

Empowering Voters.
Protecting Democracy.

Newsletter for March 2023

REACHING LWVCM

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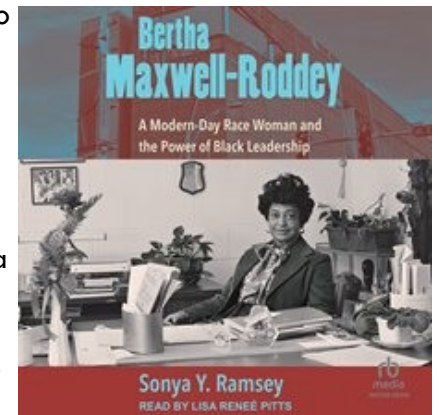
LWVCM Abuzz with Activity for Women's History Month

On the Eve of Women's History Month, the US Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing entitled "The Equal Rights Amendment: How Congress Can Recognize Ratification and Enshrine Equality in Our Constitution." It was the first time they held any such hearing in more than a decade. Though any tangible movement on the 28th Amendment will not be likely for some time, the hearing was "the first step toward the United States legislature fully enacting the Equal Rights Amendment into the US Constitution," says Equality Now. Join leagues across the country to advocate for the publication of the ERA using the LWVCM [OutreachCircle](#) tool.

In addition to ERA advocacy, League members have plenty of ways to celebrate Women's History Month all March long.

On **March 12**, Voter Services volunteers will be registering voters during the Levine Museum's Family Day "[Herstory](#)" event held at the Visual and Performing Arts Center (VaPA) from noon to 4PM.

On **March 18**, members are invited to attend the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) program "**I Am Because We Are**," Sharing Leadership Stories from *Bertha Maxwell-Roddey: A Modern-Day Race Woman and the Power of Black Leadership* from 10-11AM at the Southpark Regional Library. Author Sonya Ramsey discusses her biography of North Carolina educational activist and Black Studies pioneer. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey.



LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry will give a talk "**Women Were Not Given the Vote—They Took It! The Fiery Struggle for Women's Suffrage in America**" on **March 23** at 6pm at the Mooresville Public Library (see page 4).

We will round out our Women's History Month celebrations on **March 28** we with a Book Club selection honoring the occasion, *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* by Caroline Criado Perez.



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Find updates for League action and activities at goleagueo.org



March is Women's History Month! Celebrate by advocating for the [publication of the ERA!](#)

Coming Events

Coming Up in March, April and May

- **March:** *Women's History Month and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month*
- **March 1, 6pm:** [Civics 101 Program: CMS and the Board of Education](#) (Hybrid)
- **March 4, 9am:** Joint Meeting of CMS Board and Meck BOCC (CMGC, Room 267)
- **March 7, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting (Zoom)
- **March 8:** *International Women's Day*
- **March 8, 6pm:** [Civics 101 Program: Media Panel](#) (Hybrid)
- **March 9, 7pm:** [New Member Orientation](#) (Zoom)
- **March 12, 12-4pm:** Levine Museum [Herstory! Celebrate Women's History Month](#) (The VaPA Center)
- **March 13, 1-5pm:** Board Strategic Planning Retreat (MPBC, Suite A)
- **March 14, 12:45pm:** NC Supreme Court to rehear [Harper v. Hall redistricting case oral arguments](#)
- **March 14, 6:30pm** [League Talk: National Popular Vote, LWV Asheville President Suzanne Fisher](#) (Zoom)
- **March 15, 12:45pm:** NC Supreme Court to rehear [Holmes v. Moore voter I.D. case oral arguments](#)
- **March 15:** *Equal Pay Day*
- **March 18, 10am:** AAUW Women's History Program: "I Am Because We Are" (Southpark Regional Library)
- **March 25, 10am:** [Keep Charlotte Beautiful Street Cleanup](#) (741 Kenilworth Avenue)
- **March 28, 7pm:** LWVCM Book Club: [Invisible Women... by Caroline Criado Pérez](#) (Zoom)
- **April 4, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting (Zoom)
- **April 12, 11:30am:** Lunch with the League (Myers Park Baptist Church)
- **April 15, 10am-3pm:** [Charlotte Earth Day](#) (First Ward Park)
- **April 21, 12pm:** [Lillian's List Legislative Lunch 2023](#) (Raleigh)
- **April 22:** *Earth Day*
- **May 6, 9am-12pm:** E+S Adopt-a-Stream Briar Creek Tributary Clean Up
- **May 19-21:** [LWVNC Convention](#): "Powering and Protecting Our Democracy" (Charlotte)
- **May 30, 7pm:** LWVCM Book Club

League Announcements

- Follow us on [Outreach Circle](#)! See what Actions you can take for the League and our Democracy. Current Actions include applying for the [LWV Specialty License Plate](#), advocating for Medicaid Expansion and pushing for the publication of the [ERA](#).



