



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

your
★ VOTER ★

Volume 24, Number 3

November 2018

President

Terri Parks

Office

1272 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-986-4898
Fax 882-3797
Email lwvbn@lwvbn.org

Office Manager

Mary Ann Turkla
Office hours are flexible.
Always call before going
to the office.

LWVB/N website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Voter is published 11
times a year. December
Voter copy is due
Monday, November 12.
Send copy to Nancy
DeTine at
nancy@nancydetine.com.

Post-Election Perspectives

Thursday, November 15, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Harlem Road Community Center Auditorium
4255 Harlem Rd., Amherst, NY 14226**

Guest speakers:

Bob McCarthy, political reporter, *The Buffalo News*

Jim Heaney, editor and executive director, *Investigative Post*

The highly anticipated midterms have been decided ... now what? Was 2018, in fact, the most important election of our lifetime? Will the country be less polarized? Is there cause for optimism? Join us and hear what two of the region's most respected and award-winning political reporters have to say!

Free and open to the public.

RSVP: To reserve your place, send an email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org or call the League office at 716-986-4898.

League of Women Voters Mission

The League of Women Voters is a good government organization that encourages informed and active participation in the political process, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League never supports political parties or candidates.

News from the President and the Board

Greetings and many thanks for the get well wishes I have received. It's so good to be well on the way to complete recovery after a long but pleasant hospital stay. I am one stubborn woman and proved no match for a very stubborn bacteria with the most able help from my doctors and modern medicine. What a blessing it is to be able to serve the League and voters once again!

Many thanks also to the officers, board and committees for showing us all that the League has many willing and able people to carry on its work. I especially thank Ramona Gallagher, our most able First Vice President, for taking on many things that needed doing right now at election time.

In the past few months, the board has been very busy. It approved a leave of absence for Pat Costanzo and appointed Shirley Joy to chair the Finance Committee, with Pat continuing as a valued member. The board also agreed to set up an Instagram account and approve purchase of the League of Women Voters of New York State Voters Guide Part II for distribution at public libraries in Erie and Niagara County. It has information about all the statewide candidates in this year's election. Of course, you can get the information online at VotingNewYork.org. If any candidates for any office haven't responded to the League, please contact him/her and request a response to the invitation from lwvny.org. All candidates have been invited to respond.

Finally, I personally apologize for not having a printed Voter for September and October. I was unable to do the work to make the final copy, which I send to our printer. It would be good to have a back-up graphic editor for the Voter. Please contact the League office if you're proficient in Microsoft Word and would be willing to consider that service to the League.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Fran Holmes will lead our last topic for 2018 – Global Health: Progress and Challenges – to be discussed Thursday, November 1, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. (Be sure to change your calendar.) "The collective action of countries, communities and organizations over the last 30 years has literally saved millions of lives around the world. Yet terrible inequalities in health and well-being persist. The world now faces a mix of old and new health challenges including the preventable deaths of mothers and children, continuing epidemics of infectious diseases, rising rates of chronic disease and pandemics. For these reasons, the next several decades will be at least as important as the last in determining well-being across nations. This certainly affects all of us."

By the time you receive this Voter, I will already have had to contact everyone who belonged to Great Decisions last year in order for them to receive a 20% discount because the offer ran only for a limited time. If anyone is interested, you can still join for 2019, but your discount will be only 10% off the \$32 complete cost.

Bernice Baeumler

Candidate Forum, October 30, 2018

Candidates for the U.S. Congressional District 27, New York Assembly Districts 142 and 147, and the Erie County Clerk have been invited to participate in a Candidate Forum at the East Aurora Senior Center, 101 King Street Suite A, East Aurora, NY 14952. The forum will take place from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. There must be at least two candidates for each office participating in the forum. Candidates will respond to written questions from the audience.

Money in Politics Update

A Rose by Any Other Name ...

