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March 2010

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VOTER is published
ten times each year.
Copy for the next
edition will be due
Friday, 3/05/09.

The American Association of University Women, Buffalo Branch and
Friends of the Women's Rights National Park, Buffalo/Niagara Chapter
present

**The Ninth Annual International Women's Day Celebration and
Discussion:**

The Status of Women in North America

Co-sponsored by The League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara
These speakers will describe the current state of women in their countries.

Marta Moszczenska, Consul General of Canada

Myrna Young, Everywoman's Opportunity Center, Buffalo, NY

Jose Buscaglia, UB Professor, Speaker on Mexico

Gala Brunch

Saturday, March 6, 2010 at 11:00 AM

Samuel's Grande Manor

8750 Main Street, Clarence, New York

The meeting is open to the public; we encourage you to bring friends .

Cost: \$25/person. Write checks payable to AAUW Buffalo Branch
Make Reservations with Lillis McLean

Send reservations and checks to Lillis at 366 Victoria Blvd
Kenmore, NY 14217

Send Lillis the name and phone number of everyone whose reservation is covered by
the check also. She needs your reservation by March 1, 2010.

League of Women Voters Mission:

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages
informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of
major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and
advocacy.

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On February 14, 2010, the League observed its 90th birthday!

President's Message

LWVB/N members had a lively discussion concerning LWVUS program for the next biennium. Those in attendance voted to support the proposed new study of the Role of the Federal Government in Education as presented by Lee Tetkowski. We will recommend that the Environment be a priority, especially the clean up of hazardous waste landfill sites as recommended by Amy Witryol. Kristen Allen proposed making the issue of public transportation a priority, especially the building of high speed rail lines. Ellen Neumaier suggested that the Low Carbon Diet be used as a method of educating people about Global Warming and Climate Change. These program suggestions will be submitted to LWVUS.

LWVB/N will be participating in the Government Consolidation Study. Watch for information on this issue in the VOTER. The consensus meetings will be held on April 14th.

One of the highlights of spring 2010 will be the League's 90th Birthday Celebration. We are planning a gala birthday event to be held in conjunction with our annual meeting on June 5, 2010, at Michael's Banquet Center on Route 20 in Hamburg. Save the date and join us as we honor the League and local citizens who are Making Democracy Work.

The nominating committee is seeking candidates to fill several LWVB/N board positions. We will elect a 2nd vice president (state issues & action), 3rd vice president (national issues & action), treasurer and four directors (development, membership, voters service & local issues & action.) Please contact any member of the nominating committee if you are willing to serve in one of these positions or have another League member to suggest: Kristin Allen, chair, Judy Clarke, Janet Goodsell, Judy Huber, Sandra O'Hara, Lynda Stephens, Judy Weidemann at events@lwvbn.org

Margaret Brunson, Co-President

Coming Events

LWVNYS "Spring Fling in New York City" will be May 15th.

The National Convention will be June 11-15, 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia at the Marriott Atlanta Marquis. The room rate is \$205.85 including tax. You may make your hotel reservation online at www.lwvus.org. More information about the convention program and activities will be posted on the web site as it becomes available. If you would like to attend the convention please call Janet at the League office (884-3550).

Local Program proposals will be discussed at the February and March meetings of the Issues Committee and the Proposed Local Program for 2010-2011 will be decided at the April board meeting and sent to all members in the Annual Meeting packet. You may make suggestions for changes in our local program by contacting any committee chair, either co-president or by calling the League office.

PLEASE – Check your information in the LWVB/N Membership Directory. If your contact information has changed or is listed incorrectly please let me know and I will make the change on our records.

Margaret Brunson – events@lwvbn.org.

