

President

Lori Robinson
president@lwvbn.org

LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Office

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Office Manager

Arianna Devlin

Tuesdays
11:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m.

Always call before going to the office.

The Voter will be published six times this year. Send copy by the second Monday in February for the March-April edition to lwvoter@verizon.net.

Don't Miss Our Third Thursday Socials!

Purpose: A social gathering for members of LWVBN and anyone interested in learning about the League to connect, discuss opportunities for volunteering and leadership possibilities, introduce new members, showcase the organization's work, and discuss future plans.

Thursday, January 18, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Coffee and Stone

54 Webster Street

North Tonawanda, NY 14120

(716) 389-2233

<https://www.coffeeandstone.com/>

Thursday, February 15, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Penny's Coffee Shop

916 Main Street

Buffalo, NY 14202

(716) 370-0308

<https://www.pennys.coffee/>

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,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! It looks like it is going to be an interesting and eventful one. We will have our work cut out for us with a presentational election and a New York State Constitutional Amendment for the Equal Rights Amendment on the November ballot. More information on the NYSERA can be found here: <https://lwvny.org/nys-equal-rights-amendment/>.

At the November board meeting it was decided to send a letter congratulating newly elected and re-elected officials in Erie and Niagara Counties inviting them to communicate with LWVBN and to follow us on social media. These letters will go out in January once they take office.

The Strategic Planning group has met to review our action to date on the 2023-26 plan. We are progressing. Many of the items are ongoing initiatives that we hope will keep LWVBN thriving. With that in mind, please save the date, Saturday, February 24, for a general membership meeting to discuss the plan.

We had a delightful holiday party with lots of new faces and many familiar ones. Thank you to all who attended.

There will be lots to do this year to get out the vote, so please consider volunteering with LWVBN. We will have sign-up sheets at the meeting on February 24.

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 president@lwvbn.org with any questions, concerns, or great ideas regarding our local program.

In League, Lori Robinson

Notice: LWVBN General Membership Meeting

Saturday, February 24, 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Saturn Club Founders Room, 2nd floor

977 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

All members are encouraged to attend this important meeting when we will discuss the results of our local strategic plan. Leagues across the country are participating in Program Planning, our grassroots process for choosing the LWV Program for 2024 –26.

Agenda

10:30 a.m.: Meet and greet and introductions

11:00 a.m.: Orientation for members, new and familiar

11:45 a.m.: Break

12:15 p.m.: Program Planning LWVUS & LWVBN

1:00 p.m.: Discussion and networking

Light refreshments will be available. There is no cost to attend. Please respond to Arianna, LWVBN office manager, at lwvbn@lwvbn.org or call 716-986-4898, so that we can prepare.

Volunteer Opportunity for Naturalization Ceremony

Please volunteer for the naturalization ceremony at the Robert H. Jackson Courthouse on Wednesday, January 2, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. till noon to present voter information and register new citizens as voters. No experience is needed, as you will be paired with an experienced volunteer.

Materials can be picked up at one of two locations, East Amherst or Elmwood Village. Please respond to Deborah Shiffner and include your phone number.

Thank you so much!

Deborah Shiffner, Naturalization Ceremony Voter Registration Coordinator

LWVBN Awards to Recognize Outstanding Contributions

Once again, it's time to think about honoring local League leaders.

The Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award recognizes outstanding leadership that reflects some of the many qualities that Joan 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 Terri Parks or mail them to: LWVBN Awards, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209 by March 1, 2024.

Be sure your name is noted as the nominator.

We would be very happy to have you help make the decisions for these important recognitions. There will be no more than two meetings. Please contact Lori Robinson if you'd like to be a member of the selection committee.

Making Democracy Work Award for an Outstanding Leader in our Community

The League of Women Voters is an organization dedicated to improving our systems of government; it is the organization where active leaders work hard to make democracy work and create positive change in the community.

All of the leaders who have received our Making Democracy Work Award meet these important criteria. As one of the most trusted organizations in Western New York, LWVBN is proud to be part of a community with such dynamic citizens and, like many other Leagues across the country, we are honored to present this award. It is an ideal opportunity to celebrate an individual who exemplifies qualities essential to the wellbeing of our community.

We reach out to our members for nominees. Please use the nomination form that accompanies this edition of the Voter.

Terri Parks

Be a League Library Champ!

