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Maine League of Women Voters

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THE MAINE VOTER

Vol. 1., No. 4.

The League of Women Voters of Maine

Fall 1984

President's Column

When Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro came to Portland September 7th she asked to meet with 25 women leaders in Maine. The presidents of several state organizations including Maine Commission for Women, Maine Women's Lobby, BPW, NOW, AAUW and Family Planning were among those who obliged. The group also included women running for office and a woman physician. As president of the LWVME I was also invited. It was an exciting 35 minute meeting. She spoke to us for a few minutes on the importance of getting women registered to vote, informed and involved in this election. She shared some of her experiences on the campaign trail. When asked what issue most concerns women she responded, "national security." She also asked for questions and for us to tell what we were doing here to get voters informed and registered. Ms. Ferraro is an impressive candidate. She speaks well, is composed, and has a good understanding of many issues. It isn't every Presidential campaign Vice Presidential candidate who asks to meet with women leaders for their opinions. This is just another opportunity being your president has offered me.

by Penny Harris

IMPORTANT ERA NOTE pg7

Inside: State Board Notes pp. 2-3;
Voter's Guide pp. 4-5; ERA pg. 6.;
Nuclear Education pg. 7.

ERA FAILS IN MAINE

Why did the ERA fail in Maine? Pollsters show that of the 60 per cent of the population of Maine who declared themselves favorable to an Equal Rights Amendment before the election, only 20 per cent voted in the referendum. Those absentees, combined with the 25 per cent who openly opposed the issue, helped defeat by 283 votes the only Equal Rights contest in the nation this election.

Polls indicate that voter apathy and ignorance were the probable causes for voters staying away from the polls on what proved to be an otherwise bright clear day in Maine. Anti-ERA forces rallied again in the early morning and restated their predictions of the downfall of the society had the Amendment passed.

Representatives from the LWV, ERA for Maine and other Maine women's groups held a press conference to reaffirm their determination to win an ERA on the state level but political critics have unanimously declared the chances for that occurring during Regan's second term extremely small.

Repercussions of the vote in Maine are being felt across the nation. Most women's groups in states considering such an amendment now say their chances of success are dim. They were looking to this Northern New England state to revive the enthusiasm of their voters.

Our survey of voters exiting the voting booths indicated that most voters were suprised to see a referendum question on the ERA. Remarks such as, "I thought we already had one" were heard in addition to the more common recitations of the anti-ERA slogans. One voter said, "I thought

continued on pg. 7.

STATE BOARD

84-85 PROGRAM

NATURAL RESOURCES: Carol Fritz - 767-3737/Hunt Club Woods, Cape Elizabeth, 04107
There are two major areas the State League will be organizing action this year. The activities will include education, observing Legislation, testifying, and lobbying.

1. ENERGY: Julie Howison - 772-1197/262 Capisic St., Portland 04102

Low level radioactive waste disposal is the top priority program area for Energy. The committee will continue to follow the Siting Commission's action. Much of the research has been done and activity is now exploring solutions to waste disposal. The committee will continue to provide information to members and community, testify at meetings our concerns in hopes the solution developed will address our concerns. Members can look for articles in VOTER and possible publication.

2. FARMLANDS: Katharine Meeker - 797-8191/196 Winn Road, Falmouth 04105

There is important legislation being proposed in this legislative session relating to farmland preservation. This committee will work to motivate and educate the membership of the LWVME to the importance of this issue. They will follow legislation, testify to let legislators know our concerns, write articles to inform members. Farmlands is not only a natural resource but is related to global security of our world.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE: Alvin Moss - 422-3627/P.O.Box 305, Sorrento 04677

This program area needs continuing education for members and community. This committee will be watching legislation, lobbying, testifying, and providing resources for members to become better informed on this important issue.

WOMEN'S ISSUES: Maxine Harrow - 843-5289/R#1, Box 50, East Holden 04429

This committee will work on issues important to women. Most important may be comparable worth. This will mean educating members, monitoring legislation, lobbying, testifying. The LWVME will join the Women's Legislative Coalition again this year to form a stronger voice for women's concerns.

"LEAGUE DAY ON THE HILL": (No Chair as yet) Tentative date: Jan. 9, 1985

This is an event which will be from 4:00 - 6:00pm for the purpose of telling legislators about our legislative priorities and program goals. This is to allow League members to meet the new legislators and begin a relationship which we hope will be a positive and ongoing one.

