League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara Forum
Co-sponsored by:
Citizen Action, MoveOn.org Civic Action
WNY Peace Center Global Economic Justice Task Force

WHY CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM?
BECAUSE DEMOCRACY MATTERS!

A PANEL representing diverse perspectives will explore how money in politics is eroding representative democracy.

HEAR RECOMMENDATIONS TO STOP THE DAMAGE.
LWVNYS President Sally Robinson will participate!

Moderator – Rod Watson, Buffalo News Reporter
WNED Studio
140 Lower Terrace
Buffalo, NY 14202

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2012
7:00 – 8:30 PM
Surprise guests will amuse.
Free and open to the public.
Parking is available in the WNED lot.
For more information, contact the League office.

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.

CONTENTS

President’s Message 2  CSC Campaign 5
Great Decisions 2  LWVNY Update 6
News and Notes 3  Membership Renewal Form 7
Amherst Unit, Voter Services 4  Calendar 8
In this presidential election year, the work of the League has been in high gear all summer. The Voter Service Committee has organized voter registration drives at numerous metro Buffalo locations as part of the national League Power the Vote effort. Our outstanding effort far surpasses the goal set by the national League. If you haven’t volunteered to help, please do so now. I know that many of our League members view voter registration as one of the most important functions of our fine organization.

The Voters’ Guide steering committee has been working all summer to be ready with Vote 411 online for the September 13 primaries and November’s general election. On August 30, we expect to “go live” at www.lwvbn.org with responses from state and local candidates involved in September primary contests. The print Voters’ Guide will be ready for distribution by October 22.

Plans are well under way for League programs in September, October and November. Also the League and American Association of University Women (AAUW) are working together to conduct a fine conference at Michael’s Banquet Center in Hamburg on Saturday, October 13 with a program in the morning followed by a luncheon and guest speaker, Sally Roesch Wagner. Ms. Wagner promises to entertain and inform us with her heralded presentation on the largely “forgotten” suffragist, Matilda Joslyn Gage from Fayetteville. The details for this special event will be in the next issue of the VOTER.

Anne Huberman and Lynda Stephens deserve much appreciation for their long leadership of the Local Government Committee as one glance at the committee’s work on the League website will show you. However, both of these fine League leaders need to go on to other pursuits. The committee members selected Marian Deutschman as chair at their August meeting. Thank you Anne and Lynda for your fine leadership.

Joan Sarow, who was elected board treasurer in June, has resigned the position. At its August meeting, the board approved Debbie Billoni as treasurer until mid-September and appointed Mary Ann Turkla as treasurer for the remainder of the year. Mary Ann, a new member of our League, has considerable experience as a Business Analyst and works with the accounting software that we have been using for the past three years. We look forward to her service. Joan will be an active League member in other capacities. Debbie Billoni will chair the Fund Development Committee and will begin that work after her treasurer duties end.

The board also created a Finance Committee as is customary in not-for-profit management. The Finance Committee will support the work of the treasurer and provide financial oversight to the board. The committee consists of its chair, the president and the treasurer. Two additional League members will be appointed. The chair of the committee is a board portfolio responsibility that Pat Costanzo has accepted for this year. If financial management is one of your interests, please contact me for more details about the committee’s work.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Marie Hanrahan will lead an exploration of State of the Oceans: Waves of Change on Thursday, September 6 from 10 a.m.–noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. “The world’s oceans are essential to life on earth and are tremendously sensitive to global climate change. What are the consequences of climate change on oceanic factors like biodiversity, sea levels and extreme weather systems? How can the U.S. and its international partners address the emerging challenges to this shared resource?” These questions are not easy to answer, but Great Decision participants continue to confront them in open and honest discussion.

Bernice Baeumler
TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
The LWVBN membership year begins on July 1 of each year. We need the time, talents and treasures of all our members. If you have not already renewed, please do so today. A renewal form can be found on page seven of this issue of the VOTER for your convenience. Many thanks to those who have already sent their renewals.

Judy Metzger, Membership Chair

LEAGUE MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAM ON VOTING RIGHTS
Channel 7 is taping a program titled “Exercising Your Right To Vote”. Terri Parks and Joyce Bol will participate. The program is to be aired on September 22.

Joyce Bol, Voter Services Chair

FALL SHORELINE SWEEP TEAM
Sally Metzger is organizing a team of League members to participate in the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper Fall Shoreline Sweep on Saturday, September 22, 9:00 a.m.–noon. The team will collect litter on north Squaw Island. The League has participated at this scenic site along the Niagara River for many years. Contact the League office if you can help out.

Sally Metzger

OCTOBER PROGRAM ON MULTI-LINGUAL EDUCATION
The LWVBN and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo will co-sponsor a program for League members and the community titled “Challenges of Multi-lingual Education in the Buffalo Schools” on Thursday, October 18, 7:00–9:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Church (695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo). Dr. Tamara Alsace, the keynote speaker, will present, “The Extent of Refugee Immigrant Population in Buffalo.” A panel discussion will follow her slide presentation.

