



The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

Volume 20 Number 6

March, 2015

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The VOTER is published
10 times per year. Items
for the April issue are due
Friday, March 6, 2015



AAUW Buffalo Branch Celebrates International Women's Day March 8, 2015 "Declaring Equality: Renewing a Legacy" co-sponsor, League of Women Voters, Buffalo/Niagara

Adam's Mark Buffalo Hotel & Event Center
120 Church Street, Buffalo NY 14202
Registration, networking, cash bar at noon
Lunch served at 12:30, program at 1:30
The Public is Welcome

Join us on Sunday March 8, for luncheon and discussion between **Buffalo attorney Nadia Shahram**, author, activist, Moslem women's rights advocate, and president of The Coalition for the Advancement of Moslem Women; and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, a convenor of the first women's rights movement, as portrayed by **Dr. Melinda Grube**, historian and adjunct professor who has studied Stanton's works and life extensively.

Parking is free in adjacent ramp with ticket provided.

Send reservations by **February 28** to **Judy Weidemann**, events@lwvbn.org

Reservation form

Name _____

Phone _____

Entrée selection: ___ Sea Bass w/ passion fruit sauce or ___ Stuffed Portobello w/ port butter glaze @\$26

Name _____

Entrée selection: ___ Sea Bass or ___ Portobello @\$26

Total \$ _____

Please make check payable to **AAUW Buffalo Branch**

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 Message

At its February meeting, the board approved making “a contribution in the amount \$2000 from our treasury to the LWNYS-EF "League Matters Campaign" in recognition of the hard work of the staff and State Board members on behalf of all the leagues in New York State.” We appreciate the work of the Education Foundation to provide voter education materials, the Students Inside Albany Program and education publications and meetings for member Leagues. Our League will receive a portion of donations that our members send to the League Matters Campaign. Consider making a donation to this important effort to help insure that the League has funds to continue its education efforts.

Mark your calendars for the Women's History Month Kickoff event on Thursday, March 5, 2015 at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library! The event takes place from 11a.m. to 1 p.m. The League will be present with a display.

The Term Limits and Ballot Access Studies have concluded. The committee did an outstanding job in researching these two state studies and presenting their findings to our membership. **Janet Massaro** and **Joan Photiadis** led the effort and were most ably assisted by **Pat Costanzo, Wynnie Fisher, Barbara Jezioro, Beth Kaufman** and **Laura McDade**. This fine committee did a thorough job researching both issues. We are most fortunate that their work led to clear presentations to League members through articles in the Voter and presentations at the consensus meetings. Thank you all for your efforts.

Program Planning: Our League recommends that all current positions be retained in the League of Women Voters of New York State (LWNYS) program for the next two years. We also recommended that the state League adopt the League of Women Voters of Kansas Living Wage position by concurrence.

Call to Convention: The LWNYS Biennial Convention with the theme *A Voice for Citizens, A Force for Change*, will take place June 6-7, 2015 at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany. Please consider being a delegate to the convention. It is an excellent opportunity to network with League leaders from across the state and learn how the state and local leagues work together and support each other. Please contact me or call the League Office if you'd like to be a delegate.

- Terri Parks

Great Decisions

The 2015 briefing books were ordered on February second and have arrived. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone on Thursday, March 5, 2015 from 10 AM-noon at 1272 Delaware when I will happily exchange your books for \$18.00 each. Hopefully we can establish leaders for the eight topics. If you saved your opinion ballots from 2014 bring them as the national results are published in our 2015 books for comparison. Note: If you would like your book ahead of time, call me to arrange a pickup time.

-Bernice Baeumler

Zephyr Teachout and **Josh Fox** present
“A Solar Home Companion”
Live and in Person

at **The Buffalo History Museum, March 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.**

Lightly parodying NPR/Garrison Keillor's popular “a Prairie Home Companion, this show is like an old fashioned variety show, with music, stories, film sequences and “Americana, but with a new twist: it will teach its audience how to go renewable and how to organize for a sustainable future. It was conceived and directed by Oscar-Nominated and Emmy-Winning filmmaker and activist Josh Fox.

Make your reservation at niagarasierraclub.com. Seating is limited.

The Sierra Club Niagara Group, UB School of Architecture and Planning, WNY Environmental Alliance and others sponsor the program.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara is a co-sponsor.

Wrapping up our Ballot Access Study / Continuing with Campaign Finance Reform

By the time you receive this Voter, the Ballot Access consensus results from Local Leagues throughout New York State will have been sent to State League Office for review. The final determination, based on the consensus results of all Local Leagues will be announced later this spring. The LWVBN Term Limits / Ballot Access Committee (saying that is a “mouthful”) thanks every member for participating in these two studies over the past year and making their views known at the consensus meetings.

