

## Co-President's Message

Our November general meeting on **Monday, November 29 at 7 p.m.** via Zoom will feature a panel discussion with three of our state legislators. We need to engage all our league members to educate ourselves on upcoming issues affecting our state and express our concerns about making democracy work. We want to be good listeners and we want to make our voices heard. So put **NOVEMBER 29** on your calendar, submit your questions to **Jill Gemmill** ([jill.gemmill@gmail.com](mailto:jill.gemmill@gmail.com)) and participate virtually. We need you.



Linda Gahan

Now we are the League of Women Voters of Oconee and Pickens Counties. This name change is our effort to reflect the geographical area we are trying to reach with our mission of getting citizens involved in government. November 2<sup>nd</sup> municipal elections saw low voter turnout. The Seneca Journal reported 14.6% of registered voters in Seneca showed up to elect a mayor and four council members. Our league was unable to hold a candidates' forum for Seneca due to pandemic protocols. Pickens County Registration and Election Office told me 2.6% registered voters turned out for the Town of Central's election where we did hold a candidate forum.

Maybe we should recommend all municipal elections be held in even years along with other state and national elections? Something to consider. **Alice Flower**, however, has spearheaded the league's efforts to educate voters on the candidates using the [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) website. Read her report in the issue of this *Voter*. Alice and her committee are making progress in getting this website before the eyes of the public as a resource for voter information.

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*THE VOTER*

League of Women Voters Clemson Area  
*Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee, and  
Anderson Counties*  
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633  
[www.lwvclemsonarea.org](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org)

## OFFICERS:

Ruth Reed, Co-President  
Linda Gahan, Co- President  
Jill Gemmill, Vice-President  
Ellie Taylor, Secretary  
Elaine Laiewski, Treasurer

## ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Buzzy Adams  
Kathy Bargerone  
Carolyn Bishop-McLeod  
Sheila Crawford  
Sandy Land  
Janet Marsh  
Sarah McNeill

## APPOINTED BOARD:

Mike Ellison, *Voter* Editor  
Alice Flower, Vote411  
Eleanor Hare, Policy Advisor  
Cheryl Lee, Voter Registration  
Allison Ranson, Webmaster  
Janie Shipley, Policy Advisor  
Holly Ulbrich, Policy Advisor

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2	Election Day for municipalities in Pickens/Oconee Counties except Clemson
November 3 at 5:00 p.m.	Dinner at Our Daily Rest homeless shelter in Seneca; meal prepared by Oconee LWVOP members
November 4 at 10:00 a.m.	Quarterly meeting of Oconee Election Commission
November 4	Monthly meeting of Pickens County Board of Elections Commission following Board of Canvassers Meeting beginning at 12:55pm.
November 16 at 7 p.m.	How To get the Message Out – A Conversation on League Communications by Zoom
November 23 at 5:00 p.m.	LWVOP Board Meeting by Zoom
<b>November 29 at 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>LWVOP Monthly meeting by Zoom - Conversation with State Legislators</b>
December 16	Holiday Party

## Co-Chair's Message Continued

I want to continue to stress that our success as a league will only be as productive as the efforts of our members. If you are not involved but are concerned with the issues of voter rights, voter registration, social justice, health care, women's rights, good governance, communications, etc., consider joining a working group by contacting your co-presidents: **Ruth Reed** ([reed.juniata@gmail.com](mailto:reed.juniata@gmail.com)) or **Linda Gahan** ([glinda1942@gmail.com](mailto:glinda1942@gmail.com)). We value you input.

*Submitted by Linda Gahan*

### November 29 General Meeting

The November program will have a special date - MONDAY NOVEMBER 29 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Pickens **Senator Rex Rice** (Senate Judiciary Committee), **Representative Neal Collins** (House Judiciary Committee), and **Representative Jerry Carter** (House Medical Committee) will participate in a panel to answer your questions on redistricting, voter rights, healthcare, and more. The meeting will occur by Zoom, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Please send questions in advance that you would like to have them address for the moderator to present to them. Send your questions to [jill.gemmill@gmail.com](mailto:jill.gemmill@gmail.com) with subject line QUESTION NOV 29. There will be an opportunity for live Q&A from members as well.

