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VOTER is published
eleven times this
year. February
Voter copy is due
Friday, January 7,
2011.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara presents
A Community Forum on Public Education

RACE TO THE TOP: HOPE OR FLOP?

What role should the federal government have in public education?

Co-sponsored by

Buffalo State College and the American Association of University Women

January 20, 2011 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

WNED Studios, Horizons Plaza, Buffalo, NY

Keynote Speaker: Paul Theobald

Interim Dean of the School of Education, Buffalo State College
Author of Education Now: How Rethinking America's Past Can Change
Its Future, 2010 Critics' Choice Award from the American Educational
Studies Association

Panelists: **Donald Ogilvie**, District Superintendent Erie 1 BOCES
Claity Massey, Director of King Center Charter School
Sam Radford, Vice President of Buffalo Schools District
Parent Coordinating Council
Mike Preskop, Regional Staff Director NYSUT

Moderator: **Marian Deutschman**, Professor of Communications,
Buffalo State College

Discussion will follow. The Public is invited. **Snow date: January 27**

See page 3 for more details and information about car-pooling.

League of Women Voters Mission: 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

December was a very eventful month. Unfortunately we had to cancel the board meeting due to bad weather. I hope everyone had a very happy holiday season with family and friends.

LWVB/N Secretary Judy Clarke has resigned. She will finalize the minutes from the November board meeting. We will miss her.

Our Nominating Committee is hard at work and the Budget Committee will be starting the task of preparing a budget for 2011-2012 very soon.

We have been very frugal this past year and we have worked very hard on some new fund-raising projects to help us bolster our finances. Thank you to everyone who bought Macy's shopping passes in the fall. We would also like to thank all of the League members who volunteered for the Eastern Hills gift-wrap program during December. We were successful because so many of you gave your time to fill all of the time slots for the project. This was one of our major attempts at fund raising for the year and because of you, it was a success. I extend a special thanks to Eugene Abrahamson who organized and managed the project. Eugene has done a fine job on every part of the program. We will tell you how much was raised by all of your efforts in the next Voter.

Margaret Brunson, Co-president LWVB/N

PLEASE NOTE: *The January Board meeting has been rescheduled to January 10.*

LWVNYS Legislative Agenda, 2011

FIX ALBANY NOW – Steps To A New and Better State Government

- **Redistricting** – Create an independent redistricting commission to draft the New York State Legislative and Congressional political boundaries for the 2012 elections.
- **Campaign Finance Reform**– Support lower contribution limits and increased disclosure. In particular support stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement with increased civil and criminal penalties for violations.
- **Ethics Reform**– Put in place a new independent ethics over-sight agency and rougher enforcement. Make the legislature more open and accountable through continued rules reform.
- **Election Reform**–Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including Election Day registration, better ballot design, improved polling place management/poll worker training, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.

Remember: Local Leagues can still take action in other areas on which LWVNYS has positions. (Health Care, the Judiciary, Natural Resources, State Finances and Social Policy including Women's Issues.

The League of Women Voters of New York State Convention will be held May 20-22, 2011
at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, New York.

The state board invites members to make suggestions for workshops at the convention.

Learn how to submit your ideas at the state web site: <http://www.lwvny.org>.

Welcome to our New LWVBN Office Assistant

On Monday, December 6, 2010, Ms. Flora Sume began working at the League Office as the Office Assistant. Flora comes to us from the Supportive Services Corporation and will be answering telephones, working on mailings and doing some light filing for us. Flora Sume has been with the Supportive Services Corporation for four years and has worked directly with me in the past.

Ms. Sume's hours are Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Flora is a retired woman and has had much experience in retail. She is paid by Supportive Services.

I am pleased to have Flora Sume join me here at the League of Women Voters. She will be a fine asset to office organization at 1272 Delaware Avenue.

Eugene Abrahamson, Office Manager

International Relations, A Continuing League Issue

The Erie County League of Women Voters in the late 1920s and early 1930s was an active participant in discussions on world peace.

Conferences on the topic were held in Washington, D.C. organized by leading women's groups. The LWV was represented at one conference by Mrs. Park Lewis, chair of the Erie County League Committee on International Relations. The National League was represented by Belle Sherwin, League President.

