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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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Volume 37, Number 4
April 2009

LWVCA President: Beatrice Bailey
The Voter Editor: Catherine Mobley

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| Tues. April 21 | LWVCA Annual Meeting, Clemson University Outdoor Lab (Kresge Hall). Guest speaker: Dr. Jeffrey Allen, Strom Thurmond Institute, <i>Growth in the Upstate</i> , 6:30 p.m. |
| Tues. April 28 | Discussion on the National Popular Vote Compact, Holley Ulbrich's home, 106 Highland Drive in Clemson (off Pendleton Road), 5:00 p.m. (wine and cheese to be served). |
| Tues. May 19 | LWVCA General Meeting: "The Friends of Lake Keowee Society." Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Social time, 7:00 p.m.; Formal Program, 7:30 p.m. |

WATCH DEMOCRACY AT WORK

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| Clemson City Council | 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:30 p.m. |
| Seneca City Council | 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. |
| Pickens County Council | 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:00 p.m. |
| Oconee County Council | 3rd Tuesday, 3:00 p.m. |
| Anderson County Council | 1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. |
| Pickens County School Board | 4th Monday, 7:30 p.m., except July and December |
| Oconee County School Board | 2nd & 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. |
| Anderson County School Board | 3 rd Monday, 6:00 p.m. |
| LWV National Office | 202-429-1965 (800-424-2937 for state/ local board members) |
| LWVCA website | http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/ |

President's Message

Dear LWVCA Members and Friends,

It's April so it's time for the state LWV convention and our own local membership dinner; but by the time you receive this *VOTER*, these big events may be history. Our state convention here in Greenville will include seven delegates from our own League as well as several of our members who serve on the state board. Other members are helping with the arrangements and are making plans to attend one or more of the sessions. We also have environmentally friendly grocery bags to sell at the state's Friday night auction and that will be available for purchase later by local members. The bags will remind others that "Democracy is NOT a spectator sport." Our local membership meeting will fall on the heels of the state convention on April 21st at the Outdoor Lab. Eleanor Hare and the Program Committee has developed a fine program and menu. Look for details about these events in our next and last newsletter for the year.

Please make note of all the exciting activities over the past month. I learned so much at the Clemson City Council candidate forum and the wonderful symposium in Oconee that addressed the school system's budgetary crisis. Thanks to all who helped with these events.

I look forward to working with the new leadership team. President-Elect Della Baker is ready to assume the leadership along with others who refuse to be political spectators. Enjoy this beautiful spring weather (and rain).

Bea Bailey, LWVCA President



Pictured at the Candidate Forum for the City of Clemson City Council are the candidates themselves (from l. to r.): Roy "Steve" Fields, Christel L. Medeiros, and Jeremy T. Wright. See page 3 for a description of the Candidate Forum.

**LWVCA May General Meeting
to Address Lake Issues**

The May LWVCA General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 19th at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 7:30 (preceded by social time which begins at 7:00). Ben Turetzky, FOLKS Executive Director will make a presentation on the Friends of Lake Keowee Society's (FOLKS) work and describe the interaction between Duke Energy and the Corps of Engineers. The two "source lakes" for the Savannah River Basin are Lakes Jocassee and Keowee, operated by Duke Energy under a license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The three downstream lakes – Hartwell, Thurmond and Russell -- are operated by the Corps of Engineers (COE). He will describe the various initiatives undertaken by FOLKS and the cooperation between Duke-Energy and the COE in managing the water flow into Lake Hartwell and also discuss the complex responsibilities that the COE must meet in their operation of the three reservoirs.

Ben Turetzky retired from Michelin after 38 years in the tire and rubber industry. He earned a MS in Chemical Engineering from MIT and an MS in Chemical Engineering from Stevens. He served as President of FOLKS for 4 years and currently serves as the FOLKS Executive Director.

Submitted by Ben and Reggie Turetzky

**We Need You!
A Call for LWVCA Observers**

The League would like to revive an old practice of having observers attend as many meetings of public bodies as we can cover in our area--school boards, city councils, county councils. Observers are welcome to report to the newsletter but they don't have to. See the calendar on the first page for a list of meetings in the area. If you are interested in learning more about being a watchdog for local government, please contact LWVCA President Bea Bailey or Program and Action team chair Holley Ulbrich. This is a great way for new members to get involved!

~ Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

**Join us for the
LWVCA Annual Meeting!**

The Annual Meeting of the LWVCA will take place on April 21, 6:30 p.m. at the Outdoor Lab of Clemson University. Directions to the Outdoor Lab can be found by accessing the following link to our calendar:

<http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/files/Directions.KresgeHall.pdf>.

We originally scheduled Brad Wyche to speak at our meeting. However, he had a personal conflict and arranged for Dr. Jeff Allen of the Strom Thurmond Institute to give a presentation on Growth Projections for the Upstate. Mr. Wyche told us that he had planned to talk about Dr. Allen's research and, when he found he could not attend, immediately contacted Dr. Allen. Now we get to hear it directly from the source! We hope to schedule Mr. Wyche for another LWVCA meeting.

