



Spring 2009

Voter Highlights

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Upper Valley

Mission

“The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”

Inside

President’s Note	1
Treasurer’s	1
Membership	1
Development	2
Program	2-3
Spring Events	4

President’s Note

These winter months have been exciting, no time for hibernating! We hosted a dinner meeting for local officials to identify and consider issues that cross town boundaries. This led, in cooperation with others, to a successful procurement of funds to support the continuation of these regional discussions. Our Natural Resources Committee co-sponsored with the Sierra Club a fantastic series on water and followed-up with a viewing of *FLOW*, a fascinating 2007 documentary that covers global water issues. We organized a forum featuring candidates for the Hanover School Board. Our Representative Government Committee held a meeting to reach consensus on an alternative proposal for electing the president. Finally, in conjunction with the Howe Library, we initiated two non-fiction book discussions concerning issues with global implications and local impact.

Our spring promises even more. In addition to the guides we already do yearly for Hanover, Norwich and Lyme, this year for the first time we intend to produce a Voter Guide for Lebanon. The NH and VT LWV State Conventions, both with very interesting programs, will take place on Sat May 2nd. Our International Relations Committee in collaboration with the Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth has organized for Tues May 12th a discussion of US trade policy. Our Annual Meeting on Wed May 20th will feature Professor Daryl Press from Department of Government at Dartmouth who will speak on "Walking the Tightrope: When U.S. Economic Policies Intersect with National Security Interests." Our third non-fiction book discussion in June will address "the industrialization of food distribution". Finally, as a new initiative, an end of the year potluck on Tues June 16th will provide everyone with the opportunity to share his or her good ideas for next year’s program. Please do attend these events, all of which are described in more detail below.

Two years ago, many of you took very seriously a request to provide direction to the board. This led to many changes, such as collaborating with other groups, experimenting with different formats and engaging CATV. We haven’t been able to accomplish all that you suggested but are committed to making the organization more relevant by tackling projects of local interest and acting on positions we hold at the local, state, and national levels. Your input matters. Even if you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting in May, please review the enclosed feedback form and send us your advice in the provided return envelope. Even if you are unable to attend our June potluck to brainstorm next year’s program, please do send us your ideas.

It has been an honor to represent you all during my two-year term as LWVUV president. It has been fascinating, challenging and even fun. I’ve had the support of a talented Board and am confident that, with your guidance, the new President and new Board will continue to enhance the vitality and effectiveness of this valuable organization.

Barbara McIlroy

Treasurer’s Report

With Board support, the Budget Committee is proposing a dues increase for the 2009-10 fiscal year from \$40 to \$45. With per member payments to National now at \$29.60 and to States at \$12, current dues no longer cover our fixed costs. In addition, our ability to raise funds has been seriously diminished. Even though we have comprehensively trimmed the proposed budget, we will be dipping into our meager reserves. We believe that, even in this difficult economic climate, raising dues is the fiscally responsible thing to do in order to maintain our program and effectiveness. We ask you to support our proposal to do so at the Annual Meeting on May 20th.

Ellen Blumberg

Membership

Please join me in welcoming two new members: Susan Shadford of Hanover and Sylvia Field of Lebanon. We will be sending out requests to renew membership soon after the Annual Meeting. We value and need each and every member and would greatly appreciate everyone paying his or her dues promptly. Also, we are looking for individuals to assist with several tasks on the Membership Committee.

Evelyn Spiegel

Board of Directors 2008 – 09

Officers

President

Barbara McIlroy
603.643.5844

Vice President

Margaret Powell
603.643.6433

Treasurer

Ellen Blumberg
802.795.9883

Secretary

Alice Conkey
603.643.1399

Board Meetings

Howe Library
Murray Room
1st Monday of the
Month, 9:15 AM
All Welcome!

May 4th
Jun 1st

Development

The shared power of gifts from people like you makes possible the united power of our local grassroots efforts. The annual finance drive of the League of Women Voters of the Upper Valley raised much-needed funds to support the work you care about. While we experienced a drop in support in the annual finance drive consistent with the downturn in the economy, we are beginning to work on new ways to supplement fundraising income that we'll be sharing with you as the year progresses. In the meantime, thank you to all of our members and non-members who contributed so generously to support all League activities.

