



your
VOTER

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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. May Voter copy is due Monday, April 12. Send copy to Nancy DeTine at lwvbn@lwvbn.org.

CLAIMING OUR OUTER HARBOR

Date: Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Method: Via Zoom

**Presentation: Buffalo’s Outer Harbor:
The Right Place for a World Class Park**

Free and open to the public!

We love our Outer Harbor for its natural beauty, ecological importance, and recreational opportunities. Western New Yorkers have spoken loud and clear: we want this fragile Great Lakes gem to be permanently protected, naturally restored, and publicly accessible. Join us to learn about making our unique resource a state park.

Presenters: Sam Magavern, Senior Policy Fellow, Partnership for the Public Good, and Jay Burney, a founder of Our Outer Harbor Coalition

RSVP: Register in advance at <http://bit.ly/outerharbor>. Participants will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting.

Co-sponsors:



OUR OUTER HARBOR

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

It seems that the most important thing I hear from folks these days is, "I've received my Covid-19 vaccination." This welcome remark indicates that many of us are looking forward to being able to congregate in a more normal fashion in the near future. This doesn't mean we will be totally back to the time before the pandemic. We should all continue to wear our masks and practice safe social distancing.

We are pleased that seven members of our board will represent our League at the virtual League of Women Voters of New York State Convention from June 7 to 12, including the plenary session on June 11 and 12. We welcome other members to attend the convention and plenary as observers. There may be opportunities to carry voting credentials for another League. All attendees will be invited to participate in the workshops and caucuses all week. Please let me know if you intend to attend any or all of the convention. There may be funds available to pay for your registration, but only if you register before May 1. Let me know by April 25 by leaving a message at the League office or emailing me.

Terri Parks

Coming May 13 — Fighting For Our Vote 2.0!

To follow up on our very successful webinar on February 23, LWVBN, NAACP and SANYS will present a second roundtable discussion at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 13. Topics will include voting basics, why people don't vote, myths vs. truths about voting, accessing the polls, and how votes are counted. If you missed our first webinar, which explored the history of voting with its progress and challenges, you're in luck – the recorded session can be seen by following this [link](#).

Join Our New Healthcare Committee

On March 5, during the second meeting of our new Healthcare Committee, members Christine Reichmuth, Judy Huber and Alberta Roman met along with Marian Deutschman, chair of the Program, Issues & Events Committee, to begin to explore and create our purpose and activities. Members not present and contributory were Lois Uhteg and Elaine Puchlerz. Our very interesting discussion was around possible speakers on local healthcare issues, Covid-19 and vaccines, and single payer health insurance. Our focus at this time will be on healthcare education, with specific topics to be determined. Presently members have expressed strong interest in community health. The much awaited New York State Health Act (single payer) has been introduced in the state Assembly and Senate with majority co-sponsorship. We will follow the progress of bills A.6058/S.5474 in the legislature. Please contact any one of us to share your area of interest and any questions you might have. This is a wonderful opportunity to put skills and energy into vital service to our community. We want to hear from you and welcome you as a new member.

Judy Huber & Alberta Roman, Co-Chairs

Great Decisions

At 10 a.m. on Thursday, April 1, 2021, the Great Decisions group will meet via Zoom to discuss the topic "Global supply chains and U.S. national security." This will be the start of our 2021 Foreign Policy Association Great Decisions discussion series. The association says this about the topic: "The shutdown of global supply chains due to the Covid-19 pandemic brought to the fore an issue with the high level of global economic interdependence: what happens when one country is the main source for an item, say face masks, and then can no longer supply the item? Countries suddenly unable to meet the demand for certain supplies are faced with growing calls for economic nationalism. What are some of the lasting effects that the pandemic could have on global supply chains and trade? How would this affect national security?" Fran Holmes will moderate the discussion of this timely topic. You may contact her at lwvbn@lwvbn.org for more information.

Fran Holmes

LWVBN Discussion Group

We had another lively discussion on March 17. The MUST-READ article in the February 15/22 issue of TIME magazine revealed a collaboration between left-wing activists and business titans that saved the November election. “It’s a mistake to think that this election cycle was a show of strength for democracy. It shows how vulnerable democracy is,” said the author. As we examined the fundamentals of our democracy, we also reviewed other readings on the battles over the right to vote, suggested by members of our group, that involve the 253 bills across 43 states seeking to tighten voting rules, the impact of the filibuster, and the House and Senate legislation to establish national election standards. There is a widespread belief that high turnout benefits the Democratic candidates. “If the filibuster remains in place, voting rights will probably be in retreat over the next decade,” said another author. The voting restrictions are likely to have a greater impact on the communities that have been traditionally disadvantaged. Some of these opportunities may not occur again for decades. We speculated on what would have happened if the election had been overturned while voters seem to live in two different realities.

