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The Voter will be published six times this year: Summer, September, November, January, March, and May. Send copy by the second Monday of the month to Terri Parks at lwvoter@verizon.net.

LWVBN Strategic Plan (2023-2026)

Key Strategy: Reorganize LWVBN and Provide Training About How Our League Works

- Goal 1: Restructure and Clarify Committees
- Goal 2: Provide Annual Orientation & Training for Leadership
- Goal 3: Educate and Communicate with Current & New Members How the League of Women Voters Works

Key Strategy: Increase and Diversify Membership

- Goal 1: Review and Update Membership Materials
- Goal 2: Explore and Pursue Geographic Member Recruiting Opportunities
- Goal 3: Increase Purely Social Events

Key Strategy: Focus on Voting-related Issues and Take Stands on Important Issues

- Goal 1: Publish LWV Positions on Important Issues in a Variety of Media
- Goal 2: Make LWV the “Go To” Resource Hub for Voting Information
- Goal 3: Provide Training to Volunteers on How to Effectively Communicate
- Goal 4: Track Voter Turnout in Order to Increase It

Key Strategy: Connect to more Diverse and Local Communities & Organizations

- Goal 1: Research and Catalog Organizations with Common Goals in Erie & Niagara Counties
- Goal 2: Increase Presence within Niagara County, including Rural Communities
- Goal 3: Increase Presence within Southern Erie County, including Rural Communities
- Goal 4: Develop Collaborative Relationships with 5 New Organizations

The entire strategic plan will be available for League members soon. We hope many members will find something in the plan that suits your interests and skill sets. Creating a plan is just the beginning! Working the plan will take many minds, hands, and hearts.

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,

Our work is more important than ever. We need to be out and about encouraging the citizens to vote and informing the people of the importance of having their voice heard. Your vote, your voice. The time has passed to let "others" determine the course of our democracy. We need to be consistent and determined at protecting our freedoms.

Our Voter Services community events coordinator, Mary Bisson, is doing a terrific job at organizing opportunities for the League to attend community gatherings across Erie and Niagara counties throughout the summer. We need you to help with staffing the tables. "Registering voters is an important part of what tablers do, but also encouraging registered voters to vote and giving them the tools to do so thoughtfully can be even more important," says Mary Bisson. Please contact Mary if you have a few hours to participate in this vital League mission.

A shout-out and a big thank you to Timothy Priano for taking on the role of Membership Chair! I look forward to his enthusiastic support for the League and engaging with his plans for us. Watch for your membership renewal reminder and our next members' mixer.

We are still looking for a part-time office manager. If you or anyone you know would be interested in 10-12 hours per week of basic office work at our Delaware Avenue office, please submit a resume with cover letter and three references by Friday, August 18, via email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org or by mail to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209.

Thank you for continuing to follow LWVBN on social media and sharing with your networks. This outreach provides our League with essential visibility.

Please contact me at with any questions, concerns or ideas regarding our local program.

In League, Lori Robinson

Great Decisions

The Great Decisions discussion group will meet via Zoom at 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 3, to discuss Chapter 5 in the 2023 Great Decisions book: "Political trends in Latin America." The Foreign Policy Association, which sponsors this discussion group nationwide, says this about the topic:

Electoral results in Latin America over the past four years have led many observers of the regional/political scene to discern a left-wing surge in the hemisphere, reminiscent of the so-called "Pink Tide" that swept the area some 20 years ago. But how much do these politicians actually have in common? What implication does their ascendancy have for the region? By Jorge Castañeda

Terri Parks will moderate this discussion.

The Great Decisions group will meet via Zoom at 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 7, to discuss Chapter 6: "**Famine: a renewed threat in the 21st century?**" The Foreign Policy Association, which sponsors this discussion group nationwide, says this about the topic:

Fears of global food shortages have followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has disrupted grain shipments from the major grain producer. But what about countries and regions that were suffering before this impending shortage? How is famine defined, and how is it different from simple food shortages? What if any remedies are there? By Daniel Maxwell

Joan Mondul will moderate this discussion.

Contact Fran Holmes for additional information.

Fran Holmes, Great Decisions Coordinator

2023 Annual Meeting Highlights

In addition to the awards presentation, the League installed its new board of directors and officers for the 2023-24 fiscal year, including the re-election of Lori Robinson as president after the budget approval and other business items were completed.

