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Maine League of Women Voters

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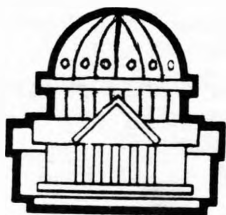
THE VOTER

Vol. 7, No. 2

The League of Women Voters of Maine

January 1990

KEYS to the CAPITOL '90



January 31

Theme: "THE NEXT STEPS"

Many of us look forward to this legislative day. With that in mind, the Keys to the Capitol Committee has come up with a challenging topic: A look into the new century. The Maine State Planning Office has already been peeking and will let us in on their plans.

--We are asking Libby Mitchell from the State Housing Authority what legislation she has planned to achieve development of AFFORDABLE HOUSING that will use environmental guidelines in land use.

--The Governor has promised to continue pushing for legislation on PRISON renovations. So we will be asking our second panel group -- Donald Allen, Commissioner of Corrections and the Reverend W. B. Kennison from the Maine Council of Churches -- to speak on ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT through education and community involvement and what these choices will cost.

--We are allowing time for a LEAGUE ISSUES BRIEFING, including our state and national position on reproductive choice.

AND: Reservations have been made at the Blaine House for our LEGISLATORS RECEPTION.

Don't forget to invite your representatives for a luncheon gathering and/or to meet you at the reception.

A detailed flyer will be mailed to you before mid-January. But be sure to MARK YOUR CALENDAR TODAY:

JANUARY 31, 1990

At the beginning of a new decade, let's consider "The Next Steps."



Keys to the Capitol Committee:

Barbara Bowler
Pam Greenman
Norma Staples
Margaret Tragard

*Happy New Year !
Happy New Decade !*



ACTION ALERT



Maine's new recycling and solid waste law is already under attack by an out-of-state, multinational corporation intent on protecting its product. This product is made of laminated paper, plastic and metal and is often called "brick Packs" or "aseptic containers." THESE ARE UNRECYCLABLE.

The Tetra Pak Company, located outside of Maine, has hired three Maine consulting firms to overturn the provision in Maine's law which bans that type of packaging starting in September, 1990.

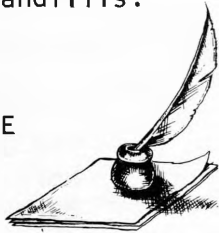
Reducing waste at the source is the primary method of reducing our garbage, our solid waste disposal problems, and the skyrocketing costs associated therewith.

If the effort to overturn the aseptic containers ban is successful, manufacturers will have no incentive to reduce at source, and will continue to package their products in non-recyclable containers.

Rep. Gould of Greenville has already had a bill to overturn the ban accepted for introduction to the second regular session of the 114th Legislature.

Remember that under our new solid waste law, the goal is for 25% of municipal solid waste to be recycled by 1992 and 50% by 1994. Towns that do not recycle will pay additional user fees on waste delivered to commercial, state, or federal landfills.

CONTACT YOUR STATE
LEGISLATORS TO
LET THEM KNOW
YOUR CONCERNS



--PAT CYPHERS
LWV-ME ENVIRONMENTAL CHAIR

ELECTION PROCESS UPDATE

MOTOR-VOTER, A program permitting Maine citizens to register to vote when receiving or renewing a driver's license, registering a motor vehicle or just visiting a motor vehicle office to register to vote, will begin in Maine with a pilot program on March 5th. The pilot program will be held at Caribou, Lewiston, Rockland, and Sanford.

Plans call for the Motor-Voter program to be fully operational following the June Primary, at motor vehicle offices statewide.

The purpose of the program is to make voter registration easier and more convenient -- one-stop shopping! --especially for new or recently moved citizens.



NOTARIES, NOTE THIS:
League members and friends planning to become notaries should be aware that the cost for becoming a notary is now \$25. It had been \$10. The change became effective in the summer of 1989.

There is a move in Maine to remove notaries from the mail-in and verification voter registration process. At present, Maine has approximately 27,000 notaries!

--RUTH and ALVIN MOSS
ELECTION LAWS



CALL TO QUAD-STATE COUNCIL '90

May 3 - 5, 1990

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

This is the first call to Quad State Council of the Leagues of Women Voters of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont to be held in Newport, Rhode Island, May 3-5, 1990.

The official business of the Council is outlined in the State by-laws under Article X, Section 3, as follows:

"The Council shall give guidance to the Board on Program, methods of work, and budget as submitted by the Board of Directors. The Council shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year and shall transact such other business as shall be presented by the Board."

