

BULLETIN

November 2003

P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034

Volume 8 03-04 #2

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

3	Sun	Rachel's Box Rededication, TriCon Church	5:30-6:30 PM
5	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting, 41 Canterbury Court	9 AM coffee, 9:30 AM mtg
10	Mon	Carlisle Town Meeting	
12	Wed	The USA PATRIOT ACT: National security and Civil Liberties Peabody Middle School Forum, Old Marlboro Rd., Concord	7:00 PM
20	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps Meeting, Everett Gardens	9:00 AM

DECEMBER

3	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting & Member Holiday Social 1360 Monument St	9:00 AM Board Meeting 12 noon Pot Luck Social
6	Sat	Concord Town Coordination Meeting	

JANUARY

5	Mon	Concord Town Warrant closes, Town House	4:00 PM
5	Mon	Concord Town Caucus, Alcott School Auditorium	7:30 PM
7	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting	9:00 coffee, 9:30 mtg
14	Wed	LWVCC Membership Breakfast, Colonial Inn	
15	Thurs	Observer Corps Meeting, Everett Gardens	9:00 AM
21/28	Wed	LWVCC FORUM: Our Town, Our Schools, Our Money	7:30 PM

FEBRUARY

4	Wed	LWVCC Board Meeting	9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
19	Thurs	LWVCC Observer Corps Meeting, Everett Gardens	9:00 AM
TBA		LWVCC National Program Planning Mtg	
TBA		LWVCC Concord Candidates Forum	

*Members are invited to attend monthly Board and Observer Corps meetings.
Contact Nancy Beeuwkes for Board meeting location.*

WHAT'S INSIDE?

President's Message	2	Letter from LWVUS	5
Membership	3	Membership form	7
Superintendent Finn Report	3	LWVCC Observers Wanted	7
LWVCC Website Update	4	Domestic Violence Prevention	8
"A Room Of One's Own"	4	Flyers: Civil Liberties Forum	
Citizen Forum: USA PATRIOTS ACT	4		

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan grassroots organization of men and women formed in 1920 and dedicated to the principles of self government established by the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Co-Presidents Nancy Beeuwkes
Cindy Nock
Membership Debbie Barr
Bulletin Editor Anne Hayden

PRESIDENTS' LETTER

Nancy Beeuwkes and Cindy Nock, Co-Presidents, LWVCC

November 2003

Dear Members,

I hope you are planning to attend the League Forum on "The Patriot Act" on the evening of November 12th. We on the Board are extremely excited about the excellent panel that has been assembled and the number of fine organizations that are co sponsoring the program. We are also delighted that a number of CCHS students have asked to come. Please see the flyer for more information, and invite your friends!

A second important date for your calendar is December 3rd, the day of our annual Holiday Party. Your Board will meet from 9-12 that Wednesday morning and as always you are welcome to join us for the Board meeting. At 12:30 PM we will start our potluck lunch. We are inviting the new Fire Chiefs from both Carlisle and Concord to speak about the challenges of their new departments. Come to hear these interesting talks and renew League friendships. I (Nancy) am delighted to host the party again this year.

The conversation with the new school superintendent in October was most enjoyable and informative. The attendance was less than we

expected (24) but that made it possible for those who attended to have a more intimate discussion with Dr. Finn. We found the new superintendent very responsive and thoughtful.

Fourteen members of our League attended the Massachusetts LWV Fall Conference where the program focused on "Fixing Our Broken Health Care System". We all came away more convinced than ever that a single payer system is more sensible, fiscally prudent, and humane.

We are looking for members who would like to work on the two areas of interest voted at annual meeting. These items for league research are 1) Concord's zoning bylaws in relation to preserving the town's character (we could follow with the same kind of research in Carlisle) and 2) education funding in comparable Regional High Schools. Please call Nancy (371-7293) or Cindy (369-3996) if you are interested.

Thank you for your financial support during the recent phonothon on behalf of the LWVM.

Hoping to see you on the 12th,
Nancy Beeuwkes
Cindy Nock
Co Presidents.

MEMBERSHIP

Debbie Barr, Chair

Support Our League. Renew Your Membership Now!

