



your
★VOTER★

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President

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**Congratulations,
Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold!**

Our 2019 Making Democracy Work Award winner

A highlight of our League’s annual meeting is the Making Democracy Work Award, to be presented to Barbara A. Seals Nevergold, Ph.D.



A lifelong educator and community leader, Dr. Seals Nevergold deserves recognition for her tireless pursuit of excellence and equity in education at local, state and national levels. She was appointed to the Buffalo Board of Education in 2012, and was president from 2016 to 2019. She has also been president and treasurer of the New York State Conference of Big 5 School Districts, a statewide advocacy group, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Great City Schools, a national coalition of urban public school systems dedicated to improving education for children in inner cities.

Dr. Seals Nevergold is a co-founder of the Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women. Recipient of many awards for professional and community service, she is also co-author of the book series **Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders**, and co-author of **Go, Tell Michelle: African American Women Write to the New First Lady**.

Make sure to mail your reservation for the annual meeting. It is located on page 2 of the annual meeting booklet.

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 Report and Board Actions

This edition of your Voter accompanies the annual meeting booklet. That booklet includes the 2019-2020 budget, slate of officers to be elected, Local Program Focus and one addition to the bylaws that the board accepted to submit to League members for approval at the annual meeting. We expect that many League members will join us for the business meeting in the morning and even more of you will join us for the luncheon to celebrate 100 years of League presence in Erie County and the accomplishments of our honorees. The League will provide coffee and the delicious pastries from the Fairdale for the business meeting. (I'll attend just for those pastries!)

This has been an eventful year for the League and the world. Every day seems to bring more news that makes us cringe or cheer. I cheer about the continued efforts of League members and their strong commitment to being political, but not partisan. While we each have personal views in support of particular government officials, as a League we never endorse or support any candidate or political party.

We acknowledge the Nominating Committee and Budget Committee in the annual meeting booklet, but I'd like to give a special thank you to their respective chairs, Kathleen McCarthy and Amy Witryol. Their leadership in these important efforts is exemplary.

I'm pleased that Lori Robinson, Lyle Toohey, Barbara Gunderson, Christine Reichmuth, Lois Uhtag and Kate Wagner have agreed to be our delegates to the convention of the League of Women Voters of New York State in Albany, June 8-10, 2019. It will be a festive celebration of 100 years of the state League.

On April 12, board members and committee chairs participated in an Appreciative Summit at Harlem Road that was ably hosted by Leslie Diaz of Collaborance. Lesley kept us busy and engaged in a playful manner to address how we can increase the diversity, equity and inclusiveness of our League so we can have greater impact. Many thanks to everyone who was able to spend the morning with us.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Christine Reichmuth has offered to start off Great Decisions 2019 by leading our first discussion on refugees and global migration on Thursday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to noon at 1272 Delaware. "Today no country has open borders. Every state in today's global system has its own laws and policies about who is permitted to cross its borders, and how they will do so. What leads someone to seek the status of a refugee or economic migrant? Who determines whether someone is a refugee or a migrant? How have different countries, including the United States, reacted to migration? How effective are the international laws, policies and organizations that have evolved to assist and protect refugees and migrants?" There is much to ponder over this hot topic.

Bernice Baeumler

Remember to Renew Your Membership!

Membership renewal information will be mailed in early May. We need you! The work of the League needs many minds and hands! Please complete the Membership Survey and submit it with your payment. It is very helpful to know the ways that members are willing and able to help with the work of the League. We also need to know which members prefer to provide only their financial contribution. We respect the needs of all members. Everyone is important.

Waterfront Committee

Connecting the Outer Harbor with the Niagara Greenway

Thirty-two people attended the Lunch & Issues program on Friday, April 12, at Scotch 'n Sirloin restaurant. Greg Stevens, executive director of the Niagara Greenway Commission, presented a PowerPoint showing both history and current projects of the Niagara Greenway. He explained that the Niagara Greenway functions as a connecting organization to facilitate projects which work together to form an ecological and sustainable necklace of trails and green spaces all along the Niagara River. The focus for the Buffalo waterfront is to connect Canalside with the Outer Harbor lands in a form that allows visitors to relax and refresh – to soak in the vistas of our inland sea, Lake Erie.

Stevens' presentation included an active question and answer session. Attendees came away with a better understanding of the subject and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about our whole waterfront, along the Niagara River.

