



THE VOTER NEWSLETTER

New Year Edition
January 2017

Mark Your Calendar!

- January 6, 2017 **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon**, Noon, Coastal Provisions; Speaker: Lynn Blackburn of the Dare Literacy Council will be our guest speaker
- January 11, 2017 **Movie Night - *Equal Means Equal***, 6pm, Duck Woods Country Club FREE to LWV members **seating limited** Contact Judy Lotas judylotas@gmail.com for reservations
- February 1, 2017 **Educational Event: “*Seismic Testing*”**; 7 PM, Pitts Center, Southern Shores; Speaker: Ladd Bayliss, Coastal Federation. Details TBD Open to the General Public
- February 3, 2017 **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon**, Noon, Venue TBD; Speaker: Gail Sonnesso, of GEM will be our guest speaker
- March 3, 2017 **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon**, Noon, Venue TBD: Speakers: Bea Basnight & Dr Sue Burgess will provide a “***Snapshot of Current Education in Dare County***”
- March 14, 2017 **ERA Day in Raleigh!** 1000’s of women and men will journey to our state capital to urge support for the Equal Rights Amendment in N.C.
- April 27, 2017 **Educational Event: “*Being Your Own Healthcare Advocate*”**; 1 PM Baum Center: Panelists include local health care providers describing how to best advocate for yourself or a loved one while experiencing a medical challenge. Open to the General Public

The Citizens Guide 2017 is busily being readied for printing and distribution. A great deal of work goes into the verification & formatting of the data. Printing and distribution is another huge job! Thank you, Carol Butscher and Team, for all your work on this signature LWV-Dare project!

Co-President's Message

Hello LWV Dare Members!

As we start this New Year and review the past year, many are concerned about the recent political divisiveness and polarization. 240+ years ago, our country, our democracy, was felt to be a 'grand experiment'. That 'experiment' has grown and strengthened and endured. As we move forward, we must re-affirm the basic principles of that democracy: that each and every citizen matters, that each and every vote counts, and that each and everyone has a contribution to make to the greater good. We all must be vigilant and responsive to attempts to thwart the dignity of any segment of our society, to undermine fair elections, and to cloud the discussion with self-interest and partisanship.

There are issues that require work and attention. Among them:

- Attempts in Raleigh N.C. to circumvent election results
- Continued Voter Suppression efforts
- Electoral College overhaul
- Non-partisan Re-districting

I personally would add 'Presidential Campaign Time Limits' to the list. Tuned in voters do NOT require 18 months to determine who warrants their vote. This drawn-out circus atmosphere contributes to voter fatigue and complacency. Other countries complete their campaigns and elections in much shorter timeframes, why can't we?

Back to our local efforts ... Our next **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon** is at noon Jan 6th at Coastal Provisions in Southern Shores. The featured speaker will be Lynn Blackburn of the Dare Literacy Council. Please make your reservation by contacting Lynda Burek rmburek@charter.net.

Our ERA Team is working to add Women to the U.S. Constitution! If you haven't seen the award winning film: **Equal Means Equal**, you have an opportunity on Jan 11th 6pm at Duck Woods Country Club. "**Movie Night**" will include light appetizers, popcorn, beverages, and a Cash Bar. The event is FREE for members, but seats are limited. Contact Judy Lotas judylotas@gmail.com for reservations. (See ERA article for all the ERA details.)

Lastly, we have an evening educational event on Feb 1st on the topic of **Seismic Testing**. Ladd Bayliss of the Coastal Federation will be our speaker. This event is open to the general public. Additional details TBD.

Happy & Healthy New Year to all of you! Stay Informed!

Submitted by: Lorelei DiBernardo and Geri Sullivan, Co-Presidents

Treasurer's Report and Fundraising Committee

Our Holiday Party was a great success!! Our auctioneer extraordinaire, Tony DiBernardo, did a superb job of "selling" the live auction items for top dollar. A very special thank you goes to Pat Hayward! Although she has relocated to Virginia Beach, she donated 16 pieces of her art collection which added over \$500 to the net proceeds.

