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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

THE MAINE VOTER

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From the President

Dear Members and Friends:

"We need to build a democracy where everyone participates, every vote is counted, and everyone's voice is heard; where people from all walks of life can run for and win office, not just the wealthy and well-connected; where every eligible American has the right to vote; and where politicians are held accountable to fair, common-sense rules with tough enforcement of penalties."

This is what we heard during Celinda Lake's keynote address at last month's New England Leadership Development Conference, and it continues to stick with me.

We also heard a lot in that presentation about how Americans feel that our democracy is "out of balance," that government is not addressing issues important to "us," and that the power of wealthy special interests means we're all not truly equal citizens. But we also learned that Americans want a fair, honest democracy and are energized by being presented with ideas that move us toward more equal participation in civic life. In other words, we know the problem, what we really need now are some solutions that include all of us.

Here in Maine, the League is working toward those solutions. After helping to pass the Clean Elections initiative last fall, we have been working hard to ensure the will of the voters is respected by advocating for full funding and implementation of our new law. And we are gearing up to support Ranked Choice Voting on the fall ballot. It will put more power in the hands of voters, ensure those elected to office have the broadest support, promote civility in campaigns, and may serve to reduce voter cynicism and increase voter participation. These are solutions that can work to engage more people in the process and lift the voice of all voters.

To help voters prepare for the upcoming election, we will be publishing our popular Easy-to-Read Voter Guide, which will include information on voting, statewide and federal races, and statewide ballot and bond issues. We also created a new, shorter pamphlet for voters that focuses solely on the basics of voting in Maine.

Solutions. It's what your League is all about.

Jill Ward, President LWVME

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Upcoming Events:

- May 20 —Democracy Forum WERU
- May 20 —Lunch with Amy Fried
- May 25 —Downeast Book Group
- May 31 —Candidates Forum Hancock County
- May 31—Bangor Book Discussion

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http://www.lwvme.org/donate_cc.html

However you want to plug in, we welcome your participation and support!

Sisters on the Planet

Peg Balano, Falmouth

What a wonderful few days! I recently attended Oxfam's 'Sisters on the Planet' Conference on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. An amazing conglomeration of women from 26 states and 7 countries gathered in Washington DC. This event is traditionally held on International Women's Day, and it is a true international experience. It was astounding to witness the wealth of experience ranging from local, state, and federal politics; judicial, philanthropic, military, religious, television and theater; consulting, education, agriculture, authors, chefs, and investments. Talking and finding common ground with so many was a real joy.



I knew of Oxfam but not about their level of commitment to and accomplishment in responding to crises and building self-reliance across the world. They don't accept U.S. government funds, rather they work with existing humanitarian aid sources. To meet people working on life and death issues around the world is humbling. We at the League work so hard on issues here at home, and it was fascinating to talk with people addressing some of the same things in other parts of the world.

There were so many interesting sessions with women addressing big, worldwide issues. Many showcased real-world examples of women-led projects that are changing the world one community at a time. The League believes that everyone has a role to play in making the world a better place, but it really was empowering – from the point of view of this woman – to see and hear stories of women in leadership. One example, was 'Local Women Solving Global Challenges' in a panel discussion with:

- the Mayor of Monrovia, Liberia, who was instrumental in the Ebola Virus Disease crisis
- an engineer with the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Council in the Philippines, during their 2011 and 2012 major cyclones
- Oxfam's Farmer and Female Food Hero from Nigeria

Oxfam America is very focused on issues caused by climate change and what that means for supporting the needs of women and children during disasters. Pregnant women are especially at risk during any crisis. Food and food security, land management, human trafficking, water rights, and education are all shared concerns during national disasters. The League is also working on environmental issues in the U.S., so it was interesting to see where our interests might intersect.

One common thread – heard over and over again – was that no country can ignore 50% of its population. When girls and women succeed, countries succeed. The need to educate local leaders and develop a crisis management infrastructure was widely acknowledged by so many speakers. It's not just an issue of charity, but communities need the tools and skills to be prepared before a crisis even occurs. Rather than depending solely on international aid (which comes after a crisis), communities and leaders must build the capacity to manage those response funds in a way that provides long-term results.



At left: Deborah Price, Vice President/Membership, League of Women Voters of Minnesota & Peg Balano, LWVME

Like the LWV, Oxfam does advocacy and public education on its core issues. It was reported that women and children account for more than 75 percent of displaced persons. The second day of the conference introduced some of their advocacy work, including an introduction to Oxfam's soon-to-be-proposed [STRIDE Act for Self-Reliance](#),

Continued on Page 3

Background Check Initiative Wins Support from the League of Women Voters of Maine

Helen Hanlon, Winthrop

Last month the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Maine unanimously endorsed the Maine Background Checks Initiative on the 2016 ballot. We join a growing list of Maine groups, churches, and professional associations who support the need to reduce the availability of firearms by those prohibited from possession. According to lead sponsor, Maine Moms Demand Action, “Closing loopholes in the background check system is a common sense policy that respects the rights of gun owners while helping to prevent crimes and save lives.”

