

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

“Educating & Advocating for Democracy”

www.lwvnc.org



NC VOTER

NOVEMBER 2003

SAY “YES” TO FAIRNESS, INDEPENDENCE AND EQUAL JUSTICE

This box will appear on your 2003 income tax form

By saying "Yes", you will:

- get a nonpartisan voter guide that helps you cast an informed vote;
- give all candidates, regardless of their personal wealth, a chance to run a fair and effective campaign*
- help keep special-interest money out of our court system.

N.C. Public Campaign Financing Fund

This Fund pays for a nonpartisan voter guide and helps fund judicial candidates who accept strict fundraising and spending limits. Do you agree that \$3 should go to this Fund? Filling in a circle below will not increase your tax or reduce your refund.

You

Your Spouse

- Yes
 No

- Yes
 No

FAIR AND INDEPENDENT JUSTICE

To ensure public "ownership" of judicial elections and preserve the public integrity of our courts, the public needs to fund the campaigns of candidates for the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court who meet the public trust. Local Leagues are asked to put this insert in newsletters and on websites to educate readers about this \$3.00 check off on their 2003 N.C. Tax form. If you have coalition partners who would also put this in their newsletters and websites that would be very helpful. The campaign begins now and runs through April. If you run the insert and then a reminder across the bottom of the front-page that would be great. For copies of the insert, brochures and requests for a speaker on this issue contact Campaign Chair Peg Chapin, ehchapin@aol.com; (704) 846-2540.

Carteret County LWV Hosts Webcast on “*The Media and Elections*”

Archived on www.beforeyouvote.us for your viewing

On October 22, 2003, the LWV Carteret hosted a panel discussion that was broadcast as an interactive webcast. The program originated from Carteret community College in Morehead City, NC and included “live” streaming audio and video, a real auditorium audience of eighty students and faculty from East Carteret High School and the community college, a virtual audience from sites such as Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte and the LWVUS office in Washington DC. Other sponsors included the *Carteret News-Times* and the LWVNC.

The panel discussed the media’s influence on elections in relationship to the 2002 NC Judicial elections and public policy changes. Panel members included:

- The Honorable Wanda Bryant, NC Court of Appeals
- Representative William Daughtridge, Jr., Nash County, NC House
- Cindy Elmore, Assistant Professor, School of Communications, Eastern Carolina University
- Bob Hall, Research Director, Democracy NC
- Carmine Scavo, PhD Associate Professor, School of Communications, Eastern Carolina University
- Moderator Patricia Raskin Carbonelle, Media Producer and LWV Carteret member

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Carteret County LWV Hosts Webcast on The Media and Elections

(Continued from front page)

Topics discussed included the impact of the various mass communication genres of elections, electioneering, and election outcomes including such issues as:

- How each medium filters “the news” for public presentation
- The cost of political campaigns, campaign reform and voter owned elections
- The effect of the media on individual campaigns and candidates including packaging candidates for campaign advertisements in each medium
- How the internet is used to reach out to voters

Using the Internet and the webcast as the delivery mechanism for a panel discussion had several advantages over the more traditional forum format. The immediacy and novelty of the technology attracted the interest of younger citizens. A virtual viewer commented that she felt very much a part of the forum because she could see the panel assembling, hear the noise of papers moving and watch the audience reaction. The League is beginning to make plans for a 2004 Judicial Candidates forum using the technology.

Co-sponsors included Carteret Community College, Democracy North Carolina, North Carolina Center for Voter Education, League of Women Voters US Education Fund and the Open Society Institute. Funding provided by the Open Society Institute, LWV Carteret County, LWVUS Education Fund, Alliance for Better Campaigns, Citizen Education Foundation, Inc., Mr. Mark Vorhees and Ms. Kathryn Cloud.

For information contact LWV Carteret President Connie Asero; casero@ec.rr.com; 252-247-9265



FRIENDS OF THE ENDOWMENT HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

The State Board would like to invite all the Endowment contributors to a Holiday Luncheon on Thursday, December 4, 2003, 12 noon, at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Two years ago we had such a luncheon, and it was so enjoyable that we want to do it again. We also want to show that we appreciate your contributions, not only in money, but in all you have done for the League. We will talk about the Endowment campaign and current State League programs.

