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## The Voter vol. 8, no. 2 (Jan 1991)

Maine League of Women Voters Staff

*Maine League of Women Voters*

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# THE VOTER

Vol. 8, No. 2

The League of Women Voters of MAINE

January 1991

## KEYS to the CAPITOL '91

**Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>** (followed by reception at the Blaine House)



Maine's new legislature (the 115th) faces some new (and some old) problems. Our annual "Keys to the Capitol" learning session will focus on two of them:

HEALTH CARE and STATE BUDGET AND THE INCOME SHORTFALL

- WHERE: Room 113, State Office Building, Augusta (and later, the Blaine House)
- WHEN: Tuesday, February 5, 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. (and reception, 4 to 5 p.m.)
- PROGRAM:
- 9:00 a.m. Registration (Fee: \$3 League members, students, Girl Scouts, \$5 non-members)
  - 9:30 Greetings and "Goals of the 115th Legislature," Legislative Leadership
  - 10:15 Break
  - 10:30 HEALTH CARE: CRISIS OR OPPORTUNITY?
    - \*Susan Collins, Chairman of the Governor's cabinet-level advisory group on health
    - \*Joseph Ditre, Ex. Dir., Consumers for Affordable Health Care
    - \*Margaret Mueller-Shore, Health Policy Analyst (Former staff member with the Maine Health Policy Advisory Council)
    - \*Katherine Alexander, Vice-President for Corporate Affairs, Maine Blue Cross and Blue Shield
    - \*Dr. Ulrich Jacobsohn, President, Maine Medical Association
    - Moderator: Senator Barbara Gill (Director of Development and Special Projects, Osteopathic Hospital of Maine)
  - 12-2 Lunch with your legislator(s)
  - 2 p.m. HOW WILL WE PAY MAINE'S BILLS?
    - Rep. John Cashman, House Chair, Taxation Committee
    - Sen. Ruth Foster, Appropriations Committee
    - H. Sawin Millett, Finance Commissioner
    - Charles O'Leary, Maine AFL-CIO
    - Moderator: Randy Wilson, Maine Times

\* Confirmed at press time

*Continued on Page 2*

**Call to Convention !**

Please see Page 3

3:00 p.m. League briefing on legislation affecting League issues

3:45 Break

4 to 5 p.m. LEAGUE RECEPTION AT THE BLAINE HOUSE

Mark your calendar today for February 5th, and remember to invite your state representative and senator to have lunch with you and to meet you at the Blaine House. (A formal invitation, on behalf of the League, will be sent to each legislator, but a personal reminder lets them know their constituents are watching.)

Pam Greenman, Camden, and Jane Saxl, Bangor, have been working on the program and obtaining speakers. As you can see from the names listed for the two panels, you will hear divergent views, but we hope speakers will recognize that a League audience wants more light than heat.

(There is no "snow date"--too difficult to schedule--so pray for clear roads.)

## **Memo to Membership Chairs**

It really is important that LWV-US, LWV-ME and all local Leagues and MAL units have accurate member lists.

When you have completed checking and correcting your annual print-out from national, please send one copy to our "computer lady," Rita Breton at 23 Spurwink Road, Scarborough, ME 04074.

With your latest corrections, she'll be able to bring our Maine member list up to snuff.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

--NELLIK DOBLE  
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

**You can no more win a war  
than you can win an earthquake .**

--*Jeannette Rankin (1880-1973), the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress.  
Elected by Montana voters to the House of Representatives in 1916 and 1940.*



# CALL to CONVENTION

IT WAS UNANIMOUS! The State Board voted to hold our 1991 convention at the Maine Maritime Academy--site of our 1989 convention. Satisfaction with facilities and food--AND the very reasonable cost--made it "no contest." This year, we trust, the weather will cooperate, making it easier for delegates to enjoy lovely historic Castine and its beautiful setting on upper Penobscot Bay.

