



## All Members are Welcome at LWVMA Council

The LWVMA Council is held every other year and provides a chance for all our members to get together, hear some fantastic ideas for your own League, and learn more about what's happening around the state.

The 2014 LWVMA Council will be Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Framingham State University, with the timely theme, "Civility in Politics: Challenge to Good Government."

**Please register by May 5.** Registration includes a buffet lunch.

Please get together with other members of your League and come. These workshops are part of the day's program:

- **Spread the word on money and politics!** Sample the Campaign Finance Toolkit, "Democracy in the Balance," and learn how your League can use this important information in your community.
- **Bringing civility to local government.** Tips and a toolkit on how to start the conversation, create awareness, and effect change.
- **Expanding our membership demographics.** A task force has been researching demographics groups and has prepared guidance for making the League attractive to them.
- **Is your League ready for the November election?** We'll discuss ballot question forums, multi-League candidate events, and advocating for League-supported ballot questions. We'll also review opportunities to work on election projects at the state level.

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## The Latest Scharfman Grant Winners

Congratulations to the four Leagues awarded Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grants in February: Amherst, Cape Cod Area, Needham and Westwood-Walpole. The grant program offers funds to help Leagues carry out events and projects in citizen education and voter service. Generous contributions to the Lotte E. Scharfman Education Fund have made this successful grant program possible.

The February grant recipients and their projects are:

- LWV Amherst: Reaching out to the community through Facebook
- LWV Cape Cod Area: Citizen Education Forum on mental health services
- LWV Needham: Civics Bee
- LWV Westwood-Walpole: Candidates' Night for town election

## From the Co-Presidents

As we write this, the warm weather seems to be here for good - and just like the daffodils and tulips, LWVMA is bursting out all over!

First, thank you very much to all of our generous donors to this year's very successful Fall Appeal and Phonathon. The funds raised are already being put to good use!

League members across Massachusetts are busy with town meetings, planning annual meetings, advocating for important issues, and much more. As you peruse the rest of this newsletter, you will see many ways to get involved with the state League.

We want to highlight two upcoming events:

- We hope as many League members as possible attend the upcoming LWVMA Council on May 10. We are sure that many of you have encountered or witnessed incivility in your communities - and perhaps have wondered: what can be done? At Council, we will be sharing experiences and you can learn some concrete ways to counter this divisive problem.
- Whether you are a longtime or new League member, consider attending the LWVUS Convention as a delegate for your local League. The Convention will be from June 6-10, in Dallas, TX. LWVMA will have a visible presence advocating for strong League action to counter the corrosive effects of unlimited money on our democracy.

Come join us! We can't say it too many times - what sets the League apart from other nonprofit organizations is the concerted, cooperative grassroots effort of all our members! Both Council and Convention provide opportunities to network with other "Leaguers" and learn about and discuss the issues that brought us to the League. We hope to see you soon.

In League,

Marilyn Peterson and Anne Borg  
Co-Presidents, LWVMA

### **LWVUS Convention in Dallas June 6-10**

Consider expanding your view of the League by attending the national Convention in Dallas. We hope to have an impressive Massachusetts presence there June 6-10. The state League will sponsor a get-together for all Massachusetts delegates during the Convention.

Note that LWVUS has increased the number of delegates for Leagues this year. Leagues with 1-49 members can send one delegate; with 50-99 members, two delegates; and with 100-149 members, three delegates. For each additional 50 voting members, a local League gets an additional delegate. If your League has already filled its allotted number of delegate slots and you still wish to attend, the state League office is matching up slots from local Leagues not using all of theirs with people who want to go. Please contact Meryl Kessler, [mkessler@lwvma.org](mailto:mkessler@lwvma.org) or 617-523-2998. The online registration deadline is May 23. Full Convention information is available at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).

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### **Come out to the Ball Park—Join the League at Fenway Aug. 20**

Save the date! The Boston Red Sox will celebrate Women's Equality Day with the second annual League of Women Voters' Night at Fenway Park on Aug. 20. Please note the date change. The game against the Los Angeles Angels will begin at 7:10 p.m., but plan to arrive at 6:45 for pre-game ceremonies saluting the League. Ticket prices for this event will be bleacher seats for \$28 and covered outfield grandstand for \$30. Check the LWVMA website in May for further information and to order tickets.

