

August 2010

PO Box 142  
Brunswick, ME 04011

# The Brunswick Voter



## Items of Interest

- What's Happening at Home?
- League Remembers Margaret Tappan
- DISCLOSE Act Stalls in Senate
- Senate Democrats Abandon Comprehensive Energy Bill

## Rejoin!

Please **renew your membership** in the **League of Women Voters of Brunswick**. Individual member dues for 2010-11 remain at \$45. Additional household members pay \$20 each. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30.

By renewing your membership, you can be a part of the League's important activities. You will also become a member of the League of Women Voters of Maine and the League of Women Voters of the United States, giving you access to up-to-date information from both of the sister organizations.

## November 2 Ballot Questions

Augusta, ME - On November 2, Maine voters will be asked to decide three ballot questions.

Question 1 will ask as follows: "Do you want to allow a casino with table games and slot machines at a single site in Oxford County, subject to local approval, with part of the profits going to specific state, local and tribal programs?"

The question's major proponent is Black Bear Entertainment LLC, the company that wants to develop a four-season resort in Oxford.

The question's major opponents include Hollywood Slots

Hotel & Raceway, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs, the Maine Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association, the Maine Harness Horsemen's Association and the Greater Bangor Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Question 2 will ask as follows: "Do you favor a \$5,000,000 bond issue to be awarded on a competitive basis to increase access to dental care in Maine, \$3,500,000 to be used for a community-based teaching dental clinic affiliated with or operated by a college of dental medicine to be matched by \$3,500,000 in

other funds, and \$1,500,000 to be used to create or upgrade community-based health and dental care clinics across the State to increase their capacity as teaching and dental clinics?"

Question 3 will ask as follows: "Do you favor a \$9,750,000 bond issue to invest in land conservation and working waterfront preservation and to preserve parks to be matched by \$9,250,000 in federal and other funds?"

As the election approaches, the Citizen's Guide to the Referendum Election will be posted at <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming.html>.

## Medicare Changes in Affordable Care Act

Washington, DC - The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has made a number of important changes to Medicare.

### Prescription Coverage

As originally passed, Medicare Part D, which has an additional premium, required subscribers to pay a deductible for prescription drugs costing up to \$250 annually and co-insurance of 25 percent for drugs costing between \$251

and \$2,250 annually.

Then, subscribers were responsible for paying for all drugs costing between \$2,251 and \$5,100 annually - the donut hole - out of their own pockets. Finally, Medicare Part D assumed responsibility for paying for all drugs costing in excess of \$5,100 annually.

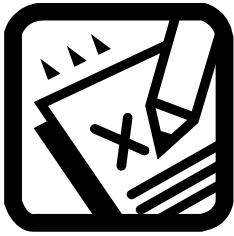
In 2010, subscribers who reach the donut hole will receive a one-time, tax-free rebate of \$250. In 2011, sub-

scribers who reach the donut hole will receive a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs. The donut hole will gradually be eliminated by 2020.

### Preventive Care

In 2011, Medicare beneficiaries will become entitled to free wellness exams annually. They will also become entitled to a range of preventive ser-

*(Continued on page 3)*



## What's Happening at Home?

Bath, ME - Following the June 8 Primary, the **Bath** City Council voted to investigate whether the City was involved with a letter in support of the turf field that was ultimately rejected by the voters.

An investigation by City Manager Bill Giroux revealed that the Parks and Recreation Department mailed the letter. The City Manager and the City Solicitor will develop a procedure requiring department heads to have mass mailings approved by the City Manager in advance.

On July 12, the **Brunswick** Town Council approved a proposal to reduce the number of polling places for the November 2 election from six to one. The single polling place will be at the Brunswick Junior High School. Secretary of State Matt Dunlap must still approve the proposal.

Freeport resident Matthew Cartmell dropped out of the **District 10** Senate race on July 12. The Maine Republican Party named Scott Thomas, owner of the Brewster House Bed & Breakfast, to replace Cartmell as Senator Stan Gerzofsky's opponent in the November 2 election.

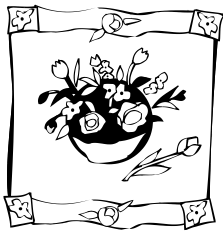
On June 15, opponents of emergency dispatch consolidation filed a petition with 1,213 valid signatures with the **Freeport** Town Clerk Beverly Curry. However, Curry deemed the petition invalid because its circulators failed to follow state law. The circulators have threatened to bring suit in Maine's Superior Court.

On June 8, **Georgetown** voters elected William "Bill" Plummer to the Board of Selectmen by a 331 to 220 margin over A. Myrick "Rick" Freeman. They also elected Dale Savoie

as Road Commissioner by a 345 to 213 margin over Charlie Collins.

At a July 13 meeting marked by controversy, the Georgetown Board of Selectmen awarded the 2010-11 snowplowing contract to Dale Savoie, even though his bid was \$102,000 more than the lowest. Selectmen Bill Plummer and Dolores Pinette voted in favor of the contract; Selectman Geoff Birdsall voted against.

