



your  
**VOTER**

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**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)

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# FIGHTING FOR OUR VOTE

*A virtual roundtable discussion presented by LWVBN, NAACP and SANYS*

Join us to explore the progress that our country and our state have made in affording all Americans the rights of full citizenship. What barriers have there been? What barriers still exist? What can we do, as individuals and organizations, to ensure that barriers to voting are removed?

**Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021**

**Time: 7:00 p.m.**

**Method: Zoom webinar**

**Panelists:** L. Nathan Hare, President and CEO, Community Action Organization of Western New York; BJ Stasio, President, SANYS (Self Advocacy of New York State); and Jennifer Wilson, Deputy Director of LWV of New York State.

**Moderator:** Hon. Lenore Foote-Beavers, Chair, Diversity Committee, Women's Bar Association of Western New York

**Important Notes:** Participants can ask questions after the presentation. There will be closed captioning. ASL interpretation will be available upon request.

**RSVP:** Register in advance at this link: [Registration](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

### 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 January board meeting, we appointed Amy Witryol to chair the Budget Committee for next year's LWVBN budget. We still need one more member for this committee. Our bylaws stipulate that we have a member on the committee who is a "member of a committee working on LWVBN issues." If you fit that description and are interested in being involved in setting the financial direction for our League for next year, please contact the League office. The committee will probably have two virtual meetings.

It's time again to think about honoring local League Leaders.

**The Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award** recognizes outstanding League leadership that reflects some of the many qualities that Joan has demonstrated in her long experience as a League and community leader. We selected five key characteristics exhibited by Joan that we feel are essential qualities for recognition: **Ethical, Innovative, Resourceful, Respected, Steadfast.** Please submit a paragraph of up to 250 words that describes how your nominee embodies these characteristics. Be sure to include each characteristic as you write about your nominee.

**The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara LEE Award** is presented to a League member who has made a **Long Term Commitment to the League with Energy and Excellence** – in short, the initials "LEE." The award honors Lenore Tetkowski, Leonore Lambert, and Lenore Banks. Please submit a paragraph of up to 250 words about your nominee in which you note the approximate number of years the person served the League actively, and give examples of her/his Energy and Excellence in League activity.

Please email completed nominations to [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or mail them to the League office by February 28, 2021. Be sure your name is noted as the nominator. Please feel free to contact Terri Parks at (716) 986-4898 or [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) if you need help with your nominations.

We also invite you to become a member of the committee to select this year's award recipients. We will meet by Zoom and expect to need no more than two meetings. To volunteer, contact the League office. We will present the awards at the annual meeting in June, whether it is live or virtual.

*Terri Parks*

## Free Citizens Lobbying Workshop

**How to make elected officials hear your voice!**

**DATE:** Saturday, February 20, 2021

**TIME:** 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**PLACE:** Via Zoom

**TRAINER:** Ramona Gallagher, LWVBN Legislative Advocacy Chair and citizen lobbyist

Learn or sharpen your skills and you'll be prepared to lobby state legislators for bills supported by the League this spring. You'll also learn effective ways to contact elected officials by other means. This workshop is appropriate for anyone who is interested in being a citizen lobbyist. It is free and open to the public. Reservations are required.

**RSVP** by Wednesday, February 17, 2021, online at [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org), via email to [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org), or by calling 716-986-4898.

## Great Decisions

On Thursday, February 4, at 10 a.m. the Great Decisions discussion group will meet via Zoom to discuss “Climate Change and the Global Order.” The Foreign Policy Affairs organization says this about the topic: “Climate change has become one of the defining issues of our time. As much of the world bands together to come up with a plan, the U.S. remains the notable holdout. What is the rest of the world doing to combat climate change? What impact will the effects of climate change have on global geopolitics?” Fran Holmes will lead us in this relevant topic. Contact her at [mfranholmes@gmail.com](mailto:mfranholmes@gmail.com) or at 716 885 8449 if you have any questions, or wish to be included in this Zoom teleconference call.