Thanks to members who participated in the Belk Charity Day Sale in November. The store's profit to us was the highest ever, and the ticket sales added almost \$600 to our treasury. Also, a big thanks to Carol Butscher who represented LWV at the sale that began at 6:00 a.m.! Hope you enjoyed your savings.

The Citizens Guide fundraising campaign is completed with a healthy balance of donations from businesses, the County and towns, and LWV members. There are sufficient funds to cover the printing of the guide. The regulations that govern the Citizens Education Fund (CEF) permit local Leagues to use some of their tax-deductible contributions for education and voter service purposes. The Board voted to utilize that option and reimburse the operating fund for the videotaping of the one forum which included both the candidates for the Board of Commissions as well as the state officials that was held in October. In addition, the purchase of new banners that are used for the forums and educational meetings will be reimbursed. The CEF monies also can be used to pay one half of the dues to National for our members. A huge thank you to our members who made contributions to the CEF. Those who donated \$100 or more will be acknowledged on the back cover of the Citizens Guide.

Due to the good balance in our treasury, some member benefits will be realized such as a subsidy for the individual cost of the Holiday Party and the Annual Meeting as well as other events throughout the year.

Submitted by Nancy Birindelli, Treasurer

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

If you want miracles to happen, you have to do a lot of coaxing—and that's exactly what the Dare County chapter of LWV is doing.

Getting Local Leaders On Board With ERA

In January, we start a two-step strategy to gain support for ERA by local governments.

Step one: **Speak out** during Public Comments January to let the powers that be know we'd like them to pass Resolutions urging the state legislature to pass ERA.

Step two: **Appear** at their next meetings with a 6-minute power point explanation of what the Equal Rights Amendment is and what it will do. Lin Logan has created both slides and script for the presentations so that any one of us could step up and give it. We're in process of getting on each organization's agenda. We will allow time for Q&A and at presentation's end hope to get their agreement to state and sign a Resolution in support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

We will also issue personal invitations to these leaders to view....

Equal Means Equal

On **Thursday, January 26**, the film will be screened at the Duck Woods Country Club for local officials. They will be our individually invited, honored guests. There will be light appetizers, popcorn and beverages and no doubt, lively discussion. We believe viewing this documentary will help persuade the audience to action, i.e. author and sign a Resolution.

Movie Night for LWV Members and Guests

On **Wednesday, January 11**, we'll hold the "Pass ERA in 2017" kick-off event with a free screening of Equal Means Equal. All League members and their guests are welcome. All the popcorn you can eat, light appetizers, beverages and a cash bar. A great opportunity to invite busy young people who think we already have ERA and/or are blasé about the need for one. The film is a sure way to get un-blasé.

Let's Go To Raleigh!

Mark your calendar for **Tuesday, March 14**, when thousands of NC women (and men) will descend on the General Assembly to encourage passage of ERA. March 14 is the biennial Women's Advocacy Day. Senator Floyd McKissick and Rep. Carla Cunningham are to introduce ERA legislation. We must persuade our legislators to hold hearings and vote, rather than suffocate the bill in committee.

More Information

- To become an individual member of ERA-NC Alliance, go to www.era-nc.org
- Excellent op-ed by long-time ERA advocate Roberta Madden at <http://www.citizen-times.com/search/It%27s%20not%20too%20late%20to%20stand%20up%20for%20women/>

PS: *If you'd like to attend the Women's March in Washington on Saturday, January 21, a bus is leaving at 4 am, returning the same day. This is NOT a League activity. It has been arranged by Lorelei DiBernardo as a private citizen. If you are interested, email or call, 252 261 4365*

Submitted by: Judy Lotas, Committee Chair

Education

The Dare County Board of Education met on Sept. 13, Nov. 8, and Dec.13, 2016 for regular sessions at First Flight Elementary, Manteo Middle, and Manteo Elementary Schools respectively. The October meeting was cancelled because of hurricane weather.

