



League of Women Voters of Central Vermont

Bulletin

December 2009

President's Message:

This time of year is filled with energy and excitement as many of us participate in the some kind of celebration of the holidays. Whether we've been traveling (like me), or just hosting or attending parties, often these activities include spending time with those we love. I hope all of our members have had a chance to spend some quality time with their loved ones.

Your local league has been taking some respite in December, but we are gearing up for a busy legislative session and the continuation of our Member Events. On January 6th we will be hosting Iron-Jawed Angels, the movie about the suffrage movement, and a timely film since the LWV is celebrating its 90th anniversary this February. Look for an e-mail with more details about the movie screening.

In this upcoming election year, we will also be registering voters and educating citizens about the election process, candidates' positions on issues important to the league and other election related news and activities.

Our state league is also planning many great activities this year, including hosting their annual Legislative Day on February 17th. Come to the Statehouse to meet your representatives, learn about the legislative process and help us educate and advocate the league's positions. This proves to be an exciting year at the Statehouse as lawmakers debate the State's budget, Unemployment Insurance reform and what to do about Vermont Yankee. Please mark your calendars and come use your voice to show the strength of the league.

February 16th, on the eve of the Legislative Day, the state league is also hosting a great event to celebrate our 90th anniversary. Actor and director Sally Mattson has been touring the country for the past seven years, portraying the activist Susan B Anthony, using letters, speeches and diaries to reveal Anthony's wit and fury and to capture her interactions with such notables as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lucy Stone, Teddy Roosevelt and, of course, her long-time collaborator in the suffragist movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. You simply cannot miss this event—it is being held in the well of the Statehouse at 7 pm on February 16th. I look forward to seeing you there!

In honor of the League's anniversary, Senator Bill Doyle and Representative Donna Sweaney will file a resolution honoring the League and its long history of civic involvement. We expect it to be read in the House, and will let you know the date. We hope you will be there to celebrate with us!

Your local league welcomes you to join us as we celebrate 90 years of the League of Women Voters this with events, films and other meetings. We are proud of the good work of the women's suffrage movement and I am especially proud to be part of keeping this great movement alive!

In celebration of Democracy,

Nancy T Lynch

Global Climate Challenge is Global Water Challenge

European Water News

Dec. 9, 2009

The failure to recognize the role of water management in adapting to climate change has numerous and multifaceted repercussions for people's lives: It means that national water suppliers will not have access to sanitation systems that are resilient to flooding or unexpected weather events; It means that farmers will not have adequate information or resources to ensure that they can cope with diminishing rainfall; It means that new pressures will be put on already strained relations between neighboring states who depend on shared water resources.

Already many developing countries lack the appropriate infrastructure and institutions to manage water effectively. As climate change stands to exacerbate existing pressures on water resources, development of institutions, technologies and capacity to manage water among competing users will be fundamental. The failure to identify and call for such adaptation actions at COP15 risks undermining efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development commitments. Ensuring that water is included in adaptation strategies is the difference between being prepared for climate change and not.

A report launched for Copenhagen by the Global Public Policy Network on Water Management (GPPN) makes the case for why negotiators should take water seriously - 'Water World - why the global climate challenge is a global water challenge' looks at water as a cross-cutting issue for livelihoods, land, ecosystems, trans-boundary relations, energy and gender.

The GPPN is a joint initiative by Stakeholder Forum and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

Hunger Mountain Coop Addresses Bottled Water (From the Coop Newsletter)

[R]ecently, a Member-Owner requested that The Coop stop selling bottled water. As many know, there has been an astonishing growth in bottled water consumption over the last 15 years and there are a variety of significant environmental, social and health issues associated with that increase. I believe that bottled water is an issue that speaks to many of our cooperative values.

The Coop has worked to provide several viable alternatives to bottled water over the past few years: we began selling home water filters near cost, we reviewed and updated our selection of reusable bottles, and we created a new, more functional filling station in our expansion. However, customers continue to purchase bottled water for a variety of reasons.

I shared this information with the Member-Owner and we agreed that an educational process to inform other customers about the implications of bottled water use was appropriate. We held a workshop en-titled "Your Water Footprint" in September, and we will include an article on bottled water in an upcoming issue of *The Full Scoop*. In the meantime, we continue to encourage the consumption of local unbottled water, including the free filtered city water available at The Coop, while still offering bottled water for customers who prefer it.

[Kari Bradley, General Manager]

And the Winner Is...

Our own Claudette Sortino.

Claudette submitted the winning ticket for our fourth annual quilt raffle. Thanks to all of you who sold (and bought) tickets, and special thanks again to Polly Ellerbe, who contributes the hand-made quilt for our raffles.

State and national League advocacy positions may be used at the local level for applicable issues. To encourage your consideration of using these positions, we publish the short version of the LWVVT positions here. The national positions in brief are in the Winter 2009 issue of the Green Mountain Citizen. The full text of the positions can be found at www.lwv.org and www.lwvofvt.org.



League of Women Voters of Vermont Advocacy Positions

The LWV of Vermont supports:

Voter Rights and Government

Instant Runoff Voting.

Efforts to streamline the legislative process.

Four-year terms for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, annual sessions of the General Assembly.

The principle of using alternative voting methods for legislative districts, to achieve both competitive elections and fair representation of both majorities and minorities within a district.

Fiscal Policy

The redistribution of the tax burden in Vermont, particularly the property tax, through land use assessment rather than fair market value; and strongly supports the present tax on Vermont-derived income of nonresidents.

Social Policy

A publicly funded, single-payer, comprehensive, universal, equitable health care system for Vermont.

