

The Voter

League of Women Voters of
the Lower Cape Fear

4/2/2018



Letter from the President

Happy spring to everyone! As you know, this is a busy and productive time in our League year. I encourage you to frequent our LWV-LCF website (lcfwv.org) to keep informed about all the activity that is happening now and in the next few months. If you're wondering how to get involved with some portion of our league program, this is the place to go for information and ideas!

What's happening with voting activities? VOTE411 is our on-line voter information site, and Bonnie Bechard, Mary Ellen Cole, Kim Hill and others are working diligently to set up the information for this program and make it available to voters by mid-April. Voter registrations continue....the latest being at the recent march, March for Our Lives in Wilmington. Forums for Brunswick and New Hanover Counties are

being planned for several primary elections.

What are the next steps after the February planning meeting? Many thanks to members who participated in the annual planning meeting and gave their input into a range of potential activities (known as The Program) for 2018-2019. The Board has emailed the membership the basic results of this issues selection process, and next the Board will use this input to define our program of action for the upcoming year. Members will then vote on this proposal at the Annual Meeting in June.

How important is the Annual Meeting? It's very important, and we hope all members will be able to attend the evening of June 4th! Members will elect new Board members and vote on the budget for the next year. There will also be a vote on the Board's proposed

Program of issues and activities. Copies of all this information will be emailed to members a month before the meeting.

What are our League Action Teams (LATS) doing these days? Our dynamic action teams concentrate on public education, the environment, voter services, fair elections, and women's issues. They are at the heart of our league's program. If you're not a part of one of these groups, I encourage you to get involved in one that interests you.

Did you know there is a LWV national convention in Chicago June 28-July 1? If you have an interest in learning about possibly attending this convention please contact me.

I hope to see you all in the coming months!

Carol Roberts
President

Upcoming Calendar

**April 19th Education
Action Team meeting 10:00
YWCA**

**April 19th Fair Elections
Action Team meeting 2:00
Leland Town Library**

**April 21st Earth Day 12:00
Hugh McRae Park, Wilmington**

**April 23rd Hot Topics 11:00
NH County Main Library**

**May 10th Tour of
Sweeney Water Treatment
Plant**

**June 4th Annual Meeting
5:00 PM Hops Supply on
Oleander Drive**

Action Team Reports – Membership

We have grown to 114 members, 6 new members the first quarter of 2018. We held a new member happy hour on March 12, where 7 new members, 7 current members, and three guests socialized and shared conversation about the league, our mission, and action team activities. The committee is busy planning the annual meeting, **June 4, 5:00, at Hops Supply on Oleander**. More details to follow.

Action Team Reports – Environmental

Check out our Earth Day booth on April 21 at Hugh McRae Park, 314 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington (corner of Oleander and College). We will be there from 12:00-6:00. Call Sue Ann Rush if you are interested in helping register voters. This will replace our regular April meeting on the second Thursday.

On May 10 we will tour the Sweeney Water Treatment Plant. Look for an email for specifics and how to make reservations. We are limited to a maximum of 25 people. If we have an abundance of interested people, we will have another tour later. **Please be aware**. This tour will require a modicum of physical skill and walking outside. If you have difficulty climbing stairs, walking on metal grids, or perhaps uneven surfaces, this tour is not for you. No heels; sensible shoes are necessary.

Thanks to all who wrote the BOEM, state legislators and local officials on Off shore Drilling/Seismic Testing, and NHC Commissioners and Wilmington Council members regarding United Gypsum. We await further developments on both issues. As always keep your ears and eyes open for letter writing opportunities. Environmental issues seem to pop up with little warning and require quick responses from us all.

Join Observer Corps – We Need You!

Attend governmental meetings, take notes and report back so members will be informed.

Learn about community issues and monitor how they are being addressed.

Promote open, transparent and accountable government.

We observe at Board of Elections, Board of Education, and County Commissioners meetings. We particularly need more observers in New Hanover County. Please contact Loraine Buker, lbuker1@earthlink.net, for more information.

