

October 2011

PO Box 142
Brunswick, ME 04011

The Voter



Items of Interest

- **What's Happening at Home?**
- **No Fraud in Student Registration**
- **League Celebrates Life of Margie Bliss**

Save the Date!

~ **Cumberland County District 3 Commissioner Forum, Thursday, October 13, 7:00 p.m., Municipal Meeting Facility, 16 Station Avenue, Brunswick. Broadcast on Local Cable Access Channel 3.**

~ **Topsham Candidate Forum, Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 100 Maine Street. Broadcast on Local Cable Access Channel 3.**

~ **Election Day, Tuesday, November 8. Polls close at 8:00 p.m., and they open between 6:00 and 10:00 a.m.**



Coalition Touts Benefits of Same-Day Registration

Augusta, ME — On October 3, Protect Maine Votes, a coalition of 18 groups that support Question 1 on the November 8 ballot, released a compendium of research on same-day registration.

Independent reports from the Voting Technology Project, the Nonprofit VOTE project, the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice and the Demos think tank confirm that same-day voter registration is an important safeguard to preserving the integrity of elections.

In a report issued on the same day, the Brennan Center for Justice found that states with same-day registration had higher voter turnout than those without. It also found that the five states with the highest voter turnout all had same-day registration.

Nonprofit VOTE's study found that Maine ranked first in voter turnout in 2010, a year when a Republican was elected Governor for the first time in 16 years.

According to Sarah Walton of the League of Women Voters

of Maine, "Keeping same-day voter registration is a nonpartisan issue of voting integrity and security. Maine is Number 1 because the state's system of same-day voter registration works so well."

Protect Maine Votes needs contributions to bring Yes on 1 voters to the polls. Contributions may be made by mail to P.O. Box 18161, Portland, ME 04112 or on line at <http://www.protectmainevotes.com/contribute>. Bumper stickers are available on line at <http://www.mainesmajoritypac.org/votingrights>.

Parties Compromise on Congressional Redistricting

Augusta, ME — During a Special Session held on September 27, the Democrats and the Republicans in the Legislature reached a compromise on congressional redistricting, passed a plan by a 2/3 majority and sent it to Governor Paul LePage for his signature.

The plan on which they agreed changes some municipalities in

Kennebec County from one district to another. Albion, Belgrade, Gardiner, Monmouth, Mount Vernon, Randolph, Rome, Sidney, Unity Township, Vienna and West Gardiner will move from the 1st District to the 2nd.

Waterville and Winslow will move from the 2nd District to the 1st.

Prior to the Special Session, the Republicans had threatened to pass a congressional redistricting plan by a simple majority notwithstanding the statutory requirement that it be passed by a 2/3 majority. The Democrats had threatened legal action in response to such a maneuver.

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What's Happening Locally?

Bath, ME - In **Bath**, there will be three City Council races in November. In Ward 1, newcomer Meadow Rue Merrill is running against James Omo.

David Sinclair is running unopposed in Ward 6. Newcomers Peter Heinz and Charles Turcotte are challenging Andrew Winglass for the At Large seat.

On September 19, the **Brunswick** Town Council unanimously declared its intention to construct a new police station on the southeast corner of Pleasant and Stanwood Streets. The site is currently owned by the Brunswick Economic Development Corporation.

As a result of the new **Cumberland County** Charter approved by voters in November 2010, the number of Commissioners is increasing from three to five. The new Region 3 includes Brunswick, Freeport, Gray, Harpswell, New Gloucester, North Yarmouth and Pownal.

Stephen Gorden of North Yarmouth and Mark Grover of Gray are competing against each other in Region 3 in the non-party election.

The League of Women Voters of the Brunswick Area is sponsoring a Cumberland County Region 3 Commissioner Candidate Forum on Thursday, October 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the

Municipal Meeting Facility, 16 Station Avenue, Brunswick. Questions may be submitted in advance to lwvba@gwi.net.

The Commissioners have also placed a referendum question on the ballot. The question asks if the County should issue \$33 million in bonds to renovate the Cumberland County Civic Center.

Residents of Portland and its surrounding suburbs believe that the renovation of the Civic Center is an economic development tool. Residents who live further from the County seat wonder about the project's advantages for them.

In **RSU 1**, which consists of Arrowsic, Bath, Phippsburg, West Bath and Woolwich, has three seats available on its Board of Directors. In District 3, Arrowsic and part of Bath, Tim Harkins has submitted nomination papers and will run unopposed.

No candidates have returned nomination papers in District 2, part of Bath and part of West Bath, or in District 7, part of Bath and part of Phippsburg. In those districts, write-in candidates will fill the seats.

