



The League of Women Voters
of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

Volume 21 Number 9

June, 2016

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The **VOTER** is published 10 times per year. Items for the Summer issue are due Friday, June 24, 2016

Please Join Us!

**League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara
2016 Annual Meeting & Luncheon**
Civil Discourse in a Presidential Election Year!

The Protocol Restaurant

6766 Transit Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

located about 1500 feet north of Exit 49, New York State Thruway (US 90)

Saturday, June 4, 2016

The Annual Meeting will begin with coffee at 10:00 a.m.

Luncheon will be served at noon

Speaker: Honorable John J. LaFalce

Mr. LaFalce will share insights from his experience in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975 to 2003, during the administrations of six presidents.

Special Awards:

Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award: Joan Photiadis

LEE Award: JoAnn Mecca for Long Term Commitment to the League with Energy and Excellence

Making Democracy Work Award: Scott Gehl, Executive Director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal

**The reservation form is in the Annual Meeting Booklet.
Reservations are due at the League office by May 31.**

Mission of the League of Women Voters:

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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Presidents' Report

June 30 marks the end of another productive year for the League of Women Voters. We have much to celebrate at the Annual Meeting on June 4 and hope you'll join us as we honor Scott Gehl from HOME and our own Joan Photiadis and JoAnn Mecca. We can accept luncheon reservations through May 31.



At the May board meeting, we discussed ways the League can work to encourage citizens to vote in the upcoming June and September primaries and especially in the general election. We would like to host a booth at the Erie County Fair this year, but will need volunteers to be there to talk with the folks who pass the booth and also to register voters. Please contact the League office if you are interested in helping with this effort.

Please contact the office if you are willing to work on other efforts to Get Out The Vote! It is so important that more people vote in this year's election. New York State has a horrible record of voter turnout in recent years.

Work begins on our Voters Guide soon. We have filled a number of key roles on the Voters Guide Steering Committee, but can always use additional help. Please contact Terri at lwvoter@verizon.net or 876-0184 if you'll be willing to help. She'll be happy to let you know what help is needed.

Judy Metzger & Terri Parks

Important Opportunity

LWV New York State 100th Anniversary Committees

We will celebrate two important anniversaries in the next few years — Women's Suffrage in New York State in 2017 and 100 years of the League in New York State. Our League should have representation on the three subcommittees of the state League to provide input about our local League and to work with folks from across the state on the plans for the state League efforts. The Researching and Updating League History Committee will update the *75 Years of a Good Idea* book to include the full 100 years of our history. The Coordinating Educational Forums/Exhibits Committee will create an educational program to share with local Leagues, coordinate efforts with local Leagues and other groups, and create a toolkit to include a list of possible speakers and ideas for local League efforts. The Fundraising Committee will create a toolkit for local Leagues to use in fundraising efforts.

Please contact our League office if you are interested in this effort and also if you'd like to work on our League's efforts to honor these milestones locally.

Great Decisions: The Future of Kurdistan

Ann Malachowski will continue our examination of regional difficulties by leading the discussion on *The Future of Kurdistan* on Thursday, June 2, from 10 a.m. till noon at 1272 Delaware. "Kurdistan, a mountainous region made up of parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Syria, is home to one of the largest ethnic groups in West Asia: the Kurds. Now most in the West know them for their small, oil-rich autonomous region in northern Iraq called Iraqi Kurdistan — one of the U.S.'s closest allies in the Middle East and a bulwark against the expansion of the so-called Islamic State. What does the success of Iraqi Kurdistan mean for Kurds in the surrounding region?" Join us in the discussion of the struggle.

Bernice Baeumler

Volunteer Service Report

April was a very busy month for Voter Service. On April 9 we attended the LWVNY Regional Training Meeting. We heard speakers on the New York State Constitution (constitutional conventions), organ donation, debates and forums, Get Out The Vote, Vote 411 and more.

The following day Terri Parks and Lori Robinson spoke to the WNY Muslims organization about voting, voter registration and more. A voter registration event followed. This group plans to conduct voter registration events for Muslims throughout the area.

