

Empowering Voters.
Protecting Democracy.

Newsletter for June/July 2023

REACHING LWVCM

Voice Mail:
704-556-4600

E-mail:
communications@goleaguego.org

On the Web:
www.goleaguego.org
www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersOfCharlotteMecklenburg/

Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/lwvcm>

Twitter:
@lwvcm

Newsletter Editor:
Sara Baysinger
newslettereditor@goleaguego.org

1900 Queen Road, Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28207

LWVCM Annual Meeting Highlight: A Special Tribute to Life Member Ann Wood

On June 15, nearly 60 chapter members gathered in Freeman Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church for a successful annual meeting. (Minutes on page 7.) In her opening remarks, President Suzanne Elsberry departed from the usual reporting on the League's accomplishments over the year to remember a remarkable member we lost. Here is an excerpt from her tribute:

This evening I am honoring Ann Wood, a very special Life Member who recently passed away. Many of you were well acquainted with Ann and her many contributions to our organization....Tonight, rather than listing her activities and contributions, I am going to share a few personal anecdotes illustrative of who she was and what her presence meant to us.



Ann Wood celebrating her birthday last year.

Ann enjoyed lunching with friends, and in the 1950s she truly abhorred the policy of uptown department stores excluding African Americans from their lunch counters. True to her motto of "Put your body into battle" Ann joined the protests against this policy and was even arrested. More than forty years later, Ann, in her 80s was still a warrior for justice attending every Moral Monday protest at the Capitol in Raleigh.

When she was 87, one July Fourth, Ann, Jane Whitley and I, dressed as suffragists for a parade. We rode in the stifling July heat in a truck bed. Jane and I, much younger women, were close to heat stroke but Ann...the indomitable Ann—was as cool as a cucumber—smiling, tossing candy to the kids and loving every second!

Ann's quick wit was legendary—a contemporary of hers once told me a very funny story that took place many years ago when a heavily pregnant Ann marched through a political event trailed by her FOUR little girls. The procession caught the eye of a gentleman who, thinking himself witty, barked out: "WELL, THERE GOES A GOOD CATHOLIC!" Never missing a beat, Ann stopped him cold with the snappy retort: "NOPE, JUST A CARELESS AGNOSTIC!"

Ann supported and mentored many successful local elected officials, instilling in them the belief that our best days as a state and nation are still to come. She knew well the challenges of race, poverty and culture and fought passionately to break down walls, build bridges and ensure every voice was heard. A defender of human dignity, she envisioned a society in which all people matter and believed in the power of people to come together and make a difference.

I will close my tribute with an excerpt from a poem by Marge Piercy I feel perfectly exemplifies my friend and mentor:

I love people who...submerge in the task...who are not parlor generals and field deserters but move in a common rhythm... who do what has to be done, again and again.

Along with everyone who knew her, I loved Ann Wood and I thank you for the opportunity to honor her memory this evening. (For more on [Ann Wood](#).)

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Find updates for League action and activities at goleaguego.org



Coming Events


Coming Up in June, July and August

- **June:** *World Pride Month*
- **June 19:** *Juneteenth*
- **June 20, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting
- **June 25, 11:30am:** "Suffrage, LWV History, Empowering the Vote and Defending Democracy" by President Elsberry at Charlotte Friends Meeting (570 Rocky River Road West)
- **July 4:** *Independence Day*
- **July 25, 7pm:** LWVCM Book Club will discuss "[Our Missing Hearts](#)" by [Celeste Ng](#) (Zoom)
- **July 26:** *Disability Independence Day*
- **Aug. 19:** New Board Member Orientation
- **Aug. 19-20:** CHARLOTTE PRIDE FESTIVAL
- **August 23:** *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade & its Abolition*
- **August 26:** Women's Equality Day

League Announcements

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Have friends go to outreachcircle.com and search for **YBP438** or scan with a QR reader or iPhone camera



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Copy recruitment link to share with friends

<https://outreachcircle.com/YBP438>

Follow us on our Outreach Circle page: [League in Action!](#) See what Actions you can take for the League and our Democracy. Current Actions include applying for the [LWV Specialty License Plate](#), pushing for the publication of the [ERA](#), and accessing information about Photo ID requirements in NC; oppose public funding of private schools or writing your elected officials in support of ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) a bipartisan organization to securely maintain accurate voter rolls across state lines.



