



The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

VOTER

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The VOTER is published
10 times per year. Items
for the October issue are due
Friday, September 9, 2016

2016-17 Kick-off Event!



Women at the Table
Expanding the role of women
in governance

Friday, September 16, 2016. 11:00 a.m.
registration, 11:30 a.m. program, 12:30- 1:30 p.m.
lunch

20th Century Club, 595 Delaware Avenue,
Buffalo, NY 14202. Parking lot at 516 Franklin
Street, Buffalo, NY 14202. Or take Metro Rail to the
Allen Street Station

Guest speaker: Hon. Rose H. Sconiers

"I have learned over the years, if you're not at the table, your voice is not heard." As a justice of the New York State Appellate Court, Rose Sconiers was obliged to keep her opinions to herself. Now that she's retired, she has plenty to say! You won't want to miss her candid observations about an issue she is passionate about — positioning women for leadership roles. Lunch in the beautiful 20th Century Club, featuring chicken crepes with mushrooms, promises to be a real treat.

Sign up today! Join us for a lively and delicious event. Guests are welcome and encouraged. For reservations, return the form with payment by Wednesday, September 7.

Special thanks to our co-sponsors



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



As usual, the League picnic gave us a chance to sample the fine cuisine prepared by folks who attended and enjoy spirited conversation in those comfortable chairs at the Chelsea Clubhouse. We had a short program with highlights from the National League Convention. Thank you to Sally Metzger for hosting the picnic, and to Ramona Gallagher and Janet Massaro for your comments about the convention.

Members have been renewing their membership at a very good rate. We contacted people who still need to renew League membership for 2016-2017 in mid-August either by email or by phone. Please send your renewal with the completed survey if you still need to do so. We need your support, both financial and through participation in committees or other League efforts. The vitality and strength of our League come from the work of its members.

We need your help to contact candidates who are slow to respond to our requests for our Vote411 and Voters Guide. We will email you names of candidates who have not responded to our invitation to participate in the Voters Guide. Please call or send an email to candidates from your districts to urge them to participate. Contact them as constituents. Candidates in the September Primary will be covered on Vote411 online. Candidates for federal, state and local office will be covered in both Vote411 and our printed 2016 Voters Guides.

The board appointed Pat Costanzo, Nicole Matteson and Lori Robinson to the 2016-2017 Nominating Committee. They join the members elected at the annual meeting: chair, Ramona Gallagher, and members, Janet Goodsell, Kathleen McCarthy and Lynne Vallone.

At its August meeting, the board members discussed the charge to the Nominating Committee and the need to address succession planning for League leadership and term limits for officers and board members. Shirley Joy and a committee of interested League members will address these governance issues. Some of the changes may affect the bylaws and be approved by the members at the 2017 annual meeting. Our goal is to develop new League leaders and ensure that an incoming president is well prepared for the job in an intentional manner. This is an opportunity for service. Please contact Shirley Joy at events@lwvbn.org or call the League office to volunteer. This committee will need to make recommendations to the board at its April 2017 meeting.

The board Finance Committee has accepted responsibility to pursue a change in our corporate status. We will be sharing what that means to members with articles in the Voter, so keep an eye out for that. It won't change how we do business in any way. A good number of Leagues and some state Leagues have already made the change and we expect to have good guidance from our state League. Both Lori Robinson and I attended a workshop at the National Convention that featured Leagues that have already made the change.

Judy Metzger & Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Our next 2016 Great Decisions topic is the UN's post-2015 development agenda and leadership. I am scheduled to facilitate the discussion on Thursday, September 1, from 10 a.m. till noon at the League office, 1272 Delaware Avenue. "On the eve of the international organization's 70th birthday, the United Nations stands at a crossroads. This year marks a halfway point in the organization's global effort to eradicate poverty, hunger and discrimination, as well as ensure justice and dignity for all peoples. But as the UN's 193 member states look back at the success of the millennium development goals, they also must assess their needs for its sustainable development goals — a new series of benchmarks, which are set to expire in 2030. With the appointment of the ninth secretary-general in the near future as well, the next U.S. president is bound to have a lot on his or her plate." Hopefully we will have a good turnout. Great Decisions meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month. New members and guests are welcome to attend.

