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For Immediate Release:

Voting Initiative by LV-Bangor Renders Unexpected Results

BANGOR —

Two Literacy Volunteers of Bangor adult civic seminars in democracy, citizen rights, and civic responsibility offer an unexpected bonus for the greater Bangor community — extra copies of *The Easy to Read Voter Guide!* The publication explains the election process for first-time voters, presents party platforms, states the candidates' positions, and simplifies those ever-confusing ballot questions and bond issues to a third-grade level. The larger print is optimal for the “over-45” crowd with poor eyesight, and the complex ballot questions and bond issues are made “elementary” for those established voters seeking bottom-line clarification.

With LV-Bangor input, Literacy Volunteers of Maine and the League of Women Voters developed the *Easy to Read Voter Guide*. The publication was used in LV-Bangor's two “Volunteers Optimizing Increased Civic Engagement” [VOICE] programs which taught U. S. civics to our adult basic literacy students and English language learners in order to educate and encourage informed participation in the electoral process.

At the recent October board meeting of LV-Bangor, current board president Dick Madore praised former board president Ben Smith on his initiative that envisioned the application of this publication for adults with low literacy. One board member stated that it was the first time she understood the ballot questions so clearly! Extra copies — while they last — of the *Easy to Read Voter Guide* are available at local libraries, adult education sites, Republican and Democratic Headquarters in Bangor, and Manna Ministries. Copies may also be downloaded at www.lvmaine.org and received by calling (800) 322-5455. “We’re grateful to Camden National Bank and The Brain Foundation for underwriting VOICE programming which uses this remarkable publication in order to foster a more thoughtful electorate,” says Ben Smith.

Collaborating on this successful local VOICE project are civic teachers Jim Smith and Jamie Cooke as well as UMaine intern Mark Stanley. LV-Bangor's leadership on this initiative is in keeping with its history as it was the *very first* Literacy Volunteers organization outside its home state of New York. It will celebrate 40 years of building a more literate population in the greater Bangor area at its Annual Recognition Night to be held at Husson University in June 2009. Says Madore, “Ben Smith has initiated a lasting civic precedent for our organization and we will do our best to replicate it every four years!”