Locally the Amherst Branch of the League at a monthly meeting was addressed by Mrs. Howard Stimm on the preliminary movements for peace and Mrs. William Ford, who spoke about the peace movement efforts that paved the way for the London Naval Conference. Mrs. H.G. Lauman opened a discussion on the London Naval Conference.

In 1932 the Courier Express covered what it termed "an amazing assemblage against war" organized by the Erie County League in conjunction with all Western New York women's organizations. A mass meeting held at the Hotel Statler at which Philip C. Nash, director of the League of Nations Association, addressed 1200 Western New York women.

This interest in world affairs and peace movements is carried on today within the league by the Great Decisions discussion group, meetings at the United Nations each fall and participation of League members in local groups working for an end to war.

Marie Hanrahan, LWVBN Historian

Prepare for the League Education Forum, January 20, 2011

Will RACE TO THE TOP improve education? Author Diane Ravitch says "I believe it is a travesty and might make education worse by narrowing the curriculum to respond to wholly inadequate tests." Our EDUCATION FORUM will give you several opinions and an opportunity to add to the discussion. The Education Committee recommends Ravitch's book, [The Death and Life of the Great American School System](#), for background information.

Invitation to Car Pool to the Forum:

Please phone our office 884-3550 or send us an e-mail at lwvbn@lwvbn.org to tell us that you are willing to be a drive or that you wish to be included in a carpool for the January 20, 2011 program. Please leave your name, community and phone number. Don't miss this program!

Lee Tetkowsk

The Case for Redistricting Reform in New York State

Many thanks to Anne Huberman, Lyle Toohey and Janet Massaro for revising and presenting the State LWV Redistricting PowerPoint and script at our November forum. If you missed it or would like to share it with friends, you can see it at our website: <http://lwvbn.org/lwvbnactivities/Redistricting/intro.html>.

New and re-elected State and Assembly members will take office in January 2011. Leaguers will have the opportunity to ask their elected officials, "Do you support an Independent Redistricting Commission?" When asked this question for the *LWVBN Voter Guide*, all candidates responded affirmatively. When the current redistricting bills supported by the League (S1514-B and A5279-B) are resubmitted in the next legislative session, we will need to contact our representatives and remind them of their statements.

Meanwhile, the committee welcomes the opportunity to present our PowerPoint presentation, The Case for Redistricting Reform in New York State, to any interested group. Contact Judy Metzger at events@lwvbn.org if you know of community or church groups who have a venue and interest in this important subject. This is a great educational opportunity and visibility for LWVBN. Thanks for your help.

Judy Metzger

Amherst Unit News

Lunch & Issues

Friday, January 21, 2011, 11:30 AM

Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant, 6999 Maple Road, Amherst

Dr. Barry Weinstein, Amherst Town Supervisor will be the guest speaker. His topic will be **Open Space Acquisition** and his comments will be followed by questions from the audience about Amherst Town Government.

Cost: \$15.00 payable to LWVBN.

Please make reservation with Sally Metzger events@lwvbn.org or by January 18, 2011. The public and all League members are invited.

Judy Metzger

Clarence Unit News

The Clarence Unit Non-Member Finance Drive for the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara has raised \$620 from the community. *(We thank Allene for conducting the Drive and applaud her success.)*

Lunch & Learn

Friday January 21, 2011

Clarence Town Supervisor, Scott Bylewski, will report on the State of the Town of Clarence.

Contact Allene Falk for details.

Allene Falk

Smart Growth Bill Passed

The Local Government Committee would like to report some important progress at the state level on one of our key issues. We have been working on sprawl, regional planning, and smart growth for more than ten years now. We think that our Education Campaign on Urban Sprawl <http://lwvbn.org/lwvbnactivities/sprawl/sprawl.html> has been an important influence in educating citizens about the costs of sprawl and the importance of "smart growth."

Our committee spearheaded the development of a state position on sprawl in 1999. In 2009, under that position, The League of Women Voters of New York State joined the coalition called Empire State Future, "a coming together of many civic improvement organizations, planning groups, and individuals interested in advancing the principles of 'smart growth' and turning them into reality in cities, towns and villages all across the Empire State." As part of Empire State Future, the League has been effective in lobbying for state legislation to address the costs of sprawl.