We'll have lunch at 12 noon upstairs (ask at the front desk for directions). This will give you time to see exhibits both before and after lunch. In addition to the general collection of the museum, there will be a special exhibit, "Defying Gravity," which "explores how aerial perspective has informed and transformed contemporary art." This exhibit complements the 100-year anniversary celebration of the first flight of the Wright brothers in Dare County.

If you have not yet contributed to the Endowment Fund, please consider doing so now. We accept contributions of any amount. To become a contributor, mail your contribution along with the luncheon payment to the address below. Please consider contributing to the Endowment Fund in addition to your local and State League annual funds.

The cost of the luncheon will be \$25. Please write your check to the CEF Endowment, mark it for luncheon and mail it to Diana Phillips, 146 Cedar Trail, Hillsborough, NC 27278. If you find you can come at the last minute, call 919-732-3561 and we will work something out.

Diana Phillips, Chair, Endowment Fund

Mark your calendar: Saturday, June 5, 2004 LWVNC Council, Asheville, NC

A Letter Sent to League Members & Friends

Dear Member & Friends of the League of Women Voters,

Two years ago the LWFNC board asked how it could be a resource of local League development. Board members brainstormed, appointed more members to serve on the board and decided that we should be talking to local Leagues. Working with Executive Service Corp. representatives here's what President's and Board Members told us: **build membership, develop leadership and increase visibility of the League.**

Here are some examples of what we've been doing for the last two years:

- ✓ Developed and held skill building leadership workshops across the state.
- ✓ Worked with others to pass public funding of judicial campaigns – a first in the nation.
- ✓ Sponsored a one-hour television program on judicial independence shown across NC.
- ✓ Visited Board of Election Directors throughout NC and formed an advisory team to develop recommendations for voter education reform.
- ✓ Designated a board member to focus exclusively on local League support.
- ✓ Put on a state convention that included workshops, networking and guests such as LWVUS President Kay Maxwell, former NC Supreme Court Justice Butterfield, workshops and networking.

Can you give a little bit extra?

As we review some of our successes and look ahead to the next two years one thing is obvious: we need the financial support of our members to continue the League's work. We hope you are proud to be a member of the League. North Carolina is a state that does not allow home rule so a strong state presence is even more vital. With your help we can do that by continuing to focus on membership, leadership and increasing our visibility.

For some paying dues is a stretch. For others a financial contribution is possible. With your contribution of \$10, \$25 or \$110, when added to the hours of volunteer time, you have in effect increased the collective voice of the League of Women Voters in NC. Think how much we could do if everybody gave as little as \$10. Imagine the possibilities. Your help and support is greatly appreciated.

Warmest regards,

Mary Klentz
Co-president

Peg Chapin
Co-president



Your support is appreciated. Thank you for your time, your talent and especially your financial contribution.

Name _____

Member of the League since _____ Currently member of _____ LWV

May we recognize you in future publications? _____ (yes/no)

Email _____ Contribution Amount \$ _____

Please make you check payable to LWFNC and mail in enclosed envelope. For tax deductible contributions checks must be made payable to CEF (the LWFNC 501(c)(3)).

LWFNC
3801 Barrett Drive
Suite 204
Raleigh, NC 27609-7214

Tel: (800) 851-VOTE

Website: www.lwvnc.org

*League of Women voters of NC: What's Next
Some the of the plans for 2004 – 2005*

Here are a few of the reasons your financial contributions are so important!

Leadership Workshops:

Skill building workshops throughout North Carolina will continue in 2004. LWFVNC will partner with local Leagues to bring community groups together to shift through issues, define what's important to them and form local networks. Advanced training sessions will offer opportunities for those who are interested in doing more.

Membership Development:

One member of the board will work with local LWFVs to develop and implement membership plans, provide broad orientations and identify other areas where the state can provide resources to local League development.

"Check it out. Check if off." Campaign:

LWFVNC will work to educate North Carolinians on the check off provision for the public funding of state judicial elections on the 2003 state income tax form. (You really fill in a small circle but this sounds better.) When taxpayers fill in the YES circle, \$3 of the taxes they pay is earmarked for the campaign fund.

