



# THE VOTER NEWSLETTER

March 2017

## Mark Your Calendar!

- March 3, 2017      **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon**, Noon, Blue Water Grill (Pirates Cove)  
Speaker: Dr Sue Burgess & Bea Basnight will share a “Snapshot of Dare County Public Schools” For reservations contact Lynda Burek [rmburek@charter.net](mailto:rmburek@charter.net)
- March 12, 2017      **Kelly’s St Patrick’s Day Parade**. This year the League will march in the parade in support of the Equal Rights Amendment in North Carolina. For information & details contact Mary Jane Slesinski [mjslesinski@charter.net](mailto:mjslesinski@charter.net)
- March 30, 2017      **Educational Event: “The State of North Carolina Public Education”** 7 PM, Nags Head ES. A panel discussion will include the State Superintendent of Public Education (or alternate), and representatives of the N.C. Justice Center, N.C. School Board Association, and N.C. Association of Educators. Q & A to follow presentations. Open to the General Public
- April 7, 2017      **First Friday Hot Topic Luncheon**, Noon, Details TBD
- April 26, 2017      **GO SEE Tour & Luncheon: NC Coastal Federation in Wanchese**. We will enjoy a tour and learn about what this non-profit does to protect and restore the NC coast, the Oyster Reef restoration project, and other shoreline protection alternatives to ensure estuarine waters. Lunch will follow at a local restaurant.
- May 5 – 7, 2017      **LWVNC Convention 2017**. Statewide gathering and educational opportunity for local Leagues throughout NC. Agenda & reservation details coming soon!
- May 18, 2017      **Educational Event: “Being Your Own Healthcare Advocate”**; Noon 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      *[Please Note Revised Date for this Event]*
- June 2, 2017      **LWV Annual Meeting**. 11:30 AM Kelly’s Restaurant; Details TBD

## Co-President's Message

Hello LWV Dare Members!

The most energizing event of the last several weeks for me was the **Women's March in Washington** on January 21<sup>st</sup>! I marched for Women's Rights and specifically for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). On reflection, I am still overwhelmed with gratitude for the energy and passion of the day. The diversity and strength of the hundreds of thousands of participants (*MANY of them under 30 years of age!*) was and is INSPIRING! I will always cherish this experience and have enjoyed sharing memories of this day with my children and grandchildren. There were several LWV members on our bus of 28 marchers to D.C. and many new friends! In addition, many of our membership participated on their own, with other bus groups, or in the Raleigh Women's March.

But back to our local efforts ... Our ERA Team has enjoyed quite an eventful couple of weeks! On January 26 our "VIP Movie Night" was attended by 24 local leaders. I think I can speak for all attendees that the film *Equal Means Equal* is very impactful!

As of this writing, we have now collected 6 Resolutions in support of the Equal Rights Amendment among the OBX towns. I think that is a truly amazing feat!

We are looking forward to an evening educational event on March 30<sup>th</sup> on the topic of **The State of N.C. Public Education** at 7pm at Nags Head Elementary School. Speakers include the State Superintendent of Public Education (or alternate), representatives of the NC School Board Association, the NC Association of Educators, and the NC Justice Center delving into numerous components and challenges facing Public Education in NC today. This promises to be an excellent peek into this important topic!

Lastly, please plan on attending our **GO SEE Tour & luncheon** on April 26th to the N.C. Coastal Federation office in Wanchese. This will be an opportunity to learn about the activities of this local group dedicated to the health and protection of our coastal waters.

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



*Judy Lotas leading discussion at Equal Means Equal VIP Movie Night, Jan 26, 2017 at Duck Woods CC.*

## Update from the North Carolina League of Women Voters

Mark your calendars for Convention 2017 – May 5-7 in Greensboro. There are always interesting and informative speakers at Convention so please plan on attending. More information will follow – registration information and the detailed agenda will be sent to all members in early April.

At the LWFNC board meeting on Jan 26, we discussed the increased interest in the LWV since the election. For example, our Facebook page saw increased activity – 1,408 followers on Nov 8 and 2,768 followers on Dec 9. One league in central NC has 44 new members since the election. In response to this increased interest in the league, the board approved hiring a part time Communications Specialist to update (modernize) our web page, support fund raising activities, and generate other communication outreach activities.

***Submitted by Lori Williams, Board Member, LWFNC***

## Observer Corp

Our Observer Corp team regularly attends the public meetings of the Dare County Board of Education (Marion Midgett), Board of Elections (Audrey Esposito), and the Board of Commissioners (Barbara Becker & Lorelei DiBernardo). Our goal is to keep a finger on the pulse of the proposals and initiatives of the local government groups. Further we strive to share our learnings with LWV membership.

