



# The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

# VOTER

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Summer 2012

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The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the September issue are due Friday, August 10.

## President's Message

We celebrated our 2011-12 year on June 2 in style! League business was conducted in record time. The budget, Local Program and board election were all approved as presented. Joan Bozer conducted a meaningful installation of officers and board members and we recognized the fine contributions of retiring Membership Chair, Judy Huber, and our Elections Service Chair, Alan Dozoretz.

After the delicious luncheon, the League was honored to present the *Making Democracy Work Award* to Michael Kuzma and to honor both Joan Bozer and Judy Metzger by presenting the first *Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award* to Judy. It was grand to have more than thirty guests to honor Mike, Judy and Joan. United States Attorney for the Western District of New York, William J. Hochul, Jr., gave a thoughtful address that surely had useful information for the audience and important ideas for introspection.



Michael Kuzma, recipient of the 2012 *Making Democracy Work Award* (holding award), with his colleagues Vince Gugino, John Curr III, and Daire Irwin (left to right). These lawyers advised the League about responding to a subpoena from Erie County in 2011.

### 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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Judy Metzger deserves special credit for her work as the Annual Meeting Chair, and Janet Goodsell and her committee are to be commended for their efforts to develop and coordinate nominations for the *Joan K. Bozer Award*. I'd also like to thank Therese Warden for identifying the best translation of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* to present to Mike Kuzma for his longtime efforts at making democracy work.

## BOARD ACTIONS

At the July meeting of the 2012-2013 board of directors, the board approved the following responsibilities for 2012-2013:

Terri Parks, President	Patricia Costanzo, Finance Committee Chair
Lyle Toohey, 1st Vice President, Board Governance	Kathleen McCormick, Voter Editor and Communications Group Liaison
Judy Metzger, 2nd Vice President, Membership Chair	Joyce Bol, Voter Service Chair
Janet Goodsell, 3rd Vice President, Issues/Advocacy Chair	Lynne Vallone, Local Government Liaison
Ramona Gallagher, Secretary	Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator
Joan Sarow, Treasurer	Dorothy Tao, Public Relations Chair
Debbie Billoni, Fund Development Chair	Dot Brown, Legislative Action Chair

The Executive Committee will consist of the six officers, Debbie Billoni and Lynne Vallone.

The Board and Issues Committee continue work on the calendar for 2012-2013. We look forward to another productive year.

Please make active participation in the League a priority for this year. We have much to do to ensure that the democratic principles we value are upheld.

*Terri Parks*



## Great Decisions

I want to thank Alan Freedman for leading our July 5 discussion on Cybersecurity, certainly, as we learned, a new frontier that every nation on the planet must deal with. Ann Malachowski, whose daughter and son-in-law are pilots in the war zone, will facilitate our fifth topic, Exit from Afghanistan & Iraq: Right time, Right pace? We will meet on Thursday, August 2 from 10 a.m.–noon in the League office. “Ten years after September 11, 2001, the U.S. is winding down its military commitment in Iraq and slowly pulling out of Afghanistan. What exit strategy will help Afghanistan and Iraq build stable democratic nations? How can the U. S. continue to achieve its counterterrorism goals? What is the roll of the U. S. in the future of the Middle East?” We have some tough questions to try to answer.

*Bernice Baeumler*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### LEAGUE HISTORY: EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AN ONGOING CONCERN

Local newspapers in the 1920s and 1930s ran numerous articles on the subject of education problems and promises still debated today. These newspaper articles often referenced discussions before the Erie County League of Women Voters Education Committee. The following are examples of the committee's program in those years:

- Mrs. Thomas Stofer, chair of the Committee on Public Education, presented Professor Worth McClure of Buffalo State Teachers College who spoke on “. . . recent trends in modern education such as health, character, pre-school, and the importance of building the future by training the young.”
- In 1928, the Buffalo Evening News published an extensive article about a talk before the League by Dr. H. Rockwell on “investment in education, America's hope”.
- Also in this time period, the formation of the New Education Association which according to the Courier Express gave its prime purpose as “. . . the promotion of the best interest of the child keeping in mind the school child of today is the citizen of tomorrow.” Among those involved in the founding of the organization along with University at Buffalo Chancellor Samuel P. Capen were a number of League members including Mrs. Bruce Wright (President, 1929–1931), Mrs. Herbert R. Davis (President, 1931–1932), Mrs. Bryant B. Glenn (President, 1934–1936), and Mrs. Stofer (Education Committee Chair).