Judicial Independence:

Watch for notices from the LWFVNC to continue work on these issues. Plans are underway to expand this program, which began in 2002. Members will learn more about how the courts work, how the integrity of our state courts can be maintained and ways to involve judicial candidates in more forums.

Voter Education Reform:

The Voter Education Advisory Team, which is developing a menu for initiatives to expand voter education in North Carolina, will meet with policy makers, private sector leaders and other organizations to get involved in voter education efforts throughout North Carolina.

State Council:

Scheduled for early June, LWFVNC will call ALL members to Council, a day long meeting to conduct League business, exchange plans and ideas with Leagues from across the state and discuss important issues. Watch the Voter for the date.

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

A big "Thank You" to our members for such a quick and generous response to the LWFVNC request for financial support. Some of those who contributed are:

Phyllis Baker	Anita Harwood	Elaine Paul
Ann Berry	Sue Hayes	Jonah & Julie Bird Person
Jila Boulas	Lucille Howard	Marlene Pratto
Alice Brown	Leah Karpen	Mary & Bill Price
Billie Ann Burnett	Beverly Kawalec	Ethel Sampson
Sue Cole	Nancy Kish	Nancy Sommer
Elsie Cunningham	Mary Klensz	Ruth Van Lehn
Marion Diamond	Betty Ann Knudsen	Joyce Waddell
Janet Durham	Linda Levy	Elizabeth Weston
Donna Earner	John McLaughlin	Marilyn White
Gay Eddy	Gayle Mitchener	Karen Wilson
Alice Greenlaw	Bernadette Parker	Eva Wilson
Gwendolyn Griswold	Susan Parry	

Presentation by LWVNC Co-President Mary Klenz to FCC Commissioners at a Public Hearing on Localism, in Charlotte, North Carolina October 22, 2003.

Good evening Chairman Powell and members of the Commission. I am Mary Klenz, Co-President of the LWVNC and past President of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg LWV. I would like to speak to you about some of the issues that concern my organization.

People are concerned about the concentration of broadcasting in fewer hands, the high cost of elections that is directly related to the cost of TV advertising and the decline in public affairs coverage. The League is particularly interested in the cost of running for office and the impact this has on elections and the decrease in local political coverage and how this relates to voter turnout.

One Billion dollars was spent on political TV advertising in the 2002 election. That was 25% of all money spent in all campaigns. Only 50% of eligible NC voters turned out in the 2000 election. Citizens get a majority of their news from TV and Radio and the main source of information available is through paid political ads. That really does our democracy a disservice. It becomes a self-perpetuating spiral downward – less information, less voting, less information.

It is unfair that broadcasters charge such high prices for political ads the closer it gets to Election Day. The airwaves belong to the public. They use them at no charge with the understanding that they will serve the public good. The LWV believes they are not living up to the bargain.

Broadcasters have an abundance of talent and creativity at their disposal. The weather is interesting, commercials are effective in getting a message out and they make outstanding use of graphics, color and design. Why can't all that talent be directed to programming that informs the public on issues of voting, elections and who is running for office?

Let me cite a few examples of how effective TV can be when it becomes involved in these issues. The League used to be invited to answer viewer's questions on local TV during election time. I was astonished at the number of calls we received. Without exception, we couldn't begin to take all the calls. Regrettably that practice was discontinued.

WTVI is our local PBS station and is noted for its local programming. The League has partnered with them on candidates debates for elections of city council, mayor, county commission and school board. I don't know of any other time when all candidates on the ballot in these local elections answer questions before an area-wide TV audience. This is done with volunteers working with WTVI and we continue to receive positive feedback from both voters and candidates.

Business concerns have taken precedent over the public interest. As Commissioner you have the job of figuring out how to balance these concerns with the obligation that broadcasters have to provide meaningful information to the public about voting and elections. From everything League members report they are not getting that now.

