



THE VOTER NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

Mark Your Calendar!

- May 2, 2017 **Educational Event: “Immigration on the Outer Banks”** 7 pm KDH Meeting Room. We have partnered with Mano al Hermano to present this forum featuring 4 guest speakers: Ama Frimpong, Carlos Babilonia, Jessica Loose, & Kay Minis. The discussion will focus on national immigration policy and how it may affect our community. Q&A to follow. Open to the General Public
- May 5 – 7, 2017 **LWVNC Convention 2017.** Statewide gathering and educational opportunity for local Leagues throughout NC.
- 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. Q&A to follow. Open to the General Public.
- June 2, 2017 **LWV Annual Meeting Luncheon.** 11:30 AM Kelly’s Restaurant; Guest Speaker: Janet Hoy of the LWV NC Board will discuss League Action Teams and how local members can get involved at the state level. Make reservations by contacting Nancy Birindelli at bbirindelli@aol.com Cost: \$20 PP
- June 20, 2017 **LWV Annual Board Planning Retreat.** 10am – 4pm Manteo Visitor Center. This day long workshop is designed to review the past year and establish goals and initiatives for the coming year. Open to membership.

President's Message

I wanted to update you on our efforts in regard to the ERA Bills: SB85 and HB102, introduced to the General Assembly in mid-February. The League obtained 6 Resolutions in Support of the ERA from the Towns of Duck, Nags Head, Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills, Manteo, and Southern Shores. By and large the support was strong and universal at these town meetings. Ultimately we did bring our case to the Dare Board of Commissioners in early March as well, and in response we received a "Resolution in Support of Equality for Everyone". During this process we touched countless numbers of Dare residents via our Public Comments campaign, ERA presentations, "Equal Means Equal" screenings, local media coverage, and phone call campaign. We have received widespread acknowledgement and support for our efforts. I sincerely thank all of you for your help and support in raising and spreading awareness!

Although the 2 ERA bills are still in committee, we will not give up! This issue is "unfinished business" and the Equal Rights Amendment is simply about equality. Equality is what our country was built upon, equality will prevail ... and so will we!

We are looking forward to an evening educational event on May 2nd titled ***Immigration on the Outer Banks*** which promises to be both timely and insightful. Next month on May 18th we have scheduled our Health Care program ***Being Your Own Healthcare Advocate*** at noon at the Baum Center. This information will be useful for ourselves as well as for our loved ones experiencing a medical challenge. Both of these forums will include 4 speakers with differing perspectives, shedding light on 2 important issues. I hope you will be able to attend both events!

I have very mixed feelings about the last item. Geri Sullivan, my Co-President, informed our board in mid-March that she would be resigning from the Board to pursue a seat on the Southern Shores Town Council. While I am thrilled that Geri is spreading her wings and seeking new challenges, I will obviously miss her! We have worked together all year and she was a great partner! Good luck, Geri!

Submitted by Lorelei DiBernardo, President

Educational Event: Immigration on the Outer Banks

PRESS RELEASE: League of Women Voters of Dare County

The League of Women Voters of Dare County will sponsor a program, "Immigration on the Outer Banks", Tuesday, May 2 at the Kill Devil Hills Town Hall at 7 PM. It will be presented by Mano al Hermano (Hand to Brother), a local non-profit organization serving the Latino community. The program, which provides information for the general public, focuses on national policy regarding immigration, current issues associated with it and the impacts on our community. Guest speakers include:

Ama Frimpong, Co-Director of Mano al Hermano, will present an **attorney's perspective** on issues such as how immigrants enter the country, how they can become documented and the process of integrating into American life.

Carlos Babilonia, of Hatteras Realty, will provide an **employer's perspective** and will address the need for hiring immigrants and obstacles in hiring them.

Jessica Loose, Co-Director of Mano al Hermano, will present the **perspective of an educator**, discussing the immigrants' desire to learn English and the need for more resources and other obstacles to educating them in our schools.

Kay Minis, Mano al Hermano Family Literacy Director, will present observations as an educator and **family advocate** with years of experience working with the immigrant community. She also will address the role of Mano al Hermano and the Family Literacy Program in addressing the issues raised during the program.

At the conclusion of the program time will be allotted for audience questions.

Submitted by Glenda Keel, Secretary



The audience at our March 30 Educational Event: "The State of N.C. Public Education" at Nags Head ES.



The forum speakers included Matt Ellinwood of the NC Justice Center, Rachelle Johnson of the NC Association of Educators, Terry Stoops of the John Locke Foundation, & Lindsay Wagner, education writer Fletcher Foundation (l-r)

Equal Rights Amendment

ERA AND Dare Board of Commissioners, ACT III

The Dare County Board of Commissioners passed a highly-edited version of the Resolution in support of passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Following is the oral rejoinder (partial) made by the League's ERA Chair during Public Comments on April 3:

"On March 6, you signed an almost-resolution urging the NC General Assembly to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. We were thrilled with your opening statement. It reads:

"WHEREAS the Dare County Board of Commissioners strongly supports equal rights for all of its citizens and people everywhere..."

Wow! That is great. But then we got to the *NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED* part...

It simply calls for *'open, vigorous debate to remedy any and all inequities facing women in federal and state statutes in order to continue progress in the advances in equal rights that women achieved in the 20th century.'*

That's like saying 'we believe in equal rights...but maybe we don't. To be discussed.'

On behalf of the League, I ask the Commissioners to seriously consider making your resolution as strong and as clear as your opening statement. Because we don't need more discussion about *'if'* women have equal rights.