Great Decisions

ACHTUNG! Word I borrowed from my German heritage whenever I needed to call for special attention. The topic for our Great Decisions meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2010 to be discussed from 10 AM - noon at 1272 Delaware is OUT OF USUAL ORDER. It will be #5 THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS EFFECTS led by Joan Photiadis. "The global financial crisis that began in late 2007 revealed major deficiencies in the regulation of markets and institutions-all of which came perilously close to collapse. Emergency measures to prevent a full collapse of the global financial system have led to mixed results. How will governments and the world community respond to this challenge?" We welcome your ideas. If you have any questions, please call *Bernice Baeumler* at events@lwvbn.org.

Volunteer Opportunities with the BMHA Elections Project

The League has entered into a new three-year contract with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) to conduct elections for the Tenant Councils in over 20 housing developments as well as the bi-annual citywide election of the two Tenant Commissioners who serve on the BMHA Board of Directors.

This year there will be a Tenant Commissioners' Election in June. Volunteers are needed for sorting the mail-in ballots and tabulating votes. There is a core of faithful workers who turn out for these tasks, but we can always add more to the team. It is a great "hands-on" project and a way for newer members to get involved. Sorting the returned ballots will be done on June 9 & 10. Tabulating the votes will be on June 11.

There is a continuing need during the year for volunteers to conduct on-site elections for the Tenant Councils, and to help Council officers with their By-Laws. This is a good opportunity to see the election process at the grassroots. Both of these activities are very important to the League and to the BMHA residents.

Please contact *Kathleen McCarthy*, Election Services Coordinator, events@lwvbn.org

They Represent You 2010

THEY REPRESENT YOU 2010, our citizens' guides to elected officials in Erie and Niagara counties, have been printed and distributed to libraries, city, town and village offices, our donors, elected officials and organizations. They are also available on our web site, www.lwvbn.org. A special thank you to Marie Hanrahan, Beth Kauffman, Joan Sillman, Francine Valvo who tracked down missing information, to Barbara Kloberdanz who did the proofing, and finally to Marion Fay, Ramona Gallagher, Marge Gardner, Marlene Katzel, Kathleen McCormick, Jo Ann Mecca, Beth Kauffman and Barbara Kloberdanz who came to the League office on a snowy February day to count, bundle, mail and deliver packets of the brochures. "Our volunteers make the work of the League possible". We are truly grateful.

Janet Massaro and Sandra O'Hara, Editors

Natural Resources Spring Program!

Watch for the date and be sure to attend another of our famous spring programs! This one entitled "The Greening of Daemen" is with the Daemen College Natural Sciences Chair, Dr. Brenda Young. Our program will feature a tour of the Research and Information Commons, their new LEED green building, a great luncheon and a stroll along the fascinating quarter-mile Ecotrail created by the students from what was initially a ditch. We will see the Rain Garden, a natural garden patch that helps absorb water from surrounding lawns and parking areas.

Climate Change Tip for March

Take your Tops reusable bags back to the store and get a chance for \$25 worth of groceries. I keep asking if it is effective and they say it is--but usually I don't see many people with reusable bags, but the trend is growing. It is a good idea: encourage your store to do it too!

Ellen Neumaier, Chair, Natural Resources Committee

Lenore Banks will represent the state League at the New York State Prisoner Justice Conference: Connecting Regions, Issues, and Strategies in Albany on March 27, 2010. The goal of the conference is to bring together under one roof a wide range of New York State organizations working on a diversity of prisoner justice issues to share ideas, information, energy, strategies, hope, and inspiration.

A growing coalition of organizations involved in a range of prisoner justice issues is planning this event that the League will find valuable, given its longstanding interest in justice issues such as public defense reform, Rockefeller Drug Law reform, enfranchisement for those with convictions, and others.

Consolidation in Western New York

In order to gain further insights for the state study on consolidations and shared services (see the last *Voter*), Local Government Committee members Anne Huberman, Janet Massaro, Dot Brown, and Arlene Miles traveled on February 4 to Brighton, NY, to attend a forum sponsored by the Rochester/Metro League of Women Voters. The speaker was Charles Zetteck, Jr., Vice President and Director of Government Management Services at the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). As a nonprofit, independent, non-partisan agency founded in 1915 by George Eastman, CGR's goal is to inform and empower citizens. In the last three years, the agency has done twelve consolidation/dissolution studies to help communities gauge the consequences of structural change and has observed the dynamics of communities struggling to reach decisions on that change. Mr. Zetteck presented case studies of Albion, Seneca Falls and Batavia.

