



your
★ VOTER ★

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Send copy to Nancy
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nancy@nancydetine.com.

**The Haudenosaunee Women:
Past, Present and Future**

Presented by AAUW and co-sponsored by LWVBN

DATE: Thursday, March 8, 2018

TIME: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Medaille College Main Building Lecture Hall,
18 Agassiz Circle, Buffalo, NY 14214

SPEAKER: **Dr. Lori V. Quigley, Vice President for Academic
Affairs, Medaille College**

Join us for International Women’s Day! Dr. Quigley, a member of the Wolf Clan, grew up in the Allegany Seneca Nation of Indians. Sharing her mother’s and her own personal story, she will help us gain a deeper appreciation of the role Haudenosaunee women continue to play in contemporary society and their role in the future. Dr. Quigley earned her bachelor of arts from St. Bonaventure University, and her master’s and doctorate from Fordham University.

Free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

RSVP by Monday, February 26, via email to Lilyen Mascellino:
lilyenm@gmail.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.

News from the Board

Janet Goodsell recruited two outstanding young women from Lafayette High School to be our representatives at the 2018 Students Inside Albany in May. The board enthusiastically approved the selection of Rosiehna Myint and Myit Nay Win, who are, respectively, valedictorian and salutatorian of this year's senior class. We look forward to meeting them and hearing about their experiences at our annual meeting in June. We thank Janet Goodsell for her fine work on behalf of the League.

The board approved two separate items as requested by the Waterfront Committee that relate to the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and to the Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050 to reflect LWVBN positions.

The board voted to support the concurrence position on Death with Dignity as proposed by the LWV New York State at its 2018 convention and as recommended by the members who attended our program on January 13. This position concurs with that of the LWV Utah.

We are currently working with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) on a new three-year contract for services to conduct tenant commissioners' elections and tenant council elections in individual BMHA housing sites. After discussion, the board approved empowering Nora Mikes, Terri Parks and Kathleen McCarthy to negotiate and reach an agreement with BMHA for this contract only. Work needs to begin on the 2018 tenant commissioners' election immediately. The draft contract from BMHA includes basically the same activities as our most recent contract. We greatly appreciate that Nora Mikes has agreed to coordinate our efforts and Kathleen McCarthy will contribute expertise from her past experience in leading this effort.

The board discussed a recommendation regarding dues relief for new members who join in the second quarter of our membership year, October through December. It was decided to offer those people a discounted rate at the time of their first renewal; this will partially offset our support for the state and national Leagues while promoting retention of new members.

The League of Women Voters reached its 98th anniversary on February 14. Each year at this time, we send our Annual Appeal letter to members and friends. Please consider how important the efforts of the League are at this time in our nation's history and reply with your donation. We greatly appreciate every dollar.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

First of all, thanks to all who sent such thoughtful and supportive expressions of sympathy upon the death of my husband. (I guess it's not surprising, considering the caring that League members have devoted to promoting the democratic practice of voting.) Also healing thoughts to Ann Marie Malachowski, a long-time member of Great Decisions, who is recovering from a serious injury. Finally, keep your fingers crossed that good weather will prevail on Thursday, March 1, from 10 a.m. till 12 noon at 1272 Delaware Avenue, when I am slated to deliver the 2018 briefing books and collect \$28 from those who ordered them.

Gratefully, Bernice Baeumler

A Tribute to Elsa Bondar

Our League lost a lively, dedicated and hard-working member when Elsa Bondar died on February 9 after a slow decline. Joining LWV upon retiring from 30+ years teaching fifth grade, Elsa was valuable from the beginning.

When the New York State Charter Schools Act was passed in 1998, Elsa joined the Education Committee, which visited and monitored most of the charter schools in the Buffalo area. When the Charter School New York State Study proposed by our League at State Convention was accepted, Elsa helped educate members through her active role in presentations. In 2006 she helped us reach consensus on Financing Education, making inequality understandable through a memorable role in our skit. When her mobility decreased, Elsa used her advanced computer skills to disperse pertinent information to members. She became our Grassroots Lobby Coordinator in 2004, a responsibility she filled as long as her eyesight permitted.

