



your
★ **VOTER** ★

Volume 25 Number 5

January 2020

President

Terri Parks

Office

1272 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-986-4898
Fax 716-882-3797
Email lwvbn@lwvbn.org

Office Manager

Barbara Gunderson

Office Hours

Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Please call before coming to the office.

LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Voter is published 11 times a year. February Voter copy is due Monday, January 13. Send copy to Nancy DeTine at nancy@nancydetine.com

New York State's Whopping \$6.1 Billion Budget Deficit

Date: Thursday, January 30, 2020

*Place: Chef's Restaurant
291 Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY 14204*

*Time: Registration begins at 11:30 a.m.
Speaker at 12:00 noon, lunch to follow*

Panel Leader: Dr. Fred Floss, Jr.
Chair, Department of Economics and Finance
SUNY Buffalo State

Panelists: E.J. McMahon, Founder and Research Director,
Empire Center for Public Policy
Additional panelist(s) to be announced

Who's responsible for digging this deep, deep hole? What can be done about it? What about the Medicaid factor? And how might we, citizens and taxpayers, be affected? Come hear distinguished panelists address these and other questions about our state's unique budget process and extraordinary shortfall. It's sure to be a lively discussion!

RSVP: Reservations, lunch selection and \$20 payment must be received by Monday, January 27. Make checks out to LWVBN and mail to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209.

For lunch, choose from Spaghetti Parmesan (vegetarian) or Roast Chicken

To attend the program only at no charge, reserve online at www.lwvbn.org, send an email to 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: Honoring League Volunteers from 2019

For the past few years, I have compiled a list of the folks who have helped carry out the work of the League. Each year, the list has grown! Most of the people on the list are League members. Many people have volunteered for two to 10 different League activities and many times during the year for each activity. Some of the people on the list volunteered once or for only one specific activity, such as attending naturalization ceremonies and registering new citizens to vote. We value the work of each person below regardless of the number of hours or activities where you've helped the League further its mission.

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."
Rabindranath Tagore

I hope that each of the fine people in this list find joy in service to the League of Women Voters. I surely do! We had at least 128 volunteers in 2019.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Kristin Allen | Kathy Elias | Linda Koenigsberg | Christine Reichmuth |
| Lona Allendorfer | Joan Eschner | Betty Krist | Lori Reiner |
| Agnes Annis | Palka Family | Rebecca LaCivita | Dianne Riordan |
| Phyllis Banas | Sue Fay Allen | Janet Lenichek | Lori Robinson |
| Bill Black | Shonnie Finnegan | Kathie Macaluso | Alberta Roman |
| Joyce Bol | Wynnie Fisher | Janet Massaro | Alice Rosenthal |
| Melissa Boltz | Barbara Frackiewicz | Helen Mayo | Alice Say |
| Margie Boyce | Ramona Gallagher | Kathleen McCarthy | Mary Scheeder |
| Joan Bozer | Scott Gehl | Patty McClain | Deborah Schiffner |
| Barbara Brooks | Ellen Gibson | Ellie McConnell | Joan Sillman |
| Dot Brown | Gladys Gifford | Kathleen McCormick | Joan Simmons |
| Margaret Brunson | Janet Goodsell | Laura McDade | Joan Simon |
| Judy Capodicasa | Michele Greco | JoAnn Mecca | Lynda Stephens |
| Judy Casassa | Barbara Gunderson | Peg Mergenhagen | Sue Stievater |
| Kristin Chilcott | Kathleen Heffern | Barbara Metivier | Dorothy Tao |
| Judy Clarke | Mary Herbst | Sally Metzger | Lee Tetkowski |
| Ann Converso | Jennifer Hoffman | Judy Metzger | Lyle Toohey |
| Rebecca Costanzo | Judy Hoffman | Patti Meyer-Lee | Pat Townsend |
| Sharon Cramer | Holly Hutchinson | Nora Mikes | Mary Ann Turkla |
| Josette Cunningham | Maxine Insera | Arlene Miles | Lois Uhteg |
| Elaine Cusker | Amanda Irons- | Sally Moelhau | Lynne Vallone |
| Kristen deGuehrey | Rindfleisch | Ellen Moomaw | Kate Wagner |
| Nancy DeTine | Barbara Jezioro | Peter Neal | Phyllis Walling |
| Marian Deutschman | Shirley Joy | Ellen Neumaier | Judy Weidemann |
| Sharon Dobkin | Joanne Kahn | Amelia Palka | Barbara Weitzner |
| Krysta Doerfler | Olga Karman | Art Parks | Pat Wille |
| Ruth Dombrowski | Marlene Katzel | Terri Parks | Karen Willyoung |
| Susan Dombrowski | Beth Kauffman | Lisa Parshall | Amy Witryol |
| Alan Dozoretz | Karen Keaton | Michelle Perkins | Liz Zausmer |
| Pat Egan | Marilee Keller | Marianne Poprosky | Ann Zawicki |
| Mike Egan | Karl Klingenschmitt | Tina Prygon | |

