

Officers and Board - 2006-2007

President - Kathleen Balogh
 Vice President - Karen Sanders
 Treasurer - Jack Saye
 Recording Secretary - Linda Carol
 Membership - Sandra Abromitis
 Virtual Lobby Corp - Barb Panarites
 Board - Hal Hogstrom
 Voter Editor, PR- Anne Higgins
 Civics Education- Ruth Christie
 Board - B. J. Snow
 Kids Voting - Sheila Franklin

Nominating Committee

Chairman - Jean Parks
 Member - Marsha Stickford
 Member - Sheila Franklin

Off Board Appointments

Betty Becker - Office Phone
 Judy Bissel and Nelda Holder - Web Page
 Grace Curry - Hospitality/Phone
 Fran Myers - Corresponding Secretary
 Jack Saye - Newsclippings

About the League of Women Voters

MISSION OF THE LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League seeks to expand citizen participation in the election process and in federal, state, and local government decision-making. Based on member participation and agreement, the League also seeks to secure public policies that promote League positions.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE

Membership is open to all citizens of voting age, female and male, who subscribe to the League's purpose and policies. Citizens of other countries or those under 18 may be non-voting (associate) members. Membership in the LWV of Asheville-Buncombe County (\$50 individual or \$75 household \$20 student) carries automatic membership in the LWVNC and LWVUS.

The League of Women Voters
 of Asheville-Buncombe County
 221 Miles Building, 2 Wall St.
 Asheville, NC 28801
 828 - 258 - 8223
 www.abc.nc.lwvnet.org/

Notes from the President's Desk

Greetings from the desk of the LWV/ABC President!

This message from my desk will be short this month. There is so much work to do, so much need for the League of Women Voters! Need I say more? Hope you all have an opportunity to meet our newest Board member who has volunteered to be the secretary, Linda Carol. We appreciate her volunteering and look forward to working with her! We are busy with election forums this month, registering voters, and preparing for election day. Thank you again to all the volunteers actively working on these issues. If you want to participate in any activity, please let us know.

Voter Registration -

Karen Sanders

Civics Education -

Ruth Christie

Membership -

Sandra Abromitis

Observer Corps -

Kathleen Balogh

Kids Voting -

Sheila Franklin

Hospitality -

Grace Curry

Voter/Newsletter -

Anne Higgins

Special Events -

Barb Panarites

If you have special talents that you feel would be of use to the League, please let me know. We always have small projects going on that could use new ideas and talents. **We don't want to just be the Board at work, We want to be the Membership at work!**

Take care all, and hope to see you at the upcoming forums!

Kathleen Balogh,
 President

Member Spotlight

Sandra Abromitis' Cure for Boredom

Boredom, as defined by my Webster's dictionary, is *the state of being weary and restless through lack of interest*. This does not, however, define League member Sandra Abromitis, whose current schedule after retirement rivals that of any busy executive. Besides being on the board, Sandra has been the secretary of the LWV-ABC and has worked hard to increase membership by becoming Membership Chair. Many other organizations have benefited by having Sandra as member, including the AAUW-NC, AAUW-Asheville, and Leadership Asheville Forum. She has worked as a Guardian Ad Litem, Room at the Inn Coordinator, Housing Coalition Board-Black Mountain, and with several committees at North Carolina Creative Retirement Center. She is currently coordinating the Women's Agenda in Buncombe County.

When asked what the groups that she supported had in common, her answer was quick and clear: "Women and children's issues." Once a single mother working multiple jobs and putting herself through college, she knows what it is

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Membership

Membership year is
 July 1 to June 30.

- Individual: \$50
- Household: \$75
- Student: \$20

Member names and addresses are not given or sold to other organizations. We do provide mailing labels when we cosponsor an event with another organization.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year there are a limited number of scholarships given to cover the cost of membership. In exchange for the membership we ask that recipients actively participate in League functions.

If you know someone who is interested in League Membership and has financial need, ask them to contact Sandra Abromitis (686-8281) for an application.

