



**The League of Women Voters[®]
of Buffalo/Niagara**

VOTER

LWVB/N VOTER Vol. 12; No. 6
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LWVUS Home Page: <<http://www.lwv.org>> • LWVB/N web site <http://www.lwvbn.org>

e-mail: lwvbn@buffnet.net • Voter published monthly except July

The Local Government Committee invites everyone to join us
for a **PANEL DISCUSSION** to introduce our publication

**AT TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE:
How Government Policies Encourage Sprawl
in Erie and Niagara Counties**

Revised Edition

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2006
at 7:00 pm**

Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Rd, Amherst

THE PROGRAM: A PowerPoint presentation by Anne Huberman about At Taxpayers' Expense followed by a panel discussion including reaction to At Taxpayers' Expense and opinions about steps the community should take to promote regional land use planning and to curb sprawl.

THE PANEL:

Kevin Gaughan, attorney, civic leader and regionalism expert

George Grasser, president of Partners for a Livable Western New York

Laura St. Pierre Smith, member of the steering committee of the Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth and vice president for business development of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership

Carl Calabrese, (not confirmed) member of Government Action Professionals and lobbyist for the Buffalo Niagara Builders Association

**For further information, contact Anne Huberman at 882-3083,
Anne.Huberman@gmail.com**

**No reservations
required!**

President's Message

One of the challenges of the presidency of an organization is getting feedback. There are approximately 400 members in the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. The board of directors meets monthly but we don't know what most of you are thinking or expecting from this organization. What is your reaction to our programs, the newsletter, actions taken or not taken, and the clarity of our messages? Feedback is critical to effective communication because it helps us to know if our intended meaning and purpose is reaching you. I want to assure you that we value your opinions and appreciate receiving comments and suggestions.

We need clear and direct information regarding our performance. Let us know how well we are accomplishing the mission, vision and values of the League. As we struggle to recruit and retain members we want to continue to make the organization relevant to members. Feedback can alert us to the existence of problems, feelings of uncertainty, and provide information to help us make decisions. We all want to look good in the eyes of others, so those who may need feedback most are often the most reluctant to seek it. I have received notes of criticism and praise for the organization but they don't come that often. I thank you for both kinds of messages because they give us an opportunity to respond to your interests. Technology makes it easy to tackle the feedback problem. It takes much less time to e-mail than to write that note, address the envelope, and place the stamp. My email address is mardeu@localnet.com and I look forward to hearing from you.

Marian T. Deutschman

GREAT DECISIONS

We in Great Decisions are still feeling the effects of our "October Surprise" but hope to be back on track as we resume on the 3rd Thursday of January 2007, the 18th to be exact, from 10 AM - noon at 1272 Delaware. **Joan Mondul** has kindly consented to lead us in completing our last 2006 topic, "**Pandemics and National Security.**" Post 9/11, security and public health authorities are planning for epidemiological disasters as never before. What does that planning encompass, and how effective is it likely to be? What lessons can be learned from reactions to the global AIDS pandemic and its growing impact on the developing world?

We also hope to be able to hand out Great Decisions 2007 at that time and sign up facilitators for each topic. Wish us luck. Any questions call Bernice Baeumler at 876-0672.

Submitted by Bernice Baeumler

Great Decisions - January 18, 2007 - 10 AM at 1272 Delaware

LWVB/N FINANCE DRIVE

It's not too late to make your annual contribution to the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. It's so easy to overlook these things with all the holiday preparations and parties crowding our busy schedules at this time of year.

It has come to our attention that several people have sent money to the State League thinking it would go into our Grants Management Fund. It wasn't emphasized in the finance letter that money to the Education Foundation for LWVB/N should be sent to **OUR** LWVB/N office with the notation that it is for LWVB/N. Money going directly to the State LWV stays with the State.

Laura McDade, Interim Finance Chair

Highlights From The Board

- ▶ The LWVB/N VOTER can be seen on the New York State League web site each month. Go to lwvny-bulletins.org.
- ▶ 2006-2007 board meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month at 4:30 pm unless there is a Monday holiday.
- ▶ The State/National Program Planning Committee will meet at 3:30 pm Jan. 8th to review the LWVNYS program. Come join us – we need your input.
- ▶ The Immigration Study group will start meeting on the third Wednesday of each month. (January 17th)
- ▶ We are still looking for a chairperson for the Finance/Development Committee to replace Judy Danforth.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

REMEMBER THE LEAGUE WHEN MAKING YOUR ESTATE PLANS

To add a bequest through your will to LWVB/N, you need to inform your attorney. Often the change does not necessitate a new will but simply the addition of a "codicil" to your existing will.

