



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Summer 2014

Quad States 2014: Looking to Future Cooperation

As usual, the Annual Quad States Conference left its attendees excited and energized by the very fact of having spent time together in a stimulating environment with those of like interests.

Record numbers attended this year's conference, with the addition of Massachusetts and Connecticut to the roster.

LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara headlined the 8th Annual Quad States Leadership Conference, where she explained the recommended program to be voted on at the LWVUS Convention on June 6-10.

The LWVUS Board recommended a comprehensive three-part program combining study and review of key, specific structures of American democracy, consisting of: 1) a study of the process of amending the U.S. Constitution, including constitutional conventions; 2) a review and update of the League position on campaign finance in light of forty years of change since the Watergate reforms, in order to enhance member understanding of the new schemes and structures used to influence elections and erode protections against corruption in our political process, and to review possible responses to counter them in the current environment of rapid change; and 3) a review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress, through the existing LWV redistricting task force, for the purpose of developing action steps.

This program is proposed because the League needs member agreement on what to do, particularly in response to various state legislatures' resolutions proposing a national Constitutional Convention in response to the so-called Citizens United and McCutcheon decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court. We must understand Article V of the Constitution.

A report from the LWVUS Convention can be found on p.

The focus of this year's event was a compact signed by the New England Governors to cooperate on infrastructure to bring "more affordable, cleaner, and reliable power" to the six states. To get there, the governors pledged to work together on an "increasingly interdependent" investment strategy to build new pipes, lines and generation sources, including renewables.

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Message from the Board Summer 2014

As many of us leave for summer vacations, let us remember that Democracy cannot take a vacation. It must always be ready to prevent discrimination and injustice. It's always striving for voter equality. Campaign Finance Reform has been a focus of the League this year, and the Champlain Valley League invited Sen. Ginny Lyons to speak at their Annual Meeting. It was Sen. Lyons who initiated the resolution in the Legislature to amend the constitution in response to the disappointing decision by the Supreme Court in Citizens United vs. the FEC. This decision by the Supreme Court has been seen as a threat to the voice of the people. We can be proud that our National League President, Elizabeth McNamara, spoke right up against this Supreme Court decision.

Sue Racanelli represented Vermont at the LWVUS Convention in Dallas. Her report on the business of the Convention can be read on p. .

We should remember to take the message of the League everywhere we go, and ask people to join is in our mission the protect voter rights, to meet basic human needs, and to address climate change.

There are League events this summer in which you can participate. On July 3 you can march in the Montpelier parade and on July 20 you help with the fundraiser to benefit the LWVVT Ed Fund by contributing time or refreshments at the Williston rest stops on 189. Perhaps there's an event in your town where you can register voters. Simply go to your town clerk's office and pick up some voter registration forms to have on hand whenever and wherever you find people who need help registering to vote. In doing so, you might also discover potential League members who would raise our membership statewide.

Like many local Leagues around the country, Vermont's have had trouble filling traditional board positions. In response to this trend, the LWVUS has designed an alternative "streamlined" leadership structure. Instead of electing the usual President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer plus directors, a simpler "Leadership Team: of at least four members may be adopted. The only designated officer required is treasurer. All other jobs, "convener," membership coordinator, communications, are distributed to take advantage of the strengths of individual team members. The Central Vermont League adopted this structure three years ago, and Champlain Valley did so at this year's annual meeting.

The state board welcomed Dottye Ricks (LWVCEN) as Treasurer at their May meeting. And this month with regret and good wishes they accepted the resignation of Claudette Sortino, who is entering the political fray.

*Jean Hopkins,
State Board*

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our great T-shirts! \$15 plus \$3 S&H. E-mail your order to hertzrader@myfairpoint.net.

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Report from Dallas: Power – Our Voices Our Votes

The League of Women Voters held its 51st National Convention, June 6-10, in Dallas at the Omni Downtown Hotel. The hotel surprised us on our first night, when it boldly lit up the night sky with the LWV logo!



