



BULLETIN

February 2013

League of Women Voters of Henderson County

FEBRUARY MEETING

February 21, 3 - 5 pm

Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room

**Finding Balance in Turbulent Times:
Non-partisanship, the Media and the Fourth Estate**

**Bill Moss, Editor of the Hendersonville Lightning
Brenda Gorsuch, journalism teacher, West Henderson High School**

We know the First Amendment to the Constitution “frees” the press and carries with it a responsibility to be the people’s watchdog. As League members we know an informed citizenry is essential to the healthy functioning of a democracy. What does this mean in today’s world of vast media ownership, the use of sound bites and editorializing by media personalities? How do we learn about issues and events? Come with your questions and thoughts for a lively discussion.

From the President

At our January meeting the membership directed me to send our League’s recommendation on gun control to our US Senate and House members, reaffirming our position on gun control based on the LWVUS position. At this same meeting it was agreed that our membership should send their own letters of support on this topic.

As you have noticed Immigration, another of our important issues, has moved to the forefront in national discussions. Please take the time to also contact our leaders regarding support for bi-partisan efforts on Immigration Reform.

Addresses:

The Honorable Richard Burr
217 Russell Senate Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510-3306
(202) 224-3154

The Honorable Kay Hagan
521 Dirksen Senate Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510-3301
(202) 224-6342

The Honorable Mark Meadows
1516 Longworth House Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515-3311
(202) 225-6401

Email:

<http://burr.senate.gov/public.index.cfw?FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm>

<http://www.hagan.senate.gov/contact/>

<http://meadows.house.gov/contact/emailm>

Judy

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Immigration in the News

Did you know that since the Executive Policy for Deferred Action for Children's Arrivals (DACA) was issued last summer that more than 115 persons in Henderson County have applied for approval? Attorney General Cooper has recently ruled that those who are approved for DACA can now apply for a driving license because their status qualifies as "legal presence" – a qualification required to secure a driving license in NC. This will enable those residents who came to the United States as children with their parents and have been here for at least five years and are in the age bracket of 16 – 31 years will now be able to apply for work and be able to drive and buy insurance – if their DACA status is approved.

League members continue to reach out to present education programs in Henderson County and beyond. Letters have been written to principals of local high schools to seek names of teachers who are currently teaching history, economics, or political science classes. Follow-up to teachers is the next step. If you know of specific teachers who teach these subjects in our high schools, please send those names to members of the Immigration Committee.

Current members are Barbara Updike, Michele Burnett, Glenn Rodgers, Judith Scruggs, and Lee Luebbe. Our regular monthly meetings are always held the third Monday at St. James Episcopal Church. The time has changed to 2 PM to accommodate all the members. Observers and guests are welcome to attend and join the committee.

As we go to press a bi-partisan Congressional committee has begun work on Immigration Reform. Please contact your Senators and Representatives to weigh in with your support of this action. See page 1 for contact information.

TIME TO GET BACK TO COURT

Revitalizing – reviewing – renewing interests in the League's long time interests and studies of the Henderson County Court system.

Come to Lake Pointe Landing, Monday, March 4, 3 – 5 PM, to learn what previous studies have led to current positions. Those members who participated in the last League Study of the Judicial system in 1995-'96 will be present to give our new members a good background and community resources from Mainstay and the Healing Place have been invited to share their observations.

The suggestion to do an update of our current position to support Family Court here in Henderson County was raised at the January Program Planning session. As a result of the discussion, this meeting is called to further explore the direction League could/should take at this time. If the group decides to do an update, the proposal will be brought to the general membership in May. If there is a recommendation to renew the advocacy for Family Court without the update, this meeting will begin laying out strategies to engage members to be effective in achieving the establishment of a Family Court. If you have your annual booklet from last year you will find the positions summarized there. Copies will be available at the meeting.

Would you like to learn more about the Henderson County Court System? Please come to the March 4 meeting at Lake Pointe Landing. Mark it on your calendar now. Contact Lee Luebbe for more information -694-3710 or lluebbe2@morrisbb.net.

My personal thanks to Miriam Plexico who made arrangements for the room at Lake Pointe Landing.

Lee

January Meeting

LWVHC Calendar 2012-2013

February

21 General Meeting - Non-partisanship

March

4 Reviewing Court study

14 Observer Corps

21 General Meeting - Women's History Month

April

11 Observer Corps

18 General Meeting - Water discussion

May

16 Annual Meeting

On a very rainy Thursday, Jan. 17th, we had our annual Program Planning meeting. Based on information gathered from a prior survey, we focused our attention on 4 areas of concern. :

1. The History and Future of Water in Henderson County
2. Health Care in Henderson County
3. Violence in Public Places
4. Poverty and Economic Development in our County

As each issue was discussed, the group agreed that the League has the responsibility to help educate the public. This is probably best handled by a meeting/forum open to the community.

These recommendations, along with the notes from the meeting, will be passed on to the Board as they plan the calendar for our next year's programs

In addition, Lee Luebbe presented a proposed update study of our Judicial Position. Since prior studies done in 1982, 1983 and 1995-96, laws have changed and new research has been completed regarding domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. (See page 2 for court study discussion.)

LEAGUE IN ACTION

This is the text of the letter that was forwarded on League's behalf to our Senators and Representative. You're invited to contact our representatives as individual voters. Find addresses on page 1

Dear -----,

The League of Women Voters has long held a position of responsible gun control. As President of the LWV in Henderson County, I am asking on behalf of our membership, for your positive response to the most recent efforts to reduce gun violence.

Most gun owners use their guns safely and responsibly, and we believe in protecting Second Amendment rights. But common sense changes can go a long way in keeping our streets and our schools safer.

Please act now on the following measures: closing background check loopholes, banning military-style assault weapons and limiting high capacity ammunition magazines, making our schools safer and increasing access to mental health services.

Thank you for your service to North Carolina and your fair consideration to this critical matter effecting all of us.

Cordially,

Judy Katz
President,
League of Women Voters of Henderson County

OBSERVER CORPS

The strictly non-partisan League of Women Voters was founded in 1920, the year women got the right to vote in the USA. It was formed to help educate women about how to vote and the responsibilities of their new voting rights. Men were admitted in 1973, and now also help the League work for 2 of the League's main issues of concern: **voter service and citizen education.**

As a way to address both voter service and citizen education, local Leagues have Observer Corps. Observer Corps members serve as watch dogs for the community at local board meetings. They want to make sure that the meetings have been posted early enough for citizens to attend to find out how board members are handling controversial issues. They want to make sure all the board members can be heard even in the back of the room and that they are discussing their business out in front of the public, so voters can tell who is voting for what and so that voters have time to speak out before a vote is taken by board members.

This certainly has not always been the case and is not the case even now, though there have been many laws passed that have helped to make the discussions and business of our governmental boards open to the public. Democracy is at risk when small groups can control decisions being made about their community without input from the entire community. On March 10-16, 2013, the USA even celebrates "Sunshine Week" about how successful our county, city, school, health and many more boards are at conducting business in an open way.

The Henderson County League of Women Voters Observer Corps would like young artists to help us celebrate this March 2013 "Sunshine Week" by submitting art that helps us understand the importance of open government meetings. Art entries will be displayed at the library during Sunshine Week and prizes for the winners in the contest will be awarded at the LWV general meeting in March.

Interested in helping with the art contest? Please contact Sharon Burlingame at 692-4012 or at sburlingame401@gmail.com after March 5th. Chair Sharon Burlingame is now in Thailand soaking up its sunshine.

The next Observer Corps meeting will be on March 14th.

January Planning Meeting



Lots of discussion