I can tell you that all Observer Corp team members feel personally enriched by getting more involved at the local level. I urge any of you who may be interested in Observer Corp, or would like to know more, to contact me directly at 261-4365. I'd be happy to describe my experiences and ways for your involvement.

Some of the recent developments at the Board of Commissioners Meetings:

- Rob Ross was appointed to take the seat of Beverly Boswell, who was elected to the NC House.
- Commissioner Margarete Umphlett announced her resignation from the Board effective 3/31/17
- Dare Co agreed to fund Southern Shores beach nourishment proposal at 50% (up to \$500k).
- The NC legislature has significantly reduced funding in support of mental health, substance abuse, intellectual /developmental disability services. Trillium Health Resources requested that Dare County pass a resolution requesting adequate funding for these programs and the resolution was passed by the BOC.
- The results of a comprehensive Dare County Salary and Compensation Study were released showing that Dare County employee salaries were significantly lower than comparable regional organizations. The BOC voted to implement the most aggressive option available to relieve the inequities.

***Submitted by Lorelei DiBernardo & Barbara Becker, Observer Corp***

## Citizens Guide 2017

6800 copies of the **Citizens Guide for 2017** have been distributed and presentations were made to the various Town and County Councils.

I would like to thank the following people who helped make this project a success:

Proofreaders: Mary Jane Slesinski & Geri Sullivan

Bundlers: Nancy D'Andrade, Carole Kimmel, Lori Williams, & Andrea Schollaert

Presenters to the Town & County Councils: Lorelei DiBernardo, Geri Sullivan, Judy Lotas, Marion Midgett, Andrea Schollaert, Annette Ratzenberger & Lori Williams

Distributors: Lynda Burek, Judy Lotas, Geri Sullivan, Laurie Martin, Nancy D'Andrade, Francene Kelly, Jane Welch, Nancy Birindelli, Vivian Gould, Marion Midgett, & Carol Butscher

***Submitted by Carol Butscher, Citizens Guide Editor***

## ERA Committee

### LWV DARE LEADS NC IN GAINING SUPPORT FOR ERA

Presentations to town councils in Dare County have resulted in six Resolutions in official support of passing the Equal Rights Amendment:

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Duck             | Manteo          |
| Kill Devil Hills | Nags Head       |
| Kitty Hawk       | Southern Shores |

Next stop: Dare County Board of Commissioners on March 6.

The local Resolutions were taken to Raleigh and presented to Senator Lloyd McKissick on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Valentine's Day. Hours later, he proposed a bill to pass ERA in the NC Senate.

IMPORTANT LINK: CHECK THIS OUT FOR QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO THE ERA Q's & A's  
<http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/faq.htm#q6>

***Submitted by Judy Lotas, ERA Chair***



*Sen. McKissick holding our Resolutions, with Judy Lotas, LWV ERA Chair on Feb 14, 2017*

## Education Committee

The Dare County Board of Education met on January 10 and February 14, 2017, and three special meetings to begin their search for a new superintendent of Dare Schools.

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

Audit report for 2015-2016. The auditor labeled it “unmodified” or highest level rating. She praised the fact that the fund balance was increasing—a goal recommended and being achieved. In addition, she pointed out that the Dare Schools Finance Department keeps on receiving certificates of excellence from the state.

Individual laptop computers and tablets for elementary students beginning next school year. The timeline calls for one-to-one Laptops in grades 3, 4, and 5 beginning in 2017—2018 and Tablets in grades 1 and 2 during 2018—2019.

Capital Improvement Plan was prepared by staff and a BOE committee. Examples of capital needs are roof and siding repairs, a/c and heating improvements, parking lots, athletic tracks, kitchen equipment, and phone systems.

New Superintendent selection. The BOE began search process after Dr. Sue Burgess announced her retirement would be effective June 2017. The search team plans to hold the following input meetings with various stakeholder groups (TBA) and will have three open meetings for the public: Roanoke Island and Manteo, March 8; Hatteras Island, and First Flight High, March 9; and a second meeting at First Flight High, March 10.

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

.....teachers’ salaries were increased by the legislature (New average is \$50,000)  
.....other concerns - 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.

As these and other issues impacting education are serious, our League hopes the members and other citizens will attend the March 30<sup>th</sup> program at Nags Head Elementary. (See Calendar).

***Submitted by Marion W. Midgett, Education Chair***

## Beach Nourishment

We recently read a very useful overview about Beach Nourishment on a local company’s blog and wanted to share it with you! We were granted approval to include a link to the article here.

Thank you to Monica Thibodeau, of Carolina Designs, and Kip Tabb, reporter.

<http://blog.carolindesigns.com/2017/02/16/beach-nourishment-environmental-cost-concerns/>