Gladys Gifford, Waterfront Committee Chair

Election Services

I was out of town during the first week of April. So just the fact that there is a report to write is due to the tremendous organizational efforts of Nora Mikes. Here is the complete scenario: An email from a Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority aide notified us that six sites would need nominations as soon as we could arrange them. The process entailed writing nomination notices for all six sites, making enough copies for each site, and then assembling sufficient volunteers to complete the 1,200 mailings. Part of the organizing effort involves connecting the right paperwork with the right envelopes so that each resident receives the correct notice.

All of this was accomplished thanks to the dedicated League members who contributed approximately three hours of their time and energy. We couldn't have succeeded without their valued assistance.

A mighty THANK YOU to all who volunteered: Nora Mikes, Sue Stievater, Kathie Macaluso, JoAnn Mecca, Pat Egan, Phyllis Walling, Susan Dombrowski, Ellen Moomaw, Joan Sillman, Lee Tetkowski, Mary Herbst and Joan Simmons. The League will be reimbursed by BMHA for all of the time devoted to this mailing. Sally Metzger had volunteered but was stranded at home due to road construction.

The residents of Sedita, Commodore Perry, Shaffer Village, Holling Homes, Jasper Parrish, and LaSalle Homes will now be able to have their meetings with our League representatives.

Al Dozoretz, Election Services Chair

Naturalization Ceremonies

All of the ceremonies reported here took place at the U.S. Courthouse. On March 14, Deborah Shiffner and Karen Keaton welcomed 50 new citizens from 24 countries. Sharon Cramer and Judy Casassa greeted 53 new candidates for citizenship from 22 countries on March 28. On April 4, Barbara Brooks and Deborah Shiffner welcomed 50 new citizens from 24 countries. And Karen Keaton and Deborah Shiffner welcomed 53 candidates for citizenship from 22 countries on April 11.

The last three ceremonies resulted in nearly 100% return of voter registration forms!

Patricia Wille, Volunteer Coordinator for Naturalization Ceremonies

Our Nuclear Times: Article 17

An Underground Tale: Chapter 4

“Look at those brilliant stars and constellations! I wonder, will the sky be the same in a million years? Who’s thinking ahead 10 years or 10,000 years? Most people live day to day. ... Some like the four-year chunks of a democratic election cycle. Others follow five-year plans of a socialist or communist variety. ... Nobody truly cares about us. ... Someone ought to get a lump of coal in a Christmas stocking. ... Huh? What was that? A bear? ... Nah. That’s another corroding barrel crumbling. ...”

“No mosquitoes tonight! Because I zapped ’em with my tiny, super-deluxe ray gun. ... Oh, these trenches are lovely, dark, and deep. ... It figures. We play penny ante, while others sling around dollars in the billions, but not our way. ... Can you guess why we got dumped here? It’s as far away as possible from New York City and Albany. ...”

“I’ll put another log on the fire. ... Look at those sparks fly! ... Personally, I don’t like meddlers with illuminating degrees in radiation and the environmental sciences. Good that there’s no chimney to mark the site. ... Hey, did you hear about Tonawanda? One chimney was declared a NIMBY, so the nearby UB steps in with big soil and health studies. ... Yup, and there’s louder talk about landfills and other radiation hot spots on the Niagara Frontier. ... Strange. For hundreds of years, smokestacks meant jobs and progress. Now, people wake up and try to take ’em down. ...”

With the light dimmed, and with effort, the group had imagined they were gathered around a campfire. So, campfire-style, they swapped scraps of news, scattered thoughts, and ghost stories. A favorite was an adventure into Lake Erie water intake pipes. Just like in the post-gold-rush late 1800s, a city would turn into a ghost town. The setting was in the Wild West, er, Western New York. Everyone had kicked off their shoes. Tensions had dropped. What was next? ... It was getting late. ... They turned off the light.

... And so ends another episode of Trench Number Nine, at a nuclear waste site called West Valley. (For Chapter 1 see the VOTER of Summer 2018; for Chapter 2 see March 2019; for Chapter 3 see April 2019.)

Barbara Frackiewicz

League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara Highlights of our History

From 1981 to 1989, the League produced a weekly TV interview program, In League with You. Gloria Aquila and Marian Deutschman hosted it.

