



BULLETIN

League of Women Voters
Arlington, Massachusetts

www.lwva.com

April 2015

Calendar

3/28	Saturday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Town Election. To offer rides to the polls between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., call Phyllis Maddox at 781-646-4362. Those who need a ride should call her at 781-354-0907 .
	Wednesday 4/1	LWVA Fiscal Year begins. Please pay your dues using the form on page 13. Thank you!
4/6	Monday 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting at Elizabeth Thompson's home, 74 Yerxa Rd. Directions on page 2.
4/12	Sunday 11:30 a.m.	Save the date for our annual Legislators' Brunch at Kathy Fennelly's home, 97 Gray Street! See page 3 for details.
4/25	Saturday 5 p.m.	Deadline for articles for the May Bulletin. Please send contributions to Kim Haase, c.haase@comcast.net .
4/27	Monday 8 p.m.	Town Meeting begins.
4/28	Tuesday 10 a.m.	LWVMA Day on the Hill lobby day, with keynote speaker State Senate President Stanley Rosenberg. See page 12 for details.
	Friday/Saturday 5/15-5/16	LWVMA State Convention 2015: Women Leading the Way in West Springfield. See page 6 for details.

Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
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Ann FitzGerald: Membership AnnFitz@rcn.com

Kim Haase: Bulletin Editor c.haase@comcast.net
Margaret Reiners: Bulletin Mailing mlreiners@gmail.com

Co-President's Message

The winter chill and fewer contested races meant a smaller crowd for Candidates' Night this year. However, I want to recognize loyal residents who came to see the forum in person and those who are making the effort to run:

- The candidates running for town-wide office, willing to take on incumbents
- The young woman, likely a high school or college student, who enthusiastically dropped a question into a box
- The audience members who heeded the call of our announcement and came to the back of the hall to write down questions
- The significant number of candidates for Town Meeting, some of them first-time candidates, who diligently stood by their precinct signs, chatting with each other and those who had come to meet them

Thank you to all the League volunteers who made Candidates' Night possible and to those who worked on the Voters Guide and will provide Rides to the Polls March 28.

Angela Olszewski

Directions to Elizabeth Thompson's home, 74 Yerxa Road:

Note: Walkway is uneven. Use safety handrails.

From intersection of Summer St. and Brattle St.:

Go uphill, immediately bearing left onto Hemlock St. Continue uphill on Hemlock to Yerxa Rd. Turn right onto Yerxa Rd. and go to end of block to 74 Yerxa Rd., which is the last house on the left (a ranch house) and park near that corner. Yerxa Rd. forms a T-shaped intersection with Ridge St. in Arlington.

From intersection of Mystic St. (Route 3) with Ridge St.:

Turn left onto Ridge St. Continue uphill (stay to right side of the little rotary) all the way to Yerxa Rd. and park. 74 Yerxa Rd. will be on the corner on the right side of the street as you walk onto Yerxa Rd.

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2014–2015

Carolyn Parsons, Co-President	781-646-9309
Angela Olszewski, Co-President	781-648-8649
Meredith Zona, Organization VP	781-648-2753
Patricia Muldoon, Action VP	781-648-1019
Joan Martin, Local Action VP	781-646-0752
Kathleen Colwell, Treasurer	781-646-4522
Anne Linn, Secretary	781-643-0356
Elizabeth Thompson, Voter Service	781-646-5942
Ann FitzGerald, Membership Director	781-646-9711
Abigail Fair, Publicity	781-643-0666
Katharine Fennelly, Voters' Guide	781-648-1794
Kim Haase, Bulletin Editor	781-643-3429
Margaret Reiners, Bulletin Mailing	781-646-9611
Janice Bakey, Email Coordinator	781-643-4345
Phyllis Maddox, Webmistress	781-646-4362

The BULLETIN is published monthly except during the summer and December by the League of Women Voters of Arlington, PO Box 461, Arlington, MA 02476.



**MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND -
LWV ARLINGTON'S ANNUAL LEGISLATORS' BRUNCH
& BRING A SPOUSE, FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR!**

Sunday, April 12, 2015, 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM


@ Kathy and Paul Fennelly's Home, 97 Gray St., Arlington

Here's your chance to meet and hear what's happening with our current State legislators – Senator Ken Donnelly and Representatives Sean Garballey and Dave Rogers.

Please contact Meredith Zona, mzona@fstinc.com or tel. 781-648-2753, if you can come and bring your favorite brunch food. Meredith will also arrange for a ride to and from the brunch if you need that.

Directions: 97 Gray St. is at the intersection of Gray St. and Churchill Ave., which is the 4th right after you turn onto Gray St. from Pleasant St. (Route 60). If you're traveling on Gray St. from Arlington Heights, Churchill Ave. is the 4th left after the lights at Highland Ave. The house is a large gray home on the right side if you're traveling up from Pleasant Street. There is plenty of street parking, now that the snow has retreated!

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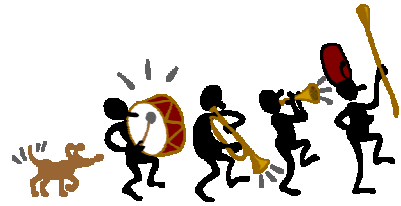
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LWVA Voter Service Activities in March 2015

By Elizabeth Thompson

Despite all the snow, our League members have been very active in voter services in March.



Voter Registration on March 2

On March 2, Anne Linn and I held the second voter registration event at Arlington High School. We registered 10 new voters who will be 18 on or before the Arlington Town Election on Saturday, March 28. We told them as they submitted their signed registration forms that the Town will confirm their registration by mail and when they get that confirmation they can vote in their very first election in the town that educated them, Arlington. It will be a fitting act by high school seniors graduating in a few months and heading out into the world as registered voters. Thanks, Anne!

Candidates' Night, March 19

A round of applause goes to the following members, friends, ACMi, and Town representatives for helping before, during, and after Candidates' Night for the local election:

- Kathy Fennelly and Peggy Reiners: Voters Guide, distributed to Libraries and Town Hall, and in *Arlington Advocate*/WickedLocal Arlington
- Margaret Coppe, LWV Lexington, our Guest Moderator
- Patti Muldoon, Introducer
- Sue Fish, our Script Writer, and also a Timer
- Carolyn Parsons, for reviewing the script and serving as an all-round advisor
- Liz "Elizabeth" Orange, Gwen Hooper, and Megan Burns, all invaluable Timers keeping the candidates on track with the times
- Bruce Fitzsimmons of Vision 2020 and Joan Martin of the LWVA, both of whom served as reviewers of questions from the audience for the candidates (Pam Meister of the LWVA would have served but was felled by illness), and Anne Linn for taking the submitted questions to the reviewers

Special thanks go to:

- Juli Brazile, Vision 2020, for organizing/coordinating all Vision 2020 activities for Candidates' Night
- Eileen Kennedy, Editor, *Arlington Advocate*
- Patsy Kraemer, Town of Arlington for watching over the set-up in the Town Hall
- Greg, Town Hall custodian for Town Hall chair and table set-up and packing up
- ACMi staff: Sean Keane, Govt. Access Coordinator; Jeff Munroe, Producer; ACMi Executive Director Norm McLeod

State Convention Planning Under Way

From the State League

The 2015 LWVMA Convention "**Women Leading the Way**" will be held May 15-16 at the Clarion Hotel in West Springfield, MA. League members throughout the state will convene to conduct the business of the League for the next biennium. In addition, the convention will feature speakers and workshops.

Our keynote banquet speaker Friday night will be Rosalee Keech. During the post-World War II period, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. The League was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization (NGO); it still maintains official observer status today. Rosalee has held the LWV UN observer post for the past five years, as well as serving on the LWVUS board of directors.

Arlington is entitled to send three voting delegates.

For more information about the Convention, including hotel and registration details, visit <http://lwvma.org/2015-lwvma-convention/>.