The League of Women Voters welcomes women and men who are interested and supportive of our principles and goals.

Candidates Forums:

The League will co-sponsor three more candidates' forums this fall, as follows:

Friday, October 13, 4:00 pm
Judicial candidates forum co-sponsored with the District #28 Bar Assoc. Sharon Barrett and Susan E. Wilson, running for District Court Judge and Robin Hudson, Ann Marie Calabria, Mark Martin and Rachel Hunter running for Assoc. Justice, NC Supreme Court have agreed to participate in the forum. Retired Judge Earl Fowler will moderate. The forum will be held in the 5th floor courtroom at Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville.

The judicial forum we co-sponsored with the Bar Assoc. in 2002 was very informative and really helped me decide which judicial candidates to support. Don't miss this opportunity to see several state wide candidates in person!

Monday, October 16, 7:00-8:30 pm
Forum for NC Senate and House candidates, co-sponsored by Kids Voting. Martin Nesbitt, R.L. Clark, Susan Fisher, Mike Harrison, Bruce Goforth, Eric Gorney, Doug Jones and Charles Thomas will speak & answer questions. Nelda Holder will moderate. The forum will be held at the Randolph Learning Center, 90 Montford Ave., just north of the new Chamber of Commerce Building. Convenient location with lots of free parking! Come ready with your questions on the state issues of most concern to you. Tell your neighbors and friends.

Monday, October 23, 7:00-8:30 pm
Forum for Buncombe County Sheriff & Buncombe County School Board candidates. Co-sponsored by Kids Voting. Sonya Friedrich will moderate. Did you realize there are five candidates for the Erwin District seat and two for the Reynolds District seat on the Buncombe County School Board? If you live in the Buncombe County School District, you can vote in both

of these contested races even though you don't live in either district.

This forum will be held in the cafeteria of the Clyde A. Erwin High School, 60 Lees Creek Road. Erwin High School is less than a 10-minute drive from the corner of Patton Ave. and Leicester Highway. (Drive north on Leicester Highway for about 2 1/2 miles. You'll pass a MacDonald's and a Pizza Hut. Turn right on Old County Home Rd. at a traffic signal just before the Exxon Station. There is a green sign pointing you toward Erwin High School. Go about a half mile to Lees Creek Road, the 3rd road on the right. Turn right at the traffic signal. At the first traffic signal on Lees Creek Rd., turn left into the main entrance for Erwin High School. Bear to the right, up the hill & around the right end of the building. There is ample parking at this end of the building, which is right next to the cafeteria. Follow the sidewalk along the front of the building to the first doorway, which will take you into the cafeteria.)

It helps to have someone else in the car when driving to a new place. If you can't convince a partner, neighbor or friend to come with you, you can plan to meet other Leaguers at the Ingles at the corner of Patton Ave. and Leicester Highway and car pool from there. Contact me at 232-2883 or rachristie@charter.com, and I'll link you up with a car-pool.

The students at Erwin are planning to help with set up, prepare questions for the candidates, usher, pick up the question cards and assist with the timekeeping on the 23rd. Kids Voting hopes to engage Kids at Asheville High School to assist with the forum at the Randolph Learning Center.

Additional co-sponsors for all three of these forums are The North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement and Leadership Asheville Forum.

Submitted by Ruth Christie

This election season, the LWV/US is expanding its traditional arsenal of voter education tools—Voters' Guides, debates and voter registration. **We are launching VOTE411**, (www.VOTE411.org), an easy-to-use, nonpartisan Web site for election related information.

VOTE411 provides both general and state-specific data on such items as voter registration and absentee ballot rules, early voting provisions, ID requirements, voting machine types, tools for overseas citizens, and contact information for elections officials. An exciting feature of VOTE411 is its local information component—a polling place locator that allows users to key in their addresses and obtain their poll locations. Knowing where to go to vote is among the most sought-after pieces of information in the days immediately leading up to, and on, Election Day. Candidate and ballot initiative information will be gathered from local and state Leagues for inclusion on the site.

