



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Summer 2022

Women Power Democracy at National Convention

(Sue Racanelli)

The LWVUS 55th National Convention, held in Denver from June 23-26, was a time of community, inspiration, and action. It was the League's first hybrid Convention, with more than a thousand members from all 50 states joining. Betty Keller and I were in Denver while Mary Alice Bisbee, Jean Hopkins, and Kate Rader joined virtually.

The most noticeable change: it was a fully digital, paperless convention! We used the app Bizzabo to view the agenda, access sessions and locations, communicate with other delegates, and vote. LWVUS had a bank of technicians on hand to help delegates with any difficulties encountered!

The Convention coincided with the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion. There was a visible pall at breakfast Friday morning, as word spread among members of the Supreme Court decision. That evening, LWVUS staff quickly organized a protest and Betty and I marched with Convention attendees to the Colorado State Capitol Building and rallied with other Denver activists for abortion justice.

During the three days of plenary, delegates elected the 2022-2024 LWVUS Board of Directors, voted on several motions, including various bylaws amendment proposals, and attended dozens of workshops and caucuses. Betty was involved in organizing *Crises in Health Care - Quality, Equity, and Affordability: The Search for Solutions*, a caucus designed to facilitate better understanding of the crises and solutions around healthcare.

Delegates approved a non-recommended concurrence with Connecticut's Digital Equity position, as well as the recommended concurrences with New York's Health Care Update and California's Criminal Justice positions. The program proposal for continuing *Making Democracy Work* was expanded with reference to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and addition of "the election of the President by popular vote." Dr. Deborah Turner, President, spoke of the League's longtime commitment to abolishing the Electoral College, even though it might take another century to accomplish.

Delegates narrowly approved a structural transformation proposal to move to a unified dues system and eliminate annual Per Member Payments (PMP) to LWVUS by 2024. This will make it simpler and easier for anyone to join the League. LWVUS will collect dues, distribute funds collected, and maintain the membership roster. State and local Leagues will continue to send out renewal notices.

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Message from the Board

Summer 2022

Some thoughts about membership in the League of Women Voters of Vermont.

I have been a League member for longer than I can remember, but what I do remember is the wonderful women I have met and experiences I have had by being a member of the League. Starting from my first League connections, I remember watching people like Vee Gordon, Amy Bond and Jean Norton testifying at the State House; the annual dinners at Mabel Buttolph's home in Burlington; and joining Sherry Worrall, Claire Anderson, Louise Ransom, Ginny Walters and others for dinner meetings at Wake Robin in Shelburne.

In early the early 2000's I mistakenly thought I had to drop my membership on the Chittenden County Board when I ran for the Vermont House representing Charlotte, so I lost contact with the League for several years, but I mostly kept paying my dues and attending the dinner meetings, and a few years ago I was recruited to be on the state Board as treasurer, and my connections started all over again.

The other Board members are some of the most interesting, committed and fun people I know and that I'm lucky enough to spend time with: Anne Mixer is doing a great job with the Youth Voter Registration; Maddy Motta is very involved with getting the "Voting in Vermont" brochure translated into several languages; Marguerite Adelman is working hard on non-citizen voting; and Sonja Schuyler, Susan Kuecker and others have recently have been working on organizing two candidate forums. We have also recently hired Mj Bouvier to help increase our visibility. Of course, this all would never happen if we weren't led by our irreplaceable leader, Sue Racanelli, who is aided by our very competent secretary, David Horton.

So, in addition to the good works that the League does, I am happy to be connecting with some of you from years ago as well as welcoming new ones coming into this fold of amazing women and men doing good and worthwhile work.

Debbie Ramsdell

Scenes from the LWVUS Convention



Betty Keller and Sue Racanelli at LWVUS Convention.



Rally for abortion rights at Colorado's Capitol.

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Membership in the League includes a subscription.

If you would like to join the League, go to our website,
<https://my.lwv.org/vermont>, or write:

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2022 Winona Smith Scholarships Announced

The LWVVT Education Fund board has awarded four \$1,500 scholarships to Vermont high school seniors. This year's winners are:

Kimberly Cummings. Kim is the daughter of Angela and John Hurd of Chester. Her career plans include becoming a computer scientist at NASA. She has been accepted by many schools including Worcester Poly-



technic Institute and Rochester Institute of Technology. Kim has been active throughout high school as an officer in student government, in sports while taking on AP courses, and excelling in academics. Kim achieved all this while working as a dog sitter, tutor and taking care of local farms.

Bethany Davis. Bethany is the daughter of Ken and Nikki Davis of White River Junction and is a graduate of Hartford High School. She hopes to become a writer and teacher so that she can help others the way in which she has been supported. She has been accepted to Castleton University. Bethany is very active with Special Olympics, Hartford Parks and Recreation, West Lebanon Congregational Church, the arts & music, and sports. Her academic achievements are superior and was recognized as Outstanding Student of the Year in 2020-2021, National Honor Society among several others.