Lee Tetkowski, Education Chair

NOVEMBER PROGRAM ON FEED-IN TARIFFS
The LWVBN will co-sponsor a program on feed-in tariffs with the Sierra Club Niagara Group on November 14, 4:30–6:00 p.m. at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center. A feed-in tariff (FIT) is a policy designed to promote long-term investment in renewable energy. Speakers will discuss how FITs work, their benefits, plans for implementing a FIT demonstration program in Western New York and how audience members can lend their support.

Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Chair

NEW MEMBERS
We welcome new members Carol Alt of Williamsville, Mary Ann Turkla of Lancaster, and Elizabeth Berchow and Carolyn Kerr of Tonawanda to the League.

Judy Metzger, Membership Chair

NEW CHAIR FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
On August 15, 2012, the LWVBN Local Government Committee selected Marian Deutschman to succeed co-chairs Anne Huberman and Lynda Stephens. Marian has the strong support of other committee members. The committee wishes Marian well in her new position and looks forward to an interesting and successful year.

Lynda Stephens
**Amherst Unit**

Thanks to Sally Metzger for making arrangements for the League picnic in July and to all who attended with their goodies. The Lunch and Issues program will begin October 19, 11:30 a.m. at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant (3999 Maple Road, Amherst). The cost remains $16.00, all inclusive. Program suggestions are welcomed. We will host a candidates’ event on Wednesday, October 24, 9:00 a.m. at the Amherst Senior Center (370 John James Audubon Pkwy).

We continue to monitor the Amherst Town Board meetings. Contact the League office if you can help. We are also following the work of the Energy Conservation Citizens Advisory Committee (ECCAC) as part of the League’s Climate Smart Communities Campaign. After Amherst pledged to become a Climate Smart Community in May, ECCAC selected a Climate Coordinator who will chair a climate subcommittee. The subcommittee is already working on recruiting additional members and planning for a municipal greenhouse gas inventory.

_Judy Metzger, Sally Metzger and Arlene Miles, Amherst Unit Co-coordinators_

---

**Voter Services**

**VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES**

A committee consisting of Kate Wagner, JoAnn Mecca, Constance Moss, Dorothy Tao and Joyce Bol organized over 20 voter registration drives during August, September, and October.

Volunteers for the first drive, held at M&T Plaza, were JoAnn Mecca, Sue Stievater, Dorothy Tao and Joyce Bol. Volunteers handed out registration forms and absentee ballot applications. On August 18, Kate Wagner, Sandy Machione and Roger Machione staffed the voter registration drive at the Bidwell/Elmwood Farmers’s Market. Thank you to all the volunteers for enabling the League to carry out this most important function.

In September and October, the League will have voter registration drives at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheektowaga Walmart</td>
<td>September 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonawanda Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>September 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Broadway Market</td>
<td>September 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNY Coalition for the Homeless</td>
<td>September 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Institute</td>
<td>September 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Hollow Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics United</td>
<td>September 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsville Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>September 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUSH</td>
<td>September 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Agricultural Project</td>
<td>September 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst Walmart</td>
<td>September 29, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidwell/Elmwood Farmers Market</td>
<td>October 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kate Wagner has done a superb job scheduling volunteers for the drives. Although most drives are fully staffed now, volunteers are still needed for the drives at Walmart Cheektowaga (September 1 and 2) and Walmart Amherst (September 29 and 30). If you would like to volunteer for either of these drives, please contact the League office.

Special thanks to Dorothy Tao, the League’s Public Relations/Communications director, who is handling with expertise and efficiency the publicity for these drives. The Buffalo News published a notice about the drives in the Seven by Seven column on Thursday, August 9.

**POSTERS**

The committee printed 100 posters for libraries, senior centers, churches, and other community gathering places. This poster, artistically designed by Lee Tetkowski, lists important dates and deadlines as well as e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for the Board of Elections. If you would like a poster for a bulletin board in your church or other suitable place, please call the League office.

_Joyce H. Bol, Voter Services Director_
Climate Smart Communities Campaign

We are moving ahead, despite being slowed down by the disappointing news that we did not receive the grant we applied for from the Community Foundation. We are pleased that the village of East Aurora and the town of Amherst have joined the towns of Evans and Brant in pledging to become Climate Smart Communities (CSC). We made our CSC slide presentation to the Aurora Town Board, the East Aurora School Board and Grand Island’s Conservation Committee this summer. We have League members directly involved in East Aurora. They plan to meet with Deputy Mayor (and League member) Libby Weberg in early September to put together East Aurora’s climate action committee. The Town of Aurora and the East Aurora school district have been invited to attend and have expressed interest in having representation on the committee.

League members Judy Metzger and Kathleen McCormick have been attending meetings of Amherst’s Energy Conservation Citizens Advisory Committee and its newly formed Climate subcommittee. The League has agreed to help to get the word out about Amherst’s pledge to become “climate smart.”

