



VOTER

League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg

May-June 2019

REACHING LWVCM

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In This Issue:

- Page 2 Coming Events
ERA Action
- Page 3 Fair Districts
Education Action
- Page 4 Environment Team
League News
- Page 5 Spotlight Feature
- Page 6 Calendar

Find updates for League action and activities at
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Action Teams See Progress

ERA

Mecklenburg County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution endorsing ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution as proposed on March 22, 1972.

LWVCM forms ERA action team looking at women's issues.
More action at state and national levels, p. 2.

Fair Districts

Fair Districts NC is setting up meetings across the state to educate leaders and the public about a fair redistricting process, including one at Wingate April 25. See p. 3 for details.

The LWVNC lawsuit contending extreme partisanship for drawing NC Congressional districts finally reached the US Supreme Court March 26. Listen to the fascinating oral arguments [here](#). More action p. 3.

Education

After urging from LWVCM and others, an equity policy has been proposed to the Board of Education. A community equity advisory committee was not part of it, but the League continues to push for it. Go to p. 3.

Environment

Mecklenburg legislators are being contacted to remedy the disastrous change in stormwater regulations passed at the last minute in 2018. League lunch speakers described the problem. Go to p. 4.

Continue reading about teams to see how you can participate.

Meet a League Author May 21



Don't miss League Talk May 21 which features League member **Kathryn Schuille**, author of *What Luck, This Life*. Her first novel was named by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* as one of the best southern books of 2018. Booklist called it "a deeply thought-provoking novel."

Set in East Texas around the time of the Columbia Shuttle disaster in 2003, the novel explores the disaster's surprising fallout for a town beset the by

(continued p. 2.)

Watch your email for the VOTER ANNUAL MEETING EDITION coming soon. In it, details for June 6: Supt. Wilcox speaking; officer nominations, program proposals.

Coming Events

Kathryn Schwille Discusses Her Book At League Talk May 21, 6:30 pm

(continued from p. 1)

tensions of class, race and missed opportunity.

Kathryn Schwille's short fiction has appeared in literary journals around the country and has been cited twice for Special Mention in the Pushcart Prize. In 2013, she was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship from the North Carolina Arts Council. A former editor at the *Charlotte Observer*, she's on the regular faculty of Charlotte Center for Literary Arts.

[What Luck, This Life](#) is available in hard cover and audio formats at Barnes and Noble, Amazon and other book-sellers.

Celebrate 100 Years Women Voting - LWV Birthday

We're celebrating the League's 100th birthday, February 29, 2020 at Le Meridien Hotel in downtown Charlotte. Now is the time to secure your \$100 ticket to celebrate with us.

A special 100th Anniversary account has been set up to receive your contributions. Please send a check to our LWVCM Treasurer, 1817 Central Avenue, Room 210, Charlotte, NC 28205.

ERA

Cate Stadelman spoke for the LWVCM at the Commission's board meeting about the value of the amendment and women's role in this county.

She told the commissioners that "Laws have been passed to address inequities for women but there are gaps in these laws. **Supreme Court decisions have limited enforcement of specific laws**, particularly in the areas of violence against women, sexual harassment and equal pay. And laws can be changed, so progress on women's rights could vanish.

"The economic survival of families depends on ending discrimination in hiring, paying, promoting, and providing a safe work environment for all working people," she declared. Read her full statement [here](#).

Several members were on hand for the rally at the Legislature promoting ERA in March. NC bills to ratify ERA are HB271 and SB184. Call your representative to ask for their support.

A bill to lift the deadline for passage of ERA has, **for the first time in 36 years**, been scheduled for a hearing by the House Judiciary Committee. There is a similar bill in the Senate, but no hearings are scheduled.

At the local level, an action team on ERA and women's issues was formed following the appearance of Sherry McQueen at the March League Talk. Contact Cate at cate.stadelman@gmail.com to join the team.



Cate Stadelman, left, Eileen Paroff and Tricia Garcia with Rep. Brandon Lofton at the legislative building.

District 9 GOP Primary Election May 14

Early voting for the Republican primary election starts April 24 at seven sites. All are open 7am-7 pm. The primary is May 14 at District 9 precinct locations 6:30-7:30 pm.