Help for overseas voters is also part of VOTE411. The League has partnered with the Overseas Vote Foundation to enable military and overseas voters to register to vote and request absentee ballots. And VOTE411 links to as many other relevant sources of online election information as possible.

VOTE411 is where voters go for easy access to trustworthy election information. There is no other Web site that provides this level of comprehensive, state-specific information. Even within a state, most people do not know what state or local government agencies to turn to on this subject. The ability to go to one site—VOTE411—for information on multiple states is especially appealing to families and individuals who are mobile—particularly college students and others who move periodically for employment, education or retirement. The League's VOTE411 is an invaluable tool for voters. Spread the word in your community about the new one-stop-shop, VOTE411!

VOTE411 provides:

- Election dates
- Voter qualifications
- Registration deadlines
- Absentee ballot information
- ID requirements
- Early voting options
- Voting machines
- Voter registration forms
- Polling place locations
- Contact information for elections officials
- Data on candidates in federal, state and local races
- Ballot measure information
- Other resources

LWVUS Immigration Study

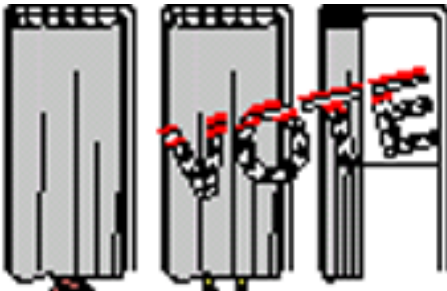
Don't forget to include the LWVUS Immigration Study in your **2006-2007** calendar. Leagues are encouraged to begin educating their members and communities on this complex issue as soon as possible. The LWVUS Immigration Study Committee members will produce materials, which will be available on the Web site early in 2007. In the meantime, local Leagues can utilize community resources for public forums and/or member meetings. Suggested resources include immigration lawyers, political science professors, law enforcement personnel, and religious/social service groups providing services to immigrants. For more information, contact Carolle Mullan, LWVUS Immigration Study Committee Chair at carmelchai@aol.com.

If anyone is interested, please call or e-mail Kathleen Balogh at 626-2695 or kbalogh@aol.com.

Cure For Boredom

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Member spotlight



to be without health and child care. She is determined and passionate about those issues and believes that women should make their vote count by electing candidates who will focus on these issues.

In her spare time, Sandra enjoys gardening with her husband of twenty years, Bill Abromitis, a teacher at A. C. Reynolds High School. She also takes pleasure in her visits to Houston to visit her daughter and granddaughter.

Reading, cooking, and her Yorkshire terrier also keep her busy. A little known desire of Sandra's is to one day attend cooking school in Italy, though she loves her home in the mountains and hopes to stay forever. As members of organizations that have benefited from her dedication and hard work, we hope to have her here as well.

Written by: Anne Higgins

The
Membership Committee of
The LWV-AB
Invites You To:

Afternoon Tea

in Honor of Our Newest
Members



Sunday, November 19, 2006

2:00 to 4:00 pm

**River Ridge
Community Center**

R.S.V.P. by November 10, 2006
to Sandra Abromitis:
abromitis@msn.com

Directions: From I-240, take exit
8 at Rt. US-74-A west. Turn
onto Fairway Road. Turn left at
River Ridge Drive. Drive through
the River Ridge Marketplace and
follow signs to the Club House.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome
our newest member.

Paige Hansen

OBSERVER REPORT - METROPOLITAN SEWER DIS- TRICT - Sept. 20, 2006

All members were present except Brownie Newman. The most contentious issue was whether to allow a pump station for a new section by the developer for The Cliffs at Walnut Cove (off Rt. 191). Some members felt septic tanks would be a solution, since the number of housing units had been reduced. The board finally approved construction of the option that combines a gravity sewer extension along with a pump station, to be built to MSD standards and subject to all applicable fees.

