



# The League of Women Voters

## of Buffalo/Niagara

# VOTER

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Summer 2013

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### Annual Meeting



On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the League was honored to recognize a number of people for their outstanding commitment to the community or the League at its Annual Meeting. Michael Kuzma, recipient of the 2012 Making Democracy Work award presented the 2013 award to Kathie Capozzi and Erin Robinson (left) of the Clean Air Coalition on behalf of award honoree, Erin Heaney.

Janet Massaro accepted the Joan K. Bozer award on behalf of Anne Huberman with a warm statement from Anne. Lyle Toohey introduced the League's new LEE Award that honors three outstanding and long serving League leaders, Lee Lambert and Lee Tetkowsky and the late Lenore Banks. Lyle presented special League Logo Pins and an award certificate to Lee Lambert and Lee Tetkowsky with our esteem and thanks for their exemplary service to the League.

John A. Curr III introduced his colleague from the New York Civil Liberties Union and our guest speaker, Katharine ES Bodde (right). The audience enthusiastically received her remarks about the Women's Equality Act. Katharine's words and suggestions for action were a most fitting way to end the day a reminder that each of us spreads "ripples of hope" each time we act in response to the issues we value as League members.



#### 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 REPORT AND BOARD ACTIONS

The proposed slate of board and nominating committee members was elected at the Annual Meeting. Congratulations to everyone who has agreed to serve the League in these important leadership positions. The board approved the following responsibilities for board members at its July meeting:

Judy Clarke, 1<sup>st</sup> V. President, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Judy Metzger, 2<sup>nd</sup> V. President, Membership Chair  
 Janet Goodsell, 3<sup>rd</sup> V. President, Issues Committee Chair  
 Patricia Costanzo, Finance Committee Chair  
 Eugene Abrahamson, Fund Development Chair  
 Joyce Bol, Voter Service Chair

Barbara Jezioro, Voter Editor  
 Sandy Chelnov, Voter Copy Editor  
 Dot Brown, Youth Program Chair  
 Dorothy Tao, Public Relations Chair  
 Therese Pope, PR Committee

They join Secretary, Ramona Gallagher, Treasurer, Lori Robinson and me to comprise the 2013-2014 LWVBN Board of Directors.

The board made these additional appointments:

Finance Committee members appointed by the board: Judy Clarke and Lyle Toohey  
 Board members appointed by the board to the Executive Committee: Dorothy Tao and Therese Pope  
 Board members for the Nominating Committee: Ramona Gallagher, Therese Pope and Dorothy Tao  
 Nominating Committee Chair, Kathleen McCarthy and members, Lynda Stephens, Lyle Toohey and Judy Weidemann, were elected at the Annual Meeting.

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, the board will host a planning retreat and invite participation of the nominating committee and program committee chairs.

*Terri Parks*

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The League Office hours have changed. They will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. It is important that you continue to call the office if you plan to go there. Sometimes Mary Ann will be there alone and may be out of the building on League business.

Because we cannot guarantee twenty hours of supervised work each week, we can no longer have a volunteer from Supportive Services. We continue to have the valued help of Flora Summe, whose voice may greet you when you call the office.

### UN Day In NYC To Be Offered Again

The state League is pleased to offer League Day at the United Nations again. We've been waiting for renovations of the UN to be completed so we can arrange the tour, lunch and briefings – and we're told that most of the work is completed.

This year's briefing will be held on Tuesday, October 8, and will focus on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign; this multi-year campaign is aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls around the world.

### Great Decisions: Humanitarian Intervention

Marie Hanrahan, also our Historian, has chosen to lead our fifth Great Decisions discussion on Thursday, August 1, 2013 (Make sure you turn over your calendars) from 10 AM - Noon at 1272 Delaware. The subject is most timely, Humanitarian Intervention. "The 'responsibility to protect' doctrine has become central to modern humanitarian intervention. When should the international community intervene? Why did the West rush to intervene in Libya but not Syria?" What are our answers to these questions? Find out by attending. (Note: My apologies for not getting the notice of July's meeting into the "Voter".) Thanks to Elsa Bondar for coming to my rescue and putting it on line.

