



The League of Women Voters  
of Buffalo/Niagara

**VOTER**

Volume 18, Number 4

December 2012

**Terri Parks**  
President  
[lwbvn@lwbvn.org](mailto:lwbvn@lwbvn.org)

**Judy Metzger**  
Membership Chair  
[lwbvn@lwbvn.org](mailto:lwbvn@lwbvn.org)

**Office:**  
1272 Delaware Ave  
Buffalo, NY 14209  
884-3550  
Fax: 882-3797  
[lwbvn@lwbvn.org](mailto:lwbvn@lwbvn.org)

**Office Manager:**  
Eugene Abrahamson

**Office Hours:**  
Tuesday and Friday  
9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Thursday  
9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
**Always call before going to the office.**

**LWVBN Home Page**  
[www.lwbvn.org](http://www.lwbvn.org)

**LWVNY Home Page**  
[www.lwbny.org](http://www.lwbny.org)

**LWVUS Home Page**  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

**Kathleen McCormick**  
Voter Editor  
[lwbvn@lwbvn.org](mailto:lwbvn@lwbvn.org)

The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the Winter issue are due Friday, December 28.

***Holiday Potluck Supper***  
***Monday, December 3***  
***5:00–8:00 p.m.***  
***Wedgewood Commons***  
***90 Wedgewood Drive, Williamsville***

Please bring a salad, vegetable, main dish or dessert to share. A \$5 per person donation will cover beverages and use of the clubhouse. You may pay at the door in cash or check made payable to LWVBN. Please make reservations by contacting the League office (884-3550 or [lwbvn@lwbvn.org](mailto:lwbvn@lwbvn.org)). Carpool if you can. Guests are welcome!

**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

Election 2012 is over for most candidates and the weary television viewing public. The huge influx of campaign funds that resulted from the Supreme Court's Citizens' United decision certainly was visible in the nasty TV ads by super political action committees that flooded the airways.

The League has advocated for campaign finance reform in New York State for thirty years. *Preserving Our Democracy: Campaign Finance Reform for New York State* is a new slide presentation from our state League about campaign finance in New York. It clearly and graphically shows the need to limit the state's sky-high contribution limits and close loopholes to limit the influence of wealthy contributors and special interest groups in political campaigns in New York.

We will present this slide show at a League program on February 14, 2013, the anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. The details of the program will be in the next issue of the VOTER. Please mark your calendar for that date to join fellow League members and other concerned citizens. We all need to work to make sure our state legislators and the governor enact campaign finance reform legislation in the next session of the New York State legislature.

The board continues its work to manage the business of the League in a responsible manner. It approved the appointment of a League member to serve as Assistant Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer will work with the Treasurer to become familiar with Quick Books, our accounting program, and be available in the event that the Treasurer becomes incapacitated. The main qualification is to be comfortable using the computer.

At its November meeting, the board supported adopting the Great Lakes Ecosystem Position by concurrence. No other League members joined the board for the decision, nor did we receive any concerns or negative responses to the position when it was published in the October VOTER.

Please join us at the League's Holiday Pot Luck Supper. There will be entertainment and door prizes and most importantly, the fellowship of one of the finest groups of women and men that exists. Bring your "significant other" and best friends, and celebrate with us.

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

Great Decisions does not meet in December, January or February. We will resume our meetings on Thursday, March 7, 2013 from 10 a.m.– noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. Sixteen people ordered books. Please bring your check for \$17.60 to the March meeting to receive your books. Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Bernice Baeumler*

## WANTED: LEADERS

Strengthen your own leadership skills or share your knowledge of possible leaders in our midst! The 2013 Nominating Committee requests your input as it considers candidates for officer and board member positions to be elected at our annual meeting. There are several board positions open. Nominations for the 2014 Nominating Committee are also needed. Please feel free to recommend yourself or others by contacting Kathleen McCarthy with your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Kathleen McCarthy, 2013 Nominating Committee Chair*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### LEAGUE WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

League members spoke to several community groups in this busy election season. In October, Janet Massaro spoke to two groups in Kenmore, St Paul's Church Women's Group and the Kenmore United Methodist Church Sunday School. Joan Bozer pursued the answer to a question raised at the Temple Beth Zion Sisterhood Luncheon where she spoke in September. Anne Huberman talked about Climate Smart Communities at a meeting of the College Club on November 5.

