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eleven times this
year. The May
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Friday, April 8, 2011.

Join us at a forum,
"Redistricting -- What Does It Mean To You?"
The forum features the League of Women Voters'
Power Point Presentation on Redistricting
and will be presented at the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo
at the corner of Elmwood and West Ferry Streets,
Buffalo, NY 14222
on
Sunday, April 3, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.
In addition the Commissioners of the Erie County Board of Elections are
expected to participate and discuss what is happening at the County
level.
This forum is FREE and Open To The Public.
Please come and bring friends.
Image: American flag and Constitution

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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## President's Message

Spring is here! The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara has planned interesting and informative programs for you and the community in the next few weeks. The redistricting committee is taking their PowerPoint presentation out to the community. The natural resources committee recently presented the movie GASLAND, a documentary on natural gas drilling and "fracking" at the Palace Theatre in Hamburg. The education committee's program on the role of the federal government in public education was well attended and very well received. We may also be called upon to moderate a candidate's debate for the Special Election for the 26<sup>th</sup> District's Congressional Seat vacated by Christopher Lee. We also look forward to our LWVB/N annual meeting on June 11, 2011.

The issues committee will be reviewing and updating our local program at their next meeting on March 29, 2011. Any League member wishing to present a new program item or update an existing program item, please submit your proposals by email to Loretta Peszynski – email: [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org) or the LWVB/N office: [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) Subject: Attention Loretta/Program.

Our local League will be participating in the League's Membership Recruitment Initiative. Our membership chairman, Judy Huber will participate in conference calls and possibly attend a workshop for this important project.

The LWNYS Convention is coming soon. Convention registration is due by April 7. We have selected six delegates and have heard from three more members who are thinking about attending. We have been allotted nine delegates, so if you are interested you must act NOW – put your name on the list for consideration at the April 4, 2011 board meeting. Remember, you may attend convention on your own if you are not selected as a LWVB/N delegate. You might be able to represent another local League.

I have submitted nominations for NYS League Awards in Fund-raising, Citizen Engagement, Visibility and Thinking Out of The Box. Our LWVB/N Voter is automatically entered in the newsletter award contest. I think we have a chance to come away with at least one award this year.

You will receive a packet of Big League Raffle Tickets in the mail soon. This is a NY State League fundraiser. The winning ticket will be drawn at the state convention in Albany.

Our local LWVB/N Fund Drive will take place in mid-April. You will be receiving a letter in the mail – please be generous – your support is greatly appreciated.

### **The League of Women Voters of New York State Convention**

MAY 20-22, 2011 AT THE DESMOND HOTEL IN ALBANY, NY

If you would like to attend the state convention please let me know by Saturday, April 2.

Contact the League office 884-3550 or e-mail [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org)

The details and registration materials are available at [www.LWVNY.org](http://www.LWVNY.org)

*Margaret Brunson, Co-president LWVB/N*

### **Great Decisions**

*Rebuilding Haiti* will be the first topic to be discussed for Great Decisions 2011 on Thursday, April 7, 2011, at 1272 Delaware from 10 AM-noon. The facilitator will be Bernice Baeumler. "The January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti struck a country already suffering from widespread poverty and underdevelopment. Did this natural disaster inadvertently provide an opportunity for reassessment and planning for a new Haiti? With presidential elections looming in early 2011, what can new leadership bring to restore the country?" What do you think?

*Bernice Baeumler* [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org)

## League Urges Redistricting Commission to Adopt Transparency Procedures

Citing the National League's statement of redistricting principles and the State League's support of Assembly bill 3432 and Senate Bill 2543, LWVBN appealed to the newly formed Erie County Advisory Commission (CAC) on Redistricting to adopt measures to ensure a redistricting process that is open and transparent to the public.

The Commissioners face a formidable challenge. In Erie County they must draw new district boundaries as they downsize the Erie County Legislature from 15 to 11 districts. The plans need to be approved before nominating petitions are circulated in early summer in time for the 2011 November General Election. (Facing the same November election deadlines are Niagara County, also downsizing their legislature from 19 to 15 members, and the City of Buffalo.) We will be following the proceedings closely.

