



# The League of Women Voters of the Kearsarge Sunapee Area

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November 2023

*Empowering Voters - Defending Democracy*

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## President's Message

Ah, November. Typically, a very exciting time for League members as we await election results following candidate forums, disseminating voter information, and volunteering as election workers. This year, there were many elections held for local candidates to fill town and city positions. Next year promises to be a particularly interesting and busy election season for the entire country and our local League will certainly be part of it as we continue our mission to "Educate, Study, and Advocate". We will be concentrating throughout the winter months on holding forums on issues that affect the democratic process. We will continue working with our partners such as Open Democracy, the ACLU, and others. Watch your email and newspapers for upcoming information.

We would like to thank all our members who have renewed their dues and the many who made additional contributions. It's not too late if that form is still sitting on your desk to complete and send it in so that your membership in the local, state, and national League does not lapse by the end of December. Expenses like postage, advertising, and publications keep rising so every dollar is important, as is your continued support and participation in your League.

Wishing you all the very best of Happy Holidays!

### **Patricia Rodgers**

President of LWVKS chapter - [patrodgers2000@yahoo.com](mailto:patrodgers2000@yahoo.com)

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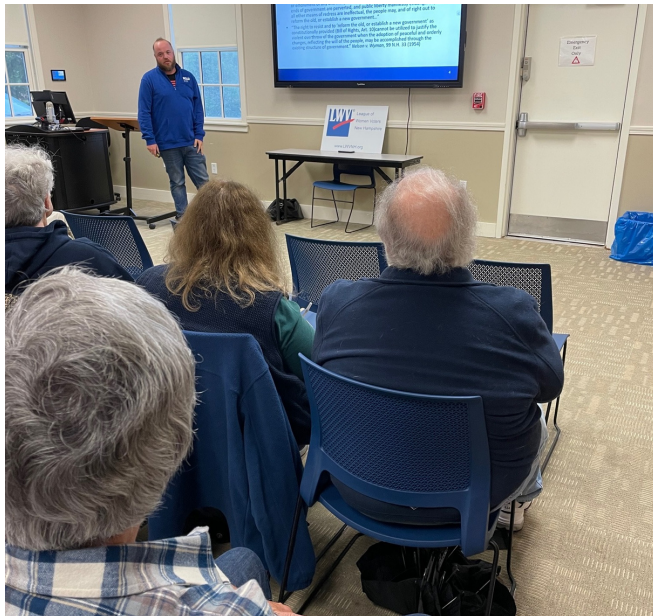
**We will soon be in need of a new treasurer for our local Board. The current treasurer will happily train and mentor a new volunteer treasurer. Please contact Patricia Rodgers at [patrodgers2000@yahoo.com](mailto:patrodgers2000@yahoo.com) with any questions or interest.**

## League of Women Voters Kearsarge-Sunapee Presents Talk on our New Hampshire Constitution

Given the interest in the contemporary impact of the United States Constitution, guest speaker Henry Klementowicz Esq., Senior Staff Attorney at the ACLU-NH, celebrated unique aspects of our own New Hampshire Constitution. Approved by the "PEOPLE," the CIVIL CONSTITUTION FOR THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE was established and officially declared at the convention on June 2, 1784, five years before the US Constitution was declared in effect. Our New Hampshire Constitution is regularly tested. Henry's work focuses on litigation and statehouse advocacy in support of civil rights and civil liberties, particularly in the areas of voting rights, governmental records, due process, and freedom of speech. Our Bill of Rights was his focus.

Article 10 of the New Hampshire Bill of Rights is the "Right of Revolution." Establishing that government exists for the common benefit of the whole community and not for the private interest of "any one man, family, or class of men," Henry highlighted the protection of public liberty. In New Hampshire frankness, the last sentence declares: The doctrine of nonresistance against arbitrary power, and oppression, is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind. (Women had no rights at that time.)

