



The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

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The **VOTER** is published
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Holiday Party: December 9th in Hamburg

Please join us at the League's 2013 Holiday Party, Monday, December 9 at Michael's Banquet Hall, 4885 Southwestern Boulevard (Route 20), Hamburg, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. We welcome guests and potential new members to a tasty meal, stimulating conversation, and entertaining surprises. This will be a good way to connect with folks who are working on issues that interest you and to connect with new and old League friends.

The cash bar will open for cocktails and conversation at 5:00 p.m. The buffet dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. We'll all be part of the entertainment that follows dinner.

The buffet dinner cost is \$24 per person. Reservations are due by December 2. Send your check payable to LWVBN with the names of the people who'll attend to the League office, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209.

Driving Directions:

Michaels is located about a mile east of Route 75 (Camp Road to locals). It can easily be reached from the New York Thruway (Rt. 90) by driving north at the Hamburg Exit 57 and turning right onto Route 20 at the first traffic light. A Mobil station is on the right at the corner.

When driving from the city via the Skyway and Route 5, keep left onto Route 75 past the Ford Stamping Plant. Drive to a major intersection at Route 20 and turn left. There's a golf course on the right and a West Herr Ford dealership on the left at the corner.



League of Women Voter's 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 Report

At least two candidates who responded to the Buffalo/Niagara League 2013 Voters Guide question related to public financing of elections were targeted for their statements in the Voters Guide in favor of public financing. This was done through postcard mailings that were "Paid for by the New York State Republican Committee". The mailings were totally inaccurate as to the candidates' responses in the Voters Guide. Currently, candidates who respond to the League's invitation to appear in the Voters Guide complete an online form in Vote411 themselves. There is no editing or proofreading by the League.

An article in the Buffalo News stated that these candidates, Tom Loughran and Wynnie Fisher, were targeted by the Republican Party for defeat, but it gave no specific reference to the allegations on the post card mailings. This is the first time any of us can recall that there have been repercussions to responses to our Voters Guide questions. It is most important that League members notify the League office of any such efforts by any political party or PAC involving the League. I'm thankful that a citizen called the League office to inquire because the campaign mailings in question credited the information stating the candidate's views as coming from the League's 2013 Voters Guide. A League member also shared one postcard she received with us.

Board Actions

At its November meeting, the League board approved three legislative priorities to submit to the state League: campaign finance reform, redistricting reform, and support for the passage of the hazardous waste bill that the League has supported for the past two years and to lobby for development of renewable energy rather than fossil fuels. The state League Issues Specialists will discuss the suggestions received from local Leagues and make recommendations to the state board for its December 4th meeting.

The legislative priorities selected at that December meeting will be those we discuss with our local state Senate and Assembly members in March and April 2014. Please contact me if you're willing to visit your state Senator and or Assembly member with a partner so as to share the League's views and find out where he/she stands. The state League supplies detailed material for the effort. Email: events@lwvbn.org.

If you haven't had this experience yet, we'll be sure to partner you with someone who has done so. Those of us who have made these legislative visits have found our representatives very approachable and gracious.

The board also approved a request from the Social-Economic Justice Education Committee to garner support from other Leagues and our state League for the following initiative: The LWVUS should adopt existing LWVUS Federal Fiscal Policy as one of the 2014 legislative priorities. This will be a big task for the committee, but the members assure us that they are up to the task. Of course, the committee will welcome members to join its efforts at any time. Contact Lynda Stephens at events@lwvbn.org if you'd like to help.

Of course, we can always use more folks to help with the Gift Wrap at Eastern Hills. This fundraiser helps us keep from raising our dues and is a good way to introduce folks to the League and just have time to chat with fellow League folks. Call the League office or contact Eugene Abrahamson at events@lwvbn.org to volunteer. Plan to bring a friend.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

We made it! Ten people were willing take the 2014 Great Decisions Briefing Book so I was able to order on line, on time to get the 20% discount so the price is \$18.00. As we don't meet in December, January or February, right now I am planning to bring the books to our Thursday, March 6 meeting from (10 a.m. - Noon at 1272 Delaware) to exchange books for money. We will hopefully set up leaders for the 8 topics at that time. If you'd like your book before March, call me after January 1 and we can arrange an exchange then.