In recent months, a coalition of citizens affected by gun violence, domestic violence prevention leaders, law enforcement members and associations, and others have formed Mainers for Responsible Gun Ownership (MRGO). MRGO will soon be announcing statewide activities to inform and educate voters about background checks on all gun sales. Events will include films featuring Mainers affected by the misuse of firearms, community discussions, and tri-state actions.

Please watch for announcements, participate, volunteer, and show your support for this important initiative. Remember, of course, how important your vote will be this November. For more information see <https://www.facebook.com/responsiblemainers/>.



Nationally, the League of Women Voters has a long, proud history of supporting gun safety. In 1990 the League adopted a gun control position urging passage of federal legislation to control the growing numbers of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. The League pushed back against efforts to repeal the assault weapons ban in 1995-1996 and fought to extend it when it expired in 2004. In 1998, the LWVUS Convention further amended the position to say, “The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.” For additional information on the League’s history on Gun Control please see <http://lwv.org/content/gun-control>.

The League of Women Voters of Florida hosts a Gun Violence Prevention Coordinating Call each month. Your Maine League will participate in these calls, joining 17 other state Leagues to discuss initiatives, policy developments, and educational forums regarding firearm safety.

Sisters on the Planet - *Continued from Page 2*

will focus on countries prone to natural disasters and the development of cost-effective disaster risk management. U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (NH) spoke about the bill. She is co-sponsor of the bill and currently an Oxfam *Sisters on the Planet* Ambassador.

The conference not only opened my eyes to some of the amazing work happening all over the world, it also made me feel more connected to the people who work to make the world a better place. The League’s work here in Maine is so important: registering and educating voters, advocating for core political issues, monitoring our government, and working with partners across the state. I came home with the sense that our work – while it may sometimes seem small in the context of national and worldwide politics – is crucial to safeguarding the rights and liberties of Maine people, and by extension, those of citizens all over the world.

10th Annual Quad States Conference: Communicating Better

Elaine DiGiovanni, Portland

Our New England Leadership Development Conference (formerly known as Quad States) was held April 9-10 in Wells, Maine. Nearly 40 Leaguers gathered in Wells, Maine, for the annual conference which this year included League members from five of the six New England States, with Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont well-represented.



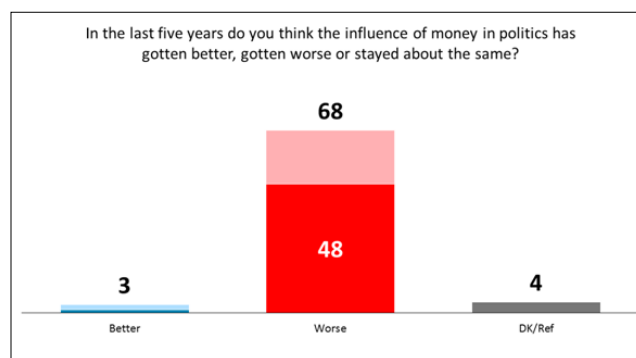
League Members from 5 states listen as Tim Ashwell explains how to work with the media.

This year's conference surely performed its mission to educate, inform, and inspire League members. Using the League's interest in *Money in Politics* as its theme, the conference focused on building communications skills and knowledge in areas ranging from traditional media to polling to social media. All the workshops were exceptional in content and presentation, and each was followed by a lively question and answer period.

Tim Ashwell, Senior Lecturer in Sport History, Media Relations, and Sport Industry from the University of New Hampshire, and also a League member, kicked off the day with a presentation on getting the word out through traditional media, with great tips on creating media lists, writing well-written media releases, and developing relationships with reporters and editors to help make the League "an opinion leader of the community."

Keynote speaker Celinda Lake, founder of Lake Research Partners and one of the nation's foremost experts on electing women candidates and on framing issues to women voters, simultaneously enlightened and entertained us as she spoke on *Money in Politics: Winning Messages*. She presented key findings from her polling research that showed that a majority of voters have a negative view of American democracy today due to the power of wealthy special interests. Voters want change that reflects their needs and concerns, a more equitable society, and are willing to limit money in elections to reach that goal. When communicating with voters, "framing" the issues in positive language is key. She was clear that we know what the problem is, and we are now hungry for solutions.