Our focus once again is on the very big, enduring, challenging, and, yes, frustrating issue of Campaign Finance Reform, always on the top of the League’s priority agenda. LWVBN members interested in updating themselves on “Money in Politics” are asked to begin by reading the “Money in Politics: A Primer on Campaign Finance Reform”. This report was prepared by League of Women Voters of the United States in the summer of 2014 and will serve as background material for our Campaign Finance Reform Committee’s ongoing work. You will find it on the League’s website, www.lwv.org. The dates and times for our discussions have not been decided at this writing, but you may call the League Office or me for information. Whether you like to talk (a few of us do) or you’re more reserved and voice your opinions “softly”, we have a seat at the table waiting for you.

-Janet Massaro

Campaign Finance Reform is a critical issue we cannot ignore!

Membership

We welcome new members to the league: Kathy Macaluso, Donna Hagerty and Joy Kuebler. We hope you will each become an active member of the League.

The Membership Committee recently created a New Member Ambassador Position to introduce the League to new members. A number of current League members have volunteered to be New Member Ambassadors to phone, welcome each new member and help her/him become active in our efforts.

Thank you to Gladys Gifford and Jay Burney, Chair of the Friends of Times Beach Nature Preserve, for sharing the evolution of the development of the waterfront and a proposal for the Great Lakes marine sanctuary as inspired by marine biologist, Sylvia Earle at the February Lunch & Issues program. We look forward to the next steps in the Outer Harbor process and appreciate the continuing efforts to insure that the public is heard in this process provided by members of the League’s Waterfront/Transportation Committee.

In Memoriam

Marie Hakala-Zakrzewski, PhD, who died on January 17, 2015 in Watertown, New York at age 97, was a strong supporter of the League and served on many committees during her twenty-year membership. Dr. Hakala was a strong woman with strong opinions, which she shared through many Letters to the Editor of the *Buffalo News* and the *Watertown Daily Times* after she moved there in 2005. She was born in Helsinki, Finland and emigrated to the United States in 1949. She was a revered research scientist at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, a multi-published author and featured in League News in 2002. The League has received several donations in her memory as requested in her obituary in the Buffalo News.

Grace Elizabeth Kerr died on February 2, 2015 at age 102. There was an obituary in the Buffalo News noting that Grace was the “longtime chair of the League of Women Voters evening group.” We’re not sure if any current members remember Grace, but it’s clear that the League was important to her and we value the service she gave to the League during her long life.

Memorial Service

Ernest (Ernie) Metzger, husband of long time member and League leader, Sally Metzger, died on January seventeenth. A memorial service will be held for Ernie on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 695 Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry Street in Buffalo.

Climate Smart Communities Update: Erie County On Board & Awarded a Planning Grant

Several years ago the LWVBN took a keen interest in promoting the New York State sponsored Climate Smart Communities program with the goal of having more municipalities in our area sign on and take voluntary actions to both reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to increase climate resilience. Actions can include decreasing community energy use, increasing the use of renewable energy, realizing the benefits from increased recycling and other climate wise solid waster management practices, along with enhancing community resilience by plans to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change.

We are very pleased to take note that the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning is systematically preparing to do the work entailed to become “climate smart.” This past summer the Erie County Legislature signed onto the Climate Smart Community pledge, joining 146 other cities, counties, towns and villages around New York State. The county legislature also agreed to write into the county budget the new position of Energy Officer. And now the LWVBN is especially happy to hear that Erie County has been awarded a grant from New York State to fund the Erie County Climate Change and Sustainability Plan, a plan that is to be mostly related to internal county operations. (Unfortunately another Climate Smart Communities grant that, among other things would have provided assistance to municipalities within the county on a first come first served basis, was not awarded. Next year perhaps?)

Still, the planning grant that has been awarded will involve public engagement in the form of three meetings: one prior to the planning process, one to present a draft plan and one to present the final plan. LWVBN has offered assistance to Erie County towards making this outreach to the public successful. We are hopeful that increased public knowledge of Erie County government’s leadership in making its county operations more climate and energy smart will help show the way to more municipalities in Western New York.

In a recent email Bonnie Lawrence of the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, who wrote the successful grant proposal, says that she is very excited with this new project as she has “been trying to get a Sustainability Director for the County for almost ten years now.” And, she reassures us, that the Department of Environment and Planning will continue to push for more support for Climate Smart Communities in Western New York.

