

# The Voter



## Items of Interest

- **Goings-On in Local Government**
- **Saving Water and Energy**
- **Remembering Macky Bennett**
- **Volunteer at a Naturalization Ceremony!**

## Save the Date!

~Naturalization Ceremonies: Tuesday, February 10, Fal-mouth Middle School, 52 Woodville Road; Friday, March 13, 10:00 a.m., United States District Court, 156 Federal Street, Portland.  
 ~League of Women Voters of Maine Board Meeting, Thursday, March 12, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., University of Maine at Augusta.  
 ~Sunshine Week, March 15 to 21. *Looking for the Sunshine* is a project to broaden public awareness about the issues involved in, and the threats related to, accountability and transparency in government.  
 ~League of Women Voters of Maine Convention, Friday and Saturday, May 1 and 2, Park-wood Inn, Brunswick.



## National Popular Vote Compact Study — LWVUS

Washington, DC - The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College, and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

### Overview

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the Electoral College. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that receives the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State election officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential

candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's Electoral College votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact - Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland and New Jersey.

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can

learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. To learn more, go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and type national popular vote into the search feature.

### Support for the Compact

Because the League already supports direct election of the president, arguments against the Electoral College are not included in the material supporting the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact).

### Constitutional Issues

The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. The same result would be achieved by constitutional amendment, but the U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend.

The NPV Compact is a compact between states — a method of concerted state

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Goings-On in Local Government



Freeport, ME - In **Durham, Freeport** and **Pownal**, voters decided in November to approve a school consolidation plan. The three towns then needed to form an 11-member board to oversee the consolidated school district. Freeport is entitled to six seats; Durham to three; and Pownal to two.

Seven Freeport residents turned in nominating papers by the November 28 deadline. They were Kristen Dorsey, Tirol Way, Brenda Kielty, Lupine Lane, Nelson Larkins, Shore Drive, Paul Lowe, Wardtown Road, incumbent John Morang, Murch Road, incumbent Beth Parker, Spar Cove Road, and Elizabeth Peters, Cortland Road.

Three Durham residents turned in nominating papers. They were incumbent Cori Holt, Quaker Meeting House Road, Melinda McKechnie, Pinkham Brook Road, and incumbent Laurie Poissonnier, Evergreen Lane.

The only Pownal resident to turn in nominating papers was incumbent Jen Blackstone. Pownal's second seat on the board was to be filled by a write-in candidate.

The election of board members took place on Tuesday, January 13. In Freeport, only 266 ballots were cast in the special election. The winners were Dorsey, 226 votes, Kielty, 197 votes, Larkins, 232 votes,

Morang, 223 votes, Parker, 205 votes, and Peters, 203 votes.

In Durham, only 49 votes were cast. Cori Holt received 43, and Melinda McKechnie and Laurie Poissonnier each received 40.

In Pownal, only 64 votes were cast. Jen Blackstone-Kaplan received 63, and write-in candidate Eric Dube received 39.

The **Harpswell** Town Meeting is scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 14, at the Harpswell Islands School.

This year's Town Warrant has not yet been issued. However, voters may be asked to fill the offices of road commissioner and treasurer by appointment rather than election in the future.

There will be two candidates on the ballot to fill the position on the Board of Selectmen being vacated by Amy Haible: David I. Chipman, of South Harpswell, and Elinor Multer, of Orr's Island. Incumbent Joanne Rogers will be the only candidate on the ballot for a position on the SAD 75 Board of Directors.

Newly-formed **RSU 1**, based in West Bath and including Arrowsic, Bath, Phippsburg and Woolwich, faces a \$401,495 or 5.1% cut in state subsidies for the current school year. Superintendent William Shuttleworth has formed a 20-person focus

group to deal with the funding crisis.

Other local school districts must also deal with large reductions in state subsidies: Brunswick \$474,144 or 3.2%; Freeport \$343,032 or 21.1%; Georgetown \$13,016 or 10.0%; SAD 75 \$293,184 or 1.8%; Wiscasset \$91,944 or 3.0%. Freeport's is the second highest percentage reduction in a single-town, K to 12 district in the state, and Superintendent Elaine Tomaszewski says that she must consider cutting positions.

In **Topsham**, a special election to fill the open seat on the Board of Selectmen took place on Tuesday, January 6. Candidates on the ballot were Carol Clark, Deer Run, Michael Dumas, Mayflower Lane, Paul Fothergill, Pleasant Street, James Morris, Bradley Pond Road, Thomas Sawyer, Woodcock Drive, and former Selectman James Trusiani, Middlesex Road.