Candidate Forums. Voter Information Mailings to all citizens. Observer Reports of town boards and committee actions. Tours of town and school facilities. Citizen Forums with public officials and guest experts on timely issues. Training in leadership skills. Mentoring of new members. Land Use Forums and SuAsCo watershed advocacy. Lobbying for Election Reform. Study of Youth and Elder Services. Monthly mailings of local *LWV Bulletin* plus *State and National Voter*.

Your membership in the League supports all of the above-and more!- ongoing activities in voter

service, citizen education and advocacy of issues in the public interest.

To those who have not renewed as yet---won't you do so today? We need your voices to be heard, your participation when you are able to do so, your example to others by simply being a member of this premier public service organization.

Fill out the membership form in the Bulletin, or send in the one mailed earlier this fall.

Many thanks to the many League members who renewed your membership in the League this fall. Your Membership team appreciates your prompt response!

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

A CONVERSATION WITH SUPERINTENDENT BRENDA FINN

On Wednesday, October 8, 2003, Dr. Brenda Finn, the new Superintendent for the Concord Public School System and the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School, spoke with league members and interested community residents. The following are some of the notes that the League's education chairs jotted down during that meeting.

Dr Finn believes that

School Committee Terms too short for learning curve.

K-12 – more efficient to combine both towns for regional schools.

Enrollment “Bulge” moving up through middle school population is nonexistent.

Initial Impressions of CCPS/CPS buildings- “unacceptable.” Dr. Finn said, “Concord’s school buildings are in much worse shape than the town’s public buildings. What does this tell us?”

Fiscal Challenges- schools are affected by public service cuts. Schools are expected to pick up the slack where the feds cut back..ie: mental health services and basic health care for children.

Federal Funding Cuts CCPS/CPS- reductions in personnel hours, administration staff, instructional personnel and SPED services.

Dr. Finn commented on failed override vote ...she felt some voters probably support schools even though they could not support this override because they felt taxes are too high and the schools need to cut back..... We as a town need to involve all citizens and educate tax payers on where and how money is being spent in the schools. It's important to shed a positive light on CCPS/CPS superior educational programs. In addition, community outreach to the elderly was strongly suggested.

Nancy Gitto-Pangeiotis & Shawna Reid

LWVCC CREATING OWN WEBSITE

Our local League is entering the internet age! Our webmaster, Li-Jen Lin (Gerber), has put together our basic website which the Board is currently reviewing. Once the site is operational it will offer information on our League, links to the state and national league, our membership and Observer Corps Bulletins, a Calendar of events and information and flyers on our activities, and definitely much more.

Future Bulletins will update you on the progress of the site and announce when it will “go live!”

“A ROOM OF ONE’S OWN” UPCOMING LWVCC HOME OFFICE BREAKFAST/TOUR

A new and exciting fundraising event is in the planning stages that promise to both meet the needs of many of us who want more efficient and attractive home office spaces and at the same time raise some money for our local league. Titled “A Room of One’s Own”, the event will include a breakfast with speaker and a self-guided tour of local home office spaces. March 11, 2003 (snow date of March 25) has been reserved at the Thoreau Outdoor Center for the event. The committee is chaired by Di Clymer and includes Paula Vandever, Holly Cratsley and Anne Rarich.

Mark your calendars now for it will be sure to be a popular activity on everyone’s early spring schedule!

CITIZEN FORUM ON CIVIL LIBERTIES AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Does the USA PATRIOT ACT go too far, or does law enforcement need all the tools the Act contains to help it thwart terrorism? The Act, authorized by Congress shortly after the tragedies of September 11, 2001, allows the government new powers to detain suspects, to conduct searches and surveillance, and to obtain information about private citizens.

The League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle and twelve other sponsors invite the public to a lively discussion of this important topic at a Citizen Forum on *The USA PATRIOT Act: Civil Liberties and National Security*, held

Wednesday, November 12, at 7 p.m., in the Peabody School Auditorium, 1235 Old Marlboro Road in Concord.