*Bernice Baumler*

## LWVBN NEWS AND NOTES

### Grassroots Action For all League Members

Currently, there are several important issues in New York State and Washington, DC that will surely provide opportunities for action by individual League members. The state League sends *Action Alert* requests to all members who have provided e-mail addresses with their membership. Recently, we were asked to call our state representatives about the Women's Equality Agenda. Because that issue and the Campaign Finance Reform issue have not been enacted into law, we should receive requests for action when the state legislature returns to Albany. Each *Action Alert* indicates how we should take action.

The national League web site has a simple form to complete on the home page at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). It's easy to receive national *Action Alerts* and other news and updates that you choose when you sign up. Click on Get Involved in the main menu at the top of the home page. You may choose from several options. The Grassroots Lobby Corps will deliver action requests to your inbox. There are four current action requests shown. There will most likely be more requests for action related to the Immigration Reform legislation, climate change and the Supreme Court ruling that "cut the heart out of the Voting Right Act". You may also choose to receive *League News and Updates* and *Voting and Election News*.

You may choose to respond by e-mail, phone call or write your own message on a post card or letter and mail it. You may edit the sample letters also. It is important that we each let our elected officials know what we need from them on the crucial issues related to voters rights and the other vital issues that are important to us all.

*Terri Parks, President, LWV Buffalo/Niagara, New York*

### Climate Smart Communities: Some Exciting Developments

President Obama's long awaited Climate Change speech comes at a time when the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program moves forward, especially in the village of East Aurora along with some hopeful and exciting developments at the county level.

Environmental considerations for the East Aurora's new Fire Hall, that will be LEED certified, are in place and the village is including greenhouse gas emission (GHG) data for the town of Aurora in a baseline GHG emission inventory for both town and village. The inventory is will be used to determine how to meet a targeted reduction of GHG emissions going forward, by conserving energy and reducing fossil fuels, while saving taxpayer dollars. It is being completed under the guidance of two knowledgeable volunteer professionals from the community, Laurie Kutina and Fred Fellendorf.

In addition, our League's Judy Weidemann and Sandy Chelnov have convened a community-based climate smart committee (as distinct from the village committee that is working under the leadership of Deputy Mayor - and League member - Libby Weberg) so as to increase community involvement in both the village of East Aurora and the town of Aurora, to better educate the public and to assist households to reduce their GHG emissions. One idea is to make use of the "Low Carbon Diet" that many League members took on several years ago (collectively "losing" over 22,000 lbs of CO2!) Dr. John Newton from East Aurora has also proposed using GIS to map paved areas in the community (that affect the heating of the atmosphere) and to then look into alternatives available to reduce the warming impact of the pavement, involving students and "citizen scientists" in the community.

Last, but not least, Erie County will be submitting soon two grant applications as part of the Cleaner, Greener New York, regional sustainability planning process. If granted, the first will provide for outreach and education about the Climate Smart Communities program in both Erie and Niagara Counties. It will also target a number of climate smart municipalities, providing them with technical assistance and funding to get them going on the path to reducing their GHG emissions. A second grant proposal will enable Erie County to set up its own internal "Green Team" so as to effectively reduce its operational GHG emissions. Erie County has requested that LWVBN send a letter of support to be included with the applications. In addition, the Western New York Environmental Alliance (WNYEA) will be sending a letter of support, an action made possible because, at the beset of LWVBN, the (emerging!) Campaign for Climate Smart Communities in Erie and Niagara Counties was accepted last year as part of WNYEA's Action Agenda.

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee*

**League of Women Voters of N.Y. State 55<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention, June 1-2, 2013**

Forty leagues and members-at-large units represented by 99 delegates participated in the state league's 55th Biennial Convention, an increase in attendance and representation from the 2011 convention. Delegates approved the 2013-2014 budget, elected the slate of officers and board members for 2013-2015 proposed by the nominating committee and voted to retain all our remaining positions as part of the 2013-2015 program.

