

IN THIS MONTH'S VOTER

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Officers and Board - 2007-2008

President - Ruth Christie
 President Elect - Barb Panarites,
 Civic Education
 Vice President - Karen Sanders
 Treasurer - Jack Saye
 Recording Secretary - Sheila Franklin
 Jean Parks, Membership
 Hal Hogstrom - Voter Enfranchisement
 Anne Higgins, Voter Editor
 Marsha Stickford, Programs
 Linda Brown, Observer Corp

Nominating Committee

Chairman - Grace Curry
 Member - Judy Bissell
 Member - Pat Wille

Off Board Appointments

Office Phone - Betty Becker
 Web Page - Judy Bissell and
 Nelda Holder
 Kids Voting - Sheila Franklin
 Hospitality/Phone - Grace Curry
 Corresponding Secretary - Fran Myers
 Newsclippings - Jack Saye

President's Report

Welcome back, everyone! I hope you're ready to plunge back into League activities, because there's lots going on this fall. We'll lead off with an interesting introduction to our study of immigration on Sept. 24. Do read Marsha Stickford's article describing the speakers and detailing time & place.(p.5) Then invite your friends, co-workers, neighbors to attend with you. If you need a ride, contact a Board member to help arrange transportation.

The shifting dates for the City of Asheville primary caused by the ordinance regarding partisan city elections and the subsequent successful petition drive to require a referendum on the ordinance made it challenging for the Civic Education committee to plan for candidates' forums. We've decided not to sponsor a separate pre-primary event but to encourage our members and others in the community to attend the forum sponsored by the NAACP the first week of October. We'll send you the date & place when that has been established.

We are presenting a pre-election candidates' forum for Asheville Candidates on Oct. 17 and co-sponsoring a forum for Black Mountain candidates on Oct 25. Read the details on date and time on page 3. Then mark your forum on your calendar and think of questions to pose at your locale's meeting. If you have questions regarding the forums, please contact Barb Panarites @ 236-5987 or by e-mail at bpanarites2@charter.net. Again, if you need a ride, contact a board member.

We had planned to present an educational panel about partisan elections. However, when I called Bill Sabo to discuss such a program, I learned he had already been contacted by Leadership Asheville Forum requesting his participation in such a panel. That forum will take place on Thursday, October 11 from 7 to 9 pm at the Reuter Center at UNCA and will be open to the public. We encourage our members to attend that forum.

Good committee work is vital for a healthy, effective League. We currently have 2 great committees working on League education projects: the Immigration Study committee, chaired by Marsha Stickford, and the Civic Education Committee, chaired by Barb Panarites. Two other core committees need new blood: the Observer Corps and the Membership Committee. Linda Brown, coordinator of the Observer Corps, is eager to train observers for key government bodies. Call Linda at 236-3720 to discuss what's involved.

Jean Parks has a vision of diversifying the membership in the Asheville-Buncombe County League to better represent our community. She needs help; i.e. members who enjoy meeting people, reaching out to potential members, and helping new members find their niche in League. Help make LWV-A/BC a stronger organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Call Jean at 687-0109 to Volunteer for the Membership Committee.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at our kick-off meeting at the JCC on Monday, Sept. 24th at 7 PM.

President,
 Ruth Christie

By the way - Please note the new mailing address for LWV-A/BC: PO Box 8292, Asheville, NC 28814.

Welcome to our Newest Members

**Gina Hallstrom
Laura and Charlie Thomas
Jean Larson
Lillian Moore
Joy Hays**

Remember to get your membership forms and dues back to Jean Parks, our new Membership Chair. You can mail to:

League of Women Voters
attn: Jean Parks
P.O. Box 8292
Asheville, NC 28814

Membership

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 co-sponsor 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 Jean Parks (e-mail or phone) for an application.

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

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO POLLY CODY !

On September 18th, Polly will be celebrating a special birthday.
Send your birthday greetings to Polly at the address below.



**Highland Farms, 200 Tabernacle Rd., #H214,
Black Mountain, NC 28711-2592.**



WCWC announces the 2007 Women to Match Our Mountains

The Women's Equality Celebration marking the 1920 passage of the 19th Constitutional Amendment that gave women the vote has been a landmark program for the Coalition since our inception. The program includes the Women to Match Our Mountains Award to recognize outstanding women of service in our region. Sandra Abromitis was chosen 2007 Civic Leader of the Year.



Sandra Abromitis' lifetime community volunteer activities include; officer and board member of the AAUW Asheville Branch, the League of Women Voters, the NC Creative Retirement Center and the Legislative Women's Agenda. Her energy, commitment and loyalty to the task have made countless events that promote women successful.

Sandra has been an active member of the LWV or Asheville-Buncombe County since 2003, plunging right in to serve as Recording Secretary from 2003-2005 and Board member in charge of Membership from 2005-2007. LWV-A/BC is proud that Sandra has been recognized as a Woman to Match Our Mountains.

submitted by Ruth Christie

Note: Other LWV members who were former Honorees include: Leah Karpen, Nelda Holder, Hazel Fobes, Patsy Kever, and Janet Bowman.