With 1,050 voters casting ballots, Trusiani defeated Sawyer by a margin of one ballot - 408 to 407. The Tuesday election was followed by a Friday ballot inspection, which did not change the outcome. It revealed that one uncounted ballot had been cast for Carol Clark.

Following the inspection, Sawyer declined to request a formal recount. He did say, "Every vote does count."

## Saving Water and Energy — Eleanor Revelle, LWVUS

Washington, DC - Indoor water usage in a typical home is about 70 gallons per person per day. However, fixing leaks, installing water-efficient plumbing fixtures, and changing some everyday habits can reduce water usage to 45 gallons/person/day.

**Fix those leaks.** Leaks account for about 13 percent of the water used in a typical home. A dripping faucet or “running” toilet can waste thousands of gallons per year. To check for leaks, read the water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is used. After the test period, if the meter has a higher reading, there is probably a leak.

**Buy water-saving fixtures and appliances.** Toilets

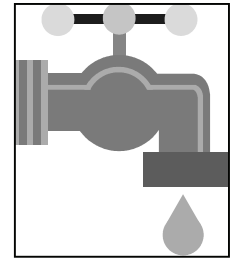
typically use one-quarter of the total water used in a home. Replacing an older 3.5-gallons-per-flush (gpf) toilet with a 1.6-gpf model will save at least 10 gallons of water/person/day. New lower-flow, dual-flush toilets will cut usage even further .

Replacing older showerheads with low-flow fixtures and installing low-flow aerators in existing faucets are both low-cost ways to save water. By cutting the demand for hot water, these steps will result in energy savings as well. Water-efficient dishwashers and clothes washers also save water and energy.

**Turn off the tap.** A few small changes in habits can also result in significant water savings. Turn off the tap while

brushing teeth to save well over 1000 gallons/person/year. Take a five-minute shower (12.5 gallons of water with a new showerhead) instead of a bath and save 20 to 30 gallons each time.

**Use green infrastructure.** Use permeable paving for driveways and parking areas to allow rainwater to seep into the ground and recharge groundwater and reduce storm-water runoff. Replace lawn areas with natural landscaping to save water and energy and benefit the environment. Lawn maintenance is water intensive — some 30 percent of water is used to irrigate lawns — and lawnmowers cause five percent of air pollution.



## Remembering Macky Bennett

Brunswick, ME - League member Macky Bennett, 79, died of cancer at her home on Thompson Street on Wednesday, October 22, 2008.

Born on February 7, 1929, in New York City, Macky attended the University of Virginia and was a graduate of Syracuse University and Teachers College at Columbia University. She worked for a number of years as a children’s librarian and then as an environmental educator.

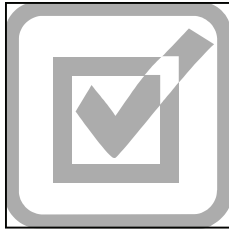
Macky married Richard Friedman in 1952, and she raised their two children, Ed and Jeanne, in Larchmont, New York. She moved to Maine in 1985.

Following her move, Macky audited many classes at Bowdoin College and served as a docent at its Museum of Art. She was also a very active volunteer at the Mid Coast Hunger Prevent Project’s Soup Kitchen in Brunswick.

In addition, Macky loved to cook, to discuss politics, to garden, to gather mushrooms, to travel, to walk her golden retrievers and to watch birds.

According to her obituary, “Her sharp intellect, instinct for beauty, straight talk and love of living life fully inspired many who knew her to reach a little higher, work a little harder and achieve a little more. She inspired people to leave the world a better place than they had found it.”





## Support for the Compact

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action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts.

### Evaluating Fairness

A candidate can be elected president by receiving the most electoral votes even though he or she did not receive the most popular votes. This is not a result voters expect or desire. As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are concentrated in key Electoral College battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate, which would foster greater voter participation.

The argument that the plan would have a negative impact on states' rights is countered by poll results showing that most voters want their individual vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole.

Any claim that the NPV Compact is an unprecedented disregard for the U.S. Constitution ignores the reality that voting rights have been changed through state action many times. Women's suffrage, for example, was insti-

tuted by 20 states before passage of the constitutional amendment that made the right universal

### Mechanical Considerations

Those opposed to the NPV Compact cite mechanical issues that might lead the NPV to fail, but the Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels and recounts.

### Other Issues

The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

### League Issues

Opponents say that the NPV Compact conflicts with the League's support of uniform voting standards. Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had ratified it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally.

Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by

popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

To prepare for a local consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.

### **Opposition to the Compact**

There is little respect for the Electoral College. The League opposes it, and most voters want a direct popular vote. However, is the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) an appropriate way to achieve that result?

