



The League of Women Voters  
of Buffalo/Niagara

**VOTER**

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The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the May issue are due Friday, April 5.

## Is Our Social Safety Net Tattered by Our Economic Policies?

**How did we get from “equal opportunity” to “winners and losers”?**



**Harlem Road Community Center – Room #2  
4255 Harlem Road, Amherst  
Thursday, April 25, 2013  
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.  
Refreshments  
Open to the public – RSVP not required  
For more information, call the League office – 884-3550**

**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

The League of Women Voters of New York State is on the Steering Committee of a coalition of over 500 organizations, including our local League, that supports Governor Cuomo's ten point Women's Equality Act. I hope your copy of the 2013 *They Represent You* has arrived in the mail with the description of the Women's Equality Act and the request that you call your state legislative representatives to support it. Please do make those phone calls. We've "come a long way..." but the points addressed by this important legislation are surely important ones for women in New York State.

In response to our Annual Appeal, we received donations from forty current League members by March 11. We appreciate your support for League activities by your donation and equally important, by your participation and volunteer efforts. While we are quite fortunate to live in a state where voting rights have not been challenged as they have in Florida and Wisconsin, there are still issues to address. We have already received requests for voter registration events this year. Joyce Bol and Kate Wagner are preparing for another busy voter registration drive season and will soon be recruiting folks to help out.

One benefit of membership in our local League is member discounts to League events. It's my great pleasure to tell you about two such events this spring.

On May 21, the Local Government Committee will host a special luncheon event at noon in the beautiful Greenhouse at the Hotel Lafayette. A panel discussion, "Renaissance of Buffalo: Successful Business/Government Partnerships" features Howard Zemsky, Managing Partner, Larkin Development Group, Chair, NFTA; Rocco Termini, President, Signature Development; Christina Orsi, Empire State Development Western New York Regional Director; Tom Kucharski, President and CEO of Buffalo Niagara Enterprise; Brendan Mehaffey, Executive Director of City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning. The buffet luncheon costs \$30 for members and \$35 for guests. We expect that this stellar panel and the desire to visit the Lafayette Hotel will draw a large crowd. Seating is limited.

On June 15, the League's Annual Meeting and Luncheon will take place at the Protocol Restaurant. We will honor another community citizen with the League's Making Democracy Work Award as well as a League leader with our Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award. In addition, we shall inaugurate a second award that will be named in honor of other outstanding League Leaders. The details for submitting nominations for both League leader awards will be published in the May Voter. Members will pay \$25 for the luncheon. Guests will pay \$30. Seating is limited.

We hope you'll plan to attend both events for the special member discount price of \$50. To take advantage of the discount, mail your check payable to LWVBN for \$50 to 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo 14209. Payment must be received by May 7 to receive the discount. Please include your name as you'd like it to appear on nametags for the events and a notation of May 21/June 15 on the check.

More details for both events will be in the May Voter and Annual Meeting booklet. These are events you certainly don't want to miss!

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

Alan Freedman agreed to kick off our Great Decisions discussions for 2013 with "Future of the Euro" on Thursday, April 4 from 10 a.m. to noon at the League Office (1272 Delaware Avenue). "How did the 2008 global recession contribute to the development of the euro crisis? The health of the euro affects and is affected by the state of the global economy. How can European Union leaders prevent the collapse of the common currency?" I hope to see everyone back as we once more engage with the rest of our world.

*Bernice Baeumler*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Every month the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service holds at least one, usually two, ceremonies to allow new citizens to take the oath of loyalty to the United States of America. There are almost always 55–60 new citizens each time. League members participate in the ceremonies, congratulating new citizens with a handshake and giving each a voter registration form. Judy Casassa, Susan Stievater and Judy Capodicasa attended the ceremonies in February. In March, Barbara Jezioro attended, and in April, JoAnn Mecca, Bonnie Asch, and Judy Hoffman will be representing the League. Many thanks to these League members for their willingness to attend these important and moving ceremonies. If you would like to be part of this League activity in the coming months, please call Mike Egan.

The “They Represent You” (TRY) brochures for Erie and Niagara Counties, which give the names and contact information for all the elected officials in our two counties, were distributed in March. In Niagara County, Mary Anne Rolland and Carolyn Kerr will be doing the bulk of the distribution to town halls and libraries. In Erie County, Mary Anne Turkla, our League office manager, is coordinating the effort with the help of the Board. Thanks to all for your work—it is patriotism in its purest form!

*Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator*

### **IN REMEMBRANCE**

Longtime League member Adeline Jerrett passed away on March 6, 2013, just one month before her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday. In addition to being a League member, she served as a town Republican committeewoman for 25 years. Miss Jerrett was employed as the supervisor of special district assessments for the Town of Amherst. She retired in 1979 after 38 years but remained active in League and other organizations including the Amherst Senior Center advisory board, the Amherst Adult Day Care Committee and the Williamsville Senior Citizen Committee. Janet Massaro recalls, “When I was in the office we would talk on the phone—mainly about Amherst things. She was a fixture in the town. She was so interesting, intelligent and “with it”, a real stickler for doing things “right.”

*Kathleen McCormick*

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Please welcome these people who have joined the League in the past several months: Diane Hart of East Aurora, Mary Carney of Buffalo, Ann Converso of Lawtons. and Barbara Murphy of Amherst.

### **PROGRAM PLANNING—YOUR IDEAS NEEDED**

Members are invited to submit ideas for the 2013–2014 League of Women Voters Local Program Focus at the Issues and Action Committee meeting on April 2. The committee meets at 4:30 p.m. in the Harlem Road Community Center (4255 Harlem Road, Amherst). The 2012-2013 Local Program Focus is available on our website: [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org). The proposed Local Program will be presented to the board and then to the membership at our Annual Meeting on June 15, 2013. We welcome your participation.

*Janet Goodsell, Issues and Action Committee Chair*

### ***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.***

## Voter Services

### Students Inside Albany

Three local students applied to the valuable Students Inside Albany (SIA) program to be held at the Hotel Albany in Albany from April 14–17. Theresa Pope and I selected Andrew McLaughlin, a junior at Buffalo City Honors. He will join fifty other high school students from around the state. The program is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government. Students will learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in policy making. This SIA Conference is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation. The only cost for our local League is the train transportation for our student.

### Voter Registration Drive

Several of the 2012 Voter Registration Drive venues have already contacted me about hosting registrations during 2013. The Voter Registration Drive Committee will schedule a meeting for sometime in May. Please call me if you would like to join this committee.

*Joyce H. Bol, Voter Services Chair*

## Education Committee

Lafayette High School has been receiving many older students who greatly need immersion transition programs. When many of them are not literate even in their native language, it is next to impossible for them to do well in a Regents tracked academic program. Many become frustrated and drop out. Ms. Naomi Cerre, principal, hopes there are League members who can volunteer an hour or two a week at the school to help these English language learners.

The Education Committee has learned that there is a federal program known as EB-5 which allows foreigners to invest at least one million dollars in certain job-producing projects, or \$500,000 if the project is in a rural area or one with high unemployment, to get immigration visas for their families. Recently charter schools have become popular among these investors. This is another example of the growing privatization of public education.

New members and guests are always welcome at meetings of the Education Committee. Our next meeting is Thursday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m. in the League Office at the 1272 Delaware Avenue.

*Lee Tetkowski, Education Chair*

### Connect the Dots!

#### Join the Auto Tour of Metro Buffalo's Waterfront on June 29th!



There is so much happening on and near the Outer Harbor, the Inner Harbor and Canalside—it's time to take an auto tour of all these sites, stopping at points of interest along the way. We will gather at Dug's Dive on Fuhrmann Boulevard at 10:00 a.m. Each participant will receive a guide with directions to places like Gallagher Beach, Times Beach, Canalside, the DL&W Terminal, the Amtrak station on Exchange, Ohio Street—and more!

**Save the date: June 29, 10 a.m., at Dug's Dive!**

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE

## 55th Biennial Convention



*League Leaders at Work  
For Our Future  
June 1-2, 2013  
The Hilton Albany  
Albany, New York*

The 55<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention of the League of Women Voters of New York State is Saturday and Sunday, June 1&2, at the Hilton Albany, Albany, New York. There will be a variety of workshops beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. The plenary sessions are 1:00–5:00 p.m. on Saturday and 9:15 a.m.–noon on Sunday. Please contact Terri Parks if you are interested in being a delegate from our League.

# **Do you know the League promotes social and economic justice, and the health and safety of all Americans? But is the sky falling?**

## **An Invitation**

The April 25 program organized by the Social Economic Justice Education Committee is an opportunity to learn more about these important issues.

