

July
2014

The DARE Voter

Mark Your Calendar

(At press time, the details for some of these events are not finalized. Please watch your email for particulars as they become available.)

July 1 -- MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE! Form is included in this newsletter.

Thursday, July 31 -- 10:00 - 4:00 --- Annual Retreat at Outer Banks Visitors' Center in Manteo
Current and past Boards are invited to attend as well as other interested members. A box lunch will be served. RSVP to Glenda Keel at 261-5214 by July 25.

September 29 -- 6:30 p.m. -- Jockey's Ridge State Park Auditorium --- The North Carolina Budget presented by the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center: Alexandra Sirota, Director, and Tazra Mitchell, Policy Analyst.



Co-President's Letter

Greetings,

I'm slowly returning to my duties as co-president after two surgeries. I have a love/hate relationship with my walker, but "she" helps me get to meetings. I am also getting the hang of the motorized carts at Harris Teeter. I have only "taken out" two signs, no displays so far!

The meeting I did get to was the Annual Meeting Luncheon on May 30, 2014 at Pamlico Jack's. We installed returning Board members for the 2014-2016 term. They are Mary Jane Slesinski, co-president, Lorilei DiBernardo, Vice-President, Marion Midgett, Elected Board Member, Nancy Birindelli, Treasurer, and Lori Williams, Membership Chairperson. Fran Kapinos presented the slate to the attendees and Dru Ferrence installed them. Almost forty Leaguers had a lovely social time and lunch. Our speaker, Carmen Odom-Hooker was delightful and inspiring. She spoke on women as leaders. Her words really rang true. Two points she made that stood out are that successful women leaders work harder than most and have had one person in their lives that had total confidence in them and told them so. All agreed we were enriched by her words and we also concurred that our daughters and granddaughters should hear her talk. If you missed this program, just wait until you hear of some of the programs we are planning for the 2014-15 year.

Our Annual Board Retreat is Thursday July 31st at the Visitors Center in Manteo, starting at 10:00 AM. The retreat is designed to bring together Board members and interested parties to brain storm and preplan the next year's events. As always everyone is welcomed to attend or send in ideas for programs. We already have a program in the works about the NC Budget. More information about this and other programs and socials will be in the August Newsletter.

If you have not renewed your membership please do so. Membership information is included later in the Newsletter. Lori Williams, Membership Chairperson, reported that we currently have 50 members signed up. Last year was a record of 82 members. It is an easy thing to forget, so this is a gentle reminder.

Have a safe and "cool" summer.

Fondly,
Lin Logan, Co-President

Surveying the School Scene

Marion W. Midgett, Education Chair

The Dare County Board of Education (BOE) met for regular meetings on May 13, 2014 at Cape Hatteras Secondary School and on June 10, 2014 at Manteo High School. In addition, the BOE met for a budget workshop on May 1 and a joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners (BOC) on June 2. Also, Board of Education members spoke at the May 19 BOC pre-passage public hearing on the budget. The following covers highlights of those meetings focusing on BOE business topics, educator issues, reports, and recognition of retiring members.

2014—2015 Budget

After many meetings, discussions, and negotiations, the BOE approved their budget, amended it, and eventually compromised with the BOC on a final document. In the end the BOE requested \$330,115 less and the BOC agreed to withhold only \$500,000 instead of \$1.4 million to pay for maintenance projects shown by invoice to have been completed. The per pupil allotment will be approximately \$3973, just a bit more than 2013—2014. A positive aspect of this budget is the County's agreement to fully fund for County—paid school personnel any salary and benefit increases passed by the NC Legislature. This has not always happened as the State budget comes in during the summer after the County has adopted its budget.

The two boards never agreed on definitions of “capital maintenance” and “operating maintenance” which are at the core of their dispute over whether certain maintenance items (projects) should be paid from the per pupil allotment or be funded separately by the County as capital maintenance. Many maintenance items (projects) have not been completed during the past few years.

Here's just a bit of history about the per pupil allotment formula. A budget process whereby an amount of \$2000 per student per year as a flat allotment from the County, instead of a line item budget request process, was agreed upon in 1999 during mediation after the BOE sued the County over funding issues. The formula has been adjusted through the years based on changing personnel costs; on costs of outfitting, staffing, and caring for new schools; on rising supply and equipment costs; and technology advances/changes; etc.

Career Status (Tenure) Elimination and Additional Pay for “Top 25%” of Teachers

The last report in this space (May newsletter) explained the legislation and Dare Schools’ response. On May 13 the board attorney gave an update on the status of two school system lawsuits and a preliminary ruling. He advised against doing the “25%” process now but to be ready in June. He also said that school systems would be better off to be in on the suits. After a closed session with the attorney, the Board voted to authorize the attorney to explore options of litigation against the State of North Carolina regarding implementation of the 2013 Teacher Tenure Law and so-called “25%” rule. Meanwhile lawsuits filed against both the tenure law and vouchers for non-public schools have resulted in injunctions delaying both statewide and delaying any Dare Schools’ action. (Your reporter jumped the gun and reported this a few days early last month, but it’s the case now.)