Next came Article 2-b, the "Right to Privacy." As amended in 2018, again New Hampshire declared the rights of the individual over government intrusion. Article 11, "Election and Elective Franchises," is repeatedly tested in courts. Its declaration that "every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote" raises contention among legislators, political parties, and citizens about what "inhabitant" means and about how to interpret the word "domicile." College students are a prime example of where such contention is centered.



Finally, Article 8, "Accountability of Magistrates and Officers; Public's Right to Know" reiterated "All power residing originally in, and being derived from, the people ... [governing individuals are] at all times accountable to them." The more recent amendment to provide "right of access to governmental proceedings and records" is frequently being legally tested regarding what may be seen as excessive numbers of pages of documents being demanded. Questions from the large audience asked about both the theoretical and the detailed aspects of the New Hampshire Constitution, emphasizing the independent minds of New Hampshire citizens, whose Constitution reflects them.

**Photo: Senior Staff Attorney at ACLU-NH Henry Klementowicz, Esq.**

**If you are a member and have not yet paid your annual dues for July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, please do so as soon as possible by mailing a check to: LWVKS, Box 660, New London, NH 03257. Thank you!**

## LWVKS member application

These newsletters are sent to LWVKS members and also distributed at various League events. If you are not yet a member and would like to join the League, please complete this form and mail to:

LWVKS  
Box 660  
New London, NH 03257

Annual Dues: \$50. Family Membership: \$60.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Family member \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Family \_\_\_\_\_ \$60 Additional contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

### **Where Does All the Money Go?**

**by Janet Miller Haines and Sara McNeil - LWVKS Board Members**

Those of you who are members of the League of Women Voters of the Kearsarge/Sunapee Area pay dues of \$50 a year, and we are grateful for your support. Have you ever asked yourself where those dollars go? In case that's been keeping you up at night, let me put your mind at ease; your local board does not dine out during our monthly meetings!

On a more serious note, in keeping with the mission of the national, state, and local leagues, we are all dedicated to becoming better-informed citizens so we can work together to influence public policy through education and advocacy. For the National League, that means appearing before the US Congress to testify in support or in opposition for bills that best represent our League's positions. During the past several years, the LWVUS has been especially involved with topics related to healthcare and the environment; more recently, the focus has been on protecting voting rights and redistricting. Undoubtedly, a significant amount of our League's monies also go toward litigation fees in multiple states throughout our country as we fight voter suppression, racially gerrymandered districts, and reproductive rights, to name just a few recent hot topics.

New Hampshire established their own League in 1919 beginning with local units hosting "citizenship schools" to help women understand the responsibilities of citizenship and the voting process. Today, our State League's slogan is Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy. We do this in our Local League by providing free presentations to the public on such topics as redistricting, public education funding, the role of the Executive Council, civics education, and understanding our NH Constitution. We also organize, publicize, and moderate Candidate Forums in some contested elections within the Kearsarge-Sunapee area, thereby ensuring that you meet your candidates and hear how they stand on current issues impacting our towns and state.

**Continued on next page...**

## **Where Does All the Money Go? cont.**

Finally, let's finish by returning to your annual LWVKS dues.

Out of your \$50 membership dues, we must send \$32 to the National League and \$15 to our State's League which leaves just \$3 for our local League. Therefore, you can see how much we appreciate any additional funds that each of you provide beyond the \$50 dues as those donations will remain with your local League.

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## **Welcome to The Equality Health Center - Our Guests at the Table** **by Dianne Bischoff LWVKS member, EHC Board of Trustees**

The LWVKS's annual June luncheon and meeting was held in New London and well-attended by 50 members and guests. We were honored to have as our guest speaker, Ms. Lisa Hall, Medical Services Coordinator of the Equality Health Center (EHC) in Concord, NH. Accompanying Lisa was the EHC's Executive Director, Jinelle Hobson.

