



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

*your*  
★ **VOTER** ★

**Volume 27 Number 7**

**March 2022**

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**LWVBN website**

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**LWVNYS website**

[www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)

**LWVUS website**

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Voter is published 11 times a year. Send copy by the second Monday of the month to Terri Parks at [lwvoter@verizon.net](mailto:lwvoter@verizon.net).

***A WNY Woman's Career Path in Environmental Remediation***

**Saturday, March 12, 1:00 pm., via Zoom**

**10:30 – Noon via Zoom**

**Elizabeth Lowes**, who grew up in Western New York, started her career at the Department of Energy's (DOE) West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) in the mid-1980s. In March 2020, she returned to the WVDP as Regulatory Strategy Manager supporting the DOE's contractor. Her career has included projects in Tooele, Utah, and Los Alamos. She earned a B.S. degree in industrial hygiene and environmental toxicology from Clarkson University.

Free and open to the public.

Register in advance:

[Zoom Registration Link](#)

You will receive a confirmation email with information to join the meeting.

If you wish to attend by phone, call the League office at 716-986-4898 to register and obtain the call-in number.

**Presented by:**



**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.

## **Letter from Our President**

Dear Members and Friends,

Is it just me or are the days, months going by faster? The good news with that is spring will soon be here! There is so much going on I find it hard to know where to start.

The state League's Students Inside Albany program is set for May. We are proud to announce the two students we are sending to Albany from our local League: Aharar Akib, a junior from Olmsted High, and Maria Evancho, a junior from Nardin Academy.

**CALL TO CONVENTION:** The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) biannual convention will take place in Denver, Colorado, and virtually from June 23 to 26. It is exciting to hear from other Leagues around the country and what the national League is working on. Please check out the LWVUS Convention link <https://convention.lwv.org/home> and let me know if you are interested in attending. We are allowed four voting delegates, and ALL members are welcome to participate.

The board discussed the possibility of a field trip to the Matilda Gage House Museum in Fayetteville and/or a day trip to the Chautauqua Institute during the week of July 23-30 as our summer outing. If you would be interested in going to either, please let us know so we can start planning.

The litigants have appealed the court's decision for the Outer Harbor lawsuit. The judge rejected the suit based on a technicality and didn't rule at all on the substance of the suit. To further support this effort the board has approved a contribution of \$500 from our designated reserve fund created by a donation to support environment issues to help with the costs of the lawsuit. Thank you to all who signed the petition to our local, state, and federal elected officials to designate Buffalo's Outer Harbor a state park in 2022. If you have not signed yet, the link is posted on our webpage, [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org).

Read on for more interesting items in this issue of the VOTER. Stay well!

*Lori Robinson, President*

## **A Message to Members from the Membership Committee**

We will soon be distributing our 2022 roster of active League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara members. This roster will include a member's name, mailing address, telephone number and email address. Many members find the roster useful when needing to contact fellow committee members or arrange ride-sharing for an event.

Should you choose not to have your contact information included in the roster, please contact our office manager, Amelia Palka-Mikes, at [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or 716-986-4898 and only your name will be included. You may also choose to not include a specific piece of contact information, such as telephone number or email address. Just let Amelia know your preference.

If you need to update your information or wish to be excluded, please contact the office no later than MARCH 20, 2022. There is no need to contact the office if you require no changes. If you would like a printed copy of the roster, please send \$3 to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209. You may also order the printed roster by using the Donate button on the homepage of [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org). You may use a PayPal account or a credit card or debit card number.

*Mary Ann Turkla, Membership Chair*

## Great Decisions

The Great Decisions discussion group will begin its 2022 meetings at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 3, via Zoom. The 2022 Great Decisions book has nine topics this year and we will start with the first one: “Changing Demographics.” Fran Holmes, who coordinates the group, will lead the discussion. The Foreign Policy Association, which sponsors Great Decisions, provides this statement about the topic: “The world experienced remarkable demographic changes in the 20th century that continue today and have resulted in far-reaching social, economic, political, and environmental consequences all over the globe. These consequences are creating mounting challenges to development efforts, security, climate, and the environment, as well as the sustainability of human populations.”