The final test of a leader is that she leaves behind in other women the conviction and the will to carry on.

--Walter Lippmann

Sarah Evans. Sarah is the daughter of Catherine Gott & Taylor Evans. She was involved in many activities throughout high school. She made Honor Roll, Summa Cum Laude; is a member of National Honor Society; leader of her school's Environmental Club; co-founder and leader of REACH (Racial Equity Activists Club for Humanity); elected member of Student Leadership; integral part in revamping her high school's Gender Sexuality Alliance; editor of the yearbook; member of Youth Lobby; volunteered over 75 hours with Girls on the Run; and was a varsity soccer player, alpine ski racer, and competitive high school sailor. For two-years, Sarah served on the town of Stowe Energy Committee—the first high school student in Stowe to serve on a town commission.



Janaya Parsons. Janaya is the daughter of Tracy and Jonathon Parsons of Fairfax. She graduated from Bellows Free Academy. Janaya has been accepted at four schools and hopes her education will allow her to become an editor at a publication company or a reporter/journalist for a news organization. Janaya has been a volunteer at ECHO Leahy Center and worked in Martha's Soup Kitchen. She has been active in student council, as vice president all four years, along with many other school activities including music, National Honor Society, and sports. She has earned recognition for her many efforts.



LWVVT Hosts Two Successful Candidate Forums

(Sonja Schuyler)

The League held two pre-primary candidate forums, for Secretary of State, on June 22nd, and U.S. House of Representatives on June 30th. Thanks to the hardworking committee - Anne Mixer, Debbie Ramsdell, Marguerite Adelman, Susan Kuecker, and Sonja Schuyler - both were very successful. Mj Bouvier provided her expertise for social media coverage.



Moderator Tom McKone, Secretary Of State candidates John Odum, Chris Winters, Sarah Copeland Hanzas, and H. Brooke Paige.

The Secretary of State Forum took place at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum with the Athenaeum and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Burlington Chapter as co-sponsors. It was streamed live over KATV's YouTube channel and recorded. Bob Joly, Athenaeum Director, provided tremendous support for the on-site event. Tom McKone moderated. The three Democratic candidates, Chris Winter, John Odum, and Sarah Copeland Hanzas; and the Republican candidate H. Brooke Paige participated. The Progressive candidate, Robert Millar, had accepted the invitation, but was unable to attend at the last minute. Jez Harrington was the question screener.

The forum for the U.S. House was a Zoom event. We initially reached out to the Vermont Commission on Women and WILPF as co-sponsors. Cary Brown, Director of the Vermont Commission on Women agreed to moderate. With the large number of candidates, we decided to do a Zoom event and focus on issues affect-ing women, children, and families. We then

secured co-sponsorships from other organizations that are focused on these issues: Vermont Works for Women; Women Business Owner's Network, Vermont; Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; Voices for Vermont Children, and Vermont Women's Fund. Each of the co-sponsors provided a question for the candidates.

All seven active candidates accepted our invitation. Unfortunately, Ericka Reddic, one of the Republican candidates, had a family emergency and was not able to participate. The participating candidates were: Becca Balint, D; Sianay Chase Clifford, D; Molly Gray, D; Liam Madden, R/I; Louis Meyers, D; and Anya Tynio, R. Sarah Henshaw was the Zoom master for the evening and did an outstanding job with this very full program. ORCA Media provided live streaming and recorded the event.

Both forums can be seen on our website at <https://lwvofvt.org/watch-recorded-forums>.

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Delegates also approved five resolutions:

- Reproductive Rights
- Immigration Reform
- Climate Emergency Declarations at local and state levels
- Statehood for the District of Columbia
- Support for increased attention to the problem of murdered and missing Indigenous people

The League shared its 2020-22 Biennium Report, <https://bit.ly/LWVUSBienniumReport>, which showcased the League's impact over the past two years.

If you would like to listen to recordings of the caucuses, there are about 50 topics covered including healthcare, elections, youth, digital equity, climate change and more... . Please contact Sue Racanelli at lwvofvt@gmail.com for access.

League Members Address Group of International Women Leaders

Madeline Motta, Jean Hopkins, and Sonja Schuyler addressed a group of 23 women leaders from 23 different countries in the US for a US State Department program, *Women in Politics and Civil Society*, on June 22nd at Contois Auditorium. The Vermont host for the program was the Vermont Council on Foreign Affairs.

Sonja gave an overview of League history nationally and in Vermont, noting some of the programs that the League successfully lobbied for nationally, such as Child Labor Laws, Social Security, Civil Service, UN membership, Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, and Voting Rights Act. She also noted Vermont successes such as land use planning, state clean water protection, Ethics Commission, and simplifying voter registration and voting.



Madeline Motta speaks at the US State Department program, Women in Politics and Civil Society.