To try this new, easy way to engage with the League, [click here](#) or scan the QR code at left to get started with our Outreach Circle App called League in Action.

It only takes seconds to join. And many of the actions our chapter has listed take just a few minutes to complete.

League members and volunteers wanting to stay connected will find this digital tool simple to use. Just hop on and start taking action for LWVCM and even the LWVUS.

This powerful tool is perfectly suited to add capacity and magnify our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy.

Try it today!

League Action & Happenings

LWVCM Education Action Team Leads Joint Public Education Rally in Raleigh

Linda Traum and Jeanne Smith, co-leads of the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg Education Action Team traveled to Raleigh on June 21 to participate in Every Child NC's "[Opportunity for Every Child](#)" rally and luncheon in support of full funding for public schools. They were joined by Rebecca Poling, chair of the LWVNC Public Education LAT. "It was tremendously inspiring," noted Traum.



Linda Traum, Jeanne Smith and Rebecca Poling

The rally featured a variety of speakers from organizations across the state, as well as several student advocates. Music performances, poetry, and face painting were on offer for children who attended with their families. A lunch provided the attendees an opportunity to network. Following the lunch, Linda and Jeanne met with State Senators Rachel Hunt and Mujtaba Mohammed and House Representative Laura Budd to discuss developing a working relationship for support of public education. They also dropped by 15 other Senate and House Members' offices and left written materials about the LWVNC Public Education policy positions. The LWVCM Education Action Team plans to make two additional advocacy trips in 2023-2024. —Linda Traum, LWVCM Education Co-Lead

Opportunity Scholarships Denounced

Educators, education leaders and advocates from across the state are sounding the alarm about the devastating impact the "[school choice](#)" bills (HB823 and SB406) will have on the NC public schools. The bills call for the expansion of opportunity scholarships (vouchers) which will use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools. Local media has spotlighted the [lack of standards and accountability](#) at some of these schools. (See the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg's position and study on opportunity scholarships on our [Education Action Team](#) page.)

Water Protections Suffer Serious Setbacks in NC General Assembly and the US Supreme Court

On May 25, the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of real estate developers in the Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency case. Despite established law under the Clean Water Act and dissent (Justice Brett Kavanaugh) in the court citing, "significant repercussions for water quality and flood control throughout the United States" 45 years of precedent was overturned, and wetlands without a "continuous surface connection" to other jurisdictional waters are now excluded from protection. The SCOTUS ruling limits the ability of agencies like the EPA to permit activities on many smaller waterways, opening these areas to unregulated development. Locally based [Catawba Riverkeeper](#) joined an amicus brief in the case. John Searby and Brandon Jones of Catawba Riverkeeper spoke to LWVCM Environment team in 2021 about countless sources of pollution and stress on the health of our Catawba-Wateree basin, water supply serving two million people. Throughout the United States, waters like seasonal streams and isolated wetlands serve as filters for pollution, flood buffers and essential habitat for wildlife. [Learn more.](#)



Meanwhile, in the NC General Assembly, HB600 passed the House floor and was heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The "Regulatory Reform Bill" limits local governments' authority over stormwater controls and voluntary treatment of stormwater. Developers will have reduced responsibility to protect the health of waterways from stormwater pollution, and fewer restrictions on destruction of vegetative buffers in new and redevelopments. Hazardous waste sites can begin development before NCDEQ approval. The Hog and Natural Gas industries can discharge more toxic chemicals into waterways.

Environmental Reporter (and LWVCM Lunch with the League speaker) Lisa Sorg interprets the wording of the bill and explains in plain language how the changes will be applied in practical cases in an [NC Newline article](#).

Critics say the bill will conflict with current Federal protections. According to Geoff Gisler, Program Director at the [Southern Environmental Law Center](#), "This legislation would block efforts to stop toxic pollution like PFAS and 1,4 dioxane in drinking water supplies, put our communities in danger, and violate federal law."

