



League of Women Voters of Central Vermont

Bulletin

Summer 2014

June Message

Summer is usually pretty quiet for our League, but not this year!

July will be especially exciting. The League will be hosting the Democracy Tent during Montpelier's July 3 Independence Day celebration. This is one of the biggest such event in the state, and since it's an election year, the Democracy Tent will be buzzing. We will be registering voters and providing a place for candidates to meet the voters, display their campaign literature and post their signs. Come one, come all. And, of course, we need your help to pull this off. Contact me (Kate) at catherine.rader@myfairpoint.net or 229-4737 if you can contribute an hour or two between noon and about 7:00 p.m.

Just as important for our visibility, we want to be in the parade! Tens of thousands of people come to Montpelier's parade, and there's no better time or place to be seen. And it's more fun than you can imagine. The crowd loves us, and you get to practice your royal wave. Again, let me know if you can join us.

Later in the month, July 20, we will be partnering with the LWV Champlain Valley at the 4th annual fundraiser at the Williston Welcome Center to benefit the LWVVT Education Fund. See details in the box on p. 2.

Elsewhere in this *Bulletin*, read about our successful membership event and our 10th Anniversary. On p. 5, Sue Racanelli writes about her adventures at the LWVUS Convention in Dallas, TX. She covers the personal experience of convention here, but in the June state newsletter, the *Green Mountain Citizen*, she reviews the business of the convention, including the election of a new board and adoption of program for the next two years. Be sure to read it.

Later in the summer and into the fall, we'll be hosting at least one candidate forum, registering voters, and working on campaign finance and climate change. Join us!

Most important, we hope to increase our Leadership Team, to help us see these activities through. Make life-long friends, gain valuable skills, and have fun. To learn more about what being part of the Leadership Team means, talk to me or to Sue Racanelli, or come to our next Leadership Team meeting and observe first-hand how we work.

Kate Rader

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

April Event Brings Three New Members

Twenty-three LWV Central VT members and guests gathered at the Vermont Thrush Tavern in Montpelier on the evening of April 23. The explicit purpose of the event was to recruit new members to our League.

The event served its purpose well. At the end of the event we welcomed three new or returning members: Sandra Levine (Middlesex), Sue Minter (Waterbury) and Tess Taylor (Barre).



Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres were provided by the restaurant.



Guests mingled before Minter's talk.

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.

In her talk, Minter spoke of the importance of civic involvement, and the role of the League in education and engaging the public in the political process.



Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Transportation Sue Minter speaks to the group.

Music was provided by Colin McCaffrey, award-winning Vermont singer, songwriter, producer and instrumentalist.

We wish to acknowledge the support of the LWVVT in presenting this event.

HELP WANTED

On Sunday, July 20, the LWV of Central Vermont and the Champlain Valley will again hold a fundraiser at the Williston rest areas (north and south-bound I89) in support of the LWVVT Education Fund. The Ed Fund awards three \$750 scholarships to VT high school seniors through an essay contest

We are soliciting individual-serving baked goods (cookies, muffins) and helpers to work in two-hour shifts from 10:00 a.m. To 4:00 p.m. Please contact Kate (catherine.rader@myfairpoint.net; 229-4737) if you can help.

LWVCEN Celebrates Ten Years

The LWV of Central Vermont was officially recognized as a local League at the LWVUS Convention in 2004. On Sunday, May 18 we celebrated our 10th Anniversary with sparkling wine and cider, and birthday cake! The League is a volunteer organization, administered by volunteers. So the cake, too, was made and decorated by volunteers.



We're better at voter service and advocacy than baking fancy cakes.

Following brunch, the annual business meeting was held. The current Leadership Team, Sharon Dinitz, Sue Racanelli and Kate Rader will remain in place, but are actively looking for a couple (or more) of additional members to guide the Central VT League through the next year.

This election year, the LWVCEN plans to hold at least one candidate forum, and will look to social media venues to make candidates' ideas and views known to their constituencies. We will also advocate on local issues as appropriate, and, we hope, help the state League as part of a legislative observer corps.

