



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WAKE COUNTY
Working to safeguard democracy through civic involvement

VOTER

February 2010

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 90TH BIRTHDAY TEA

Sunday February 14, 2010, 2-4 pm

The Heritage at Falls of the Neuse Road, 1200 Carlos Drive, Raleigh

The League is Turning 90 on February 14th. See article about how Wake County League will be celebrating this momentous occasion.

The organization has three purposes: to foster education in citizenship, to promote forums and public discussion of civic reforms and to support needed legislation. The League through the ages has been true to these aims.

The League inherited its structure from the National American Women Suffrage Association. In 1920 it was a federation of affiliated state Leagues, most of which had been in existence as state headquarters of the NAWSA. The 1944 convention made major changes in the basic structure of the League, proclaiming it an association of members, rather than a federation of state leagues.

The witch hunt period of the early fifties inspired the League to undertake a two-year community education program focusing on the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. In response to the growing civil rights crisis of the 1960s, the League directed its energies to equality of opportunity and built a solid foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing. The 1974 convention amended the bylaws to allow men to join the League as full voting members. The League was in the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982 and contributed significantly to enactment of the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986. The League launched "Take Back the System", a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections and sponsored a Presidential Primary Debate in 1992. The League was instrumental in the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002. The League worked to renew the Voting Rights Act, and filed a number of amicus briefs relating to campaign finance reform issues, racial bias in jury selection and Title IX.

LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE

February 26, 2010, 12 noon – 1:15 pm

Hargett Street YWCA, 554 E. Hargett Street

Jane Pinsky, Director, NC Coalition for Lobbying and Government Reform

As the first decade of the 21st Century came to a close, several NC government leaders were accused of ethical transgressions, and some have even gone to prison for their illegal actions while serving in state office. Most recently, former Governor Mike Easley has been accused of using his influence to secure favors for political friends and for his own family.

The *NC Coalition for Lobbying and Government Reform*, which includes the *NC League of Women Voters*, focuses on the business of governance and monitors suspected ethical violations in the state. **Jane Pinsky** was a guest commentator with David Crabtree during WRAL's broadcast of the recent hearings on possible violations by Gov. Easley and his administration. Ms. Pinsky's expertise in this area gives her a unique perspective on these recent ethical transgressions and on possible ways to prevent future behaviors by our officials. She will discuss the recent cases and will explain the several bills that have been introduced into the NC General Assembly to address these problems.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Lisa Mowat

We have two outstanding events this month. The first is the Wake League of Women Voters 90th birthday party at the Heritage. We have a wonderful tea party set up to treat everyone, just like our foremothers would have had. We will have several pots of different teas with fancy cups and saucers along with tea sandwiches and sweet delicacies. Entertainment will include songs and a perspective review by Beth McAllister. Jo Nichels and Mary Lou Bennett of the Carrie Cats from Moore County will provide a short vignette of League in earlier times. We encourage you to come in period dress or just come as you are to enjoy each others company.

We will have another interesting program at Lunch with the League this month when Jane Pinsky will talk about ethical issues in North Carolina Government. Bring a friend and your lunch for a stimulating program.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at one or both events. If you need a ride to either event, call Claudia Kadis, 787-0992, or me and we will arrange a ride for you. Please give us a two day notice at least to arrange your ride. If you are interested in working on any of the League activities or serving on the Board, please call me at 782-8839 and we will discuss these opportunities.

STATEMENT BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TO THE WAKE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD, January 19, 2010

My name is Lisa Mowat and I am here today as President of the League of Women Voters of Wake County. The League appreciates the sacrifices that our public officials make on a daily basis including a willingness to accept public criticism as part of their service to the community. The League has long advocated open, transparent, and responsible government. We are strong advocates of decisions based on knowledge and the informed participation of the voters. We believe that is the basis of a strong democracy.

Recently there has been a pattern of resolutions injected into the Board's agenda. This pattern contradicts the basic tenants of democracy, namely openness and transparency. Neither board members nor the public have had advance notice of resolutions which have been presented, and passed at single meetings. Neither board members nor the public have had the opportunity to benefit from study and debate on these resolutions. Without benefit of board study or debate beforehand, and with neither the public nor the school board privy to the discussions leading to these resolutions, democracy is ill served.

