



BULLETIN

League of Women Voters
Arlington, Massachusetts

www.lwva.com

September 2014

Calendar

9/9	Tuesday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.	State Primary Election. Please call Phyllis Maddox if you can help with rides to the polls. See last page for details.
9/13	Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Arlington's Town Day celebration in Arlington Center. Volunteers needed for the LWVA booth — see below for details.
9/22	Monday 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting at Patti Muldoon's home, 67 Smith St. Directions on page 2.

HELP WANTED! LEAGUE TOWN DAY BOOTH SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2014

The end of summer means it's time to get ready for Arlington's Town Day. LWV Arlington will have a booth at this event that will be packed with information about voter registration, precinct maps, the upcoming State elections and proposed legislation, League membership, policies, and activities, and other voter service literature. We are looking for volunteers to work in 1- or 2-hour increments from 9 AM to 4 PM.

This is a great, fast-paced event, with two to three people at the booth at all times, so both seasoned and new League members are welcome to participate. If you can help out, please call Meredith Zona at 781-648-2753, or send an email to Meredith at mzona@fstinc.com. We look forward to seeing you on Town Day!

Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
CarolynMParsons@msn.com, amolszewski@gmail.com
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

Our preparations for Town Day should remind us about the strong community spirit in Arlington. The League, as well as many other non-profit and civic groups, will staff booths and offer information and services. Residents will enjoy meeting volunteers and learning about happenings in town. We will provide the important public service of registering people to vote and assisting them with finding their polling places.

With the change of season from summer to fall, many groups, including the League, will begin meeting, planning events, and organizing activities. While we need to focus on our tasks, this time of year is also an opportunity to learn about what groups have scheduled. We live in a town where there is a broad array of cultural, educational, and recreational events to attend. As we hope and advocate for strong participation and attendance at League programs, we should also try to support other groups whenever possible. This is what makes Arlington a strong and vibrant community.

Angela Olszewski

Directions to Patti Muldoon's home, 67 Smith St.:

Take Mass. Ave. to Arlington Heights, then

Left up hill on Dundee (across from Trader Joe's)

Right on Arnold

Left up hill on Williams

Right on Smith St.

If you're coming down Park Avenue, you can take Wollaston to Wilbur to Williams to Smith.

67 Smith St. is the brick house on the corner.



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.

LWVA Supports Community Preservation Act

By Carolyn Parsons

At the Annual Meeting of the LWVA, members voted unanimously to support adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA). A question will be on the ballot for the November election.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)?

The CPA enables cities and towns in Massachusetts to create a local dedicated fund for open space, historic preservation, community housing, and outdoor recreation.

HOW IS CPA FUNDING GENERATED?

CPA funds are generated through two sources:

- A voter-approved surcharge of up to 3% on property tax bills (Arlington's Town Meeting approved a surcharge of 1.5%)
- An annual disbursement from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund to communities that have adopted the CPA

The Trust Fund's revenues are derived from fees collected at the Registry of Deeds and from the state budget surplus. Because Arlington has not adopted the CPA, it has **not** been receiving these funds.

HOW ARE CPA FUNDS SPENT?

Each fiscal year, CPA communities must spend, or set aside for future spending, the following share of their annual CPA revenues on three core areas:

- 10 percent for **open space and recreation**
- 10 percent for **historic preservation**
- 10 percent for **community housing**

The remaining 70 percent of the revenues may be spent or reserved for future projects in any of these three core areas. CPA funds may never be directed to the Town's general fund; the funds may only be spent on the CPA core areas.

WHAT PROJECTS CAN ARLINGTON FUND WITH CPA?

- Restore and preserve historic town buildings, documents, libraries, schools, and other structures
- Create or restore ball fields, playgrounds, and trails for walking and biking
- Preserve land for the enjoyment of residents, flood control, and wildlife habitat

(Continued on page 5)

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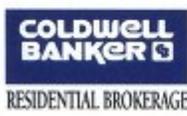
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Initial Free Consultation for League Members

LWVA Supports Community Preservation Act (Cont.)

- Create affordable housing for local residents such as: supportive housing for seniors and the disabled and renovated apartments for young families and small households
- Leverage additional dollars from state, federal, and foundation grants

WHAT IS THE QUESTION ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT?

Arlington's Town Meeting voted to put a question (probably question number 5) on the November ballot as to whether or not to accept the CPA legislation for Arlington. The legislation includes:

- A surcharge of 1.5% on the local property tax
- An exemption of the first \$100,000 of assessed value of residential and commercial/industrial real estate
- An exemption for low-income homeowners and low to moderate-income senior homeowners

HOW MUCH WOULD THE CPA COST THE AVERAGE ARLINGTON HOMEOWNER?

The estimated yearly cost would be approximately \$86.

HOW MUCH WOULD THE CPA GENERATE FOR ARLINGTON?

