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The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the December issue are due Friday, November 9.

Come find out how we can have

## Good Jobs! Good Business! Clean Renewable Energy! A Perfect FIT\* for WNY

\* Feed-in Tariff

League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara  
and  
Sierra Club Niagara Group

**Wednesday, November 14, 2012**  
**Burchfield Penney Art Center Auditorium at 4:30 p.m.**  
1300 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo NY

The program is free and open to the public.

**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

Members of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara have been especially involved in Voter Service efforts this election season.

- Joyce Bol and Kate Wagner organized and led voter registration efforts at 21 locations with the help of about 40 volunteers, many of whom worked several shifts at a variety of locations. This was an outstanding effort to assist new voters and voters who needed to register again for various reasons.
- Many League members served as organizers, moderators and time keepers for four candidate forums and the Channels 17 and 2 debate between Kathy Hochul and Chris Collins, candidates for the 27th congressional district. These events offered voters a close look at candidates in their communities.
- Our Vote411.org online Voters' Guide went live on September 28, thanks to the work of Kristin Allen. If you noticed that some of the candidates in your voting district hadn't responded, you may want to check again. We have had some candidates respond since then. However, the late responders will not be able to be included in our printed Voters' Guide due to deadlines that we must follow. Candidates were invited to participate by mail, e-mail and follow-up phone calls.
- League volunteers distributed the printed 2012 Voters' Guides on October 22. They were also mailed to our members at that time by bulk mail. However, the Post Office has an abundance of campaign literature from candidates that takes precedence over other bulk mail during election season.

Once again, our local League's excellent service to has enabled voters in Erie and Niagara counties to learn candidates' views about issues that are important to the League and the community.

League members and guests are invited to a Holiday Pot Luck Supper on Monday, December 3 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Wedgewood Commons clubhouse, 90 Wedgewood Drive, Williamsville. Please bring a salad, vegetable, main dish or dessert to share.

The \$5 per person donation will cover beverages and expenses for the use of the clubhouse. Please call the League office 884-3550 or e-mail [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) by November 26 to make reservations. If you're bringing people who are interested in joining the League, please indicate that. You may pay at the door in cash or checks made payable to LWVBN.

We recommend car-pooling. Drive north on Hopkins Road from Sheridan Drive past West Klein Road and turn left onto Cimarand Drive. Turn right at Wedgewood Drive. Guests should park in the parking pads along Wedgewood Drive, along the inner ring of Wedgewood Drive, or in the recessed area directly in front of the clubhouse. No garages may be blocked. "NO PARKING" signs must be obeyed.

We have much to celebrate this holiday season. Our Holiday Party will be an excellent way to introduce prospective members in a friendly and informal manner.

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

Our last topic for Great Decisions 2012, *Energy Geopolitics: Quandaries Intensify*, will be facilitated by Bernice Baeumler on Thursday, November 1 from 10:00 a.m.–noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. "The energy markets have been shaken by the instability of Middle East oil and the vulnerability of nuclear power. Moreover, developing countries like China are becoming bigger energy consumers while energy producers like Russia see the opportunity to widen their influence. In this changed landscape, how will the U.S.'s energy needs affect its relations with other nations?" Please note the date on your November calendar because the meeting comes up fast.

*Bernice Baeumler*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

Judy Cassasa, Judy Hoffman and Mike Egan represented the League at citizenship ceremonies in September. In October, Sandra O'Hara, Judy Huber, Susan Witt and Beverly Nenno attended. Approximately 55-60 new citizens take the oath of allegiance to our country at each of these moving ceremonies. Any League member who would like to represent the League at a citizenship ceremony can call or e-mail Mike Egan.