At the close of the business meeting, LWVCEN member Lindy Biggs gave a thought-provoking talk on climate change and sustainability. More about her presentation can be found on p.



Lindy Biggs makes a point during her talk at Annual Meeting. On the left is long-time member Hedi Ballantyne.

The League of Women Voters was founded 94 years ago. It was an experiment, to help newly enfranchised women understand the political process. Founder Carrie Chapman Catt called the League a living memorial to the suffrage movement.

In 1916 the National Women's Suffrage Association worked on all fronts to secure the vote for women, and accepted incremental progress to reach that ultimate goal. The League is doing that now – working to protect voting rights (still necessary after all these years), to combat corruption and undue influence in campaign finance, to secure health care for all, to slow climate change... *The League stands for what you care about. As the LWVCEN enters its second decade, join in that proud tradition, and help us to grow to be ever more effective in fulfilling the League's mission of education and civic engagement.*



Mission of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Banking Forum Attracts a Crowd

It was standing room only in Room 10 of the State House on April 16 when the LWVCEN presented a forum on public banking.



Left to right: Chris D'Elia, Sen. Anthony Pollina, Beth Pearce and Gwen Hallsmith discuss the pros and cons of public banking on April 16.

Moderated by LWVCEN member Claudette Sortino, chair of the study committee, the panelists were: Washington County Sen. Anthony Pollina; VT State Treasurer Beth Pearce; Gwen Hallsmith, founder of Global Community Initiatives; and Chris D'Elia, President/Treasurer of the Vermont Bankers Association.

The panel provided a clear summary of the pros and cons of a public bank for Vermont, and proved to be a good resource for those participating in the LWVVT's study of public banking. You can see the discussion by going to <http://www.orcamedia.net/>, scroll down the list of videos to Spotlight on Vermont Issues - Public Banking Forum.

What is Your Ecological Footprint?

LWVCEN member Lindy Biggs spoke at our annual meeting on May 18. A historian by training, she was Director of the Sustainability Program on the campus where she taught.

Her topic, *Climate Change: the big picture*, is a daunting one, in scope and in solution.

Simply stated, the carrying capacity of the earth has been exceeded.

Bill McKibben, in *The End of Nature*, was one of the first to warn us of the consequences of man's impact on nature, and impending climate change wrought by our activity. Others, reaching the same conclusion, have been more or less sanguine about our ability to stop, slow, or adapt to the changes that are even now taking effect.

Paul Kingsnorth sees a bleak picture "we are no longer facing a 'problem' that can be solved but we are now in a 'predicament' of ecological loss that we have to figure out to survive." A more optimistic view is held by Jim Schultz, who writes "Things that we value are going to be lost," but he has not lost hope. His message: 1. be strategic 2. practice activism biodiversity 3. use the power that comes from acting on our deepest convictions, know that what is truly possible never reveals itself until we take the risk to seek it."

Much can be done to brighten our prospects. First is to use less energy. We have the knowledge and technology to do this, if we can muster the political will. Along with that, we must reduce consumption. This is difficult, especially for individuals, but change can be done – examples are reduction in smoking, the use of seat belts, and on a less personal basis, ending the depletion of the ozone layer.

The Ecological Footprint estimates the amount of land and ocean area required to sustain your consumption patterns and absorb your wastes on an annual basis. An interesting tool to determine your own ecological footprint is the Ecological Footprint Quiz. It is a tool to measure how many earths are needed to provide everyone in the world with a particular standard of living. Using this tool, it appears that we can't get under 2-3 earths to provide a U.S. standard of living to all, whereas it would take about 1/3 earth to meet Afghanistan's. You can measure your own eco-footprint at <http://www.myfootprint.org/>.

Big In Dallas! Back From National Convention.

When Kate asked me to represent our League as a delegate at the 51st biennial National Convention in Dallas, I wasn't sure what to expect. The convention, with its theme *Power: Our Voices, Our Votes*, was held June 6-10 at the Omni Downtown Hotel. More than 640 delegates from 47 states plus the District of Columbia were in attendance.

Friday, June 6th was a long day...I left home around 8:45 a.m. and arrived at the hotel shortly after 6 p.m.



