Annual Meeting

On June 15th, the League was honored to recognize a number of people for their outstanding commitment to the community or the League at its Annual Meeting. Michael Kuzma, recipient of the 2012 Making Democracy Work award presented the 2013 award to Kathie Capozzi and Erin Robinson (left) of the Clean Air Coalition on behalf of award honoree, Erin Heaney.

Janet Massaro accepted the Joan K. Bozer award on behalf of Anne Huberman with a warm statement from Anne. Lyle Toohey introduced the League’s new LEE Award that honors three outstanding and long serving League leaders, Lee Lambert and Lee Tetkowski and the late Lenore Banks. Lyle presented special League Logo Pins and an award certificate to Lee Lambert and Lee Tetkowski with our esteem and thanks for their exemplary service to the League.

John A. Curr III introduced his colleague from the New York Civil Liberties Union and our guest speaker, Katharine ES Bodde (right). The audience enthusiastically received her remarks about the Women’s Equality Act. Katharine’s words and suggestions for action were a most fitting way to end the day a reminder that each of us spreads “ripples of hope” each time we act in response to the issues we value as League members.

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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The proposed slate of board and nominating committee members was elected at the Annual Meeting. Congratulations to everyone who has agreed to serve the League in these important leadership positions. The board approved the following responsibilities for board members at its July meeting:

Judy Clarke, 1st V. President, Volunteer Coordinator  
Judy Metzger, 2nd V. President, Membership Chair  
Janet Goodsell, 3rd V. President, Issues Committee Chair  
Patricia Costanzo, Finance Committee Chair  
Eugene Abrahamson, Fund Development Chair  
Joyce Bol, Voter Service Chair  
Barbara Jezioro, Voter Editor  
Sandy Chelnov, Voter Copy Editor  
Dot Brown, Youth Program Chair  
Dorothy Tao, Public Relations Chair  
Therese Pope, PR Committee

They join Secretary, Ramona Gallagher, Treasurer, Lori Robinson and me to comprise the 2013-2014 LWVBN Board of Directors.

The board made these additional appointments:

Finance Committee members appointed by the board: Judy Clarke and Lyle Toohey
Board members appointed by the board to the Executive Committee: Dorothy Tao and Therese Pope
Board members for the Nominating Committee: Ramona Gallagher, Therese Pope and Dorothy Tao
Nominating Committee Chair, Kathleen McCarthy and members, Lynda Stephens, Lyle Toohey and Judy Weidemann, were elected at the Annual Meeting.

On August 12th, the board will host a planning retreat and invite participation of the nominating committee and program committee chairs.

Terri Parks

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The League Office hours have changed. They will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. It is important that you continue to call the office if you plan to go there. Sometimes Mary Ann will be there alone and may be out of the building on League business.
Because we cannot guarantee twenty hours of supervised work each week, we can no longer have a volunteer from Supportive Services. We continue to have the valued help of Flora Summe, whose voice may greet you when you call the office.

UN Day In NYC To Be Offered Again
The state League is pleased to offer League Day at the United Nations again. We’ve been waiting for renovations of the UN to be completed so we can arrange the tour, lunch and briefings – and we’re told that most of the work is completed.
This year’s briefing will be held on Tuesday, October 8, and will focus on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign; this multi-year campaign is aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls around the world.

Great Decisions: Humanitarian Intervention

Marie Hanrahan, also our Historian, has chosen to lead our fifth Great Decisions discussion on Thursday, August 1, 2013 (Make sure you turn over your calendars) from 10 AM - Noon at 1272 Delaware. The subject is most timely, Humanitarian Intervention. “The 'responsibility to protect' doctrine has become central to modern humanitarian intervention. When should the international community intervene? Why did the West rush to intervene in Libya but not Syria?” What are our answers to these questions? Find out by attending. (Note: My apologies for not getting the notice of July’s meeting into the "Voter"). Thanks to Elsa Bondar for coming to my rescue and putting it on line.

Bernice Baumler
Currently, there are several important issues in New York State and Washington, DC that will surely provide opportunities for action by individual League members. The state League sends *Action Alert* requests to all members who have provided e-mail addresses with their membership. Recently, we were asked to call our state representatives about the Women’s Equality Agenda. Because that issue and the Campaign Finance Reform issue have not been enacted into law, we should receive requests for action when the state legislature returns to Albany. Each *Action Alert* indicates how we should take action.

The national League web site has a simple form to complete on the home page at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). It’s easy to receive national *Action Alerts* and other news and updates that you choose when you sign up. Click on Get Involved in the main menu at the top of the home page. You may choose from several options. The Grassroots Lobby Corps will deliver action requests to your inbox. There are four current action requests shown. There will most likely be more requests for action related to the Immigration Reform legislation, climate change and the Supreme Court ruling that “cut the heart out of the Voting Right Act”. You may also choose to receive *League News and Updates* and *Voting and Election News*.