Over 640 delegates from 47 states plus the District of Columbia participated at the convention. *(Delegates averaged 630-646 per day. However, here were more than 700 attendees.)*

Aside from a break for lunch and dinner, the day started at 7:30a.m. and ended at 10 p.m. with a choice of 31 caucuses on a variety of issues including voting rights, human trafficking, climate change, economic inequality, redistricting, and money in politics, and 17 workshops ranging from *Building an Effective Board Team* to *Create a 12-week Fundraising Program*. The Saturday morning caucus "*Building A Diverse League: How to Recruit Younger Members*" overflowed the room and into the hallway resulting in The Young People's Task Force scheduling a second standing room caucus.

Plenary sessions, a venue for witnessing parliamentary procedure at its most intricate and finest, began with Committee Reports followed by a presentation of proposed national program and motions to adopt board recommended and not-recommended concurrence resolutions, and study items.

For 2014-16, the two program items proposed by the National League were both adopted.

1. A comprehensive three-part program combining study and review of key, specific structures of

American democracy including campaign finance reform, the constitutional amendment process, a redistricting reform for the U.S. Congress.

2. Concurrence with the LWV New Jersey Human Trafficking position opposing all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

LWVUS also recommended retaining all current League positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. (www.lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions)

In addition to the items proposed by LWVUS, delegates had the opportunity to consider several proposals brought forward by the caucus process. Pro and con microphones placed around the room



allowed for vigorous and thorough debate as speakers were given two minutes to state their case before delegates voted to accept studies, concurrences, and resolutions.

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Quad States, Cont'd from p. 1

To better understand what this agreement might mean, organizers invited Jack Cashman, former head of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, and Lea Aeschliman, former member of New Hampshire's Public Utilities Commission to discuss ISO-NE, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and how our environment is affected by and can be protect from our continually growing energy consumption.

ISO (Independent System Operator) New England is an independent nonprofit regional transmission organization serving CT, ME, MA, NH, RI and VT. It oversees the operation of New England's bulk electric power system and transmission line (the "Grid") generated and transmitted by its member utilities. ISO New England was created in 1997 to manage the regional bulk power system and new wholesale markets and ensure access to transmission systems.

RGGI is a cooperative effort among the states of CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NY, RI and VT to cap and reduce CO₂ emissions from the power sector.

A workshop led by Pam Person, League member from Maine who also serves on 8th LWVUS Climate Change Task Force and Launa Zimmaro, board member and advocacy chair from LWVMA, led a workshop explaining LWVUS positions and made suggestions how we can advocate at the state and regional level on the issue of energy and climate change.

To follow up on the discussions and information taken from the conference, a smaller group [New England Regional Advocacy Collaborative] with representation from all six states in attendance held a Webinar to discuss next steps to be taken by the New England state Leagues.

The Webinar resulted in formation of two subgroups, one working on energy and climate change, led by Sally Davis, LWVNH) and one working on campaign finance and voter rights, led by Ann Luther, LWVME. The subcommittees will look for areas of collaboration in advocacy on these issues. They will meet again in July. The six

Leagues will share information electronically on *all* issues of common interest through Drop Box.

Local Leagues Hold Membership Socials

The Leagues of the Champlain Valley and Central Vermont held by-invitation social events in April to introduce attendees to the League and invite them to join.

The Champlain Valley soiree was held in the Montreal Room of the Windjammer Conference Center in S. Burlington, and featured a talk by former Governor Madeleine Kunin and entertainment by Vermont stand-up comedian (and former state Rep. from Burlington) Jason Lorber.



VTTrans Deputy Secretary Sue Minter addresses LWVCEN gathering.

The Vermont Thrush Tavern in Montpelier was the scene of Central Vermont's event. Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation Susan Minter stepped up to address the group when scheduled speaker Deb Markowitz was not able to attend. Background guitar music was supplied by Colin McCaffrey, award-winning Vermont singer, songwriter, producer and instrumentalist.

A good time was had by all, and the two events garnered five new members of the League.

***Vermont Works for Women
Releases Disturbing Report on the Status
of Young Women in Vermont***

*(The following was excerpted from material received in
April from Vermont Works for Women)*

Vermont Works for Women released a sobering report in May 2013 about the state of young women in Vermont related to school, work, and becoming adults. Entitled ***ENOUGH SAID: Why We Should Listen and What We Can Do***, the study identified barriers young women say they face when envisioning and making choices that will affect their futures, including too few allies and role models, limited exposure to career options, lack of personal finance skills, and ongoing peer aggression.

