



The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

Volume 19 Number 10

Summer 2014

Terri Parks
President
876-0184
events@lwvbn.org

Judy Metzger
Membership Chair
688-2351
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
655-5349
events@lwvbn.org

Barbara Jezioro
Voter Layout Editor
838-5968
events@lwvbn.org

The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the September issue are due Monday, August 4

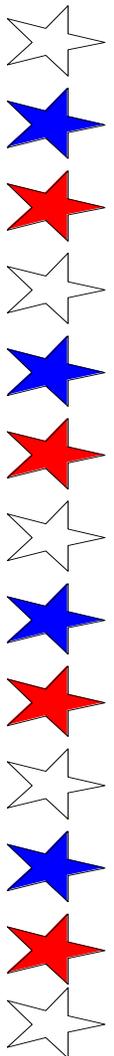


IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

Please join us at the League's Annual Pot Luck Picnic hosted by the Amherst Unit on July 29th.

In addition to the fabulous food that League members always bring to potluck events, we do have important business to conduct: The consensus efforts for the State League Term Limits Study. Our local committee, directed by Janet Massaro and Joan Photiadis, has done an outstanding job sharing information through articles in the Voter. The issue is complex, but the consensus questions that are in this edition of the Voter, are straightforward and unambiguous. I look forward to a spirited discussion of the issue with the highly intelligent and informed members of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. Make sure to join us and do what League members do best; speak with passion and informed opinion.

Terri Parks



**Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at Noon
Chelsea Club House,**

*Downing Lane at Canterbury Woods, off Renaissance Drive in
Williamsville*



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.

CONTENTS

President's Report	2	Campaign Finance	4
Great Decisions	2	Natural Resources	5
Term Limits Consensus	3	Students Inside Albany	5

President's Report

Summer is a busy time for the League. Once again, Kate Wagner and Joyce Bol have arranged a voter registration effort at a number of venues. Work on the Voters Guide is in progress. On July 14, the board had its first board meeting since the slate of board members was elected at the Annual Meeting.

Board meetings will continue to be the second Monday of the month at the League Office from 4 to 6 p.m. unless that date is a holiday. The meeting dates for 2014 are 8/11, 9/8, 10/14, 11/10. In 2015, the board meets 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11.

Mark your calendars for the League's Holiday Party on December 1, 2014 at Chef's Restaurant, the League of Women Voters of New York State Convention on June 6 and 7, 2015 and our League's Annual Meeting on June 13, 2015.

To date, the following responsibilities have been accepted and approved:

1st Vice President and Volunteer Coordinator:	Judith Clarke
2nd Vice President and Membership Committee Chair:	Judy Metzger
3rd Vice President and Issues Committee Chair:	Marian Deutschman
Secretary:	Ramona Gallagher
Treasurer:	Lori Robinson
Voter Service Chair:	Margaret Brunson
Legislative Action Chair:	Joan Lo Curto
Finance/Investment Committee Chair:	Pat Costanzo
Youth Programs Committee Chair:	Dot Brown
Public Relations Committee Chair:	Dorothy Tao
Voter Editor:	Barbara Jezioro
Voter Copy Editor:	Sandy Chelnov
Executive Committee Director:	Dorothy Tao
Finance Committee- League Member:	Lyle Toohey

The board discussed the problems with the Gift Wrapping efforts this past year at Eastern Hills Mall, and given the uncertainty of continuing that effort, voted to discontinue that effort and sell as many of our supplies as possible and donate the remainder. While we had three successful Gift Wrap efforts, this past year's location and the difficulty we had getting sufficient volunteers made it clear that we need to focus our fundraising efforts elsewhere.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Marie Hanrahan will be leading our fifth Great Decisions discussion on energy independence Thursday, August 7 from 10 a.m. to noon at the LWVBN office at 1272 Delaware Ave. Energy independence, by taking the bargaining chip of oil dependence off the table, would be good for American foreign policy, but the very technological advances that make independence possible have created a dilemma for lawmakers. In a government with fixed resources, should the U.S. encourage more traditional fuel production or invest in the technology of renewable resources? What do you think? Tell us why.

Bernice Baeumler

Correction:

In the June edition of The Voter, Jean Flowers' name was inadvertently left off the list of volunteers that worked on School Board Candidate's Night in Hamburg.

Calling League Members to a Discussion and Consensus* Meeting

AT ISSUE: Should there be term limits for New York State legislators and statewide elected offices?

Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at Noon

League Potluck Picnic, Chelsea Club House,

Downing Lane at Canterbury Woods, off Renaissance Drive in Williamsville

Term Limits consensus questions are printed below. Please bring the questions with you to the potluck.

The arguments for and against term limits and the experience of states with term limits were printed in the March, April, May, and June VOTER. If you have questions or need copies, call the League Office or a member of the Term Limits Study Committee.

**The LWV is a grass roots organization. League members select government issues for study and action. Following study, a League position is reached based upon member agreement, or Consensus.*

Term Limits Study - 2014

Consensus Questions

1. Should there be term limits for the office of New York State Senate, which currently has a term length of 2 years?
2. If the answer to 1 is yes:
 - a) How many years in total should a Senator be allowed to serve?
 - c) Should a person who has served the maximum number of years in the Senate be able to run again after sitting out one or more terms?
3. Should there be term limits for the office of New York State Assembly, which currently has a term length of 2 years?
4. If the answer to 3 is yes:
 - a) How many years in total should an Assembly member be allowed to serve?
 - c) Should a person who has served the maximum number of years in the Assembly be able to run again after sitting out one or more terms?
5. If term limits for Assembly and Senate were adopted, should the term limits apply to service in one house or service in both houses combined?
6. Should there be a term limit for the following statewide offices in New York State, all of which currently have term lengths of 4 years?

