



League of Women Voters® of
Orange-Durham-Chatham
Serving the people of Orange, Durham, and
Chatham Counties, North Carolina

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK®

JULY 2018

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear League Members and Friends,

I am honored and excited to begin my term as the President of ODC for the 2018-2019 year!

Our year got off to an excellent start at the June Retreat with the incoming Board members and the committee/team leaders. This is an outstanding group of ladies who are ready to give their time, energy and expertise to help uphold ODC as the vibrant and amazing organization that it is. I look forward to working with them and our members to promote the League's work.

In the coming year the issues our programs and events will tackle include voting rights and improving Elections, fair Elections (redistricting), public education, violence against women and the environment. For the first time, we will also explore two pilot projects: youth outreach and a civil discourse initiative.

Obviously in the fall our primary focus will be the upcoming midterm Elections and the possible changes in NC voting laws and hours. The Voter Services team is ready to host voter registration and education events as well as candidate forums.

Furthermore, as we did for the Primary Election, ODC will join VOTE411. ODC along with every NC League and will invite ALL NC candidates running for office to participate in our nonpartisan voter guides. The candidates' information and answers, along with all ballot measures will be available on the VOTE411.org website.

Clearly there is a lot to do and we need your help! You can become more involved with our chapter by joining an action team, committee or County unit, working on the youth outreach or civil

discourse projects, helping organize candidate forums, voter registration, thinking up questions for candidates, promoting VOTE411.org, or joining us during the ODC Happy Hour!

So, we are off to a great start! I look forward to working with you as we continue to develop ODC and help the communities of Orange, Durham and Chatham Counties!

Best regards,

Krishna Mondal
President

2018-2019 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President - Krishna Mondal

Vice President - Pat McDaniels

Treasurer - Cynthia LaMaster

Secretary - Tara Fikes

Director - Joan Broun

Director - Kathy Wright

Director - Amy Jeroloman

Director - Jennifer Rubin

Nominating Committee Chair - Pam Oxendine



2018-2019 Officers and Directors, Kathy Wright, Cynthia LaMaster, Tara Fikes, Pat McDaniels, Krishna Mondal and Pam Oxendine



Krishna Mondal and Pat McDaniels thank outgoing President, Pam Oxendine

ACTION TEAMS

CIVIL DISCOURSE INITIATIVE

The LWVODC Civil Discourse Initiative Study Group kick off meeting was held on June 6 at the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center in Chapel Hill, with a follow-up meeting held on June 21. The group will not meet in July, resuming meetings in August: stay tuned for a place and time.

The group's first task is to review resource materials from other Leagues around the country, with a focus on *New and Improved Methods for Civil Discourse in the Public Arena* and *A Study of Civil Discourse in San Luis Obispo County: Finding a Definition, Best Practices, and Position* developed by LWV San Luis Obispo, California.

These documents and other Civil Discourse resources can be found on the LWVODC web site, Civil Discourse Initiative page under the Action Teams tab. The CDI Study Group discussions will focus on ways to use existing materials to develop resources to assist governmental bodies in Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties to resolve local issues in as civil and productive manner as possible.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ACTION TEAM

The principle work of the Environmental Issues Team this year has been a Study of Water Quality in our three counties. To that end we have met with two NC legislators.

Sen. Mike Woodard of Durham warned of budget cutbacks to environmental programs.

Rep. Chuck McGrady, a member of the House Select Committee for River Quality, spoke to us about the undesirability of legislation which permits spraying of leachate from landfill sites on fields. The level and makeup of possible contaminants is unknown.

We attended the Jordan Lake Symposium only to learn that progress toward definite solutions is slow. Both the Haw River and Jordan Lake which it feeds are on the EPA list of impaired waters. These are principle sources of water for Chatham County and Cary. The solar bee trial was an expensive failure. The Collaboratory is studying new methods. In the meantime, implementation of the Jordan Lake Rules continues to be postponed.

We observed a Citizen Stream Monitoring Demonstration by Emily Sutton, Haw River Keeper. This was done at a park on Bolin Creek in Chapel Hill. DEQ is not funded or staffed so that they can monitor streams. Bolin Creek is adjacent to the coal ash dump

site on the Police Station grounds. While the water was clear, there appeared to be almost no living creatures in the creek.

Pittsboro Mayor Cindy Perry spoke to us about adjusting to the new development there which will bring thousands of homes and businesses to their doorstep. The county and developers are working together. However, the drain on water resources will be great. Pittsboro's water treatment plant will have to be enlarged as there are currently no new plants being permitted.

A large new chicken processing plant in Siler City will have some effect on resources in the area as may the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline.

The counties of ODC are very different in their make up and their sources of water. We will focus the first portion of our report on Chatham County concerns.

