

Augusta, ME 04332-0863

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

THE MAINE VOTER

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From the President —

What a year we've had! From an historic election that saw Maine become the first state to use Ranked Choice Voting statewide and have the system be upheld in federal court, to educating tens of thousands of voters with our voter guide and education efforts, to registering 2,000 new voters, we have been busy!



And that's not all! The League of Women Voters of Maine and our long-time organizational ally, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) have been working closely on our new partnership and are pleased to announce that we will be

organizing our collective activities under the umbrella of **Democracy** Maine.

We are excited to bring together the strengths of both organizations to make government more equitable, inclusive, and accessible by improving elections, protecting and engaging voters, and reducing the influence of private money in politics. Our advocacy webinar series and Advocacy Day are just a couple of examples of how we will work together to advance our collective goal of a Maine where democracy works for us

We will be sharing more about this work and our plan for the next two years at our biennial Convention, May 17 & 18, so save the date. The location is still to be determined, but we expect to be in the Augusta area. Look for more details about speakers and registration in the weeks ahead.

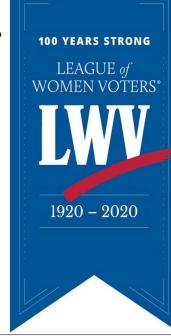
Also, coming right up on April 6-7 is the 13th Annual New England Leadership Conference (aka Quad States). This year's theme is "Advancing Civility in a Diverse New England." You'll meet some incredibly talented, dedicated people. If you are not yet a member, you might consider joining just for this event. It's always great.

Cathie Whittenburg To keep up with all things League, check out our website, like us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter and Instagram. We welcome your participation and support!

> III Ward President, LWVME

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Advocacy Agenda for the 129th Legislature

Ann Luther

Busy, busy, busy.

We're out of the gate in the running of the I29th Legislature, and we're going to see more action on election reform than any of us can remember. Here in Maine, as across the nation, we're a closely divided electorate, with sharp differences among us and high stakes on both sides. It's no wonder that the laws affecting voting, elections, and political campaigns are going to be hotly contested.

The League and our partners at MCCE have combed through the long list of possible reforms to develop an ambitious program of priority bills for making democracy work. Learn more about the **measures that really matter** at http://www.lwvme.org/Alert.html.

You can also learn more about these issues from our series of webinars. We're doing six of them this year – first time – and there are three still left ahead:

- Policy Brief: 2019 Conduct of Elections Legislation (2/25)
- Policy Brief: 2019 Money in Politics Legislation (3/4)
- Policy Brief: 2019 Voting Rights and Election Integrity (3/11)

Look for your chance to register for these detailed policy briefs in your email over the next few weeks. Not getting our email? Sign up at www.lwvme.org/webinar.html.

1. **These detailed policy weeks. Not getting our email? Sign up at www.lwvme.org/webinar.html.

The League's weekly email update, **Action Under the Dome**, is back featuring news on timely legislative developments, advance notice of public hearings and work sessions, and action alerts when key votes are coming up. To get the weekly emails, you can sign up on our website at www.lwvme.org or check it out on our Facebook page every Monday during the legislative session.



You can look up priority bills and read our testimony on these and other legislation at: www.lwvme.org/Alert.html. We've got a wonderful team, including dozens of volunteers who research bills, write testimony, and appear before legislative committees. You can do most of the work from the comfort of your own home. If you are interested in joining the Advocacy team, let us know by email: info@lwvme.org. We welcome new members!



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE www.lwvme.org
LIKE US ON FACEBOOK.
FOLLOW US ON TWITTER.



Advocacy Day in Augusta

Dena Libner

Over 60 volunteers attended Advocacy Day 2019, hosted by the League and our Democracy Maine partner, MCCE. Advocacy Day is an annual opportunity for supporters of a fair, equitable, democratic process and accessible elections to advocate for these causes at the State House in Augusta.

Executive Director Anna Kellar kicked off the morning, followed by remarks from Senate President Troy Jackson, House Speaker Sara Gideon, and several legislative leaders on democracy and election-related issues. Participants then met with their legislators to voice their support for our 2019 legislative agenda, which includes a wide range of election reforms to strengthen Maine's democracy.



