



your
★VOTER★

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Summer 2019

President

Terri Parks

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Voter copy is due
Monday, August 12. Send
copy to Nancy DeTine at
nancy@nancydetine.com.

Inside Buffalo's historic City Hall

A private tour for LWVBN members, families and friends

Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2019

Place: City Hall

65 Niagara Square, Buffalo NY 14202

Time: 10:45 a.m. arrival; tour leaves at 11:00 from the
information booth in the lobby

Cost: \$5.00 exact change

Join us as Sharon Cramer, League member and Preservation Buffalo
Niagara docent, leads us on our own private one-hour tour!

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, City Hall is a stunning
example of Art Deco architecture. Learn about Buffalo's history and how
the building and its many decorative elements celebrate governance at
its best. Afterward, those who wish can accompany Sharon to the
Observation Deck for a breathtaking view!

Parking is limited near City Hall, with paid parking in ramps, surface lots
and some street spaces; plan on two hours. We recommend parking at
the League office and taking public or other transportation to City Hall.

Building access is easiest from the South Elmwood Avenue entrance;
there is an elevator to the first floor lobby.

Note: *To enjoy the tour, attendees should be able to stand in place for
15 to 20 minutes. There is seating along the route, plus elevator access
to the Mayor's Office and the Common Council chambers where our tour
will end. From the elevator on the 25th floor, there are 60 steps to the
Observation Deck.*

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 Decisions

At the Annual Meeting, we were pleased to present the 2019 awards for outstanding service: the Making Democracy Work Award to Barbara Seals Nevergold for her dedication in pursuit of excellence and equity in education opportunity for all children; the Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award to Ramona Gallagher for her service to our League; and the League's LEE Award to Joyce Bol for her Long Term Commitment to the League with Energy and Excellence. We were honored to have Reverend Kirk Laubenstein, Joan Bozer and Lee Tetkowski to present the awards.

The 2019-2020 Budget, Program, an addition to the bylaws, and the election of officers and board members were all approved as presented in the Annual Meeting Booklet that all members received during the business meeting that preceded the luncheon and awards program.

Each July, the board reviews appointments and sets its meeting dates and times for the year. Board meetings will continue to be on the second Monday of each month except for December and June, at the League office at 4:00 p.m. League members are welcome to attend board meetings and participate in discussion. The Holiday Party will be on Saturday, December 14, and the 2020 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 13.

Committee chairs and members of standing committees are appointed for a year at a time. The board approved these appointments for the 2019-2020 year:

Finance Committee members: Shirley Joy, Chair; Pat Costanzo, Deborah Shiffner
Program/Issues Committee Chair, Marian Deutschman
Advocacy Chair, Ramona Gallagher
Communications and Public Relations Chair, Nancy DeTine
Outreach for Civic Education and Engagement Chair, Liz Zausmer
Voter Service Chair, Barbara Gunderson
Membership Chair, Tina Prygon
Increasing Voter Turnout Steering Committee, Liz Zausmer, Barbara Gunderson, Tina Prygon
Bylaw Review Committee Chair, Lyle Toohey
Naturalization Ceremonies Volunteer Coordinator, Pat Wille
Election Services Chair, Alan Dozoretz with the able assistance of Nora Mikes
BMHA Resident Commissioners' Election Coordinator, Nora Mikes
Voter Registration Volunteer Coordinator, Mary (Mike) Egan
Budget Committee Chair, Amy Witryol

The board reluctantly accepted the resignation of board member, Joan Simmons. While she was active in the League for less than two years, she brought many valuable skills and insights to the League. We know that she will continue to serve people in our region and wish her success in her endeavors.

We're pleased that Lyle Toohey is chairing the committee to honor the centennial of the founding of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that permitted women to vote. The committee has begun planning a most special event for 2020 and would welcome anyone who'd like to join them in their work. Please contact Lyle or the League office if you'd like to work with a really fine group of League members in this effort.

The board has adopted an ambitious plan to increase voter turnout in the next two years. To succeed, we will need participation of as many League members as possible. One key effort is to reach out to diverse organizations, especially in areas with low voter turnout, to learn how we may collaborate with them for program and such activities as voter registration and getting folks to the polls. Please help us by sending us the names of civic, cultural, community organizations or places of worship where you have a personal connection, membership or active participation. Send us a contact person, phone number or email address.

