



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

your
★ VOTER ★

Volume 28, Number 1

September 2022

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LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Voter is published 11 times a year.

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***Russia's War Against Ukraine:
Historical, Local, and
International Perspectives***

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site

641 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202

Join us for this program, presented by Dr. Avto Kharchilava and Dr. Katherine Zubovich of the University at Buffalo, as we explore the question: Where is the accountability for an appalling war that includes murder of civilians and alleged war crimes?

The program is free, but advanced registration is required as space is limited. Contact the League to register at lwvbn@lwvbn.org or call 716-986-4898.

The program is co-sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site and the American Association of University Women Buffalo Branch.



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 Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Summer is winding down and election season is here. Our voter service volunteers are out and about, encouraging voters and talking up the League. Please check the list of where we will be on our website lwvbn.org and stop by to say hello.

This election (as they all are) is crucial to our democracy. We all need to GOTV! We have received a mini grant from LWV New York State to help with our efforts. The grant allows us to run ads on the local radio station, WUFO, during September and October. You can listen online at <https://power965radio.com/> or at 1080AM or 96.5FM on your radio. The grant also provides hand out materials.

Encourage everyone to sign up for the NYS League's texting service to get timely reminders about voting. **Texting Service - text VoteNY to 474747.**

Our esteemed LWVBN board secretary, Susan Dombrowski, has requested to retire. Susan has been a great asset to the League with her years of service. We will miss her on the board and hope to see her at some of our programs. Thank You, Susan!

If you or someone you know would like to serve on the board, please call me and we can talk.

Several of our meetings have been on summer hiatus including the board. We are now back to a full schedule and hope you will join us and help safeguard our voting rights.

Lori Robinson

Great Decisions

The Great Decisions discussion group will meet on Thursday, September 1, via Zoom to discuss Chapter 5 in the 2022 Great Decisions book: **Xi's China takes on the Quad**. The Foreign Policy Association, which sponsors this discussion group nationwide, says this about the topic:

As part of the U.S. pivot to Asia, the United States has been in dialogue with Japan, Australia, and India in an effort to contain China. Recently, the Quad countries held joint naval exercises in the South Pacific. How effective will the actions of this alliance be? *By Kevin Rudd*

Bernice Baeumler will moderate this discussion. Contact Fran Holmes at lwvbn.org for additional information.

Fran Holmes, Great Decisions Coordinator

Please Save the Date!

The **Pulling the Race Card** discussion – planned by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and partner organizations – has been rescheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2022, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The location is to be determined.

Elisabeth Zausmer, Chair, DEI Committee

You Have 4 Guesses (no peeking): What is a Plutonium Pit?

- A) A storage pit for shallow burial of plutonium at the West Valley site
- B) A peach or apricot pit contaminated by low-level radiation
- C) The trigger for a nuclear bomb
- D) None of the above

From the creation of plutonium, a man-made element formed by bombarding uranium, Los Alamos scientists were eager to find a use for it in making a bomb. It was a very touchy element to work with, very chemically reactive, so the work on the first atomic bombs went forward on two tracks. Fat Man was the larger with a solid plutonium core and first exploded in the Trinity test at Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, and used at Nagasaki on August 9. The other, Little Boy, a different type without a plutonium core, was dropped earlier at Hiroshima on August 6.

The composition and size of plutonium alloy pits evolved over time, but all of today's nuclear bombs use them. Between 1954 and 1989, pits for U.S. weapons were produced at the Rocky Flats plant near Denver. After that plant was closed due to numerous safety issues, pit production was shifted to Los Alamos. Recently, amid much controversy, the Savannah River Site in South Carolina was chosen as a second place to make the many new warheads that have been authorized by Congress.

Why new warheads, given how many were decommissioned by both Russia and the U.S. after the START treaty? Plutonium degrades over time by both corrosion and self-irradiation. The plutonium isotopes decay to americium and uranium. This decay is what allows arms inspectors to determine not only that bombs have been made, but also when they were assembled. The degraded pits from retired bombs can be processed to purify the plutonium for re-use in new pits.

So, is it hard for a nation to get its hands on enough plutonium to make bombs? Nope. Plutonium is one of the components of used nuclear power fuel rods. What is their connection to West Valley? When the Nuclear Fuel Services operation there was reprocessing fuel rods from 1966 to 1972, plutonium and uranium were the products it was chemically separating from the rods. After reprocessing at West Valley, plutonium and uranium were sent to other weapons facilities for use. Several nations are still doing reprocessing.

The abundance of plutonium is one of the issues that negotiators have to deal with when meeting periodically at the United Nations to review the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This review, the first in seven years, began in New York on August 1, 2022. These were the Secretary General's conference-opening words: *"Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation."*

Patricia K. Townsend

Naturalization Ceremonies

Volunteers Needed Again

Naturalization ceremonies are back! Our role as representatives of the League of Women Voters is to greet new citizens and help them register to vote. On August 4, I greeted 50 new citizens and registered 49 with the assistance of my visiting family members. The ceremony took place at beautiful but very warm Fort Niagara.

If you are interested in volunteering for naturalization ceremonies please email me at lwvbn.org so I can add you to the distribution list.