Bernice Baeumler

Lunch and Issues

The Amherst Unit sponsors Luncheon Issues for League members and the community. The next luncheon is:

Place: **Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant** 3999 Maple Rd., Amherst

Time: **11:30 a.m., January 17, 2014**

Cost: \$16.00 all inclusive payable in cash or check written to LWVBN

Joan Bozer will be our guest speaker. Joan is a League member, former Erie County legislator and long time community activist. She will enlighten us on the “solar carousel” concept and design that is being considered for the outer harbor waterfront proposals going forward in our region.

Please contact Sally Metzger events@lwvbn.org or Judy Metzger for reservations. We look forward to hearing from you.

We extend many thanks to Steve Sanders, Amherst Town Board member and liaison to the Town Energy Conservation Committee. He updated us at our November gathering on his role in town government and conservation measures that the Amherst has taken as a “Climate Smart Community.”

Local Government

Did You Know? County roads are in poor condition (200 lane miles were rated #5 on a scale of 1-10). Erie County owns more than 1,100 lane miles of road, more than that of three states. It costs \$36 million to fix what we have.

Did You Know? Erie County has the highest sales tax of all New York State counties. In contrast, Erie County’s property tax is one of the lowest. In 1993, the property tax rate was \$8.24 per thousand. In 2011, it was \$5.03 per thousand.

Did You Know? In the 2013 budget 27.78% of the budget revenues came from sales tax, compared to 16.85% in property taxes. Out of \$720 million in sales tax revenue, 45 percent is given to local governments.

Did You Know? There is a Citizens’ Budget Review Commission in Erie County. It released a series of recommendations that included changing the deadline for the County Executive’s proposed budget to a later date so that he/she would have a more accurate estimate of revenue from sales tax. The county receives sales tax revenues for the third quarter from New York State each year on the second Thursday of October. The county executive is required by local law to submit his proposed budget by October 15.

Did You Know? This same commission was disappointed to see such poor attendance at the 2013 Mid-Year Budget Hearings by members of the Erie County Legislature, some even missing testimony relevant to the committees on which they serve.

Did You Know? The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara has a local government committee that is studying the county budget, attending budget hearings, interviewing legislators (and others) to learn and then present our findings to the membership for your guidance in taking action. We welcome additional members at our meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:15p.m. at the LWVBN office. Join us to uncover more of the mysteries of the county budget and its process.

Marian Deutschman, local government chair

REMINDER

Please send your reports for the Winter Voter issue to Sandy Chelnov by Tuesday, December 17.
Mark the subject line of your e-mail “Winter Voter”.

Education Committee

Several Education Committee members attended the Summit for Smarter Schools held October 2 at Kleinhans Music Hall. The theme was “GET TESTING RIGHT,” urging reform of high-stakes testing for schoolchildren. This event was organized by the Partnership for Smarter Schools.

The large audience, representing much of Western New York and estimated at 2,500, was composed of educators, parents, school board members, administrators and others. The speakers, including some elected officials, expressed great dissatisfaction about time spent on preparing, taking, and appropriateness of the many mandated tests. Also, the competence of State Education Commissioner John King and his apparent lack of responsiveness to parents’ concerns were questioned. It was argued that testing doesn’t take into account differences among students and communities. The Dean of the U.B. Graduate School of Education showed that high-achieving nations like Japan and Korea are de-emphasizing testing and encouraging creative thinking. Mothers gave compelling talks about the anxieties of their youngsters concerning the new tests. The involvement of private enterprise and political interests were presented as well.

The Education Committee will continue to explore the effects of high stakes testing as it relates to Common Core State Standards. Enlisting a dialogue with Assemblyperson Sean Ryan and others was considered.

To add to our understanding, Dr. Laura Klenk, an Assistant Professor in Literacy at Buffalo State, agreed to be guest speaker at our November meeting, and to share with us information on the portions of the Common Core requirements with which she works.

The Education Committee meetings are the third Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m. at our League Office - 1272 Delaware. Our next meeting will be **January 16. (No December meeting.)** New members and visitors are always welcome.

Maxine Insera and Lee Tetkowski

Election Services

The Election Services Committee serviced four Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) sites in October 2103. We conducted nominations and elections at Msgr..Geary, Kenfield-Langfield, Ferry Grider, and the Belle Center. My thanks to LWVBN members Mike Egan and Judy Capodicasa for their valuable assistance.