### Our recommendations on transparency to the Commissioners are as follows:

Conduct CAC meetings and public hearings in diverse geographical locations in the county.  
 Conduct public hearings both before and after the maps are drawn to solicit public comment.  
 Provide prominent and adequate notice of times and locations of all meetings and hearings in the news media and on a public Internet site established for this purpose.

The Web site must be updated continuously and include the following:

- All necessary demographic and political data used in mapmaking
- Detailed maps reflecting new demographic and political data
- Information on software being used by the CAC and software the public can use to submit their own maps and make comments
- Summary reports of all CAC meetings and hearings
- State the criteria that the CAC will follow and in which order



Prior to adoption of the final plan, a detailed version of the plan, its reasoning for how and why the lines were drawn, as well as any dissenting statements, shall be made available to the public with adequate time for review and comment.

*Janet Massaro*, Redistricting Committee

## Erie County Advisory Commission Meetings and Public Hearings

Date	Day	Time		Location
April 5	Tuesday	10:30 a.m.	CAC Meeting	Chamber of the Erie County Legislature, 4th Floor 92 Franklin Street, Buffalo, 14202
April 12	Tuesday	5-7:30 p.m.	Public Hearing	ECC City Campus Auditorium, 121 Ellicott Street. Buffalo 14203
April 13	Wednesday	5-7:30 p.m.	Public Hearing	EEE North Campus, Kittinger Hall (K Bldg.), Room 100, 6205 Main Street, Williamsville, 14221 Enter off Youngs Road or Wehrle Drive.
April 14	Thursday	5-7:30 p.m.	Public Hearing	ECC South Campus Auditorium (Bldg.5) 4041 Southwestern Boulevard, Orchard Park, 14127
April 19	Tuesday	10:30 a.m.	CAC Meeting	Chamber of the Erie County Legislature, 92 Franklin Street, Buffalo, 14202, 4th Floor

A link to the Redistricting Commission web site titled *Erie County Legislature Committee on Reapportionment* that posts their meetings, public hearings and the names of all Commissioners, as well as League of Woman Voters statements and PowerPoint Presentation are available on our Web site, [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org).

## Voter Services

### Naturalization Participation:



Thanks to Jean Flowers for recruiting the representatives for the naturalization services at the Federal Court for the spring, March 3rd - Arlene Miles and Joyce Bol and April 7th - Sandra O'Hara and Judy Weidemann. We also thank JoAnn Mecca for obtaining volunteers for the fall term.

### Possible Debate for the 26th Congressional District:

The Congressional seat for the 26th District, formerly held by Chris Lee, will need a special election, which was recently set by Governor Cuomo for May 24th. The Downtown YWCA has asked the League to think about having a debate between the Republican and Democratic candidates. This debate would be held either in Clarence or Amherst. The League is in the process of making a decision regarding the possibility and feasibility of such a debate.

*Joyce H. Bol* Voter Services Chair

## Call to Action

What happens ONCE every ten years and affects the way our government operates EVERY DAY of the next ten years? If you're a member of the League of Women Voters, your answer is "redistricting", or maybe "reapportionment". The design of legislative districts as a result of recent census figures has a profound effect on the quality of government at all levels for all citizens. As is only human, our elected officials would prefer to choose the voters in their districts to benefit their own agendas. This careful district design has resulted in one district shaped like "Abraham Lincoln riding a vacuum cleaner", according to Blair Horner of NYPIRG. The League has taken the position that we must have redistricting commissions or committees that are independent of political considerations, in order to restore integrity in our governance.

As a member of the LWVBN Redistricting committee, I plan to get the League's message to our local New York State Assemblymen and Senators with your help. Officials respond best to their own constituents, so I need a few League members who are willing to write, call, or visit their New York State Assembly and Senate representatives to make the case that the formation of an Independent Redistricting Commission is critical to effective governance of New York State. If you are willing to help, I'll direct you to all the talking points. Please contact me [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org). Thank you!

