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The MAINE VOTER

Published by The League of Women Voters of Maine

MRS RICHARD WAGNER
26 MOUNTAIN AVE.
LEWISTON, ME 04240

VOLUME XXI

MARCH-APRIL 1974

No. 4

LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

The longest Special Session ever held is finally over; and now that the dust has settled, we can assess how well our priority legislative items fared. It depends on your particular area of interest in the League whether you will consider this year a success.

1. **ERA:** By this time, everyone knows that Maine was the 31st state to ratify the ERA. The Legislature spent a long time arguing over the state ERA referendum, and no wonder. It was a very cloudy issue. The League of course supports the concept of a state ERA, although we had reservations about its need at this time, since the federal amendment has a very good chance of passage. What we questioned were the motives of those who had been so loudly opposed to the federal ERA. They supported en masse the state ERA, but clearly said that they would oppose it after it passed the Legislature and went to the people. Their campaign would have been built around the issue that the state amendment would replace the advisory referendum which had been declared unconstitutional by the Attorney General. Confused? So were many legislators, and the voters surely would have been. It did need a two-thirds vote of both houses, and after passing the House twice, it was finally defeated in the Senate. The roll call there was certainly strange; proponents and opponents of the federal amendment could not have been clearly defined at all. In any case, we will not have an ERA referendum this fall, for which we may all heave a sigh of relief. Now, what about rescision? All the information available indicates that there is a clear precedent for Congress not to accept a rescision after a state has ratified. When the 38th state has finally ratified, Congress will have to decide whether or not to accept Nebraska's rescision.

2. **Increase in welfare benefits:** This passed as part of the budget. The League was a member of a coalition which worked very hard for this legislation. Portland had a Time for Action; the State Board sent out a voter alert.

3. **State Government:** There was action on several fronts.
a. **Legislative Reform:** as usual the League was alone in support at the hearing, other than several legislators who have been as persistent as we on this issue. There has never been much public interest on this item, but we hope that we can make it something of a campaign issue. The legislature again defeated the reform issue; single-member districts was the sticky point. At the

last minute, the Republicans tried to trade the Democrats abolition of the Executive Council for single-member districts, but there was no trade, and it was all downhill from there on.

b. **Reapportionment:** The Legislature couldn't come to terms with the plan prepared by the Commission (with our own Nancy Masterton as Chairman), so it went to the Court which accepted the Masterton plan with minor changes.

c. **Compensation:** The Commission recommendation passed. Legislative salaries are now \$6000 for the biennium. The Commission had recommended \$7500, but the League did not have a position on a specific figure. This is at least a step in the right direction.

4. **Public Lots:** This went down to ignominious defeat in spite of the support of a large number of citizen groups. The League testified in favor and had a Time for Action. Special interests worked very hard against it. This will continue to be an issue which the League will follow carefully.

5. **Campaign Spending:** The national position came too late for us to take any concerted action. A memo from the State Board went out with information on the pending legislation, thus leaving it to individual members to act.

One other item which we had set as a priority was the Returnable Bottle Bill. It was not allowed into the Special Session, but is sure to be a hot issue in the 107th Legislature.

CALL TO COUNCIL

On May 21st and 22nd, hostess MAL Units of Augusta and Waterville will welcome the State Board, local presidents, and two additional delegates from each League to State Council at the Oblate Fathers House in Augusta. Delegates will decide on state program direction for the next year, and adopt a 1974-75 budget.

The Council will see a preview of the slide show on Land Use prepared by LaRue Spiker, State Environmental Resources Chairman. In addition delegates will discuss new directions in League expansion, service, and program. Observers from all Leagues are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion, although only designated delegates may vote. Pre-registration forms may be obtained from the state office or local presidents.

Co-chairman of arrangements are Gloria Anderson of Augusta and Maureen Thibideau of Waterville.

LEAGUE VALENTINE RECEPTION

On February 14, Valentine's Day, Leaguers decked their local legislators with Valentine carnations, welcomed them to a coffee reception at the State House, and discussed affairs of State.

For many Leaguers the trip to the State House was a first: they were introduced to House and Senate sessions, daily calendars, horse blankets, and a computer giving the current status of bills. Even veteran Capitol goers had an opportunity to update their legislative knowledge by intensive discussions with representatives. Everyone had an opportunity to attend an important hearing on Public Lands.

