

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
DARE COUNTY

May
2014

The DARE Voter

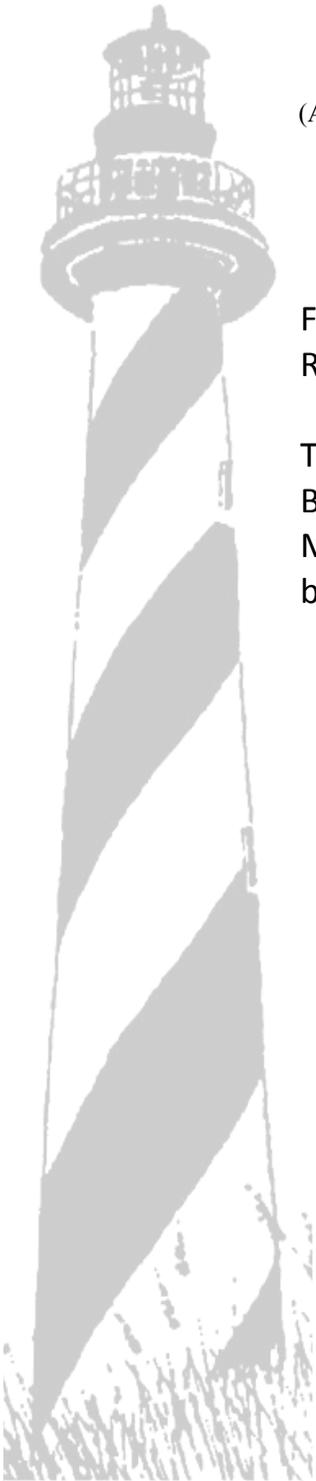
Mark Your Calendar

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

Friday, May 30, 11:30 a.m. – Pamlico Jack’s – ANNUAL MEETING—
Reservation form is included.

Tuesday, July 15, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. – Visitors’ Center, Manteo –
Board Retreat

Members are invited to attend, and suggestions for programming can
be forwarded to any Board member.



Co-President's Letter

Since our last Newsletter was published, we held several great events for our members and for the citizens and voters of Dare County.

On March 19 we held a members-only program and reception at the Coastal Studies Institute in Skyco. Dr. Nathan Richards discussed Maritime Heritage on Outer Banks and described his work exploring shipwrecks off our coast. He also described the unique educational experiences for undergraduate and graduate students at the Institute. Thank you, Lori DiBernardo, for planning the event, to Tony DiBernardo for serving as host and bartender, and to all of those who helped to make the wine and cheese tasting a success.

On April 4 we stuffed envelopes for our annual mailing and held First Friday Lunch at Plaza Azteca. If you have not opened your large envelope, please do so. It contains, among other important things, your reservation form for the Annual Meeting, which will be held on May 30 at Pamlico Jack's. It also contains your LWV membership renewal form for the 2014-2015 season.

In April, Mary Ellen Hawthorne and her team held a reception for the candidates running in the primary election at the Kitty Hawk Town Hall. Most of the candidates and many members of the community attended for a lively discussion. Two forums were held for School Board candidates, the first in Hatteras and the other at the Nags Head Elementary School. Again, many members of the public and the candidates attended.

Audrey Esposito and Nancy Birindelli planned an extremely interesting program to inform Dare County citizens of the impact of North Carolina's education legislation on our schools with a visit from Dr. June Atkinson, the Superintendent of Public Instruction for NC, at the First Flight High School on Monday, April 28. Many members of the community, Dare County teachers and local political leaders attended this program.

The May First Friday Lunch was a pot-luck lunch combined with New Member Orientation and was held at the Duck Town Park on Friday, May 2.

The Primary Election was held on May 6. While this was the Primary for US Senate and US House of Representative seats and several State and County offices, it was the only election for Dare County Board of Education candidates. Results are posted on the Dare County Board of Elections website at http://enr.ncsbe.gov/ElectionResults/?county_id=28

Please make your reservations and mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting on May 30 at Pamlico Jack's at 11:30.

I'm hoping to see you all at these activities, Mary Jane

PS. Please keep Lin Logan in your thoughts as she had surgery on May 1 and will be recovering over the next few weeks.

Membership Update

Our membership roster continues to expand – there are now 83 members – an all-time high. In response to a gain of 11% this year, LWV – Dare received a acknowledgement certificate from LWV – US signed by Elisabeth MacNamara, President.

The two newest members are Arlene D’Agosto and Chrissy Simmons – welcome.

Please remember to send in your dues, still only \$50 for one member and \$75 for a family. The number of family memberships also continues to increase. Consider having your spouse or adult child join as well. The membership renewal form is included.



