

2026 ELECTION NEWSLETTER

BUFFALO NIAGARA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



MESSAGE FROM JOHN B. LEONARDI BNAR CEO

As we head into the fall market, strong leadership and member engagement are more important than ever. Please learn about the candidates, make your voice heard by voting, and join us at the Annual Meeting as we celebrate our accomplishments and look ahead to the future of our association.



ANNUAL MEETING AND DIRECTOR ELECTION EVENT

As a valued member of our association, your voice and participation are crucial in guiding our path forward. The board election is a great opportunity for you to have a direct impact on the strategic decisions and vision of BNAR. By casting your vote, you play an essential role in selecting leaders who align with our mission and values.



All BNAR members are invited to our FREE Annual Meeting and Director Election Event on Wednesday September 9, 2026 from 5:00-7:00 pm at Salvatore's Italian Prime, 6461 Transit Rd, Depew, NY 14043.



Winners of the Election will be announced shortly after 7:00 pm



Register through your member portal under Events for all BNAR Events. Please note there is a \$25 no show fee.



ELECTIONS & VOTING

There are seven candidates running for Director and four will be selected to serve three-year terms. The Candidates are:

- Earl Altheide
- Colleen Brunelle
- Lisa Hirsch
- Nan Malysza
- Christopher Mekker
- Patrick Stanchak
- David VanSchoonhoven



ONLINE VOTING

As a voting member, you may vote through your member portal. Voting begins on September 2 at 9:00 am and closes on September 9 at 7:00 pm.



IN PERSON VOTING

You may vote in person at the event as well until 7:00 pm. You will need your MLS Login information.

Mission: To assist members to become successful, inclusive, and profitable and to promote professionalism, cooperation, fair housing, and real property rights

Vision: The BNAR will support and maintain an orderly marketplace for the effective exchange of real estate while promoting uncompromising ethical principles among its members.

2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

Born and raised in Lancaster, NY, I have always been proud to call Western New York home. After attending the University at Buffalo, I began my career locally and entered the real estate world more than eleven years ago as an investor. Over time, my passion for the industry led me to become a licensed agent and, ultimately, a broker.

In addition to my professional work, I've been a member of the BNAR board of directors for a year, and an active member of BNAR, serving the past three years on multiple committees, including Technology, Grievance and Professional Standards, Agents' Day, and Best Practices. These experiences have allowed me to contribute to the organization while collaborating with peers to uphold professional standards and explore innovative solutions.

I am eager to continue supporting BNAR and its members, with a focus on integrating new technologies that enhance the way we serve clients and strengthen our role as agents and brokers in the community. My long-standing commitment to real estate and to Western New York motivates me every day to help others achieve their goals.

EARL
ALTHEIDE



2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

"If you love what you do, you never have to work a day in your life."

This sentiment truly reflects my perspective on my career in real estate. With 23 years of experience, I am a dedicated professional specializing in the Western New York real estate market. My commitment to the industry includes serving on several committees at the Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors (BNAR). Additionally, I have enhanced my expertise by earning the Graduate, REALTOR® Institute (GRI) and Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES) designations to better serve my clients.

I am running for BNAR Director because I believe our industry moves forward when we collectively raise the bar. Professionalism isn't just a standard, it's a promise we make to our clients, our colleagues and our community. Directors help shape the association's culture, reinforce ethical standards and strengthen member support. The goal remains to ensure Realtors have the tools and guidance needed to thrive in an ever changing market.

Collaboration isn't just a concept, it's the engine that drives innovation, problem solving and shared success. Directors play a pivotal role in shaping that environment. They help set expectations for ethics, education and accountability. They ensure members have access to meaningful resources, fair representation and a strong voice within the industry. I truly want to contribute to that work and be part of an Association where members feel supported, informed and connected, where our shared commitment to excellence becomes the foundation for everything we do.

Outside of Real Estate, I cherish time with my family, enjoy time with friends and can sometimes be found on the golf course. I served 14 years on the Board of Assessment Review in Orchard Park, where I was most recently voted Chairperson. I enjoy volunteering at Golisano Children's Hospital.

COLLEEN
BRUNELLE



2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

I am honored to be nominated for a Director seat on the Buffalo Niagara Association of REALTORS Board and am grateful for the Nominating Committee's confidence in me.

I have always been interested in real estate, and 12 years ago I decided it was time to join the business. It sounds cliché, but this career is not just a job; it's a passion for me. My credentials, including ABR, MRP, SRES and SRS, reflect my dedication to specialized client service and ongoing education.

Beyond day-to-day client work, I have consistently invested in our professional community through committee involvement at the local and state levels (BNAR AND NYSAR). Serving as a Director on the BNAR Board would mean taking on a vital fiduciary role as part of the association's governing body. As a Director, I would be stepping beyond my individual real estate practice to guide the business, strategic vision, and standards for the entire membership across Western New York.

Through the highs and lows, I am grateful for every opportunity to help others reach their real estate goals.

Real estate is more than transactions for me, it is about building trust, adhering to ethics guidelines, and setting a high standard for our industry. Today, our value to our consumers is defined by integrity, awareness, and education, and I am committed to keeping those core values front and center.

