

# The Voter

League of Women Voters of the  
Lower Cape Fear

5/18/2016

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

## *Letter from the President – Sheila Fellerath*

Do you recall a tourism campaign from the 70s that promoted North Carolina as a wonderful place to live? Gorgeous images of iconic locations from one end of the state to the other were accompanied by a pleasant folksy ballad with concluding lines:

*Lord it's just like living in a poem;*

*I like calling North Carolina home.*

These days, unfortunately, North Carolina no longer feels like home to many among us. Those who are “different”, those living in poverty, those who are sick and underserved by our medical establishment, those languishing in underfunded and struggling public schools, those who are trapped in a dysfunctional criminal justice system, those who find their right to vote severely challenged – how can this feel like home to any of them? And because they are our brothers and sisters, how can North Carolina feel like home to any of us?

The answer, I suggest, is our willingness to work tirelessly to put things to right – attend that Board of Elections meeting and speak out, write one more letter to your state senator or representative, say “yes” when the call comes for school volunteers, staff the voter registration tables and help prospective voters negotiate their way through the new rules. In short, it's a time for action – we need backbones rather than wishbones.

The League of Women Voters knows how to struggle and persevere; just look at our history and the audacious women who never gave up, even in the face of unfathomable personal sacrifices. As you read through this issue of our newsletter, take a moment to appreciate and savor the accomplishments of our members – worthy successors to our founders. And read with an eye toward finding a place where you can make a difference. It won't happen overnight, but North Carolina will begin to feel like home again.

## *Time for our Annual Meeting*

*Monday, June 27, 2016*

*6 pm Social*

*6:30 Dinner*

*7:00 Program*

[See details, page 3](#)

For our calendar of  
events, go to

<http://www.lcflwv.org/calendar.html>

[Roundtable Activities](#)

[See details, page 5](#)

## Be An Observer...

### WHAT IS Observer Corp?

The history of the League's Observer Corp began in the 1960's: the Freedom of Information Act passed in 1966 which was followed by the Sunshine Act of 1976, which was then followed by Sunshine Laws in individual states. These sunshine laws refer to openness in government in two distinct areas: access to public records and access to public meetings.

The premise behind them is that everyday people have the right to know what actions their government is taking. These regulations give people the right to attend public meetings and have access to public documents.

**The League actively supports the citizens' right to know about its government and advocates for government transparency. How do we do this?? One important way is through THE OBSERVER CORP. This is a structured way for League members to exercise these rights.**

An Observer attends a governmental meeting, notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League (and in some cases, the community)

- **Observers learn what the government is doing and learn about the issues in the community and how they are being addressed.**
- Their notes are reported back to our League so membership can learn from them.
- **They keep elected officials on notice, let them know someone is watching about the decisions being made, and form relationships with officials that can be beneficial.**
- Observers attend the meetings to gain information. They do not make statements or give opinions on issues.

**Currently: NHC observers attend the NHC Board of Education, the Board of Elections, and the Board of Commissioners.**

**Brunswick County observers attend the Board of Education and the Board of Elections.**

Time commitment: a monthly meeting, periodically scheduled/as much as desired.

Some observers attend a meeting monthly and some prefer to just do it periodically and rotate the responsibilities with others.

**There is a form** to facilitate the notes being taken so they can be shared with our League.

As you consider how you want to be involved in our League, I hope you'll consider the Observer Corp!

## LWV Lower Cape Fear 2016 Annual Meeting...

Hard to believe, but a year has rolled around and it is time for our Annual Meeting. This is the meeting at which we officially elect new board members, adopt a budget for the coming fiscal year, vote on a program of action for the coming year, and take up any other business that typically requires member participation as set out in our by-laws. Materials for all of these business items will be coming to your Inbox soon!

It's also a time to kick back and celebrate the wonderful year we have had. Plan to socialize with friends and share an early evening meal before enjoying an interesting presentation by Mike Giles, North Carolina Coastal Federation coastal advocate. Mike's topic is "Lessons from Titan", examining how the successful multi-year campaign by a coalition of community groups and individuals resulted in the decision of Titan America to abandon its cement plant plans for Castle Hayne.

### Meeting Date and Location:

The meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 27 and will take place in lieu of Hot Topics for June. We will gather at Temptations Everyday Gourmet in Hanover Center with social time beginning at 6:00, dinner at 6:30 and program beginning about 7:00. Please watch for your invitation and be sure to RSVP (no payment required) so that we can let Temptations know about how many to expect. See you then!



**President Sheila Fellerath speaks with Bonnie Bechard and Nancy McCoy-Fennel at our new members party in April.**

The Membership Committee hosted a Wine and Appetizer party for members that joined in the last year. Sandra Sink offered her lovely home for the party and the committee brought delicious appetizers.

We had presentations about the history of the League and how our local League interacted with State and National League of Women Voters. Round Table chairs shared information about their groups and we all became more knowledgeable about our League.

This was a great opportunity for new members to meet other new members and become more acquainted with our activities.

