

June 2011

PO Box 142
Brunswick, ME 04011

The Brunswick Voter



Items of Interest

- What's Happening at Home?
- Ranked-choice Voting Bill Defeated
- League Mourns Passing of William Inderstrod

Annual Dues!

If you received your dues letter, then your annual dues are payable as of July 1. The amount of dues is \$55 per individual and \$82.50 per household of two. You should mail your check to LWVBA, PO Box 142, Brunswick, ME 04011. Your dues entitle you to membership in the State League as well as the Brunswick Area League.



Legislature Curtails Voting Rights

Augusta, ME - The League of Women Voters expressed disappointment that the 125th Legislature voted to curtail the public's voting rights. By a vote of 18 to 17, the Senate eliminated same-day voter registration and moved the deadline for registering back to the third business day prior to Election Day. The vote in the House of Representatives was 74 to 70.

Based on information acquired from the Secretary of State, the League is concerned that this drastic change in the law has the potential to disenfranchise tens of thousands of voters. In 2008, more than 55,000 voters registered to

vote in the days leading up to the election. In 2010, more than 19,000 voters did.

A number of groups will be adversely affected by this change. Among them are the following: the elderly who have moved from their homes into retirement facilities; working parents; students who travel home from college to vote; people who have moved during the past year; and first-time voters.

Same-day registration was enacted by a Republican-led Legislature in 1973. In the year before the law was passed, Maine ranked 21st among the states in voter turn-

out. By 2000, Maine ranked 3rd and has continued to rank 3rd – only behind Minnesota and Wisconsin, which also have same-day registration.

One purpose cited for eliminating Election Day registration is to prevent voter fraud. However, fraud is extremely rare. The League is aware of only two cases of voter fraud that Maine's Attorney General has prosecuted in the last several decades. This is a drastic solution to a virtually non-existent problem.

The League believes that this legislation is a giant step in

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Congressional Districts Declared Unconstitutional

Portland, ME - In a ruling on a law suit brought by two Cape Elizabeth residents in March, a three-judge panel of the federal district court declared Maine's congressional districts to be unconstitutional and ordered the state to draw new districts in time for the 2012 election.

In an unusual move, the panel announced its decision orally 15 minutes following the hearing. It took that action

because next year's elections are so close.

The plaintiffs claimed that their votes were being diluted because the population of the 1st District based on the 2010 Census is 668,515 while the population of the 2nd District is 659,848. The 1st District now consists of York, Cumberland, Lincoln, Sagadahoc and Knox Counties and part of Kennebec County.

Forty-eight other states are

redrawing their congressional districts this year. Maine and Montana were the only states scheduled to redraw their districts in 2013. However, Montana has only one district.

A 15-member Apportionment Commission recommends a redistricting plan to the Legislature, which must approve it by a two-thirds vote of each house. If no such vote is achieved, then the Supreme Judicial Court rules on a plan.

What's Happening at Home?



Bath, ME - On Wednesday, June 1, the **Bath** City Council voted 5 to 3 to impose a 180-day moratorium on the installation of "Smart Meters" by Central Maine Power. Because the Public Utilities Commission had already approved an opt-out provision for consumers, CMP warned that it might pursue legal action against the City.

The City Council also approved a \$13.4 million municipal budget.

On Thursday, May 26, the **Brunswick** Town Council approved a \$53.5 million municipal budget, including a \$33.3 million school budget.

On Tuesday, June 7, **Brunswick** voters went to the polls and approved a \$33.3 million school budget by a margin of 728 to 231.

Fourteen residents have brought a law suit against the Town of **Brunswick** to overturn a zoning variance granted for the construction of a 40,000-square-foot train maintenance facility between Bouchard Drive and Turner Street.

The Legislature rejected LD 69, a bill which would have changed the boundary between the Towns of **Harpowell** and **Brunswick** along the clam flats off Route 123. The vote was 88 to 56 in the House of Representatives. There was no roll call vote in the Senate. A similar bill was rejected two years ago after

the towns settled the boundary issue in 1998.

On Tuesday, June 14, **Harpowell** voters went to the polls and voted against a petition to begin the process of secession from SAD 75 by a margin of 475 to 450. The Town previously began the process of secession, but that effort was terminated in March 2007 by a margin of 466 to 211.

The **RSU 1** Board of Directors has hired RSU 21 (Arundel, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport) Assistant Superintendent Patrick Manuel of Topsham as Superintendent to replace William Shuttleworth, who is taking a position as Superintendent of SAD 28 (Camden-Rockport).

On Tuesday, June 7, **RSU 1** voters from Arrowsic, Bath, Phippsburg, West Bath and Woolwich went to the polls and approved a \$25.6 million school budget by a margin of 555 to 194. The budget passed in all five communities.

On Tuesday, June 14, **RSU 5** voters from Durham, Freeport and Pownal went to the polls and approved a \$23.9 school budget by a margin of 1,289 to 898. Durham and Pownal opposed the budget, but Freeport strongly supported it. Voters rejected a proposal to borrow \$3 million to build a stadium complex at Freeport High School by a margin of 1,350 to 884. Freeport supported the proposal, but Durham and

Pownal strongly opposed it.

