



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

Save the Date:

“What Does Community Mean: How Can We Find It Together?”

Tuesday, September 27

7 - 9 pm

St Brigid's Church - Keilty Hall

2001 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington

Lexington is a vibrant and caring community. How can we make it even better? Bring your thoughts and ideas to share in small group discussions.

The evening will be facilitated by Deborah Brown, Lexington Town Moderator and sponsored by these Lexington groups: the League of Women Voters, the Council on Aging, the Recreation Committee, the Recreation Department, and Lexington Stand for Children.

For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-863-0474. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

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Membership: Wendy Manz - wendy_manz@yahoo.com

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON – BOARD MEMBERS

1) Board Members with terms expiring in 2013

Peg Bradley
Pat Costello
Barbara Manfredi
Wendy Manz
Setha Olson
Lisah Rhodes
Lisa Smith

2) Management Team Positions

**SPOKESPERSON/VOTER SERVICE
CONVENER
TREASURER
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATORS
BULLETIN/WEB PAGE EDITOR**

**Peg Bradley
Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti
Lisa Smith
Wendy Manz and Melinda Walker
Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti and
Gretchen Reisig**

Continuing Board Members with terms expiring in 2012

Nancy Adler
Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti
Peggy Enders
Jeanne Krieger
Gretchen Reisig
Jessie Steigerwald
Melinda Walker

LWVL First Friday Planning Continues

The League is currently planning its First Friday series which begins in October and continues through May of next year. Look for more details in September's Bulletin.

Membership

The League of Women Voters of Lexington is always open to new members. If you know of someone who is interested in becoming a member, you can download a membership form from our website at www.lwvlexington.org or call 781-862-6435 and we'll be happy to send one.

LWVMA

Resolutions Adopted at LWVMA State Convention in May

The following three resolutions were approved at the MA State Convention on May 21, 2011.

1. "Be it resolved that before June 30, 2012, the LWVMA Board will draft a written policy with regard to its own advocacy to be presented to local Leagues for their input and approval."
 2. "Be it resolved that the board of LWVMA urges the LWVUS to disclose the organizations and individuals who fund advocacy ads concurrent with the appearance of those ads."
 3. "LWVMA urges the National League, prior to conducting media campaigns within states to provide the state and local Leagues in those states with a plan for public relations and media communications, including, but not limited to, drafted press releases, letters to the editor and a list of who from the National and state Leagues will be available to respond to the press."
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Excerpts from LWVUS Judy Davis's Speech to the LWVMA May Convention

THE POWER OF THE VOTE

Ninety-one years ago this August, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified and millions of women got the power of the vote-almost. Because the simple language of that amendment did not, in any way, guarantee women the tools they needed to fully exercise that power, nor did those words sweep away the remaining legal barriers to the full exercise of that power. The Nineteenth Amendment may have been the single most important step to full participation, but it was still just a step. Finishing the fight for the power of the vote was and remains the mission of the League of Women Voters. What does that mission entail?

- Finding and eliminating legal barriers to voting
- Educating new voters on the political process
- Registering new voters
- Providing nonpartisan voter information
- Using the power of the vote to hold elected officials accountable

What our founders understood in 1920 is that women could use the power of their vote to achieve a fairer, more humane, peaceful and just world only if women voters understood the issues of the day and actively participated in government. They understood that if you don't vote, you don't count (They also discovered, early on, the challenge of non-partisan political activism.)

In a time of political polarization, it is more important than ever to break down the barriers to voting, educate the electorate, and ensure that our elections are run fairly. Because of the central role of elections in our democracy, your national board would like to ask you to join with us in a campaign to ensure that the 2012 election serves the voters. We call this the League's Power of the Vote campaign, and I'd like to discuss it with you today.

Our history in getting the right to vote is very instructive. That vote was meaningless if women did not register and go to the polls; it was pointless if women registered and voted without understanding the issues. And understanding the issues and voting only matters if civic engagement continues to the accountability phase.

What was the power of the woman voter? Well, consider the social change that was legislated in the aftermath of giving women the vote. Wage and hour laws, child labor laws, civil service laws might never have been passed otherwise.

To this day, the League's mission is ongoing. Whether native born or naturalized, every new voter faces the same issues that faced millions of women following ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. For generations, the League has registered new voters, educated all voters and actively worked to protect the electoral process.

There have been plenty of bumps along the way, years of work to change state election laws, a great depression, a world war, red scares, racial discrimination, Viet Nam, Watergate, terrorism -- all have impacted attitudes toward civic participation or at least the participation of one or another identifiable group.

So what are we in the League to do? How can the League of Women Voters remind Americans of the power of the vote? By committing, as an organization, to focus on elections. Not just in advocacy, not just in education, not just in community service, but with all our tools. Elections are central to the functioning of our democracy. We need all citizens to be registered to vote. We need to have non-partisan, informative debates between candidates. We need to stop unjust ID requirements for voters and we need to reform campaign financing at every level. We need fair, non-partisan redistricting of our legislatures and the Congress.

Elections are what the League of Women Voters does. We know elections. We know how they do run, and we know how they should run. More importantly, our work on elections gives us the opportunity once again to model good behavior. We treat others with respect and civility, even if we disagree. We believe in hearing all sides of the debate. We think that a fact-based, non-partisan approach is the best way for our democracy to operate. We do the work, from voter registration to election reform that every community needs.

As one organization working at three levels, we have the ability to effect change at all three levels of government. But we can only do this by helping each other to re-emphasize our non partisanship and the ways in which our education and advocacy is necessary to and a product of the power of the vote.

First, we must focus on our own non partisanship. In the current climate, we might want to think of this as defensive driving as we navigate the political highway. We need to recognize that we are not the only drivers out there and that many of those out on the political roadways have not chosen a nonpartisan vehicle, are not as well-trained and courteous as we are, and let 's face it, there is a lot of political road rage, especially as we approach elections. It is altogether too easy to avoid driving for fear of encountering some of this rage and discourtesy. But if the League gets off the road, who will be there to assist voters? So we should commit ourselves to developing what we might call a non partisan defensive driving course -- making use of the expertise within the organization to provide tips and training for our members at all levels of League. No matter how experienced our "drivers" are, Everyone benefits from defensive driving courses. In fact, we should consider some emergency road side services in each state to support our "drivers " in the event of accidents!

We must remind ourselves and our communities that the vote is powerful only if every eligible voter is registered and if every registered voter assumes the responsibility of getting informed and voting. In many of our states, that means protecting the election process from unjust ID requirements and in all of our states and in Congress, it means reforming the campaign finance system. Similarly, we need fair, non partisan redistricting of our legislatures and Congress. These are issues that already are League priorities.

We must provide every opportunity for voters to increase the power of their vote by providing non partisan voter information about candidates and issues. We must use the bully-pulpit that our ninety plus years of nonpartisan civic engagement provides to encourage candidates to publicly debate and discuss the issues confronting our communities.

So what I 'm asking here today is that you and your League join with us to "Power the Vote " Be active and visible in your community registering voters; work with us on Vote411 to provide candidate information online to the voters; and keep up the good work in protecting the voter.

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the September 2011 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at *Nancor1106@gmail.com* by August 28.

Dates to Save:

September 18 Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition Presentation

September 27 “What Does Community Mean: How Can We Find It Together?”



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