## Welcome New Members!

**Casey Finn**...Moved from Northern Virginia to Leland with husband, Patrick in 2011. Career in nursing. Women and children's issues are very dear to heart, and looking forward to getting more involved in our area.

**Valerie Arroyo**...Resident and business owner here in Wilmington, NC. I am a State Certified Notary of North Carolina, Volunteer of the Domestic Violence of Wilmington, Honorary Member of NHC Sheriff Business Association, and a Board Member of Juvenile Prevention of NHC, and VIP Member of the National Association of Professional Women. I am currently working on completing my Bachelors in Human Services and Sociology with Families in Charlotte, NC. Promoting voting is passion and why excited to join the League.

**Pat Lerch**...Moved from Ohio to Wilmington in 1981. Career at UNCW in the Department of Anthropology, recently retired. Member of Kiwanis, with interests are in education, voter rights, immigration and women's issues.

**Brooke Lamson**...Lives in Wilmington for over 30 years,

with husband Tom Pollard. Career as an attorney for the Army Corps of Engineers, retiring in 2014. Currently a Guardian ad Litem, and volunteers in the classroom at Snipes Elementary school. Interests are in education and immigration.



### Report from LWV North Carolina 2016 State Council

Coastal issues, voter registration, health care in North Carolina, overreaching of state government, the power of local studies – these were just some of the stimulating topics and presentations at Council 2016. LWV Lower Cape Fear was proud to welcome over 65 delegates representing 12 of the 17 local leagues across North Carolina as we gathered on April 29-30 here in the Port City. Mayor Bill Saffo joined us at the beginning of the opening session to extend his own welcome on behalf of the City of Wilmington and surrounding communities.

One of the highlights from Council was the unanimous adoption of a resolution calling for complete repeal of HB2. In addition, two of our own members made substantial contributions as presenters: Gail Bromley in the “Candidate Debates and Forums” workshop and Anne Eitelman in the “How to Advocate for Education” workshop. How fortunate we are to have them as part of the Lower Cape Fear league!

Many thanks to our local organizing committee headed by Carole Ellis and ably assisted by Gail Bromley, Loraine Buker, Joan Rosko Miller, Rebecca Philpott and Sue-Ann Rush. They handled all the local arrangements including a very well received Dine Around on Friday evening, hotel and meeting room reservations, assembling of welcome packets and staffing the registration table. The compliments continue to come in!



Anne Eitelman, LWVLCF

## What's Happening Right Now?

Gail Bromley reports for *Voter Services* that several candidate forums are already scheduled for the fall general election. See the League website calendar for dates, times and races. Help wanted: Save the dates; spread the word to the public; help design poster publicity; contact Gail to help with the forums.

Johnette Fields reports for *Voter Registration* that she has registration events scheduled this spring in the New Hanover County high schools. See the League website calendar for details. Help wanted: Contact Johnette if you can assist with any of these drives or have ideas for other places in New Hanover County where we might conduct registration drives. Contact Barbara Brandes with ideas for sites in Brunswick County.

Anne Eitelman and Nancy McCoy- Fennell report that the very busy and productive *Education Roundtable* is in the final stages of its spring

advocacy action plan supporting the Schools Our Students Deserve campaign. To date we have adopted our own LWVLCF resolution in favor of public education and the Brunswick County School Board adopted a modified version of this resolution. These resolutions have been shared with our local and State legislators. The New Hanover County School Board will vote on a similar resolution in June, and we are still working with some of the other boards. Going forward we plan to continue with our advocacy efforts, but we will also revisit our interest in Pre-K education later this year.

Carole Ellis reports that the *Immigration Roundtable* will be getting an update on immigration developments at its meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>. See the League website calendar for details.

Jana Albritton reports from the *Women's Rights Roundtable* that there will be a screening of "Trapped", a documentary about the targeted regulation of abortion providers in Texas and other states, on May 18 at

6:00 p.m. at the Wrightsville Beach Blockade Runner Hotel. Plan to attend and meet Planned Parenthood activists from our area. The Women's Rights Roundtable is in the process of reorganizing with additional leadership and more specific goals for advocacy. To join or offer your help contact Jana at [lwvjana@aol.com](mailto:lwvjana@aol.com) or [ncjana13@gmail.com](mailto:ncjana13@gmail.com).

Sue-Ann Rush reports that the *Environmental Roundtable* members are beginning to explore management of wetlands in our area. They recently heard from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Projects Manager, Wilmington District, about the Army Corps' role in this effort. The Roundtable is also supporting the Coastal Federation's Special Use Permit (SUP) efforts. Finally, they will join others of the Stop Titan coalition in a No Titan Jamboree celebration on May 22, 2016. Information is on the League website or contact Sue-Ann Rush.

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

League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear

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For a calendar of monthly activities, including public Hot Topic luncheons, Round Table meetings, open Board meeting, go to our website at [www.lcflwv.org](http://www.lcflwv.org)

Read more about us online at...

[www.facebook.com/LWVLCF](http://www.facebook.com/LWVLCF)

[www.twitter.com/LWVoftheLCF](http://www.twitter.com/LWVoftheLCF)

