



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

The Maine Voter

Volume 31 Number 2

Spring 2014

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*

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Dear League Members and Friends,

LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara recently noted that Eleanor Roosevelt, a League member, credited the League with teaching her the importance of civic participation. There is renewed focus on **civic engagement** across the country. We see it in Maine as the Portland Public Library works with various groups in its Choose Civility Portland program. Newspapers like *The New York Times* run stories about civic engagement and its importance. And we see cities like Cincinnati picking the brains of business consultants like Jim McGraw, the CEO of KMK Consulting Co, who stated that locating a business isn't just about finding a region that touts its economic incentives, it's also about intangible assets including engaged, enthusiastic public officials and citizens. Civic engagement makes a difference in a community. The League helps its members become engaged—its members work to help everyone have a voice in the community.

It is in that spirit that I invite you to join us at our **Quad States Leadership Development Conference** this year. Our theme stems from the fact that last December the New England Governors signed a compact agreeing to work together to solve the region's **energy issues**. The Governors committed to working toward a regional goal of lowering electricity and heating costs and expanding their energy portfolios. How can we be part of the dialog deciding what that means in our state? As League leaders, the presidents of the four Quad States (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island) realized that there was a lot we needed to know before we could talk intelligently about the issues involved. What is an ISO? What does the Public Utility Commission do? How does the electric grid work? What is our Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and how does it work? We are pleased that two former members of state PUC's will be our keynote speakers. With energy policy as our focus, we will also have workshops on advocacy. I think it will be an exciting weekend.

Our state and local Leagues here in Maine are in the process of naming delegates to the 51st **National Convention** of the League of Women Voters on June 6 through 10 in Dallas Texas. Its theme is Power: Our Voices, Our Votes. Let us know if you are interested in serving as a delegate.

If you are interested in helping our local Leagues **welcome new citizens** at the Naturalization Ceremonies held in Portland, South Portland, and Bangor, please contact me. These are very moving ceremonies. I'm grateful the League can be there to welcome our new citizens and encourage them to become participating citizens by voting.

It's been an exciting year watching the local Leagues grow, working on the Agriculture Update consensus, and advocating for Clean Elections and voters' rights. Your help makes us stronger. Thank you,

- Barbara McDade
President, LWVME

Quad States 2014 Energy and Energy Efficiency

The League's 8th Annual Quad States Leadership Development Conference will be held May 3 and 4, at the Hampton Inn in Wells, Maine. State League leaders from ME, NH, RI and VT have put together an agenda for this year that is sure to be the best yet. And this year, for the first time, **we welcome CT and MA to join us.**

With energy production and distribution currently "hot topics," this year's subject will be **Energy and Energy Efficiency.** The New England Governors, in December, signed a compact agreeing to work together to solve the region's energy issues. The Governors are committed to working toward a regional goal of lowering electricity and heating costs and expanding their energy portfolios. This announcement contributed to our making the choice of topic for our 2014 conference.

Our keynote speakers are Lea Aeschliman, former member of NH's Public Utilities Commission, and Jack Cashman, former head of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Lea Aeschliman is a former League member in NH; she will update us on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and energy efficiency.

Jack Cashman will explain how ISO-NE (Independent System Operator- New England) works, and how our environment is impacted by and can be protected from our continually growing energy consumption.

ISO-NE is an independent, non-profit Regional Transmission Organization serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. ISO-NE oversees the operation of New England's bulk electric power grid generated and transmitted by its member utilities.

Tentative Agenda

Saturday, May 3:

9 -10 am Registration

10 – noon **Welcome and Keynote Speakers,** Jack Cashman and Lea Aeschliman. They will discuss ISO-NE, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and how our environment is affected by and can be

protected from our continually growing energy consumption.

Noon: Lunch

1 - 2:50 pm Workshop #1: **Advocacy.**

Pam Person, League member from Maine who also serves on LWVUS Climate Change Task Force, will lead a workshop explaining LWVUS positions and suggest how we can advocate at the state and regional level on the issue of energy and climate change.

3:10 - 5 pm. Workshop #2. **Energy Issues, with breakout sessions by state.**

6:30 pm Dinner at choice of local restaurants

Sunday, May 4

9 - 11 am Workshop: **Event Planning by state**

11:30 am Wrap-up and Adjournment.