It would seem that if there were a mandate for change, as some believe, there would not be a need for secrecy in presenting resolutions. Information gathering, presentations of information and points of views, and discussions in the public venue would not be denied. True intentions would not be hidden as staff instructions were developed.

We would like to remind you that you serve all the people of Wake County and that in doing so you must allow many people with whom you might disagree to have their voices heard. In closing we ask that you respect transparency in government, and collegiality as a functioning board. We ask that you honor your pledge to listen to the public and as a body base your decisions on knowledge which will benefit our students.

LITTLE RIVER RESERVOIR PROJECT REVIEW MEETINGS HALTED by Jeri Gray

Since April 2009, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and consultants for the City of Raleigh have been holding meetings of representatives of federal and state governments and other stakeholders to review plans for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed reservoir on the Little River in eastern Wake County. Jeri Gray has been attending the meetings as a representative of LWV-Wake.

The EIS is required under the federal Clean Water Act because it will destroy wetlands and habitat for federally listed endangered species. The EIS must show that Raleigh and its partners in the consolidated water and sewer system need additional water supply. It must examine all possible alternatives for getting the needed water supply and show that the "preferred alternative" (most likely the reservoir) is the best choice economically and environmentally. It must also detail how direct impacts to the environment (wetlands, endangered species and other natural resources) and indirect impacts to the natural and human environment from facilitated growth will be mitigated.

The project review team has heard presentations and discussed (1) purpose and need for the project, (2) alternatives, (3) siting of the associated water treatment plant, and (4) an analysis of the impacts. Additional meetings to discuss the preferred alternative and the preliminary mitigation plan had been scheduled but were canceled in November because, according to the consultant, there was no additional information on those topics to be presented.

A preliminary draft EIS is scheduled to be presented to the Corps and the project review team in March, and a public hearing on the draft EIS is scheduled to be held in October.

Talks are underway about the possibility of LWV-Wake partnering with WakeUp Wake County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the N.C. Natural Heritage Program to hold a public forum on the reservoir project and the natural resource values of the Little River Watershed just prior to the public hearing on the EIS.

NOTICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Wake LWV has joined the **Great Schools in Wake Coalition**, a group of Wake organizations, parents, civic leaders and taxpayers who believe that *every* child in Wake county is our responsibility. Together we will work for great schools in our community! We want the media and the public to know that our members are already speaking up, working for strong schools, researching policies, and examining new proposals of the Wake Board of Education. Our community needs to be vocal. We must all speak up for the values of the Coalition, including educational excellence, stability, diversity, strong students and teachers and equity.

Volunteers needed to set up a table with LWV information at the upcoming NC Women United event. On Thursday, March 11, 6 pm - 8 pm at the Radison RTP, NCWU will host its first "Member Showcase." Come to learn more about the membership organizations in North Carolina. To volunteer, please call Judie Burke 919-542-1701 or NCWU, 866-518-7657 or e-mail them at www.ncwu.org.

The NC League is supporting **voter preregistration of high school students**, an opportunity that began January 1, 2010. Please contact Louise Romanow at 467-8599, if you are interested in helping with voter registration of students in area high schools.

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LWV-W Calendar 2010

Feb 14 Sun	2-4 pm	90th Birthday of League of Women Voters	The Heritage 1200 Carlos Drive
Feb 26 Fri	12 noon- 1:15 pm	Lunch with the League Speaker: Jane Pinsky	Hargett Street YWCA 554 E. Hargett Street
Mar 11 Thurs	6 pm	Potluck Dinner and Program Planning Meeting	Home of Claudia Kadis 4143 Gardendale Drive Raleigh, NC 27612
Mar 26 Fri	12 noon- 1:15 pm	Spring Luncheon Speaker: Ann Denlinger	NCSU University Club 4200 Hillsborough Street
Apr 23 Fri	12 noon- 1:15 pm	Lunch with the League	Hargett Street YWCA 554 E. Hargett Street
May 11 Tues		Annual Meeting	

Board of Director meetings – 2nd Thursday, 7 pm, League Office

Committee Meetings (open to all members and guests)

Education	1 st Thursday, 3-4:30 pm at League Office
Environment	4 th Wednesday, 7:30 pm at League Office
Lunch with the League	4 th Friday, noon-1:15 pm, Hargett Street YWCA