Dr. June Atkinson Visited Dare

By Nancy Birindelli

The North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. June Atkinson, visited Dare County in April. She presented a most informative address about The Status of Education in North Carolina: The Impact of the State’s Budget cuts on PreK-12 Education. The auditorium at First Flight High School provided a perfect venue and the presentation was attended by approximately 125 interested teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. The event was sponsored by LWV as the lead with co-sponsorship by The Dare Education Foundation, The Dare Literacy Council, The Dare County North Carolina Retired School Personnel Association, and the Zeta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. Audrey Esposito and Nancy Birindelli planned the event with the cooperation of Dr. Sue Burgess, Dare Superintendent of Schools, and Nancy Griffin, Director of Secondary Instruction.

Dr. June Atkinson Visited Dare (con't)

By Nancy Birindelli

Dr. Atkinson presented a grim review about the state of education in our state. With the severe decreases in the state's funding as approved by the General Assembly, teachers' salaries continue to be frozen for the sixth year with a beginning teacher earning \$30,500 which is the 48th worst in the country. Also, the master's degree stipend has been eliminated, and there is a drastic change in tenure with only 25% of teachers being selected to receive raises if they give up their right of tenure and sign a four year contract providing only a \$500 salary increase next year. This latter action is being reviewed in the courts. A sad, but understandable, consequence is that 41% of NC teachers are either retiring or leaving the state to seek employment elsewhere. Along with cuts in salary, positions, materials and supplies, textbooks, and early childhood education, the entire state system is in a dire financial condition. North Carolina and Hawaii are the only states that operate the educational system as one unit not by counties or local jurisdictions as is the case in all other locations. Therefore, the impact of the budget approved by the General Assembly greatly affects all aspects of the educational process.

Two other items that were discussed were the use of public funds for vouchers for students to attend private schools (also being litigated) and an effort to eliminate the new common core curriculum which is intended to provide a more standardized course of study in math and reading for students in the entire country so that they can transfer to a different state and be on grade level with those students.

Dr. Atkinson visited Kitty Hawk Elementary and First Flight High Schools on the second day of her visit and had great praise for the activities that she observed at both locations. The day ended with a luncheon at Kelly's for the co-sponsors, members of the Board of Education, and school administrators.

LWV was extremely pleased that June was able to come to OBX and spend some quality time with our community and its schools. She is a very enthusiastic speaker who has a real passion for education.

The program was videotaped and is being aired on the new Educational Access channel on Charter Cable – 198. It will be shown three times daily from now until May 20. The program will air at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. You are invited to tune in.

A Visit to the North Carolina Legislature.

On Wednesday, May 21, four representatives from LWV – Dare will attend the LWV Day at the NC Legislature. Audrey Esposito, Lori DiBernardo, Lori Williams, and Nancy Birindelli will attend and will visit with our local Representative Paul Tine and Senator Bill Cook to discuss items that the League advocates. They will also sit in on several committee sessions as well as the general session.

LWV – NC Council

Audrey Esposito, Lori and Sam Williams attended the biannual Council for LWV – NC in Asheville in April. Every other year the state League holds a meeting to approve the budget and to focus on Issues of Emphasis that have been selected for advocacy. The issues for 2013 – 2015 are the environment, immigration, campaign finance reform, ratifying of the ERA in NC, voter protection, education, redistricting, and health care. Local Leagues are encouraged to provide informational meetings on these topics for their citizens. Audrey was a presenter on the issue of the environment. Next year, LWV – NC will hold its Convention when officers and Board members of the state League are elected as well as the budget and sessions about the Issues of Emphasis.

Support for BPW

The Virginia Dare Chapter of the Business and Professional Women’s Club will hold its 17th Annual Symposium on November 14 at the Ramada Plaza. The cost is \$35.00. The proceeds from the event are used by BPW for its scholarship initiative.

Annual Meeting Reservation Form

Annual Meeting Reservation Form
Friday, May 30, 11:30 a.m.
Pamlico Jack’s Restaurant

Name(s) _____

Number of guests _____ @\$20.00 – Total: _____

Luncheon: light hors d’oeuvres, salad with choice of grilled chicken or salmon, pound cake with strawberries.

Select: _____ chicken or _____ salmon

Mail check, made payable to LWV-Dare, to:
LWV
P.O. Box 689
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949

Deadline for reservations: Monday, May 26, 2014

Contact Nancy Birindelli – Bbirindelli@aol.com – for late requests or changes

Surveying the School Scene

Marion W. Midgett, Education Chair

The Dare County Board of Education (BOE) met for regular meetings on March 11, 2014 at First Flight Elementary School and on April 11, 2014 at Nags Head Elementary School. In addition, the Board met in special session on March 17, 2014. The following covers highlights of those meetings, plus state-wide news with local impact in a different format this month focusing on BOE business topics and educator issues.