Elsa valued her League activism highly. As her daughter Carol noted: "I know my mother ... would want to be remembered as an activist for women's rights, a loving mother and wife, and a kind person. She brought her family, including two small children ages five and two, to live in Africa for a year in the 1960s. She climbed the Grand Teton. She had a full and adventure-filled life."

Condolences can be sent to Gene Bondar, her husband of 60 years, at 317 Wellness Way, Apt. 225, Washington, PA 15301. Her family listed the League for memorial gifts in Elsa's name.

Lee Tetkowski

Regional Training

The League of Women Voters of New York State holds regional training meetings in the years when there is no state convention. This year's training session for Leagues in Western New York will take place at Rush Henrietta Senior High School on Saturday, April 14, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$20 per participant. The session offers an excellent opportunity to meet and network with members from other Leagues and obtain useful information. Flyers were sent by email to all members with email addresses. We hope we'll have a large delegation attending the event, which is only one hour away. If you need a registration form, please contact our League office. And please make sure to call or email our office if you register. We surely would like to carpool for the drive. Phone 716-986-4898 or email lwvbn@lwvbn.org.

First Call to National Convention 2018 – We Need You!

The League of Women Voters' 53rd National Convention will take place at the Hilton Chicago in Chicago, IL, from Thursday, June 28, through Sunday, July 1, 2018. We invite our League members to save these dates and plan to join hundreds of passionate and engaged leaders for our biennial national gathering. More information and the full "first call" are [available here](#).

LWVBN is entitled to four delegates. Please consider being a delegate in 2018 and contact the League office if you're interested. The National Convention is stimulating and rewarding.

Education Committee Report

At our January 25 meeting, the Education Committee worked on plans for a May program on the Buffalo Public Schools' *New Buffalo Bargain*, based on our recent visits to Lafayette International High School and Highgate Elementary School, and on a discussion with David Mauricio, Chief of Strategic Alignment & Innovation for the school district.

We also reviewed the WNED-TV program *Cash's New Education Bargain* and agreed that it reflects very well what we'd learned and seen implemented in the schools we visited. The *Bargain* states, "If students work hard and parents commit to their child's education, the Buffalo Public Schools will guarantee them a path to opportunity, achievement and success."

Key *Bargain* features in Community Schools include: 1) **Rigorous teaching of essential reading skills in the early grades**; 2) Lowering class size; 3) Providing teacher training for teaching essential skills to this population; 4) Providing counselors and specialists to deal with societal problems: poverty, family, behavioral, academics; 5) Increased outreach to the family and community – visits to new parents; 6) Welcoming parents and children to the school building several days after school, as well as on some Saturdays, and also offering breakfast and lunch; 7) Offering academic help and participation in sports and art, as well as access to legal/health information and the use of computers. Another key feature of the *Bargain* is the establishment of **Education to Work** programs such as those at Burgard and Bennett, which offer high school classes, internships, and college classes relative to welding, auto-tech or advanced machine tool technology, and computer coding and use of state-of-the-art equipment to prepare students for the new workforce.

Top educational, political, community and business leaders have been tapped as *Bargain* partners offering advice, internships, monetary support, and coaching. They include Katherine Conway-Turner, president of Buffalo State College; Phil Rumore of the Buffalo Teachers Federation; David Rust of Say YES; activist Sam Radford; Robert Gioia, CEO of the John R. Oishei Foundation; and Steve Finch, former plant manager of the GM Tonawanda Engine Plant.

Based on our knowledge of both the progress and the complexities of the schools (improved graduation rates but, for example at Highgate, minimal improvement in test scores), at our next meeting we will discuss two approaches: Should the May program be dedicated to progress alone of the Buffalo Schools? Or should we invite an outside speaker to offer a bigger picture of current American education to discuss the long-standing societal and economic problems facing schools in urban U.S. and the efforts that have been put in place here and elsewhere? What can we as citizens do? At our meeting on February 22 we will decide what tack to take and will find a speaker to offer more insight into these issues.

Dorothy Tao and Lee Tetkowski, Co-Chairs

Naturalization Ceremonies

One of LWVBN's most rewarding activities is welcoming new citizens and helping them register to vote. At the U.S. Courthouse, Kathleen McCarthy and Mary (Mike) Egan represented the League at the January 18 ceremony, and JoAnn Mecca and Marja Nordman represented the League on January 25. At the downtown campus of Erie Community College, Lynne Vallone and Deborah Shiffner represented the League on February 1. Erie County Board of Elections representatives have been very helpful in facilitating completion and collection of voter registration forms.