VOTERS SERVICE Jane Saxl - 945-5786, 37 Pond St., Bangor 04401

LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE: Date: March

The purpose of this event is to bring members and guests to the state legislature and see it in session, attend workshops, and hearings. We hope you will become more comfortable with the legislative process and more informed on the issues.

STATE CONVENTION: Joan VanRheenen - 866-4383, 6 Mayo St., Orono

Date: May 4-5 - Samoset Resort- Rockport

This is for all Local Leagues and MALS to send representatives to select the program, the budget, and make bylaw changes for all Leagues in Maine. During this year all local League will be involved in discussions leading to this convention. We will have exciting and informative speakers, workshops and fun at this time. Plan to attend. Offer suggestions on how to have a successful convention.

FUNDRAISING: 1. General membership fund drive: October/November

2. "Take a Chance on a MAINE Experience" - special drawing: Spring

Already prizes include weekend in Bar Harbor and White Rafting Trip.

3. Product/Service Auction which will kick off a campaign for an office for the LWVME. This will take place at state convention. Watch for more details!!

STATE BOARD

ENERGY

Some highlights of what has been happening statewide and what to expect this coming year:

** Carol Fritz, state N.R. chair, met with Aileen Katz (L.W.V. N.H.) and Sonja Schuyler (L.W.V.Vt.) to try and get a tri-state agreement (similar to the concurrence we passed last year) so that we may support the Northern New England Compact. Those two Leagues will take it to their membership for a concurrence this fall.

** The 11 state Northeast Compact is dead; the options at this point are the Northern New England Compact, an agreement with N.Y. state or Mass (if Me. doesn't have to host the site) and going it alone.

** Carol Fritz and other Portland Energy Committee members have been attending the Me. siting Commission meetings chaired by Judy Kantz. The Commission will be making a recommendation to the legislature this Dec. or Jan. The Commission has directed the Dept. of Env. Protection to study engineered storage and disposal facilities to determine their environmental, engineering and economic feasibility. They are also negotiating with Mass., N.Y. and any other state that might receive Me.'s low level waste. They have also directed the staff to look at alternatives for interim storage (5-10 years) and to undertake a geological investigation around the Me. Yankee vicinity to see if there is a location suitable for an engineered above-ground facility.

** Results of the energy questionnaire: The top three priorities were to continue following low level waste legislation and take action when needed; to follow other energy legislation and; to study high level waste and federal laws.

by Julie Howison

MALs

If you are a Member At Large and would like to be a voting delegate at state convention in May you need to plan now. Ballots need to be sent to the LWVME state office by January 1, 1985. This ballot must contain a 130 word statement on qualifications and reasons for wishing to serve as a delegate. MALs who are not in a unit are now eligible to be delegates because of a bylaw change at the last state convention. Their selection will be supervised by the MAL coordinator. MALs who are chosen will be required to attend the program planning meeting of the state board held in February or a local League program planning meeting. Don't wait. Decide now to attend state convention as a delegate.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Do your League meetings lack zip? Do you want to learn leadership skills while having fun? LWV Bangor held a Discussion Leader Training workshop on July 17, 1984. LWV Portland Area held theirs on September 27, 1983. If you would like to help your League and other groups have livelier, more productive meetings, ask your League for a one day training course in discussion leading or in other leadership skills. Or contact directly:

Marlee Coghlan
Route 85, Box 279
Raymond, ME 04071
655-7624

Ask any graduate about the training. Remember: one of League's special benefits is developing skills which you can later use when you are leading other groups, running for office or participating in corporation directors meetings.

**action packed
POLITICS**

VOTER'S GUIDE

CANDIDATES:

- A. John R. McKernan- Republican incumbent for U.S. House of Representatives.
- B. William S. Cohen- Republican incumbent for U.S. Senate
- C. Olympia J. Snowe- Republican incumbent for U.S. House of Representatives.
- D. Barry J. Hobbins- Challenging A.
- E. Chipman C. Bull- Challenging C.
- ** F. Libby Mitchell- Challenging B. (Did not respond to questionnaire)

1. Will you support an unamended Equal Rights Amendment for the United States Constitution?

- A. Yes
- B. Yes
- C. ...I will continue to place passage of an unamended ERA among my highest priorities in the Congress.
- D. Yes
- E. Yes

2. How much of a role do you believe costs should play in developing and enforcing environmental policies?

- A. Cost should not play a role...except when benefits become minimal and cost excessive.
- B. Costs are an important but not necessarily a controlling factor...our primary concern must always be the health and safety of this and future generations...
- C. My overriding concern is to assure that our environmental policies are effective, and at a cost that is fair to all.
- D. While we must endeavor to be as cost-effective as possible, the costs of not developing and enforcing an effective environmental program are incalculable.
- E. Cost must play a role...but should not be the determining factor.