Mary Klenz was part of a panel assembled by the Federal Communications Commission. Other panel members included: Jim Keelor, President & COO, Liberty Corporation; Debbie Kwei, General Manager, WCHH-FM; Tift Merritt, Singer/Songwriter; Joan Siefert Rose, General Manager, WUNC-FM; Terry Avery, Operations Manager/Program Director WBAV-FM; Jim Goodman, President and CEO, Capitol Broadcasting Company; John Rustin, Director, Government Relations North Carolina Family Policy Council; Michael Ward, General Manager, WNCN-TV

Some of what local Leagues are doing (Fall, 2003):

Asheville-Buncombe: Was in the news to nip negative campaigning in the municipal elections, and testimony at a public hearing on the use of public land. Both actions made it into print in the Asheville Citizen Times.

Catawba: Registered voters at the Old Soldier's Reunion, at Women's Equality Day and at the Kenworth Neighborhood Association block party partnered with the United Hmong Assoc., the Women's Resource Center and Foothills Advocates for Democracy.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg: Put out a web site voter's guide for local elections that had 8,733 hits and partnered with WTVI on candidates debates that were rebroadcast multiple times.

Craven: Members arranged for Co-presidents Peg Chapin and Mary Klenz to appear on a local television issues program during their visit to New Bern and organized a meeting of interested people to talk about the future of the League in the community.

Dare: is hosting a public forum on election reform to explain the Judicial Campaign Reform Act and discuss the free airtime issue.

Piedmont Triad: Worked with the Guilford BOE during elections and hosted new members at a gathering.

New Hanover: Has developed a very effective membership development campaign to have all board members provide the names of four (or more) potential members in four target groups. All received a personal letter and phone call and sponsored the NPR program "Dollars Behind Democracy".

Union: kicked off their study of the NC Judicial System with a Sept. meeting. Guest was Clerk of Superior Court who talked about the functions of her office.

Wake: staffed the Wake Board of Elections hot line for both the primary and general elections. They answered more than 300 calls for the primary elections alone and will receive a stipend from the BOE.

Email your League updates to klenzm@nationwide.com and we'll put them in the next Voter. Tentative date is February, 2004.

LEAGUE IN ACTION
Leadership Development Workshops
Full Speed Ahead!
 By Peg Chapin

The Community Leadership Development Workshops "Working Locally for Social Change" have continued this fall with 3 workshops. They were held in Charlotte, Boone and Murphy. Each was unique and exciting because of the great people who attended and the ideas that they brought to the table. We have had one advanced training workshop in Asheville and have a group working independently in Charlotte.

We will be focusing heavily on educating folks on the Judicial Reform Bill and the Public Campaign Financing fund. We met in Hendersonville in October and will speak in Dare County in November; and Wilmington, Charlotte and Union County in January. Look for the flyers that will be coming to each league by the first of December.

Be sure to check out www.lwvnc.org

LWV to Partner with State Board of Elections and Local Leagues on Voter Education Meetings

In spring 2004 the state League, along with the State BOE will partner with local Leagues to put on a series of multi-county meetings in various parts of NC on Voter education issues. HAVA funding will be provided to underwrite the costs.

Community leaders from several contiguous counties will be invited to attend a meeting. They will be updated on election changes, basic voter education materials, exchange ideas and develop plans for increasing the visibility of elections, information and voter turnout in their communities. Local Leagues will be invited to coordinate the meetings where possible.

In 2002-03 the LWVNC Election Reform Team met with Directors of local elections boards and discovered that voter's are lacking the most basic information about voting. Many are unaware of elections, the candidates, the issues, if they are registered and where they vote. These meetings were first proposed by the State Board of Elections Director Gary Bartlett and are one way to address the findings of the team.

For more information on this program please contact Mary Klenz, 704-542-5012, klenzm@nationwide.com. Planning will begin in December.

**Adopted by LWVNC Board at 10-18-03 Meeting
From LWV Wake County Study and Position**

Recommendation for a New Position for Action:

The LWVNC supports a two-year moratorium on the North Carolina Death Penalty.

Is this Position an appropriate action item for the League of Women Voters?

The national, state and local Leagues of Women Voters have historically addressed issues that threaten or deny equal rights and equal access to the basic needs and services in our society. For several years, the NC League of Women Voters has had a program item addressing *Human Resources & Social Policy*, which states: "Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty." Within that program category, they address the *Criminal Justice* system, and under that specific item, the State League adopted a position to "promote fair and equal treatment of all citizens in the criminal justice system..."