Lisa spoke with enthusiasm about EHC's history which began with the founding of NH Women's Health Services in 1974, the first independent abortion and gynecological clinic in New Hampshire. A few years later, the name was changed to the Feminist Health Center. Over the years, EHC has evolved to include men's health services and clientele from the LGBTQ+ community as well; hence the current name, The Equality Health Center.

Due to the political climate at the NH State House during the last few years, the Center has recently lost our state's funding support for independent health centers upon which we relied annually. The Center now must depend solely on donations from the public and from grants from a variety of sources, all of which require detailed, prescribed application processes. In spite of these financial challenges, and in order to ensure access to services, we have never turned away a client.

Following Lisa's presentation, the Executive Director answered questions about the Center's operation. Ms. Hobson and Ms. Hall were warmly received by our members and guests whose many questions and comments showed strong support for the Center's mission.

We are pleased to welcome League member, Kristin Schultz of Newbury, to the EHC's Board of Trustees. For those interested in making contributions, please visit their website at [equalityhc.org](http://equalityhc.org) or mail to: Equality Health Center, 38 S. Main St., Concord, NH 03301.

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## **In Memoriam - Jan Krueger, LWVKS board member**

Janet (Jan) Krueger passed away on August 14, 2023. Throughout her life, Jan was deeply committed to two important causes: the need for compassionate treatment of animals and the protection of the environment. She wasn't merely concerned about these issues; she personally stepped up to rescue animals in need and to live with a reduced environmental impact.

In addition to her many personal joys, such as sailing, waterskiing, downhill skiing, ice dancing and traveling, Jan cherished the opportunity to connect with people. As a board member of the LWVKS, she was always the first to step up and volunteer for tasks like making calls to league members to discuss important issues or remind them of upcoming league events.

We extend our deepest condolences to her three sons and their families. Jan was so proud of them all. Jan's dedication to her causes, her community and her family leaves a lasting legacy of compassion and action that will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

# **The League of WOMEN Voters: What's in a Name?**

**by Liz Tentarelli, President of LWVNH**

The League of Women Voters is a membership organization open to people of all gender identities. So why do we insist on keeping "Women" in our name?

Short answer: pride. We are proud that women fought for 72 years for recognition of their right to vote, eventually achieved with passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Pride that women have taken their voting rights seriously, voting in greater numbers than men since the 1960s. Pride that women have learned to study issues and to run for office, often through their involvement with the League.

All right, already, you may say. Isn't it time to change the name? Some members think so; others disagree. This has been discussed at the national League conventions. But we keep coming back to recognition of our founding as a direct descendant organization of the women's suffrage movement.

In 1920, after Congress had passed the 19th amendment, the amendment still had to be ratified by three-fourths of the states (at that time, 36 states). The suffragists worked each state, lobbying the state legislatures to vote for ratification. A year after Congress passed the bill, they had succeeded in getting just 35 states to ratify. Oddly, Vermont and Connecticut hadn't ratified, only because their governors refused to call a special session to do so. The measure would have passed in those states.

That brought the issue to Tennessee, in the summer of 1920. Oh, it was close. The Senate passed the bill to ratify, but the Tennessee House seemed to be split. When the vote was finally called, one of the legislators, the youngest member of the House (Harry Burn, aged 24) was expected to vote against ratification. But when his name was called, he voted in favor! The note from his mother, urging him to vote for ratification, played a part. Then one more legislator, who had been abstaining, got the courage to vote Aye. The amendment was ratified and became part of the US Constitution on August 26, 1920.

Meanwhile, during 1919 and 1920, the suffragists realized that with women about to get the vote, they needed to understand the mechanics of voter registration and voting. They also needed to learn how to study issues so they could vote from a position of knowledge. At the national convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, on February 14, 1920, attendees voted to change their name and mission to the non-partisan League of Women Voters.

So there you have it: it is with pride that we keep "women" in our name; the name we've had for 103 years, at the same time that we welcome people of all genders to join our organization.

**You can also find this newsletter on the LWWNH webpage.  
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