



your  
★ VOTER ★

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November 2017

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Voter is published 11  
times a year. The  
December Voter copy is  
due Wednesday,  
November 15. Send copy  
to Nancy DeTine at  
[nancy@nancydetine.com](mailto:nancy@nancydetine.com).

**Don't miss our festive holiday luncheon!**

- DATE:** Saturday, December 2, 2017
- PLACE:** Salvatore's Italian Gardens, Victorian Room
- ADDRESS:** 6461 Transit Road, Depew 14043
- TIME:** Doors open at 11:30 a.m., lunch at noon
- COST:** Members \$27, guests \$30
- PARKING:** Enter from Genesee Street at Transit Road

Come early and marvel at Salvatore's legendary holiday decor!

Enjoy a delicious menu including your choice of Salmon with Lobster Dill Sauce OR Chicken Francaise with Lemon Caper Sauce, plus fresh garden salad, rosemary roasted potatoes, chef's blend vegetables, and apple cobbler with salted caramel ice cream.

Our speaker will be Diane Picard, executive director of the Massachusetts Avenue Project. Her topic will be Growing Green, the MAP program she established in 2003. Growing Green's urban farm covers more than an acre, having reclaimed 13 vacant residential lots on Buffalo's West Side. Here young people work together to grow, market and distribute organic produce for communities, restaurants and retail establishments, and learn such valuable skills as microenterprise and leadership. If you're inspired to help, financial donations are welcome.

**Paid reservations MUST be received by Tuesday, November 21. Due to restaurant policy, we CANNOT make exceptions! Please complete the form in this Voter and send it with your check today.**

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**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 Board

The board approved an update to our League's Investment Policy at its October meeting. It also agreed to staff a vendor's table at the Peace Center Dinner on November 3, 2017, to distribute information about the League.

The 2017 Voters Guide has been mailed to all current members and is available in the public libraries, city, town and village halls and many sites in Erie and Niagara counties. As coordinator of the Steering Committee, I especially thank these committee members: graphic designer, Krysta Doerfler; Vote411.org coordinator, Barb Jezioro; Voters Guide delivery coordinator, Laura McDade; and the trio of folks who worked hard to get candidates' responses to our invitation to participate, Mary Ann Turkla, Flora Summe and Nora Mikes. Please contact candidates on your ballot to express appreciation for their participation or regrets that they failed to respond. Candidates may add their information to [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org) until Election Day.

We appreciate continued support from the M&T Bank Charitable Foundation through our grant request. Their \$1,000 grant will help us with the printing cost for the 2017 Voters Guide.

*Terri Parks, Leadership Team Member*

## Great Decisions

### ***Great Decisions to Meet on Thursday, November 2***

Nora Mikes will lead our last topic for Great Decisions this year — Nuclear Security: The Enduring Challenge of Nuclear Weapons — on Thursday, November 2, from 10 a.m. till noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue. "Nuclear nonproliferation was a top priority for the Obama administration. While the Iran deal was a diplomatic victory toward this end, major threats persist from both state and non-state actors. Countries like North Korea, Russia, India and Pakistan continue to challenge nonproliferation efforts. The possibility that terrorists will carry out an attack using a "dirty bomb," made from captured nuclear materials, looks increasingly real. In a fractious world, which way forward for U.S. nuclear security policy?" It's been quite a year for hot topics. As of the Voter deadline, 10 people have signed up for Great Decisions 2018 so we can take advantage of the 20% discount which expires on October 30, 2017.

*Bernice Baeumler*

## Waterfront Committee Report

The Waterfront Committee continues its review of developments at Buffalo's Outer Harbor, as conducted by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation. We seek permanent protection of critical environmental habitats, as well as strategies to engage the public while respecting the continuing evolution of the natural habitat at the water's edge. To that end, we continue to build relationships with New York State legislators as well as with the ECHDC and the City of Buffalo. Our next meeting is November 8, 3 to 4 p.m., in the cafe area of the Central Library at 1 Lafayette Square in Downtown Buffalo. All are welcome!

