



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

*your*  
★ **VOTER** ★

**Volume 25 Number 7**

**March 2020**

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Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Please call before coming to the office.**

**LWVBN website**

[www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org)

**LWVNYS website**

[www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)

**LWVUS website**

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Voter is published 11 times a year. April Voter copy is due Monday, March 9. Send copy to Nancy DeTine at [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)

# Census 2020: High Stakes for Our State and Region



**Date:** *Thursday, March 12, 2020*

**Place:** *Twentieth Century Club  
595 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202*

**Time:** *Registration begins at 11:30 a.m.  
Speaker at noon; lunch to follow*

**Speaker:** Amy A. Brombos, Supervisory Partnership Specialist,  
U.S. Census Bureau

Every 10 years, we have just one chance to get a complete and accurate account of our population. One chance to ensure equal and fair representation in government, and our fair share of funding for schools, infrastructure and all the critical services our communities rely on for survival. Join us to hear how trusted community voices like ours can help dispel misinformation about this vitally important issue.

**RSVP:** Reservation and \$23 lunch payment must be received by Wednesday, March 4. Make check out to LWVBN and mail to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209, or pay online at [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org). Please indicate whether gluten-free or vegetarian lunch is required.

To attend the program only at no charge, reserve online at [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org), send an email to [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org), or call 716-986-4898.

**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**

At the February board meeting, the board approved two excellent candidates for the 2020 Students Inside Albany conference. We received six applications. Every one of them was an outstanding student. It was a difficult task for the ad hoc committee – composed of Ramona Gallagher, Janet Goodsell, Barbara Gunderson, and Terri Parks – who considered all the applicants as finalists. Two students stood out based on the variety and scope of their activities and experiences. We're honored to send Sierra Duke from Lockport Senior High School and Colin O'Neill from Lakeshore Central High School to Albany to represent our League. All applicants come from high schools in the northern or southern areas of our jurisdiction. Many thanks to Janet Goodsell and Barbara Gunderson, whose outreach to schools paid off. We are awarding all six students with honorary memberships in the League through June 2021.

Board members were the only League members who came to reach concurrence for the state League position update related to New York State Constitutional Conventions. We agreed unanimously to remove this sentence: "The League of Women Voters of New York State does not support or oppose the holding of a constitutional convention."

We have six people registered for the State League Training Workshop in Rochester from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on March 14, 2020. We will be very happy if more of our members join us. We plan to carpool. The \$25 cost includes lunch and materials. The workshop topics include:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Beyond Just Race: How do we include more?
- Get Out the Vote: How do we get more people to vote?
- After Parkland: How to keep the youth engaged?
- Stats and Lines: Get everyone counted and represented fairly?
- Hot, Hot, Hot: Attracting and engaging your community with the League.

You can register online at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org). You may attend any of the four training sessions across the state, but the closest one will be in Rochester. Please let us know if you register, so we can coordinate driving. Call the office at 716-986-4898 or send an email to [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org).

*Terri Parks*

## **Welcoming New Citizens**

One of our League's most rewarding activities is the privilege of attending naturalization ceremonies and registering new citizens to vote. All of the following events took place at the U.S. Courthouse.

On December 5, 2019, Elisabeth Zausmer and Deborah Shiffner greeted 50 new citizens and 46 voter registration forms were returned. Karen Keaton and Elisabeth Zausmer welcomed 51 new citizens on December 12, when 48 forms were collected. On December 19, Elaine Cusker and Judy Weidemann welcomed 50 new citizens and 49 forms were returned.

Bob Hellwitz, our Board of Elections partner in voter registration efforts at these ceremonies, reported that 2,147 new citizens registered to vote in 2019, representing a return rate of 98.25% for the year.

On January 9, 2020, Judy Casassa, Deborah Shiffner and Sherry Leff greeted 49 new citizens, and 45 forms were returned. Elisabeth Zausmer and Mary Michael Egan welcomed 45 new citizens on January 23, and 39 forms were returned. On January 30, Sharon Cramer and Elisabeth Zausmer greeted 50 new citizens and 49 forms were completed.

