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## The Voter vol. 8, no. 2 (Oct 1990)

Maine League of Women Voters Staff

*Maine League of Women Voters*

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# THE VOTER



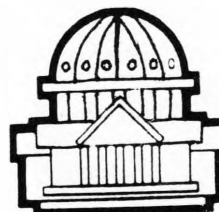
Vol. 8, No. 1

The League of Women Voters of MAINE

October 1990

## DEBATES\* State Senate State House

In response to a request from the Maine Municipal Association earlier this year the League and the MMA have been working together to organize and conduct a number of debates this fall among candidates for the State Senate and House. The League's experience and reputation in this arena was the reason given by MMA in asking for our cooperation.



Marion Holshouser of the LWV-Portland Area worked with MMA and contacted League volunteers to coordinate the debates in their districts.

League members are working with municipal officials in seven (7) communities as coordinators for the debates. Not all debates have been scheduled as of publication date (check your local League president or Marion for updated information.) The League's appreciation and thanks go to all involved.

COORDINATORS COORDINATORS		Senate District	House District	Date	DEBATE Time	Place
LWV	MMA					
Barbara Bowler Bangor	Jane Saxl Mary Sullivan Bangor	10	115, 116, 117, 118 119	10/24		Bangor
Midge Stafford Mt. Desert	Jill Goldthwait Bar Harbor	12	125*	10/15	7 pm	Somesville Fire House
Alice Conkey Brunswick	Michel Kiernan Bath	24	74, 75	10/18	7 pm	Patten Library Bath
Ethel Schwalbe Ellsworth	Harold West Milbridge	7	125,* 126	10/11	7 pm	Cherryfield Town Hall
Olive Moore MAL So. Paris	Edward Roach Dixfield	8	54			
Jean B. Smith MAL Wayne	David Byras Litchfield	18	93			
Jane Root Portland Area	Gail Walker Raymond	27	35, 37, 38			Windham

(\*not a typo--a long narrow district)

# From the President



After Labor Day, as the nights grow chilly, a few leaves begin to change color and the asters and goldenrod bloom, it's time to go back to school. Many years have passed since I put on new shoes and selected a crisp new outfit for the first day of school but the feeling still lingers. I was always anxious to go back to school. It meant shopping for new notebooks, sometimes a Scripto pencil, but it always meant a new beginning. It was a time of promise, it was the chance to do better than I had before, and to learn new skills and subject matter. At this time of year I still get that sense of anticipation, the excitement that comes when you know that new challenges lie ahead.

Now I don't go to the schoolhouse, but I continue to learn through the League. Like school, each year offers new opportunities, new friends and the sense of accomplishment that comes from gaining insight and knowledge. The League has all the positives and none of the negatives. You don't get graded on performance; it's not compulsory, and you can devote as much or as little time as you choose, yet the rewards are there.

This year's League program offers a wide range of activities from which to choose. Some are traditional; others are new League efforts. This year will bring the first of what we hope will become an annual tradition, the League of Women Voters of Maine / Maine Municipal Association Legislative Debates. If you want information on debates in your community or area, call your local League president or Marion Holshouser of the Portland Area League (767-2784.) (And see page 1 of this VOTER.)

The League will of course be registering citizens across the state, especially on September 22, National Voter Registration Day. As always, we will assist voters with absentee ballots and provide voter information.

Some of the areas in which we worked last year will be continued. Back on the agenda is Waste Mangement which includes recycling, waste reduction, and waste disposal. Currently we are in the process of answering LWV Education Fund questionnaires about the extent of recycling programs in our communities and the efforts of our local newspapers. Ann Knowles will continue to chair a committee on Affordable Housing. Last year, she and her committee, with the help of a local legislator, introduced a bill which made it all the way to the Appropriations Committee. Maybe we will reintroduce it in the new session.

