



The League of Women
Voters of Hingham

Hingham Voter

Serving the Towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset and Norwell

December 2012

LWVH Board 2011 - 2013

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President's Letter

Dear Members,

Welcome back! It is two and a half months into our year and we have already accomplished a lot! Hopefully everyone received the letter with this year's program and the dates to mark your calendars.

The year started with a meeting between our League's Town Meeting Study committee and our new Moderator, to review our findings and get feedback. Our 2012 Guest Speaker Forums have launched and proved educational to new and long term members. Please look out for the Evite email invitations.

Eileen McCracken, Town Clerk, was the perfect start to the voting season. I wasn't aware that when Eileen enlists citizens to aid in the teller positions at Open Town Meeting, she pulls equally from Democratic, Republican and Un-enrolled voters. She would love us to help in this effort so please send me your name if you are interested in contributing and I will forward a list of LWVH members.

In October, Dan Coughlin, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee informed us of the requests for funding that they had received the previous evening at their meeting. Questions were answered regarding the request for funding the High School fields and CPC funds. Newly elected Moderator Michael Puzo met with the

league this month and it was very informative.

Eight of our League members contributed to registering voters in Quincy on National Voter Registration Day. Personally it was quite moving for me. My first registrant arrived with her two beautiful children and although she had been a citizen for three years she had never registered. The most touching moment came when I was registering voters in a senior housing complex. I approached a table of men and women and asked if anyone was a new resident and needed to change their address. A woman piped up, "oh yes-me. I am glad you are here." As we spoke I found out she was originally from Hingham, had become homeless and recently been helped by Father Bills organization. Now she had a home and a vote.

Lastly, VP Kathleen Nugent and I participated in the LWVMA Leaders luncheon and have brought back some new ideas that should continue to strengthen our League. I look forward to seeing you at one of our monthly events. They were developed through your feedback at our Annual Meeting.

Have a wonderful holiday,

Kate



The League of Women Voters of Hingham

Hello Members,

Our 2012 Annual Meeting seems long ago however the LWVH is looking forward to another informative year! If you were fortunate to attend Eileen McCracken's presentation I am sure you found it informative.

There are many, many opportunities for you to be learn more about local and State issues and we hope you can bring a friend or two as a guest, whom might be interested in joining our League.

We do ask that you please respond to the monthly invitations thru the EVITE email if you will or will not attend so the host can plan ahead.

Also, we all have a responsibility to attend when we can so we are able continue to have these speakers give of their time to speak to the LWVH. With 43 members, we would love to average 20 attendees like we had last year.

As always, feedback is important to your Board so please email us with your thoughts at kateboland@comcast.net.

Looking forward to another great year,

Your LWVH Board

Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. and speaker will start at 7:15p.m..

September 19, 2012	Get Out the Vote!	Eileen McCracken, Town Clerk
October 18, 2012	Guest Speaker Forum	Dan Coughlin, Chair, Community Preservation Committee
November 15, 2012	Guest Speaker Forum	Michael Puzo, Town Moderator
January 23, 2013	Guest Speaker Forum	Ray Estes, School Committee
February 27, 2013	Warrant Review	Karen Johnson, Chair, Advisory Committee
March 20, 2013	State of the State	State Representatives & State Senator
April 10, 2013	Candidates Night	Meet the Candidates
May 22, 2013	Annual All Members Meeting	

* You will be notified as to locations by Evite email invitations or call 781-749-5946

LWV of Hingham Updates

If you are looking for a truly rewarding experience and to help out our Hingham League, then we need you!!

The LWV of Hingham Nominating Committee is looking for league members interested in participating in next year's Executive Board.

Board Positions include the following.