Anna Kellar opens Advocacy Day 2019



Advocacy Day participants meet with Senator Louis Luchini

After a tour of the State House, volunteers enjoyed tea and cookies at the James G. Blaine House. After some words of welcome from Governor Janet Mills, they were treated to a stimulating panel discussion on "The Universal Struggle for Suffrage," moderated by Keller. Panelists Maulian Dana, Tribal Ambassador at Penobscot Indian Nation; Anne Gass, author and women's suffrage historian; and Reverend Kenneth I. Lewis, Jr., Pastor at Green Memorial AME Zion Church discussed and compared their work to inspire present-day advocacy efforts.



Tea at the Blaine House



Panelists discuss the history of the struggle for universal suffrage.

Leading the Way: Ranked Choice Voting

John Brautigam

In a few short years, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has already earned a strong legacy in Maine. After months of contentious opposition, Maine's RCV law sailed through the 2018 primaries and general election with nearly flawless implementation, even while state and national experts and pundits held up the program to intense scrutiny. RCV has survived countless challenges and obstacles, emerging stronger than ever.

The most exciting RCV race was the general election contest in the Second Congressional District. Four candidates appeared on the ballot – incumbent congressman Bruce Poliquin, Democratic nominee Jared Golden, and independents Tiffany Bond and Will Hoar. In the first choice vote totals, Poliquin held a slim lead. After the ballots and digital voting records were gathered in Augusta, the RCV tabulation revealed that Bond and Hoar were eliminated based on their first choice vote totals. Most of their second choice votes were cast for Jared Golden, who was declared the winner.

Congressman Poliquin challenged the result in federal court in Bangor. The case was assigned to newly installed judge Lance Walker, who held a hearing on a frigid morning in November to consider Poliquin's challenge, followed by a second hearing in December. Judge Walker issued two opinions resoundingly rejecting the legal challenges and affirming the right of Maine voters to set the terms of their elections using RCV. Jared Golden became the first member in the history of the United States Congress to be elected using RCV and takes office knowing that he had support from a majority of voters.

This does not end our work on RCV. We still don't have the option of ranking candidates in the gubernatorial or legislative general elections. We are now advocating for a constitutional



amendment to allow RCV in those races. We hope the legislature will honor the views of a majority of the voters in the state and allow a statewide vote on a constitutional amendment to allow use of RCV in these critical races.

Meanwhile RCV is moving forward in other areas, including municipalities around the country where Maine's success has been an inspiration. So much so that the League was honored by FairVote with its 2018 Democracy Champion award for Breakthrough Achievement! One thing is clear – Maine's success with RCV is strong evidence of a wave of new democracy initiatives here and around the country. 2019 promises to be an exciting year!

Who Lives at P.O. Box 606, Lewiston, ME 04243-0606?

It's our national affiliate, the League of Women Voters of the U.S.! Two years ago, LWVUS contracted with a financial services firm in Lewiston to process receipts and donations. While we are pleased and proud that a Maine-based firm was chosen to service our national account, it has created some confusion here at home.

Our state League, the League of Women Voters of Maine, keeps a P.O. box in Augusta: that is P.O. Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332. Checks sent to Lewiston are for the sole benefit of LWVUS.

As things now stand, you may not renew your League membership with a payment to LWVUS. LWVUS accepts donations to benefit our important work at the federal level, but none of this money comes back to Maine. Membership dues and donations to benefit the work of our state and local Leagues here in Maine should be sent to our P.O. box in Augusta. Dues sent to that address to join or renew with a local League are passed through directly to that local League.

A considerable portion of dues payments from Maine-based members goes to LWVUS, as it should. Here in Maine, we also depend on non-dues donations to support our ambitious work at the state level. For the benefit of state and local Leagues in Maine, checks should be sent to the Augusta address. To join or renew your state or local league membership or to support our work through a donation, checks should be sent to the Augusta address.