The Great Decisions group meets from 10:00 a.m. to noon on the first Thursday of the month. Books that provide reading material on the topics can be acquired from the [Foreign Policy Association website](#); more information on the topics to be covered is also available on this website. If you are not already a member of the group or have questions, contact Fran Holmes for additional information.

*Fran Holmes*

## Nuclear Scrabble: Some Government Agencies at West Valley

A public citizen trying to engage at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) is immediately exposed to an alphabet soup of acronyms for the many government agencies and private contractors involved there. Our March 12 speaker Elizabeth Lowes, for example, has worked for NYSERDA and DOE and now works for CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley. Got that? Because she is trained in industrial hygiene and environmental toxicology, in all three cases her niche is the environmental regulation framework.

**CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley**, known on their website as [www.chbwv.com](http://www.chbwv.com), is the company that has been the prime contractor at the site doing the demolition and other decommissioning work since 2011. They are kin to another CH2M offshoot at Hanford, the big nuclear project in Washington State that provided much of West Valley’s used atomic reactor fuel for reprocessing in the 1960s. What does CH2 stand for? Very few people know (or need to know) that, but according to Wikipedia they are the three civil engineers from Oregon State University who founded the company in 1947, Cornell, Howland, and Hayes. Repeated mergers and the formation of subsidiaries have followed, as is typical of the industry.

**DOE** is the U.S. government’s Department of Energy. It was created in 1977 as a cabinet-level agency combining research and development of energy technology, energy conservation, and the nuclear weapons program. Within the DOE, the Office of Environmental Management oversees the West Valley Demonstration Project, along with 15 other big environmental remediation projects resulting from nuclear bomb manufacture and nuclear research.

The old Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was split into the DOE and the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission), which continues to regulate nuclear reactor safety and radiation protection. In 2021-22, for example, the NRC’s big job at West Valley is approving the plan for regulating air pollution from the demolition of the Main Process Plant Building.

**NYSERDA** is the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Alas, unlike the two above, they will be there for a long time because they (or should I say “we,” New York State) are the owners of the site. They also have primary responsibility for the State Disposal Area and the part of the West Valley site outside the 150 acres of the West Valley Demonstration Project. On an unused part of the larger site, NYSERDA has recently developed a large installation of solar panels to benefit local electricity consumers.

Even after you figure out the players it can be hard to understand the game. For example, the New York

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Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is concerned about the “forever chemicals” at the West Valley site and has regular interactions there. But I was surprised to discover that the forever chemicals they are concerned with are only the hydrocarbons. The radioactive chemical isotopes that will last for millions of years are outside their purview.

So, who is looking out for our air, water, and health at this nuclear site upstream from us? Well, it depends: different agencies, different toxics, different media (air, water, soil). It takes many specialists. It also takes many dedicated non-specialists (like League members!) to interpret the specialist knowledge to other members of public, who have multiple stakes in what happens there, as residents of affected communities, taxpayers funding the cleanup, and ancestors of generations that will be exposed to the outcome of remediation. Let's strive to be good ancestors!

*Pat Townsend*

### LWV of New York State Regional Training Meeting



The LWV of Buffalo/Niagara will attend the Regional Training in Rochester on March 19, 2022. If you would like to attend, please let us know by March 10 – email [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org) or call the office at 716-986-4898. We will arrange carpooling. Also please register and make payment to LWNYS using the information below.

The League of Women Voters of NYS invites **all** members to attend any or all of the training workshops being held throughout the state. All local League board members are **strongly** encouraged to attend at least part of the day. Lunch will be provided and will allow for informal networking.