Where do your State Senators stand on the issue? Please call them today to express your opinion. Find your State [Senator's contact information here](#). LWVUS Policy supports the preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the earth's ecosystem for maximum protection of public health and the environment. —Margaret Fritze

League Action & Happenings

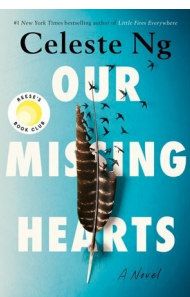
LWVCM Education Action Team Engages with the Alliance Ahead of Bond Campaign

Members of the Education Action Team met with Chief Advocacy Officer Joe Bost of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance this month to coordinate our efforts to support the passage of the school bond that will appear on Mecklenburg County resident's ballot this November.

The League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg is uniquely positioned to influence the success of the bond having participated in and even hosting two public engagement sessions around the CMS Capital Improvement Plan Review that informed the size of the bond.

The Education Team sees its role as getting the word out to our dozens of allied organizations, and encouraging GOTV efforts that support the bond.

LWVCM Book Club to Host July Meeting

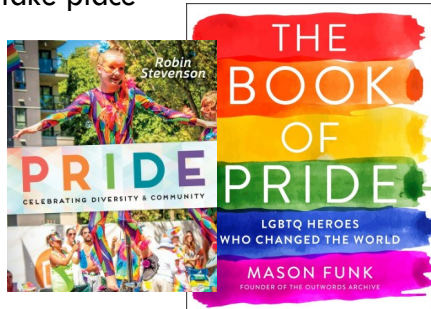


On July 25, the LWVCM Book Club will meet to discuss Goodreads nominee for Best Fiction, "Our Missing Hearts" by Celeste Ng. The book is described on [Ng's website](#) as "an old story made new, of the ways supposedly civilized communities can pretend to ignore the most searing injustice. It's a story about the power—

and limitations—of art to create change, the lessons and legacies we pass on to our children, and how any of us can survive a broken world with our hearts intact." Register for the [7PM Zoom meeting here](#).

In late May, ahead of World Pride Month, the Book Club met to discuss two books—"Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community" by Robin Stevenson and "The Book of Pride: LGBTQ Heroes Who Changed the World" by Mason Funk. The CHARLOTTE PRIDE FESTIVAL will take place August 19-20.

LWVCM Book Club meets every other month (Zoom). Our book club is registered with Park Road Books (4139 Park Road, Charlotte, NC 28209). At checkout, identify yourself as a LWVCM book club member and receive 20% off current book club titles.



Suggestions for future titles?
Email: goleaguego@gmail.com

Exemplary Leadership Award Goes to Our Own Margaret Howe-Soper at LWVNC Convention

Margaret Howe-Soper was honored with an Exemplary Leadership Award during the banquet of the 39th LWVNC Convention held in Charlotte last month.

Margaret, who recently completed her term on the Board of Directors and as Membership Chair, was always diligent about keeping the board members advised on all things related to our membership. She consistently helped with planning and support at our events with her attendance. For many years, Margaret organized and directed our annual orientation meeting for new members. In addition, she worked with Voter Services registering new citizens and never missed a chance to recruit new members to our chapter. Margaret also serves as Co-Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Team, which added to her workload. She is often consulted for her opinions by others and is unafraid to take a position in which she believes, regardless of how others may stand.



Her former experience as an archivist and librarian has proven invaluable to our chapter in several instances: when we moved our office a year ago, and now that we are sponsoring a project which will record our chapter's history. She gathered and cataloged documents, photographs and records for that effort.

In her function as Roster Keeper, Margaret kept meticulous records and worked diligently to maintain and manage our roster throughout the challenge of our recent transition to Club Express. In her role as Membership Chair, she gave our new members a warm and friendly first impression, providing them with personal attention and information. She administered our "Angel Fund" with compassion and unquestioned confidentiality-making membership available to everyone who wants to join but may not have the funds for the dues.

