



# The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

# VOTER

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10 times per year. Items for  
the April issue are due  
Friday, March 7

## League of Women Voters – Buffalo/Niagara Presents:

### **LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMON CORE: A FORUM FOR THE COMMUNITY**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.**  
Unitarian Universalist Church, 695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Mark Garrison, Professor, Education Policy/  
Research, D'Youville College

#### **Panel:**

Robert Christmann, Executive Director WNY Services Council  
Dr. Mira Tetkowsky Berkley, Assoc. Professor, Early Childhood Education,  
SUNY Fredonia

Molly Dana, MA, Curriculum Instruction; West Seneca Parent  
Danilo Lawvere, Teacher, Iroquois Central; Amherst Parent

#### **Areas of Discussion:**

Origin of Common Core Standards (CCS)

Relation of CCS to:

No Child Left Behind/Race to the Top

Implementation

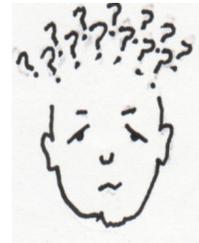
Relation to testing

Privacy concerns

Co-sponsor: Social Justice Task Force, Unitarian  
Universalist Church of Buffalo

Free parking on Elmwood and on West Ferry. Everyone welcome.

For more information please call LWVBN office at 884-3550.



#### League of Women Voter's 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

**Service Above and Beyond the Call** It was cold, snowy and roads were pretty bad, but our intrepid Office Manager, Mary Ann Turkla, made the drive to the office on January 8 to make sure the that our League members had the information to share with new citizens the next day. She found that the driveway and parking lot hadn't been plowed, so she headed home empty handed. Mary Ann surely deserves our respect and thanks for one more example of her outstanding service to the League. It was intrepid Volunteer Coordinator, Judy Clarke, who made her way to the Board of Elections and got the registration forms for folks to use the next day. Thanks, Judy!

Several other folks deserve recognition for heading to Eastern Hills Mall during heavy snows and blustery windy days, especially Judy Huber and Eugene Abrahamson. All of us who worked at this year's gift-wrap were disappointed in the location in the Food Court at Eastern Hills Mall. It was too far removed from most of the stores and business was much less than in previous years.

The League received a most generous bequest from the estate of Nancy Ryther. At the February board meeting, the board approved a motion to use a portion of the Nancy E. Ryther bequest to pay for necessary technology and related upgrades and invest the remainder in our present investment vehicle(s).

We have also received over \$2100, in donations in memory of Mary Zaehring. The board created the Mary Zaehring Fund to recognize outstanding leadership and service to the League. Donations in Mary's name will be restricted to the Joan K. Bozer and LEE Service Awards and any other awards that may be created to recognize outstanding leadership and service to the League.

The board approved the appointment of Amy Witryol as the 2014 budget committee chair and Marian Deutschman as the committee member representing a committee that works on LWVBN issues. As our bylaws require, the budget committee also includes treasurer, Lori Robinson, fund development chair, Eugene Abrahamson, and voter service chair, Joyce Bol. Mary Ann Turkla and Terri Parks will be ex officio members.

The *2014 They Represent You* is beng mailed to all members with the updated information for officials elected in the November 2013 elections. Thank you, Mary Ann Turkla and Flora Summe for your fine work and Ramona Gallagher for adding one more pair of eyes to the proofreading.

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

Hopefully weather will permit our resuming Great Decisions on Thursday March 6 form 10 AM- Noon at 1272 Delaware. The 2014 books arrived and will be distributed at that time to those who ordered them. The price is \$18.00. At the same time we'll be looking for leaders for the 8 topics. Also bring your 2013 book because the opinion ballot results are in and we can compare our ideas with the rest of the responders.

*Bernice Baeumler*

### IMPORTANT

**Mary Ann Turkla will be on vacation from March 1-12. The office will be open on some, but not all of the work days during that time. Please call the office and check the phone message for more specific information. Plan ahead and get things you need during those days by February 28. Contact Terri Parks if you need further assistance.**

### Did You Know?

Erie County has responsibility for 2400 lane miles of road or 1177 miles of road, more than that of three states (Delaware, Rhode Island and Hawaii). None of these miles/lanes are in the cities in Erie County except the south side of Kenmore Avenue which is owned by the city of Buffalo. The county works with Buffalo on the south side of Kenmore Avenue. (*Note: This is a correction from a previous reference to Erie County roads in the Voter.*)

*Marian Deutschman, chair, local government committee*

## Term Limits/Ballot Access - What Do You Think?

Studies of these two major issues are underway in local Leagues across the State. Our League has begun by focusing first on term limits. The following is a brief historical overview of this important topic.