However, telling the story of money in politics can be quite difficult at best, according to James Cook, professor of social science at the University of Maine at Augusta. His workshop talked about the obstacles faced in accessing the public information about who is spending money in our system. Much pertinent political and campaign finance information is available for public consumption and study in this digital and social media age, but often that information is located in so many disparate locations and in so many different formats that it might as well be unattainable. We learned about the importance of thinking about how we can advocate to help make information about money in politics that is already public more accessible and understandable to citizens.



To advocate effectively, the League and the public need access to digital information and our elected officials. Jill Ward, President of LWVME and former aide to two U.S. Senators, gave attendees some tips about how to more effectively reach, influence, and inform Members of Congress and their staffs. Being a reliable source of information for staff, maintaining positive relationships with staff, and showing up at meetings and events in the Representative or Senator's home district/state will help maximize our ability to be heard.

The next morning, LWVUS Board Member Anne Schink led the group through an interactive workshop on hosting community conversations. Using the League's recent work on *Money in Politics*, the Constitutional Amendment process, and Redistricting, we learned how we might foster local conversations about these issues to help educate League members and the community at large.

All in all, by listening, questioning and learning, we spent a most worthwhile day in Wells, Maine, and had much to bring back to our League colleagues across the New England region.

127th Maine Legislature Adjourns – Lobby Corps Update

Ann Luther, Trenton

The Second Regular Session of the 127th Maine Legislature convened on January 6, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. The statutory adjournment date for the second session was the 3rd Wednesday in April – April 20, 2016. The Legislature finally adjourned sine die on April 29.

Regular Bills and Resolves passed during the Second Regular Session become effective 90 days after adjournment. Emergency Bills that pass with a 2/3 majority become law when signed by the Governor.

Our Lobby Corps team includes Harriet Burgoon, Gina Coppens, Helen Hanlon, Iris Levitis, Linda Lord, Ann Luther, Stephanie Philbrick, Anne Summer, and Polly Ward. The team followed just over twenty bills during the second session in these priority areas:

- Clean Elections & Campaign Finance Reform
- Voting Rights
- Election Methods & Administration
- Ethics & Disclosure
- Good Government



The League Lobby Corp spends many hours in Augusta, this year

Here are some highlights. You can read more about all of these bills by entering their LD number at www.maine.gov/legis/. You can read the League's testimony and positions on these bills at www.lwvme.org/about_action.html.

Clean Elections

The League of Women Voters of Maine has been a staunch supporter of publicly financed elections since the beginning of the ballot initiative that won the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) almost 20 years ago, and LWVME has worked continuously ever since to defend and improve the Act. The League joined partners at Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) and MCCE Action to pass the Clean Elections Initiative in November 2015, and we supported efforts in the second session to ensure adequate funding for Clean Elections in the 2016 election cycle. Our volunteers testified in favor of repaying – out of surplus revenue ([LD 1606](#))-- funds “borrowed” from Clean Elections by previous governors and legislatures, but when that effort failed, MCCE also supported a measure ([LD 1579](#)) that would have drawn down \$500,000 in funds earmarked for 2017. Under this proposal, the funds would have been paid into the fund in September, 2016 to make sure the fund would not run dry before the 2016 election. That bill passed to be enacted but was vetoed by the governor and failed a veto over-ride in the House. At this point, we are hopeful that existing Clean Election funds will be sufficient to allow us to squeak by this year, but this is the first time in the history of the program and legislative borrowing from the fund – going back to 2002 – that the legislature has failed to make good on its promise to pay back the money if needed and allowed the program to head into an election season with the level of funding in jeopardy.

Voting and Voting Rights

The League joined the Town and City Clerks Association to offer testimony in support of a new law to allow early processing of absentee ballots before Election Day ([LD 1539](#)). In our testimony, we continued to advocate for true early voting as the best solution to high-volume absentee voting. (You can read more about our support for early voting in our [testimony](#) on [LD 156](#) from the 126th legislature.) LD 1539 passed to be enacted and was signed into law with an emergency preamble, meaning it goes into effect immediately – in time for the June primary election. Under the new law, towns will be able to start scanning absentee ballots on the Saturday before Election Day.

Continued on Page 6

Lobby Corps Update: *Continued from Page 5*

In other election news, the legislature passed a new law (LD 1574) creating a buffer zone for anyone attempting to video record activity at the polls. In the wake of long lines and frustration during the March presidential primaries in Maine. This new law is really a placeholder that sunsets in December 2018. It requires the Secretary of State to come forward with a full statutory proposal by the end of 2017, giving the legislature an opportunity to pass a more comprehensive bill during its session in 2018. Both of these were signed into law by the governor. The League did not testify on either of these bills.