We meet on Sunday afternoons at 3:30 in the Chapel Hill Library usually on the 3rd Sunday but this depends on availability of space. Look for monthly email notices or check the website calendar. We especially need members from Orange County.

Robin Smith, Environmental Attorney and former Assistant Secretary of DENR (now DEQ), will be with us

on July 22. Please join us for this informative conversation.

Contact: Eva Rogers ebrog43@aol.com.

PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTION TEAM

In North Carolina at present, charter schools divert funds from public school systems. The Durham Public School system has been severely impacted by this loss of funding. Sue Collins is leading our team in a plan to screen the film "Backpack Full of Cash" at Durham Tech on September 13, 2018 at 7 pm.

The film highlights and explains this problem as it applies nationally. Local aspects of the problem will be addressed following the film in a question and answer session led by Durham school board member Natalie Beyer and former superintendent Bert L'Homme who is now with the Sanford School of public policy at Duke.

Find the latest news stories about public education in North Carolina on the LWVODC website. Working closely with Cynthia Wertz, Mary Kolek and Ruth Ann Groh have just completed a significant revision and update to our Action Team web pages. On these pages you can also find a list of partner organizations, summaries of past forums and speakers, and other relevant information.

www.lwvdc.org/edu_action.html

GOVERNOR'S ADVISOR SPEAKS ON THE CLASS SIZE MANDATE

At a forum sponsored by the LWVODC on January 11, 2018 LaTanya Pattillo, Teacher Advisor to Governor Roy Cooper addressed the pressing issue of the class size mandate. Ms Pattillo stated that the governor's position is: Either fund this mandate or phase it in. " (In early February legislations announced a deal to implement the class size mandate gradually.)

Among those attending were two superintendents, a school board member and other persons with expertise on this issue. Comments from the audience included:

- There is economic disparity in the state. In some counties the teachers are paid more than the median income of residents.
- Teachers are not solely responsible for what happens in schools. Students' ability to learn is impacted by poverty, hunger, homelessness and other community problems.
- Durham would have to build 63 classrooms to comply with the class size mandate.
- We need a bold vision from the Governor.
- There is a shortage of effective teachers to meet the mandate resulting in potentially causing districts to fall back on hiring less qualified teachers.

Excerpt of a summary edited by the Public Education Team.



Mary Kolek introducing LaTanya Patillo

FAIR ELECTIONS ACTION TEAM (FEAT)

FEAT, co-chaired by Beverly Kawalec and Brenda Rogers, is excited to announce that LWVNC has received a \$10,150 grant to implement a redistricting reform program in 2018. The timing is critical since any changes in the redistricting process in NC needs to be in place by 2021, after the results of the 2020 census are received. The focus of the most recent FEAT meeting was on the draft white paper developed by Jennifer Bremer, Janet Jones, and Suzanne Johnson and the implementation of the project funded by LWVUS.

Jennifer and her team conducted a study of redistricting bills introduced across the country, focusing on those states that do not

have the citizens-initiated referendum option, like NC. The bills were analyzed along 12 dimensions, or elements, and the report identifies options for drawing districts using a Structured Legislative Commission (SLC) which provides for a role for the Legislature while creating a fairer, more transparent process. The practical reality is that legislatures rarely will approve of a plan that does not allow for some degree of influence by the legislature. Jennifer has developed a general plan for educating the legislature and its staff, key stakeholders, our partners in redistricting and fair elections, and the media about the options for a SLC. Upon approval of the white paper and the plan by LWVNC, we will post the documents on the ODC website.

ODC FEAT has agreed to make the implementation of the plan as presented in the proposal to LWVUS as its primary focus for the next 6 to 12 months. The speakers bureau will continue but will probably focus on the white paper as well as a general overview of the problem with extreme gerrymandering. Several presentations have been scheduled in the next few months, including two to other local Leagues. We have volunteers to write letters and opinion pieces to be published in area newspapers. However, some critical roles to implement the program need to be filled. The plan calls for a director and project manager for the project and volunteers to lead the project components: stakeholders; legislators; media; and redistricting organizations. We also will need a coordinator to work with local Leagues and provide training. The project has funds for a limited amount of paid work, approximately 10 hours a week. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer coordinator in these areas, please contact Jennifer Bremer who will be organizing a planning meeting within the next two months at bremer.jennifer@gmail.com.

ODC FEAT is seeking support from our members of the redistricting project. Those interested should attend future meetings

of ODC FEAT, usually scheduled the second Tuesday of each month at 4 pm at the Chapel Hill Public Library. Due to the holiday, July's meeting will be on July 17.