*Patricia Wille, Coordinator*

## Great Decisions

The first meeting for the 2020 Great Decisions discussion group will take place on Thursday, March 5, from 10 a.m. to noon at the League office, when topics from the Foreign Policy Association's 2020 Great Decisions book will be assigned to discussion leaders. Subsequent meetings, on the first Thursday of the month from April through November, will focus on these topics, one per month. The eight topics range from Climate Change and the Global Order to China's Road into Latin America. They all lead to thoughtful conversation. Contact Fran Holmes at [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) if you have any questions.

*Fran Holmes*

### **The Board of Directors Thanks You for Exemplary Service, Pat Wille!**

Pat Wille, our outstanding Volunteer Coordinator for Naturalization Ceremonies, has retired from that position. The good news is that she recruited her successor, Deborah Shiffner, and has prepared and shared a complete record of how she coordinates the volunteers with the Immigration Service and the Board of Elections. Pat's work was instrumental in achieving a rate of 98.5% registration by new citizens at naturalization ceremonies in 2019. The handbook she compiled gives Deborah clear information about this important work. We're confident that Deborah will carry out this work in a fine manner. Of course, we look forward to Pat's continued participation in the League.

*Terri Parks*

## **Concurrence on Voter Representation / Electoral Systems**

### **Join us March 9, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. at the League Office**

At this concurrence meeting, League members will be asked to adopt or reject the following position on Voter Representation / Electoral Systems as proposed by the LWVUS. The final decision, based on the responses from League members nationwide, will be made at National Convention this June. Background information for the concurrence was printed in our January Voter and a list of definitions appeared in the February Voter.

The proposed position reads as follows:

*The LWVUS promotes an open government that is representative, accountable and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible. Whether for single or multiple winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:*

- *Encourage voter participation and voter engagement*
- *Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including underrepresented communities*
- *Are verifiable and auditable*
- *Promote access to voting*
- *Maximize effective voting and minimize "wasted" votes*
- *Promote sincere voting over strategic voting*
- *Require the winner to receive a majority of the votes for executive and single seat offices*
- *Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail.*

Currently LWVUS has no position on how we elect our representatives. The purpose of having this position is to provide a clear and flexible base of principles for evaluating electoral options to enhance the voice of more voters.

Our decision is important. We urge all LWVBN members to attend on the meeting at 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 9, at the League Office to ask questions and to make your opinions known. If you are unable to attend or want further information, please contact the Money In Politics Committee.

*Janet Massaro, Chair*

## Among Schoolchildren

Note: This article was submitted to the My View column in The Buffalo News but not published.

*I looked at the 20 high school seniors gathered at one side of the charts I'd posted. They gazed at me with a mixture of hope and fear. But I was unable to return their looks with hope. Fear for their future exacerbated my feeling of powerlessness in the face of their hope for safety. I felt so helpless in the face of their wish to trust the adults in their lives to protect them.*

*I'd met with the students at the beginning of their senior Participation in Government class, when I posted a spectrum of choices regarding the issue of gun ownership across the front of the classroom and asked the students to arrange themselves according to their positions on the issue. When they finished, they were all standing on the state or federal regulation end of the spectrum. They turned and looked at me as if I had an answer to their fear of an attack and their hope that they could be safe in their school. And I had no answer for them.*

*I volunteer in Participation in Government classes as a member of the League of Women Voters. I offer students reasons to vote, ways to analyze candidate positions by focusing on issues, and the opportunity to register or preregister to vote in New York State. I use the gun ownership spectrum as an icebreaker – a way to see that in any group our views on issues differ, but we can have reasoned discussions about those issues.*