As evidenced from these snippets, education has always been an issue high on the League of Women Voters' list of priorities.

*Marie Hanrahan, League Historian*

### LEAGUE MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Joan Bozer will speak at the Temple Beth Zion sisterhood luncheon on August 30. She will talk about the issues in the upcoming fall elections. Lyle Toohey will cover the same topic at the St Paul's Women's Group in Kenmore on October 10.

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator*

### DOROTHY WESTHAFFER WINS CONSERVATION AWARD

The Western New York Land Conservancy honored League member Dorothy Westhafer at its annual meeting in May by presenting her with its *Henry J. Kreher Conservation Award*. This award exemplifies passion and commitment in protecting critical open space and wildlife habitat, working farms and scenic vistas within the eight counties of Western New York. According to the Western New York Land Conservancy, Dorothy has been a pillar of the group since 1993. She has also been chair of the Grand Island Conservation Commission.

*Lee Tatkowski*

### REMEMBERING ANN SHUB

Longtime League member, Ann Shub, died suddenly on July 5. She was especially active in the Amherst Unit. She was an officer in that Unit for a number of years and delivered Voter Guides each year. Ann made the arrangements for volunteers and greeting candidates for the Amherst Candidate Forums for many years. Sally Metzger wrote, “She was a highly organized lady and we all enjoyed working with her.” A few years ago, Ann initiated and conducted a small fund-raiser for the League by selling fair-trade coffee at several League events and donating the profits to the League. We honor Ann's long life and appreciate her service to the League.

*Terri Parks*

### SUMMER OFFICE STAFF

Please welcome Vanessa Currie to the League staff. She will work in the League office on Thursdays. Vanessa works part-time under the Supportive Services Corporation and will be here for the summer.

*Eugene Abrahamson, Office Manager*

## League of Women Voters of the United States 2012 Convention

Ramona Gallagher, Gladys Gifford and Terri Parks were delegates for Buffalo/Niagara League. Debbie Billoni officially was a delegate for the Geneva League. There were more caucus and informational meetings than the four of us could cover in the long convention days that usually began at 7:30 a.m. and ended about 10:00 in the evening. Six hundred fifty-two Voting Delegates and 773 total attendees from 25 states were certainly immersed in all things League. National League President Elisabeth MacNamara, officers and members of the national Board of Directors, and national staff showed professional and efficient leadership. The convention was well-run with ample time for discussion and input from the delegates, great use of technology, and smooth transition of leadership.

**Ramona:** As a “first-timer” to the LWVUS National Convention, I would sum up my experience as terrific, overwhelming, impressive, reinvigorating and incredibly informative. I learned I have a lot more to learn about this organization and look forward to continued involvement in our Buffalo-Niagara community to support the League’s efforts in ensuring that all citizens continue to be able to exercise our precious right and responsibility to vote and participate in our democracy. Being in Washington, D.C. was expensive, but a wonderful opportunity to see the sights around the city, be at the heart of our Federal government, and learn how well-respected the “branding” of the League of Women Voters is around the nation.

**Gladys:** I met wonderful women who are passionately engaged in the issues facing our country. I was inspired by them, and am now willing to become engaged at the national level. The League is committed to becoming more visible, as in the *Power the Vote* campaign. All state and local leagues must become active partners with the national League, to use its resources and engage with staff expertise.

**Terri:** There are many serious issues throughout the nation that impact our work. The voter-suppression efforts in many states, especially Florida and Wisconsin, and the impact of an endless pot of money from unnamed sources for some candidates are two of the most pressing current issues. Throughout the convention, the courageous efforts of Leagues that are taking a stand on behalf of the voters were honored and applauded. We have much to do and impressive role models among us.

The National Program for the 2012-2014 biennium that retains all current LWVUS Positions including the newly adopted education and privatization positions was unanimously approved. The following concurrence position was also approved: *Sentencing Policy: The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.*

After much spirited discussion of a number of items, only one was approved, the motion to review and update the LWVUS agriculture position, last approved in 1988. Such a review would investigate genetic modification, consolidation in the food industry, money in the regulatory process, and the consumer’s right to accurate and comprehensive food labeling. This will be the only study item undertaken in the next two years.

League practices of consensus were upheld and demonstrated, especially in relation to the efforts around campaign finance (Citizens United). After much discussion, the delegates approved the “motion to adopt the LWVUS Board recommended comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance in order to inform our education and legislative efforts as needed.”

