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The Maine Voter vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 1984)

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Maine League of Women Voters

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THE MAINE VOTER

Vol. 1., No. 1.

The League of Women Voters of Maine

Winter 1984



Betsy Sweet, David Bustin and Representative Masterton

League Day on the Hill A Savvy Success

The League's annual Day on the Hill in Augusta was held on January 11th from 9AM until 3PM. The program included a Blaine House reception, state committee updates and an educational workshop on "how to lobby" your legislators. Despite this savvy program, both membership and legislative attendance were moderate.

The day started off with a reception at the Governor's residence where members were free to mingle with the dozen or so legislators who attended. A representative from Presque Isle, Mary MacBride, told this reporter about some of the hardships facing her northern constituents, such as the difficulties in reviving a degenerating potato processing plant and the high rate of unemployment. She assured me, however, she "loved" her job and found it very fulfilling.

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Inside: ERA countdown pg. 3; Citizens' Day pg. 4; President's Column pg. 2; Calendar pg. 8; Natural Res. pg. 7

League Speaks Out on National Security

In its first foray into the arms control debate, the League of Women Voters of the United States on Dec. 9, 1983 announced its support for a bilateral, mutually verifiable freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons followed by reduction of those weapons.

In a related action, the League announced its deep regret that the INF and START talks have been suspended and will urge the merger and resumption of these negotiations.

These two actions are results of the League's newly determined position in support of arms control measures. The League's 111,000 members across the country participated in the development of this new position which was ratified by the League's national board of directors.

In announcing the new position, League President Dorothy S. Ridings said, "The League is entering the debate at a critical juncture, World tensions are high, the government's commitment to arms control is being challenged, and citizens are looking for some progress towards arms reductions. The League brings a well-informed, politically active grassroots network to the debate to help citizens translate their concerns into concrete actions."

Other actions resulting from the new position include:
-support for a Comprehensive Test Ban
-support for negotiations to prohibit deployment of anti-satellite weapons
-opposition to the deployment of space weapons that would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

An overwhelming majority of local Leagues participated in setting this new position. "We had responses from

Continued on page 7.

President's Column

Program planning time is here. A time for reflection and a time to look ahead. Where do we take the LWVME? Will we make the decisions today to make the LWV an attractive organization for future members?

The past ten years have been marked with change and challenge. We studied energy, farmland preservation, national security and low-level radioactive waste disposal. During this time, demands on leaders and members changed. As the LWV became more visible providing services and products citizens respected and wanted, the time each volunteer could give grew less. Currently we have seven local Leagues and one MAL Unit for a total of about 450 members--and still growing. But, we are still trying to manage the LWVME the same way we did forty years ago--all volunteer and no office.

Being a League leader and member is a great opportunity to be educated on the issues, to meet people, to learn management and leadership skills, and to learn to handle challenging situations and projects. Being a League leader has been a great experience for me. I have been called for public speaking engagements, and to help students with civics projects, to testify at public hearings, to attend national meetings, as well as being interviewed by the media on my opinions on public participation in government. Most recently, I was invited to serve on the Maine Municipal Association's Advisory Commission. All of these experiences came to me because I hold a leadership position with the League of Women Voters.

However, all of these projects and events take time. These special experiences require lots of time for organizing, writing, typing, mailing letters and memos, hundreds of phone calls and much following-up to talk, support, cajole and lobby members, citizens, donors and legislators. With this in mind, look at a woman's changing lifestyle these days and you will find that time is at a premium. Leaders

are getting fewer, not because the LWV is not a great place to be, but because we demand almost a fulltime commitment. Women and men will be future League leaders because it offers so many opportunities, but they can no longer make a full time volunteer commitment.

What can the membership of the LWVME do to assure that the League will continue in the style to which we have become accustomed? If we want to keep an experienced leadership and a strong LWV for future members we must plan now to make important commitments to our organization.

