

THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Champlain Valley

March 2009

CVLWV Board, 2008 - 2009

President	Marge Gaskins	879-0003
Vice President	Irene Wrenner (Voter Editor)	879-0011
Treasurer	Amy Bond	879-0628
Secretary	Jean Norton	879-0872
Director	June Carmichael	878-8360
Director	Mabel Buttolph	863-3990
Director	Sue Golden	985-9524
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
Mar. 18	7 pm – 8:30 pm	Speeder & Earl's Coffee 412 Pine St. Burlington	National Popular Vote Compact. Members only deliberate and come to consensus on this method of choosing a U.S. President by popular vote without amending the Constitution.
Mar. 19	10:30 am	Essex Town Offices 81 Main St., Essex Jct.	CVLWV Board of Directors Monthly Meeting. All welcome.
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!
Apr. 23	10:30am	Brownell Library, EJ	CVLWV Board of Directors Monthly Meeting.
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 14	5:30 pm	Mabel Buttolph's home 20 Peterson Terrace So. Burlington	Annual Meeting and Pot-Luck Dinner. We selected a Thursday evening this year to assist those with Wednesday conflicts. Hope to see you there!
May 30-31	TBA	Portsmouth, NH	Quad States Leadership Conference. Featuring a keynote speaker as well as workshops.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - Marge Gaskins

I feel like I have been away for a very long time, so I'm trying to catch up.

First of all (pretty important) I have changed my e-mail address to mgaskins@comcast.net.

This month our Board of Directors will discuss the viability of holding a member meeting at Wake Robin. We have several members and former members there.

This is a busy time of the year. LWVVT hosts Legislative Day, March 24th. Join in this opportunity to greet other LWV members, chat with your legislators, attend committee meetings,

and more! Several members usually attend and carpool from here. Let me know if you're interested. Also, be sure to invite your legislators to join us for lunch.

Our State Convention will be held in Montpelier in early May, and the Quad States Workshops will discuss our regional interests a few weeks later. Please consider attending these meetings. Last year four CVLWV members went and found them worthwhile. For newer members, it would be even more so.

I would like to ask if you would remember June Carmichael, whose health has taken a turn for the worse, in your prayers, or just offer her good wishes in whatever way you choose. June has more than 40 years of League history, and she and I have been friends for many years. I will miss her contributions to League.

June has been active in League, serving as president, then treasurer in Rutland. She then chaired the environmental committees statewide during the planning for Act 250 passage, working on land use and costs and taxing that were so important in these issues. Hers will be a hard act to follow. We are fortunate that Amy Bond will take over the treasurer's position for us in CVLWV, and we have found new treasurers for LWVVT and the Education Fund.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT? - Irene Wrenner

Wednesday, February 18, League members Terry Bouricius and Chris Pearson explained a method of choosing a U.S. President by popular vote without amending the Constitution. Although Chris and Terry differ in their degree of enthusiasm for The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact, members of their audience gained a good understanding of What?, Why?, and How? that evening.

As you may recall, the National LWV supports replacing the Electoral College, so that the candidate receiving the most votes would always win the Presidency. Normally, a change to our Constitution of this magnitude would take a very long time.

The League is now examining a faster way to make this happen by using the power vested in the states to select their own electors.

To encourage individual states to consider this idea, a compact (agreement) between states was drafted and is making its way around the country, thanks to a non-profit named National Popular Vote, for which Chris Pearson works. States agreeing to the compact are assured that they will have sufficient leverage to make NPV happen when the time is right.

Our speakers described the current electoral system as "broken." For one thing, so few voters have influence over the outcome of a Presidential election that 67% of the money spent on campaigning went to just six states in 2008, and 98% of that money went to just fifteen states.

Today's electoral college determines the presidency in such a way that a Vermont voter doesn't have a "voice" equal to that of a Florida voter. NPV, on the other hand, would assure that a vote cast in any one state and a vote from another state carry equal weight in determining the President.

Voter fraud -- of great concern this past decade -- is easier to perpetrate in a small number of states. Therefore, by broadening the playing field, NPV will help dilute any possible "pollution" that may occur at the ballot box.

Four states (Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, and New Jersey) have already passed the NPV bill. State legislative chambers in ten other states have passed it as well.

States under this compact agree to award their bloc of votes to the candidate who has won the most popular votes in all 50 states (and DC). (In this way, even voters in states that haven't agreed to the compact receive equal treatment.)

Once the number of states passing the bill reaches the threshold of 270 electoral votes, these states will have a sufficient majority of votes to elect the President. For more information, please visit www.NationalPopularVote.com.

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 on March 18 at 7 pm (per Calendar).

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>.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - Susan Marks

We met on February 11 and welcomed new member Lois Farnham to help us plan future meetings. For April we had planned a meeting on Energy, but reconsidered because Energy meetings abound, plus Energy is the focus of the state convention. Therefore, our April meeting will likely be on the Economy. Please let me know if you have suggested topics for fall meetings.

VOTER SERVICE

Thanks to Susan Alden and Sue Golden for going to Burlington High School to register voters last month.

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.

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League of Women Voters
P.O. Box 8266
Essex, Vermont 05451-8266