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator*

### 25,000 PRINTED VOTER GUIDES DISTRIBUTED IN OCTOBER

All the volunteers who worked on our printed Voter Guide deserve a huge thank you, especially editor Kristen Allen. The proofreaders were Kristen Allen, Dot Brown, Barbara Jezioro, Ann Marie Malachowski, Joan Mondul and Terri Parks. Judy Clarke ably guided the following people to update the 34 distribution lists: Mike Egan, Mary Ann Ellis, Ramona Gallagher, Ann Marie Malachowski, Peg Mergenhagen, Barbara Metiver, Judy Metzger, Sandra O'Hara, Janet Sciolino, Terri Parks, Francine Valvo, Judy Weidemann and Virginia Ziebarth. The guides were delivered to locations across Erie and Niagara counties by Eugene Abrahamson, Sue Faye Allen, Aaron Amrose, Agnes and Bob Annis, Bonnie and Harold Asch, Phyllis Banas, Dot Brown, Pat Costanzo, Marian Deutschman, Alan Dozoretz, Mike Egan, Ramona Gallagher, Janet Goodsell, Dick Hemann, Betty and John Howell, Marlene Katzel, Carolyn Kerr, Carl Klingenschmitt, Kathleen McCormick, Laura McDade, JoAnn Mecca, Peg Mergenhagen, Judy Metzger, Sally Metzger, Arlene Miles, Joan Mondul, Joan Photiadis, MaryAnn Rolland, Ruth Sehl, Lee Tetkowski, Lynne Vallone, Judy Weidemann, Dorothy Westhafer, and Ginny Ziebarth.

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator and Laura McDade*

### WOMAN OF DISTINCTION: TERRI PARKS

The Tonawanda News named League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara (LWVBN) president Terri Parks a *Woman of Distinction*. She was one of eleven women honored at a reception on October 2. Terri was recognized for several volunteer activities that included her leadership as LWVBN president. Congratulations Terri!

*Kathleen McCormick*

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The League welcomes new members Martin Gugino of Amherst, Elizabeth Preble of Orchard Park and Lori Robinson of Buffalo.

Jane Sweet, a long time Clarence League member died recently. The League sends sincere condolences to Jane's family. Jane will be remembered as an enthusiastic, dedicated member of the Clarence community. All who knew her and the grace with which she lived during her struggle with cancer will miss her.

*Judy Metzger, Membership Chair*

### CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY TIP

Did you know that if everyone in the United States skipped eating meat and cheese just one day a week, it would be like taking seven million cars off the road in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. See the *Meat Eater's Guide to Climate Change + Health* to learn more about how food choices affect the environment (<http://www.ewg.org/meateatersguide/at-a-glance-brochure/>).

*Judy Metzger*

## Voter Services

Our local league completed 21 voter registration drives this election season. Our last two drives were held on October 6. The final tally is not yet in, but so far 291 voter registration forms were completed. One hundred six were new registrations and 185 were changes in citizens' residences. We also handed out close to 190 absentee ballot applications. Some sites were more successful than others with farmers' markets being the most successful sites. More than 42 volunteers assisted in our voter registration drives. We are very, very grateful for their participation. We also placed more than 100 posters with important election dates and information at various colleges, community centers and stores.

*Joyce H. Bol, Voter Services Chair*



League members register voters at the farmers' markets in Williamsville (left) and on Bidwell Parkway (right).

## Amherst Unit

Assemblyman Ray Walter will be the guest speaker at *Lunch and Issues* on Friday, November 16 at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant, 6999 Maple Road, Amherst. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. Assemblyman Walter represents the current 148th district, which includes Amherst, Pendleton, and part of North Tonawanda. He is a member of several important Assembly committees: Aging, Election Law, Housing, Libraries and Education Technology, Oversight, Analysis and Investigation.

The cost for *Lunch and Issues* is \$16.00 all inclusive, payable to LWVBN. Contact Sally Metzger or Judy Metzger for reservations. As always, this program and luncheon are open to the public. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

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

### ***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.***

## Local Government

The Local Government Committee is always open to new members. At the last meeting, we began with a lunch honoring retiring co-chairs Lynda Stephens and Anne Huberman who will thankfully continue as members of the committee. Then we sampled Paula's Donuts as part of our study of Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) because this business received tax credits from the Clarence IDA and we have an interest in IDA reform.

