



your
★ VOTER ★

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President

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nancy@nancydetine.com.

Congratulations for a Job Well Done!

The 2018 midterm election had a fantastic turnout in Erie and Niagara Counties. Almost 393,000 voters cast their ballot for governor as compared with 299,000 in the 2014 election. That represents more than 54% of the eligible voters in the two counties. Some races had a 60% turnout, notably the 27th Congressional District, and a few had less than 50%, mainly where candidates ran unopposed.

The League was more active in voter registration this summer and fall than we have been in many years. More than 50 members and friends conducted voter registration at 33 locations that included many community events this summer. While most of the people we met said they were already registered, we had an opportunity to remind them that it's important to vote every year and especially this year with all state officials and members of Congress on the ballot. Each month, we also register more than 100 people at naturalization ceremonies.

Certainly, we can give ourselves a well-deserved pat on the back for this outstanding effort. Special thanks go to Mike Egan for arranging most of the registration events, Linda Koenigsberg for contacting most area colleges, Barb Gunderson for outreach to high schools, Dana Saylor for leading the effort at several art festivals and Pat Wille who coordinates the volunteers for naturalization ceremonies.

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

The League's work prior to elections involves holding candidate forums. It is most important that voters have a chance to be face to face with the people vying to represent them. We send a special thank you to Judy Huber and Ellen Neumaier for coordinating candidate forums in Amherst and East Aurora. Making the arrangements and getting responses from candidates can be challenging. Judy and Ellen did a fine job.

The board of directors appointed Marian Deutschman, Janet Massaro and Joan Simmons to be the board representatives on the 2019 Nominating Committee. The board approved the charge to the Nominating Committee also and sent it to Kathleen McCarthy, committee chair. Janet Goodsell, Lyle Toohey and Lynne Vallone are the three other committee members who were elected at the 2018 annual meeting.

The League has been distributing pens to each new citizen at naturalization ceremonies for much of this year. An anonymous League member donated the first orders of pens, and we appreciate the generous donation. At its November meeting, the board agreed to continue the practice with League funds. We distribute an average of 52 pens at each ceremony as excellent reminders of the important work of the League.

Terri Parks

Making Democracy Work

Honoring community leaders with the League's Making Democracy Work Award

This edition of the Voter includes a nomination form for the 2019 Making Democracy Work Award. Please consider nominating a community member who you feel has made memorable efforts to make democracy work. Recent honorees include attorney Michael Kuzma, Erin Heaney, Bill Nowak, Sam Magavern, Bonnie Smith from WEDI, Scott Gehl from HOME and Rev. Kirk Laubenstein. We welcome your nomination for the 2019 award by February 7, 2019. The nomination form has the details.

Each year, the state League requests suggestions for the legislative priorities for lobbying our state legislators. We are also invited to submit ideas for state League program to be decided at the biennial convention in June 2019. Please take some time to think about these two opportunities and join us at the Issues and Program Committee meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at the Harlem Road Community Center at 4:00 p.m. You may write us your suggestions and mail or email them to the League office, lwvbn@lwvbn.org by January 5. We look forward to a lively discussion.

Marian Deutschman & Terri Parks

Welcome New Members!

We are delighted to welcome Margie Boyce and Elizabeth Heuer as new members to our League. And here's an important announcement for all our new – and not so new – League members: Save room on your calendar for a *new member welcome, coming this January 2019*. Date, time and place to be announced.

Janet Massaro, Membership Committee Chair

Our Nuclear Times: Article 12

Radiation: A Grab Bag

- A) Do you know these words? **Millenium** = 1000 years. **Millipede** = an insect that appears to have 1000 quickly moving legs. **Millimeter** = there are 1000 millimeters in one meter. **Millirem** = there are 1000 millirem in one rem. Hey, wait a minute! What is a rem? (It rhymes with stem.) A rem is a measure of harmful radiation exposure to a human's soft tissues. It is a measure of biological damage.
- B) If you live in the United States, you receive 620 millirem [mrem] per year on average. That includes radiation received from a nice variety of sources, both natural and manmade. This radiation comes from outer space as cosmic rays (28 mrem per year), radon gas (200 mrem per year), food, medical X-rays (a dental X-ray gives 4 to 15 mrem), cigarettes (at 1½ packs per day, 1300 mrem per year), atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb test fallout, nuclear power plant and reprocessing plant emissions, a smoke detector (1 mrem per year), and so on.
- C) If you go to the West Valley nuclear waste site in Western New York, you might be exposed to some radiation. By law and regulation, these are the maximum amounts of radiation that are allowed: for a visitor or the general public, up to 100 additional mrem per year; for support staff, up to 500 additional mrem per year; for an onsite nuclear worker, up to 5000 additional mrem per year (5 rem).
- D) In extreme radiation events, the consequences to humans are extreme. A sudden dose of 1000 rem will cause a human death rate of 50% within 30 days. A sudden dose of 10,000 rem will cause human death within hours of exposure. A sudden dose of 100,000 rem will cause human death within minutes of exposure.
- E) The international unit of biologically damaging radiation exposure is the sievert [SEE-vert], abbreviation Sv. 1 Sievert = 100 mrem. 10 Sieverts = 1 rem.

RADIATION: You can't see it, smell it, or taste it. If you see a radiation warning sign: read it, respect it and react.

Helpful links:

www.westvalleyctf.org www.nirs.org www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org www.wv.doe.gov
www.chbwv.com

Questions and suggestions are welcome! Send email to Barb at bfbuffalony@yahoo.com.