The motion to approve the national per member payment rate of \$31/year for the next two years passed by a vote of 323 for and 186 against. The League’s first two-year budget based on that rate then was approved overwhelmingly. LWVBN will not increase its dues for the 2012-2013 to reflect the one dollar per year increase.

There being no nominations from the floor for officers, directors and nominating committee members for 2012-2014, the slate was approved by acclamation.

The League of Women Voters of New York was awarded the *Community Connection with Community Award* for the *Students Inside Albany* program.

Videos of the inspirational speakers and panels may be seen at <http://www.lwv.org/blog/watch-videos-convention-2012>.

Terri Parks, President

## Social Economic Justice Education

The committee continues to review relevant news, books and book reviews, and media stories. The committee description on the LWVB/N website has been expanded to include links to websites that provide information about economics that helps us understand current events within historical frameworks. One of our committee members, Ramona Gallagher, attended 2012 League Convention and will share with us the process to follow to revisit national positions and bring forward social economic justice issues based on League positions.

At the May meeting, we discussed articles found online by committee members: "Private Equity's Public Subsidy Is a Tragedy", by William D. Cohan (Bloomberg News, January 22, 2012), "From Financial Crisis to Stagnation: The Destruction of Shared Prosperity and the Role of Economics", by Thomas I. Palley (Global Labour Column, April 23, 2012), and "Plutocracy, Paralysis, Perplexity", by Paul Krugman (New York Times, May 3, 2012). We viewed and discussed a Bill Moyers DVD, "On Crony Capitalism" (January 2012). The program included interviews with David Stockman, former Ronald Reagan Budget Director, and Gretchen Morgenson, New York Times financial reporter. In addition, we heard a summary of the film "Priceless" by League member Judy Frank.

The June meeting featured John Washington of Occupy Buffalo who told us about the movement, meetings, and how the Occupy consensus process works. He described local actions, for example, demonstrating at ECIDA meetings to demand transparency. We continued our review of tax policy history and considered reviews of two recently published books: *Inequality and Instability*, by James K. Galbraith, reviewed by Roger Lowenstein (Bloomberg Businessweek, April 5, 2012) and *How Financial Criminalization Crashed the Economy, and the Culprits Got Off Scot-Free*, by Charles Ferguson, director of the film "Inside Job" (Huffington Post, May 23, 2012). We also listened to part of an NPR program featuring the May 24, 2012 speech by economist Paul Krugman, "We Know How to Fix the Economy". Krugman stated the conditions leading up to the 2008 financial crash were very similar to conditions leading to the Great Depression.

The July meeting was to include viewing of another Bill Moyer's program, "Dark Money in Politics", televised June 16 and 17, 2012, featuring an interview with Thomas Frank and with "Mother Jones" editors Clara Jeffery and Monika Bauerlein. The topic is timely and matches national and state League interest in campaign financing reform. (Weak wireless connection prevented us from viewing the full hour.) We checked out reviews of economist Joseph Stiglitz' new book, "The Price of Inequality" (sources online - Financial Times and AlterNet). Stiglitz suggests America is no longer a land of opportunity and why so.

The committee is preparing our 2012-13 Outlook for Work. When complete, we will add this to our committee description on the LWVB/N website. The above articles and archived programs can be accessed using internet search engines such as Google.

*Lynda Stephens, Social Economic Justice Education Chair*

### ***The League of Women Voters:***

***Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.***

***Work with the LWV to help shape the issues that keep our community fair,  
vibrant and strong.***

## Voter Services

### THE 2012 VOTER GUIDE

The Voter Guide Steering Committee, under the leadership of Anne Marie Malachowski, met in June. The committee coordinates the activities involved in producing both the online guide through VOTE411 and our printed Voter Guide. The next committee meeting will be on Thursday, August 9, 10:00 a.m., at 1272 Delaware Avenue. The committee welcomes the help of League members to assist in the preparation and distribution of our 2012 Voter Guide.

### VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

The Voter Registration Drive Committee met on July 11 to discuss unique ways to register voters during August and September. The committee will be supplying materials for voter registration drives at the Bethel Baptist Church on July 22 and August 10. The Community Action Organization will host a voter registration drive at their Head Start picnic on August 4 where Theresa Pope will speak briefly about the importance of registering to vote and voting.