*Janet Goodsell*

## Lunch & Learn

**11:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 13, 2011 in the conference room,  
Clarence Senior High School,  
9625 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031**

Dr. Thomas Coseo will reflect on his many years as an educator, twenty of them as superintendent of the Clarence Schools, at a luncheon sponsored by the Clarence Unit of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. Dr. Coseo will discuss the ranking of American and Clarence students on a recent international test. He will also describe how State cutback of funding will affect the Clarence schools.

The cost for the catered lunch will be \$13.

Make your reservation by April 8 by contacting Barbara Kautz, [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org)

*Allene Falk*, Clarence Unit Coordinator

## Spring Shoreline Sweep

Can you help pick up trash on scenic north Squaw Island in the Niagara River Saturday, April 16, from 9:00 a.m. until noon? We will again be working under the auspices of the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. All League of Women Voters and friends are welcome. Reply by email or phone to tell us you can come, so we have enough supplies. This is a site worth seeing with its fishermen's pier and the rushing Niagara.

Bring gloves, hat or sunglasses, jacket, sunscreen, water and maybe a camera. There are no restrooms.

We drive into the Squaw Island Park from Niagara Street in Buffalo on the ramp-like entrance next to 1726 Niagara Street. It's a short block north of the Niagara St./Scajaguada intersection. The entrance has a large billboard and a small park sign. From the park entrance, cross the bridge spanning the Black Rock Canal. (Make sure that no one is already on the bridge as it has only one lane.) Then drive straight ahead (west) to the river. Turn right under the International Railroad Bridge and drive to the end of the road where we will start our work.

If you can you come, call Sally Metzger by email her: [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org).

If you live in Amherst, Clarence or the South towns you may prefer to work at a site closer to home. Contact Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, 852-7483, <http://bnriverkeeper.org/get-involved/cleanups/> for other sites.



*Sally Metzger*

## Membership News



Dear League Members,

Our League membership year is July 1 through June 30. However, we welcome new members at any time of the year. If you join the League at this time, your membership will be paid through June 2012. Renewal notices are given out at the Annual Meeting in June and mailed to members who are not in attendance.

Beginning in November, I called members who had not renewed and appreciate that many of you sent your renewals. If you aren't sure that your membership is up to date, please contact the League Office, 884-8550 or by e-mail: [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org).

I look forward to meeting you at one of our many League events.

*Judy Huber, Membership Chair*

**Reminder:** Please notify the League Office, [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) if you change your e-mail address, Grassroots Lobby Coordinator, Elsa Bondar, [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org) and also Terri Parks, [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org) you receive your VOTER electronically.

### In Memoriam

We sadly report the recent deaths of two special League members.

**Lou Lester** joined the League of Women Voters in 1945. She was a Lifetime member and served as president of the Hamburg League. Lou was also active as a leader in her church and other civic groups. She was 98 years old.

**Bedros (Pete) Odien** was a great supporter of the League for many years. He also worked as an election inspector with Janet Massaro who remembers him as "a funny man who loved to talk to people, tell stories and dearly loved this country because of its freedom and democracy."

<b>April 2011</b>
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<b>SUN</b>	<b>MON</b>	<b>TUE</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THU</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>SAT</b>
3/27	3/28	3/29 <b>ISSUES COMMITTEE 4:30 P.M.</b>	3/30	3/31	1	2
3 <b>REDISTRICTING FORUM Page 1</b>	4 <b>BOARD MEETING 4:30 p.m.</b>	5	6	7. <b>GREAT DECISIONS Page 2</b>	8 <b>VOTER COPY DUE</b>	9
10	11	12	13 <b>LUNCH &amp; LEARN Page 4 TRANSPORTATION 10:00 a.m. LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1:15 p.m.</b>	14 <b>NATURAL RESOURCES 9:30 a.m.</b>	15	16 <b>SPRING SHORELINE SWEEP Page 5</b>
17	18	19	20	21 <b>EDUCATION COMMITTEE 1:30 p.m.</b>	22	23
24	25	26 <b>ISSUES COMMITTEE 4:30 p.m.</b>	27	28	29	30