The delegates recommended concurrence on a Human Trafficking position, which has already been approved by the number of leagues required including LWVBN. The new LWVNY position on human trafficking follows: Human forced labor and sex trafficking should be stopped through legislation and changes in public policy. Those who have been commercially sexually exploited or coerced into slave labor, or who are minors, should be considered as victims of human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking should be provided with services to facilitate integration into the community. The state Board recommended, and the delegates approved, a study on term limits for members of the state legislature and statewide officials. As approved by the delegates, this study will only go forward if a chair and a working committee are found.

Delegates also approved a non-recommended study to determine if another form of primary would be beneficial to the democratic process in New York State. The study is limited to the ballot for state legislative and statewide offices, but it will consider the entire process by which individuals get on the ballot for the general election, including the issue of being endorsed by more than one political party.

The state Board recommended, and the delegates approved an update of our position on the Constitutional Convention with an emphasis on the method of delegate selection. This update will be very limited in scope and background research will be done primarily by the state office but will require interested League members to volunteer to be part of the update committee.

**Please contact [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org) or Sally Robinson at [robintwins@gmail.com](mailto:robintwins@gmail.com), or call the office at 518-465-4162 if you are interested in participating in any of the three studies above.**

Amy Witryol and Gladys Gifford each prepared and presented detailed statements as *Directions to the Board* about these non-recommended program items: Proposal that the LWVNY take a position against expansion of the one hazardous waste landfill operation in the state in Niagara County, and Support for improved public transit to maximize equality of opportunity for all and 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.

Our nine-person delegation also met with Lisa Scott for an informal chat Friday evening. Lisa is our league's Membership/Leadership Program coach and conferences with LWVBN's membership team members monthly. She is an excellent resource and coach with much League leadership experience.

**Advocacy and Issues:** Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNY Legislative Director, gave us an insider's look at the NYS legislative process – how legislation is passed or killed and how deals are made. Barb talked mainly about two issues - Campaign Finance Reform and Women's Equality Agenda and the active role the League played in work on actual wording of proposed legislation.

**Election Reform Issues Caucus:** Aimee Allaud spoke briefly of legislation LWVNY supported, discussed the post-election LWVNY survey and handed out a copy of HAVA funds allocated to each county's BOE as part of the 2001 HAVA Legislation.

**Health Care Caucus:** It focused primarily on the single payer option and its advantages over traditional health insurance plans. A bill has been crafted to establish this type of health care in New York State but has not come up for a vote. The single payer option has no co-pays and is funded by a progressive tax paid by all who participate in the plan.

**Membership Growth and Leadership Development:** Membership messages are familiar - but critical - working together as a team so every new member is welcomed and feels comfortable being in League and finding a meaningful role. The workshop gave hints on how to do this skillfully and with intentionality. The presentation stressed getting members involved in activities that are neither too easy nor too difficult for them, but that are interesting and challenging for them.

**Vote 411:** Sarah Podber, was very patient and expertly guided the class in an abbreviated, whirlwind course in how to use this computer program to create, use and publish the electronic voter guide.

**Voter Service Workshop:** Maggie Moehringer, past state Voter Service chair, stressed that it is an absolute necessity to maintain reputation for non-partisanship and the perception of fair and impartial conduct in holding candidate events. She suggested there be a planning meeting in the summer regarding all fall elections – plan where you want to have forums early. Each League needs to have clear policies regarding forums, meet the candidate events and debates. Be sure to dot the “i’s” and cross the “t’s” before the fall. Someone must be in touch with candidates to ensure they will attend. Respond to groups who want us to co-sponsor a forum to “let them do the work.” Invite a Boy or Girl Scout troop to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. According to FCC regulations, there is supposed to be nonpartisan agreement between the League and the press. Resources are available at the National League Web site: <http://www.lwv.org/content/faqs> with details re polices on holding candidate forums and debates.

**Youth Programs of Local Leagues:** “Without youth, we are finished!” said Judy Gorenstein, LWVNY Youth Program Director as she opened the program. Then representatives from Chautauqua, Huntington, Smithtown, and Scarsdale described their programs, which were well planned cooperative efforts with such local service organizations as the board of elections, the Girl Scouts, the middle School, and the youth board. Marcia Merrins, from Chautauqua: described an October mock election they planned with their Board of Elections (BOE), and which received the Convention’s first prize for Youth Programs. The project was adapted from “Take Me to Vote,” a League Initiative for fourth graders, and “Vote Eighteen,” also a League Initiative, from which they customized their materials depending on the age level of the youth involved.