You and a fellow League member or friend have an amazing opportunity to adopt a local library, either your neighborhood branch or the library of your choice in Erie or Niagara County. You will work with library staff to find space for voting materials, a counter or shelf during the year and a larger display option, perhaps a glass case, from October 1 through Election Day in November. All year, you'll keep your library supplied with voting information and materials from our League and the New York State League. In September, you'll work with library staff to design a GET OUT THE VOTE display in space designated by staff. You can order material through Voter Services and/or browse the collection of display materials we've already accumulated. After the election, you'll dismantle the display and store the materials in the LWVBN office. We're offering this opportunity because a pilot program has been so effective and so popular with librarians in both counties, and we hope to have information and displays in every library in Erie and Niagara County. Please get in touch with Ann Zawicki, GOTV Committee Coordinator to become a LIBRARY CHAMP!

Barbara Gunderson, Voter Services Chair

Voter Services Volunteers for the 2023 Election

Under the Voter Services umbrella are candidate forums, naturalization ceremonies, Vote411.org, community events, voter registration/information, college programs, high school programs, and the GOTV Committee. Volunteers participated in community events, naturalization ceremonies, college and high school voter registration and information, Vote411.org administration, a canvassing and voter information distribution effort in the North District of Buffalo, and library displays to get out the vote in October 2023. Most of the people on this list participated in many of the volunteer opportunities above.

Andrea Baldi	Pauline Dyson	Lauren Hess	Lillis McClean	Alberta Roman
Katie Bales	Mike Egan	Jennifer Hoffman	Kathleen McCormick	Caren Shapiro
Mary Bisson	Joan Eschner	Judy Huber	JoAnn Mecca	Deborah Shiffner
Eileen Cassidy	Sarah Fisher	Barbara Jezioro	Patti Meyer-Lee	Estelle Siener
Chris Cavarello	Jill Fondiller	Beth Kaufman	Ellen Moomaw	Jola Simon
Deborah Cohen	Tyrell Ford	Kathleen Keenan-Takagi	Jayne Murry	Edward Stavsky
Sharon Cramer	Janet Goodsell	Jess Kent	Ellen Neumaier	Marjorie Tritto
Elaine Cusker	Ramona Gallagher	Betty Krist	Sandra O'Hara	Kate Wagner
Zack Day	Michele Greco	Rebecca LaCivita	Beverly Painter	Judy Weidemann
Bernard Dent	Barbara Gunderson	Adelaide Lanz	Terri Parks	Alison Whitton
Joyce DiChristina	Patricia Hannotte	Janet Lenichek	Timothy Priano	Celeste Whitton
Katie Dusza	Beatrice Havey	Barbara Weitzner Lin	Amanda Robert	Liz Zausmer
	Cindy Havey	Kathleen Macaluso	Lori Robinson	Ann Zawicki

DEI Committee Sponsored Allied Organizations Meet and Greet

Members of the LWVBN DEI Committee and representatives of 15 other organizations met at the new West Side Bazaar on November 15, 2023. The group included Buffalo Niagara District Councilman David Rivera and, from the mayor's office, Chief Diversity Officer Darren Saxon and City Comptroller Barbara Miller-Williams. We enjoyed an opportunity to learn about one another's organizational history, projects and how we might work together in the coming year. Videographer Rick Wall interviewed various attendees, so we have documentation of the work and mission of the organizations represented.

Members of the Delta Theta Sorority, a civic organization that is more than 100 years old, were interested in the League's assistance with civics education and voting information. Darren Saxon referred us to Pastor Alexis who is interested in providing such information to members of his three congregations of immigrants from African nations. A real bonus was registering a new voter, Erin St. John Kelly, a WEDI member, who had recently moved to Erie County.

The West Side Bazaar vendors catered the event. The food was delicious, and Maria Provenzano and Erin, who presented the buffet table, were extremely gracious and accommodating. This is definitely a great place to consider for future League events.

I want to thank our committee members for their input during meetings and for making phone calls to people who had not responded to our invitation. The personal touch of phone calls made quite a difference in the turnout. Last but not least, we all thank Timothy Priano, co-chair of the DEI Committee, for making the arrangements with people from WEDI and underwriting the event. As always, his contributions were exemplary!

Elizabeth Zausmer, Co-Chair, DEI Committee

Disheartening Nuclear News

For those of us who are tuned in to the continuing failure to find solutions to the problem of nuclear waste, with used nuclear fuel piling up in casks around nuclear plants throughout the United States, the news about reactors has not been encouraging. (Keep in mind that “used” fuel is extremely radioactive and that efforts to recycle it at West Valley were monumentally unsuccessful.)

One trend is the decision to keep old nuclear reactors in operation long past their intended life span. This is disturbing not only because of the possibility of their failure, but because reactor components may become more and more challenging to dispose of when the reactor is finally closed.