**Topsham** Town Clerk Ruth Lyons verified the 434 signatures required to place a petition to ban transmission towers from the R1 (urban residential) zone before the voters. On July 15, the Board of Selectmen decided to place the question on the November 2 ballot instead of calling a special meeting to obtain greater voter participation.



## Remembering Margaret Tappan

Brunswick, ME - Margaret Tappan died in Brunswick on March 23, 2010. Born in Farmington, MO, on March 15, 1930, she was the daughter of Paul and Faith Shaffer Teal.

Margaret was a home economics major at Purdue University and received her master's degree from Drexel University.

In 1951, she married Richard Tappan, a student at Yale Divinity School. During her marriage, she taught home economics in Hamden, CT, and Wayne, PA.

Margaret first became active in the League of Women Voters when she and her husband moved to Boulder, CO. In St. Petersburg, FL, she was extremely active in the Pinel-

las County League of Women Voters and served on the state board and the Governor's Commission on Education.

She is survived by her husband of Brunswick, her son Mark and his wife Lyn Brown and their daughter Maya Brown of Waterville, and her daughter Nancy of Glen Ridge, NJ.

## Significant Changes to Medicare Advantage

(Continued from page 1)

VICES at no cost. Currently, preventive care is subject to a \$155 annual Part B deductible and 20 percent co-insurance.

### Quality Improvement

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act aims to change provider reimbursement methods to improve patient care. Current reimbursement methods furnish incentives to provide more care (volume) as opposed to better care (value).

Short-term solutions include penalizing hospitals with high rates of readmission and large

numbers of hospital-acquired infections.

Long-term solutions include pilot programs featuring bundled payment systems, which reimburse all providers from three days prior to a hospitalization up to 30 days following discharge.

### Medicare Advantage

Some of the most significant changes involve Medicare Advantage Plans. The federal government has been paying private insurers \$1,000 more per year per beneficiary to cover a healthier population of retirees.

While it will continue to require

the same level of benefits, Medicare will no longer make excessive payments to private insurers. This will decrease Part B premiums for all beneficiaries, including the 75 percent who are not enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Beginning in 2014, Medicare will limit the percentage of premiums that private insurers can allocate to administration and profits.

Experts anticipate that Medicare Advantage Plans will drop benefits like dental, hearing and vision care. For that reason, they predict that more beneficiaries will opt for regular Medicare.



## DISCLOSE Act Stalls in Senate

Washington, DC - The DISCLOSE Act requires interest groups to have officials appear in campaign advertisements, to reveal the identities of campaign contributors and to disclose expenditures on their Web sites.

However, the Act contains controversial exemptions for large organizations like the NRA and the AARP that have been in existence more than 10 years and have more than 500,000 members.

The House passed the measure by a margin of 219 to 206. Two Republicans crossed party lines to support the bill.

“Secret spending in elections undermines our democracy --

that’s why this bill is so important,” said Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the League of Women Voters, following the House vote.

“The League of Women Voters commends the House for taking strong action. We now call on the Senate to pass a similar bill, ideally a version free of amendments that dilute transparency or corrupt the spirit of the legislation,” MacNamara stated.

The Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. FEC* recently gave the green light to corporations to spend without limit to support or oppose candidates for office. However, the Court’s decision made clear that disclosure of this spend-

ing could be required by Congress.

On Tuesday, July 27, a motion for cloture failed to pass in the Senate. The official vote was 57 to 41. However, Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, who supports the bill, was absent to attend a funeral, and Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada voted no in a procedural maneuver that will allow him to call for a revote in the future.

Prior to the cloture vote, supporters of the Act unsuccessfully put heavy pressure on Senate Republicans Scott Brown of Massachusetts and Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine to cross party lines.





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**Please deliver to:**

*The League of Women Voters is where  
hands-on work to safeguard democracy  
leads to civic improvement.*

Go to [www.lwvme.org](http://www.lwvme.org)

## Senate Democrats Abandon Comprehensive Energy Bill

Washington, DC - On Thursday, July 22, Senate Democrats abandoned plans to pass a comprehensive energy bill before the November election. Without the two Republican votes (Senate Democrat Ben Nelson of Nebraska opposes the bill) necessary to achieve cloture, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has decided to concentrate on a scaled-back bill.

Last year, the House passed a "cap and trade" plan that would have featured economic incentives to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, automobiles and other sources.

Republicans labeled the bill a "national energy tax" and argued higher costs would be passed on to commercial energy consumers, eliminating jobs.

In recent weeks, Senate Democrats had discussed a "cap and trade" plan limited to the utility sector. That plan drew words of praise from Republican Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine. However, she "believes our primary focus right now should be on creating jobs and passing a long-overdue small business jobs bill."

The scaled-back bill would focus on the oil spill in the Gulf

of Mexico and energy efficiency.

Bipartisan legislation introduced by Democratic Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington and Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine has yet to be heard in committee.

The Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal (CLEAR) Act would establish a mechanism for selling carbon shares to energy producers and returning the revenues to most Americans.

The goal of the Act is to reduce greenhouse gases by 20 percent by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050.