Unfortunately, Margaret was recently hospitalized with Covid. After her recovery, she astonished everyone by taking up her duties without hardly missing a beat. Her sense of duty and dedication serves as a model to everyone in leadership in our chapter.

Adjectives that describe Margaret are: Self-disciplined, persistent, intelligent/wise, generous (with her time and money), ethical and goal oriented. She is a person who always acts with integrity and forethought and who demonstrates a collaborative leadership style accompanied by a sense of humor and a genuine sense of caring about people. She has many accomplishments, but always focuses on and celebrates the successes of others.

—Adapted from the award nomination submitted by President Suzanne Elsberry

LWVCM President's Perspective



As we approach the end of the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg's 2022-23 fiscal year, we traditionally reflect on our work: its impact, challenges, and successes. This year, our Action Team Leads submitted comprehensive annual reports published in our May Annual Meeting Voter. So as not to repeat those reports, I offer a brief retrospective, positive and negative, of national and state events since last June. This brief review is meant to remind us of the milieu in which we have lived and worked and the prospective and ongoing challenges facing League Members.

2022 June: *The U.S. House Select Committee began investigative hearings on the January 6 seditious Capitol invasion by an angry, violent mob intent on thwarting the will of American voters. As a result, the Committee issued criminal referrals and calls for ethics inquiries. *SCOTUS overturned Roe V Wade, returning the right to regulate abortions to the states. Following this decision, many states have adopted increasingly draconian laws all but eliminating women's reproductive rights. *Ketanji Brown Jackson was the first Black female to be appointed to the Supreme Court. Throughout 2022 and 2023 elections of women to state legislative office, governorships and Congress, rose in record numbers. **August:** The landmark Inflation Reduction Act targeting deficit reduction, lower prescription costs, and reducing climate change effects was signed into law. **September:** *Men and boys joined Iranian women in protesting the Hijab Mandate. *96-year-old Queen Elizabeth II dies, ending her 70-year reign—the longest of any English monarch. **November:** *The world's population reached 8 billion people. *Midterms failed to produce the predicted "Red Wave" with the resulting slim party margins of the majority party virtually assuring a polarized government. **2023 February:** *Russian forces invaded Ukraine, raising the possibility of a European war. *In an environmental disaster, a Norfolk Southern train derailed in Ohio spilling dangerous chemicals endangering the lives and health of locals. **March:** *In an historic first, a former President (Donald Trump) was indicted by a Manhattan Grand Jury for alleged hush money payments and found liable for battery and defamation in a civil trial. *The failures of four American Regional Banks marked the third-largest U.S. banking collapse in history. **April:** *With more than a million deaths attributed to COVID19 from January 2020 to May 2023, Dr. Anthony Fauci declared our country officially "out of the pandemic phase." *A federal district judge in Texas imposed a national ban on FDA approval of the abortion pill mifepristone. In 2020, pills were used in 60% of abortions in NC. With the new state mandate, those seeking abortions must make three trips to the provider: counseling, witnessing the first dose, and follow-up. The ruling, subsequently blocked by SCOTUS, is pending continued litigation. *Despite 85% of Americans agreeing the passage of the ERA is past due, the U.S. Senate voted 51-47 against removal of the deadline, thereby preventing ratification of the Amendment. **May:** *Governor Cooper vetoed state legislation banning almost all abortions in NC after 12 weeks. Three days later the NCGA overrode the veto effectively restricting women's privacy and bodily autonomy. *The NC Supreme Court reinstated the former Voter ID law. The Court also reversed its prior ruling on partisan gerrymandering of district maps effectively enabling politicians to select their voters. *In Sackett v EPA, Supreme Court justices rendered a decision spelling catastrophe for 120 million acres of U.S. wetlands. Wildlife will lose habitats, with some threatened with extinction. Humans are impacted as well: loss of their buffer against storms, rising sea-levels and river overflow. *The Senate passed comprehensive immigration legislation including provisions for a path to citizenship for 11 million U.S. immigrants.

