



The League of Women Voters® of Buffalo/Niagara INC.

VOTER

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VOTER is published monthly except July. Copy is due the Friday following the monthly board meeting.

Join us for the LWVBN Annual Meeting and Luncheon Saturday, June 6, 2009

Read the details in the Call to Annual Meeting enclosure.
Reservations are due by May 29, 2008.

Senate Committee Endorses \$475 Million for Great Lakes Restoration in Budget

On March 27, 2009, the U.S. Senate Budget Committee passed its budget resolution that calls for a commitment of \$475 million to restore the Great Lakes by addressing problems such as invasive species, habitat loss, and toxic pollution. Senator Debbie Stabenow led the committee effort.

Since that announcement, Senate leaders have urged for the inclusion of the new restoration fund in the Congressional budget. Signatories to the letter include Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Russ Feingold (D-Wis.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio).

“Fully funding the President’s request will be a big step forward in the multi-year effort to restore the Great Lakes and revive the economy,” said Jill Ryan executive director of Freshwater Future and co-chair of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition. “We need to make sure that the momentum being generated in the halls of Congress and the White House to restore the lakes lead to results for the millions of people who depend on the Great Lakes for their jobs, drinking water and public health 365 days a year.”

According to the Brookings Institution, an investment of \$26 billion to restore the Great Lakes will lead to at least \$50 billion in economic benefit for the region. For more information visit: <http://www.healthylakes.org/>

Ann Ingleman, Regional Water Issues

President's Message

Spring marks the completion of many of this year's projects and programs. We reached consensus on the National Popular Vote Study on April 20, but our eco-teams continue to their efforts "lose" 5000 pounds of CO₂ per person in a year.

We will welcome Mary Wilson, President of LWVUS, to our long awaited Taffy Tarbell Memorial Event at the new Burchfield Penney Art Center on April 30.

The LeaderSpark program has concluded and three graduates of the program went to Albany for the Students Inside Albany conference. Thank you to **Loretta and Chuck Peszynski, Joann Ross, Nuala Drescher, Dr. Mary Davis, Theresa Pope and Tretobia Powers**, who worked so hard to make this year's program a great success.

We have also been making plans for next year. Our annual meeting will mark the conclusion of the current League year and the beginning of the new League year. Our committees have prepared the program, budget, bylaws revisions and slate of officers to be presented to you, the members of LWVB/N, at the annual meeting on June 6.

I look forward to seeing all of you at Le Metro for a fun and informative Annual Meeting.

Margaret Brunson, Co-president, Administration

April Board Highlights

- The proposed budget for 1009-2010 was presented by committee chair, Laura McDade
- The proposed LWVB/N Program for 2009-2010 was presented by Loretta Peszynski representing the issues committee.
- Terri Parks presented the bylaws revisions proposed by the bylaws committee.
- Judy Weidemann presented the slate of officers proposed by the nominating committee.
- Susan Davis was appointed to complete the term of treasurer through the end of the fiscal year.
- We had a brief presentation on the pros and cons of applying for 501c3 status.
- We selected eight LWVB/N members to represent us as delegates at the May LWNYS convention: Margaret Brunson, Loretta Peszynski, Lee Lambert, Gladys Gifford, Ellen Neumaier, Janet Massaro, Amy Witroyl, and the recipient of the Taffy Tarbell award. Lyle Toohey and Joann Ross will attend the convention in their roles at the state level

Great Decisions

Marie Hanrahan will facilitate our 4th Great Decisions discussion for 2009, The Arctic Age, when we hopefully will reconvene at 1272 Delaware on Thursday, May 7 from 10 AM - noon. "Rising global temperatures have created new opportunities in the Arctic for resource extraction and intercontinental transport. How will sovereignty disputes among the five countries that border the Arctic affect its potential development? What impact will this race for the Arctic have on an environment already in serious flux?" As you know Great Decisions is not for the faint of heart, so we look forward to seeing all you brave souls tackling another one of Planet Earth's problems.

Bernice Baeumler

Local Government News

On March 10th, Anne Huberman, Marian Deutschman and Lynne Vallone of the Local Government Committee attended a luncheon presentation on the city manager form of city government. League participation was at the invitation of Councilmember Joe Golombek. Darnell Earley, city manager in Saginaw, Michigan, gave a compelling presentation on the benefits of a city manager. He is also the president of the International City/County Management Association.

Mr. Earley reported that a professional city manager has specific training in management, law, finance and other areas related to the administration of a municipality and takes an oath to adhere to a code of ethics. He said this process improves the measurement and evaluation of performance. It also improves the efficiency and efficacy of city government management. He further maintained that city manager administrations result in a new way of doing business and reduced nepotism, patronage and "pay to play" government. The code of ethics of city managers instructs them to serve and not benefit from their positions. Continuing training is also required.

Establishing a city manager form of government in Buffalo would require a change in the city charter. If Councilmember Golombek gathers enough support for this change to put it on the November ballot, the Local Government Committee would recommend that the League sponsor a program on the topic that discusses the pros and cons of this approach.

Lynne Vallone, Local Government Committee

On April 8, 2009, several committee members met with the Buffalo News Editorial Board, led by Mike Vogel, to advocate for our new position on intergovernmental relationships. Anne Huberman, Marian Deutschman, Arlene Miles and Lynda Stephens reviewed the when, why and how of the three-year Merger/Consolidation Study. We introduced our presentation with identification of the various forms of intergovernmental relationships and a reading of the position adopted by the LWVB/N membership in June 2008. We walked them through our findings as expressed in past Voter articles: Facilitating Factors and Barriers, Impressions from Readings, Call for Consensus, and "To Merge or Not to Merge", the latter a summary of Regional Institute Director Kate Foster's February 2008 presentation. Copies of these articles, along with our position statement, were given to the Editorial Board. We requested they consider our research and criteria for assessing intergovernmental relationships when they write editorial opinions.