## Highlights on Home Rule

At the League meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>, I provided a rundown on the sorry state of home rule in South Carolina, a product of the post-reconstruction Jim Crow era. Home Rule is a catchall term for authority delegated by states to local governments, mainly cities, counties, and school boards. On a scale of one to ten, South Carolina is probably a two, and even that little bit of authority was coerced by the Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s that mandated state House and Senate Districts be apportioned on the principle of one person, one vote. This requirement ended the rule of each county's senator over local affairs, especially school districts and counties. Some counties had no resident senator, others had several, and many counties shared a senator or two with adjacent counties.

From 1895 to 1975, the senator was the head of county government, aided by the House members from that county. The county delegation as the authority over county government and with a major role in managing school districts was unique to South Carolina. Vestiges remain, particularly in county delegation control of appointments to boards and commissions and in the county constitutional officers (auditor treasurer, sheriff, assessor, and probate judge) who are elected independently of county councils but are funded by the county. The structure of school districts and the amount of fiscal authority school boards are controlled by the state legislature, which in practice means the county delegation.

Legislators have least authority over cities but do limit the ability to grow through annexation. The legislature also regulates the kinds of revenue sources available to cities and counties and the uses of some of those revenues. These include accommodations taxes, hospitality taxes, impact fees, and local sales tax. It's not easy to change because we would be asking legislators to give up power and authority. But perhaps piecemeal we can nibble away at the power of the delegation and bring it back to the locals we elect.

*Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

### **New Working Group at the State League Level Needs Representative from LWVOP**

The Gender and Women's Rights Working Group is made up of local league delegates who will discuss issues, policies, and strategies to further the goals of the LWVSC as regards to gender and women's rights. The group hopes to be a supportive community of members who care about gender and women's rights throughout the state. Recognizing that South Carolina is a tough place to work for progress, one group goal is to help people to never give up on "Making Democracy Work" for all. Group discussions over time will home in on two to three primary issues, on which we would advise the LWVSC leadership to concentrate advocacy efforts. The Working Group understands that the LWVSC is nonpartisan, speaks with one voice, is dedicated to Diversity, Inclusion, and Engagement, and that people's lives are intersectional as are social issues.

Again, we are hoping to have one person from each League in the state join us in the working group.

*Submitted by Laurie Levin, Chair of Gender and Women's Right Working Group*  
(636) 233-3330

## Review of the Town of Central Candidate Forum

Our League (in transition from Clemson Area to Oconee/Pickens) hosted one in-person forum for this off-year election cycle. It was held on Thursday, September 21st, for the candidates for mayor and for town council of Central. After discussion at the Board meeting, I agreed to set up a virtual forum for Central but made the “executive decision” to go for the in-person forum after discussion with town clerk, **Susan Brewer**. **Pastor Darren Rood** of the Cannon Memorial Baptist Church had volunteered use of the church fellowship hall, which is large (larger than the town hall facilities), and we anticipated a small audience where masking and distancing could be enforced. (Normally, we would use a neutral location like a town hall or a fire station, but Covid times lead to exceptions.) I was wrong! We had about 80 people at the peak of attendance, in a hall designed for probably about 100. The crowd was clearly interested and very courteous—an ideal forum audience.

**Sarah McNeill** moderated the questions for first the three mayoral candidates (one hour) followed by five candidates for council. One candidate could not be present and sent a statement, read by **Ruth Reed**. (The statement was too long to be completed.) One write-in candidate was allowed to participate after checking with the Pickens County elections administrator. We received more questions than could be asked, though all areas of questioning were covered. We received several questions by email and many at the forum itself.