Terri Parks

Great Decisions

Well, I've done it another year – missed including the July Great Decisions notice with the June Voter since our timing does not coincide well. Because the first Thursday in July was Independence Day, Great Decisions was postponed to July 11, when Barbara Frackiewicz volunteered to facilitate topic three, Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future? She, as you know from her Voter articles, is very passionate about all of our nuclear threats, so I am sorry she did not get proper publicity by me.

Liz Zausmer, our newest member, has agreed to lead our fourth topic, The Rise of Populism in Europe, on Thursday, August 1, from 10 a.m. to noon at 1272 Delaware. "Mass migration and the problems associated with it have directly abetted the rise of the populist parties in Europe. Opposition to immigration was the prime driver of support for Brexit. It brought a far right party to the German Bundestag for the first time since the 1950s, and propelled Marine LePen to win a third of the vote in the French presidential election. In addition to calling for stronger borders, however, these parties are invariably illiberal, anti-American, anti-NATO and pro-Kremlin, making their rise a matter of concern for the national security interests of the United States." Be sure to mark your calendars for August 1.

Bernice Baeumler

Election Services

The Election Services Committee has been quite busy this past month. We had mailings at the League office, where the mailing stalwarts included Nora Mikes, Ramona Gallagher, Mike Egan, Janet Goodsell, and Marlene Katzel. I also would like to thank Sally Metzger and Shirley Joy for volunteering to stuff envelopes, although I did ask them to volunteer again when we needed more support. We conducted meetings at Commodore Perry, Shaffer Village, Jasper Parrish, LaSalle Homes, Marine Drive, and Sedita. A hearty "thank you" to JoAnn Mecca, Nora Mikes, Ramona Gallagher, Mike Egan, Judy Capodicasa, Marlene Katzel, and Marianne Poprosky (our Spanish interpreter) for their able assistance at these nominations and election meetings.

Nora Mikes has been taking over many of this committee's responsibilities and I very much appreciate her time, effort, and commitment. If any League member would like to view his or her name in lights in our Voter, please contact Nora or me. Our contact information is in the directory.

Again, my deepest appreciation to all who were a part of this month's efforts.

Alan Dozoretz, Chair

Finance Committee 2018-2019 Annual Report

The League began investing with TIAA in September 2013 with \$40,000. An additional \$16,364 was invested in July 2014, and \$20,000 in September 2014. The balance in our account is now \$94,134.69 as of May 30, 2019.

Growth and Income Fund	\$35,098.23	37%
Social Choice Fund	\$30,544.39	32%
Mid-Cap Value Fund	\$24,279.82	26%
Bond Fund	\$ 4,212.25	5%
	\$94,134.69	100%

Committee: Shirley Joy, Pat Costanzo, Terri Parks, Lori Robinson, Deborah Shiffner

Shirley Joy, Chair

Our Nuclear Times: Article 18

An Underground Tale: Chapter Five

The following message was on an oversized postcard addressed to Mr. Black. (There was a picture of a large sea turtle. Zooplankton were on the stamp.)

“Sunshine. Tropical breezes. Wish you were here! Don’t believe the tales about oceanic dead zones. There’s an international crowd of all shapes and sizes in this Giant Pacific Garbage Gyre. It’s wilder than a New Orleans Mardi Gras! Drifters mix with swimmers. Drunks slowly fall to the sea floor. Plus, it’s thick with small fry. One hazard: fish, whales, and birds think we’re food. If we’re trapped in a stomach or gizzard, the party’s over. Don’t know where I am. Longitude and latitude keep shifting. Will send this via friends of friends, so the postmark may be odd. Yours, Fantastic Plastic Uncle Zed. P.S. Sparks sometimes fly. We’ve got recent Fukushima types here along with youthful fallout old timers.”

The following message was on a postcard addressed to Ms. Rad. (There were the usual palm trees silhouetted against a fiery sunset. Phytoplankton were on the stamp. The postmark was not legible.)

“Endless ocean vistas. Colorful beaches. It’s a dream vacation that does my retired radio-eye-sew-taupe heart good! Quite different from your situation, but try to stay cheery. Must tell you about my favorite bar. Buy a local, blast-fused, radioactive pint glass (for a larger bill) and get free drink refills for a lifetime. Honey, it’s the greatest deal, ever! Well, to tell you the truth, this little island will soon be submerged. But I’ve got a nice souvenir. Bought one for you, too. Got to run. Surf’s up! Love, Auntie A.”