Deborah Shiffner

The Harder We Run: The State of Black Buffalo in 1990 and the Present

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Luncheon program at Chef's Restaurant

11:30 a.m. registration, luncheon at noon followed by the speaker
291 Seneca St, Buffalo, NY 14204

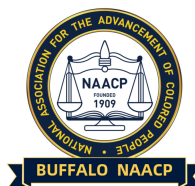
Speaker: Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Director of University at Buffalo Center for Urban Studies

Using the report of a study done in 1990, Dr. Taylor will tell us what happened to Black Buffalo over the past 32 years, why it happened and what we can do about it.

Choose either Small Spaghetti Parmesan or Chicken Cacciatore and spaghetti.

Register and pay online at lwvbn.org or by cutting and mailing the registration form on page 5 by September 27 with your check for \$25 per person to the League Office, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209.

Program is co-sponsored by the NAACP and Voice Buffalo



Money in Politics Update

Buffalo Common Council Redistricting Process

The Buffalo Common Council held its first public meeting about redrawing the districts for the Common Council in the council chamber on June 28, 2022. League members in attendance were Joyce DiChristina, Ramona Gallagher and JoAnn Mecca. About 100 citizens attended in person and about 40 more were on Zoom.

The speakers, many of whom are members of the new activist group Our City Action Buffalo (OCAB), criticized the map as unfair to neighborhoods and racial groups. These citizens were angry and frustrated because they had an alternate map created by Russell Weaver, a geographer, which the council refused to consider. At the end of the meeting the council postponed the vote on its map.

The council scheduled another meeting for July 12 to vote on its map. However, a notice in *The Buffalo News* that morning announced that the council would not vote on its map that day. Instead, members would hear from the city corporation counsel about their options for dealing with the alternate map. As a result, on July 19, in just minutes, the council met and voted unanimously for the recommended map, which members had previously altered, and adjourned the meeting.

On August 3, the mayor held his required hearing on the council-approved map. All speakers but one denounced the map and asked the mayor to veto it. If the mayor does veto the map, the council can override his decision. OCAB will mount a lawsuit on the issue. JoAnn Mecca, Beth Kauffman, and Janet Massaro attended that meeting. Additional information is on the OCAB website, www.OURCITYACTIONBUFFALO.com.

JoAnn Mecca, MIP Committee

**Reservation for the luncheon at Chef’s Restaurant on October 13, 2022
for people who order and pay by check.**

Please mark an X in the box of each menu choice for the people in your party

Name (please print)	Small Spaghetti Parmesan	Chicken Cacciatore with Spaghetti

Total number of meals ordered: _____ X \$25 per meal = \$ _____

Write checks payable to **LWVBN**

Mail to **LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209 by September 27, 2022.**

Your phone number: _____ Email address: _____

League Members Hear Jelani Cobb at the Chautauqua Institution on July 27

Jelani Cobb is fond of sports metaphors. It’s how he describes his attitude amid the current threats to American voting rights and democracy. “I have the optimism of a boxer in the late rounds,” Cobb said. “If I have not been knocked out yet, I still have a chance to win.”

The lessons of his life’s work and personal experiences were part of the lecture series at the Chautauqua Institution, which 28 members of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara attended along with members from the LWV Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties and the LWV Chautauqua County.

Cobb, a historian, Peabody Award winner, incoming dean of Columbia Journalism School and staff writer for *The New Yorker*, spoke to the theme “The Vote and Democracy,” taking the audience on both a personal and a historic journey.



Cobb’s first memory of voting came in 1976 when his father took him along when he voted. While six-year-old Cobb wanted candy at the corner store, he later understood the lesson his dad was teaching him. “He wanted to instill in me at an early age the importance of not only exercising the right to the franchise, but the importance of having the rights to the franchise,” Cobb said.

Cobb discussed the importance of an eight-week span in 1965 that saw President Lyndon B. Johnson sign the Voting Rights Act and Immigration and Nationality Act – a pair of laws which gave the U.S. a drastically different demography that was now a fundamental part of the electorate.



The intermingling of voting rights and immigration, an attempt as Cobb noted to “curate the electorate,” is not a modern idea, but dates back to 1798 and the Alien and Sedition Acts which altered the residency requirement for U.S. citizenship in an attempt to keep immigrants, who favored Thomas Jefferson, from voting. Using the fear of voter fraud as the language to justify voter suppression? That has its roots in 1890.

In the 2020 election, Black voters were asked to do the same thing the nation called upon them to do back in 1870 – nullify the threat of white supremacy destroying democracy. “That is the responsibility that confronts us. That is the work that is in our hands,” Cobb said. “It’s our responsibility to ensure that this country continues to move as diligently as possible in the direction of democracy, not autocracy. History is watching.”

Amy Moritz

Photos show some of our League members who were present at the lecture.



1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September 2022 Calendar

Wednesday, August 31, 1:00 p.m.

League Discussion Group

League Office

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

Great Decisions

via Zoom

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

Program/Issues/Events Committee

via Zoom

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

Board of Directors

via Zoom

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

Local Government Committee

via Zoom

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

Money in Politics Committee

League office

Tuesday, September 20, 7:00 p.m.

Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee

via Zoom

Friday, September 23, 11:00 a.m.

Healthcare Committee

TBA

Tuesday, September 27, 4:30 p.m.

Education Committee

via Zoom

Wednesday, September 28, 6:30 p.m.

Russia's War Against Ukraine

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site