Barbara Bowler will be our active and vocal representative to the Maine Pro Choice Coalition. She will be looking to you to help protect reproductive choice in Maine. Pat Cyphers will continue to keep us informed about clean air and clean water issues. She is our representative to the University of Maine's Chemicals in the Environment Information Center board. For updates on election process look to the Moas duo, Alvin and Ruth. They will be our representatives to the Secretary of State's Election Practices Advisory Commission. This year Margie Soule promises to go on the road and let us know the results of last year's School Library Survey on which we worked with the Maine State Library, the Maine Library Association, and the Maine Educational Media Association.

*(Continued on Page 7)*

...the following five proposals on the November 6 referendum ballot. The decision to support four bond issues and the constitutional amendment was taken by the State Board after a review of all items in relation to established League positions (and, in some instances, after obtaining additional information from the Secretary of State's office.)

The quotations following each ballot item are from the LWVUS publication IMPACT ON ISSUES.

**YES** ☒ # 2. "Do you favor a \$4,500,000 bond issue for the acquisition of certain rail lines, rail trackage rights or easements or ancillary rights and interests for the establishment, preservation and operation of rail service in Maine?"

"Government policy should promote the development, nationwide, of transportation systems, in particular rail systems (*underscoring added*) where they can move people, goods and raw materials in a more energy-efficient manner than alternative systems."

**YES** ☒ # 4. "Do you favor a \$3,000,000 bond issue for the investigation, abatement, clean up and mitigation of uncontrolled hazardous substance sites that pose a hazard to public health, the environment and ground water quality?"

"The League supports...policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in order to protect public health and air, water and land resources."

**YES** ☒ # 5. "Shall a bond issue for the purchase of public lands to provide access for Maine's people and for construction to replace Churchill Dam in the amount of \$19,000,000 be approved?"

The \$19,000,000 is to be allocated as follows:

\$8,500,000 for Inland Fish and Wildlife acquisitions.

\$8,500,000 to Land for Maine's Future for acquisition for recreational uses.

\$1,000,000 to Land for Maine's Future for buying up farmland.

\$1,000,000 to patch up (not replace) Churchill Dam. (Note: Blocking of fish migration is not a problem.)

"The League supports...acquisition of land for public use."

**YES** ☒ # 7. "Do you favor a \$9,000,000 bond issue for construction of water pollution control facilities?"

"The League supports...measures to reduce water pollution from direct point-source discharges and from indirect nonpoint sources."

**YES** ☒ # 9. "Shall the Constitution of Maine be amended as proposed by a resolution of the Legislature to ensure payment of mortgage loans for the purpose of encouraging the acquisition, construction, repair or remodeling of housing for Maine citizens?"

"The League's dual commitment to work for fair housing and an expansion of housing supply for low- and moderate-income families continues at every level of government."

(Note: See also the July 1990 VOTER, Page 6, heading.)

## MORE on:                      **Radioactive Waste**

An article in the July VOTER headlined "Radioactive Waste in Your Local Landfill?" prompted a response from new League member Maria Holt (who is also Representative Maria Holt, District 74.) (The July article mentioned that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had proposed new rules that would exempt certain "low-level" radioactive waste from regulatory control and would permit such wastes to be landfilled, incinerated or recycled.)

Rep. Holt pointed out that in Maine we have a law forbidding nuclear waste in any repository other than a facility especially for radwaste. She proposed and was the prime sponsor of the bill, which was supported by the Senate Chair of the Energy Committee, Judy Kany and passed the legislature without debate in 1989. Maine's law was the first, but at least four other states have followed our lead in demanding that we keep careful track of nuclear waste (Vermont, Iowa, Minnesota, Pennsylvania.)

The information below is from a packet of materials Maria sent, and is especially timely because of:

1. Price increases and prospect of shortages for all petroleum products, and resultant pressure on some fronts to "return to nuclear."
2. The report that the Maine low-level waste siting commission is about to release a list of potential sites.

### ENERGY SUPPLIES VS. FEDERAL SUBSIDIES

The figures below are from "Hiding the True Costs of Energy Sources," The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 17, 1985. They show the number of MBTUs supplied per dollar of subsidy.