Decent housing and a suitable living environment for every citizen (from LWVUS position on basic human needs).

Environment

Legislation which moves Vermont to predominant reliance on renewable energy resources and energy efficiency.

A regional approach (ME, NH, VT) to disposal of low-level radioactive waste.

The policy and purpose of the Act Relating to Solid Waste adopted in 1987 by the General Assembly.

Land protection and an integrated development plan for Vermont through a state organizational framework.

Education

Equality of educational opportunity for all public schools in Vermont.

Alternative high schools for special purposes and magnet schools with scholastic specialties, in order to strengthen Vermont's public schools, but does not support vouchers or charter schools.

Uniform pre-school screening for all Vermont children.

This is a short version of our positions. For the full text, go to our website at www.lwvofvt.org and click on Advocacy and Action.

A Firm Cap and a Stringent Emissions Reduction Timetable Are Critical for an Effective United States Cap-and-Trade Program

Aggressive near-term action is essential to stabilize the global climate.

The United States must cap its greenhouse gas emissions at current levels and steadily reduce the cap to at least 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80-95 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. A firm cap with steadily declining reduction targets will (1) help limit future warming, (2) promote long-term planning and investment in low-carbon technologies, (3) encourage strong action by other nations, and (4) facilitate steeper cuts in future years if called for by new scientific information.

Key elements in designing an effective cap-and-trade program —

- **Scope.** A comprehensive, economy-wide cap-and-trade program covering all greenhouse gases and all major sectors and emissions sources will increase certainty that critical emissions reduction targets are met. Complementary policies such as stronger energy efficiency standards, renewable energy standards and higher fuel economy standards will also be needed, but they are not a substitute for an effective cap on emissions.
- **Allocation.** Allowances should be auctioned rather than distributed free, with revenues used in the public interest, e.g., to fund efficiency measures and clean-energy technologies, invest in green-jobs training programs, cushion vulnerable households from higher energy prices, and help communities adapt to the unavoidable impacts of global warming.
- **Banking.** Allowing capped entities to hold unneeded allowances for use in future years will create incentives to make larger emissions reductions in the near term. Early action is especially important because a significant fraction of carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for thousands of years, making it all the more critical to limit cumulative emissions.
- **Borrowing.** Allowing firms to use future-year allowances to satisfy current-year obligations should be strictly limited. Regulations concerning the amount that can be borrowed, the repayment period, and the rate of interest should be designed to ensure that cumulative emissions targets are met.
- **Offsets.** Firms should be permitted to use offset credits generated by projects outside the cap-and-trade program to satisfy a small fraction of their compliance obligations. An offset program can help address emissions in sectors that don't lend themselves to a trading system, e.g., agriculture, landfills, and forestry, as well as support qualified projects in developing countries. The quantity of offsets must be limited, however, so as to maintain incentives for capped entities to invest in new technologies. Offset projects must meet rigorous standards to ensure their environmental integrity and that they achieve real, permanent reductions that go beyond what would have occurred without the incentive of the offset.

The following mechanisms would undermine the integrity of the emissions cap and should be rejected.

- **Safety valve.** Setting a ceiling on the price of allowances and permitting capped entities to purchase unlimited additional allowances once that ceiling price has been reached would slow emissions reductions and erode incentives for investments in new technologies. It would also hinder linkage with international carbon markets, which do not use safety valve mechanisms.
- **Circuit breaker.** The option of delaying the scheduled timeline for emissions reductions if the price of allowances rises above a specified level would jeopardize the environmental certainty of the cap.

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QUICK FACTS ON HEALTH CARE COSTS

- Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7,026 per capita.
- By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion.
- Between 2005 – 2006, total health spending increased 6.7 percent, more than double the rate of the 2.9 percent increase in overall economic growth.
- Total health spending remained relatively constant at about 16 percent of gross domestic product from 2003 – 2006, but is projected to increase to 19.5 percent by 2017.
- Spending for home health care increased at a faster pace from 2005 – 2006 (9.9 percent) than any other category of health spending; however, its impact is limited because it accounts overall for only 2.5 percent of total health spending.
- Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 8.5 percent from a low of 5.8 percent in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D.
- Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1 percent, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9 percent in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.
- Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, 46 cents came directly from government sources.
- Costs for program administration and the net cost of private health insurance were about 7 percent of total health spending in the U.S. in 2006 and grew 8.8 percent, a marked increase over the 3.6 percent rise in 2005.

This list (without the original endnotes) is from “A Reporter's Toolkit: Health Care Costs” (an Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit produced with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) and is reproduced here courtesy of the Alliance for Health Care. The entire toolkit can be found at http://www.allhealth.org/Publications/Cost_of_health_care/health_care_costs_toolkit.asp#keyfacts.

Janis McMillen (LWVUS Board member and LWVKS) is chair of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.

Produced by the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009

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Calendar of Events

<u>January</u>	Wednesday	6	6:00 p.m. Movie Night: <i>Iron-Jawed Angels</i> , Langdon Street Café. Celebrate the League's 90 th Anniversary with this story of the Suffragists' courage.
<u>February</u>	Sunday	14	90th Anniversary of the Founding of the League of Women Voters
	Tuesday	16	7:00 p.m. Another anniversary celebration: <i>Susan B. Anthony the Invincible</i> . The Statehouse. Come see Sally Matson as the redoubtable suffragist. Sponsored by the LWVVT and Vermont Humanities Council.
	Wednesday	17	LWVVT Legislative Day. Join League members from around the state as we observe legislative committees in action, meet with our legislators, and learn about the bills the League is following in the State House. See www.lwvofvt.org for details.