If you wish to include LWVB/N in your will, our Board of Directors suggests the following language: "I give _____ (percentage, residue, or specific amount) to LWVB/N, having its principal offices at 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209, for its general purposes.

LWVUS ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION TOOL

LWVUS has a voter registration tool online. It's easy – just fill out the form; then print, sign and mail it to the address given.

<http://www.lwv.org/voter/register.html>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Express yourself...let me know your ideas and opinions.....keep it short and to the point. Mail your letter to Margaret Brunson, Editor, LWVB/N VOTER, 778 Lawrence Ave., East Aurora, NY 14052 or FAX to 662-2152 Attn.: Margaret Brunson by January 12, 2007 - 2 p.m. for the February issue.

E-mail: margbrunson@yahoo.com

Hello Everyone,

I know you are all in the throes of holiday festivities and before sugar plums obliterate the rest of our focus, I offer you a diversion!

I am looking for a few volunteers.

1. We are looking for budget committee members. The budget committee will meet at noon on January 17th in Albany for one meeting only! All budget information will be sent out prior to the meeting. It is possible to participate by speakerphone from home, although it's better to meet face to face.

2. LWVNYS also needs to form a bylaws review committee to review current state bylaws and perhaps make recommendations for member action at our State Convention 2007. The committee will also review recommendations made by local Leagues. All of this can be (and has been) accomplished through email.

If you are interested, please contact me directly mmerrins@netsync.net or call for more information 716-672-4275 .

I hope you will help us or recommend someone from your League who would be interested!

Many thanks!
 Marcia Merrins,
 President LWVNYS



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Local Government-Merger Study Committee needs volunteers to accompany committee members during brief interviews with local government officials, beginning in January. Volunteers will help take notes during interviews. Commitment can be for one interview or several.

To sign up, contact Lynda Stephens at 875-2707 or stephenslynda@netzero.net.
 Lynda Stephens, LWVB/N Director - Local Government

IMMIGRATION 101

Delegates at the LWV June 2006 National Convention adopted a Three Year Study of Immigration Policies.

The Scope of the Study is to include the:

- *** Underlying values and principles regarding immigration,
- *** Reasons for immigration,
- *** Current federal immigration, and
- *** The impact of immigration.

The LWVB/N purchased four recommended books to jump-start the study:

William Dudley, Ed; "Illegal Immigration, Opposing Viewpoints Series" ---- Includes expert opinions in a pro/con format

Rubin Martinez; "Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail" ---- First person, anecdotal account of a migrant family.

Doris Meissner, "Immigration and America's Future: A New Chapter", Report of the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future released on September 20, 2006.

Oscar Handlin, "The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations of the American People"

As the title indicates, this book is about the history of immigration in this country.

For those interested in immigration issues or curious about "Immigration 101", join us to shape the League's immigration position.

Meetings for the Immigration committee are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday at 1pm at the League office.
The books will be available for the committee.

See you Jan 17th.

Joan Photiadis, 877-1871, Immigration Study Coordinator
joanpho@verizon.net

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."

United States Supreme Court, American Communications Association v. Douds, 339 US 382 (1950)

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"My Experience of League Day at the United Nations"

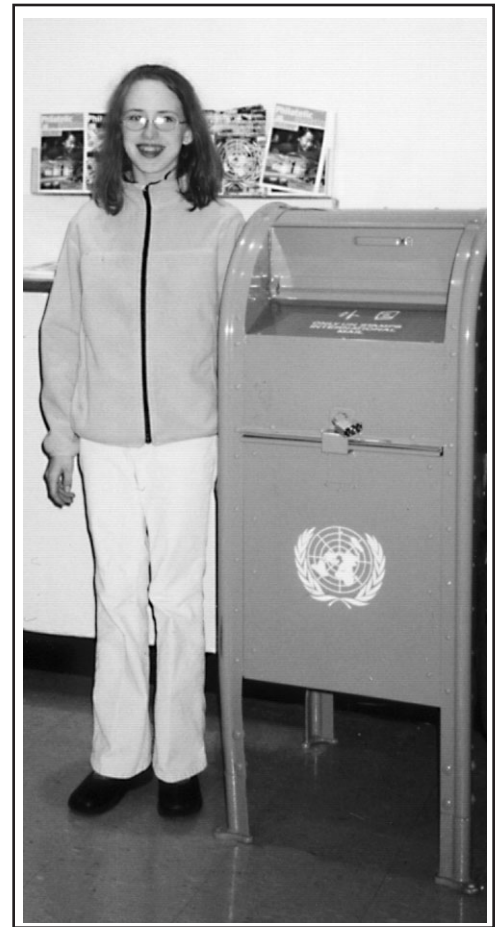
by Laura Colligan

I went to my first League Day at the U.N. with my mother, Dianna McGraw Colligan, a Buffalo/Niagara League of Women Voters member. I, a seventh grader, was the youngest person at the November 15th event. After my initial age-related discomfort, I found the topic, "Briefings on the Status of Human Trafficking Around the World," engaging.