It is in keeping with that commitment to equality and fairness for all our citizens that we recommend adopting a position in support of two-year Moratorium on the Death Penalty in North Carolina.

This position is consistent with other positions we have regarding equal treatment and is also very timely. Currently, many groups throughout the state are questioning the right to execute persons who may have been either incorrectly found guilty of a crime or have been denied equal justice within our criminal justice system. There is growing momentum to adopt a moratorium while the validity of the system and its impartial administration is re-examined.

How did the Wake League arrive at this Position?

This issue was presented to the Board as a possible study item at its November 2000 Board Meeting. In December, the Cary Town Council announced its intention to consider endorsing a moratorium, and several members wanted the League to testify in support of the moratorium. However, the Board recognized that we did not have a position on this issue, and we would need to study it and adopt a position before taking any action. Because of the urgency involved, the Board convened a Study Committee to carry out a thorough but expedited study of the issue.

The Study Committee, consisting of 10 members, held three meetings to share information educate its members and carefully consider the issues. We have communicated online as well as in person and have tapped into the expertise and experience of League members who were not able to attend the meetings (a lawyer and former judge and a church leader). We had access to the thinking of those who oppose the moratorium by visiting various web sites. We gathered information from web pages of organizations that support the moratorium on the death penalty (ACLU, Amnesty International, Moratorium Now, etc.). Individual members of the committee have reviewed scientific studies and newspaper reports around the country via the Internet.

We have alerted all League members of our work through the League's newsletter, web page and emails. In turn we received comments and suggestions from several League members. All members were invited to attend our meetings and give us their input.

Once the committee had reviewed the information and deliberated, the members agreed to present a position supporting the Moratorium on the Death Penalty to the Board. This position was considered and approved by the Board in February 2001, and the Board agreed to recommend it to the membership for discussion at the annual Program Planning Meeting on February 13, 2001. At the meeting, the members will have an opportunity to hear from the study committee and be able to thoroughly discuss the issue. They will then be asked to support the moratorium. If the membership supports the moratorium, the Committee and the Board will formulate an action strategy.

Why should the LWVNC support a Moratorium?

Studies demonstrate that the death penalty is applied in a racist manner.

- 76% of all people executed in North Carolina are African-American.
- 60% of death row in North Carolina is composed of racial minorities whereas minorities compose approximately 22% of the general population of the state.
- A 1990 study by the US General Accounting Office reported "a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing, and imposition of the death penalty."

Studies demonstrate that the death penalty is unfairly applied to the poor

- 90% of all people in the United States facing execution are poor and cannot afford to hire an attorney to represent them
- Appointed attorneys often have little or no training and experience in trying death penalty case, which are highly specialized and complicated.
- Appointed attorneys tend to come from small firms or single practices which cannot neglect all other cases for the several months that it takes to prepare a capital case for trial.

(Continued on page 8)

Adopted by LWVNC Board at 10-18-03 Board Meeting

(Continued from page 7)

The most compelling reason to establish a moratorium on the death penalty is the fact that innocent people are being executed.

- Eighty-seven people, including four from North Carolina, have been freed from death row when their innocence was proven, often by investigators outside the justice system and the number is growing
- Twenty-three people have been executed in this country only to be found innocent after their deaths.
- Since the death penalty was restored by the state in 1977, more than half of all death sentences have been thrown out because of flawed trials.

Based on these types of facts, The American Bar Association concluded that the administration of the death penalty is "a haphazard maze of unfair practices with no internal consistency." In 1997 the American Bar Association (as well as the NC Bar Association) passed a resolution recommending a moratorium on the death penalty.

Printed in the Charlotte Observer, October 23, 2003

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE, by Peg Chapin

If you believe state judges should be independent, here's the best way

If you enter a courtroom as a litigant, it is your right to expect three things: The judge is impartial, the judge is fair, and the judge is knowledgeable about the law.

Wouldn't you be upset if you had a case before a judge who had expressed an opposing position on cases such as yours during his or her campaign? Wouldn't you be equally upset to know that your opponent in the case was a major campaign contributor to the judge?