Barbara Frackiewicz

Money In Politics Update

The Supreme Court fails to rein in partisan gerrymandering

On June 27, the Supreme Court ruled in *Rucho v. League of Women Voters of North Carolina* that there are no fair tests for determining partisan gerrymandering in drawing congressional district maps.

The League of Women Voters of North Carolina was the lead plaintiff in this case that was consolidated with *Rucho v. Common Cause* and *Benisek v. Lamone*, a redistricting case from Maryland which the League of Women Voters of Maryland joined as amici. Lois Hybl, co-president of LWVMD, explained the importance of hearing the two cases together: “In Maryland, Democrats in power created a gerrymandered district to benefit their party. In North Carolina, it was the Republicans. We have seen both parties abuse this process that takes power away from the voters and, unfortunately, this trend may continue.”

The League and the other reform groups were united in expressing their deep disappointment in the Supreme Court’s 5–4 decision and vowed to continue their work for reform through state courts and through legislation. In 2018, four states joined California in creating independent redistricting commissions that would take power to draw district maps from sitting legislators. This spring, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR1, the For the People Act, which includes a provision to require states to set up such independent redistricting commissions.

Our Money in Politics Committee follows redistricting and other critical election law issues. Contact me if you’d like to join our discussions.

Janet Massaro, Chair

Students Inside Albany 2019

Two 2019 graduates of West Seneca West High School were the recent guests of LWVBN and LWVNY for Students Inside Albany, a three-day opportunity to experience participation in New York State government. Tom Griffin and Gabrielle Gelinias, chosen for their contributions to their school and community, anticipate their future of addressing some of the world's most serious problems. Tom's interests include international relations, human rights, and genocide studies. Gabby will pursue a better world through environmentalism, conservation, and equality of all. They joined 58 other high-achieving students from across the state to tour the Capitol, shadow their legislators, participate in citizen lobbying, and discuss public policy issues. They also enjoyed relaxing with a tour of the city, a pizza party, dinners out, and an evening of bowling.

Members of LWVBN were able to meet Tom at our annual meeting luncheon and hear an account of his Albany experience. What he learned, he said, was that any citizen can make a difference in shaping policies of our government, and it is imperative that we do. He was grateful for the chance to talk to his assemblyman, and to meet "like-minded peers." Tom impressed his listeners with his ideas, maturity, and the ability to express himself. We are proud that both students represented Western New York so admirably.

Janet Goodsell

Save the Date! Thursday, September 26

Kick off the new program year with a celebration of New York's new voting rights! Our speaker, UB School of Law Distinguished Professor James A. Gardner, is the eighth most frequently cited election law scholar in the country. Join us at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for an informative keynote address, followed by a panel of experts.

Spring 2019 Candidate Forums

The League facilitated several Board of Education (BOE) candidate forums this spring.

April 30, NAACP Buffalo BOE: Ramona Gallagher moderator, JoAnn Mecca, timekeeper, Liz Zausmer collated questions

May 7, Starpoint BOE: Nora Mikes moderator, Mike Egan, timekeeper

May 9, Williamsville PTA Council BOE: Kathleen McCormick moderator, Pat Wille, timekeeper

May 13, East Aurora BOE Candidates: Judy Weidemann, moderator

Thank you to everyone who assured that each candidate forum provided citizens with civil discourse from the candidates in response to questions posed by the audience.

Mike Egan, Volunteer Coordinator for candidate forums

On July 5, 2019, "the Grand Island Town Board honored 96-year-old Lenore Tetkowski for her lifelong commitment to her home town." Town Supervisor Nathan McMurray presented a proclamation that listed Lee's many endeavors through the years and commented, "If only I was so productive."

The proclamation recognized Lee "for her commitment to Grand Island, educating voters, and honors Grand Island's award-winning master weaver who, besides creating beautiful, artistic textiles during her entire adult life, has been weaving together, with passion and commitment, art, education and civic engagement." The League is honored to have Lee's continuing service and to have had a hand in this recognition.