Please consider joining us at our next virtual session at 7 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month – April 28. One of our readings was recommended by Janet Lenicheck and Janet Goodsell:

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/gerontocracy-is-hurting-american-democracy.html>.

Should Americans get serious about setting into law mandatory retirement ages for members of the U.S. House and Senate, U.S. president and Supreme Court members? The U.S. government needs sharp minds and a diversity of fresh ideas to solve the multiple complex problems we are currently facing, in addition to the problems that will arise down the road. Would the elderly people in these branches of government ever put this into law? Let me know if you would like to join us for this discussion.

Marian Deutschman

Students Inside Albany

Like most other educational activities these days, Students Inside Albany will be presented in a virtual format. High school students from across the state will take part in a day and a half introduction to our state government and their elected officials. The State League has designed an online program that will provide, as much as possible, what they would have learned during the Albany SIA experience.

As a result of Barbara Gunderson’s enthusiastic recruitment among her high school contacts, Maria Evancho of Nardin Academy and Lily Janik of Lake Shore High School have been selected to participate. Their interest in the legislative process and state government prompted them to apply. We are proud to have such outstanding young people represent LWVBN.

Maria Evancho, a very accomplished 10th grader and student member of LWVBN, took an interest in the League during the 2020 election when daily news left her with a lot of questions. Her plan for the future is to attend a “dream” college, and then become a physician, possibly at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Institute. She believes in the importance of being well informed about what is happening around oneself. Maria is involved in multiple school activities that reflect her civic values, such as Student Council, Model UN, president of the sophomore class, and the Holocaust Remembrance Club. She also finds time to play golf and the bass in the orchestra and jazz band.

Lily, a senior, was chosen because she wants to learn more about state government and is anticipating a career in law. She has served as an attorney in mock trials and enjoys studies of women in the social sciences. She has also participated in a women’s suffrage conference. Her future college studies will include history and political science.

We wish Maria and Lily a successful school year, and a very productive learning experience with Students Inside Albany.

Janet Goodsell

From Suffrage to ERA — Equity Resiliency, Activism

The Western New York Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration Committee (WNYWSCCC) was formed in 2019 when the League invited a number of other women's organizations to work with us to celebrate the centennial of the 19th Amendment. We first invited organizations that sponsored or partnered with us in 2017 when we celebrated women's suffrage in New York State, and the organizations that signed on suggested others. We now have an impressive group of 11 organizations planning an event that we postponed from 2020. Lyle Toohey chairs the group. When we expanded beyond the League, we needed an identity. So WNYWSCCC was born; we have recently also expanded the scope of the program, given the current focus on the ERA amendment. (On March 17, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a joint congressional resolution that would remove the deadline for states to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.)

Please save Saturday, October 2, 2021, for an interactive and engaging seminar that will feature historian Sally Roesch Wagner, Ph.D., and four outstanding panelists to address issues that affect women. The event is now titled ***From Suffrage to ERA – Equity, Resiliency, Activism***. The event will take place in person at Daemen College, 4380 Main St., Amherst, NY, and online via Zoom, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

Terri Parks

Celebrate Earth Week with the Spring Shoreline Sweep



Join the annual Shoreline Sweep litter cleanup along our local streams, creeks, rivers and lakes. League members have participated for years in this enormously successful effort, organized by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. Because of Covid-19 protocols, this year's registration is a little different. Small groups of five or fewer will pick up litter on Saturdays, April 24 and May 1. Solo individuals will pick up on Sundays, April 25 and May 2, and also during that week. There are 40 sites to choose from throughout Western New York, and even as far away as Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in Basom, NY.

Each person must register as an individual and choose a site and time slot. To form a small group, decide who will be in it and what site and time slot your group wants to work on.