See the registration form on page 6 and look for updates to the agenda at www.lwvme.org

Ranked Choice Voting

The Ranked Choice Voting Working Group, led by the League of Women Voters of Maine Advocacy Committee, meets monthly to identify a feasible strategy and timeline for achieving implementation of Ranked Choice Voting for state and federal elections in Maine.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) would be applicable to any election for state or federal office in which there were more than two candidates, including primary elections. It would permit voters to rank the candidates in order of preference. The candidate with the fewest first place rankings in the first round would be eliminated and that person's second preferences would be counted and added to the votes of the candidates still in the race. This process would continue until only two candidates remain. The candidate with the most votes would then be elected.

RCV has many advantages: it recognizes the preferences of all voters in a multi-candidate race; it avoids vote-splitting problems; and it promotes

positive, issue-based campaigns, among other positive features. However, the Maine State Constitution requires the governor and state legislators to be elected by a “plurality of all votes,” and since RCV would result in a majority winner from among the final two candidates, a lack of clarity regarding the constitutionality of RCV has been a major stumbling block in developing a practical strategy for getting this election process implemented.

The Working Group has explored three different potential strategies:

- Pass RCV through the legislature by statute
- Pass RCV through citizen initiative
- Amend the Maine constitution

In an effort to bring clarity to the issue of constitutionality, the Ranked Choice Voting Working Group sponsored a Moot Court on March 17 at the Rines Auditorium in Portland. A Moot Court is an activity that simulates a formal court hearing on a specific issue, but has no legal bearing. For our Moot Court, two eminent local attorneys served as advocates: Tim Shannon of Verrill Dana taking the position that RCV is constitutional; and independent attorney John Brautigam taking the position that it is not. The advocates prepared briefs and made arguments to a three-person panel. We were honored to have three distinguished legal professionals serve as our panelists – Judge Daniel Wathen, Catherine Connors of Pierce Atwood, and James Kilbreth of Drummond Woodsum. Audience members were polled prior to the arguments to get their opinion about whether Ranked Choice Voting is constitutional in Maine and then again after the arguments to see if the arguments changed minds. These polls revealed no strong consensus among the attendees and, after the arguments, while the number of undecided votes was greatly reduced, opinion was still split equally between the Yes and No groups. The panel, however, reached a unanimous conclusion that RCV would not be constitutional in Maine. It was a great event, with a high level of discourse in which all the key arguments were vetted. Whether you agreed with the conclusion of the panel or not, you came away better informed about all the issues involved. We hope to have an audio transcript available quite soon.

The Working Group will meet on April 1st in Augusta to review the outcomes of the Moot Court and consider a course of action. We welcome your help and participation. If you want to join the

Working Group, please contact Polly Ward at polly.ward@gmail.com for more information.

While the Moot Court panel reached a consensus that Ranked Choice Voting would be unconstitutional in Maine, it is important to remember that the Moot Court was a simulation, not an actual court hearing, and other legal professionals have reached a different conclusion. This will be the challenge for the Working Group over the coming months as we determine next steps.

*- Polly Ward
Ranked Choice Voting Working Group*

LWV National Convention June 2014

The 51st National Convention of the League of Women Voters will be held June 6 – 11, 2014, in Dallas, Texas, at the Omni Dallas Downtown Hotel. The 2014 Convention theme is Power: Our Voices, Our Votes. Several of our members from Maine will be there. For more information or to become a delegate, contact your state or local League.

Freedom of Information in Maine

The Maine Freedom of Information Coalition (MFOIC) works to protect the right of Maine’s people to know what the government is up to. This legislative session, we weighed in on two bills that would do just that: LD 1818 would make it easier for the public to find useful information, such as the contact information of public access officers, on the websites of state agencies. LD 1821 would implement the recommendations of the Maine Right to Know Advisory Committee regarding the accessibility of state records. As this goes to press, the Judiciary Committee is preparing to hold work sessions on both bills.

Each year, in honor of International Sunshine Week, we give the **Sunshine Award** to an individual or group that has gone above and beyond to protect government transparency. This year, we were pleased to honor Sharon Leahy-Lind, the former director of the Maine Center for Disease Control, who refused directives from her boss to destroy public documents in order to evade a Freedom of Access request. As Ms. Leahy-Lind said about her

decision, "Sunshine is the best disinfectant, and it is my goal to shine light on one area of the government that is broken, and causing harm to me and the people of Maine."