About the League of Women Voters

MISSION OF THE LEAGUE

The The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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.

ASHEVILLE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES FORUM

Date: October 17, 2007
 Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
 Site: UNC Asheville, Reuter Center
 Chestnut Ridge Room
 Sponsor: Asheville Buncombe LWV
 Co-Sponsor: North Carolina Center for
 Creative Retirement (NCCCR)
 and Kids Voting

Let Us Know What You Think.

Where is the best place to hold LWV events? Contact Grace Curry, our Hospitality Chair at GraceCurry1@charter.net

Who would you like to hear as a guest speaker? Contact Barb Panarites by way of e-mail at bpanarites2@charter.net.

LIVING WAGE UPDATE

The Asheville City Council on May 22 approved the Living Wage ordinance for City of Asheville employees. The pay will be a minimum of \$10.86 per hour or \$9.50 per hour with benefits. According to staff reports, this amount already is being paid. Seasonal workers are not included.

The Council also voted to make living wage a factor in awarding city contracts. They did not approve an automatic annual cost-of-living increase. The Asheville-Buncombe League had endorsed the proposed ordinance. The Living Wage Committee, which is now part of Just Economics, will begin work on a living wage certification program for business.

BLACK MOUNTAIN ALDERMAN AND CITY MAYOR FORUM

Date: October 25, 2007
 Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
 Site: Black Mountain Center for the Arts
 Sponsor: Black Mountain News
 Co-Sponsor: Asheville Buncombe LWV

WEB HELP WANTED

Like to sit at your desk late at night or early in the morning when the world can't bother you? Want to make a small contribution to society at the same time? The League needs a new Web master to keep our information up-to-date for our members and the viewing public, especially such things as registration and election dates and other civic information. This is NOT tech-intensive (our site is a template-site connected with the California LWV, and they have made it very easy to use). You just need a few minutes on a bi-weekly basis and some rudimentary abilities to click-and-type. It's an easy but important way to help the League from the sanctuary of your own home.

Contact Ruth Christie at 232-2883 or rachristie@charter.net

OBSERVER REPORTS

Asheville City Council

August 21, 2007

Time - We began at 5 pm and ended six hours later. In rapid order three areas of the city were re-zoned. **Britt Drive**- A business wanted to rezone land on Britt Drive. He wanted it rezoned "light industrial" so he could build a warehouse near the river. It was unclear whether the neighbors had been consulted. It was unclear whether he had access (a road) to the land. One lawyer testified that Britt Drive cannot be used because it is a private street. The City Attorney stated that "without access" the resolution could not be passed. City Council passed it anyhow. **Main Street at Biltmore Lake** - A condo developer presented a plan that was concrete in only one respect: There would be four 12-story buildings. One Councilmember asked: "We are going to approve a vague plan that is never coming back to us for approval?" The answer must have been yes, because it passed. **Hominy Creek** - The developer is going to build tall buildings above a tiny creek. City Council passed it – and then decided to discuss height limits on urban villages next week. The Mayor asked, 'You say Planning & Zoning already granted this developer a variance.- is that legal?' The City Attorney's answer, 'Yes.'

Stormwater and Erosion Control- This was the hot issue of the night and many citizens (furious) testified against it. Under the proposed law, a person could not build within 50 feet of a stream. City Council passed the ordinance with one change – a buffer of 30 feet. Then sent it back to Planning & Zoning to have it written properly.

Submitted by: Observer Chair, Linda Brown

Energy Forum

Democracy for America (no connection to LWV) sponsored a forum on June 6 relative to Energy. The Panel consisted to Avram Friedman, Canary Coalition; Brownie Newman, Conservation Council and Asheville City Council; and Ulla Britt-Reeves, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, with Cecil Bothwell, Mountain Express reporter, as moderator. While each presented different viewpoints, all agreed that burning coal to produce power is definitely not environmentally desirable Cecil suggested simple political solutions that can work; for example, turn off the TV and computer when not in use, especially in public places like airports. Brownie described the steps that Asheville City Council currently is taking, like hiring an energy specialist on staff and creating a Committee on Sustainable Environment. Ulla mentioned a regional greenhouse gas commission. She and Avram talked about the necessity of economic incentives and land use planning, as well as restructuring utility rates. Both wind energy and solar were cited as being cost-competitive. Those present were asked to send postcards to the State legislature supporting HB1825 as well as energy efficiency and renewables. The way ahead requires commitment by all of us but is not too difficult to achieve the goal of energy (and cost) savings.

