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Maine League of Women Voters

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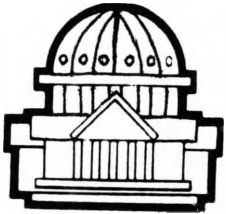
THE VOTER

Vol. 7, No. 3

The League of Women Voters of MAINE

April 1990

SUCCESSFUL 'KEYS'



Our "Keys to the Capitol" opened a few more doors than usual on January 31st. It was that morning that Governor McKernan announced the state budget deficit figures and a background of discussion was perceptible in the State House and State Office Building.

Thanks to efficient advance planning by Margaret Tragard, who had to leave for grandmotherly duty, the meeting went smoothly. Ed Pert, Clerk of the House, brought some Representatives to greet us and opened the proceedings. Joseph McGonigle gave us a glimpse of a global future with a rising sea level. Our State is highly diversified but over-dependent on the defense industry. Instruction is needed on machine tools and software for Job Conversion. Panels on "Solving the Problems of Affordable Housing," moderated by State President Jane Saxl, and "Alternatives to Big Prisons" were well received. **

The Governor came early to the Blaine House reception, gave an excellent talk, and answered questions freely.

Thanks go to all who arranged invitations and announcements, especially Judy Johnson; to Barbara Bowler, the York County and Midcoast Leagues, our guest Girl Scouts; and to Louise's Bakery and Dunkin' Donuts for their wonderful donations!

** Marge Roberts has made available an outline of the panel talks. If you send a stamped, addressed legal size envelope to Pamela Greenman, 27 Knowlton Street, Camden 04843, I will send you a copy.

--Pamela Greenman

League Beyond Maine:

May 3-5	QUAD-STATE COUNCIL Newport, Rhode Island
June 9-13	NATIONAL CONVENTION Washington, D.C.

Earth Day April 22



GREEN PLEDGE

BECAUSE our planet today faces severe environmental crises such as global warming, rain forest devastation, growing world population, and water and air pollution ...

BECAUSE the Earth's future depends on the commitment of every nation, as well as every individual ...

I PLEDGE TO DO MY SHARE in saving Earth by letting my concern for the environment shape how I ...

LEARN - I pledge to learn about, buy and use only those products least harmful to the environment.

ACT - I pledge to do my utmost to recycle, conserve energy, save water, use efficient transportation, and try to adopt a lifestyle as if every day were Earth Day.

BUY - I pledge to do business with corporations that promote global environmental responsibility.

VOTE - I pledge to vote and support those candidates who demonstrate an abiding concern for the environment.

SUPPORT - I pledge to support the passage and enforcement of local, state and federal laws and international treaties that protect the environment.

PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT

The League's program planning process distinguishes us from other citizen organizations. When we select issues for study and action, we do not simply complete an "issues poll," individually checking off on a list provided by a national office. In League, we meet, propose, discuss, argue, compromise--until we reach consensus on our preferred agenda, just as we do when reaching consensus on the substance of an issue. Additionally, we discuss and decide in the context of a set of criteria:

--Political Relevance --Effectiveness --Timeliness --Manageability

This year, the program planning process for national issues resulted in the following recommendations to LWVUS from Maine Local Leagues and the State Board.

BANGOR-BREWER

1. Environmental pollution (chemical and radioactive contamination, toxics, air pollution, drinking water)
2. Sustainable agriculture
3. Recycling and waste management
4. Energy policy
5. Global Warming

BRUNSWICK

1. Health care finance & delivery
2. Environment
3. Presidential nominations
4. Violence in American society
5. Federal role in public education

ELLSWORTH

1. Presidential nomination/election process
2. Economic conversion
3. Campaign finance reform
4. Foreign policy roles/responsibilities (Congress and Executive)
5. Federal budget process

MID-COAST

1. Environment (comprehensive)
2. Education
3. Providing/financing health care
4. Reproductive privacy
5. Foreign trade and the U.S. economy

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

1. Global warming
2. Nuclear, conventional and chemical arms control
3. Workforce issues in a changing population with emphasis on economic conversion from the military
4. Recycling and waste management
5. Delivery of health care services (including for the drug problem)

PORTLAND

1. Right to privacy in reproductive choices
2. Recycling and waste management
3. Child care
4. Air pollution
5. Economic conversion (the orderly redirection of resources from military economy to socially useful economic endeavors and civilian growth industries)

YORK COUNTY

1. Recycling and waste management
2. Housing
3. Air pollution
4. Chemical and radioactive contamination of the environment
5. Reducing poverty: Federal/state responsibilities and options

STATE BOARD

1. Economic conversion
2. Presidential nomination/election process
3. Right to privacy in reproductive choice
4. Toxics
5. Waste Management and recycling

President's Column

A year ago no one would have guessed the rapid changes which are taking place in today's world. Eastern Europe has broken the fetters of communist domination. Nelson Mandela has been released from jail. The Soviet Union has opened its doors and we are witnessing the beginnings of a democratic electoral system. Peaceful elections and the orderly transfer of power are currently taking place in Nicaragua. The breathtaking pace at which these events have taken place is almost as remarkable as the events themselves. Without wanting to sound trite, I can't help wondering what new momentous event will have taken place by the time you read this.