You can register and vote at early voting locations. More election information [here](#).

Early voting sites are

Hal Marshall Annex, Main Library uptown, Matthews Library, Mint Hill Library, Morrison Regional Library South County Regional Library and Elon Park Recreation Center, 11401 Audrey Kell Rd.

Welcome to New Members

Joining since March were:

Lori Halloway
Elayne DeMaria
Heidi Pruess

ACTION TEAMS

Fair Districts

Redistricting will be at the top of the list for statewide policy action in the coming 2019-21 LWVNC program, followed closely by the rest of the Making Democracy Work agenda--voter services, voter protection and ERA. Interested groups from around NC have joined together to form **Fair Districts NC**, an organization that is dedicated to ensuring that new maps are fair and impartial.

Making this happen entails reaching out to voters, community leaders and legislators on both sides of the aisle. In a significant step toward this goal, the **Union County LWV** is sponsoring a redistricting panel discussion and town hall, with support from LWVCM, the LWVNC FEAT and Fair Districts, NC. This in-depth discussion of a process that is core to our democracy will be held on **Thursday, April 25 at Wingate University in the Batte Center's Plyer-Griffin Recital Hall at 6:30 pm. Everyone is welcome.**

On May 7, Common Cause NC is hosting a people's lobby day at the General Assembly to end gerrymandering. You can be a part of the event. Details [here](#).

The coalition has received a \$15,000 grant from LWVUS to promote programs that will build support for redistricting reform among conservative constituents of key legislators. The objective is to increase momentum to bring these bills forward for consideration in committee. Organizers are looking for other opportunities to hold community forums throughout the state. Twenty-one forums in 10 key counties are being planned.

[HB69](#) has been introduced to establish a non-partisan redistricting process.

To join this action team, contact **Debbie Snowdon** at Debbie.snowdon@gmail.com. Link to Fair Districts NC website [here](#).

Education

Charlotte Mecklenburg School Board members heard from the LWVCM Education Committee April 9 when **President Delores Johnson-Hurt** strongly endorsed a community-based equity advisory committee as part of the proposed equity policy that the board is considering. Several members sat behind her holding signs.



Delores Hurt



Delores pointed out that such a committee can help to build trust among CMS, the Board, and the public. Also, she noted, “a committee of diverse stakeholders can provide valuable input and resources to assist CMS in addressing the complex community challenges that impact our students and schools.” In addition, she said,

“Transparency and accountability can be achieved through regularly scheduled reports shared with the EAC that are prepared by CMS which indicate progress toward its identified areas of action for equity in our schools.” Read her full statement [here](#).

The first public hearing on the policy is April 23. A vote is expected to be taken by the board May 14.

Education committee members also have been working on several issues which are supported by most of the Mecklenburg delegation to the General Assembly, including changing the overall school grading system (HB145), reinstating supplemental pay for advanced degrees (HB457) and changing the assessment of student growth in proficiency (SB475).

Join this busy action team by contacting Cheryl Milam at docmilam@hotmail.com.



Four of this year's Civics 101 graduates: Jennifer Gaddy, Collette Alston, DonnaMarie Woodson and Kevan Woodson.

Action Teams

Environment

A "technical correction" to the state's stormwater runoff requirements passed at the end of the 2018 legislative session interferes with Mecklenburg County's post construction stormwater ordinance and could put the county at odds with federal stormwater permitting regulations. That was the warning League members heard from County Water Quality program manager **Rusty Rozelle** and Charlotte Post-construction Stormwater Ordinance Administrator **Jordan Miller**.



Rusty Rozelle, left, Jordan Miller and County Commissioner Elaine Powell address the League.

The loosening of the regulations and taking away local control of stormwater regulations has already cost the county millions of dollars in lost revenue paid by developers and raises the prospects of increased residential flooding and polluting public water bodies, they said.

Environmental team members have prepared a fact sheet that is being used to encourage legislative action to reverse last year's change to the post construction runoff law. Stormwater runoff is

the most significant source of pollution on our waterways, according to environmentalists.

Contact **Margaret Howe-Soper** at Margaret-soper@hotmail.com to join the action team.