In **SAD 75**, Topsham has three open seats on the Board of Directors. Incumbents James Cusano and Jane Scease and newcomers James Conner and Jeffrey Wolkens are vying for those seats.

In **Topsham**, there are three candidates running for two seats on the Board of Selectmen. Newcomer David Douglass and incumbents Ronald Riendeau and James Trusiani are on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of the Brunswick Area is sponsoring a Topsham Candidate Forum on Wednesday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 100 Main Street, Topsham. Questions may be submitted in advance to lwvba@gwi.net.

In **Woolwich**, there are three candidates running for two seats on the Board of Selectmen. Newcomers Charon Curtis, Allison Hepler and Jason Shaw are on the ballot.

Election Day is on Tuesday, November 8. Polls open between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., depending on the municipality, and they close at 8:00 p.m. If you have questions about polling hours or polling places, please call your clerk.

If you need assistance finding your polling place, you can also go to the Secretary of State's Web site at http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/lookup_voter_info.

You can register to vote at your clerk's office until the Monday before Election Day, and you can register to vote at the polls on Election Day.

No Fraud in Student Registration

Augusta, ME - On July 25, Republican Party Chair Charlie Webster raised the specter of voter fraud, claiming that 206 out-of-state students had registered to vote illegally. Webster delivered a list of names to the Secretary of State and called for an investigation.

"Regardless of who gives this to me, these are fairly serious allegations," said Secretary of State Charlie Summers, "and I have a duty as the chief election official to look into this and so we'll begin an investigation."

On September 21, Summers announced the results of his investigation. The original list of 206 students contained two names that were duplicates and 77 names of students who

were registered to vote only in Maine.

Summers only investigated the voting records of the remaining 127 students. Of those students, 44 were also registered to vote only in Maine. Seventy-seven of those students were registered to vote in Maine and another state, but only voted in Maine during 2010. Five of those students voted in Maine and another state during 2010, but they did not vote in two different states during the same election. Summers was unable to obtain records concerning a final student.

Thus, despite Webster's allegations of voter fraud, Summers did not find a single instance where a student voter had violated Maine's election

laws. However, Summers implied that students were somehow unpatriotic for being registered in two states or for voting in two states during two different elections.

Under Title 21-A MRSA Section 122(3), it is the responsibility of the registrar of voters to notify another state of the voter's new registration.

It is not unusual for students to move and vote in two states during two different elections. Per the Supreme Court in *Symm v. United States*, the standard for residency cannot be higher for college students than for other residents. Under Title 21-A MRSA Section 112(1), residence is where one "has established a fixed and principal home," which can be a dormitory room.



Congressional Redistricting Affects Only Kennebec County

(Continued from page 1)

The redistricting plan originally proposed by the Republicans would have moved Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc Counties and the rest of Kennebec County into the 2nd District while moving Androscoggin and Oxford Counties and part of Franklin County into the 1st.

The redistricting plan originally proposed by the Democrats would have moved Gar-

diner, Rome, Unity Township, Vassalboro and Vienna from the 1st District to the 2nd while moving Oakland and Wayne from the 2nd to the 1st.

In a June 9 ruling on a law suit brought by two Cape Elizabeth residents, 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.

The plaintiffs claimed that their votes were being diluted because the population of the 1st District based on the 2010 Census was 668,515 while the population of the 2nd District was 659,848.

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.





League of Women Voters of the
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Please deliver to:

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

Join us on lwvme.org!

League Celebrates Life of Margie Bliss

Brunswick, ME - Margaret "Margie" Bliss, age 76, of Willow Grove, died on Tuesday, September 6, 2011 at Mid Coast Hospital. She was born in Orange, NJ on September 25, 1934, the daughter of Edward and Caroline Bliss Taylor.

Margie graduated from Northfield School for Girls in Northfield, MA. She later attended Pomona College in California and graduated from Columbia Presbyterian School of Nursing in New York City. Margie worked as a nurse at Yale University Hospital and with the Visiting Nurse's Association in

Guilford, CT.

Later, Margie and her husband Arthur moved to Harvard, MA, where they raised their two children and she became involved in local politics. She became President of the Harvard League of Women Voters and then the Massachusetts League of Women Voters.

When Margie and her husband moved to South Carolina, she worked as a real estate agent. In 1999, they retired to Bath, where he died in 2004. Margie moved to Brunswick in 2005.

Margie was a member of the Bath Garden Club and the Bath Library. She was also a member of First Parish Church, Curtis Memorial Library and Friends of Bowdoin, as well as the League of Women Voters.

In addition to her husband, Margie was predeceased by a daughter, Millie. She is survived by a son, Jim Bliss, of St. Louis, MO, his wife Joyce and their two sons as well as a daughter, Katherine Bliss, of Norton, MA, her partner Patricia Keighley and their five daughters.

