



# NH Voter

**League of Women Voters  
New Hampshire**

**LWVNH.org**

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LWV Upper Valley

**AUGUST 2015**

## **Celebrating Our Past, Embracing the Future - LWVUS Council 2015**

Joining 110 other state League presidents, voter service chairs, or executive directors, I was honored to represent New Hampshire at our national League Council in Leesburg, Virginia in June. Our four days were filled with excellent speakers from within and outside the League. We were also given structured time and national board guidance to work on action plans and network with members from other similar-sized states. I'd love to share some of the excitement with you.

In just five years, League will have our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as women nationwide will celebrate 100 years of having the right to vote. What are our wishes for this momentous anniversary? What do you wish? Greater participation by women at all levels of government? Winning the fight against restrictive voter access policies in NH and elsewhere? More people caring enough to vote? More young people developing a passion for responsible and responsive government? Elected officials that listen to all their constituents, not just to the moneyed donors? Fewer sound bytes, more substantive public stances by candidates? How big do we dare to wish?

I will freely admit that I had some reluctance about attending Council. I don't like big conferences, and I was afraid that I was going to hear the same old discussion about League's need to build membership. But I went because our state board has been having productive discussions about the need to do things differently in order for League to have a greater impact in New Hampshire. In short, I went ready to fight for change.

At the first plenary session on Thursday evening, somewhat tired from a day of travel, I kept asking myself, "Am I really hearing what I think I'm hearing?" The League is discovering untapped reserves of interest and involvement by non-members as well as members. The League is reaching groups of people previously not connected. The League is healthy!

The themes of inclusion and diversity in connecting with like-minded people continued the next morning, as LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara said from the outside, League has looked like an institution but that doesn't have to be the case. She said engagement, not recruitment, is

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the key. Guest speakers Matt Leighninger and Emily Shaw said that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, people feel less confident in government's ability to deliver on its promises. The public responds with either **thick** or **thin** participation. **Thick** participation is informed, deliberative, emotional, and most often face to face. But **thin** participation is not to be discounted: fast, easy, often online, **thin** participation can have an impact because it involves many people demanding change.

Leighninger said the League is unusual today in that it still has **thick** involvement (active boards at all levels and active members nationwide) but also online **thin** engagement (for example, our members and donors who support our work financially, who check our websites or follow us on Facebook and who send emails when our action alerts resonate personally). We must beware of losing the **thin** supporters by not welcoming and valuing them. Shaw explained we must give them lots of content, but also specific action steps if they are looking for that.

By now I was fully awake and aware: yes, I was hearing a sea change in League's message. League is much more than monthly local meetings or studies that involve just a fraction of members. League is every person who reads our website to find out more about an issue. League is everyone who calls their legislator to urge their vote on a bill. League is every person who reads this newsletter and comes away knowing more than before and considers taking action. League is also every person who supports the work of the organization by dues or donations. League is all of us, and those whose involvement is "thin" at this time, for whatever reason, are still vitally important.

I don't have room here to summarize all that went on at Council. Please know that first, I thank LWVNH and the LWVNH Education Fund for helping to finance my attendance. Also know that the state board will discuss the ideas I brought back and work to make LWVNH the best it can be. And know that every one of you reading this matters to the League.

**- Liz Tentarelli, president LWVNH**

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**Members' News**

Be sure to check our newish website page, **Member News**, to find out about things beyond League some of our members are doing in the public arena. Have any members been elected to school or municipal offices this year? Let us know and we will post them. Involved in other good works? Tell us so we can share. Email your news to: [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net)

## **League of Women Voters NH Greater Nashua Area Unit ...A New Beginning**

So, after a post on Facebook inviting anyone interested in creating a League presence in Greater Nashua received 53 “hits” within several hours, and over 100 in a few days, it wasn't surprising that our first organization/information meeting on July 22, was well-attended and brimming with energy and enthusiasm.

Former St. Reps. Jan Schmidt and Sylvia Gale (recently elected to the LWVNH Board) were convinced the time was now for Greater Nashua to have a local League. For one, it would provide a reliable source to host and moderate candidate forums for upcoming state and local elections. We immediately found women interested in playing a leadership role: Liza Blondeau, April Peters Murphy, Cate Eldridge, and Kim Smith (Muisse) Kleiner will work with Jan and Sylvia as the Steering Committee for the new unit.