New Voting Laws in New York State

EARLY VOTING: effective for the November 2019 general election New York now has nine days of early voting before an election. Locations, dates, and times will be posted on the Erie and Niagara County Boards of Election websites. This means that even if you work long hours, you can vote after hours or on weekends before the election date. Erie County is currently completing the times and directions for its 37 sites.

PARTY ENROLLMENT DEADLINE: in effect now You can change your party enrollment by Valentine's Day [February 14] in any primary election year. Before now, you had to change almost a full year before a primary election. This means that you have more flexibility to change your mind about your party affiliation.

CONSOLIDATED PRIMARIES: went into effect in June, 2019 The state and federal primary elections are now on the same date in June 2019 making voting easier and the election process less expensive. This means that you only have to remember two election dates a year, in June and November, for state and federal elections. Presidential primaries are an exception.

ELECTRONIC POLL BOOKS: effective for the November 2019 general election. Counties may now use electronic poll books if they choose. They have proven to be more efficient and accurate, and will make early voting easier and lines in some polling locations shorter.

REGISTRATION PORTABILITY: in effect now The Board of Elections will automatically update the registration of voters who move within New York State and fill out a change of address with USPS [the post office]. This means that you don't have to register over again when you move from county to county within the state.

UNIFORM POLLING HOURS DURING PRIMARY ELECTIONS: effective January 1, 2020. All New Yorkers will be able to vote from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during a primary election, no matter where in the state they live.

PRE-REGISTRATION OF 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS: effective January 1, 2020. Teens 16 years of age or older may pre-register to vote. The Board of Elections will automatically register them when they turn 18. This means that teens may register when they get their learner's permits or driver's licenses at the DMV, or in their high school government classes, where it is convenient for them.

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION: effective January 1, 2021 New Yorkers will be able to register to vote online through the State Board of Elections website. This means that you won't need to fill out a paper form in order to register.

SAME DAY REGISTRATION: first step taken—one more legislative approval in 2020 and voter referendum still needed. This removes the constitutional requirement to register to vote at least 10 days before an election. This means that voters will be able to register to vote as late as Election Day, if the rest of the legislative process is fulfilled.

NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING ["VOTE BY MAIL"]: first step taken—one more legislative approval in 2020 and voter referendum still needed. This removes the constitutional requirements about when to vote. This means that any New Yorker may request an absentee ballot with no conditions, effectively enabling any registered voter in New York to vote by mail, if the rest of the legislative process is fulfilled.

Barbara Gunderson, Voter Service Chair

News in Brief from the Editor's Desk

Delegates report about League Convention

On July 15, our five delegates to the 2019 League of Women Voters of New York State Convention joined the board and gave reports about their experiences at the convention. We are most appreciative that Barbara Gunderson, Lori Robinson, Christine Reichmuth, Lyle Toohey, and Lois Uhteg represented our League this year. Their enthusiasm was evident as was their appreciation of the many other fine League leaders from across the state that they met. They made contacts with people who we will call on for advice and ideas as we go forward. Thank you all for giving your time to attend the convention and returning with valuable new friends and information.

Join us at the Board Orientation

We invite any interested League member to join us at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, July 29, 2019, at the League office for the orientation to new and continuing members of the board of directors. Come and learn more about what it means to be a member of a League board and what board membership entails. We do need an accurate count of attendees, so please reserve your space by calling the League office at 986-4898 or sending an email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org.

Welcome New Members

We are especially pleased to welcome these new members to the League: Pat Czora, William (BJ) VanDeWater, Ann and Joseph Zawicki. We look forward to your active participation in League events and volunteer activities.

2019 League Award Honorees



Joan Simmons, Rev. Kirk Laubenstein and Barbara Seals Nevergold, Making Democracy Work Honoree



Ramona Gallagher, Joan K. Bozer Honoree



Joyce Bol, League LEE Award Honoree

Thank you, Rev. Kirk, for the photos.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Late July and August 2019

Monday, July 29, 2019, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Board Member Orientation

League office

Thursday, August 1, 2019, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Great Decisions

League office

Tuesday, August 6, 2019, 4:00 p.m

Issues/Program Committee

Harlem Road Community Center

Monday, August 12, 2019, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

League office

Wednesday, August 14, 2019, 1:30 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League office

Tuesday, August 20, 2019, 10:45 a.m.

Tour of Buffalo's Historic City Hall

95 Niagara Square, Buffalo 14202

Remember to wear your League badge to League events.