

The Voter of ODC



Inside this issue:

- December meeting 1
- Message from Joyce, Citizen Education Foundation 2
- Ruth Shur Memorial Year end gifts 3
- Immigration Reform Membership News 4
- Health Care Action Global Warming 5
- League history in Water Quality Protection 6
- Local Water Quality Protection 7
- League Calendar 8

**CLEAN WATER FOR PEOPLE
AND WILDLIFE
WHAT CAN LOCAL OFFICIALS DO?**



Thursday, December 3

10:00 AM Light Refreshments

10:30 AM Commissioner Ellen Reckhow speaks on the role of local officials in protecting water quality

**Extraordinary Ventures
200 South Elliott Road, Chapel Hill**

League member Ellen Reckhow has served as a Durham County Commissioner for twenty years. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston University and a Masters in City and Regional Planning from Harvard University.

The water quality issue currently before the Durham County Commission will impact all LWVODC members, as it concerns Jordan Lake, the primary source of water for Chatham County, and an emergency source for Orange and Durham Counties.

A proposed development in the Jordan Lake Watershed is the subject of special meetings, challenges of decisions by the former planning director and the Commission, and threatened law suits by environmentalists and the developer.

Come hear what Ellen is doing and what you can do to protect the water of Jordan Lake.

Upcoming Events

**December 3
Ellen Reckhow,
Local Action on
Water Quality**

**February 11, 2010
Program Planning, Priorities
For Future League Activities**

**May 13
Annual Meeting**

LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

I'm writing to ask for your involvement in your League! Let me tell you how easy it is to volunteer as an officer, director or committee chairperson position in the LWVODC. With the LWVODC now operating with an Administrative Team and with the County Unit concept for organization and holding meetings, your time spent in a position has been reduced considerably. Much is accomplished with emails and best practice tools.

Currently we are in need of a Nominating Chairperson, Publicity Chair, and member to assist with preparation of a budget for next year. We also would like you to be thinking of taking on the jobs of Membership, Treasurer, Secretary, VOTER Editor and Administrative Team Leader for next year. With the team concept, these positions are not extremely time consuming and most importantly, you are doing your part to participate in the support of the LWVODC.

Let me hear from you OR contact the person who currently holds the position to hear what it involves! You can reach me by email at:
jcolaiace@nc.rr.com.

Thank you.

Joyce Colaiace
Team Leader, LWVODC

WANT TO GIVE TO THE LEAGUE AND GET A TAX DEDUCTION?

The **Citizen Education Foundation** is the 501 © (3) branch of the League of Women Voters of North Carolina. One of several criteria for such an organization is that it is operated solely for education activities. These may include public discussion groups, forums, panels, lectures, printed materials, video tapes or other similar projects.

CEF projects must present fair, objective, non-partisan information to the general public. Projects cannot advocate a particular position or legislation or urge any action to affect legislation. The project cannot involve work with political parties or candidates for office, other than non-partisan voter service activities.

**League of Women Voters
Orange/Durham/Chatham
P.O. Box 3397
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3397
919-419-1650
[Http://lwvodic.org](http://lwvodic.org)**

Administrative Team

Leader

Joyce Colaiace
colaiaj@aol.com

Secretary

Ruth Ann Groh
Ruthann.groh@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Rita Weimer
rkweimer@mindspring.com

Voter Editor

Carol Rist
carol.rist@verizon.net

Webmistress

Cynthia Wertz
Cynthia_wertz@embarqmail.com

Logistics Coordinator

Margie Maddox
maddoxmargie@aol.com

Membership

Health Care Reform

Evelin Brinich
967-5819
Membership@lwvodic.org

Unit Contacts

Chatham County

Margie Maddox
362-0433
maddoxmargie@aol.com

Durham County

Elizabeth Hein
309-2741
ehain@nc.rr.com

Orange County

Rita Weimer
rkweimer@mindspring.com

LWVUS Announces Extraordinary Charitable Contribution to Secure and Strengthen the League

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. has made the following announcement:

*The League of Women Voters Education Fund is honored to have received a generous contribution from League member **Walter Shur**, of Pittsboro, North Carolina, to create and endow the **Ruth S. Shur Leadership Institute**. The Institute will develop and sustain a "national coaching team" that will support and strengthen emerging League leadership, membership recruitment and League visibility and best practices. Mr. Shur has made this extraordinary gift to honor the memory of his beloved wife Ruth S. Shur, a longtime League member and leader.*

We are honored that Walter has made this extraordinary gift in honor of Ruth, who brought wit and wisdom to every League meeting.

Thank you, Walter.