A letter from Speaker of the House Richard Hewes warmly thanked the League:

"On behalf of the members of the House of Representatives, I wish to express our appreciation to you and the members of the League of Women Voters who so generously provided the Legislature with coffee, goodies and pleasant hospitality on Valentine's Day. You all should be commended for your efforts."

The Senate "Horse Blanket" for that day quoted Senator Richard Berry of Cumberland as follows:

"Mr. President and Members of the Senate: I wear very proudly today a carnation. This was given to me and to the others by the League of Women Voters. I am particularly proud because I worked and voted against ERA Bill which they supported, and I think this is in the finest spirit of good friendly combat, so I wear this with a good deal of pride and I am sure that all of us do."



League President Shirley Knowles presents a red carnation to State Senator Jerrold Spears at the League's Valentine's Day Reception for Legislators. Senator Spears, from Winthrop, is also chairman of the State Government Committee which favorably reported out the Equal Rights Amendment prior to its passage by the Legislature.

STATE BOARD NEWS

The Board accepted with great regret the resignation of three of its members: Mardy Wheeler, Organization; Joan Averill, Public Relations; and Libby Mitchell, Legislative Action.

Joining the Board in March was Bobby Graham, Brunswick. Bobby will pick up the Legislative Reform item with a view to a concerted effort for passage in the 107th Legislature. She will be a state delegate to National Convention. Pat Skaling, a former Lewiston-Auburn member and now a MAL in Springvale, is off-board Finance Chairman. Lois Wagner, who has become our jack-of-all trades, is picking up the organizational portfolio.

During March, Marie Lisi, a staff member in the National League's organization department, met with State Board members and also visited the Board of the Portland League. Marie will return in June for a follow-up visit, which will focus on League orientation. On Tuesday, June 11th, the full Portland Board, State Board, and all local presidents and membership/organization chairmen will meet with Marie, place to be announced at Council. The State Board will have their regular board meeting on June 11th.

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

Statement of ownership, management and circulation of THE MAINE VOTER, published 4 times a year in July, October, January, and April by the League of Women Voter of Maine, RFD 2, Winthrop, Maine.

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RURAL/SMALL LEAGUE CAUCUS

The Maine League is attempting to bring a new dimension to the National League. Over the years we have had a sense of frustration and, sometimes failure in our ability to feel ourselves a vital part of League nationally. Although the National Board has many times helped us with workshops, by and large the National Office has not really known what we need. On our part, we have not always known exactly what to ask for. In terms of national programs and policies, it is easy, although not always correct, to feel we are such a small cog that our occasional squeaks go unnoticed. At National Convention in May, for example, Maine will be sending 8 delegates compared with Massachusetts' 132.

In the belief that the National Office would be more able to respond to our needs if we were able to articulate them better and that we should be able to have at least some impact on national decision-making, local League presidents in Maine met with our state president in February to propose basic goals and objectives for the formation of a national coalition of small/rural Leagues. The proposals listed below have been sent to twenty-five states with small League memberships. We are hearing from them now, and other state Leagues are expressing interest in the caucus. In addition, we are reserving a room at national convention to meet with those states who are interested in forming an on-going coalition.

The objectives and goals are:

1) **SPECIFIC HELP FOR SMALL LEAGUES FROM NATIONAL.** We are asking for the assignment of a national staff member, part-time, to coordinate the on-going activities of the caucus. Among the kinds of help we envision are success stories and ideas geared to small Leagues, development of a publication series geared to small League finances, and organizational help in coping with program and creating new League organizations in areas without sufficient population to sustain a traditional League.

2) **CREATE A POWER BASE TO INFLUENCE LEAGUE DECISION-MAKING.** The short range goal is to meet with the caucus and National Board members to set up long-range implementation of the caucus and to determine its structure. The long range goal is, of course, to make it possible for small leagues/states to cooperatively promote program, by-law and budget considerations at the national level. As a result of having a greater voice, an expected development would be to make the National Convention more meaningful and more representative of the total League membership by encouraging greater attendance by small Leagues.

3) **TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR SMALL LEAGUE SUCCESSES, PROBLEMS AND NEW IDEAS.** Here we envision a periodic newsletter among caucus members, prepared by them and published and distributed by the national office; evaluation of national services such as field trips, workshops and conferences so that other Leagues can take advantage of those that are particularly effective; development of service teams within the caucus to share particular areas of expertise; and setting up a system of sister local/state Leagues to exchange bulletins, publications, and other material of interest.