Although a bit tired, I went to the Registration Desk right away and received my tote with program booklet, folder of information, envelope with shrink-wrapped red and green

voting cards, and badge.

The program booklet, I was told, was my bible – everything I needed to know was in the book! Flipping through its pages, I was in total shock as I noted that meetings began at 7:30 a.m. and went on till 10 p.m. All I kept thinking was...but Kate goes to bed by 9!!

Following a quick dinner, I hauled myself to the 8 p.m. workshop on “Healthcare.” However, my weary mind was unable to comprehend that the Caucus on the Affordable Care Act & Beyond was the same as Healthcare!! So, I walked in late to hear Linda Mahan, LWV Larrimore County, CO say, “*Is Sue Racanelli from Vermont here?*” Caught off-guard without my notes, I started stammering over my words about Vermont’s goal of Universal Single Payer Health Care Coverage - *and I hope Jean Hopkins can forgive me!* But Linda was good - and gracious. She had Jean’s report and read it to the group. Later, she took the

time to help me understand the Convention’s program and suggested I attend the Delegate Briefing to get an overview of the proceedings.

Aside from that little mishap, being at the Convention was exciting, invigorating, and checkered with high drama! Interesting guest speakers, a

challenge from the floor for President of LWVUS followed by a debate between incumbent and challenger, hotly debated motions



Campaign buttons for President.

and resolutions, “closed door” card vote, roll call of states, caucuses, training tracks, and parliamentary procedure at its finest.



Go to a pro or con microphone to be recognized in debate.

Speakers included Houston Mayor Annise Parker, Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Steven Murdock of Rice University, *Governing Magazine’s* Peter Harkness, former U.S. Election Assistance Commissioner Ray Martinez, former Director of Texas Elections Division Ann McGeehan, Peter Levine of CIRCLE, Patrick Bresette of Public Works, and NPR National Desk Correspondent

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

Delegates had a choice of 31 informative caucuses on a variety of issues including voting



Working hard at a training session.

rights, human trafficking, climate change, economic inequality, redistricting, and money in politics, 17 workshops ranging from *Building an Effective Board Team to Create a 12-week Fundraising Program*, and a technology series.

Attending the different workshops and caucuses, I was continually impressed by my fellow Leaguers... their collective experience and insight, their tremendous knowledge and understanding of issues, the articulation with which they voiced their opinions, the civility, camaraderie, and adherence to parliamentary rules.... I had to keep reminding myself that we are all volunteers here bound together by the common cause of civic responsibility.

During the Roll Call of States, it was so good to hear all the great work done by leagues across the country. I had one bragging minute at the podium to share the accomplishments of our League and spoke of the ORCA interviews, State Bank Study and Forum, and Fourth of July Democracy Tent.



Proudly representing LWVVT in Dallas.

President Elisabeth MacNamara, in her opening address, said, *“Right now, we are facing the greatest assault on voting rights in 50 years. Our focus on the most basic right of democracy is well placed and we are well placed to discuss it.”* The challenge to local leagues at the Convention is to:

- Run five voter registration events
- Hold one candidate forum/debate
- Pursue an online voters guide on Vote 411
- Meet with local election officials
- Identify five key media contacts & communicate monthly
- Follow up with registrants, volunteers, & online networks
- Take advantage of LWVUS and state trainings.

My experience was eye-opening and affirming as well as exhausting and sobering. It was a great convention and I am home with enthusiasm and lots of great ideas.



!!! 2014 Quilt Raffle !!!



Front



Back

Dimensions: approx. 5'4" x 5'4"

To benefit the League of Women Voters of Central Vermont

Tickets: \$1/each \$5/6



LWV Central VT

1186 Towne Hill Road
East Montpelier, VT 05651

Calendar of Events

July 3	Thursday	Noon – 8:00 p.m. Democracy Tent, State House Lawn and Independence Day Parade, Montpelier
July 20	Sunday	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. LWVVT Ed Fund Fundraiser, 189 Welcome Center, Williston
August 26	Tuesday	Primary Election Day

**Like us on Facebook at League of Women Voters of Vermont
and
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