At these meetings the Board received staff and attorney reports, handled routine business on budget items and personnel matters. The following is a sampling of notable and interesting items and report notes:

- Sept. Dare Schools enrollment was 5,128; number of teachers was approx. 350
- Several central office administrators have new titles and assignments. There are new administrators at schools where principals were promoted or moved around
- Eleven administrative openings were filled by internal promotions/transfers
- The Board approved sixth grade participation in interscholastic athletics, with the exception of football, to begin with 2016-2017 winter sports
- The Superintendent presented a Summary Accountability Report on 2015-2016 testing results which follow the “new accountability program” which in its fourth year — includes a new curriculum, more rigorous material, advanced concepts pushed down to lower grades; but steady progress has been realized since 2014.
- A - F ratings are based on achievement (80%) and growth (20%) and use a 15-point grading scale (100- 85=A, 84- 70=B, 69- 55=C, 54- 40=D, 39- 0=F)

Elementary End of Grade results---percentage on/above grade level.

- ➔ KHES, NHES, FFES, CHES earned performance grades of B in Reading & Math
- ➔ MES earned performance grades of D in Reading & Math, down from 2014-2015.

Middle School End of Grade results---percentage on/above grade level

- ➔ Above state average in 6 of the 7 areas:
 - 6th grade math ranked 12th in state
 - 8th grade reading ranked 12th in state
 - 8th grade math needs most attention at state level and in Dare.
- ➔ Performance grades earned were:
 - FFMS--B in Reading, C in Math
 - MMS--C in Reading, C in Math
 - CHSS--C in Reading, D in Math (CHSS=Cape Hatteras Secondary School)

High School results are based on an involved combination of End of Course test results and other factors.

- ➔ FFHS & MHS earned overall performance grades of B
- ➔ CHSS earned an overall performance grade of C

Overall school performance grades showed seven Bs, two Cs, and one D.

Check www.DARE.k12.NC.US for more information.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Manteo Elementary School has implemented a 2016—2017 Improvement Plan with the goals being to improve the School Performance Grade and Growth Status of the school. This is a fluid plan employing twelve research-based practices for student success which is evaluated twice a month by the school team. The plan implements specific learning/teaching strategies, emotional support for students and regular communication with parents on how to support their children's learning.
- The Board attorney, Brian Shaw of Raleigh, announced that a judgment was found in favor of the plaintiff schools (one of which is Dare County) in a lawsuit against the State of N.C. Carolina. The case challenged the N.C. practice of directing the fines associated with a new (5 year old) category of traffic fine (for "improper equipment") to prisons, while the N.C. Constitution directs that traffic fines go to public schools. The school system group lawsuit followed a suit won by a single system, Richmond County, in the fall of 2015.

Attorney Shaw announced that Dare's award would be approximately \$567,000. However, he cautioned that Richmond County had not received its judgment amount a year later. At the time, a General Assembly spokesperson said that it would handle the matter in the spring during the short session; but, the General Assembly did not do anything to comply with the judgment at the 2015 session. **{Perhaps calls to NC legislators might make a difference.}**

SAVE THE DATE:

On March 3, 2017, at the First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon Dr. Sue Burgess, Superintendent of Dare Schools will present "A snapshot of Dare Schools". She will be accompanied by the Board of Education Chair, Bea Basnight. Check the LWV Calendar for place and time.

Later in March the League plans a program where speakers with a state perspective will talk to us about the "State of education in our State".

The following is from the Educ. Report in the Sept. 1, 2016 *Dare Voter*:

On the State scene, teachers' salaries were increased by the legislature. The new average is \$50,000, depending who is doing the reporting.

Other State 2016 legislation and previous legislation raise concerns. Local schools (LEAS) are suffering due to the overall decrease in basic State funding (e.g. loss of textbook money), the diversion of taxpayer dollars to private school vouchers and decreasing Pre-K funding, to mention a few. As these and other issues impacting education are serious, our League is planning an "education" information program for later in the year. Get your questions ready.

Submitted by Marion W. Midgett, Chair

Media Relations Committee / Voter Services

GENERAL ELECTION EXIT SURVEY RESULTS

The “Early Voting Team”, composed of several LWV Dare members, conducted an Exit Survey on General Election Day, November 8th, to find out about the voting experience and voters opinions. A summary of the **LWV Dare Exit Survey** Tally follows:

Total Surveys completed: 331 from 6 polling locations:

➔ Colington 62, Kill Devil Hills (KDH) 103, Kitty Hawk (KH) 36, Manteo 80, Nags Head (NH) 17, Southern Shores (SShores) 33.

