



The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

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May 2014

Terri Parks
President
events@lwvbn.org

Judy Metzger
Membership Chair
events@lwvbn.org

Office:
1272 Delaware Ave
Buffalo, NY 14209
884-3550
Fax: 882-3797
lwvbn@lwvbn.org

Office Manager:
Mary Ann Turkla

Office Hours:
Tues., Wed., & Fri.
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
**Always call before
going to the office**

LWVBN Home Page
www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS Home Page
www.lwvny.org

LWVUS Home Page
www.lwv.org

Sandra Chelnov
Voter Copy Editor
events@lwvbn.org

Barbara Jezioro
Voter Layout Editor
events@lwvbn.org

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May Message from Terri and the Board:

Chef's Restaurant - May 6

If you haven't made a reservation for the May 6 luncheon program at Chef's Restaurant, please do so today. Certainly the topic, Can we afford NOT to raise county property taxes? is of great interest to everyone in the county. Bring your friends! The buffet luncheon costs \$20 for League members and \$25 for others. Call the League office and send your check written to LWVBN with the names of the people who will attend.

Annual Meeting - June 14

Special Awards Announcements

We are pleased to announce that Bill Nowak will be the recipient of the Making Democracy Work award at the Annual Meeting. Bill is a community activist who's advocated for many environmental and social justice issues. He is most deserving of this honor and will be at the Luncheon on June 14, 2014 to receive our congratulations.

This years' Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award will be presented to Lyle Toohey.

The first awardee for the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara LEE Award is Laura McDade

This work honors the Long Term Commitment to the League, Energy, and Excellence of Lee Lambert, Lee Tetkowski and Lenore Banks.

We are privileged to honor these fine League members and hope that you will join us to honor them on June 14.

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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Volunteers

Our thanks to Volunteers Representing LWVBN at Buffalo Naturalization Ceremonies

We have filled up the 2014 Naturalization Calendar thanks to our volunteers who are so generous with their time. A few people have offered to fill in if we have cancellations.

In February, Agnes and Robert Annis represented the LWVBN at the naturalization ceremony at the T.R. site on Delaware Avenue. Marian Deutschman and Sandra O'Hara attended the March ceremony, held at the U.S. Courthouse.

Joan Simon and Judy Huber represented the League in early April at the U.S. Courthouse. We had feedback from Joan who described it as a wonderful experience. She scheduled for another ceremony in mid April.

Thank you to all our volunteers who have attended these ceremonies and are excellent representatives of the LWVBN.

Any League member is eligible to represent the League at these events, and most find it a memorable experience. If you would like to serve the League, but cannot commit to a large project, this is an excellent way to help. You can send your intentions to me at events@lwvbn.org.

Another way to serve short term is by helping with the work our volunteers do for the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) elections. You can help by stuffing envelopes or assisting with nominations and elections. If you are interested, e-mail me at the same address.

Judith Clarke-LWVBN, Volunteer Coordinator

Election Services Committee: LWVBN volunteers log in 40 hours during March!

The Election Services Committee is giving a AN EXTRAORDINARY THANK YOU to this committee's volunteers who have been stuffing, stamping, sealing, folding, recording, checking names for ballots, logging in voters, and counting votes for very extensive periods of time during February and March. During March alone, this committee logged almost forty hours in service to our League while striving to ensure reliable, valid, and fair elections for the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority. Without their dedication and competent efforts, this committee could not function adequately, if at all.

Through this article, our organization is demonstrating our deepest appreciation to Ramona Gallagher, JoAnn Mecca, Lillis McClean, Judy Capodicasa, Judith Clarke, Judy Huber, Mike Egan, Marge Gardner, Marlene Katzel, Janet Massaro, and non members Helen Weintraub, and Emily Paulsen. Again, thank you to all.