Convention is where we make decisions and set goals for the next two years. Delegates will discuss, confer, lobby each other, and then vote on:

- STATE PROGRAM: "Governmental issues for concerted study and action" based on recommendations of local Leagues submitted to the State Board at least six weeks prior to convention (requested by Feb. 15th)
- BUDGET, to support the program we select, Voters Service, administrative expenses, Per Member Payment to LWVUS, etc.
- STATE OFFICERS, BOARD and a NOMINATING COMMITTEE for 1993

LWVME President Jane Saxl beat the deadline in our by-laws for the first official "Call to Convention" by mailing in December a packet of materials to local League presidents and Member-at-Large Units, providing forms for their responses (following local League meetings) on suggested state program, nominations for officers, and any suggestions for by-law changes.

State Membership Chair Nellik Doble will be sending each League a report on its membership as of January 1, for determining number of that League's delegates.

League's "from the grass roots upward" approach means that planning for a successful convention is a long process. So, the middle of winter is NOT too early to start thinking about being a delegate from your local League. To help you, here is information on costs:

REGISTRATION: \$20 (checks payable to LWVMaine)

LODGING: Leavitt Hall Double room with private bath, \$60 per night (\$30 pp)  
Single " " " " \$50 per night

(If needed for "overflow") Curtis Hall Baths "down the hall"  
Double room, \$35 per night or \$17.50 per person  
Single room \$28 per night per person

MEALS: Friday, May 3 Dinner 6 to 7 p.m. \$8.50  
Sat. May 4 Breakfast 7 to 8 a.m. \$4  
" " Lunch 12 to 1 p.m. 5.50  
" " Reception (w/light hors doeuvres) and dinner \$17.50  
Sun. May 5 Breakfast 8:45 to 10 a.m. \$4 ("Recognition bkfast)

Total for five meals \$39.50

(Checks for lodging and meals payable to Maine Maritime Academy)

More details (on guest speakers, etc.) in the April VOTER. Meanwhile, if you know now you'll be a delegate, clip and send this form:

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TO: LWVMaine, 335 Water St., Augusta, ME 04330 THIS IS PRE-REGISTRATION FOR:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Accommodations: Type/nights Representing: LEAGUE NAME



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The following concise notes were taken by Charlotte Wilbur, Portland Area League, at that League's "Our Town" conference on September 25, 1990. Underscored names are, of course, the speakers.

Pat Clancy (of Community Builders, Boston): Across the country, 1,500-2,000 non-profit groups have been formed to address problems of housing--responsible for 125,000 units developed so far.

Hallmark of these groups:     Close to the customer  
                                  Revitalization of neighborhoods with pride  
                                  Long-term support and services (in for the "long haul")

Layers of Resources:        Tap in to Grant dollars (These are match, mix---  
                                  Fed/state; public/private. Needs all or some together)  
                                  Operating dollars (rentals, etc.)  
                                  Mortgage, debt instruments  
                                  Equity financing

If affordability is to be preserved, renters and owners must have a stake in the whole process.

Kay Rand (We heard her first at LWV State Convention, Maine Maritime Academy, 1989):  
Quality of life in Maine is changing due to: property tax rising without support services keeping pace; natural resources being depleted; character of communities is changing, but a balance can be struck between conservation and development and both are valid.

Dept. of Economic and Community Development is making planning grants to cover 75% of preparing local comprehensive plans--82 now in the works; every municipality by 1994. Plans are to cover a 10year period; 10% of housing should be to benefit low-income and low-low income; local citizens must be part of the planning process.

There is a good video about housing development available from DECD (289-6800)--ask for Randall Arendt video. It is in demand, but available.

Greg Nadeau: Affordable Housing Partnership Act funded for \$15 million in the 1989 referendum. Land acquisition is the most expensive component in new construction. Mortgage Insurance Fund available to assist first-home buyers. Default on Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) loans very low.

Perley Beane: The Affordable Housing Alliance works in tandem with MSHA to give technical assistance and distribute funding - to 45 communities so far. There is an Advisory Committee, and encouragement for local Alliances to form. Land acquisition has a revolving fund - \$500,000 with low-interest loans. \$4 million allocated to municipal infrastructure (not schools) to supplement rising cost of growth. \$2 million for rehabilitation of existing housing, with low-interest loans.