Beverly Kawalec
bevkawalec@gmail.com

Brenda Rogers
Brenda.hyde2@gmail.com

Don't be shy, visit the NC General Assembly and talk to legislators.

How we lobbied?

LWVODC action teams representatives met with the Board on June 16th, to discuss their advocacy plans, and address questions about effective lobbying. After you have informed yourself on issues of importance, how do you talk to legislators? Speaking at a LWVODC forum in 2016, Representative Graig Meyer stressed the importance of organization and persistence.

He told us to listen, explain, and persist.

We need to inform ourselves, listen, explain our problems and try to find agreement on solutions.

Key points also included:

- Educating legislators needs to be an ongoing process, not a one-time visit or message
- We need to persist, not give up easily
- Being determined and persistent in contacting and visiting government officials and legislators is paramount and is why being organized and coordinated in our efforts matter.
- Large numbers of volunteers provides leverage. Large numbers of contact, over time, send a powerful message.

By Ruth Ann Groh, co-chair of the Public Education Action Team

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACTION TEAM

The Violence Against Women Action Team will be meeting on the second Saturday of the month at 10:00 am (location TBA). Join us at our next meeting on July 14th where we will be discussing our upcoming agenda. We want to continue to work with area experts to identify critical gaps in funding and education about family violence, organize relevant discussions and panels, and work with state and local violence prevention agencies to advocate for their legislative goals. We hope to continue the discussion around domestic violence and immigration law and possibly look at North Carolina's laws around divorce and how that makes it harder for survivors to leave.

For more information you can check our web page: <http://www.lwvdc.org/ViolenceAgainstWomen.html>

You can also contact the Program Lead: Arianne Hartsell-Gundy: arianne.hartsell@gmail.com

VOTER SERVICES ACTION TEAM

Officials from the League of Women Voters of North Carolina report an increase in voter engagement in the 2018 NC primary compared to previous midterm primaries. Surely, some of this increase is because of generic voter enthusiasm, but much of this increase results from ongoing efforts by the Voter Services teams to share important voter information, register many new voters, and stand up for voting rights. These are ways that we have a positive impact on voter enthusiasm and turnout.

As we move forward from the primary elections to the general elections, we will NEED the continued support of our members. To that end, we have scheduled a Voter Services Team meeting for Saturday, July 7, 10am at the Chapel Hill Public Library. We need to develop plans that will best utilize our resources to increase participation in the November 6 general election. We must plan for an ODC Judicial Forum, at least one candidate forum in each county, and multiple voter education/registration events.

2018 General Election Dates

Sept. 7 - Absentee Voting begins for General Election

Oct. 12 - Registration for General Election ends

Oct. 18 - One stop Early Voting begins for General Election

Nov. 3 - One stop Early Voting ends for General Election

Nov. 6 - General Election

NOTE: Gov. Cooper vetoed a law passed by the NC Legislature to change the beginning and ending dates of early voting. This veto will likely be overridden but did not happen before this publication.

VOTE411 TEAM

Just as voter enthusiasm has increased throughout the state, the League's own election information site, www.VOTE411.org had a record number of users in NC for a non-presidential election year. It is not surprising that most of the [VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) users are residents of the larger counties like Mecklenburg, Wake, Buncombe, Guilford and Durham; but residents from all 100 counties accessed the system during the primary.

[VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) is a nonpartisan, community-specific, website owned by the League of Women Voters of the US. It is always available to help voters determine whether they are registered, obtain instructions on how to register, and obtain generic election information. When we advertise that [VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) is going live, we are referring to the online voter guide developed for the primary and general elections. With this guide, voters can find out who is running for specific offices in their districts and what their candidates' positions are on important issues. Voters can also obtain a customized ballot, find polling locations, hours of operation, as well as early voting dates.

The key component of the voter guide is the candidate questionnaire, where candidates respond to specific questions in their own words. The candidates also get an opportunity to provide links to their website, include a photo, and background information. Developing the voter guide is a technical activity that requires training and is also an information gathering process that requires input from other League members to help assure objectivity in the questions. Our ODC [VOTE411](http://www.VOTE411.org) team completed the questionnaire development process for the primary in February and March and will do this again for the general election in July and August.

KUDOS: To everyone who helped with [VOTE411!](http://www.VOTE411.org) A noteworthy accomplishment was the state-wide expansion of [VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org).

Beth Springston, Krishna Mondal, and Louise Romanow-LWVNC **VOTE411** Steering Committee--deserve enormous credit for initiating and seeing this effort through to fruition. This was no easy task.