Judges are not supposed to be politicians who respond to the ups and downs of public sentiment or who use their power to push an agenda. They must examine the facts, decide cases without bias, and interpret laws using sound principles grounded in the state and federal constitutions. For these reasons, the League of Women Voters of North Carolina has consistently supported "merit" selection of judges since 1972. However, the North Carolina Constitution calls for judges to be elected. It is up to the voters and state legislature to change the constitution to implement merit selection, but a recent survey shows that 86 percent of North Carolinians prefer to elect judges.

The League, The Charlotte Observer, N.C. Supreme Court justices, and many others may favor a change to merit selection, but that does not seem likely in the near future. State legislators took the public's view into consideration when they passed the N.C. Judicial Reform Act in 2002. The League supports this new law, which keeps but greatly improves the election system for choosing N.C. Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges, beginning in 2004.

The law takes the party labels off judicial candidates, so they are not beholden to a partisan agenda. It sets up a public financing option for candidates who accept fund raising limits, so they are not beholden to special interests or large campaign donors. And it creates a Judicial Voter Guide, so voters get more information about the qualifications and professional experience of the candidates.

The public financing option and voter guide will only work if the public participates. Those programs are paid for by a Public Campaign Financing Fund, which receives \$3 for every taxpayer who marks a check-off box on the 2003 N.C. income-tax form. The check-off asks people to select Yes or No for the Public Campaign Financing Fund after this statement: "This Fund pays for a nonpartisan voter guide and helps fund judicial candidates who accept strict fundraising and spending limits. Do you agree that \$3 should go to this Fund? Filling in a circle below will not increase your tax or reduce your refund."

To ensure real public "ownership" of judicial elections and to preserve the integrity of our courts, the League urges everyone to answer "Yes" to the new Public Campaign Financing Fund.

Whether people favor or oppose judicial merit selection isn't the question to ask right now. There's another reform, newly won but still unfunded, that presents a more immediate question: If you believe that judges should be impartial and independent of political pressure, please say "Yes" to judicial fairness on your N.C. income tax return.

NOTES & NICHES

This *Voter* edition's column welcomes a guest piece written by Robin Smith with the Conservation Council of North Carolina, concerning a working group of environmentalists which has targeted environmental enforcement as its primary goal. The League is a participant in this group.

--Nelda Holder, Environmental Chair

The Environmental Enforcement Workgroup (EEW) is comprised of 16 organizations concerned about enforcement of environmental laws in North Carolina. Eighteen representatives of statewide groups and local community organizers have met to identify and support key environmental enforcement issues in North Carolina. Group members developed a vision of successful enforcement and identified common ground to unite and support diverse enforcement-related interests and efforts.

According to the *See No Evil* report (CCNCF, July 2002) and environmental leaders, North Carolina faces numerous challenges in preventing and dealing effectively with air, water and land pollution. Statewide and community-based organizations struggle to ensure that existing environmental enforcement systems adequately prevent pollution and to hold polluters accountable when violations occur. An excellent example of this is the Raleigh Waste Water Treatment Plan. Over the last several months, the city of Raleigh has come under fire due to revelations about the operations of the city's sewage treatment plant. Because of media reports and environmental watchdogs such as the Neuse River Foundation, the public is now aware of the treatment plant's ongoing violations over the last several years. These violations have included illegal dumping of sludge into the Neuse River and over-application of sludge onto neighboring fields, which could lead to groundwater contamination. Costs to the residents of Raleigh continue to mount while investigations continue.

This high profile investigation is just one example of how environmental violations go unchecked due to lack of enforcement. In addition to seeking funding to ensure an adequate number of enforcement and inspection personnel in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, there are other steps that can be taken to increase enforcement. The EEW will be advocating that information on environmental violations be made more readily available to the public. Public attention brought to chronic violators of environmental laws is the underlying theme for achieving successful environmental enforcement in North Carolina.

The EEW is currently providing comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) new tracking system for compliance information outlined in the "Draft Compliance Data Feed and Decision Support System Business Rules." The new system will improve accessibility of comprehensive information across all departmental programs and to the public.