Unrestricted funds support the operating budget and all League programs and are not tax deductible. This year unrestricted contributions from members totaled \$985 and from non-members, \$495. Restricted contributions to the LWV Education Fund support the League's education efforts in providing voters with factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and ballot issues and underwrite public forums on critical public policy issues, publications and other educational activities and are tax deductible. This year member and non-member contributions to the Education Fund totaled \$2,235, making the grand total of both restricted and unrestricted contributions \$3,715.

Ellen Gitomer

Program

The Representative Government Committee: The National Popular Vote Compact

The LWV has a long-standing position that supports the direct election of the president and abolishes the Electoral College -- seen by some as a difficult goal. An alternative -- the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact -- has many supporters, including Common Cause, several states, NYT editorials, etc. It proposes to bypass the Electoral College by recruiting enough states holding the majority of electoral votes (at least 270) to commit their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote (even if their state voted for the loser).

The National League has asked its membership to reach consensus as to whether the LWV should support the NPV compact or continue its long-standing position to abolish the Electoral College. At a meeting on March 18th, representatives from our local group of nine long-time league members studying this topic explained provisions in the US Constitution for presidential elections. They presented the pros and cons of the NPV Compact and then opened up the meeting of about 45 members for questions and lively (sometimes heated) discussion (all captured on CATV!). In many cases, the consensus questions were difficult or impossible to answer because the issues involved was so complicated. Many people felt the NPV Compact would be a grave mistake. Their thinking was that times have changed. Now, the electorate more generally views the Electoral College as an impediment to fair elections, so chances for successful passage of a constitutional amendment to abolish it have increased. Enacting the NPV Compact would be as difficult and more complicated than continuing the League's current position of abolishing the Electoral College. Therefore, the general consensus was that continuing our attempts to pass an amendment abolishing the Electoral College is the proper way to proceed. (You may find more information about this issue on the LWVUS website.)

Joyce Fieldsteel

The Regional Growth Management Study: 2020 Vision for the Valley

Our two-year study ended with a lively meeting of about forty local officials (managers as well as members from planning and select boards) from five 'core' towns (Lebanon, Hanover, Hartford, Norwich and Enfield). The group wanted to continue discussing and grappling with issues that cross town boundaries. In cooperation with Vital Communities and the three regional planning commissions that represent the Upper Valley (Upper Valley Lake Sunapee, Two Rivers Ottauquechee, and Southern Windsor), we have obtained funds to do just that. So, this project continues and promises change in how we function at the 'official' level as a region. We have a growing steering committee and can use even more help as we set up subcommittees to move forward. We hope these efforts eventually blossom into a vibrant regional and public forum that guides future planning efforts and defines a '2020 Vision for the Valley'.

Barbara McIlroy

NH and VT LWV State Conventions

Both the NH and VT LWV have planned interesting programs for their State Conventions scheduled for Sat May 2nd. To be held in Hopkinton, the NH LWV State Convention will consider a proposal by the Board to study the treatment of women in its state prisons. Several of us are interested in this proposed study and are planning to attend. (For details, see the recent edition of the NH Voter.) To be held at Vermont College in Montpelier, the VT LWV State Convention will consider a proposal to study mass transit. (For details and registration form, see the recent Green Mountain Citizen.) Both conventions require advanced registration. If you are interested in attending or have questions, contact Barbara McIlroy at 603.643.5844.

The International Relations Committee: Annual Seminar

The Obama administration faces unprecedented economic policy challenges. One of those challenges is U.S. trade policy. Will the world's current economic crisis lead to greater protectionism? Should the Obama administration renegotiate NAFTA and review previous trade agreements? How should the large U.S. trade deficit be addressed?

We will address these issues during our annual seminar cosponsored with the Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth on Tues May 12th. Professor Irwin will explain why trade is unpopular with the public (in their minds, it is tied to job loss) and why the talk of "failed trade policies of the past" is wrong. His primary focus will be on the trade deficit and its underlying determinants (savings and investment, here and China) and how they will be affected by the current economic crisis. Professor Slaughter will summarize the current condition of the U.S. and global economies and what policy options the United States could pursue regarding international trade, investment, and immigration.