Much has been written recently about the fact that young women are entering and graduating from college at higher rates than their male counterparts. What is often underreported, however, is the fact that women continue to live in poverty at higher rates than men, across all age and educational levels. Female-headed families, which represent 22% of all working families, are 39% of low-income working families. The costs of women's poverty – to individuals, to their children, and to our economies – are significant.

While Vermont should be proud of its high school graduation rate – at 91.4% the highest in the country – a number of signs indicate that we have more to do to ensure that the next generation is ready for college and/or work. The report, *Enough Said*, considers how well we're preparing young women, who are twice as likely to live in poverty as their male counterparts, to make informed, deliberate choices about education and work and to shoulder the financial responsibilities of adulthood. The unfortunate answer: not well enough.

Tomorrow's economy will demand individuals who think expansively, solve problems, are comfortable with ambiguity and can work collaboratively. Vermont will need a workforce that is persistent in the face of failure and flexible in

the wake of change. The creative forces that underpin a robust economy – entrepreneurial innovation, scientific discovery, a willingness to take risks – are fueled by emotional engagement, the freedom to experiment and fail, and a clear sense of purpose.

The full report (which can be found at www.vtworksforwomen.org) offers recommendations for how we can do more to help young women realize their personal potential, and main-tains that we must do more if Vermont is to realize its full economic promise.

Vermont Works for Women is a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 to help women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue and excel in work that leads to economic independence.

Local Leagues to Host July Fundraiser

For the fourth consecutive year, the Leagues of the Champlain Valley and Central Vermont will be serving coffee and goodies at the north- and southbound I89 Welcome Centers in Williston (Exit 12). Donations for the refreshments will benefit the LWVVT Education Fund, which grants three \$750 scholarships to the winners of the Fund's essay contest for high school seniors, and supports other League voter service activities.

Volunteers are needed to greet travelers at the centers, preferably in two-hour shifts, from 10:00 a.m. To 4:00 p.m. on July 20. We also need cookies or savory finger food to be contributed by our members. In the past two years, hotdogs and buns have been donated. Electric skillets are a tidy way to heat the 'dogs, and if a couple of members have one to loan, that would be great.

Let Kate know how you can help (catherine.rader@myfairpoint.net; 802-229-4737). And thank you for your continued support.

Dallas, Cont'd from p. 3

Approved

1. Resolution supporting a price on carbon emissions that will increase in stages, as part of an overall program to improve energy efficiency and to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, fast enough to avoid serious damage to the climate system. (*LWV of New Castle County, DE*)
2. Quickly appoint the committees to review our campaign finance position and to study the process of amending the Constitution, in order to arrive at a comprehensive national action program that will support the aspirations and content of our position and mobilize our members. We call upon those committees, as well as the newly-formed committee on redistricting, to move quickly, deliberately and collaboratively to produce results that will allow the League, unified and strong, to participate fully in local, state and national efforts to reclaim our democracy. (*LWV of MA*)
3. Advocate for passage of legislation that restores voting rights in federal elections to citizens with felony convictions who have been released from prison or who have been paroled or placed on probation and use the resources of LWVUS to provide support to Leagues who are working to repeal state felon disfranchisement laws. (*LWV of Clackamas County, OR*)

Defeated

1. Review and update LWVUS Agriculture position approved in May 2014, focusing very narrowly on the consumer's right to accurate and comprehensive food labeling, including information about genetically modified organisms, nano-materials, and other food, feed, or ingredients produced through the use of inadequately tested, potentially harmful new technologies. (*LWV of Chester County, PA*)
2. Consideration of the not-recommended study item, Alternatives to Partisan Primaries. (*LWV of Cuyahoga Area, OH*)
3. Study on Economic Inequality which would identify the social and political impacts of economic inequality on our democracy and seek appropriate policy solutions. (*LWV Berkeley Albany Emeryville,*

CA) Fails in narrow standing vote because most thought we had no time for two studies.

4. Concurrence with the LWV-Kansas position on "Living Wage," which, in brief, is "Encourage establishment of a living wage policy by government and for profit businesses that receive tax incentives and other public funds." (*LWV Berkeley Albany Emeryville, CA*) Card Vote: Total Votes Cast = 471; Yes = 254; No = 214; Spoiled Ballots = 3. Two-thirds vote required.