Special thanks also to the ODC **VOTE411** Team: Val Gist, Team Leader; DeLois Cue, Durham County; Judy Lechner, Orange County; and Jackie Walters, Chatham County on the technical end. Thanks also to Krishna Mondal, Ruth Anne Groh, Anne Truilzi, Pat McDaniels, Vickie Shea, and Pam Oxendine for help developing questions for the voter guide.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you have a better understanding of what **VOTE411.org** is and how it works, another very important step is yet to come. For this next step, we need your help. We need you as a **VOTE411** AMBASSADOR to help us publicize **VOTE411.org** in any way you feel comfortable, including in the following ways:

- Distribute bookmarks, post cards, and posters to local stores, churches, at voter education events, places where you volunteer;
- Wear your **VOTE411.org** t-shirt;
- Tell your friends and family about **VOTE411.org** through emails, Facebook, twitter, etc.

TO HELP, or ask questions please contact Val Gist at lww.valgist@gmail.com .



VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING SCHEDULE

Are you interested in helping with LWVODC non-partisan voter registration & education events? All voter registration volunteers must have completed voter registration training by the time of their first shift. Vickie Shea is offering the training needed. Previously trained volunteers are welcome to come to a training session for a refresher. Training takes place in Vickie's home and lasts 1-1½ hours.

Two training sessions have been scheduled:

- Friday, July 27 at 10:30am
- Tuesday, July 31 at 7:00pm

For more information or to register for one of these sessions, please email Vickie at victoria.shea32@yahoo.com

VOTER PHOTO ID BILLS AND VOTER SUPPRESSION UPDATE

The League of Women Voters supports free, fair, and accessible elections for all eligible Americans and takes a clear stance against all voter photo identification bills, because:

- Nationwide voter ID policies have been shown to disenfranchise voters across the county.

- The League of Women Voters opposes efforts to create barriers that block citizens from fully participating in our great democracy.
- Voting is the one time when all citizens have an equal say in our government and it is wrong to pass laws that deny eligible American voters the opportunity to participate equally in our democracy.
- Simply put: it's wrong to pass laws that take away the right to vote from millions of eligible citizens, including seniors and veterans, for political gain. Research shows these laws disproportionately harm people of color, those with disabilities, low-income individuals, women, seniors, students, and veterans.

Voters expect their elected officials to focus on real issues such as the economy, education, and public safety. Restriction on voting rights is unfair and voting laws are being passed by politicians who are trying to manipulate the system for their own personal benefit and political gain. Additionally, there are unnecessary costs associated with voter ID enforcement.

During the 2016 Presidential Election, 14 states faced new voting restrictions. That same year, court rulings blocked such restrictive measures in three states, including North Carolina.

Public discussion and voter education:

Below, some key points to reference as you discuss voter fraud with the public:

- The League of Women Voters is the first to speak out about election integrity.
- During voter education and discussion, frame your point of voter fraud by broadening the definition of fraud-to include politicians manipulating the system and other forms of election-rigging.

Additional Resources:

The League of Women Voters offers resources to those of you involved with voter photo ID legislations. Locally, please contact Jennifer Rubin, if you would like to submit a letter to the editor or an op ed piece regarding voter ID. You may contact Jennifer directly at jennifer@jmcmillaninc.com .

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Membership of LWVODC currently stands at 288 members according to the National Database maintained by Amy Jeroloman. However, if you joined before Feb. 1, it is time for your annual renewal dues. You should have received an email about this recently. You can go to our website and use Pay Pal or copy the membership form and mail with your dues to PO Box 3397, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. Your support for our work is essential. Our new year begins July 1 and we want very much to have you on board with us again.

We have added to our team recently. Renee Twersky will be assisting Amy with the database. Karen Eldridge and Rick Gist will be helping with other aspects of our work. Arianne Hartsell Gundy handles our invaluable Interest Survey Spreadsheet which helps us connect group leaders with new members. Arianne will be expanding that to give leaders a record of the dates new members join. This will help to welcome and engage new members in the most timely manner.

I will be having Orientation once per month. It is usually on a Tuesday or Thursday evening. Always from 6 to 7 pm at the Chapel Hill Library. You can check our website calendar at LWVODC.org. In addition I will send out an email to recent members prior to the orientation date. The next session is on June 28th. An Interest Priority Survey will be distributed and made available to the board.

We appreciate your prompt response with your renewals. We are responsible to pay our obligations to state and national organizations. Your timely response saves our resources, both money and time, for important work. Many, many thanks for your ongoing support with your time, talents and treasure.

**Eva Rogers
Membership Co-chair
ebrog43@aol.com**

Stay Connected

- Join Facebook and become a friend to other LWVODC members:https://twitter.com/LWV_ODC
- Email us: info@lwvdc.org
- Visit our website: www.lwvdc.org
- Write to us: LWVODC, P O Box 3397, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3397
- Krishna Mondal, LWVODC President lwvmondk@gmail.com

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