The first speaker was Anke Strauss, Liaison Officer at the International Organization for Migration Office of the Permanent Observer to the U.N. Ms. Strauss gave us a general idea of what human trafficking involves, and repeatedly asked all of us to work for state-level legislation protecting the victims of this crime. It is estimated that 15 million to 30 million people are moved internationally against their will and forced into slave labor each year, and 20 thousand of these come into the U.S.A. Our country has ratified the United Nations protocol on human trafficking, but New York hasn't made it state law. If we were to do so, as Anke Strauss advocates, local law enforcement can play a role in helping catch human traffickers, instead of it just being the job of national law enforcement.

After a spirited round of questioning by the audience, our second speaker took the stage. Lucie Hrbkova, who is the Programme Management Officer at the New York Liaison Office for the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, had prepared a long speech, but realized how interested the participants seemed in discussion. Instead, she gave a shortened version of her comments, which allowed a longer session of Q&A. She is working on the three pillars against human trafficking, which are prevention, prosecution, and protection. The prosecution of perpetrators and the protection of those who the crimes were committed against are covered in the U.N. protocol, and Lucie's office is working on ads that, among other things, emphasize prevention. When she showed us some of these, I learned that one of the most common ways a trafficker uses to snare victims in a developing nation is convincing them that they have jobs as waitresses or nannies waiting for them in an industrialized country, or that their children will be taken care of and go to a good school in a place like America. Really these people are going to be forced to work dangerous jobs under brutal conditions. In some areas, trafficking is as bad as ever, but one of the big success stories is replacing kidnapped African boys with robots in Middle Eastern camel racing.

Overall, Briefings was a wonderful program, but my one big disappointment was that I never learned the official difference between trafficking and smuggling. This, however, is not the League's fault, and my mom and I are already making plans for going back next year. I am so glad that this program exists!



Laura Colligan at the United Nations
November 15, 2006



Pictured at right: Pat Egan, Margaret Brunson and Dianna McGraw Colligan at the United Nations.

Not pictured but also attending the briefings this year:
Joan Bozer and her friend Nancy from Connecticut and
Lyle Toohey in her role as a State Board member.



JOIN US AT THE PROGRAM PLANNING SESSION (2007-2009) MONDAY, JAN. 8, 2007 AT 3:30 PM AT 1272 DELAWARE AVENUE

We need your voice to determine if state program should be retained as is or if some items should be added or dropped.

LWVNYS POSITIONS IN BRIEF • 2005-2007

ELECTION LAW:

Support of measures to protect, extend, and encourage the use of the franchise; open the political system by enacting a public campaign financing law for statewide offices; establish legal, ethical campaign guidelines; monitor campaign practices; simplify rules for ballot access. Restore integrity to the election process - specifically support for uniformity in election laws and procedures in their implementation and enforcement; promote measures that ensure the integrity of all ballots; support adequate funding for these procedures, including training of all involved election personnel.*

Opposition to term limits for members of the NYS Legislature.

Opposition to term limits for NYS statewide elected officials.

GOVERNMENT:

Support of standards to ensure equitable representation in the State Legislature and the Congress.

Support of improved measures to provide representation for legislative districts in case of a vacancy.

Support of responsive and responsible legislative processes which increase the role of the individual member and the committee system.

Support of effective lobbying and ethics regulation. Support of procedural reforms in the constitutional convention process to promote openness and nonpartisanship.

HEALTH CARE

Support of measures to assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care for all state residents, including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective alternative methods of delivery, funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs; provisions for effective citizen participation in health policy decisions.

Support of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their own health and to participate in decisions including termination of extraordinary life-extending procedures.

Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through public financing.

JUDICIAL

Support of a unified state court system with improved provisions for judicial selection.

Support of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.

Support of measures to improve pre-trial procedures in the criminal courts.

Support of measures to promote a fair and efficient jury system.

Support of alternatives to incarceration.

Opposition to the death penalty, with life without parole as the primary alternative.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support for measures to achieve watershed protection, including limiting pesticide uses and applying Best Management Practices.

Support for a state-established, intergovernmental system for land resource management.