Bernice Baeumler,

Volunteer Service Report

Kathleen Macaluso and Deborah Shiffner represented LWVBN at a naturalization ceremony on June 30 on the USS Little Rock. Joyce Bol, Jayne Murray, Nora Mikes and Judith Casassa represented the League at two ceremonies in the U.S. Courthouse during July. Roberta Bothwell and Nicole Matteson attended a ceremony at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center. Patricia Wille and Mary Egan represented LWVBN on August 4 at the U.S. Courthouse.

LWVBN is grateful to these volunteers who represent the League at these important ceremonies.

Judith Clarke, LWVBN Volunteer Coordinator

LWVBN Voter Service Committee

The Voter Service Committee held several events in August, including voter registration events at the Food Truck Rodeo at the Buffalo History Museum with UNYTS, at the Burchfield Nature Center in West Seneca, and more. Thanks to members Margaret Brunson, Ramona Gallagher, Agnes Annis, Laura McDade and all the others who volunteered.

There are several more voter registration events in the works for September:

Wednesday, September 7, 5-8 p.m. at the Food Truck Rodeo at the Buffalo History Museum with UNYTS
 Saturday, September 10, at an all-day health fair event at Ralph Wilson Stadium with UNYTS
 Saturday, September 27, National Voter Registration Day. Voter Service is scheduling voter registration sites in conjunction with a variety of organizations.

Contact me at events@lwvbn.org if you are interested in participating in any of the upcoming voter registration events.

In conjunction with the International Institute, Voter Service held a social for new citizens after church services at Our Lady of Hope in the second half of August.

Margaret Brunson, Voter Service Chair



COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY 2016

STATE AND LOCAL PRIMARY — TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, **September 12**

Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, **September 6**

Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, **September 13**

Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, **September 12**, and received by Tuesday, **September 17**

New Members

We send a hearty welcome to new LWVBN members — Elisabeth Zausmer of North Tonawanda and Christine Reichmuth of Buffalo — and a sincere "welcome back" to returning member Judith Kerr, also of Buffalo.

As the election approaches, there is much work to do in the area of Voters Guide preparation and distribution, work on Vote411.org and voter registration efforts. If new or long-term members want join in these or any other opportunities to be more involved, contact Judith Clarke, volunteer coordinator, at events@lwvbn.org

Money in Politics

LWVBN Statement on Erie County Legislative Redistricting

On July 28, 2016, LWVBN presented a statement on the Erie County Charter Review Commission's proposal for an Independent Commission on Reapportionment (redistricting) to redraw county legislative districts after the next federal census in 2020.

League had closely monitored the last round of redistricting in 2010 — a very partisan, bitter battle that satisfied no one and was finally decided in court. The Charter Review Commission's new proposal attempts to eliminate partisan acrimony by removing the legislature and the county executive from the redistricting process.

League believes that the proposal still lacks important safeguards against political gerrymandering. Our recommended changes are summarized below. The League's complete statement on the Charter Review Commission's redistricting proposal for 2020 is available online.

Who should draw the lines. In addition to geographic diversity, the redistricting body should reflect the county's gender, racial, ethnic, and economic diversity. It should include members of both major political parties, minor parties, unaffiliated voters, nonpartisan community groups and interested citizens. Those prohibited from serving as commission members or on staff should also include paid lobbyists and those doing business with the county.

How lines should be drawn. Redistricting must follow federal and state law, including the "one person one vote" rule, and the Voting Rights Act. Clear guidelines among other competing criteria are needed to encourage compromise. It should be required that no advantage be given to incumbents or to challengers, or to one or another political party.