- Restricting the number of years that elected officials can serve has been vigorously debated even before our nation's founding. Although term limits were not included in the U.S. Constitution, they remained a popular principle throughout the 1800's, with many elected officials voluntarily leaving office.
- In response to Franklin D. Roosevelt's election to a fourth term, the 22<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1951, limiting the Presidency to no more than two full elected terms.
- Another strong effort to enact term limits emerged in the 1990's, when twenty-one states passed laws limiting the terms of their Congressional members as well as state legislators and governors.
- In 1991, the LWVUS announced its opposition to Congressional term limits but allowed its' 1976 position in support of a two term Presidential limit to remain unchanged.
- In 1994, the LWV of Washington and Arkansas participated in suits challenging state imposed term limits, leading to the 1995 Supreme Court ruling which declared state imposed restrictions on federal offices unconstitutional, but allowed state limits to stand.
- In 1996, the LWVNY adopted the National League's position, opposing term limits for the members of the NYS legislature as well as state wide elected officials.
- At the 2013 NYS League convention, it was agreed that this issue would be revisited and studied to reach consensus.
- Presently, 15 states have term limits for legislatures. Of the original 21 states that passed term limits, six have either been repealed by their legislatures or invalidated by state courts. The most common limit is eight years, but others range from 6 years to twelve. Some states have a lifetime ban while others allow legislators to sit out a term, and then run again.
- In 36 states, governors are subject to some sort of term limit.
- Currently there are proposals in the New York State Legislature to impose term limits by statute, which could easily be repealed, or by amendment to the State Constitution, which would be difficult to change or remove.

In the wake of recent corruption scandals, 82% of New Yorkers say that they favor term limits but is this a reasoned response or is it based on frustration and emotion? What are the arguments for and against term limits? We will discuss these in the next Voter, but you need not wait until then. If you're interested in examining the facts on both sides, we'd like to hear from you. We will meet on March 19 at 1:00 p.m. at the League office at 1272 Delaware. Please join us!

*LWVBN Term Limits/Ballot Access Study Committee*

Additional material is available at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)

## Education Committee

At their January, 2014 meeting, the Education Committee hosted Dr. Laura Klenk, Assistant Professor of Literacy at Buffalo State. She enriched our knowledge about the controversy connected with the Common Core Standards (CC), which have been adopted by most states.

The idea that students across the country would have the same educational accomplishments at each grade level has merit, as does having schools provide challenges for higher achievement. Dr. Klenk reminded us that CC was meant to be a set of goals to standardize education geographically, not to be a curriculum. She explained that CC has not been tested anywhere and that the implementation of the Common Core Standards is occurring in most school districts without adequate staff preparation time, resulting in "on the job learning." Unlike pre CC, Dr. Klenk's student teachers recently had less than ideal experiences with their supervising teachers, who are experiencing high stress because of the implementation.

New York State had sound standards before Common Core and the State Education Department worked with teachers in their implementation. Dr. Klenk believes the Federal Government should sponsor research in education, and teachers should have freedom to teach their way.

Some issues that Dr. Klenk asks us to consider as we investigate Common Core:

- The idea that one size fits all
- The need for adjustment for various ways of life and mobile populations
- The school to work concept
- Is college for everyone?
- The influence of business and industry in providing study and testing materials as well as the great cost involved
- The change in kindergarten curricula from a socializing/readiness experience to the learning of academic skills
- Is participation driven by the pursuit of funding?

As always, Education Committee Meetings are open to all and held the third Thursday of each month, with the next meeting on February 20th at 1:30 p.m. at the League Office. Copies of the Common Core State Standards can be viewed at [www.p12.nysed.gov/cai/common\\_core\\_standards](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cai/common_core_standards).

*Lee Tetkowsky and Maxine Inera, Education Committee*

## Membership News

Our annual membership drive will begin in a few months. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining or supporting the league, please e-mail your suggestions to [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org). The membership committee members will follow up on them.