Approximately 30 women and men attended this first meeting and we heard presentations on the League and its herstory in NH by our LWVNH President Liz Tentarelli and Nashua resident Lillian Nelligan, chair of the LWV-NH Education Fund.

There was no shortage of enthusiasm or commitment to “sign up” as clipboards were circulated asking for attendees to become involved in several upcoming events, including a Nashua Mayoral Forum on October 22, which we will co-host and moderate and distributing voter information in Spanish and English at a Community Resource Fair hosted by the Adult Learning Center just a week before the Nashua municipal election in November.

On Wednesday, August 26, we will be hosting a Celebration of the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage and we have also been invited to introduce the LWV at Nashua’s Second Annual Indian-American Independence Day Celebration on August 15.

What will be doing is what the League is known for - hosting and moderating candidate forums and preparing and distributing reliable and user-friendly voter information to a very diverse demographic of many new citizens and first-time voters! We are looking forward to the coming months as our new and growing membership works together to develop more tools and seek out other opportunities to improve voter education and involvement in the Greater Nashua area.

Check out our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/392670177610695/?fref=nf> and come join us!

**- Sylvia Gale, LWVNH Greater Nashua Area Unit**

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## **Environmental progress—a first step**

**From LWVUS comes this information, August 4, 2015:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has just released its Clean Power Plan—the first ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants. This life-saving regulation has been a long time coming. League supporters have been encouraging the administration to move forward with this rule for years. Together, we’ve generated over 90,000 letters to the Obama Administration in support of a strong rule. We all know that power plants are the number one contributor of carbon pollution, and carbon pollution is the largest contributor to climate change. This long awaited regulation will save lives, improve health, spur economic growth and protect our environment.

But there’s more work to come as states work to draft plans for implementation and League works to fight off attacks from big polluters and their allies in Congress. Check the LWV.org website and our own [LWVNH.org](http://LWVNH.org) [energy webpage](#) for updates and calls to action as the states work on draft plans.

## **Check Your Calendar**

There are many important events coming up in the next few months: a Women's Equality Day celebration in Nashua, a special election in Strafford County, coffee with the LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee Area, municipal primary elections and more. Check it all out on the LWVNH webpage: <http://www.lwvnh.org/calendar.html>

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## **Candidate Forums**

### **Presidential Candidate Forums**

As NH plunges into its busy Presidential primary season, voters will have many opportunities to see and hear the candidates, either in person or in televised forums. As we become aware of forums, we will post them on our "Forums and Candidate Visits" [webpage](#).

To find out where the candidates will be meeting voters less formally, check the link on that page to appearances in the Granite State by Presidential candidates. WMUR TV also tracks candidate appearances and posts them on their website. Check back frequently if you want to meet the candidates in person, as the lists are updated often.

### **Closer to Home, City Forums and Elections**

Most of NH's major cities have municipal elections in the fall. We have attempted to post them on our Calendar page, including the primaries for those cities we have been able to research. If you dwell in a city, do check out the election dates on our ["Calendar" page](#).

When we have information about forums for those elections, we have posted them on our "Forums and Candidate Visits" [webpage](#). Of particular note is the mayoral race in Nashua, which will have a pre-primary forum in August and also a general election forum in October. That October forum will be organized by the newly formed unit of the League of Women Voters in the greater Nashua area. Great start, new League members!

### **Spreading the Word about Forums**

LWVNH board members have recently revised our Moderators' Handbook and expanded it to include information about organizing candidate forums. This clear and user-friendly ***Guide to Organizing and Moderating Candidate Forums*** will be used to offer training to any groups that want to try their hand at hosting candidate forums, whether for local elections coming up or for state races in 2016.

We need League members and supporters to spread the word that our free training is available. In addition, League is willing to supply a moderator if this is a group's first effort at organizing a forum. So think of any civic groups you belong to or know of, anywhere in the state, that might be willing to work on hosting forums. Give us contact information, and the state board will do the rest. This is an excellent way for members-at-large to bring forums to their towns.

Local Leagues are great at holding forums in their communities. This training is a way to have forums occur where we don't have local Leagues. We can work in partnership with groups, or share with them our expertise and let them go it on their own. No pressure either way.

We firmly believe that the League's mission of a well-informed voting public is served by opportunities for voters and candidates to interact in person, including at forums in local communities. Your state board wants to make that happen, and you can help by giving us contact information. Send an email to [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net), or leave your name and phone number at the League office and we'll call you back.

