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The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the April issue are due Friday, March 8.

The American Association of University Women

Invite you to a

Celebration of International Women’s Day

An annual recognition of women’s achievements throughout history and across nations
Also known as United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace

Friday, March 8, 2013

Cash Bar, Appetizers and Buffet Dinner
Milos Restaurant
5877 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221

Registration and networking: 5:15 p.m.
Dinner: 6:15 p.m.
Cost: \$30.00

Make reservations with Carol A. Griffith
e-mail: cag2002@roadrunner.com

This event is co-sponsored by LWVBN.

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

Janet Massaro, Anne Huberman and Joanne Massaro spent many hours preparing for the February 14th program featuring the campaign finance reform slide presentation developed by the state League. Janet's enthusiastic delivery and knowledgeable comments were enlightening and stimulated audience questions and discussion. We were most interested to learn how voluntary public financing works in New York City elections. Folks suggested that it would be a good idea to emulate them in our own county and city elections.

This event was bittersweet. Anne and Joel Huberman are moving to another state by the end of March. Anne's long-time leadership of the Local Government Committee, beginning with the Sprawl Campaign, and her willingness to assist with any presentation dependent on computer technology, as well as her involvement with the Climate Smart Community Campaign have benefitted the League tremendously. Anne has been generous with her time, talents and resources for many years. Thank you, Anne, for your able leadership; we certainly hope you enjoy your new home.

It's good news that Eugene Abrahamson joined the board as Fund Development Chair. He brings much experience to our efforts and will be reaching out to League members to join his committee. You can certainly volunteer by contacting the League office. You'll enjoy working with him, I'm sure.

The board approved sending the following items to the League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) for inclusion in the 2013-2015 state program:

- Proposal that the LWVNYS take a position against expansion of the hazardous waste landfill operation in Niagara County, the only one in the state.
- Add this Transportation Policy under Social Policies: Support for improved public transit to maximize equality of opportunity for all.
- Add this Transportation Policy under Natural Resources: Support for transportation planning that focuses on investing in infrastructure for public transit in high-capacity corridors as a strategy to minimize sprawl and to combat air pollution.
- Consider concurrence with the national League position on federal tax policy which supports a system that is progressive, not proportional. LWVNYS should adopt the complete national League position on tax policy for state tax policy.

The LWVNYS Convention will be June 1 – 2 in Albany at the Hotel Albany (to be renamed Albany Hilton this spring). The convention has been shortened to encourage more folks to attend. People need only spend one night in Albany to attend the actual convention. Please contact the League Office or me if you're interested in being a delegate from our League.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

The Great Decisions books have arrived. We even received a Winter Update, something new I believe. If anyone wants his or her book ahead of time, please let me know. If not, I look forward to seeing all of you on March 7, 10:00 a.m., at which time I will exchange your book for \$17.60. Please bring your 2012 edition so we can compare our opinion ballots with the results compiled by Great Decisions.

Bernice Baeumler,

LWVBN News and Notes

LEAGUE HISTORY: THE WOMAN'S BLOC

In this past election season much was made of the woman's bloc. Did women vote in a bloc implying a lack of individuality unlike men who voted according to a candidate's qualifications?

This is, of course, not a new concept. It was used in much of the rhetoric aimed at denying women the right to vote. After passage of the nineteenth amendment, the woman's bloc issue did not go away. Dispelling this idea was an early mission of the League of Women Voters. In the 1920s, Carrie Chapman Catt, an early leader of the League, along with other like-minded people, addressed the woman's bloc issue. Mrs. Catt made it clear that the League was not a woman's party intending to mobilize the women's vote, but a group dedicated to helping women learn the political process and how to measure candidates and political parties in terms of their abilities and character.

In the early years, women studied the issues and realized that it was important to show the same individuality as men when they went to the polls. Women have continued to confront the issues as individuals. Apparently however, after ninety some years, not all politicians and political parties are convinced of this truth.

Marie Hanrahan, League Historian

MEET MARY ANN TURKLA: LWVBN OFFICE MANAGER

Mary Ann Turkla is the League's new office manager. She was born in Lackawanna and lived in Western New York until 1977 when she moved to New England. Mary Ann returned to our area in 1995. She has a Masters degree in education but spent most of her career in the computer industry, gaining the valuable skills she brings to the League. Mary Ann is an active volunteer for the Variety Club, the Steel Plant Museum, the Hillcrest Senior Center and her church. Welcome Mary Ann!

Judy Metzger, Membership Chair

UPCOMING EVENTS

Janet Massaro and Terri Parks will present *The League of Women Voters: Protecting our Democracy* during a free lunchtime Women's History Month event at the Erie County Central Library at noon, March 18, 2013. Terri will discuss the League's work in our community and Janet will present the League's slide show about campaign finance reform. We would certainly love to have some familiar faces in the audience.

Terri Parks, President

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 25, 2013

The League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara Social Economic Justice Education Committee invites you to attend and participate in a program about League positions on federal social programs and fiscal policies including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, universal health care, the fiscal cliff, and growing income inequality.

Purposes: Promote understanding and stimulate action

When: Thursday, April 25 from 4:30–6:30 p.m.

Where: Harlem Road Community Center, Amherst. Light supper/refreshments will be available.

