

THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Champlain Valley

September 2008

CVLWV Board, 2008 - 2009

President	Marge Gaskins	879-0003
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Director	Sue Golden	985-9524
Director	Jean Hopkins	878-9326
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.

Champlain Valley LWV Monthly Meetings

Date	Time	Place	Description
Sept. 17	7 pm	Speeder & Earl's Coffee 412 Pine St. Burlington	The Road to Health Care: Paved with Good Intentions Panelists include Craig Jones, MD , the Director of Vermont Blueprint for Health -- a vision, a plan and a statewide partnership to improve health and the health care system for Vermonters; Dan Johnson , a Principal of Hickok & Boardman Group Benefits, member of the Vermont Business Roundtable (VBR) Health Care Working Group and board member of the Vermont Program for Quality Health Care; and State Senator Doug Racine , chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and member of the Health Care Reform Commission. They will update us on the latest challenges and successes along the rocky road to providing health care to all Vermonters. We co-host this event with VBR.
Sept. 18	10:30 am	Brownell Library, Essex Jct.	CVLWV Board of Directors Monthly Meeting. All welcome.
Oct. 15	Noon	Fletcher Free Library Burlington	The Influence of the Media on Elections (Speaker) A journalist from the Free Press will join us to discuss how our elections are – and aren't – influenced by print and digital media.
Oct. 15	7 pm	TBD	The Influence of the Media on Elections (Panel) Journalists and bloggers offer their insights on Campaign '08 and discuss how our elections are – and aren't – influenced by print and digital media. We co-host this event with UVM's Political Science Department.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - Marge Gaskins

The new Champlain Valley League year is underway, and the committee focusing on new member recruitment and monthly meetings has worked hard all summer. It looks like a great schedule, and an ambitious one.

Last week several members attended the CSPAN bus arrival in Burlington. We registered new voters and were quite visible on the Fletcher Library lawn. And it was fun.

I have talked with some people who are interested in candidate's debates, and I hope we can work with those who are interested. I will be calling several candidates for statewide office and hope we can include some of the local races that are being contested.

The state board will meet again soon and we can perhaps hear from the members where and how to set some debates up outside just the Champlain Valley. It seems a lot of groups want to sponsor debates, but the League as a strictly non-partisan organization has to consider our status when we agree to share sponsorship. It would be nice to have others to share costs and pressure on the candidates to participate. I'll let you all know if and when we set these up.

In the meantime, we will continue to register voters, and be sure everyone we contact plans to vote. Let me know if you have ideas or contacts we should be aware of.

Hope to see you all at our general meetings this fall. Don't forget to bring a friend!

C-SPAN BUS VISITS BURLINGTON - Susan Marks

On August 5th, C-SPAN and the Champlain Valley League of Women Voters joined forces to encourage citizens to be informed and register to vote. One of C-SPAN's two "Road to the White House" campaign buses was in Burlington on an unusual dry sunny day and at C-SPAN's request, the League was there to register voters and answer questions. The bus, which is forty-five feet long, is equipped with a mobile multi-media center and a TV production unit that allows C-SPAN to interview students, authors, journalists and politicians aboard the bus anywhere in the country.

A number of protesters, who were visible but not unruly, added ambiance to the event in front of Fletcher Free Library. Amid signs that "Elections are Fake" and "Media is Dividing Us" there was good-natured interaction between protesters, League members (Joanna Cole, Marge Gaskins, Vee Gordon, Jean Hopkins, and Susan Marks) and C-SPAN staff. Although a few registrations were completed, the good news is that almost everyone who came by was already registered to vote!

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS THIS FALL

Dust off your rolodex and give it a whirl! In an effort to grow and strengthen our local chapter, every member is encouraged to invite five (5) people to join the League this fall. Whether you cold-call your acquaintances, arm-twist a few friends, or invite a total stranger to attend a monthly meeting, there are plenty of good reasons to join LWV now. We've got a robust slate of meetings in the coming months, so it's easy to bring a friend along. Current and recent members will be getting a personal phone call with drive-details. Non-members are asked to contact Irene, Keri, or Susan (phones and e-addresses on page 1) for more info.

WORK AT THE POLLS ON SEPT. 9 OR NOV. 4

Can you spare a few hours to make democracy work? Chances are your municipality can use a few more poll workers for upcoming elections. The town of Essex, for example, offers morning (6 am - 1 pm) and afternoon (1 pm - closing) shifts and pays \$8 per hour. To apply, you should be a registered voter in your town and able to see and hear well. If interested, contact your Town Clerk.

STUDY ON TRANSPORTATION TO MEDICAL FACILITIES - Jean Hopkins

Vee Gordon, Susan Alden and I are attending the UVM Transportation meetings on Fridays at noon in Farrell Hall on UVM campus this month. We've gathered a lot of information and ideas from the 20-30 people who are attending these meetings. Many attending are concerned about the effect of transportation on climate change. More details to come as we determine how to improve transportation to medical offices and facilities.

NOTARIES NOT NEEDED TO REGISTER VOTERS

It's not that we are flush with notaries at the CVLWV, nor does the headline above contain a typo. According to new Vermont law, voters may now register to vote by take the Freeman's Oath without a notary present. While self-registration has been available in many other states, this is a considerable change from the way it's always been done here. As of July 1, older voter registration forms are invalid. Consider getting new forms from your Town Clerk bringing them to church, clubs, reunions, and other places you may meet folks who are new to your area or haven't before taken the oath. (You may also download and print the form at <http://vermont-elections.org/elections1/register tovote.html#Get%20a%20Voter%20Registration%20Form>.)

TOOL AIDS RESEARCH ON CONGRESS' VOTING RECORDS - Carol Reimers, LWVUS

The League has announced a new tool for researching congressional votes for the first session of the 110th Congress (2007), listing House and Senate votes on key good government issues. This tool, searchable by member of Congress as well as by issue area, includes key votes on LWVUS legislative priorities. This is a new tool to assist you in your advocacy. Check it out here: http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Take_Action&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=47&ContentID=10429, or visit www.lwv.org and click "Take Action"!

Here are some tips for using the votes list:

1. Thank your members of Congress who voted the right way, and encourage those who didn't to reconsider their positions on key good government issues.
2. When lobbying in the future, research how your member(s) of Congress voted on key LWVUS issues
3. Customize this press release <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=10674> for use in your own state—and let your community know how your elected officials are doing in Washington!

Please contact Christina Vamvas at cvamvas@lwv.org with any questions related to the list.

*Please note: The purpose of this resource is not to "grade" or "score" members of Congress, but, instead, to provide an accurate listing of key federal votes. We hope you'll utilize it starting today!

SEE US AT THE ART HOP!

CVLWV members will host a voter information table at Speeder and Earl's on Pine Street during the South End Art Hop on Sept. 5 and 6. Contact Elizabeth Ottinger at eottinger@comcast.net or 862-2860 if you wish to volunteer for a two-hour Friday night or Saturday afternoon shift. It should be fabulous face-time!

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE!

Would you please remit annual membership dues (now \$50) to:

Champlain Valley League of Women Voters
PO Box 8266
Essex, VT 05451

**Thank you for helping to keep us on a
sound financial footing!**

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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.