Janet Massaro was inadvertently left off the list of people who helped produce and distribute the Voter Guide that was published in the November VOTER.

On November 1, Judy Huber and Mary Scheeder represented the League at the always inspiring new citizen ceremony at the federal courthouse. Joyce Bol will attend for the League on November 29. On December 6, Margaret and Dan Brunson will be participating. The good citizens at New Era Cap Company have made a parking place available in their company lot for League members who are going to the citizenship ceremonies. This makes life much easier for all attendees—many thanks to New Era!

The League has a contract with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority to provide guidance and oversight during the process of selecting tenant representation. This fall, Alan Dozoretz and his committee have helped with elections at West Side Community Center, Kelly Gardens, Ferry-Grider, and Kenfield-Langfield. If you would like to know more about this important work please give Al a call. It is a fundraiser for the League and offers a vital service to the community.

Our gift wrapping service opens in December in Eastern Hills Mall. Add your name to the list by calling Eugene Abrahamson in the LWVBN office.

It won't be long before spring, and the school board election cycle, is upon us. Please call Mike Egan to volunteer to help with a candidates' night in your district, or one nearby.

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator*

### IN REMEMBRANCE

Nelli Fejer, a League member since 1966, died on November 3, 2012 at the age of 96. Originally from Switzerland, she took her U. S. citizenship very seriously and joined the then Kenmore/Tonawanda unit. She was devoted to the Great Decisions group, always contributing articles pertinent to the topic under discussion. She also was active in representing the League at naturalization ceremonies. Jean Wholahan recalls how she and Lee Tetkowski would sing, "Driving Nelli home" when Nelli became hospitality chairperson. Lee described her as "hardworking and generous." Joan Photiadis added, "a gracious lady." Elsa Bondar described Nelli as "a wonderful, friendly person." She was a very good friend to me. A memorial service will be held at a date to be announced.

*Bernice Baeumler*

Nancy Ryther, a devoted League member for over 50 years, passed away recently in Oneonta, New York. Nancy was very special. She was always well informed, could summarize and simplify complex issues, was an excellent writer, and stood up for what she believed in. She was proud of her work with the League of Women Voters, and was a founding Trustee of the Western New York Sustainable Energy Association Trust. She championed renewable energy causes and events and wrote articles for the newsletter. Nancy also served on the Local Government Committee, did research for "At Taxpayers' Expense", participated in the Sprawl Campaign and researched Erie County government when we were studying consolidation.

*Joan Bozer and Janet Massaro*

## Voter Services

The Voter Registration Drive Committee initiated twenty drives this fall at eighteen venues. Forty-one volunteers plus the League office manager participated. Nineteen volunteers worked at more than one venue. The total number of forms recorded was as follows:

New Voters	106
Address Changes	187
Delivered to Board of Elections	293

Drives were held at the following locations: M&T Plaza/Downtown Market, Farmers' Market on Bidwell/Elmwood, University Community Farmers' Market, Elmwood Arts Festival, Walmart Cheektowaga, Tonawanda Farmers' Market, Broadway Market, Buffalo State College Volunteer Fair, Western New York Coalition for the Homeless, Buffalo Convention Center; International Institute, Clarence Hollow Farmers' Market, Hispanics United, Empire State College, Williamsville Farmers' Market, Unitarian Universalist Church (Elmwood), Urban League, People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH), Massachusetts Avenue Project, Walmart Amherst.

In our final report, Kate Wagner and I made some recommendations regarding locations which were not productive this year and should not be used again. The International Institute did not have enough citizens to warrant a voter registration drive. Clarence Hollow Farmers' Market provided no new voters and at Hispanics United only two voter registrations were completed. The Massachusetts Avenue Project also had a very low demand for voter registration forms with only one new voter and one change of address form being completed. Finally, although the Elmwood Arts Festival is a popular festival, our table was on a side street with the other cultural organizations and, consequently, few people came down that street.