Submitted by: Leah Karpen

Metropolitan Sewerage District Board

August 15, 2007

Mayor Terry Bellamy was absent; numerous observers attended, mostly staff. The only public comment was by Ben Pace, former Board member, asking the Board to be consistent in applying the policy of no future pump stations. Prior to the business agenda, a staff member made an impressive power point presentation on the District's recycling program. The initial goal set in 2003 of 100 lbs. recycled per month has been far exceeded. Also, employees may bring recyclables from home. Curbside collects the recyclables; Cardboard, waste iron and rags are separated, bringing income. Biofuels are used where appropriate. MSD produces 50% of power used. Waste Reduction Partners of Land-of-Sky Council had done an energy audit in the past with recommendations. The Planning Committee considered reimbursement of sewerage work in an affordable housing project in the Starnes Cove Area. Of the \$1.3 million total cost of the sewer extension only \$473,000 was recommended and approved by the Board, in conformity with present policies. The Finance Committee considered several policy items: Investment policy was reviewed and approved by the Board.; some changes in auditing standards and controls; continue current auditor with an 11% increase based on those changes; reviewed banking relationships and customer service; considered post-employment benefit for health insurance—approved by Board to be designated in the budget but not funded in a separate trust. The Personnel Committee discussed goals and objective as well as a new contract with the General Manager Mr. Hartye. A three-year contract was considered acceptable and approved by the Board. Recommendations for condemnations as proposed by the Right of Way Committee were approved; all had involved numerous meetings with owners. Carolina Specialties received the contract for Brucement Place Phase II as low bidder. Several developer-constructed sewer systems were accepted. The City of Asheville presented a report on billing for the fourth quarter. Billings after adjustments increased; number of customers increased by @.2% and consumption increased by 2.5%. Other details may be found on the MSD web site.

Report by Leah Karpen, Observer

LWV IMMIGRATION STUDY EDUCATIONAL FORUM

SAVE THE DATE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

7:00PM

LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED



League of Women Voter Studies are used to develop National League Programs and the positions employed to impact public policy (see your LWV Member Handbook for a complete list of LWVUS positions). The Study process consists of 3 steps that involve League members at the local and state level and includes (1) selection of an issue, (2) study of that issue and process to develop consensus on the issue, and (3) use of the resulting consensus to define position to affect public policy.

Delegates to the 2006 National Convention voted to initiate a two-year Immigration Study aimed at helping communities better understand the implications of immigration at the local, state, and federal level. This Study creates an opportunity for League members to explore their underlying values and principles regarding immigration, reasons for immigration, current federal immigration policy, and the impact of immigration in American society. It also provides local and state Leagues a framework to support members becoming more informed *participants in the consensus process that will lead to the formulation of LWV position on Immigration.*

Our League Board has formed an Immigration Study Committee to help members of the League and the general community connect with the information they need to become more informed on this complicated and divisive issue. League members are invited to participate in the activities of this committee by contacting the Committee Chair, Marsha Stickford at mestickford@charter.net or 258-0210. [The next Committee meeting is on September 10th at 9:30 am at Hal Hogstrom's home.] The Board and the Immigration Study Committee want to emphasize that the Study process is very dependent on the active involvement of our members, who are encouraged to take advantage of every possible opportunity to educate themselves during the Study.

The Study Committee will conduct two information forums this fall in addition to making written and web-based materials available. The first of the two forums is scheduled for **Monday, September 25th at 7 PM** at a location yet to be determined. This event will be co-sponsored by the Congregation of Temple Beth Ha Tephila.

Information on the 2nd forum will follow in the October VOTER. Both forums are open to the general public.

In January of 2008, you will be called upon to join with other local League members to come to a broad agreement/consensus on the values we hold related to immigration by participating in structured and facilitated discussions. The consensus developed from this process, along from those of other Leagues across the country, will be used to form the position the National League will use for years to come to affect public policy on Immigration. More information on the Consensus meetings will be announced at a later date.

Resources of interest:

- **LWV US website**
- **COLA**: The Coalicion de Organizaciones Latino-Americanas. Contact Ada Volkmer at 828-713-5124.

Carpooling to the forums will be available by contacting the League office number.

THE VOTER



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LEAGUE CALENDAR 2007-2008

SEPTEMBER

Immigration Study Comm at H. Hogstrum residence 9:30 a.m. Sept 10
Immigration. Forum Sept 24

OCTOBER

LWV - Asheville Candidates Forum
7:00-9:00 UNC Reuter Center, Chestnut Rm **Oct 17**
Black Mtn Candidates Forum 7:00-9:00
at Black Mtn. Center for Arts **Oct 25**

NOVEMBER

New Member Tea -2:00 Nov 4
Economic Impact of Immigration
(date subj. to change) .. week of Nov 12

DECEMBER

Holiday Party - Dec 7

JANUARY 2008

Consensus meeting for League members on
Immigration Study week of Jan 14

FEBRUARY 2008

Program Planning Mtg - Potluck at the
YWCA 5:30 Feb 25

MAY

Annual Meeting - 5:30 May 19

**The League of Women Voters
of Asheville-Buncombe County
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OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

ACLU Forum 'The Right to Dissent'.
Moderated by Mark Gibney. 7pm at
UNCAshville - Sept 27

NAACP sponsored pre-primary forum
(Date and place to be determined)
..... - week of Oct. 1

Forum to discuss partisan city elections
at UNCA Reuter Center, 7-9pm. Spon-
sored by Leadership Asheville- ... Oct 11

NC Bar Assoc, Women's Division Dinner
- Guest Speaker Justice Ruth Bader-
Ginsburg. Grove Park Inn - \$50. Reserve
@ 919 657-1560 - Oct 18

Election Day- Nov 6
Board Meetings @ YWCA, 5 pm, 4th
Tues of the month