New member, Christine Vogel, LWVBN Action Chair, is a practicing attorney in the Feroletto Law firm. Christine's passion for fighting for the little guy is her motivating force and she brings to her job a background of working with others on vegetable and dairy farms and as an instructor for people with disabilities and working to enhance the workplace for the "little guy". She has also been a commercial welder.

Christine agreed to be our Action Chair to help insure that visits to our state Senate and Assembly delegation take place this spring where traditionally leaguers discuss and report the NYS league agenda. Welcome Christine!

Congratulations to League member, Gail Radford, Ph.D. on the publication of her latest book, *The Rise of Public Authorities, Statebuilding and Economic Development in the 20th Century*. Gail is a professor in the University at Buffalo History Department. Her book is available on Amazon.

*Judy Metzger, Membership Chair*

## Naturalization Ceremonies

League of Women Voters Buffalo/ Niagara volunteers participated in three naturalization ceremonies during January and the beginning of February. Susan Steivater and Judith Clarke represented the LWVBN on January 6, 2014 at the U.S. Courthouse. The same site was used for the ceremony on January 23, 2014, which Dorothy Tao and Judy Weidemann attended. The February 6, 2014 ceremony at the courthouse was attended by JoAnn Mecca and Dorothy Brown. Our appreciation goes out to these volunteers. They have served the LWVBN in this capacity many times.

If you are looking for opportunities to serve the League and our community, volunteering to represent the League at these ceremonies is a very rewarding experience. Please let us know if you are interested.

*Judith Clarke, Volunteer Coordinator*

## LWVUS Convention, June 6-10. Dallas, Texas

LWVBN is entitled to four voting delegates at the convention. The board appointed Ramona Gallagher and Terri Parks as two of them. If more than four members are interested, we will be able to have folks carry credentials from a League that will not attend. That will enable them to be voting delegates. The first Plenary will be Sunday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m. and the closing session is scheduled to end at noon on June 10. Please contact Terri if you'd like to represent our League. We will be promoting the program item below that was suggested by the Social Economic Justice Education Committee and approved by the board at the February board meeting:

As part of Convention 2014, The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara recommends a review and update of the Federal Fiscal Policy positions to address growing income inequality, which we believe is due in part to failure of the US government to implement a progressive tax system that is generally free of preferences.

Based on our research, study and program events about socio-economic justice issues and increasing income inequality during the past two years, we believe the time is now to focus again on the League of Women Voters of the United States Federal Fiscal Policy, which was adopted in the 1980s. Given the present state of our Union, we find the existing Policy is still relevant and viable and just needs to be placed on the "front-burners" of League's attention. The United States Congress keeps "kicking the can down the road" and has failed to implement measures to get our fiscal house in order...enough is enough.

*Terri Parks*

## An Special Invitation to All Members

On April 5, 2014, The League of Women Voters of New York State will host a Regional Workshop in Rochester at the Brighton Parks and Rec Building. We hope many members will attend this regional meeting that will give us a chance to network with other leagues and get specific information from both state and local league leaders. It will be fun to meet other League members from our region of the state and have a chance to share our successes and challenges.

Please contact the League office if you plan to attend. We'll surely have car-pooling and a most enjoyable time together. The registration form includes the workshop topics for the day and is included with this Voter. I'll gladly buy your lunch if you send your registration form to the office or email it to me at [events@lwvbn.org](mailto:events@lwvbn.org). Please also let us know by phone or email to the League office if you'll attend, so we can arrange the car pools.

*Terri Parks*



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## March Meetings

**Tues., 3/4, 4:30 p.m.**

Issues Committee, Harlem Rd.  
Community Center

**Thurs., 3/6, 10 a.m.**

Great Decisions, League Office

**Mon., 3/10, 4 p.m.**

Board Meeting, League Office

**Wed., 3/12, 1:15 p.m.**

Local Government Committee  
League Office

**Wed., 3/12, 7 – 9 p.m.**

Common Core Forum, Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo

**Wed., 3/19, 1:00 p.m.**

Term Limits/Ballot Access Committee  
League Office

**Thurs., 3/20, 9:30 a.m.**

Natural Resources, East Aurora

**Thurs., 3/20, 1:30 p.m.**

Charter Schools/Education Committee  
League Office

**Wed., March 26, 1:30 p.m.**

Social/Economic Justice Committee  
League Office

Copy for April Voter due 3/7/2014