

League of Women Voters of the Greater Capital Area

June 2017 newsletter

Summertime - the best time!

League of Women Voters of the Greater Capital Area

Sponsoring

Candidate Meet and Greet

Wednesday, June 28

7 – 8:30

Baker Library, Bow

Candidates for NH Senate District 16

(Bow, Dunbarton, Candia, Hooksett and Manchester – wards 1, 2, and 12)

Candidates

Kevin Cavanaugh (D)

David Boutin (R)

Jason Dubrow (L)

Special election to be held on July 25 to fill unexpired term of Senator Scott McGilvray of Manchester, who died while in office.

Representative Mary Heath Speaks at Annual Meeting

On Wednesday, May 7 the LWV of the Greater Capitol Area held its annual pot luck annual meeting. Once again, members provided special favorites and our plates were full as we enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow league members. NH House Representative Mary Heath was our guest and she spoke of her experience as Assistant Commissioner of Education, a post she held under two education commissioners. She reviewed current bills for us and explained their impact on public education. She praised the league for taking on the education study and told us we have a lot to learn and it's time for advocacy to protect our system of public education.

LWVNH Convention

At the biennial convention of the state league on Saturday, June 3, NH Commissioner of Education Frank Edelblut gave league members his view of the role of the Commissioner and his unique ability to lead the department. Because he is a businessman, he feels he can ask hard questions about the reasons behind the way things are done in education and make new suggestions for change. His priorities are to increase the role of the parent in having a voice in their child's education (school choice) and the personalization of education - to meet students where they are. Convention members had lots of questions which kept the discussion lively.

A major segment of the convention was the presentation of a new study on education and the focus of the study. Convention delegates entered into a spirited discussion giving the league board of directors plenty of direction as they define the study and determine the scope. Some of the topics of interest seemed to be financing, charter schools, school choice, vouchers, tuition tax credits, and home schooling. This will be a two year study and will involve league members as well as the community.

Liz Tentarelli will serve two more years as president (hurray!), and Concord members Mary Perry will serve as treasurer, Sally Embley will remain as a director and June Frazer will be a new director on the board. Mary Davies and Peg Fargo have completed their terms and are leaving the state board.

League Members Generosity

Our convention cost was \$18 per person and several members donated their change plus more to the League for the purchase of bus tickets for Shea Farm residents. Just before the heat wave, I took 10 bus passes (10 tickets on each pass) - \$100 worth to Shea Farm. The women who have to walk 3 miles each way to work can take the bus for perhaps half the way, which on such a hot day would be most welcome.

Long-time Concord member Gwynne Burkhardt sent a very generous donation along with her dues at a time when our bank balance is looking a bit slim. Thank you, Gwynne.

Breaking News

I always wanted to write that but I do wish this was better breaking news.

Today's Concord Monitor covered the current budget negotiations and also had the article that the opening of the new women's prison has once again been delayed. While the construction work is in its touch-up phase, it now appears that the facility will not open in 2017. The opening date will hinge on when the department can hire and train enough guards.

The House Finance committee reduced the number of positions requested by the department, prompting Commissioner Wrenn to announce that program staff will not be hired leaving voters to wonder what positions will be left unfilled. The women's prison has been woefully understaffed and that sad state will undoubtedly continue in the new facility.

The lawsuit of the late 1980s was settled with the court requiring the state to provide female prisoners with housing and services equal to male inmates. In 2012 a new class-action lawsuit was filed, but was shelved in 2014 when legislators authorized the construction of a new facility. The women have waited for 28 years for equity.

Wouldn't it be interesting if the state lost another lawsuit and this time the court fined the state X amount of dollars for every woman incarcerated per day until equity was established? Hmmm....