**Aleta Robinson** collected questions, **Ruth Reed** sorted them, **Linda Gahan** served as timekeeper. **Ken Marsh** brought camera and tripod and filmed the proceedings to test how well a simple camera recording would work. As a result, we have a good set of data to use for planning forums for our bigger set of elections in 2022. My hope of having a masked, distanced audience clearly was naïve, but the energy of the group reminded me why in person forums are valuable. I think we can set up a system of filming that will give us useable files for a YouTube channel that **Jill Gemmill** showed me how to set up. However, we will need to consider how to manage the material so that it is not used out of context (for campaigning, for example). I am collecting notes for us to codify into a timeline and set of instructions for how to proceed next year. We need to start in January with identifying what forums to hold and who will coordinate each. Be forewarned—we will need lots of help. But it can be very satisfying work.

Kudos to **Alice Flower** and group for the hard work of getting candidates to post information!



**On September 21, the League held a candidate forum for the Town of Central municipal elections. There was a great turnout of around 80 people.**

**At left: audience, including Aleta Robinson, question collector and greeter (black mask) and Linda Gahan, timekeeper (front right).**

## Oconee County Board of Voter Registration and Elections Meeting

**Janie Shipley, Sandy Land,** and I attended the quarterly meeting on November 4, 2021, at 10 a.m. in the County Council chambers in Walhalla. A board Canvass Hearing (same personnel) was also held to certify the November 2 election.

As always, I learned so much during this meeting. Here are a few highlights:

During the Canvass Hearing, the duly sworn-in Board of Canvassers accepted and counted the Failsafe and other Provisional ballots (see editor comments below). Not a reference to an old movie, a Failsafe ballot is completed when the voter's photo ID address does not match the address on the registered voter roster. Provisional ballots are used for other "reasonable impediment" such as lost photo ID, trouble getting to the DMV to get a photo ID, or that the voting machine failed to properly process the ballot. Six ballots were entered at the meeting, including one from a determined voter who brought her photo ID to the meeting to prove her eligibility.

A huge drop in the number of Provisional ballots compared to prior years is the result of the county's acquisition of sufficient e-tablet devices used for screening voters at the polling place. When a question arises, the poll worker can now call a staff member who can clarify the voter issue on a handy app. More than 100 Provisional ballots were processed during the Canvass Hearing that was held after the previous election. The board and staff expressed gratitude for the new technology.

During the regular board meeting, it was announced that the decision to change precinct locations will be delayed until the state finishes its redistricting process. The board hopes that no precincts will be split by new redistricting lines. We also learned that the county is not required to perform audits on municipal election results, but that Oconee County chooses to do so for one municipality per election. Voter registration is possible at the DMV, but it is on an "opt in" question on their form. An "opt out" feature would likely register more voters. Registration is also possible at social services offices.

Meeting dates for 2022 were announced. The next meeting is on Thursday, January 13, at 10 a.m.

*Submitted by Buzzy Adam*

*Editor's comments, as a certified poll worker:*

*There are two types of Provisional Ballot. Emergency Provisional ballots are used if ballot-marking devices and/or scanner are not available, if the voter's eligibility is challenged, or they do not have a valid ID. Failsafe Provisional voting is designed to allow voters who have moved from one precinct to another and failed to update their address to update the address on election day and vote. There are additional details to each of these situations. Vote tallies at the polling place are not official. All ballots are preserved using careful protocols so that the county board can canvass the vote prior to certification.*

## Anderson's First Candidate Forum!

Our sister League-in-training in Anderson County had their very first candidate forum for two contested town council seats in Pendleton. The mayor, who is running unopposed, updated the crowd of thirty-two masked audience members in Cox Hall on various activities of town government and the four candidates answered questions and offered their vision of what Pendleton needed to be working toward.

Kudos to **Barbara Hamberg, Zoe Hale, Mary Tavolucci, and Dale Cronemiller** for making this event a success! Barbara and Mary are alumni of the Oconee-Pickens League, while Zoe and Dale are among the newcomers who have jumped enthusiastically into the process of creating a League for Anderson County. Anderson is ready to move forward with bylaws and electing a board, so it shouldn't be too much longer before the Member-at-Large Unit designation disappears from their identity and they are South Carolina League #14!

*Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

### WE ARE NOW THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OCONEE AND PICKENS COUNTIES

At its September meeting, the LWVUS Board of Directors approved our League's name and boundary change request. LWV of Clemson Area is now LWV of Oconee and Pickens Counties.

### Your Membership Matters



Local, State and National Membership League of Women Voters

21-22 DUES (same as last year)

\$60 Primary Membership

\$30 Additional Household Membership

\$10 Student Membership

Ways to Pay Your 21-22 LWVCA Dues

-Mail a check to PO Box 802 Clemson, SC 29633.

-Send a Bill Pay payment through your bank or credit card.

-Pay with PayPal through our website.

-For other options or questions, phone a board member or send an email to [LWVclemson@gmail.com](mailto:LWVclemson@gmail.com)

## Vote 411 Report: 2021 Election

There were fifty candidates running in the 2021 municipal elections in Pickens and Oconee Counties. Of that number, twenty-one participated in Vote411. We had no participation from candidates from Liberty, Norris, Salem, Walhalla, or West Union. At the other end of the spectrum, we had participation from six of nine candidates in Central, four of five candidates in Easley, three of four candidates in Pickens, and four of six candidates in Seneca. It appears that we are making progress in getting candidate involvement in some areas but have room for improvement in others.

On a national level, **Megan Brown**, LWVUS Vote411 Manager, reported "... over 905,000 voters looked at the candidate information on this site. This is an 83% INCREASE over the 2017 cycle (the most comparable cycle)." She added "Not only did we have more voters looking for our information, but we had more candidate information for them to find! Yesterday we had nearly 28,000 candidates on the site, which is a 100% increase over the 2017 cycle, and even more candidates than the 2018 midterm election! "

Many thanks go to all who helped by distributing flyers or publicizing the Vote411 site to friends and neighbors. A special thank you to **Eleanor Hare** for her invaluable assistance and advice with the Vote411 site and to **Buzzy Adams**, **Carol Kozma**, and **Ken Marsh** who called all the candidates who hadn't responded and encouraged them to make use of the site.

*Submitted by Alice Flower, Vote411 Coordinator*

### How To Get the LWVOP Message Out

Because our meeting with local legislators has been rescheduled for November 29, we would like to use the regular meeting time on November 16 at 7 p.m. to get input on how we might improve our communications efforts.

We send out *The Voter* eight times a year (excluding December and the summer), and we email information to members. We are working on improving our new website, and we post to our Facebook page. This may be effective for members, but it is not sufficient for the broader audience of Oconee and Pickens Counties. How can we do better?

If we could collect links to local groups, towns, neighborhoods, interest groups, etc., using Facebook or other media, we might be able have a greater impact. We can take advantage of newspapers (I have contact information for *The Journal*, which has published letters to the editor recently from members and expressed an interest in more) and perhaps radio and television. Who has specific suggestions and perhaps contacts? Who has other thoughts? And who has thoughts on how best to organize ourselves to make the best use of our time? We need something like an old-fashioned phone tree! If you can join in on the 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be most appreciative. I will email the Zoom link a day or so before the meeting.

*Submitted by Ruth Reed*

*Clemson City Council*      *1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm*  
*Seneca City Council*      *2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*  
*Pickens County Council*    *1st Monday, 6:30 pm*  
*Oconee County Council*    *1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*  
*Anderson County Council* *2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm*

*Pickens County School Board*    *4th Monday, 7:00 pm*  
*Oconee County School Board*    *3rd Monday, 6:00 pm*  
*Anderson Co. School Board*      *3rd Monday, 6:00 pm*

### Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (opt) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters Ed Fund" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

Visit our website at [www.lwvclemsonarea.org](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org) and contact us at [lwvclemson@gmail.com](mailto:lwvclemson@gmail.com).

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