Student Laptop Initiative

The district has been planning and preparing for distribution of student laptop computers to all students in grades 6—12 since 2009. Throughout this school year a variety of staff members and students have had opportunities to “test drive” a number of different laptops and to evaluate each for affordability, durability, and instructional functionality. The groups reached consensus on a first choice---*Dell Chromebook 11*. The choice was presented in detail and shown to the Board on May 13 and approved on June 10 for purchase, distribution, and use in the 2014—2015 school year.

Annual Report: Random Drug Testing of Students--Nancy Griffin

Drug testing is required of athletes and others who participate in privileged activities in grades 7 through 12. Ninety-three percent of high school students are in the pool. All testing is handled by an outside vendor who chooses the students (50%), performs the tests, and reports results.

This year there was a 13% reduction of positives. This is a 50% reduction since 2011. While results are improving, Dare’s incidence rate is about two times the national rate. Only parents receive results on first positives; school is notified of subsequent positives. The overwhelming majority of positives were for marijuana; there was only one instance of heroin. Data shows strong acceptance of the program as a preventive.

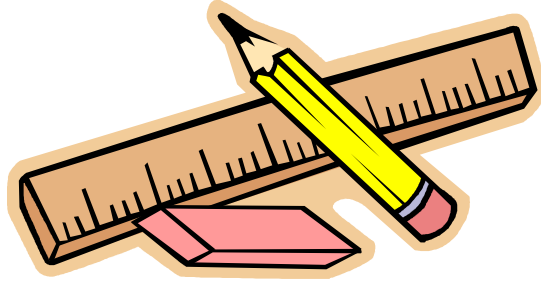
Resolution Regarding Pending Legislation

After a closed session on June 10, the BOE adopted a resolution opposing “legislation that would transfer or authorize the transfer of ownership, maintenance, general control of, or other authority regarding public school buildings and facilities away from local boards of education to any other entity.”

The resolution was sent to the General Assembly members representing Dare. Legislation allowing this kind of change was introduced last year and may rise again during the 2014 short session. Watch *The Coastland Times* for more information.

Retiring Board Members

Dr. Walter Holton and Benjamin Cahoon are retiring at the end of June. Dr. Holton has served 16 years which he reviewed in a short, emotional speech to a large audience. He pointed to the importance of parents, teachers, and students. Ben Cahoon, current vice-chair has served 6 years. He thanked all and praised the work of staff and Board members. Both received standing ovations.



Voter Services Committee Report

Mary Ellen Hawthorne, Chair

Appreciation is extended to all League members who participated in the Spring Voter Services Programs! This is one committee that "gets the job done" because of everyone's contribution, whether out front or behind the scenes. Planning, arranging, and staffing candidate forums and meetings takes Team Work. We are true to the League mission of providing Dare County with a fair, informative, and courteous Election Process.

Activities included the following:

- 1) Spring 2014 Primary and Board of Education Elections.
- 2) Letters mailed to all candidates with an invitation to participate, Voters Guide questions, and a pledge.
- 3) Newspaper articles referencing LWV Voter Services programs.
- 4) Reception for Candidates running in Primary Races held on April 6th at Kitty Hawk Town Hall. It was well attended, and each candidate gave a three minute presentation and then mingled with the attendees.
- 5) Board of Education Forums on April 3rd at Cape Hatteras Secondary School with a sparse gathering and on April 10th at Nags Head Elementary with more than fifty citizens in attendance.
- 6) The Coastland Times and the Sentinel published the Voters Guide.

Thanks to all the members involved in the Spring Voter Services Programs!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DARE, NC.

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Contact: Audrey Esposito 261-8052

On Wednesday, May 21, 2014 four members of the League of Women Voters of Dare: Nancy Birindelli, Lori DeBernardo, Audrey Esposito, and Lori Williams journeyed to Raleigh to visit the North Carolina Legislature along with almost fifty league members from across the state. League members gathered in the Legislative Building and were greeted by the LWVNC Advocacy Team: Mary Klensz, Advocacy Chair; Janet Hoy, LWVNC Health Care; and Vicki Boyer, Education Roundtable.

The day began with updates on important LWV issues: the expansion of Medicaid by Adam Linker of the NC Justice Center; Alexandra Sirota briefly discussed the state budget and tax issues including reinstating the Earned Income Tax Credit; and Page McCullough from Public Schools First NC talked of the current state of education in NC.

League members then broke into small groups in order to visit each and every representative's office with printed information and handouts of LWV issues. Some members observed Committees while in session while others had appointments with their own legislators. The Dare County group met with Senator Bill Cook and Representative Paul Tine and advocated for LWV issues.

