Karen Price at lwvma.presidents@gmail.com.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM--OPEN FOR MEMBER COMMENT

Registration (10:00)

1. Welcome and introductions (10:30-10:45)
2. Workshops Session 1 (10:45-11:30)
 - A. How to communicate League priorities with your legislators
 - B. Roundtable discussion: Membership and leadership ideas that worked
3. Workshop Session 2 (11:45-12:30)
 - A. Multi-League candidate forums
 - B. League best practices
4. Lunch and keynote speaker (12:45-2:00)
5. Plenary (2:00-3:30)

Get Involved and Make a Difference Today!

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has many ways for you to share your talents and ideas, learn new skills, meet great people, and further our work at the state level. If you have a little time, or a lot, please help out. LWVMA needs you! Check out this opportunity:

LWVMA Field Service--Support for Local Leagues

The Field Service program provides local Leagues with support and training on a regional level. The program is part of the Membership and Local League Services (MLLS) Committee. The purpose of the field service program is to foster the exchange of ideas and communications among the Leagues in the region and to serve as a conduit of communication between the local and state Leagues. The Leagues in the state are divided into regions. Each region has one or more Field Service Representatives. The representative communicates with the local League leaders, holds regional meetings 2-3 times per year, and reports to LWVMA.

If you are interested in being part of the program, or if you would like to take part in the revitalization efforts, please contact Karen Price lwvma.presidents@gmail.com. Being a Field Service Representative is a great way to pass on your League experience and knowledge and help keep local Leagues healthy and engaged!

LWVMA Legislative Update

SB 772 - A Resolution Restoring Free Speech: President Valentine spoke in support of this resolution at a press conference at the State House along with House and Senate co-sponsors and members of supporting organization (talking points). She was joined by local League members, as well. Testimony is being developed for a hearing scheduled for 1:00 PM on 2/28. Interested members should contact the office if they plan to attend the hearing.

HB 1173/SB 413 - An Act Providing Equitable Coverage in Disability Insurance and HB 1172/SB 414 - An Act Prohibiting Discrimination in Insurance Policies: Testimony (HB 1173/SB 413 and HB 1172/SB 414) was developed and presented to the Judiciary Committee by Carole Pelchat on 1/24.

HB 3815 - An Act Enhancing the Practice of Nurse Midwives received a positive vote in both the House and Senate and as the date of this report has been placed before the Governor for his signature.

Campaign Finance Panel Discussion

Thursday, May 17th: SAVE THE DATE - Tom Ashbrook will moderate an evening panel discussion (with audience questions) on campaign finance reform co-sponsored by LWV Concord-Carlisle and LWVMA at the Concord-Carlisle High School Auditorium. More information to follow.

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the February 2012 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at Nancor1106@gmail.com by February 25th.

LWVUS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

If the first three weeks are any indication, 2012 is going to be even more interesting and opportunity-filled for the League than we imagined. In some cases, the League has already been in the spotlight in ways that we could not have anticipated.

Last week, the President released an ad in several states touting his own record on ethics and the environment. In that ad, he quoted several sources, including a joint press statement sent in April of 2009 by the League, Common Cause and other good government groups commending the then new Administration's ethics policies. Use of the statement was not authorized by the League. The ad, but not the League, has been criticized in the media. State presidents were alerted to the ad last Friday.

In addition, as you know, the environmental community, including the League, engaged in issue advertising throughout 2011. This work focused on protecting the Clean Air Act and the EPA by highlighting votes in Congress. This week, Sen. Scott Brown, now a candidate for re-election to the Senate from Massachusetts, and Elizabeth Warren, a possible Democratic opponent, entered into an agreement designed to ban independent advertising in that race. So far, the only independent ads have been from the right and aimed at Warren. To balance their stories, several news outlets (Time, NY Times) mentioned the League of Women Voters and the League of Conservation Voters as independent groups aiming attacks at Scott Brown. Several of the stories were inaccurate and those reporters have been contacted. Every news outlet that contacted the LWVUS for comment on the agreement received a response that corrected the timeline and the notion that the League has any interest in the current Massachusetts Senate race.

Taken objectively, there are many positive aspects to the recent spate of visibility. The League voice matters, and candidates, elected officials and reporters think our opinions are newsworthy. The League has a long and proud history of speaking to our elected officials about issues that matter to us. In this political environment, we must be prepared to have our words, positive and negative, used by politicians and the media for purposes that we never intended. We can take two approaches to this new environment. We can stop speaking out on issues and make sure that candidates have no new fodder for their campaigns or we can honor our traditions and celebrate the visibility and effectiveness that controversy brings.

Our research shows that taking stands and speaking out on issues is positive for the League and keeps us in the public eye in a manner that reinforces our role as a source of information and an advocate for voters. That research also suggests that we should appreciate this kind of visibility. The Obama ad refers to us as an 'independent government watchdog group,' and the clear inference is that we have enough credibility and name recognition for the president to think that our opinion matters and should be shared. Politics is not for the fainthearted, but we know our hearts are strong and our message matters.

To clarify our position, we have added some language in several places on our website stating clearly that the "League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League." We encourage you to add similar language to your websites in this important election year.

Speaking Out in League,
Elisabeth MacNamara

Dates to Save:

February 3 LWVL First Friday – The Library in the 21st Century

February 16 Candidates Night for Town Election

March 2 LWVL First Friday – Community Preservation Projects

March 6 Presidential Primary and Annual Town Election



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