



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

## The Maine Voter

Volume 27, Number 2

May 2010

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Dear League Members,

**LWVUS President Mary Wilson** will be with us this year to help celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters! The Quad States Leagues are honored to host President Wilson for a luncheon celebration on Sunday, May 23, in Wells, just after the **Quad States Leadership Training Conference**, May 22 and 23. It will be a lively and interesting weekend. If you are a League Member or would like to know more about the League, please come to all or some of the events in Wells. Please read the Quad States article in this issue for details and a registration form. President Wilson is coming to Wells to help present **Climate and Clean Energy Leader Awards** to Maine's congressional delegation in a ceremony co-hosted by OXFAM and LWVME.

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**Barbara McDade** Bangor
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That Sunday morning, May 23, we will start the day at 8 AM, with our **League's Bi-Annual Council** in Wells. We will talk about what we've done this year and where we would like to go in the next year.

The League's **Keys to the Capitol** event held March 25 was a day filled with interesting people doing interesting things and sharing it with our members. Colleen Tucker and Anne Schink and committee members arranged the day in Augusta. We met in the Welcome Center at the Capitol and visited the House where Rep. Mary Nelson had arranged for us to receive a "sentiment" congratulating the League on its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We listened to *PAC Reform - Possibilities and Pitfalls* with Dan Billings, an attorney with Marden Dubord, and Alison Smith, Co-Chair of the Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. We had a tour of the Capitol building, and after lunch we went to the Blaine House for another brief tour. Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap met us there to present us with a proclamation from the Governor. We then had tea and listened to a panel discussion on the NOM lawsuit with Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director of the Ethics Commission, and Phyllis Gardiner, Assistant Attorney General.

\*  
Editor: Martha Dickinson

Contributors: Barbara McDade, Ann Luther, Malory Shaughnessy, Michelle Small, Pam Person  
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The League continues to attend the **Naturalization Ceremonies** in Portland, South Portland and Bangor to welcome new citizens and encourage them to vote. If you have not attended one of these events, members would welcome your participation.

The League of Women Voters of Maine, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major political policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.  
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We continue our work on the **PAC Study**. It is almost ready for members to start working on consensus. Voters Service members are working to get information out for the June election—and gearing up for the race for governor and the legislative races in November.

It's been a very busy year, but I've found that whether it's working on issues or education, it is very rewarding to work with the committed, passionate, intelligent people in the League. Thank you all very much.

**League of Women Voters of Maine**  
P. O. Box 863  
Augusta, ME 04332-0863

- Barbara McDade, President  
Bangor, Maine

## QUAD STATES LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Leagues of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island will meet at the Hampton Inn in Wells, Maine, on May 22 and 23, 2010, for their 4<sup>th</sup> annual **Quad States Leadership Development Conference**.

On site check-in begins at 9 AM. The program will commence at 10 AM with a **keynote** speech by **Professor Jim Melcher**, University of Maine at Farmington, on **Political Discourse in the U.S.** In addition to being a gifted academic, Dr. Melcher is one of Farmington's most popular faculty members. He is also a talented impersonator and often infuses his highly entertaining lectures with dead-on impressions of politicians, news broadcasters, pop icons and others. He will be speaking to us about civility in government, past and present.

**Workshops** will be offered on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Some of the questions that will be addressed are: How can the League use social networking to disseminate voter and candidate information to 21st century voters? What alternatives exist to traditional candidate forums? What are alternative voting systems and how could they increase voter involvement and provide a more accurate picture of voters' preferences? Each of the three workshops listed below will be offered twice.

- **Alternative Voting Systems:** Terry Bouricius, LWV Champlain Valley, VT and FairVote (tentative).
- **Get Out the Vote/Voter Service** (nontraditional outreach, Vote411): Judy Davis, LWVUS Board Liaison, and TBA.
- **Social Networking** (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube): Nancy Lynch, LWV Central Vermont and Executive Director, Peace and Justice Center, VT.

### Climate and Clean Energy Leader Awards

Immediately following the last workshop, at approximately 11:30 AM, on Sunday, LWVME and Oxfam America will co-host a **Climate and Clean Energy Leader Awards** Ceremony. LWVUS President Mary Wilson will introduce the program. Liz Carty, Senior Advisor for Oxfam America, will give a short video presentation on

the Sisters on the Planet project, and LWVME President Barbara McDade will present the awards. All four members of Maine's congressional delegation have been invited to receive these awards. Senators Snowe and Collins and Representatives Michaud and Pingree have long been committed to action on climate change and clean energy. Representatives Michaud and Pingree plan to attend. Senators Snowe and Collins will send aides to accept their awards.

