



NH Voter

June 2016

website: LWVNH.org

League of Women Voters New Hampshire

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President's message

Changing Your Party; Who Will Be Running.

May 31 was the last day for registered voters to change their party affiliation before the September 13 state primary election. The last date to change is always just before the filing period opens for the coming election. The filing period for federal, state and county offices is June 1 through June 10.

This will be an exciting election year in NH. Not only do we choose a new Governor, but one-third of the state senate seats will be up for grabs (no incumbents running), as well as several Executive Council seats. Of course all the state representative seats will also be on the ballot.

The race for US Senate for the seat currently held by Kelly Ayotte is heating up, and the two US Representative seats are also contested.

Voters who are curious about who is running in these races can check the Secretary of State's website sometime after June 12

<http://sos.nh.gov/Prim9.13.16.aspx>

The League board will be looking at the contested races carefully to see where holding pre-primary candidate forums will be most important and then will try to organize those forums. Check our Candidate Forums webpage for information on debates and forums, both those sponsored by the League and others, including radio and television events.

<http://lwvnh.org/Forums-debates.html>

Liz Tentarelli, President

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Local League News

LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee Area is having its annual meeting on June 22 at the Lake Sunapee Country Club. A sit-down lunch with three choices of entree will be followed by Art Rosen, guest speaker on “Radical Islam: The End Game.” A short business meeting will follow. Members and friends are welcome at the luncheon, but the deadline for reservations with a check for \$35 is June 15. Send check made out to LWVKS, and add a note with your menu choice for the sit-down dinner: balsamic chicken breast, sesame soy-glazed salmon, or potato gnocchi. Mail your check and luncheon choice at least a week in advance to LWVKS, POBox 660, New London NH 03257.

The Greater Nashua unit has several meetings scheduled over the summer, open to members and the interested public. June 22 at 7 pm is a discussion about Homelessness in NH, led by guest speaker Cathy Kuhn, PhD., Executive Director, NH Coalition to End Homelessness. This will be held at the Hunt Communities library, 10 Allds St, Nashua. On July 12 the topic will be “Open Democracy--moving forward from here.: Guest speaker is Olivia Zink, Executive Director, Open Democracy. This event is at the Nashua Library, in the Hunt room, at 7 pm.

The fledging unit in the Seacoast will be participating in Portsmouth Market Day on Saturday, June 11, by offering voter information brochures to interested people. Find out more as the unit makes other summer plans by visiting their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1188405247870949/>

Good News re Women’s Prison

So often we report on problems facing women offenders. This time there are two good news pieces: The new women’s correctional facility, in Concord off Rte 3 directly behind the men’s existing facility, is officially under construction with a completion goal date of fall 2017.

Of more immediate interest is that the recidivism rate has dropped for the fifth year in a row. The rate of offenders returning to prison within three years of their release is still higher than anyone would like, often because of parole violations and sometimes because of new crimes, but the women now return at a lower rate than men. In the group of women released in 2010, the return rate was 39.7%. The NH Dept. of Corrections is seeking to understand the reasons behind the steady reduction in recidivism.

Election Law Update

The outtake from this session of the Legislature is that we came close. Close to good legislation and close to bad legislation. The good legislation that didn't quite make it was a bill to allow Manchester, Hooksett and Durham to test run the use of electronic poll books for the state primaries in September and the Presidential Election in November. All of the equipment and training would have been provided at no charge and the three communities were very eager to take part. The Senate approved the bill. Unfortunately, the Secretary of State doesn't believe we'll be ready to use computers for database management for another twenty years and he was able to kill the bill.

Electronic poll books are not used for voting. Voters would still receive a paper ballot for marking as they do now. The poll books (similar to iPads) allow registered voters to check in and get a ballot very quickly by wiping a driver's license to confirm their identity and that they are already registered. Address corrections can be made right in the poll book if needed. Voters would get a receipt to exchange for a ballot. The checklist and all the different color pens would no longer be necessary. Registering to vote with a driver's license would confirm identity and age and the address would be entered manually in the poll book. Those without a driver's license would still be able to use other IDs or affidavits which would be programmed into the poll book. The benefit for election officials is that at the end of the day, all the data is already collected and tabulated and can be added directly to the statewide database. It would no longer take Supervisors of the Checklist weeks or months to manually type in all the information that is currently handwritten on separate pieces of paper.

The bad legislation that came close to passing was yet another attempt to put a time limit on a citizen's right to vote. This bill keeps coming back so it's worth explaining the issue. The Supreme Court ruled decades ago that no state can place a durational residency requirement on a citizen's right to vote. In other words, if you are a citizen at least 18 years old, a state can't require you to wait for some length of time before you can exercise your constitutional right to vote. The court did allow states that have Motor Voter or mail-in voter registration to have an administrative period before the election to certify registrations. States must justify the number of days they need. Most are 10 to 15 days. The Court also said that since same-day registration states collect the information they need to certify registrations; they don't need an administrative period before an election. New Hampshire stops accepting registrations for ten days before election day in order to print the checklists but people can still register on election day. (Note: If the state used electronic poll books, it wouldn't be necessary to stop registrations in order to print the checklists.)

Joan Flood Ashwell

League Education Fund Reflects Past and Looks to Future

According to an early report, the LWVNH Education Fund was started by “League old-timers” to benefit the educational work of the League. Their initial goal was to have an investment fund of \$20,000 that would guarantee income of about \$2,000 each year to award as grants to the state board and to local Leagues.

Thirty-three years later the LWVNH Education Fund has an investment fund of around \$60,000. In today’s world, however, this generates less than \$3,000 per year. In most recent years our expenditures have been greater than our investment income.

In fiscal year 2015-2016 the Education Fund approved grants to support the Quad States Conference, a delegate to the LWVUS Council, training across the state for citizens interested in organizing and moderating candidate forums and a special donation to the Marilla Ricker Portrait fund.

At their recent meeting the Ed Fund board approved grants to support the New England League Leadership Conference (formerly Quad States), and to send two state board delegates to the LWVUS convention and one from Kearsarge-Sunapee. Ed Fund money is also used each year to pay a portion of the state office rental, telephone, insurance costs, and website fees.

Fall 2016 will be a big year for voter service. The Ed Fund board will consider grant applications at their August 13th meeting. The Board feels it is very important to continue to fund voter educational as well as the other funded activities even when we need to draw down principal. With more members at large we also have greater potential for reaching more voters with candidate forums and voter information.

Members and friends interested in providing financial support to ensure that the Education Fund can continue to make grants are invited to send checks to the League of Women Voters of New Hampshire Education Fund, 4 Park St., Room 200, Concord, NH 03301. Contributions to the Ed Fund, which is a 501(c)3 organization, are fully tax deductible.

Current Education Fund Board members are Lillian Nelligan- chair, Sue Capano-secretary, Mary Davies- treasurer, and Joan Timmerman, Peg Fargo, Kate Nelligan, and Margery Bostrom.