The composition of the Council is outlined in the State by-laws under Article X, Section 2, as follows:

"The Council shall be composed of the presidents of the local Leagues, provisional Leagues and Member-at-Large units or an alternate in the event that the president is unable to attend; two delegates chosen by each local League, provisional League, and Member-at-Large Unit; and the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Maine. Members at Large who are not in a unit shall elect through the ballot process as described in Article VIII, Section 2."

"MAL members wishing to be delegates to Council should contact the MAL coordinator and indicate their willingness to serve at least six weeks prior to Council. Slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis."

The Quad State presidents have been making plans for an exciting and stimulating Council. We will be staying at a lovely inn in Newport and will reserve time for the delegates to explore that lovely, historic city. Pre-Council trips to a SOLAR AQUATIC WATER TREATMENT PLANT and a RECYCLING PLANT are being arranged. There will be DYNAMIC SPEAKERS, time to NETWORK with others who hold your portfolio, and STRATEGY PLANNING for LWVUS Convention.

You will be hearing more about Quad State Council '90 during the next months but NOW is the time for you to start planning your trip to Rhode Island.

--JANE SAXL

Progress on League's Housing Bill

LD 451, the housing bill initiated by LWV-Maine, continues to make progress in the legislature. The final hearing and committee vote on the bill and changes made by the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development have been scheduled for the first week in January. Members of the League's Housing Committee have attended several of the legislative committee's meetings and have provided the following progress report.

A committee addition on "Tax Incentives for Maine Low-Income Housing" has been attached. The "municipal educational bonus" would provide grants to municipalities to reduce the short-term pressure on local school budgets and property taxes arising from new affordable housing development. The low-income housing tax credit would provide state tax credits for the development of qualifying low-income housing projects. A sub-committee is also recommending that the Joint Committee establish a "Commission on Investment Capital Needs in Maine" to undertake a comprehensive review of capital needs for affordable housing and related investment requirements.

Another change to LD 451 is that of awarding the educational bonuses to communities that meet the criteria of the state's comprehensive planning requirements. The implementation for allowing affordable housing would be in a municipality's subdivision ordinance. Some members of the Joint Committee were concerned that small towns may not be sophisticated enough to develop comprehensive plans. The chairman of the committee, Rep. Mills, stated that a goal of the committee report will be to encourage cleanup of subdivision ordinances within one year.

Under "Obstacles to Affordable Housing," the problem of pressures on local school budgets is met by the bill. The committee developed a slight range of awards, depending on the salary range for which the housing is developed and on number of bedrooms in a unit.

The committee considered the instance when an individual (in contrast to a developer) builds an affordable house for himself or herself (affordable by definition.) They stated that, when a municipality applies for a bonus, such a house could be "counted" only if the owner agreed to let it be counted. The reason for the consent of the owner is that, if counted, a deed restriction would be necessary on the property.

Norton
WPPGEA 230
1/11/4/89

FOR HOME MORTGAGES...

ESTIMATED MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE HOUSING PRICES FOR SELECTED PERCENTAGES OF FY'89 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME¹

COUNTY	Median Family Income ²	Sold to 50% Median	Sold to 60% Median	Sold to 70% Median	Sold to 80% Median
Androscoggin	\$30,900	\$46,330	\$55,596	\$64,862	\$74,128
Lew/Aub.	28,900	43,331	51,998	60,664	69,330
AROOSTOOK	25,200	37,784	45,341	52,897	60,454
CUMBERLAND	30,900	46,330	55,596	64,862	74,128
Portland	35,200	52,777	63,333	73,888	84,444
FRANKLIN	29,000	43,481	52,178	60,874	69,570
HANCOCK	26,000	38,983	46,780	54,577	62,373
KENNEBEC	31,900	46,330	55,596	64,862	74,128
KNOX	26,100	39,133	46,960	54,787	62,613
LINCOLN	27,600	41,382	49,659	57,935	66,212
OXFORD	27,600	41,382	49,659	57,935	66,212
PENOBSCOT	29,600	44,381	53,257	62,133	71,010
Bangor	31,100	46,630	55,956	65,282	74,608
PISCATAQUIS	26,300	39,433	47,320	55,206	63,093
SAGadahoc	31,300	46,930	56,316	65,702	75,088
SOMERSET	25,500	38,234	45,880	53,527	61,174
WALDO	23,200	34,785	41,742	48,699	55,656
WASHINGTON	22,300	33,436	40,123	46,810	53,497
YORK	32,600	48,879	58,655	68,431	78,207
Portsmouth	36,800	55,176	66,212	77,247	88,282

1). "Maximum eligible price" means a sale price that, assuming a 5% downpayment and a 30 year mortgage at 10%, will produce principle and interest payments equal to 30% of income for each group.

2). Median family income by county, for FY'89. Data provided by MSHA from figures compiled annually by HUD.