The 2023 Making Democracy Work Award was presented to Tim Tielman, a leading voice for historic preservation in Buffalo for more than 30 years. He has worked on collective efforts to protect important historic buildings and sites such as the Commercial Slip of the Erie Canal through advisement, advocacy and litigation. Tielman's efforts through the Preservation Coalition and The Campaign for Greater Buffalo History, Architecture & Culture have been instrumental in Buffalo's resurgence as an architectural heritage destination.

We were honored to have Alan Bozer, son of the late Joan Bozer, present the Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award and share examples of his mother's dedication to the people of Erie County and the League. Nancy DeTine, award recipient, served on LWVBN's board of directors as second vice president from 2018 to 2021. She worked as the organization's Communications and Public Relations Committee chair, bringing innovative marketing skills to key League programs, including the annual Voters Guide. Nancy has also been the Voter copy editor and proofreader for many League publications.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara "LEE" Awardee is Ellen Neumaier, who was recognized for her long-term commitment to the League with energy and excellence. Leaning into her passion for environmental issues, she was the first and long-term chair of the LWVBN Natural Resources Committee and remains at the forefront of the environmental protection movement in East Aurora. Ellen also coordinates candidate forums with the League for school board, village, town and countywide elections in East Aurora.

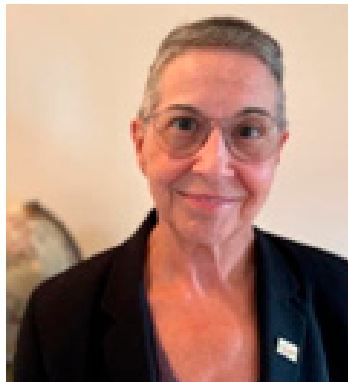
Lori Robinson begins her second two-year term as LWVBN president. A member of the League since 2011, she was treasurer from 2012 to 2019 and membership co-chair. She also was the New York State League treasurer from 2017 to 2023.

Nancy DeTine was elected secretary. Four board directors were also elected: Deborah Shiffner and Cynthia Havey will join the board for the 2023-25 fiscal years while Barbara Gunderson and Sue Czynny were re-elected to serve their second two-year terms. They join Marian Deutschman, vice president, Terri Parks, treasurer, and members Alberta Roman, Kat Cejka and Amy Moritz to comprise the 2023-24 board of directors.

Amy Moritz, Communications Chair



Alan Bozer & Nancy DeTine



Lori Robinson



Marian Deutschman, Judy Weidemann,
Lyle Toohey

Welcome New Members

We're excited and energized to welcome these new members who joined the League in June and July: JoAnn Boehm, Joyce Bruyere, Nadine and Pernell Carson, Margaret Dick, Patrice Hanotte, Georgia Helliwell, Melanie Pederson, Fatima Slimani, Kathy Spillman, and Christine Walker. What a special way to begin the membership year!

I have accepted the position of membership chair and welcome help on the Membership Committee to lead the charge to increase and retain membership. Please contact me if you are interested in hearing more about our efforts.

Timothy Priano, Membership Committee

Another Voice Article in The Buffalo News

Participation by candidates essential to democratic process

More than 100 people came to the Buffalo & Erie County Central Library to ask questions of candidates running in the Democratic Primary for the Buffalo Common Council.

Unfortunately, not all who want to represent those residents showed the same level of interest.

While there are five contested districts on the primary ballot, multiple candidates only showed up from one district – Ellicott. Masten, Lovejoy, North and University candidates were unable to participate in the formal forum because their opponents were no-shows.

When candidates refuse to participate in opportunities to help their future constituents learn more about them, it is a profound loss for voters.

The League of Women Voters has a long history of conducting candidate forums, but this isn't about the League: it's about voters. We want to provide a platform for voters to learn about who will be on their ballot. That's why we are particularly concerned about candidates who refuse to show up at forums or participate in voter guides.

Candidates running for public office are applying for a job. Forums are like job interviews, and the voters are hiring. Who would hire an employee without interviewing them first?

When a candidate decides not to participate, it is a lost opportunity for all voters. Declining an opportunity to discuss the issues that matter most to voters is contrary to the public interest.

Research conducted on voter behavior and participation shows that not only does the public expect candidates to participate in voter education activities, but it also found that voters are more likely to vote when they know who the candidates are and where they stand on the issues. So, when candidates choose not to participate, it's the voters that are harmed.