While I remain amazed as events swirl around me, my disappointment has been the slow reaction of our own government. We seem unwilling or perhaps unable to respond to the great happenings of our day. We seem reluctant to embrace the end of the cold war. We seem to clutch to the old script unable to enunciate the new lines demanded by the theater of world events. A peace dividend, we are told, is non-existent. Our domestic social, environmental and economic needs cry out for resources long diverted toward national security, but the emphasis in the national budget remains on defense. In light of all that has happened, we continue to allocate scarce resources for the Stealth and B-1 bombers.

Clearly, the LWVME State Board members felt this way too, as we sat down to our biennial task of National Program Planning. New study suggestions came from all around the table; one board member suggested health care, another the election process, but the study which had unanimous support was Economic Conversion. Members were concerned that we could not advocate for an economic conversion bill currently before Congress, while others wondered if it wasn't too late to study since events around the globe were occurring at such an accelerated rate. All agreed that we, as a league and as a country, must learn how to adjust our economy and government to the new realities which face us.

On the Program Planning form, in bold capital letters, appears "ECONOMIC CONVERSION." The form went in to National office and will be reviewed by the LWVUS Board at their April meeting. The LWVUS-recommended program will be announced later that month in time for discussion at Quad State Council to be held in Newport, Rhode Island. We shall lobby the other New England states to support Economic Conversion, and hope that our delegates can be united when they go to National convention in Washington, DC, June 9-13. Call your local league president or the MAL Coordinator, and volunteer to be a delegate to our regional and national meetings. Help decide the future of the League of Women Voters and work to shape public policy for our country.

--Jane Saxl

* * * * *

"From 1947 to 1987, we expended on behalf of the Dept. of Defense, 7,620 billions of dollars, cast in dollars of 1982 purchasing power by the Comptroller of the Dept. of Defense. That sum of equivalent capital resources exceeded by 1982 the total money value of the assets of U.S. industry, its complete plant and equipment, PLUS the money value of the physical infrastructure plant of the United States.

"Stated differently, we have expended during the 40 years 1947 to 1987, a quantity of resources on military account more than sufficient to replace the largest part of what is man-made on the surface of the United States."

Seymour Melman, Professor of Industrial Engineering, Columbia University, speaking on "Economic Conversion" in Washington, D.C., February 25, 1989

POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

BANGOR June 21

Subtitled EXPLORING PRACTICAL PREVENTION STRATEGIES, "Pollution Solutions" will be an all-day conference being co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Maine and several components of the University of Maine (listed below.) The conference will focus on pollutants in our homes and schools and will be held:

Thursday, June 21 9 a.m. (8 a.m. registration, coffee) to 3:45 p.m.

BANGOR CIVIC CENTER 100 Dutton St. (Near eastern termination of Rt. 395.
Turn right on Main St. (also Rts. 202 & 9), then very shortly, left on Dutton)

The tentative program lists speeches and workshops on:

- Indoor air pollution (sources, prevention, remediation)
- Health effects of chemical products used in the home
- Consumer products and pollutants (wood, drapes, rugs, etc.)
- Pollution prevention in the school curriculum
- Story strategies for pollution prevention
- Composting strategies
- Garden chemicals

And the following possible additional workshops:

- Auto-machinery maintenance
- Radon
- School indoor air
- Consumer purchasing decisions (environmental impact from manufacture to disposal)

Sherry Huber, head of the Maine Waste Management Agency, will open the conference at 9 a.m. A representative from ENVIRONMENT CANADA, Canada's Environmentally Friendly Products program, has been invited to give the closing address.

The tentative agenda lists no entrance fee and says 12-1:30 will be the time for a "walk-around lunch," to see exhibits and to network, so presumably lunch will be your own brown bag. If those tentative plans change, information will be sent to local Leagues.

The University of Maine's Chemicals in the Environment Information Center, Cooperative Extension Service and Bureau of Public Administration are co-sponsors. Cooperating agencies include the Maine Solid Waste Management Agency, Maine Lung Association, and the Community Environmental Health Information Program.

Don't forget to arrange car-pooling!

REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE NOTES

A Maine Chapter of the NATIONAL ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION LEAGUE (NARAL) has been formed. The League may not join as an organization because NARAL will target political candidates for election or defeat, based on their pro-choice stands, (as the anti-abortion groups have done.) However, the LWVME remains a founding member and supporter of the Maine Pro-Choice Coalition.

Those who are interested in becoming involved as individuals in pro-choice activities from a partisan standpoint may contact either:

Maine NARAL
PO Box 2393
Bangor, ME 04401

OR

Barbara Bowler
RFD 1, Box 34
Bradford, ME 04410

★ The LWVUS has joined the national PRO-CHOICE COALITION, after the LWV's national board determined that the Coalition would not form a Political Action Committee (other member groups have formed their own PACs.) While much of the activity on this issue is in state legislatures, HR-3700 and S-1912 in the U.S. Congress may lead the LWVUS to call for grassroots lobbying. The bills provide that states cannot restrict the right to abortion (before viability) except for laws protecting the life and health of the mother.