3. Would you like to see any changes made in the defense budget? If so, what and how would you implement them?

- A. Yes. Congress should restrict spending on new nuclear weapons, anti-satellite weapons, chemical weapons, conventional weapons of questionable value and other weapons that may not add to our security.
- B. We must increase our emphasis on non-nuclear forces ...we must attract high quality people and establish more efficient budget practices.
- C. We must control growth in the defense budget by reducing wasteful procurement practices, inefficient management, and unnecessary weapons. I oppose the Strategic Defense Initiative...we must make all efforts to avoid an arms race in space...I oppose funding for antisatellite weapons.
- D. Yes ...I would advocate a systematic reevaluation of our military management, strategy and weapons systems to ensure that our national defense is strong and sound.
- E. I would eliminate any expenditures for development, manufacture or proliferation of nuclear bombs...and implement recommendations for cost reductions made by task forces like the W.R. Grace Comm.

4. What do you see as the most important issue facing this country?

- A. Domestically, the deficit. Internationally, arms control.
- B. The risk of war...we must actively seek means of reducing world tensions...
- C. ...the size of the federal deficit.
- D. Ending the nuclear arms race.
- E. The threat of nuclear proliferation to other countries.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ON NOVEMBER 6th BALLOT:

" Shall the Constitution of Maine be amended to allow the Legislature to set the limit for guaranteed business loans to Maine Veterans?"

EXPLANATION: If passed, this amendment will allow the legislature to insure the payment of any mortgage loan to resident Maine veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, including a business organization owned in whole or in part by a resident Maine veteran.

" Shall the Constitution of Maine be amended to limit the life of bonds authorized but not issued?"

EXPLANATION: If passed, this amendment stipulates that if any bonds have not been issued within five years of the date of ratification, then those bonds may not be issued after that date. Within two years after expiration of that five-year period, the Legislature may extend, by a majority vote, the five-year period for an additional five years or may deauthorize the bonds. If the Legislature fails to take action within those two years, the bond issue shall be considered to be deauthorized and no further bonds may be issued.

" Shall the Constitution of Maine be amended so that no watercraft will taxed as personal property, provided there is an excise tax on some watercraft collected and used by municipalities?"

EXPLANATION: You are NOT voting on whether to replace the personal property tax on boats with an excise tax. The excise tax was passed by the Legislature and is now law. Towns may no longer charge a personal property tax on boats. Instead you ARE voting on how the excise tax will be collected and distributed. Your YES vote will allow the municipalities to collect, retain and use all excise taxes paid by boatowners--just as they collect and retain all excise taxes on automobiles. Your YES vote will also exempt the State from reimbursing towns for 50% of the personal property taxes lost. Your NO vote will require that the municipalities return the collected excise taxes to the State so that it can meet its 50% reimbursement obligations to the towns. In addition the excise tax on watercraft will be repealed and will for 1985 and thereafter be replaced by the former personal property tax.

TO PICK A CANDIDATE

The following are excerpts taken directly from a brochure published by the League of Women Voters. For a copy of the full brochure, order from:

The League of Women Voters
of the United States
1730 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(publication #259, 10/\$1.50-minimum order)

A major political campaign, with all its excitement, activity and extensive news coverage can bombard you with images and impressions, and yet leave you with very little real information about candidates and their stands on issues. This voter's guide will help you to follow the campaigns, listen to the candidates, and sort out what you need to know to pick a candidate when you go to the polls.

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Television and radio commercials: When you see or hear a paid political ad, ask yourself some questions. What did you learn about the candidate from the ad? Did you find out anything about issues or qualifications? Or was the ad designed only to affect feelings or attitudes about the candidate?

Direct mail: If you are aware that you must read between the lines to get the full story, the direct mail letter can help you understand the candidate's stands on issues. Recognize that the letter is a campaign tactic and try to see what can be learned from it.