One way to support leadership is to provide a state office and a part-time office manager. I realize this is a big step but let's look at the advantages: 1. All our records and materials would be in one central place. 2. a place where mail, questions and information could be directed 3. a place to organize fundraising efforts 4. a place to organize publication sales 5. central place to handle membership 6. more consistent communication with local Leagues 7. more visible organization in the state.

What would this major commitment be? It would mean paying rent, telephone and a part-time office manager. A staff person would cost \$4 per hour for 20 hours per week and this would be \$3840 per year. We already budget \$1500 per year for a telephone. Rent could range from \$1200 to \$1800 per year. We would be looking at an additional financial commitment of about \$5000 to \$6000.

You must be asking how can we do this? If we assessed every member \$5 by raising the state per-member-payment (PMP) it would bring us an extra \$2250 per year. Right now we have about the lowest state PMP in the nation. We might consider that the increased visibility would bring in many new members and thus increase the amount we could realize from membership. The rest would have to be raised through fundraising projects.

The bottom line is, what are our real choices? I finish my presidency in April 1985. This has been a full-time commitment for me and I am not employed outside the home. Of our

Continued on page 7.

ERA for ME: COUNTDOWN TO NOVEMBER

a letter to Carrie

Editor's note: The following is a novel approach taken by Joyce Bancroft, state chair of the Social Policy committee, to summarizing her committee's work and goals. In an open letter to Carrie Chapman Catt, a suffragist and a courageous woman who was instrumental in winning some of women's first legal rights, Jo outlines the work her committee has done this year and the fights we have yet to win to continue in the spirit of her mentor's work.

Dear Aunt Carrie,

Thank you so much for sending the LWV history book. I am always eager to learn of the women like yourself who started the women's movement. You are too modest and we are deeply indebted to you and your friends.

Continued on page 5.

Please return the form below to: ERA for ME.
c/o Jo Bancroft, 80 Hennessey Ave., Brunswick, ME
04011

I want to HELP! I am willing to:

☐ Contribute money. Enclosed is \$ _____. I will pledge \$ _____ more.
☐ Be an area co-ordinator
☐ Help organize a fundraiser in my local area
☐ Help organize an information meeting in my local area
☐ Appear on a local radio talk show
☐ Arrange a spot on a local radio show
☐ Appear as a speaker with local groups
☐ Arrange with local groups for a speaker
☐ Ask ten friends to contribute money
☐ Make telephone calls
☐ Work at an information booth at malls, fairs, etc.
☐ Help with voter registration
☐ Distribute literature
☐ Write a letter to the editor of my local paper
☐ Put a sign in my yard
☐ Put a bumper sticker on my car
☐ Other _____

Please list any skills or experience you have that would help the campaign, such as speaking, writing press releases, producing brochures, fundraising, writing tv or radio ads, office skills, press contacts:

Events in my local area between April, 1984 and the November election where an information booth could be used include (give name of event, date, and location):

Name: _____ Telephone: (home) _____ (office) _____
Address: _____

why ME?

What we have in Maine

The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment could give women equal rights but for over 100 years it has not been interpreted to do so.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 applies only to government employees.

Title IX of the Educational Amendment bans federal assistance to discriminating educational institutions but has been weakened by recent interpretation by the current administration.

Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, access to public accommodations and extension of credit based on, among other things, sex. Other Maine laws "sex neutralized" through recodification include tax, education and labor laws. However, there are many other areas which are not so obviously sex discriminatory such as family law, health and welfare, corrections and especially common law upon which a significant number of court decisions are based.

What we want in Maine:

"Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged in this state because of the sex of the individual."

Why we want it:

-To provide a clear, consistent basis for interpretation of state and federal laws.

-To include all areas of discrimination not now covered.

-To eliminate the need for piecemeal revision and enactment of laws.

-To ensure the rights of future generations of Maine men and women.

Continued on page 8.