### President Mary Wilson to Attend Our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Luncheon

The Leagues of Women Voters of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island invite everyone to join in celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the League of Women Voters of the United States at a luncheon honoring LWVUS president Mary Wilson. This luncheon will start at 12:30PM on Sunday, May 23, after the Awards Ceremony. The cost for the luncheon is \$25.00 each. Please check that you will attend this event on the Quad States registration form.

**Registration** for the conference is due May 10. Please send in the registration form at the end of this newsletter with your payment soon, and indicate if you will also attend the awards ceremony and luncheon.

### Hotel Reservations

Make your own hotel reservation at Hampton Inn & Suites, 900 Post Road, Wells, Maine 04090 (207-646-0555). Be sure to say you are with the League of Women Voters and the room rate will be \$95.23 (incl. tax). Find a roommate to share and the cost will be \$47.60 per person. Our block of rooms will be held until May 16<sup>th</sup>, but the rate will be in effect until the event. Breakfast is included in the room rate. We will have dinner in area restaurants on Saturday.

***This has been a stimulating and well-received event for the past three years. Please join us!***

## LETTER FROM THE STATE HOUSE

The 124<sup>th</sup> Maine State Legislature convened for the second regular session on January 6, 2010 and adjourned Sine Die April 12, 2010, at 4:57 pm. Bills that are not enacted as emergency legislation will take effect 90 days after adjournment - July 12<sup>th</sup>.

The League Lobby Corps continues to be a presence in the State House and at the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee, which has oversight in most of our priority areas. Volunteers from the Lobby Corps were present for virtually all of the public hearings and work sessions on the bills of interest to the League.

Because it was a short session, many fewer bills were heard and the League followed fewer of these. Whereas in the first session, the Legislature considered nearly 1,500 bills; in the second session, it took up fewer than 400, including a few that were carried over.

The League followed just a dozen bills in the priority areas of election methods, election administration, campaign finance, citizen initiatives and people's veto, and freedom of information. Here are some of the important developments. Complete information is available at the League web site, <http://www.lwvme.org/LOI2010.html>.

### • **LD 56 An Act To Join the Interstate Compact on the National Popular Vote**

This was a carryover bill from the first session. League members will recall that the 2009 LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact resulted in no consensus among League members, and thus no advocacy position for the League. We did offer testimony neither for nor against this bill in the first session, but we did not offer testimony in the second session.

The bill received a divided report from the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee, with a narrow 7-6 majority voting Ought to Pass. But the majority OTP report failed to carry in a roll call vote in the House (50-95), and the bill died in concurrence.

### • **LD 1730 An Act To Strengthen the Ballot Initiative Process**

In response to ballot initiative activity in the 2009 general election, four bills proposed various reforms to the Citizen Initiative and People's Veto processes. Proposed reforms included raising the number of signatures required to put a question on the ballot.

In the end, LD 1730 was the designated vehicle for those proposals that had broad support, and this bill – frequently amended – passed both houses and was signed into law on April 6.

Among the significant provisions of the new law are ones that require paid signature gatherers to register with the Secretary of State and that allow extra time for appealing the decision of the Secretary of State to certify or reject petitions.

### • **LD 1579 An Act to Facilitate Voting by Uniformed Service and Overseas Voters**

This bill allows voters from all municipalities in the State to request absentee ballots using the Secretary of State's online absentee ballot request service. Furthermore, it allows the Secretary of State to facilitate voting by uniformed service and overseas voters by allowing central issuance, receipt, and counting of the absentee ballots of these voters and electronic transmission of absentee ballots to and receipt of absentee ballots from these voters.

LD1579 passed with some amendments, was signed into law with an emergency preamble, and takes effect immediately, although the bill specifies that its provisions are not applicable to the June primary.

- Ann Luther, Trenton  
LWVME Advocacy Chair

## Alison Smith Is Highlighted In Book On Citizen Activists

Author Paul Loeb has updated and re-released his book, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times* (St. Martin's Press, April 2010). Through stories of everyday activists that have made change happen, sometimes in ways they never intended, he shows how small steps can lead to big changes. The common theme is that someone felt compelled to speak up, followed through, and in so doing gained a sense of connection and purpose rare in today's world.

One of these activists is Alison Smith, League activist and MCCE Co-Chair. The change she helped create became the Maine Clean Election System. Alison was one of over a thousand volunteers that in one day gathered the signatures needed to bring Clean Elections to the ballot in Maine, and it was passed overwhelmingly by the voters.