What do we do on the serious side? We attend public hearings of the Erie County legislature that are related to League Women Voters interests and positions. We also zero in on meetings concerning other lively local issues as they emerge. We schedule meetings with government officials to help us understand the complexities of negotiating issues such as the county budget. For example, we have a meeting with the county deputy budget director this month. We have two more potential meetings with government officials in the next few months to help us monitor the IDAs and tax exemptions, tax relief and tax credit issues. We meet with other organizations that have similar interests so that we can more effectively take action when appropriate. If we expand the size of our committee, we could consider developing a work group on IDAs and another on the county budget to regularly provide updates. We have a continuing interest in sprawl and in promoting regional land use planning. We're planning a program in May that will deal with the interface of local government and private sector economic development.

To get more detail on the outlook for work for the Local Government Committee, check the League website (<http://lwvbn.org/lwvbnactivities/committees.html>) or contact Marian Deutschman.

*Marian Deutschman, Local Government Chair*

## Social Economic Justice Education

The League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara Social Economic Justice Education Committee continues to explore topics related to the national League of Women Voters' (LWVUS) position on federal fiscal policies. We plan to present an educational program in April 2013. At our October meeting, after review of other related LWVUS positions such as federal deficits and military spending, we decided to include study of other LWVUS social and economic positions to gain a broader understanding of why the LWVUS adopted the federal fiscal policies position.

Much research and media attention is being paid to the widening wealth gap in the United States. We are discovering and beginning to understand causes of this dilemma. Committee members are reading "The State of Working America, 12th Edition". This new publication, available online at [www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org), is part of a series of reports prepared by researchers at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Topics included in the publication are income, wealth, jobs, poverty, mobility and wages. Committee members will report on the various chapters. The EPI researchers conclude that the growing wealth gap is driven by economic policies created in Washington. We'll provide more details in a future VOTER. Or you can go online and read it yourself.

The committee meets at the League Office. We have about ten active members, and occasional guests. Other League members are invited to drop by for informative and often lively discussions. Check with Lynda Stephens or the League Office at 884-3550 to find out meeting dates.

*Lynda Stephens, Social Economic Justice Education Committee Chair*

## State League News: Transportation

Now is the time, prior to the New York State (NYS) legislative session, to monitor the results of our previous efforts and gather materials to help us support a sustainable and effective transportation system throughout our state.

As always, transportation is a concern in the NYS budget. We joined with many other groups to safeguard transit funding-- and we succeeded! Appropriate action: remind NYS legislators to support continued and improved transit funding in the 2013-14 budget.

The BRIDGE Act (S1071B) was passed by the Senate in 2012 but died in Assembly. Reminder: this bill pushes NYS to abide by the law enacted in 1991, a "lock-box" which intended for the gasoline tax to be used for road and bridge repair and maintenance. Appropriate action: urge legislators to revive this bill.

The new Federal transportation bill, "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21), may have significant impact on NYS transportation projects. MAP-21 took effect on October 1, 2012 and is set to expire on September 30, 2014. This new bill weakened provisions for transportation alternatives by allowing states to opt out of the previously established Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The RTP is a small fund which supports local efforts for rails-to-trails and other alternative non-motorized pathways. However, NYS and most other states chose not to opt out of the RTP. MAP-21 has other provisions that have bearing on NYS. The bill: 1) reduces the local match for interstate highway projects from 20% to 5%, thus creating more incentive for expressway construction; 2) deletes dedicated funding for bridge repair; 3) deletes flexibility for use of Federal transportation dollars, i.e., states cannot move money from freight or road to transit as needed; 4) reduces funding for transportation alternatives; 5) eliminates Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants but increases loans; 6) improves requirements for transit planning outcomes and continues transit funding.

Of special note for local Leagues: MAP-21 creates new rural planning entities that will represent smaller communities at the NYS Department of Transportation. Of special concern: the bill encodes "streamlining" which may be a euphemism for blocking public comments on transportation projects and environmental concerns. Appropriate action: maintain relationships with our Congressional representatives to monitor closely the outcomes of MAP-21.

*Gladys Gifford, LWVNYS Transportation Specialist*



## ***Holiday Potluck Supper***

***Monday, December 3 from 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 November 26 by contacting the League office (884-3550 or [lwwbn@lwwbn.org](mailto:lwwbn@lwwbn.org)). Please carpool if you can. Guests are welcome!