With all of that said, I bring a wealth of practical experience, advocacy, and passion to the table, and I would be privileged and honored to serve our membership on the Board. I ask for your vote for BNAR Director. Thank you!

LISA
HIRSCH



2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

I am currently seeking a position as a Director with the Buffalo Niagara Association of REALTORS® (BNAR).

My commitment to our REALTOR® organization and our profession has been a significant part of my career.

I currently serve on the Board of Managers for REIS and previously served as a Director for BNAR. I am a licensed Real Estate Broker, a Graduate of the REALTOR® Institute (GRI), and an At Home With Diversity® (AHWD) Instructor.

In 2026, I am also serving on several BNAR committees, including Professional Standards, Grievance, Best Practices, and Forms & Contracts. These roles have provided me with valuable opportunities to contribute to our Association, work alongside fellow REALTORS®, and gain insight into the issues and challenges affecting our members and our industry.

As a Director, I would work to ensure that the voices and interests of our members are heard while supporting professionalism, education, collaboration, and the continued advancement of our Association.

NAN
MALYSZA



2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

I am a trusted name in the Buffalo–Niagara real estate community, bringing over 20 years of professional experience. As the Broker of Record at BFLO Realty and founder of Buffalo City Living, I offer a forward-thinking approach to branding and technology-driven property management.

I currently serve on the Grievance Committee and the Professional Standards Committee at the Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors. I am also a Volunteer Firefighter and Advanced EMT in the Getzville Fire Company, where I have previously served on the Financial Audit and By-laws Committees, and as a Chaplain. As a lifelong Western New Yorker, I have successfully built strong relationships across our community in both the private and public sectors.

With a strong foundation in management, risk mitigation, and fiscal policy, I am committed to bringing fresh perspectives to the BNAR Board of Directors.



**CHRISTOPHER
MEKKER**

2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

Since earning my real estate license in 2009, I have made it my life's work to promote homeownership and advocate for Realtors throughout WNY and beyond. I have been fortunate to be mentored by some of the most successful, powerful and kind people who have also served the WNY community as their life's work.

Over the almost two decades of being a part of the fabric of the WNY real estate community's fabric, I have served on many BNAR committees, including chairing the Young Professionals Network and currently chairing the Grievance Committee and Community Engagement Committee. I am also an active member of the Government Affairs Committee with a strong commitment to Realtor advocacy through participating in Lobby Day and being part of the Green Energy Task Force.

I believe that every person should own a piece of the world at some point in life; this is a true pillar of humanity and a vital part of the human experience.



**PATRICK
STANCHAK**

2026 DIRECTOR CANDIDATE

David VanSchoonhoven for BNAR

For 37 years, I have built my career in real estate through experience, leadership, communication, and service. As a licensed Associate Broker for more than 30 years, I have worked with buyers, sellers, and investors through complex real estate transactions while developing a strong knowledge of our local market. As a Team Leader with Howard Hanna's Amherst/Clarence Office and head of Team Schooner, I have also had the opportunity to lead and mentor agents, support office operations, and work collaboratively with clients, colleagues, and staff. Service and leadership have been important throughout my career. I have previously served the Buffalo Niagara Association of REALTORS® as a Director and Committee Member. I have also served as Worshipful Master of the Free and Accepted Masons and with the Greater Lockport Development Corporation. From 1982 to 1986, I proudly served in the United States Army, attaining the rank of Sergeant.

I am seeking the opportunity to serve BNAR again and to bring the experience I have gained throughout my 37 years in the real estate profession to that responsibility. BNAR exists to support its members and promote professionalism, cooperation, fair housing, and real property rights. I would be proud to contribute my experience in leadership, team management, agent mentoring, communication, real estate compliance, organization, and community engagement in service to the Association and its members.

I would sincerely appreciate your support and your vote.

David VanSchoonhoven

Experience. Leadership. Service.



DAVID
VANSCHOONHOVEN

UPCOMING EVENTS AT BNAR!



Meat-Brawl Competition!
Join us for a fun, flavorful night of competition, community, and support for RPAC!

Cost: \$75 RPAC Investment

 Artisan Culinary Loft
200 Amherst St, Buffalo, NY 14207

 October 14, 2026

 5:30 - 8:00 PM



DON'T MISS THIS SPOOKTACULAR EVENT!

Join us for an engaging and energetic Agents Day & Trade Show, where industry connections, education, and business growth come together with a festive Halloween twist. This highly anticipated event brings together real estate professionals and a wide range of seminars and exhibitors showcasing the latest products, services, and resources designed to support your success. Cost is \$10.

 Grapevine Banquets
333 Dick Rd Depew NY 14043

 October 28, 2026

 Registration opens at 8 AM

Please register for all events on the member portal under Events.

Please note there is a \$25 no show fee

Interested in getting involved at the BNAR?
Join a committee!
Committee forms are due to Chloe Cozzarin (ccozzarin@bnar.org) by 12/11/26

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 Buffalo Niagara Association of REALTORS®