Alan Dozoretz, Election Services Chair

Great Decisions

Israel and the U. S. is the timely second Great Decisions 2014 topic to be led by Joan Mondul on Thursday, May 1 (please note date) from 10 AM - noon at the LWVBN office, 1272 Delaware Avenue. "Modern Israel's struggles with the Palestinians have turned what was meant as a safe haven for Jews into the center of a decades-long conflict. The U. S. has stepped in as Israel's ally due to the two countries' shared values, providing years of unparalleled military and diplomatic support. But now those ties are being tested. The Arab Spring, Iran's nuclear ambitions, failed peace talks, and Israel's own decision to give Washington the cold shoulder have put new strains on the 65-year-old 'special relationship.'" We hope everyone can attend.

Bernice Baeumler

Term Limits: Lessons Learned after 20 Years of State Experience.

Last month's article in the Voter listed some arguments for and against term limits for state legislatures. These arguments were first put forth when term limits were originally proposed in the 1990's. Researchers are now using twenty years of state experience with term limit reforms in their evaluations. Some states have now gone through two full cycles of elected officials being "termed out". How have states adapted to these dramatic changes? Have any of the consequences that were predicted, for or against term limits, been realized?

We have listed some of these outcomes below.

- Rather than giving rise to citizen legislators, newcomers in term limit states were more likely than any other group to have held elective office prior to their election to the legislature. Indeed, entering elective politics is today viewed as a personal and honorable career choice. However, careerism in term limited states changes: legislators first move from lower house to upper house and then from state to federal office or to an appointed position.
- There have been virtually no effects on the types of people elected to office, in terms of race, ideology, age, religious, professional backgrounds or socioeconomic status of legislators. While some states saw a change in minority representation, this may have been due to redistricting, demographic changes, and expanded voting rights. Most incumbents that have been termed out have been white males. While this has created more opportunities for women, these opportunities have not been realized through term limits. The number of female legislators has increased throughout the country, but this increase is the same in states with term limits and in states without term limits.
- A term limited incumbent changes strategies and concerns as he/she advances towards the limit. In the beginning, constituents concerns are uppermost, closer to the end, the good of the whole community or one's conscience tends to carry more weight.
- Legislators in term limited states spend less time keeping in touch with constituents and far less time securing government money and projects for their districts.
- There is a lack of measurable effect of term limits on the influence of lobbyists. They have to work harder forging relationships with new members, but their influence is not diminished.
- In the areas of campaigning and fundraising, the more years that legislators have remaining, the more effort they spend campaigning and fundraising, slowing down as their term comes to a close.

In the next Voter, we'll discuss the differences in state institutional structure, restrictions of various term limit laws, effects on incumbents and challengers, how term limits affect leadership in both legislative and executive branches, and how more open seats affects competitiveness and voter turnout. If you have questions or comments, you can let us know by contacting us at events@lwvbn.org. Otherwise, stay tuned!

LWVBN Term Limits/Ballot Access Study Committee

You should have received tickets for the 2014 Big League Raffle in the mail. This annual fundraiser from the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation benefits the education efforts at the state and local level. We have additional tickets available at the League office.

LWVBN Membership Directory Available

The 2014 LWVBN Membership Directory is available to all members in hard copy. If you would like to have one mailed to you, please remit \$4 to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209.

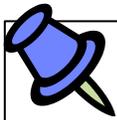


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May Meetings

Thurs., 5/1, 10 a.m.
Great Decisions, League Office

Tues., 5/6, 4:30 p.m.
Issues Committee, Harlem Rd.
Community Center

Thurs., 5/8, 9:30 a.m.
Natural Resources, East Aurora

Mon., 5/12, 4 p.m.
Board Meeting, League Office

Wed., 5/14, 1:15 p.m.
Local Government Committee
League Office

Wed., 5/21, 1:00 p.m.
Term Limits/Ballot Access Committee
League Office

Thurs., 5/22, 1:30 p.m.
Charter Schools/Education Committee
League Office

Copy for June Voter due 5/9/2014