CRUISE MISSILE UPDATE

HAGAR

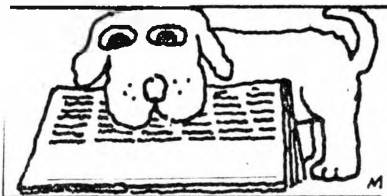


GOOD NEWS! (Though you may have missed it--the Bangor Daily News buried it in the middle of an inside column of an inside page of a second section, March 17-18.)

★ All members of Maine's congressional delegation now support asking the Bush Administration to include sea-launched cruise missiles in arms reduction talks! ★

Once again, a victory for citizen action! (LWVUS did not permit our State League to take a public position on the November referendum, but many League members were very active individually.)

★ Interested Leaguers may wish to write to Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, Senator William Cohen, Representative Olympia Snowe and Representative Joseph Brennan to thank them for this decision and to urge them to continue pressuring the Administration. ★



PERSONALS

CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES!

To EMILY FARLEY (what would the Portland League do without her?), who was chosen as one of "Maine's Best Neighbors" by Channel 13, WGME-TV. Emily was one of the first five chosen because of "the difference they make in their community through volunteer time and effort."

To ALICE JOHNSON, former president of LWV-Maine, who was elected to the Hallowell School Board.

To MELISSA MURPHY, State Board legal advisor and Portland League member, on the birth of William.

To RUTH and ALVIN MOSS, State Board members (Alvin is also Ellsworth Lg. President) on the birth of a fourth grandchild (and, given Ruth's recruiting talents, a fourth future League member.)

To RUTH SAXL, Bangor-Brewer member, who passed her qualifying exams for a Ph.D. in biological chemistry.

OUR SYMPATHY and CONDOLENCES:

To Ann Knowles, State Housing Chair, on the recent loss of her brother.

OUR EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET BUT APPRECIATION FOR PAST SERVICES

To JUDY HARRISON, Bangor-Brewer Leaguer, who has resigned from the State Board as well as the presidency of B-B League (see below).

Local League News

BANGOR - BREWER

Judy Harrison resigned as president of the Bangor-Brewer Area League on February 26. Her letter of resignation said in part:

"Since my mother's death in July I seem to have lost my energy for League but not my respect or love for the organization and its members. I want to thank each of you for the support you have given me over the years.

"Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of and to serve the League of Women Voters. It is an experience I will always cherish."

Harrison was completing her second term as Bangor-Brewer head. Under her leadership the League successfully sponsored a series of seminars on re-use and recycling last spring and succeeded in building an excellent relationship with the Bangor city government. Succeeding Harrison as president is vice-president Barbara Bowler. The Bangor-Brewer Area League will hold elections at the annual meeting in May.

Senator Judy C. Kany
District 17
State House 3
Augusta, Maine 04333



MAINE STATE SENATE
114th Legislature

18 West Street
Waterville, Maine 04901

February 20, 1990

Alysan Hooper
P.O. Box 201
Biddeford Pool, ME 04006

Dear Alysan,

Thanks very much for your letter and the photo of the League's great reusable grocery bags. I should have known that the League would be ahead of its time and right on target on the recycling issue--just exactly what we have grown to expect from the League over the years!

Thanks for all your good work.

Sincerely,

JUDY C. KANY
Senate Chair, Energy and Natural
Resources Committee

Members of the York County League and State Board met with representatives of one of the state's two major food chains, in an effort to have the chain sell the bags in its stores. Unfortunately, that did not work out.

\$

BUT, the bags are still available through Alysan Hooper, and still provide both a fund-raising and a "visibility" opportunity for LOCAL LEAGUES.



FUND RAISING—A NEW APPROACH NEEDED?

Should the League of Women Voters of Maine have a staff person, working on a commission basis, to carry out our fund-raising?

Or, should this continue to be a volunteer(s) assignment?

Will we raise more money more efficiently and effectively with a professional on board, being paid a percentage of money raised?

Let's hear your ideas and recommendations, including suggestions of possible names of professional personnel.

Call Madeline Brown (797-0939) or Ruth Moss (422-3627) with your thoughts and suggestions.

--Ruth Moss

Message to Congress

"The main thing is, it seems to me, that these revolutionary changes will enable us to escape from the rather antiquated straitjacket of this bipolar view of the world, and to enter at last into an era of multipolarity; that is, into an era in which all of us, large and small, former slaves and former masters, will be able to create what your great President Lincoln called the family of man."

"We still don't know how to put morality ahead of politics, science and economy. We are still incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of all our actions, if they are to be moral, is responsibility--responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my company, my success."

Vaclav Havel speaking to the U.S. Congress, Feb. 21, 1990

June 15 -- DEADLINE for July VOTER

Mail neat copy to Box 137-B, Steuben, ME 04680



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