Where is this happening? In the U.S., for example, California announced in 2016 that it would close its last nuclear power plant, the aging and earthquake-vulnerable Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant because of excessive cost. However, in November 2023 they applied to extend its license for another 20 years.

In European countries, nuclear plants are extending their years in operation. Hungary derives nearly half of its electricity from Russian-supplied nuclear reactors built in the 1980s with a design life of 30 years. In 2005 their life was extended by 20 years; now they plan to extend their operating license for yet another 20 years. Switzerland is considering the same action. And in Germany, which closed the last of its nuclear reactors in April, political opposition is calling for re-opening them.

A second recent trend has been for the U.S. Department of Energy and private investors with deep pockets, notably Bill Gates, to promote small or modular reactors (SMRs). The hope was that the SMRs would avoid the enormous cost overruns and delays in the construction of large reactors. Criticism of the SMRs centers on the environmental and security risks of scattering them widely, and particularly of the prospect of selling them overseas into areas where warfare and access to the plutonium that the SMRs breed are risks.

NuScale Power Corp., leading among several firms developing SMRs, pulled the plug on the project in November as a financial failure, despite having received hundreds of millions of dollars in grants from the Department of Energy.

Even some environmental activists have begun to promote nuclear power as an answer to fossil-fuel-induced global climate overheating. Will the NuScale failure lead to constructive rethinking of the attractions of nuclear energy, or not?

Pat Townsend

Annual Holiday Party Recap

Nearly 50 people joined us at our annual holiday party, at Banchetti by Rizzo's. Along with hearing about recent work by the League, including outstanding efforts by the Voter Services Committee, members and guests heard from Dr. RJ Haq, a professor of political science at the University at Buffalo, who discussed recent voting data, voting reforms being considered in New York, including rank choice voting, and the impact of early voting on voter turnout. Of course, the attendees appreciated his comments, and we appreciated that he graciously stepped in when our scheduled speaker became ill.

Amy Moritz, Communications Chair

In Memoriam

Long-time League member and leader Joan Mondul died in late August. There was no notice in The Buffalo News or memorial service. For information, I reached out to Laura McDade, who replied, “Joan and I co-edited the Voters Guide for several years. She was on the board during those years but was not responsible for any specific portfolio that I recall. She executed many jobs with little or no fanfare. I remember her fondly as a member that supported all our endeavors.” More recently, Joan served on the League Awards Committee. Her suggestions and comments were wise and considerate, and showed her high ethics and regard for others. I was honored to work with her. She continued to volunteer in other League efforts. Joan certainly was a model of how all League members should act. Those of us who participated in Great Decisions this year were surprised at the news of her death only weeks before she planned to facilitate our September discussion.

Terri Parks



**League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara (LWVBN)
Making Democracy Work Award Application**

Please complete a separate nomination form for each person nominated and return it by mail to LWVBN, 1292 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209, or by email to lwvoter@verizon.net by March 31, 2024.

Please direct questions to Terri Parks at lwvoter@verizon.net.

Any person from the communities in Erie and Niagara Counties who has contributed to the community in a meaningful way to make democracy work is eligible for the award. This application needs to be completed by the nominator.

Nominator: _____

Organization: _____

Email address: _____

Nominee: _____

Contact information for the nominee

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Profession (current/previous):

How long has this individual been active in the community? _____

About the nominee

In one sentence, tell us why the individual you are nominating should be considered for the Making Democracy Work Award.

1. The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders: individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community. How does the individual you are nominating exemplify community leadership?

2. Please describe in detail what impact this individual has had on our community. What population/organization/event has benefited from the nominee's efforts?

3. How does this individual stand out from other leaders in the community?

4. What are your personal experiences with the nominee, if any?



1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January-February 2024

Monday, January 8, 4:00 p.m.

Board Meeting

League Office

Thursday, January 11, 7:00 p.m.

Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee

via Zoom

Thursday, January 18, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Third Thursday Social

Coffee and Stone in North Tonawanda

Monday, January 29, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Communications Committee

Kenilworth Library

Thursday, February 8, 7:00 p.m.

Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee

via Zoom

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

Board Meeting

League Office

Thursday, February 15, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Third Thursday Social

Penny's Coffee Shop in Buffalo

Saturday, February 24, 10:30 a.m – 1:30 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

Saturn Club

Monday, February 26, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Communications Committee

Kenilworth Library

The Voter will be published six times this year. The remaining editions will arrive in the beginning of March and May.