This is just one of the four well conceived and executed programs described with excellent documentation on the convention website, which would be fine models if we decide to engage in youth outreach. As was said, “Without Youth, we ARE finished!” Plus the moderator mentioned that the NY State Curriculum has a voting requirement at the 4th grade level. The four local Leagues showed they are well aware of problems such as customizing for age specific programs that arose and offered to help other Leagues who are interested in setting up similar programs. The workshops and caucuses noted above provide opportunities for action within LWVBN or with the state League. Please contact one of us if there’s anything above that you’re interested in pursuing for our League.

**Saturday night’s featured speaker** was Mickey Edwards, a sixteen-year Republican congressman from Oklahoma ( 1077-92), former professor at Harvard and Princeton, and astute observer of the partisan crisis we have in government today. He drew his insightful material from his newest book, *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans.* He believes that the current way we finance and conduct elections and draw district lines for representation result in ultra partisanship in government. A League book club might well find much to discuss while reading it.

This shortened convention packed much into a day and a half. We came home with many practical and inspiring ideas and a new appreciation for the fine people who lead our local and state Leagues. As Barbara Jezioro wrote, “It was a privilege to meet so many articulate and talented women.”

*Ramona Gallagher, Gladys Gifford, Barbara Jezioro, Janet Massaro, Terri Parks,  
Lori Robinson, Dorothy Tao, Mary Ann Turkla, Amy Witryol*

## The Erie County Budget

The new local program focus adopted at the League of Women Voters June 2013 annual meeting is to: *Examine and investigate the Erie County budget and budget process for the purpose of taking action consistent with League positions and priorities.* During this year, the local government committee is expected to prepare substantive programs regarding the budget with the goal of educating the committee, League members and the general public. One way to begin this process is to understand the procedure for adoption of the Erie County Budget. The Division of Budget and Management works to ensure that the County's budget is in balance and that it allocates its resources in a manner that is consistent with the County's priorities and with the goals and objectives of County departments.

One of the most important powers of the county legislature is to annually adopt the Erie County Budget. The county's fiscal year is January 1 - December 31. In adopting the budget, the legislature, in part, makes appropriations, levies taxes and incurs indebtedness.

On or before the 15th day of October each year, the county executive must submit a tentative budget for the ensuing fiscal year, a financial forecast for the two (2) subsequent years, a capital program for the next six (6) fiscal years and an accompanying message. Upon receipt of the tentative budget, the county legislature's budget committee schedules hearings to consider proposed amendments to the county executive's recommendations. Amendments that add or increase items are subject to approval by the county executive. Decreases made by the legislature are not. The report of the budget committee to the legislature must lie on the table of the legislature at least 48 hours prior to the annual meeting to adopt the budget. The annual meeting to adopt the budget must be held on or before the first Tuesday in December.

If the legislature adopts a budget without additions or increases, no further action by the county executive is required. However, if the budget adopted by the legislature contains additions or increases, it must be presented to the county executive for his consideration. If the county executive objects to one or more of the added or increased items he must inform the legislature so that they have an opportunity to override his veto. Two-thirds of the voting membership is required to override a veto.

During the summer, the Legislature conducts mid-year budget hearings of all County departments, this year beginning on Monday, July 15. The primary objective of these hearings is to gain insight into the fiscal status of departmental budgets and consideration of corrective measures advanced at the hearings.

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**The local government committee is looking to add a few more enthusiastic members to help us plan creative programs for the coming year. We meet at 1:15 on the second Wednesday of the month at the League office. Please contact Marian Deutschman for more information.**

*Marian Deutschman, Local Government Chair*

*The League of Women Voters:  
Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement  
Join the LWV and help shape the issues that keep our community fair, vibrant and strong.*

## SAVE THE DATE: Social Economic Justice Education Committee Plans September 19, 2013 Program

The committee is busy planning the LWVB/N Kick-Off Program. **Please save 6-8 PM on Thursday, September 19, 2013** for an informative evening at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center Auditorium. We expect our panel of four speakers to address a most critical current issue.