Support for a proactive role for New York State in regional land use planning, containing urban sprawl and protecting sensitive areas.

Support of reconditioning of the New York State Erie/Barge Canal System and its development for recreational uses.

SOCIAL POLICY

Support measures to meet the needs for low-income housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.

STATE FINANCES

Support reforms for greater equity in education financing for both pupils and taxpayers.

Support raising funds to provide New York's children with a sound basic education through increases in the New York State personal income tax, implemented in a progressive fashion.

Oppose in principle the use of public funds to support non-public schools, kindergarten-twelfth grade.

Support a uniform equitable assessment and property tax system.

Support for the replacement of the existing local residential property tax relief programs in which relief goes to all with programs based on need, with annual cost of living adjustment.

Support of measures to provide for openness and accountability in the operation of the New York State public authority system.

Support of a timely and responsive state budget.

Support the funding of public higher education and the existing formula for financing the community system, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 state aid, and 1/3 county support.

WOMEN'S ISSUES/SOCIAL POLICY

Support of measures which hold marriage to be an economic partnership with a presumption of equality between the spouses.

Opposition to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of the children.

Support for equity in employment laws and practices and equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

Support of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

Support of measures to meet the needs for affordable and accessible housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.

*These state positions are based on LWVUS principles and public policy positions. State actions on other items not covered under a state position can also be taken under LWVUS positions. Reproductive Choices (Government position) and Welfare Reform (Meeting Basic Human Needs position) are two examples.

Our thanks to all who have worked so hard and under such tight time constraints to make the charter school consensus possible.

Lee Tetkowski and Betsey Swan

The State League has approved the following CHARTER SCHOOL POSITION:

The League recognizes that charter schools represent an educational experiment whose efficacy has never received appropriate validation. Moreover, a review of the performance of charters in New York State indicates that, while some do an excellent job of educating children, others are less successful than the most substandard traditional public schools. Therefore, the League supports public funding of academic research into the characteristics of charters that lead to student academic success.

Authority to grant, oversee, renew and revoke charters, other than those granted in public school conversions, should be vested in a single entity. Charters should be subject to more stringent oversight of charter compliance in the renewal/revocation process, with greater emphasis on positive educational outcomes.

The League supports measures to limit the negative financial impact of charter schools on their home districts, including: transition assistance; home district payment to charters based on the same standard used to pay operating aid to school districts (While the League supports enrollment as the appropriate measure, it believes the measure should be identical for both charters and traditional public schools.); separate levels of reimbursement for elementary and secondary education to charter schools based on what the home districts spend for the level of schooling provided; limitation of the percentage of a school district's budget that could be paid to charter schools. The League is opposed to State provision of capital construction and renovation services and reimbursement of capital expenditures for charter schools.

The League supports limitation of the number of charters issued in New York State. As a general matter, it believes that the number of charter schools should not be increased without prior successful implementation of the improvements outlined in this position. In lieu of amendment of the Charter School Act to increase the total number of charters that could be granted, it supports retention of the current total (100) with amendment of the Charter School Act so that a charter could be reissued if a charter school ceases to function for any reason. Any increase in the cap on charter schools should be tied to amendment of the Charter School Act so that charters are required to prove positive educational outcomes for all children (disaggregated by special needs) exceeding those in traditional public schools as a precondition for charter renewal. To more accurately measure student outcomes in charters and to compare them to those in traditional public schools, the League supports public funding to measure educational growth in individual students as they progress from grade to grade in charter schools (a value added approach).

**OUR COMMITTEE
WILL CONTINUE AS
THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.
NEXT MEETING WILL BE
AT THE LEAGUE OFFICE
ON JANUARY 11, 2007
AT 1:00 PM.**



New members are welcome.

NATURAL RESOURCES Notification Law permanent!

We received great news upon returning to town. Here's a thank you to all who called, wrote, etc.

Thanks for all your calls to Erie County Legislators urging them to pass the Pesticide Neighbor Notification law permanently . Thanks to you it was passed unanimously.

Ellen Neumaier,
LWVB/N Natural Resources Chair

STATE/NATIONAL PROGRAMS

State and National Committees met on December 7th and discussed the following State and National Agenda items.

STATE: 1. Voting Machines, 2. Redistricting, 3. Invasive Species in the Great Lakes, 4. Reforming New York State Government, 5. Judicial Selection, 6. Charter Schools.

NATIONAL: 1. Immigration (Meetings will be led by Joan Photiadis every 3rd Wednesday at 1pm at the League office.) 2. Health Care - reviewed the State position on Health Care, and considered a few approaches. Also discussed problems with present health care system. Decided to meet with local Federal representatives to encourage changes, especially allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices with drug companies. 3. DC representation, 4. Energy and global warming were not addressed due to time considerations.