This fall we will focus on getting things going in East Aurora and strategizing about how to gather ourselves and others to move ahead in Buffalo and other area municipalities. Sandy Chelnov will present our project at the Environmental Summit at Daemen College on September 29. In addition, we plan to reach out to the Western New York Environmental Alliance and the membership of its member organizations—citizen engagement will be crucial in successfully making Erie and Niagara Counties climate (and energy) smart. Please join us!

CSC Project Director Sandy Chelnov can be reached at the League office.

What DOES it mean for a municipality to become “Climate Smart?”

First and foremost it’s about being Energy Smart by seeking ways to eliminate waste and save taxpayer dollars. It also means systematically finding ways to reduce a municipality’s greenhouse gas emissions, or carbon footprint. After first calculating its baseline carbon footprint, municipalities can track the reductions they make and the money they save. Cities and towns around the world are doing this already!

Local League members who went on the “Low Carbon Diet” three years ago have an intimate understanding of how to go about losing pounds of carbon. It all starts with keeping track of how we use energy, especially energy that comes from burning fossil fuels, be it gasoline, propane, natural gas or electricity. Then, once we know how much of our energy comes from fossil fuels, we can look for ways to reduce our fossil fuel energy use and substitute clean, non-fossil fuel, renewable energy whenever possible.

Access to inexpensive renewable energy is still a challenge. This is why our League has endorsed the joint Sierra Club/United Steelworkers proposal for a Feed-in Tariff (FIT) program in Western New York. A FIT program would set a stable long-term price for renewable energy and guarantee priority access to the grid, making it possible for homeowners, farmers, municipalities, and businesses to profitably generate local renewable energy. Our neighbors to the north in Ontario have instituted a highly successful FIT program that created 22,000 new jobs and is enabling the province to retire its coal-fired power plants ahead of schedule.

Sandy Chelnov, Climate Smart Communities Project Director
In April, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver introduced the “2012 Fair Elections Act” (A09885D) to provide public financing for statewide campaigns. This act was just what the League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNY) needed to begin a new push for campaign finance reform in New York. LWVNY immediately took two actions. First, it joined with a diverse group of business, community, good government, faith, and labor organizations to execute a coordinated campaign called Fair Elections for New York (http://www.fairelectionsny.org/). Second, it joined with Citizens Union of New York City and the New York Public Interest Research Group to issue a statement about the 2012 Fair Elections Act and offer suggestions for improving it.

Upon joining the Fair Elections campaign, Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director for LWVNY, said, “The League is optimistic that New York’s scandalously lax campaign finance laws might finally be transformed and accompanied by a public financing system that will counter the influence of big money in politics. We believe that real campaign finance reform should accompany public funding with effective enforcement, lower contribution limits, pay-to-play limitations and robust disclosure. We encourage the Legislature to pass the entire package of needed reforms this session.”

Despite the concerted efforts of LWVNY and its partners, the Assembly failed to vote on the 2012 Fair Elections Act before the legislative session ended in July.

LWVNY’s push for campaign finance reform continues. The state League received a small grant to develop materials to be used in community forums about campaign finance reform. Carol Mellor, LWVNYS board member, is creating a slide presentation and background paper to educate the public about New York’s current campaign finance system as well problems with the current system and reforms to remedy them. LWVBN will likely share the presentation with Western New York citizens in January.

In the meantime, our local League is supporting LWVNY’s efforts by co-sponsoring a public forum about campaign finance reform on September 24, 7:00–8:30 p.m., at WNED Studios.

Kathleen McCormick

Resources

Description of 2012 Fair Elections Act
http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&bn=A09885&term=&Memo=Y

LWVNY statement about the Fair Elections Act

Report on impact of small-donor matching funds in New York State elections
Executive Summary
Full Report

Campaign Finance Institute Citizen Policy Tool
This interactive tool allows the user to see what could happen to campaign financing if various policy reforms were adopted.
http://www.cfinst.org/state/CitizenPolicyTool.aspx

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.
LWVNY sponsored two conferences, one in Long Island on August 11 and the other in Liverpool on August 18, for local New York Leagues that completed their first year of work in the national League (LWVUS) Membership Leadership Development (MLD) program. Joan Sarow and I attended the conference in Liverpool. We both found the event worthwhile. We came away with useful information, not only from our fine presenters, Georgia DeGregorio and Dare Thompson, but also from the 35 League Leaders, who attended and shared their challenges (opportunities) and successes. There was much positive energy in the room!

It’s clear that LWVUS has made a commitment to help local Leagues strengthen and grow through the MLD program. The program is designed to assist Leagues in their efforts to recruit active members and develop leaders from within their own membership. Faced with current challenges to good government and voters’ rights, LWVBN will most certainly benefit from the fine MLD program as we work to build the organizational capacity needed to address these pressing issues even more effectively.

Terri Parks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUN</th>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUE</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THU</th>
<th>FRI</th>
<th>SAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Issues 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great Decisions 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Meeting 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation/Waterfront 10:00 a.m. Local Government 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>ELECTION DAY Natural Resources 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Shoreline Sweep 9:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Program: Campaign Finance 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copy for October VOTER due September 7, 2012