Kate and I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our volunteers who were ready in rain or shine, setting up the table and heavy canopy. Most of them were League members, but we had a few American Association of University Women members and some friends: Barbara Carier, Freddy Cheek, Dorie Deavers, Marian Deutschman, Mary Egan, Ellen Gibson, Gladys Gifford, Janet Goodsell, Fran Holmes, Judy Huber, Beth Kaderbeck, Mary Kluczycki, Sue Licata, Sandy Marchione, Roger Marchione, Kathleen McCarthy, Kathleen McCormick, JoAnn Mecca, Peg Mergenhagen, Sally Metzger, Judy Metzger, Sandra O'Hara, Jill Weikert, John Ortner, Terri Parks, Joan Photiadias, Theresa Pope, Betty Preble, Lynne Rapin, Dianne Rubin, Mary Scheeder, Al Schuster, Joan Sillman, Dorothy Tao, Lenore Tetkowski, Lynne Vallone, Kate Wagner, Frances Witnauer, and Ginny Ziebarth.

Finally, I would like to personally express my gratitude for the hard work of the Voter Registration Drive Committee: Kate Wagner, Dorothy Tao, Constance Moss, JoAnn Mecca.

*Joyce H. Bol, Voter Services Chair*

### JANUARY EVENTS

January 7, 4:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
January 9, 1:15 p.m.	Local Government Committee
January 10, 9:00 a.m.	Natural Resources Committee
January 16, 10:00 a.m.	Transportation/Waterfront Committee
January 17, 1:30 p.m.	Education Committee
January 18, 11:30 a.m.	Lunch & Issues

## Local Government Committee

We encourage and welcome interested League members to attend the meetings of the very active Local Government Committee. What you missed this month was a meeting with Tim Callan, deputy budget director for Erie County.

Our objective for the meeting with Tim was to enable us to more effectively observe budget hearings and act if and when appropriate. We expected to learn how the budget process works, how it is developed and monitored, the legislative wheeling and dealing, and the players in the process.

We all agreed that it was a tremendous educational experience for this committee. We learned all that we expected and more. He provided extensive background on himself, his perspective on the differences between the budget of this county administration and the budgets of previous county executives. We keep in mind that a large portion of the \$1.5 billion budget is mandated (\$903 million). The budget process is outlined in the County Charter. He reminded us that the budget is a fluid planning document that includes estimates and projections. The administrative budget process begins in July and continues until approval by December 4 or December 11 (with legislative override). It was the background on the process and its various components that proved to be fascinating.

After the nearly two hour session with Tim Callan, we discussed our next steps. There were many recommendations. While we were enlightened, we expected to gain more from attendance at the budget hearings on November 13, 14 and 15. Taking a short break from the hearings, we met again November 14 to continue our discussion of next steps.

Please contact Marian Deutschman if you need more information on this committee.

*Marian Deutschman, Local Government Committee Chair*

## Amherst Unit

The next *Lunch and Issues* will be on Friday, January 18 at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant, 3999 Maple Rd. Amherst. Dr. Debra Street, a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University at Buffalo, will be the guest speaker. Her specialty is health care. She will speak about the U.S. and Canadian health care systems from a sociological perspective. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$16.00, all inclusive. Please bring a check payable to LWVBN. We will also be collecting items for Haven House, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. Socks, personal items and checks will be gratefully accepted. The luncheon and program are open to the public. For reservations, contact Sally Metzger or Judy Metzger.

We thank Mary Scheeder for chairing the Town Board Observers Committee for the past three years. We are looking for League members who can attend Amherst town board meetings held on the first and third Mondays of the month at 3:00 or 7:00 p.m. We also thank Sally Metzger for serving as a member of the Amherst Waste Committee.

*Judy Metzger, Sally Metzger and Arlene Miles, Amherst Unit Co-coordinators*

### CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY TIP

From 2007 to 2011, 35% of new electric generating capacity in the United States came from wind with less than 15% coming from coal and less than 1% coming from nuclear.

*Judy Metzger*

## Education Committee

### Meeting the New Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools

We had an opportunity to meet and hear Dr. Pamela Brown, the new Superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools, at her presentation at the Burchfield Penney Art Center on November 8. She came across as really open and sincere. We already knew of her extensive professional experience. Dr. Brown's core belief is that "all children can and must have a world-class education."