You may choose to respond by e-mail, phone call or write your own message on a post card or letter and mail it. You may edit the sample letters also. It is important that we each let our elected officials know what we need from them on the crucial issues related to voters rights and the other vital issues that are important to us all.

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**Climate Smart Communities: Some Exciting Developments**

President Obama’s long awaited Climate Change speech comes at a time when the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program moves forward, especially in the village of East Aurora along with some hopeful and exciting developments at the county level.

Environmental considerations for the East Aurora’s new Fire Hall, that will be LEED certified, are in place and the village is including greenhouse gas emission (GHG) data for the town of Aurora in a baseline GHG emission inventory for both town and village. The inventory is will be used to determine how to meet a targeted reduction of GHG emissions going forward, by conserving energy and reducing fossil fuels, while saving taxpayer dollars. It is being completed under the guidance of two knowledgeable volunteer professionals from the community, Laurie Kutina and Fred Fellendorf.

In addition, our League’s Judy Weidemann and Sandy Chelnov have convened a community-based climate smart committee (as distinct from the village committee that is working under the leadership of Deputy Mayor - and League member - Libby Weberg) so as to increase community involvement in both the village of East Aurora and the town of Aurora, to better educate the public and to assist households to reduce their GHG emissions. One idea is to make use of the “Low Carbon Diet” that many League members took on several years ago (collectively “losing” over 22,000 lbs of CO2!) Dr. John Newton from East Aurora has also proposed using GIS to map paved areas in the community (that affect the heating of the atmosphere) and to then look into alternatives available to reduce the warming impact of the pavement, involving students and “citizen scientists” in the community.

Last, but not least, Erie County will be submitting soon two grant applications as part of the Cleaner, Greener New York, regional sustainability planning process. If granted, the first will provide for outreach and education about the Climate Smart Communities program in both Erie and Niagara Counties. It will also target a number of climate smart municipalities, providing them with technical assistance and funding to get them going on the path to reducing their GHG emissions. A second grant proposal will enable Erie County to set up its own internal “Green Team” so as to effectively reduce its operational GHG emissions. Erie County has requested that LWVBN send a letter of support to be included with the applications. In addition, the Western New York Environmental Alliance (WNYEA) will be sending a letter of support, an action made possible because, at the beset of LWVBN, the (emerging!) Campaign for Climate Smart Communities in Erie and Niagara Counties was accepted last year as part of WNYEA’s Action Agenda.

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee*
Forty leagues and members-at-large units represented by 99 delegates participated in the state league’s 55th Biennial Convention, an increase in attendance and representation from the 2011 convention. Delegates approved the 2013-2014 budget, elected the slate of officers and board members for 2013-2015 proposed by the nominating committee and voted to retain all our remaining positions as part of the 2013-2015 program.

The delegates recommended concurrence on a Human Trafficking position, which has already been approved by the number of leagues required including LWVBN. The new LWVNYS position on human trafficking follows: Human forced labor and sex trafficking should be stopped through legislation and changes in public policy. Those who have been commercially sexually exploited or coerced into slave labor, or who are minors, should be considered as victims of human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking should be provided with services to facilitate integration into the community. The state Board recommended, and the delegates approved, a study on term limits for members of the state legislature and statewide officials. As approved by the delegates, this study will only go forward if a chair and a working committee are found.

Delegates also approved a non-recommended study to determine if another form of primary would be beneficial to the democratic process in New York State. The study is limited to the ballot for state legislative and statewide offices, but it will consider the entire process by which individuals get on the ballot for the general election, including the issue of being endorsed by more than one political party.

The state Board recommended, and the delegates approved an update of our position on the Constitutional Convention with an emphasis on the method of delegate selection. This update will be very limited in scope and background research will be done primarily by the state office but will require interested League members to volunteer to be part of the update committee.

Please contact laura@lwvny.org or Sally Robinson at robintwins@gmail.com, or call the office at 518-465-4162 if you are interested in participating in any of the three studies above.

Amy Witryol and Gladys Gifford each prepared and presented detailed statements as Directions to the Board about these non-recommended program items: Proposal that the LWVNY take a position against expansion of the one hazardous waste landfill operation in the state-in Niagara County, and Support for improved public transit to maximize equality of opportunity for all and support for transportation planning that focuses on investing in infrastructure for public transit in high-capacity corridors, as a strategy to minimize sprawl and to combat air pollution.

Our nine-person delegation also met with Lisa Scott for an informal chat Friday evening. Lisa is our league’s Membership/Leadership Program coach and conferences with LWVBN’s membership team members monthly. She is an excellent resource and coach with much League leadership experience.

