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**The VOTER** is published 10 times per year. March items are due Friday, February 10, 2012.

# Moderator Training

## Saturday, February 18

### Noon to 2:00 p.m.

## Harlem Community Center 4255 Harlem Road, Amherst

Would you like to serve as a League moderator or timekeeper at a candidates' debate or forum in the upcoming 2012 election cycle? The community counts on the League of Women Voters to ensure that candidates' events are conducted with fairness and respect for all parties.

Laura McDade, former president of our League and a highly experienced moderator and trainer, will provide an informative session for all interested League members.

A light lunch will be provided. Parking is free. To register, please contact Mike Egan by February 7 ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or 884-3550).

### League of Women Voters 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 and Board Actions

The December board meeting was held on November 28 to facilitate board approval of the consensus report for the national education study. We commend the entire Education Committee and its able chair, Lee Tetkowski, for their fine work on the study. In addition to directing the study for our League, they summarized consensus question responses from members who attended consensus meetings and from members who were unable to attend the meetings, but submitted written responses. We also thank the League members whose thoughtful comments and questions at the consensus meetings were important to the successful completion to the study. The board approved the final consensus report and Lee had the task of completing the online report to the national League. The national Education Study Committee will review all reports received and write their position paper. The position paper will be presented to the national board in March 2012.

The board continued its work to update board policies for appropriate operation of a nonprofit corporation by approving a Whistleblower Policy. It also approved Membership Renewal Guidelines to assist the office and Membership Committee in their work.

The board approved a more detailed version of the letter in support of increased funding for the county libraries that was published in the Buffalo News on November 28, 2011. I sent the more detailed letter to the county executive and legislature. I thank the Local Government Committee for gathering the information when it met with the director and chief financial officer of the libraries and Lynda Stephens for writing both versions of the letter. Our local positions were well addressed.

On behalf of the entire board, I extend huge thanks to Eugene Abrahamson for his outstanding work to make this year's Mall Gift Wrapping successful and to the League members who signed on to assist in the effort. We are indebted also to the community volunteers and students from Lancaster and Williamsville East High School who worked many shifts on behalf of the League. I'm not sure all our members realize that without this fund-raising effort we'd probably need to raise dues for everyone to continue our work at its present level. Those of us who wrapped gifts know that it's a good opportunity to talk with folks about the work of the League and also to connect with fellow Leaguers.

It's time to address the national League program proposals for 2012–2014. The 2012–2014 program will be approved at the National Convention. The Program Planning list, along with the Convention discussion list, will be on the LWVUS web site ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) in early January. Locally, we plan to discuss suggestions for the 2012–2014 national program at the January 31, 2012 Issues & Action Committee meeting. The committee meets at 4:30 p.m. in the Harlem Road Community Center. We welcome all members who have program or study suggestions to join the committee that day or to submit suggestions in writing prior to that meeting to me at [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org).

Details about submitting program plans can be found in the LWVUS Program Planning Leader's Guide 2011–2012 under the Convention & Council heading on the LWVUS home page ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)).

The First Call to the 50th LWVUS Convention, June 8–12 at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., has been issued. With the issues that confront voters currently, it surely should be an interesting convention.

*Terri Parks*

## Great Decisions

Here is just a little reminder that Great Decisions does not meet in January and February. I hope that everyone's appetite will be whetted to learn more about our world when we meet once again on March 1 from 10:00 a.m.–noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. Happy Hiatus!

*Bernice Baeumler*

## LWVBN News and Notes

### NATIONAL LEAGUE HISTORY

In June 1919, the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed by the senate after tireless lobbying by the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). After the amendment was ratified, NAWSA was reconstituted as the League of Women Voters. Maud Wood Park, a national leader of NAWSA, became the League's first president.

Maud Wood Park served as president from 1920–1924. She was responsible for building the organization and guiding its development as a means to educate women to become knowledgeable voters. She also formed the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, an alliance of women's organizations, to lobby for issues such as the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act of 1921 and the Cable Act of 1922. The Sheppard-Towner Act provided federal matching funds for programs designed to reduce maternal and infant mortality. The Cable Act ensured independent citizenship for married women. Prior to the act, the citizenship of a married woman immigrating to the United States was dependent on her husband's citizenship.



Maud Wood Park

Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1871, Maud Wood attended Radcliffe College where she first became interested in the Suffragist Movement. She died in May 1955. Fellow suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt described Maud as the one who mobilized the factors that resulted in the passage of the 19th amendment.

Source of biographical information: *American National Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1999.

*Marie Hanrahan, Historian*

### ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

The Erie County Association of School Boards will have its annual Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, February 11 from 8:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. at the Protocol Restaurant, 6766 Transit Road. Again this year, along with Western Region PTA, WNY Association of School Personnel Administrators, Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association and other educational leaders, our League has been asked to be a co-sponsor and to provide timekeepers. Specific issues to be discussed and questions for our elected officials are still in the planning stage. This annual event is well attended and begins with a large buffet. Reservations can be made through Jane Burzynski, Executive Director, Erie County Association of School Boards at 821-7297.