Locally, State Assembly member Sam Hoyt has long understood the costs of sprawl and the need to prevent state infrastructure spending from promoting sprawl. For years, he has submitted smart growth bills to the state legislature, where they were received with little enthusiasm or understanding. Finally, this year, with strong lobbying support from Empire State Future, Hoyt and his colleagues managed to pass the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act. It guides the State in making more sustainable and strategic infrastructure investments. This legislation requires State agencies to create Smart Growth Advisory Committees that would evaluate public infrastructure investments based on the Smart Growth criteria and will require such investments to meet the criteria to the extent practicable. The Governor signed the bill at the end of August and came to Buffalo in October to highlight its passage. We are proud of the role the League has played in the passage of this bill.

Anne Huberman, Local Government Committee

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

RENEW

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

- \$65 Individual (Basic Membership) \$100 Household
 \$75 Carrie Chapman Catt Membership *(2 members living at the same address)*
 \$90 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership \$30 Student membership
 \$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership
 Enclosed is my additional contribution of \$ _____

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 News

Dear LWVBN Members,

As we begin 2011 we still have a considerable number of members who still need to renew for the July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 membership year. I have been calling members who haven't renewed and found a few mistakes. Eugene and I are working to correct them. We are down in numbers but not in enthusiasm. As you go about your daily routines, please keep you eye out for potential members. Anyone who voices a concern about government, environment, health care, etc is a potential member. We offer many worthwhile opportunities to make a difference in our communities and in our state and national government. Speak positively about the League and how they might like to join us.

Judy Huber, Membership Chair

2010 Election Survey: Machines Perform But Privacy Suffers

The League of Women Voters of New York State (League) released the results of an online survey of voters' experiences using the new paper ballot optical scanning system that was implemented statewide for the 2010 election cycle on December 16, 2011.

The online survey of 1,072 respondents, from 47 counties including all 5 counties of NYC, showed that the voting machines indeed did perform well; however, the respondents did make note of several inadequacies that the League feels must be addressed to ensure that voters are guaranteed a secure and private franchise. The League's recommendations for immediate action are listed below; the state Board of Elections should move to implement these recommendations before the next election cycle.

• Increased Voter Education on the Voting Process

The State Board of Elections must provide standard template materials which county boards of elections can tailor for their specific needs. Remaining HAVA funds should be used for this purpose.

• Increased Training for All Elections Personnel

The survey showed an immediate need for better-trained election personnel. Legislation has passed permitting split shifts for election inspectors and recruitment of younger poll workers. These new laws need to be implemented.

• Revision of the Paper Ballot for Maximum Usability by Voters

There is an immediate need for improving the design of the ballot. Legislation to address the full-face ballot should be a legislative priority and should be introduced early in the 2011 Legislative Session.

• Privacy Issues

Over 20 percent said they did not have sufficient privacy in marking the ballot, scanning the ballot, or were not given a privacy sleeve or instructed how to use it. Poll workers need to be trained that any viewing of the markings on a completed ballot is a violation of the voter's privacy.

As noted by League Elections Specialist, Aimee Allaud, "Improving ballot design, providing better trained poll workers and ensuring privacy in voting are fundamental to our voter electoral system. We must take immediate steps to resolve these problems."

"The League's Voter Survey shows that we need to do much, much more if we're to take full advantage of the State's new voting systems. In particular, the design of New York's ballot must be completely overhauled in order to be fully usable by voters." said Bo Lipari, the League's Technology Director.

The full report is available on the League website: <http://www.lwvny.org>.



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January 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2	3	4 ISSUES COMMITTEE 4:30 p.m.	5	6	7	8
9	10 BOARD MEETING 4:30 p.m.	11	12 TRANSPORTATION 10:00 a.m. LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1:15 p.m.	13 NATURAL RESOURCES 9:30 a.m.	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 EDUCATION FORUM: RACE TO THE TOP, HOPE OR FLOP? Pages 1 & 3	21 LUNCH & ISSUES LUNCH & LEARN Page 4	22
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30	31	2/1 ISSUES COMMITTEE 4:30 p.m.				