Advocacy and Issues: Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS Legislative Director, gave us an insider’s look at the NYS legislative process – how legislation is passed or killed and how deals are made. Barb talked mainly about two issues - Campaign Finance Reform and Women’s Equality Agenda and the active role the League played in work on actual wording of proposed legislation.

Election Reform Issues Caucus: Aimee Allaud spoke briefly of legislation LWVNY supported, discussed the post-election LWVNY survey and handed out a copy of HAVA funds allocated to each county’s BOE as part of the 2001 HAVA Legislation.

Health Care Caucus: It focused primarily on the single payer option and its advantages over traditional health insurance plans. A bill has been crafted to establish this type of health care in New York State but has not come up for a vote. The single payer option has no co-pays and is funded by a progressive tax paid by all who participate in the plan.
**Membership Growth and Leadership Development:** Membership messages are familiar - but critical - working together as a team so every new member is welcomed and feels comfortable being in League and finding a meaningful role. The workshop gave hints on how to do this skillfully and with intentionality. The presentation stressed getting members involved in activities that are neither too easy nor too difficult for them, but that are interesting and challenging for them.

**Vote 411:** Sarah Podber, was very patient and expertly guided the class in an abbreviated, whirlwind course in how to use this computer program to create, use and publish the electronic voter guide.

**Voter Service Workshop:** Maggie Moehringer, past state Voter Service chair, stressed that it is an absolute necessity to maintain reputation for non-partisanship and the perception of fair and impartial conduct in holding candidate events. She suggested there be a planning meeting in the summer regarding all fall elections – plan where you want to have forums early. Each League needs to have clear policies regarding forums, meet the candidate events and debates. Be sure to dot the “i’s” and cross the “t’s” before the fall. Someone must be in touch with candidates to ensure they will attend. Respond to groups who want us to co-sponsor a forum to “let them do the work.” Invite a Boy or Girl Scout troop to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. According to FCC regulations, there is supposed to be nonpartisan agreement between the League and the press. Resources are available at the National League Web site: [http://www.lwv.org/content/faqs](http://www.lwv.org/content/faqs) with details re polices on holding candidate forums and debates.

**Youth Programs of Local Leagues:** “Without youth, we are finished!” said Judy Gorenstein, LWVNYS Youth Program Director as she opened the program. Then representatives from Chautauqua, Huntington, Smithtown, and Scarsdale described their programs, which were well planned cooperative efforts with such local service organizations as the board of elections, the Girl Scouts, the middle School, and the youth board. Marcia Merrins, from Chautauqua: described an October mock election they planned with their Board of Elections (BOE), and which received the Convention’s first prize for Youth Programs. The project was adapted from “Take Me to Vote,” a League Initiative for fourth graders, and “Vote Eighteen,” also a League Initiative, from which they customized their materials depending on the age level of the youth involved.

This is just one of the four well conceived and executed programs described with excellent documentation on the convention website, which would be fine models if we decide to engage in youth outreach. As was said, “Without Youth, we ARE finished!” Plus the moderator mentioned that the NY State Curriculum has a voting requirement at the 4th grade level. The four local Leagues showed they are well aware of problems such as customizing for age specific programs that arose and offered to help other Leagues who are interested in setting up similar programs. The workshops and caucuses noted above provide opportunities for action within LWVBN or with the state League. Please contact one of us if there’s anything above that you’re interested in pursuing for our League.

**Saturday night’s featured speaker** was Mickey Edwards, a sixteen-year Republican congressman from Oklahoma (1077-92), former professor at Harvard and Princeton, and astute observer of the partisan crisis we have in government today. He drew his insightful material from his newest book, *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans*. He believes that the current way we finance and conduct elections and draw district lines for representation result in ultra partisanship in government. A League book club might well find much to discuss while reading it.

This shortened convention packed much into a day and a half. We came home with many practical and inspiring ideas and a new appreciation for the fine people who lead our local and state Leagues. As Barbara Jeziorno wrote, “It was a privilege to meet so many articulate and talented women.”

Ramona Gallahger, Gladys Gifford, Barbara Jeziorno, Janet Massaro, Terri Parks, Lori Robinson, Dorothy Tao, Mary Ann Turkla, Amy Witryol
The new local program focus adopted at the League of Women Voters June 2013 annual meeting is to: *Examine and investigate the Erie County budget and budget process for the purpose of taking action consistent with League positions and priorities.* During this year, the local government committee is expected to prepare substantive programs regarding the budget with the goal of educating the committee, League members and the general public. One way to begin this process is to understand the procedure for adoption of the Erie County Budget.

The Division of Budget and Management works to ensure that the County's budget is in balance and that it allocates its resources in a manner that is consistent with the County's priorities and with the goals and objectives of County departments.