Ranked Choice Voting

The ranked choice voting initiative was certified for the ballot in November, 2015, and the measure was presented to the 127th Legislature in its second session. Questions arose during the legislative process about whether the measure would be constitutional under the Maine State Constitution. Senate President Michael Thibodeau requested an opinion from the attorney general, which expressed the opinion that there were constitutional issues. Other opinions from legal scholars came forward indicating the opposite -- that the measure would be fully constitutional. League President Jill Ward has issued the following statement on RCV constitutionality:

We understand that there is an open question of whether Ranked Choice Voting would be constitutional in Maine.

There is no consensus answer to that question. In 2011, after three years of careful study, the League of Women Voters of Maine endorsed Ranked Choice Voting because it puts more power in the hands of voters, ensures those elected to office have the broadest support, promotes civility in campaigns, and may serve to reduce voter cynicism and increase voter participation. These are values we support and believe would improve our election system.

If the people of Maine want Ranked Choice Voting for the many civic benefits that it would confer -- and the League of Women Voters is in this camp -- the surest means to that end would be to pass Ranked Choice Voting at the polls in 2016. Should there be a review by the courts that results in an adverse court opinion, we would support a constitutional amendment to allow Ranked Choice Voting to be implemented in time for the 2018 election.

In any case, whether the measure will prove constitutional or not may only be decided by the courts after the law goes into effect. In the meantime, the Maine State Constitution also provides that the legislature cannot prevent the citizen initiated question from appearing on the ballot. On March 15, 2016, the Legislature decided to send the measure directly to referendum without a competing measure, where it will appear on the general election ballot in November, 2016.

Governmental Ethics

During the first regular session, the League supported a Resolve, To Implement Recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee To Strengthen the Ethics Practices and Procedures for Executive Branch Employees (LD 6). This resolve would implement the recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee by directing the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to take steps to strengthen the ethics standards and practices for executive branch employees. Although the resolve had bipartisan support from members of the Government Oversight Committee, it got a divided report from the State and Local Government Committee, and it got a significant fiscal note. It was scaled back significantly, and the amended bill spent the entire second session awaiting action on the Special Appropriations Table, a place where good bills often go to die, which is where it sat when the legislature finally adjourned.

Based on our observations of the conduct of legislative committees, we continued to advocate for an open legislative process accessible to its citizens, by calling for an end to the common committee practice known as “corner caucus”; supporting public access to audio archives of legislative hearings and work sessions; and, through our membership in MFOIC, decrying the practice of conducting public commission meetings behind closed doors. You can read more about our views at our LWVME blog at <https://lwvme.wordpress.com/>

Update on the Clean Elections Citizen Initiative

Anna Kellar, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

The Clean Election Initiative won at the polls last November with a ten-point margin, proving that Maine people want a strong Clean Election system, transparency, and a government accountable to the voters.

This winter, volunteers from Maine Citizens for Clean Elections and the League of Women Voters of Maine reached out to candidates to educate them about changes to the law and encouraged candidates to use the system. These efforts paid off, 62% of candidates for House and Senate in 2016 are using Clean Elections to Fund their campaign – a big increase from 2014. We are on the way back to historical participation rates.



Volunteer efforts were also key to ensuring the full \$3 million in Clean Elections funding was transferred after Governor LePage delayed the scheduled transfer. Although that effort was successful, past raids on the Clean Election Fund mean that there is still a risk of insufficient funds for this year's election cycle. MCCE and League Lobby Corps members testified before the Appropriations Committee and called on legislators to return the raided money.

Ultimately, a bipartisan compromise emerged that would have transferred part of 2017's Clean Elections funding early to avoid a shortfall. While this bill passed the legislature, Governor LePage vetoed the measure and the legislature failed to override the veto.

While it has been frustrating the see legislators and the Governor ignore the will of the voters in this way, we've been reminded once again that democracy is a verb, and that we must continue to act. We must continue to bring the voices of ordinary citizens in front of our lawmakers, and remind them that they work for us.

* * * * *

We're Blogging!

Stay up to date on League testimony and advocacy work at the Statehouse. Plus, get press releases, opinion, and information on events, media appearances, and more.

Visit the LWVME blog at <https://lwvme.wordpress.com>

Check it out & give us your feedback!

Summary of Issues Currently Approved for November 2016 Ballot

John Brautigam, Falmouth

The following referendum questions and bond question have been approved for the November 2016 ballot. The proposed ballot questions have been posted and are open for public comment until June 13, 2016. You can see the questions and submit comments here: <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/publiccomment.html>

Ranked Choice Voting – Establishes statewide ranked-choice voting

Official Summary: This initiated bill provides ranked-choice voting for the offices of United States Senator, United States Representative to Congress, Governor, State Senator and State Representative for elections held on or after January 1, 2018.