Issues of Critical Concern: Gun Control: Guns are a major threat the health and safety of our citizens and stronger regulatory laws are needed to limit citizen's access and ownership. Mass Shootings have occurred in Texas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, Virginia, Arizona, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan, California, Utah and Alabama. At least 20 such shootings occurred over our Memorial Day weekend. Although 56% of Americans favor stricter gun laws, experts are pessimistic over prospects of achieving major state or federal gun reform. **Book Bans:** This movement has been on the rise in 2022-23. Books with themes related to Race, History, sexual orientation and Gender are being suppressed. A 2022 poll revealed that 70% of parents oppose the idea, yet an insistent minority seems to hold sway. In addition, our children's ability to reason and learn is being undermined by legislative efforts restricting teaching about these topics. **White Supremacist Movement:** The spread and growth of the White Supremacist Movement is also appalling with its countrywide 38% rise in 2020—three times the number of incidents in 2019. ADL tracked 6,751 incidents in 2022 with the highest number of occurrences in WA, MT, OK, PA, NY, VA, NC and TX.

Obviously, as members of this respected 103-year-old grass-roots organization, we face a plethora of challenges in the days and years to come, both in our mission to empower the vote and to defend our democracy. I am confident in the League's power and ability to bring about positive change, as we recognize that each vote cast signifies the continuation or demise of our democracy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Elsbury". The signature is fluid and cursive.

President, League of Women Voters
of Charlotte Mecklenburg

League News

Welcome to New League Members

New Members

Anupam Bose	James Lee
Allison Honeycutt	Zachary Lee

Membership Renewal

Membership renewal is underway! Most members share a renewal date of June 30 and so will have received two of three renewal notices from ClubExpress directly to your inbox. Please make sure to include payment if you plan to pay online. A few members have missed that step and will receive a follow-up phone call or email. Also, while students and life members don't pay dues, they must renew their memberships too, so that we know they are still interested in the LWVCM! And speaking of interests, during the renewal process, you will be asked to "identify which skills, talents, and experiences you have and are willing to share with the League through volunteering and engagement opportunities." Your answers will help Action Team Leads know to reach out to you and connect you with their teams.

ClubExpress allows a six-week renewal grace period before moving a member from "active" to "inactive" status. Renewals will be current for one year. New members who joined on February 1, 2023 or later will receive their notices in 2024.

Thank you to those of you who have renewed your memberships already. For those of you with questions about renewals, please contact Margaret Howe-Soper at: mhowesoper2014@gmail.com.

Membership Renewal Postcard Party!!!

Looking for a quick, easy, fun way to help the League? Join us for our Membership Renewal Postcard Party on Thursday, July 20 at 4PM in the LWVCM office at Myers Park Baptist Church. Gather with other Leaguers to write postcard reminders to members who have not yet renewed. Refreshments will be provided.

Interested in participating? RSVP at: communications@goleaguego.org

ClubExpress Corner: Account Activation, Renewal, and Volunteer Opportunities

We have been on ClubExpress as our member engagement platform since December. We know that for many, this platform and engaging with us in this way is new and can present some challenges as we shift to better serve you and our community. ClubExpress positions us to expand our messaging and present many exciting features to manage our League business. One of the exciting parts about ClubExpress is that event reminders and notifications are autogenerated. As a volunteer organization, having automated features like event reminders allows us to focus on what matters most, educating and informing our community. ClubExpress is powering our renewal process entirely online sending renewal notifications directly to your inbox.

To participate in the 2023 renewal process, we need to ensure that everyone has activated their account by accepting the member agreement. In December, all members were emailed their user name and temporary password. Many of you used that to login right away to set up your profile and select League areas of interest, but many did not. If you have activated your account, you are ready to renew by signing in to your account. If you are a Lifetime Member, your membership expiration is 2050, but we still encourage you to activate your account. It is critical that you follow the prompts in the email and accept your member agreement. If you have questions about how to create your user profile, please contact ClubExpress Support directly. Their Help Team can assist you with any questions you may have about this process or any other account inquiries. We, LWVCM, do not have access to your password and cannot assist you directly.