Promoting an open and transparent process. Redistricting should be accomplished in an open unbiased manner with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps in the process. Specifically the League asks that the process be subject to open meeting laws and that notice of all commission meetings and hearings be prominently announced. The commission should maintain a website with necessary data used in mapmaking and include information for the public to use to draw maps of their own. Summary reports of all commission meetings must be promptly available. The commission must issue a final report for public comment justifying any plan that may be adopted. There should be at least one public hearing in each legislative district.

Janet Massaro, chair, MIP Committee

Election Services Report

July brought the Election Services back to its core functions of supervising nominations and elections at BMHA housing sites.

The resident councils at both Shaffer Village and LaSalle Courts have been dormant for many years. At Shaffer Village the residents who attended were very enthusiastic about starting up a new resident council. An election was scheduled there in late August. A small but seemingly dedicated group of residents attended a nominations meeting at LaSalle. Their energy and dedication will hopefully lead to these new leaders inspiring their community.

I send heartfelt thanks to all of the committee members who assisted with the July mailing. With their dedication, this committee can function well and serve our League proudly.

Alan Dozoretz

Save the Dates!

On **October 6, 2016**, the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, Western New York Chapter, and the League of Women Voters will co-sponsor a panel discussion: Effects of Big Money and Big Media on Political Campaigns. The program, to be moderated by Lee Coppola, will take place at the United Way at 742 Delaware Avenue. Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m. Coffee and dessert will be served after the program, to end at 7:30 p.m.

October 7 & 8, 2016

13th Annual World on Your Plate Food and Sustainable Living Conference

5 - 8:30 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday at Daemen College

For more information: www.worldonyourplate.org, info@worldonyourplate.org or 716-741-8815

(Note: This event is listed as a courtesy; it is not affiliated with LWVBN)

The League Holiday Party will be a luncheon at Rizotto's Restaurant on Saturday, **December 3, 2016**. Mary Travers Murphy, executive director of the Family Justice Center, will be our guest speaker. We'll share information about gift items you can contribute in future editions of the Voter. Mark your calendars now.

Board Member Responsibilities 2016-2017

We're pleased to announce the areas of responsibility for the 2016-2017 board of directors and excited by the energy and commitment these fine League leaders show.

Co-Presidents:	Terri Parks & Judy Metzger
2nd Vice President, Volunteer Coordinator:	Judith Clarke
3rd Vice President, Issues & Action Committee Chair:	Marian Deutschman
Secretary:	Mary Herbst
Treasurer:	Lori Robinson
Board Events Chair:	Kathie Macaluso
Communications Chair:	Nancy DeTine
Finance Committee Chair:	Pat Costanzo
Fund Development Chair:	Nicole Matteson
Governance Chair:	Shirley Joy
Legislative Advocacy Chair:	Joan LoCurto (on leave)
Membership Chair:	Sue Stievater
Public Relations Chair:	Dorothy Tao
Voter Copy Editor (appointed 8/8/16):	Nora Mikes
Voter Service Chair:	Margaret Brunson

Judy Metzger & Terri Parks

A timely reminder

in this tumultuous season from State Voter Service Chair Judie Gorenstein, as seen in the July League of Women Voters of NYS Voter:

“We can never be too careful in being nonpartisan. Do **NOT EVER** give any indication that you support or oppose a candidate or party [while on League business].”



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



September Meetings & Events

Thur., 9/1, 10:00 a.m.
Great Decisions, League Office

Wed., 9/14, 1:30 p.m.
Local Government, League Office

Tues., 9/6, 4:00 p.m.
Issues Committee, Harlem Road Com. Cntr

Fri., 9/16, 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Women at the Table, 20th Century Club

Mon., 9/12, 4:00 p.m.
Board Meeting, League Office

Mon., 9/23, 1:30 p.m.
Education Committee, League Office
We welcome guests and new members

Tues., 9/13, Primary Day
State and local offices
6:00 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Remember to vote

Sat., 9/27
National Voter Registration Day

REMINDER: The next deadline for the October Voter is Friday, 9/9/2016. **All copy, photos, etc., should be sent to our new copy editor, Nora Mikes, events@lwvbn.org.** Do you have photos of recent League events that you are willing to share? She wants those too!