### POSSIBLE CANDIDATE DEBATE

A League-sponsored debate between Chris Collins and Kathy Hochul, candidates for the 27th U.S. Congressional District, is being explored. If negotiations are successful, details will follow.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION ON CHANNEL 7

Channel 7 is taping a program entitled "Exercising your Right To Vote". Terri Parks and Joyce Bol will participate. The program is to be aired on September 22.

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

JoAnn Mecca and Marge Gardner reported for the Associated Press on the June 26 Republican primary. If you are interested in participating in any Voter Service activities, please contact Joyce Bol ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)).

*Joyce Bol, Voter Services Chair*

## Election Services

On Wednesday, June 27, and Friday, June 29, League volunteers tallied and counted votes for the 2012 Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority Commissioner's Elections. Kathleen McCarthy and I thank all of the volunteers who so generously donated their time, efforts, and competencies. We appreciate the work of: Margaret Brunson, Mary Egan, Judy Metzger, Lee Tetowski, Jo Ann Mecca, Lillis McClean, Mary Ann Turkla, Sally Metzger, Marlene Katzel, Joan Photiadis Lois Uteg, Terri Parks, Judy Capodicasa, Dorothy Westhafer, Agnes Annis, Bob Annis, Ramona Gallagher, Lynne Vallone, Janet Massaro, and Helen Weintraub. A salute to those who embodied the true spirit of the LWV of Buffalo/Niagara!

*Alan Dozoretz Election Services Chair*

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The League of Women Voters is proud to announce that VOTE411, the on-line voter guide, is ready for use at <http://www.vote411.org/>. Obtain information on primaries, candidates, and voting in New York State. Choose New York in the "On Your Ballot" pull-down menu, then enter your address to compare candidates running in your district. Information about Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate seat and Congressional District 27 is available now. Watch for information on candidates running for state Senate and Assembly seats in late August.

## Climate Smart Communities Campaign

The League was not one of the 31 organizations to receive a Community Foundation Competitive Grant this year, but work on the League's Citizens Campaign for Climate Smart Communities (CSC) continues, though at a slower pace. Certainly the work that was done to submit the grant has helped us have a well organized format to pursue the effort. Sandy Chelnov, especially, has made important contacts with state officials that will enhance the work to be done, and continues her fine work as the coordinator of the campaign.

Amherst is well on its way to becoming a CSC having signed the pledge and in the serious process of forming a CSC committee. They are asking for resumes from potential members and may accept individuals who live outside the town as well as Amherst residents.

In early July, Sandy Chelnov gave the Climate Smart Communities presentation to the Aurora Town Board. Ellen Neumaier and Sandy met most of the board members beforehand; all except one are in favor of participation. League members were asked to attend the Town Board work session on July 17 to answer questions. We are learning how important it is to emphasize that to be climate smart is to be energy smart; being energy smart saves taxpayer dollars.

Sandy made a well-received presentation to the Grand Island Conservation Committee on July 12. The town board member at the meeting seemed very interested and committed to creating an inventory of all energy saving actions already taken by the town.

We need more League member participation to succeed with our efforts. Please contact Sandy Chelnov ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)) if you are willing to assist in the work. The Climate Smart Communities program is an important New York State sponsored effort to help communities in Western New York save energy costs and reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the earth's atmosphere.

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Chair  
Sandy Chelnov, Climate Smart Communities Campaign Coordinator*

## Amherst Unit

We are busy with plans for fall events to include a candidates' breakfast at the Senior Center at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 24. Volunteers are needed. Our *Lunch and Issues* program will begin October 19 at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant.

Kathleen McCormick is our point person for the Amherst Climate Smart Communities Campaign. A subcommittee of the Town's Energy Conservation Citizens Advisory Committee has been formed and people are needed to help collect data for this year long project. The exciting news is that Erie County Community College students will be helping with this project too.

Mary Scheeder continues to coordinate efforts to have League members observe Amherst Town Board meetings. The Town Board meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 3:00 or 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending, please contact Mary ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)).

Many thanks to Sally Metzger for continuing the Amherst Unit's long commitment to keep portions of Klein Road free of litter and for serving on the Town Waste Committee.

*Judy Metzger, Sally Metzger and Arlene Miles, Amherst Unit Co-coordinators*



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**Late July/August 2012**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30.	31	August 1	2 Great Decisions 10:00 a.m.	3	4
5	6	7 Issues 4:30 p.m.	8 Local Government 1:15 p.m.	9	10	11
12	13 Board Meeting 4:00 p.m.	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	