Voter Services Roundup

Peg Balano

In 2018, League volunteers attended 25 Naturalization ceremonies and registered 56 percent of the new citizens tas Maine voters. The total count of new voters registered last year was 1,880, including Naturalization Ceremonies and many other voter registration events. There are ten Naturalization Ceremonies scheduled so far for 2019.

Last year was also a big year for voter education around the 2018 election. With our organizational partners we distributed more than 50,000 copies of our Easy-to-Read Voter Guide to almost 200 Maine towns. We also distributed 10,000 supplemental guides for Portland voters that covered local races and issues.

For the first time, the guide was translated into Somali and Arabic and was also offered as audio and ASL translations. We are so excited about these latest efforts to reach more voters to make sure everyone is informed and able to participate on Election Day.

Local chapters kept busy last fall sponsoring or cosponsoring dozens of candidate forums across the state in races ranging from school board to District Attorney to State House and State.

Looking ahead to 2019, LWVME has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from the national League of Women Voters Education Fund. This year's grant is for the 2019 Youth Voter Registration Project, which aims to engage high school, community college, and vocational school students in the electoral process.

The LWVME Board's Voter Engagement Team is made up of League representatives throughout the state. In support of the grant, our goals are to build on previous school voter drives, start planning for the 2020 election, and determining how best to increase voter turnout.

We have a robust and enthusiastic team of volunteers and staff that helps to register voters and distribute voter information across the state. If you have thoughts or suggestions on how to increase voter registration and Get Out the Vote efforts or want to join the team, please email us at: volunteer@lwvme.org.



Newly-elected Governor Janet Mills pitches in at the League's voter registration table at last January's naturalization ceremony at King Middle School in Portland.

ELECTION 2018 RECAP

An overview of our efforts to empower voters

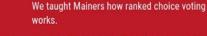
BOOST IN REGISTERED VOTERS



We registered over 2,000 new voters.

Through over 120 events and ongoing outreach efforts, we helped thousands of people register to vote for the first time.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING EDUCATION



- . Over 190K people reached via social media.
- 23 community presentations delivered.
- 1,200 RCV handouts distributed.
- 8,000 palm cards passed out.

MORE LOCATIONS & LANGUAGES



We distributed guides in 68% more towns.

General election voter guides reached 194 towns, from Houlton to Kittery. And for the first time ever, they were printed in Somali and Arabic!

SURGE IN VOLUNTEERISM



We attracted 353% more volunteers.

Our committed volunteers come from across the state and are essential to making sure a diverse network of communities have access to nonpartisan voter information

Thanks for your support!

Transparency Portland

Al Cleveland

On November 6th, Portland voters passed a charter amendment that would require municipal level candidates to release their campaign donations 42 days before the election. The amendment, Question 2, ensures greater transparency regarding our candidates. This guarantees that all voters have access to information about who is funding a candidate's campaign. Having an informed electorate is the cornerstone of a flourishing democracy.

It is important for voters to be informed about both the Candidate's position, as well as the agenda of the individuals and groups funding the campaigns. Prior to the amendment, candidates were required by the city of Portland to disclose their campaign donations II days before the vote in November 2018. However, many voters had already voted via absentee ballot by the time the disclosures had been released. The new 42 day amendment does not get rid of the II day report requirement. It simply gives voters enough time to have access to campaign finance data that could influence their decision. Additionally, the 42 day filing requirement now matches the filing rules for state-level candidates.

The group behind the initiative is a grassroots network of Portland citizens called Transparency Portland. This group came together with the goal of addressing money in politics and its increasing impact on Portland politics. Winning Question 2 was a vital step in the fight for clean and fair elections at our municipal level. However, it was just a first step; fighting for transparency is key to a thriving democracy and having trust in our elected officials. Transparency Portland is continuing its work on ways to improve the accountability of our elected officials.

Maine Suffrage Centennial Collaborative

2020 marks the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, granting women the right to vote. The League is proud to be part of the Maine Suffrage Centennial Collaborative (MSCC), a group of diverse organizations across the state dedicated to commemorating the anniversary.