### Evaluating Fairness

Voters supporting the candidate who receives the majority of votes in their state want their state's electors to support their choice. Adoption of the NPV Compact may require a state's elections official to direct its state's electors to cast their ballots in support of a candidate who was not favored by the voters of that state.

Passage of the NPV Compact will result in the emphasis of presidential campaigns shifting from the battleground states to areas of large concentrations of population. So, while some voters are disenfranchised by the Electoral College, others might be dis-

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## Opposition to the Compact

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enfranchised by the NPV Compact. Because the Compact requires entry into a contract with other states that binds state elections officials to direct electors to vote in a certain way, regardless of the outcome of the election in their states, states' rights are diminished.

In addition, one can question the advisability of a method that bypasses the normal constitutional amendment process in this manner.

### Constitutional Issues

Many constitutional scholars argue that this plan will lead to extensive litigation involving challenges to the NPV Compact on issues such as the scope of constitutional powers, the Compact itself, the need for congressional approval, the concerns of non-Compact states, and constitutional protections of state interests and their role in elections.

### Mechanical Issues/Flaws

The methods for enforcement of this plan are unclear. Opponents question the power and timing to withdraw from the Compact and the power to enforce compliance.

Others express concern about an onslaught of lawsuits between compacting and non-compacting states, as well as procedures in close elections.

The plan, allowing the election of a president by a plurality of votes, does not improve on the current system; neither the present system nor the NPV Compact requires that the president be elected by a majority.

### Other Issues

The Voting Rights Act requires pre-clearance for legislative changes. This, too, has the capacity to engender lawsuits to ensure compliance.

### League Issues

This proposal does nothing to achieve the goal of uniform standards of voting. The NPV Compact is effective when passed by states representing 270 electoral votes, effectively negating the impact on presidential elections of the voters in states that represent the other half of electoral votes. A system that assures no voter disenfranchisement is a better way to assure that every person's vote counts.

The League has long supported the abolition of the Electoral College. Although the NPV Compact purports to foster the same result, it creates additional concerns. Amending the U.S. Constitution is a difficult process for a reason, and we should seriously consider supporting the normal amendment procedures to abolish the Electoral College versus this specific "work-around."

To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.



### **Consensus**

The League of Women Voters of the Brunswick Area must meet to achieve consensus and return its response form to the National League by May 1, 2009. These are the consensus questions.

Questions 1 and 2 ask whether alteration of the constitutional framework should be undertaken by amendment to the Constitution or through the compact process.

Question 3 asks if the possibility that the NPV Compact will require consent from Congress makes it advisable that such consent be solicited in advance.

Question 4 asks about the level of enforcement concerns.

Question 5 asks if uniformity of voting systems or the popular election of the president is more important.

Question 6 asks if the popular election of the president is more important than the abolition of the Electoral College.

Question 7 asks about the likelihood of the NPV Compact and/or a constitutional amendment being passed.



League of Women Voters of the  
Brunswick Area  
PO Box 142  
Brunswick, ME 04011

Please deliver to:

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

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Send your email address to [lwvba@zwi.net](mailto:lwvba@zwi.net).  
*The Voter* is now available electronically!

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Have a happy and healthy 2009!

## **Volunteer at a Naturalization Ceremony! - Colleen Sanders**

Portland, ME - The League of Women Voters of the Portland Area has always been on hand at Naturalization Ceremonies in southern Maine to welcome new citizens and register them to vote. Colleen Sanders, of Freeport, who coordinates this project, will be away in February and March, and needs some volunteers from Brunswick to be a part of beautiful and uplifting experience.

Naturalization events are tentatively scheduled to take place on Tuesday, February 10, at Falmouth Middle School, 52 Woodville Road

(take Exit 10 off I-295, take a right on Bucknam Road, go straight through light to Falmouth Road, take a right on Woodville Road) and Friday, March 13, at the United States District Court at 156 Federal Street in Portland (take Exit 7 off I-295, follow the Franklin Street Arterial through three lights, take a right on Congress Street, take a left on Pearl Street, and take a right on Federal Street).

Another is likely to take place in the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office in South Portland during March. All ceremonies are

held during morning hours. Two League members are needed for all events held outside the USCIS office because they are larger. Only one member is needed for the event held at the USCIS office. There are detailed guidelines that answer most if not all questions about League participation.

To volunteer to welcome new citizens, please contact Colleen Sanders at [colleensanders@att.net](mailto:colleensanders@att.net) or 838-1457. For voter registration cards, feel free to contact Michelle Small at [msmall@zwi.net](mailto:msmall@zwi.net) or 729-1856.