Mr. Zetteck began by suggesting that if we were to start over now, no one would design the 4,720 local government entities now existing in New York State. The assumptions people generally make are that fewer governments lead to greater efficiencies which lead to cost savings which lead to lower taxes. Studies of other states with fewer governments appear to bear this out. However, he pointed out that there are three major conceptual problems in New York. 1. No one has designed a model for the most efficient form of government. The destination of change is not well defined. 2. Efficiency and cost savings are not the same. There are some simple ways to cut costs that don't involve efficiency, like cutting salaries, but people generally don't want to change large cost factors. 3. Decisions to change involve both head and heart. Even the largest tax cuts won't necessarily convince people to give up what they have.

To move ahead, voters need to approve change. Mr. Zetteck feels that the savings that can be realized from consolidations/dissolutions are much greater than those that can come from shared services alone. He also said that cost savings are just the tip of the iceberg. Consolidations/dissolutions, he feels, lead to better decision-making. Whenever land use decisions and other decisions are made for broader areas, they tend to make more sense.

As an example of a benefit of consolidation other than simple tax savings, Mr. Zetteck described an experience with the City of Batavia, which is surrounded by the Town of Batavia. When developers wanted to build a large shopping center in the city, they were refused permission because the city wanted to protect its recently revitalized downtown shopping area. The developers then got permission from the Town of Batavia to build the center just beyond the city boundary. Since the town was not required to consider how this might hurt the city, it simply acted in its own self-interest. If the town and city had consolidated, this land use decision could have been made with the best interests of the whole area in mind.

The new law, *The New N.Y. Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act*, will take effect in March. This law will allow citizens to petition to start the process of potential consolidation/dissolution, and Mr. Zetteck expects this to cause a flurry of activity. He pointed out that there are many circumstances not covered by the law, and he thinks that the legislature will probably act quickly to make changes that will support actions communities suggest to make consolidations/dissolutions easier or more effective.

Some lessons learned: 1. All communities have unique issues. 2. Whether the starting point is friendly or hostile can make a big difference in the outcome. He advocates a friendly start, with potential petitioners and board members working together. 3. There's a very wide range of size and complexity among the communities considering change.

One major criticism of village dissolutions is that they usually result in the formation of several special districts. Mr. Zetteck explained that special districts have two forms. One, like many fire districts, has its own elected commissioners and sets its own budget. The other is simply a special tax district, overseen by the local government board, designed to tax only the users of a particular service. Mr. Zetteck feels that special districts formed without commissioners (like those resulting from most dissolutions) simply make taxing more fair and are not part of the general problem.

Mr. Zetteck believes that the state incentives for consolidations and dissolutions are very important because they encourage change and the development models. He hopes that a few larger communities will work through all of the complications of a consolidation so that they can be examples for others to follow.

Anne Huberman, Local Government Committee

Contributors to LWVBN, 2009 - January 2010

We sincerely thank all League members who have contributed to the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. The people named here contributed to our League in 2009 through January 2010. They responded to the request on our membership registration form, memorial requests and to the All Member Finance Drive. Your donations are essential to the work of LWVBN to fulfill our mission.