The enforcement workgroup ranked improving public access to information as a key priority to the pursuit of effective enforcement in North Carolina. Comments by the workgroup on the proposed new rules are intended to insure that vital information needed to strengthen the citizen advocacy network and inform the public will be included in the new decision support system.

If you would like more information about the environmental Enforcement Workgroup contact Robin K. Smith or visit the Conservation Council of NC website at <http://www.conservationcouncilnc.org>

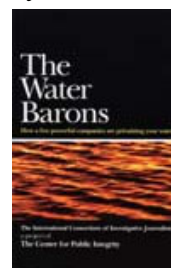
The following organizations are participating in the EEW: Conservation Council of NC, Catawba River Foundation, Neuse River Foundation, Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, Clean Water for NC, NC ConNet, NC PIRG, NC Coastal Federation, Environmental Defense, Southern Environmental Law Center, Environmental Poverty Law, Blue Land and Water Infrastructure, Bladen Environment, League of Women Voters, and Concerned Citizens of Rutherford County.

For more on global water issues, which could conceivably be coming home to roost, see this special report:

Privatizing Water: What the European Commission Doesn't Want You to Know

<http://www.icij.org/dtaweb/report.asp?ReportID=518&L1=10&L2=10&L3=0&L4=0&L5=0>

SUGGESTED READING: Environmentalists and others interested in how the world works would be well-served to read a publication which explains the terrifying terrain of global privatization of water. It's entitled *The Water Barons*, and it was created by the Center for Public Integrity, a D.C. based organization you may have seen featured on "60 Minutes" or CSPAN. (See <http://www.icij.org/water> for more information on this book.)





“About the Courts and the Law”

Did you know?

Under General Statutes 90-21.6 through 90-21.10 any person under age 18, pregnant and unmarried and seeking an abortion may ask a court to waive the requirement that a parent or parent figure consent to the procedure. Normally, a doctor in North Carolina may not perform an abortion for an unmarried minor unless parental consent is provided.

In order to request a waiver from the court, the minor, a guardian ad litem or an attorney must file a petition in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court in any county. The Court will appoint counsel upon request. These forms are available in the office of the clerk of any county courthouse. The form will require the following:

1. Minor's name, date of birth, and age.
2. A check mark to ask for a lawyer or to say that minor does not want a lawyer.
3. A check mark to say whether the minor wants a parent, legal guardian, or custodian to receive notice of the proceeding. *(If the minor **does not** want any of these people to get notice, the minor **does not** have to put their names and addresses on the petition.)*
4. Information about where the minor wants court papers to be sent.
5. Minor's signature, or the signature of the minor's lawyer or guardian ad litem, and the date.

A minor may complete and file a petition if:

- a) under age 18 and is not married
- b) no court has declared the minor emancipated
- c) currently pregnant, and
- d) the minor lives in or is present in the county where the petition is filed

OR

A lawyer may file petition for the minor.

OR

Another person, over age 18, who has agreed to help the minor, can file the petition.

The petition and everything else about the court proceeding is confidential. The minor meets with a judge in private. The court papers are private and may not be shown to anyone without the minor's permission. The clerk will set a time for the court hearing within seven days.

The judge may ask questions about the minor's emotional development, maturity, intellect and understanding; the nature, possible consequences and alternatives to an abortion, and anything else that will help the judge make the decision.

The judge will waive the parental consent requirement if the judge finds that the minor is mature and well informed, that it is in the best interest of the minor to allow her to make the decision on her own or that the minor is a victim of rape or incest.

There is no cost to the minor for appointed counsel or for the proceeding itself.

Avril Ussery Sisk, Guest Columnist

District Court Judge

26th Judicial District

DNET to be activated for 2004 Elections

The North Carolina League of Women Voters will once again work with National on DNET for the 2004 elections. DNET provides voters information about candidates and elections in all 50 states. This year National is partnering with Capitol Advantage to make DNET accessible from many of the major search engines on the Internet.

Though, still in the early planning stages, LWVNC plans to cover the state judicial elections as well as the U.S. House and Senate seats. If you are interested in helping gather information in your district please contact: Katarina Moyon at katarina1@earthlink.net.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2003-2005 (7/3/03)**

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Membership is open to all women and men, who are age 18 years or older and U.S. Citizens.

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