

THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Champlain Valley

January 2009

CVLWV Board, 2008 - 2009

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Director	Jean Hopkins	863-5359
Director	Susan Marks	288-9702
Director	Keri Toksu (Website)	658-0962

Calendar of Events

We sponsor meetings and events for the public and League members.

Local, Statewide, Regional Meetings

Date	Time	Place	Description
Feb. 17	10:30 am	Essex Free Library Essex Center	CVLWV Board of Directors Monthly Meeting. All welcome.
Feb. 18	7 pm – 8:30 pm	Speeder & Earl's Coffee 412 Pine St. Burlington	National Popular Vote Compact. League member Terry Bouricius, a senior policy analyst for FairVote, will introduce this method of choosing a U.S. President by popular vote without amending the Constitution.
Mar. 24	9 am – 1 pm	Vermont State House Montpelier	Legislative Day. An opportunity to greet other LWV members, chat with your legislators, attend committee meetings, and more!
May 2	TBA	Noble Hall Vt. College of Fine Arts Montpelier	51st Convention of LWV of Vermont. In addition to the regular business meeting, the program will emphasize energy issues, with a keynote speaker and a panel discussion. Please save the date!
May 30- 31	TBA	Portsmouth, NH	Quad States Leadership Conference. Featuring a keynote speaker as well as workshops.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT - Irene Wrenner

What an exciting time to follow politics at all levels - crises, challenges, and change abound! Be sure to supplement your media "fixes" with face-to-face opportunities to engage locally with our League.

Dozens of us did just that at our annual legislative dinner in December, the spirit of which Susan Marks captures in the next article. Looking ahead: We'll discuss the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact, a new way to choose the President of the United States by popular vote without amending the Constitution, at our Feb. 18 meeting. In mid-March we'll come to consensus on the NPV Compact. (Details on both meetings are below.) In the works are a meeting on renewable energy in April and, of course, our Annual Meeting in May.

Special thanks to the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, which permitted us to reprint their handy list of Chittenden County Legislators in this issue.

Marge asked me to cover her column this month. I expect she'll be back at her keyboard soon. In the meantime, would you please keep her healing in your thoughts and prayers? Thank you!

DINNER WITH VERMONT LEGISLATORS - Susan Marks

On a snowy December 10th, a group of about 30 hardy League members and their guests enjoyed a stimulating and fun evening at the 2008 Legislative Dinner. The Eagles Club once again opened its doors (at its new location in South Burlington) for this CVLWV annual dinner, and provided a tasty chicken entrée in a cozy, firelit dining room.

The lively dinner table conversations finally ceased so that Senator Ginny Lyons and Representatives Linda Myers, Martha Heath and Joan Lenas could regale the group with tales from Montpelier. The somewhat grim forecast for the upcoming legislative session was tempered by good humor and a commitment to work through these tough times.

Senator Lyons provided an update on issues to be addressed by the Health & Welfare Committee this session, including an attempt to expand Catamount. In these difficult financial times, even keeping current coverage levels may be problematic. There were also a number of questions for her in her capacity as a member of the Natural Resources & Energy Committee and interesting information about Vermont Yankee and alternative energy possibilities was presented.

Linda Myers and Joan Lenas both serve on the House Corrections & Institutions committee and gave a perspective not often seen about the state of corrections in Vermont and the process for getting a building built. Martha Heath is on the House Appropriations Committee and had the difficult task of explaining (without being too pessimistic) the process for determining the budget and how the shortfall might be dealt with.

All in all it was an energetic, interesting, and informative meeting that everyone thoroughly enjoyed. If you missed it, plan on attending next year - it's one of the best events of the year.

FEBRUARY MEETING, NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT - Keri Toksu

Please join us Wednesday, February 18, 7-8:30 pm, at Speeder & Earl's (412 Pine St., Burlington) to discuss the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact. Delegates at the LWVUS Convention 2008 voted to study the advisability of using the NPV Compact among the states as a method for electing the U.S. President. We will discuss the questions posed by the National LWV in preparation for our consensus meeting in March.

The discussion will be led by League member Terry Bouricius, senior policy analyst for FairVote. To see the questions or browse materials before the meeting, please see "National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact Study" at:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=National_Popular_Vote_Compact&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=157&ContentID=12169

MARCH MEETING, CONSENSUS: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE - Keri Toksu

Join your fellow League members to discuss and vote on consensus questions from National LWV on the topic of the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact.

The process of study and coming to consensus is a time-honored League process by which we arrive at a position, soundly based on members' views, on issues of importance to our democracy. This is your chance to participate in one of the liveliest, most well-informed discussions there is!

Be sure to read the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact material from the national LWV at: http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=National_Popular_Vote_Compact&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=157&ContentID=12169

LEGISLATIVE DAY, Tuesday, March 24 - Kate Rader

The Board of the LWVVT has scheduled its annual Legislative Day for Tuesday, March 24. (This is a change from the initial date because Town Meeting recess has been extended to two weeks.)

We will attend the House session and selected committee meetings in the morning, and have lunch with legislators at noon, followed by more committee hearings in the afternoon as desired.

Members are urged to contact their Senators and/or Representative and ask them to join us for lunch (venue to be determined). This has proven to be an excellent means for one-on-one discussion of our legislative priorities.

A list of pending bills and committee hearings of interest will be posted at <http://www.lwvofvt.org>.

KEEP OUR CHAPTER GOING - AND GROWING!

Remember to tell your friends about what you've learned, thanks to the League, and invite them along to our next meeting. Word-of-mouth is most effective, so please spread the word!

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to men and women citizens of all ages. With more than 86 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.