*But no one of us as an individual can protect our children in their schools from the possibility of a school shooting. In New York we have strict gun control laws, but guns are easily obtained in neighboring states and brought to our communities. Federal legislation is the only answer – but it seems so difficult to achieve. And so, our children are fearful at school. They hope that we, the adults in their lives, can somehow protect them, but we can't, not by ourselves.*

*Talk is cheap, but our children's lives are priceless. Our children are depending on us, the adults in their lives, to protect them, and we can't do this by talking – by disagreeing with each other on how to interpret the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We need to see clearly the threat that automatic and semi-automatic weapons pose in the hands of those determined to kill as many of our children as possible in the places where they learn. Based on that insight, we need to speak loudly and act forcefully to enact federal legislation so our children will be protected wherever in America they live.*

*We didn't talk about gun ownership, those students and I. Rather, we talked about how they can determine their own views on the issues that concern them in their everyday lives, how they can decide which candidate's positions most closely align with their own views, and how they have the power to vote for those candidates. If we'd had time, we might have talked about how voting is a starting place – how their voices can be heard as they vote, but that there are also many other venues – letters to newspaper editors, phone calls to elected officials, joining or forming groups to make their voices stronger.*

*Our children have ideas and ideals. They want the world they live in to be a better place for them and their children. We need to heed their voices, and to act so that the hopes they have for their future are what we're working for, as well.*

Barbara Gunderson

## Our Nuclear Times: Article 25

### WELCOME to this WIMBY (What's In My Back Yard) series:

West Valley Demonstration Project, New York State, USA

Numbers start at #1001.

This nuclear fuel reprocessing site (1966-1972) contains nuclear waste that is extremely hazardous to life for thousands of years. The alphabetic index cards (3 ½ X 5 inches) do not require electricity or devices.

Instructions: Copy or cut out. Collect. Place into an envelope marked: To Future Generations. Share.

*Barbara Frackiewicz and Pat K. Townsend*



### C

West Valley Demonstration Project, New York, USA #1004

#### Consent Decree

**What is it?** A judge's ruling, a decree that approves a voluntary agreement between parties in dispute. In regard to West Valley, it refers to a dispute between the state and federal governments on how to split clean-up costs. New York sued the federal government in 2006. In the year 2010, an agreement was mediated and signed by Federal Judge John Curtin.

**What doesn't it do?** It does not specify how complete the remediation will be. That is a matter for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov>

Information compiled by PKT2020

### I

West Valley Demonstration Project, New York, USA #1003

#### Information Curators

**Who are they?** Human beings who ensure access to relevant, timely, and reliable data, and who help preserve knowledge for thousands of years.

**Types of data:** Electronic office files, documents on paper, etc.

**Data priorities:** Inventories of radionuclides, chemical and metal toxins. Information about the management and migration of these substances within and beyond the West Valley site boundaries.

**Requirements:** A robust, long-term business ecology between governments (federal, state, county, local, tribal); the user community; and manufacturers of hardware, software, and electronic records management, plus all support systems.

Information compiled by BF2020



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1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

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## March 2020

**Tuesday, March 3, 4:00 p.m.**

**Issues/Program Committee**

Harlem Road Community Center

**Thursday, March 5, 10:00 a.m.**

**Great Decisions**

League office

**Monday, March 9, 3:30 p.m.**

**Concurrence on Voter Representation/  
Electoral Systems**

League Office

**Monday, March 9, 4:15 p.m.**

**Board of Directors**

League office

**Wednesday, March 11, 2:00 p.m.**

**Local Government Committee**

League office

**Thursday, March 12, 11:30 a.m.**

**Census 2020: High Stakes for Our State and  
Region**

Twentieth Century Club

**Wednesday, March 18, 2:00 p.m.**

**Waterfront Committee**

Central Library cafe' area

**Thursday, March 19, 1:30 p.m.**

**Education Committee**

League office

**Friday, March 20, 1:00 p.m.**

**Money In Politics Committee**

League office

**Check the calendar on our website for updates.  
Please remember to wear your League badge to all League events.**