*Gladys Gifford, Waterfront Committee Chair*

## Money in Politics Update

### **Rematch: Gerrymandering vs. Democracy**



The issue of gerrymandering has again landed in the lap of the Supreme Court. Gerrymandering is the strategy by which political parties in power regularly draw voting district lines after every 10-year census, enabling and often guaranteeing election of their favored candidates.

After 30 years of trying to define when gerrymandering violates the U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Court began hearing arguments on October 3 in a case involving the Wisconsin Assembly. The outcome of the case, *Gill v. Whitford*, will determine whether the Republican Assembly acted constitutionally when it redrew districts after the 2010 census to reflect the party majority makeup of the Assembly. Dana Milbank of the *Washington Post* says, “Gerrymandering...is making a mockery of the right to vote in Wisconsin...where a redrawn map allowed Republicans to hold more than 60 percent of the State Assembly while getting less than half the vote.”

Extremely gerrymandered districts can stretch out a hundred miles in length while narrowing to the width of half a city block to ensure the maximum impact of specific voters in that district. Voters of the minority party can be dispersed over several districts so that their votes have a negligible effect on the outcome. Gerrymandering has been called the process by which candidates choose their voters rather than the other way around.

A wide range of interested parties on both sides of the issue have filed 54 briefs in *Gill v. Whitford*. The outcome could strike down the Wisconsin Assembly map along with those of up to 20 other states. Since the current court is evenly divided with four justices who regularly interpret the law from a conservative perspective and four who vote to support liberal positions, it appears that Justice Anthony Kennedy will most likely determine the direction of this case. During his 30 years on the Supreme Court, Justice Kennedy has remained a defender of the First Amendment. He insists that the government may not discriminate against forms of speech or political association (party membership). Gerrymandering would nullify the votes of members of the political party not favored by the Assembly. In the current case, Kennedy has made clear that his view remains the same. Beginning with his very first question, he referred to the First Amendment and suggested that the Wisconsin Assembly was depriving the minority party’s voters of their First Amendment rights.

While the four justices on the left agree that gerrymanders are incompatible with democratic principles, the four on the right believe that only politicians (i.e., state legislators of the party in power) and not the courts, can determine district lines.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg sums it up by asking, “What’s really behind all of this?...The precious right to vote.”

The League of Women Voters and other good government groups argue on the side of the plaintiffs in promoting an independent redistricting process that does not include political parties operating in their own self-interest. The democratic process must be protected and voters’ rights preserved.

The Supreme Court will make a groundbreaking decision that, one way or another, could reshape American democracy.

*Janet Goodsell, Money in Politics Committee*

## Celebrate 100 Years of Women Voting in New York State

### **Centennial Celebration Reservation Deadline Extended to October 31!**

On Thursday, November 9, the League will celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage in New York State. We've planned a wonderful luncheon at the Twentieth Century Club with an excellent speaker, and we know you'll want to be there! We're delighted that Shannon M. Risk, Ph.D. will discuss **Intruding in Sacred Territory--Forging Women's Suffrage on the Buffalo-Niagara Frontier** and that MaryAlice Demler from WGRZ-TV will be our emcee for this event.

**Six partners** have joined us to present this important event: WNY Women's Foundation; the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women; AAUW Buffalo Branch; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Gamma Phi Omega Chapter; Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, Western New York Chapter; and New York State Women, Inc., Region 8.

### **SEND YOUR CHECK TODAY!**

Individual Reservations at \$35 or a Suffragist Reservation at \$75.

Checks should be written to LWVNYS-EF and mailed to 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209 by October 31.

We're also most pleased to have received sponsorships at the Elizabeth Cady Stanton level from the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women, Ingold Law, New York State Women Inc., Buffalo Niagara Chapter, and Kirisits & Associates CPAS PLLC. Proceeds from this event benefit the education efforts of LWVBN.