Arlington would generate approximately \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on the number of exemptions. **It is important to note that this figure does not include revenue that Arlington would receive annually from the state CPA Trust Fund.**

The CPA's three core areas, open space and recreation, affordable housing, and historic preservation are all included in the program of the League. For an Arlington perspective, visit www.cpaforarlington.org. This website should be operational around the beginning of September. For a statewide perspective, visit www.communitypreservation.org. If you would like to make a contribution to the campaign to pass the CPA, checks can be made out to "CPA for Arlington" and sent to Christine Carney, 98 Richfield Road, Arlington, MA, 02474-0250. (Contributions are not tax-deductible.)

Primary Election Voters' Guide to Statewide Offices Now Available!

From the State League

We are pleased and proud to let you know that all 20 of the candidates who will be on the Democratic and Republican primary ballots September 9 have responded to questions posed by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts for an online voters' guide.

That guide is NOW up on our website. Please take a look at <http://lwvma.org/voting-and-election-information/primary-election-voters-guide-to-statewide-offices-2014/>.

The candidates for governor answered questions on economic development, education, transportation, climate change and health care. Candidates for lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasure and auditor answered questions specific to those offices.

Following the September 9 primary election, the League will update the voters' guide and add responses from any independent candidates who qualify for the ballot in the general election November 4.



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League of Women Voters
for its contribution to
our community**

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LWVMA Positions on the Ballot Questions

From the State League

Four ballot questions will be on the statewide ballot November 4. The Massachusetts League has positions on three of them.



Here are the questions, in the order they will appear on the ballot, and our positions.

Question 1: Eliminating Gas Tax Indexing

This proposed law would repeal a law passed in 2013 and eliminate the requirement that the state's gasoline tax be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index. **LWVMA opposes this question and urges a NO vote.** We believe indexing the gasoline tax to the CPI provides funding needed to maintain and improve the state's transportation infrastructure.

Question 2: Expanding the Beverage Container Deposit Law

This question would update the state's current deposit law, the Bottle Bill, to include most non-carbonated beverages. It would also increase the handling fee and make other changes to the existing law. **LWVMA supports this question and urges a YES vote.** We believe an expansion of the Bottle Bill will greatly increase the rates of recycling and reduce litter. See <http://lwvma.org/updated-bottle-bill-to-be-ballot-question-2/> for more information.

Question 3: Expanding Prohibitions on Gaming

This question would prohibit casinos, any gaming establishment with slot machines, and wagering on simulcast greyhound races, even if licenses have already been granted. **LWVMA supports this question and urges a YES vote.** We have long opposed casinos and other gambling in Massachusetts, arguing the costs in services needed and social impact outweigh projected gains in tax revenue and employment.

Question 4: Earned Sick Time for Employees

This question would entitle employees in Massachusetts to earn and use sick time according to certain conditions. The League has no state or national positions that would enable LWVMA take a stand on this question and so we neither support nor oppose this question.

The Legislative Action Committee has prepared a more detailed summary of the ballot questions, along with a list of organizations which can serve as resources for speakers or additional background. You can find it at http://lwvma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Resources+Info_2014_Ballot_Qs.pdf.

Some Big League Wins in Legislature

From the State League

LWVMA saw some major victories in the two-year legislative session that came to a close July 31. Several bills that we have been advocating in favor of for years finally made it to the Governor's desk and were signed.

Your willingness to contact your Senators and Representatives on these bills, especially in response to Action Alerts as the bills came up for a vote, contributed mightily to their passage. Legislators pay attention to their constituents. Thank you.

Here is a brief summary of some of those victories. You can find detailed reports from our legislative specialists in an article on the LWVMA website at <http://lwwma.org/league-scores-big-wins-in-2013-2014-legislative-session/>.

- **Election reform:** Early voting, online voter registration, post-election audits and pre-registration of teens were all included. See the next page for details.
- **Massachusetts Disclose Act:** This law requires timely disclosure of funding behind SuperPACs and listing of top five donors to groups buying political ads in those ads.
- **Reproductive Health Care Access:** Law revised the rules governing protests at women's health clinics after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the state's "buffer zone" law.
- **Gun Control:** Final version brings Massachusetts into national background check system, requires background checks on private gun sales, increases data collection on guns used in crimes, and allows discretion by licensing authorities for rifle licenses.
- **Health Care:** Patient safety bill ultimately agreed to by Mass. Nurses Association permits hospitals, nurses and nurse-managers to decide the number of intensive care patients assigned to a nurse.
- **Transportation:** "Active Streets" law encourages communities to consider "active" use of streets by pedestrians and bicyclists in designing public street projects.
- **Basic Human Needs:** The comprehensive welfare bill included provisions increasing educational and training opportunities for low-income families and made changes that will make it easier for families to move out of poverty, such as counting education and vocational training toward work requirements.

Other bills we supported, including a bill to raise the dropout age from 16 to 18, and one to address the emergency shelter needs of unaccompanied homeless teens, remained in the House Ways & Means Committee at the end of the session.

Many of the bills LWVMA supported that were not passed will be introduced again in the new session of the legislature that convenes in January 2015, and we will continue working to get them passed. If you are interested in being a legislative specialist and working on bills, particularly in the areas of criminal justice, children's issues, domestic violence, and immigration, please contact Nancy Brumback at nbrumback@lwwma.org.