LWV Volunteers worked a total of 24 hours:

➔ Barbara Becker, Laurie Martin, Audrey Esposito at Colington; Arlene D’Agosto, Glenda Keel and Audrey Esposito at KDH. Geri Sullivan and Audrey at KH. Marty Hamed, Jane Welch at Manteo. Lynda Burek and Audrey Esposito at SShores. Audrey Esposito at NH. Since we were not at polling places during heavy turnout in the early morning hours, our numbers are lower than expected.

Q1: Did you vote today? Total 323 responses

Voted today with regular ballot: Total 313 responses

➔ Colington 61, Nags Head 12, Manteo 77, KH 36, SShores 33, KDH 96

Provisional Ballot: Total 7 responses Colington 1, Manteo 1, KDH 4, SShores 1.

Did not vote: Total 3 responses Manteo 2, KDH 1

Q2: Was the voting experience satisfactory? Total 322 responses

Yes 308 responses

➔ Colington 62, NH 12, KH 34, SShores 30, KDH 93, Manteo 77

No 14 responses

➔ KDH 8, SShores 3, Manteo 1, Colington 2.

Reasons:

- *Long slow moving lines:* Manteo 1, SShores 1, KDH 4.
- *Intake needed more staff:* KDH 1
- *Staff needed better training:* KDH 1 “Process seemed confusing”.
- *Other reasons:* SShores, one woman in line with child, signed in but couldn’t stay. Returned and told that she had “already voted”. Had to use provisional ballot.
- *One voter in KDH, “Why can’t I vote anywhere in Dare County on Election Day, like on Early Voting?”*

Q3: Were you Aware of Early Voting at four locations? Total 310 responses

Yes 287 responses

➔ NH 15, Colington 55, Manteo 77, KH 33, SShores 30, KDH 83

Not Aware 23 responses

➔ Colington 3, NH 3, KH 1, Manteo 4; KDH 12.

Q4: Reasons for not voting early Total 304 responses

Always vote on Election Day 154 responses

→ Colington 36, NH 9, KH 18, Manteo 36, SShores 13, KDH 42

Long lines at Early Voting 32 responses

→ Colington 13, NH 3, KH 5, SShores 4, KDH 7

Did not have information on Early Voting 18 responses

→ Colington 5, KH 2, Manteo 1, KDH 10

Early Voting Hours made available did not suit my schedule 50 responses

→ Colington 10, NH 2, KH 2, Manteo 7, SShores 12, KDH 17

Need Hours before 8:30AM 15 responses

→ Colington 3, SShores 7, KDH 5

Need hours after 6 PM 24 responses

→ Colington 3, KH 1, Manteo 2, SShores 8, KDH 10

Need for longer weekend hours 11 responses

→ Colington 3, Manteo 2, SShores 4, KDH 2

Q5: How was communication on Early Voting received?

Print Media: 116 responses

→ Colington 15, NH 10, KH 11, Manteo 28; SShores 17, KDH 35

Online Media: 138 responses

→ Colington 18, NH 9, KH 16, Manteo 30, SShores 17, KDH 48

Social Media: 144 responses

→ Colington 29, NH 8, KH 13, Manteo 32, SShores 22, KDH 40

Civic Organizations, LWV: 40 responses

→ Colington 6; NH 8, KH 6, Manteo 7, SShores 2, KDH 11

Political Parties: 42 responses

→ Colington 4, NH 6, KH 3, Manteo 10, SShores 2, KDH 17.

Other: Radio, family members, television, friends, Baum Center, neighbors.

Some General Comments from voters:

“Not enough privacy when voting” —one person KDH

“Choices on ballot distressing”—one person Colington

“Republicans don’t trust early voting”—one person Colington; another from Colington doesn’t agree with early voting.

“Thought Early Voting was for handicapped people”—one person KDH.

Person in KDH wanted a paper ballot at Early Voting. (voted election day)

Submitted by Audrey Esposito, Media Relations Chair