Terri Parks

Call for Nominations — Making Democracy Work Award: Honoring Community Leaders

This edition of the Voter includes a nomination form for the 2020 Making Democracy Work Award. Please consider nominating a community member who you feel has made memorable efforts to make democracy work. Recent honorees include attorney Michael Kuzma, Erin Heaney, Bill Nowak, Sam Magavern, Bonnie Smith from WEDI, Scott Gehl from HOME, Roger Cook, Rev. Kirk Laubenstein, and Barbara Seals Nevergold. We welcome your nomination for the 2020 award by February 21, 2020. The nomination form has complete details.

Terri Parks

We Need Your Ideas!

Each year, the state League requests suggestions for the legislative priorities for lobbying our state legislators. Please take some time to think about this opportunity and join us at the Issues and Program Committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2020, at the Harlem Road Community Center. You may write us your suggestions and mail or email them to the League office at lwvbn@lwvbn.org by January 3. We look forward to a lively discussion.

Marian Deutschman & Terri Parks

Welcome to Our New Office Manager

We are most pleased to welcome Barbara Gunderson as Office Manager for the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. She officially began work on December 17. Barbara will be in the League office on Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. An exception will be the week of each board meeting, when she will substitute Monday for Tuesday and the office will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. As always, we encourage people to call the office before you drop in. Barbara will continue her work as Voter Services Chair as an off-board Committee Chair. She is being well oriented to her new responsibilities by Mary Ann Turkla.

Please note: The League office will be closed when the Network of Religious Communities is closed due to weather.

Terri Parks

In Memoriam

It is with deepest sorrow that we note the passing of one of the finest women and League volunteers we remember, Judy Clarke. Judy served the League for many years with her caring nature, positive and respectful relations with everyone, keen intellect, dedication and quick wit. Judy enlivened every meeting with her incisive comments and keen observations. Judy served the board as Secretary and First Vice President and was Volunteer Coordinator from 2013 until December 2018. Judy was also one of the first people to volunteer as a member of the Finance Committee when we organized it in 2012, to ensure that we manage our funds wisely and to increase the earnings from our reserve funds. She did most of the research and writing of our investment policy and was a key committee member to monitor our investments. Judy continued to be the main helper and advisor for her husband, Alan Dozoretz, the League's Election Services Chair. The fine obituary in The Buffalo News mentioned several other community boards that had the good fortune of Judy's able service. Donations to the League in her memory will be gratefully received.

Terri Parks

BMHA Election Services

The Election Services Committee met at the League office in early December and conducted two mailings – for a nominations meeting at LBJ and for an election at Lakeview Homes, both to be held in early January. Many thanks to Mary Ann Turkla for securing our space and providing so much help and so many envelopes over the years. We will miss you as office manager, but look forward to your help on this committee in the future!

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for Marianne Poprosky's expert services as interpreter and translator; for this mailing, she made sure that the Spanish versions of the documents were as perfect as she is.

Our utmost thanks also to committee members Sally Metzger, Joyce Bol, Marlene Katzel, Lee Tetkowski, Shirley Joy, Janet Goodsell, and Ramona Gallagher for coming out to the office on a rather freezing day to make this mailing another pleasant, successful effort.

Finally, the committee as a whole would like to express our appreciation for Chair Al Dozoretz. His tireless, enthusiastic, and expert leadership represents a really enormous and unmatched contribution to the League.

Thank you to everyone who makes this committee successful.

Nora Mikes, on behalf of the Election Services Committee

Our Nuclear Times: Article 23

An Underground Tale: Chapter 10

Confusion. Climate change confusion. Global temperatures and seas were rising. Things were upside-down. Mother Earth was angry. In his younger years, Mr. Pebble had experienced a glacial pace that was a very slow pace. Now, the glaciers of Greenland, the Himalayas, the Antarctic, and many mountains were melting faster and faster. Ms. Rad, ill with a fever, spun aloud fanciful names for future hurricanes, aka cyclones, aka typhoons. Mr. Black gave up trying to eliminate the black mold problem. Instead, he collected colorful specimens of fungi and algae. These life forms might become exalted one day, he reasoned. Ms. Splinter still lamented the loss of her photosynthesizing powers. And she most desperately missed the simple sunshine. A biblical verse gave them all hope, "The people who sat in darkness, have seen a great light." (Matthew 4:16)

They were long overdue for a vacation. They pooled their impossible dreams. They sipped hot cocoa. They – "Thud." A package landed on their doorstep. The books had arrived! SNOW CRYSTALS by Bentley and Humphreys. SILENT SPRING by Rachel Carson. EIS AND SEIS BASICS Everything You Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask by the U.S. Government Printing Office. SURVIVAL UNDERGROUND New 2020 Edition Multiple Escape Plans Included Success Guaranteed Or Your Money Back Your Location Will Never Be Divulged.