**Register online at:** [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/HOhq-CqnO8wQHrms7-w8Kg](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/HOhq-CqnO8wQHrms7-w8Kg)

**DATE and LOCATION:** March 19, Rochester Area, The Perkins Mansion, 494 East Avenue, Rochester, 14607

**\$25 registration, deadline March 11**

#### **Schedule:**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 9:30-10:00  | Coffee and Welcome  |
| 10:00-11:00 | It's All About the Ask: Tactics for Increasing Membership and Cultivating Leadership  |
| 11:15-12:15 | First Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 411 on Vote 411: A Beginner's Guide to the New Platform (hands-on workshop)</li><li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Past, Present and Future</li></ul>      |
| 12:15-1:15  | Lunch (networking)  |
| 1:15-2:15   | Second Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Engaging Youth Through Civic Collaborations</li><li>▪ Zooming into 2022: How to Successfully Host a Virtual or Hybrid Candidate Forum</li></ul>                    |
| 2:30-3:30   | Third Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hacking Social Media: Getting the Best Use out of your League's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter Accounts</li><li>▪ Let's Take Action: How, When and Why?</li></ul> |

**All attendees are required to show proof of vaccination and booster and be willing to wear a mask. The deadlines for registration are stricter than usual, as we will not hold the workshops at a specific location if we do not have enough people registered, so we need to ask for all to register early.**



## Workshop Sessions:

### **It's All About the Ask: Tactics for Increasing Membership and Cultivating Leadership**

Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. That's our mission. To further this mission we need strong, sustainable Leagues. And that requires all of us to get involved in attracting prospects, welcoming and mentoring new members, checking in with inactive ones, and identifying leadership candidates. Our best tool is The Ask:

- Ask others to attend a League program
- Ask others to join
- Ask members how they want to get involved, and
- Ask engaged members to take leadership positions

Join us as we talk about **The Ask...And More**. We'll share other practical tips on recruiting members and creating a leadership ladder. Plus we'll talk about best practices to help nominating committees identify and enlist capable and dedicated board members.

### **The 411 on Vote 411: A Beginner's Guide to the New Platform (hands-on workshop)**

Explore the new Vote411 platform (League's electronic voter guide). This workshop will walk through a step-by-step guide to setting up your local elections and will answer your questions on the new system. Bring a laptop so you can navigate the platform along with us (laptop not required).

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Past, Present and Future**

We will look at some of the "isms" that hang over our collective past, as both a country and a national organization. Thereafter, attendees will be guided in a conversation on the efforts made in recent months, both on an individual basis and by their local Leagues, in overcoming the marginalization that has placed the soul of democracy at increasing risk.

### **Engaging Youth Through Civic Collaborations**

While the pandemic has limited our traditional abilities to get into schools, that doesn't mean we have to stop engaging the youth! Learn how to engage the next generation of voters online, in person, and everything in between even if you can't get into the classroom.

### **Zooming into 2022: How to Successfully Host a Virtual or Hybrid Candidate Forum**

Discover various methods for hosting candidate forums in the digital age. This workshop will discuss best practices for hosting a virtual, hybrid or in-person forum.

### **Hacking Social Media: Getting the Best Use out of your League's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter Accounts**

Learn about different social media platforms, their quirks, and how to "hack" the algorithm. This workshop will explore the uniqueness of each social media platform and explain how your League can use them to your advantage.

### **Let's Take Action: How, When and Why?**

You or your local League is passionate about an issue and wants to advocate and lobby. When is the correct time? How best to advocate? And how does taking action vary based on local, state or national issues? Come learn more about advocacy.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## March 2022

*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, March 1, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Program, Issues & Events Committee**  
via Zoom

**Thursday, March 3, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Great Decisions**  
via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 9, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Local Government Committee**  
via Zoom

**Saturday, March 12, 1:00 p.m.**  
**A WNY Woman's Career Path in  
Environmental Remediation**  
via Zoom

**Monday, March 14, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Board Meeting**  
via Zoom

**Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee**  
via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 16, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Waterfront Committee**  
via Zoom

**Friday, March 18, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Money in Politics Committee**  
League Office

**Tuesday, March 22, 4:30 p.m.**  
**Education Committee**  
via Zoom

**Friday, March 25, 11:00 a.m.**  
**Healthcare Committee**  
via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 30, 1:00 p.m.**  
**League Discussion Group**  
League Office