Madeline spoke about the Ethics Commission, prisoner voting, and her role as a UN Observer for the LWVUS. Jean told about her work on a national League caucus working for health care for all, and her job as a local elections official.

We enjoyed a lively Q and A with the participants about elections, voting, and holding election officials accountable.

New Citizen Voter Registration is Back

(Joanne Necrason)

As the daughter of a naturalized American citizen I take the LWV effort to register new citizens both seriously and joyfully.

On June 22nd I had the good fortune to represent the League at a Naturalization Ceremony which took place during a very special Grand Opening of the new building for United States Citizenship and Immigration Services on Mountain View Drive in Colchester. This is the USCIS Burlington Field Office.

The new building was the result of planning, effort and funding by many Vermonters and agencies. Because it was a big deal the giant tent at the Grand Opening was filled with easily 100 people. Many of them either were or were representing state, federal and local office-holders and dignitaries. There were also lots of uniforms.

Speeches were crisp with the pride of the agency's history and accomplishments. The presentation of the flags and a choral group were quite thrilling. All of this made the eventual swearing in of the newly naturalized citizens more meaningful and connected to our local and national history.

My interactions with the 14 new citizens and their families and the usual beautiful baby was, as always, so heartening and enjoyable.

On the local news that evening I was totally thrilled to see and hear a gentleman with whom I had spoken, dressed in his shirt from the Congo, tell the interviewing reporter that he was very excited and planning to vote in the August primary and November election.



LWVVT Joins Reproductive Freedom Rally

On Saturday, May 14, the LWVVT joined Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and others in a national protest of the (then) pending SCOTUS decision that would reverse nearly 50 years of precedent and explicitly end federal constitutional protections for abortion. The final decision came down on June 24th. This affects almost half of the United States, greatly banning or restricting abortion rights, and affecting other reproductive and sexual health services.

The REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS Day of Action in Montpelier, an event that was part of the national event, also supported Vermont's Reproductive Liberty Amendment.



Registering voters at the rally.



The Reproductive Liberty Amendment will be a ballot measure in Vermont's 2022 General Election. If passed, it would permanently protect every Vermonter's right to make their own reproductive decisions, like whether and when to become pregnant, use temporary or permanent birth control, or seek abortion care.

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After a Two-year Hiatus, Montpelier's Independence Day Parade Was Back, and So Were We!



Ferguson Leads Redistricting Workshop

Johnna Ferguson led an activity at American Legion Auxiliary Green Mountain Girls State, a civic and leadership camp on June 19, for students who just finished their junior year of high school, hosted every year at VTC -



Randolph. Her panel focused on redistricting and gerrymandering, with the delegates splitting into groups, given a certain number of voters from different parties, and told to create new voting districts. The 15 delegates split into four groups, and

organically created four different kinds of redistricting maps: two gerrymandered for either political party, and two created fairly with a slight favor towards one party or the other. Vermont just went through the redistricting process after the 2020 census, so it was a great way for the delegates to understand some of the many nuances and intricacies of redistricting.

Youth Voter Project Update



Anne Mixer has announced that the Youth Voter Project, which registers eligible high school students to vote, has received a \$700 grant from the LWVUS to work at five to seven schools. Six more volunteers have been trained for the project.

The first event was held at Spaulding High School in Barre on April 13. To date, others have been scheduled for U-32 in East Montpelier and Montpelier High School

LWVUS Statement re: SCOTUS Decision on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*

"Today's ruling strips women and those who may become pregnant of their bodily autonomy and will have devastating — and immediate — consequences across the country. While the Court's opinion was expected, its harm is extreme and real. When women and those who can become pregnant can no longer make reproductive decisions for their own bodies, they are no longer equal individuals in our democracy. This harm will exacerbate societal inequalities and fall disproportionately on people of color and low-income communities already facing egregious obstacles to health care.

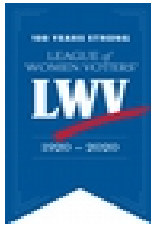
"The decision foreshadows the erosion of other well-established Constitutional rights including marriage equality, access to contraception, and the right to engage in private, consensual intimate conduct.

"The dissenting Justices get it exactly right: today's majority opinion is an assault on the constitutional guarantee to equal protection of the laws and the right to due process. With this decision, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other historically marginalized communities have no guarantees that their civil rights will be protected.

"The League of Women Voters stands in our power with our reproductive partners and all persons who fear the dangerous consequences of this decision. We will use our anger to fight in the legislatures, in the courts, and in the streets. We call on our elected leaders at the state and federal levels to act swiftly to restore bodily autonomy to all people.

"Women hold the power to create a more perfect democracy. We will not stand by as constitutional rights are stripped away, one by one. Women's rights are human rights, and we will continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored. Our lives depend on it."

"The League of Women Voters filed an amicus in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Learn more about the case [here](#).



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