Salutes the
League of Women Voters
for its contribution to
our community

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Unequal Justice: Consequences of Race and Class in Our Criminal Justice System

By Colleen Kirby

On Saturday, February 28, at Town Hall, the Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group, along with 24 co-sponsoring groups including the Arlington League of Women Voters, held a forum titled **Unequal Justice: Consequences of Race and Class in Our Criminal Justice System**. There were four panelists: Fred Ryan, Arlington's Chief of Police, Frank Rudy Cooper, Law Professor at Suffolk University, Don Perry, a Parole Reform Activist, and Bonie Bagchi Williamson, a Dean at Northern Essex Community College and chair of the Diversity Task Group in Arlington.

All participants expressed dismay at the events that occurred in Ferguson and said that the most important thing is to make sure that there is trust between local law enforcement and the community they are serving. Chief Fred Ryan pointed out that Ferguson was broken long before the Michael Brown incident, and that their police department is not representative of the community and does not have community policing as we do in Arlington. He said there are always flaws in the justice system: sometimes innocent people are caught up in the system, and sometimes the guilty are released. He pointed out that there were over 1,200 firearms seized in the Boston metropolitan area last year, and yet no shots were fired. Chief Ryan also explained that his officers undergo bias training with the Human Rights Commission to learn about their own biases and how to understand the biases of callers to the department. He also spoke about how they do an analysis about the use of force each year and have found that most or all use of force comes during calls regarding substance abuse or mentally ill persons. So with the help of our legislators, the Police Department has been able to hire a Mental Health Clinician who goes to the scenes of disturbances to give advice and help out. This has led to a decrease in arrests. In addition, the Town has worked with the Police Department to put a School Resource Officer on site in the schools and has created diversionary programs for students who cause infractions instead of sending them into the criminal justice system. Because of the success of these programs, arrests have decreased, and we need the Town to understand that so they don't cut the police budget due to our success!

Professor Frank Cooper said we incarcerate a larger proportion of minority black and Latino men than is representative of population figures. He spoke about the indignity and instillation of fear induced by a disproportionate stop and frisk policy, as occurred in New York City, and a disproportionate incarceration rate, which we are seeing nationally. He noted that although only 5% of arrests are for violence and 8% are for property crimes, a large proportion of the rest are for low level drug offenders. He said we need to fix this. That it both saves lives and money if we don't incarcerate unnecessarily.

Don Perry spoke movingly about his experiences as a child from a dysfunctional family who ended up on the streets to survive and got involved in drugs and crime. He then explained how different prisons have different resources and philosophies towards rehabilitation. In his first prison, the prisoners were able to just hang out and get high and did not have any programs

(Continued on next page)

Unequal Justice Forum (Continued)

available to better themselves. Then he was transferred to another prison, Griswold, that had good rehabilitative programs where he was able to get a college degree and really turn his life around. However although his crime was 30 years ago, he is on parole for life, and that can cause very different outcomes for people who may come under suspicion for an alleged crime and thus get sent to jail again, and it makes it very difficult to get housing or a job.

Bonie Williamson spoke about her experiences as a dean at a community college where young students from more troubled backgrounds end up in the criminal justice system, which she calls the School to Prison pipeline. She thinks that there should be better restorative justice programs to keep young people out of jail for minor infractions. She also pointed out the disparities faced by students getting out-of-school suspensions. Often it is the children without stable family situations that end up being suspended, and this becomes a negative cycle. If a child is suspended, they miss school and homework, find it even harder to keep up, and eventually end up dropping out. She said the suspension rate for black students is triple the rate for white students for the same behavior (using inappropriate language, being disruptive), and so this really needs to be changed. It turns out that the number of out-of-school suspensions is the biggest predictor of whether a child finishes school.

All panelists spoke positively about the benefit of Community Restorative Justice. In this model, you bring together the "victim" and the "perpetrator" and ask was there harm, who caused it, and how do we repair the harm? We do this in Arlington for some disturbances. And Rep. Sean Garballey has a bill currently being proposed to address this issue.