The League of Women Voters does not endorse individual candidates or political parties. The core of our mission is to empower voters to make informed decisions by providing information and opportunities for meaningful, and respectful, engagement between elected officials, those running for office, and their constituents.

Voters deserve better from their candidates.

The lifeblood of democracy is participation – not only by voters showing up on election day, but by candidates, incumbents, and challengers alike, showing up for public forums.

Lori Robinson is the president of the League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara

A Time of Crucial Decisions about Nuclear Policy

“Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” Oppenheimer, quoting the Bhagavad Gita. When my daughter decided to major in physics at Bryn Mawr, I worried that all the best jobs she would qualify for would involve making bombs. (I needn't have been anxious about her priorities. After she completed her education, she ended up as a contented primary health provider in a small town in the Adirondacks.) We have a date to go together to see the summer Hollywood blockbuster Oppenheimer, the biography of the brilliant theoretical physicist who directed the making of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

After World War II, Oppenheimer became a strong opponent of the development of the hydrogen bomb. He advocated for greater transparency on the part of the U.S. government, which had wrapped all things nuclear under a blanket of secrecy, while engaged in a fierce arms race with the Soviet Union. Oppenheimer advocated for strong control of nuclear technology under an international agency. All of this won him enemies among his former colleagues in science and government.

The year 1953, the first year of Eisenhower's presidency, was a significant one for the policy debate over nuclear technology. From the first briefings on the nuclear program within days after his election until his momentous “Atoms for Peace” address before the United Nations on December 8, 1953, the year was devoted to grappling with how nuclear technology would go forward. Would it remain a government monopoly? Or would it be opened commercially to public utilities? Major corporations like General Electric, Westinghouse, and Du Pont were pressing to profit from the U.S. lead by being the first to market nuclear reactors for the world's electricity needs.

Eisenhower heeded Oppenheimer's call for greater candor as he worked on draft after draft of the U.N. speech. In 1953, for the first time, atomic tests were conducted in Nevada, rather than the distant Pacific, and were closely covered by the press. At the same time, despite Oppenheimer's warnings, preparations were secretly underway for the test of the H-bomb that would take place on Bikini Atoll in early 1954.

Eisenhower's “Atoms for Peace” speech declared America's search for “the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life.” The speech called to curb the nuclear arms race and inspired the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Periodic re-assessments have debated the extent to which the speech was propaganda that used civilian nuclear power to provide cover for the continuation of military buildup or succeeded in slowing nuclear proliferation.

The decision that nuclear reactors would become a commercial enterprise, while also producing the plutonium used to make bombs, meant that the next step would involve creating a bridge between the two. That bridge was the Nuclear Fuel Services operation in Western New York in the 1960s, where usable uranium and plutonium were reprocessed, that is, chemically separated from other highly radioactive elements and isotopes in used reactor fuel assemblies.

The military and commercial aspects of nuclear technology are inextricably linked, whether in the history of the West Valley Project or in the federal government's current investment in developing new types of reactors. At the same time, events in Ukraine remind us that nuclear reactors are a form of civilian infrastructure that is uniquely vulnerable to war. Seventy years later we are at another “1953” – a time of crucial decisions about the future of nuclear policy.

Pat Townsend

Naturalization Ceremonies

On June 7, Elaine Cusker and Eileen Cassidy registered 37 new citizens to vote at the naturalization ceremony at the Robert H. Jackson U.S. Courthouse. Sharon Cramer and Kathleen Macaluso represented the League on July 5 at the courthouse. They greeted and distributed voter registration forms to 50 new citizens with 42 people completing their forms. Some members of the audience also registered. All new citizens who did not register took their forms home to be completed later or online.

Deborah Shiffner, Naturalization Ceremonies Coordinator



1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
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Summer 2023

Thursday, August 3, 10:00 a.m. - noon
Great Decisions
via Zoom

Thursday, August 10, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee
via Zoom

Monday, August 14, 4:30 p.m.
Board of Directors
LWVBN Office

Monday, August 28, 5:00 p.m.
Communication/Marketing/PR Committee
Kenilworth Library

Thursday, September 7, 10:00 a.m. - noon
Great Decisions
via Zoom

Monday, September 11, 4:30 p.m.
Board of Directors
LWVBN Office

Thursday, September 14, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee
via Zoom

Monday, September 26, 5:00 p.m.
Communication/Marketing/PR Committee
Kenilworth Library

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