



**December 2014**

**League of Women Voters  
New Hampshire**

**LWVNH.org**

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**What League Means to Me:**

As a co-president of LWVNH, I often have the honor of being the public face of the League. I also get to moderate a number of candidate forums, and that's where I find my fun in the League. Each forum is different, but all are the same in that voters of different political viewpoints don't hesitate to ask their questions. Fortunately I've never had a forum go awry because of rowdy candidates or audience members. Also fortunately, I've rarely been bored. What seems like a mild question may take a vivid turn because of one candidate's response. A topic I'd never given much thought to suddenly becomes an exciting exchange of ideas.

It's not unlike what happens when I substitute in fourth grade in my local elementary school and students are suddenly turned on to a topic. What a rush!

Each of us joins the League for different reasons, but at the heart of it, we all value the democratic process and take a personal interest in it. Since 2009, our study of women incarcerated in NH has never been far from my thoughts. The hours I and our study committee have spent in research and advocacy have been filled with learning and excitement and satisfaction at small victories beyond what I can express. The challenges still remaining stimulate me to continue our work.

Over the next few months, you will find other personal stories of board members and what League means to them. Enjoy. And ask yourself what is your personal touchstone with the League?

Liz Tentarelli, co-president

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## **Voter Service**

The state and local Leagues were busy this fall with voter service, in particular with candidate forums.

Before the September primary LWVNH organized and moderated a forum for Executive Council in Nashua and a state representatives' forum in Durham. The LWV Greater Capital Area hosted a forum for the much contested Senate District 15 race in Concord.

In October, forums were almost nonstop: LWV/Upper Valley hosted a successful forum for Enfield and Canaan state representative races. LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee hosted multi-candidate forums in Warner and New London. LWVNH organized and moderated a forum in Grafton for state house candidates, first time in memory they have had a forum.

LWVNH partnered with SPEEKS, a student group at Lakes Region Community College in Laconia to hold a Senate district 2 forum that attracted about 60 people. Lots of other candidates in the area came for the meet and mingle at 6:30, then introduced themselves in a sentence to the audience. After the main forum, we had a mini-forum (15 min or so) with the two county commissioner candidates--the only contested race on the county ballot! All of that went very well.

The Lakes Region Public Access TV station had run out of funding, but the students scrambled to get the forum taped and edited so it would appear on TV. Not only that--the students made refreshments, had a tasteful band playing during the meet and mingle, had prepared questions, handled the intro and flag pledge and timing, greeted people as they arrived, and had everything ready. All that was left for the League was to moderate. The students were incredibly excited and proud of how everything turned out. Exciting to see non-League people care so much and learn so quickly.

The League also attempted to post on its website, LWVNH.org, all the scheduled forums and debates we could find, including those on NHPR and on television. The list grew and grew. We know we missed some, but we did find that the page received many "hits" during the months leading up to the Election on November 4.

As always we made available fliers on voter registration, voter ID, college students' voting requirements, and an informative brochure on the Executive Council, both on our website and in paper copies at various venues.

Our website's Elections page was referenced by many non-League groups around the state, and the statistics of "hits" to our website show that people were looking to us for detailed voting information: In the four months of primary and general election excitement, we had over 32,000 "hits." In October alone, over 13,000 "hits" were made, and in the busy week leading up to the election, 2,264 requests for information went to our website.

Did this "Get Out the Vote" create a more informed public? We certainly tried.

**More on Candidate Forums...**

The state board will be working over the next few months to update our moderators' handbook, adding more information on organizing a forum and choosing forum formats. We hope to make print materials and a new webpage available to anyone who wants advice on hosting forums. We will also hold workshops for League members and the public.

**Redistricting Task Force**

As part of the comprehensive study and review of key, specific structures of American democracy, last spring's LWVUS National Convention approved a review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress for the purpose of developing action steps. Members of the Task Force represent the states of Alaska, California, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, Virginia, and our own New Hampshire.

Every ten years the census of U. S. population is followed by redistricting - the process of redrawing boundaries for electoral districts.

The LWVUS Redistricting Task Force is appointed to: (1) review the various methods and criteria that have been used in the states and the positions of state Leagues on redistricting; (2) consider how well the methods and criteria have worked; (3) develop materials to educate Leagues and communities; and (4) make recommendations on next steps.

The primary work product expected in 2014-2015 is a matrix that gives each state's League position on redistricting (if any) and the action(s) each state has taken to both educate and advocate for effective redistricting.

Additional tasks include recommendation of next steps to the LWVUS Leadership Council, development of a redistricting workshop for National Council in June 2015, and perhaps creation of educational materials for State and local Leagues working on redistricting.

Information collected so far led our coordinator, Chris Carson, to note that "State Leagues have done/are doing a lot more than anybody realized...."