The next meeting will be January 11th at 10:00 AM at Higher Grounds Coffee House: 3622 Sheridan Drive at Millersport. (You are required to purchase coffee, juice, pastry etc.) We will discuss two books 1. Democracy in America by Alex de Tocqueville (1831) and 2. American Journey: Traveling With de Tocqueville in Search of America. (1982)

The following meeting will be at the same location on February 8th. Everyone is welcome to attend State/National Meetings to participate or observe.

Submitted by Abbey Bernardis
and Polly Ferguson.

NEWLY UPDATED WEBSITE

Sally Metzger has updated our website. Click on LWVNY.org and link NYS units and click on Buffalo. All current local and NYS activities are listed on this website along with some local League newsletters from around the state.

Submitted by Judy Metzger

Membership



We print the names and addresses of new members and changes to the LWVB/N Directory in each month's VOTER. Please make note of this new information in your directory to keep it up to date.

NEW LOCAL MEMBERS

- WALTER DANNHAUSER**688-6274
17 Kings Trail, Williamsville, NY 14221
- GEORGE R. GRASSER**741-4650
6930 Lexington Ct., East Amherst, NY 14051
- KAREN STEPHENSON**835-6271
52 Bondcroft Dr., Amherst, NY 14226

UNIT COORDINATORS - BUFFALO METRO UNIT

- Rev. William Cobb**834-3631
- Dr. Nuala Drescher**883-610

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS:

JOAN PHOTIADISjoanpho@verizon.net

Please note that as of 12/7/2006

The League of Women Voters of New York State and the Education Foundation will have a new address:

62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207

The telephone number, fax number, email accounts and website information will not change.



New York State

Kristen Hansen, Executive Director
League of Women Voters
of New York State
(518) 465-4162
(518) 465-0812
www.lwvny.org

Amherst Unit News

Lunch & Issues

SCOTCH & SIRLOIN RESTAURANT

3999 Maple Road, Amherst

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19th

• Noon •

Speaker: JOHN J. GIARDINO

Buffalo Control Board Member

Contact Clarine Radt at 633-7069 by JAN. 17th.

Cost: \$13.00 payable to LWVB/N

Please Save the Date: February 16th

**Our speaker will be Gordon Sacks,
Immigration Judge**

All are invited to learn what is happening on the local and national scene.

Bring your appetite and your questions.

Buffalo Metro Unit News

You are invited to join the **OBSERVER CORPS** for the following meetings:

BUFFALO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS - 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. (851-3500), Council Chambers, City Hall.

BUFFALO COMMON COUNCIL MEETINGS - every other Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. (851-5105) - Council Chambers, City Hall.

Call Jo Ann Mecca if you have questions about the Observer Corps and its meetings. (884-5312)

Elsa Bondar - 773-5344

CUT OUT AND MAIL TODAY

Make check payable to **LWVB/N** and send to **LWVB/N**, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209-2401 (Attn: Membership Chair, Judy Weidemann)

- \$50 Individual (Basic Membership)
- \$60 Carrie Chapman Catt Membership
- \$75 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership
- \$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership
- Enclosed is my additional contribution of \$ _____
- \$75 Household
(2 members living at the same address)
- \$25 Student membership
Scholarship fund available to supplement membership dues when necessary

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____


Unit Affiliation (optional)

- Amherst
- Aurora-Elma
- Buffalo Metro
- Clarence
- Hamburg
- Niagara County

LWVB/N keeps only \$6.00 of each member's \$50.00 dues, the rest goes to state and national League.

Membership dues and contributions to the LWV are not deductible as a personal or business expense for tax purposes.

JOIN

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JANUARY 2007		1  NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4 New Citizens Ceremony	5	6
	7	8 State Program Planning 3:30 PM - p. 5 LWVB/N Board Meeting 4:30 PM	9	10	11 STATE/NATIONAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE 10 am - see p. 6 EDUCATION COMMITTEE - p.6	12	13
	14	15	16	17 IMMIGRATION STUDY COMMITTEE See page 3	18 GREAT DECISIONS See page 2	19 LUNCH & ISSUES Noon - p. 7	20
	21	22	23 Panel Discussion & Introduction Of "At Taxpayers' Expense" Revised - 7 pm See page 1	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31			

For meeting times of LOCAL GOVERNMENT & MERGER STUDY COMMITTEES Call Lynda Stephens at 875-2707 or Anne Huberman at 882-3083



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