Alan Dozoretz, Election Services Chair

Voter Services

We conducted two candidate forums in October and would like to thank the following League volunteers: East Aurora: Moderator- Lyle Toohey and Timekeeper -Phyllis Banas; Hamburg: Moderator-Marian Deutschman and Timekeeper-Jean Flowers, ushers and question gatherers - Bev Halligan and Barb Metivier and Laura McDade, organizer. We also provided moderators and timekeepers for three candidate forums hosted by community groups: Wales Center: Moderator-Lee Lambert and Timekeeper-Judy Weidemann; Colden: Moderator-Dot Brown and Timekeeper-JoAnn Mecca; Amherst Senior Center: Moderator-Ann Marie Malachowski and Timekeeper-Mike Egan.

The Colden forum was attended by about 75 people, the Hamburg forum was attended by about 175 and the Amherst Senior Center forum was attended by about 80. Thanks to all of you!

Thanks also to Ramona Gallagher and JoAnn Mecca for reporting again the Erie County results of the November 5th general election for the Associated Press. Janet Goodsell reported the Niagara County results.

Joyce Bol, Voter Services Chair

League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara Membership Registration Form

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Make checks payable to LWVBN and return to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209



Check one category. Dues to local, state and the national affiliates are included in each category.

- \$ 65 Individual Member July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013
 \$100 Household (2 members living at the same address)
 \$ 75 Carrie Chapman Catt Membership
 \$ 90 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership
 \$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership
 \$ 30 Student Membership
 Enclosed is an additional donation of \$ _____

- This is a renewal.
 This is a new membership.
 This is a membership for a former member who is returning to the League.

Unit Interest
 (Optional)
 ___ Amherst

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please e-mail me the LWVBN bulletin: LWVBN Voter. The First Year I joined the League

Thank you, League members who have renewed. If you have yet to renew your membership for 2013-2014, you may use the renewal form above to renew by January 2014, when we need to update the national membership database. If you have forgotten to renew or are not sure, please contact MaryAnn at the office 884-3550. Your continued generosity and participation in committees, the board, friendships and your understanding of our League mission are all greatly appreciated. Consider asking a friend to join us and please call us anytime. Leave a message and one of us from the membership committee will return your call, Ramona Gallagher, Judy Huber, Dorothy Tao, Judy Weidemann and Judy Metzger, chair.

Nominations Committee

Share Your Talent for Leadership

You can strengthen your leadership skills or share your knowledge of possible leaders in our midst! The 2014 Nominating Committee requests your input as it considers candidates for Officer and Board Member positions to be elected at our annual meeting in June. There are several open positions on the Board as well as a need for nominations for the 2015 Nominating Committee. Please feel free to recommend yourself or others by contacting the 2014 Nominating Committee Chair, Kathleen McCarthy at events@lwvbn.org with your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you.

A big THANK YOU to the following people for delivering 23,000 VOTER GUIDES to Erie and Niagara Counties:

Marian Deutschman, Judy Weidemann, Dorothy Tao, Sally Metzger, Judy and Jim Metzger, Arlene Miles and John Segmen, Marlene Katzel and Aaron Amrose, Al Dozoretz, Janet Massaro, JoAnn Mecca, Ramona Gallagher, Dot Brown, Lynne Vallone, Dick Hermann, Sue Faye Allen, Carl Klingenschmitt, Kimberley Burg, Peg Mergenhagen, Mary Scheeder, Pat Costanzo, Janet Goodsell, Lee Tetkowsky, Dorothy Westhafer, Sally Moehlau, Laura McDade, Joan Photiadis, Bonnie and Harold Ashe, Carolyn Kerr, Joan Broderick, Mike Egan, Joan Mondul, Agnes and Bob Annis, Phyllis Banas, Fran Holmes, Betty and Jack Howell.

Laura McDade



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DECEMBER 2013 & early JANUARY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 1	2	3 Issues Committee 4:30 p.m. Harlem R. C.C	4	5	6	7
8	9 Holiday Party Michael's Restaurant 5-8 p.m.	10	11 Soc./Econ. 1:30p.m. Loc. Gov 1:15 p.m. LWV office	12 Natural Resources 9:30 a.m.	13	14
15	16	17 Copy due for winter voter	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	January 1	2 Issues Committee 4:30 p.m. Harlem R. C.C.	3	4

Copy for Winter Voter due 12/17/2013