### **Volunteer Coordinator's Report**

As the deadline for voter registration for this election year came closer, there were many additions and substitutions to the naturalization ceremony calendar. I want to thank all of our volunteers who quickly stepped up to accommodate those changes. We were able to successfully fulfill all of our commitments.

JoAnn Mecca represented the League at two September ceremonies. On September 14, she was joined by Ellen Moomaw at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site. On September 28, Mike Egan accompanied her to proceedings at the U.S. Courthouse.

Janet Goodsell and Barbara Brooks attended the first ceremony in October at the U.S. Courthouse.

*Judith Clarke, Volunteer Coordinator*

### **Membership Committee Report**

We extend a warm welcome to these new members of our League family: Barbara Frackiewicz, Joanne Kahn, Angela McGowan, Dusan Palka, and William Townsend.

Janet Massaro, Membership Committee Chair

### **Election Services Report**

During September there were no elections; however, in preparation for a busy October, this committee completed three different mailings in just one morning. Through a frenzy of envelopes, stamps, folding notices, and conversation, all of these flyers arrived at the post office by noon. My complete thanks to the committee volunteers who worked that extremely industrious morning: Anne Creaven, Kathleen Macaluso and friend, Mike Egan [great cookies], Terri Parks, Sue Stievater, Sally Metzger, Judith Clarke, and Lee Tetkowski.

Thank you to everyone who assisted that morning and helped promote democracy.

*Alan Dozoretz Election Services Chair*

## Holiday Luncheon Reservation Form

Complete and send this form with your check to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209. Paid reservations MUST be received by Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

Names, as you would like them to appear on badges for guests. **Members wear your name badge.**

	Entree choice: Salmon	Chicken Française
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_ members at \$27  
\_\_\_ guests at \$30

Total amount of check payable to LWVBN \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

## Health Care Revisited

### *Reflections on our League's Health Care History*

In her opening remarks during our program on October 12 — *Single-Payer Health Care: Medicare for All* — Dr. Debra Street asked the audience, “How many of you are satisfied with your health care?” Many hands were raised. She was obviously surprised at such support. She did not ask a logical follow-up question, “How many of you are on Medicare?” Had she done so, I am convinced those same hands would have shot up again.

Medicare is America’s single-payer health system and most U.S. seniors like it and don’t want it taken away.

In 1990 Leagues throughout the country began a study of the funding and delivery of health care in the United States. League members concluded that universal health care — covering everyone, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick – was essential to a fair and equitable system.

At the time of the study, there were six local Leagues in Erie County. All six agreed to form one Health Care Committee and to join the League’s campaign for universal health care. In 1994 we applied for a small grant and were accepted as a partner in the national League’s major community education effort, “Citizen’s Voice for Citizen’s Choice.” For almost two decades we worked for incremental health reforms. The goal of universal care was finally celebrated with the passage of the Affordable Health Care Act in 2010.

The six small local Leagues have since merged into one much larger, the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara.

Terri Parks reminded us at the end of our *Medicare for All* program that we do not currently have a Health Care Committee. But the option is there. A group of enthusiastic and committed League members can form a *new* Health Care Committee and continue much-needed advocacy for universal health care.

*Janet Massaro, Board Member*



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## November 2017 Events and Meetings

**Tuesday, 11/2, 4:00 p.m.**

**Great Decisions**

League Office

**Tuesday, 11/7, 10:00 a.m.-noon**

**Issues Committee**

Harlem Road Community Center, Amherst 14226

**Wednesday, 11/8, 1:30 p.m.**

**Local Government Committee**

League Office

**Wednesday, 11/8, 3:00 p.m.**

**Waterfront Committee**

Central Library, Buffalo 14203

**Thursday, 11/9, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

**Celebrate 100 Years of Women Suffrage**

Twentieth Century Club, Buffalo 14202

**Monday, 11/13, 4:00 p.m.**

**Board of Directors**

League Office

**Thursday, 11/16, 1:30 p.m.**

**Education Committee**

League Office

**Please remember to wear your League name badge to all League events.  
Make arrangements to pick it up or have someone get it from the League Office.**