



your
★ **VOTER** ★

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November 2020

President

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LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Voter is published 11 times a year. December Voter copy is due Monday, November 9. Send copy to Nancy DeTine at nancy@nancydetine.com

National Task Force on Election Crises

Here's some important news regarding the League of Women Voters' role in national election security, published in the state League's October Voter:

LWVUS is a member of the National Task Force on Election Crises, a diverse, cross-partisan group of more than 50 experts in election law, election administration, national security, cybersecurity, voting rights, civil rights, technology, media, public health, and emergency response. The task force's core mission is to ensure a free and fair 2020 presidential election by recommending responses to a range of election crises. Our focus is ensuring that the election runs smoothly during challenging circumstances, that disputes are handled in a way that maximizes confidence in the outcome, and that there is a peaceful transition or continuation of power on January 20, 2021. The only electoral outcome the task force advocates is that the election is free and fair. For more information, see the task force's website at:

<https://www.electiontaskforce.org/about>

**November 19 Program Reminder!
So We Voted . . . Now What?**

Whether the final counts are in or not, be sure to tune in at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 19. Panelists Lee Coppola, Peter Yacobucci and Bob McCarthy will provide a lively recap of this year's extraordinary election. RSVP by Monday, November 16, via email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org. Remember, the program is FREE but you MUST provide your email address in order to receive Zoom participation instructions.

Coming Next Month: GOTV Wrap-Up

As this edition of the Voter goes to bed, with Election Day just one week away, our amazing Get Out the Vote Steering Committee is still hard at work. League bus signs are on the road, lawn signs and door hangers have been distributed, voter registration has finished, postcards have been mailed ... and voters seem more eager than ever to make their voices heard. Watch for a summary of the committee's extraordinary efforts next month.

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

After polling the membership by email about the holiday luncheon and receiving only 16 responses from folks who might attend this December, the board decided that we must cancel it for 2020. We may hold an event by Zoom to honor Aaron Bartley as recipient of our 2020 Making Democracy Work Award and learn about his social action efforts, especially with PUSH Buffalo. We will send an invitation by email for that event. We plan to have our next League luncheon at Ilio di Paolo's when it is safe to do so. Of course, we would have liked to celebrate in person, but we know that now isn't the time for that.

As we look forward to having a new office manager soon, the board appointed Barbara Gunderson to the board as Voter Service chair for the remainder of this board year. Her appointment will take effect the day following her last day as office manager. She has been more than busy these past few months, managing the office and leading efforts related to voter service. She and Liz Zausmer, chair of the GOTV Steering Committee, worked closely together. They have established a relationship with diverse community groups to both register new voters and promote voting in this year's election by early voting, absentee ballot or on November 3.

The office is still officially closed. However, we are able to use it and Barbara is usually there one day a week. If you need anything, please call or contact her at lwvbn@lwvbn.org to make arrangements. We have been holding meetings via ZOOM and folks are getting accustomed to that platform. At least most of us can see each other on ZOOM, or listen to those who call in on the phone. There are far more opportunities to be involved with both the state and national Leagues through ZOOM.

Terri Parks

Join Our Growing Discussion Group!

The next virtual session of the LWVBN Discussion Group will take place on Thursday, November 12, at 7:00 p.m. We hope you will join us to consider Peter Hessler's article in the October 12 issue of **The New Yorker** magazine: *Nine Days in Wuhan – Ground Zero of the Coronavirus Pandemic*. It is available online if you just Google it.

Please let us know if you're interested in joining us. So far, 12 people have attended one or both of the first two sessions, and there's always room for more. Call Marian Deutschman (634-2412) or Janet Massaro (884-1505), and we will send you the reading list for November and access information for Zoom.

Last month we had a lively conversation about a series of articles recommended by member Susan Czynry, including a 1970 essay by economist Milton Friedman titled *The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits*. For many decades, support of "shareholder primacy" was the bedrock of American capitalism. This article was coupled with an array of responses from today's business leaders and academics related to changes in the social responsibilities of businesses. One CEO noted that Friedman's version of capitalism grew in the 1980s and continued until the 2008 financial crisis, when short-termism and the long-term harms of shareholder primacy were becoming increasingly urgent. The observations of these business leaders provided us with many directions for discussion of stakeholder capitalism replacing shareholders as the key to sustainable, broad-based, long-term American prosperity.