There was also discussion about implicit biases by the moderator, David Whitford. He encouraged people to go take the test at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> and learn about their own implicit biases: these are ingrained biases that a person isn't aware of. He said he was surprised by what he learned, and you may be, too.

For more information, you can get in touch with the Arlington Human Rights Commission, Arlington's Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group, Arlington's Police Department, the Mystic Valley Branch of the NAACP, or the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition. Or you can educate yourself by reading Michelle Alexander's "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness."

Economic Inequality and Political Participation: Whose Voice Is Heard?

By Colleen Kirby

On March 19th at Bentley University, the same night as the LWVA's Candidates' Night, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts held a forum titled **Economic Inequality and Political Participation: Whose Voice Is Heard?** with panelists Noah Berger, President of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, and Professors of Political Science Kay Schlozman from Boston College and Katherine Levine Einstein from Boston University.



Anne Borg, Co-President of the LWVMA, introduced the forum, focusing on the role of the League of Women Voters (founded in 1920) in enabling citizens to take an active part in civic life through voting, getting informed, and shaping policy. To this end, the League has forums, writes issue papers, has Candidates' nights, registers voters, drives people to the polls, and tries to engage more of the public in the process of politics.

Noah Berger is President of the MBPC (<http://www.massbudget.org/>), "an independent research organization that produces non-partisan policy research, analysis, and data-driven recommendations focused on improving the lives of low- and middle-income children and adults, strengthening our state's economy, and enhancing the quality of life in Massachusetts." He began with facts and figures.

From 1947-1973 we all shared in wage/income growth such that there was about 2.5% annual growth in all strata of society (lower 20%, middle, and top 95%), but that changed in the past few decades. Wage and income growth from 1973 to 2011 has stratified such that it actually decreased for the bottom 25% by -.03%, it increased for the median by only 0.29% and by 1.29% for the top 95th percentile. But for the top 1%, who have the vast majority of investment income, it increased by 4.2%.

What changed? If you look at productivity and wages you see that they grow in tandem from 1948 through 1973, but then after that, although productivity keeps rising at the same rate, average wages flatten out, so that we see a doubling of productivity over wage growth by 2013. Whereas before 1973 management and labor would need to get together to come to agreements on wages, after that unions were weakened and managers could ignore them and just make decisions to hold down labor costs to increase profits.

Our state and local taxes in Massachusetts are regressive, meaning the lower your income the more you pay. The lowest 20% pays 10.4%, the next 20% pays 9.9%, the middle 20% pays 9.7%, the next 20% pays 9.6%, the upper 80-95% pay much less at 8.9%, the 95th-99th% really reap the benefits at 7.9%, and the top 1% only pay 6.4%. Just capturing this inequality of payment from the top 1% would add \$2 billion a year to the Massachusetts budget and solve many of our fiscal difficulties (and rebuild the T!).

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Economic Inequality Forum (Continued)

Now look at the minimum wage corrected for inflation: In 1968, the minimum wage would have been around \$21,000 in current dollars, compared to \$16,000 in 2014, which is a real loss of \$5000 in a country that is far wealthier (looking at GDP) than it was in 1968. These are policy choices, not a choice made by the economy. Now the minimum wage is \$8; if we had let it stay the same (as 1968) but increase due to inflation, it would be \$10.86; if we had added in productivity growth, it would be \$15.63; and if we had increased the minimum wage the same way CEOs have increased their own incomes, it would be \$63.07/hour.

Kay Schlozman spoke about the unequal voice we have in our political process. She pointed out that a *New York Times* article a few days ago (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/14/upshot/wall-street-bonuses-vs-total-earnings-of-full-time-minimum-wage-workers.html?_r=0) calculated that the Wall Street bonuses given out in 2014 were double the wages earned by all minimum wage workers across the country combined. On the one hand, about \$170,000 bonus for each of the 167,800 Wall Streeters, versus the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 or less for over 1 million workers working full-time.