## **Election Law**

The campaign to redefine who lives in New Hampshire in order to keep college students, minorities, the disabled, homeless and poor from voting continued in this spring's session of the NH Legislature. There were three bills to redefine domicile, the standard for deciding who lives in and can vote in NH towns and wards. Two of the bills were retained in committee or re-referred and may or may not come up before this year ends. Senate Bill 179 which not only redefined domicile but would have required a citizen to live in NH for 30 days before being allowed to vote, was passed by both houses of the Legislature. Governor Maggie Hassan vetoed the bill, and there should be enough votes to sustain the veto. You can read the Governor's veto message here:

<http://governor.nh.gov/media/news/2015/pr-2015-07-10-sb179.htm>

- Joan Flood Ashwell, LWV Greater Capital Area

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## **Who Will Government Represent?**

“The country has the idea that if we (individuals) make the right decisions we’ll be successful; if we make the wrong decisions, we’ll fail.” In his presentation at the LWVNH 2015 Convention, Dan Weeks, executive director of Open Democracy, presented a different view, “A View from Below.”

Over and over, what Weeks heard from individuals living in poverty is that politicians don’t care about the little people. Each of those individuals has dreams; each dreamer was clear about wanting to work to make life better for those in like situations - to get people back on their feet. Politicians wouldn’t give those people the time of day, wouldn’t listen to what would help turn dreams into reality.

Disenfranchisement extends to institutions. Weeks noted that Congress is more likely to act on issues supported by affluent Americans (the 1%), showing near zero rate of responsiveness on poverty issues. Business accounts for 90% of spending on lobbying; spending on poverty issues is less than 1%. Income is a powerful determinant of whether a citizen’s voice is heard or even raised. One of the best indicators of citizenship, voter registration, and voter turnout is money. Those in poverty are less likely to participate in politics.

Weeks spent much of his presentation on reforming the system, on how we can fix it. He said poverty is not only an economic or social problem but fundamentally is a democracy issue. Weeks said the problems are bigger than individuals. He urged us each to act to reform the system - to fix it. His fixes include:

- \* guarantee voting access for all
- \* reform campaign finance through public funding
- \* reform lobbying - “What if each citizen were given \$50 to give to a lobbying interest of their choice?”
- \* reform ourselves to assure that government truly represents us all

His message was clear. Those in poverty find it harder to act, but they don’t give up their dreams. Neither should we. Ask basic questions of candidates before they are elected. Ask yourself what specific reforms you will advance.

- Nancy Marashio, LWV-Kearsarge/Sunapee

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## **Town Website Template**

Is your town's website information about voting and elections easy to find and up-to-date? The League discovered that accurate and complete voter information was missing from or hard to find on many town sites and developed a template that would make it easy for towns to update their websites. The League also developed a webinar to explain the template and why the improvements are helpful for voters and town officials. The webinar is available for anyone to watch at [this site](#) . For a Word document of this template, to allow webmasters easy cut and paste, please email [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net) with a request. Check out your town's website and let us know if you can't find information about voting and elections.

## Amending the US Constitution

At the LWVUS 2014 convention, delegates voted to study Structures of Democracy. This includes study of the amendment process, updating of the League's campaign finance position, and a study of redistricting.

This fall, members will look at the process of amending the constitution and the criteria for evaluating a proposed amendment. The study will not look at any specific amendments. Members will consider all sides of this issue and respond to consensus questions by Dec. 1.

### **Article V of U.S. Constitution**

*The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the Several states, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the Ninth section of the first Article; and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.*

Some things to consider: Would a proposed amendment make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights? Would a proposed amendment be effective in achieving its policy objectives? Would the public policy objective of the amendment be better achieved through legislation?

Some questions members will consider in looking at the possibility of an Article V convention: How are citizens are to be represented - by elected or appointed delegates? How would delegates vote - by state or as individuals?

The constitution has been amended by Congressional action but calls for a convention have never succeeded. Should LWV support an Article V Convention, and how would such a convention be structured?

Finally, the consensus will consider the balance between policy and process. Responses to this section will depend on parts 1 and 2: Should the League consider supporting a Constitutional amendment that will advance a League position even if there are significant problems with the amendment as proposed or it is being put forward by a procedural process the League would otherwise oppose?

