



Calendar of Events

Special points of interest:

- **Calendar**
- **Domestic Violence Action Diane DeVanna Donation**
- **Holiday Party**
- **Recaps:**
 - **Creating a Healthy Home Congressional Forum**
- **Studies:**
 - **Affordable Housing-Fiscal Policy**
 - **Immigration**
- **Mark Your Calendars**
 - **Day on the Hill**
 - **LWVUS Council/Convention**
 - **LWVM Annual Online Student Essay Contest**

Steering Committee

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*Welcome Back to Another Full Year Of League Events
Westwood-Walpole Steering Committee Adminstrates the Local League.*



December

There will be no Steering Committee Meeting in December

14th—Holiday Party

Karen Coffey's house

6:30pm

See page 3 for more

January

11th—SC meeting at Phoebe Joseph's

18th—Program Planning at Jane Walsh's

20th & 27th Time and Places TBA for state study on Fiscal Policy



Happy Holidays

May 2007 Bring Peace



Contribute to Dianne DeVanna Center and help defeat Domestic Violence

THE DIANNE DEVANNA CENTER

The Dianne DeVanna Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support and strengthen both individual family members and the family as a whole in order to significantly contribute to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The Center has established a lasting memorial to Dianne DeVanna through the development and implementation of programs in the area of public education, child and family support, and crisis intervention. The Center provides services to families who are currently receiving assistance from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services..



Dianne DeVanna

This is the child whose death at the hands of her parents caused the Dianne DeVanna Center to be established.

Each year the Westwood-Walpole League supports the Center with a contribution. In 2005 we raised over \$450.

This year we are asking for a contribution of \$25 a person. But all contributions no matter how small are most welcome.

Make checks to DeVanna Center and send it to: LWV, Box 294, Westwood, MA 02090 or bring it to holiday party on the 14th of December at Karen Coffey's home.

What Do We Do?

The DeVanna Center provides home-based support services to families whose children are at risk of abuse and neglect through the following programs:

Parent Aide Program- Our Parent Aides are trained, professionally supervised individuals who assist parents under stress. By establishing a long-term, supportive relationship, our Parent Aides can help the parent to improve parenting skills, reduce stress and isolation, access community resources, and discover his/her own strengths.

Transportation Program- Our Transportation Program transports children, usually in foster care, to supervised visits with their parents, therapy, daycare, school, and other necessary appointments.

Parent Education Program-The Parent Education Program is designed to help parents develop practical and personal coping skills. The demands of raising children can sometimes be overwhelming and parents may struggle with issues of discipline, communication, and encouragement. These classes help parents learn how to build a strong parent-child relationship as they develop their parenting skills.

1599 Washington Street, Braintree, MA 02184; Susan Nagle Executive Director 781-843-7010

HEADS UP: Mark Your Calendar

HOLIDAY PARTY

COME JOIN WITH FELLOW LEAGUERS FOR:

GREAT FOOD

GREAT CONVERSATION



Date: Thursday December 14, 2006

Place: Karen Coffey's House

Time: 6:30pm

As usual our senators, representatives, and local officials will be invited.

This is one our most popular events. SO—

Mark your Calendars

Come!! Bring your favorite appetizer

Have the wonderful opportunity of meeting with fellow Leaguers in a purely social atmosphere.

Please Rsvp by December 10th to Jane Nash (jane.nash @Comcast.net) so that Karen will have an idea of the number of people to expect.

Thank you.

Questions? Need a ride? Call 781-769-1185





Recap—Creating a Healthy Home

Leise Jones of Clean Water Action came to the historic Lewis House in Walpole on October 13th to speak to seven of our members.

She had a power point presentation and also gave us a few handouts. There are so many harmful chemical in the products we use every day. They especially affect infants and children, the chemicals accumulate in our bodies. Our body burden is increasing every year! One chemical to avoid is BLEACH. Don't use it to clean your counters, etc. Use Baking Soda or Borax instead!

Also dangerous are the additives in PVS plastics. Look for the 3 symbol inside the recycling triangle. (They should NOT be recycled—they contaminate the other products.)

Our cosmetics are also full of allergens and harmful ingredients. You can check out your brand on www.SafeCosmetics.org

One book Leise recommends is Clean House. Clean Planet by Karen Logan.