The impact she helped make also changed Alison personally. "It gave me a sense that I really can do something just by showing up to further a cause -- this fundamental cause of democracy that affects

everything I care about, so my kids won't grow up in a cynical world."

Originally released over ten years ago, this book has inspired a generation of activists, and this update adds new stories offering hope in a time of increasing cynicism. It is an antidote to the sense of powerlessness and despair many feel today. It is a worthwhile read for us all. For more information see <http://www.maineclipselections.org/> and <http://www.paulloeb.org/>.

- Malory Shaughnessy  
Executive Director, MCCE

## Gubernatorial Candidates for June 8 Primaries

There will be no shortage of candidates in the gubernatorial primary on Tuesday, June 8.

On the Democratic side, there are five candidates.

- Patrick McGowan, of Hallowell, is a former Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, a former regional administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration and a former three-term legislator from Somerset County. He ran unsuccessfully against former U.S. Representative Olympia Snowe in 1990 and 1992, coming within one percentage point of her vote total in 1990.
- Elizabeth "Libby" Mitchell, of Vassalboro, is currently President of Maine's Senate. She has served nine terms in the House and three terms in the Senate, and she is a former Speaker of the House. In 1984, she ran unsuccessfully against former Senator William Cohen.
- John Richardson, of Brunswick, is a former Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and a former Speaker of the House. He is an attorney.
- Steven Rowe, of Portland, is a former four-term Attorney General and a former Speaker of the House. He is currently of counsel to the law firm of Verrill Dana.
- Rosa Scarcelli, of Portland, is the owner of Stanford Management, a provider of affordable housing. Her company owns properties in 35 cities and towns across Maine and in other states.

On the Republican side, there are seven candidates.

- Steven Abbott, of Portland, served as Chief of Staff for Senator Susan Collins for 12 years and managed her 2002 and 2008 re-election campaigns. Prior to his work for Senator Collins, he practiced law at Pierce Atwood.
- William Beardsley, of Ellsworth, who has a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins, served as President of Husson University from 1987 to 2009. Earlier in his career, he served in the executive branches of the states of Vermont and Alaska, and he was employed by Green Mountain Power Company in Vermont and Bangor Hydro Electric Co. in Maine.
- Matthew Jacobson, of Cumberland, is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Maine & Company, whose objective is to attract business to and create jobs in Maine. From 1991 to 2005, he was an executive with the railroad industry, most recently Canadian National Railways. Before his railroad career, Jacobson was a U.S. Air Force Pilot.
- Paul LePage, the Mayor of Waterville, is the General Manager of Marden's. He is also the head of an executive consulting firm.
- Peter Mills, of Cornville, is currently a Maine Senator. He has served seven terms in the Senate and one term in the House. Mills has practiced law in Portland and then Skowhegan for more than 35 years.
- Leslie "Les" Otten, of Greenwood, is the former owner of Sunday River Skiway Corp. He was also a partner in the group that purchased the Boston Red Sox in 2002. Since 2008, Otten has been involved with Maine Energy Systems, which equips homes and businesses with renewable energy systems.
- Bruce Poliquin, of Georgetown, is the general manager of Dirigo Holdings LLC, which is the developer of a 69-unit retirement community on 183 acres in Phippsburg. He was formerly a principal in Avatar Investors Associates Corporation, where he managed the assets of corporate pension plans.

There will be no Green gubernatorial candidate this year. Attorney Lynne Williams, of Bar Harbor, suspended her candidacy because she was unable to gather the 2,000 signatures necessary to gain a spot on the ballot.

Patrick McGowan, Peter Mills and Libby Mitchell have qualified for funding under the Maine Clean Elections Act. John Richardson's application for Clean Elections funding is still pending, and the

Maine Ethics Commission hopes to issue a decision by April 15.

The 10 unenrolled candidates have until June 1 to submit their nomination papers to the Secretary of State. Therefore, the number of candidates may well grow beyond 12. Unlike in past years, unenrolled candidates had to qualify for Clean Elections on April 1, at the same time as the party candidates. Because none of the unenrolled candidates made a submission on April 1, none of them will receive certification for Clean Election money even if they do qualify for the ballot.

- Michelle Small, Brunswick

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE RELEASES REPORT ON MAINE CANDIDATE PACS**

Earlier this year, the League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME) released its long-awaited study report, "Candidate PACs: Follow the Money," which finds that the vast majority of contributions to candidate Political Action Committees (PACs) in Maine come from businesses and corporations.