*Fran Holmes*

## Discussion Group Debates Free Speech

On January 14 the LWVBN Discussion Group had another lively and very timely Zoom discussion on “The First Amendment in the Age of Disinformation” by Emily Bazelon, from the October 13 issue of The New York Times Magazine. Coincidentally, we met on the day President Trump was impeached a second time with many references to free speech in the media.

We discussed other democracies that have imposed regulations on free speech somewhat the way they impose regulations on utilities. Our First Amendment has become a weapon of the powerful. According to the author, it serves authoritarians, racists, misogynists, Nazis, Klansmen, pornographers and corporations that buy elections. In our conversation, we sought solutions to an amendment that might be viewed as having guarantees too simplistic and inadequate for our era. There are limitations in the amendment but they are not enforced. We need constant fact-checks to avoid drowning in lies. We considered restoration of the Fairness Doctrine. We need to control the monopolies in social media because self-policing doesn't seem to be working. President Joe Biden may need to become a user of Twitter to reach the young white male who feels excluded. Most of all we want to see a restoration of self-discipline and common sense in the Biden administration and in our country.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 17, at 7 p.m. We welcome new members and we're open to recommendations for articles that generate good discussions.

*Marian Deutschman*

## Invitation to Program Planning Meeting on February 2

All members of LWVBN are invited to attend the virtual meeting of the Program, Issues & Events (PIE) Committee on Tuesday, February 2, at 4 p.m. We will discuss **Program Planning for 2021 LWNYS Convention**, and look for your input on deciding what program items should be kept, deleted, updated/revised, or proposed for program study for the League of Women Voters of New York State. The **Summary of Public Policy Issues** emailed with this Voter will give you information about the current program and help you to determine where changes and emphasis for action could be initiated. Please let the League office know if you will attend the meeting so that we can provide you with Zoom access information. Email [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or call 716-986-4898.

## Welcome Our New Members!

We are pleased to report that we have added the following people to our League membership: Alissa Shields of Buffalo and Victoria Mueller of Amherst. Note that Victoria is also our new office manager. Welcome!

*Lori Robinson and Mary Ann Turkla, Co-Chairs*

## Thank You, 2020 Volunteers for League Activities

In her book, **A Nun on the Bus**, Sister Simone Campbell wrote: “But a democracy cannot survive if various groups and individuals only pull away in different directions. Such separation will not guarantee that all are allowed the opportunity for ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’ All people must be recognized for their inherent dignity and gifts regardless of the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, or their place of origin. And all these gifts need to be shared in order to build up the whole.

“So I have begun to wonder if the new task of the first half of the 21st century should be a commitment to civil obligation as a balance to the focus on civil rights.

“Civil obligations call each of us to participate out of a concern and commitment for the whole. Civil obligations call us to vote, to inform ourselves about the issues of the day, to engage in serious conversation about our nation’s future and learn to listen to various perspectives.”

The 120 people listed below have shown, through their actions on behalf of the League in 2020, that they embrace the concept of civil obligations as Sister Campbell envisions it. Please note that for most of the year, we were unable to conduct business as usual. I commend your efforts on behalf of democracy and the principles of the League.