She also recommends that we use 7th Generation household products and Zoots Dry Cleaners

You can do something about getting safer alternatives for the toxic Ten Chemicals (lead formaldehyde, TCE, Perc, Dioxins and furans, Hexavalent Chromium, Organophosphate pesticides, 2,4-D herbicide, PBDEs and DEHP) that are contributing to our chronic illnesses. Write your state representatives and senator in favor of passing S553 (H1286, an Act for a Healthy Massachusetts: Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals.) Urge that they lead efforts to pass this bill in the next session. Duval Patrick is in favor of it.

You can host a Healthy Home Party yourself for your relatives, neighbors, and friends. Call 617-338-8131 or email info@healthytomorrow.org

Contact Phoebe Joseph for web resources for finding Safe and Healthy Products



Congressional Forum Recap

Hi District 9 League partners:

I think that those of us who were there at the Candidate's Forum on Thursday, November 2 can only agree that it was a successful evening. The candidates kept up a lively debate back and forth for all the offices and we had a full Hall including 40 students attending from the high school.

It has been a long journey from our first meeting in July with such high hopes but at least we won one Forum and it was wonderful meeting and working with all of you in the District 9 League Coalition. Most everyone helped, from sending in questions to attending, to just giving us encouragement. Thanks to Debbie Winnick from Needham League and Cindy Buckley from the Dedham MAL group for helping to screen questions. Thanks to Marcia Hirshberg, Westwood and Martha Colamaria, Norwood for picking up cards, We had Betti Cottrell, Norwood and Steve Eosco, Norwood taking care of the timing and of course, our wonderful moderator and State League President, Madhu.

One thing we learned from experience and that was that when so many Leagues are involved with so many cable stations, we needed to plan further ahead and let the stations know we were coming in with a tape of our forum and to save a time to show it. Let me know if there is any other suggestions you would like to share.

Special thanks to Norwood's Voter Service Chair for the Congressional race, Helen Palmucci (who kept in touch and made sure we had all the information we needed even though she was faced with a death in the family.)

Mary Anne Kenney, President Norwood LWV

Where To Find More Information on the LWVM and LWVUS Studies

State and National Studies Update

NOTE: Information on these studies will be on the State or National Web Sites, in local Bulletins, and on local Websites

For the Immigration study see National Web site: www.lwv.org

Log in

From top section in blue (drop down screen) choose—projects & programs

From side bars—choose Immigration study

For the Affordable Housing and Fiscal Policy studies see LWVM site at: www.lwvma.org

On home page left side (grey area) choose: Member Resources

Next screen choose: LWVM Studies

Next screen choose: particular study of interest

Fiscal Policy Scope of Study

Study as adopted by Convention 2005:

Scope: to restudy / update of fiscal policy positions, such restudy / update to start in year two of the 2005-2007 biennium. The main goal is to evaluate the current status of the financing of local government services.

The study may include, but is not limited to:

- Propositions 2 ½
- State Aid
- Property taxes

Informational meetings planned in January 20th, 2007 Western MA Place/time TBA: January 27th, 2007 Boston Area Place/Time to be announced. Consensus meetings in 2007-2008

Affordable Housing Scope of Study

Study as adopted by Convention 2005:

Scope: To evaluate legislation, regulations and programs in Massachusetts to determine their effectiveness in providing affordable housing and propose a new position through consensus or concurrence.

Study may include, but is not limited to:

- Senior housing
 - Effect of Chapter 40B, Massachusetts' Comprehensive Permit statute, on cities and towns
- “Smart growth” concepts

Look for articles on Affordable Housing in the Bulletin Beginning in December



Affordable Housing: A Taste of What's to Come

Most people agree that affordable housing is necessary. Some claim a healthy town has a diverse populace. Therefore, to ensure diversity each city and town needs a variety of housing styles at prices for people of all economic levels. Some take a very practical view and claim that affordable housing is necessary for the economic welfare of the state. These claim that the housing shortage is driving skilled employees from Massachusetts.