Out of Order

LWVUS actively support all efforts in the US and, particularly those 15 states who did not previously vote to amend the Constitution with the ERA- Equal Rights Amendment. (*LWV of Nevada, NV*)

Other

Per Member Payment (PMP) was approved at its current rate of \$31 for FY 2014-15. The motion to increase PMP for 2015-16 to \$32 was approved. PMP accounts for 18% of total revenue of LWVUS.

Election of Officers

There was a rare challenge from the floor for the position of LWVUS President. Challenger Deirdre MacNab, President of LWV Florida campaigned on a platform of increasing membership and collaboration. A Candidates Forum and hour-long debate with questions and answers from the con-vention body allowed the candidates to share their vision and hopes for the League, Though it was a good fight, MacNab lost her bid, 2-1. Elisabeth MacNamara was reelected President for a third term.

In her acceptance speech, Elisabeth challenged delegates: "Our communities are stronger because the Leagues are there. Let's not be afraid to keep getting in the way and make a difference on big money and campaign finance reform, redistricting climate change and voters' rights.

Power Our Voices, Power Our Votes Awards

Effective Member Engagement and Recruitment

Award: League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade County. Through 18 Cocktails & Conversation events targeting young professionals, saw a 64 percent increase in membership.

Strengthening Democracy Award: League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area for its 2012 Young Adult Voter Education Project targeting youth in grades 11-12. Over 800 students voted in a mock election and the City Clerk's office trained 50 students as poll workers.

High Impact Visibility Award: League of Women Voters of New Jersey. Compelling 20-minute documentary "Storming for the Vote: Hurricane Sandy and the Election captures the obstacles New Jersey voters faced when Super-storm Sandy hit one week prior to the November 2012 General Election..

Community Connection Award: League of Women Voters of Collier County, Florida for their Know Your County Government Teen Citizenship program in public schools and 4-H.

The four-day gathering was a success, giving members the opportunity to celebrate the League's accomplishments on voting rights, campaign finance reform, and the environment and reminding us that our critical role is advocacy and our job is to initiate the change.

Speakers' Comments

Annise Parker, Mayor of Houston and Opening

Speaker: *"Government is not a necessary evil. Government is a necessity. Government is about us. It allows us to provide for the common good."*

Steve Murdock, PhD, Sociology Chair at Rice University and former Director of the U.S.

Census Bureau: *"The future of the United States is tied to its minority populations. And how well they do is how well America will do"*

Ray Martinez, former U.S. Election Assistance

Commissioner: *"Online secure voting. Not the present but could be the future"*

Ann McGeehan, formerly of the TX Secretary of State office: *"Schools should be used as polling places. Election day should be in-service days for teachers, day off for students."*

Peter Levine, Director, The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE): *"Citizenship = deliberation + collaboration + civic relationships."*

Wade Goodwyn, National Public Radio: *"The League must always be there to bear witness."*

All of the speakers commended the League for our work on behalf of neighborhoods and voters throughout the country and urged the organization to press forward using our community-based power on the critical issues of the day including money in politics, voter protection and environmental issues.

The following is taken from the novel The Land Across, by Gene Wolfe (Tom Doherty Assoc., New York, 2013).

APPENDIX

This is a lecture and you do not have to read it. I just want to say something about dictators and dictatorships.

Dictators get in when democracy sucks. The elected governments do a bad job, one after another. Or they are so crooked the elections no longer matter and nobody cares. Are dictators bad? Sure. But some are worse than others. Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot were about as bad as they come, but there have been a whole bunch of others. They were bad, too, but look at the governments they replaced and the governments that replaced them.

If you do not want a dictatorship here, vote. But be careful who you vote for, and be careful about who gets on that ballot. Democracy means rule by the people, and if the people will not do the job – well, somebody is going to step in and do it for them.

Spreading democracy is a really good idea and I am all for it. Just keep in mind that ruling is work. It means staying informed and making the tough choices. And if the people do not want to do the work of ruling, democracy will not work. It is a lot easier to shoot a dictator than it is to replace one with something better.

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