Ranked-choice voting is a method of casting and tabulating votes in which voters rank candidates in order of preference, tabulation proceeds in rounds in which last-place candidates are defeated and the candidate with the most votes in the final round is elected.



Minimum Wage Increase – Increases minimum wage to \$12 per hour by 2020

Official Summary: This initiated bill raises the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour in 2017 and by \$1.00 per hour each year after that until it is \$12.00 per hour in 2020. The minimum wage then increases at the same rate as the cost of living. The minimum wage for workers who receive tips increases to \$5.00 per hour in 2017 and then by \$1.00 per hour each year until it matches the minimum wage for all other workers, which occurs no sooner than 2024.

Background Checks for Gun Sales – Requires specific background checks for gun sales and transfers

Official Summary: This initiated bill requires a background check before a firearm sale or transfer between individuals not licensed as firearm dealers. If neither party to a sale or transfer has a federal firearms license, the parties meet at a licensed firearm dealer, who conducts a background check on the transferee and completes the sale or transfer as though selling or transferring from the dealer's own inventory. Exceptions to the background check requirement are made for transfers between family members, while the parties are hunting or sport shooting, for emergency self-defense, in the presence of the transferor and in other circumstances.

Public Education Surcharge Initiative – 3% surcharge on household income over \$200,000 to fund education

Official Summary: This initiated bill establishes the Fund to Advance Public Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education for the purpose of improving the ability of the State to reach the annual target of 55%, as specified in statute, for the state share of the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12, and for increasing direct support for student learning rather than administrative costs. Revenue for the fund is generated by a 3% surcharge on Maine taxable income over \$200,000, beginning with tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2017.

Legalize Marijuana – Allow the use and possession of marijuana by anyone 21 years of age or older.

Unofficial Summary: This initiated bill allows the possession and use of marijuana by a person 21 years of age or older, and provides for the licensure of retail marijuana facilities. It provides for regulation and control of the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of marijuana by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. It allows a person to consume marijuana in a nonpublic place including a private residence, and places a sales tax of 10% on retail marijuana and retail marijuana products.

Transportation Bond – Voter approval to issue \$100 million in bonds for transportation projects.

Ballot Language: Do you favor a \$100,000,000 bond issue for construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of highways and bridges and for facilities, equipment and property acquisition related to ports, harbors, marine transportation, freight and passenger railroads, aviation, transit and bicycle and pedestrian trails, to be used to match an estimated \$137,000,000 in federal and other funds?

For more information: https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_2016_ballot_measures

Ranked Choice Voting Educational Initiative: Coming to a Classroom or Senior Center Near You!

Last edition, we announced an exciting new partnership between the League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund and FairVote Maine to continue the Education Fund's on-going commitment to conduct citizen education and outreach on election systems with a focus on Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). The goal of this project is to educate Mainers on RCV through presentations across the state.

Finn Melanson serves as the Project Manager and brings a wealth of RCV-related work experience to this initiative, having served as the Communications Coordinator for the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting and FairVote Maine since October of 2014.

Through the end of August, Finn will oversee the progress of this program. So far, the project has been well-received by Mainers across the state. To date since January:

- Over 80 letters to the editor have been published on Ranked Choice Voting
- school presentations have reached nearly 1,000 middle school and high school students in over 40 classrooms across the state; and
- more than 30 presentations in senior centers and retirement communities have been scheduled for the spring, summer, and early fall.



Over the next few months, the Education Fund will be seeking additional opportunities to engage with Mainers. One of the most effective ways to make an immediate impact is by activating personal and professional networks of friends, family, neighbors, or coworkers and reaching out to those who may have a connection in a local school or senior center that would be interested in hosting a presentation. We are seeking League volunteers to help with these efforts and take part in the presentations.

For more information about getting involved with this project, please contact Finn Melanson at finn@lwvme.org.

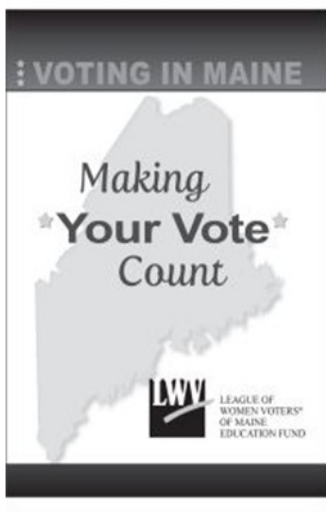
LWVME Welcomes Summer Intern Sarah Palmer!