Bill Burney (Mayor of Augusta): Gap financing available, \$210 million tax-exempt bond. Maine State Housing Authority mortgage fund just now being finalized. Grants available to non-profit groups to administer housing; loans to shelters - SHIP.

*Continued on Page 6 with a HOUSING SUCCESS STORY*



Ruth and Alvin Boss, joint guardians of our Election Process portfolio, report that Secretary of State William Diamond is submitting to the 115th Legislature a package of election law legislation that includes:

"An Act to Encourage Students to Register and Vote." The Secretary of State's office would obtain (through public and private schools) the names and addresses of 13-year olds, then send each potential voter a voter registration application. Also, 17-year olds who would be 18 by Election Day would be encouraged to register, with local registrars keeping these names on a separate list with birthdates, and placing them on the municipal voting list on their 18th birthdays.

"An Act to Assist Absentee Voters who Expect to Vote Absentee on an Ongoing Basis." Clerks would be permitted to compile separate lists of voters who vote absentee on a perennial basis, thereby eliminating the requirement that these voters reapply at each election.

"An Act to Allow Any Registered Voter to Vote by Absentee Ballot." This would remove specific reasons for voting by absentee ballot, e.g., incapacity, religious belief, confinement, distance, absence from municipality on Election Day.

"An Act to Encourage Voter Registration by Enclosing Voter Registration Applications in Individual Income Tax Returns." Self-explanatory.

"An Act to Clarify Certain Election Laws." A voter may not be removed from a voter list for not voting in previous elections. Municipal clerks will be permitted to accept voter registration applications when the municipal voter registrar is unavailable or the board of voter registration is not in session. A person's right to vote can be challenged on ground said person does not live in the electoral district in which registered.

Two more proposals with regard to absentee ballots: 1. That absentee ballots no longer need to be marked and printed separately from regular ballots. 2. Ballot clerks could start processing absentee ballots by 2 p.m. on Election Day instead of at the close of balloting.

The League has always wanted "informed voters", so there is a lot of Voters Service work to be done if the laws respecting 13-year olds are passed and many more students register. Time previously spent by League members at high school "Voter Registration" tables can now be devoted to providing information on issues.

"Secondly, the President is to be the commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States. In this respect his authority would be nominally the same with that of the king of Great Britain, but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first General and admiral of the Confederacy; while that of the British king extends to the declaring of war and to the raising and regulating of fleets and armies,--all which, by the Constitution under consideration, would appertain to the legislature."

*(Underscoring is in the original text)*

# Health Care Costs

U.S. 1989

## WHO PAID ?

33% Private insurance  
21% Consumers  
17% Medicare  
10% Medicaid  
15% Other Gov't programs  
4% Other private sources

## WHO RECEIVED ?

39% Hospitals  
19% Doctors  
22% Dental and other professional  
services, home health care, drugs,  
and vision products  
8% Nursing homes  
12% Administration, research, construction

The national total expenditure of \$604 billion was approximately \$2,400 per capita and equaled 11.6% of GNP (the total of all goods and services produced.) Health care expenditures in 1989 were 11.1% higher than in 1988; GNP was 6.7% higher than in 1988.

Federal spending on health programs was 14.7% of total Federal budget in 1989; 14.1% in 1988.

From a report by the U.S. HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION

(Recommended reading: America's Health Care Revolution, Joseph A. Califano, Jr. Simon and Schuster, 1988, (paperback edition 1989)

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING, continued from Page 4

SUCCESS STORY! Western Maine Community Action, Farmington. University town means flow of ideas, in and out, fertile ground for this effort. Area known as the Ghetto was two blocks from center of town, one block from university and near biggest employer. BEGAN with tenants of area (40% still living in rehab. area) to see what they could put into the project -- ideas, sweat equity, skills, etc. Next, the church connection, ending up with 10 churches putting money up front (\$17,354.) Next, Western Maine Community Action came in with funding, then Maine State Housing Authority, Maine Housing Enterprise, then Town of Farmington, and all together made the project work. 13,000 hours of volunteer labor!

On top of these there were contributions from United Way, 75% pro bono lawyers' fees, closing costs forgiven, plus ongoing rental income held in escrow.