Response to name change

Two League members responded to an editorial in the Fall Maine Voter on the question of "should the League of Women Voters change their name" to a less sex-biased one. Lack of room prevents printing the letters in their entirety, excerpts follow.

From Elinor Multer, Orr's Island
Dear Editor,

I respect your strong feelings on the question of changing the name of the LWV, however, I think your emotions have gotten in the way of some other things, such as civility and common sense...I have no strong view on whether we should change our name.

Primarily, I think your argument that a name change will make us more attractive to younger women is based on flimsy evidence, if any. If our average age is 52 (and I am in no position to prove otherwise) then I agree that we need to ponder how to attract younger members; however, I know of no evidence to suggest that changing our name would be of much help. If you have some, I suggest you present it.

Let me suggest that your proposition is an extremely sexist one. You are saying that the way to attract intelligent, concerned young women is to involve men. I think that is insulting foolishness. Young women have shown again and again that they are ready to join an organization that does what they want to do in the way they want to do it. The hook does not need to be baited with men. Members of both sexes will join us if we match their needs.

From Elizabeth Doble, Brooklin
Dear Penny,

Suffice it to say that I disagree (with the editorial.) As the LWV, we have national recognition, political strength, and an excellent reputation. Why should any of us (male or female) get "hung up" on a name, when there is so much real work to be done? I take pride in the name as it stands; it celebrates the hard won achievements of our mothers and grandmothers...

Citizens' Day at the Legislature

March 15, 1984

Thursday

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 8:30-9:45 | <u>Registration</u> - \$3...\$2 for LWVME Members |
| 9:15 | Attorney General James Tierney "Effect of State ERA on Maine Citizens" (<u>remember</u> , we vote on this in November) |
| 10:00 | Attend Legislative Session |
| 11:00 | Representative John Michael (Auburn) Campaign Finance Issues in Maine |
| 12:00-1:00 | Lunch--invite your legislator to lunch! |
| 1:00 | Press Conference--League President Penny Harris will announce our support for the state ERA |
| 1:30 | Attend a Hearing--Information on interesting hearings that day will be provided at registration. |

I especially liked the quote by Mrs. Schoonmaker addressing the League in those early days (1921): "You women...are going to align yourselves with some political party. Will it be the best? There is none. Make up your minds which is the least bad, hold your noses and go in." This was particularly striking to me since some of our Social Policy committee members here in Maine have been attending the party caucuses. As you know, the Democrats have long carried the Party's commitment to the ERA on their platform but since Mr. Reagan came to power the GOP has been forced to drop it. Our state League has determined to try to win them back and our strategy is to speak at several county platform caucuses asking them, in the best LWV tradition, to make a public commitment to our state ERA which will be up for a referendum vote this November. Last Sunday I was much encouraged by the comments I received at the Lincoln Co. caucus. We are also planning to testify in Hancock, Waldo, Cumberland, York and Sagadahoc Counties.

We are having a good year with regard to Women's Issues in the LWV. One of the state groups we have joined is the Women's Legislative Coalition whose purpose is to target specific legislation and lobby it through the process into law. There are seven pieces of legislation being watched this session.

You'll be pleased to hear of the State ERA Steering Committee's activities. As the "hub" of strategy for all groups interested in getting the ERA passed, the Steering Committee seems to be off of a vigorous start. Our state LWV is preparing the pamphlet which will be used by this and other groups in the state-wide campaign. We hope to have it published by mid-March. At our last board meeting we distributed lovely green buttons which boldly say, "ERA for ME", which has become the campaign's slogan. I'll send you one for your collection! Of course we are trying to raise money for the campaign. As

women we seem reluctant to open our purses; it is more our nature to volunteer to do something (also necessary, but...) now it's time to "put our money where our mouth is," and fund this campaign because we will not fail. I can't bear to think of what will likely happen to the rights of women if Ron R. is reelected. His future appointments to the Supreme Court will surely undo much of the progress we have seen in the last two decades. That is why we need the ERA in our state now, after the election may be too late.

