



Volume 17, Number 6

March 2012

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**The VOTER** is published 10 times per year. April items are due Friday, March 9, 2012.

## Who Needs County Government and Why?

Thursday, March 22

7:00–9:00 p.m., check-in starts at 6:30 p.m.

Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Road, Amherst

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Joseph Stefko

Director of Public Finance, Center for Governmental Research, Rochester, NY

Panelists:

James Magavern, Esq.

Magavern Magavern Grimm LLP

Brenda McDuffie

Executive Director, Buffalo Urban League

Kenneth Vetter

Executive Director, Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority

Invite a friend and join us to learn about the various purposes and forms of county government, where county authority originates, what services/assets are supported by counties in New York and the sources of revenue, and how Erie County compares with other counties. The panelists will present an overview of Erie County services/assets from 2000 to the present, the beneficiaries of services, and the impact of the control board. All will be asked for two suggestions that would make Erie County more effective and responsive to community needs. For more information, please contact [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or call the League Office at 884-3550.

### 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 and Board Actions

The proposed maps for New York State Senate and Assembly Districts have been released and the Legislative Taskforce on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR) committee from the State Senate and Assembly is conducting a second round of hearings across the state. The League is extremely disappointed in the committee's recommendations and continues to advocate for an independent commission to create districts that are fair to voters. It is most appropriate that League members, speaking as individuals, contact their state senate and assembly members to insist on lasting reform for the future. The district lines created this year will be in place until 2022. It's time that election district lines allow the voters to select their representatives instead of protecting incumbents as continues to be the case with the current process.

We continue to speak out as a League for redistricting reform and other issues, both in the Buffalo News and through letters to our elected officials. At the February meeting, the board approved posting our actions on the LWVBN website after submitting them to the Buffalo News or mailing them to officials so that our members have access to them. The board also voted to publish board meeting minutes on our website once they are approved by the board.

Thank you to all the League members who responded to our Annual Appeal request. A donation to the League directly or through the LWVNY Education Foundation helps us continue the many programs of our local League. We continue to be active in many areas and welcome your participation in League activities and efforts to "help shape the issues that keep our community fair, vibrant and strong."

The board accepted with deep regret the resignation of board Secretary, Donna McNally. Ramona Gallagher was appointed Acting Secretary until the end of this year. We will elect a secretary for the second year of the term at the Annual Meeting. Donna is a most special lady. I hope she will be able to return to active League leadership again.

The board adopted an expense reimbursement policy governing business expenses of members or other volunteers that states: It is LWVBN policy not to reimburse volunteers for ordinary, necessary and reasonable expenses when directly related to the transaction of LWVBN business.

Finally, the board is working to make the luncheon and program following the League's Annual Business Meeting into a signature event for the League. We will honor at least one community member each year with the League's *Making Democracy Work Award*. Our initial award recipient will be local attorney, Michael Kuzma, Esq. Mr. Kuzma is widely respected for his strength, knowledge and dedication. He was recommended by a diverse group of individuals to be the League's lead pro bono attorney to address the subpoena served on the League in November 2010. He is surely one who makes democracy work and we are honored to recognize him.

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

I hope to see as many of you as possible on Thursday March 1, 2012 from 10 a.m.–noon at 1272 Delaware for our first *Great Decisions* meeting of the new year. At that time I'll gladly hand over the book you ordered in exchange for \$18. I also hope to obtain as many facilitators as possible for our 8 topics. I urge you to bring your 2011 books because the results of the opinion ballots are contained in our new book and we can see how our ideas compare with those of the respondents. Last but certainly not least, we have a video version of the *Great Decisions* DVD thanks to the kindness of Kristin Allen and her husband, the "techie".

*Bernice Baeumler*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### CONGRESSWOMAN HOCHUL ADDRESSES LWVBN

Seventy-six people attended Lunch and Issues at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant on January 6 to hear Congresswoman Kathy Hochul. To the delight of the audience, Kathy opened her talk by saying, "We need campaign finance reform." She went on to talk about some of her experiences as a freshman legislator and her current committee work. Thanks to Kathy and her staff for meeting with Leaguers and the public in this informational forum. For more information on Kathy's legislative work, visit her website (<http://hochul.house.gov/>). To find out what our state League is doing about campaign finance reform visit the LWVNY website ([http://lwvny.org/advocacy/reform/govReform\\_campaignFinance.html](http://lwvny.org/advocacy/reform/govReform_campaignFinance.html))

*Judy Metzger, Amherst Unit Coordinator*



Congresswoman Hochul

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Please welcome our newest members to the League. They are: Donnette Darrow, Barbara Jezioro, Samuel Mcgavern III, Ramona Popowich, Barbara Wachtel, and Willie Mae Walker. We hope to personally welcome them at our next program on March 22nd. Have you invited a friend to join the League?

Dorothy Phelan, a member of the League for over 50 years died on January 31, 2012. She was active in the Buffalo Metro LWV and earlier in the Kenmore LWV and she was a past president of at least one of those leagues.

