



**SO MANY LEAGUE ACTIVITIES TO CHOOSE FROM THIS WINTER!**

## Upcoming Dates for Your Calendar

Feb 14	9 am	<b>Democracy Partnership Advocacy Day</b> State House, Augusta More info and sign up <a href="#">here</a> .
Feb 14	6:30 – 7:30 pm	<b>Book discussion: The Soul of America</b> Riverton Branch of Portland Public Library <a href="#">1600 Forest Ave.</a> Plenty of parking available in library lot.
Feb 19	7 pm	<b>Transparency Portland Meeting</b> LWVME/MCCE offices @ 565 Congress St., Portland
Mar 4	9–11 am	<b>LWVPA Board Meeting</b> LWVME/MCCE offices @ 565 Congress St., Portland
Mar 28	5:30 – 7:30 pm	<b>The “Can We?” Project Student Presentation</b> Postponed from January 24 <sup>th</sup> due to icy conditions Waynflete – Building location TBD
Apr 6–7	Sat: 9–4:30 Sun: 9–2	<b>New England States Leadership Development Conference</b> <a href="#">York County Community College (YCCC)</a> 112 College Drive, Wells, ME
Apr 11	6:30 – 7:30 pm	<b>Book discussion: There There</b> Riverton Branch of Portland Public Library 1600 Forest Ave. Plenty of parking available in library lot.

Additional information about LWVPA and LWVME activities is available on the Maine LWV [website](#) calendar.

# DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP ADVOCACY DAY: FEBRUARY 14TH

Will you join us for our Advocacy Day on February 14th? We are fighting for a constitutional amendment for RCV, ban on lobbyist contributions, automatic voter registration, and more. The morning program includes hearing from bill sponsors and a mini "how to lobby" training. We will also speak with our legislators about the importance of protecting and expanding our democracy. You will have a folder with information which includes talking points and handouts to give legislators. In the afternoon, we will have tea in the Blaine House and listen to a panel discussion on the Women's Suffrage movement. It's going to be an exciting conversation!

Please [RSVP here](#); participation in the Blaine House tea requires prior registration.

If you need a ride, carpooling is available from the Portland area; contact Ali: <[ali@mainecleanelections.org](mailto:ali@mainecleanelections.org)>

## JUST FIVE DAYS AWAY: FEBRUARY BOOK DISCUSSION THE SOUL of AMERICA

Our February discussion will be about *The Soul of America*, which has been widely discussed in the media via author interviews ([CNN](#) and [Comedy Central](#), for example). The author, John Meacham, is one of our most prominent presidential historians (biographies of Jefferson, Jackson, FDR, Wilson, and H.W. Bush); and he gave the first eulogy at the recent George H.W. Bush funeral. He was interviewed by [Judy Woodruff](#) about a variety of issues concerning presidential history, including the role of the press, which is a topic covered extensively in *Soul of America*. For those who don't have time to read through the entire book, listening to these interviews will be great preparation for joining the February 14th book discussion at the Riverton Branch of the

Portland Public Library (6:30 – 7:30 pm). Plenty of off-street parking is available.

If **planning to attend, please call 797-2915 to sign-up** so the library can be sure to allow enough space for everyone. Also, if the library is closed on the 14<sup>th</sup> due to bad weather, the “snow” date will be the following Thursday.

## REGISTER NOW FOR THE NEW ENGLAND STATES LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Dates are set for the weekend of April 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. The conference theme is Advancing Civility in a Diverse New England. It will be six states again this year: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI and VT. Maine will host the regional event, with hotel accommodations available at the Hampton Inn in Wells. The conference room is about one mile away at York County Community College. A full agenda, registration, and hotel information is available [here](#). Please register and reserve your hotel rooms soon.

Highlights for Saturday include:

- The keynote address by [Nancy Thomas, Director of Institute for Democracy and Higher Education, Tufts University](#). She will discuss what populations did not vote in the 2016 elections. Who are they? Why didn't they vote? What would motivate them to vote? What are the tangible and psychological barriers to voting? What was different in 2018?
- [Susan Clark, author of \*Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back home\*](#), will conduct a Workshop on Communicating Across the Divide: Challenges and Tools.
- A panel of experts and participant breakout sessions will then explore the question: What does diversity look like in New England? The panelists will stimulate our thinking about determinants of diversity such as economic inequality, rural/urban differences, and education or literacy levels -- factors that

often combine with the more commonly discussed issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and generational differences, resulting in a complex set of diversity factors that need to be considered when developing inclusive policies.