We don't. We never have. And we need them.

As of this writing, we've received no amended Resolution.

Submitted by: Judy Lotas, ERA Chair

Information from the North Carolina League of Women Voters

At the LWFVNC board meeting earlier this year, we talked about the increased interest in the League since the November election. For example, our Facebook page saw increased activity – 1,408 followers on Nov 8; 2,768 followers on Dec 9. One league in central NC has 44 new members since the election. In response to this increased interest the state board approved hiring a part time communications specialist to update (modernize) our web page, support fund raising activities, and other communication outreach activities.

Submitted by: Lori Williams, Board Member, LWFVNC

Observer Corps Committee: Board of Elections

The Dare County Board of Elections held their scheduled meeting Tuesday, March 28, 2017, at 4 PM. Attending: Director Michele Barnes, Chairman Donna Elms, Sec'y Carole Warnecki. Member Lynda Midgett absent. Jackie Tillett, assistant to Director, asked to attend in Ms. Midgett's place, as the Democrat on the board.

The minutes of previous meeting were approved.

On March 30, an NC Users Group meeting was held in New Bern; attended by Tillett and Barnes. Hands on approach, "look and learn", financial information given, feedback from other counties.

Training in Wilmington was held April 10-11.

The Budget Process/Progress: Budget has been submitted by Director Barnes. No response as yet.

IT Election Assistant-Update: There is to be a new IT director, current one leaving at end of April. No new person found as yet. Members believed there is need for 2 IT Election assistants, since there is tremendous responsibility entailed. Board believed upcoming municipal elections this Fall would be good training ground for all involved, especially with new equipment.

Poll Worker updates: A few people have retired. Full complement not necessary for the municipal election. Individual poll workers and names of applicants to be discussed in closed session.

Further discussion: Reappointment Procedure for Board of Elections. Director Barnes will send letters to party chairmen of each political party requesting recommendations for BOE. As of this meeting, letters had not been sent.

Public Comment at end of the meeting: A copy of the LWV Dare Exit Survey from the November election was distributed and briefly discussed. The detailed results were to be sent to Director Barnes. As in the past, members expressed thanks to the Dare LWV for efforts. Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Submitted by Audrey Esposito, Board of Elections Observer

Education Committee

The Dare County Board of Education met on March 14 and April 18, 2017 for regular monthly sessions at First Flight High and Nags Head Elementary Schools.

March 14 meeting

The Board received staff and attorney reports, and handled routine business on budget items, policy revisions, and personnel matters.

The following is a sampling of notable and interesting recognitions, highlights, and business items:

- Plaque designating the FFHS auditorium as the *David E. Oaksmith, Jr. Auditorium* was unveiled. The plaque features a unique bronze relief portrait of Chairman Oaksmith who served many years as a math teacher and then as a board member and chair during a very progressive period for Dare Schools.
- Superintendent Burgess announced that the FFHS football field had been named in memory of Warren C. Judge III because of his outstanding contributions to education in Dare County.
- A demonstration of coding (programming) used to control and drive a robot, a project of FFHS Advanced Computer Science Principles students; and, Nags Head third graders demonstrated a tech driven math problem-solving game, “Breakout Boxes”, that requires collaboration and communication among students.
- The FFHS Model UN delegation won individual awards at Model UN Conferences in Norfolk (ODU) and Chapel Hill (UNC); they also were named *Best Small Delegation*. Manteo High will have a Model UN program next year.
- The FFHS journalism department won many awards this year: Mary Pat Thompson was named North Carolina High School Journalist of the Year; *Nighthawk News* and *Shorelines Yearbook* staffers won a bunch of awards at a summer institute and earned “Best in State Newspaper” from the Southern Interscholastic Press Association.
- The FFHS ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) Team earned a spot in the Marine Advanced Technical Education (MATE) Center’s International Competition.

Board Attorney Brian Shaw discussed two bills currently in the House (HB265) and Senate (SB94) proposing partisan elections for school boards. All of the members spoke adamantly against the change and voted to send letters and a resolution to legislators in opposition. Attorney Shaw added a final thought, “If it ain’t broke, why...?”

The Board approved and agreed to submit the 2017-18 to 2021-22 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the County Commission for funding. The CIP was produced by staff and a BOE committee which toured schools and facilities in order to determine needs. Examples of capital needs are roof and siding repairs, a/c and heating improvements, parking lots, athletic tracks, kitchen equipment, and phone systems.

April 18 meeting

The Superintendent and finance officer presented the Dare Schools Proposed Budget for 2017-2018. The total amount is \$57,809,670. Sources for the funds are:

- State, 56%; Local, 38%; Federal 3%; Other local, 3% (misc. fines and forfeitures, etc.).

The Board will meet for workshops right away to study and prepare to approve a final document.

During the budget presentation, Dr. Burgess pointed out (warned) that if House Bill 13 does not pass, \$1.2 million more will be needed to meet class size rules passed last year and to pay for the extra teachers not allowed unless the General Assembly passes the flexibility fix found in HB13. Without the flexibility fix, school systems will not be allowed to pay for elementary art, music, PE, technology, and world languages teachers from the state allotted funds. The House passed HB13 unanimously in February. The Senate seems to be against the bill which would restore the flexibility that systems have had. A call to Senator Cook might help. Find your "advocacy guide" sent to you by our co-presidents.

The following is from the "Education 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, just to mention a few."

As these and other issues impacting education are serious, our League hopes the members will contact legislators with your thoughts.

Submitted by Marion Midget, Education Chair