Lynda Stephens, Local Government Committee Co-chair

We're sad to report that fifty year League member, **Ruth Duke**, died April 5, 2009. Throughout her long life, Ruth was active in the political arena and served as a supervisor of election inspectors for more than twenty years. She was involved in many local arts organizations, was an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church, an education advocate and enjoyed painting and gardening.

Urgent Request from the Nominating Committee

WANTED: We seek a treasurer for our League to replace Bob Williams. Candidates should be computer literate and be willing to attend Board meetings. Interim Treasurer, Susan Davis, can teach you the ropes. Contact Laura McDade, nominating committee member, at events@lwvbn.org if you can help us yourself, or if you can suggest someone for the job.

Laura McDade

Amherst Unit News

Thank you to everyone who participated in "CleanSweep" on April 18th and especially to Sally Metzger who coordinated the effort. Our Lunch and Issues season was varied and filled with informational speakers who challenged us to participatory action. We will resume Lunch and Issues in October, but will have a Unit meeting in June so please plan to attend it when we notify you. Bring your ideas, a potential Leaguer and your willingness to serve.

Remember that our Amherst Unit continues to clean up Klein Road when weather permits. Contact Judy if interested at events@lwvbn.org

Thank you!

*Judy Metzger, Arlene Miles
and Sally Metzger*

Natural Resource News

Thank you to everyone who contacted state legislators about the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, which updated and expanded New York's Bottle Bill. Its passage is a great victory and was accomplished because of an incredible outpouring of public support.

Earth Day 2009 has passed, but we do hope you all made a resolution to use the metro, bus, carpool, bike or walk whenever possible in your travels. You'll be helping your health as well as the environment.



On April 25th, we held a follow-up Climate Change event for the eco-teams and other interested people. It's never too late to join an eco-team. We welcome your participation. You may

contact me or any of the current team leaders if you'd like to join us. Current team leaders are Ellen Moomaw & Joan Herold, East Aurora; Joan Photiadis & Delight Dann, Buffalo; Janet Massaro, Amherst; Lee Tetkowski & Janet Goodsell, Grand Island; and Judy Weidemann, LWVBN board.

Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Chair

Voter Services

Thank you, Lauren McDade and Beverly Nenno for welcoming our new citizens at the Naturalization Ceremony on April 2. I gave a presentation on voter responsibility to two Mt. Mercy High School Classes in early April and registered 30 new voters.

Joyce H. Bol, Voter Services Chair

Our League History

Helen F. Duke, of Buffalo Saturday Night, wrote an article for its April 21, 1923 edition about the League of Women Voters (a relatively new organization). She said, "the League of Women Voters has proved the claim that women's clubs and women's organized effort are enormous factors in the political world." She also said that the Erie County League of Women Voters numbers among its members "many women of strong character with the ability to envision the things they desire to accomplish – to see clearly and straight and to plan effectually to bring them to pass".

In the coming months, as I find information about the women who laid the foundation for our current League, I will write occasional vignettes on highlights of their careers. The first is Mrs. Melvin Porter, League president in 1921-1922. Marion Otis graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, where she met a fellow student, Melvin Porter, her future husband. Shortly after graduation, they moved to Buffalo, NY, where they became involved in social work.

As a social worker, Marion was especially interested in public playgrounds, and the issue of playgrounds was a recurring topic of the LWV committees on Child Welfare in Buffalo and New York City. She was a welfare worker at Westminster House and served as president of the City Federation of Women's Clubs and was a member of the American Association of University Women. She served as a regional director for the eight county WNY Region of our state League and 1929, she was secretary of the City Planning Association.

Marie Hanrahan, Historian

Dear League Members,

Membership

This may be the perfect time to interest others in joining the League. If a person joins now, they will have membership through June 2010. That is a good deal. Our main source of revenue is through membership dues. Increased membership will enable us to better carry out our mission both financially and with new, interested members.

Judy Weidemann, Membership Chair

If you change your email address, Please send an email notifying us of the change from your new e-mail address to: lwbvn@lwbvn.org, and to me at embondar@gmail.org. We need this notification to reach you by e-mail with the latest news, advocacy requests, and information.

Elsa Bondar, LWVB/N Grassroots Lobby Coordinator

Welcome to these LWVBN Members:

New:

Larry Brooks	Buffalo
Philip Rumore	Buffalo
Patricia Szarpa	East Aurora

Rejoined:

Mary Scheeder	Amherst
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LEAGUE LINGO (for new and not so new League members)

Action	giving information about and urging support of LWV positions
Call to Action	request for specific action on a LWV position
Consensus	substantial agreement of the members on an issue developed after discussion and presentation of information
Education Foundation	a tax-deductible affiliate of the LWVNYS which funds education projects
Issue	any specific topic on the local, regional, state or national program
LWV	League of Women Voters, formed in 1920 after passage of the 19 th Amendment to the Constitution that gave women the right to vote
Nonpartisan Policy	LWV does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.
Observers	LWV members who attend and monitor meetings of governmental bodies for information of importance to LWV
PMP	Per Member Payment, the portion of local dues that is directed to state and national Leagues
Portfolio	area of responsibility for a board member
Position	LWV stand on an issue upon which action may be taken
Program	issues adopted by members for study and action
VOTER	name of the newsletters issued by LWV