

President

Lori Robinson
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LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

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Office Manager

Arianna Devlin

Tuesdays
11:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m.

Always call before going to the office.

The Voter will be published six times this year. Send copy by the second Monday in December for the January-February edition to lwvoter@verizon.net.



Thursday, November 16, 2023
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Neat - Wood, Whiskey, Wine
5175 Transit Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

Wow, it's sweater weather and time to prepare for Thanksgiving! Join us as we head out of the big city to see how the burbs are doing.

Neat is an industrial-style restaurant offering cold cuts, pizzas and burgers, plus grilled meats and whiskeys.

www.neatbuffalo.com

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.

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Early voting is in progress. It was the League of Women Voters that helped pass the Election Law in New York State so residents get the right to early voting. Yay us! Now let's tell everyone to "go vote!"

I am happy to report that we now have a new office manager. Arianna Devlin started working for LWVBN on September 20. And she was worth the wait!

Arianna and I have been working together to get her up to speed on our League's work. I am pleased to announce that we once again have regularly scheduled office hours. Arianna will be in the office every Tuesday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. should you need materials from the office or to drop off your membership renewal or your reservation for the holiday party.

Our local League has been very busy these past months tabling at every community event we could. We have been registering voters, helping everyone to check that their voter registration is current and talking up the League. We have added 24 new members since June!

I have been busy with various local and state issues that have been in the news lately, including the Bigger, Better Bottle Bill and Package Reduction Act, the issue regarding building a plastics manufacturing plant in Lockport, and the LLC Transparency Act. Please check out this link for information on these and many more issues that LWVNY is advocating for and against: <https://lwvny.org/legislative-actions/>.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at our holiday party on Saturday, December 2. We will be at Banchetti's at 11:00 a.m. for check-in and socializing. We should be finished by 2:00 p.m., leaving plenty of time to finish (or start) your holiday shopping.

Thank you for continuing to follow LWVBN on social media and sharing with your networks. This outreach provides our League with essential visibility.

Please contact me at president@lwvbn.org with any questions, concerns, or great ideas regarding our local program.

In League, Lori Robinson

Naturalization Ceremonies

On June 7, Elaine Cusker and Eileen Cassidy registered 37 new voters at the new citizens ceremony at the Robert H. Jackson U.S. Courthouse.

Sharon Cramer and Kathleen Macaluso represented the League on July 5 at the courthouse. They greeted and distributed voter registration forms to 50 new citizens with 42 people completing their forms. Some members of the audience also registered. All new citizens who did not register took their forms home to be completed later or online.

There have been five naturalization ceremonies since August. Thank you to the volunteers, in some cases on very short notice. There have been three ceremonies at the courthouse, one at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site, and one at Iroquois High School. Many thanks go to Michele Greco, Eileen Cassidy, Kathleen Macaluso, Sharon Cramer, Ramona Gallager, Joyce DiCristina, Barbara Weitzner-Linn, Timothy Priano, Betty Krist, Sandra O'Hara, Joan Eschner and Ellen Neumaier.

Since naturalization ceremonies resumed on August 4, 2022, we have met with 777 new citizens and registered 619 or 81%. They came from all over the world, from Afghanistan to Yemen and many countries in between.

Volunteers are needed on November 1 and December 6 for the ceremonies taking place in downtown Buffalo at the U.S. Courthouse. You will meet people from many countries and help them register to vote. If you are interested, please email Deborah Shiffner at shiffnerdl@aol.com and let her know the date you are available.

Deborah Shiffner, LWVBN Naturalization Coordinator

Arianna Devlin, Our Multitalented Office Manager



Arianna Devlin has lived in Buffalo and Western New York her entire life. She was educated in a private Catholic school and graduated from Mount Saint Mary Academy in 2018. She graduated from Mercyhurst University in December 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in graphic design. She also has experience in photography and website design and does photography on the side.

In the evenings, she works part-time as a certified gymnastics coach. She started gymnastics at the age of two and began competitive gymnastics at the age of seven. When she was 13 years old, she worked as an assistant coach to the lead coach; at the age of 18 she became a certified gymnastics coach and now leads her own classes.

What interests Arianna about our League is gaining knowledge and experience about important topics. She can find new interests, expand new skills and learn about pivotal matters in the community. She will be able to make professional contacts as she meets others in the League.

We asked several questions about Arianna's favorite things. In her free time, she enjoys working out at the gym, doing anything creative like graphic design, and coaching gymnastics. Her favorite spot in Western New York is Delaware Park because it is a beautiful park and lake. The best book in the poetry genre that she has read lately is *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*.

Arianna's mother is an elected public official and Arianna has worked on at least three of her campaigns. Arianna learned at a very early age how important voting is. It really instilled in her a comfort level with the process and a sense of civic duty at a young age. Voting gives you the power to create positive change for your community and determine a better quality of life for you and your family.

