



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

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Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

### ***LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION***

### ***NOVEMBER 2015 FIRST FRIDAY RECAP***

#### ***FIRST FRIDAY – NOVEMBER 6, 2015***

#### ***CARY MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRANSFORMATIVE SPACES PROJECT***

On Friday, November 6, the Lexington League hosted its First Friday Forum for November. An enthusiastic audience was introduced to the **Cary Memorial Library Transformative Spaces Project** which is on schedule to update and reconfigure portions of the Town's beloved library over the next year. The goal is to make the library facilities more flexible and better equipped for various uses not foreseen 15 years ago when the major renovation of the building was planned

Presented by Library Director Koren Stembriage and her six-person team of library specialists, the project envisions a library of three general zones: (a) quiet study and research on the upper (mezzanine) level, (b) moderate sound and activity on the middle (main) level which will house the fiction, foreign language, and new book collections, as well as four new enclosed study rooms and (c) noisier activity on the lower level, which will now include not only the Children's Room, Learning Center and Meeting Room but materials and facilities for teens.

On the main level, where materials are checked in and out, we will no longer see the large Reference Desk. The central area of the main level will be created as a flexible space which can be reconfigured to accommodate up to 200 seats, for large meetings beyond the capacity of the large meeting room on the lower level.

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Most dramatic will be the reconfiguration of the lower level space which currently houses the fiction and foreign language collections. This area will feature tables and chairs and interactive technology in various arrangements to permit group study, work on projects and a level of interaction appropriate for the many students who use Cary Library every day. Students will have the freedom to chat, collaborate and hang out, without disturbing quieter patrons in other parts of the library.

Ms. Stembridge explained that the entire project is estimated to cost around \$750,000, which will be privately funded through the Cary Library Foundation, borrowing from the endowment as a bridge. Because the money is already available, the project will be completed in phases over the next year. And pictured below is a photo of staff.



The League's First Friday program can be accessed on LexMedia, and we also encourage you to go to [www.carylibrary.org/transformativ-spaces](http://www.carylibrary.org/transformativ-spaces) to review the details of this project.

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## **LEXINGTON LEAGUE CONDUCTS CITIZENSHIP WORKSHOPS AT MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

Last month the Lexington League was pleased to be asked by the Montessori School of Lexington to conduct two workshops on citizen participation as a part of a day-long Diversity Workshop the local school hosted for Montessori Schools in the area.

Members Lisah Rhodes and Hank Manz conducted an hour-long workshop for seventh and eighth graders, encouraging the kids to come up with topics of actual concern to them and then exploring ways to raise these issues with the appropriate town officials.

Among the topics raised by the students were installation of sidewalks, particularly in areas where kids walk to school, and facilities for persons with disabilities. The kids were encouraged to contact town departments and practiced writing letters.

An adult workshop for parents and teachers was conducted by members Charles Hornig and Wendy Manz, drawing on their experience as elected and appointed

members of Town Meeting and town committees. Parents were interested in how to go about acquiring additional land for the school, should a nearby parcel become available, and how to approach both town officials and abutters in that situation.

The League of Women Voters of Lexington is glad to offer information of this kind as part of our over all mission of Voter Service and Education.

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**HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL!!!!**

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**LWVL DECEMBER FIRST FRIDAY  
December 4, 2015**

**Lexington's Department of Public Works Sees Winter Coming  
At the December 4<sup>th</sup> First Friday**

Last winter over 110 inches of snow fell on Lexington; yet our Department of Public Works kept our roads and sidewalks clear. Learn about the preparation and planning that goes into such a heroic effort at the League's First Friday Forum on December 4<sup>th</sup>, at Cary Memorial Library Large Meeting Room.

This is the third in the series of 2015 – 2016 Frist 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 a.m.

For more information, contact the League at [lwvlexington@gmail.com](mailto:lwvlexington@gmail.com). All League Forums are free and open to the public.

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**The League is Looking for Volunteers**

The League is looking for volunteers to fill position openings it has. If interested, contact the League at 781-307-3116 for more information.

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## **LWVLEXINGTON - LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP Renewal Forms Have Been Mailed!**

Thank you to members who've renewed their memberships. If you haven't renewed your membership for 2015-2016, please use the form that you received earlier or the one on our website at [www.lwvlexington.org](http://www.lwvlexington.org). If you have a friend or neighbor who may be interested in joining the League as a new member, please encourage them to do so at this time.

Thank you!