*Terri Parks*

Linda Barat	Gretchen Ford	Joanne Kahn
Margie Boyce	Tyrel Ford	Olga Karman
David Boyd	Barbara Frackiewicz	Marlene Katzel
Barbara Brooks	Ramona Gallagher	Beth Kauffman
Larry Brooks	Frances Genco	Karen Keaton
Dot Brown	Ellen Gibson	Linda Koenigsberg
Barbara Bunker	Gladys Gifford	Rebecca LaCivita
Kathleen Burke	Jessica Godios	Cheryl Leff
James Carr	Janet Goodsell	Janet Lenichek
Judy Casassa	Barbara Gunderson	Nina Lukin
Eileen Cassidy	Vito Guitierrez	Janet Massaro
Liz Clark	Marie Hanrahan	Helen Mayo
Pat Costanzo	Kris Hanson	Kathleen McCarthy
Sharon Cramer	Mary Herbst	Patty McClain
Josette Cunningham	Jennifer Hoffman	Kathleen McCormick
Elaine Cusker	Judy Hoffman	Laura McDade
Susan Czyrny	Debbie Holahan	Liz McGough
Nancy DeTine	Fran Holmes	Angela McGowan-Kirsch
Marian Deutschman	Carolyn Hoyt-Stevens	JoAnn Mecca
Krysta Doerfler	Judy Huber	Peg Mergenhagen
Susan Dombrowski	Don Ingalls	Sally Metzger
Max Donatelli	Maxine Insera	Margaret Meyer
Mariely Downey	Portland Jackson	Patti Meyer Lee
Alan Dozoretz	Barbara Jezioro	Gail Michaels
Mike Egan	Alaina Jones	Nora Mikes
Maria Evancho	Shirley Joy	Joan Mondul

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Amy Moritz	Mary Scheeder	Mary Ann Turkla
Leslie Nickerson	Deborah Shiffner	Lynne Vallone
Sandra O'Hara	Onda Simmons	Kate Wagner
Terri Parks	Joan Simon	Judy Weidemann
Lisa Parshall	BJ Stasio	Barbara Weitzner-Lin
Michelle Perkins-Kowalewski	Lynda Stephens	Jonathan White
Susan Petherick	Eileen Sullivan	Pat Wille
Marianne Poprosky	Gretchen Szal	Amy Witryol
Tina Prygon	Dorothy Tao	Liz Zausmer
Clare Rados	Lee Tetkowski	Ann Zawiki
Christine Reichmuth	Suzanne Thomas	Janet Zehr
Lori Robinson	Maureen Tomzcak	Joyce Zobel
Alberta Roman	Lyle Toohey	
Vicki Ross	Pat Townsend	
Barbara Rubin	Marjorie Tritto	

### **Happy 80th Birthday, Plutonium!**

In February 1941 Glenn Seaborg and his colleagues produced element 94, plutonium, by bombarding uranium. Plutonium was one of the transuranic elements, those heavier than uranium. Demonstrating that plutonium-239 was fissile (that is, capable of sustaining a nuclear chain reaction) made a key contribution to the manufacture of the atomic bomb by the Manhattan Project.

The half-life of plutonium-239 is 24,000 years – much shorter than uranium, but still long enough to require deep geological burial. It usually damages human health by being breathed in rather than ingested and attaching itself to lung, liver, or bone – the tiniest bit may lead to cancer decades later. Weapons-grade plutonium (used to ignite atomic bombs) is enriched to 93% of highly fissionable plutonium-239, while the plutonium produced in civilian reactors is only about 60%, mixed with several other isotopes.

After several years, the fuel rods in nuclear power plants are no longer usable, but once they have cooled under water, the plutonium can be separated from the uranium by a process that uses chemical solvents. From 1966 to 1972, the company Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS) reprocessed fuel rods at a site in West Valley, New York, south of Springville. When there was not enough used fuel from the Yankee plant in Massachusetts and other early civilian power plants to get the project going, the government provided fuel from the military reactor at Hanford. Some of the plutonium from Nuclear Fuel Services was sold to foreign countries for research or for breeder reactors, a type of reactor that uses plutonium as fuel. The plutonium that came from Hanford was returned to the government for military use.

In the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, reprocessing was controversial. The Atomic Energy Commission already had a poor record in preventing accidents with plutonium, and the dangers of nuclear weapon proliferation and terrorism were feared. Barry Commoner and Margaret Mead led 35 scientists suing the AEC over its breeder reactor program. The Carter administration banned reprocessing in the U.S., though it continues in England, France, and Japan.