The Collaborative will celebrate both the national centennial in 2020 and the centennial of Maine ratification in 2019. The centennial offers a unique, nonpartisan opportunity to commemorate this victory in the fight to ensure all Americans the right to vote, while also encouraging voting and civic engagement today.

As a group, we are committed to celebrating the anniversary without repeating the discriminatory and exclusionary aspects of the original movement and we seek and welcome the participation of all Mainers.

We are excited to have Governor Janet T. Mills, Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden as honorary chairs.

More information about the collaborative, including the list of member organizations, can be found on the new website at: www.mainesuffragecentennial.org.

The website will serve as a platform to share information, including a calendar of events that will be updated regularly. So make sure to bookmark and check back frequently!

League Embarks on Study of Citizen Initiatives & People's Vetoes

Suzanne Carmichae

A six-member LWVME Study Committee has begun a comprehensive review of Maine's Citizen Initiatives and People's Vetoes including their history, process, uses, restrictions, and financing. The Committee will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, possible alternatives, and proposed changes.

After reviewing studies from Leagues in California, Oregon, Washington, and Massachusetts, it was determined that there were enough differences in Maine that a thorough original study was required. Reports, Consensus questions and Study Guides will reflect this study and be distributed to our Locals for discussion and voting at Consensus meetings later this year.

In addition, League members will receive monthly Study update emails along with interactive questions and links to further information. Look for the February letter going out soon with questions about voter information. Committee members include: Beth Basham (Portland), Suzanne Carmichael (Deer Isle), Barbara Kaufman (Freeport), Valerie Kelly (Peaks Island), Kim Peaslee (Peaks Island) and Judy Whiting (Manchester). Beth is in charge of Study management and Valerie is in charge of research. You can reach the Committee at: CIStudy@lwvme.org.

Save the Date!

Thirteenth Annual Leadership Conference ADVANCING CIVILITY IN A DIVERSE NEW ENGLAND

April 6-7, 2019 in Wells, Maine

Plenary Sessions: York County Community College Accommodations: Hampton Inn, Wells

State League leaders from CT, MA, ME, NH, RI and VT have developed a dynamic agenda for this year's conference that is sure to address the most compelling issues of the year. Our plenary sessions will be at the York County Community College (112 College Drive, Wells, ME; https://www.yccc.edu), less than a mile from our hotel accommodations (Hampton Inn, 900 Post Road, Wells, ME).

On Friday night the early arrivals dine together at a local restaurant and make final arrangements for the conference. It's a fun and relaxing evening.

Saturday is a full day featuring keynote speaker, Nancy Thomas, Director of Institute for Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University, who will address the question of what populations did not vote in the 2016 elections and why. Susan Clark, author of Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home, will lead a workshop on Communicating Across the Divide: Challenges and Tools and there will also be an expert panel discussion on diversity in New England. Saturday evening is a dine-around at local restaurants. Sunday includes a debrief and discussion of Saturday's topics and a discussion about preparing for the League's 100th anniversary.



It's a great way to meet others who are passionate about the things that you care about, to be inspired, to gain new insights, and to share your League successes.

For more information and to register go to: www.lwvme.org/Quad.html.

LOCAL LEAGUE UPDATES

Bangor Area Chapter

The Bangor Area had a busy fall hosting candidate forums in Bangor, Orrington, and Hampden. Local area members have also been active in registration drives in local schools and in the Naturalization Ceremonies held in Bangor. Monthly meetings and book discussions are scheduled on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and held at Seasons Restaurant. Check out the League website for book titles and more information.

Brunswick Area Chapter

The Brunswick Area Chapter of the League continues to meet monthly to plan activities and keep up-to-date with League activities and issues. Our focus is on encouraging more members to take an active role in our chapter. We kicked off our Book Club with a talk by Anne Gass. She shared information about the cross-country trip undertaken by three suffragettes in 1915 to build support for the right of women to vote. The talk was enhanced by period pictures of the women and their trip, and by Anne's personal insights from recreating the trip in 2015. It was interesting to reflect on the politics of the cause and the challenges they faced, as well as the challenges facing women today. Our next book club meeting will be on March 24 to discuss Elaine Weiss' book *The Woman's Hour*.