The program, moderated by Madhu Sridhar, president of the Massachusetts LWV, will cover the history of the Act and of civil liberties in the United States as well as topics of local concern, including the Act’s impact on local law enforcement and library practices. The panel of speakers includes:

Herbert Wilkins, retired chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

Nancy Murray, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLU) Bill of Rights Education Project

Kimberly West, Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney Office, Anti-Terrorism Unit

Elliot Lilien, retired history teacher, Concord-Carlisle Regional High School
Barbara Powell, director of the Concord Free Public Library

Leonard Wetherbee, chief of the Concord Police Department

Representatives from Senator Kennedy, Senator Kerry and Congressman Meehan’s offices will attend in order to take note of constituent concerns.

A question and answer period follows the program with participation by audience members and a Press Panel of editors of the Concord Journal, Carlisle Mosquito, CCHS Voice, Third Wing and Bureau Chief, Boston Globe NorthWest.

Co-sponsors of the program include the ACLU of Massachusetts, Amnesty International Group 15, Concord-Carlisle Adult and Community Education, The Concord Bookshop, Concord Chamber of Commerce, Concord Civil Liberties Committee, Concord Democratic Town Committee, Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council, First Parish Social Action Education Committee, Grassroots Actions for Peace, North Bridge Alliance for Democracy and Trinitarian

Congregational Church Mission and Social Concerns Committee.

For information, please call 978-287-0627.

**LWVUS LETTER TO
US SENATE MEMBERS**

TO: Members of the U.S. Senate
FROM: Kay J. Maxwell, President
RE: Civil Liberties and the Patriot Act

The League of Women Voters strongly believes that basic civil liberties must be preserved and protected as the nation seeks to guard against terrorism and other threats to national security. We are particularly concerned about the impact of provisions of the Patriot Act passed by Congress in October 2001. The League supports congressional efforts to modify the extreme provisions of the Patriot Act and we are concerned about new efforts to further expand governmental powers that infringe on civil liberties.

Members of the League are steadfast in their conviction that the need to protect against security threats to America must be balanced with the need to preserve the very liberties that are the foundation of this country. There are fundamental principles that guard our liberty -- from independent judicial review of law enforcement actions to prohibitions on indiscriminate searches -- that must be preserved.

These beliefs have been long held by the League of Women Voters. In 1942, during World War II, the League wished "to preserve the greatest degree of civil liberty consistent with national safety." That concern continued during the "witch hunt" period of the early 1950s when the League conducted a two-year, community education program known as the "Freedom Agenda" that provided opportunities for Americans to discuss and learn about their freedoms under the Bill of Rights. This was followed by a League study on the federal loyalty/security programs, culminating in a policy position that emphasized protection of individual liberties against major threats to basic constitutional rights.

It is up to Congress to keep close watch over the Patriot Act's implementation and to address instances where citizens' freedoms have been abused. Earlier this month, President Bush proposed an expansion of the Patriot Act's law enforcement powers. We believe this expansion of power would significantly undermine the fundamental liberties guaranteed to all citizens in the Constitution.

We are deeply concerned with the Administration's plan, which would allow subpoenas to be issued without obtaining approval from judges or grand juries. We are equally concerned about proposals that would create an overly broad definition of terrorism so that government action could be directed against protesters and organizations that voice disagreement with the policies of the leadership of the United States.

The League of Women Voters supports the legislative language that will withhold funds for Section 213 of the Patriot Act which was passed by the House of Representatives in the Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriations bill earlier this year. We believe that Section 213, which delays notice of the issuance of a warrant, is overly broad and interferes with an individual's Fourth Amendment rights.

The League is also concerned about the impact of the Patriot Act on the free and open exchange of knowledge by patrons of libraries and bookstores. We believe that the Patriot Act allows government officials to obtain information on library patrons without probable cause and without a warrant and we support legislative efforts to amend the Patriot Act to protect the privacy of library patrons and bookstore customers.

In addition to threats to basic individual liberties that are central to our civic life, the League is concerned about the potential impact that the Patriot Act and proposals to expand it could have on the checks and balances of government. We believe that accountability and responsibility to the people require that unnecessary secrecy

between the President and Congress be eliminated. It is critical that Congress know of the actions of the Executive and Judiciary branches and that the courts be kept apprised of and have the opportunity to review the actions of law enforcement. In addition, it is important for local and state governments to be able to work in concert with the federal government in the critical balancing of security concerns and individual liberties.