- Holding Out for a SHERO (or two!):
 - ⇒ 1) The LWVCM is looking for a Healthcare Action Team Lead to promote education and advocacy related to our health care reform goals, e.g. Medicaid for All and Reproductive Justice.
 - ⇒ 2) The Women's Issues Action Team is in need of a PR maven who can help garner press opportunities now through the publication of our Pay Equity Scorecard in August.
- Interested in either opportunity? Contact President Suzanne Elsberry at: dessuz@bellsouth.net

League Action & Happenings

March League Talk to Feature President Fisher on “Time for a Change: One Person, One Vote!”

The LWVUS believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government and therefore, supports the elimination of the Electoral College.

Suzanne Fisher, President of the Asheville-Buncombe County League and Team Lead for their National Popular Vote Action Team is LWVCM’s guest speaker for our [March 14 League Talk](#) (Zoom).

A volunteer at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial, a member of the Asheville Buncombe County Preservation Society and an avid supporter of women’s rights, Dr. Fisher’s career was spent in a variety of research and managerial positions at the National Institutes of Health near D.C.

She will inform attendees about the plans to eliminate the Electoral College, requiring a Constitutional amendment, and the National Popular Vote Compact as an interim method of electing the President and Vice President until the abolishment of the Electoral College is accomplished.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact will guarantee the Presidency to the candidate receiving the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, taking effect when enacted by states possessing a majority of electoral votes (a minimum of 270 of 538.)

[House Bill 191](#) which would establish North Carolina as a member of the Interstate Compact was introduced in the NC House on February 23, 2023. It passed its first reading on February 27.

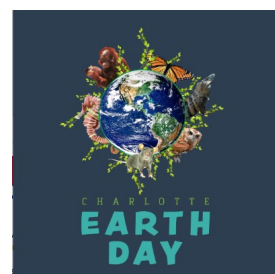


Environment + Sustainability Team Reignites

After a short hiatus to focus on Voter Services efforts leading up to the 2022 midterms, the E+S Team has reactivated with gusto. In February, the team participated in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Climate Leaders Environmental Open House at Birdsong Brewery. We networked with other Environmental organizations, offered voter registration and [Vote411](#) information, and invited attendees to join our upcoming Street ([March 25](#)) and Stream (May 6) Cleanups.

Perhaps the most auspicious result of our attending the Open House was learning that [Charlotte Earth Day](#) is indeed happening this spring!

The E+S Team will again take part in the Earth Day event organized by Hardin Minor of OMIMEO Theatre. Plans are developing for the April 15, family-oriented celebration which will feature music, science-based learning stations, and the incredible giant [Paperhand](#) puppets. It will take place at First Ward Park. [Register now](#) to help plan and work at the E+S Team table.



LWVUS President Turner to Deliver LWVNC Convention Keynote

[Dr. Deborah Turner](#), 20th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, will deliver the keynote address at the LWVNC Convention. The Convention will be held at the Doubletree Suites in Charlotte-Southpark from May 19-21.

League members from across the state are invited to attend. You do not need to be a voting delegate in order to participate. In fact, the LWVCM urges any member who would like to

join to register. A small number of subsidized registrations are on offer for interested, active members. For any inquiries about the Convention, please contact LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry (dessuz@bellsouth.net).



Clockwise from top: Trombone Shout Band closes out the 2022 Charlotte Earth Day; E+S Team Lead Margaret Fritze and Sara Baysinger attend the Climate Leaders Open House; Paperhand puppets in First Ward

Women's History Month League Action & Happenings

Tribute to LWVCM President Betty Seizinger

While searching through some very old LWVCM files in preparation for our current history project, I discovered the following clipping of a 2004 article in the Charlotte Observer by Fannie Flono. In celebration of Women's History Month, we are re-printing the following homage to one of our chapter's own remarkable members who dedicated many years of service to our mission of empowering the vote and defending democracy.

—LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry

Remembering Citizen Betty by Fannie Flono

There I was, in a parade—all because of Betty Seizinger. It was August of 1995, and I had come uptown to watch the Women's Equality Day Parade.