County Commission Offer to take over capital maintenance

As reported here in the last newsletter, the County offered in January to take over the capital maintenance of school facilities instead of funding the Capital Improvement Plan request. At its April 8 meeting, the Chairman Sproul reported that the BOE had not yet made a decision. Sproul described capital maintenance as “the technical maintenance of systems such as heating and cooling and large capital fund items like roofs and other facility improvements that extend the life of a structure.”

At their April 23 workshop, as reported in *The Coastland Times*, the County Commission decided to “pursue a directed maintenance path whereby the County would withhold for maintenance work \$1.427 million of the schools’ budget allotment. Under this program, Dare Schools’ personnel would manage the projects but submit invoices to Dare County for payment. The County Commission contends that maintenance funding is included in the per pupil formula that is used to calculate the local current operating expense for the schools.” (*The Coastland Times, April 27, 2014, pg. one*) The per pupil amount is \$3,954, the highest in the State.

Proposed Dare School Budget

In April Dr. Burgess presented a draft operating budget for 2014—2015. To fulfill it, a funding increase of \$1.2 million from Dare County would be needed. This budget is on track to be approved on Mar 13, 2014. The following is a snapshot of budget facts:

- 2013—14 funding was based on enrollment of 5010; 2014—15 budget anticipates an increase to 5029
- Total is \$57.75 million with \$29.3 million (54%) from state sources, \$2.1 million (5%) for federal program support, and \$21.0 million (41%) from local appropriation and other sources
- Burgess anticipates six additional state funded teachers
- A total of 224 teacher positions will be state funded
- 97.5 teacher positions will be locally funded, the same number as 2013—14. Budget anticipates an increase to \$33,000 for beginning (early-career) salaries, a 3% rise for other teachers, and an increase in local supplement pay of 2 to 3%, as well as insurance premium increases

- Local funds make up the major portion of funding for the following: instructional supplies--\$1.38 million local, \$295,856 state funds; general operations, \$1,458,700; expenses of athletic programs, \$601,903; utility bill, \$2.67 million; professional development \$60,000; maintenance dept., \$995,800.
- Capital outlay fund request total is \$700,000 to cover: individual school needs such as desks, chairs, tables, scoreboards, etc. at \$96,000; technology needs such as phones, security cameras, projectors, paging systems, school pads, at \$201,900; transportation, \$50,000 debt on activity buses; maintenance needs for a chiller replacement, a power breaker, etc. at \$352,000
- A new program using local funds will distribute a laptop computer to each student in grades six through 12. The first year allocation is \$200,000; \$180,000 for the second year. These funds are available with the lapse of existing computer lease programs.
- Two more important programs listed in the budget are the child nutrition operation which will spend \$2.28 million and the After-School Enrichment Program slated to spend \$545,050 in fiscal 2015. Both are basically self-supporting.

Manteo Elementary Addition

Ocean Builders, LLC of Nags Head won the contract to construct the sorely needed MES addition for \$2,550,000. Work began on April 28 and is required to be completed by December 12, 2014. Additional funds (\$29,000) are required for various special inspections, engineering, and testing related to the building systems (HVAC, etc.).

Career Status (tenure) Repeal and BOE Response

The 2013 NC General Assembly passed legislation repealing teacher career status rights with full effect by 2018. In addition to repeal, they designed and mandated a plan whereby each district, beginning in spring 2014, would identify 25% of its teachers, counselors, etc., to be offered a four-year contract with a \$500 raise (bonus) for four years in a row. Employees accepting the contract would voluntarily relinquish career status. Others' career status would end in 2018 or never be given to newer teachers.

Teachers in Dare expressed great concern about being forced to surrender career status and due process. Many said they would not accept such a contract. So at the March 11 meeting, the BOE approved a plan allowing teachers to "opt out" of the process. The process will be formal, written, and individual. The legal counsel advised that although the law requires the process, there is nothing that prohibits systems from allowing the "opt out" provision. Other NC school districts are allowing this process.

Teachers representing Dare County Association of Educators (DCAE) spoke during *public comment* urging Dare to join other districts in lawsuits fighting the career status law and the new NC voucher law which would divert \$10 million from public schools by using taxpayer dollars to send students to private schools. Meanwhile lawsuits filed against both laws have resulted in injunctions delaying both.

BOE Resolution in Support of Robust Teacher Compensation

At a special meeting on March 17, the BOE called on the General Assembly by resolution to move forward with a robust teacher compensation plan that will:

- attract and retain high quality teachers,
- significantly increase all teachers' salaries,
- reinstate compensation for advanced degrees,
- consider and reward teacher collaboration,
- not be restricted by a predetermined percentage, and
- honor the career status of all teachers who had qualified for career status by June 30, 2013.

Many red-clad teachers attended the recent BOE meetings. In addition they've held forums with elected officials and candidates for state positions.

Note

Many thanks are due to Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy personally and for her reporting for *The Coastland Times*.





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?



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.