Downeast Chapter

The Downeast Area Chapter, in partnership with WERU FM, a community-based radio station, was awarded a \$3,000 grant by the Maine Humanities Council (MHC) in November 2018. The grant was for a project focusing on the role journalism plays in undergirding democracy, as well as the challenges facing journalists today. The project is built around our monthly radio show, Democracy Forum, that has featured several national speakers and deals with issues ranging from fake news and distrust of government to Ranked Choice Voting and immigration. A working group consisting of members drawn from print journalism, academia, and secondary education is helping guide the project.

The project encompasses two interrelated activities: a radio program and live public event. The February 15th radio program showcased a conversation on journalism and democracy among Judy Woodruff anchor and managing editor of *The PBS Newshour*, Burt Neuborne, Professor, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School, and Earl Brechlin, the founding editor of the *Mount Desert Islander*. January's show featured Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Professor, Annenberg

Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania, whose recent book, *Cyberwar* garnered accolades from several prominent reviewers, and Jamie McKown, James Russell Wiggins Chair in Government and Polity, College of the Atlantic.

The live public event, titled "Free Press: Enemy of the People?" will be held on March 2nd at the Moore Community Center in Ellsworth and feature a panel of experts reflecting on the importance of a free press in a functioning democracy, followed by questions from the audience.



The panel includes John Christie, veteran journalist and co-founder of Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting; Irwin Gratz, Morning Edition host for Maine Public; Liz Graves, managing editor of the *Mount Desert Islander*; Joseph Reisert, Associate Professor of American Constitutional Law, Colby College. The discussion will be followed by a reception. The project ends the first week in March, by which time we hope to have generated a lot of public conversation about this important topic.

Local League Updates Continued

Midcoast Chapter

Executive Director Anna Kellar attended the Midcoast Chapter February meeting and presented an excellent overview of this year's legislative agenda for Democracy Maine. Several members attended the February 14th Advocacy Day in Augusta, the panel discussion on Suffrage, and tea at the Blaine House with Governor Mills.

The Midcoast Chapter is planning a spring full of activities and events. On Tuesday, March 12th the group is hosting a celebration of Women's History Month at the Rockland Public Library 5:30 –8:00PM. The documentary "Equal Means Equal" will be shown with a discussion following the film. Our co-sponsors are the Rockland Public Library and ERA Maine.

Voter registration teams continue to work locally to help high school, college, and technical school students register to vote for the first time. Spring voter registrations are planned for the high schools in Knox and Waldo County along with the Mid-Coast School of Technology, Waldo County Technical Center, the Hutchinson Center in Belfast (UMA) and the University of Maine in Rockland.

Midcoast Chapter is also hosting a social gathering and outreach event in April to meet with old friends, make new friends, and continue to build our network (details to be determined). In May, the Millennial Project team will be working with leaders and parents of Girl Scouts in the 4th and 5th grades on an "Inside Government" class. Further into the year the group is looking forward to organizing a Civil Discourse discussion with high school students and the community at large.

Portland Area Chapter

This past fall's crazy-busy election season feels far away now, but League of Women Voters Portland Area (LWVPA) members were everywhere. New partnerships emerged and a very successful Cumberland County District Attorney forum attracted large numbers of voters. Our high school voter registration efforts continued as did other local registration drives (see Voter Services Roundup article).



To reflect on this past election, on November 14th, the LWVPA held our 3rd biannual post-election Whine and Wine at PelotonLabs. The panelists, Marpheen Chann (Democrat), Barbara Harvey (Republican), and Dick Woodbury (Independent) shared their views on how the recent elections were likely to affect this session of the Maine State Legislature. They addressed questions from the audience on many topics such as civil discourse, ranked choice voting, legislative priorities for their parties, and the role of citizen initiatives in the legislative process. It was refreshing to hear the panelists offer thoughtful answers to the audience's questions in an atmosphere where all views were respected and differ-

ences among the panelists were discussed in a civil manner.