## **The League Is Not Just About Voting Rights**

The League's Social Policy program addresses the common good. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has studied and adopted positions that enable the League to educate and advocate for equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Equality of opportunity includes promotion of equal rights for women (Equal Rights Amendment), and support of equal access to education, employment and housing. Other social policy positions include universal access to health care, support for programs that prevent or reduce poverty, expansion of affordable, quality child care, early intervention for children at risk, violence prevention programs for safer communities, gun control, abolition of the death penalty, and urban programs that improve the economic health of cities and the quality of urban life.

## **It's Deja Vu All Over Again!**

In 1986, after two years of study, LWVUS adopted a position on fiscal policy pertaining to the federal government—tax policy, deficit issues and entitlement funding. Sound familiar? The tax policy part of the study was completed in time for the League to become a major force in the 1985-86 tax reform movement. While Congress debated major legislation to broaden the income tax base, the League and other good government organizations pushed for passage of reform legislation to make the tax system more broad-based, fair and progressive. The result was passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. (Come to the April 25 program to find out what subsequently happened to those reforms.)

## **The League's Position on Federal Fiscal Policy**

The LWVUS believes that federal fiscal policy should provide for: adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; responsible deficit policies; and a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

## **Some History of LWVUS Advocacy on the Fiscal Policy Position**

Leading up to passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the League opposed a value-added tax as regressive, supported taxing capital gains as ordinary income and urged removal of loopholes in the tax law. The League has supported selective cuts in defense spending that target military investment rather than readiness, in accord with the LWVUS Military Policy and Defense Spending position.

In 1986, as Congress continued to grapple with extraordinary federal deficits and budget dilemmas, the League took a comprehensive approach to the budget battle that combined support for increased funding for human needs, for selective cuts in defense spending and for necessary revenue increases. In March 1986, the LWVUS opposed a proposed balanced budget constitutional amendment.

## **When Does LWVUS Support Deficit Spending?**

The League could support deficit spending, if necessary, for stimulating the economy during recession and depression, meeting social needs in times of high unemployment, and meeting

defense needs in times of national security crises.

### What About Entitlements?

LWVUS believes that the federal government has a role in funding and providing for old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance. For such insurance programs, participation should be mandatory and coverage should be universal. Federal deficit reduction should not be achieved by reducing Social Security benefits.

### Some Recent History

On November 15, 2012 in a memo to Congress: The “Fiscal Cliff,” Taxes and the Budget, LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara urged Congress to avoid the spending and tax changes scheduled for January 1, 2013. She stated, “it is much more important to provide a long-term solution by substantially increasing revenue, protecting the social safety net, reducing defense spending and carefully managing the deficit.” You can read the letter online at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) or better yet, come to the April 25<sup>th</sup> program and get it as a handout.

### Next?

Please join us at Harlem Road Community Center in Amherst for the Thursday, April 25 program; refer to VOTER front page. Find out how you can help promote League goals and provide a more secure future for our people.

*Social Economic Justice Education Committee*

## SAVE THE DATE FOR SPRING SHORELINE SWEEP

Can you help pick up trash on scenic north Squaw Island in the Niagara River **SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 9 a.m. to noon?**

Twice a year the League shows its commitment to maintaining the natural beauty of our local shorelines by working under the auspices of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper.

Bring gloves, hat or sunglasses, jacket, sunscreen, water and maybe a camera. There are no restrooms.

Enter Squaw Island Park from Niagara Street in Buffalo on the ramp-like entrance next to 1726 Niagara Street. The entrance has a large billboard and a small park sign. From the park entrance, cross the bridge spanning the Black Rock Canal.

Make sure that no one is already on the bridge as it has only one lane. Then drive straight ahead (west) to the river. Turn right under the International Railroad Bridge and drive to the end of the road where we will start our work.

A volunteer appreciation party will follow the work session. The party will be at Marcy Casino, Delaware Park, 199 Lincoln Parkway. There will be lunch and raffle prize drawings. Hawk Creek Wildlife Center will be on site to show some live animals as well.

Can you come? Reply by email or phone to tell us you can come, so we have enough supplies. Call Sally Metzger, site captain.



*Sally Metzger, Amherst Unit Co-coordinator*



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**April 2013**

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