



League of Women Voters of Central Vermont

Bulletin

Summer 2015

Summer Message

Ah, summer is almost here! For some, it means a few months of rest and relaxation (and scouring garage sales!) For others, it more time to enjoy the great outdoors. For us at the League, it is planning the year ahead, which, in addition to our legislative agenda, will center on two priorities.

1. Growing our membership. The League's voice is strong and powerful and, in today's world of political misinformation, is very much needed by voters as a source of factual and trustworthy information. In Central Vermont, while most people are aware of The League and associate our work with "registering voters," they are surprised to learn of our broad scope and realize that we share common values. We have steadily gained new members and this has been done by simply asking a friend, relative, colleague, or acquaintance. Our goal is to develop a membership plan and focus on the value of a League membership - we welcome your input and help. In the meantime, tell someone you know about the League and what we do, and ask if they would like to join us.

2. Sponsoring a Speakers Series. We would like to offer a series of discussion and insight on League issues relating to civic participation, money in politics, improving government, defending the environment, advancing health care, gun safety, and immigration. Please call Kate (229-4737) or me (225-6032) or email iracansue@gmail.com if you have ideas or thoughts on definitive topics, potential speakers, or possible co-sponsors. We were fortunate, in March, to hear Peter Levine of CIRCLE, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement give a rich and interesting presentation on *What is A Good Citizen?*

Keep in touch with us and have a wonderful summer!

Sue Racanelli

Like us on Facebook at League of Women Voters of Vermont!

2015 Annual Meeting

A lively and engaged group heard Washington County State's Attorney Scott Williams speak at our 12th annual meeting on May 13.

Williams described the process of evaluating whether a case should be prosecuted: does the evidence support a conviction, is a diversion program a better alternative?

These questions have important consequences for Williams and his staff. The Washington County State's Attorney's office now prosecutes about 2000 cases a year. A large number for a constituency of about 60,000 people. Williams has been in this job for about four months, and is examining why the crime rate is so high.



To some extent it's because there are a lot of laws. He is working to prioritize the case load, and gave as an example trying to work with Fish and Wildlife, whose cases are often not pursued.

Drugs are a huge problem, being an aspect of more than 75% of the cases handled by his office. Williams sees drugs as a public health issue, which should be addressed with a public health

model. It's an institutional problem, and must be addressed as such.

While acknowledging that some are incorrigible, Williams is trying to reduce the case load through such measures as mediation and restorative justice, recognizing that not all violators are “bad guys.”

Institutional change takes civic participation, and willingness to get beyond what we “know” about those who people his world.

At the business meeting preceding Williams' talk, the membership adopted a new budget and were encouraged to step up to take a leadership position in our League. Sue Racanelli appealed for help in increasing our membership. All members can contribute in this effort by *asking* friends and acquaintances to join the League.

Every year, League leadership is given “directions to the board” by membership. This year we were exhorted to continue and enhance our mission to educate voters on the issues. One way the League in Vermont does this is through our series “Spotlight on Issues” on public access television. We have also begun a relationship with the Montpelier *Bridge* which has potential for being a League outlet for balanced information about the issues.



Come to the Parade!!!!



Don't just come to it – be in it!

*We're signed up to be in Montpelier's Independence Day parade on
Friday, July 3*

*You get to hear the roar and applause of the crowd
(one of our very best visibility opportunities)
a respond with the royal wave.*

March with us – it will be the most fun you'll have all year.



We're looking for a truck to decorate (with our class 'Democracy is not a Spectator Sport' banners). Can anyone help us out with locating one? The parade starts around 6:00, we meet at the starting point about 5:00. E-mail Kate, catherine.rader@myfairpoint.net, if you can march (in a League T-shirt), find/drive a truck, help decorate same. If we can't find a truck, we'll march with the banners anyway.

2015/16 Calendar

Here is the tentative Calendar of Events for the coming League year. We will be adding some public events – movie, speaker, etc. - and welcome your ideas. We would also like your help in planning our holiday event. Help us make this year the one you want for the League.

July

Friday 3 Independence Day parade. Be part of it!!!

Aug.

Monday 10 10:30 a.m. - Leadership Team Meeting. Location TBD. All members welcome

Sept.

TBD 9:00 a.m. - Noon -Naturalization ceremony/reception/voter registration, State House

Saturday 19 Sen. Leahy Women's Economic Opportunity Conference, 7:30 a.m.- noon, VTC, Randolph

TBD National Voter Registration Day

Oct.

Monday 12 10:30 a.m. - Leadership Team Meeting, Location TBD. All members welcome.

(Tentative) Consensus, LWVUS Study on Money in Politics/Constitutional amendment

Nov.

Monday 9 10:30 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting. Location TBD. All members welcome.

Dec.

TBD Holiday event

Jan.

Monday 11 10:30 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting. Location TBD. All members welcome.

TBD National Proram Planning

Feb.

TBD 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., LWVVT Legislative Day, the State House

March

Tuesday 1 Town Meeting Day

Thursday 10 Movie, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, co-sponsored by Kellogg-Hubbard Library.

April

TBD Public event

May

TBD LWVCEN Annual Meeting

June

Thurs-Sat 16-18 LWVUS Convention, Washington, DC



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