On Tuesday, June 14, **RSU 12** voters from Alna, Chelsea, Palermo, Somerville, Westport Island, Whitefield, Windsor and Wiscasset went to the polls and approved a \$25.1 million budget by a margin of 388 to 318. The budget passed in every community except Wiscasset. Voters rejected a proposal to purchase the school district's central office in Whitefield for \$160,000 by a margin of 401 to 338. Somerville, Westport Island and Wiscasset opposed it.

The **SAD 75** Board of Directors has hired SAD 75 Assistant Superintendent Brad Smith of Cape Elizabeth as Superintendent to replace Mike Wilhelm, who is retiring as of June 30.

On Tuesday, June 14, **SAD 75** voters from Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham went to the polls and approved a \$34.2 million budget by a margin of 924 to 331. The budget passed in all four communities.

On Wednesday, May 18, 227 registered voters attended a three and one-half hour **Topsham** Town Meeting at Mt. Ararat Middle School. Those in attendance approved an \$8.09 million municipal budget. They rejected an ordinance that would have established a Limited Commercial Zone on the southwestern side of I-295.

Ranked-choice Voting Bill Defeated

Augusta, ME - On May 9, the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee heard testimony on LD 1126, An Act To Require That the Governor Be Elected by the Ranked-choice Voting Method. The bill was sponsored by Representative Diane Russell of Portland.

As originally drafted, the bill would have employed “a method of casting and tabulating votes for Governor that simulates the ballot counts that would occur if all voters participated in a series of run-off elections and that allows voters to rank candidates according to their preferences.”

The League of Women Voters

of Maine testified in favor of the bill, stating that “Plurality voting, in which the candidate with the most votes wins, can be thorny in elections with more than two candidates.”

“Voters may sometimes be reluctant to vote for the candidate they most strongly support for fear of facilitating the election of the candidate they most strongly oppose. The winning candidate may be one fervently supported by a minority of voters – albeit a winning plurality – but lacking the broad support of a majority of voters.”

“Ranked Choice Voting, on the other hand, encourages

candidates to reach out to more voters, alleviates concerns about the ‘spoiler effect,’ and guarantees the election of candidates who have majority support.”

Following the hearing, Representative Russell amended her bill to require only an updated version of a 2005 Secretary of State’s report. However, even that amendment failed to garner the support of a majority of the Committee.

The amended bill was defeated in the Senate by 22 to 12. It was also defeated in the House of Representatives. There was no roll call vote in the House.



League Mourns Passing of William Inderstrodt

Topsham, ME - League member Reverend William “Bill” Inderstrodt died on May 17, 2011 in Topsham. He was born on July 14, 1927 in Richmond, IN, the son of Sheridan and Inez Inderstrodt.

Bill attended Richmond public schools and then graduated from Earlham College in 1943. From 1949 until 1952, he attended the Hartford Seminary Foundation in Connecticut.

It was at the Seminary that Bill met his wife, the former Jane Sattler, of Washington, DC, who was also a graduate student. They were married on February 6, 1954 at the Methodist Church in which she had been raised in a Quaker ceremony they both had written.

After Bill graduated from the Seminary, he served as associate minister at the Westmoreland Congregational Church in Washington, DC, for four years. Then, he was the minister at the First Congregational Church in Washington, CT for 16 years, and in Danbury, CT for eight years.

Bill also served as the Minister to Business and Government of the Connecticut Conference UCC, where he built housing for moderate-income seniors and managed 100 units. For a time, he served as interim Deputy Director of the Office of Communications for the United Church of Christ in New York City. One summer, he even served as pastor of the Church of Scotland in Ber-

muda.

Before “officially” retiring in 1993, Bill was the minister at the First Parish Congregation in York. However, following his retirement, he was the interim minister at the Elijah Kellogg Congregational Church in Harpswell and the Pride’s Corner UCC in Westbrook.

Bill served as a board member of the Volunteers of America, the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maine, and the Ethics Committee of the Office of Guardianship for Adult Services with the Maine Department of Human Services.

Bill is survived by his wife Jane, a nephew and many nieces.





League of Women Voters of Brunswick
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Please deliver to:

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

Send your NEW email address to
lwvba@gwi.net.

Public Faces New Barrier to Voting

(Continued from page 1)

the wrong direction. Maine should be proud of its tradition of high voter turnout. It indicates that a wide cross-section of the state's eligible voters is involved in choosing leaders and deciding issues. This level of civic engagement is admirable in the 21st century.

The League of Women Voters has joined with a coalition and filed a people's veto application with the Secretary of State to restore same-day voter registration. To place the question on the November 8 ballot, proponents must gather

and submit 57,277 valid signatures to the Secretary of State by August 8.

On June 21, the same day when Governor Paul LePage signed the bill, Barbara McDade, president of the League of Women Voters of Maine, stated, "The right to vote is under attack in Maine. We have filed this petition to protect voting rights and to assure that every resident of Maine has the opportunity to participate."

The Secretary of State has 10 business days to review and approve the application and provide the ballot question. Therefore, petitions should be

available for circulation on or about July 6, 2011.

Members of the coalition include the Disability Rights Center, Engage Maine, EqualityMaine, Maine AFL-CIO, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Maine Education Association, Maine Equal Justice Partners, Maine League of Young Voters, Maine People's Alliance, Maine Women's Lobby and MSEA-SEIU.

The League of Women Voters is looking for people who can circulate petitions in their communities. If you are interested, please contact lwvme@gwi.net or 622-0256.