Throughout the month we were busy scheduling candidate forums for school board elections in the area. KenTon and Williamsville districts had events on May 5; these events were co-sponsored by LWVBN and the local PTAs.

Four LWVBN members conducted Vote 18 events for graduating seniors at Maryvale High School. We found that the script from LWVNY had to be altered to fit the circumstances. Because the classes were very large and the classroom was congested, we could not have the students move around, so we did questions and answers and a mock election.

At the end of each class we distributed voter registration forms and guided the students through the registration process. Ninety-four students returned completed registration forms. Four students had to make corrections and re-submit their forms. We took 90 completed forms (with a few completed organ donor forms) to the Erie County Board of Elections. Joyce Bol, JoAnn Mecca, Ann Converso and Margaret Brunson conducted the event and all agreed that it was well worth the effort and we would do it again. The teacher, Mr. Murphy, was a great help to us.

We are in the process of scheduling voter registration events for this summer and fall. If there is an event in your neighborhood that might have room for a voter registration table, let me know and I will try to schedule something.

Margaret Brunson, Voter Service Chair

Volunteers in Action

In April, Janet Goodsell, Mary Herbst, Jayne Murray, Christine Reichsmuth and Judy Weidemann represented the LWVBN at new citizen ceremonies. On May 5 Ann Converso and Judy Casassa represented the League at the U.S. Courthouse. Because of their efforts the Board of Elections reported we had a great return for the month of April! We continue to encourage our volunteers to approach new citizens after the ceremony and offer help filling out their forms. Hopefully, these efforts will pay off with larger returns. The Board of Elections will continue to keep a tally of forms returned with the LWVBN stamp so we will be able to keep track of the progress we make. We are also suggesting our volunteers take a few extra forms to the ceremonies in case there are more new citizens than expected.

In addition to the new citizen ceremonies, two of our volunteers — Marian Deutschman and Janet Goodsell — moderated and kept time at the Ken-Ton candidates' night.

Judy Clarke, Volunteer Coordinator

Save the Date!

Join with League friends to hear Zephyr Teachout

Zephyr Teachout will speak at the Chautauqua Institution on Thursday, July 7, at 10:45 a.m. We are forming a League car pool for that event. Please contact the League office if you are interested in going and also if you're willing to drive. Each person will be responsible for her/his gate pass purchase; \$24 allows access to the Institution for the morning, until 2:00 p.m. Drivers will decide how to share driving and parking expenses with their passengers. There are no other costs for Zephyr's talk in the amphitheater. There are places to get a light lunch on the grounds and we can decide where we may meet for dinner on the way home when we are together. Contact the League office by June 28 if you want to be included in this informal event. We'll arrange meeting times and places.

Money in politics

We have a new Money in Politics position!

The LWVUS announced its new position in April, just as our May Voter went to press. Those members who receive the Voter by email were sent a copy, but here it is below for everyone to read. Our League was one of 336 Leagues throughout the country that participated in the two-year study and consensus process. The new updated position enables us to take action on a much broader range of federal campaign finance reform issues and it complements our activities on state and local levels as well. We thank you, LWVBN members! Interested in joining the Money in Politics Committee? We always have a place for you. For information, please email me at events@lwvbn.org

LWVUS Position on Money in Politics, as announced by the National Board in April 2016

(1) The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should:

- Enhance political equality for all citizens;
- Ensure maximum participation by citizens in the political process;
- Protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns;
- Provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices;
- Ensure transparency and the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections;
- Enable candidates to compete equitably for public office;
- Ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and
- Combat corruption and undue influence in government.

(2) The League believes that political corruption includes the following:

- A candidate or officeholder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor's interests in exchange for a campaign contribution;
 - An officeholder or staff gives greater access to donors;
 - An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them;
 - A candidate or office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given; and
- The results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.

(3) In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, the League supports:

- Public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits;
- Enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes changes to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed, and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process;
- Abolishing Super PACs and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate's own campaign committee); and
- Restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists, which may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.