Lynda Stephens, Social Economic Justice Education Committee Chair

Membership

Members are the most important part of any organization. Without YOU we would not exist. The League needs YOU. There are many simple ways to get involved. Can you bring a friend or relative to our next meeting? Can you send a name to our office (1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, 14209 or lwvbn@lwvbn.org) so that we can invite the person to join us for an event or to become a member? Can you help spread the word about the League and our programs? Thank YOU for your continuing involvement in whatever way you are able. Together we do the hands-on work that safeguards democracy and leads to civic improvement.

Judy Metzger, Membership Chair

Amherst Unit

Sally Metzger continues to attend the Town of Amherst Solid Waste Committee.

The Amherst Energy Conservation Citizens Advisory Committee needs the support of League members as they take steps to become a Climate Smart Community (CSC). The Town of Amherst adopted the CSC pledge in May 2012 (Resolution 2012-422). Now they are working on a greenhouse gas inventory and would like the League to be involved. The committee meets the first Thursday of each month from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the Town Hall (5583 Main Street, Williamsville, 14221). If you are interested and can attend a meeting, please contact Judy Metzger or Sally Metzger.

Judy Metzger, Sally Metzger, Arlene Miles, Amherst League Co-coordinators

Natural Resources Committee

Climate Smart Community Updates

East Aurora began planning its greenhouse gas inventory. Meetings with architects and the Village board about the Fire Hall, a new build designed to be energy efficient, are ongoing. East Aurora book clubs are being contacted about participating in a Low-Carbon Diet challenge similar to what the League did a few years ago to get members thinking about their personal carbon footprints.

A letter signed by Terri Parks, Sandy Chelnov, Marian Deutschman and Ellen Neumaier was sent to Mayor Byron Brown asking for a meeting with him and/or his staff to discuss Buffalo becoming a Climate Smart Community. Buffalo did a greenhouse gas inventory several years ago and already has made some climate smart changes. We need Buffalo League members to get involved in this!

Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources 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.***

Campaign Finance Reform

As We Work for NYS Campaign Finance Reform, Know We're in Good Company

The New York State Legislature is in full swing and League members are once again advocating for much needed campaign finance reform and fair elections. Our February meeting on campaign finance reform continued the successful conversations begun at our Kick-Off program last September and will be the focus of our efforts going forward. We asked members in attendance to “pledge their active support” towards achieving our campaign finance legislative goals. A heavy lift you say. Yes, it is – which is why I want you to know of a remarkable LWV leader, Deirdre Macnab.

So, read on.

I first learned about Deirdre's activities when our League was engaged in redistricting in Erie and Niagara Counties in 2010. At that time she led the Florida LWV in a coalition to reform her state's redistricting process by proposing a “Fair Districts” amendment to their state constitution. Although the legislators twice had the amendment removed from the ballot, a successful petition drive spearheaded by the League put a third amendment on the ballot and it was approved by 63% of the state's voters. Quite an amazing accomplishment.

Just this January the Orlando Sentinel honored Deirdre Macnab, President of the LWV of Florida, with its 2012 “Central Floridian of the Year” award. The paper cited Deirdre's “persistence and courage in the face of hostility, along with her dedication and skills as an organizer ...in successfully fighting the State of Florida's many attempts to roll back the clock on voting advances and erect new obstacles.”

Here is another example of her fearless advocacy. In 2011, Florida rewrote its voter registration laws. After decades of registering voters without problems, League members and other volunteers would now be required to appear in person to sign out and be responsible for specific numbered voter registration forms. The filled out forms had to be returned within 48 hours and if any were found in error, the volunteer would have to pay a fine. With such draconian restrictions in place, the League cancelled its voter registration drives. But under Deirdre's leadership, the League did not go quietly away. It sued the State of Florida. In August 2012, the courts agreed with the League's arguments, overturned the restrictions, and voter registration drives began again.

The Florida League has been unrelenting in correcting other voting wrongs, working to restore early voting hours and undoing parts of Florida's voting laws that have been blamed for long lines at polling places on Election Day. It continues to find new ways to inform and educate voters.

In giving its achievement award to Deirdre, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women credited her with “making the Florida LWV more vital than ever before, with the highest regard of credibility.” More to the point is a comment by the Seminole County Elections Supervisor, “She's done a remarkable job in making sure the League is always at the table.”

Of her League members Deirdre says, “They never give up...They are passionate about good government.” Yes we are.

Be proud. Be inspired. Actively support our campaign finance reform efforts. We will be calling on you.

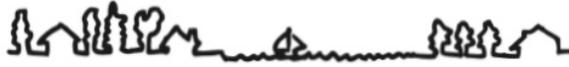
Janet Massaro, with thanks to Allene Falk for the Orlando Sentinel Article

Lost and Found

Someone left a winter scarf at the campaign finance reform event at the Harlem Road Community Center on February 14. Please contact the League Office to claim it.



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March 2013						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Issues 4:30 p.m.	6	7 Great Decisions 10 a.m.	8 International Women's Day	9
10	11 Board 4:00.p.m.	12	13 Local Government 1:15 p.m.	14 Natural Resources 9:00 a.m.	15.	16
17	18 Women's History Month Program @ Central Library	19	20 Transportation/ Waterfront 10:00 a.m.	21 Education Committee 1:30 p.m.	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						