The study report, which examines thousands of donations to Maine candidate PACs from 2005-2006 (the last gubernatorial election cycle), found that corporations and businesses were by far the largest contributors to candidate PACs during that period, outstripping individuals, unions and professional associations. Not surprisingly, the majority of contributions received by candidate PACs came from large donors.

In the works for two years, the study report came on the heels of the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. FEC*, which overturned the federal ban on independent expenditures by corporations and unions, while upholding disclosure requirements. The Court's decision itself will have little effect in Maine, since Maine has no limits on corporate participation in PACs or in making independent expenditures.

Barbara McDade, president of the League of Women Voters of Maine, noted that "although important disclosure requirements were upheld that keep the process transparent, the League's study makes clear that without limits, business and corporate interests are able to thoroughly dominate candidate PACs affecting state office."

The paper is the fourth in a series of reports from the League's "Money in Politics: PACs in Maine" study begun in 2007. The series is aimed at helping Maine citizens understand the role of PACs in financing candidate elections. This study focuses on how PACs are funded, how they influence candidate elections, and what changes, if any, should be proposed to limit the influence of private money on elected officials. PACs involved in ballot initiatives are not included as they present very different issues and deserve their own study.

The full report can be read at LWVME's website, at [http://www.lwvme.org/pac\\_study.html](http://www.lwvme.org/pac_study.html).

Two additional papers should be released shortly: the fifth paper examines the results of over 30 interviews conducted by League volunteers with political leaders, surveying their experiences with and attitudes toward candidate PACs; the sixth paper reviews the reform landscape in the states and looks at what changes to Maine's PAC laws might be considered effective and constitutional.

Later this year, League members will meet in their local Chapters to discuss the six papers and answer questions among themselves to determine whether members can reach consensus on a League advocacy position regarding changes to Maine's laws for candidate PACs.

- Ann Luther, Trenton  
PAC Study Chair

## NEW HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION

On March 21, Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, stated, "Today's votes by the U.S. House of Representatives mark a milestone in American political history. The path that began with Social Security and continued with Medicare is reaching fruition with this health care legislation. Comprehensive health care reform will begin to undo decades of neglect and inaction that have left millions of Americans uninsured and at risk." While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will not provide the universal coverage that LWVUS sought, it will provide coverage to 32 million more Americans. By a vote of 219 to 212, the House gave final approval to the bill passed by the Senate on December 24.

### Health Care

In June, the legislation will begin providing subsidized coverage to people with *pre-existing medical conditions* through high-risk insurance programs. In 2014, these people will become eligible for coverage under Medicaid or state-run insurance exchanges. At this time, they can no longer be excluded based on pre-existing conditions or subjected to annual or lifetime benefit limits. In September, the legislation will prevent termination of coverage for people who are diagnosed with medical conditions while insured. It will also prohibit denial of coverage for children with pre-existing medical conditions. Furthermore, it will require policies to cover dependent children until they reach the age of 26. Finally, it will prohibit lifetime benefit limits.

In 2014, more lower-income people under age 65 will become eligible for *Medicaid*. Households with incomes as high as 33 percent of the poverty level - \$29,327 for a family of four - can be covered in this way. Primary care physicians will receive higher payments to give them an incentive to accept patients insured by Medicaid. People with higher incomes will be eligible to purchase insurance through *state-run insurance exchanges*. Households with incomes lower than 400 percent of the poverty level - or \$88,200 for a family of four - will be eligible for premium subsidies. Beginning in 2014, *businesses* with fewer than 25 employees will be eligible for tax credits covering up to 50 percent of health insurance premiums. Businesses with more than 50 employees that do not provide health insurance benefits will face federal fines of \$2,000 per employee.

*Individuals* without coverage must purchase policies or face federal fines up to \$695 or 2.5 percent of income. An individual who cannot purchase

insurance at less than eight percent of income will be able to purchase catastrophic coverage intended for people under age 30. People who receive health insurance coverage through large companies should see few changes in coverage.

*Medicare* beneficiaries will see the "hole in the doughnut" of the Part D prescription drug program phased out by 2020. In addition, they will become eligible for preventive care without co-payments. Likewise, primary care physicians will receive higher payments to give them an incentive to accept patients insured by Medicare.

