



League of Women Voters of Central Vermont

Bulletin

March 2010

A Call to Action!

This president's message is going to be a little different from what you are used to reading from me, I think. This message is a call to action. This message is a cry for help. This message is a plea.

The League of Women Voters Celebrates its 90th anniversary this year. We were formed just after our grandmothers, our brave foremothers fought and died to get women the vote. This was no easy task, it took 70 years. Yet today, we seem to take it all for granted.

Ninety years after its inception, and after many years of robust work running the national presidential debates (which we no longer do), organizing "Get Out the Vote" drives, educating people about their civic responsibilities, trying to get civics education into the schools, registering our newest citizens after their naturalization ceremonies, and studying important issues of the day and then taking positions that influence public policy, the league is losing members year after year. Our local league is down to 25 members—when at one time we had as many as 34. (The original Central VT league had 98.)

Are these issues no longer important just because we have the vote? Does our government no longer need a non-partisan organization who works on these issues? Have we worked it all out now so that everyone is an engaged voter and actually, votes?

I don't think so. The latest evidence of this is the poor showing of voters in Burlington on Town meeting Day. Twenty-three percent showed up to vote on one of the most important votes Burlington has seen in a long time - an issue that the league supports - Instant Run Off Voting. How many people showed up to vote for your school budgets or other town issues this year? In Williamstown, it seemed like fewer than 200 people came, making decisions for all of our townspeople that day.

Your local league needs you. We need your financial support and, more, your physical support. We need to you come to meetings, to show up at our events. You missed the most amazing movie last month, "Iron Jawed Angels," about the suffragist movement. Many of you also missed Sally Matson present her one woman show, "Susan B. Anthony – the Invincible," and it would have been great to see more people at the State League's Lobby Day!

I know that we are all busy. I know that these are tough times. I know that there are other groups to join, other important issues of the day. But it is hard to believe, and frankly, to accept, that the issues that your league works on, democracy and civic participation, are any less important than they were 90 years ago.

Today the LWVCEN is at risk. Your board is committed to building a strong local league here, but we can't do it alone. We need your help to keep this league vital. What issues or activities would engage you? Please come to program planning on April 21st (see p. 3), and then come to Annual meeting. Meet your fellow leaguers and guide us in the direction you want us to go. Help us make the league what it can be. Prove that we are relevant. I just can't believe, with all that is going on in the country and in our own state, that anyone can believe that the issues that the league stands for, and the work that it does, are not relevant.

Be a part of that effort, and prove our concerns for the health of LWVCEN are unwarranted.

In celebration of democracy and a strong LWV,

Nancy T. Lynch

Movie Night Scheduled for April

Our next movie night will be co-sponsored by the Kellogg-Hubbard Library and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).



Nuclear Tipping Point is a conversation with four men intimately involved in American diplomacy and national security over the last four decades. Former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn share the personal experiences that led them to write two *Wall Street Journal* op-eds, in support of a world free of nuclear weapons and the steps needed to get there. Their efforts have reframed the global debate on nuclear issues and, according to the *New York Times*, "sent waves through the global policy establishment."

The film will be followed by a facilitated discussion.

This important film will be shown on Monday, April 12, 7:00 p.m., in the Hayes Room, Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Montpelier.

Fourth Annual Quad States Leadership Conference Set for May 22, 23

Four years ago last September the Presidents of the LWV of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont met with our LWVUS Board Liaison to talk about how the League, and in particular our local Leagues could be strengthened.

We agreed that a strong League needs a strong, engaged, well-informed board, and thus the Annual Leadership Conference was born.

The conferences are not meant just for existing leadership however, but to inspire and grow the future leadership, and to inform and engage the membership as well.

The theme of this year's conference is *The League in a Changing World*. It will again be held at the Hampton Inn in Wells, ME. You can read about the details in the Spring issue of the Green Mountain Citizen and on the LWVVT website at www.lwvofvt.org. It features workshops on using social networking, alternative voting systems, and voter service in our electronic age. Knowledge and skills gained at the conference will be useful to you personally as well as in support of the League.

Our own President, Nancy Lynch, will lead the social networking workshop.

The best news is that, ***thanks to a generous gift from a member, the LWVCEN can provide a \$50 subsidy to Central Vermont attendees.***

LWVCEN
First Call to Annual Meeting

6:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 19

The Wood Room
T.W. Wood Gallery
College Street, Montpelier

Once again our Annual Meeting will be held in the gracious Wood Room at the T.W. Wood Gallery. Our usual potluck dinner will begin at 6:00, followed by the business meeting, during which we will adopt a budget for FY11 and a program for the coming year, as recommended by our membership (see Program Planning, below).

Following the business portion of the evening, our keynote speaker will be Kim Greenwood, of the VNRC, talking about the water crisis globally, nationwide and across VT, drawing heavily on news headlines.

Program Planning Scheduled

We keep singing the refrain that this is a grass-roots organization. That is because our impetus and our energy come from you.

Every year at Annual Meeting, the membership decides where we should direct our efforts for the coming year. That could be a new study, emphasis on action priorities (and what they should be), or an assessment of general health as an organization. The League call these activities “Program.”

The board makes recommendations for Program at Annual Meeting, but the ideas come from you.

On April 21, the LWVCEN board meeting will be devoted to local program planning. Please come and give us your thoughts. Or, send an e-mail to Nancy at nancyt1213@gmail.com with your suggestions for where we should put our energies next year.

Never forget that this is your organization. Make it what you want it to be.

In Memoriam

We want to take a moment to remember long-time League member Sarah (Sally) Schober, who passed away on March 1.

Sally was an active volunteer in too many organizations to list here. A member of the original League of Women Voters of Montpelier/Central Vermont, she served on the board of the LWVVT for twelve years, and was the League's liaison to the Vermont Commission on Women.

She helped with the re-establishment of the LWV in Central Vermont, and in spite of continuing health problems was an active member. She regularly attended Annual Meeting and was there when we “tabled” at public events.

Her steadfast enthusiasm and support of the League will be missed.

A memorial service will be held at Berlin Congregational Church on Saturday, April 3, at 11 a.m.

Calendar of Events

<u>April</u>	Monday	12	7:00 p.m., Movie Night: <i>Nuclear Tipping Point</i> , Hayes Room, Kellogg Hubbard Library. Co-sponsored by the Library and WILPF.
	Wednesday	21	7:00 p.m., LWVCEN Board Meeting and Program Planning . Location to be announced. Check the local League page on the state League website: www.lwvofvt.org .
<u>May</u>	Saturday	1	10:00 a.m., LWVVT Biennial Council , Wood Room, T.W. Wood Gallery, College Street, Montpelier
	Wednesday	19	6:00 p.m. LWVCEN Annual Meeting, Wood Room, T.W. Wood Gallery, College Street, Montpelier
	Sat/Sun	22, 23	Quad States Leadership Conference , Hampton Inn, Wells, ME. See www.lwvofvt.org for details.