Looking forward, we're excited to start working on an audio program to educate our lawmakers and the public about Maine's Freedom of Access laws. Legislators are busy people, but we believe making information available to them in short audio segments will help them become more familiar with key elements of these important laws.

MFOIC is delighted to welcome Michelle Small to our board as the representative of the League of Women Voters!

*- Rachel Myers Healy
Director of Communications and Public Education
ACLU of Maine*

Maine Clean Elections News

On March 9th, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, Maine Initiatives, and the University of Southern Maine's Political Science Student Association hosted Lawrence Lessig, Professor of Law and Leadership at Harvard Law School and director of the Center for Ethics at Harvard University.

In his talk "Leading," Lessig told an audience of over 200 that, "Maine is the most important state to teach the nation about the most important issue that our nation must finally come to address."

It has become increasingly clear that professionals cannot solve the issue of corruption in our government -- it must be solved by citizens. If we truly want to get big money out of politics, we must commit ourselves to a government of, by, and for the people, as citizens.

As we head into the spring, MCCE is excited to announce a new citizens' initiative that will close loopholes, disclose dark money, and strengthen our Maine Clean Election Act. The initiative will ensure the government is in the hands of the people, not large corporations, lobbyists, or special interest groups.

If Maine citizens truly want a government to work on solutions for us, instead of helping out rich corporations and their lobbyists, then we need to close loopholes and enact reforms that make elected

officials accountable to voters. We all know that a government of, by, and for the people is not some idealistic fantasy. In our government, it's non-negotiable. It's time to reclaim our democracy.

And that's where you come in. As a member or friend of the League of Women Voters, you know that we are at our best when elections and government work for people. As the voices of everyday Maine citizens are drowned out by outside special interest groups, elections and government work less for people.

A citizens' initiative is not easy or without costs. If we are to succeed, Maine citizens will have to knock on doors, make phone calls, sign up to be poll captains on Election Day, recruit friends, and most of all, be leaders.

During the 1995 signature gathering effort, Mainers lived up to the motto "Dirigo," and we must lead once again. Not as professionals and retirees, not as parents and grandparents, and especially not as conservatives and liberals, but as citizens. Will you join us? As a citizen.

*- BJ McCollister
Maine Citizen's for Clean Elections*



The LWVME Board met recently with Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, to discuss ways to improve Maine's Clean Elections.

Help Wanted!

We are looking for a League volunteer to join the **Ranked Choice Voting Working Group** to work with our partners at FairVote in helping develop and maintain a web site on Ranked Choice Voting in Maine. The Working Group meets monthly in Augusta, although participants often join the meeting by phone. Contact us at lwvme@gwi.net.

LWV Portland Area News

We are hosting **Pathways to Civic Engagement** events -- a conversation with various organizations in Portland to learn more about and focus on the goals and strategies of new Mainers and how we can assist and encourage people to become engaged in their communities. Our conversation on March 19 went well, and we will schedule more such conversations with different members of the newcomer community.

A flurry of activities complicated by snow cancellations resulted in moving our Agriculture Study meeting to April 9th and postponement of the Affordable Care Act discussion.

An Agriculture Traveling Committee headed to Brunswick on March 26 as part of a gathering at the Brunswick Library for members and friends of the Brunswick League.

We will hold **Voter Registration drives** at private and public high schools during the weeks of April 7th and 14th. We have been encouraging member volunteers to help with this and people have begun to sign up.

Our **Annual Meeting** is scheduled for May 21. The Leadership Group has a revised set of bylaws and will be sending out a slate of nominees for Officers and Board. We plan a local program for members to consider as well as a budget. We are sooo proud to have come this far!

*- Karla Wight for the
LWV Portland Area Leadership Team:
Lorraine Glowczak, Polly Ward, Polly Ferguson, Tammy
Wing, Kim McCollister, Barbara Kaufman*

Check the Box for Clean Elections!



When you file your income tax returns, the good news is that Line 1 of your Maine return is the Clean Election Check-off. Check the box for Clean Elections, and \$3 goes into the Maine Clean Election Fund. It won't raise your tax bill or reduce your refund, but it will help keep Maine elections clean.

Agriculture Policies -- What and Why?

From the US Farm Bill to very personal decisions about what to feed our families, we are all part of complex agricultural systems. How do we make wise policy choices when such diverse influences impact our wellbeing?