Pamphlets and flyers: That leaflet slid under your door or handed to you at the store may contain valid substantive information or it may be full of lies, distortions or evasions. Read it critically!

DISTORTION TACTICS

Name calling: Aside from the ignorant and the absurd, inflammatory statements that distort truth can be damaging. Don't be sidetracked by attacks on a candidate based on family, ethnicity, gender, race or personal characteristics that don't make a difference in performance.

Rumor mongering: Watch for the unsubstantiated statement or innuendo. Legal perhaps, but dirty campaigning. Such "dark hints" can sway an election, if voters are unwary, long before a fair campaign investigation or a slander suit can put a stop to them.

Loaded statements: "I oppose wasteful spending" doesn't say much--and it implies that the candidate's opponent favors it. If a candidate gets away with claims like that, he or she may never be held to account for identifying which expenses are necessary and which are just fat.

Guilt by association: Look carefully at criticism of a candidate based on that candidate's supporters--Every candidate needs support from a wide range of people and groups who may or may not represent the candidate's own views on all the issues.

PHONY ISSUES

Passing the blame: When one candidate accuses another candidate or party of being the cause of a major problem such as unemployment or inflation, check it out. The incumbent or the party in power is often accused of causing all the woes of the world!

Promising the sky: There are promises that no one in an elective office can fulfill and problems that are beyond the reach of political solutions. Voters shouldn't expect miracles and candidates shouldn't promise them.

Evasive real issues: Many candidates work very hard to avoid giving direct answers to direct questions. The candidate who claims to have a secret, easy plan to solve a tough problem is often just copping out.

BIG ISSUES

Pinpoint the issues that are important to you. Decide what changes you feel that your community, state and country need most. What do you want to keep the same? Which of your interests are served by the programs each candidate is proposing? As you ponder, weigh alternatives. Listen to people on both sides of an issue. Look at cause and effect. Consider what you have to trade off to get what you want.

Find out where the candidates stand on your top priorities. Which candidate most closely shares your views on important matters.

...THEN VOTE

ERA..... PLAIN AND SIMPLE

"EQUALITY OF RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW SHALL NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED
IN THIS STATE BECAUSE OF THE SEX OF THE INDIVIDUAL."

YOU WILL HEAR..... about an "ERA-gay rights connection". In their scramble to find publicly acceptable reasons for opposing equal rights for women, the anti-ERA activists claim a connection between the ERA and gay rights. Among their claims is that an Equal Rights Amendment will cause the legalization of same-sex marriages. NONSENSE! Of the 16 states that have ERAs in their Constitutions not one allows single-sex marriages. In fact, in 1982, a court in the state of Washington soundly rejected the notion that its ERA would make homosexual marriages legal. The so-called "ERA-gay connection" exists only in the minds of those who must invent frightening reasons to oppose equal rights under the law for women.

YOU WILL HEAR.....that the ERA will force unisex public facilities and restrooms. NONSENSE! It's easy to see, from the 16 other states with ERAs that this is simply not true. Neighbor states of New Hampshire and Mass. do not have unisex public restrooms yet they have ERAs. The Constitution of the United States guarantees us all the right to privacy and cannot be over-ridden by an Equal Rights Amendment. Besides, most of us have unisex bathrooms in our homes.

YOU WILL HEAR.....that the ERA is anti-family. NONSENSE! Nothing is further from the truth! A better, fairer state for women is a better state for their families and children. Homemakers must be recognized for their value within the family. The courts in states with Equal Rights Amendments tend to view marriage as an economic, as well as a moral and emotional commitment.

YOU WILL HEAR..... that the ERA will force Medicaid to pay for abortions for poor women. It will not! The ERA and abortion are not linked. Abortions are legal throughout the United States today. What is at issue is whether or not Medicaid will pay for abortions for poor women. The fact is that an ERA in the Maine Constitution could not force Medicaid to pay for abortions. ERA opponents widely quote a lower appellate court decision in Pennsylvania (which is under appeal) which did mandate abortion funding in that state. There are, however, two important reasons why that decision does not apply in Maine. First, the decision was based primarily under that state's Equal Protection clause, not under its ERA. Second, what Pennsylvania courts decide does not affect Maine court decisions. There is no basis for predicting that Maine courts will mandate Medicaid funding of abortion with or without an ERA.