We have two important meetings coming up. On March 15th we will sponsor a Citizens' Day at the Legislature, an annual event our League has carried off for years and the best opportunity for guests and new members to see our state Capitol and Legislature in action. At 9:15 that morning, Gene Tierney, our State Attorney General will address the group about the effects of an ERA in Maine. I am looking forward to Mr. Tierney's remarks.

Last fall the LWV joined Family Planning to sponsor a legislative update with Senator Cohen. We will have the second meeting--an up-date with Senator Mitchell--on April 7th. This is a classy operation--the LWV members will be invited by mail.

I am learning something about your work and sacrifices for the cause of women as I see the time and effort these priorities demand. Equal Rights for women--our daughters and granddaughters, our nieces, our neighbors and friends--are worth whatever it takes. I only hope our society won't make the price too high. I'll be in touch.

Fondly, Jo (Bancroft)

Help Wanted

Needed: State VOTER editor beginning August 1984 for one year. This is a chance to learn editing and writing techniques and to contribute to the League in one of its most visible and rewarding positions. Call Penny Harris: (207)-947-4737



Following the reception, everyone filed over to the State House to hear Senator Judy Kany, chair of the State Low Level Waste (LLW) Siting Commission, speak on the progress of her commission's work. The LWVME state board Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Carol Fritz, has been closely following this commission's work (particularly Energy chair Julie Howison.)

Senator Kany began on a highly complementary note, saying she was, "very, very pleased with the quality of the publications," put out by Carol's committee. The Senator then went on to outline her commission's work. In the weeks prior to our Day on the Hill, the LLW Siting Commission had been working on their report to the legislature on the feasibility and attractiveness of Maine joining a Northeast Compact with 10 other states, possibly ending up as the storage site of 40 per cent of the nation's low level radioactive waste. The commission recommended against joining the NE Compact in its present form, and was more in favor of either a smaller compact with Mass., N.H. and Vermont or "going it alone"--storing only our own waste--or being a customer of one of the other compacts.

Senator Kany, in monitoring citizen response to this critical issue, said she was pleasantly surprised at Maines' citizens willingness to have a storage facility. However, she noted that the majority of people who contacted her preferred to store only our own waste, most of which is generated at Maine Yankee.

The LLW Siting Commission's duties are not complete. Their report,

when complete, will probably lead to legislation. Then the questions of how and where to store the waste still must be answered.

Governor Brennan was our next guest. Breezing in on a cloud of reporters and aids, the Governor's address was a brief preview of his State of the State address. His presence that day was shadowed by the crowd's anticipation of his imminent announcement on his decision whether or not to run for the National Senate. We now know what his decision was but that morning most people thought they were looking at a future senatorial candidate, not so much a governor.

The Governor made a six point speech, outlining his priorities for 1984:

- Education--the need for a teacher's career ladder

- Prisons--the need for increased housing

- Abused and neglected children--they need attention

- Retirement--the state can't afford to support early retirement practices of state employees

- Retail liquor--the state should get out of that business

- The MX missile--he stood against it

Mention of a national issue like the MX prompted us to look at one another knowingly, concluding that he would surely run for senator... surprise, surprise. Maxine Harrow, Membership chair, then made the Governor an honorary LWVME member, complete with a "Democracy is not a Spectator's Sport" bumper sticker.

After lunch, everyone returned to an informative session organized by Jane Roy, the state Action chair. A panel discussion on "how to lobby" your legislator was presented. The panelists included David Bustin, State Personnel Commissioner, Betsy Sweet, Director of the Maine Women's Lobby and Nancy Masterton, League member and State Representative from Cape Elizabeth.

