



League of Women Voters New Hampshire

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website: LWVNH.org

President's message

If the eligible voters nationwide who did not come out to vote Nov. 8 were to get electoral votes assigned to their DID NOT VOTE position, DID NOT VOTE would have received 490 electoral votes (with 32 of the remaining votes going to Hillary Clinton and 16 going to Donald Trump in the six states where one or the other of those candidates got more votes than the number of absent eligible voters). At least I think that's what one intriguing map shows. "Only 6 states plus Washington DC had high enough voter turnouts where one of the actual candidates won more votes than [the number of] people who did not vote. Those states are Iowa and Wisconsin for Trump and Maine; Massachusetts, Minnesota, **New Hampshire** and DC for Clinton."

The map has been criticized but the point is valid: in this most contentious and expensive election in recent history, too many eligible Americans still did not vote. Look for a short article elsewhere that summarizes voter turnout.

What does that mean for the League? Partly it suggests that "you can lead a horse to water..." is an accurate aphorism. Get Out The Vote efforts by the parties, the candidates, and the League worked, but only to some extent. Negative ads by superpacs and campaigns may have turned off more voters than inspired others to vote against someone. Talk of dark money, corrupting influence by big donors, and the very word "rigged" were hard to overcome with talk of rights or duty.

But here we are, with a new federal administration coming in and a new state government, both dominated by the same party in executive and legislative branches. League must do two things, and that means all of us: first, assess the new political landscape and focus our efforts where we can find success, if not necessarily in passage of bills on our issues but at least in building support for our positions. And second, we must trust that our country, our state, and the people will stand together to meet the challenges we face. That means giving our newly elected officials the time and support and help they need to study the issues and to make decisions that will be for the greater good. If, however, those decisions threaten the civil rights, environmental progress, and societal values that League has worked on for 96 years, we must raise our voices and demand better.

Liz Tentarelli, President

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NH Fiscal Policy Institute's 4th Annual Budget and Policy Conference

Jan. 13, 2017, at the Grappone Center, Concord.

“Investing in NH’s Future: Strategies to Maintain a Strong Workforce and a Vibrant Economy.”

For a fascinating day of nationally known guest speakers and discussions of NH specific solutions, attend this conference. Register at nhfpi.org or click this link for more information: <http://nhfpi.org/news-events/policy-conference-2017>

Cost is \$35 for registrations before Dec. 15.

Nashua League's Voter Service Successes

The Nashua League put forth a strong Get Out The Vote effort this election season, including a variety of festival appearances, online promotions, community events and voter service initiatives.

The season kicked off in full on September 27th, National Voter Registration Day, with a proclamation from Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess. Approximately two dozen members, friends and supporters, including the city clerk and board of registrars, turned out for the reading of the proclamation, which was then presented to the city clerk's office. Nashua League's co-chair Kim Kleiner concluded the special day representing the League on a voter education panel at SNHU, discussing current obstacles to full implementation of the NVRA.

The League had a strong presence at several community events in the days leading up to the election, including tabling with voter information at Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, the Latino Festival, Diwali Festival, and the Adult Learning Center's resource fair. The league's multi-lingual voter resources were useful and well-received.

A voter guide was produced for the first time in many years. Over 70 candidates from Nashua's ballots were solicited for long-form responses to questions on a variety of issues, such as public school funding, passenger rail, HAVA funding and NH's aging workforce. Approximately 30% of Nashua's candidates provided responses, which were compiled, printed and distributed at various locations, such as the Public Library, City Hall, Senior Center, public health agencies, as well as online. A separate guide explaining the significance of the various elected offices was produced, and was very well-received.

A candidate meet-and-greet was held in conjunction with Nashua High School South's John Locke government honor society. Thirty-six candidates attended and tabled with campaign materials, and statements were made by candidates for executive council, state senate and governor. Lack of a full complement of candidates precluded us from being able to host a forum, but the event was appreciated by all candidates in attendance.

Our online (Facebook) promotions were perhaps our most successful in terms of response generated for effort and dollars expended. Promotions to "vote the down ballot", as well as publicizing the City of Nashua's "Free Election Day Bus Service" and a Voter Registrar Recruitment Drive generated over 10,000 Nashua-area "views". The bus service promotion alone was "shared" by more than 100 individual Facebook users, and the League was able to provide dozens of contact names to the city, enabling the clerk to fully staff each of Nashua's nine wards with eight voter registrars on Election Day. Even fully-staffed, more were needed.

We ran into constraints simply by not having enough hands and time to effectively accomplish everything we'd hoped, but feel our efforts were well-received by the community, strong working partnerships have been fostered, and important lessons learned to help us move forward efficiently and productively into our next election season

Nov 10, 2016 By: CCNH-LFDA Highlights--Voter Turnout

Voter turnout nationally on November 8th was down from recent previous presidential election years, but how did individual states perform when it came to casting ballots? Minnesota boasts the highest percent of its voting eligible population (VEP) that turned out to the polls, at 74%. Maine was second, and New Hampshire ranked third at 68.7%. The state that saw the lowest turnout was Hawaii, at 34%.