Action Team Reports – Voter Services

Vote411: LWV Lower Cape Fear has seized this opportunity By Bonnie Bechard

Vote411.org is a League of Women Voters on-line Voter Guide that is used nationally. It has such promise for shining a light on civil political discourse! It may also help dilute the influence of money in our elections. Maybe it will help get voters out of their silos and help overcome much of the biased and non-factual information that inundates us all. Yes, I'm an optimist.

Some background. The state league purchased this software and local leagues chipped in to help defray some of the cost. Vote411 can help a citizen do many things, such as see which candidates will be on their ballot and the candidates' answers to our questions. They can register to vote, get an absentee ballot, see their polling site, or see a calendar of events. There are some variables we can't control, such as polling site information may not be available until later in the process due to the big changes at the Board of Elections.

Our response so far has been very positive. Candidates who may be relatively unknown and who do not have the funding of incumbents, see this as an opportunity to reach voters and have their voices heard. Our process for Questions for Candidates worked well. Gail Bromley, Joan Rosko-Miller and I reviewed questions submitted by the action teams. With the guidelines provided by the state and national Leagues, we pared down the number of questions and worded them carefully in order to be non-partisan.

Finally, the system has a great new feature that will appeal to younger voters: YouTube!

The candidates answer the questions with text, but they also have the option to add a YouTube video to expand on their answer. Several candidates have commented they really like this option and will gradually be adding these to their page on the Vote411 system. Candidates can amend their questions or add videos right up until the general election.

Now for the marketing. We have Vote411 bookmarks we want to distribute across our counties. Can you help? Just email me at bbechard@mac.com.

Action Team – Fair Elections (FEAT)

Monthly meetings continue as we track gerrymandering judicial action and plan our upcoming activities. Next meeting will be April 19th at 2:00 at the Leland Town Library.

Action Team Reports – Women's Issues

The newly formed Women's Issues Action Team will hold its first meeting soon – to be announced. We will be discussing goals for next year, as well as the ERA in NC, and planning the LWV centennial celebration. Please join us, call Linda Kurta, 910-622-2260.

Action Team Reports – Education

Education happenings include the release (after a year of hard work and multiple edits) of Bonnie Bechard's excellent report on private school vouchers and curriculum. This will be widely shared with our State League and various education advocacy groups as well as legislators. Our action team members are currently in the process of observing at various NC PreK sites (both public and private) to better inform ourselves and get feedback from these sites about the NC PreK program. Finally the New Hanover County School Board voted to delay high school redistricting for another year.

Our next action team meeting will be Thursday, April 19th at 10 am at the YWCA (2815 S. College Rd)

Bonnie's report is also the topic for our April 23rd Hot Topics presentation:

"NC Private Schools Receiving Vouchers: A Study of the Curriculum". Bonnie Bechard will present the year-long research on vouchers by the Education Action Team, that has been presented and approved by the LWV-NC. The finding of this report concludes that most of the tax-payer funding of this program is going to schools where the curriculum's lack of academic rigor limits student acceptance into major colleges and universities, as well as choices for careers. Duke University Law School also did a voucher study, which found fault with educational outcomes based on testing and that the voucher program failed to deliver on its promises. Bonnie will give a brief overview of the Duke study, as well as our unique finding on curriculum content and its limitations. Finally, she will discuss how the study will be "rolled out" in a controlled way and our messaging and responses to the study.



March Hot Topic "I Can Do That - Women Seeking Public Office"

53RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

The League of Women Voters' 53rd National Convention 2018 will be held June 28 – Sun., July 1, 2018 in Chicago, IL. We invite our League members to save these dates and plan to join hundreds of passionate and engaged leaders for our biennial national gathering to be held in Chicago next June.



League of Women Voters of the United States
53RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

CREATING A
**MORE
PERFECT
DEMOCRACY**



2018 Convention Schedule At A Glance <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/2018-convention-schedule-glance>

*League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear
SERVING BRUNSWICK, NEW HANOVER, PENDER COUNTIES*

League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear

P.O. Box 4503 Wilmington, NC 28406

For a calendar of monthly activities, including public Hot Topic luncheons, Action Team meetings, open Board meeting, go to our website at www.lcflwv.org

Read more about us online at...

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