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership
- Publicity
- Newsletter/Website
- Fundraising

We are looking for suggestions for speakers at the League's Annual Meeting in May. If you have any ideas, please send them to Kate Boland at president@hingham.ma.lwvnet.org

LWVH Member Marge Schiller Receives Prestigious Award

The Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus introduced the Tribute to Abigail Adams in 1988 to recognize six Massachusetts women leaders. Award recipients are women who have demonstrated through their work and/or their community activism an outstanding commitment to the realization of equal political, economic, and social rights for women. As part of the Abigail Adams event the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus has also established two additional awards. The MWPC created the Dolores L. Mitchell Lifetime Achievement Award to honor her for being one of the MWPC's founders and current Board Members. This Award was presented to Teresa Heinz Kerry in 2003. In 2002 the MWPC honored Governor Jane M. Swift with the creation of a new award in her honor, the Jane M. Swift Commitment to Public Service.

One of Hingham League's newest members, **Marge Schiller**, *Founder, MA Women's Political Caucus* received the **Dolores L. Mitchell Lifetime Achievement Award** last month at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. Congratulations!!

LWVH Article in the Hingham Journal

The following article was submitted and published in the Hingham Journal:

The Voting Season is Here!

The Voting Season is in full swing in Hingham. The League of Women Voters of Hingham has been active educating voters for the upcoming election and planning ahead for Hingham's Open Town Meeting and town elections next spring.

The LWV of Hingham encourages you to participate by casting your votes for national and state races as well as several ballot questions on Election Day, Tuesday, November 6, 2012. A great place to start for voter information is www.Vote411.org. This website is an online, non-partisan resource developed by the League of Women Voters Education Fund to provide all your election information. The website can help you register to vote, tell you who the candidates on your local ballot are; and provide a schedule of candidate debates and forums, polling locations, links about the election, and other information. The site delivers information across the nation so simply input an address and it will supply you with local election information.

The LWV of Hingham reminds all Hingham citizens to register to vote. On National Voter Registration Day on September 25, the League was out in force registering voters at Linden Ponds, Hingham High School, and various Manet Community Health Centers. Please note that Wednesday, October 17, 2012 is the deadline to register to vote for the election on November 6, 2012. The Massachusetts Voter Registration Form can be found at the Town Clerk's office, any Division of Motor Vehicles office, or by downloading a mail-in form from <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleafy/howreg.htm>. If you are new to town or have recently changed your address, please remember to register to vote. If you have recently registered to vote by mail and have not received acknowledgement of your voter registration in the mail, you will need to provide identification and check with the Town Clerk's front desk at the polls.

If you require an absentee ballot, please contact the Hingham Town Clerk's office at 781-741-1410. Massachusetts allows voters to vote by absentee ballot if they:

- will be absent from your city or town on election day, and/or
- have a physical disability that prevents your voting at the polling place, and/or
- are unable vote at the polls due to religious beliefs

You may have an absentee ballot mailed to you or you may vote at your city or town hall by making arrangements with your local election official. To be counted, a completed ballot must be received by the time the polls close on Election Day. If you are voting from outside the United States, your completed absentee ballot for a final state or city election can be received up until 10 days after the election, but

....continued LWVH Article

must be postmarked on or before Election Day.

On Election Day, Hingham voters are divided into seven (7) voting precincts. The voting locations are as follows:

- Precincts 1-4 - Hingham High School, 17 Union Street
- Precincts 5-6 - Hingham Middle School, 1103 Main Street

Precinct 5A - The Oakleaf Clubhouse Building, 300 Linden Ponds Way (new location)

To find your precinct, you can call the Town Clerk's office at 781-741-1410 or review <http://hingham-ma.com/townclerk/vote.html>. To avoid the crowds, history has shown that slow times at the polls are 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. The LWV of Hingham will be handing out "I voted" stickers this year. We hope to see you after you vote!