*Medicare Advantage* beneficiaries may see the greatest changes. At the moment, the federal government pays private insurers 14 percent more than they spend to care for beneficiaries. Next year, payments to Medicare Advantage plans will be frozen at 2010 levels, and payments will start to decrease in 2012. As a result, beneficiaries may find themselves paying higher premiums or losing extra benefits such as dental care, vision care and gym memberships.

### Revenue

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Act will reduce the federal deficit by \$143 billion during the next decade and by \$1.2 trillion during the following decade. To help pay for reform, the IRS will levy a 10 percent excise tax on indoor tanning facilities next year. In 2013, the *Medicare payroll tax* will be increased and be expanded to include *investment income* for individuals with incomes above \$200,000 and couples with incomes above \$250,000. The same year, the cap on untaxed contributions to flexible *spending accounts* for health care will be reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,500, and the threshold to deduct medical expenses will increase from 7.5 to 10 percent of income. In 2018, the IRS will levy a *40 percent excise tax* on the cost of any individual health insurance policy in excess of \$10,200 or any family policy in excess of \$27,500. Another source of savings will be reduced payments to hospitals and providers under Medicare. Providers as a whole did not oppose lower Medicare payments because they anticipate additional revenue when more of their patients are insured as a result of other reform measures.

- Michelle Small, Brunswick

## SISTERS ON THE PLANET EVENT IN WASHINGTON, DC MARCH 2010

Climate change hits poor people hardest—especially poor women, who are disproportionately affected. The Sisters on the Planet initiative brings together American women leaders to raise awareness about women and climate change, and to influence policy to help vulnerable communities adapt to the crisis. LWVUS and many state Leagues, including ours from Maine, are partnering with Oxfam America on the Sisters Project.

In March over 100 women from many different organizations gathered in Washington DC not only to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Women's Day, but also to talk with their states' congressional delegations about climate change, clean energy legislation and funding for international

adaptation. I was honored to be LWVME's representative on that occasion. During the DC visit, I had good meetings with aides to Senator Snowe, Senator Collins and Representative Pingree.

LWVUS President Mary Wilson was one of two people given a Sisters on the Planet Climate Leader Award by Oxfam America at a reception.

LWVME has been given a grant from LWVUS Education Fund and Oxfam America to help in disseminating information on climate change and its effects on people around the world—especially on women—who in many countries do much of the farming, food and water gathering and caring for the children and elderly.

*- Pam Person, East Orland  
Project Leader, LWVME Sisters on the Planet Project*

Stay in Touch with LWVME -- Make sure you receive our timely communications about important action alerts and current issues. If you are not receiving our e-mail messages, make sure we have your current email address. Send a message to us at [lwvme@gwi.net](mailto:lwvme@gwi.net).

### JOIN THE LEAGUE!

If you are not yet a member of the League, we need your help now in carrying out our mission of reform. You may become a member of the League of Women Voters of Maine and the United States by mailing us your contact information with a check for \$45 for one membership, or \$67.50 for two members at the same household. Our Mailing Address is: **League of Women Voters of Maine, PO Box 863, and Augusta, ME 04332-0863.** Thank you!

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## Register for Quad State Leadership Conference

Fill out the registration form below and return with a check for \$20, payable to LWVNH - Quad States. Please send your check **by May 10**, to LWV c/o Liz Tentarelli, 27 Bowles Rd., Newbury, NH 03255

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

- I plan to attend just the Saturday workshops.  
 I plan to stay at the hotel Saturday night and attend workshops on Saturday and Sunday.  
 I plan to stay at the hotel Friday and Saturday nights and attend workshops Saturday and Sunday.  
 If staying overnight, I have already booked my room at the Hampton Inn.  
 I plan to attend Maine's Bi-Annual Council at 8 AM Sunday.  
 I plan to attend the Climate and Clean Energy Leader Awards Ceremony, Sunday at 11:30.  
 I plan to attend the Sunday Luncheon to celebrate the Leagues 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to honor LWVUS President Mary Wilson.  
(Please include a check to LWVME for \$25 for this lunch—it is **not** part of the Quad States registration.)

This training is made possible by a grant from the League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund.

League of Women Voters of Maine  
P.O. Box 863  
Augusta, ME 04332-0863

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Calendar for 2010**

LWV-DE Discussion Group, Trenton	Wednesday, Apr 21, 4:30 pm
Quad States, Wells, ME	Sat, Sun, May 22, 23
LWVME Council, Wells, ME	8 AM, Sun, May 23
LWVME Board Retreat, Searsport	Monday, June 7
Election Day	Tuesday, June 8
LWVUS Convention, Atlanta, GA	June 11 – 15