In the early 1990s, the six Leagues in Western New York, Amherst, Aurora-Elma, Buffalo Metro, Clarence, Hamburg and Orchard Park, decided that a merger would address declining membership and the difficulty of coordinating six individual Leagues to address county issues. On May 24, 1995, the League of Women Voters of the Greater Buffalo Area held its organizational meeting and elected its first board of directors. The six Leagues continued to conduct program in their communities as units of the new League. One by one, the units ceased their efforts until, in 2016, the last remaining unit in Amherst stopped its work in Amherst. Today, all efforts are conducted by the work of members from all the communities in the League’s jurisdiction.

After a study of waterfront development, League members reached consensus and adopted a Position on Waterfront Development in Erie County on November 4, 1996. Today the League and partner organizations are engaged in efforts to guarantee that development of the Outer Harbor on Lake Erie’s eastern terminus is consistent with that position.

The League began conducting tenant council and resident commissioner elections through contracts with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority in the 1990s.

This League incorporated as the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara (LWVBN) through its initial filing with New York State on November 22, 2002, as a 501(c)(4) not for profit. Prior to that date, the Greater Buffalo

League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara Highlights of our History

League worked informally with members from Niagara Falls. The incorporation officially added Niagara County to the local League jurisdiction.

In 1998, Katherine "Taffy" Tarbell (1921-2007), chair of the Local Government Committee of the LWVBN, had the vision to see that there was a need to curb urban sprawl and to develop regional planning in Erie and Niagara Counties. She gathered materials to produce a state concurrence on urban sprawl that was announced by the State Board in spring 2000.

Meanwhile, she was applying for grants to support an education campaign on urban sprawl. In 1999 and 2000, she obtained grants totaling \$107,545 to fund this project, and she became the project director. She and her committee spent months working on renting an office, hiring a part-time staff member, developing a presentation, purchasing equipment, and training members to deliver our PowerPoint presentation.

In June of 2000 the committee launched The Sprawl Campaign to educate citizens about the economic, environmental, and social costs of sprawl, on remedies being used in other urban metropolitan regions around the country, and about options available to this region to reverse the trend. Sixteen LWVBN members took the presentation to luncheon groups, church groups, classrooms, citizens' groups, government groups and any gathering that would hear them, reaching many hundreds of citizens with our message.

For this effort, they won the awards listed below:

Civic Empowerment Award from the Buffalo Niagara All-America City Committee, April 2002.

Public Education Award from the Western New York Section of the American Planning Association, June 2002.

2002 Outstanding Planning Project in Public Education from the American Planning Association New York Upstate Chapter, September 2002.

2003 Public Education Award from the national American Planning Association, announced in November 2002.

It took some time for the lessons of the campaign to influence the attitudes of local leaders, but current leaders generally accept and act on the message the campaign delivered.

LWVBN undertook a study related to merging local governments in the early 2000s. The resulting consensus was the establishment of criteria for support of intergovernmental relationships. It was approved in June 2008 and became the model for the position adopted by the League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS).

During the early years of this century, LWVBN undertook four studies related to alternative sentencing and re-entry that followed the positions established by LWVNYS. The Re-Entry Committee hosted full day conferences in 2008 and 2009: Alternative Sentencing and Re-Entry in Erie County and Re-Entry Support in Western New York.

On January 31, 2009, LWVBN members participated in a Climate Change Café to craft a low carbon diet to decrease energy consumption of participants. LWVNYS recognized the effort with an award for "Thinking outside the box."

Throughout their history, the Leagues in Erie and Niagara Counties worked and continue to work tirelessly on state and national League studies, lobbying state legislators each spring, producing publications such as an annual Voters Guide and information about individual communities and elected officials at all levels of government and conducting voter registration drives and candidate forums. Program events about topical issues are planned and carried out monthly from September to June each year. Members speak and register new voters at naturalization ceremonies in Buffalo, currently 35 ceremonies each year.

*Terri Parks with the invaluable assistance in research by the Women's Suffrage Celebration Committee.
Ann Huberman provided the comments about the Sprawl Campaign.*

Updated February 2019



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

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May 2019 Calendar

Thursday, May 2, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Great Decisions

League Office

Saturday, May 4, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

An Afternoon with Eleanor

Garret Club

Tuesday, May 7, 4:00 p.m.

Issues/Program Committee

Harlem Road Community Center

Monday, May 13, 4:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

League Office

Wednesday, May 15, 1:30 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League Office

Thursday, May 23, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee

League Office

Saturday, June 1, 10:00 a.m.

Annual Meeting

Fairdale Banquet Center

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