End Use Efficiency	13	Fossil electric	0.8
Coal	5.8	Hydro	0.4
Natural Gas	3.8	Nuclear	0.07
Oil and natural gas		Synthetic fuels	.0
liquids	2.4	Nuclear fusion	.0
Non-hydro renewable	1.7		

### MAINE YANKEE AS A PERMANENT DISPOSAL SITE ?

(Excerpts from a November 21, 1989, statement to the Maine Authority on Low-Level Radioactive Waste by Representative Maria Glen Holt.)

"To consider Maine Yankee's containment as a short or long term nuclear waste dump is a threat to our marine resources and people. I intend to remind Mainers that we were promised at Maine Yankee's licensing hearings that all nuclear waste would be shipped away from our coastal area."

"The earthquake issue has been glossed over, I believe, as has the issue of possible rises in sea level.

"The Robinhood fault lies in front of the Maine Yankee plant. There is a smaller fault on the Maine Yankee land north of the peninsula. Maine Yankee could be right on top of it. The Maramachi fault runs all the way down from New Brunswick into the Seabrook nuclear power plant area and on into Massachusetts. In 1979 we had a 4.2 earthquake in the Maine Yankee area. ....

"Seismologists believe rising sea levels can effect seismic activity because of changes in sheer weight. Studies have not been done on the eastern seaboard."

# HOUSING NEEDS IN MAINE

FROM THE HOUSING COMMITTEE:

The following material was excerpted from a January, 1990 report by the Maine State Housing Authority. The draft reports title is Housing Needs in Maine: A Preliminary Assessment. For a complete copy of this 37-page report, telephone Maine Housing Authority at 1-800-452-4603.

In Maine, the 1980's development boom has resulted in a polarized housing market. Moderate-income households were able to take advantage of the investments that they made in the 1970's and use their equity to purchase larger and higher quality homes. Maine's low-income households, many of which are on fixed incomes, have experienced an increasingly costly rental market and, in some cases, a lack of adequate supply.



Some other aspects of the market include:

- Statewide average selling prices increased 88% from 1981 to 1988.
  - 62% of the renter households earned less than \$20,000 in 1987, as compared to 35% of the state's home owners.
  - Nearly one-third of Maine's renters pay more than \$500 monthly for rent and utilities.
  - More than 41% of the state's housing was created before 1940. During the 1970's and 1980's a greater proportion of single family and mobile homes were constructed.
  - More than 67,000 new housing units were created in the 1980's. 42% of this growth occurred in York and Cumberland counties.
  - Over half of Maine's apartment units are located in its four metro areas although only one-third of the total housing stock is located in these areas.
  - More than 27,000 of Maine's rental units are receiving Federal rental subsidy. Survey data indicates as many as 26% of renters may be receiving government assistance though 52% of the renter households may be income-eligible. This translates into nearly 28,000 renter households that may be income-eligible for assistance but are not being assisted.
- Maine faces the threat of losing 4500 federally subsidized rental units in the next ten years due to expiring rental assistance contracts, prepayment of mortgages, or physical deterioration.
- The number of emergency shelter beds for the homeless has doubled since 1986 though the use of these beds has increased more than 400% during that same time.
  - An estimated 15,700 Maine residents have impaired mobility and may need wheelchair accessible housing.

The first building block of housing resource allocation must be demand. Demand is impacted by increases in population, increases in household formation, changes in age distribution, income relative to housing costs, and economic forces.

## HOUSING NEEDS IN MAINE, *continued from Page 5*

Actual U.S. Housing and Urban Development Dept. spending for Maine increased from \$42.6 million in 1980 to \$70.1 million in 1987 due to funds expended for multi-year subsidy commitments which were made in prior years, yet the number of Maine State Housing Authority-financed newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated Section 8 subsidized units fell from 804 to 0 in 1988. The Section 8 New Construction/Substantial Rehabilitation programs which were responsible for much of the subsidized housing development in Maine were terminated in 1983. Rural housing programs, administered through the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration have been responsible for much of the federally subsidized new rental housing during the mid-1980's. This may explain in part the lower relative need for the construction of federally subsidized multifamily housing in northern and eastern Maine. These are the areas served by the Farmers Home Administration.