Hingham's town government has its busy voting season in the spring. The League of Women Voters of Hingham will be active again with voter information for Open Town Meeting and the Town Election. If you are new to town or want to learn more about Hingham's legislative process, look for the "**Citizen's Guide to Town Meeting**" on the LWVH website <http://hingham.ma.lwvnet.org/TownMeeting.html> or the Town's website http://www.hingham-ma.com/selectmen/town_meeting.html. The LWVH in collaboration with the Town developed resources to clarify the submission of warrant articles, including How to Submit Petitions for Articles for Hingham Open Town Meeting, [Guidelines for Articles Submitted for Open Town Meeting](#), and an optional form for submitting articles. These resources are also available on the websites.

In 2010, the League submitted an article for a Town By-Law amendment requiring the Town Meeting Warrant to be made available to citizens 10 days after the Warrant closes on January 20. Having access to this information by early February enables citizens to inform themselves near the beginning of the review process and prepares them to offer input at Board and Committee meetings. Mark your calendar for the second annual **Warrant Review scheduled for February 27, 2013** to discuss the submitted articles and learn about the Advisory Committee's review process. The League sponsors this event to inform citizens and increase participation in Open Town Meeting scheduled for April 26, 2013.

Voters have come to rely on the LWV of Hingham's annual Candidates Forum for candidate information. For over 50 years, the LWV of Hingham has hosted a Candidates Forum for voters to meet candidates for town elections. To maintain its nonpartisan status, the League strives to ensure fairness by giving each candidate equal time for opening and closing statements. Questions to candidates in contested races are permitted only when all candidates are present to avoid giving unfair advantage to candidates who do participate. The Forum is moderated by an independent moderator and strives to uphold rules and regulations regarding Non-Debate Candidate Appearances as established by the LWV. An unedited recording of Candidates Night will be available on local cable stations and the League's website for those unable to attend.

National Voter Registration Day

Members of the LWV of Hingham participated in National Voter Registration Day by helping out Manet Healthcare in their voter registration efforts. Thank you to everyone who volunteered. The following is a press release from Manet Health regarding the efforts.

National Voter Registration Day at Manet!

Manet's efforts on September 25 were made possible with a combined "force" of volunteers from the League of Women Voters in Hingham including Kate Boland, President, Julie Strehle, Mary Kenyon, Liza O'Reilly, Chris Wilk, Chartis Tebbitts, Mary O'Donnell, and Nancy Darr of The League of Women Voters in Weymouth and Sandra Koonz and Jeanne Giagrande, or the former League of Women Voters Braintree, combined with 2 walk-in MassVote volunteers, Karen Bonatti and Laura Gabel Hartman, Manet volunteer, David Griffin and Manet staffer. Manet's observance of **National Voter Registration Day** successfully and simultaneously canvassed 5 practices sites, from 9:30-3:00. inside and out, and outreached to surrounding communities venues.

In total, the effort helped registered on-site 55 person(of all ages) to vote in this one day. Briefly, the day reached and helped to register: college students, service professionals, teachers, community advocates, allied health professionals, physicians, executive managers, November travelers, parents, Bingo players, health and social service consumers, and coffee drinkers!

Upwards of 245 individuals were engaged in conversation about voting or had their questions answered such as "Where do I vote? I recently moved—do I need to re-register? I have not voted since the 2000 election, what do I do? What are the ballot questions? What is the deadline to register? Am eligible to vote whereas I have a criminal record or I just became a citizen 3 months ago? I will not be home to vote is there something I can do? Can my child at college vote?, etc.

Moreover, 56 persons signed the Community Health VOTE's Pledge to Vote on Tuesday, November 6, 2012.

Thirty-five (35) Voter Registration forms and 15 absentee ballots were taken home for completion.

We learned that civic education matters—and conversations such as these are important whereas for many that we met this process and the access to relevant information may not be routine. We also learned that having venues and events that are accessible to individuals where the frequent, come, work and spend time is key. There was a general sense of enthusiasm and appreciation for the process and some visible ease and relief for those we engaged that this was a portable process encouraged by **National Voter Registration Day** that bring the opportunity to register and ask questions right to them as they are managing a busy work day, appointments, neighborhood stops and errands. Further, we could affirm that on the South Shore, materials and persons that speak diverse languages was key, and materials were both completed on-site and distributed in Chinese, and Vietnamese. Moreover, there is a request for registration forms in Portuguese.