She lists *World-class Student Characteristics*:

- Experience with athletics, teamwork, health
- Adept at creative and critical thinking
- Intercultural proficiency
- Technological literacy
- Disciplined
- Ability to adapt to change

Dr. Brown described the serious state of the district: 86% economically disadvantaged students, many English language learners, many students with disabilities, a very poor annual attendance rate, low graduation rate and a high teacher turnover rate.

Priority number one is student achievement with a strong emphasis on whole child development. Toward reaching her high goals she welcomes partnering with colleagues, parents, Say YES to Education, Promise Neighborhoods, foundations, the City of Buffalo, universities, houses of worship and others. She would like to see a citywide campaign to improve attendance.

She has a formidable task to bring a world-class education to Buffalo. We hope her strong education philosophy as well as her personality will help effect positive change in the culture of the Buffalo Public Schools.

### Impact of Sequestration on Federal Education Programs

If there are across-the-board budget cuts for 2013, almost all federal education programs would be drastically cut. Here are some estimates by the Office of Management and Budget for New York State:

	Students Affected
Head Start	4,150
Grants for infants & families	2,480
Grants for preschools	5,250
Grants for special education	31,920
English language acquisition	19,110
Rural education	9,220
Education for homeless children and youths	2,350

We should contact our members of Congress urging them to stop cuts to education.

### Committee Meetings

The Education Committee will not meet in December. Our next meeting is January 17, 1:30 p.m., at the League office building (1272 Delaware Avenue).

*Lee Tetkowski, Education Committee Chair*

## Natural Resources Committee

We have been working to assemble a Climate Smart Community (CSC) Committee for the Village of East Aurora. At the first CSC Committee meeting, professionals with eight different areas of expertise attended. All were excited and willing to help make East Aurora a truly Climate Smart Community!

After getting the Village board to sign the pledge, the CSC Committee will undertake three major tasks:

1. Take an inventory of the energy used in all Village operations.
2. Pick a spotlight project. The Village intends to design its new fire hall in an environmentally sensitive manner, consistent with a previously approved resolution that any new municipal building must be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. LEED-certified buildings are designed to lower operating costs, reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, be healthier and safer for occupants, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and qualify for tax rebates.
3. Educate the public.

The Village of East Aurora CSC Committee is excited about using the Low Carbon Diet and engaging students, book clubs, church groups and businesses to compete in a fun way to reduce their personal and household energy usage (carbon footprint) as Leaguers did a few years ago with our Climate Change Cafes and Eco-teams. Soon East Aurora may be challenging other communities to reduce their carbon footprint!

Congratulations to Dorothy Westhafer, long time League of Women Voters member, for receiving the Henry J. Kreher Conservation Award from the Western New York Land Conservancy. The award goes to an individual, organization, business or municipality that exemplifies passion and commitment in protecting critical open space within the eight counties of Western New York. Dorothy has been an environmental leader in her home community of Grand Island as chairwoman of the Grand Island Conservation Commission and Grand Island's Quality Quest Coalition, a citizens group formed to help preserve the unique ecosystems and open spaces on the Island. She also chaired the Citizen's Advisory Committee that spent more than 20 years creating the Rollin T. Grant Gulf Wilderness Park in Lockport, a geologically and ecologically significant 50-acre natural park.

On Saturday, November 9, the Western New York Environmental Alliance (WNYEA) agreed to support the League's Climate Smart Communities Campaign as part of WNYEA's 2013 Action Agenda. Kudos to Sandy Chelnov for the work she did to make this happen.

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee Chair*

## REMINDER

The Membership Committee submits a per member report to the National League by December 31. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so now. If you are unsure about the status of your membership in LWVBN, please contact the League office (884.3550) or Judy Metzger. We thank you for your continued support at our programs, sharing information with your friends, lending your expertise and volunteering when asked. Together, we make a difference!

*Judy Metzger, Membership Committee Chair*



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**December 2012**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2	3 Holiday Party 5:00 p.m.	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Local Government 1:15 p.m.	13 Natural Resources 9:00 a.m.	14	15
16	17	18	19 Transportation/ Waterfront 10:00 a.m.	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	January 1	2	3	4	5