After attending lunch in the delegates dining room/ cafeteria League advocates chose to visit either the NC House or Senate while in session. The Dare members decided to sit in on the Senate which was debating Senate Bill 786 Energy Modernization Act—(fracking), with Senator Rucho beginning the discussion of the second reading of this bill. There were four amendments proposed, on disclosure of chemical compounds, protection of water quality, enabling local government to have a say in the process, compulsory pooling. Each of these amendments were voted down with votes of either Aye 17, Nay 29; or Aye 16, Nay 30. Later in the afternoon, after the Dare group departed, SB 786 passed.

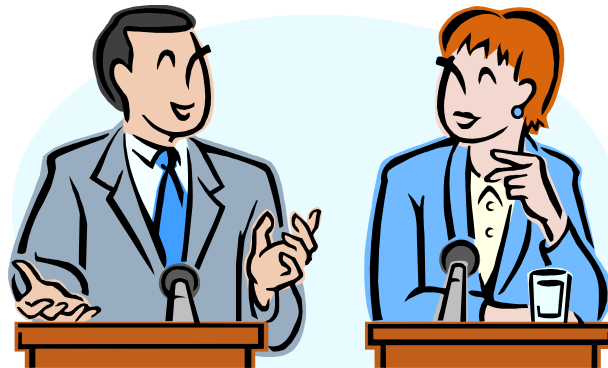
www.LWVDareNC.org

The LWV of Dare valued the opportunity to make the League of Women Voters presence known to our lawmakers and why the League cares about these issues. Future advocacy plans are being developed by the LWNCA Advocacy Team.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

For more information visit our website at LWVDareNC.org or contact co-presidents Mary Jane Slesinski mjslesinski@gmail.com or Lin Logan LWVDare@gmail.com.

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Just a Note

I have been on the sidelines for a while, but I was able to attend the Board of Education Forum at Nags Head Elementary School with my husband Bob. A nearly full room, all but one candidate, press, Commissioners, parents, concerned citizens, and , as always, plenty of Leaguers on hand. Good question and answers from the candidates. Dru did a great job of moderating. No doubt a success, but the real success story here is about my husband and the many voters who benefit from our forums. After he early voted we talked about our ballots. He said, “I couldn’t have voted or voted intelligently, if it hadn’t been for the forum.” I agreed. I knew there were many more voters that could have said the same thing. That’s how we help democracy work!

Sincerely,
Lin



League of Women Voters of Dare County

ANNUAL DUES

Individual membership:	\$50
Household membership:	\$75
Amount enclosed (checks made out to LWV of Dare)	\$ _____

CITIZEN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Please consider enclosing a tax deductible contribution to the Citizen Education Foundation (CEF). Contributions provide direct support for citizen education programs and the publication of the annual Dare County Citizens Guide which provides information about government and services to county residents.

Amount enclosed (checks payable to LWV-CEF): \$ _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

PLEASE NOTE - IF YOU CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR, PLEASE LET US KNOW SO WE CAN UPDATE OUR RECORDS AND KEEP YOU INFORMED OF ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

I/we are interested in assisting with: Voter Services _____; Education _____; Natural Resources _____; Health _____; Public Relations _____; Citizens Guide _____

Do you have any interests/talents that you would be willing to share/assist our league?

Plases remit to: League of Women Voters of Dare
PO Box 689
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949



LWV – Dare
P.O. Box 689
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949
www.LWVDareNC.org

Address Service Requested

League of Women Voters of Dare County

Officers:

Co-presidents:

Lin Logan (2013-2015) - 480-2866

Mary Jane Slesinski (2012-2014) -261-1591

Vice President: *Vacant*

Secretary: Glenda Keel (2013-2015)

Treasurer: Nancy Birindelli (2012-2014)

Elected Lori DiBernardo (2012-2014)

Board Members: Audrey Esposito (2013-2015)

Carol Butscher (2013-2015)

Lori Williams (2012-2014)

Committee Chairs:

Citizens Guide: Geri Sullivan

Education: Marion Midgett

Fundraising: Carol Butscher

Health: *Vacant*

Membership: Lori Williams

Newsletter: Nancy Birindelli and Lauren Logan

Nominating Committee: *Vacant*

Program Coordinator: *Vacant*

Public Relations: Audrey Esposito

Voter Services: Mary Ellen Hawthorne

Natural Resources: Lori DiBernardo

Program: *Vacant*

Appointed Geri Sullivan

Board Members: Mary Ellen Hawthorne

(2013-2014) Marion Midgett

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to both men and women. Annual dues, payable July 1, are \$50 for individuals and \$75 for households. To join, send a check made payable to: League of Women Voters of Dare County, P.O. Box 689, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949.