*Judy Huber, Membership Chair*

### KUDOS TO LYNDA STEPHENS

Our own Lynda Stephens is receiving the Louis J. Billittier Honorary Alumni Award from Erie Community College on Thursday, March 1 at 6 p.m. at the city campus. The award is presented to a non-alumnus whose past, present, and potential professional, personal, civic, and philanthropic pursuits reflect the high standards and values associated with ECC and educational opportunities. Congratulations, Lynda! For more information, call 851-1999 or visit [www.ecc-foundation.com](http://www.ecc-foundation.com).

### SAVE THE DATE

Join us on May 9 at 4:00 p.m. at the Harlem Road Community Center in Amherst to discuss current initiatives aimed at reaching long-range transportation goals. Details about the program will be in the April VOTER.

*JoAnn Mecca, Transportation and Waterfront Committee*

### NEW LWVBN OFFICE HOURS

The LWVBN office at 1272 Delaware Avenue will be open on Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. At times, staff members are out of the office to attend to League business, so please call ahead if you plan to visit.

***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.***

### Amherst Unit

At the February *Lunch and Issues*, participants heard from Dr. Munroe Eagles, Canadian Studies professor at the University at Buffalo, about elections and electoral administration in Canada. League member Joan Bozer introduced Dr. Eagles, who presented a detailed discussion on the Canadian voting system, including interesting facts such as Canadian government stipulations regulating the length of electoral campaigns and the amount of money individuals can donate to candidates. Eagles was well received and fielded many questions from the audience. There will be no Lunch and Issues in March or April. Please plan to attend the League's "Who Needs County Government and Why" program on March 22 at the Harlem Road Community Center and the April 20 program on "Climate Smart Communities" which will take place at Ecology and Environment.

The Amherst Unit continues to observe Amherst Town Board meetings and to report on issues which are of special interest to us. We support measures for environmentally sound water, air and land management, especially the Renew Amherst program. The website, [RenewAmherst.org](http://RenewAmherst.org), explains the town's efforts to become a greener community. Sally Metzger serves on the Solid Waste Committee and has been involved with the town's comprehensive new trash collection and recycling program. We were encouraged by Supervisor Weinstein's recent invitation to residents to join town committees and are urging members to submit resumes. We will be monitoring the selection process.

Unit members met on January 31 to plan for upcoming events and programs. We are committed to joining the League's "Climate Smart Community Campaign" so that Amherst will be recognized as one of the first climate smart communities in Erie County. Many thanks to members for their input and help as we seek new directions and partnerships with Clarence Leaguers as well as the larger League and members of the community.

*Judy Metzger, Amherst Unit Coordinator*

### Voter Services

League members Arlene Miles, John Segmen, Judy Huber, Willie Mae Walker, Ramona Gallagher, and Andrea Copley represented the League and congratulated new citizens at the January and February citizenship ceremonies. The ceremonies are an inspiration to all who attend. If you would like to represent the League at one of these inspiring events, please call Mike Egan at 884-3550.

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator*

### Natural Resources

The Natural Resources Committee invites League members and friends interested in the League's new Climate Smart Communities campaign to "Climate Smart Communities -- Energy Saved is Money Earned", on Friday, April 20 at Ecology and Environment, Inc (E&E). Sign-in begins at 11:30 a.m. The no-cost program will include a buffet lunch and presentations about the Climate Smart Communities program and how to determine a community's carbon footprint. Attendees will also have a chance to tour E&E's headquarters which achieved the U.S. Green Building Council's highest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating and to learn about E&E's Project Earth, a global environmental education network designed to connect schools, students, and teachers around the world to help solve environmental problems.

Invite a friend and reserve your spot today by calling Ellen Moomaw at 884-3550. Reservations are required and limited to 60 people. Please plan to carpool since parking at E&E is limited.

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee Chair*

### **Social-Economic Justice Education Committee**

The Social-Economic Justice Education Committee held its second meeting with seven members present. We courageously embarked on a review of very complex subject matter with the leadership of Lynda Stephens and assistance from Dorothy Tao who compiled a tentative reading list.

In an effort to provide background for an understanding of the current economic situation and various impacting philosophies, Lynda Stephens reviewed Robert B. Reich's *Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future* and Lynne Vallone reviewed Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*. A lively discussion ensued.

The committee decided to include "viewing of relevant videos" to the Social-Economic Justice Education Committee Action Plan after adding videos Dorothy Tao discovered to our bibliography. In addition, our Outlook for Work and committee description and purpose will be posted on the LWVBN website. We also decided to invite various guests, such as former Congressman John LaFalce to meet with us and to extend invitations via Elsa's e-mail list to other League members who might be interested in attending. Committee members also attended the International Institute's Great Decisions February 6th meeting: "Promoting Democracy".