In other business, a Pipe Rating Contract was approved for Terry Bros. Construction Co. for over one million dollars. The amount was within budget. The project includes pipe rehabilitation, replacement or rehabilitation of manholes, all for pipe segments having significant structural problems.

Martha Ziegler, Director of Finance, reported on the self-insured Health Plan, to which employees contribute. Fiscal year 06 results were similar to FY 05. Chronic conditions and prescription drugs drive up costs. FY 07 may be more expensive. The MSD's River Water Reclamation facility was favorably presented in an article, with pictures, in a trade magazine.

Submitted by: Leah Karpen, Observer

Planning and Zoning Commission Report

September 6, 2006

Three Conditional Zoning (CZ) requests were heard. The first was reconsideration of a previously approved CZ request for property at 430 McDowell Street (across from Asheville High School). Instead of the proposed office, the applicants want to have a children's daycare center.

Addition of a sidewalk the length of the property along McDowell was part of the plan, but to avoid having to blast a rock face, the sidewalk would be more narrow in one section. The request was approved, with a request to the Engineering Department to explore the possibility of some protection between the street and the sidewalk at the narrow point.

A second CZ request was for modification of a previously approved plan for 103 N. Bear Creek Road. The applicants asked to be allowed to add a temporary modular classroom so they could accommodate more students until the work on the main building is complete. This request was approved.

More controversial was a request to change zoning at 2 Iris Street, just off London Road, from Commercial Industrial to Residential Multi-Family High Density CZ, with a "density bonus" that would allow a total of 84 units on just over three acres. Nine members of the public spoke, and the primary concerns seemed to be the contrast of the multi-family units with the single family homes nearby, the increased traffic on narrow roads, and parking. There was discussion of not allowing the "bonus" units, but the consensus of the Commission members was that the proposed development is consistent with City Council goals for higher density in areas close to downtown, and the request was approved.

There was a request for a variance for Building One in Phase One of the Riverbend Urban Village Project regarding orientation of the building to the street and regarding windows and openings on the first floor level. The observer left before a decision was made.

*Submitted by: Jean Parks,
Observer*

ANNUAL KICK-OFF MEETING

On September 17, 2006, from 1:00-3:00 pm at the YWCA Asheville, the League of Women Voters of Asheville-Buncombe County Kickoff Meeting opened with a warm welcome by President Kathleen Balogh following a social with delicious cakes, cookies and beverages.

Kathleen highlighted the day's agenda and presented our keynote speaker, Judie Burke, President of the North Carolina LWV, who is in the second year of her second term. Visitors were specially introduced and spoke briefly on local chapters.

Judie reported that she was with Kathleen at the National LWV convention where issue priorities were established for the coming year. Since inception, LWV has represented nonpartisan politics and a true grassroots movement. The convention provides opportunities for training and counseling for the leadership of the LWV. During the convention, sixteen non-recommended agenda items were recommended on the floor and five passed, including support for abolition of the death penalty and immigration reform. Key topics included:

- Requirement of paper trail voting machines
- Democracy agenda
- Internet neutrality
- Top tier membership for North Carolina
- Diversity of membership (new, seasoned and transfer LWV members)
- Reforms in campaign financing, redistricting, elections, civil liberties, lobbying, DC voting
- Clean air initiatives
- ANWR Alaska (Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) oil drilling

We are involved with broad-based coalitions and, while we cannot support individual candidates, we can accommodate their needs, for example, by use of public scorecards. We are sharing some issues with Women United including open government; One Shot having a single issue which is lobbying reform; and Common Cause. We're

working with Tom Coulson, chairman of Common Cause-NC 11th District, and Voters for Clean Elections. The goal is voter-owned elections. These coalitions cover a political range from extreme left to extreme right. We're also working on Fair Share, same day registration at Early Voting sites.

We are developing a lobby core in Raleigh as well as a virtual lobby core. The lobby core has been successful at increasing the minimum wage and lobbying reform was strengthened in 2005. LWV is close to the National Citizens Lobby Corps. We've had no success in advocating for same day registration, public financing of NC races for state offices, or winning approval of the earned income tax credit.