Dr. Jeff Allen is the Director of the S.C. Water Resources Center at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs at Clemson University. During his talk, he will provide up-to-date information about growth in the Upstate.

As described in previous newsletters, the LWVCA has a special interest in growth management issues: in November we sponsored a forum on growth management in the Upstate and at our program planning meeting in January we decided to draft a new position on growth management. Dr. Allen's talk should thus give us much "food for thought" as we consider our position on growth management.

In addition to hearing this program, we will elect new officers and board members, adopt a budget and approve our local program for next year. And, delegates to the state convention will provide a brief summary of the convention. Please join us as we celebrate our accomplishments from last year and plan for the upcoming year!

*~Submitted by Eleanor Hare
and Catherine Mobley*

Some Information About LWV Action Alerts

If you are wondering why you are receiving so many Action Alerts recently, it is because the Legislature is in session. Action alerts are designed to make it easy for us to contact our legislators and include a description of an action, a message to send, talking points, the LWV position supporting the action, and contact information for state officials.

On March 17, the SC League sent out an Action Alert to oppose voter photo ID (H 3418). League members were asked to express strong opposition to legislation that would require voters to obtain and show a government-issued photo ID before exercising their right to vote. One of several reasons for opposing H 3418 is that there is no evidence of the kind of fraud this legislation would prevent.

On March 22, the SC League invited members to join with other organizations in a press conference on the front steps of the Statehouse on Gervais Street to inform the media and the public of our united opposition to House bill 3418, which had passed the House and was then in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

On March 31, the SC League sent an Action Alert to support early voter legislation for SC citizens. The league supports this legislation in order to avoid long lines at the polls and make it easier for all eligible voters to cast their ballots. Ten separate bills which require an early voting period, center or precinct have been submitted to the 118th Session (2009-2010) of the legislature.

~ Submitted by Eleanor Hare

LWVCA Sponsors the Clemson City Council Candidate Forum

On March 24 the League sponsored a Candidate Forum for the candidates for Clemson City Council. Approximately 50 people turned out to hear Steven Fields, Christel Medeiros, and Jeremy Wright answer questions about their views and goals for the city. Donna London moderated this forum, which was held in the Arts Auditorium of the Clemson Child Development Center.

Several weeks before the forum, local LWVCA members developed questions about a variety of topics, including how to award grants, the future of the CAT system, the role of government in encouraging energy efficiency and environmental responsibility, and the role of government in encouraging affordable housing. The candidates' replies to all questions were posted on the League web site and a one-page selection of the questions and answers was distributed at the forum.

Jeremy Wright won the election on Tuesday, March 31. *~Submitted by Eleanor Hare*

A Report on the Forum on the School District of Oconee County

On March 31st, Dr. Mike Lucas, Superintendent, School District of Oconee County (SDOC) - Dr. Mike Lucas; Andy Inabinet, Chairman of the SDOC Board of Trustees; and Joel Thrift, Oconee County Council Vice Chairman spoke at the LWVCA forum "How the Fiscal Crisis is Effecting SDOC." Kathy Woodard was an expert Moderator. Below is a summary of this informative meeting.

The participants all asked those in attendance to email, call, or write letters to Governor Sanford urging him to apply for the School Stimulus Package of \$700M for the South Carolina Schools and to ask others to do the same. Bea Bailey sent an email to our membership to remind them to contact Governor Sanford. On Friday, April 3rd, the Governor applied for the Stimulus Package but he

is still urging the Legislature to use the \$700M to pay down the State Debt.

In his opening statement, Andy Inabinet expressed concern about the cash flow from tax money that is still coming in from last November. He said that the Oconee County Council has been supportive of education compared to some other Council's in the state. He wants to avoid having to eliminate teacher jobs during the school year and he especially does not want the children's education to be affected by budget cuts. SDOC is striving to be one of the top school districts in the state in all areas including art and athletics. With cuts by 2010, the level of finance for school districts will be at the 1999 level.

Dr Lucas emphasized that the SDOC Board of Trustees is committed to education and has done a good job. During his PowerPoint presentation, he indicated that Oconee County is lucky to have Duke Power, the largest employer in the county, pay such a large portion of the County Taxes. The state contribution to local school districts is 70% and their local government supplies the remaining 30%. The state contribution is dependent on the wealth of each district. For SDOC, the state provides 53% with the local government providing 43%. It was interesting to be reminded that the first sales tax in South Carolina, enacted in 1951 under Governor Byrnes, was implemented for "separate but equal school construction", keeping the schools segregated.

We learned that there will be an additional \$4.5M state budget cut in the beginning of April. To accommodate this budget shortfall, SDOC will cut and trim, stop buying equipment and experience a \$500,000 cut, but there is a little wiggle room with \$211,000 in reserve. Potentially, there will be more budget cuts during the 2009-2010 school year. And, if the Governor does not use the \$700M Stimulus Funds, there will be substantial staff reductions, approaching 85 positions, including teachers and staff, and classroom sizes will increase. We learned that SDOC usually

experiences a 100 person turnover due to attrition each year.