(4) Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed in order to meet the League's goals for protecting democratic processes. Among the different entities that spend money to influence elections, the League supports the following comparative limits:

- Higher spending limits for political parties, genuinely non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote organizations and activities, and candidates spending money raised from contributors;

- Mid-level spending limits for individual citizens (including wealthy individuals), Political Action Committees (with funds contributed by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members and volunteers), and candidates spending their own money;
- Lower spending limits for trade associations, labor unions and non-profit organizations from their general treasury funds;
- Severely restricted spending by for-profit organizations spending from their corporate treasury funds; and
- No limits on spending by bona fide newspapers, television, and other media, including the Internet, except to address partisan abuse or use of the media to evade campaign finance regulations.

Janet Massaro, MIP Committee Chair

Membership news

I would like to introduce some members who have recently joined our League:

Elise Fay Murphy, of Amherst, wants to be more active in local government. She comes from a Southern Tier family that took an active role in shaping local politics. Elise, a recent graduate of SUNY Fredonia, is interested in outreach, educating the community, and having an impact on social change. She sees the League as an organization to help those goals. We welcome her enthusiasm and her youthful outlook.

Jean Duffy has much experience with the political process being a Clarence School Board member, lobbying for the N.Y. School Board Organization, NAMI NYS, and other boards. A great-grandmother, she is concerned for the future and feels that the League of Women Voters would be a helpful organization for her goals. We welcome her extensive experience.

Cynthia Frame-Endres founded the Coalition for Positively Charged People, an alkaline battery recycling program. To get this off the ground, she had to be involved in the legislative process. She sees the League of Women Voters, with its outreach program on lobbying, as helping members to be more effective in making our voices heard. We welcome her grassroots initiative experience.

Sue Stievater, Membership Committee Chair

Election Services Report

April began with a large group attempting to qualify petitions for the Buffalo Municipal Housing Tenant Commissioners Election. The group spent several hours at 300 Perry Street poring over petitions in order to qualify as many candidates as possible for this June 2016 election. This work included poring over computer and paper lists of BMHA residents and ensuring that there were enough qualifying names for each petitioner. This was slow and sometimes agonizing work to match names and addresses with the information on the petitions. A huge thank you to all of this committee's volunteers for staying the several hours needed to complete this task.

The second reconvening of this committee involved a 600 letter mailing for Marine Drive's site election. Fortunately, these valuable committee members again rose to the challenge. We had enough volunteers to enable all of the 600 letters to be stuffed, stamped, folded and addressed within an hour and a half! That timeliness required a full complement of committed volunteers, and the response was absolutely heartwarming!

My deep thanks to all who participated in those two efforts. Without such commitment, this committee could not function. I would like to recognize Judith Clarke, Terri Parks, Kathleen McCarthy, Ramona Gallagher, Kathleen Macaluso, Mike Egan, Judy Metzger, Judy Capidacasa, Ellie Johnson, Lee Tetkowski, Joyce Bol, Janet Goodsell, Janet Massaro and Marlene Katzel.

Stay tuned for more activities during the month of May. Any League member who might be interested in volunteering for the Election Services Committee or who would desire more information, please contact Alan Dozoretz at events@lwvbn.org

Alan Dozoretz, Election Services Chair



OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



June Meetings & Events

Wed., 6/1, 3:00 p.m.

Waterfront Committee, Teddy Roosevelt
Historic Site

Thur., 6/2, 10:00 a.m.

Great Decisions, League Office

Sat., 6/4, 10:00 a.m.

Annual Meeting, Protocol Restaurant

Tues., 6/7, 4:00 p.m.

Issues Committee, Harlem Road Com. Cntr

Wed., 6/15, 1:30 p.m.

Local Gov., League Office

Thurs., 6/2, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee, League Office

REMINDER: The next deadline for the Summer Voter is Friday, June 24. All copy, photos, etc., should be sent to Sandra Chelnov.

Important: The League Office has a new phone number: 716-986-4898. The office will be open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m.; Mary Ann will usually work from home on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.