The State Board is considering a better-timed more business-rather-than-social event next fall. Your suggestions are welcomed, and needed.

by Martha Wolfe

President's Column (cont.)

current board, five are employed and four have major time commitments elsewhere. Finding a new president who is an experienced League leader is doubtful, if we don't support her/him with some organized staff help. We have a year until our next convention. We must start planning now for the kind of support and program we are going to give the next president and board of directors. There is a real need for local presidents and state board members to hear your thoughts on restructuring and setting program for the LWVME. What are you willing to support with your time, money and talents?

The LWV is an important political education and advocacy organization--not a social club. The public depends on the objective information we provide on both sides of many issues and our fair, non-partisan informed look at candidates for elective office. The demand for our products and services is increasing and, if we want to be responsive, we have to provide this help promptly or they will go elsewhere. Women and men want the opportunities LWV can provide but, modern schedules limit the time one person can give. Can we join together to provide the level of support members and leaders need to continue our high level of service? Do you feel the LWV is important enough to deserve this kind of support? Remember, we are one of only six state Leagues without a state office.

I know that if you believe something is important enough and you want it, we can work together to have it.

National Security (cont.)

76 per cent of our 1,197 local Leagues an indication of their strong interest in finding solutions to the arms race," said Ridings.

Local Leagues are currently studying US military policy and defense spending. The national League will be evaluating the study's results in the spring of 1984.

Natural Resources Legislative Update

LD 1459- An Act Relating to Hazardous Waste Management: If enacted, its most important accomplishments would be regulation of transportation of radioactive materials, establishment of fees for transportation of four classes of hazardous wastes--including chemical pesticides, explosives and solvents--and create a Hazardous Materials Control Fund,"to be used to protect the public and the environment from dangerous use, transportation and disposal of hazardous materials.

LD 2028-An Act to Establish a Food Policy for Maine:To establish that it is in the best interest of the State to ensure the availability of an adequate supply of food for its citizens by decreasing our reliance on out-of-state food sources, including the protection and improvement of the farmland base. (Many of the League's farmlands positions are included in this bill.)

LD ? - An Act to Protect Agricultural Lands: This bill is being developed and would establish: -The adoption of a state policy to protect significant agricultural lands.-The creation of an Agricultural Lands Protection Board which could establish criteria to define most important agricultural areas. -Agricultural Retention Districts, Districts in towns with strong farmland protection ordinances would become the focus of state agricultural assistance programs because farms with a secure land base are the best investment targets for public funds.

Look for detailed information on these bills in your local bulletin:

LD 1250-An Act to Revise the Classification System for Maine Waters

LD 1993-An Act to Repeal and Replace the Regional Refuse Disposal District Enabling Act

LD 2069-An act Relating to Enforcement of Land Use Laws

LD 1917-An act to Amend the Air Emission License Law.

by Carol Fritz

Why ME (cont.)

How we are going to get it:

The Maine state ERA as a constitutional amendment has been passed by both houses of the Legislature (Feb. 1983) and will be voted upon by the citizens of the state as a referendum item Nov. 6th, 1984. It must pass by a majority.

What you can do:

- Return the "ERA for ME" form below to Jo Bancroft.
- Take a friend to vote Nov. 6th.
by Joyce Bancroft

Members in the News

Maxine Harrow of Bangor-Brewer LWV was recently appointed Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Maine at Orono

Penny Harris, LWVME President, was recently appointed to the Advisory Commission of Maine Municipal Assoc.

Judy Rosetti of Bangor-Brewer LWV was recently promoted to Administrator of Bangor City Hospital.

CONGRADULATIONS!

Calendar

March 15...Citizens' Day at the Legislature...Augusta

March 17-19...New England Environmental Conference...Tufts University Boston

March 22, April 26...State Board

April 7...Legislative update with Senator Mitchell...Augusta Civic Center

April 27...State Republican Party Convention...to be announced

May 4-6...Tri-State Regional LWV meeting...Loon Mountain, New Ham.

May 4-6...State Democratic Party Convention...Lewiston

The Maine VOTER

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Non-Profit Organization

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