Sue Walker
President, Bangor-Brewer LMV

FIFTY-FOUR YEARS OF A GREAT IDEA

What idea? The great idea that a non-partisan organization could provide political education and experience that would contribute to the growth of the citizen and thus assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded upon the idea.

Governor Curtis has proclaimed April 1 to 5 as "LMV Week", the time when our once-a-year statewide Finance Drive starts. Members, businesses and individual citizens are urged to support in the public interest our cause for good government.

We are grateful to the many members (and husbands), who take the initiative to make a contribution, when they discover that it costs the League \$18 or more per member to carry out its program.

Business (and citizens) in a democratic system must rely on responsible government in order to prosper. So, please, — if you can — add something extra to your "dues bill" toward promoting our goal: effective self-government through citizen education and participation.

POPULATION FILM AVAILABLE

The Population Committee of the Natural Resources Council has purchased a film entitled "No Room for Wilderness." It is available free for showing to organizations and can come with a discussion leader if desired. For details concerning booking and equipment, write to the NRC, 20 Willow St., Augusta 04330.

LWV OF MAINE

PROPOSED BUDGET 1974-75

EXPENDITURES

A. Operating Costs		D. Services to local Leagues	
1. Maintenance of equipment	50.00	1. Workshops (Travel, room, coffee)	75.00
2. General supplies	300.00	2. Services to MAL Units, Provisional Leagues	100.00
3. Postage	240.00	3. Existing Leagues (advisor travel, materials)	120.00
4. Telephone and telegraph	550.00	4. MAL units (DPMs, postage, etc.)	150.00
5. Insurance (fire, theft on equip.)	45.00	5. Scattered MALs	80.00
6. Audit	25.00	E. Assessments and pledges	
7. Capital expenditures	25.00	1. National support	1334.00
B. Board and administrative committees		2. MAL PMP (91 at 4.75)	432.25
1. President (incl. secretarial)	500.00	F. Voter	800.00
2. Board tools and expenses		G. Educational activities	
a. 3DPMs, 3TFA, postage	100.00	1. Publications	
b. Room Rental	50.00	a. Purchase	0
c. Travel	700.00	b. Production and distribution	
d. Miscel. (State Handbooks)	10.00	State Gov. Booklet	1000.00
3. Administrative committees		Land Use Facts and Issues	500.00
a. Finance	35.00	Land Use slide show	300.00
b. Public Relations	10.00	2. Program Committees	
c. Budget and nominating	50.00	(incl. Observer Corps)	150.00
C. Delegates, travel, affiliations		3. Voters Service	
1. State convention/council	200.00	a. Publications (revisions of Voters Manual	
2. National council/convention	600.00	This is Legislature Make Your Ballot)	1300.00
3. Delegates to regional meetings	25.00	H. Position Support	250.00
4. Affiliations (NRC, WLC)	25.00	Total Expenditures	10131.25

INCOME

Local League Support @ 7.50/member	4177.50	Workshop fees	75.00
MAL dues to State (90 members anticipated at 5.25*)	472.50	Sale of Publications	
MAL PMP (90 at 4.75)	427.50	Voters Service	500.00
Contributions		State Government Booklet	500.00
MAL gifts	150.00	Interest on Savings	80.00
Finance Drive		State Duplicate Presidents Mailings	70.00
Education Fund	1000.00	Non-cash donations (audit, travel)	429.75
Non-deductable	500.00	Unexpended Balance	594.00
Election Night Reporting	880.00	Total Income	10131.25
Land Use Slide Show (this am't already in Hand)	275.00		

SUGGESTED PLEDGES FROM LOCAL LEAGUES (7.50 per member)

Bangor-Brewer	48 members as of 1/1/74	360.00
Brunswick	75 members as of 1/1/74	562.50
L-A	55 members as of 1/1/74	412.50
MDI	44 members as of 1/1/74	330.00
O-OT-V	68 members as of 1/1/74	510.00
Portland	217 members as of 1/1/74	1627.50
So. Portland	50 members as of 1/1/74	375.00
Total - Local League Support		4177.50

*Since the PMP to Nat'l is expected to increase from \$4 to \$4.75, the Budget Committee recommends increasing MAL dues from \$9 to \$10.