



League Leader Update

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Calendar

Tuesday, Nov 19 "Pricing Carbon", 7pm, Babson's Sorenson Theatre, Wellesley
Thursday, Nov 21 *Unacceptable Levels* screening, 5:30pm, UMass Lowell
Friday, Nov 22 LWVMA Board Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Tuesday, Dec 3 Updated Bottle Bill Rally, 11am, One Ashburton Place, Boston
Thursday, Dec 5 Massachusetts Conference for Women
Tuesday, Dec 10 5th Congressional District Special Election
Saturday, Dec 14 "Boston Remembers Newtown," 1:30pm, Boston Common
Friday, Dec 20 LWVMA Board Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Saturday, Jan 18 Field Service Meeting Metro SW Region, 10am-1pm, Newton

Welcome, Meryl!



A hearty welcome to Meryl Kessler, who started as executive director of LWVMA Nov. 6. The board is delighted Meryl has joined us, and we are already benefiting from her efforts. Take a look at the announcement [here](#) for more details and be sure to introduce yourself to Meryl at League events going forward.

LWVMA Student Video Contest

"Dear Future Governor..." The League will sponsor a video contest for high school students tied into next fall's governor's race. Any high school student can submit a short video illustrating a problem or issue in his or her community that the next Governor should address, with a scholarship prize for a winner at each grade level. We need League volunteers to help make this happen, especially folks with some background in graphic design, marketing and technology. Email our new executive director, [Meryl Kessler](#) or call 617-523-2999.



Legislation Update



The state legislature recesses at the end of this week until after the first of the year, but committees continue to meet and your Legislative Action Committee continues to keep track of significant pieces of legislation.

Election Reform: The House may vote on H.3647, the election law reform bill, before the recess. We hope it will be strengthened in such areas as early voting, teen pre-registration and post-election audits. Look for an action alert in the near future on how you can help influence this bill when it reaches the Senate. We will also testify at a hearing Dec. 4 (changed from Nov. 20) opposing Photo ID to Vote bills and

supporting Election Day registration bills.

Gun Safety: LWVMA participated in the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence lobby day. The coalition does not expect a bill on gun safety to be reported out of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security until after the first of the year. There will be a major demonstration in Boston on Dec. 14, the anniversary of the Newtown slayings; see below for more information.

Welfare Reform: On Nov. 6, the House passed its version of the welfare reform bill, H.3756, companion to S.1806. A conference committee has been appointed that we hope will keep in the bill measures to help some of our poorest citizens. Both the House and Senate bills incorporated measures we have supported for three sessions: increased work-related deductions, an increased valuation for one vehicle per household, exclusion of scholarships from income, making available information on jobs and educational opportunities, and a savings account program to help recipients when state aid ends.

This session we also supported a bill which set up a comprehensive system of assessments and career training or education to address the low skill levels of most adult welfare recipients. This "pathways" system is also in both bills that have gone to conference, along with \$6 million to support it.

Major parts of H.3756 and S.1806 are devoted to anti-fraud measures that arose from two very damaging 2013 reports on the management failings of the Department of Transitional Assistance. LWVMA has not taken stands on these measures, but we certainly understand that vigilance is needed. We are concerned, however, about measures that deny or delay aid to people whose basic needs are not met. One such measure, in the Senate version, is to require a job search before assistance is given; the House bill allows applicants to receive temporary assistance while completing the job search.

--Clare Gordon, basic human needs specialist

Casinos: Massachusetts adopted, after long debate, legislation which allows for three "resort style casinos" and one slot parlor. At least one casino should, in theory, go to a Native American tribe. Massachusetts adopted a very tight process with rigorous standards for license applicants and a requirement for the consent of the host community. To oversee the process, the state set up a gaming commission, which so far has carried out its mandate to oversee the process very carefully.

While the process is nearing the deadline for applications, there are continual surprises. A casino at Suffolk Downs, located mostly in East Boston, was approved by Revere but rejected by East Boston. Looming over Suffolk Downs is the proposal for a casino in Everett which has strong local support. Now, the Mashpee of Aquinnah have announced plans to build a Class 2 facility on tribal land on Martha's Vineyard, and the Mashpee Wampanoag are still hoping for federal approval of the request to take land into trust.

An independent group working to repeal the casino legislation outright has been gathering signatures to get that question on the November 2014 ballot.

--Louise Haldeman, casino and gaming specialist

Next Steps for the Updated Bottle Bill

As we noted in a recent [email](#), LWVMA doubled its pledge by bringing in 20,000 signatures -- an achievement shared by all members, especially the local League coordinators. LWVMA gathered signatures, along with over 100,000 gathered from other sources, are now being certified (or have been certified) in all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. To move on to the next step in getting this bill on the November 2014 ballot, 68,911 signatures must be certified. Once that's done, the Legislature will have one more chance to pass the bill prior to November 2014. Nancy Brumback and Lynn Wolbarst, representing LWVMA, will be working with the coalition over the next month to develop a strategy for moving the bill during this last-gasp legislative window. If the Legislature fails to update the bottle bill by May 4, then it's on to the ballot in November. We will keep you posted on the progress!

Massachusetts League members are welcome to participate in a **rally/press event on Tuesday, Dec. 3**, before the coalition presents all the certified signatures to the Secretary of State. We'll gather on the steps of One Ashburton Place, across Bowdoin Street from the State House, at 11 a.m. for a rally to celebrate the strong public support for the updated bottle bill evidenced by the number of people who signed our petitions. After the rally, the coalition leaders will personally deliver the certified signatures to the Secretary of State.