Members were reminded to check "approval" on our next state tax returns for \$3.00 to be used for financing judicial races for the North Carolina Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals.

Judie said that at the August retreat, the Board decided to hold the next NC LWV annual convention at Pinehurst and it's scheduled for March 23-25, 2007. Half of the mandate for the NC LWV is to provide services to local league chapters which number 17 in North Carolina. She hopes you will contact her with your ideas and suggestions at:

Judie Burke, President
League of Women Voters of N.C.
3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 404
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609
Phone and fax: (919) 783-5995
E-mail: lwwnc@mindspring.com

Other speakers and topics included:

Jean Parks on the issue of Internet neutrality (everyone should have access to the Internet without charge).

There was a brief discussion of the North Carolina Clean Elections ethics code. LWV is encouraging candidates to sign up and take a pledge.

Karen Sanders is promoting voter registration with students who will be turning 18 in eight high schools, as well as at the Super Wal*Mart, the

Asheville Mall and at UNCA. Dr. June Atkinson, North Carolina Superintendent of Schools, has encouraged students to register to vote.

Ruth Christie will be seeking a grant to conduct three sessions of Civics 101 in March 2007, which covers judicial systems including civil and criminal process.

Marsha Stickford is working on the Boards and Commissions study. In the first half of the study, members became acquainted with the appointment processes, how they work in reality and how they are supposed to work, to make suggestions to City Council members and County Commissioners. There are 10-15 boards with budgets and oversight responsibilities.

Asheville/Buncombe LWV is sponsoring three candidate forums before the November elections including one on healthcare (already completed in September), one with NC legislative representatives, and one for School Board and Sheriff candidates. Dates, times and locations of the last two are announced within this newsletter. LWV members will observe Boards and Commissions and assist in Kids Voting.

The LWV hot topic for winter and spring is "instant runoff elections." Tom Coulson of Common Cause spoke of San Francisco, California, using "instant run off voting" and suggested that it would be a good study.

Anne Higgins has been working hard to learn new software in order to bring us E-Voter to be produced electronically and sent out by e-mail from now on.

We're making progress on many other fronts including the creation of an improved LWV website that is straightforward and clear. Stay abreast of our developments at: <http://abc.nc.lwvnet.org/>

Business was adjourned at 2:53 p.m. and members were invited to stay until 3:30 p.m.

Submitted by Linda Carol

THE VOTER



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www.abc.nc.lwvnet.org/

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LEAGUE CALENDAR 2006

OCTOBER

Last day to register for November election Oct.13

Candidate Forum, Judicial; 4 pm on 5th floor courtroom of Buncombe County Courthouse Oct.13

Candidate Forum, NC House and Senate; 7 pm at Randolph Learning Center 90 Montford Ave Oct.16

One Stop Voting opens Oct. 19

Candidate Forum, for School Board in Erwin and Reynolds districts, and Buncombe County Sheriff at Erwin High School 60 Lees Creek Road Oct. 23

Board Meeting Oct. 25

NOVEMBER

One Stop Voting ends Nov.4

General Election
Kids Voting Volunteers needed Nov. 7

LWV Board Meeting 5:30pm Nov. 22

New Members Tea, River Ridge Club House Nov. 19

DECEMBER

LWV Holiday Social to honor elected officials TBA

LWVABC Board Meetings

The board meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday, 5:30pm at the YWCA Board Room. All members are welcome to attend. The deadline for submissions to *THE VOTER* is each month's board meeting. **Next board meeting is October 25.**

Note: If you have not received your 2006-07 membership list in the mail, please let us know!

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

OCTOBER

NC Conference for Women, Charlotte Oct 19

I NEED A RIDE!
If you ever need a ride to an event we are sponsoring please let us know so that we can try and arrange transportation for you! We don't want anyone to be unable to attend for any reason but we won't know you can't come if you don't call us. The LWV office number is 258-8223.