PROGRESS ON LEAGUE'S HOUSING BILL, *continued*

Two-thirds of subsidized rental units in Maine (14,000 units) will be eligible for conversion to market value within the next 15 years. All of the currently available subsidized low-income units which have provisions for preserving the affordability typically consist of contractual set-asides or agreements between the project developer and the funding agency.

In the language amending LD 451 to create a Maine low-income housing tax credit for rental units, the committee established a minimum compliance period of 15 years. They also established a project ranking system which requires projects to compete against one another for available credits and which gives high priority to the length of the "commitment-to-affordability" period. This technique should produce projects with substantially longer compliance periods.

Congress and the President recently agreed to extend Federal tax credits for one year, but at 3/4 strength. The State tax credits attached to LD 451 would begin regardless of the Federal program, and would begin January 1, 1991.

Norton
WPP/GFA 230
11/14/89

FOR RENTAL UNITS.....

ESTIMATED ELIGIBLE MONTHLY RENT FOR SELECTED
PERCENTAGES OF FY'89 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME¹

COUNTY	Median Family Income ²	Rented to 50% Median	Rented to 60% Median	Rented to 70% Median	Rented to 80% Median
Androscoggin	\$30,900	\$386	\$464	\$541	\$618
LeW/Aub.	28,900	361	434	506	578
AROSTOOK	25,200	315	378	441	504
CUMBERLAND	30,900	386	464	541	618
Portland	35,200	440	528	616	704
FRANKLIN	29,000	363	435	508	580
HANCOCK	26,000	325	390	455	520
KENNEBEC	31,900	399	479	558	638
KNOX	26,100	326	392	457	522
LINCOLN	27,600	345	414	483	552
OXFORD	27,600	345	414	483	552
PENOBSCOT	29,600	370	444	518	592
Bangor	31,100	389	467	544	622
PISCATAQUIS	26,300	329	395	460	526
SAGadahoc	31,300	391	470	548	626
SOMERSET	25,500	319	383	446	510
WALDO	23,200	290	348	406	464
WASHINGTON	22,300	279	335	390	446
YORK	32,600	408	489	571	652
Portsmouth	36,800	460	552	644	736

After discussing the terms of continued affordability, the committee decided (as had the League committee) to leave the ending point of affordability after ten years, up to the enforcing department. The possibility of a requirement that contact be made with the agency prior to the end of the ten years was raised, to bring attention to possible programs that could extend affordability longer, if desired by the owner. This may be added to the bill.

The committee is also concerned about a shortfall in Federal money for fuel assistance, an annual emergency that occurs until Federal funds arrive in January. Added to that problem was the announcement in late November that the Federal government will cut back fuel assistance from \$325 to \$234. The committee may develop another housing bill to meet this need, as well as others deemed necessary by State housing authorities.

Information has been sent to WELAC, listing the bill for consideration on their legislative agenda in January.

--ANN KNOWLES, Chairperson
LWV-ME HOUSING COMMITTEE

Resource Development Teleconference

The JCPenney Company recently gave the League of Women Voters-US a sizeable grant and the use of their teleconference facilities in Dallas, Texas to put together a leadership program on video. On November 18th, the JCPenney store at the Maine Mall in South Portland made their local teleconference facilities available to the Portland Area League, who hosted the Resource Development Teleconference. Membership, Time Management, and Fundraising were the focuses of the conference. Seventeen local and state League Board members from around the state attended.

The national League hopes to use the remaining portion of the grant to edit this two-hour program into a Leadership Program on video that can be sold to other interested organizations.

Mr. Laird Spaulding, the manager of the South Portland JCPenney store, provided a light luncheon and the assistance of his staff. During the hour before the broadcast, we had a very productive discussion facilitated by several exercises designed to help us focus on the points to be covered by the broadcast.

Unfortunately, at broadcast time it was discovered that the excessively high winds of the previous two days had blown the antenna out of alignment. We were unable to receive the broadcast as planned. Several members of the JCPenney staff made an extra effort to try to correct this problem without success.

The South Portland JCPenney store is attempting to obtain a recording of the broadcast for us. We hope to be able to make copies of this tape available to the League members from around the state who attended.

In spite of modern technology going awry, we wish to extend our thanks to JCPenney, Inc., Mr. Laird Spaulding, and the South Portland store for their efforts to assist the League of Women Voters of Maine in leadership training.

--ANNA MESSMER
TELECONFERENCE FACILITATOR
Portland Area LWV

EDITORIAL

It would be unrealistic to expect that the amazing events in Eastern Europe which ushered out 1989 could continue without mishaps==faltering steps forward, perhaps a slip backward occasionally. Nonetheless, what a wonderful gift to the free world! What satisfaction to the partisans of peace who persevered in the face of dire warnings from hardliners that Gorbachev was not sincere, that "they" are different from "us."