*Lee Tetkowski, Education Committee Chair*

### A BELATED THANK YOU

Mary Ann Rolland was inadvertently omitted from the list of 2011 Voter Guide distributors published in the November VOTER. Apologies for the omission and a belated thank you to Mary Ann for her help.

### NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES

Two naturalization ceremonies were held recently. Bob and Agnes Annis participated on November 22. Eugene Abrahamson and Jackie Skinner welcomed new citizens on December 1. Thank you for volunteering.

*Joyce Bol, Voter Services Chair*

### Amherst Unit

Mark your calendars for Friday, February 17 at 11:30 a.m. to hear Marc Mayrand, Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, at our next Lunch and Issues. Mr. Mayrand will explain Canada's election system. The luncheon will be held at the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant, 3999 Maple Road. The cost is \$15.00 payable to LWVBN. For reservations, contact Judy Metzger or Sally Metzger ([lwwbn@lwwbn.org](mailto:lwwbn@lwwbn.org)).

We are always looking for Town Board Observers to monitor issues that may positively or negatively affect Town of Amherst residents. Observers attend board meetings and work sessions, make note of important motions and discussion, and then write a few sentences summarizing their observations. Please contact Mary Scheeder if you can help.

*Judy Metzger, Amherst Unit Coordinator*

### Local Government

The Local Government Committee has been busy with several tasks. On November 10, we met with Director Mary Jean Jakubowski and Deputy Director Ken Stone of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System at Central Library. We couldn't help but notice the substantial downsizing. The Director and Deputy Director provided background and information related to funding support from Erie County, looking back to 1975, and explained their interest in a separate taxing district as an alternative to the current county governance system. Since 1975, county support for our library assets and the services libraries provide has generally diminished. We all remembered the closing of fifteen libraries during the Red Budget period. Staffing and materials/resources funds have also been significantly reduced.

Important library services include literacy development for children and adults, career exploration, closing the digital divide, and providing community meeting spaces and public programming and events. LWVBN has a position that favors regional support for libraries. The committee mobilized and worked with the Issues Committee and the board to send a letter to the editor of the Buffalo News, published on November 28, and a longer version to the County Executive and Legislature prior to the final budget vote. The League urged increased county funding for the library system. We received thanks from both the library system Director and Deputy Director for League support.

During the week of November 14, committee members observed the Erie County Legislature department and agency 2012 budget hearings. We also observed the 2011 mid-year interim budget reporting sessions. At our December 8 meeting, we shared and reflected on findings. We hope to provide our insights in a future Voter article.

Anne Huberman represents the Local Government Committee in a collaboration with the LWVBN Natural Resources Committee to help promote Climate Smart Communities, a New York State program. Anne also has attended meetings of the WNY Environmental Alliance.

We also are planning what we hope will be a challenging March 2012 program, "Who Needs County Government?"

*Lynda Stephens, Co-Chair Local Government Committee*

### ***The League of Women Voters:***

***Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.***

***Work with the LWV to help shape the issues that keep our community fair, vibrant and strong.***

## Natural Resources

Congratulations to the Town of Evans! It is the first Erie County municipality to join the Department of Environmental Conservation's *Climate Smart Communities* program. Climate Smart Communities protect the environment while saving money and producing jobs. They also are eligible for grants that are not available to other towns. The Natural Resources and Local Government Committees are teaming up to encourage ALL communities in Erie and Niagara Counties to become climate smart.

To join the program, a municipality: 1) adopts a Climate Smart Community pledge; 2) sets up a task force and selects a local climate leader; 3) inventories greenhouse gas emissions from local government operations; 4) develops a climate action plan and starts implementing it. Find out more about the program at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/50845.html>.

With help from university students, we plan to research what the 98 cities, towns and villages in New York State who have already pledged to become climate smart are doing to live up to their pledges.

Leaguers learned first hand about the power of pledges with our "Low-Carbon Diet" program in 2008. Before taking part in the program, one member drove 24,000 miles per year. After the "Diet" she reduced her annual mileage to 20,000. This year, she will have driven only 16,000 miles. She did it by planning her trips and carpooling. She saved money on gas, wear and tear on the car, and an enormous amount of emissions. Think how this would translate to a municipal fleet or a whole community.

Is your community ready to save money and invest in the future? Contact us if you would like to help it learn how!

*Ellen Neumaier, Natural Resources Committee Chair*

## New League Committee: Social-Economic Justice Education

Are you wondering what the United States fiscal crisis is all about? Has anything like this happened in the US before? Does the League of Women Voters have anything to say about it? The new Social-Economic Justice Education Committee will try to bring answers to our members and the broader community. As for the last question, it seems the League approached this issue before. In 1984, after much study, the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted a position on federal fiscal policies. Read a synopsis of this position below.