Joel Thrift assured the audience that the Oconee County Council supports SDOC. It is a tough job for the Council, since \$122M has been cut statewide and \$1.6M of that is in Oconee County. The income from the state is based on assessed values and we are fortunate that Oconee County has a high assessed value. Industry has doubled in the last few years and thus there is a need for skilled labor in the workforce. Thrift indicated that he owns a saw mill and that he requires employees with math and computer skills. And, as Thrift indicated, high quality schools are necessary to continue to attract industry to Oconee County.

There were several questions from the floor. When asked about the top two issues of concern, Inabinet indicated that the top two issues needing to be addressed to the Legislative Delegation are: fiscal autonomy, even though the County Council does not believe there should be another taxing authority; and to support legislation that would get all the financial state aid that Oconee County can get. Dr. Lucas felt that the Legislative Delegation should be thanked for supporting SDOC and secondly, that school funding needs to be changed to make sure Oconee County will not be hurt by making changes that shift the wealth in the state.

The next question dealt with whether Oconee County has been affected by the change in the source of school funding, now that the sales tax replaces part of the property tax. Thrift felt that the sales tax works in decent economic times. Dr. Lucas said that sales tax is a regressive tax and places the burden disproportionately on the backs of the poor. He indicated that while the sales tax may work in good economic times, it is not a great source of revenue during bad economic times. He pointed out that both cars and airplanes have a maximum sales tax of \$300. Inabinet also recognized that much of sales tax is contributed by tourists. He also indicated that Act 388 was not very well thought out; thus, when the economy

turned sour, so, too, did the source of revenue. Another question focused on the topic of fiscal autonomy. The participant asked if the County Council would consider supporting fiscal autonomy if a non-binding referendum on the subject passed. Thrift indicated that he would support fiscal autonomy if the non-binding referendum was overwhelmingly in favor and he thought that the County Council would consider it. Andy Inabinet felt that there is a need for fiscal autonomy so that SDOC doesn't have to rely on the council. For example, what if a particular County Council did not consider a high quality education as a priority? Another question pertained to the State Lottery Money. Dr. Lucas said that the Lottery funds are earmarked for K-5 literacy in Oconee County and that little is left for middle and high School education. Since the inception of the lottery, SDOC has received \$4.5 million from lottery funds. Thrift was asked – if the county funding was cut would the Council be committed to funding the budget requested by SDOC. He responded that there are separate funds – education and county needs are not competitive.

In closing, Thrift said that he looks forward to working with SDOC and that education is a top priority. Inabinet summed up the evening by stating that there is a good school system in Oconee County and recognized that volunteers do great things for the schools. He appreciates the support and does not want the district to regress; there is a need to hire and retain good people and continue using good facilities. Dr. Lucas quoted Margaret Mead, since there was a small crowd at the forum “Small groups of committed people make a difference.” He said classrooms are exciting places and that children need the very best.

~ *Submitted by Reggie Turetzky*

Wine, Cheese and Consensus The National Popular Vote Compact

As reported in the March 2009, the National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC) is an attempt to choose the president and vice president of the United States by popular vote, without amending the U. S. Constitution. The compact is basically an agreement among states through which the member states give their electoral votes to the candidate with the greatest "national popular vote total." The compact specifies that it shall take effect only if it is law in states controlling a majority of electoral votes on July 20 of a presidential election year.

States that join the compact agree to instruct their electors in the Electoral College (EC) to cast their votes for the candidates receiving the largest national popular vote total. In this consensus, we are asked to decide whether or not the NPVC is an acceptable method of achieving the goal of popular election of the president.

The LWVCA will study this issue further and we invite you to join the conversation. We will meet at Holley Ulbrich's home (106 Highland Drive, just off Pendleton Road) at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28, to reach consensus on the National Popular Vote Compact. This consensus is due to National by May 1.

Before meeting for consensus, everyone is encouraged to explore the many useful documents supplied by the LWV which provide a comprehensive discussion of the NPVC. See the links on our website which can be accessed at <http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/>. More information can be found in the Winter 2009 issue of the *SC Voter* (found at the following website: http://lwvsc.org/files/lwvsc2009_1winter.pdf On the following two pages, you will find some specific questions which will guide our discussion on Tuesday, April 28. We hope to see you on Tuesday, April 28, as we discuss this important issue! ~ *Submitted by Eleanor Hare*

**National Popular Vote Compact
Consensus Questions to be Considered**

1. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
- b. Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

2. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

3. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
- b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

4. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
- b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed anyway.
- c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.
- d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
- e. The group could not reach consensus.

5. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

6. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

7. Which statements reflect the views of the group?

- a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

- b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Agree Disagree No Consensus