On March 26, a group of about 20 people, led by Portland Area League members, met at Brunswick's Curtis Memorial Library to discuss the Portland League's two year League Agriculture Study. When consensus finally emerges nationally and locally, the League may then advocate on behalf of policies supporting the issues studied.

Christine DeTroy, a 50-year League member, is also actively involved with the Brunswick group, Bread for the World. In reading about the League Agriculture Study, she suggested that members of both organizations join together to discuss issues related to the recently passed Farm Bill and how it intersects with the Agriculture Study. Bread for the World is a faith-based organization that advocates for policies to end hunger worldwide.

Valerie Kelly, part of the Portland Study group, has also served on the League's National Agricultural Study Committee. She was joined by other members of the Portland Study group --Polly Ferguson, Lorraine Glowczak, Anne Schink and Karla Wight. Thanks to new League member Sarah Brown, Adult Services Librarian, for arranging the use of the Morrell Meeting Room and the required technology.

A recent TEDx Talk by Maine's District 1 US Representative Chellie Pingree kicked off our discussion about the recently passed US Farm Bill. See it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxsgQLryuE4&feature=youtu.be

A core group of Brunswick Area League members is interested in becoming more actively involved in the League, particularly since we are starting a big election year in Maine. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Barbara Kaufman at kaufman.barb@gmail.com.

*- Barbara Kaufman
Portland Area League*

Help Wanted: Our **Voter Services Committee** needs volunteers to help plan and facilitate local forums. If interested in helping inform voters about local, state, federal races, please contact Barbara Kaufman, Voter Services Chair at kaufman.barb@gmail.com

Register for the Quad States Leadership Development Conference

- Fill out the registration form below and return with a check for \$25, payable to the LWVME Education Fund. Note “Quad States” in the memo field. Send to

LWVME Education Fund
PO Box 863,
Augusta, ME 04332

- You may also register online using a credit card at www.lwvme.org/donate_form.html. Use the PayPal button in the LWVME Education Fund section. Note “Quad States” in the area for special instructions to the seller.
- 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 \$109, tax included. Find a roommate to share, and the cost will be under \$55 per person. Our block of rooms will be held until April 22, but the rate will be in effect until the event. Upon request, LWVME attendees will be reimbursed \$50/night toward the room rate.

- Breakfast is included in the room rate. Saturday lunch is included in your registration fee. We will have dinner together in small groups at area restaurants on Saturday.

Quad States Leadership Development Conference Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

_____ I plan to attend just the Saturday workshops.

_____ I plan to attend workshops both days, but I will not be staying at the hotel.

_____ 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 both days.

_____ I have already booked my room at the Hampton Inn.

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK – SEARCH FOR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE
Follow us at www.lwvme.org and on Twitter at @LWVME

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.

*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*

Join the League!

Help us grow - Join the League! We need your help in carrying out our mission, promoting political equality, and safeguarding the right to vote. If you are not yet a member of the League, need to renew your membership, or would like to make a gift of membership to someone you know, now is the perfect time.

Membership is \$25 for the first year for first-time members; \$25 for students; \$55 for a single membership; \$85 for a two-person household; and \$100 for a mentor-level membership to help us sustain new members joining at reduced rates.

You may become a member of the League of Women Voters by mailing us your contact information with a check for your membership, or signing up online at www.lwvme.org.

Our mailing address is: **League of Women Voters of Maine, PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863.**

Thank you very much!

Member Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone (home): _____ Cell phone: _____

Email address: _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Check one:

- Introductory Member: \$25
- Student Member: \$25
- Single Member: \$55
- Two-person Household \$85
- Mentor \$100

Please make the check out to: League of Women Voters of Maine.
Dues are not tax deductible.

Comments (e.g. interests, how you heard about the League):

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

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Calendar for Spring 2014

Agriculture Policy Consensus Meeting LWVDE - Ellsworth	Apr 2, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Voter Registration Drive Portland Area High Schools	Apr 7
Agriculture Policy Consensus Meeting 1 City Center, Portland	Apr 9, 5:45 – 7:30 pm
Quad States Leadership Development Conference Wells	May 3 - 4
Maine Clean Elections Convention, location TBA	May 17
LWV Portland Area Annual Meeting Location TBA	May 21, 5:30 - 7:30 pm
LWVME Board Meeting in Augusta	May 31, 10 am – 3 pm
LWV Convention in Dallas, TX	June 6 – 11