The term “501(c)4s” is a designation for “social welfare” groups named under the federal tax code. We encounter the term in our reading and skim over it, better left to the accountants. The Internal Revenue Code grants tax-exempt status to these groups, as long as their funds are spent primarily on social welfare causes, such as poverty, education, health, and safety. They can accept unlimited contributions from any source and are not required to publicly disclose their donors.

These groups may legally contribute *unlimited* funds to a super PAC that supports a cause or a candidate. Who could suspect the motives of donors to super PACS with names like Americans for Prosperity, American Tradition Partnership, Club for Growth, and Citizens for a Strong America? Surely, we think, they must be working for the benefit of all of us. Other more descriptive names could be “dark money” and “stealth players.”

IRS rules allow super PACs to advocate for a party or a candidate, but they may not communicate directly with them. They cannot ask the campaign for information, strategies, or what to say in television ads. That would be called coordination, and it's illegal. They can produce the colorful, glossy, and often untruthful postcards that can derail a candidate for election. We don't know who the stealth players are behind sometimes false charges. They choose our candidates, influence our vote, and, when their candidates are elected, reap the rewards of favorable legislation. They determine our quality of life, our children's future, and whether or not our planet will continue to sustain life ... all with the power of money.

A documentary entitled “Dark Money” and distributed by the Public Broadcasting System is currently being shown across the country. It depicts the attack by anonymous moneyed interests on Montana's government, natural resources, environment, and individual citizens. As the first state to try to control the flow of corporate money into politics in 1912, Montana was effectively slapped down by the historical Supreme Court ruling called “Citizens United vs. FEC” in 2010.

Watch for more about the “Dark Money” documentary next month.

Janet Goodsell, MIP Committee

Forum: Voting Rights in New York

Wednesday, November 28, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church Parish Hall
724 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

Parking is available behind the church.

New Yorkers want free, fair and secure voting. But, unlike many other states, New York has antiquated laws that discourage voting and deny many citizens the freedom to vote. Together, we can change that. Western New York voters and speakers from the Let NY Vote Coalition, including Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause/New York, will talk about common-sense solutions needed to protect and expand the freedom to vote.

Sponsored by: Common Cause/New York, Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government, Jewish Community Relations Council, League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara, NAACP-Buffalo Branch, and Partnership for the Public Good.

Our Nuclear Times: Article Eleven

The Tour Was Free, in October 2018

The tour was free, and in September. I wore a hat because the hike was outdoors and the day was sunny – I'd had skin cancer. At the site, I noticed a silence, greater than the silence of one grave or a cemetery.

Ten years ago, I had joined a citizen's group that took on a 10,000-year mission: monitor government activities at the West Valley nuclear waste site, 30 miles south of Buffalo. The car approached, as usual, rolling down the Route 219 hill into Springville's Cattaraugus Creek Valley. It was a historic day – the tall chimney at the site could still be seen on the far hillside. That chimney was being removed the very next day, part of a "clean-up" of nuclear reprocessing and vitrification facilities from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

On the tour, I was surprised (why was I surprised?) to see the surrounding green trees, grasses, and wildflowers. A few butterflies fluttered. Birds chirped. We saw a huge turtle, a snake. There! There was that massive mound, covered with black tarps! Area two was covered with black tarps and weights. I'd seen these before, many times, on small maps, these waste disposal areas.

A few unusual earthen mounds are credited to native people of North America's central plains. Were these mounds a refuge during floods? Were these religious or ceremonial gathering places? Who remembers? Ancient mounds are found all over the world, also pyramids and temples, many crumbling.

Adults must tell children the truth. Is that grass-covered mound really garbage, in other words a landfill? A chemical waste dump? A nuclear waste site? There might be, or there might not be, fences and warning signs.

Our nuclear age began in the 1940s. We have travelled around the sun nearly 80 more times. We were told: A serious nuclear incident might occur once in 10,000 years. There was no mention of the additional nuclear wastes. World-wide, nuclear wastes are placed inside mountains, buried below the ground, stored at all nuclear power plants, and even cast into the oceans.