Marian Deutschman

Welcome Our New Members!

We are excited to introduce you to the newest members of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara: Emily Cole of East Aurora, Dawn Cody of Niagara Falls, and Janis Dunworth of North Tonawanda. We know that each and every one of us sincerely welcomes them to our organization devoted to educating our citizens on the importance of civic involvement.

Mary Ann Turkla and Lori Robinson

Great Decisions

The Great Decisions discussion group will meet via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 5. The topic will be U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle, with Bernice Baeumler facilitating. The Foreign Policy Association (www.fpa.org) states this about the topic: "Combating illegal immigration has become a priority of the Trump administration. The Northern Triangle of Central America, made up of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, is a special target of the administration, which holds the nations responsible for the large flow of migrants from Latin America to the U.S. With funds from the U.S. cut, how can the Northern Triangle countries curtail migration?"

This promises to be an interesting and relevant topic. An email link will be sent to Great Decisions members a day or two in advance of the November 5 date. Contact Fran Holmes at mfranholmes@gmail.com or at 716-885-8449 if you have any questions, or wish to be included.

Fran Holmes

How Radioactive Is West Valley, Anyway?

You would think that would be one of the easiest questions to answer, right?

Nope. Folks who have been at it for 50 years or more are still asking that question. One of the most often heard questions from the public to the agencies, and from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to the Department of Energy, is, "What is the inventory of xxx?" Nobody is quite sure exactly what was brought there, what has been taken away, and what remains. And if we knew that, we would still have to calculate how much had already decayed in the intervening years, for substances that have different half-lives varying from minutes to hundreds of thousands of years.

Let's just consider the Main Plant Processing Building (MPPB) and ignore the vastly larger amounts of radioactivity underground in the tanks, soil, and disposal trenches. The MPPB is one of two remaining buildings on the site and is scheduled to be demolished in 2021. The contractor has already been chipping away at the non-radioactive outer rooms of the building, which is a rabbit warren of smaller rooms and aisles, some with concrete walls up to six feet thick.

It was estimated that in 2011 the building had 6100 curies of residual radioactivity. The largest contributions come from cesium-137, strontium-90, and plutonium-241, though a dozen other radioactive isotopes contribute as well.

That did not sound like so much to me, as a newbie, 6100 in a big building like that: 130 by 270 feet in area, and almost 80 feet tall now that its tall stack has been taken down. But it turns out that curies are REALLY big, annoyingly so. (One curie corresponds to the activity of one gram of radium, or 37 billion disintegrations per second.)

Most of the time scientists had to be talking about microcuries and millicuries, and that got confusing. So in 1975 they created a new unit, the becquerel, that seemed more practical to them, working on the atomic level, of just one decay per second. Unfortunately for us, that is an inconveniently small unit.

6100 curies = 2257000000000 becquerel

Got that?

The more historically oriented among you might recognize that the curie is named for Marie and Pierre Curie and the becquerel for their boss, Henri Becquerel. The three of them shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903 for their work on radioactivity. Marie also received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1911.

*Pat Townsend,
LWVBN representative on the West Valley Citizen Task Force*



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2020

Note: Due to social distancing and stay-at-home practices, meetings are subject to change and may take place via phone or computer. Please contact the committee chair for the latest information.

Tuesday, November 3, 4:00 p.m.
Program, Issues & Events Committee
TBA

Thursday, November 5, 10:00 a.m.
Great Decisions
via Zoom

Monday, November 9, 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors
via Zoom

Tuesday, November 10, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee
TBA

Wednesday, November 11, 2:00 p.m.
Local Government
TBA

Thursday, November 12, 7:00 p.m.
Book Discussion Group
via Zoom

Wednesday, November 18, 1:30 p.m.
Waterfront Committee
via Zoom

Thursday, November 19, 1:30 p.m.
Education Committee
via Zoom

Friday, November 20, 1:00 p.m.
Money in Politics Committee
via teleconference

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