

March 2008

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Two Important LWVNH Spring Events

LWVNH 2008 Council - Saturday, April 26

Further details on page 3

??How many delegates does it take to elect a President? What's a super delegate and why are they important? What is the role of the party in primary rules? What's the difference between a caucus and a primary, and which is more important? What is the role of the media in electing a President??

Wayne Lesperance, associate professor of political science at New England College in Henniker will lead a panel discussion on these topics. Professor Lesperance is the Director of the Center of Civic Engagement and has become a frequent commentator on area and national newspapers on local and regional radio programs. He comments on public policy, the political process and emerging trends in politics. The other panelists will include leaders in both major political parties as well as a media representative.

Quad States Leadership Training Program May 17-18, Wells, Maine

The Quad State Presidents, representing Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, are excited to be presenting the upcoming Leadership Training Program. Last year's event was so successful we are having it for a second year! If you missed last year's Program, you will want to join us in Wells this year for sure.

Four workshops are planned for the day and a half long meeting. Each will be held twice, so that all attendees can go to all sessions. This year's topics are:

Advocacy and LWVUS Positions: Advocating at the state and national levels based on LWVUS positions; coordination with LWVVUS; protocol for contacting Congressional delegation.
Leaders: Judy Davis, LWVUS National Board Liaison, Jara Burnett, LWV Connecticut (invited).

(Continued on next page)

Quad State *(continued)*

Candidate Debates and Forums: Organizing debates; nonpartisan principles; keeping them both fair and interesting; following the law. Leaders: Hollie Courage, LWV Rhode Island and someone from LWV Massachusetts (invited).

Membership Strategies- What Works: Recruitment; Member and Leadership Development; Member Retention; Best Practices from LWVUS. Leaders: Cheryl Graeve and Kelly McFarland Stratman, LWVUS staff.

Conducting a League Study: The nuts and bolts of study at the local and state level; getting organized, developing resources, educating members, reaching out to the community. Leaders: Kate Rader, LWV Vermont, and Marianne D'Angelo, LWV Sudbury, MA.

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn new aspects of the League and to share League experiences with members from the other three states. And – not to be under estimated – we all have a really great time. This year will be a little closer to the seacoast action – right on Route 1 in Wells, Maine. Join us even if you can only come for one day. The program is Saturday 9:30 – 5:00 and Sunday 9:00 am – 11:00 am. Registration is just \$20. We'll have a choice of restaurants for Saturday dinner.

See you on the Maine coast in May.

Jane Armstrong

To register for Quad State Leadership Training Program,

-Fill out the registration form below and return with a check for \$20, payable to LWVNH. Return to LWVNH, 4 Park Street, Concord, NH 03301.

-Make your own hotel reservation at Hampton Inn and Suites, 900 Post Road, Wells, Maine, 04090 (1-207-646-0555). Be sure to say you are with the League of Women Voters and the room rate will be \$89.00 plus 7% tax. Find a roommate to share and the cost will be less that \$48 per person. We will have dinner in the area. Breakfast is included in the room rate.

This training is made possible by grants from the Education Funds of NH, VT, RI and ME.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

LWVNH 2008 Council

The New Hampshire LWV will meet for its biennial Council on April 26 at the Hopkinton Library (Directions below). Council is an all-member state meeting, which occurs in the years between Conventions. The agenda will include a business meeting and adoption of a budget for 2008-2009.

All members are entitled to attend and vote and non-members are welcome. The program described on page 1 of this Voter will be both interesting and timely, and should be of interest to both members and non-members, so bring your friends. A light lunch is included in the registration fee.

If you will attend please call the State Office (225-5344) by Monday, April 21 so that we will know how much food to prepare for lunch. If you have not reserved and discover at the last minute that you can attend, please come on and take a chance on lunch.

Agenda for Council

9:30 *Registration and Coffee*
10:00 *Program*
12:00 *Light Lunch Provided*
12:30 *Business Meeting*
1:00 *Adjourn*

Cost for Registration and Lunch - \$10

Directions to the Hopkinton Library: From I89, take Exit 6. Coming from Concord, turn right at the bottom of the ramp; coming from the west, turn left. Continue into Contoocook Village. Turn left at the Sunoco station and then left onto Pine St., which is between the fire station and TDS. The Library is on the right at 61 Houston Dr.

Happy 88th Birthday League of Women Voters

The month of February marked the 88th birthday of the League. Among the birthday greetings received in the national office were these:

- _ "You are the most underappreciated national treasure."
- _ "LWV is the standard by which I measure all other organizations."
- _ "It is great to be associated with this wonderful organization which so many depend on for advice and information, especially in this election year."

Innovations for the Polling Place

(Based on a 2006 LWVUS Education Fund Study...available as a pdf file on (www.lwvnh.org))

Voters in New Hampshire were lucky this year: primary day was mild, no sign of a blizzard...the perfect day to go to our town halls and other voting places to cast our ballot. But suppose we'd been in the grip of a Nor'easter, or the roads had been icy and the temperature below zero? How many of us would still have gone out to vote?