The participants were lining up and I spotted Betty, who was then president of the local League of Women Voters, a parade sponsor. The parade celebrated the 75th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Betty came right up to me, put her arms around me, and started talking.

"Walk with us," she said. "Do it for your mother. Do it for your grandmother. Do it for all the people who pushed women's rights and have benefited from it. Do it for yourself."

Before I knew it, I was in a parade.

People who knew Betty Seizinger are not surprised. Betty, who unexpectedly died last week, had a way of *persuading* you. Calmly, and sometimes with a mischievous glint in her eye, she'd grab hold of you and stick to you like Velcro until you saw the light. If you didn't see the light, well, she'd still be hanging around giving you her two cents' worth.



That got to be annoying to some NC legislators when she and the league led a grassroots effort pushing repeal of the state sales tax on food. She showed me some of the thousands of grocery receipts they had gotten consumers to send lawmakers to nudge them to cut the tax. The state tax was circled on the receipts and an X drawn though the circle. I don't recall her exact words, but her comment to me was something like, "I want to see them ignore that."

They didn't. She and fellow league member Mary Klenz traveled across the state, revving up support. They called, picketed and met lawmakers face to face. In the

(Continue on pg. 5.)

Women Were Not Given the Vote; They Took It!

During the month of March we seek to remember, celebrate and raise awareness of women and their contributions throughout our history. At the heart of women's history is the epic and painful struggle by women to secure the right to vote, thus enabling their participation as equals in our democracy.

In honor of Women's History Month, LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry will speak on the history of women's suffrage in America to a group at the Mooresville County Library on March 23. Her talk entitled **Women Were Not Given the Vote!-They Took It! The Fiery Struggle For Women's Suffrage in America** will address the fierce, nearly century-long campaign for women's suffrage from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in August of 1920. This victory resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in American history, culminating in the November 1920 election in which more than 8 million women exercised their newly-won right to vote.

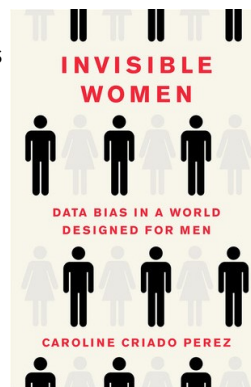
LWVCM March 28 Book Club

In honor of Women's History Month, we welcome you to [join our virtual book club meeting](#) to discuss **Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men** by Caroline Criado Perez. Perez was awarded the 2019 FT and McKinsey Business Book of the Year Award for this work. It was also a 2019 Goodreads nominee for the Best Science & Technology Choice Award.

Goodreads Summary:

"Data is fundamental to the modern world. From economic development, to healthcare, to education and public policy, we rely on numbers to allocate resources and make crucial decisions. But because so much data fails to take into account gender, because it treats men as the default and women as atypical, bias and discrimination are baked into our systems. And women pay tremendous costs for this bias, in time, money, and often with their lives.

"Celebrated feminist advocate Caroline Criado Perez investigates the shocking root cause of gender inequality and research in *Invisible Women*, diving into women's lives at home, the workplace, the public square, the doctor's office, and more. Built on hundreds of studies in the US, the UK, and around the world, and written with energy, wit, and sparkling intelligence, this is a groundbreaking, unforgettable exposé that will change the way you look at the world."



League Action & Happenings

Recap of February Lunch with the League with U.S. Attorney for the Western District of NC

On February 8, the LWVCM welcomed Charlotte native Dena J. King as our speaker for Lunch with the League. League members (some brand new!), gathered to hear a fascinating talk from the top prosecutor from the Tennessee line to Anson County.

King's appointment is historic as she and fellow appointee Sandra Hairston (Middle District of NC) are the first African Americans to be named U.S. Attorney in North Carolina's History. The South Mecklenburg High School graduate was officially sworn in as United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina on November 29, 2021. She has more than 16 years in public service, and leads an office of approximately 100 federal prosecutors and staff, located in Charlotte and in Asheville, that serves more than three million residents throughout North Carolina's 32 westernmost counties, including residents of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Reservation.



LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry welcomed U.S. District Attorney for the Western District of NC to speak during "Lunch with the League" on February 8.

CMS Board Votes 8-1 in Favor of \$2.99B Bond

During their February 28 meeting, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board of Education voted 8-to-1 to approve a bond request for the [2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan](#) in the amount of \$2,997,749,160 (escalated) that will be taken to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners at their joint meeting on Saturday, March 4. The dissenting vote came from At-Large Board Member Jennifer De La Jara who, rather than opposing the actual bond, voiced her desire for the request to have been larger and include more projects from the original list of 125. As it stands, the nearly \$3 Billion bond request is proposed to cover 30 projects.