Election Reform — At Last!

From the State League

Massachusetts has taken a major step to update its voter registration and election processes. Governor Deval Patrick signed an election reform bill that was passed overwhelmingly by both houses of the legislature at the end of May 2014.

This law includes provisions for early voting, online voter registration, pre-registration for 16-year-olds, and post-election audits of voting machines.

The League has worked actively for these reforms for years, and partnered with other voter advocacy organizations including Common Cause, MassVote, MassPIRG, and the ACLU of Massachusetts to persuade the legislature to pass them. The Election Modernization Coalition includes 45 organizations.

The new law should greatly improve Massachusetts' standing as a state that supports access to the polls. Rock the Vote had ranked Massachusetts 42 out of the 50 states for failure to implement modern procedures such as online registration and early voting.

At a time when too many states are making it more difficult for citizens to register and to vote, Massachusetts should be proud to be moving in the opposite direction.

Specifically the bill calls for:

- Online voter registration.
- Online portal to check voter registration status. This portal is already available on the Secretary of State's website, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>
- Pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds, who then automatically become eligible to vote when they turn 18.
- Early voting during business hours at a city or town's election office. Cities and towns can extend early voting hours to weekends if they choose and offer additional sites for early voting. Early voting begins with the 2016 election.
- Post-election audits of randomly-selected precincts after Presidential elections.
- Creation of an elections task force to study additional issues, including cost of early voting and need for additional sites and hours, voter fraud, wait times, and Election Day voter registration.

These are significant improvements, but there is more work to be done. The League and its coalition partners will be advocating in the next legislative session to require some evening and weekend hours for early voting, to explore "permanent or portable" registration that automatically changes a voter's registration when the voter moves within Massachusetts, and to implement Election Day registration, the reform that has been shown to have the greatest impact on voter participation.

We will also work to extend early voting to state elections as well as Presidential elections and to provide for audits after state elections, not just after Presidential ones.

Mystic River Talk Highlights Annual Meeting

By Kim Haase

The LWVA's guest speaker at the Annual Meeting June 5 was EkOngKar Singh Khalsa, Executive Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). EK, as he asked to be called, noted the League's longtime involvement in water issues, including the passage of the Clean Water Act over 40 years ago.

MyRWA (mysticriver.org) is a nonprofit dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mystic River watershed, which covers 76 square miles extending from Reading to Boston Harbor and including almost all of Arlington. The watershed has undergone over 250 years of urban development but is still a living system, though much modified and assaulted. Some antique pollution from coal gasification plants lingers in sludge in or near the river. However, industrial sites along the river no longer release pollutants, so the watershed has been recovering and supports healthy aquatic, bird, and animal life (including two bald eagles).

The most recent progress in Arlington has been the rebuilding of the Mystic Lakes dam in 2012, which now includes a fish ladder strongly urged by MyRWA. The fish ladder is enabling once-abundant herring to get through to the Upper Mystic Lake for the first time in many years. Annual fish counts held by MyRWA indicate that the herring have indeed recovered.

The Mystic River was once a tidal estuary all the way to Alewife Brook, where it met fresh water. Now it is fresh water above the Amelia Earhart Dam in Somerville/Everett.

The main problem facing the watershed now is city streets and sewage systems that continue to release pollutants. Cities and towns lack the funds to repair old and leaky sewage systems at more than a very gradual rate, so e. coli bacteria continues to pollute the watershed, particularly in storms. An even worse problem is phosphorus from fertilizer, which gets into the river from streets. Rain on grass goes into the ground, where pollutants are gradually cleansed; but rain on streets goes into the streams and rivers. 50% of Arlington is paved, 78% of Somerville. Pollution leads to algae blooms and the flourishing of invasive species such as water chestnuts. We need to repair sewage pipes and to change the built environment to make the water soak into the ground as much as possible.

EK encouraged League members to advocate and educate voters on behalf of watershed cleanup and to join MyRWA's activities:

- Support Town efforts to improve water and sewage pipes and to provide a green infrastructure for storm-water runoff
- Become aware of the benefits of a clean watershed, such as swimming at Shannon Beach on Lower Mystic Lake
- Help with MyRWA activities such as counting fish and removing water chestnuts

EK Khalsa advocates for local action on behalf of clean water at the LWVA Annual Meeting June 5.

Photo by Phyllis Maddox



The League welcomes new members at all times. 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 _____ Fundraising _____
Graphic design _____ Writing articles _____
Desktop publishing _____ Other _____
Web site maintenance _____
Membership development _____
Moderating meetings _____

BEST TIME TO CALL YOU:

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

*Some of these can be seen on cable TV

Rides to the Polls

We will be offering rides to the polls for the
State Primary Election on
Tuesday, September 9.

We'll be offering rides from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you can help
as a driver at any time during those days, please let Phyllis
Maddox know by calling 781-646-4362 or emailing
PhyllisMaddox@comcast.net.

On Election Day or during the week before, those who need
rides should call Phyllis's cell at 781-354-0907.

— *Phyllis Maddox*

September 2014

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