Sarah is from Winterport and currently a sophomore at Wheaton College double-majoring in political science and women and gender studies. She is delighted to be interning with the League of Women Voters of Maine this summer. Throughout this internship, Sarah hopes to gain knowledge and skills that will be useful in the future, as she plans to pursue a career in public policy. She is also thrilled to be working with an organization that deals with issues surrounding civilian participation in government, a topic about which she is very passionate. Overall, Sarah is “super excited” to be interning with LWV of Maine, and hopes to have a great experience.

Exciting New Education Fund Publication: *Voting in Maine: Making Your Vote Count*

Barbara Kaufman, South Freeport



The League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund and the Voter Services Committee are so pleased to be able to share this new publication with you. This new resource covers the basics of voting in Maine to make sure all Mainers know how to exercise their right to vote when election season comes around.

You might wonder how educational resources like this one come to be. Well, it all gets back to you, the voter, and below is the story of how this particular brochure was born.

League groups throughout the state are concerned with voter registration and voter education, and this is a very strong focus for the LWV of the Portland Area (PA). So far this year, volunteers have registered 138 new US citizens at 12 naturalization ceremonies and 115 new voters at local high schools. What a wonderful achievement guided primarily by the leadership of League member Peg Balano. These numbers indicate the strong desire of our newest and youngest eligible voters in Maine to have their voices heard by exercising the basic right and responsibility of democracy.

While celebrating these successes, the LWVPA Board discussed the confusion most citizens, new or not, have about the details of voting in Maine. The board asked Sarah Robinson, who coordinates the annual publication of the Easy-to-Read Maine Voter Guide, to start researching and drafting a new “How To” pamphlet for Maine voters. The statewide Voter Services Committee of the LWVME pitched the idea to the LWVME Education Fund and easily won both financial support and content guidance.

A fortunate aspect of a growing LWVME is that different geographic areas serve as incubators for both new ideas and actions. For example, the Bangor area group has inspired Chapters around the state to incorporate book groups into their programming, while the Down East Chapter has a great relationship with local radio. Brunswick members are now rebuilding the Chapter there and will undoubtedly find their special way of contributing to our collective efforts.

You can find the link to the pdf version of the new brochure on the home page of our website at www.lwvme.org. To request hard copies, please contact us at 207-622-0256 or lwvme@gwi.net.

Mark your Calendar!

National Voter Registration Day

September 27, 2016



Learn more at: <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>

Local League Updates

Portland Area League Update

Barbara Kaufman, South Freeport

On May 11, 2016, the LWVPA held its third Annual Meeting which was a wonderful blend of our past, present, and future. The agenda included refreshments, a terrific keynote speaker, reflections on the past year, a very moving tribute to a key founder of our “new, improved” Chapter (please see article on Karla Wight and the Emily Farley Award), and a business meeting to elect new board members, approve a budget, and set goals.



Danielle Conway, Dean of the University of Maine School of Law, Keynoter in Portland.

Our keynote speaker was Dean and Professor of Law Danielle Conway who joined the University of Maine School of Law on July 1, 2015. She is nationally known as a leading expert in public procurement law and entrepreneurship, and as an advocate for minorities and Indigenous Peoples. Dean Conway has authored numerous [books, book chapters, and articles](#). Dean Conway has also delivered numerous speeches since July 1, 2015, predominantly focusing on two themes: first, the role of a public law school in the larger community and, second, the imperative to recapture the narrative of the lawyer and the legal profession.

We owe the existence of this recently reconstituted Portland Area Chapter primarily to the leadership and development skills of Karla Wight, who received the Emily Farley Award. The Emily Farley Fund, part of the Maine Community Foundation, serves as the Portland Area League’s Education Fund. Emily Farley was a beloved leader and committed League member. The last time the award was given out was in 2000, when Jana Lapoint received the honor. Jana and Lorraine Glowczak both presented the award to Karla.

At the meeting, members celebrated the terrific success of the October 2015 Mayoral Forum; the completed consensus meetings on both the Constitutional Amendment and Money In Politics studies; a PPL/League book discussion on *Madison’s Music*; the “How to Communicate with your Legislator” program that featured Joanne D’Arcangelo’s presentation and a panel discussion; the moderator training with Anne Schink; our successful continuing partnership with the Portland Public Library’s Choose Civility Project; our house party for Clean Elections; a meet and greet event; and, most of all, our active membership.

After reflecting on the past year’s activities and achievements, members approved the recommended 2016-17 budget and goals with high expectations for next year’s work and growth.

The new LWVPA Board includes: Barbara Kaufman, President; Peg Balano, Vice President; Polly Ward, Secretary/Treasurer, and Directors Karma Crawford, Maria Elizabeth Cushing, Elaine DiGiovanni, Valerie Kelly, and Meghan McCormick.