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### **Meet Your Legislative Action Committee**

The Program & Action Committee, now the Legislative Action Committee (LAC), changed its name to better reflect the Committee's emphasis on legislation. The goal of the LAC is to support and strengthen LWVMA's position as an influential advocate for public policy by raising the League's visibility at the State House and with the public. It does this by taking action on and keeping our membership informed about pending legislation.

The LAC recommends bills the state League should support or oppose and submits these to the board for its vote. Currently, there are 13 legislative specialists and a legislative director on the LAC. You see their work when an Action Alert hits your inbox, asking you to contact your legislators about a pending bill. The LAC also plans Day on the Hill, our annual lobbying day, and has made recommendations to the board on the positions to be taken on potential statewide ballot questions. Specialists often serve as LWVMA representatives on coalitions

working in their areas. Currently, our specialists are involved in transportation, health care, environmental, education, and election reform coalitions.

LAC needs additional legislative specialists. Currently, no one is following legislation in such key areas as immigration, women's issues, equal rights, domestic violence, children's issues or criminal justice, all areas in which the League has positions. If one of these areas is your passion, please consider joining the LAC before the new legislative session begins in January. It is possible to participate in LAC meetings by teleconference as well as in person. Contact Carole Pelchat, legislative director, at [cpelchat@lwvma.org](mailto:cpelchat@lwvma.org) for more information. You will make a difference.

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### **Students Tell Next Governor What's On Their Minds in LWVMA Video Contest**

High school students from around the state responded enthusiastically to our invitation to create two-minute videos telling the next governor of Massachusetts what issues should be at the top of his or her agenda.

The "Dear Future Governor" Student Video Contest drew videos from Millis to Maynard to Mashpee to Martha's Vineyard...from Sudbury to Saugus. (Other locations include: Quincy, Fall River, Natick, Burlington, Newton, Watertown, Granby, and Wareham, Duxbury, Orleans and more.)

What's on young people's minds? The economy, gun control, crime, gangs, the environment, education, campaign finance reform, legalization of marijuana, the minimum wage, bullying, potholes, veterans' benefits... really just about every topic you could imagine. Winners will be announced the first week of May, and three winning videos will be shown at council. Don't miss them!

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### **Fall Appeal Surpasses Goals, Returns Money to Local Leagues**

Thanks to our loyal donors and our local Leagues, LWVMA's annual Fall Appeal and Phonathon raised over \$58,000 to support the operations and the programs of both the state League and the Scharfman Citizen Education Fund. The incredible generosity of our donors and the dedication of our callers made this Phonathon a success. The money raised through this annual appeal is a critical part of our budget and helps fund membership events, outreach, and support; citizen education projects; and voter service.

In February, as part of our local League revenue sharing program, LWVMA sent checks totaling approximately \$6,300 to 37 local Leagues. LWVMA applauds the efforts of the Leagues that made Phonathon calls, including Concord-Carlisle, Needham, Newton, Sudbury, Hamilton-Wenham, Wellesley, Wayland, and Andover/North Andover.

### **“Day in the District”- A Personal Lobby Day**

The state League and especially the legislative specialists on the Legislative Action Committee were terribly disappointed when we had to cancel our annual Day on the Hill lobby day in the face of a threatened snowstorm.

But you can still make an impact. Please use the information in the Day on the Hill packet you received, particularly the information in the featured bills section, and ask your State Senator and Representative for a meeting in your district to discuss those bills. You can find the packet on our website at [lwvma.org](http://lwvma.org).

Before this legislative session ends in July, there is much to be done. Please let your legislators know we want action on election reform, the campaign finance disclose act, a stronger gun safety law, disposal of electronic waste, dropout prevention, earned income tax credits, health care reforms, and more. An in-person meeting with your legislators will work wonders.