League Leader Lunch: Past and Future



The Oct. 19 League Leader Lunch in Northampton brought together League leaders from across the state. To view a slide show from the event, click [here](#). To see the agenda, presentations and handouts, visit the [Local League Sharing Site](#) and scroll down to "League Leader Lunch 2013 October 19."

League Treasurers should be sure to view the presentation "Treasurer Tips" prepared by co-president Anne Borg [here](#).

Save the date for the next League Leader Lunch, Saturday, March 1. We're working now on the location and agenda. If your local League would like to host this lunch (arrange venue and food, participate in agenda planning), please email [Karen Price](#).

MLD Training Continues

The annual Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) lunch and training took place Nov. 2 in Needham. New MLD Leagues Winchester, Greater Haverhill and Falmouth attended. Leagues already in the program are Hamilton-Wenham, Waltham, Worcester, Norwood and Needham. They all were joined by MLD coaches, LWVMA co-presidents and vice president for membership and communication.

The state coaches -- Pam Holland, Carol Bullivant, Ann Grantham and Dee Orter -- presented the MLD program, designed to stimulate interest in League, increase membership, and encourage new leaders.



As usual when League leaders get together, there was a wealth of ideas and experiences exchanged. For information on MLD including a slide show from this event, click [here](#). If your League is interested in this successful program, email statecoaches@lwwma.org.

LWVUS Program Planning Begins

Every two years state and local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update or concurrence. Read the [Program Planning Leaders Guide](#) to assist you in your January/February 2014 Program Planning meeting. The Program Planning Response form will be available Dec. 5. If you have questions on this process, please email progplan@lww.org.

Carbon Pricing Forum Tonight!

LWV Wellesley, with co-sponsors LWVMA, Citizens Climate Lobby and LWV Needham, is presenting a program, "Pricing Carbon," that will focus on the emerging national dialogue about a revenue-neutral carbon tax on Tuesday, Nov. 19, at 7 p.m. The forum is at Babson College's Sorenson Theatre, 231 Forest St., Wellesley, and is free and open to the public. Come learn about this challenging issue! Click [here](#) for a flyer.

Remember Newtown Demonstration



Saturday, Dec. 14, is the first anniversary of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. To mark the day, the [Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence](#) will sponsor "Boston Remembers Newtown," a commemorative gathering. LWVMA is a Coalition member.

The afternoon's program will begin with a presentation by Moms Demand Action at 1:30 p.m. at the Parkman Bandstand on Boston Common. Invited speakers will immediately follow, at about 2:15. At 3:30, the group will walk down Boylston Street, turning right on Dartmouth, right again on Marlborough and arriving at First Church in Boston, 66 Marlborough St., for a 4:30 p.m. vigil and service.

If you are interested in volunteering the day of the event, please contact the Coalition immediately [here](#). The Coalition asks that volunteers attend at least one planning and organizing meeting (likely in Boston early on the afternoons of Nov. 24 and/or Dec. 8) and that they can arrive at the Parkman Bandstand by 12:30 p.m. Dec. 14 to review necessary guidelines and understand their assignments. If you just plan to attend, please let the Coalition know [here](#).

Mass. Conference for Women Coming Up

LWVMA will be exhibiting as a supporting organization at the [Massachusetts Conference for Women](#) Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The conference provides connections, motivation, networking, inspiration and skill building for thousands of women each year.

Keynote speakers are historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, actress Kerry Washington, author Susan Cain, and Blake Mycoskie, founder of TOMS shoes, a manufacturer which donates shoes and eyeglasses to people in a number of countries. Dozens of [expert speakers](#) lead workshops and seminars on the issues that matter to women, including personal finance, business and entrepreneurship, health and work/life balance.



Email [Natalie](#) if you would like to register. And stop by our table at the exhibitors' hall to say hello!

Is Your League Working on the Agricultural Study?

The LWVUS update on agriculture is just getting underway at the national level but there are some local committees already going here in Massachusetts. The agriculture committee for the Concord-Carlisle LWV is beginning to assemble information on the pros and cons of GMOs, adaptive farming techniques, the farm bill, and more.

If your League has such a committee, please get in touch with [Louise Haldeman](#), Agriculture Specialist. Perhaps we can all share our resources.

Read the latest information from LWVUS in the Agriculture Update Group on the League Forums. To access the League Forums, you must log in to the [LWV.org member system](#). If you don't know your login or need additional directions to get you Started on the Forums, a quick guide, click [here](#).

Toxic Chemicals Film Premiere



Join the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow Thursday, Nov. 21, for a discussion and the first screening in Massachusetts of the groundbreaking documentary *Unacceptable Levels* at UMass Lowell.

When: Thursday, Nov. 21, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Where: O'Leary Library, Rm. 222, at UMass Lowell, 61 Wilder St. Lowell

Unacceptable Levels is a documentary created by first time film maker Ed Brown that examines the results of the chemical revolution in America. Lynn Wolbarst, LWVMA environmental specialist, is exploring whether the film can be made available for local Leagues to show.

Idea of the Month



The Hamilton-Wenham League produced a PowerPoint show, Town Meeting Trivia, a quiz on government and the history of the two towns, to entertain folks waiting for annual town meeting to begin. They worked with the town moderators to get an OK for the project. Take a look at their effort [here](#) and think about adapting it to your own town if you have an annual Town Meeting. And notice that the League logo is on each and every slide for an extra boost of visibility!