MEN UNDER A MAINE ERA.....in addition to assuring the rights of women, the ERA will also protect the hard-won rights of fathers to have access to their children after divorce, and even to have custody or to share custody of their children. Most of the women who support ERA are family women with children. These women support the ERA because they share the dream of mothers around the world that the future will be better for their children and grandchildren. The claim that the ERA is "anti-family" is false.

AN ERA IS NECESSARY.....The most serious argument against the ERA is that it is unnecessary because the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution already provides citizens all of the rights under the law that are

continued on pg. 7.

The passage of Maine's proposed Equal Rights Amendment was voted top priority at last year's state convention. Now is the time to support that vote. ERA needs your help! T.V. spots on all Maine stations have cost upwards of \$30,000. We need money to pay for these spots and other campaign expenses.

Can the LWVME raise \$1500 to contribute to this cause? I challenge each member to send a \$5 contribution to LWVME for ERA today. Make the check available to state Treasurer Kathy Meeker. National LWVME President Dot Ridings has kicked off this fund raiser by contributing the first personal \$5 contribution. Do likewise, and let's get Maine's ERA passed this November.

ERA Fails (cont.)

they were using up some old ballots from years ago so I didn't fill it in." LWV spokeswomen repeated their statement of election night: "The LWVME regrets that the ERA for Maine has failed in 1984 but we will fight on to win another day."

Will you read this article in your local newspaper on November 8th?

by Joyce Bancroft

Constitutional Amendments (cont.)

necessary. This is not true. The 14th Amendment (passed in 1862, before women had the right to vote) was intended to right the national wrong of discrimination based on race. It was not intended nor has it been consistently used by the courts, to prevent discrimination based on sex.

Women have made great strides in this century, but the important gains we have achieved could be nearly wiped out in just one session of the state legislature. Laws and regulations are easily over-turned as legislators' attitudes change, but a constitutional amendment guarantees that women will maintain the rights already won as it assures future fairness.

NUCLEAR EDUCATION

The LWVME has been awarded a National Security Grant by the LWVUS to develop a computer simulation of decision-making that can lead to, or avoid, a nuclear war. It is designed for use in Maine high schools starting in the 1985-86 school year. The program will present groups of students with the type of information national leaders would receive in a crisis. It will stimulate discussion of options and require decision-making under pressure.

As program director, I have been working on the computer program, and an accompanying study guide, with Grant C. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds was a Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine in 1984. He taught courses on nuclear weapons, arms control and environmental politics. A 1957 graduate of Bates, he was on sabbatical leave from his position as Assistant General Counsel (Installations and Environmental Law), Department of the Air Force. I have been interested in national security for several years now. Aside from the reading I have done, I have attended several conferences, and worked on a few.

The program will be tested at Falmouth High School with the cooperation of Susan Harkins, John Drisko (who teaches the nuclear arms course there) and Theodore Sharp (the Superintendent of Schools.) I have Kathy Meeker to thank for pointing me in the direction of Falmouth.

Persis Hope
National Security
RFD 2 Box 70
Turner, ME. 04282

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Lois McDaniel passed away at her Orono home on September 1, 1984, at the age of 52 after a gallant fight against cancer, during which she joked about her problems and never gave up hope.

Understanding, caring...these are words describing Lois. Lois was always willing to help in any way she could and served the Orono-old town-Venzie League in many capacities. She was president for three years, a former treasurer, a long-time director and had been chairman or member of a number of committees. She was budget chairman for 1984-85.

Subsequent presidents turned to her for advice and could count on her encouragement, sympathy and humor. The memories are warm and lingering--of the urban crisis and budget committees she chaired (we shared ideas and laughter around her kitchen table); of meetings in her sun room overflowing with plants (Lois had an incredibly green thumb); of going with her to the naturalization ceremonies; car pools and many Board of Directors meetings.

Our League will miss Lois, but we are grateful that with her responsibilities as a veterinarian, a 4-H leader, wife and mother, she cheerfully contributed her time, ideas and energy to help us.

Thanks...for the memories.

Alma Otto
President, LWV-OOV

Membership

Membership chairpeople: please send your Membership Roster to:

Mary Hunter
34 Pine Ledge Road
Bangor, Maine 04401

AS SOON AS POLLIBLE!

Special thanks to the Leagues or Lewiston-Auburn and Orono for having sent membership rosters in already!!

Marlee Coughlan
Membership

The Maine VOTER

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