Patricia Wille, Volunteer Coordinator for Naturalization Ceremonies

Money in Politics Update

New York State's campaign finance system and closing the LLC loophole

LLCs are Limited Liability Corporations. Companies create LLCs for many business reasons. But for some companies one reason alone is paramount – the ability to pour huge amounts of money into the coffers of candidates, elected officials, and political parties, frequently without revealing the names of the donors.

In 1996 the New York State Board of Elections decided to treat LLCs as “individuals” under the state’s campaign finance laws, with spectacular results. When considered as a corporation, as under federal law, an LLC could contribute up to \$5,000 to an elected official, political party, or a candidate running for office; but when considered as an individual under NYS law, an LLC could contribute up to \$60,800! If this was not a sufficient pot of campaign money to make recipients happy, corporations and businesses could create any number of LLCs, each with the same outrageously high contribution limit. Each additional LLC is then given a different name and the names of the original donors remain hidden.

LLCs are equal opportunity donors. All political parties, candidates and elected officials benefit from the seemingly endless generosity of LLCs.

In 2015 Glenwood Management, a huge real estate company that figured prominently in the criminal corruption trial of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, created 22 separate LLCs, each with the ability to contribute the maximum amount to favored candidates and political parties. Another state corruption investigation that originated almost a decade ago, involving the Buffalo Billion, is unfolding now and demonstrates again how the LLC loophole works to benefit both donors and recipients at the public’s expense.

We know from our Money In Politics study that *quid pro quo* corruption is difficult to prove. A wink and a nod can convey the intended message when money changes hands. Citizens are rightly suspicious when legislative favors are granted to certain interests and when constituent-supported legislation is defeated over and over or not even discussed in committee. The LLC loophole exemplifies a government failure in both fairness and transparency. Closing it is the goal of the League, of other reform groups and of many government officials.

Closing the LLC loophole through state legislation. In 2015 the New York State Assembly, with broad bipartisan support, passed legislation to close the loophole but the bill died in the Senate Corporations Committee chaired by Michael Ranzenhofer (Amherst).

This year the legislation has been reintroduced. **The League strongly supports A.9758A (Simon) and S.27149 (Kavanagh)** which will lower contribution limits to the federal level of \$5,000 and require donor disclosure. The League urges members to call and write their legislators in support of the legislation – *better still*, come with us when we visit legislators in March and April 2018. Passage will occur only when enough citizens are alert to the problem and determined to correct it.

NY State League President Dare Thompson wrote, *“Closing the LLC loophole is an obvious and long overdue fix to limit contributions by special interests and help end ‘dark money’ in our electoral system. This one small step is just one of many reforms needed to reduce corruption in Albany.”*

Janet Massaro, Chair

New Membership Directory!

If you would like a hard copy of the LWVBN 2017-18 Membership Directory, as well as a current list of board members and committee chairs, please send \$3.00 with your request to:

LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209

Our Nuclear Times: Article Four

Do you know the players?

1. The United States federal government [DOE = Department of Energy; NRC = Nuclear Regulatory Commission]
2. New York State [NYSERDA = New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; DEC = Department of Environmental Conservation]
3. The contractor [CHBWV = main contractor for the West Valley, New York, nuclear waste site cleanup]
4. Community organizations [CTF = Citizen Task Force, and others]
5. YOU [as an informed member of the public]

What are the current issues?

The site [WVDP = West Valley Demonstration Project] in Western New York has nuclear wastes, buried and above ground. Since containers corrode over time, and since site erosion occurs over time, what are possible consequences? Reports and decisions [Phase I and Phase II] determine how the wastes are stored, monitored, possibly exhumed, transported, disposed, etc. Are funding levels adequate for site maintenance and tasks?

What are future areas of concern at the site?

There are 10 Waste Management Areas [WMA]. These include two large burial grounds, a waste tank farm [WTF], a demolition debris field, a plume of radioactivity, and 56 casks tagged with only a 50-year warranty.