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### **Volunteer for State Election Year Projects**

LWVMA urgently needs volunteers for state-level projects during this election year. Can you spare some time to work on candidate forums for statewide offices, an online voters' guide or voter registration? The amount we can do at the state level depends completely on the number of people who volunteer. If you can join in or just want to know more, contact Nancy Brumback, [nbrumback@lwvma.org](mailto:nbrumback@lwvma.org). Thanks!

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### **Welcome, Brynne!**

LWVMA is pleased to welcome Brynne Gorman as our new Administrative and Program Associate. Brynne is a 2012 cum laude graduate of UMass Dartmouth with a degree in political science. Most recently, she worked as a database manager at Covidien. We are delighted to have her on board and think she will be an excellent addition to our team! Brynne can be reached at 617-523-2999 and [bgorman@lwvma.org](mailto:bgorman@lwvma.org). Brynne succeeds Natalie Kassabian, who moved on to a new job in the software industry.

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### **LWVMA Greets Armenian Delegation**

LWVMA's co-presidents, Anne Borg and Marilyn Peterson, and Program and Administrative Coordinator Natalie Kassabian met at the Massachusetts State House March 11 with a delegation of six women from Armenia to discuss the League's work with coalitions, local politics, voting, and election reform. The visit was made possible through Open World and the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA).

### **Once More, the Bottle Bill Needs Your Help**

The League had an enormously successful drive last fall to gather signatures to put the Updated Bottle Bill on the November ballot. We came up with over 20,000 signatures, a significant contribution to the more than 130,000 signatures collected overall. But the process of getting a question on the November ballot is not easy. We have to do one more round of signature-gathering in late May-early June.

Here's how the ballot question process works. After the first round of signatures is submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State, he sends a new bill that is the text of the petition to the legislature. In the case of the bottle bill, the new bill is H.3848. If the legislature passes that bill by May 7, the updated bottle bill becomes law and no further effort is required. BUT the joint committee considering the bill has appointed a "working group" of four legislators to develop a compromise bill and has given them a deadline of June 1. If the bill is not passed by May 7, the ballot question proponents have to gather additional signatures, have the signatures certified by town/city clerks, submit them to the Secretary of State for approval by June 18, and then submit the final ballot question petition to the Secretary July 2. At that point, the Secretary decides which questions will be on the November ballot. The legislature could still pass the updated bottle bill before July 2, but if the coalition doesn't have its signatures ready to go by June 18, the question can't be on the ballot.

With that timetable, the coalition is proceeding with the next required step in the process, to gather another 22,000 signatures (that's the total number, not the League's share) for the Secretary of State. We can't wait to see what compromise the legislators might come up with since, if they delay, it will be too late to get the signatures by the June 18 deadline.

The good news is this round requires far fewer signatures, about 22,000 total from all the coalition members, instead of the over 130,000 the coalition gathered in the fall. We hope most of our local Leagues will pitch in again. If you want to volunteer and are not sure if your League is collecting signatures, please fill out this form and the Updated Bottle Bill steering committee will be in touch.

The Updated Bottle Bill has been bottled up in the legislature for over 14 years! It's time this bill, widely supported by citizens and by towns across the state, becomes law. We can do it. You can help.

**League of Women Voters of Massachusetts  
Lotte E. Scharfman Fund**



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**Please send us your email address!**

If you are receiving the Mass. League Voter in the mail, then LWVMA does not have your email address. That means you are not receiving Action Alerts, invitations to events, and other information. Plus, mailing the Mass. League Voter is expensive! You can help by sending your email address to Brynne Gorman at [bgorman@lwwma.org](mailto:bgorman@lwwma.org).

<b>LWVMA Calendar</b>	
Saturday, May 3 - Sunday, May 4	Quad States Leadership Development Conference, Hampton Inn, Wells, Maine
Saturday, May 10	LWVMA Council, Framingham State University, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday, May 27	"Why You Need Single-Payer Healthcare," Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem Square, Worcester, 6 - 8 p.m. (Co-Sponsored by the Worcester Area League)
June 6-10, 2014	LWVUS Convention, Dallas
Wednesday, August 20	League of Women Voters' Night, Fenway Park, Boston