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM EVENT A SUCCESS**

On September 24, 2012, the League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara (LWVBN) presented a program on campaign finance reform in collaboration with five co-sponsors. "Why Campaign Finance Reform? Because Democracy Matters!" was held at WNED Studio for a diverse audience of almost one hundred people. Program co-sponsors helped publicize the event and the audience included many of their members. We are grateful to Citizen Action of New York, the Western New York Peace Center Task Force on Global Economic Justice, MoveOn.org Civic Action, Democracy Matters, a student civic organization, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9 for planning, implementation and financial support. The format for September 24 was inspired by Citizen Action's Fair Elections Town Hall Meeting presented in Buffalo on May 3.

The League was pleased to welcome New York State League of Women Voters (LWVNYS) President Sally Robinson as a panel member. Citizen Action booked the other speakers: Joan Mandle, Executive Director of Democracy Matters, Jim Anderson, State Vice President for Citizen Action of New York, Ellen Kennedy, Citizen Action board member and former candidate for public office, Jennifer Mecozzi, Director of Organizing for People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH), and Paul Schuh, Director of New York State Community Action Program (CAP) Council and United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9. The panel moderator was Buffalo News reporter Rod Watson. The program began with a movie clip from "Pricele\$\$", a film about campaign finance problems which was made available through Citizen Action. During panel presentations, the audience was treated to an interruption by one of the Buffalo Billionaires, played by Peace Center member Eric Gallion. The Billionaires are an informal street theater group who use satire to draw attention to serious issues.

Four League members were part of the joint planning committee. Thanks to Ramona Gallagher, Marian Deutschman, and Joan Photiadis who worked along with me and co-sponsor representatives to make this joint venture a success. Monetary support was provided by the League, MoveOn.org, and UAW Region 9. Planning committee members helped with sign-in, served as ushers and timekeeper, and a facilitated audience question and answer session. WNED Studio arrangements were facilitated by Marian Deutschman. On September 19, Ramona Gallagher and Ellen Kennedy from Citizen Action were interviewed by Jim Anderson of Citizen Action on a WUFO radio call-in show. Of course the topic was campaign finance reform.

At the LWVNYS president's suggestion, seventeen of the current state and federal legislators who represent Western New York were invited. Two assemblymen attended. Do we need campaign finance reform? The answer is an emphatic "Yes!" Check the LWVNYS website ([www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)) for more information. Campaign finance reform is part of the LWVNYS 2012 Legislative Agenda.

*Lynda Stephans, Social Economic Justice Education Committee Chair*

## **LEARN ABOUT FEED-IN TARIFFS**

### ***Feed-in Tariff Policy: Design, Implementation, and RPS Policy Interactions***

[http://www.irenew.org/uploads/NREL\\_FIT\\_report.pdf](http://www.irenew.org/uploads/NREL_FIT_report.pdf)

This 2009 policy report from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, a United States Department of Energy research laboratory, explores several aspects of the design and operation of feed-in tariff policies.

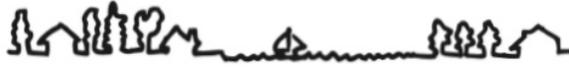
### **Long Island Power Authority Feed-in Tariff Program**

<http://www.lipower.org/FIT/>

The Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) approved the first feed-in tariff program in New York. The program is expected to generate 50 megawatts of solar energy for Long Island. Program details can be found at the LIPA website.



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**November 2012**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Great Decisions 10:00 a.m.	2	3
4	5 Issues/Action 4:30 p.m.	6 <b>Election Day</b>	7	8 Natural Resources 9:00 a.m.	9	10
11	12 Board Meeting 4:00 p.m.	13	14 Local Government 1:15 p.m. Feed-in Tariff Program 4:30 p.m.	15 Education 7:00 p.m.	16 Lunch & Issues 11:30 a.m.	17
18	19	20	21 Transportation/ Waterfront 10:00 a.m.	22 <b>Thanksgiving</b>	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	December 1