She also displayed several graphs showing that for at least 50 years, political engagement of the citizenry is based on income and education, no matter your race, but as minorities tend to have less income and education they are more often disenfranchised. And we see the same stratification in online political activity.

Katherine Levine Einstein pointed out that most protest movements that work tend to include the middle class (such as the Abolitionists, Occupy, Tea Party, Pro-Life/Choice) but we did also see successful Labor and Civil Rights movements from the working classes that were successful. As Noah Berger points out, the key is to organize, form coalitions, link many groups together, and work the political process, and you'll see success as we have seen in Massachusetts for gay marriage, earned sick leave, increasing the minimum wage, and health care for all. The sick pay initiative had 4000 volunteers involved to put a ballot question on the ballot, which got legislators to act.

Kay Schlozman then displayed a slide showing how business groups dominate in pressure politics. 53% of lobbying groups in DC are memberless businesses/museums/universities, and 77% of the funding comes from them. Only 4% of all organizations are public interest groups and only 2% of the lobbying funding comes from them. And only 2% of all organizations are working for the less privileged. This is thanks to the increase in inequality in our society, plus the Citizens United ruling, which allows those who can give, to give massive amounts of money. Recent figures show that 28% of all known lobbying funds came from only 0.1% of the public (31,000 individuals). And this doesn't even include the dark money given to 501(c)4 groups where donors are not enumerated, which would make those percentages look even worse.

Katherine Levine Einstein stated that we do see local governments, and some states, passing progressive legislation, but the places where it is most needed are left out. Our country is politically splintered. In our poorer states, there is higher infant mortality and also more conservative voters. We see this especially in the South and in more racially diverse communities.

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Economic Inequality Forum (Continued)

Kay Schlozman points out that this wealthy influence has real consequences on the policies we see coming out of Congress. If you give more money, you get to communicate more with your representatives, who then learn about your pet peeves. For example, because many wealthy (hedge fund managers) get taxed on carried interest at only 15%, it is not treated as normal income, and since they donate so much more to Congress we won't be seeing a change to this. Why is it that taxes are usually indexed to inflation but the minimum wage is not? And the people who aren't heard from are those who need food, clothing, shelter...so our politicians end up with a skewed view of the problems the country faces.

Noah Berger counters that our politicians do listen to their constituents and it does enable change here in Massachusetts, but you do need a strong coalition. We have a regressive income tax in Massachusetts, but they have a progressive one in California that passed recently. People are focusing on public transportation and the cost of education, so we can do something in those areas.

Kay Schlozman thinks Citizens United and having more money in politics may not be so bad in one way: in the last Presidential Primary the big money kept many untenable candidates in the race for longer than they would have lasted otherwise. But we need transparency in a timely way to know who is spending money on a candidate before we vote for them. Noah Berger adds that the wealthy will always find a way to impose influence. He thinks grassroots organizing is the only way to pull more people into the process and activate them.

Union membership has decreased from 33% in the 1950s to only 6-7% today (and 25 states are now "Right to Work" states, anti-union by law). This has decreased advocacy for ordinary people.

Education is more important than ever for jobs, and the states that focus on good preschool through college education will see more benefits over time.

Why do so few people participate in elections, especially local elections? Only a select population participates. Voting is a learned experience, and our society provides fewer such experiences than we have in the past. For example, we have fewer unions, and so those elections aren't happening. Getting people involved in organizations helps teach them the skills to get political and can overcome a lack of education or income, even if the group isn't political. Examples of successful political organization in Massachusetts for lower income people are Neighbor 2 Neighbor (<http://www.n2nma.org/>) and EPOCA (<http://exprisoners.org/>). Church groups are good.

In 2010, conservatives were focused on congressional state house district redistricting, and the left dropped the ball there. This allowed conservatives to take over many state houses; this also leads to a deeper bench of political prospects who can then run for national office.

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Economic Inequality Forum (Continued)

Katherine Levine Einstein points out that there is some research showing that representatives are less likely to respond to constituents with black or Hispanic sounding names.