*Lynne Vallone, Social-Economic Justice Education Committee*

### **Legislative Breakfast: Erie County Association of School Boards**

For many years League members have been timekeepers for annual discussions with elected local officials at the Erie County Association of School Boards' well-attended events. JoAnn Mecca and Lee Tetkowski served as timekeepers for the February 11 discussion held at Protocol restaurant in Williamsville.

The following Western New York legislators participated: Senator Patrick Gallivan District 59, Senator Mark Grisanti, District 60, Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, District 61, and the following Assembly members: Jane Corwin, District 142, Dennis Gabryszak District 143, Kevin Smardz, District 146, Raymond Walter, District 148. Aides for Senator Tim Kennedy and Assembly members Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Robin Schimminger also attended.

The major areas of focus discussed were mandate relief, funding equity, and reform without revenue. This part of the Western New York delegation seemed united in the ongoing effort to gain deserved attention and funding from downstate officials.

*Lee Tetkowski, Education Committee Chair*

### **Student Inside Albany Selected**

Ryan Montgomery will represent LWVBN at the *STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY* conference in March. Ryan is a junior at Bennett High School planning on a career in law enforcement. He is on the Student Council and an award-winning member of the Debate Team. Ryan also takes an active role in Bennett High School's Youth Court, Peer Mediation, and Peer Mentoring programs as well as the Students Against Violence Initiative. Ryan will join some 54 peers in Albany on March 25 to 28 for the conference. Students will shadow their state representatives, sit in on legislative sessions, and attend lectures on the state budget process, the importance of lobbying in state politics, the role of the media, and the importance of publicly available information. Congratulations Ryan!

The American Association of University Women Buffalo Branch presents  
11th Annual International Women's Day Celebration  
Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara

**International Women's Day 2012 Theme**  
***"Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures"***

Thursday, March 8, 2012

5:15 p.m. social gathering

6:15 p.m. dinner

Guest Speaker - Filomena M. Critelli  
Assistant Professor, University of Buffalo School of Social Work  
"Past, Present and Future of Pakistan (Focus - Women & Children)"

Milos Restaurant  
(Formerly The Little White House)  
5877 Main Street  
Williamsville, New York 14221

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Registration Form

Buffet Dinner: Appetizer - Soup, Main Course, Dessert

Choice of Main Course: Baked Greek Style Chicken, Milos Salmon, Mediterranean Style Pasta

Cost: \$35.00 per person (please make checks payable to AAUW/Buffalo Branch)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

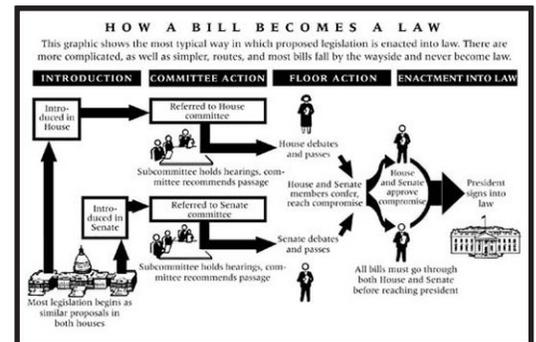


## WANTED: Potential Leaders

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara needs your experience and leadership skills! We also want to identify leaders in our midst! The 2012 Nominating Committee requests your input as it works to consider candidates for Officers and Board members to be elected at our annual meeting this year. There are several open positions on the Board as well as a need for recommendations for the 2013 Nominating Committee chair and three Nominating Committee members. Please feel free to recommend yourself or others for our consideration and review by contacting the 2012 Nominating Committee Chair, Marian Deutschman, at [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) with your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you no later than March 15.

### Civics 101

Sometimes we all need a review of the fundamentals. Thank you to Judy Metzger for sharing this nice overview of how a bill becomes a law. Please visit the Massachusetts Student Nurses' Association website (<http://www.mastudentnurses.org/article-how-a-bill-becomes-a-law.html>) to see the full-size image.



### State League News: Voter Participation Project

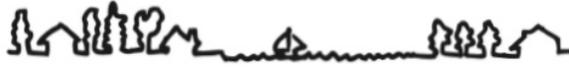
The New York State League of Women Voters has ready-made presentation materials on ways to increase voter participation in our state. The materials are available to all New York leagues for use at educational community forums. Voter registration modernization, early voting systems, improved ballot design, poll worker training and voter education are all discussed in the materials. Information about what other states do in these areas and how they could be implemented in New York is also included. Finally, recommendations for short term and long term actions are offered. Find out more at the state LWV website (<http://lwvny.org/index.html>).

### Computer Know-How: Free Access to Government Publications

Did you know that you can download official publications from all three branches of the Federal government? The Federal Digital System (FDsys) at the U.S. Government Printing Office web site lets you search for documents and publications from 50 different federal collections including the budget, White House press releases, Congressional hearings and U.S. court opinions. You can browse by collection, Congressional committee, and date, as well as do advanced searches for specific topics. Check it out at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/home.action>.



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**March 2012**

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