These statistics don't come as much of a surprise, as Minnesota and Hawaii have topped and bottomed the turnout statistics for several election years running, with New Hampshire generally ranking near the top.

At 68.7%, New Hampshire's VEP turnout was actually lower than in the past two presidential elections, which rated 70.9% in 2012 and 72.5% in 2008. Voter turnout for the 2016 election nationally averaged 56.5% of VEP. (Voting eligible population may not reflect the number of actual registered voters. It also excludes non-citizens and, depending on state election laws, may exclude prisoners and felons.)

Some argue that a switch to mail-in voting or enabling early voting would increase voter turnout. What do you think?

(and a little amusing note from your League state president—my daughter, who has a busy work schedule, lives in Massachusetts and would have been able to vote early under a new state law there. Tempting, but she chose not to vote early when she found out that it was like an absentee ballot, filled out and put in an envelope. As she told me, “I love to see the ballot sucked into the machine and I find the whooshing sound very satisfying—it feels like I've really cast an important vote.” So she got up extra early and voted in person. And indeed every vote is an important vote, whether it gets delivered in an envelope or you see it slurped into the ballot box.)

Congratulations

To League members and those who were members in the recent past who were elected Nov. 8:

Jan Schmidt & Catherine Sofikaitis, NH House & Sen. Bette Lasky (re-elected Senate 13) (all from Nashua);

Karen Ebel, NH House (New London);

Sue Gottling and Linda Tanner, NH House (Sunapee);

Christy Bartlett, NH House (Concord);

Susan Almy, NH House, and Martha Hennessey (Senate 5) from Upper Valley area;

Sen. Martha Fuller Clark (re-elected Senate 21), Portsmouth.

We are also proud of those members and recent past members who ran a good race but didn't make it this time: Sylvia Gale, NH House (Nashua) who lost by only 6 votes in the recount; Linda Harriott-Gathright, NH House (Nashua); Marcy Rothenberg, NH House (Hooksett); Gale Taylor, NH House (Brookline); Ricia McMahon, Merrimack county commissioner (Sutton).

Have we missed any of you? If you are a League member who ran—won or lost—please let us know

NH Rebellion dinner, inspirational speaker

On November 19 a number of League members joined many other NH Rebellion and Open Democracy supporters at a “Democracy Dinner” with world-renowned author of *Diet for a Small Planet* and social philosopher Frances Moore Lappé. An activist since before she published that landmark book in 1971, she continues now to paint the big picture of ways in which cultures must evolve if the goal of a sustainable life for all is to happen. Lappé’s most recent book is *EcoMind: Changing the Way We Think, We Create the World We Want*.

Summing up Lappé’s talk would be presumptuous, but in a time when we all need inspiration in an uncertain political landscape, she made some thought-provoking statements we will share here.

Lappé spoke of “the thrill of democracy”--bonding deeply in common purpose, experiencing civil courage, and moving from outsider to owner. Only in democracy can we feel this.

Her pivotal question is why are we together creating a world that individually we would never choose? Consider which aspects most concern you—a world in which a tiny fraction control more wealth and power than the lowest 50%? A world in which resources—food, water, technology, medical care, to mention just a few—are scarce in too many places and taken for granted elsewhere? A world in which most don’t know what is happening behind the scenes on issues that affect us all?

Lappé theorizes that the “dominant mental map driving the US right now is a perception of lack”--a sense among many that there are not enough jobs, goods, opportunities, goodness, or trust. That mood makes us feel powerless. She lists three conditions that bring out the worst in us: when power is concentrated in a hands of a very few, when there is a lack of transparency, and when blaming “the others” is a frequent explanation. These conditions are antithetical to three of society’s basic needs, in Lappé’s view: our needs for connection, meaning, and power to control (at least to some extent) the world in which we live.

To change that world view and begin to meet our needs we need to shift to an emerging view that we have human capacities we can count on. These include empathy, cooperation, fairness, efficacy, imagination and creativity, mutual accountability...which lead to a spiral of empowerment. Much to think about.

Electing a President – How Does That Work Again??

Join Greater Capital Area League members for a discussion of the popular vote and possible end-runs around the electoral college in future elections.

Friday, December 9, 10 am to noon

Baker Library, Bow (509 South St., Bow 03304, just off route 89 exit 1)

Olivia Zink, the executive director of Open Democracy, said the other day, “Don’t just sit back and rest; the candidates for the presidential primary for the 2020 election will probably come to New Hampshire the day after Thanksgiving.” She was only half-joking. We can’t sit back and think the problems with how our elections are run will go away. Are we satisfied with the election process?

Winning the presidential election without winning the popular vote has only occurred five times in the nation’s history. It did not happen at all in the 20th century, but we’ve witnessed this phenomenon twice in the 21st century. Democrats have won the popular vote four out of five times this century, but have lost three of the five presidential elections.

In 1970 the League studied and came to a strong consensus supporting direction election of the President by popular vote as an essential element of representative government. In 2008 the League undertook a new study and decided that “...the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote fo election of the president...” (excerpt from the LWVUS position on Selection of the President.