One of the most important powers of the county legislature is to annually adopt the Erie County Budget. The county's fiscal year is January 1 - December 31. In adopting the budget, the legislature, in part, makes appropriations, levies taxes and incurs indebtedness.

On or before the 15th day of October each year, the county executive must submit a tentative budget for the ensuing fiscal year, a financial forecast for the two (2) subsequent years, a capital program for the next six (6) fiscal years and an accompanying message. Upon receipt of the tentative budget, the county legislature's budget committee schedules hearings to consider proposed amendments to the county executive's recommendations. Amendments that add or increase items are subject to approval by the county executive. Decreases made by the legislature are not.

The report of the budget committee to the legislature must lie on the table of the legislature at least 48 hours prior to the annual meeting to adopt the budget. The annual meeting to adopt the budget must be held on or before the first Tuesday in December.

If the legislature adopts a budget without additions or increases, no further action by the county executive is required. However, if the budget adopted by the legislature contains additions or increases, it must be presented to the county executive for his consideration. If the county executive objects to one or more of the added or increased items he must inform the legislature so that they have an opportunity to override his veto. Two-thirds of the voting membership is required to override a veto.

During the summer, the Legislature conducts mid-year budget hearings of all County departments, this year beginning on Monday, July 15. The primary objective of these hearings is to gain insight into the fiscal status of departmental budgets and consideration of corrective measures advanced at the hearings.

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The local government committee is looking to add a few more enthusiastic members to help us plan creative programs for the coming year. We meet at 1:15 on the second Wednesday of the month at the League office. Please contact Marian Deutschman for more information.

Marian Deutschman, Local Government Chair
The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara deeply appreciates the gifts to the League in from July 1, 2012 until June 30, 2013 from the people below. Most donations were received at the time of membership renewal, in memory of deceased League members, or as response to our Annual Appeal letter. Your generous support enables the League to continue its Voter Service efforts and work for current League issues.

Allen, Kristin M
Allen, Sue Fay
Annis, Agnes & Robert
Banas, Phyllis
Bass, Marian
Baeumler, Bernice
Bartkowski, Tom
Bowen, Cathleen E.
Brooks, Lawrence
Brown, Dorothy J.
Brunson, Margaret
Capodicasa, Judith
Cardoso, Rosemarie
Cary, Martha
Casassa, Judy
Cheek, Freddie
Clarke, Judith
Collins, Ruth
Costanzo, Pat
Cudney, Toni
Dabney, Lois
Deutschman, Marian
DiFranco, E.C. Ross
Donovan, Judith M.
Dozoretz, Alan
Dyson, Pauline
Ebel, Dorinne
Edgcomb, Jean M.
Egan, Mary & Ted
Egan, Patricia
Ellis, Mary Ann
Eschner, Joan
Falk, Allene
Fay, Marion
Ferranti, Sandra
Flickinger, Mary
Fraser, Patricia
Frederick, Arlene
Freedman, Allan
Gallagher, Ramona
Gardner, Marjorie
Gardner, William
Gessner, Teresa
Gibson, Ellen
Gifford, Gladys
Gooding-Cadwell, Jean
Goodsell, Janet M.
Haines, Ruth
Holmes, M. Frances
Huber, Judith
Huberman, Anne
Jansen, Marie
Jeziore, Barbara
Johnson, Maxine
Keller, Marilee
Krist, Betty
Lindquist, Susan
Lista, Ellen
Martina, Linda
Massaro, Janet
McCarthy, Kathleen
McCormick, Kathleen
McDade, Laura
McLean, Lillis
Mettivier, Barbara
Mettzger, Judy
Mettzger, Sarah G.
Mettzger, Elizabeth
Meyer, Lois
Miles, Arlene
Minkley, Paula
Moehlau, Sally Roy
Nelson, Evelyn Fogg
Neumaier, Ellen
Parks, Terri
Photiadis, Joan
Pine, Ellen
Plumb, Marjorie
Popovich, Ramona
Quinn, Betty
Radford, Gail
Robinson, Lorraine
Rubin, Dianne
Sahaf, M. Ashraf
Saunders, Linda
Saxton, Ann
Schuster, Alvin
Sciolino, Janet
Scott, Marcia
Sillman, Joan
Stephens, Lynda
Stevenson, Norma
Tao, Dorothy
Tetkowski, Lenore
Toohey, Lyle & Phil
Tritto, Marjorie
Vallone, Lynne
Valvo, Francine
Westhafer, Dorothy
Wholahan, Jean
Wilkins, Lynn
Willyoung, Karen
Witryol, Amy
Witt, Susan
Zobel, Joyce

Contributions were received in memory of Miriam Becker, Richard Edgcomb and Harry A. Moehlau Jr.
Contributions were received to honor Allene Falk, Judy & Jim Metzger, Terri Parks and Lee Tetkowski
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