A study done in 2006 by the LWVUS Education Fund points out that in many parts of the country innovations in how ballots are cast have made the mandatory trip to a specific location on a specific day unnecessary. The complete report is available as a pdf file on the state League website: www.lwvnh.org on the "Publications" page.

The common denominator among these innovations is convenience. By eliminating long lines, limited hours, and the vagaries of the weather on a certain day, elections officials hope to boost voter participation and make voting less of a hassle for all of us.

In some areas, voters may go to any of a number of "vote centers" in their county rather than just one place to which they are assigned. Vote centers have worked in some states with large counties, where one may choose a vote center near work rather than try to beat the rush hour to vote in one's town. It also has increased voter turnout where the population is highly mobile, moving often within the county, because people can record their address changes on the same day they vote. Another advantage is that fewer vote centers are needed than when each precinct had its own, saving money on compliance with ADA regulations. What special equipment is needed? an electronic poll book system that operates in real time.

Early voting is another innovation, perhaps a more realistic option for New Hampshire. In many counties where it has been in use, 50 percent or more of the voters take advantage of early voting. Some states use both permanent and mobile locations for early voting, up to two weeks before Election Day. The mobile units make the rounds, going to shopping malls, community centers, libraries, and other locations. To make early voting viable, an electronic poll book system is needed. If real-time connection is not possible, voter lists need to be centrally updated each night. Ballots or DRE results must be delivered to the county tabulation center nightly, raising some security concerns. Also early voting must end a few days before the official election day to allow time to tabulate results and update the voting list.

A simplified version of early voting is sometimes called "no excuse" absentee voting. Anyone may request an absentee ballot and vote ahead of time at their town hall or county election center. Voters need not be handicapped,

housebound, nor expect to be out of town on Election Day to get an absentee ballot. The downside is for the poll workers who need to wait until the end of actual voting on election day to begin counting absentee ballots. In Colorado in 2004, one-third of the voters took advantage of no-excuse absentee voting.

More and more innovations are going to rely on electronics, both electronic poll books connected with temporary transmission lines and also DRE, or touch-screen voting, in which votes are tabulated electronically. Security concerns need to be addressed. The training of poll workers is vital, especially as the process becomes less reliant on pen and paper. Cost factors are important, and while some innovations might save a county money, paying for more poll workers over a longer period of time and training them may counteract that.

As I type this, March town meeting is still a few weeks away. I've been a town meeting junky since moving to New England over 40 years ago. I like to vote "where everybody knows my name" and to interact at direct town meeting. But if a Nor'easter hits that day, I may think twice. Perhaps it's time we in New Hampshire look at innovative ways to ensure that everyone is able to vote conveniently.

Liz Tentarelli

HAVA Implementation (see article in the January Voter)

"...voters' election experience is largely shaped at the polling place – and successful operation of the polling place is largely dependent on poll workers."
June 2008 National Voter – "Election Day Front Line: Poll Workers" by Jenette Secechal

League members were asked to monitor the implementation of measures to make the polling place more accessible as they voted in the recent Primary election. Problems they encountered (reported in the January Voter) included poll workers who didn't know how the equipment worked, electronic equipment incorrectly installed, high noise level in the room, and lack of a secret ballot.

Peg Fargo met with Tom Manning, Asst Secretary of State and director of the HAVA Implementation and reported these results. He responded that only about 50% of the towns have participated in training offered to poll workers even though training was offered in sites all over the state during the summer of 2006. Training for poll workers, which is not mandatory, continues to be offered at the election-training site in Concord.

LWVUS recommends that leagues learn local practices, identify areas in need of improvement and work with officials to implement change. LWVNH will join the Disability Rights Center in a meeting with Assistant Secretary Tom Manning to explore these concerns and learn more about what needs to be done.

Thoughts on League and the skills we develop to use are what I want to share. I have been part of an effort in this part of NH to get the Granite State Fair Tax Coalition Warrant Article on the ballot. Our state President, Jane Armstrong, coordinated our connections up here – a part of the state she was unfamiliar with. We used the usual connections we have through other groups and individuals and were successful in getting the petition signatures necessary to put the article on our warrant. How the vote goes in each town is something we will read about in the paper before you get this Voter. The work on this project, especially the LWVNH work within the coalition by Jane and Peg, has certainly built our reputation with others in the state.

One non-league person gathering signatures in another town reported that when she asked people for signatures and showed them the list of sponsors (with LWV at the top of the list) several persons said, “If the League is sponsoring this, I’ll support it.”

I am so proud of our leadership and the progress we are making. I encourage this example of local action as a way to help others see the benefits, personally through the experience, and with results we hope will be positive, as a reason to join the League of Women Voters!

Dates to Remember

April 26 – LWVNH Council, Hopkinton Library

May 17, 18 – Quad State Training, Hampton Inn, Wells/Ogunquit, Maine