Available data indicated that the highest relative need for the new construction of rental housing is concentrated in southern and central Maine (Biddeford, Portland, Norway-Paris, Livermore Falls, Belfast, Skowhegan, and Penobscot.) Population is projected to grow in all these areas. The number of persons receiving AFDC food stamp assistance were at moderate levels. These areas tended to have lower percentages of federally-subsidized multifamily housing and were among the areas with the highest ratios of Fair Market Rent to wage levels.

Rent subsidies for existing housing are considered to be a high priority if there is a high ratio of rental costs to wage levels and if the area has a low proportion of federally-assisted rental housing.



Affordability of housing reduces itself to two variables:  
the cost of the unit and the income of the household.  
Housing problems are often directly related to income problems.

More than 27,000 multifamily units in Maine are receiving Federal rental subsidy. Many of these units were privately constructed and owned in the 1970's and early 1980's with public incentives. According to a 1987 National League of Cities report, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's housing assistance budget will reach only 28% of those who qualify. Data from the Mainepoll survey indicated that only 26% of Maine's renters receive Federal subsidy, but nearly 52% may be income-eligible. Those households which are headed by someone over the age of 64 or under the age of 36 account for 87% of those households which receive rental subsidy.

Housing options are limited for lower-income people in Maine. Sixty-two percent of the renters earned household incomes which were less than \$20,000 in 1987 as opposed to 35.2% of the homeowners. Conversely, less than 1% of the renter households earned more than \$30,000 in 1987 compared to 41% of the home owner households. Maine's multifamily units tend to be occupied by the lower-income households.

### NEW CONSTRUCTION OF UNITS FOR HOME PURCHASE

Indicators for this type of housing assistance include: population growth, a low ratio of wage levels to housing prices, and a low proportion of single family housing stock.

Changes in the composition of housing stock development since 1970 have resulted in an increasing percentage of mobile homes and a decreasing percentage of multifamily

*Continued on Page 7*

units. Municipal Valuation Returns, which are submitted by municipalities to the State's Bureau of Taxation, show that more than 67,000 new housing units have been created since 1981. More than 42% of this development occurred in York and Cumberland counties. The Commission estimates that more than two-thirds of the total migration into Maine towns consists of Mainers moving around. Housing prices may, in fact, be affecting migration patterns. People may be moving to where housing costs are lower.

The Sanford, Biddeford, Portland, Sebago Lakes, Bath-Brunswick, Auburn, Boothbay Harbor-Wiscasset, Norway-Paris, Waterville, Belfast, Ellsworth, and Bangor Labor Market Areas, much of the southern and coastal areas of the state, exhibited a need for the construction of affordable single family residences. The creation of new units, given the demands placed on the existing stock by population growth, should provide a more competitive market environment which may, in turn, provide selling-price stability for these growth areas.

#### REHABILITATION OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:

Rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing is considered needed if there is a slow population growth, a high proportion of older housing stock, incomes that lag behind housing prices, a high proportion of low-income residents, and a high proportion of single family units within the market area.

Mainpoll survey results indicated that more than three-fourths of the households in Maine own their housing units. The survey results also indicated that more than 20% of the home owners in the state had household incomes which were less than \$15,000 in 1987. A full 10% of the households earned less than \$10,000. This translates to an estimated 35,000 households which subsist below the poverty level yet own their housing units.

Areas which exhibited a higher need for rehabilitation funding for owner-occupied units included Rockland, Livermore Falls, Belfast, Skowhegan, Calais-Eastport, Dover-Foxcroft, Lincoln-Howland, Patten and Houlton. Characteristics of all these areas included slow population growth, high proportions of older housing and low income residents, and high rates of ownership.

--Ann Knowles 829-5053  
100 Middle Road  
Cumberland Foreside, ME 04110

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

*Continued from Page 2*

A new item has been added to our already full plate! We have a new national study which will evaluate public and private mechanisms for delivery of and financing of health care in the United States. Our League's committee for this study is chaired by Ethel Schwalbe. Each local League has a representative to that committee but there is room for lots more.