How did we celebrate our growing numbers of active members, our increased visibility in and around town, our wonderful collaboration with staff at the LWVME and MCCE office in downtown Portland? Our Annual December Celebration continued its pizza, drinks, and amazing desserts tradition! We recapped our events and accomplishments and highlighted plans for winter and spring.

On February 14th, we held our first of two book discussion groups in partnership with the Riverton Branch of the Portland Public Library. Member Elizabeth Miller led the discussion of Soul of America by Jon Meacham. More than 20 people participated in the conversation.



Upcoming Programs: On March 28th, at 5:30PM at Waynflete, the LWVPA invites you to learn about "Can We?" a student-led program that promotes civil and honest discourse among high school students. Originally started at Waynflete, the group is now comprised of 29 student from six area high schools whose populations mirror our area's diversity. Our second book discussion group is scheduled for April 11th at the Riverton Branch of the Portland Public Library. There's plenty of parking so please join the discussion about *There There* by Tommy Orange.

Donors and Supporters

Thank you to our members and donors who help support the work of the League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME) and the League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund (LWVME Ed Fund). We couldn't do it without you!

League of Women Voters of Maine

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Sherry Fletcher Elizabeth Franklin lane Freeman Frontier Café Liane Giambalvo **Emery Goff** Joan Greene

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Barbara & Michael McDade Joshua McIntyre Elizabeth Miller & David Body

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Patricia Ryan & David Westphal

Anne Schink Martha Sholes

Kim Simmons & Craig Bramley Moira Simonds & Mark Nordenson

Alison Smith Linda Garson Smith & David Smith

John Sterling Emily Swan Richard Tappan Annee Tara Colleen Tucker Sara & Joe Tufo Polly Ward Linda Washburn Ellen Wells

Jane Whitney & Richard Hero Cathie Whittenburg Elise & David Wilson Timothy Wyant

\$500 and Over

Gina Coppens & Steve Buchsbaum Ellen & Bill Dohmen Ann Luther & Alan Vlach

lill Ward

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Upcoming Events

Monday, March 2 2:00PM

Patricia & John Hatton

Downeast: Panel Discussion: Free Press: Enemy of the People? Panelists will be John Christie, Irwin Gratz, Liz Graves, and Joseph Reisert. This event is free and open to the public. A wine and cheese reception will follow. Moore Community Center, 133 State Street, Ellsworth.

Jill Ward

Polly Ward

Tuesday, March 12 5:30PM

Bangor: Business Meeting & Book Discussion on Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President by Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Seasons Restaurant, 427 Main Street.

Friday-Sunday, April 5-7

New England States Leadership Development Conference - Advancing Civility In a Diverse New England. York County Community College, 112 College Drive, Wells. For more information and to register go to: http://www.lwvme.org/Quad.html.

Tuesday, April 9 5:30PM

Bangor: Business Meeting & Book Discussion on Lauren Hilgers's Patriot Number One: American Dreams in China Town. Seasons Restaurant, 427 Main Street.

Thursday, April 11 6:30-7:30PM

LWVPA (Portland Area): Book Discussion on Tommy Orange's There There Riverton Branch Portland Public Library, 1600 Forest Avenue.

Tuesday, May 14 5:30PM

Bangor: Business Meeting & Book Discussion on Casey Gerald's There Will Be No Miracles Here. Seasons Restaurant, 427 Main Street.

Saturday, May 18

Save the Date! LWVME Convention

JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Join the League and be part of the solution! Your community needs leaders like you to be a strong, safe, and vibrant place to live. Become a member and make a positive impact on your community.

Sign up online at www.lwvme.org and pay by credit card or PayPal, or mail this form and a check made payable to LWVME to PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863. *Dues are not tax deductible.* But contributions made payables to LWVME Education Fund are deductible and are always appreciated. Thank you!

Member name(s):			
Address:			
City/town:			
Telephone (home):	Telephone (cell):		
Email:	_Check amount:		
$\hfill\Box$ Introductory Member (First Year) - $\$25$	□ Student Member -	\$25	□ Single Member - \$55
□ Two-person household - \$85 □ Mentor (Supports First-Year Membership Program) - \$100			



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