- a) Governor _____
- b) Lieutenant Governor _____
- c) Attorney General _____
- d) Comptroller _____

7. If the answer to 6 is yes, how many years in total should a person be able to serve in each of the following elected offices?

- a) Governor _____
- b) Lieutenant Governor _____
- c) Attorney General _____
- d) Comptroller _____

8. If the answer to 6 is yes, should a person who has served the maximum number of years in that specific office be able to run again for the same office after sitting out one or more terms?

- a) Governor _____
- b) Lieutenant Governor _____
- c) Attorney General _____
- d) Comptroller _____

9. The current term length for both Assembly and Senate offices is 2 years. The current term length for New York statewide offices is 4 years. If New York State changes the current term lengths for any of these elected offices, should the League reconsider its position on term limits?

Campaign Finance Reform Update

No doubt, it was a disappointing year for campaign finance reform in New York State. What started out as a bright beginning in January drew to a dreary close in May, with very little accomplished. The New York State League strongly criticized both the Legislature and the Governor for failing to take the opportunity to pass comprehensive reform and the Governor additionally for abruptly shutting down the Moreland Commission that he had convened to investigate corruption and other wrongdoing in Albany.

Yet it was a surprisingly good year for reform locally. After months of inaction, the Buffalo Common Council passed a resolution on May 27th “to explore the possibility of implementing a public financing system for elected municipal offices...” and to set up a committee of interested community organizations to do just that. As of this writing, the “Committee” will be appointed sometime in July and begin work in September. We are particularly grateful to Ian Hoffmann, from Common Cause in New York City, who worked tirelessly to get unanimous Council support, for our good friends Bill Nowak, Jim Anderson (Citizen Action), Marjorie Girth (Common Cause) and LWVBN members (of course) for being equally persistent in getting this exciting initiative off the ground.

Our CFR Committee needs your continued support and – yes – your input as well. As we learn more, we can do more, and the better the outcomes will be. Whether addressing the CFR issue locally, or on a statewide or national level, working together we can reduce the influence of money in politics.

Janet Massaro, Campaign Finance Reform Committee

Natural Resources Committee

Food Security, GMOs and Climate Change

**Wednesday September 17, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.
Unity Church, 1243 Delaware Ave.**

This forum, sponsored by the Natural Resources Committee, will include a panel bringing together award-winning food justice advocate and long-time organic farmer Elisabeth Henderson, retired nurse and integrative nutrition health coach Eveline Hartz and Aiden McLaughlin, a student who is passionately involved in East Aurora's Parkdale Elementary School vegetable garden. This forum will take place at a new location for our League: directly across the street from the League office at the Unity Church at 1243 Delaware. The forum, like all League programs, is open to the public. See you there & bring a friend!

Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee

Students inside Albany Conference

The Students Inside Albany Conference gives selected New York State high school students the opportunity to understand the mechanics of state government – a topic not covered in traditional high school courses. Through seminars given by lobbyists, campaign strategists, journalists, and Assembly members, participants gain a multi-faceted view of the New York State Legislature. I had the privilege of representing New York State's 60th district at this conference, May 18 to 21, 2014. I also shadowed Senator Mark Grisanti and Assemblyman Sean Ryan. My attendance was sponsored by the Buffalo/Niagara chapter of the League of Women Voters.

The Students Inside Albany Conference is all about educating a future generation of voters, and possibly, politicians. The grassroots-driven system of our state government was explained and emphasized. The laws and bills passed in legislature deal with our community and directly impact our daily lives. The average person can make an impact by bringing attention to a certain issue – without need for monetary donations, a group of individuals can have sway. This was a powerful message underscored by nearly all of the informed Albany insiders who spoke to our group. Lobbyists, campaign strategists, journalists, and Assembly members took the time to both inform us and share their opinions, and perspectives, on hot button topics. This allowed us to draw our own educated conclusions based on both the mechanics of our government, and the experiences of those working in it.

The best part of this conference was how interactive my experience was. Shadowing my district's representatives was different to the awkward, scheduled, silence I had envisioned – the representatives were candid, welcoming, and attentive. I felt as if I was talking to one of my friend's parents, not an elected official. Although the senator I was shadowing was busy, and the session in the senate is more formal than in the assembly, Senator Mark Grisanti showed me the ropes of the state Senate and introduced me to his peers. He welcomed me into a setting that very easily could have been alienating. Assemblyman Sean Ryan had more time to spend with me. He gave me a tour of the building (despite Assembly being in session) and explained and discussed various bills and laws that had recently been passed and that were being passed that day. The representatives of my district were just that, representatives of my district – I felt that they were real everyday members of my community, and was surprised at how accessible they were.

More than anything, *The Students Inside Albany Conference*, made it clear how influential state government is in our day-to-day lives, and how important it is that each generation is involved in their government. By sponsoring our participation in this conference, The League of Women Voters helps us to understand that government, something that often feels out of reach, is relevant and approachable.

Griffin Saiia, Junior, City Honors School

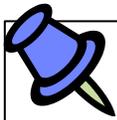


OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA
1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209-2401



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Buffalo, NY
Permit No. 1681



August Meetings

Mon 8/4, 1:00 p.m.
Term Limits/Ballot Access
League Office

Tues., 8/5, 4:30 p.m.
Issues Committee, Harlem Rd.
Community Center

Thurs., 8/7, 10:00 a.m.
Great Decisions, League Office

Mon., 8/11, 4 p.m.
Board Meeting, League Office

Wed., 8/13, 1:15 p.m.
Local Government, League Office

Thurs., 8/14, 9:30 a.m.
Natural Resources, East Aurora

August 26 is "Women's Equality Day."

The date commemorates the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York.

Copy for the September Voter due 8/4/2014