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## **Watch the League's Forums on Demand**

If there is a League of Women Voters of Lexington's First Friday Forum that you've missed or would like to see again, log onto <http://www.lexmedia.org/ondemand.html> and scroll down to "League of Women Voters" under Categories.

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## **LWVMA LWVMA Backs Early Voting Challenge**

Advocates for election reform, including the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts have issued their recommendations for implementing early voting in the state, which will go into effect with the November 2016 election.

To encourage cities and towns to offer a robust early voting program, the Election Modernization Coalition has issued an Early Voting Challenge, with gold and silver "medals" to recognize communities which meet or exceed those recommendations.

The law passed by the state legislature in 2014 requires early in-person voting be available at city or town election offices for an eleven-day period before the election, during normal business hours.

The coalition, which also includes Common Cause Massachusetts, MassVOTE, MASSPIRG, ACLU of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Voter Table, MIRA Coalition, and Progressive Massachusetts, urges cities and towns to offer at least one early voting location for every 35,000 residents. All ballots that will be used in a municipality should be available at every early voting location.

The coalition also urges that early voting locations be open at least one evening each week and for at least four hours on the weekend in the early voting period.

Early voting is already available in 32 other states, making it possible for people to vote in person who can't get to the polls on Election Day, and helping to reduce lines on Election Day.

For more details on the recommendations and the Early Voting Challenge, go to [www.EarlyVotingMA.com](http://www.EarlyVotingMA.com).

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## October 2015 Awards to Nine Local Leagues

Congratulations to nine Leagues awarded Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grants in October—a record number! The grants, to Leagues in Brookline, Harvard, Needham, Newton, Plymouth, Sudbury, Waltham, Wellesley and Winchester, totaled \$2,235.

For information on the grant program, [click here](#). Following is a description of the nine projects:

### **LWV Brookline: Citizen participation in land use policy decisions**

The League of Women Voters of Brookline has committed to make Land Use Planning a priority for activity in the coming year. The Brookline League will launch the activities with the Annual Meeting, a public event in Brookline Town Hall featuring Anthony Flint, a Fellow and Director of Public Affairs at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, who will speak on current strategies for land use planning. Over the next year, the Brookline League will sponsor informational meetings in partnership with municipal government, convene panels of experts, and work to inform Brookline residents about proposed projects that can impact quality of life, open space, affordable housing, neighborhood preservation, traffic and transportation and more. This grant request is to support outreach and educational materials for community meetings.

### **LWV Harvard: Forums and information on housing issues**

The League of Women Voters of Harvard is launching a series of voter education forums on issues related to housing. Harvard has had significant difficulties in getting affordable housing approved; an aging senior population with few options for suitable housing; and lack of diversity of housing stock. LWV Harvard hopes that the forums will both raise awareness and spur people to become involved in one or more activities to adjust zoning as needed, work on important town committees, or work to drive change in the town's governance structure so that it will be easier to make important decisions regarding housing. The series is co-sponsored by the Harvard Council on Aging and Friends of Council on Aging, which will also be contributing to the program costs.

**LWV Needham: Citizenship education project with Mass Bay Community College**

Dr. Jill Silos-Rooney, an Associate Professor of History at Massachusetts Bay Community College in Wellesley Hills, in collaboration with LWV Needham, will run one workshop a semester, open to the public, to help any American resident prepare to take the United States Citizenship exam offered by the State Department. Massachusetts Bay Community College will provide classroom space and refreshments, and the League will fund workshop citizenship study materials. Massachusetts Bay Community College will promote the workshop, which will be free and open to the public. The workshop is planned for a Saturday morning in early November.

**LWV Newton: Signage for public events and forums**

This generic League signage will increase LWV Newton's public presence and serve to notify the public of League events taking place. LWV Newton holds forums throughout the year on many different topics and presented by our different LWVN committees (Voter Service, Environment, Civics Bee, Education, Transportation, etc). These forums are open to the public and located in public spaces. This signage will be useable both indoors and outdoors and we will be willing to share it with state League upon request.

**LWV Plymouth Area: Civics Bee**

The Plymouth Area League is planning its second Civics Bee to be held April 3, 2016. Since one of this League's missions is to promote community involvement and understanding of local, state and national government, the Plymouth Area League envisions that this event will enliven its communities' interests in these areas. The 2015 Civics Bee with five school participating was extremely well received.