REMEMBER THE LEAGUE IN YOUR YEAR END GIVING

by Rita Weimer

What We Did

This fall all three Units sponsored candidate forums to assist voters to make informed choices on November 3. We collected and posted candidate and election information on our web site. *The Chapel Hill News* printed our Voters Guide information verbatim, giving the League credit. *The News and Observer* and the *Durham Herald Sun* covered the Durham Candidates meeting, noting that it was sponsored by the League. The Chapel Hill and Pittsboro forums were video taped and broadcast on The Peoples Channel (Channel 8 on Time Warner Cable).

What It Cost

This is the sort of activity for which the League is well known. It costs money. We spent \$855 from our Citizens Education Foundation (CEF) money to support these projects. A \$500 grant from the Triangle Community Foundation covered much of the cost, but now our CEF funds are nearly depleted.

How You Can Help

As you consider the year end funding requests please remember your local League. You have two options:

- You may send a **tax-deductible donation** for our education fund (CEF). We can use this money for voter education or to pay part of our per member dues to the state and national Leagues. Please make your check out to **CEF**.
- You can also send a donation toward operating expenses, which include printing, telephone, or rental of meeting places. **This donation is not tax deductible**. Make your check out to **LWVODC**.

Please send both CEF and LWVODC checks to LWV-ODC, PO Box 3397, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3397

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Next Important Call to Action

By Cynthia Wertz

Recent signals from the Obama administration indicate that they will be taking steps to give legal status to the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants by pushing legislation early next year to reform the immigration system. Their approach will be a three pronged effort: tougher enforcement of laws against illegal immigrants and employers who hire them, streamline the system for legal immigration, and a tough but fair pathway to earned legal status. As in the case of health care reform, the League of Women Voters will be heavily involved in this legislative process. We will take action to support our recent position on Immigration which was released by the National Board after an 18-month comprehensive study on immigration followed by local League consensus.

The LWV position, which calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants, provides for federal enforcement of immigration laws and full due process rights for immigrants. In addition, the position supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immigrants into the United States. To read the detailed LWV position on Immigration, various LWV resource documents on immigration reform, and the *Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population in NC*, please visit our website: <http://www.lwvodc.org/immigration.html>.

In preparation for the expected LWV Call to Action on Immigration Reform, the LWVODC will be organizing Unit meetings on immigration challenges and issues in each of our three counties early next year. The Unit meetings will be followed by a general meeting with a panel discussion on immigration challenges and issues at the national, state and local level. The meeting will be open to the public. These planned events will help prepare LWVODC members to take an active and important role in successfully supporting Immigration Reform in 2010.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marna Doucette
20 Wythebrook Lane
Durham, NC 27713
493-6315

Lonna Harkrader
1320 Shepherd Street
Durham, NC 27707-1647

DON'T FORGET TO THANK

REPRESENTATIVE

DAVID PRICE

FOR SUPPORTING

HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Go to his website,
<http://price.house.gov/>**

Click on "Contact David,"

**Tell him that you appreciate
his support for health care reform.**

ACTION ON HEALTH CARE

Congress must take action to pass strong health care reform legislation that guarantees quality, safe and affordable health care to all U.S. residents including the choice of a public insurance plan. It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system. The legislation must include a benefits package that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care, and mental health care. In addition, any health care package must include prescription drug coverage and allow for pre-existing conditions.

Legislation must establish a system-wide program to coordinate information, establish best practices and provide consumers the information they need to protect themselves and their families. It is essential that comparative data on treatments, benefits packages and medical outcomes be made publicly available so that individuals can make informed health decisions and so costs can be controlled.

Cost containment measures must take place in the context of overall health care reform. We must reduce or eliminate the cost-shifting that currently exists in health care financing and work to streamline the system. Legislation must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care. To achieve this kind of comprehensive, system-wide reform will take a shared effort by citizens and Congress.

Now that the Senate has voted to consider health care reform legislation, it is time for League members, as individuals, to once again contact their senators and urge them to support health care reform legislation which would meet the League criteria.

To contact Senator Burr, go to his website, <http://burr.senate.gov/> and click on "Contact me."

To contact Senator Hagan, go to her website, <http://hagan.senate.gov/> and click on "Contact Senator Hagan."

THE OTHER LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY - GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

LWV recently secured its official Observer status for the United Nations Framework Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen this December. Seven League members will serve as delegates to the conference. All of these delegates have taken an active role in working on climate change issues both for the LWV and in their professional work; they are making this trip at their own expense as representatives of the LWV.

League's Long History in Protecting our Water Resources

Back in the 1920's and 1930's the **League of Women Voters of the U.S.** undertook a study of flood control, erosion and the creation of the Tennessee Valley Resources. In the 1970's the League helped pass the landmark Clean Water Act, and worked to protect, expand and strengthen it through the 1990's. Water issues, from ground-water protection to agricultural runoff to the Safe Drinking Water Act, have been addressed, especially at the local level, for decades. The League has taken action based on the following LWVUS positions which were arrived at following study and consensus:

Natural Resources

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.