Shea Farm Gifts—can you help?

Once again the state board members who co-chaired the women incarcerated study have committed to creating gift bags for all the women (about 44) currently at Shea Farm. (Shea Farm houses some women from the state prison, most of whom are within a year of release. Some of them go out to work each day, preparing for full re-entry into the work force.) If you wish to join us in showing our support and belief in a better future for the women now at Shea Farm, please consider donating any of the following items for the holiday gift bags LWVNH delivers to them:

crossword and sudoku puzzle books (the kind at the supermarket checkouts), colored gel pens, shampoo/lotions/body wash, fun bed socks, small notebooks and pens, pocket calendars, gloves and warm hats, bags of individually wrapped candies. We are also collecting yarn--leftover partial skeins are fine--for the many women who love to crochet.

No time to shop? You may send a check that LWVNH uses to buy bus passes for the women who go out to work each day.

Call or email either of us if have items to donate and we'll work out a pick-up. If you live in the Kearsarge/Sunapee area, we'll be collecting items at the League's holiday social December 15 at Tracy Library. Or you can send a check made out to LWVNH, marked "Shea Farm bus passes" in the item line, and mail it to our office: LWVNH, 4 Park St Room 200, Concord NH 03301.

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Calling our members to action:

As the NH legislative session gears up in January, we will from time to time be sending out to members a Call For Action on key bills we'll be following. If it is an issue you care about, you can help by calling or emailing your NH state representative or state senator. Hearing from constituents is a powerful motivator for yea or nay votes. You will not be speaking for the League but as a concerned NH citizen.

LWVUS also issues an occasional Call For Action. Your state board will address that in the name of the League, but you can also respond as a NH voter by calling or emailing your congressional representatives (we'll have the office phones and website links for the newly elected Congressional Delegation in our next newsletter and on our Elections page).

One such National Call For Action came through in mid-November, and if this issue matters to you, you can email the President via the link given:

"Right now, before he leaves office, President Obama has a unique opportunity to safeguard our climate, our children's health and our coasts by permanently protecting the outer continental shelf of the U.S. Arctic and Atlantic oceans from future oil and gas leasing.

Click here to tell President Obama to permanently protect the Arctic and Atlantic from offshore drilling. http://participate.lwv.org/c/10065/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=12540

Preserving and protecting the Arctic and Atlantic is an important step in fulfilling America's commitment to stopping climate change. Keeping the oil industry from expanding offshore drilling will continue to move America towards a clean energy economy and away from the fossil fuel business."

Moments in Women's History

As we draw closer to the 100th anniversary of the League's founding (Feb. 14, 1920), a direct outgrowth of the women's suffrage movement, your state president intends to indulge her love of women's history with occasional tidbits in this newsletter. Hope you enjoy them.

2016 marks the 96th year that women have the right to vote and to run for public office. We saw NH suffragist Marilla Ricker added to the NH State House portrait gallery. The female candidate for President won the popular vote on Nov. 8, and NH's entire Congressional delegation will be female when the new Congress is seated. So this is a fitting time to recall some of the early women who not only fought for women's right to vote, but also women like Lenna Perry who seized the opportunity to run for elective office, at both the local and state level, when most of the populace was still pondering the implications of women's suffrage.

New Hampshire's First Female "Selectman": Lenna Gwendolen (Wilson) Perry (1899-1986) –thanks to cowhampshireblog.com for most of the information, and to Newbury selectboard chair Ed Thorson for calling her to my attention.

Lenna Wilson was the tenth child of a farming family in the Monadnock region of NH. She was educated in the Sharon schools, then took business courses at Katherine Gibbs School and Burdett College in Boston. From 1918 to 1920 she worked at the Veterans Administration in Washington, D.C.

From 1925 until 1939 she put her skills to work as Town Clerk of Sharon, NH. In that position she became well known to most of the tiny town's residents. In 1927 they elected Lenna to the NH House as a Republican (she got 16 votes in a town with a population under 50). During that term she was a member of the Cheshire County Building Committee and was also clerk of the New Hampshire House of Representatives (elected by the rest of the House). The book: "New Hampshire Women Legislators Golden Anniversary 1921-1971" compiled by Leon W. Anderson and others states: "It has been recalled that in her first term, Miss Wilson, at 28 the youngest of the 14 women then in the Legislature, became fondly known as 'The Rose of Sharon'."

In 1928, at the age of 29, Wilson made history. She was elected to Sharon's selectboard, becoming the first female in NH to sit on a "board of selectmen" as it was traditionally called. She was re-elected three more times, serving until 1940. Obviously good at multi-tasking, she was also trustee of the town's trust funds and a library trustee (1926-1940).

Somehow Lenna found time for a social life. At 36 she married James Perry and moved to Jaffrey. When her husband died in 1951, during his third or fourth term in the NH House, Lenna ran as a Republican to succeed her husband. Official records show that in 1955 as a member of the NH House, she served on a number of committees, including Ways and Means, Municipal and County Government, Banking, and Forestry. Just 21 when women first got the right to vote, Lenna Wilson Perry grabbed her chance and ran with it.