From an interview with Arianna

Great Decisions

The Great Decisions discussion group will meet on Thursday, November 2, via Zoom to discuss Chapter 8 in the 2023 Great Decisions book: "Climate change, environmental degradation, and migration." The Foreign Policy Association, which sponsors this group nationwide, says this about the topic:

As climate change accelerates and drought and rising sea levels become more common, millions of people in affected regions must uproot themselves and seek safety elsewhere. Who are these affected individuals, and how might the United States aid them, and be affected by the migration? By Karen Jacobsen

Alberta Roman will moderate this discussion. Contact Fran Holmes at mfranholmes@gmail.com or 716-885-8449 for additional information.

Fran Holmes, Great Decisions Coordinator



PLEASE CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH US

Our annual holiday party luncheon is an opportunity for our members and friends to get together to share holiday cheer and hear from a local organization working to improve our community.

DECEMBER

2

2023

**CHECK IN:
11:00 AM**

**SOCIALIZING - LUNCH SERVED AT:
NOON**

COST

Members: \$35

Non-Members: \$40

MENU

Cobb Salad

Chicken Parmesan

Stuffed Pork Chop

Pasta Primavera (Vegetarian)

BANCHETTI'S

**550 North French Road
Buffalo, NY 14228**

Guest Speaker

Mustafa Abdo of H.E.A.L.

H.E.A.L. International Inc. is a nonprofit charitable tax-exempt organization run and managed by former refugees to help new arrivals in the country adapt to the challenges that arise from leaving a region of conflict and violence arriving to a new life in the U.S.

Registration can be made online at LWVBN.org or call the office at **716-986-4898**.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS NOVEMBER 26

West Valley Citizen Task Force

What is the West Valley Citizen Task Force? Could you be involved?

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo-Niagara has a seat on the West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF). I have filled that seat since January 2019, regularly attending monthly meetings in Ashford, south of Springville on Highway 219, or on Zoom. The evening meetings usually last from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. They provide an opportunity to learn what is happening in the remediation of the site and provide input to New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the Department of Energy about community concerns regarding the nuclear waste site at West Valley. Members also communicate what is happening there to organizations with which they are affiliated.

CTF members are encouraged to find an alternate. Might you be interested in considering that role? If so, it would be easy to start observing some online CTF meetings and chatting with me. If you would like more information, let me know at the email address below! This would be a good time to get involved, with some important decisions being made about site remediation that will have implications for the environmental health of our region.

Founded in 1997 with 19 members, the CTF currently has 16 members. Three of them are staffers for the New York State assemblyman and senator. Others represent the Towns of Ashford and Concord and the Cattaraugus County and Erie County governments. Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has a member, as do the local school system and the workers' union. The Seneca Nation is represented because their reservation is downstream of the site along Cattaraugus Creek. Environmental groups are represented by the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, formed two decades before the CTF.

In July 1998, the CTF issued a detailed report on its consensus on the principles that should guide the choice of a preferred alternative for the cleanup and closure of the site. Those remain in effect as we enter the year or so leading up to the release of the Draft Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS), which should finally make that recommendation.

Patricia K. Townsend: pat_twnsnd@yahoo.com

Candidate Forums

This fall, Deborah Cohen joined me in coordinating candidate forums. It has been wonderful to work with her and I look forward to when she decides she's ready to take charge and I can just be her behind-the-scenes helper. We worked with community organizations on Grand Island to set up one forum until some of them objected to the League Empty Chair policy and they hosted their own event. We also planned a forum for the Ellicott District Common Council race. However, when one candidate declined our invitation, we needed to cancel that forum at the last minute.

On October 17, the League hosted a candidate forum for Erie County Executive, Erie County Legislative District 10 and the Aurora Town Board. It was very well attended. Unfortunately, while we thought we were videotaping the event, we succeeded only in getting some still photos. Many thanks to Ellen Moomaw, event coordinator and question screener, Judy Weidemann, moderator, Ellen Neumaier, videographer, and Joanne Wahl, timekeeper.

The candidate forum on October 26 at the Amherst Center for Senior Services featured the elections for Erie County Executive and Amherst Town Board. In both Erie County Legislator races, one candidate reported having scheduling conflicts, and we never had a response from one candidate for the highway superintendent, so we couldn't hear from any of the other candidates. Many of us are not pleased with this practice which is a state League directive. We appreciate the fine work of our volunteers: Ramona Gallagher, moderator; Deb Cohen, question screener; Lori Robinson, videographer; Mike Egan, timekeeper; and Janet Goodsell and Jess Kent, ushers.



1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November-December 2023

Thursday, November 2, 10:00 a.m. – noon
Great Decisions
via Zoom

Thursday, November 9, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee
via Zoom

Monday, November 13, 4:30 p.m.
Board Meeting
League Office

Thursday, November 16, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Third Thursday Social
Neat - Wood, Whiskey, Wine in Williamsville

Monday, November 27, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Communications Committee
Kenilworth Library

Saturday, December 2, 11:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Holiday Party
Banchetti's

Thursday, December 14, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee
via Zoom

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