The LWVUS supports adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax. We support equal access to education, employment and housing. We support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

The LWVUS supports income as the major tax base for federal revenues; believes that the federal income tax should be broad-based with minimal tax preferences and a progressive rate structure. We oppose a value-added tax or a national sales tax in the federal revenue system. Part of the minimal preference position is to include capital gains with ordinary income, rather than taxing capital gains at a lower rate as is the rule today.

The League recognizes that deficit spending is sometimes appropriate and therefore opposes a constitutionally mandated balanced budget for the federal government. If necessary the LWVUS could support deficit spending for stimulating the economy during recession or depression, meeting social needs in times of high unemployment, and meeting defense needs in national security crises.

The committee meets at the League Office on Wednesday, January 18 at 11:00 a.m. If you would like to find out more, contact chair Lynda Stephens or just attend the meeting.

*Lynda Stephens, Social-Economic Justice Education Chair*

# Invite Friends to Join the League as Trial Members

Do you know someone who resolved to make a difference in 2012?

Do you know someone who needs a little nudge to get involved?

Do you know someone who likes meeting exceptional people?

Do you know someone who likes a good discussion?

Invite them all to join the League!

## Join the League of Women Voters! with a trial membership for \$30.



The membership runs from now until the end of **June**.....

You receive our Voter Bulletin, invites to programs, events and ability to try out a membership until the end of the membership year.

This trial membership is for **first time members only**. Or as a Gift from a current member who sponsors you with a trial membership gift!

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara is offering a Trial Membership to our local League for new members only for **\$30**. Trial memberships will extend to June 30 each year and the member will be invited to join as a full member of the League-local, state and national at the current membership rate.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## State League Lobby Day 2012

The League of Women Voters of NYS will hold its annual Lobby Day on January 18, 2012 in Albany. All members are invited. The day will start at 11:00 a.m. with a workshop on this year's key issues, how we develop our positions, and how members can participate in the legislative process. After a short lunch, attendees will be given a tour of the Capitol and may stay to watch the legislative sessions (they are scheduled to be in session on this day, but no guarantees) and meet key staffers. The workshop, tours and introductions will be led by LWVNY Vice President for Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, and LWVNY Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti.

The State League adopted the following legislative agenda, "Steps to a Better New York", for 2012:

1. Election Reform  
Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including paperless and Election Day registration, better ballot design, improved polling place management/ poll worker training, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.
2. Campaign Finance Reform  
Support lower contribution limits, increased disclosure and public financing. Support stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement with increased civil and criminal penalties for violations.
3. Other Government Positions  
Support structural reform to legislative redistricting; support effective ethics enforcement and open and transparent government processes; monitor impact of the property tax cap on localities and schools.
4. Health Care  
Support affordable and effective health care for all New Yorkers.
5. Natural Resources  
Support protection and management of New York's natural resources in the public interest.
6. Other League Positions  
The League also has positions on the Judiciary, State Finances, and Social Policy under which we can and do take action.

Lobby Day is designed for any League member interested in becoming more active in our state advocacy agenda or just interested in learning about advocacy work. The League cannot provide reimbursement for travel expenses, but LWVNY can arrange overnight stays at League members' homes. They will also arrange hotel accommodations, at your own expense, in Albany. Come join the fun and see how you can make your voice heard in Albany!

If you want to register for Lobby Day 2012, please contact Katrina at the state League office by January 6, 2012 and let her know if you need overnight accommodations (518-465-4162 or [lwny@lwny.org](mailto:lwny@lwny.org)).

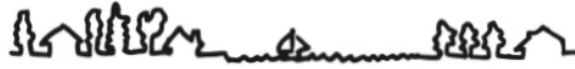
*League of Women Voters of NYS*

### **Computer Know-How: On-Screen Reading**

Having trouble reading on your computer screen because the text is too small? Mac users can press the "Option, Command, +" keys to zoom in and the "Option, Command, -" keys to zoom back out. Mac users may need to turn this feature on by pressing the "Option, Command, 8" keys and selecting "on" for the Zoom feature. PC users press the "Ctrl, +" keys to zoom in and the "Ctrl, -" keys to zoom back out.



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**Winter 2011**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
January 8	9 <b>Board Meeting</b> 4:30 p.m.	10	11 <b>Transportation &amp; Waterfront</b> 10:00 a.m.	12 <b>Natural Resources 9:30</b> <b>Local Government</b> 1:15 p.m.	13	14
15	16	17	18 <b>Soc-Econ Justice Education</b> 11:00 a.m.	19 <b>Education</b> 1:30 p.m.	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <b>Issues&amp;Action</b> 4:30 p.m	February 1	2	3	4
5	6 <b>Board Meeting</b> 4:30 p.m.	7	8 <b>Transportation &amp; Waterfront</b> 10:00 a.m.	9 <b>Natural Resources 9:30</b> <b>Local Government</b> 1:15 p.m.	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 <b>Education</b> 1:30 p.m.	17 <b>Lunch &amp; Issues</b> 11:30 a.m.	18 <b>Moderator Training</b> 12:00 p.m.

Copy for March VOTER is due Friday, February 10, 2012