To register, go to bnwaterkeeper.org. 1) Click on Cleanups. 2) Choose Spring Sweep. 3) Choose Volunteer. 4) Choose the desired date and time slot, then check out. The checkout step confirms the date

and time of your shift. You will receive email information from Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper before the Sweep date. If the dates shown do not work for you, the Waterkeeper webpages list other ways you can help, including making a donation.

Questions? Contact Claudia Rosen, the Waterkeeper staff member who is organizing the Sweep in our area (crosen@bnwaterkeeper.org or 716-852-7483, ext. 14). Or call the League office at 716-986-4898.

Ellen Gibson, longtime Sweep site captain at Unity Island

Nuclear Timescapes

There is no such thing as a retired anthropologist, you know. It is one of those professions that you keep on practicing even if no one pays you to do it. This means that I try to read everything that other anthropologists are writing about nuclear matters now that I am serving the League on the West Valley Citizen Task Force. That is not a LOT of books and articles; I wish there were more, but I have read two newly published books to share with you.

The first is Vincent Ialenti's ***Deep Time Reckoning: How Future Thinking Can Help Earth Now***. Vinny did his anthropology doctorate at Cornell based on research with the scientists and engineers in Finland who were working at designing Finland's repository under an island in the Baltic Sea for storing wastes from its nuclear power plants. This book develops that research into a readable account of how these scientists think about the world of the distant future. The repository is not yet accepting wastes, but it is well ahead of Yucca Mountain in Nevada, which seems increasingly unlikely ever to become the U.S. repository.

Now Vinny has moved on to a postdoctoral position at the University of British Columbia. His current research deals with the human factors in recent accidents in which drums containing nuclear waste exploded and burned. The first occurred at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) transuranic waste repository in New Mexico in 2014. It exposed 22 people to radiation and shut down the repository for military transuranics for 35 months, costing the U.S. more than \$1 billion. The cause? A waste packaging operator at Los Alamos mistakenly used organic kitty litter, instead of inorganic kitty litter, to absorb liquid in the drum. Inorganic kitty litter contains zeolite, the material used in the underground wall at the West Valley site to serve as a barrier preventing strontium from moving in the groundwater. The wheat-based organic kitty litter reacted with the chemicals in the drum when it was placed deep underground at WIPP.

Too weird to happen again? Four drums containing transuranic waste being packaged for WIPP exploded at the Idaho National Lab in 2018 because of lack of analysis for chemical compatibility. Ialenti shows that DOE's policies and incentives are part of the problem. He suggests that there is a need for a federally-funded regulatory organization staffed by scientists, social scientists, and policy experts that is independent of DOE and its contractors.

The second new book is Rosemary Joyce's ***The Future of Nuclear Waste: What Art and Archaeology Can Tell Us About Securing the World's Most Hazardous Material***. Rosemary is a Buffalo-born and raised archaeologist teaching at the University of California. She has spent most of her career excavating and writing about Mayan ruins in Central America. For the past 20 years she has also been puzzling over the problem of how the government should mark the WIPP repository so that thousands of years from now, if humans are still around, they will know NOT to excavate in that area and expose themselves to radiation danger.

How did I get on a first-name basis with Vinny and Rosemary? I emailed them and invited them to take part in a panel discussion at the March meeting of the Society of Applied Anthropologists with the other anthropologists that I had been learning from these last few years while I have been involved with the West Valley project. More about the Zoom panel next month.

Note: 'Transuranic': Elements having an atomic number greater than that of uranium, 92. All of these are artificially made, unstable, and decay radioactively. Examples include neptunium, plutonium, americium.

Pat Townsend, anthropologist



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

April 2021

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.

Thursday, April 1, 10:00 a.m.

Great Decisions

via Zoom

Tuesday, April 6, 4:00 p.m.

Program, Issues & Events Committee

via Zoom

Monday, April 12, 4:00 p.m.

Board of Directors

via Zoom

Wednesday, April 14, 2:00 p.m.

Local Government Committee

via Zoom

Wednesday, April 14, 4:00 p.m.

Waterfront Committee

via Zoom

Thursday, April 15, 1:30 p.m.

Education Committee

TBA

Friday, April 16, 1:00 p.m.

Money in Politics Committee

via Zoom

Monday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.

GOTV Committee

via teleconference

Tuesday, April 20 7:00 p.m.

DEI

via Zoom

Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.

Claiming Our Outer Harbor Park

via Zoom

Wednesday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.

Book Discussion Group

via Zoom