As we work to build capacity in the League, we are looking for members who may be interested in joining the Communications Team to learn more about our monthly newsletter (Voter), support social media, or join our strategy committee to offer a member's perspective. These are great opportunities for members who want to be active, yet need opportunities that can be done on their time, from any place as long as they have computer/phone access. There are extensive synchronous and asynchronous trainings, manuals, and virtual networking available via ClubExpress. No previous experience is necessary. If you are interested or want to discuss these opportunities in more detail, please email: communications@goleaguego.org.



Phone: 1-866-457-2582

Email: support@clubexpress.com

Support hours : 7:30 AM to 10:00 PM, M-F

LWVCM Annual Meeting

LWVCM Annual 2023-2024 Meeting Minutes • 6/15/2023 • Unitarian Universalist Church

Welcome and Introductions - Suzanne Elsberry

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. Guests, notable attendees and the guest speaker were introduced.

Keynote Address - State Senator Natasha Marcus

Senator Marcus introduced her speech as "Pay Attention: There Will Be a Test." She asked the audience questions about state and local representation. She emphasized the need for an informed public. Several current bills were discussed relating to core values of the League. She emphasized the need for unbiased media coverage. She decried the lack of local civic education as well as the overall lack of support for public education currently. She urged the League members to get out the vote to facilitate change.

Business Meeting

The business portion of the meeting was called to order 7:44 p.m. President's State of the League Address President Elsberry praised the work of the League members for the past year. She then paid homage to a life member, Ann Wood who was a valiant defender of individual rights for all. Several anecdotes were cited. The League was reminded of her mentoring so many members and her generosity to the League.

Adoption of the Meeting Rules

Cate Stadelman presented the rules for the meeting. Hayne white was the time keeper. Cate moved the adoption of the rules and Conor Choka seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2022 Annual Meeting Minutes Approved by acclamation.

Annual Action Team Summaries

Full reports from the teams were published in the *May Voter*.

By-laws Changes

Cate Stadelman presented word changes regarding the payment of dues. Jane Hoffmann made a motion to approve the changes. Angie Lunking seconded and the motion passed.

2023-2024 Proposed League Program Approved by acclamation.

Nominating Committee Report and Election

Donna Armbrister introduced the proposed slate of officers and Board members for the LWVCM.
Officers for 2023-2025: President Suzanne Elsberry; Vice-president Pam Liebman; Secretary Cate Stadelman
Directors for 2023-2025: Sara Baysinger; Carolyn Lyons; Kevan Woodson
Nominating Committee - 2023-2024: Chairperson Linda Levy; Stacey Jenkins; Shamaiye Haynes
Continuing for second year of 2022-2024 term: Second vice president Jane Hoffmann; Treasurer Lauren Voorhees;
Directors Regan Aduddell; Margaret Fritze; John Lee
There were no nominations from the floor. The slate was approved by acclamation. No directions given to new Board.

Acknowledgements

Linda Levy, Margaret Howe Soper, Cindy Moore and Shanda Martin (Sara Baysinger accepting) were given crystal plaques in honor of their service to the League. Donna Armbrister received an engraved notebook for her service of three years as chair of the nominating committee.

Announcements

President Elsberry referred the members to goleaguego.org website for future announcements.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Jennifer Roberts and a second by Hayne White at 9:10 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by Pam Liebman, Secretary

League Action & Happenings

LWVCM Prepares to Educate Voters About New Voting Laws Ahead of City Primary

The proposed changes in voting laws currently winding their way through our state legislature (SB747) will likely necessitate a massive effort to educate the public about changes regarding such aspects as absentee ballots and [Voter ID](#). The North Carolina State Board of Elections will be our trusted resource that we will refer voters to for the most up-to-date information. On the national level, LWVCM members may advocate for Voting Rights Act through our League in Action app. Just [click here](#).



LWVCM President Elsberry Speaks at Charlotte Friends Meeting

On June 25, President Suzanne Elsberry addressed Charlotte Friends members at their weekly hybrid meeting. Her talk was titled "Fiery Struggle for Women's Suffrage in America and Voting Rights Under Attack in NC."



LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry (third from left) with members of the Friends Missionary Baptist Church



1900 Queens Road, Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28207

Dated Material

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