In 1969 the Massachusetts legislature passed Chapter 774 of the acts of 1969 to address the spread of sprawl, and what was deemed as destructive exclusionary zoning that limited the ability of black people or people of moderate means to move to the suburbs. The Comprehensive Permit also known as 40B is what most people associate with the development of affordable housing today. This legislation requires that each city and town provide 10 percent of its housing stock to be classified as affordable. If a town has not reached that goal, a developer may use 40B, which requires a special permit only from town's local Zoning Board of Appeals side stepping all the other zoning boards in town. All the regular requirements of any development must be met, but the standards are set at the state and federal levels. Most communities have stricter requirement especially for density. [Proponents of 40B claim it is very successful accounting for 43,000 units in 736 developments, which includes 23,000 assigned to households below the 80% median income of the area.](#)

[Those against 40B claim it has not developed much housing especially in the area of family housing. Further, they claim developers misuse 40B and force developments that are detrimental to the town. They also claim that some developers have exceeded the 20 percent profit limit because there is no true accountability or oversight in place \(Look for more articles on 40B in the coming months\)](#)

Thirty years after "774" was instituted, the housing crisis is worse than ever with housing shortages reaching well into the moderate income levels. Many have left Massachusetts in an effort to find affordable housing, draining our state of skilled labor. Still the debate continues over how to create more affordable housing. Some claim that state laws must demand that each city and town produce a certain number of affordable houses. Others claim that there should be no state or federal intervention at the local level. That each city or town should have absolute control over its zoning. Some of these favor a local by-law which stipulates that a developer must designate a percentage of a development to affordable housing. In some cases the town will accept a deposit to an affordable housing trust fund of an agreed amount of money in lieu of a building within the development.

The LWVM 2005 convention adopted a study on affordable housing and a committee was formed. This is a huge topic and the Affordable Housing committee plans a multi-faceted approach to prepare members for Consensus. From December 2006—June of 2007 we plan to have articles in local newsletters, material for local and LWVM websites and for the "Voter." The articles will cover: basic zoning regulations, the need for affordable housing, what's in it for the average citizen, Massachusetts laws which propose to provide affordable housing—their success, challenges, and some innovative programs at the local level. Resources on the topic will be available on the LWVM website so that those who wish to can study along with the committee. Please refer to the chart on the next page for a list of the laws.

Regional consensus meetings will begin in the fall of 2007. Meetings will be held in each of the 10 League districts. Two or more members of the Affordable Housing Committee will present a power point presentation followed by a discussion period leading to consensus.



Affordable Housing Laws

Major Affordable Housing Zoning Laws & Acts

- 121A In 1969 Massachusetts enacted chapter 121B of the 1969 MGL which enables all cities and towns in Massachusetts to operate housing authorities and it also codified all previous Massachusetts housing laws from 1935 to 1969.
- 40A Chapter 40A is the state's zoning enabling legislation, called the *Zoning Act*. It is based as are most state's zoning regulations, on the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SZEA) of 1926. It was enacted in 1954 and updated in 1975. Its original purpose was to minimize crowding and congestion, and to promote the health, welfare, and safety of all citizens while encouraging development. According to many leading planners including the American Planning Assoc the statute is one among 28 states with the most outdated land use laws in the nation. 40A is Massachusetts basic law on zoning. Other zoning laws have been enacted in response to inadequacies in 40A.
- 40B Chapter 40B is the state's comprehensive permit law, enacted in 1969, (part of Chapter 774 sometimes referred to as the "anti-snob zoning" law) which established an affordable housing threshold of 10% of housing stock for every community. In communities below the 10% level, developers of low and moderate income housing can seek an expedited local review under the comprehensive permit process and can request a limited waiver of local zoning and other restrictions which hamper construction of affordable housing as long as 25 % of the housing units are designated as affordable. As of 06/01/2006 49 out of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts have reached 10%. About 12 more have reached 9 % (DHCD)
- 40Q In 2003 Chapter 40Q was enacted as part of a "municipal relief and flexibility" package. Under 40Q a municipal government can use eminent domain to acquire property and turn it over to redevelopers. 40R is inserted after 40Q
- 40R Chapter 40R adopted in 2004 encourages municipalities to adopt zoning overlay districts that allow higher density residential and mixed use development in smart growth locations by providing fiscal incentives to cities and towns. Chapter 40R provides cities and towns with an up-front zoning incentive payment, a density bonus payment per unit of housing constructed and priority consideration for various discretionary grant programs.
- 40S Created in December of 2005, this plan will reimburse cities and towns for a broad range of costs associated with school enrollment growth as a result of 40R development, including increases in local public or charter school attendance (K – 12) and the need for services such as special education programs.
- CPA Community Preservation Act is a law enacted in December 2000 that allows cities and towns in Massachusetts to raise local property taxes to acquire and protect open space, preserve historic buildings and landscapes, and create and maintain affordable housing. It also provides significant state matching funds to participating communities. To date, 111 municipalities have adopted the CPA. (10/2006)
- IZ Inclusionary zoning also known as Inclusionary housing, refers to city planning ordinances that require a given share of new construction be affordable to people with low to moderate incomes. The term *Inclusionary* zoning is derived from the fact that these ordinances seek to counter *exclusionary* zoning practices which aim to exclude affordable housing from a municipality through the zoning code. In practice, these policies involve placing deed restrictions on 10%-30% of new houses or apartments in order to make the costs of the housing affordable to lower income households. The mix of "affordable" and "market-rate" housing in the same neighborhood is seen as beneficial by many, especially in jurisdictions where housing shortages have become acute. Inclusionary zoning is becoming a common tool for local municipalities in the United States to help provide a wider range of housing options than the market provides on its own.
- Most Inclusionary zoning is enacted at the local level. However when imposed by the state, as in Massachusetts's 40B, it can be argued that it usurps local control. In these cases, developers can use Inclusionary zoning to avoid local zoning laws
- LIP The Local Initiative Program (the state subsidized LIP) often referred to as a "friendly 40B" was established by the Legislature in 1990 to stimulate the production of affordable housing opportunities by fostering cooperation between municipalities and housing developers. The program provides technical assistance to developers and municipalities seeking to develop housing that serves households at or below 80% of the area median income *within mixed-income (market and affordable)* housing developments.