Generally ignored in the euphoria has been an important message for the League and other citizen organizations, for League members and others like us. That message is:

"The 'experts' were wrong!"

None of the foreign policy experts--not the august professors from prestigious universities, specialists in Soviet and Eastern European history; not the present and retired members of the U.S. diplomatic corps who had served in that area--none of them acknowledged, in their writings or their TV guest appearances, that such a sudden upsurge of popular will to freedom could happen in Communist countries nor that the old entrenched leadership could collapse so quickly.

Continued on page 7

KUDOS

--to the BRUNSWICK LEAGUE (belatedly) for its Community Hazardous Waste Collection last spring. Praise came from Glenn Angell of the state's Bureau of Oil and Hazardous Waste. Speaking to the Western Washington County Solid Waste Management Planning Committee at its December meeting (and, of course, unaware there was a League member among that mostly male group), Mr. Angell gave full credit to the Brunswick League for its initiative in proposing the collection, for its fund-raising efforts to help pay the costs (the state also made a contribution), and for its educational and organizing work.

Perhaps the most sincere and valuable compliment is one made when the complimentee is not around to hear it!

Mr. Angell also credited the Lexington, MA League with organizing the first such effort in the nation. At a Maine League convention or council a few years ago, Pat Cyphers showed the video that Lexington LWV made to record its project. Perhaps she still has it to lend.)

--to Bangor-Brewer League member RUTH STRIAR, who was recently honored by the American Cancer Society, Maine Division, at its 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting. Ruth has been a volunteer for the Cancer Society--continuously--since 1946. That adds up to 43 years, and understandably makes Ruth the Maine Cancer Society volunteer with the longest term of service.

If there is any League member out there with a longer term of service in the League, please let the VOTER editor know.

--to EVERYONE who participated in planning and conducting the recent series of RECYCLING WORKSHOPS in Bangor, Presque Isle, Portland and Augusta---League members, employees of the state's Dept. of Environmental Protection and the new Waste Management Agency, volunteers from the Natural Resources Council, Federation of Women's Clubs, and, especially, the true "experts", the just plain folks who had been operating their towns' pioneer recycling efforts, in places like Freeport, Bath, Camden area. Pat Cyphers was correct in her October VOTER article--"hands on" experience was the order of the day.

Kudos also to Judy Harrison, who was a very able moderator at the Bangor workshop, pinch-hitting for the flue-stricken Jane Saxl. Judy presented Sherry Huber (on her first official day as Executive Director of the Maine Waste Management Agency) with one of the League's blue canvas reusable shopping bags and a League pin (Sherry is a long-time League member.)

Continued from Page 6

In its Dec. 4, 1989 issue, The New Yorker remembered a Nov. 1979 article in Commentary by Jeane Kirkpatrick. As paraphrased by The New Yorker, Dr. Kirkpatrick said that it was "essential to observe the distinction between traditional authoritarian dictatorships" (like many South American countries and Iran under the Shah) "which might be expected to reform themselves toward democracy, and Communist-totalitarian regimes, which had shown no capacity to do." Ah, the risks of prophecy!

Although the League has not been hesitant to take on complex issues, occasionally we, as individuals, have felt a little less competent, despite our study, than those who (like congressional staff, for example) are full-time specialists in subjects like national security. No more undue modesty, friends! Experts can be wrong.

70 ?

THE LEAGUE ?!



On February 14 the League of Women Voters will celebrate its 70th birthday. Since its inception the League has worked towards perfecting our representative form of government and protecting the individual liberties provided by the Constitution.

If the past predicts the future the League will continue to be the preeminent multi-issue citizen organization in the country. Now we stand at the beginning of a new decade, the end of a millenium, and the beginning of the eighth decade for the League of Women Voters.

We are emerging from an egocentric period which produced the "me" generation and the Yuppies. As we close the decade and enter the new we find the "evil empire" of the Reagan era disintegrating. We are witness to the breaching of the Berlin Wall. The struggle for self-determination, freedom and the longing for economic opportunity appear paramount. The promise of serious arms reduction never appeared more real. Now more than ever the League must enunciate its principles clearly and work to accomplish our goals.

I wish each of you a prosperous and a happy 1990, and hope that our work together will see the potential for peace realized and cooperative economic sharing fulfilled.

--JANE SAXL, PRESIDENT

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

DEADLINE FOR NEXT VOTER: MARCH 15 MARCH 15 MARCH 15 MARCH 15 !

Mail neat copy before March 15 to: Box 137-B, Steuben, ME 04680.



League of Women Voters of Maine
335 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330

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