The group settled into silence, reading. Above their heads a blizzard of information, discussions, and papers raged. The West Valley nuclear waste site PHASE II decommissioning decision process was underway. After a while, Mr. Black picked up and shuffled the deck of cards, then said, "I'll deal."

Barbara Frackiewicz

Welcome New Members

We are most happy to welcome these people who joined the League in the fall of 2019 and hope you will become active in one or more of our pursuits: Elizabeth Clark, Claudia Kruszynski, Rebecca LaCivita, Cheryl Leff, Margaret Meyer, Roslyn Morgante, Emily Sampey, Margaret Sontag and Barbara Weitzner-Lin.



**League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara (LWVBN)
Making Democracy Work Award Nomination**

Please complete a separate form for each person nominated and return it by mail to LWVBN, 1292 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209, or by email to lwbnn@lwbnn.org by February 21, 2020.

Please direct questions to Terri Parks at lwwoter@verizon.net.

Any person from the communities in Erie and Niagara Counties who has contributed to the community in a meaningful way to make democracy work is eligible for the award. This application needs to be completed by the nominator.

Nominator: _____

Organization: _____

Email address: _____

Nominee: _____

Contact information for the nominee

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Profession (current/previous):

How long has this individual been active in the community? _____

About the nominee

In one sentence, tell us why the individual you are nominating should be considered for the Making Democracy Work Award.

1. The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders: individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community. How does the individual you are nominating exemplify community leadership?

Money In Politics

Voter Representation/Electoral Systems Position

The national League, 11 state Leagues and one local League have proposed that the LWVUS adopt a Position on Voter Representation/Electoral Systems by concurrence at the LWVUS Convention 2020. Our League's Money In Politics Committee will conduct this concurrence for our membership this spring. The Position recommended by LWVUS 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*

The LWVUS supports this concurrence because we currently do not have a position on how we elect our representatives. Our Mission, our Principles, and our trademark "Making Democracy Work" all speak to empowering voters through representation.

When voters are denied representation because of where they live, the way their district lines are drawn, or because they are an ethnic or political minority, voter apathy shouldn't come as a surprise. The purpose of having this Position is to provide a clear, but flexible, base for evaluating electoral systems that empower voters.

This Position does not support a particular electoral system as no system is perfect. However, some are better than others at enhancing representation for voters. This Position is based on criteria to consider when evaluating electoral options that meet the needs of a community and the voters.

This Position does not require local or state League action. Like many of our positions, it is there when we need it.

Electoral systems are tied to representation of voters, so we will provide some basic terminology in the next Voter. Save this MIP Update and participate in this concurrence discussion in time for the National League Convention 2020.

LWVNY criticizes the Public Campaign Finance Commission's reform proposal

In response to New York State's proposed campaign finance reforms, Sally Robinson, advocacy director for the League of Women Voters of New York State, provided the following statement:

"The League continues to believe that comprehensive campaign finance reform is the change New York's state government desperately needs above all. This commission had before it a historic opportunity to make significant improvements to our broken campaign finance system, centered around a small donor matching system that would actually work. Instead, they are leaving the job half-done and have allowed themselves to be distracted with issues that are tangential to their mission. The complex small donor matching system proposed by this commission in some ways may be seen to be designed to favor incumbents. The League believes that much lower campaign contribution limits for all candidates and parties and better enforcement are necessary for any new public financing system to function as intended and fix how elections work in this state."

Janet Massaro, Chair



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January 2020

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

Issues/Program Committee

Harlem Road Community Center

Thursday, January 16, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee

League office

Wednesday, January 8, 2:00 p.m.

Local Government Committee

League office

Friday, January 17, 1:00 p.m.

Money In Politics Committee

League office

Monday, January 13, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

League office

Friday, January 30, 11:30 a.m.

**New York State's Whopping \$6.1 Billion
Budget Deficit**

Chef's Restaurant

Wednesday, January 15, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Waterfront Committee

Central Library Cafe Area

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