These are challenging times for all Americans. We recognize that there are real and serious terrorist threats. But like the League members of the 1940s, who lived in another time of grave crisis for America and the world, we ask that you work to preserve the greatest degree of civil liberty in the fight against terrorism.

Wanted: Observers

Under our Town Charter, Concord is one of the few Massachusetts towns where volunteer boards and committees are deeply involved in town governance. We elect the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Town Meeting Moderator. But, we depend heavily on the commitment and expertise of the 263 volunteers who serve on the 40 boards and committees that keep our community running.

Our Observer Corps members attend town board and committee meetings throughout the year. Through their regular, publicly available reports observers provide one of several checks and balances on public officials to ensure that the community is well served. In addition, being an observer is a wonderful way to learn about the Town of Concord, the issues we face, and the way decisions are made and issues addressed.

The Observer Corps can always use a few good women or men to serve as observers. Right now, observers are needed for the Wastewater Committee, the School Committee, several subcommittees and, above all, substitutes. The Observer Corps meets monthly to review individual reports, but it is possible to be an observer even if you are unable to attend these meetings. Observers are responsible for writing a report on the meetings they observe which is printed in the *Observer Report*, a monthly publication which is mailed separately to all League members and to subscribers to the *Observer Report*.

Please call Louise Haldeman for more information.

League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle

July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004 Membership Renewal Form

Name _____ Tel # _____

Address _____

Town _____ Email _____

Preferred means to communicate with me: Mail Phone Email

Please make check payable to League of Women Voters Concord-Carlisle

Send to: Fran Neville, Treasurer, LWVCC, P.O. Box 34, Concord, MA

Dues:

Single _____ \$55 Family _____ \$80 Student _____ \$25

I wish to be a member, but can afford \$ _____ Additional Contribution \$ _____

(Contributions are welcomed, and will be listed in the LWV Bulletin; however, they are not tax deductible.)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Nancy James

Introduction: national and state League chapters have made a significant commitment to domestic violence prevention. Our newsletters will now contain a report each month on the activities within Concord and surrounding towns about this issue. Included in these reports will be the **Network for Women's Lives** (Network), **Concord-Carlisle Domestic Violence Roundtable** (Roundtable), Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (**DVVAP**), an umbrella organization, Domestic Violence Services of Central Middlesex (formerly **DV Services** is now **DVVAP – Citizen's Council**) and seasonally, the **Walk for Women's Lives** ("Walk"). A new men's group **Men Against Domestic Abuse and Control** has been formed in Carlisle.

Rachel's Box rededication gathering held on Monday, November 3, at Trinitarian Congregational Church was well attended by institutional hosts, project volunteers, and community supporters. Representing the **League** was Nancy Beecher, Deb Barr and Lucy Furber, who was honored for her initial seed money for the project. Also honored were both Senator Pam Resor, who was also in attendance, and TriCon church Social Action Committee for their financial support. The Reverend John Lombard of TriCon offered remarks about his growth in understanding of domestic violence issues. Network president, Mary Greenberg, and Rachel's Box liaison Mary Jane Nichols, greeted guests with a few words of welcome.

The League's early support of this project was noted with gratitude.

Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP) and ***Network for Women's Lives*** jointly sponsored a candlelight vigil on the evening of October 20. Advertising the vigil throughout Concord Center during mid-October were plywood life-size figures, each chronicling the life of a domestic violence murder victim. The cutouts, loaned from the Jane Doe Fund, were picked up along the vigil route, read, and carried with participants to First Parish Church, where speakers offered comments and hope in the work of assisting victims.

Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP) and ***Network for Women's Lives*** jointly sponsored an ***Essay Contest*** with **Concord Oil Company** and **Reach** (of Waltham) during October – Domestic Violence Awareness month. School grades 7-12 were asked to submit essays on a domestic violence issue and how their community might respond for support to victims. 5 winners were announced, receiving tickets to Boston Bruins games.

Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP) To become a **DVVAP** volunteer call or email Kiersten Warning for volunteer information. See their web site www.DVVAP.org.