Education Team Attends Olympic High School's Black Student Union Grassroots Fair

On February 22, LWVCM's Education Action Team members met with students from Olympic High School eager to learn about the League, register to vote, and try their luck at answering citizenship questions for prizes.

The League was just one of the organizations invited to participate in the Black Student Union Grassroots Fair where students could learn about volunteer organizations they might like to join. The students were welcoming, curious and engaged with the materials we presented! Thanks to the student organizers for inviting the League to participate in such a wonderful event!



(Continued from pg. 4, "Citizen Betty")

end state legislators, too, couldn't say no to Betty. They began phasing out the 35-year-old tax in 1995.

If that was Betty's only legacy, it would be sufficient. But Betty's stamp is on many admirable efforts—from inspiring and motivating students as a classroom teacher to helping citizens become better informed and more civically engaged. The Civics 101 class, which she helped establish, is offered each year to people who want to understand how local government really works. It is widely praised and duplicated nationwide. Only a few knew that while Betty worked on many of her crusades, she did so from a hospital bed. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and an ovarian cyst on her 65th birthday in 1996. But she still coordinated a series of televised debates and oversaw production of thousands of voter guides for that year's elections. In her characteristically straightforward way, she said radiation therapy left her feeling "scuzzy" but she did what had to be done.

She was a commanding presence who left a legacy worth emulating

Betty dropped by the Observer to chat a few months ago. It was the last time I saw her. She was still imposing at her 6 feet plus height, but time and illness had visibly slowed her. She was still feisty and blunt, but there was a new and pronounced vulnerability in her voice and gait.

I can hardly imagine a world without Betty Seizinger. She lived life at full tilt. This community is much better because she did.

Reprinted with the permission of the author. See an interview with Ms. Flono and Charlotte Museum of History President & CEO Terri White about the "Save the Siloam School" Project on our [LWVCM YouTube page](#).

League News

Welcome New League Members

New Members in February 2023

Giselle Bergmeier
Lauren Fields
Maegan Mack

New Member Orientation

On March 9 at 7pm, the LWVCM will host its New Member Orientation on Zoom. If you have not attended an orientation, please feel free to join us! Register on the events page of our website by clicking [here](#).

Attendees will learn from Chapter Board Members and Action Team Leaders about the League's culture, respective roles, goals and activities. Special guest Ernie Mowell of LWV of Henderson County will inform us about League nonpartisanship policy.

Life Members Honored in Celebration of Women's History Month

Honorary Life Membership is granted to any voting member of the League of Women Voters US who attains fifty years of consecutive membership. Life membership conveys with it the privilege of being excused from the payment of dues. The League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg is pleased to announce the names of the Life Members of our organization:

Ann Wood 1958	Lucille Howard '70
Carol Rousey '61	Linda Levy '71
Ruth Goldberg '62	Bernadette Parker '71
Anna Hood '65	Wilma Pinter '71
Betty Chafin Rash '68	

We are grateful to these distinguished members for their many years of loyalty, dedication and service to the League and honor their commitment to our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. Please join with us in applauding their remarkable achievement!

Suzanne Elsberry, President
Margaret Howe-Soper, Membership Chair
LWV of Charlotte Mecklenburg

ClubExpress Corner: Evites and Website Email Function

We are sunsetting Evite. ClubExpress has internal features that allow us to streamline our communication tools and platforms to share event information. But until we all get accustomed to checking the calendar independently, we will continue to use the Voter and one comprehensive email to share upcoming events.

The internal event email system batches communications by two categories, those who have registered for an event and those who have not. If you register for an event, within 15 minutes you will receive a confirmation email. This email details the event logistics. You can also expect to receive two more emails leading up to the event; one reminder a week out and another day or two before the event. Each email will again share location/Zoom information.

If you have not registered for an event, two weeks out from the event, you will receive a reminder email that there is an upcoming event. This is to ensure that you did not miss it and that you are up to date on any events that are happening.

If you feel like you are receiving too many emails, there is an opt out feature at the end of the reminder emails. Please note, if you chose to opt out, LWVCM website administrators will not be able to confirm or change the level of your settings. You will have to reach out to customer service or adjust your member profile.

We encourage you to activate your account and to login when you register for events. Currently, you do not have to login to register for events. But as we engage more with the community and non-members, having members to login will support our membership database record keeping.