By 1972 NFS found it no longer feasible to continue reprocessing, leaving its Main Process Plant Building contaminated with plutonium. As much as feasible, radionuclides are being removed from surfaces before demolition of the building later this year.

*Pat Townsend*

## Celebrating Two Devoted League Members



### In Memory of Jean Wholahan

We should not let the death of Jean Wholahan at age 106 on January 7 go without remembering and appreciating her amazing, very long life on Grand Island. She has been an inspiration for me since the 1950s, when her husband, Allan, and I worked on the Citizens' Committee for the High School. It was Jean who encouraged me to join the League of Women Voters, which became a major part of my life. In her quiet, modest way she worked diligently on various committees for an informed electorate. She took on necessary work like League budget preparation. It was Allan who had the first computer of anyone we knew, and who was deeply involved in using his new skills to work with us on League publications, like preparing "Know Your Officials."

Many meetings and much committee work led to our deep ongoing friendship. As Jean aged she continued her lifelong interest in good government, and even when her eyesight was failing, managed to follow news events. She never missed a voting opportunity.

Jean's ability to remain independent until well after her 100th birthday astonished her friends. Her clear memory allowed her

to share with me very early experiences of her childhood and early youth. Her interest in annual geranium plantings and activities of her little Island Presbyterian Church, of which she was a founding member, continued throughout her life. Her optimism never failed!

I drove her to a garden nursery to choose her geraniums each spring. I remember the one that turned out to be the last time. As I was dropping her off back home, Jean thanked me and said, "Will you do this for me next year?" I replied, "Sure, Honey!"

*Lee Tetkowski*



### **In Memoriam: Lee Lambert**

Leonore Lambert, a longtime active member of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara, passed away on December 21, 2020. Lee, the wife of the late Louis Lambert, was the mother of ten, grandmother of 22 and great-grandmother of 18.

She will be fondly remembered as a respected, admired pillar of the League. As president of the former LWV of Aurora/Elma, Lee was an instrumental member of the Restructuring Committee which, in the early 1990s, oversaw the consolidation of six individual Leagues in Erie County. In 1995 she was elected vice president of the newly formed League of Women Voters of the Greater Buffalo Area, the original name for our LWV Buffalo Niagara. A dedicated environmentalist, Lee served as League liaison to the West Valley Demonstration Project Citizen Task Force. The LEE Award, named to honor Lee Lambert, Lee Tetkowski and Lenore Banks, is presented to a League member who best exemplifies a "Long Term Commitment to the League with Energy and Excellence."

Lee was known by all as fun-loving, cheerful, and enthusiastic, approaching everyone and everything with a smile on her face and a song on her lips. Music was dear to her heart; she served as choir director for St. Benedict Church in Eggertsville. Many of

us will remember skits and songs that Lee wrote, produced, directed and drafted hapless League members to perform for our entertainment.

Memorials may be made to LWVBN to honor Lee's legacy.

*Lyle Toohey*



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

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## February 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.*

**Tuesday, February 2, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Program, Issues & Events Committee**  
via Zoom

**Thursday, February 4, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Great Decisions**  
via Zoom

**Wednesday, February 10, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Local Government Committee**  
TBA

**Wednesday, February 10, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Waterfront Committee**  
via Zoom

**Monday, February 15, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Board of Directors**  
via Zoom

**Monday, February 15, 7:00 p.m.**  
**GOTV Committee**  
via teleconference

**Tuesday, February 16, 8:00 p.m.**  
**DEI**  
via Zoom

**Wednesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Book Discussion Group**  
via Zoom

**Thursday, February 18, 1:30 p.m.**  
**Education Committee**  
TBA

**Friday, February 19, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Money in Politics Committee**  
via Zoom

**Saturday, February 20, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Citizens Lobbying Workshop**  
via Zoom

**Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Fighting for Our Vote**  
via Zoom

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