- Nancy Marashio, Kearsarge/Sunapee Area League

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**In the Spirit of Granny D:**

The Coalition for Open Democracy (of which LWVNH is a member) is joining with the New Hampshire Rebellion for a series of walks in January to highlight the issues of campaign finance and big money in politics. The New Hampshire Rebellion is a nonpartisan movement whose goal is to make the root problem of systemic corruption driven by money in politics the central issue of the 2016 presidential primary. Stay tuned for details via our website or <http://www.nhrebellion.org/>

You can sign up online to walk a section of the state. The overall dates are Jan. 11-21, and you can walk just a short stretch or challenge yourself, as Granny D. did, to wear out some shoe leather.

## **The 2014 General Election and What Comes Next**

Here in New Hampshire, almost half a million voters cast their ballots, about 50% which was better than the national average and higher than the 2010 midterm election.

With a Democrat in the Governor's seat, a 3 to 2 Republican majority in the House, a 14 to 10 Republican majority in the Senate and a 3 to 2 Republican majority in the Executive Council, there will need to be much negotiating to pass anything in this session. Should be interesting!

Typically, between 1200 and 1400 bills are filed by legislators in each biennium. Bills are assigned to committees in the house of origin, and that is the time that the public can have the most impact. Public testimony is taken at most hearings, and phone calls or emails to committee members can have an impact on whether they vote to recommend killing a bill or recommend its adoption.

Each week on our "Hot Legislation" webpage we will post the committee hearings for bills of interest to the League. The complete calendar of hearings in each house will also be linked, so that if you are personally interested in a topic, you can follow its bills yourself. If you'd like to get a weekly list of hearings, send Sally Davis an email with your name and email and she'll put you on her legislative alert email list.

Email Sally at [sally.davis36@gmail.com](mailto:sally.davis36@gmail.com)

The "Action" page of our website gives some tips on Advocacy, including how to write a letter to the editor and how to phrase phone calls or emails or letters to elected officials. It also includes a flyer about how a bill becomes a law in NH and when public input is most effectively given: [http://lwvnh.org/files/how\\_bill\\_become\\_law\\_revised.pdf](http://lwvnh.org/files/how_bill_become_law_revised.pdf)

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## **My League Story**

(Editor's note: Mary Davies is a member of the state board of the LWVNH, a member of the LWV of the Greater Capital Area, and on the Board of Trustees of the LWVNH Education Fund.)

I first joined League when my children were small and I craved adult conversation. Discussions on China, clean water, landfills, electing the president and many other pertinent topics enhanced my world. After attending local government meetings through the Observer Corps, I decided to run for local office. I put League-learned skills to good use. The women I met through League became lifelong friends and we served on our local city council, school board, and county board as well as appointed boards. Many years and several careers have come and gone but I still look to League for that stimulating conversation. Where else will I find people interested in knowing more about GMO foods, immigration or campaign finance? I am addicted. For over 50 years I have not been without LWV.

**- Mary Davies, LWV Greater Capital Area**

## **Visit Our Website**

Just because it's not election season, don't think our website rests. Please visit [LWVNH.org](http://LWVNH.org) frequently to see upcoming events on our Calendar page, updates on our study topics and legislative priorities, member news and press releases, and scheduled forums as we get closer to town meetings and elections.

Not a member? Visit our ["Join LWVNH"](#) page.

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## **Town Websites: How is Yours?**

As part of the League's voter service work, we continue to work to improve voters' access to accurate information. The template the League designed for voter information on town websites is still on our website, accessible to any webmaster seeking to improve a town's website. The template suggests a clear and simple way for towns and cities to make voter registration, voter ID, and elections information available to potential voters.

The webinar the League presented last March via the NH Municipal Assn. was reprised in person at the NH Municipal Assn. annual conference on Nov. 12. Liz Tentarelli and Nancy Marashio spoke with people from a variety of towns and cities. According to the evaluations, they found our information and template very helpful. Several also commented on the good work the League had done leading up to the elections.

Here's our challenge to you: Visit your town's website. Is there a menu item somewhere on the homepage called Voting or Voting Information? When you click on it, does it get you to an explanation of voter registration and voter ID requirements? Does it report on the local results of the November 4 election? When town meeting draws nearer, will it include the town warrant and a sample ballot?

Can't find good clear voter information on your town's website? Maybe your town administrator needs to hear from you that the website could be improved. No potential voter should have to wonder where or how to register. You can make a difference by offering suggestions for change. Refer your town's webmaster to [www.LWVNH.org](http://www.LWVNH.org), in particular the [Sample Town Website page](#).

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## **Take Me Out to the Ballgame**

We need a pitcher.

The League has been contacted to throw out the opening ball at a spring or summer Fishercats game in Manchester. The League would be recognized on the big video display—I'm sure some of you know what that thing is called—and we could get a block of discount tickets.

Sounds like a fun way to get some publicity for League, but as the board discussed this possibility we realized none of us can throw worth a darn.

Let us know if you are interested in discount tickets for yourself and your family when a date is chosen. If any League member is sport enough to throw for us, we'd love to hear from you. Email Liz at [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net) to express your interest.