The apartment-house/trailer complex has 8 new mobile homes and 13 1- and 2-bedroom units. Lease-to-own came out of the project, with requirements for completing home ownership courses and maintaining a family budget with savings built in.

The whole area now pays its fair share of property taxes; police calls in the area have been reduced 75%; children are proud to say they live there (a new playground was part of volunteer labor.)

One fly in the ointment: An 8 ft. stockade fence separates area from surrounding homes. It is not on project property. Perhaps there will be a Berlin Wall or Brewster Place happening!

--CHARLOTTE WILBUR  
Affordable Housing Committee  
LWV of Portland Area

## Health Care Issues

"These are fundamental questions. Who will care for the old, the infirm, and the poor?  
Is misfortune private or public? Is it better to be excellent or just?"

"What do we really need? Where should we get it? At what price? Should every-  
one be guaranteed certain services close by, no matter what the price?"

"Society spends an inordinate amount of money on the treatment of disease, but invests  
very little for prevention or protection."

"We cannot depend on medical miracles to undo the effect of bad habits, poverty  
and lack of basic care, or unhealthy homes and workplaces."

"A 1987 study of behavioral risk factors in Maine found that: 28% of adults smoked,  
59% did not get enough exercise, 26% were obese, and 58% did not use their seatbelts."

Recommended reading: THIRD ANNUAL REPORT (Dec. 1989) of the State of Maine Health Policy  
Advisory Council, from which these quotations were taken.  
Order from the Council at: State House Station #141, Augusta 04333

## "NO" to Turnpike Expansion

In mid-September the League was approached by the Campaign for Sensible Transportation (made up of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the Maine Transportation Coalition and other citizen groups) and was asked to endorse the effort to collect signatures on election day petitions which would:

1. De-authorize the proposed widening of the Maine Turnpike from Exit 1 to Exit 6A.
2. Redirect surplus Turnpike funds to finance other, more pressing, road and bridge repairs throughout the state, and
3. Establish a transportation policy for Maine that:
  - coordinates transportation planning with land use and economic development initiatives;
  - minimizes environmental degradation;
  - reduces the state's reliance on foreign oil;
  - promotes reliance on energy efficient forms of transportation, such as trains;
  - evaluates the full range of transportation alternatives including transportation management prior to increasing highway capacity;
  - meets the mobility needs of the people of Maine, especially the elderly and disabled; and
  - establishes a public participation process to involve citizens and communities in transportation policy.

The State Board, at its October 24 meeting, verified that the goals of the CST were in harmony with League positions on transportation, the environment and the decision-making process. Consequently the Board decided to endorse this grass roots effort on behalf of the League.

On Thursday, November 1, a press conference was held at Portland City Hall to announce the support of various citizen groups. League member Jane Lester read a statement outlining the League's support and the reasons for it. A second press conference was held on November 14 after the election and after the successful completion of the signature-gathering effort. Portland Area League president, Carol Fritz, represented the LWV, one of several supporting groups with representatives present.

--JANE LESTER



# VIDEO on ECONOMIC POLICY

"If I were an 18-year old, I would be incensed."

"The U.S. today ranks 14th out of 16 industrial nations in the share of its economy that it puts into education."

"We see that a growing portion of our (future) labor force must come from people who are now part of the economic underclass, and if these people don't have adequate education, health care, training, they aren't going to be productive contributors to our economy, and that is going to leave us as a second-rate economic power."

"Nothing changes in America unless we participate in the political system."

These quotations are from an 18-minute video, Reaching for the American Dream-- Understanding Economic Policy, part of an LWV-Education Fund package designed to get more citizens (of all ages) talking about U.S. economic policy and how to affect it.

Although the economists featured in the video express varying views, they agree on one point: Future generations will pay a high price for our current economic policies.

The LWVME has a copy of the video and its accompanying CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK and TEACHER'S GUIDE (for use in classroom discussions) to lend to any interested local League or individual member. Request it from: Ethel Schwalbe, RR, Box 137-B, Steuben ME 04680.

MARCH 10	DEADLINE FOR April VOTER	MARCH 10
Mail neat copy to: RR, Box 137-B, Steuben, ME 04680		



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