Barbara Frackiewicz

Give the Gift of League Membership

Do you know someone who is passionate about any League issues, but is not yet a League member? Or have you friends or family who have expressed interest in our work or in becoming a member of the League? The League celebrates its 99th birthday on February 14, 2019. It's an especially fitting time to welcome new members.

People who join the League for the first time after Feb. 1, 2019, will be members until June 30, 2020.

We'll be happy to send the membership brochure to the people whose dues you pay with a note that you have given them a year's membership to the League. Send the name and address with payment to the League office and indicate if you'd like the membership to begin February 1, 2019.

Membership rates: Individual \$65. Household (all people at the same address: first person \$65, all others \$35 each). Youth members from age 16 are \$20 each.

Money in Politics Committee

New Discoveries in a PBS Documentary: "Dark Money"

I recently had the opportunity to view the excellent PBS documentary "Dark Money." (For those of you who have not seen it, the Money in Politics Committee will be showing it this coming spring, so there's no need to buy a copy.)

There were several things that I learned about dark money...

A) Dark money is being used against both Democrats and Republicans running for public office. It is frequently used against Republicans during election primaries.

B) Dark money is really dark! In other words, these special interest groups tend to be very opaque in how they name themselves.

Here is an example: *Coalition for Energy & the Environment* is a project of *Western Tradition Partnership*. These names sound pretty vague and innocuous, don't they? Who would guess that the financial backers are top executives/owners of businesses aligned with the interests of the fossil fuel industry!

C) How dark money maneuvers within our democracy is a bit complicated. Fortunately, the narrator of the documentary uses a white board and draws all the connections using a marker, so the audience can see exactly how dark money works.

D) The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is composed of equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. The FEC is now very partisan, so it gets bogged down in gridlock and very little gets accomplished. According to the former chair of the FEC, Ann Ravel, the FEC no longer defends the election laws of the United States, not even details of *Citizens United v. FEC*. The candidates running for public office know this, so they can knowingly violate election laws without consequences.

Next month, another member of the committee will share what she learned from watching "Dark Money," so stay tuned.

Janet Lenicheck

Election Services

After a rather quiet early autumn, the Election Services Committee is back to being engaged with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority. On November 1, 2018, this committee met at our League office and conducted a mailing of more than 900 envelopes that were labeled, stuffed, and stamped by an enthusiastic and wonderful group of volunteers. My deepest thanks to all who ably assisted: Janet Goodsell, Lee Tetkowski, Kathleen McCarthy, Sally Metzger, Mike Egan, and Kathleen Macaluso. Another BMHA site will conduct nominations in December, so an additional mailing was needed. Marlene Katzel, Ramona Gallagher, Mike Egan, Kathleen McCarthy, and Kathleen Macaluso answered that challenge. Thanks also go out to Nora Mikes for completing all of the needed paperwork and to Judith Clarke and Mike Egan for providing those absolutely delicious concoctions that help us all to keep working on our tasks. In addition, kudos to Mary Ann Turkla, our office manager, for securing our needed space.

On Tuesday, November 27, Nora Mikes, Marlene Katzel, and Lois Uteg will be conducting an election at the Kenfield-Langfield site.

I appreciate all of those League members who assist. Often they are deeply involved with other League projects, and they still find the time and energy to make this committee a success.

Alan Dozoretz

Naturalization Ceremonies

Barbara Brooks and Helen Mayo represented the League at the naturalization ceremony on October 4, welcoming 51 new citizens at the U.S. Courthouse. On October 18, Barbara Metivier and Patricia Wille welcomed 56 new citizens at a ceremony at the Hamburg Middle School. Joyce Bol and Josette Cunningham welcomed 58 new citizens on October 25 at the U.S. Courthouse. At the November 1 naturalization ceremony at the U.S. Courthouse, Elisabeth Zausmer and Helen Mayo welcomed 52 new citizens.

Patricia Wille

Too Many Costly Local Governments: Is Anything Being Done?

Don't miss this special presentation! 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, at 1272 Delaware Avenue.

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 your town or village debating this important issue? 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.

Please let us know you're coming! Send email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org or call the League office at 716-986-4898.

Help GOBike Buffalo

This year's special guest at the League holiday party is Justin Booth, founder and executive director of GOBike Buffalo. "GObike Buffalo is working to build a thriving, dynamic and connected Buffalo by promoting biking, alternative transportation options, and improved streetscapes to create positive impacts on health, our environment, our streets and the overall quality of life for all residents."

GOBike accepts used bicycles in any condition and bicycle parts and accessories at its Community Workshop, 68 Colvin Avenue, Buffalo, New York, during workshop hours, Tuesday and Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.

Monetary donations to help GOBike may be made online at GOBike.org or by mail to 640 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14203. GOBike also encourages folks to become a member or volunteer with GOBike. It's signature event is the annual SkyRide that includes biking over the Skyway and it conducts the weekly Slow Roll Buffalo on Monday nights.

Attend a Sunday evening workshop at the Community Workshop to learn to ride or fix your bike. The schedule of workshops is posted at GoBike.org. You can also learn more by calling the GOBike at 716-320-0193 during workshop hours.

We expect to learn more about this worthy organization and its activities from Justin Booth.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2018 Calendar

Saturday, December 1, 11:30 a.m.

League Holiday Party

Risotto's Restaurant- reservations required

Wednesday, December 12, 1:30 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League Office

Guests especially welcome, see page 5 for details

Many wishes for a peaceful and happy holiday season to you all!

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**