Let's go back to the tour. Would you spend money to tour a nuclear site? Hundreds go to Ukraine. They pay for a guided ground tour of the 1986 Chernobyl site. The melted nuclear reactor core was never secured. A similar situation exists at the 2011 Fukushima, Japan, site. People go there and experience the horror. They take photos and films to bring a message to the world.

My tour was local. My tour was free.

Barbara Frackiewicz

Naturalization Ceremonies

On September 14, Kate Wagner and Barbara Brooks welcomed 32 new citizens at the naturalization ceremony at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site on Delaware Avenue in Buffalo. On September 20, 50 new citizens were welcomed at the ceremony at the U.S. Courthouse by Mary Michael Egan and Kathleen Macaluso. On September 27, Deborah Shiffner and Janet Goodsell welcomed 48 new citizens at the U.S. Courthouse in Buffalo.

Patricia Wille

Voter Registration

I would like to thank all League members and community friends for their endless generosity, energy and enthusiasm this busy fall. Linda Koenigsberg and Liz Zausmer set up voter registration opportunities on college campuses and locations all over Western New York. Barbara Gunderson gave presentations and set up voter registration at area high schools. Dana Saylor and volunteers she recruited staffed several venues during the summer. Volunteering to register new voters were: Phyllis Banas, Sandra O'Hara, Barbara and Wally Ochterski, Kate Wagner, Kathy Elias, Jayne Murray, Joan Kerman, Janet Goodsell, Diane Goupil, Joan Simmons, Kathie Macaluso, Michelle Perkins-Kowalewski, Eva Hassett, Mary Herbst, Callie Lockwood, Janet Lenichek, Sue Kirkland, JoAnn Mecca, Tina Prygon, Ramona Gallagher, Shirley Joy, Lee Tetkowski, Sally Metzger, Claudia Kruczynski, Sara Vernon and Peg Mergenhagen.

Candidates events: Judy Huber organized a Candidates Night in Amherst Town Hall with the assistance of Marian Deutschman, Pat Wille, and Sally Metzger. Ramona Gallagher and JoAnn Mecca officiated at the Candidates Event at the Amherst Senior Center. Janet Massaro was the speaker at the Buffalo Insurance Women's dinner. Ellen Neumaier organized a Candidates Night in East Aurora with the assistance of other League members from East Aurora.

Mike Egan

Welcome New Members!

We are pleased to announce that Elaine Cuskar and Colleen Dunham have become new members of our League.

Janet Massaro, Membership Committee Chair

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPEN MEETING

The Local Government Committee meets on December 12, and you're invited!

Our state is notorious for the high taxes needed to support thousands of local government entities. The New NY Reorganization and Citizens Empowerment Act of 2009 made it easier for communities to consolidate or dissolve those expensive layers. Is that happening? Is dissolution being debated in your town or village? Join the Local Government Committee for an update on the status of local government reorganization efforts, presented by Lisa K. Parshall, PhD, professor of political science and pre-law advisor at Daemen College.

1:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, 1272 Delaware Avenue

Important Reminder to Vote on Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Polls open in Erie County from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Polls open in Niagara County from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

You may still make an application for an absentee ballot. The application may be downloaded at www.elections.erie.gov. It must be postmarked by October 30, 2018.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2018 Calendar

Tuesday, October 30, 7:00 p.m.

Candidate Forum

East Aurora Senior Center

Thursday, November 1, 10:00 a.m.

Great Decisions

League Office Library

Wednesday, November 7, 4:00 p.m.

Issues Committee

Harlem Road Community Center

Monday, November 12, 3:30 p.m.

Board of Directors

League Office

Tuesday, November 13, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee

League Office Library

Wednesday, November 14, 3:00 to p.m.

Waterfront Committee

Café area at Central Library

Thursday, November 15, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Post Election Perspectives

Harlem Road Community Center

Thursday, November 29, 1:30 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League Office

Please remember to wear your League name badge to all League events.

We thank the sponsors from our Celebration of 100 years of Women Suffrage in New York State:
the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women, Ingold Law, Kirsits & Associates
and New York State Women, Inc., Buffalo Niagara Chapter