Kristin Allen	Phyllis Goldstein	Valerie Moliterno
Agnes Annis	Janet Goodsell	Ellen Neumaier
Bernice Baeumler	Jean Gooding-Caldwell	Margery Nobel
Phyllis Banas	Paul Guenther	Robert North Jr.
Deborah Billoni	Ruth Haines	Kathleen O'Connor-Mullen
Mary Bisson	Joan Herold	Bedros Odian
Cahtleen Bowen	Karen Hopkins	Janice Olszowka
Joan Bozer	Laura Houghtaling	Terri Parks
Belmore Bridgford	Jean Hubbard	Joan Photiadis
Margaret Brunson	Judy M. Huber	Ellen E. Pine
Martha Cary	Anne Huberman	Marjorie Plumb
Frederica Cheek	Maxine Insera	Elizabeth Quinn
Judith Clarke	Maxine K. Johnson	Gail Radford
Sandra Chelnov	Marlene Katzel	Clarine Radt
Delight Dann	Marilee Keller	Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney
Susan M. Davis	Judith Kieffer	JoAnn Ross
Marian Deutschman	Maryellen Kloss	Janet Sciolino
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Allene Falk	Maria Martens	Agnes Tufariello
Marion S. Fay	Janet Massaro	Lynne Vallone
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Mary Flickinger	Laura McDade	Dorothy Westhafer
Patricia Fraser	JoAnn Mecca	Jean Wholahan
Ramona Gallagher	Judith Metzger	Catherine Williams
Marjorie Gardner	Sarah Metzger	Karen A. Willyoung
Teresa Gessner	Lois M. Meyer	Amy Witryol
Ellen Gibson	Arlene Miles	Maire Zakrzewski
	Sandra A. Miller	

We have received donations in memory of Margaret Klayman and Margit Spector.

Voter Service

Kathleen McCarthy and Ramona Gallagher represented LWVBN at the New Citizens Ceremony at the Wilcox Mansion on February 15, 2010. Thank you for introducing the new citizens to the process for registering to vote and to our fine organization.

Consolidating Local Government Consensus Meetings

The consensus meetings for the LWVNYS study will be held on April 14, 2010 as follows:

11:30 a.m. at the League Office (Please take a bag lunch with you.) or

7:00 p.m. at the Harlem Road Community Center.

The April VOTER will have the details and consensus questions.

Lunch & Issues

Friday, March 19, 2010 at 11:30 a.m.

Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant
6999 Maple Road, Amherst, NY

Guest Speaker: Barbara S. Nuchereno,
an attorney, a first term Amherst Town Board
member and the only woman on the board

Cost for your full lunch: **\$15.00**
Write checks payable to LWVBN.

For reservations, contact Sally Metzger or
Arlene Miles at events@lwvbn.org.

Lunch and Learn

Friday, March 12, 2010 at 11:30 a.m.
Location and cost of lunch to be announced

**Guest Speaker: Assemblywoman
Jane Corwin**

We especially invite her constituents from other
towns in her district.

For reservations, contact Barbara Kautz at
events@lwvbn.org.

Amherst Unit News

Our observer corps in Amherst is working quite well. We have a group of from 8 to 10 women, who have agreed to attend some afternoon meetings of our Town Board. We attend the government meetings twice a month on the Monday afternoons that do not precede the evening public meetings. These are meetings where various issues are discussed by the Board that are not necessarily on the Public Evening Meeting agendas, and there are also often interesting reports from town employees. These meetings are open to the public, of course, and we try to make the League's presence known by wearing League buttons. The observers send me a short report after each session, and I also keep a file of clippings from the Buffalo News and the Amherst Bee. There are excellent reporters from both papers and they are both aware that the League is attending meetings and reading their newspaper articles as well.

Joyce Zobel, Amherst Unit

Clarence Unit News

The Clarence Unit and the Chamber of Commerce cosponsored the meeting at which Town Supervisor Scott Bylewski delivered his annual State of the Town address.

As guest of the Clarence School Board, Diane Showalter represented us at the Erie County Association of School Boards' legislative breakfast.

Town Justice Michael Powers spoke at Lunch and Learn about the Clarence Drug Court, which was created about a year ago.

Our 2009 Finance Drive closed with a total of \$540 donated from people in the community.

Allene Falk, Clarence Unit



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
www.lwv.org

Save June 5, 2010

*for the LWVBN Annual Meeting and
Celebration of 90 years of the League of
Women Voters. Your official invitation
will be in the April Voter.*

The League of Women Voters Celebrates its first Ten Years

In 1930, members of state and local Leagues in 45 states participated in celebrations marking the birth of the League of Women Voters. At that time, many of the early pioneers in the suffrage movement were still active and took part in various programs nationwide.

Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, Miss Belle Sherwin and Miss Catherine Ludington spoke on a radio hookup from a New York City Luncheon. The radio hookup allowed them to speak to League members nationwide, sharing their memories of the struggle for the ballot and encouraging members to look to their future role in government issues and studies.

Local Western New York events were covered extensively in the Buffalo News and the Courier Express. Mrs. Bruce Wright, Chairman of the Erie County League at the time, and Mrs. Melvin Porter, a past League chair, represented the Erie County League at numerous luncheons and conferences held locally and throughout the state and nation.

As we look back, through our history/archives project, we can follow these early activities and see their relationship to the present work of the League of Women Voters locally and nationally.

Marie Hanrahan, Historian

Membership dues and contributions to the LWV are not deductible as a personal or business expense for tax purposes.

JOIN

CUT OUT AND MAIL TODAY

Make check payable to **LWVB/N** and send to **LWVB/N, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209-2401 (Attn: Membership Chair, Judy Weidemann)**

- \$62 Individual (Basic Membership)
- \$75 Carrie Chapman Catt Membership
- \$90 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership
- \$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership
- Enclosed is my additional contribution of \$_____
- \$95 Household
(2 members living at the same address)
- \$30 Student membership

Unit Affiliation
(optional)

Amherst
 Buffalo Metro
 Clarence

Name (s) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ e-mail _____

Please send me the LWVB/N VOTER via email.

This includes local, state and national League dues.

Membership

If you change your email address, please send an email notifying us of the change from your new email address to: lwvbn@lwvbn.org. We need this notification to reach you by email with the latest news, advocacy requests, and information.

Elsa Bondar, LWVB/N Grassroots Coordinator

If you're willing to receive your VOTER by e-mail, please send a request to me at events@lwvbn.org. You will help the environment, save printing and postage costs, and learn about upcoming events at least a week earlier than folks who receive the printed copy.

Terri Parks, VOTER Editor

Welcome to New Members: Michael Billoni, Grand Island
 Lois Dabney, Buffalo
 Beverly Gallagher, East Aurora
 Mary Ellen Marlette, Amherst
 Emily Paulson, Amherst



In Memory of Margit Spector

Thank you to those who responded to Margit's request to honor her memory with a contribution to our League. To others who may still want to do so, it is not too late to be included. Please send your contribution the LWVBN Office, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209.

We're saddened to report the deaths this winter of Norma Klayman and Joan Dosch, long time League members.

Message from JoAnn Ross

This is to inform you that I have resigned from my NYS League of Women Voters board position effective February 1, 2010. My husband has been assigned to work in Baltimore where I intend to join him. I will remain a member of the Buffalo/Niagara League and will also continue to work with the NYS League in a consultative capacity, when needed, in the finalization of projects that I have started.

I appreciate the opportunities given me as a board member and have enjoyed working with all of the New York State local leagues in the area of Civic Education and Youth programs.

In League, JoAnn Ross

Our Coffee Project has contributed \$84.00 to LWVBN. The nice profit on each order helps build the League treasury, and helps small farmers in developing countries earn their fair share from coffee sales. Of course, you will enjoy a delicious cup of coffee or make a gift recipient very happy with each purchase.

Contact Ann Shub at events@lwvbn.org.

MARCH 2010						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2/28	1 BOARD MEETING 4:30 p.m.	2	3	4 GREAT DECISIONS Page 2	5	6 INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY CELEBRATION Page 1
7	8	9	10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1:15 p.m.	11 NATURAL RESOURCES 9:30 a.m.	12 LUNCH & LEARN Page 6	13
14	15	16	17	18 CHARTER SCHOOLS 1:30 p.m.	19 LUNCH & ISSUES Page 6	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 ISSUES COMMITTEE 4:30 p.m.	31			