Land Use

The League supports:

Identification and regulation of areas of critical concern:

- Fragile or historical lands, where development could result in irreversible damage (such as shorelands of rivers, lakes and streams, estuaries and bays; rare or valuable ecosystems and geological formations; significant wildlife habitats; unique scenic or historic areas; wetlands; deserts);
- Renewable resource lands, where development could result in the loss of productivity (such as watersheds, aquifers and aquifer-recharge areas, significant agricultural and grazing lands, forest lands).

Water Resources

The League supports:

- Water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, ground-water and surface water and that address the potential depletion of pollution of water supplies;
- Stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking-water supplies, including protection of watersheds for surface supplies and of recharge areas for groundwater.

The **North Carolina League of Women Voters** undertook a study of state government activities affecting water resources in the 1950's, and water quality and resource programs have been a major concern of LWVNC ever since.

LWVNC POSITION ON WATER QUALITY

- Promote high water quality standards through monitoring, watershed protection regulation, basin-wide water resource planning, coastal water resource protection, and equitable financing.

Water Resources in Orange, Durham and Chatham Counties

North Carolina has seventeen major river basins within its boundaries. Chatham County is wholly within the Cape Fear Basin while Orange and Durham Counties are in two river basins, the Neuse and the Cape Fear.

Stormwater from Orange and Durham counties pollutes Falls Lake, so decisions made by local officials in Orange and Durham affect the quality of water in Falls Lake. However, it is the people of Wake County who depend on Falls Lake for their drinking water. Their elected officials have no influence on land use decisions in Orange and Durham which will affect the quality of the water in Falls Lake.

Stormwater from Orange, Durham and also Chatham County pollutes Jordan Lake. Chatham is totally dependent on Jordan Lake for its drinking water, while Orange and Durham rely on Jordan Lake only in an emergency. However, the people of Chatham County have no influence on land use decisions in Orange and Durham which will affect the quality of the water in Jordan Lake.

The Durham County Commission is currently addressing an issue which will affect the quality of water in Jordan Lake. A development company which has assembled a large parcel of land in the Jordan Lake watershed succeeded in getting the former planning director, and eventually the County Commission, to O.K. an amended survey changing the watershed protection boundary, thereby greatly increasing the density of construction in the parcel. Civic and environmental organizations are ready to go to court, as is the developer.

At our December meeting, Durham County Commissioner **Ellen Reckhow**, who has worked to protect the environment in her twenty years on the commission, will bring us up to date on this proposed development. She will brief us on what a county commissioner can and cannot do to protect the environment and she will tell us what we can do to support elected officials who work to protect the environment.

You Can Protect Water Quality Using Green Infrastructure

A new approach to stormwater management uses natural systems to absorb and filter rainwater and make use of it where it falls. It treats rainwater as an asset rather than a waste product.

- Using permeable paving for driveways and parking areas allows rainwater to seep into the ground, thus recharging groundwater and reducing stormwater runoff.
- Rainwater can be "harvested"—collected as it runs off the roof and stored in rain barrels or a cistern for future landscape irrigation. Benefits include lower water bills, less waste of precious drinking water, reduced demand on the municipal water system and increased groundwater recharge.
- Replacing lawn areas with natural landscaping will save water and energy as well as benefit the natural environment. Lawn maintenance is water intensive—some 30 percent of our water is used to irrigate lawns—and lawnmowers cause five percent of the nation's air pollution. Native plants, on the other hand, help reduce runoff and minimize the need for watering. They do not need fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides. And they provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

League of Women Voters of
Orange, Durham and Chatham Counties
P.O. Box 3397
Chapel Hill NC 27515-3397
Tel: 919-419-1650
<http://www.lwvdc.org>

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization for men and women that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen over 18, male or female, may become a voting member of the League. With that membership comes the opportunity to work on local, state, regional, and national program issues.

The Voter is printed on recycled paper.

League Calendar

Thursday December 3 10:00 AM	General Meeting Durham Commissioner Ellen Reckhow “How can we keep our lakes and streams clean?”	Extraordinary Ventures 200 South Elliott Road Chapel Hill
Thursday January 21 10:00 AM	Administrative Team Meeting	Home of Ruth Ann Groh 309 Granville Road Chapel Hill
Thursday February 11 10:00 AM	Choosing priorities for LWVUS and LWVODC	Game Room Carolina Meadows
Thursday May 13 11:00 AM	Annual Meeting	Extraordinary Ventures 200 South Elliott Road Chapel Hill