Look for more tips in the next Voter.

-Shanda Martin, LWVCM Webmaster and Board Member



Phone: 1-866-457-2582
Email: support@clubexpress.com
Support hours : 7:30 AM to 10:00 PM
Monday-Friday

LWVCM Board Strategic Planning Retreat Scheduled for March 13 from 1-5 PM at the League Office

The LWVCM Board will attend a Strategic Planning Retreat on Monday, March 13 at the League Office at Myers Park Baptist Church. Using the guiding principles set forth by the LWVUS, Board members will work together to set priorities, goals and objectives for our League Chapter.



Trailblazer Lillian Exum Clement Stafford (1894-1923)

In 1987, Congress declared March as Women's History Month to commemorate the important role so many women have played in our history and society. In recognition of Women's History Month, here is the story of a courageous and brilliant woman from North Carolina, Lillian Exum Clement Stafford, a pioneer in women's rights and an inspiration to the women following in her wake.

This extraordinary trailblazer holds the distinction of being the first female elected to serve in any southern state legislature. More remarkable is that she was elected to the North Carolina State House in 1920 before the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Preceding her election, Exum Clement prevailed over her male opponent in her Democratic primary by an astonishing vote count of 10,368 to 41.

Born in 1894 near Black Mountain, North Carolina, Lillian moved with her family to Asheville where her father worked on the construction of the Biltmore House. Edith Vanderbilt took notice of her promise as a young student and provided her with encouragement. At the tender age of 14,

Lillian studied law under two local attorneys while simultaneously performing as deputy in the county sheriff's office. She eventually passed the state bar exam in 1917 in a group of 70 with one of the highest scores.

Unquestionably a woman of firsts, Exum Clement established a private legal practice without male partners, something no other North Carolina woman had done before. While practicing law under the masculine sounding name of L. Exum Clement, Lillian garnered a reputation as a brilliant and talented criminal attorney. She also earned herself a career-long nickname from one of the judges: "Brother Exum."

Lillian was 26 when she traveled to Raleigh to begin her term in the North Carolina House of Representatives in January 1921. Soon after becoming a State Representative, she married E. Eller Stafford, a newspaper journalist at the Asheville Citizen.

When asked about herself by a newspaper reporter, the new legislator replied that she sought "...to blaze a trail for other women." Her hope came to fruition as two Charlottean women followed Clement Exum's legislative trail: Julia Alexander in 1925, followed by Carrie McLean two years later.

Never one to sit idle or to serve as a token female, "Brother Exum" was responsible for the introduction of 17 bills during her one-year tenure—all but one was successful. Three examples of her legislative efforts were the Clement Bill which advocated privacy in voting (booths) and a secret ballot (vigorously opposed by many who practiced vote buying); a bill to aid abandoned wives by reducing the time required wait before suing for divorce; and the Pure Milk bill which mandated tuberculin testing of dairy cows.

Perhaps Exum Clement's most challenging undertaking was advocating for state sponsorship of the Lindley Training School in Asheville. The premise of this facility, a home for unwed mothers and "wayward girls," was not well-received by many locals. At a public meeting in Asheville, Exum Clement was pelted with raw eggs and trash, and even called a Jezebel for helping "sinful women." Exum Clement even endured a blow to the nose from an enraged male protester. Lillian did not let this sway her determination, and the school was funded.

Having decided against a second term in the General Assembly, Lillian was appointed by Governor Morrison to the position of Director of the North Carolina State Hospital located in Morganton. In 1923, following two years of deteriorating health, Exum Clement died of pneumonia at 38 and was interred in Asheville. Both houses of the state legislature issued resolutions of regret upon her death.

In 1998, Lillian's List was established with the intention to aid pro-choice, Democratic women to run for public office, selecting its name in honor of Lillian Exum Clement Stafford, North Carolina's first woman legislator.



President, League of Women Voters
of Charlotte Mecklenburg

Civics 101 participants heard from the Board of Elections, the County and City Government and the NC Courts (District 26).



Clockwise from left: Assistant City Manager Brent Cagle; NC Courts panel (Superior Court Judge Archie, Clerk of Superior Court Chinn-Gary, Deputy DA Lillie, Chief Public Defender Tully) and Civics 101 Lead Jane Hoffmann, LWVCM volunteers Shannon Mullaly and Helen Hossley; County Commissioners Jerrell (District 4) and Rodriguez-McDowell (District 6), County Assessor Joyner and Deputy Manager Johnson.



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