Josette Malley

Annual Meeting (See enclosed flier)**Non-Fiction Book Discussions: "Global Issues/Local Impact"**

Co-sponsored by the Howe Library, "Global Issues/Local Impact" is a series of issues-oriented book discussions designed to increase awareness of social/political/economic topics currently capturing worldwide attention and having a tangible impact on our lives in the Upper Valley. To begin, we chose two issues -- "global trade" and "securitization" -- and selected books that could clearly explain the issues as personally experienced by the authors: "A Year Without Made-in-China" by Sara Bongiorni and "Liar's Poker" by Michael Lewis.

The Howe made ten books available for readers (and does not require library cards to borrow). Both books were widely circulated and the related discussions, one held in January and the other in April, were spirited. In addition to creating awareness of the LWV-UV and its mission, the discussions generated energy for further educating the local community about these issues and determining whether or not to take action to support/control/change the impact of global trade and securitization (or the "disintermediation" of consumer finance) on our environments.

Our next discussion is scheduled for June. We have selected an issue -- the industrialization of food distribution that has taken place over the past sixty years -- but not yet a specific book. We welcome all suggestions. If you have one, please contact Ellen Lynch at the Howe or Maureen Bolton.

Maureen Bolton

Program Potluck: Brainstorming for Next Year

Please join us on Tues June 16th at 5 PM in the Howe Library's Mayer Room for a potluck and brainstorming session for next year's program. Bring your ideas and passions to help guide our priorities for 2009-10. If you have ideas but cannot attend, please contact Barbara McIlroy.

Barbara McIlroy

Fall Newsletter**Deadline for Submissions is Late August**

www.uppervalleyleague.org

Judi Colla

**Board
of Directors
2008 – 09**

(Continued)

Membership

*Evelyn Spiegel
603.643.4353*

Development

Ellen Gitomer

Voters Service

*Ellen Blumberg
802.795.9883*

Program

*Maureen Bolton
603.643.4069*

Communications

*Judi Colla
603.643.9274*

*Estelle Diamond
603.643.2710*

*Joyce Fieldsteel
603.643.3042*

*Marilyn Lieto
603.786.2605*

*Josette Malley
603.643.5681*

*Margaret Robinson
802.295.5228*

*Marisa Smith
603.443.6152*

*Barbara Taylor
603.643.6335*

*Eve Templeton
603.643.4570*



LWV-UV
 PO Box 423
 Hanover, NH 03755
www.uppervalleyleague.org

FLIER PROVIDING DETAILS ABOUT OUR ANNUAL MEETING ON WED MAY 20TH ENCLOSED. PLEASE SHARE WITH FRIENDS AND PLAN TO ATTEND.

Program 2008 – 2009 – Spring Events

For updated information, please check our website at www.uppervalleyleague.org or the Valley News calendar

May

**League of Women Voters State Conventions
 Sat May 2nd**

**“Proposal to Study Treatment of Women Prisoners”
 Hopkinton, New Hampshire**

**“Proposal to Study Mass Transit”
 Vermont College, Montpelier, Vermont**

**Annual Seminar
 Co-sponsored with Rockefeller Center for Public
 Policy and Social Sciences at Dartmouth College**

*“The Obama Administration’s Trade Policy:
 Old Wine in New Bottles?”*

**Tues May 12, 4:30 – 6:00 pm
 3 Rockefeller Center**

Professor Douglas Irwin, Robert E. Maxwell Professor
 in Department of Economics at Dartmouth

Professor Matthew J. Slaughter, Associate Dean and
 Professor of International Economics at the
 Tuck School of Business

**May (Continued)
 Annual Meeting**

**“Walking the Tightrope: When U.S. Economic
 Policies Intersect with National Security Interests”**

**Wed May 20, 11:30 am
 Hayward Lounge, Hanover Inn**

Professor Daryl Press
 Department of Government at Dartmouth

June

Program Committee Potluck Dinner

*“Brainstorming Next Year’s Program:
 Bring Your Ideas!”*

**Tues Jun 16th, 5:00 pm
 Mayer Room, Howe Library**

**Non-Fiction Book Discussions:
 ”Global Issues/Local Impact**

“The Industrialization of Food Distribution”

**Book and Time TBD
 Howe Library**