The new Membership and Nominating Committee includes: Sarah Robinson, Chair; Anne Schink, and Karla Wight. Another member will be selected at the Board retreat in June.

The new Emily Farley Fund Advisory Committee includes: Marsha Bingler, Chair; and members Lorraine Glowczak, Jana Lapoint, Polly Ward, and Karla Wight.

The LWVPA Board will hold a retreat on Saturday, June 11 to develop an action plan that is sure to include voter registration and information forums during this busy election year.

LWV-Downeast

Ann Luther, Trenton

The League of Women Voters – Downeast has three projects underway this spring.

We are continuing our 2016 edition of the popular radio program, the Democracy Forum series, on WERU FM Community Radio. The programs broadcast live from the WERU station in East Orland, Maine at 10:00 am on the third Friday of every month. The hour-long format features interviews with expert guests and listener call in during the last half-hour.

WERU transmits from Blue Hill, Maine and serves the central coastal and Downeast regions of Maine. WERU can be heard at 89.9 FM, in Bangor at 99.9, and streams live on the web at weru.org.

Here is the program schedule for the rest of our 2016 productions:

May: Us vs Them: Is Government the Enemy (Colin Woodard and Amy Fried)

June: Press or Propaganda: Free Speech, Free Press, and the Future of Democracy (John Christie and Michael Franz)

July: Privatizing Public Policy: Shadow Networks, Private Foundations, the Private Drivers of Public Policy Innovation (Theda Skocpol)

August: The Civic Mission of Public Education

September: Engineering the Electorate: Gerrymandering and Redistricting: Recent State Action and Court Rulings; plus Voter Participation: Obstacles and Opportunities

October: Five Ballot Question in Maine (includes Ranked Choice Voting)

In addition, LWV-Downeast is partnering with the Ellsworth American and the Community Union of Hancock County to present a forum for area candidates in contested primaries. The event will be held at the Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers on May 31 at 6:30 pm.

Finally, we are continuing our monthly book group. We just finished reading Colin Woodard's new book and loved it: [*American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*](#). We will turn next to Ari Berman's, [*Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*](#). That discussion will be on Wednesday, May 25th, 5:00 p.m. at Ann's house.

* * * *

LWV-Bangor

Barbara McDade, Bangor

Members of the League in Bangor are hosting a book discussion at Season's Restaurant on May 31 at 5:30 p.m. The book is [*Let the People Rule: Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of the Presidential Primary*](#) by Geoffrey Cowan.

Let the People Rule tells the story of the four-month campaign that changed American politics forever. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt came out of retirement to challenge his close friend and handpicked successor, William Howard Taft, for the Republican Party nomination. To overcome the power of the incumbent, TR seized on the idea of presidential primaries, telling bosses everywhere to "Let the People Rule." After sweeping nine out of thirteen primaries, he felt entitled to the nomination. But the party bosses proved too powerful, leading Roosevelt to walk out of the convention and create a new political party of his own.

League members will also start planning for next year, including plans for candidate forums, registration drives, and fall programs.

MEET KARLA WIGHT - Emily Farley Award Recipient

Lorraine Glowczak, South Portland



Each League member offers a level of commitment, active participation, and leadership that contributes to the success of the League and its mission. Without these qualities, there would not be a LWV as we know it today. On occasion, certain individuals come along whose level of devotion and contribution create an impact with a punch. Their energy and passion are contagious and their mere presence, genius. One such person is Karla Wight, a member of the League of Women Voters of the Portland Area, who was the recipient of the 2016 Emily Farley Award at the LWVPA Annual Meeting on May 11th.

Karla comes to the Portland Area League by way of Seattle. In fact, the LWVPA would not have celebrated their 3rd Annual meeting if Karla had not moved to Maine. In 2011, Karla was disappointed to discover that the LWVPA was a dormant organization. She immediately set out, working diligently to reignite the spark that had been absent for 10 years. The third annual meeting is proof of her success. Who is this exceptional Karla Wight?

Born Karla Dona Lothrop in 1934 in Wakefield, MA, Karla was the first child of Donald Lothrop, a Unitarian minister, and Helena Lukomska, a Polish immigrant and social worker. When Karla was four, the family moved to Brookline, MA to be near the Community Church of Boston, of which her father had become the new clergy. As a result, Karla, as well as her sister and brother, became a part of the “family business,” working on duties of community efforts that come with the obligations of a minister’s family. Additionally, her outgoing father and studious mother were both politically active. Mr. Lothrop ran for town office, while Helena was active in her own right, picketing for things that mattered to her such as the right to birth control. This community-active and civic-engaging family set the stage and prepared Karla for her adult life.