League News



Education Action Team members met in April with Mecklenburg Commissioner **Mark Jerrell** (below) and **Dr. Betty Howell Gray**, shown speaking to **Louise Woods**.



Becka Tait (below) finished her 16th half marathon in New York city. Her goal: run in all 50 states.



Elizabeth Dunand, with mother **Carolyn**, attends her first League meeting.



Spotlight on Beth Springston



Beth Springston has been a mainstay of the LWV of Charlotte Mecklenburg since the day she arrived from California, in 2001. Two years later, she became a co-president of the League, serving two terms 2003-2007 with Lucille Howard. She has held board positions here ever since--treasurer for several terms, among others.

And it wasn't long before she was tapped to be a member of LWVNC as treasurer. For the last few years, she has been the **state co-director of Vote411.org** with Louise Romanow.

Beth will leave a huge hole in Charlotte when she moves to Montpelier, VT, in

June to be closer to her family.

Vote411.org has thrived under her leadership, with nearly every Mecklenburg candidate participating. Through her diligence and extraordinary efforts to publicize the website providing voter information, the number of visits exploded for the mid-term election last year. Vote411.org had 52,000 sessions in the 5 weeks leading up to the general election, an increase in usage in Mecklenburg County by 163%. Signs, bookmarks, parade appearances and advertisements helped spread the word about the website offering non-partisan information.

On the LWVNC board together, **Louise Romanow** and Beth paired up to work on the most ambitious VOTE411 year ever, to cover all of the states' elections and candidates in 2018. "Not only does Beth have far more understanding of data sets and working with them than I can only imagine, but she was indefatigable in creating and populating our enormous VOTE411 database, creating candidate letters, getting other League members and an intern to work on VOTE411, and being our liaison with LWVUS," Louise wrote.

"It would never have been as successful as it was if she had not stepped up to the plate and invested hundreds (if not thousands) of hours of her time to making it work."

A native of Massachusetts, Beth moved to Charlotte to be controller at Geoscience Engineering. A few years later she started Soil Drilling Services with other investors, becoming the controlling partner and operating the company while still working at Geoscience until retirement. She studied business economics at Brandeis University and small business administration at California State University, Hayward.

Beth joined the League 30 years ago in Berkeley, CA where she was a board member, secretary and treasurer.

In her spare time, she does volunteer work for the Main Library and "really enjoys" doing income tax preparation.

Another hole to fill--**her convertible** used by the League in all parade appearances is going to Vermont with her!



Beth shown here with her brother George.



Delores Hurt, Beth Springston and Tricia Garcia in costumes for the St. Patrick's Day parade.

LWVNC Convention

May 17-19



President Delores Johnson Hurt will lead a delegation of several LWVNC members at the state convention in Chapel Hill.

Virginia Case, CEO of LWVUS, will be the keynote speaker. Numerous caucuses and workshops are offered on League operations and advocacy. Members will be voting on new officers, next year's program and other business.



Advocate—Educate—Empower

Visit LWVC—M's Website:
www.goleaguego.org

Dated Material

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CALENDAR

All events are at the LWV-CM Center, 1817 Central Ave., Room 210, Charlotte 28205 unless otherwise noted. Click [here](#) for driving and parking directions.

- Apr. 24 (Wed) Early voting starts for District 9 Republican Primary
- Apr. 25 (Thurs) Fair Districts panel discussion at Wingate. See p. 3.
- Apr. 26 (Fri) Environment Action Team, 11 am, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave
- May 1 (Wed) ERA Action Team, 6:30 pm League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave
- May 7 (Tues) League Board of Directors, 6:15 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave
- May 8 (Wed) Education Action Team, 11:30 am-3 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
- May 14 (Tues) District 9 Republican Primary, 6:30 am-7:30 pm
- May 17-20 Fri-Sun LWVNC convention, Chapel Hill School of Government
- May 21 (Tues) League Talk, Kathryn Schwille, 6:30 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave., page 2
- June 4 (Tues) League Board of Directors, 6:15 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
- June 6 (Thurs) ANNUAL MEETING, 6:30 PM, League Education Center, auditorium, 1817 Central Ave.

Check our [online calendar](#) for up-to-date LWVC-M events and meetings at goleaguego.org.