Each of these chairs wants your participation. Don't wait to be invited; call them and volunteer your time. If you are more interested in organizational work, let me know. You will find our addresses and phone numbers on the card ("1989-90 State Board" and "1990-91 Priorities") stapled inside this VOTER. Ann Knowles' address and phone follows the article on "Housing Needs in Maine", pp. 5-7. We may not be starting off to school but we are beginning a new League year and that can be even more rewarding.

--JANE SAXL

# POLICY on ACTION

Assure the right of local Leagues and Members-at-Large (MALs) to take action in the name of the state or local League at the federal or state level on all national and state consensus positions, with consultation and consent of the national and/or state boards.

1. Annually the state board will establish and pass its legislative agenda.
2. The state president or designate will receive requests from local Leagues to take action in the state legislature on local program.
3. When a local League or state board member wishes to testify before a state body on a state position, the local president or appropriate Chair shall send a copy of the proposed testimony to the state President sufficiently far in advance of the date the testimony will be given to allow for review and revision.
4. A copy of a local League's request to national (LWVUS) for permission to act on a national position on national legislation shall be sent to the state President.

--Adopted by State Board, LWVME  
February 21, 1990

## A REMINDER:

The policy above applies to action taken in the name of the League. League members, when writing to express their political views, do not even mention their League membership, for that will almost inevitably be misinterpreted and taken as an expression of League policy.

Following are two possibilities for member action!

### **Parental or Spousal Consent Will Most Likely Reappear in Next Session**

Parental consent for teen-age abortions will probably be raised again as an issue in the 115th Maine Legislature. Possibly, the Maine Right-to-Life Committee may by-pass that issue in favor of spousal consent. Although the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1976 (Planned Parenthood v. Danforth) that the U.S. Constitution prohibits a state from making a woman's right to an abortion contingent upon her husband's permission, more recently an increasing number of men (husbands or ex-husbands) were temporarily successful in obtaining court orders to block abortions.

Watch--and write--or call your  
state legislators

### **Sen. Mitchell Needs to Hear from Pro-Choice Constituents**

Senator George Mitchell is the only member of the Maine congressional delegation who has NOT signed as co-sponsor of the Freedom of Choice Act.

The senator has always said that he would support the law, but with Roe v. Wade in jeopardy, it is important that he hear from his pro-choice constituents. Write to ask him to sign on as co-sponsor and also to make a public statement about his support for a woman's right to choose.

*(Both articles based on the Maine NARAL News,  
Summer 1990)*

# memo to: Local Leagues

## Please send a copy...

... of your results on the LWV Education Fund's (LWVEF) recycling questionnaire (if your local league is completing the questionnaire) to:

Julie Howison  
262 Capisic St.  
Portland, ME 04102

Julie will collate local league survey results into a statewide report.

State Natural Resources Chair Pat Cyphers requests this, and reminds you that your response to LWVEF is due October 24.

NAME CHANGE: On the State Board/Priorities card enclosed, please change "Patty Letcher" to "Patty Ryan."

## ENVIRONMENTAL TIDBITS



SOMETHING OLD HAS BEEN ADDED !

You are reading this VOTER on RECYCLED PAPER.  
We knew we should have been using recycled paper all along, but the much higher cost didn't fit in our budget. However, a letter from a Leaguer, chastising us for not living up to our professed principles, led us to reconsider. Although the cost of recycled paper has come down, the size used for the VOTER is not quite as low as for new stock, so we are making some sacrifice for principle!

**cathy®**

**by Cathy Guisewite**



# Prison Bond Issue

Maine League members have not studied prison issues, and therefore have no position on the following bond issue:

"6. Shall a bond issue be authorized in the amount of \$20,250,000 to build, purchase, plan and renovate correctional facilities and to study future operation needs?"