Karla completed her Master’s at the University of Washington and worked as a Psychiatric Social Worker until she had her first daughter, Kelly, in October 1959. As was expected of a woman of the 1950’s, Karla quit her job to become a full-time mother. Although she dearly loved her newborn child and enjoyed being a mother, it wasn’t long until Karla felt something was missing. Her conversations with others now included subjects such as potty-training and other homemaking topics. Not having the intellectually stimulating discussions she once had, Karla asked a friend out of frustration, “Is this all there is?” It was that friend’s recommendation that led Karla join the LWV and changed not only Karla’s life, but also the life of the League.

Without hesitation, Karla quickly became involved and joined the League of Women Voters of Seattle in January 1960. In no time, she became a Unit Leader, Board Member, and Membership Chair, working persistently on civic issues facing her new home’s community. The civic work with like-minded and equally passionate individuals was the intellectual stimulation she so dearly missed and provided the opportunity to serve the needs of the community that one cannot do alone. Additionally, Karla believed she became a better mother as a result of her work with the League. Her second daughter, Lael, was born in 1965.

Karla remained an active and full time member in the Seattle League until the age of 62 when she was diagnosed with cancer. As a result of the diagnosis, she and her second husband, Joe, retired early and spent their summers at their camp in North Conway, New Hampshire. They would return to Seattle in the winter where Karla resumed her volunteer work. Karla is now cancer free.

Continued on page 14

Karla Wight - Continued from Page 13

In 2007, Karla and Joe moved to Portland to be near his sons as her husband's plight with Alzheimer's began deteriorating. Upon his death in 2011, Karla was ready to join and meet members in her new League home. It was at this point she was saddened to discover the inactive Portland Area League. She turned that disappointment into action, and through hard work and dedication, re-established a thriving, fully active organization. It is for this very reason that she was the recipient of the Emily Farley Award, the first given since the LWVPA re-launched.

Karla is still an active, passionate, and motivating member with the LWVPA and remains an honorary member with the LWV-Seattle. Thank you, Karla, for your enthusiasm, dedication, and incredible, extraordinary spirit!

Emily Farley Award – Established over 15 years ago by the LWVPA in honor of long time member Emily Farley. The award recipient must meet the following criteria:

1. Has substantially increased respect for the League of Women Voters in the community.
2. Has demonstrated outstanding leadership ability (motivating others, initiating new ideas and directions, taking risks).
3. Has demonstrated high standards of performance (thoroughness, reliability, attention to detail, organization).
4. Has shown deep commitment to the purposes and processes of the League.
5. Has given devoted service to the League.



LEAGUE OF
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52ND NATIONAL CONVENTION

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FOR ALL**

June 16-19, 2016
WASHINGTON, DC

The graphic features a blue silhouette of the U.S. Capitol dome on the left, set against a background of a crowd of people in various shades of blue and grey. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of blue, yellow, and red colors.

LWVME — CALENDAR

Friday, May 20
10–11:00 AM

WERU 89.9 FM and
99.9 FM Bangor
Streaming at WERU.org

Democracy Forum — Us vs. Them: Is Government the Enemy? LWV Downeast hosts a radio program on democracy in cooperation with WERU FM. Special Guests: **Amy Fried**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Maine, nationally recognized expert on American politics and the political uses of public opinion and **Colin Woodard**, whose recent book is *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*.

Friday, May 20
11:45 AM

Bangkok Restaurant
78 Downeast Highway
Ellsworth, ME

Lunch with Amy Fried, professor of Political Science at UMaine. She is internationally recognized expert on American politics, particularly the history and political uses of public opinion. Please join us RSVP at downeast@lwvme.org

Wednesday, May 25
5 –7 PM

Ann's House

Downeast Book Group. Ari Berman's new book, *Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*. Call 460-9587 to RSVP and for directions.

Tuesday, May 31
5:30 –7 PM

Season's Restaurant,
427 Main St
Bangor, ME

Bangor Book Group. *Let the People Rule: Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of the Presidential Primary* by Geoffrey Cowan. Discussion of Primaries.

Tuesday, May 31
6:30–8:30 PM

Ellsworth City Hall
Council Chambers
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth

Candidate Forum: Hancock County Contested Primaries. LWV–Downeast is working with the Ellsworth American and Community Union of Hancock County to present this forum for candidates in contested primaries.





League of Women Voters of Maine
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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 on line 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: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (home): _____ Telephone (cell): _____

Email: _____ Check amount: _____

- ☐ Introductory Member (First Year) - \$25 ☐ Student Member - \$25 ☐ Single Member - \$55
☐ Two-person household - \$85 ☐ Mentor (Supports First-Year Membership Program) - \$100