If this article has piqued your interest in this important endeavor to make our villages, towns, cities and counties “climate smart” please contact Sandy Chelnov. The more citizen engagement we have, the more successful the Climate Smart Communities program will be!

- Sandy Chelnov, events@lwvbn.org

Our Volunteers

The last few months have been busy for League Volunteers. In November, Marian Deutschman spoke for the LWVBN at the Amberleigh Campus. Her remarks were very much appreciated by the residents who attended. Amberleigh had requested a speaker from the LWVBN and Marian graciously accepted the request to be that speaker.

In December, Sandra O’Hara and Lillis Mclean represented the League at Naturalization Ceremonies at the U.S. Courthouse. The December 12 date was a make up date for a ceremony previously scheduled during the snow storm. Sandra and Lillis responded quickly to fill in for that date with little notice. Judy Casassa, JoAnn Mecca, Richard Hemann and Marian Deutschman represented the League at Naturalization Ceremonies in January.

We appreciate all those who volunteer to represent the LWVBN. There are many volunteer opportunities! Right now we are filling the Naturalization Ceremony calendar for this year. If you think you might be able to represent the League at one of these ceremonies, please let me know.

- Judith Clarke, LWVBN-Volunteer Coordinator, events@lwvbn.org

LAST VOTER

Receipt of The VOTER, our bulletin that is produced ten times each year, is a benefit of membership in the League. If you failed to renew your membership or are an elected official, the address label on this mailing includes the term **LAST VOTER**. If you think you renewed your membership, please contact Mary Ann at the League Office, events@lwvbn.org.

We'll be happy to include you as a **Non-Member Subscriber** to the printed VOTER for \$15 per year to cover printing and mailing costs. A Non-Member subscription to the electronic edition costs \$5 per year. Complete this form for a one-year subscription to the Voter that will conclude with the June 2016 edition and mail it with your check written to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

Please note that future annual subscriptions will begin with the Summer Voter. The subscription fee will be prorated for the editions remaining until the next June edition.

Name _____

Position (if an elected official) _____

Number and Street _____

City, State, Zipcode _____

Phone Number _____

An elected official may request the electronic Voter at no charge by sending his/her e-mail address to lwvbn@lwvbn.org.

2015 Membership Directory

All members with email addresses recently received the updated League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara Membership Directory. If you would like a printed copy of the directory, please send \$3.00 to the League Office to cover copying and mailing costs.

It's Everybody's Waterfront

Following up on a long tradition of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara, the Waterfront/Transportation Committee has been monitoring the Outer Harbor process, to ensure that the voices of the public are both heard and included in any plans adopted by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC). Our League has been monitoring the development of the waterfront for many years. The first position was formed in 1996; the current statement carries forward the original intent with slight changes in wording.

We hope that the presentation at Lunch & Issues on February 20 provided Leaguers with some clarity and insights to help us all promote our position on the Lake Erie waterfront, which includes: year-round public access to the waterfront, regional planning process that includes adequate public participation, development that is appropriate for the waterfront location, respect for the area's significant history, and protection of the natural environment.

Many members and friends of the LWVBN express enthusiastic interest in what happens on our waterfront. The ECHDC is in charge of the process. We will continue to insist that the voices of the public be heard. We are cooperating with various civic groups, both to support our position and to oppose inappropriate development, i.e., housing, on the Outer Harbor. Watch for updates from our committee!

- Gladys Gifford, Waterfront/Transportation Committee Chair



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March Meetings

Mon., March 2, 3:00 p.m.

Waterfront, Central Library

Tues., 3/3, 4:30 p.m.

Issues, Harlem Rd. Community Center

Thurs., 3/5, 10:00 a.m.

Great Decisions, League Office

Mon., 3/9, 4:00 p.m.

Board Meeting, League Office

Wed., 3/11, 1:15 p.m.

Local Government, League Office

Thurs., 3/12, 9:30 a.m.

Natural Resources, East Aurora

Thurs., 3/19, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee, League Office

Save The Date for Programs for Members and the Public.

“Living Wage – One Step to Equity!”

April 23, 2015, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

Harlem Road Community Center Auditorium

Free parking, Refreshments

A panel will present why we need a living wage. League support appears likely.

-Lynda Stephens, Social Economic Justice Chair

Pies & Pie Charts, Brunch & Budget

May 16, 2015, 9:30-11:30 AM

Harlem Road Community Center

Much more information to come!

-Marian Deutschman, Local Government Chair