Special appreciation the League of Women Voter of Hingham and Weymouth and Mass Vote! YOU inspired the day. In fact, the League of Women Voters continue to make this work possible and today 6 more registrations to vote were completed here at Manet in North Quincy!

***A current and outstanding resource is www.wheretovote.ma. This allows the registered and newly registered to learn or confirm our polling location with simple an address.

LWV of Hingham - Forum Recaps

September Forum - Eileen McCracken, Town Clerk

Eileen McCracken, Town Clerk was the guest speaker for the September forum, our first forum of the year. She discussed voting and attendance statistics and trends in Hingham. About 93% of the residents in Hingham are registered to vote. Since 2007, the lowest voter turnout was 10.9% which was in 2007 for an all town election. The highest was 84.3% in 2008 for the Presidential election. The higher turnouts tend to be for State, Presidential or special town elections. In 2007 - 2008, all town meeting attendance was around 6%. The Ward Street lights all town meeting had a whopping 30% turnout. In the past 3 years, all town meeting attendance has seemed to increase to 8 - 10%.

October Forum - Dan Coughlin, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee

Dan Coughlin, Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee was the guest speaker for the LWVH October forum. The CPC was formed in Hingham after the Community Preservation Act was adopted at Hingham Town Meeting in 2003. It provides funds for affordable housing, historic resources, open space and recreation land. Funds come from two sources - a local surcharge on property taxes (1.5% in Hingham) and from the statewide CPA Trust Fund. Last year in 2011, the state matched 22%. There is a possibility it may go up to 26% or 27%. Roughly 140 cities/towns in Massachusetts have adopted the CPA. The CPC's mission is to invest in Community housing, historic resources, open space & recreation land to preserve, restore and enhance Hingham's character as a community. Under the CPA, funds are granted through two steps: 1) The CPC recommends an amount of funding for a project, 2) then Town Meeting votes to appropriate the funds up to the recommended amount. There are 9 CPC members who are appointed by the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, Board of Selectmen as well as the Moderator. The CPC accepts applications from town committees and boards as well as from town citizens. A rough timeline is as follows for the CPC application process: 1) CPC funding applications are due mid October ; 2) Reviewing and voting on applications are done in November and December; 3) Public Hearings occur in January – February; 4) Presentations to Advisory Committee and the Board of Selectmen occur in February; 5) Town Meeting is held for approvals in April.

November Forum - Michael Puzo, Town Moderator

Michael Puzo, Hingham's newly elected Town Moderator, was the guest speaker for the LWVH November forum. Mr. Puzo and his family moved here to Hingham in 1985 after attending college and law school in the area. He believes it a privilege to have open town meeting in Hingham, and quoted the Four Freedoms speech from Norman Rockwell regarding self governance. He seemed to have a respect and high regard for town meeting and stated "we aren't just going to town meeting, we are town meeting. If we didn't go, then there wouldn't be a town meeting".

A Town Moderator's responsibility is to run and moderate annual town meeting, and also has the task of appointing individuals to town boards (ie - the Advisory Committee and the Personnel Board).

Mr. Puzo believes that Town Meeting needs to be fair, to follow protocol and be respectful of the process. His approach to this Spring's Town Meeting: "Do No Harm". Meaning he doesn't plan on any significant changes, only wants to ensure things run smoothly.

But, Mr. Puzo has actually been very busy learning, researching and talking to Hingham residents, to other town moderators and to town officials, committee and board members. Eventually, he would like to see an improvement with the efficiency of Town Meeting, without harming or doing any detriment to the institution of Town Meeting.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
HINGHAM**

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*Democracy: The more you use it,
the better it gets!*