Kay Schlozman points out that once you've been to jail in some states, you can be disenfranchised, and in general it causes less political participation because of the lack of trust in government. Voter ID laws are worrisome, although there isn't enough solid research to prove an increase in disenfranchisement, at least not yet. Unnecessary incarceration has both political and economic effects.

She also points out that in the 1960s-70s businesses weren't taking a focused interest in politics; then they started organizing and had big money to back them up and start efficient lobbying groups.

Noah Berger says that to counter this, we need more public engagement and more people speaking up.

And this is why what the League of Women Voters does is so important to a well-functioning democracy. We educate, inform, and engage people in the political process. Although there is still more to be done!

Day on the Hill to Feature New State Senate President

From the State League

Senator Stanley Rosenberg, the president of the Massachusetts State Senate, will be the keynote speaker at this year's Day on the Hill lobby day, **Tuesday, April 28**.

Sen. Rosenberg, one of the three most powerful politicians in the state, will speak to the day's theme, "A Vision for Massachusetts," with his thoughts on the priorities for the new session of the legislature. We are particularly proud to note he is a member of the Amherst League.

Day on the Hill begins at 10 a.m. in Gardner Auditorium at the State House. Following Sen. Rosenberg's presentation, our legislative specialists will review some of the bills we are supporting to prepare you for visits to your own Senators and Representatives after our formal session ends at noon.



**Dues are due! Our fiscal year begins on April 1.
Thank you for your support.**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARLINGTON
Membership Application/Renewal Form**

Fiscal Year runs from April 1 to March 31

Name _____ Precinct _____ Date _____
Address _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

_____ Please indicate if you do NOT want your contact information sent to Arlington League members

_____ Basic Membership Dues..... \$60
_____ 2nd member in household \$23
_____ Student (full-time) \$20
_____ Contribution to help the LWV in Arlington, add \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

If \$60 is a hardship, please pay what you can and let us know that this is your dues payment.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: League of Women Voters of Arlington
MAIL TO: Ann FitzGerald, 162 Summer St., Unit 1, Arlington, MA 02474

Please check areas of interest and activity even if you can't be actively involved THIS year.

SPECIAL LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

- Join the Board. Position: _____
- Action: phone calls _____ letters _____
- Bulletin: mailing _____ soliciting ads _____
- Membership
- Nominating Committee
- Publicity Writer
- Voter Service: Rides to the polls _____
- Candidates Night
- Voters' Guide
- Attend State League's Phonathon
- Be a discussion leader at local meetings
- Fundraising activities
- Offer meeting refreshments
- Post fliers and deliver brochures
- Host a meeting in my home
- Monitor elections for nonprofit organizations

**FOLLOW ISSUES, KEEP LEAGUE
AND COMMUNITY INFORMED**

- Congress/Presidency/Election Process
- Discrimination/Equal Employment/Civil Rights
- Education/Child Care
- Environment/Recycling
- Health Care
- Justice/Courts/Prisons
- Land Use
- Taxation/Budgets/Deficits
- Transportation/Urban Policy
- Voting Rights
- Warrant Articles Review
- Welfare Policies/Basic Human Needs
- Women's Issues
- Zoning/Community Development/Land Use

**OBSERVE AT
TOWN BOARD MEETINGS***

- Selectmen (Mondays)
- Redevelopment Board (Mondays)
- School Committee (2nd & 4th Thursdays)
- Conservation Commission (1st & 3rd Thurs.)
- Housing Authority

SKILLS LEAGUE COULD DRAW ON

- Computer database
- Graphic design
- Desktop publishing
- Web site maintenance
- Membership development
- Moderating meetings
- Fundraising
- Writing articles
- Other

BEST TIME TO CALL YOU:

(for phone tree reminders) Call before _____ o'clock

*Some of these can be seen on cable TV

Time for Dues!

As spring approaches (officially, it's here, but we know better), it's also time for the League's fiscal year to begin.

Please send in your dues using the form on the previous page.

Your dues help fund all our activities and those of the State and National Leagues.

Thank you!

April 2015

**League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
Arlington, MA 02476**