**LWV Sudbury: Public educational forum on marijuana in Massachusetts**

This forum is open to the public and sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Sudbury. There will be four panelists who will discuss these subjects:

1. Senator William Brownsberger, "In favor of legalization of marijuana"
2. Representative Hannah Kane, "In opposition to legalization of marijuana"
3. Robert Moura, Director of Pharmacy, Emerson Hospital, "Is there any scientific support for the use of marijuana?"
4. Mike Fitzgerald, Founder and CEO, New England Grass Roots Institute, "In favor of non-pharmacists dispensing medical marijuana"

**LWV Waltham: Materials for participation in social justice impact week at Brandeis and civic education programs for the Ugandan and other immigrant communities**

LWV Waltham has been invited to have a presence at the DEIS Impact festival at Brandeis University. This is a weeklong Festival of Social Justice. In order to participate, LWV Waltham needs promotional materials, posters, flyers, etc. The Waltham League has been working to put together a program to encourage civic engagement among Ugandans and others in the area and will highlight that work at the festival.

**LWV Wellesley: Public panel discussion on proposed changes in town government**

LWV Wellesley will sponsor a public panel discussion of how proposed changes to our town government will impact Wellesley. Panel members include Michael Ward, Director of Municipal Services-Edward Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at U Mass/Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, as well as Jennifer Wilson and Dan Matthews, representatives from Winchester, MA and Needham, MA, who have served on their towns' boards. Wellesley formed a Town Government Study Committee and they have recommended Wellesley hire a Town Manager. This proposal is up for a vote at this fall's Town Meeting.

**LWV Winchester: Public program on the incarceration of women and its impact on children and communities**

LWV Winchester will use March, "Women's History Month," to examine the incarceration of women and some approaches to reform, including the alternatives of community reinvestment. On March 8, 2016, this League will sponsor "The Incarceration of Women and its Impact on Children and Communities: Building up People, not Prisons." The speaker will be Andrea James, founder and director of Families for Justice as Healing, which focuses on raising public awareness about the incarceration of women and its impact on children and communities. Ms. James, a 2015 Soros Justice Fellow, will discuss the high number of incarcerated women in the United States and her efforts to reduce the number by shifting from prisons to community wellness alternatives

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**LWVUS**

Last week millions of voters across the country took control in their communities by casting their votes in thousands of state and local elections. ***If you voted this year or helped others in your community cast their votes, thank you!*** Due to your participation, many new leaders are preparing for their positions and taking into account your vote and the issues you and millions of Americans weighed in on.

**This year, League volunteers registered thousands of new voters and helped hundreds of thousands of voters prepare for the elections in their communities.** We hope to build upon this year's successes and do even more to succeed in Making Democracy Work® in the future. [Help us continue to provide voters with the election information they need.](#)

While Election Day 2015 has passed, there's no time to rest – next year's presidential campaign is already in full swing with numerous debates already having occurred, and with primaries and caucuses set to start in early 2016.

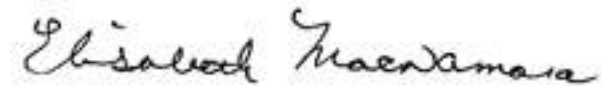


Today, League volunteers are already busy reflecting back on their efforts this year in order to be even more successful next year. With your help, League volunteers will register more new voters, provide more nonpartisan information on the candidates through millions of printed and online voters' guides, and host more debates and forums, as well as serve as poll workers, poll monitors and, in some cases, drivers helping voters get to the polls. **Help us get a jump start on our work in 2016 – [support the League and VOTE411.org](http://supporttheleague.org).**

After 95 years of Making Democracy Work®, the League continues to build on its legacy of empowering people across the country to make their voices heard in the political process and to keep the power of our democracy in the hands of people by arming voters with the information they need. [Your support helps the League keep VOTE411.org online and available to millions of voters across the country.](http://VOTE411.org)

Thanks again for everything you did in Making Democracy Work® this election cycle. We couldn't do what we do without supporters like you.

Sincerely,



Elisabeth MacNamara  
League of Women Voters

P.S. Now that you've weighed in with your vote, make sure to hold your elected officials accountable by continuing to be in regular contact with them on the issues you care about.

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**We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the November 2015 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at [Nancor1106@gmail.com](mailto:Nancor1106@gmail.com) by November 30, 2015.**

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**Dates to Save:**

November 26      Thanksgiving Day

December 4      LWVL December First Friday Lexington's Department of  
Public Works Sees Winter Coming, 9:30 a.m., Cary  
Memorial Library Meeting Room



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