*“Widespread poverty and concentrated wealth cannot long endure side by side in a democracy,” Thomas Jefferson.*

The Jefferson quote establishes both the September theme and inspires topics that will be developed by our speakers:

1. The impact of growing income inequality on US democracy
2. Corporate ownership of media and government
3. Austerity that cuts jobs and hurts the US economy
4. What does good government look like and how can we get it?

We look forward to seeing you at the Burchfield Penney Art Center Auditorium at 6PM on September 19.

*Lynda Stephens, Social Economic Justice Education Committee Chair*

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara deeply appreciates the gifts to the League in from July 1, 2012 until June 30, 2013 from the people below. Most donations were received at the time of membership renewal, in memory of deceased League members, or as response to our Annual Appeal letter. Your generous support enables the League to continue its Voter Service efforts and work for current League issues.

Allen, Kristin M	Cudney, Toni	Gardner, William	McLean, Lillis	Saxton, Ann
Allen, Sue Fay	Dabney, Lois	Gessner, Teresa	Metivier, Barbara	Schuster, Alvin
Annis, Agnes & Robert	Deutschman, Marian	Gibson, Ellen	Metzger, Judy	Sciolino, Janet
Banas, Phyllis	DiFranco, E.C. Ross	Gifford, Gladys	Metzger, Sarah G.	Scott, Marcia
Bass, Marian	Donovan, Judith M.	Gooding-Cadwell, Jean	Metzger, Elizabeth	Sillman, Joan
Baeumler, Bernice	Dozoretz, Alan	Goodsell, Janet M.	Meyer, Lois	Stephens, Lynda
Bartkowski, Tom	Dyson, Pauline	Haines, Ruth	Miles, Arlene	Stevenson, Norma
Bol, Joyce	Ebel, Dorinne	Holmes, M. Frances	Minklei, Paula	Tao, Dorothy
Bondar, Elsa	Edgcomb, Jean M.	Huber, Judith	Moehlau, Sally Roy	Tetkowski, Lenore
Bozer, Joan & John	Egan, Mary & Ted	Huberman, Anne	Nelson, Evelyn Fogg	Toohey, Lyle & Phil
Bowen, Cathleen E.	Egan, Patricia	Jansen, Marie	Neumaier, Ellen	Tritto, Marjorie
Brooks, Lawrence	Ellis, Mary Ann	Jeziro, Barbara	Parks, Terri	Vallone, Lynne
Brown, Dorothy J.	Eschner, Joan	Johnson, Maxine	Photiadis, Joan	Valvo, Francine
Brunson, Margaret	Falk, Allene	Keller, Marilee	Pine, Ellen	Westhafer, Dorothy
Capodicasa, Judith	Fay, Marion	Krist, Betty	Plumb, Marjorie	Wholahan, Jean
Cardoso, Rosemarie	Ferranti, Sandra	Lindquist, Susan	Popowich, Ramona	Wilkins, Lynn
Cary, Martha	Flickinger, Mary	Lista, Ellen	Quinn, Betty	Willyoung, Karen
Casassa, Judy	Fraser, Patricia	Martina, Linda	Radford, Gail	Witryol, Amy
Cheek, Freddie	Frederick, Arlene	Massaro, Janet	Robinson, Lorraine	Witt, Susan
Clarke, Judith	Freedman, Allan	McCarthy, Kathleen	Rubin, Dianne	Zobel, Joyce
Collins, Ruth	Gallagher, Ramona	McCormick, Kathleen	Sahaf, M.Ashraf	
Costanzo, Pat	Gardner, Marjorie	McDade, Laura	Saunders, Linda	

Contributions were received in memory of Miriam Becker, Richard Edgcomb and Harry A. Moehlau Jr.

Contributions were received to honor Allene Falk, Judy & Jim Metzger, Terri Parks and Lee Tetkowski



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August 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Great Decisions 10 am	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Planning Retreat 4-7pm Audubon Library	13	14 Local Government 1:15 pm	15 Natural Resources 9 am	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Women's Equality Day	27	28 Social/Economic Justice 1:30 pm	29	30	31