Mark Your Calendar—Fiscal Policy meetings

*League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Fiscal Policy Update Committee Presents*

**Forum on Municipal Finance:
Where doe\$ the money come from
and where doe\$ it go?**

*Local League Self-Study
Jan 20th, Western MA; Jan 27th Boston
Look for more information on www.lwvma.org and in the Bulletin*

Background and Introduction to the topic

State Policies/Laws that affect how municipalities spend money

(Education Reform, Special Education, Health Insurance, Pensions)

State Policies/Laws that affect how much revenue can be raised

(Proposition 2 1/2, Local option taxes, Motor Vehicle Excise tax, Tax- exempt non-state property)

State policies/Laws that affect money coming from State to municipalities

(Local Aid: Chapter 70, Additional Assistance, Lottery Aid; Tax- exempt state property)

State assessments that cities and towns pay the state

(Transportation-MBTA, Regional; County tax; School Choice spending; Charter School sending tuition; Sped charges against receipts)

. For more information please contact Fiscal Policy Update Co-chairs Kathy Leonardson kleonardson@lwvma.org, Zaxaro Bennett zbennett@lwvma.org or State League Office 617-523-2999.

Mark Your Calendars



Save the Date!

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts presents

Day on the Hill

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

State House, Boston

Watch www.lwvma.org for more information.

Contact the League office with questions at lwvma@lwvma.org or 617.523.2999.

LWVUS COUNCIL AND CONVENTION

- Council 2007 will be June 8-11 at the Marriott Metro Center in Washington, DC. “Strengthening our Leaders” will be the theme. State presidents and presidents of ILOs, capital and big city Leagues will be invited to attend. The registration fee of \$295 includes the banquet. Hotel rooms are \$165 per night. The goals are:
 - o 100% participation of State Leagues
 - o Networking opportunities
 - o Meaningful workshops and learning experiences
- Convention 2008 is in Portland, Oregon. The Board discussed possible locations for 2010 and 2012.

HEADS UP: Mark Your Calendar

*League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Citizen Education Fund
presents*

8th Annual Online Student Essay Contest for Massachusetts grades 4-12



**Go to www.lwvma.org for essay questions, rules & prize info
Contest Deadline is March 16, 2007**

Sign up to be a judge for the Essay Contest

Any League member can be a judge .

All work done through emailing; no meetings required!

To sign up, send an email to judges@lwvma.org.

**Save the Date: Essay Contest Awards Event
Sunday, April 29, 2007 | Faneuil Hall, Boston**

Questions? Contact the League at lwvma@lwvma.org or 617.523.2999.