To get started, you are invited to go to our state website, <http://www.lwvnh.org/LWVUSstudies.html> and look for the constitutional amendment study under LWVUS Studies. There are some readings listed there and other information about amending the constitution.

- Mary Davies, LWV Greater Capital Area

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## Who is Marilla Ricker and Why Do League Members Care?

Marilla Marks Young Ricker tried to do what Jeanne Shaheen accomplished in 1996 - to be elected as New Hampshire's first female governor - but Ricker's attempt was back in 1910.

When New Hampshire-born Marilla Ricker tried to file for the gubernatorial primary (against Charlie Bass's grandfather), her papers were denied because she, as a woman, did not have the right to vote. This stubborn suffragist wrote:

***"I'm running for Governor in order to get people in the habit of thinking of women as Governors...People have to think about a thing for several centuries before they can get acclimated to the idea. I want to start the ball a'rolling."***

For the sake of the many women who have since served in state and federal government, we can be glad it did not take "several centuries" for voters to get used to the idea of women in high public office.

As a member or supporter of the League of Women Voters, you are aware how hard women had to fight to get the vote and to take an active role in political life. Marilla fought that fight in New Hampshire.

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Ricker was the first woman who tried to vote in New Hampshire (demanding a ballot as a property owner and competent adult, in Dover in 1870 and yearly thereafter). She was also the first female who applied to practice law in New Hampshire, having already been admitted to the Washington DC bar. When she was refused, simply for being a woman, she brought suit and won, thus opening the NH Bar to women in 1890.

Legislation was passed in 2013 to hang a portrait of Marilla Ricker in the State House, but no state or other funding was allocated. Marilla has no descendants, so the League of Women Voters NH and the NH Women's Bar Association are jointly heading the effort to raise the tax-deductible funds to have a portrait painted and installed.

We hope League members and friends will lend their financial support to this effort to honor the legacy of Marilla Ricker with a generous donation. We are, as of August 1, halfway to our goal of \$10,000 in this project. Your support will get us there.

A brochure about the remarkable Mrs. Ricker in pdf format is available on the LWVNH.org website. Visit [http://lwvnh.org/Marilla\\_Ricker.html](http://lwvnh.org/Marilla_Ricker.html) Members of the project committee are also able and eager to attend house parties or community meetings to tell people more about Marilla and to show a 30-minute documentary, if you wish. Email Liz Tentarelli at [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net) to discuss a meeting.

To make a **totally tax deductible donation**, send a check to:

LWVNH Education Fund Ricker Portrait Project

4 Park St., Room 200

Concord, NH 03301

Please include your email so we can invite you to the installation ceremony and reception in early 2016. We will also email you a receipt for your tax deductible donation.

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### **In Memory of Alice Krasner**

Alice Krasner, the League's oldest New Hampshire member, died of pneumonia at St. Teresa Nursing Home in Manchester on June 12, 2015. Alice was 102, and a photo taken at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party is on our League History webpage.

Alice's daughter kindly shared some details of Alice's life with the state board. Alice attended New York University, pursuing an undergraduate degree in music education, but she and her sister Sylvia were forced to leave before graduation by financial need during the Great Depression. They opened a piano studio together and taught piano to children. Both continued as piano teachers into their adult life. Alice later switched to human services, serving as Assistant Director of the Upward Bound program and as a social worker for the NH Department of Health and Human Services.

In 1941, she married George D. Krasner and traveled with him to the western states, where he served as a physician in the US Army Medical Corps throughout WW II. After the war, they lived in Quincy, MA. In 1951, the family moved to Manchester when Dr. Krasner was appointed the Chief of Radiology at the VA Hospital. Alice had lived in Manchester ever since.

In Quincy, Alice began a lifelong association with the League of Women Voters, which led her into other community and political commitments, including the League in Manchester, NH, serving as vice president, president, finance chair and voter education chair. With her husband, she founded Citizens for Better Education, which promoted the shift in Manchester public education to the junior high school system. She also served as a volunteer for many political campaigns.

Alice is survived by her three children, who requested that memorial gifts honoring Alice's life and dedication to the League of Women Voters be made to the League of Women Voters of NH—a fitting tribute to a loyal League member who is fondly remembered by many.

Donations in Alice's memory made be made by check and mailed to: League of Women Voters NH, 4 Park St., Room 200, Concord, NH 03301