The State Board recommended that this VOTER include arguments--pro and con-- on this bond issue. Thanks to Pam Greenman for trying to spur people to send information. BUT, the headline above was ready and waiting---the promised "pro" materials were not in the editor's mailbox by October 6th--the absolutely final deadline. (A Fax machine would have solved the problem--but this editor will not even consider investing in one until Congress passes a law--with enforcement provisions--prohibiting unsolicited "junk fax" !)

The following brief statements reverse the usual "PRO/CON" sequence because the "CON" material was received in a timely fashion.

**NO** ☒

"Maine voters should reject Bond Issue #6 on the November 6th ballot because it is too expensive and does not do enough to solve our corrections crisis. Also, the majority of the proceeds will be expended to build maximum security cells, a plan the voters overwhelmingly rejected last November.

"We have nearly 400 maximum security cells and only 300 maximum security inmates to put in them. The Department of Corrections already has authorization to build an additional 100 maximum security cells. We need more minimum and medium cells, not more maximum cells, at this time.

"We cannot build our way out of this crisis. We need a fresh approach, not a recycled initiative that the voters previously rejected."

--Joseph W. Mayo  
House Majority Whip  
(and member of Corrections Committee, *ed.*)

*Ed. Note:* The amount to be allocated for 100 maximum-security beds in South Warren would be \$14,250,000. *From L.D. 2469, the act authorizing the bond issue.*

**YES** ☒

Several phone calls to the editor the afternoon of October 5 provided the information that:

--The Maine Council of Churches, which opposed last year's \$35,000,000 prison bond issue, is supporting No. 6 this year.

--The Maine Civil Liberties Union is supporting the bond issue "conditionally"--MCLU feels it "does not go far enough."

## DATE BOOK

**Oct. 27**

"WOMEN, WORK, AND WORTH," a day-long conference on women and employment, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 27 at the Sonesta Hotel in Portland. It is sponsored by the Maine Commission for Women and is targeted to "women working in traditional employment situations and to women re-entering (*underscore added*) the workforce."

The registration fee, including lunch and materials, is \$25 per person (but \$45 for two attending together, \$65 for three.) The MCW brochure says "Please register by October 12", but doesn't say "must register" by that date. Make check payable to Maine Commission for Women/Conference and mail to: Maine Commission for Women, State House Station #93, Augusta, Me 04333. OR, call 289-3417 for more information.

**Nov. 13/14**

Kate Michelman, head of the National Abortion Rights Action League, will make two appearances in Maine.

On Tuesday, Nov. 13, she will debate Susan Smith, of the National Right to Life Committee, at UMaine Farmington. (No time given in NARAL newsletter.)

On Wednesday, Nov. 14, Michelman will speak in the Bangor area. Check a local paper for time and place.

**NOV. 6 VOTE !**

**Dec. 5**

Newly elected legislators and those re-elected will convene for the first session of the 115th Legislature to elect the State's Constitutional Officers: Treasurer, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and Auditor.

Ruth Moss, who submitted the above information, adds that deadlines for legislators to submit bills are:

Nov. 14 for re-elected legislators

Dec. 28 for new legislators



**B & B in N.H.**



Planning a trip to New Hampshire? Or wishing you could afford one? Wish no more. The New Hampshire League has a Bed and Breakfast program, offering Leaguers and their families comfortable rooms with breakfast in LWVNH members' homes. Rates are reasonable, and breakfast conversation should be stimulating.

Call 603-225-5344 (LWVNH OFFICE) for reservations or for information. (Why not put the number in your personal telephone directory, to save looking through VOTERS--which you save, of course-- when you are ready to plan your trip.)

# IN THIS ISSUE

## Page

- 1 Legislative Debates -- a first-time collaboration with MMA
- 2 President's Message
- 3 Bond Issues/Constitutional Amendment Supported by LWVME
- 4 Radioactive Waste; Energy Subsidies/Results Data
- 5-7 Housing Needs in Maine
- 8 ACTION POLICY  
Pro-Choice Notes
- 9 Request to Local Leagues re Recycling Questionnaire
- 10 Prison Bond Issue
- 11 Notices of speeches, conference, New Hampshire League's Bed&Breakfast

DEADLINE FOR NEXT VOTER: DECEMBER 10

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