Why are actions especially important now?

The public has only 60 days in 2018 to comment on the scope of future cleanup decisions. The current generation ought to bear the costs and inconvenience of this cleanup. Astoundingly, this nuclear legacy includes more than 85 radionuclides. Examples: Carbon-14 with a half-life of 5,730 years; uranium-238 with a half-life of 4.5 billion years; and plutonium-239 with a half-life of 24,100 years. Can a future government guarantee the safety of any nuclear wastes that are left at the site?

When are the public meetings?

March 19, 20 and 21, tentatively. Please check the dates, locations, and times online. Why attend? To become well informed and to submit public comments. www.westvalleyctf.org www.nirs.org
www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org www.wv.doe.gov www.chbwv.com

Barbara Frackiewicz

Save this Date – Wednesday, April 25!

As Buffalo's resurgence continues, gentrification and displacement are increasingly urgent issues as progress fails to reach every neighborhood. Join us as an expert speaker and knowledgeable panelists explore possible solutions during a **free** program at the Central Library Auditorium on **Wednesday, April 25, from 5:30 till 7:30**. Complete details are coming soon.

Waterfront Committee Report

The Waterfront Committee continues to meet and exchange information about Buffalo's waterfront, and currently has a focus on the Outer Harbor. Highlight of the winter was our testimony at Buffalo's City Council on January 16, 2018, presented by Gladys Gifford. Our comments pertained to the plans offered by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation concerning the area of the Outer Harbor bounded on the south by Terminals A and B and on the north by the Bell Slip. We supported several features of the plan: to move festival and performance areas to space next to Terminals A and B and away from the sensitive ecological areas at the Bell Slip; to remove invasive species throughout; and to cancel a proposed visitors center at the Bell Slip. We objected to the plan to include a mountain bike park feature.

We are still calling for a public process to create a coherent master plan, which would ensure that all proposals for the land of the Outer Harbor adhere to sound principles of ecology and sustainability.

Recently the City of Buffalo has finalized a Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in accordance with the New York State Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act, and in partnership with the New York State Department of State. This process has taken a very long time, according to City Hall sources, but is now ready to be completed. The Local Waterfront Revitalization Area boundary for Buffalo encompasses all of Scajaquada Creek and the Buffalo River as well as the shores of the Niagara River and Lake Erie. The Waterfront Committee has monitored this process, and composed comments for the LWVBN to be sent to the NYS State Department by the February 20 deadline.

We continue to participate in the advocacy group Our Outer Harbor, and expect that a public meeting will be scheduled in March to share updates and successes.

Winter weather has interfered with our meeting plans, but we intend to meet in person from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21, at the Central Library café area in downtown Buffalo. All are welcome!

Gladys Gifford, Chairè

Women's History Month Events of Interest

2018 Women's History Month theme: Nevertheless, She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

1. The Erie County Commission on the Status of Women invites you to attend the Annual Women's History Month Kick Off Event honoring Betty Jean Grant on Thursday, March 1 from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. A reception will follow from 5:15 to 7:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Hotel.

RSVP: Joelle Logue, Advisory Board Chair, Erie County Commission on the Status of Women
jblogue@yahoo.com - 716-908-3964

2. The WNY Women's Foundation presents A DIVA by DIVA Celebration of Women: created especially for the WNY Women's Foundation, Wednesday, March 20. The 6:30 p.m. reception will be followed by the show at 7:30 p.m. at the Park School of Buffalo, 4625 Harlem Road, Snyder. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased at wnywomensfoundation.org/join/. There are only 100 available. Contact Kelli Cavo at 887-2626, or KELLI@WNYWFDN.ORG for more information.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2018 Events and Meetings

Thursday, 3/1, 10:30 a.m.- noon

Great Decisions

League Office

Tuesday, 3/6, 4:00 p.m.

Issues Committee

Harlem Road Community Center, Amherst 14226

Thursday, 3/8, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**The Haudenosaunee Women:
Past, Present and Future**

Medaille College Main Building

Monday, 3/12, 4:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

League Office

Wednesday, 3/14, 1:30 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League Office

Wednesday, 3/21, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Waterfront Committee

Central Library café area

Thursday, 3/22, 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.**

**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**