Sunday has a "League Action" focus aimed at applying lessons from Saturday to our Local and State League activities. Then we turn to 2020 and a discussion of celebrating the League's 100th anniversary.

## GET INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS OF MAINE'S EXPERIENCE WITH CITIZEN INITIATED LEGISLATION

Members of LWVME study committee visiting LWVMA Hamilton-Wenham Chapter to observe their CI Study Consensus Meeting on Feb 5, 2019



Most of you received a message from the LWVME Citizen Initiative (CI) Study Committee on January 17th. The message described the [scope of the state-wide study](#) and asked you to help the State Study Committee assess your interest and involvement in citizen's initiatives. The State Study Committee will send out periodic progress reports between now and June/July, when the Committee hopes to have a full set of study materials and consensus questions ready for local

unit consensus meetings. For those of you new to the League, the CI consensus meetings will assess member views on the types of advocacy the LWVME should undertake when legislation is proposed to change Maine's CI laws.

In an effort to help LWVPA members prepare for these consensus meetings and to ensure broad participation, the Portland Area Board would like to start an informal CI study group. The plan is to get together once a month to build and share CI knowledge among participants in advance of the consensus meetings. We would use the meetings to discuss the League study process, review readings recommended by the Study Committee (including draft sections of their report when available) and become better informed on the general topic before the consensus meetings. During the recent past, the LWVME has been involved in CI campaigns to promote Clean Elections and Ranked-Choice Voting, so developing a position to guide League advocacy on this topic would be of interest to all of you who care about these issues. Please email [Peg Balano](mailto:Peg.Balano@lwvme.org) if you would like to join this CI Study Group. Once we get an idea about interest, we will work on a location and schedule.

## **MAINE CITIZENS FOR CLEAN ELECTIONS / TRANSPARENCY PORTLAND MEETING**

Transparency Portland supported Question 2 on the Portland Municipal ballot during the last election, calling for greater disclosure of donor funding in city elections. They continue to meet and invite those interested in money in politics and democracy issues on the local level to join them. Next meeting is Tuesday, February 19th at 7 pm at the LWVME/MCCE office.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION UPDATE**



Our first Naturalization Ceremony this year was at the King Middle School in Portland on January 18, where 46 new citizens were welcomed from 31 countries. We registered 24 new voters following their ceremony. The guest speaker was our new Governor, Janet Mills.

A reminder to those who arrange spring voter registration events at local high schools and colleges – please reach out to your school contacts now to schedule a League Voter Drive in March or April. For questions or to offer help, contact our PA voter drive coordinator this year, Ali Cleveland, at [ali@mainecleanelections.org](mailto:ali@mainecleanelections.org).

If you have thoughts or suggestions on how to increase voter registration and Get Out the Vote efforts, please contact Peg Balano at [volunteer@lwvme.org](mailto:volunteer@lwvme.org).

## ENHANCE YOUR LEAGUE EXPERIENCE

Thanks to all our volunteers for helping with our various programs. Here are some of our needs to fill. We mentor and coach all volunteers!

- Coordinate and manage Voter Registration Drives that are not USCIS Naturalization Ceremonies.
- Organize events and programs with others.
- Help on a brochure committee and with other marketing messages.

Contact [Barbara Kaufman](#) or [Peg Balano](#) if you can lend a hand.

Also, our civic education program for 7th graders is looking for volunteers to help deliver the civic presentations that have been developed this past year. The curriculum is designed to motivate young people to be change makers. It uses stories of Maine youth who rose up to address problems in their communities and became well known around the state and the country. The goal of the curriculum is to inspire a new generation of leaders, regardless of their age. If you like working with middle-schoolers, this is a great opportunity. We would also like suggestions for schools that might want to participate. For more information about the program and how you can get involved, please reach out to Lado Lodoka at [lado@mainecleanelections.org](mailto:lado@mainecleanelections.org).

**Join Us!** If you are not already a member of the League, we need your help now to carry out our mission and to strengthen our democracy. [Please join us.](#)